

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 08230384 7



Patsy Carroll

*in the
Golden West*

Grace Gordon

Carroll's History of the State of New York
Part 1
Book 1



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

Admission

g

NAS
Gordon

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R L



-Thelma Gooch-

She got a hold on the fateful shell, and...
finally urged it safely ashore.

Patsy Carroll

In

The Golden West

By

Grace Gordon

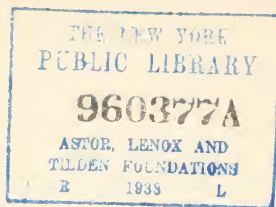
Illustrated by

Thelma Gooch

New York

Cupples & Leon Company

L. C. 1920
1124



PATSY CARROLL SERIES

By GRACE GORDON

Cloth. Price per Volume, \$1.50 Net.

PATSY CARROLL AT WILDERNESS
LODGE

PATSY CARROLL UNDER SOUTHERN
SKIES

PATSY CARROLL IN THE GOLDEN
WEST

Other Volumes in Preparation

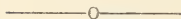
CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, New York

COPYRIGHT, 1920, BY
CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY

Patsy Carroll in the Golden West

Printed in U. S. A.

CONTENTS



CHAPTER	PAGE
I THE GEYSER A LA MODE.....	1
II A SOUTH SEA ISLAND.....	13
III THE VEILED STRANGER.....	25
IV THRILLING PROSPECTS	35
V AT THE FORT LEE STUDIO.....	44
VI ABOARD THE "ORAGRANDIA".....	56
VII OVER THE OCEAN BLUE.....	66
VIII JUST GIRLS	77
IX DOING NEW ORLEANS.....	88
X THE FORBIDDEN TRAIL.....	98
XI A CLOSE UP OF TER-REE.....	108
XII THE GOLDEN WEST.....	117
XIII A STAR INTERVIEW.....	128
XIV SMASHING A PREJUDICE.....	138
XV THE UNBIDDEN GUEST.....	148
XVI BINGO AND BOUNTY.....	161
XVII ON THE BIG LOT.....	171

OFFER FROM C O JUL 1938

CHAPTER		PAGE
XVIII	A COMPLICATED RESCUE.....	182
XIX	A DOUBLE SET MOVIE.....	192
XX	PLANS FOR NEW ADVENTURE.....	203
XXI	CHATTER AND CLATTER.....	214
XXII	OFF FOR THE CLIFFS.....	225
XXIII	A QUEER DISCOVERY.....	234
XXIV	BRAVING REAL DANGER.....	243
XXV	THE PANORAMA OF MYSTERY.....	256
XXVI	THE INDIAN TRADING STATION.....	270
XXVII	NANCE AND NEWS.....	283
XXVIII	THE PEARL OF THE PACIFIC.....	294

Patsy Carroll

In

The Golden West

CHAPTER I

THE GEYSER A LA MODE

“**M**AB, will you kindly see if Old Faithful can still perform?”

“Old Faithful?” and there was a look of surprise on the countenance of the slim, blue-eyed girl sitting opposite Patsy Carroll, with a gate-legged table between them. “Old Faithful? What in the world——?”

Patsy, nodding her glorious head slightly, indicated the teapot, which a maid, shortly before, had placed before the Wayfarers. Already it had served its purpose in dispensing fragrant cups of the aromatic beverage, and now it seemed about to be called upon to afford further cheer.

“Oh, you mean——” began Nell, coming to the rescue of her sister, who still seemed rather dazed by the metaphor her hostess employed.

“I mean Old Faithful and nothing else,” reiterated Patsy. “If you can think of another name for it, pray do, as Aunt Martha says at whist.”

“What has whist to do with this gathering?” demanded a rather retiring member of the quartette, as she daintily nibbled at a sugar wafer. “It seems to me, Patricia, that you are getting deeper and deeper into a maze of——”

“Mixed metaphors to say the least!” cut in Mab. “That’s right, Bee, side with poor little me! I declare, I don’t know what has come over Patsy to-day.”

“Bee will know soon enough if she comes that schoolmarm air over me again!” threatened Patsy, and her rippling laugh brought deeper color to her cheeks. Joy, the beautifier, always found a responsive subject in working on Patsy Carroll.

“Don’t speak of school and schoolmarms!” begged Beatrice Forbes—otherwise Bee—the “Busy Bee” she had often been dubbed. “Haven’t we had enough? And now, with exams over and a glorious future before us——”

“Let’s see if Old Faithful will perform,” sug-

gested Patsy again, "and then we can talk."

"Gracious, child! What have we been doing all the afternoon but talk?" demanded Mab. "I should think——"

"One shouldn't think when the tea is brewed," said Patsy. "But what I meant was that we'll really begin to, now."

"As if we hadn't been planning, and longing, and dreaming, and hoping, and wondering, and going into raptures, and——"

"'Twill suffice!" exclaimed Bee, reaching over and daintily thrusting what was left of her sugar wafer between the parted lips of Eleanor Perry. "If you go on like that much longer you won't survive to see the glories of the Yellowstone."

"Oh, now I understand why Patsy called this Old Faithful," murmured Mab when she had munched a cracker and proceeded to fill the beautiful china cups—the pride of Aunt Martha. "She was thinking of the geyser in the Park."

"Wonderful! How'd you guess it? Such intuition is extraordinary, is it not, my friends?" exclaimed Patsy. "That is just what I was thinking of. And I am glad my simile proved applicable, for there is enough tea left for all of us. Shall I ring for more? A second cup?" and she glanced up questioningly at her guests.

"I've had plenty," said Mab.

"And I," murmured the others in turn.

"These cakes are delicious, Patsy. Where did you get them?" asked Bee.

"A new Danish pastry shop has opened down the street," replied the auburn-haired hostess. "I tried it, just for luck, you know, as I do anything new; and since the trial Daddy won't have any other sort of pastry."

"Is your father fond of sweets?" asked Nell.

"Is he? My dear! You should see him! He's a perfect fiend over a kind he used to get at the French shop. Mochas he called them. They had ground coffee sprinkled over the top, with a roll of sweet chocolate sitting acrost a diamond-shaped cake, covered on the outside with powdered pistachio nuts, and the whole encased in a mantle of whipped cream studded with mallow."

"Oh, mercy. Patsy! Your father never ate that conglomeration!" cried Bee.

"He did. I give you my word on it. I never knew him to be so fond of sweets before. Positively the cakes Saunders made didn't satisfy him at all. But we're getting off the subject, I'm afraid."

"Did we have a subject?" laughed Nell. "It

seems to me we were wandering around in a haze of words and the aroma of confections."

"The only hope is to get back to our starting point," remarked Bee, "and that is the geyser."

"Anyone would think we were lost in the park and had to pick our way through boiling springs," murmured Patsy. "But, girls, seriously, I was just thinking what a glorious time we shall have. And now, as has been intimated, we are through with Yardley. I won't say forever, for we certainly had some glorious times there, even with the fire and all; but since we are through, and since our longed-for vacation has 'arrove,' we can really make final arrangements for our great, grand, glorious, golden West tour. You may notice I ran out of gs.

"I've been doing little else but reading literature on the Yellowstone," she continued, "and, naturally, when I saw the teapot steaming so consistently there, I thought of Old Faithful, the geyser that has been spouting so long—forty odd years at intervals of every sixty-five minutes. There, you see I've been reading up."

"And so, naturally——" this from Nell.

"She just couldn't help airing her knowledge and springing it on us!" cut in Mab. "All right, we'll forgive her since I do think we are going to

have a most wonderful time, and I'm fully as ready as any of you to talk about it. When can we start, Patsy?"

"That's one of the reasons I asked you over here this afternoon," spoke the Titian-tressed hostess. "I expect Daddy home soon with full details as to trains, tickets and traps—notice the alliteration; and then we can settle definitely when we are to go and how. None of you are going to back out?" she asked anxiously, looking around the circle of her chums.

"Never!" came in a determined chorus.

"Good!" voiced Patsy. "I had some difficulty in getting Aunt Martha's courage to the sticking point, but when I pointed out that she had survived the terrors of Wilderness Lodge, and had proved herself so valiant under the Southern skies, I think I convinced her that it was due to herself not to let this opportunity go by. Auntie is a real Wayfarer, remember."

"Just what feature seemed to alarm her?" asked Bee. "Was it the hot springs or the geysers? I should think the hot springs would be beneficial to the slight rheumatism she sometimes complains of."

"Those springs aren't to bathe in—they'd boil you like a lobster!" declared Nell.

"It was the bears!" explained Patsy, leaning back in her chair with a satisfied air.

"The bears!" chorused her chums.

"In the park," Patsy went on. "Aunt Martha read about them coming up to tourists and sometimes being too friendly, and that seemed to settle it for her. She is deathly afraid of a bear and she intimated that I might lead the beasts our way."

"There are bears in the Adirondacks," Bee reminded Patsy.

"Yes, but Aunty didn't happen to read about them before she went with us on that trip. In the present instance she has been priming herself on Yellowstone facts, so to speak, and the bears stuck in her memory. I don't think the guide books should picture old Bruin. I had a difficult task to persuade her that they were only baby bears, whose mothers cuffed them into submission if they so much as nibbled the fingers of tourists offering them French pastry and——"

"Patsy, please subside," expostulated Nell.

"Very well, Nellie; but you don't know how I worked to win the Aunt. However, she is going with us. Aren't you, Auntie?" she challenged, as a sweet-faced matron entered the room almost before Patsy could change her tone of voice.

“Going where, child? I must know all the details before I answer you,” with a comprehensive nod to the girls.

“That is perfectly right, Miss Carroll!” encouraged Mab. “Patsy seems to have the spirit of Puck in her to-day.”

“Don’t! Don’t!” begged the hostess. “It reminds me of the lit. class and Shakespeare and——”

“Oh, do you remember Mercutio Macbeth Merrifield?” cried Mab.

“And Hamlet! Don’t forget the dog!” exclaimed Eleanor.

“As if we could forget either,” sighed Patsy. “Weren’t those glorious days in the wilderness? But we shall have even better times in Nature’s Marvelous Playground, as one of the books calls the Yellowstone. What were we talking about? Aunt Martha, shall I ring for some fresh tea?”

“No, thank you, dear. I had some in my room just now. I thought perhaps Robert had come.”

“Daddy’s late,” announced Patsy, glancing at her wrist watch. “And he promised to be home early with all the information about trains and everything.”

“There are so many things to be settled,” murmured Nell. “Were you really apprehensive of

the bears?" she asked Aunt Martha, who, since the death of Patsy's mother had assumed charge of the Carroll homestead.

"I was, my dear, and for good reasons. I once saw a man injured by a bear in a zoological park, and since then I have had a horror of the creatures. But Patsy assures me——"

"Oh, it will be perfectly all right," came in a chorus, for Patsy sedately winked at her chums with a merry eye concealed from her aunt.

"I am glad to know you think so," said the energetic, elderly lady, who seemed to be getting younger the more often she chaperoned her lively charges to mountain, lake, shore or river resort.

"We were just talking and planning," said Patsy. "And I started——"

"She startled us by calling the teapot Old Faithful!" broke in Mab. "Why don't you tell a story straight, Patsy? Has't forgotten style?" this with a rising inflection recalling school terms.

"Not I. Style in lit. or style in bonnets—I'm strong for both."

Patsy Carroll paused and turned her wonderful head in the direction of the hall. At the moment a door was heard to open and close; whereat the hostess, with a murmured "excuse me," hurried out of the room.

“It is Robert,” said Miss Carroll, Aunt Martha by courtesy to all the girls, but to Patsy, Aunt Martha by inheritance.

There was heard the murmur of voices in the hall—the full, eager tones of Patsy herself, mingled with the more resonant voice of Mr. Carroll.

“Did you bring them?” Patsy was heard to ask.

“Exactly what?” asked her father.

“The time-tables, the folders, the guide-books, the——”

“Gracious, Patsy dear, you must take me for a walking tourist library!” laughed Mr. Carroll, and at the sound of that laugh Miss Carroll seemed to start and appear ill at ease. It was only a flash, and then she resumed the duties of hostess devolving on her during the momentary absence of her niece.

But talk as they did the conversation of the quartette in the dining-room could not drown the murmur of voices in the hall.

“But Daddy, why?” asked Patsy. “Why can’t you?”

“Because, my dear, it is utterly out of the question,” came the reply, which was audible to all.

“But you promised,” insisted Patsy, “and the girls have their hearts set on it—so have I.”

“I know, my dear, and if there were any possible way out of it I would take it. But I can see none just now. That is what makes me late. I remained at the office, going over matters with Davis, and this seems the only way out. Of course I could send him with you, or I could wire for Uncle Ed——”

“We don’t want either of them! We want you!” cried Patsy Carroll, and there was the hint of tears in her voice. “Oh, dear! I think business deals are perfectly horrible!” she burst out. “I just won’t give up our plans. We Wayfarers simply must go. Oh, what a shame! How can I tell the girls? And yet I must!”

Some sense of the impending disaster—at least disaster to their cherished plans—filtered in to the others in the dining-room, but before they had a chance to form very definite ideas of the turn in affairs Patsy burst in on them, followed, more sedately, by her father.

“Oh, girls! What do you think!” cried Patsy. “Isn’t it perfectly terrible! Daddy can’t go to the Yellowstone with us after all,” and Patsy Carroll threw herself into a chair, looked gloom-

ily at her companion Wayfarers, then gave herself up to black despair.

“But, daughter, there are other trips,” said Mr. Carroll quizzically, and some of the girls interpreted hope in his voice.

CHAPTER II

A SOUTH SEA ISLAND

CHARACTERISTIC it was of Robert Carroll that the more gloomy Patsy seemed the more genial grew his smile. Perhaps the lonely years after Patsy's mother left him had to do with this, for he had formed the habit of keeping the sunny side of his heart outward, so that the girl bereft of maternal care, might not so keenly feel the lack of that which is the birthright of every daughter—a mother's love and protection.

So it was, that now, when to Patsy the world seemed a gloomy place indeed, his smile grew broader and warmer, and his eyes twinkled with the inspiration of courage.

"Oh, it's just too positively awful!" insisted Patsy. "Here we were so jolly, thinking of what we were going to see; the wonderful trees,

the sunsets, the geysers—why, I even named the teapot Old Faithful! And then we had Aunt Martha all over her fears of the bears and——”

“Child, you told me we should never see a bear!” accusingly voiced Miss Carroll.

“Well, I would have seen to it that you were looking the other way if we did chance on one,” said Patsy. “And now it’s all gone—there isn’t any plan—there isn’t going to be a trip to Yellowstone—there isn’t going to be—just anything!”

Mr. Carroll smiled even more genially and broadly if that were possible.

“All is not gold that glitters,” he remarked sententiously.

“Ahem!” exclaimed his sister, with rather an anxious glance at him. “Do you mean there is a silver lining to what seems a dark cloud to Patricia?” asked Miss Carroll.

“Something like that,” went on her brother. “And yet the golden simile holds, too. How would you like to go to the land of gold, little daughter, not to say to the land of moving pictures——”

“Oh, I detest the movies!” groaned Patsy.

“But perhaps you may be interested in how they are made,” suggested her father. “There is

no evil without a corresponding good somewhere, and I——”

His gaze wandered over the table on which were the remnants of the afternoon tea.

“Some new pastry?” he asked interestedly. “I——may I——”

He paused suggestively and Mab passed him the plate of Danish confections.

“I’ll ring and have Saunders make some fresh tea,” offered Aunt Martha, at which Mr. Carroll did not object.

“Is there really any hope, Daddy?” asked Patsy seriously when her father had sipped, with evident appreciation, the fragrant Orange Pekoe.

“You should know your Pandora better than to think there is not,” he answered, smiling. “I am sorry to say, young ladies,” he went on, “that the projected trip to the Yellowstone seems off for the season—that is, off as far as I am concerned. A change in some business matters, coming to the front only this afternoon, has forced me to alter my plans. But if I know you Wayfarers rightly, and I may claim to having some slight interest in you” (his gaze rested on Patsy’s dejected head), “I think I am right in assuming that it does not so much matter where you

go, as does the how, and when, and the ultimate result. Am I right?"

"Gracious, Daddy! What are you trying to say?" murmured Patsy. "Don't give him any more of that Danish pastry, Mab. He ought never to have gotten off his French diet. These allied confections cause rambles."

"If you will bear with me a moment," went on Mr. Carroll.

"For the love of peace don't mention bears while 'Aunt Martha is here!" broke in Patsy. "But be brief, Daddy, and tell me if there is still hope. Never mind Pandora."

"There is every sort of hope if you only will consent to change your viewpoint, my dear," said her father, gently. "If you have to give up a geyser, would not a South Sea island fill its place acceptably?"

"Oh, Daddy! 'A real island? In the South Seas? With pirates, buried treasures and——"

"Cannibals——" boomed out the voice of Bee. 'A struggling giggle, however, marred the boom.

"Don't!" whispered Mab. "We must have 'Aunt Martha with us."

"Oh, Daddy!" exploded Patsy. "You must tell us! Are we really going somewhere? And what did you mean by that golden allusion?"

"I'll tell you as soon as I've finished my tea—and another piece of pastry, Mab, if you please," he added. Then, master of the situation, he leaned back in his chair to fully enjoy the refreshment.

"Well, there's no use trying to hurry him, girls. We may as well let him take his time," said Patsy with a long breath. "But I do feel a little better."

Mr. Carroll smilingly surveyed the pretty group which eyed him so eagerly. Even Aunt Martha was pretty with that wonderful loveliness of contented and happy age. Wayfarers they were, and Wayfarers they hoped to remain. As set forth in the initial volume of this series: "Patsy Carroll in Wilderness Lodge," they had gained that name for themselves when they journeyed to the Adirondacks to spend the summer in a camp there.

"Wilderness Lodge" was the name of their rendezvous, and it proved as romantic as its title. No sooner were the four girls and Aunt Martha ensconced in the place, than Rupert Grandin, the worthless nephew of the deceased owner, tried to force them out of the lodge by declaring their lease void.

But the Wayfarers would not thus be ousted,

and after some dramatic if not tragic happenings, they were vindicated in their right, and were also instrumental in bringing to light a missing will, so that charming Cecil Vane came into possession of her inheritance.

In this volume we first met Patsy Carroll who lived with her maiden aunt and her father in their lovely Morton home, and, not far away resided the Perry family, of whom we shall have mainly to deal, with Beatrice and Mabel, two of Patsy's chums. The completing member of the quartette was Bee (Beatrice) Forbes, the daughter of a widow, who supported Bee by millinery work of wonderful distinctiveness. Bee, to eke out the family finances, had fitted herself for teaching in the lower grades in school, but just then her great-aunt, learning of the girl's ambition to obtain a college education, furnished the means for undertaking it, so that after the adventures in Wilderness Lodge the four chums together went to Yardley, a girls' preparatory school.

"Patsy Carroll Under Southern Skies" is the title of the second volume. From Yardley, following a fire that destroyed some of the dormitories, the Wayfarers as they dubbed themselves, journeyed to Florida.

Wayfarers they were, indeed, for the lure of the great out-doors was sufficient to lead them on and over the perils and adventures in the glorious Southland, where the romance of early settlers still clung to the fine old estate upon which they settled for their vacation. This place known as Golondrinas (The Swallows) fairly oozed with mysteries, and the actual capture of a very lusty and violent "ghost" formed something of a tragedy in the volume of adventure.

After two such noteworthy seasons the present must surely shine to keep up the records, and it is in attempting, not only to compete with but actually outdo the other volumes, we now find the Wayfarers planning.

Mr. Carroll was cautiously feeling his way to outline a new itinerary, when the girls demanded the program be given them in blanket form.

"If you cannot go West and you can go West, how do you expect to go West, Daddy dear?" sighed his daughter in her bravest Patrician style.

"Well, then, to be brief," resumed Mr. Carroll, "I have been forced to give up the Yellowstone trip because of more important interests breaking out in another and somewhat widely separated part of the country."

“Gracious, Daddy! What is it, measles that you speak of it as breaking out?” asked Patsy.

“Do be quiet, Patricia!” urged her aunt. “How is your father ever going to tell anything if you chatter so?”

“He hasn’t talked anything yet but business!” voiced Patsy, making a queer little face at her father. “What I want to hear, and what the audience wants to hear is—where are we going and when?”

“To the Golden West and as soon as you can get ready!” exclaimed her father so quickly that Patsy’s breath was, figuratively, taken away.

“The—the Golden West?” she murmured. “Oh, it sounds like a beautiful dream—and I know it is going to be a thriller.”

“To dreamland we are going, indeed!” said Mr. Carroll, “for I have been called to lower California. It is some years since I have personally taken a case in hand, but the complexities of the moving picture world demand experts,” he finished, discounting the personal tribute with a boyish laugh.

“Moving pictures! Oh, Daddy, really!” Patsy flung her arms around his neck. “Oh, let me act! Do let me act! I just know I can do it wonderfully! Oh, girls! I’m going to be a

movie queen!" and she flounced around, whether in joy at the last mentioned prospect, or because the West was now assured, would be hard to determine.

"Patricia!" declared Aunt Martha. "Do sit down!"

"I can't, Auntie! I just can't! I've got to practice! Let me see, what shall I do first? Oh, I know—faint!"

"Patricia, if you don't sit down," and Aunt Martha assumed a voice intended to be stern, "we shall never reach any conclusions."

Mr. Carroll solved the problem by gently placing his daughter back in her chair, and pretending to tie her in with a silk table scarf.

"It isn't what you think at all," he said. "As far as I know the moving picture concern—the Interal Company, I believe it is called, is well supplied with actresses and actors, to say nothing of 'extras' which, I believe, is the film name for supernumeraries. So there is no apparent chance for you girls either to shine or to be eclipsed there. However, you may, I am sure, see something of the movie world, and if you care for beautiful scenery, the finest climate of the world, and perhaps some side trips to interesting places, I believe I may safely promise you that. Will it

make up for the loss, the temporary loss of the Yellowstone?"

"Will it? Oh, the dream of my life has been to go to California," murmured Bee.

"I have sometimes thought I might see it," spoke Nell, "but I had given up the idea lately."

"Well, then," said Mr. Carroll, smiling, "we may consider the acceptance of my offer as settled. Now——"

"Oh, but Daddy! Can't you tell us something more about it?" teased his daughter. "How did you come to be interested in movies? Though I suppose it isn't to be wondered at considering your fondness for Danish and French pastry."

"You are rattling the family skeleton," laughed her father, shaking his finger at her. "Well, to just touch the high lights, as I suppose a camera man would say, I am sort of official court receiver for a concern over which there is considerable litigation. They have made so much money that there is a dispute as to who owns it, and I am sort of referee as in a football game. I want to go to lower California, where the headquarters of the concern are located, to take testimony and straighten matters out. They are engaged in making some important pictures, I understand, and cannot risk spoiling them by leaving the vi-

cinity of the golden sun. This is the main issue. But to be honest it is a smaller detail that attracts me—a side issue of the case. So the mountain goes to—no, I have that wrong. Mahommet goes to the mountain, and you girls may go with him, if you like.”

“If we like! Oh, listen!” cried Patsy. “But where does the South Sea Isle come in?” she demanded. “I refuse to stir a step unless I am guaranteed a South Sea Isle.”

“Cannibals and all?” begged Mab.

“Cannibals and all,” repeated Patsy.

“Oh, girls!” murmured Aunt Martha.

“The island shall be provided,” declared Mr. Carroll. “There are to be some scenes filmed there—note how apt my expressions,” he interjected. “Yes, the island will be guaranteed.”

“But may we go out there?” stipulated Patsy. “You know someone—oh, I forget his name—said he could call the spirits from the vasty deep, but the trouble was they wouldn’t come.”

“You shall go to the enchanted isle,” promised her father. “And now, if you feel that I have, in a measure, compensated you for the loss of the Yellowstone, may I not have another cup of tea and——”

“All the Danish pastry you can eat!” laughed

Patsy. "You certainly may, Daddy Daddles!" and she kissed him shamelessly.

In response to the summons of Aunt Martha, Saunders brought the cakes, but before Mr. Carroll touched them the telephone tinkled.

"Oh!" exclaimed Patsy. "I just know that's a message to say that our trip to the Golden West is off! Don't you answer, Daddy. I will, and I'll tell them you have already left, and that we are to follow on the next train. I'm not going to be cheated twice in one day," and she danced in front of her father as Saunders, who had answered the ring, came in to say:

"You are wanted on the telephone, Mr. Carroll."

"I just know our Golden West trip is off," murmured Patsy. "I just know it is!" and she howled gleefully and mournfully—only an expert could have given the wail its correct classification.

CHAPTER III

THE VEILED STRANGER

“DON’T worry,” murmured Mr. Carroll, with easy assurance, as he picked up the receiver of the extension telephone that stood on a small teakwood table in the dining-room. “You shall go to the Golden West if you have to go alone. No! No! I was not speaking to you!” he added quickly, for it was evident that the person on the other end of the wire had overheard the remarks made to Patsy. Then Mr. Carroll listened.

“Yes. Yes,” he replied presently. “I understand perfectly. I will see you this evening.”

Ensued then a longer period of listening on his part, and Patsy and her Wayfarers drew into a farther corner of the room where their whisperings would not disturb the telephone conversation.

"Doesn't seem to be what you feared, Patsy," remarked Bee, in an undertone.

"Oh, I'm so glad. Wouldn't it have been a shame if we were to be cheated out of it after all the ups and downs?" said Patsy.

"Would you go alone?" asked Mab. "I mean if your father couldn't go."

"Of course," declared Patsy. "It wouldn't be such a risk, particularly after what we went through down south, to say nothing of our experiences in Wilderness Lodge. But this seems to be rather serious," indicating her father's manner at the telephone. He was still talking and seemed to be trying to convince someone on the other end of the wire that he would not undertake something that the other party was insisting on.

"It is out of the question," he said. "Unless you follow my advice, I can have nothing further to do with the case. Yes, I will see you this evening. You may call here. But my decision is unchanged. Good-bye."

"Do tell me it is all right, Dad!" exclaimed Patsy, gliding up to him with some interpolated fox-trot steps. "Don't say the trip is off."

"No, this has nothing to do with the trip," he assured her. "It is another matter altogether.

I shall not use the car this evening, Saunders," he remarked, as the maid came into the room to remove the remainder of the tea things. "Tell Hanson he need not stay—that is, unless you want him, Patsy," he added quickly.

"No, Dad," she answered. "The girls are going to stay to dinner and I'll run Bee over myself."

"Run me over in the machine—two blocks! I think I see myself allowing you to do that!" laughed Beatrice. "It's too lovely to ride, anyhow. We'll walk."

"Very well," assented Patsy. "But now let's start and talk it all over—the moving pictures, the wonderful southern ocean, the desert island and——"

"The cannibals!" interjected Nell. "Don't forget them. I'm particularly keen on cannibals—in the movies."

"You are shocking Aunt Martha—don't!" whispered Patsy, and it was evident that her aunt was getting restless. Too much confusion was not a condition she enjoyed. Mr. Carroll arose to leave the room.

"If you'll excuse me now, young ladies," and he bowed ceremoniously to his sister, "I shall see you at dinner," he said. "I am expecting a caller

and I have some matter to prepare. So I'll take myself off and you may talk to your hearts' content."

"And the trip to the Golden West goes; does it, Dad?" asked Patsy emphatically.

"It certainly does. As I said, you shall go if you have to go alone—I mean all you Wayfarers and Aunt Martha."

Miss Carroll followed her brother to his study.

"Robert, is there any trouble?" she asked seriously.

"Trouble? Yes, there is always trouble, sister," was the low-voiced answer.

"Do you mean about——?"

Her gaze seemed to travel after the girls.

"No, no, Patsy will not be disappointed," he was quick to add. "This is altogether another matter. When I said 'trouble' I meant it in a general sense. This has to do with the caller I expect. It is rather a sad case. I hope I may be able to help her."

"Then it's a woman?"

"A girl, rather, hardly older than Patsy. But I mustn't bring my office worries home. Sufficient that I must attend to a little business after dinner. I shall want the library to myself and the caller. So if Patsy and her friends seem

about to invade, will you kindly put up the no trespass sign for me?"

"Yes, Robert. Well, I suppose I shall be expected to go on this wild west trip," and she sighed in anticipation.

"It isn't so very wild," her brother assured her. "Southern California is a paradise—as near as we shall get to one on this earth, I think. And——"

"But are you really going to take them to some island?" her voice faltered.

The big man smiled broadly. "That is part of my program, I believe. Of course the girls don't have to come if they don't want to. But part of the property of the moving-picture concern is located on a lonely island, and I must, at least, view it to give the court my personal opinion. The girls may remain in the mainland if they wish and you think best."

"I fancy I see Patsy wishing that—where a sea voyage under such romantic conditions is involved," laughed Miss Carroll.

"Perhaps you may not be averse to it yourself," suggested her brother. "I believe it will do us good. I have been sticking rather closely to my desk of late. I shall welcome the change."

"But are there really—savages there?" and

the manner in which Aunt Martha pronounced the word betrayed actual apprehension.

“There are natives in the cliffs, certainly,” he admitted. “But they are far from savages. Indians, I should call them, though my study of anthropology is not up to date. However, leave it to Patsy and the Wayfarers to find out all about it.”

“Yes, leave it to them,” sighed Aunt Martha. “But I do hope it will not be altogether too venturesome.”

Her brother’s laugh did not seem to diminish her fears, groundless or not, and with a sigh she went out of the room.

Mr. Carroll, the thoughtful look still on his face, went immediately to his desk. There he compared notes with documents and appeared puzzled over some discrepancy.

“Poor, poor girl!” he murmured. “So young—and—oppressed.”

He glanced up suddenly as Patsy’s laugh floated into the room.

“A big difference,” he reflected. “And yet——”

Thus he pondered when the gong sounded for dinner.

The evening meal, always a function under

Aunt Martha's supervision, was to-night a jolly occasion indeed, for the prospective trip seemed to develop new wonders momentarily.

"You have a genius," said Mr. Carroll as they finally arose, "a positive genius, young ladies. For you possess the infinite capacity for fun, and you remember, infinite capacity is synonymous with genius."

"Well, that sounds all right, Dad," replied Patsy, "so I'll not analyze it. We'll take it as a compliment whatever it really means. There's the bell!"

"A lady to see Mr. Carroll," said the maid as they waited to be informed.

"Show her into the library," spoke up that gentleman very promptly.

The girls looked astonished. Who could the lady caller be and why so quickly ushered into the library?

Even Saunders, the maid, said a word to the cook implying a similar question.

"Mysterious like," replied the cook. "And a customer I'm sure. I rec'leck one time a man came here, just like that, and Mr. Carroll talked and talked with him, and we found out next day that man was a murderer," proclaimed the excited woman.

"He wasn't a murderer," said Saunders. "He was only suspected, and Mr. Carroll was the means of getting him off."

"Well, suspected murders are the worst kind," was the cook's opinion. "You never know whether they have done it or are goin' to. And this was a customer like that."

"Clients, not customers," corrected Saunders. "No, she wasn't that kind, but she was mysterious—I'll say that."

"What nonsense are you talking, Saunders?" asked Patsy, just stepping into the kitchen from the rear porch after seeing her chums over the lawn to their own grounds.

"I was speaking of your father's caller, Miss," was the reply. "She's in the library with him now—a veiled lady and she seemed very mysterious like."

"You mustn't say such things, Saunders," Patsy gently chided. "Father would not like it."

But, at the same time, Patsy Carroll could not help wondering who the visitor might be, and what was the nature of this interview.

She was passing the library on her way to her room, having told Saunders to lock up, when the door of the library opened, and Mr. Carroll with his visitor stepped out.

Patsy could not see the stranger's face for she wore a heavy veiled motor hat, and gave the impression of having come from a distance.

With only a nod to her father, Patsy passed on. She went to her room, and, after the front door was shut, she heard her father ascending the stairs.

"Asleep, Patsy?" he asked softly, pausing outside her room.

"No, Dad! No notion of it!" she informed him. "I am thinking of too many things. You, too, seem to have had a lot of business to-day," she went on. "Come on in and sit down and I'll smooth some of the wrinkles from your brow. Sorry I can't rub away the gray hairs."

"Yes, Patsy, they are coming faster—coming faster," he said as he sank, rather heavily, into a chair. "First they were a corporal's guard, and now they advance by platoons. I wish——"

"Why don't you ask for an injunction?" she countered, springing one of his court phrases on him.

"It would only be temporary—not permanent," he said. "And it is so easily dismissed. Well, no matter. Perhaps I shall find the fountain of youth in the Golden West."

"I think it will do you a lot of good, Daddy,"

she informed him. "You should not bring your troubles home with you," she remonstrated.

"I didn't bring this home—it, or, rather, she followed," he went on. "Poor girl!" and he shook his head.

"She looked sad, that is, I thought she seemed dejected," ventured Patsy.

"She is. A tragedy has practically blasted her young life and wrecked what should be a brilliant career. But we must not let that get on our minds. Go to sleep, Patsy dear, and dream of our excursion. My unhappy caller shall have no part in your visions," and he kissed the red lips offered him.

But Patsy did not succeed in dismissing the figure of that young girl from her fancies. Somehow even her joyous dream seemed to embrace a troubled girl, with a soft voice, and a mysterious face swathed in a great mass of blue chiffon draped from a little traveling hat. And there was a reason for the insistence of the picture.

CHAPTER IV

THRILLING PROSPECTS

“**C**OME in, girls, and let’s check up our lists. For really practical tourists, warranted not to be overburdened with luggage, it seems to me might be catalogued as baggage aides,” said Patsy drolly.

“Do you believe boys travel lighter?” asked Bee, rescuing at least four parcels that were slipping from her overtaxed arms.

“No, I don’t: that is, they buy as they go,” said Nellie. “You know, Sis, every time Dad returns from a trip Mother threatens an auction.”

“That’s perfectly true,” agreed Mab. “Last time we counted twenty-eight extra collars.”

“And collars are so worthless,” commented Patsy. “Two things my eyes never become accustomed to: women’s hats and men’s collars. They always represent the extreme in grotesque to me.”

"Hats!" exclaimed Bee. "And you had such a dream?"

"Maybe," agreed Patsy, "but just the same a feather sticking up in a hat always looks to me like a comic from the Fiji Islanders."

"Glad we all agreed on plain sailors for traveling then," said Nell. "We would hate to keep you thinking of the poor missionaries when you should be enjoying America's best views."

"I don't like to pester you, Pat dear," said Bee, changing the subject abruptly, "but Mother is so anxious to know which way we are going. Has your father decided yet?"

"Beesy, I haven't had a real chance to speak to Dad in hours. Something is so very engrossing in his business he just runs in and out, and makes me think of 'on again, off again, away again, Finnegan!' But I am sure of this much; he is trying to arrange his affairs so that he can go with us; also, he is deeply interested in a pathetic case. And you know Daddy hasn't really practised law in years."

"It must be very interesting, indeed, to draw him back from his high finance," commented Bee. "But as long as he is trying to go with us we may safely assume he will do so. That is purely Carrolesque."

“And a pretty new word you have coined, Bee. But you always were a wizard at words,” said Nellie.

“While we are on the subject,” pursued Bee, “it might be well to remind ourselves that alliteration is always tempting, but often poor style. Note the ‘wizard and words,’ Nellie.” This was said in mock school style.

“Tommyrot and tinkletoe!” exclaimed Patsy. “Just note that. Bessie, dear, you may think in a writer’s way, but we girls insist on talking in a talker’s way. Who’s got my kit? The rubberized traveling case, you know.” She was looking for a lost parcel among the packages lately “dumped” about. Then began such a counting of bundles the porch at once took on the appearance of a bargain sale.

“Aren’t these dear little day-books?” asked Mabel, opening up a stationer’s parcel.

“How do you like my boudoir cap?” inquired Eleanor, displaying a black net cobweb. “I took black to be circumspect—en route,” she explained.

“What on earth is in that big bundle?” inquired Beatrice, as Patsy placed the very largest parcel safely on the swing seat.

“That’s a complete dressing table, the kind you

unfold on your lap in hill or dale, train or trolley; and with its equipment you may enjoy all the luxuries of home cooking—I mean, of course, home dolling up. But I haven't found Aunt Martha's kit, and I especially wanted to carry it home, so she could see it at once. You know it even has in it a dear little hot water bag for Auntie's neuralgia——”

“Here it is,” announced Mabel, tearing off enough paper from one package to make sure of its contents. “Now, I think we have found everything.”

The girls were but human, and the shopping expedition had been exhausting. Not even the joy of buying for the great journey could entirely eradicate the mortal element, so that resting now on the broad side porch, grace of attitude was not made a feature of the tableaux: each girl seemed to vie with the other in tying herself into the most complicated sort of knot. Pumps had been kicked off and hats were tossed aside, in fact the sight caused Aunt Martha herself to order Saunders to fetch cool lemonade to those “worn-out girls.”

“You will make yourselves ill,” she protested, “if you keep up this endless shopping.”

“We have found the end of the endless,

Auntie," said Patsy, hiding her pumpless feet under her plaid skirt while she sipped Saunder's iced lemonade.

"And your father is equally busy," bemoaned Miss Carroll. "Whatever all this new work is he seems simply engulfed in it, and he has not taken up detail work for so long a time." This comment was made with considerable deprecation.

"Just what I have been saying, Auntie. You know I believe it is all about the soft-voiced woman in the thick blue veil. She who came the other night. It was perfectly evident she was an actress, and I wanted so much to ask Dad about her, but when can one see Dad? He hardly sleeps at home."

"The complications of those moving picture matters, I suppose," deplored the little lady in the soft green voile. "I am glad to see Robert really actively interested in his profession again, but I shouldn't like to see it spoil all his home life."

"But we are all going away so soon," interposed Patsy. "I say all, for I know perfectly well this feverish rush of Dad's presages his grand exit—the business before the climax, you know."

"Nothing would make this vacation so perfect

as to have Robert along," said Miss Carroll. "You know, children, you will have all your necessary freedom—we will only be near enough to call upon in case of disaster" (she said this with a meaning smile), "but in the interval I am sure older folks could have a delightful time even if Robert must attend to some business. Will you stay to dinner, girls?" she asked Patsy's chums.

"Impossible, thank you, Aunt Martha," replied Mabel, answering for her sister and herself. "Mother has grown so fond of us since she feels we are really about to depart. Blessings brighten as they vanish, you know. Come along, Mab. Gather up the drygoods."

"And my little mother also pines for me," added Beatrice, "so I must spend all the fleeting hours with her. Hope I have not purloined any of your traps, Pat. These little bundles are elusive," she finished, jabbing as many packages into her utility bag as that receptacle would hold.

Patsy ambled over to her aunt directly they were alone. She cuddled up beside the little lady on the big porch swing, and in her old-time baby attitude cozied her bright head in the very "crook" of Aunt Martha's shoulder.

"Mattie, dear," she began, "everything is com-

ing along beautifully but Daddy keeps me guessing. I feel sure he will make some grand announcement very soon, and I fancy he is holding it back to make it all the more impressive. At the same time it is queer that he has gone in so strong for actual business. Nothing but human interest could work that change, and the interest, I am sure, has to do with the veiled lady."

"I overheard a long telephone message this morning," said Aunt Martha, with her arm around the beloved girl. "There was evidently nothing private about it for your father fairly shouted, but I gathered that the moving-picture people are involved in some matter, one end of which is located in California. That is why I am so hopeful your father may come along with us."

"I am figuring on that very point myself. Now for the windup of a busy day, Auntie. Please don't think of me again this evening, just read a bit and I shall try to do the same," and she led the little lady in to their evening meal.

Next morning after a prompt breakfast (Aunt Martha's management was too accurate to change to an earlier meal than usual), Patsy had raced out to her favorite nook, the rose garden house, and was there checking up plans, when the

runabout shot in the driveway and her father hailed her from its window.

“Jump in, Patsy, I haven’t time to get out.”

She was beside him before the engine had changed its mind, and the circle taking the car out to the roadway again was covered just as Mr. Carroll started to explain.

“I have the loveliest chance for a big day for you girls if you can plan quickly enough,” he said. “I just received a wire calling me out to the studios at Fort Lee, and as you have all been so busy shopping and fussing, I believe the day’s fun would tone you up for the trip. Can you make it?”

“A day at the moving-picture studios at Fort Lee!” exclaimed the glowing daughter, taking hold of the two hands she loved to clasp when no more definite embrace seemed reasonable. “Daddy Carroll, you are a wizard! Don’t you do anything for your clients at all? Just think of me and my friends?”

“I have one star client, you know,” and he smiled a whole volume of pardonable pride into his daughter’s laughing eyes. “But come to think of it I have another, and one in whom you will surely be interested. We may see her out at Fort Lee.”

“I know, the pretty young woman who wears black and came to see you the other evening,” ventured Patsy. “That’s she, and I know there’s romance and mystery behind those velvet eyes, Daddy. I don’t wonder actresses have to own exceptional eyes. I have always wondered how they work them as they do, even with all the magnifying equipment of the studios. But saying studios, I should also say: yes, of course we can go to Fort Lee. It’s a wonderful chance. As soon as I leave you at the office I’ll collect the girls. How do we go?”

“By ferry. Here I am now,” as the car pulled into the curb. “You fix it up with the girls and have Hanson bring you to the ferry at two-fifteen. I can’t get back to lunch.”

Thus with a whirl of her kaledioscope came the brilliant prospect of a visit to the moving-picture studios, and what girl would not be overjoyed at such an opportunity?

CHAPTER V

AT THE FORT LEE STUDIO

EVEN a ferry ride can be delightful, and leaving New York for a sail along the Palisades to Fort Lee is not a journey to be overlooked in its scenic importance. But Patsy, Bee, Mab and Nell scarcely saw the real goat that posed on the very highest rock, standing there overlooking the Hudson, in all his pristine glory. What mattered the tin cans and ash heaps just far enough back to be out of sight? It was his same picturesque goatship, and the grandeur of the rocks had not been marred by modern Weehawken in the distance. But the Wayfarers were too busy with other matters to see a mere goat, and the effect was entirely lost on their group.

“I think, daughter,” said Mr. Carroll, coming up to the circle of chairs, “at last I have my mind

clear on the big trip. If we go by the Southern Pacific I can go——”

“If we go you can go! Of course we’ll go, it’s a first rate go! And that means a lovely ocean voyage, doesn’t it?” she asked.

“Yes, I need that, and it won’t do you girls any harm to have a real rest either. How would you like to go by water to New Orleans, then hit the Apache Trail?”

Four pairs of eyes registered delight, and even Patsy’s earlier reference to mechanical means on eye possibilities was discounted, if not actually voided, in the startling effect.

“An ocean voyage, then the Apache Trail. Daddy, you really are a wizard!” exclaimed Patsy. “Girls, we secretly did lament the loss of the ocean this summer, and here it is heaped upon our heads, so to speak. All we have to do is to ask Eileen Powell about togs. You see, hittin’ a trail may be different from solid vestibule service. But, oh! I am so happy, Daddy. This will surely be a wonderful jaunt for the Wayfarers.”

“I have been trying to work it out,” replied Mr. Carroll, “and I know I cannot do anything much when traveling by rail. I have a case to prepare which exacts my personal attention. I consider by taking the five days’ sail I can pull

up and be about ready when I get to the West," he concluded.

"And it will be lovely for Aunt Martha also," added his daughter. "Everybody wants her to have all the rest she can get, especially as we may have to draw on her reserve strength later on," this with an impish bite on her cherry lip bespoke possible big doings in that "later on."

"I know Mother will be glad to have me settled safely on a steamer for a five-day rest," put in Mab. "Her only expressed anxiety was to the effect that such jaunts as we indulge in might eventually make me thinner than I am."

Bee and Nell added their approval to the new plan of making the trip: one said she always dreaded the dusty inland journey, and the other expressed her preference for the ocean, on the ground of crowded trains in early vacation, tourists always just flocking to the coast at that time.

Fort Lee was in sight when the final exclamation point was added to the already overworked system.

"Here we are!" announced Mr. Carroll. "We may get a bus to take us to the hilltop."

Up through the little village of historic Fort Lee, the party followed the most modern of all

the white man's trails—the road to Movie Land, and at the top of the hill they were confronted by a number of substantial brick buildings with glass roofs. Outside the high fence a real man stood guard beside the gate, and the numbers of signs warning "No strangers allowed" bespoke the popularity of the studio to the curious and the idlers.

"How do we get in?" asked Nell. "This is dreadfully strict, isn't it?"

"Has to be," replied Mr. Carroll. "Just follow me, and we will go in through the office."

However stringent the rules were from without, they were extremely liberal within, for scarcely had Mr. Carroll exchanged greetings with his business friend than Patsy and her chums were extended the freedom of the studio.

"Run around and enjoy yourselves," said the manager. "And don't let them wind you up in too many reels," he added jokingly.

"Come on over here and watch them make this," said Patsy. "See, the actors are going into that little room. They are making a parlor scene, I guess—see the gowns of those real matrons."

In one of the little booths that were fitted in all along the sides of the studio actors were busy,

and the yellowish make-up for everything white gave such a circus look to it all that even Patsy, who expected this mechanical effect, enjoyed a laugh over it.

"No wonder they are highly paid," said Nell. "Think of that complexion."

All effects seemed exaggerated and different hues made things look queer indeed.

In a few minutes the picture in the parlor had been made, and the participants trailed out and back to their dressing-rooms. There was no excitement, no confusion, in fact it was over before the girls realized anything had happened.

"Nobody shouted or slammed things or did anything reckless, as they always picture they do it," grumbled Bee. "I thought someone would have to do it over at least."

"Look here!" directed Mab. "This is going to be a big scene. See, they are taking down partitions and setting a lovely big stagey room."

The partitions were simply flaps or scenes, easily shifted, and when the director rushed over to that end of the studio he did call loudly through a megaphone, much to the joy of the sightseer who felt some trouble, at least, was due their visit.

"Two girls short there!" came the call, after the director counted a number of people from the

improvised street who had rushed into the "public place" at the heels of the "made-up police." The girls could now interpret the scene as that of an after-dinner tragedy at a hotel exchange. "You two fill in there," the director ordered Patsy and Eleanor who stood nearest him; and without knowing how to refuse the two Wayfarers stepped into the picture and complied. Mabel and Beatrice were too surprised to laugh, they simply stared in utter amazement.

Patsy and Eleanor presently found themselves too busy to think of laughing. They were being called upon to act!

"Here is your woman dead right here," shouted the manager, placing a vacant chair in the center of the "set" to indicate that was where the star would die when her support had learned how to properly express their horror at the scene.

There was some shifting of the "extras" by the assistant director who didn't exactly shove the actors around, nevertheless he did see to it that they got to the spots he wanted them to reach. The floor was all chalk-lined and marked out, and when Patsy found herself in the center of a nice little square, she told the girls afterwards she all but jumped into a game of hop-sotch, while Bee related she was sorely tempted to try

a double jump to a double line that beckoned her in the same act.

Twice the cast was called upon to rush in and register horror; then the star was brought out to die.

She emerged from a dressing-room and was in her place promptly at the signal. Everyone seemed to respect her entrance, and the act at once became realistic.

“Dad’s client!” whispered Patsy to Beatrice in astonishment. “Watch her!”

A needless suggestion, for everyone did watch the star. She was very tense in her motions, but that was evidently part of the play. She staggered in, grasped the back of the chair, sank into it and with her hand on her heart—she was wounded, of course—she fell dead!

“All right,” called out the director and the scene was finished. All hands rushed off, and the Wayfarers were soon reunited. It seemed everyone had left that section of the studio, but the star was lingering: in fact, she had dropped down very wearily on one of the couches.

“She may be ill,” said Eleanor, for the moment delaying opinions on their own part in the picture. “I’m going over and ask her if she’s all right.”



-Thelma Gooch-

"Are you ill?" asked Patsy kindly, first to reach her side.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R L

"It's a shame!" came an expression from some young woman just passing. "I don't see why she doesn't insist on having her contract extended."

"And give the Jersey Blue a chance," scoffed a companion of the first speaker. "I never saw a girl try to cut under as she does."

The speakers passed down the line and on into their rooms, just as Beatrice and Patsy hurried over to the girl still sitting inane on the property couch.

"Are you ill?" asked Patsy kindly, first to reach her side.

"Oh, I don't know, perhaps a little," and she smiled wanly. "I guess I have just lost heart in it all."

But the girl's friendliness seemed to inspire courage, for presently the actress got to her feet and gathered up the yellow-white robe in her trembling fingers. "New girls?" she asked with polite interest.

"Oh, no, just sight-seeing," Patsy replied.

"But they were rushed into the scene un-awares," Bee added. "Can't we help you dress? Is your maid here?"

"I'm alone, didn't expect to work to-day," replied the stranger. "But the scene was called for

and—oh, well, I just about managed it. I believe I would like you to come to my dressing-room, if you care to,” she continued, “not so much to help me actually, I mean in dressing, as to ward off the curious,” she finished.

“That will afford us an opportunity of seeing the inside of a dressing-room,” Patsy remarked, making a pleasure out of a task.

“Oh, yes, indeed,” the actress expressed warmly. “Just bring your whole party—those are your friends, are they not?” indicating Mabel and Eleanor who stood waiting. “The quarters are small but you are all welcome to a peek.”

Small indeed were the quarters, and a peek was about the extent of the Wayfarers’ inspection. It was mysterious to glimpse at. How anyone could dress, or even select a dress from the numbers of hooks; then how one could actually “make up” carefully in such cramped quarters. Trunks stood around, some open and some closed, but all apparently in service. On the largest trunk, in a position that commanded a very good view into the long mirror, a girl sat, and that she was garbed in Jersey Blue was very apparent. The glaring blue-jay hat and costume stood out like a figure on a billboard, and quite as striking was the wearer of the outfit. She was made up

like a mannikin, and her hair was chemically red.

"You about spoiled it, didn't you?" said this blue girl to the one who had almost collapsed after her scene. "I told you to let me do it."

The girls quickly observed the antagonism in manner. The same thought flashed through more than one mind. It was:

"And extension of her contract would give Jersey Blue the chance she coveted." This was the remark they had overheard directly after the rehearsal.

"But I must attend to my work," meekly replied the girl confronted by the one on the trunk. She seemed about to extend the hospitality of her quarters to the Wayfarers grouped about the door, but the occupant of the trunk cover paid not the slightest attention to the strangers.

"Seems to me you might as well give in—without—well, before you are forced to," she scoffed. "Mr. Broadbent told me I could go in to-day and you were a fool to block me."

"Did any message come in while I was on?" asked the actress, who was now slipping out of the satin robes.

"Ask the office," snapped back the other, springing down from the trunk and brushing out rudely past the girls. "Don't know as I'm here

to do your messenger work," she finished, her blue hat high as her blazing bleached head could tilt it, and her gait markedly that of the forward, insolent type.

Tears were in the eyes and voice of the young woman who now stood before the mirror.

"I haven't introduced myself yet," she faltered. "I felt so done up I was rather confused. I am Alene Sherwood, and I have just signed my first leading-lady contract. The girl who left is sort of an understudy and—well, I suppose you can interpret her actions."

"Never mind," soothed Patsy. "It is very human to be a little bit jealous."

"But in this instance she can make trouble," sighed Miss Sherwood. "The whole affair is fearfully complicated and I shouldn't impose it on a group of happy sight-seers." She smiled frankly now.

"We have had a lovely time," chimed Beatrice and Mabel, each managing a few syllables of the simple sentence.

"And there's Daddy," added Patsy. "Miss Sherwood, we do hope you will soon be very strong and able to meet all comers," finished the bronze-haired girl, with a pardonable chuckle.

"I need exactly that much strength," laughed

the actress, "and thank you so much for wishing it on me."

They had scarcely left the door of the dressing-room when a messenger boy rushed up to it, and asked if Miss Sherwood was in.

"I gave it to Miss Nankin," the girls heard him say. Evidently Miss Sherwood questioned this, for in another moment the boy brushed past the girls and he continued to grumble.

"I'll put Mr. Broadbent wise to that lady, if she can't be trusted with a written message," he declared loudly.

"Complications," remarked Mabel.

"We expected as much," concluded Patsy.

But Mr. Carroll insisted he could not wait another moment, so the next "set," made just as the light was dimming, could not be witnessed nor participated in by Patsy or her chums.

CHAPTER VI

ABOARD THE "ORAGRANDIA"

"REMEMBER your promise, young ladies," spoke Mr. Carroll. "I am to rest and work; you are to rest and play."

Patsy sealed the simple contract with a kiss not so simple: then she fluttered off with the girls to the upper deck to see the very last shadow of New York as they sailed away.

Waving handkerchiefs and calling good-byes to imaginary statues of liberty and big bridges, the girls finally desisted in the farewells and came into the saloon of the big Southern steamer, the *Oragrandia*. Aunt Martha was delighted with the prospect of a long rest—five days were to be given to the sail from New York to New Orleans, and she was now in her stateroom getting things to rights.

The girls had already opened their steamer

trunks and had spread out the gowns to be worn at dinner, so that they were free to enjoy completely the first afternoon of their voyage.

It was altogether delightful and a bit bewildering, especially to Beatrice, who had not seen very much of hotel or other public life. The saloon presented the scene of a busy hotel: everyone seemed to be coming and going, although it was self-evident there was no place to come from, and no place to go to, but such spots as could be discovered aboard that steamer. Yet everyone seemed to be moving in a restlessness characteristic of traveling—before folks can settle down.

“What gorgeous flowers!” breathed Mabel Perry in wrapt admiration of the great table of “good-bye pieces” usually sent in by friends unable to personally wish the *bon voyage*.

“Yes, it’s a pity to toss them overboard so soon,” replied Patsy. “But some people claim flowers add to the sea-sick symptoms.”

“I have our bouquets in our staterooms,” remarked Eleanor. “We had some floral good-byes, you know, and perhaps we can keep them longer there than out here.”

“See that group of tourists over there?” said Patsy, indicating a very busy crowd of young folks—busy with pencil, paper, and pamphlets.

“They are surely movie folk. We can’t seem to relinquish our interest in the silver sheet, can we?”

“Shows how wonderfully the business has spread,” remarked Mabel. “So many pictures are being made it must take a great many people to make them.”

Arm in arm the girls sauntered around the cabin and were presently abreast of the group of movie folk.

Patsy pinched Bee’s arm. “There’s the Jersey Blue,” she whispered. “See her talking to that stout man?”

“Oh, so it is,” replied Bee, while the other girls had also noticed the actress of the Fort Lee incident. “I wonder if Miss Sherwood is along.”

The entire party of theatrical people were busy studying and evidently checking up instructions. They paid no attention to those about them. The stout gentleman, presumably a director, was speaking as the girls passed along, and it was very easy to overhear the loudly spoken remarks.

“Why shouldn’t you go over it now while it’s fresh in your minds?” he was saying. “Just as quickly as you show me you are ready for the other end I’ll be glad to drop this, but we have got to run off another set right here on this ship.

Easy enough; good light in the morning, and we'll make it all right—just the 'set' for it."

In a lowered voice someone must have offered objections to this plan, for presently the director spoke again, more sharply.

"All you have to do is to be ready," he snorted. "Look over your work and jump into it. I'm running this" (in a tone admitting no argument). "Plenty of room here for this set, and lots of time for you hot-house flowers to rest up afterwards. No sense wasting five whole days on a little moonlight sail to New Orleans."

When the Wayfarers passed out on deck they left behind a subdued murmur of voices from the movie girls.

"They object to working on the trip," said Mabel. "Don't know as I blame them."

"But if it has to be done and the scenes here are convenient——" interposed Patsy. "Mercy, girls! I shall be afraid to change my mind lest the camera man catch me in the act. You know that's an old standby of Mark Twain's—the noisy changing of one's mind," Patsy finished.

"But the Blue Jay being here and Miss Sherwood absent," remarked Mabel. "Wouldn't that indicate the former may have gained the lead she was trying for?"

“Not necessarily,” said Patsy. “You see many pictures are begun in New York and finished in California. The long days in the West give the necessary light to work by. That, and the tropical growths, of course, make unequaled scenes. Please note my movie intelligence,” mocked the bronze-haired girl. “My success as a star—ahem! as born out by my trial performance——”

“If only I could get that portly manager aside from his followers, I would tell him of his two other stars being aboard,” said Beatrice. “Why shouldn’t you two go on with your work? Weren’t you in this very picture?”

“Beatrice Forbes, don’t you dare!” ordered Patsy, bringing everyone to a standstill against the rail at the extreme end of the deck. “I did act once, I’ll admit, but I’ll not be dragged into another scene soon. I may—when I am ready to lead!” and she made eyes, twisted her mouth, and shot her head at a defiant angle quite vampirish indeed.

“Very well,” agreed Beatrice. “But we haven’t found out why Miss Sherwood insisted on taking her part when she was so ill. Also, why she toted us along to her dressing-room just to ward off the blow she did actually receive from the Blue Jay.”

“Wise little Bee,” commented Patsy. “I also am eager for the very information you crave, and, in spite of Daddy’s business taboo en route, I am going to risk asking him a few things pertaining to his mysterious client. You see, girls, she came to our house just before we left, and no one ever comes there unless the matter is too urgent to wait for regular business hours.” Patsy was really serious now.

“Forgive me for intruding our mental activities on such a scene as this,” said Beatrice, in a half fooling, three-quarter serious tone (the extra quarter was for good measure). “But you know, girls, our experience at Fort Lee is not so easy to dismiss. While not exactly thrilling, it was compelling.”

“Indeed, yes—yes’m,” said Mab. “And I noticed a little bit more than you have reviewed, Bee-bee. Let’s sit down. It’s lovely out here and too tumultuous inside.” Convenient camp stools stood about and the girls dropped languidly into them.

“What else did you keep account of, Mab?” asked Patsy. “We may as well go to the trouble of keeping those items in our day books, as I am sure Dad will be in touch with these moving-

picture people, and therefore the plot is bound to thicken. Tell us, Mab; we are all ears."

"Why, you remember that messenger boy who shot past us just as we were leaving? He was blaming the Blue Jay—I forget what he called her—for not giving Miss Sherwood her message."

"Yes, and Miss Sherwood had asked the girl on the trunk if she had taken any message," appended Eleanor.

"Besides all of that there is this much more," spoke Patsy. "Girls who were in the set—you know, I speak professionally, that means in the scene, were saying it was a shame for Miss Sherwood to try to act when she was ill, but if she did not, they insisted, it would give the Blue Jay her lead. Now, we have with us to-night the Blue Jay, although she has—shall I say moulted and gone brown? And there is no telling how we may be able to serve pretty, nice, ladylike Miss Sherwood, by just being on this very *Ora-grandia*."

"I agree with you, Patsy love, but there is Aunt Martha. Have we been neglecting her?"

"How lovely!" exclaimed Miss Carroll, incidentally referring both to the marine scene and to the young ladies. "You don't know what a

positive joy it is to see you girls really composed."

"Sit down, Auntie darling, and get into the composition," said Patsy, pulling up another chair. "But I feel bound to break the horrible news to you: the only reason we appear calm is because we are afraid of falling overboard if we romp around. Personally the strain is telling on me already," and she did a little exercise with her feet just to avert actual stagnation.

"Patricia-love, this is ideal, and I realize now you all just needed restraint." This was a playful thrust and received with smiles of a kind—the grin kind. "I wonder why folks seek out sanitariums for rest when they might take a trip like this?" and she exhaled deeply in sheer joy.

"I know why, Auntie. It's probably because the clientele of sanitariums is somewhat restricted and does not include active movie casts and their rotund directors. Now here we have that element——"

"What!" interrupted the lady, adjusting her long purple auto-veil so that it might not entangle in the breeze. "Is there a troop aboard?"

"Yes, the horrid things," laughed Patsy, swinging the end of purple chiffon affectionately across Miss Carroll's cheek. "Aunt Martha, you look

simply stunning in that veil cloud, and I advise you to watch out for the fiend camera man. He may 'get you.' ”

“I did notice some queer folks as I passed through the saloon,” said Miss Carroll, accepting Patsy’s compliment with a smile. “I hope they do not try to put on any evening entertainments. Those things are such a bore.”

“Do you mean they may perform? Give shows?” asked Mabel, not concealing her hope for an answer in the affirmative.

“Talent used to be called for on ocean trips, but I don’t know about this sort of a voyage. However, girls, it is time to put aside your tourists’ garb and don the dinner gowns. I dressed before I came out,” concluded the agreeable chaperon, smoothing out her pretty gown.

“Wise lady,” said Patsy with a playful tweak of the hand that rested near her own. “But I am not sure we can leave you out here all alone, Auntie mine. Where is Daddy?”

“Your father is just locked up in his room with those troublesome papers,” replied Miss Carroll. “It seems he must mail back from New Orleans his opinion or his views in this case—I am sure I don’t see why the motion-picture interests should assume such importance.”

“Because it is such an important industry. Didn’t I act in the movie? Isn’t that sufficient reason?” and the unquenchable Patsy linked an arm into that of her aunt on one side, and on the other she encircled Beatrice Forbes, as they all passed indoors to dress for dinner.

“Look!” whispered Mabel, “over by the reading table!”

A glance in that direction disclosed the actress known to the girls as Blue Jay, still in animated conversation with the man assumed to be director of the company.

“I’ll have to talk to Daddy after dinner,” said Patsy, with a pointed significance that was easily conveyed to her chums.

CHAPTER VII

OVER THE OCEAN BLUE

“PATSY, are you awake?”

“Yes, hush; don’t wake Nell.”

“Hear those people talking outside?”

“Yes, they are right at our window on the deck.”

“Listen!”

Silence then in the girls’ stateroom. Patsy in the lower, and Beatrice in the upper berth, in their cozy stateroom just off the side promanade deck. Out there two voices spoke louder than the speakers knew; else the wind from the waves blew the tones directly into the Wayfarers’ ears, for without an effort Patsy and Beatrice were made something of an audience to the dialogue.

“Talk as you like, Nett, I think it’s a pretty raw deal, and I can’t see how you figure to win out.” This came in a rather pleasant masculine voice.

"The way you talk, Terry, one would think you were worried about Allie." A voice familiar to the girls uttered this, and in recognition Patsy pulled vigorously at the bedclothes trailing down from the upper berth.

"Not exactly worried," drawled the man outside in reply, "but I do like to see things played out square, Nett."

"Well, if you had seen that girl as many years as I have, your interest might not be quite so keen. She got everything she wanted, and I—got—left."

"But didn't her father provide for that——"

"Oh, if you want to fight her battle no use in my tossing on wet blankets," sneered the girl. "But this much is clear, Terry. I am going to stick out."

"She may beat you to it coming on the Overland," he suggested.

"Let her. I'll have Broadbent on my side before we reach New Orleans."

Beatrice had slid over the edge of her berth and was now cuddled up beside Patsy. They listened intently, for it was clear to both that the girl speaking was none other than the Blue Jay, and the "Allie" spoken of was surely Alene Sherwood.

“Poor little Allie,” said the man finally, and he must have turned with his back to the ocean, for his voice seemed almost within the girls’ room. “It all seems to me nothing less than a tragedy, and I wanted to talk to you, Nettie, because—well, even a half-sister is some relation, you know, and we all like Alene.”

“You have wasted your breath, Terry. I am out to win this time, and it will pay her better to pick up her lost trail and let work slide for this summer,” insisted the girl’s voice.

“Her lost trail,” repeated Beatrice, whispering in Patsy’s ear. “That must be the mystery.”

“Yes, I suppose that’s what Daddy is interested in. Hark!”

The persons on deck were still talking and each sentence seemed to bring them nearer to conflict. It was clear that the man took the part of “Allie,” and that the girl did not pretend to even veil her antagonism.

“We’ll see!” said the man in a lighter voice. “Just you wait, Nettie. Fate can claw things up beautifully when she gets really busy, you know.”

“She will have to be a pretty lively dame to beat me this time. Even ill health counts on my side, when it isn’t my health that’s ill.” Then the voices ceased.

“Mean thing,” said Patsy. “I would like to go to that window and help fight for Miss Sherwood, but perhaps we can do it in some other way with better results.”

“They’ve gone, Pat, and I’ll climb upstairs,” said Bee, meaning, of course, she would go back to the upper berth. “We must get to sleep again; it’s past midnight.”

“All right, Beesy. Glad to have you call, come again. This rolling is like a cradle rocking: it makes me sleepy. But I also feel a bit like fighting. I’m glad they are gone. I might have thrown at least a glass of water through the window.”

“It was a temptation,” said Beatrice, scaling her ladder.

“But we must keep out of the Blue Jay’s sight,” warned Patsy. “If she discovers us we may not be able to do any sleuthing. Night-night, girlie. Dream of Terry’s nice soft voice.”

“And watch for him on the morrow,” wound up Beatrice, and presently the music of the waves filled the Wayfarers’ stateroom.

Not even the variety of outdoor games played on all the decks next morning served to divert the girls from their “interest in the case.” After a council meeting held on the boat deck, highest

of all secluded spots on the great *Oragrandia*, the girls, scenting mystery, and keen on its trail, formed themselves into the A. S. P. S., which, written out, spelled the Alene Sherwood Protective Squad.

"Whenever we say A. S. P. S. girls," announced Patsy, "we must cock our ears for news. It will mean be alert, something is doing."

"I'll shorten my signal," decided Mabel. "I'll just say 'P. S.' like postscript, and you must imagine the introductory A. S."

"Good idea!" agreed Beatrice, "and I wouldn't wonder but in the course of time we may get it down to 'S.'"

Girl fashion, they followed this lead, and it was Patsy who proposed the signal of raising the index finger of the left hand to the lips, which usually stands for an "s" sound.

The code became interesting, but it was the hunt for the soft-voiced Terry that threatened to become a contest.

"They must be in some of the deck games," said Eleanor, "and I want to see who wins in quoits to-day. They are playing a finishing game to their match on the aft deck, and I'll take my post up there."

"I think the baby croquet on the main deck

too interesting for anything," said Patsy, "for not only must the players put the ball through the wickers, but they must also be careful not to tear up the lawn. The nice green canvas makes a really practical front yard, I think, so I guess I'll watch the baby croquet."

"I never would have imagined so many outdoor sports could be modified to steamship life," commented Nell. "I expect to-morrow to see those three nice old gentlemen, who look like bankers, playing golf with sunken tin cans submerged here and there and all over. I saw them exercising with a big pulley arm-swinger out by the funnels, and I had to duck to save my head."

"Come on down," suggested Patsy. "It's time for the morning paper, and I am anxious to see the news. Daddy promised to save his *Call* for me, and it may have an account of the big fete we left behind us. Isn't it wonderful to have our own morning paper by wireless?"

"Where do they print it?" asked Bee. "I might get on the staff."

"Joy!" exclaimed Patsy, "and we might say something about night prowlers talking into other folks' windows."

"P. S.!" exclaimed Mabel, at the same time pressing her finger to her lips. "I think I see that

fiery red-head spoiling the color scheme of the fo'castle. Come down this hatch, and we may be within hailing distance."

"I am going to sit out with Aunt Martha and see the marine sights," announced Beatrice. "We missed a couple of whales yesterday, and I heard they were big enough to make scenic islands. Also, I want to hunt flying fish and sea turtles. You may hunt your secret-code stuff, but just now I'm out at sea, and I have no interest in the land lubbers."

"Take my glasses," offered Patsy. "I'll not need them to sight the sort of fish I'm after."

"Give my love to Terry," whispered Beatrice as the group separated.

"Better interview him for your paper," flung back Patsy. "I'm sure he could give you some wonderful news."

"Let us change bunks to-night," suggested Eleanor. "Mab and I might hear the climax of the great story."

"But I'm thinking of installing a dictaphone," joked Patsy. "It might all make important evidence in Daddy's famous case. S'long. We part here," and two of the squad went "fore" while the other two of the squad proceeded "aft."

The journey south by water is making such

speed we have but little time to comment on the attraction of dress, or the queer, fantastic effects of some of the tourist costumes; but the Wayfarers in their simple white serge frocks, their nautical flying red or blue ties, with either sailor hat or sailor cap, as best suited the winds, were so obviously well dressed that they had really established themselves as the most attractive group aboard.

Mr. Carroll was having a quiet time preparing his papers, and in deference to his desire to be left "unmolested," Patsy had refrained from making him a member of their new surveillance squad, so he knew nothing of the plot Nettie Nankin was developing against Alene Sherwood.

The joys of real rest, with the healthful stimulation of pure ocean air, had worked wonders with Aunt Martha. As Patsy put it, the air was strong enough to constitute applied exercise; so that while resting one actually did get real exercise; thus the voyage afforded ideal health conditions.

On this beautiful morning the girls had not more than separated after their council meeting on the boat deck, when a rush forward announced something interesting in the sights.

“What is it—a whale?” folks asked.

“Maybe a submarine,” guessed one lusty youngster, loath to leave aside the terrors of war.

“It’s a school of flying fish,” Mabel told her chums. The girls met in the saloon as all hands seemed to be hurrying forward to catch a glimpse of the unusual sight.

“Have they really wings?” Nellie almost whispered. She was not anxious to advertise her limited knowledge of the finny tribe.

“No,” scoffed Beatrice, the well-read member of the squad. “They have broad pectoral fins, and when the bluefish chase them they just shoot out of the water. See, there they go!”

In the strong sunlight over the deepest of blue waters, a glistening spectacle of the flying fish could now be seen. As the finny tribe cut through the mists they looked like magic frescoes on the blue velvet seascape.

Everyone was snapping cameras, and the sight furnished one of those welcome incidents of any tour, when persons talked to neighbors they had been brushing by for days, and what anyone on the *Oragrandia* knew about flying fish it is safe to say everyone else was clearly familiar with before the last of the fish ventured again under

water, there to fight it out with bluefish or sea bass.

"Queer where all the movie people are!" Patsy remarked to Mabel, turning her eyes from the sea to the faces all about her.

"They are making their 'set' downstairs," Mabel replied. "I heard folks talking about it."

"And I saw a boy from the purser's office looking for some of the company. He had just been given a wireless to deliver," added Eleanor.

"There's Daddy!" exclaimed Patsy, "and he is waving for us. Come on, girls! Maybe we have a wireless," and over the quoit pegs they skipped and jumped, down to the main deck where Mr. Carroll was luxuriating in a big steamer chair, with its commodious arm literally banked with reading matter.

"Just got the mail," he announced. "Where were you when the aviator tossed it in?"

"Oh, did we miss that?" bemoaned Beatrice.

"We can't see everything at once," replied Patsy. "I heard the plane when we were in council an hour ago."

"Yes, they had enough in their sack," added Mr. Carroll, "so it took some time to sort it. Here are a few for the Wayfarers," and the joy of welcoming the mail carrier became as keen as

might otherwise be the delight of such an event on the gift route of some bounteous holiday. The very picture card that failed to reach the steamer as it sailed out from the harbor, now took on the aspect of an important document, and even ordinary postmarks were eagerly deciphered by the news fiends, three days from New York and two days north of New Orleans.

“These are surely footprints on the water,” quoth Patsy, snuggling one dear, delicious letter into her blouse for secret reading later, in her solitary stateroom.

CHAPTER VIII

JUST GIRLS

THE graceful *Oragrandia* was rounding the Florida coast, and from its deck the Wayfarers clearly sighted Palm Beach in the distance. The scene recalled their plan of the year previous, when the famous beach was their first objective, but owing to changes old Florida really became its substitute. The story of our second volume, "Patsy Carroll Under Southern Skies," is replete with their adventures along this coast, and now from their steamer the little hedge-like islands of Florida afforded the girls abundant reminiscent material.

The panorama furnished, indeed, an animated moving picture, and its effect was not wasted on the buoyant group led by Miss Patricia Carroll—alias Patsy.

That anticipation always keen near the end of a voyage was plainly noticeable now, and only the seasoned tourists kept to their schedule either in recreation, exercise, or absolute rest—everyone seemed ready to leave the ship although there remained another full day's sail.

"We must have gained weight," remarked Mabel, "although I wouldn't be seen stepping on the scales. It always appears such a vain thing to do—worse than kissing oneself in the mirrors."

"Yes, it does seem some tourists weigh after each meal. As you say, Mab, it is a very self-conscious proceeding. But our skirt belts are sufficient indicators, and mine is tight," admitted Patsy. "Girls, I did not have a chance to tell you about my letter," she digressed, "but if you will all flock around me right now, and let your marine glasses rest a while, I shall endeavor to enlighten you as to its contents. It was a surprise, you know—from Miss Alene Sherwood."

The invitation to flock around was complied with literally, for a big steamer rug was spread on the deck, and around this a fence of deck chairs afforded the girls a very comfortable flocking ground.

“It was a surprise,” continued Patsy. “I have told you all every single bit I knew about Miss Sherwood. I mean to keep our council fully posted on the developments in that case—that is, as fast as I become acquainted with them myself.”

“No need to explain, Pat dear,” spoke up Beatrice. “We have confidence in our leader, and are not apt to question methods. We all knew you had a private letter from the carrier plane, and if you never mentioned it we would have been assured it was none of our affairs.”

“Thank you for ‘them kind words,’” colloquially quoted Patsy, “but just the same, girls, I need your advice. Now here is the letter. Look around, Waf-fers, and make sure none of the Blue Jay tribe is spying.”

“If we keep on gaining we can’t hold to our *reductio ad absurdum* with Wafer from Wayfarers,” remarked the enlightened Beatrice. “Maybe Waffle, being a little thicker, might be more appropriate.”

“Wafers we be,” insisted Patsy. “If I even forego every sherbet from here to the other coast. Now just listen to my letter.” She smoothed a broad sheet of letter paper and proceeded to read:

“My dear young friend:

“You will be surprised to receive a letter from me, but think of my surprise when I learned you were the daughter of my trusted counsel and very good friend, Mr. Robert Carroll. The interest you and your friends showed in me as I finished so miserably the other day when I almost collapsed, served to inspire me with new courage; for, indeed, we girls and women are much more dependent on just such spontaneous interest than we realize, until left starving for it.”

Patsy stopped and glanced at her listeners.

“She just acted like a girl starving for friends,” remarked Beatrice, “for we have always been taught that the loneliness experienced in the multitudes is much more poignant than that ever felt when one is really alone.”

“That’s easy to understand,” remarked Mabel, but she did not venture to explain the analogy.

“And our little bit of interest really cheered her,” pondered Eleanor. “I wish we could have known her earlier, or at least that we did not have to leave her just then.”

“But listen,” admonished Patsy. “Miss Sherwood does not exactly leave us if we did leave

her. She says—wait a minute. Yes, here is the next paragraph:

“It must have been providential that Mr. Carroll took my case, for I dare not even hint how black was my despair only a few short weeks ago. Please do not think I am weak enough to become so morbid because of business. That is the very smallest item in my list of troubles. Neither do I feel I can now burden your happy young head with a review of my sorrows. I just write to say you have given me courage, and that I may see you again before you leave the Golden West. Should you, by any possibility, run across my step-sister, Antoinette Nankin, may I ask that you do not mention this letter? I believe some of our company have gone by the ocean way, that is why I allude to Miss Nankin.

“Most cordially,

“Alene Sherwood.”

Patsy folded the paper, but no one spoke. Somehow the girls were gulping if not actually choking back sighs.

“Poor girl,” said Patsy finally, “and I believe

she is only a few years older than any of us. I do wonder what can have saddened her so?"

"That sharp-tongued Blue Jay would sadden anyone," declared Eleanor. "And she's her half-sister," this reflectively. "Well, I can't help thinking how a blue jay squawks. Makes life miserable for anything within hearing. And this in spite of the brilliant blue coat."

"But did you notice she said she might see us in the West?" questioned Patsy. "Put that with the fact that the Jay is trying to do her out of her part in some big piece of work, and just see how exciting is our prospect."

"Yes, indeedy," agreed Nellie. "And if we are just lucky enough to keep in line with this company all the way over, we may be able to help our friend Alene. But, Pat, what about Terry? Don't you honestly think you and Bee had the nightmare that night?"

"No mare about it," protested Patsy. "Yet, I am willing to admit it is a little mite queer we have never happened to hear anyone being called 'Terry' since that eventful night."

"Perhaps the Jay calls him that just to be cute," suggested Mabel. "I do think Terry the loveliest name. Ter-ree!" she trilled like a telephone operator rolling her rs.

“The whole company seems to keep well under cover,” remarked Nell. “I wouldn’t wonder but they parade around all night and sleep all day.”

“Even at that,” added Beatrice, “they have all managed to shy clear of our windows. And Patsy and I have slept with one ear, instead of one eye, opened ever since the initial performance.”

“And last night Nell and I just went scouring around back of all the funnels, and in every dark corner; poking our heads into the most unfrequented places, determined to ferret out the plotters. But I hate to tell you what we did discover.” Mabel almost choked at the recollection and her companions insisted on sharing the joke.

“Well, I’ll try to tell it,” conceded her sister Eleanor. “Mab heard voices and so did I. We set out to trace them, and no sooner did the sounds seem to come from one spot than the wind would blow them to another direction. It was dark and spooky, and no one seemed to be outside. At last we heard a titter. It was up by the captain’s bridge, and somehow we were both sure it was Terry—Ter-ree! and the Blue Jay. We meant to hear the plots if they were being plotted——”

“Was that honorable conduct?” demanded Patsy in mock severity.

“We had decided it was,” cut in Eleanor, “because our friend Alene—note my confidence—was not able to take care of her own interests, and we had organized the A. S. P. S. to do just that.”

“All right, proceed,” ordered Patsy. “Who emitted the giggles?”

“Now prepare to weep,” suggested Mab. “We stumbled up those narrow steps and almost into the lap of the little gray-haired woman with the toy poodle. She was actually scolding the passengers who evidently refused to acknowledge the strong points of her dog, and the giggle was a sort of decisive jeer. I think some of the Wayfarers were implicated, for I recall, Bee, that you flipped a few almonds at this pedigreed darling.”

“In movie plots a woman and dog would just about furnish the ideal skeleton,” remarked Beatrice, “and I do recall that poodle. Thus ended your sleuthing?”

“Just about,” replied Mabel, “for no sooner did the woman (who told us she was Miss Sims) discover our nearness than she sweetly asked would we mind carrying her steamer robe, because the stairs were so dark——”

"And wouldn't I like to carry Zaza's basket, as she had to carry Zaza," chirped Eleanor.

"So as a sleuthing expedition it turned out to be an express and baggage haul, and Mab doesn't love lugging dog's baskets through the saloon during reading hours."

"I don't wonder you struck," commented Bee. "But what a pity we missed the fun."

"Queer things do happen," admitted Patsy. "But, girls, have you noticed what a lovely time Aunt Mattie is having? However shall we tear her loose from this ship? She has made the loveliest friends, and they just surround her like bees about honey. Even the busy, overworked Dad has occasionally slipped in on the chattering ladies."

"Yes, I asked him if he had joined the club," said Beatrice. "But he just beamed joyfully."

"The situation is transparent," announced Eleanor grandiloquently. "They don't have to worry about us. We can't get away unless we jump overboard, so in the interval—I mean between now and the time we can get away, Pat's dad and Aunt Mattie are bound to enjoy life. When it comes to desert islands, and mountain peaks, to say naught of movie heights, all this,"

with a wave that embraced the ocean, "shall be changed."

"Feel better, Nellie dear?" crooned Beatrice. "That must have been terribly oppressive on your heaving chest. But hark! I hear a tenor's voice! Let's go within and hark with 'a close-up.'"

From the saloon a rich tenor voice floated in the strains of an aria from the "Bohemian Girl." The perfection of tone quickly drew an audience, and when the girls edged in they were forced to be content with hearing the voice without seeing the singer.

"Who is that?" asked a lady who was vigorously manipulating her lorgnette—as if aided sight might improve her hearing of the melody.

"That's Terence Marbury," replied a much up-to-date young girl, who could safely be classed as a movie fan. "He's a star in the Inter-teral Company."

"Terry!" gasped Patsy, and she must have stepped on toes and toes in her prompt and impatient effort to get into the saloon.

The other girls, with difficulty, succeeded in following her. They had no idea of allowing the singer to escape unseen, for they were sure he must be the elusive Terry.

"Come on," whispered Patsy, as she turned and her head almost brushed Nellie's ear. "He's about finished."

But just as she attempted to dart past a group of listeners into a narrow path, that was outlined by the double-sided settees, a young woman stepped into the opening, and this obliged the girls to hesitate. The brilliant head had announced its owner before the face was turned.

It was the Blue Jay, otherwise Miss Antoinette Nankin.

And before the girls could dodge past her she had favored them with a blazing look. Meanwhile, the singer succeeded in losing himself in the throng about the piano.

"But I saw the top of his head," Eleanor declared, "and it's the loveliest brown, like the tangles of hazel-nut burrs."

"Some clue," concluded Patsy. "We may find the hazel-nut brown among the hundred other browns aboard. But one thing I am sure of is, that Terry is lovely, that he has a magical voice, and his face must match it. Wonder why he is so interested in our darling little Alene?"

CHAPTER IX

DOING NEW ORLEANS

NEW ORLEANS and a short stop-over! This was the announcement made by Mr. Carroll to the tourists as the final day of their voyage brought them through the Gulf of Mexico, thence up the Mississippi River to the famous old city of the south.

It was delightful, after five days on the water, to be able now to view land "close up," and the last one hundred miles, with the views of levees and plantations, formed a soothing modulation from ocean back to land.

From the thronged landing to the prominent hotels tourists hurried, determined to "freshen up," and also to see something of New Orleans before taking the train to finish the journey across the continent; and the Wayfarers quickly decided upon an automobile trip after a brief rest at the St. Charles.

It was a source of satisfaction to the girls that their guide, a very reliable-looking chauffeur, was originally a service man; and as he took orders and proceeded to show his fares the Crescent City, everyone knew he would waste no precious time in making up his own mind about executing the orders imparted.

Along the drives the white sea-shell linings at once emphasized the peculiarities of detail in the city's construction, while the wonderful avenues, with deep lawns studded in great cocoa palms, gave the place a luxurious setting indeed, like the tropics without the oppressive heat.

"Isn't it all very flat?" commented Aunt Martha, when they had turned their backs on the slight slope from the artificially banked river.

"Yes, too flat," replied Mr. Carroll. "That has been one of its great drawbacks. It is very difficult to drain a city built on mud. What shall we try first, Pat?" he asked his daughter.

"The most novel feature, of course," promptly answered Patsy. "And I believe the old French market place is one of the regular sights. They call it the 'Vieux Carré,' I know, for that's in every guidebook we have touched."

"Coffee-house quarters," added Beatrice.

"Yes, I believe the mart is still catalogued. Let's thither."

Along Canal Street they were driven, and in the entire quarter it was noticeable how narrow the streets were. Some of the balconies seem to lean over the sidewalks, and they looked like scenes from some old-time drama. Bee remarked she felt just like shifting the scenes by pushing the houses back to make room for the next set.

But before the market was reached the splendid old Esplanade Avenue showed what the French considered worth while in landscape gardening, and even Time, with its vaunted progress, had not succeeded in spoiling the quaint picturesqueness of this Latin quarter.

At the market was found "The Woman in Business." She was at the stalls, stands, and wagons everywhere, and her efficiency had not been developed either in a correspondence course or at any modern class for "Women in Industry." Rather, she had sharpened her wits on the best of all grindstones, Necessity, and the sparks still flew as the Wayfarers sampled her wares.

Outside the market place were many flower carts. In these the blooms were arranged by invisible supports, probably holes in pasteboard boxes serving as centers for the heavy mag-

nolias and luxuriant roses, massed therein.

"Let's all buy flowers," suggested Mabel. "They seem like old friends after a five-days' fast."

Accordingly, a creole boy was hailed, but before he had filled the order the girls' car was surrounded by a veritable troop of eager little salespeople. Why call them peddlers?

Aunt Martha purchased an odd little plant she hoped to send back to a friend in New York. She declared it would go safely by parcel post, and be just the most acceptable sort of gift for Mrs. Munroe, who made a specialty of cultivating such flowers.

"We might obtain something better and have it packed at the regular florists," suggested Mr. Carroll. But to this the boy with the cart took prompt exception.

"They have only water-soaked stuff," he declared. "Our's are fresh dug, and will stand any journey."

"Yes," agreed Miss Carroll. "I do think this is a very hardy little plant. It has tough, hairy stems, and its flowers are so papery they do not crush easily. So I think I'll take this," and the little vine growth, with its pink silk buttons sewed on green velvet leaves, was handed into the car,

along with the individual bunch of cut flowers, each Wayfarer treated herself to. The bill was, of course, paid by Mr. Carroll, but the "treat" was personal, as each girl had a preference, and the choice was duly regarded.

It was not easy to get away from the enterprising little market men and women, but there were parks and cemeteries to see, so that the car finally succeeded in drawing out from eager, lively venders.

"I know that all the vaults are built above ground," said Beatrice, "and I'd just love to see a real old French-Spanish City of the Dead. You know, I am going to have the heroine of my novel a dreamy-eyed Spanish girl who communes——"

"Wait until you copyright that, Bee, dear," warned Patsy. "I see Mab swallowing your plot this minute. But please tell the man to seek such a cemetery, Dad."

It was the old St. Louis they were driven to. The girls insisted on getting out at the entrance, and exploring the place "by hand," and the experience proved most interesting. The rows of antique Spanish tombs were not all forgotten, it seemed, for freshly-cut flowers, and great wreaths of waxed leaves gave mute evidence of that re-

membrance which serves to link mortals with the immortal.

“Those are anniversary flowers, I am sure,” said Eleanor, indicating a marvelous urn of pink and white roses. “Bee, do take care! The officer may see you and then——”

“And then we would surely hit a high spot in romance,” declared Patsy, “for I can just vision the sort of dungeon jail that would serve as penalty situation for the crime of despoiling a tomb—even to the extent of a rose petal. So desist, Bee, do.”

“Just a waxen leaf to press!” exclaimed Bee, tucking a bit of green in her purse. “It is from the tomb of Andreas——”

“Here’s a piece of purple ribbon at your very feet,” announced Eleanor. “You may take this in perfect safety, and catalogue it as being from the tomb of Mme. Baroness de Pontalba, she who built the city over into parks, you know.”

“Here also is a piece of strap,” joked Patsy. “You might list this from the stirrup of General Beauregard.”

Beatrice took the relics in spite of the girls’ banter, and it was really not a secret that the others were dropping available splinters of marble into their own handbags.

“Where is the monument of the Orphan’s Friend?” asked Miss Carroll, who was reading inscriptions on the most majestic tombs.

“Oh, you mean the one erected to Margaret Haughery by the women of New Orleans,” said Mr. Carroll. “I believe that’s out in a park at Marguerite Place. We may be able to reach it.”

“That’s one of our national tributes to women’s common sense,” went on Miss Carroll. “This was a plain, ordinary woman,” she explained, “who devoted her life to simple, good deeds, and the women were wise enough to see the glory and power of such an example.”

“Right-o! Aunty mine,” finished Patsy. “I wouldn’t wonder if the women of America would some day be wise enough to recognize the glory of the woman who toted the Wayfarers——”

But the eulogy in a Spanish churchyard was cut short by the summons of Mr. Carroll, who had just relayed a call from the chauffeur.

“We must drive past the Mint, and also take a bird’s-eye view of Lafayette Park,” said Mr. Carroll, “so we will have to leave the romance of the cemetery.”

A quick view of the Mint was not impressive, for its severe lines and forbidding iron fence

rather discounted the other softer attractions of the city's architecture.

Lafayette Park proved quite fascinating, however, and the stately and imposing buildings at its entrance served to emphasize the general effect of luxury, so riotously gorgeous in the famous park.

Hurrying back to the hotel, that famous hostelry was found to be a veritable hive of action. Everyone seemed to want to get messages off, and everyone seemed to want to get themselves off on the Golden Limited to the West. Aunt Martha finally succeeded in having her little plant wrapped to send parcel post, Mr. Carroll was busy in the telegraph office, and the girls were "dolling up" for the remainder of their journey.

"It's refreshing even to revert to the discarded waist," remarked Nell. "Here I am donning one I scorned as we went by Key West."

"Mab, dear, don't apply too much cream," cautioned Patsy. "We are bound to run into dust clouds."

"I thought that railroad was advertised dust-proof," replied Mabel, who was at the moment trying to soften her ocean tan with facial cream.

"Yes, so it is," spoke up Eleanor. "We ride

back of oil-driven engines. I have read that much.”

“Yet there will be dust from somewhere,” insisted Patsy. “We may run into a sand storm or a tornado.”

“My dear, I am trusting our journey will end as satisfactorily as it has begun,” spoke Miss Carroll, who at that moment entered the dressing-room. “Please don’t even think of storms, girls, and then our attitude may help dispell them.”

“Only joking, Auntie dear,” crooned Patsy. “You know we have been so docile, obedient and good, I am almost afraid to guess what may happen when you actually turn us loose again,” and she pressed a kiss on the one cheek that was just free from the antics of a violent washcloth. “You are as sweet as a baby, Auntie love, and lots nicer as a traveling companion. We won’t even think of storms unless they come rudely upon us.”

A tap at the door announced Mr. Carroll.

“All ready!” he called, and the dolling-up party ended in a series of dabs and jabs: the dabs were facial, and the jabs applied to hair pins. The latter useful little toilette implements seemed to know just where to seek refuge in the brilliant tresses of Patsy or Mabel, as well as in the more

somber head arrangements of Beatrice or Eleanor.

The last lap of their journey was then undertaken aboard the Golden Limited bound for the Apache Trail.

CHAPTER X

THE FORBIDDEN TRAIL

“IF we could only decide which one is Ter-ree!” wailed Beatrice. “I am sure the entire Interl Company is aboard this train. We have each and all spotted the Blue Jay, but Ter-ree is still elusive.”

“We might bribe the porter,” suggested Mabel. “He is most affable to me. Gathered up a young man’s magazines and insisted they were mine. That, of course, furnished a speaking excuse for said young man.”

“Suppose we breakfast at Globe,” came a suggestion from Mr. Carroll, who just brushed in, spic and span and obviously well brushed by his particular porter. (One wonders when a porter learns his strokes, and how he decides what number will draw from the pockets of his guests the expectant coin.)

"That will be delightful," replied Miss Carroll, who was always first ready to detrain.

Accordingly, the Wayfarers prepared to alight, meanwhile keeping a sharp lookout for the members of the moving-picture company. But it was not easy to select from the throngs of tourists any particular group. The lure of the 'Apache Trail seemed sufficiently strong to melt the heart of the "movie director," for it was understood that the "Interals" were to have a little holiday to make up for the work they had been forced to accomplish on the *Oragrandia*.

"Just suppose," said Nellie, "that our mules happen to canter alongside of Ter-ree's!"

The idea of a cantering mule almost choked Patsy, and did real damage to a choice morsel of real Golden West grapefruit.

"And are we really going to hit the trail on mule-back?" asked Beatrice, finishing her coffee.

"I'll ask Daddy," offered Patsy. "Seems to me he may feel obliged to do the trail in less time than even cantering mules might be able to cover it in."

The reply from Mr. Carroll confirmed this opinion. The trip to Roosevelt Dam, forty miles west, was to be made in the white man's way—via auto.

"Flivvers for ours," said Patsy. "All right, Dad, lead us to the dam. We have seen so many pictures of it since we left New York I feel I know the bricks by heart."

"Bricks, indeed!" scoffed Beatrice. "'Tis built of marble!"

"Nary!" contradicted Nell. "I know that dam is a great roof garden, with a pretty little bridge across an Alice blue lake. I've seen it in the movies lots of times."

"And I know all about the spillways," announced Mabel. "The height of the barrier is two hundred and eighty feet, and along the crest leads a splendid broad driveway, one thousand, one hundred and twenty-five feet in length. Of great interest——" But Mabel got no further, for Beatrice had slipped her hand under the table and grabbed the guidebook from which the wily Bee was quoting.

"Oh, I know what it's made of," called out Mabel triumphantly, referring shamelessly to the brightly colored booklet. "It's made of masonry."

"So it is," agreed the supporters of the brick, and the marble, and the concrete theory, as if masonry were an actual substance.

In spite of their seeming levity the grandeur

of that world of scenery, between the railroad stop at Globe and the century's triumph of engineering, the Roosevelt Dam, was surely engulfing the Wayfarers.

"Glad they gave it that name," said Mr. Carroll tersely. "Seems right that anything so powerful should have been related to Teddy."

"The colors of the booklet pictures are actually faint compared with these tints," breathed Patsy, in spellbound admiration of nature's profligacy, scattered and strewn over mountains with such a lavish hand, as to indicate a sort of final irresponsible hour in the finish of the world's creation.

"Yep," chimed in Mab with more effect than elegance. "Makes me feel as if a paint shop shower cut loose when the powers were fixing things up for Adam and Eve."

Mr. Carroll was reveling in all the Apache stories he had ever read, and linking them up with the trail, and its seemingly unlimited attractions. Aunt Martha would just gasp at the cruel massiveness of the cactus trees, while Beatrice begged to stop at just one cliff dwelling, so that she might glean first-hand material for her promised novel.

"No wonder the Apaches thought this the work

of the evil one," quoted Mr. Carroll. "For such rocks, summits, cliffs and gorges are plainly too stupendous to contemplate as the work of a normal creator. Each time I see it as the terrors of Nature melted into beauty, the impression is more vivid."

"But we say 'Divinity,' where the poor Apache said 'Diabolo,'" said Patsy. "Dad," she exclaimed suddenly, "see that car over on that awfully steep little path? Looks as if it were in trouble."

All eyes now followed Patsy's indication, and as she said, an automobile was stalled, if not actually disabled there, for it seemed almost turned on its side, and was still shifting in a sort of zigzag way.

"Oh, they'll surely go over that cliff!" exclaimed Miss Carroll excitedly. "Just see the car waver—oh, Robert! Can't we get over there to them?"

"Have no business to pick those sky lines," growled the driver of the Carroll car. "I'm not going to risk this ship by running after them."

"Oh!" screamed Patsy. "They have struck the tree! Let us get out! We girls can reach them," and before her aunt or her father had time to in-

terfere, Patsy and her three chums had sprung from that car and were picking a trail by foot across the rocky pass.

It seemed a short distance to the disabled car, but in spite of that Miss Carroll expressed her fears for the girls' safety.

"No need to worry about them," Mr. Carroll answered his sister. "They're as sure-footed as mountain goats, and someone had to go to those people."

It was self-evident that neither Mr. nor Miss Carroll could as well undertake the task, and the stubborn driver only grumbled that his passengers should delay his next trip.

As the girls made their way across the short rocks to the narrow path—that chosen by the ill-fated tourist—two girls could be seen standing beside the disabled machine. Patsy called to Beatrice who had made her way a little ahead of the others.

"Bee, wait for us. I want to tell you, I know that car. I saw it start out, and I am almost sure the movie people boarded it."

"Yes, so am I sure of that," affirmed Mabel. "The red-headed Blue Jay was bargaining with the driver of that yellow car just as we started out."

"Then be careful not to recognize anyone aloud even if you do know them," cautioned Patsy. "Remember Alene's letter asked us not to mention her name to the other."

That was all could be said, as they fairly hopped over the mountainous obstructions, quite like the sure-footed goats Mr. Carroll had compared them to.

"Look out for that ravine!" called back Nellie. "There's a terrible gully down there."

But the rescuers were taking no chances with such dangers as brush-hidden cliffs.

"Oh, come quickly," screamed one of the girls, from the side of the other car. "He is hurt!"

In another moment the Wayfarers were beside the disabled car. It was leaning against a giant tree, and the driver lay back with blood trickling down his face.

"What happened?" demanded Patsy, at the same time recognizing one of her listeners as Nettie Nankin, the Blue Jay, of their recent adventures.

"We should not have urged him to come this way," wailed the girl. "And we don't dare touch him lest the car topples over. Oh, what shall we do? Terry, are you much hurt?"

The figure in the car seemed very much hurt,

indeed, for the glass of the windshield was scattered all about, and had surely cut him badly.

"Wait a moment," commanded Patsy, at once assuming leadership. "I think I can get the car back on the road. Keep away, the engine is still running; he must have kicked the clutch and shoved it into neutral."

"Pat, are you going to climb in that car?" gasped Eleanor.

"Yes, certainly. I won't tip it from this side," and while the other girls looked on in terror, Patsy climbed in beside the injured man, pushed his feet clear of the peddles and grasped the wheel. With one foot on the accelerator and the other on the clutch she allowed the car to move slowly forward, and the next moment it was safely on the narrow roadway.

She stopped the car instantly, pulled on the emergency, thus locking the wheels, and then jumped out.

"Quick!" she cried. "We must see what we can do for him. He seems to be badly stunned."

No words were wasted as the girls worked with the man in the car. He was not unconscious, and soon seemed to recognize his release from danger.

"Can you move to the rear seat?" asked Patsy.

"What good will that do?" he mumbled.

"Drive," he said next.

"Oh, I'll drive you out to the trail," Patsy insisted quickly. "You must have overlooked that big tree root that tossed you."

"It was all my fault," wailed Miss Nankin. "I had been told this was not a safe road, and he only turned his head to speak to us. Whatever will I do, and our pictures are all ready to finish?"

There was no need to explain to anyone what "pictures" she was referring to. This was certainly Mr. Terence Marbury, star of the *Integral Company*.

"Our car is just over that pass," Mabel attempted to assist Patsy by explaining. "We can all hang on here while you drive over, Pat."

There was plenty of room to spare in the big car, so that the *Wayfarers* piled on, or hung over the sides, while Patsy very carefully drove out of the forbidden trail.

Miss Nankin was doing all she could to save the young man from suffering as the car jolted, and her companion, a pleasant-looking young girl, did not delay in expressing her admiration for the rescuers.

“I think I saw you on the *Oragrandia*,” she said to Eleanor. “Did you come that way?”

“Yes, they are with the Carroll party,” interrupted Miss Nankin, and the warning she gave her friend with a quick pressure of her heel upon the other’s toe, was not lost upon Bee or Mabel.

She was cautioning the strange girl to be careful what she said before the Wayfarers!

CHAPTER XI

A CLOSE-UP OF TER-REE

DRIVING over the rough mountain passes in a car not too sure of itself, with an injured man at the mercy of every jolt, to Patsy the distance between the forbidden trail and the open road seemed almost indeterminate.

All her skill as an autoist was brought to bear upon the steady hands with which she guided her wheel, and not even the incessant exclamations and questions, that seemed to seeth into her ears from the rear seats, served to divert for a single second her concentrated responsibility.

The other girls might, if they would, realize the almost ironic circumstance that had precipitated their acquaintance with the young man they had been so anxious to know, but to Patsy it was all a matter of life or death, and she had no idea of minimizing that hideous fact with any

side issues, however interestingly their promptings might offer themselves.

Beatrice was on the front seat with Patsy. She knew better than to ask questions or make suggestions, as the steel eyes of the driver peered ahead at rocks, or at sinister tree roots, that seemed to have purposely blocked the narrow road through this forbidden way.

One more sharp downgrade and the open road was reached in safety. A sigh of relief escaped Patsy's lips as she let out the car to take its regular run on the finished highway.

"Good girl!" spoke the man from the back of the car. "I should have had you along when I climbed in there."

"And I would have forbidden the risk," replied Patsy with a smile over her shoulder at the young man, who now seemed revived and strong enough to talk coherently.

"But I was just crazy to do that stunt," chimed in Miss Nankin. "I suppose I'll never be forgiven——"

"Oh, yes, you will. Just see what it led us to," interrupted Terry Marbury.

This triangular compliment, intended, of course, for the Wayfarers, was not seconded by

Miss Nankin, for, instead of smiling her assent, she all but scowled.

Aunt Martha and Mr. Carroll could now be seen standing beside their car awaiting the on-comers. The girls nearest Miss Nankin could see *she* did not approach them with any degree of pleasure.

“You don’t suppose you could possibly show me how to manage the car, Terry?” she asked adroitly. “It’s a shame to bother these people so much.”

“You must not think of such a thing,” objected Patsy promptly.

“Do you think we would trust our lives out here to you, Nett?” asked the second movie girl indignantly.

There was no time for further dispute, for Patsy was now almost alongside her father in the roadway. Aunt Martha had her ammonia bottle ready in hand, and, from the faithful thermos, water was poured in its cup, the ammonia measured out, and before Terry realized it he had received his initial dose of First Aid on the Apache Trail. It required but a few sentences to explain the entire accident, and at its conclusion Mr. Carroll insisted on turning back to Globe with the ill-fated party.

"No, Daddy. That won't be necessary at all," declared Patsy. "We are in sight of the Dam now. I can see it quite plainly, and I think it would be best for you, Aunt Martha and at least two of the girls to continue on there, while I drive this car back to Globe. And if you don't mind my seeming insistence, I think we should start at once, for Mr. Marbury's wounds should be washed and dressed as quickly as possible," she said emphatically.

"Patricia is right," spoke Miss Carroll authoritatively. "We could do no good to go back with them, and it is important this gentleman receive prompt attention. I have every confidence in my niece as a driver," she assured the strangers, and at the compliment Patsy became suffused with a smile only literally interpreted by her Aunt Martha.

So it was arranged and Beatrice, the strong of nerve, stayed in with Patsy, while Eleanor and Mabel took their places in the car again bound for the Dam.

Miss Nankin seemed greatly relieved when her car drew away and she thus escaped from the scrutiny of Mr. Carroll's gaze. Surely he had recognized her as the half-sister of Alene Sherwood, and the very situation she had hoped to

avert, that of openly meeting Alene's counsel in the West, she had been thrown into through this miserable accident.

Terry Marbury was now becoming talkative. The stimulation of the ammonia brought on the reaction from the temporary suspension of energy, and only the streaks of blood on his face seemed to remain as evidence of his injury. His arm had been wrenched as the swerving of the car pinned him against the giant redwood, and the glass of the car windshield "had spoiled his beauty" as he expressed it; but Aunt Martha's First Aid had worked contrary miracles, and he was now even able to smile.

But each time he attempted to speak of the pictures that were to be made, Miss Nankin interrupted him so pointedly he finally objected.

"What's all this mystery?" he asked, showing marked resentment. "Can't a wounded man speak without having his head snapped off?"

"Certainly, Terry," replied the girl in tones too sweet to be wholesome, "but shop talk is apt to bore strangers."

"I can just about guess what old man Broadbent will say when he sees pretty little me, all smiling through this red mask," went on Terry. "I'm a brave man as a rule, but I don't particu-

larly hanker after that interview," he finished.

"Just leave it to me," ordered Miss Nankin, "and don't you dare say we were on that trail. Blame the brakes, they're always a handy alibi," she suggested.

"And you are always a handy alibiest," said Terry pointedly. "But I don't blame you for caging this time. I hope, Miss Carroll, we are not going to lose sight of your party directly you dump the invalid?" he said to Patsy, as she slowed down in front of a doctor's sign on a drug store.

"We may run across you again," said Patsy politely. "We expect to be in the West all summer."

"Good," he managed to say before Miss Nankin could get the attention of the man the car had been hired from. "I can't quite express my gratitude now. Just a bit shaky yet, I guess, but I would appreciate having your address."

"Daddy is counsel for the Interal Company," replied Patsy, "and you can reach us, I imagine, through that office."

"What luck!" he exclaimed. "If only Nettie wouldn't hustle me off to that beauty doctor, I'd like to——"

But Nettie did hustle him off, and even the interesting sentence was left unfinished.

The driver claimed his car, so that Patsy and Beatrice were left to themselves while awaiting the return of their own party from the Dam.

"What do you think of all that?" gasped Bee, as quickly as Patsy had shaken herself down to normal. "Our adorable Ter-ree!"

"Yes, and our detestable Blue Jay," added Patsy. "Wasn't she dreadfully afraid we might get better acquainted, and that he might mention some leading fact? She scarcely allowed him to complete a single sentence."

"And I hope you noticed how profusely she thanked us," commented Bee sarcastically, for, as a matter of fact, Miss Nankin had not even used the simple one-syllabled word. "But the other girl seemed of a different type, didn't you think so?" continued Bee.

"Very different. But who would match that fiery little traitor? I am just going to be sociable enough to see how Terry makes out with his court plaster," declared Patsy, stirred to resentment against the rude Miss Nankin. "And I also will make it my business to have a little private chat with Terry Marbury first chance I can get him away from that watchful lady. I know perfectly well he is interested in Alene Sherwood,

and so are we, so why shouldn't one try to help the other?"

"I don't believe that girl will ever let him out of her sight," replied Beatrice. "She acted positively nervous every time he attempted to speak to you."

"Come into the station," urged Patsy. "I feel like a wreck after that drive. I'll just straighten up a little."

"You don't look a bit like a wreck," declared Beatrice with admiration in her voice. "The run just made you prettier. There, Pat dear! Don't scold. Traveling doesn't always bestow such favors, you know, and I just couldn't help checking them up."

Within the splendid new terminal, tourists and hand luggage seemed helplessly entangled, while plentifully scattered among the travelers were merchants and business men, easily recognized as having interest in the copper industry, or the great smelting works for which Globe is noted.

Patsy and Bee presently found themselves hemmed in by a group of young girls talking loudly of their work. They appeared unconcerned of the throngs about them, and expressed their opinions openly and without constraint.

“Moviettes,” said Beatrice. “We can’t lose them.”

“It’s all very well for Nett Nankin to make promises,” said one very blonde young woman, “but how are we going to keep tabs on her fulfilling them?”

“Some difference between her and Miss Sherwood,” answered a real glossy brunette. Her hair shone like metal, and looked as if it had been poured on in liquid form.

“Alene Sherwood!” repeated the girl with the camera vanity case. “Well, you told it!”

“I’m going to send her some cards—I mean to Miss Sherwood, of course,” continued the blonde. “It seems awful she never can get trace of——”

A shrieking train whistle drowned the last word of that sentence.

“Almost, but not quite,” commented Patsy.

“Better luck next time,” added Bee. But what it was that Miss Sherwood “could get no trace of” remained a mystery to the Wayfarers, when an hour later they all resumed their journey along the Apache Trail.

“And Roosevelt Dam is built of concrete,” declared Mabel, just to offer one more possibility in that line of conjecture.

CHAPTER XII

THE GOLDEN WEST

“**A**ND may we really keep house in one of those little play places?” exclaimed Patsy.

“You may, child, and to your heart’s content. All I ask is that you have yourselves ready to hit the trail back with me in about a month. Meanwhile let me present the Golden West. Wayfarers, make its acquaintance,” and Mr. Carroll uncovered his head to the glow of earth that almost seems a halo of heaven—the glory of America’s West.

“Daddy, dear!” exclaimed Patsy. “I feel exactly like a bird, and I’m going to flutter. Look out! My wings are steering straight for——”

With a swoop this human bird alighted on the shoulders of Robert Carroll. She fluttered around him, pecking his tanned cheek, and smoothing his silver hair, until she finally folded

her wings about him in one all-enveloping hug—embrace might be a more euphonious word, but it was a genuine hug that Patsy Carroll gave her father on this particular occasion, so why not adhere to facts?

“I never could have imagined any colony so picturesque,” admitted Miss Carroll, “and I feel sure we shall all have a delightful time here.”

“We all feel exactly that way,” added Beatrice, “but I’m going to unpack my bag. Are we sure this is to be the house? I don’t want to collect my things a half-hour hence, you know, Pat.”

“This is the one,” insisted Patsy. “We have decided upon it because it is lost in roses, and buried under violets as well as banked with magnolias. Also just see our orange grove.”

“I choose the pepper tree,” announced Mabel. “I worked a sofa cushion once in all those little red berries, and I never knew why I had to do such a compelling piece of work. I know now it was to make me appreciate the beauty of those trees.”

“Oh, the trees!” exclaimed Eleanor. “How could one choose! But I think I’ll claim that darling little lake. Do you suppose the movie lords and queens will really allow us to ramble and roam all over this enchanted isle?”

"You have been given a grant by the manager," said Mr. Carroll. "You see, you actually did take part in a picture at Fort Lee, so you can't be classed as rank outsiders."

"How wonderful is chance!" quoth Patsy. The Wayfarers had crossed the continent; they had followed the Apache Trail, they had gasped at the rugged grandeur of canyon and cliff, compared the tones of the giant cactus with its fluted trunk and perhaps one solitary branch as big as the trunk itself, to the hues of the softest clinging laurel, with more branches than leaves and more blooms than either.

And now from all that masonry of Nature they have come to rest in a veritable dove-cote with nothing but the velvets, satins and velours of creation's art all about them.

In the movie village—one of the many scattered through Southern California, the girls with Miss Carroll were happy to claim a "stop over," and the fact that Mr. Carroll must go further on, to attend to details of his special commission, was splendidly disguised in the complete comfort with which he established them previous to his departure.

"Decidedly Carrollesque," insisted Beatrice, reverting to the word coined earlier in their trip.

"The Golden West is perfect, and this bungalow takes on one degree past superlative. Now I propose that we settle immediately and hold council meeting. Just to be generous, I'll volunteer to take the first shift, I will serve the house as chairman for the first week beginning right now!"

"Cheers! Cheers!" called the girls.

"We have with us to-day——" prompted Patsy, then they all broke out in their camp call:

 "Wafers, Waffles, Way-far-ers!
 Wiffle-waffle, tiffle-toffle!
 Slee-slew-slurrs!
 Pat, Pat, rat-tat-tat!
 Hah! rah! siss-boom-ah!"

"Young ladies, young ladies," protested Miss Carroll in a voice so subdued it fairly gasped. "What will the neighbors think?"

"Neighbors! We haven't any. They are all colonists, and guaranteed to be absolutely free from every convention," declared Patsy. "If they choose to have their latest 'set call' about midnight, no one could object, so we are surely within bounds for it is not yet sunset."

"I thought the sun didn't set out this way," said Beatrice naively. "That's why the movie

world lives here—they have all day, and all the daylight-saving combinations to work under.”

“The day is long and bright and joyous,” paraphrased Mabel. “But I must appeal to the house chairman, Nellie, if you insist on pegging your things around my quarters. Here are your cap, cape, vanity and guidebooks. If we are going to do our own slicking up it behooves us to keep slick.”

“As commandant,” said Bee, “I order all traps, including duds, placed in their proper quarters. Now I am ready to receive suggestions for the evening meal. Aunt Martha, you are to go right over to that enticing couch and curl up. I am sure it was built expressly for you.”

While the girls busied themselves with distributing their hand luggage in the novel little container provided by the very original architects of the bungalow, Mr. Carroll was already receiving messages over the telephone.

“Your maid is at the rear door, Beatrice,” he announced; “she was down the road at the lodging of another coming-in party, and I have just reclaimed her.”

Bee, as head of the household, hurried to the side porch to usher in the girl who was to be their maid during the sojourn, and she

was not surprised there to meet a little Chinese girl, in her cerise pantaloons and china-blue blouse.

"I am for work," she announced briefly, in English, almost free from any oriental coloring, and it seemed incongruous that a girl so much of an American should wear a costume so distinctly oriental.

"Come in," said Beatrice, with more of the invitation than an order in her voice. "All the food is here, and I suppose you understand cooking?"

"Velly well," replied the girl, betraying the impossible tongue twist of our twirling "r."

The Wayfarers had all assembled now to inspect the little Chinese, and their glances spoke quite audibly, as they stood around in unhidden admiration.

"Your name is——?" prompted Patsy.

"Ah Wee," replied the animated statuette.

"Come along, Ah Wee," called Beatrice, leading the way to the kitchen. "I guess we will find everything out here."

"Oh, isn't she darling?" exclaimed Mabel. "Why can't we have that kind of practical art in the East?"

"Wait until we sample its practicability," sug-

gested Eleanor. "She may want to feed us chop suey for breakfast."

"No need to worry about breakfast here," commented Patsy, "for what isn't bearing fruit is in flower. You may know that strawberries ripen every day in the year in this climate."

"And think of the nectarines and the grapes and nuts!" added Mabel. "I am bound to get fat if only from reading the market news. As a land of milk and honey surely this is the place of flowers and fruit. But Patsy, I hate to spoil the sonnet—yet I am afraid the Nettie Nankins are in this colony. No other head is quite as red as hers, and I saw a goat shying in the open field when a certain automobile shot by."

"Why the goat?" queried Patsy.

"In lieu of the white horse," explained Mabel drily.

"Would it not be rather interesting to have them near us?" asked Patsy. "As this side of the lake is all the bachelor girls' quarters we are bound to meet our alleged friends somewhere hereabouts. Of course, musical Terree is banished to the bachelor boys on the other side of the lake."

At this juncture Mr. Carroll appeared at the

living-room door with bag in hand, and he was garbed in traveling attire.

“Now, girls, I must leave you,” he said, “and I feel like that fellow in the musical comedy who is always singing ‘Good-bye, girls, good-bye!’ You know the one I mean, Pat. He takes up a whole act with the good-byes. But I haven’t time to do him justice, as I am due at the station in five minutes. Now, listen, everybody,” and the Wayfarers surrounded him in prompt attention. “You have your maid and your telephone. My address for ten days will be care of the Interal Company. We have arranged our letters of credit at the local bank, and all you have to do is to have a good time and not forget the folks at home. Of course, I know all this is unnecessary advice, but being Dad I feel bound to deliver this peroration. Good-bye, girls, good-bye,” he sang, and when Patsy was finally shaken off, he managed to respond to the insistant call of the chauffeur who had been impatiently tapping at the door.

“On our own now,” said Beatrice with a sigh, “and I am very glad I have chosen the first week at K. P. A little girl like Ah Wee is sure to be amused with us at first—no telling how she may regard us later.”

"If we could add one more idealistic feature to life in California," said Aunt Martha, "it would be that of the absolute faithfulness of the Chinese servant. It is proverbial that the word of these servants is as good as a bond."

"Lovely!" exploded Patsy. "The only drawback is the possibility of not being able to take 'Ah Wee' back among our souvenirs. Isn't it too be-au-tiful!" she exclaimed. "What shall we call the place?"

"The Trellis!" promptly replied quiet little Mabel. "It is just a trellis for vines and flowers."

"Brilliant!" declared Eleanor. "Little sister Mab, I am going to put that in my first letter home. And I'm going to write this very afternoon. Girls, have we decided on 'The Trellis?'"

"We have," answered Patsy. "No need to vote on it. And our little cherry blossom in the kitchen is to be reckoned as one of the clinging blooms. Oh, girls, it is working out so wonderfully I am almost tempted to postpone our A. S. P. S. But 'Alene needs us, I am sure. And her Protective Squad must keep active. We overheard enough in the station at Globe to confirm our worst opinions of the Nankin. Girls there expressed opinions freely anent her duplicity, didn't they, Bee?"

“Yes, they were even threatening dire things on her red head. They said they would send cards to Miss Sherwood to express their loyalty; said Nettie Nankin made tons of promises and kept none of them, and, in fact, if their train hadn’t whistled in, Patsy and I would have heard what it was that composed the tragedy of Alene’s life. One girl said: ‘Isn’t it awful she can never get trace of——’ and whizz went the whistle.”

“Pat, did you hint to your dad of anything heard aboard the *Oragrandia*?” asked Nellie. She was rearranging the little heart-shaped cushions on a swing, that hung from the end beam in the low living-room, just at the window in that corner the trellis which best depicted its significance.

“Yes, and, of course, he recognized Nettie Nankin when we drove up after Terry Marbury’s accident. But he merely said he hoped everything would come right for Miss Sherwood, and he was positive it would, if he could bring about the circumstances. I know that Alene Sherwood’s name is Mrs. Ferd Davidson, and that her husband lost his health after doing some perilous stunt in a marine picture.”

“Oh, that’s it, then!” exclaimed Beatrice. “She has loved and lost——”

“No, that is not all of it, but the real ‘It’ has to do with this separation,” went on Patsy. “Coming in on a train last evening Dad and I just had time for a short chat, and it was then I learned these few leading facts. But the mischief Nettie Nankin is plotting surely could have nothing to do with Miss Sherwood’s sick husband,” finished Patsy reflectively.

“Since it is so obviously complicated with our soft-voiced Terry, why should it include Ferd Davidson? Girls!” and Beatrice the seer mounted a leather floor cushion to give dignity to her speech, “I have it! Nettie Nankin is trying to star in Alene’s place, and she is working with Terry Marbury to achieve that ambition.”

“But what about Ferd Davidson and tragedy?” demanded Mabel.

“To obtain the answer to that question will take more time than we have as yet been able to give the subject,” said Patsy grandly. “But I am not sure the real sorrow of Alene Sherwood’s life is her husband.”

Ah Wee appeared at the door. She took in her hand the padded mallet for the Chinese dinner gong, and then very solemnly struck the bronze bell.

The Oriental picture was complete.

CHAPTER XIII

A STAR INTERVIEW

“**A**ND these are the long, balmy evenings,” remarked Mabel. “When do we light up, towards morning?”

“Perhaps,” replied Beatrice. “But you don’t mind that, do you, Mab? What could be more perfect than this?”

“A guarantee of its lastibility; I was going to say durability but the root doesn’t apply. This is not durable, it is ethereal,” declared Patsy.

The Wayfarers sat on the delightful veranda of their bungalow, The Trellis. The porch was described by Eleanor as being a finish of hand embroidery applied to artistic drawn work in architecture; and this description fitted the picture oddly. The porch especially was like “embroidery” for it turned in and out of the shingles, like scallops worked with the roses and floral vines,

that Nature's hand had skilfully wrought in richest colorings.

"And observe the passing throng," remarked Mabel. "Up to the minute the throng has consisted of four absolutely perfect little blondes, and three charming silver grays—the former daughters of the latter."

"Not disappointed that our neighbors are so circumspect, Mab, are you?" asked Patsy. "You know we four unsophisticated maids would not have been allowed to bungalow here, had the colony been one whit less puritanical. In fact, I am reminded we may be considered outré, if perchance we ventured out even in 'A.M. without Aunt Martha. Wonder is she the correct shade of gray."

"Joking aside," interpolated Beatrice. "It is very evident the movie colony here is outdoing itself on the side of convention to save the rather Bohemian reputation applied to the larger places. At any rate, we have our Aunt Martha."

"Who wants to come down and inspect my lake?" asked Eleanor. "I don't care to take on too much flesh all at once, and we are decidedly reclining after eating."

"A girl is coming this way—and she is alone," announced Patsy suddenly. "Also she is not

togged out in the gorgeousness of movie attire, so I venture she is bound for this house. Now, who can she be?"

Sailor hat, white shirt waist and blue serge skirt, this could be seen first; and with the costume came a very brisk young woman indeed. She stepped right up to the porch before the girls had time to exchange further remarks.

"Miss Carroll?" she inquired in a perfectly modulated voice.

"Yes," admitted Patsy.

"I'm from the *Silverpage*," she announced next, and the girls now recognized her as a reporter from the local colony paper.

"Won't you come up?" Patsy felt obliged to ask, while all the group, especially Bee, smiled expectantly.

"Thank you. What a delightful nook! I suppose you have already named it? They always do," she had tossed the leather cover off her pad and was cocking her fountain pen.

"Yes," answered Eleanor proudly. "We have called it the Trellis."

"How cute! It is just that—a support for your floral vines. And how do you like the Cloister?"

"The Cloister?" repeated Patsy in question.

“Oh, don’t you know everything is so—so very circumspect here we call it the Cloister—just for fun, of course. But you must know only such as stand the social tests are admitted this side of Lake Reflecta. It is not a bad idea either.”

“We have only just arrived,” explained Patsy, so we may be shy on nomenclature. But I think the Cloister rather extreme. Why not the Hearth?”

The fountain pen scratched. “Splendid; newest arrivals prefer Hearth to Cloister, and found on the porch of the Trellis these young ladies stand ready to demonstrate the glory of their claim. There! won’t that make an attractive leader for my interview?” The reporter glanced up from her notes. She had been quoting on speculation.

“But why the interview?” asked Beatrice. “What have we done?”

“Oh, that is rich. I’m going to have a perfectly cracker-jack story,” declared the scribe. “Don’t you really know everyone who comes to Cloister—I mean the Hearth, is promptly interviewed? They say we even interview the canaries, the feathery kind, I mean,” and the very blonde girl who tripped by at the moment furnished an apology for the levity.

“No, we didn’t know,” acknowledged Patsy. “You see, we are very green,” she smiled whimsically, “and we know absolutely nothing of movie colony tactics.”

“How perfectly charming,” declared the lauding lady. She was resourceful; she seemed to find virtue even in failings.

“But really,” protested Beatrice, relying on her alleged literary sense, “I can’t see what possible interest there is in our arrival, or why you seek an interview. We are merely the Wayfarers——”

“Wayfarers? ‘A new company?’” Again the reliable fountain pen.

“Oh, no!” this in chorus. Even quiet little Mab joined in.

“It sounds so romantic,” insisted the reporter. “But I haven’t introduced myself. I’m Nance Rosalee; I suppose everyone in Movie Town knows me.” The tone of voice in which this was uttered evinced modesty rather than brag.

“And we are very glad to make it unanimous,” said Patsy. At the moment there flashed through her mind the possibility of making a lark out of an interview. A glance from Beatrice conveyed the same thought, Nell and Mab were settling down to evident comfort, and Miss Rosalee had

twice patted the velour cushions under her left arm. All things considered, the outlook was promising.

"Do tell me what you mean by Wayfarers?" asked the reporter, pen poised.

It seemed little difficult to "boil that tale down" to a few coherent sentences, but Patsy undertook to do so.

"These are my friends" (she gave their names), "and we united a few seasons ago just to spend our vacations as Wayfarers," began the plucky Patsy. "We have had some very interesting experiences," a broad smile condoned the triteness of this statement, "and we feel we are now embarking on the sea of another."

"You should be a reporter," announced Miss Rosalee. "You tell things so concisely. But what is to be the adventure of this season?"

"We are wondering!" answered Patsy.

"Wondering? You surely have a plan?"

"Oh, yes, but our adventures never come in the plans. They are always extras," said Beatrice, a trifle embarrassed that she should revert to such a flagrant banality.

Miss Rosalee tried another lead. "What picture are you to work with?" she asked frankly.

"Picture? Why?" faltered Patsy. "We are not in pictures."

"But you came out here with the Interal Company," insisted the scribe, puzzled but still hopeful.

"No, we didn't really," contradicted Patsy. "You see——" she was about to mention her father's connection with the moving-picture company when prudence checked her. It would be most unwise to give anything of Mr. Carroll's business to the public, she quickly decided. The other girls were following her cautiously, and all had promptly sensed the importance of print.

"You were about to say what brought you to the coast?" prompted Miss Rosalee. No wonder she was known as the star reporter, rather than as the reporter of stars.

"Just one of our regular summer jaunts," glibly answered Patsy. "We have been South and North, belong in the East and this is the West. You call that continuity, don't you?" she smiled comprehensively.

"Rather. But you have worked in pictures?"

"Not really," replied Patsy in perfect rhythm with Miss Rosalee's "rather." The girls threat-

ened to titter then, but an exchange of tossed rose leaves from Eleanor to Beatrice sort of saved the situation.

"Miss Nettie Nankin of the Interal Company gave me the tip," confessed the reporter, "and I surely understood her to say you were in the 'Shadows Dispelled.' That's the new picture the Interals are making. They came here to finish it. I am sure I don't know why I am telling you this, for you must know more about it than I do." She laid down her pen, threw back her shoulders, and sort of confronted the audience.

"We are students at the Eastern College," said Patsy, "and have only seen the inside of a studio once. We were allowed to stand in with a group, but it was only an accident. We never, any of us, posed or worked or did whatever they do to make pictures."

"Girls," said the reporter, melting to the level of mere humans, "I am going to tell you something. We will just reverse the usual order of an interview. Miss Nankin took the trouble to telephone me that I would get a good story here. Now, I am not a new hand at this work, and I can recognize sincerity when I meet it," she paused to allow the compliment to take effect. "I am well aware you girls are merely sightseeing,

and even in a picture colony some unusual circumstances would easily explain your presence. Then, why did Miss Nankin give me the false tip?"

No one seemed to care about venturing a reply to that question. The Wayfarers were distinctly conscious of a pleasant regard for this business-like yet frank newspaper woman. Finally Mabel, who had scarcely spoken before, risked a reply.

"Miss Nankin is one of the persons we ran across in the Fort Lee studio," she said simply. "We also happened to come down on the same steamer with her, and met her more directly at the Apache Trail. In all of that we have not been able to—well, to change our opinion from that formed in Fort Lee. Somehow, Miss Nankin did not impress us favorably."

"Nor did she me," quickly added the reporter. "You see, we newspaper people must be critical, and her motive in calling me here easily forms the background for conjecture. She evidently had some reason for trying to put you girls in a false light if not actually to embarrass you. But just leave it to Nance," and she bit her lips defiantly. "First, let me ask you if you have any objections to my using a little story about your visit here?"

I shall put it exactly as it is. That you are students chaperoned by——”

“My aunt, Miss Martha Carroll,” supplied Patsy.

“Yes.” That was made note of. “That your bungalow is the Trellis, and that you are charmed with——”

“The Golden West,” interrupted Beatrice.

“Will you mind that?” asked Miss Rosalee frankly.

“Not in the least,” replied Patsy. “In fact, it will be lovely to have a nice clipping to mail to our lonely home folks. Now come inside, Miss Rosalee, and meet my aunt. She is always interested in the successful young business woman.”

So the plans of Nettie Nankin had failed, if they actually included antagonism between the star reporter of the *Silverpage* and the Wayfarers. And directly Aunt Martha even called Ah Wee to serve a cup of tea for the girl who pitted her brains against the apathy of public opinion.

CHAPTER XIV

SMASHING A PREJUDICE

IT was after the pleasant half-hour spent over the tea cups with Aunt Martha presiding, that Patsy and her chums rambled off through movie town with Miss Rosalee, who was starting for the eight-thirty train to the city.

The acquaintance with this brisk young business woman had brought to the girls a welcome link in the chain of Western life just being forged, and even in the short hour's time it was safe to predict that friendship, congenial and promising, would eventually develop from the chance meeting.

"We have still twenty minutes before train time," said Miss Rosalee, as they all turned into Magnolia Lane. "Suppose we sit here and finish our conversation concerning the Interals. You know they expect to make the most import-

ant scene in their big picture one week from to-day, and no one can tell a thing about Miss Sherwood, the star. Her step-sister, Miss Nankin, says she will be unable to come, but I am personally apt to discount any such report coming from her."

"You say they are going to finish that picture a week from to-day?" repeated Patsy reflectively.

"Yes," replied the scribe, "and I was near enough the director's office to-day to overhear a most emphatic statement from Nett Nankin. Not only did she declare Alene Sherwood could not come, but she stated positively that she *would* not come. Everyone knows Nett is doing everything possible, and even impossible, to break down Alene's record. Instead of helping her out, which was the only reason Nett ever got into the work, the little red-head immediately proceeded to cut under," emphasized the reporter.

Briefly and with caution, Patsy then told what she knew of the situation. Nor did she hesitate to relate the story that was wind-blown into her stateroom that night on the *Oragrandia*, when Nettie Nankin declared to Terry Marbury her intention of "getting back at Alene Sherwood." Also, that jealousy was the very evident cause of the step-sister's animosity was too clear to

everyone to be overlooked in the girl's review.

"And Terry Marbury has been so fine," commented Miss Rosalee. "You see, he has the part always taken by Alene's husband, and he feels so conscientious about it all. If Ferd Davidson could come back Terry would immediately void his contract in Ferd's favor."

"But what happened to Mr. Davidson?" asked Beatrice.

"Oh, the most awfully tragic thing," said Miss Rosalee. "He was making a picture out in the Pacific and a number of lives were lost. There were children in it, and some say he lost his own and Alene's darling little girl, Pearl. Alene has never admitted this is really true; but whatever was the direct cause, Ferd Davidson has since been hidden away in a sanitarium, and Alene has scarcely escaped the same fate."

"How dreadful!" gasped Patsy. "And to think that a sister, even a half-sister, would take advantage of such a tragedy!"

"Yes, it is unbelievable. But I know that the ambitious jealousy of a girl is as dire an evil as the most desperate enmity that can exist. It will lead one into perfectly awful risks and complication. For instance, building her story on Alene's ill-health, Nettie has now made herself believe

Alene is actually unable to do her work, whereas I heard Broadbent, the director, say her suffering has perceptibly increased her ability."

"But the baby?" asked Eleanor. "Wouldn't everyone know if it were lost?"

"No; such accidents are hushed up as quickly as possible, and the fact that Mr. Davidson had to be taken to a sanitarium, and Alene had to go away and rest for a long time, simply covered up the whereabouts of little Pearl," explained Miss Rosalee. "She may be safely ensconced in the most exclusive baby boarding-school, for all we know. Many actresses will not trust their little ones to the uncertain life of field work, which the mothers must follow, you know."

"And so often we blame the actresses for leaving their babies," said Mabel. "Perhaps they have no choice. It would surely be dangerous to keep moving a child from one place to another, and not every child has a kindly disposed potential grandmother to rely on."

"That's exactly it," agreed Miss Rosalee. "Of course, the very best and nearest friends of the Davidson's avoid absolutely any mention of the tragedy, and such reports as Miss Nankin scatters are by no means reassuring. She declares Alene will never come to the coast again."

“And I know she will,” spoke up Patsy. “We had a sailing letter from Miss Sherwood. But she asked us not to mention it to any of the company.”

“What luck!” exclaimed Miss Rosalee. “You need not fear that I shall betray your trust for the sake of a story,” said the scribe quickly. “I know that the big story will be mine when we help straighten out the miserable tangle Nettie Nankin is busy with, and I feel sure you girls—I was going to say little girls—are the very ones to intervene.”

“Would you like to tell us just how to go about it, Miss Rosalee?” asked Patsy simply.

“I would prefer not to offer suggestions, if you don’t mind. You see, I am bound to look at everything from the angle of print, and in this the print must follow the sequence of events—again continuity,” and she smiled at the application of the picture term.

“We are so glad to have met you, Miss Rosalee,” said Patsy honestly. “And that you should be our first acquaintance here seems coincidental, since we are interested in the same trend of events. We all want to see Miss Sherwood back at the studio, and I feel we may have to follow a line of clever tactics to accomplish this. How-

ever, as Wayfarers we have been rather successful, now as Wayfarers plus publicity, we ought to be doubly so. I suppose that is your train we hear turning the curve?" she asked, as a whistle shrilled.

"Yes, I have been listening for my signal," said the reporter, arising rather reluctantly from the pleasant seat in the little wayside grove. "You have no idea how much good it has done me to meet you girls. Of course, you must have guessed I am only a girl myself—one whose higher education has had to be postponed for a time. But I'll soon be able to take it up again. And now let us arrange for a future meeting. I feel I am also a member of the Wayfarers."

"Indeed you are," replied Patsy decidedly, accepting the card with the office address of the *Silverpage*. "I am sure we shall be very glad to count you in."

"There, I must run. You know, or you can scarcely know, what a lovely time I have had——" and the way-train slowed up just long enough to take on the business girl who stepped aboard as lightly as did the train man himself. As the tracks cleared again the Wayfarers felt they had met a very charming girl, indeed.

"I am simply suffocated with interest!" ex-

claimed Mabel. "Just to think of dear Alene Sherwood losing her baby and husband with one stroke?"

"But she hasn't lost her husband——"

"Don't you think it is a terrible loss to have one shut up in a sanitarium?" Mabel interrupted Beatrice. "It seems to me one of the most dreadful conditions—especially when one's mind is affected."

"And if the little Pearl is really lost," said Patsy, as arm locked in arm, like a very small guard, the four girls turned back to the Trellis, "that is surely enough to sadden the life of any mother. No wonder Alene Sherwood said her life had been wrecked by tragedy."

"How shall we go about reaching Miss Sherwood in time to bring her here to complete the big picture?" asked Beatrice in her usual direct and practical way. "It seems most important that she be notified immediately."

"Yes, I am sure it is most important," agreed Patsy. "If Nettie Nankin can convince the directors here that Miss Sherwood will not come, of course her 'sets' will be taken, and those made at Fort Lee will be all cut out. Now the thing to do is to get a direct message to Alene. But how can we do that?"

Confronting the problems, even Patsy was puzzled, but not actually baffled, for she quickly made up her mind to try first one, and then another means of reaching the lady in the East.

"I could send messages, I suppose, through the Interl Company, on account of Daddy's connection with it, but I don't think that would be wise," she told the girls. "It would be too simple a matter for the office here to understand our business. No, I'll just go home, and send a message by wire, giving it over the telephone," she concluded.

They were now almost at the arch leading into the Trellis, but they paused a few moments to finish their conversation.

"How can you word such a message?" asked Eleanor.

"It will be a little difficult, but just leave it to me, and you girls take care of Aunt Martha. Perhaps she would like a little walk if Ah Wee has finished her work. Ah Wee is not to stay nights at the bungalow, you know. She is studying English and Americanization after working hours."

"All of which may insure us a higher class maid," remarked Beatrice. "But didn't the little

newspaper woman bring us news instead of collecting it? I am sure we are going to find her a staunch friend."

"Yes, and thereby smash an old prejudice," said Patsy. "Here was a wonderful chance for her to give out news, and she has deliberately suppressed it to help us with our plans. We all know a single line published now would spoil everything. Here we are, Waffles. I'll dive straight for the telephone corner, and you just invite Auntie out for a little stroll. She must be wondering what our new surroundings look like."

But how was Patsy to word that night letter! Sheet after sheet of note-paper—the soft "scratch" kind, was scribbled on only to be crumpled up and discarded. She wanted to make it clear that Miss Nankin had given a false impression to the director, yet it was obviously impossible to put that sort of complication in a simply worded message. Perhaps if Miss Sherwood knew how much the old and even young members of the company wanted her back—that might exert a favorable influence, thought Patsy.

Finally she decided on the following:

"Come at once. Last set for 'Shadows

Dispelled' next Tuesday. Everyone waiting for you. Wire me when you start.

“Signed PATSY CARROLL.”

“There,” sighed the girl whose auburn locks were becoming obstreperous—they would not keep within proper bounds. “That may perform the miracle. In taking it for granted she will come, I believe the message equivalent to demanding an affirmative reply. Come on, Alene Sherwood!” she sang to her own heart. “The Wayfarers are ready to help you fight the big battle!” and the next minute the telephone tinkled ready to receive and relay the wired message.

CHAPTER XV

THE UNBIDDEN GUEST

T IRED but, nevertheless, happy young heads nestled in the pillows of Trellis bungalow on this, the Wayfarers' first night as sojourners in the Golden West. It had been an exciting day, but one in which the happenings all tended to add promise of interesting times in the select little movie town, and when at eleven o'clock Aunt Martha insisted every light should be turned out, the girls, like a group of romping children, were subdued.

The sleeping rooms were arranged on each side of a hall that ran directly through the house, and at either end, opening into a little vined balcony, were the bath and lavatories. From these windows a light breeze stirred the dainty draperies through the corridor, and it seemed there were other noises than mere curtain disturbances at



A glaring, hideous face appeared framed in the opening of the curtains!

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R L

times, for more than once Aunt Martha called to the girls, asking if they were moving about.

Toward morning, however, everyone had settled down to that sleep so comfortable, so composed, so dead to the world that curtains might blow, and draperies flap to their hearts' content, for all of the Wayfarers.

But a sudden something snapped, and crashed, and made so much noise every girl sat upright in her bed before she realized she had stirred. It was as if each had answered to some imperative call, but no one knew whence came the sound.

"Bee," whispered Patsy. "What was that?"

"I don't know," mumbled Bee. "But it sounded like breaking glass."

"It's down at our bathroom," called back Mabel, fear and dismay in her voice.

"Got your revolver, Pat?" asked Bee, seeing her companion slip out of the bed on the other side of the room.

"Yes, come on. Touch that light button."

"The hall is light enough," replied Beatrice under her breath. "It must be morning. Don't you think we had best go out there—without being seen, if possible?"

"Yes, perhaps," said Patsy quickly. "But do come. That's broken glass and plenty of it."

While they made hasty preparations to investigate this sinister disturbance, the clear tingle of splintering glass sounded as if all the windows, in the halls at least, were being shattered.

"I think it's in the east bathroom," said Beatrice. "That sounds like bottles."

"It does," agreed Patsy. She had dived into slippers and negligèe, and she now held her small revolver in a firm hand.

Eleanor and Mabel had evidently decided to hide until the more courageous members of the household looked over the ground, for no further sounds came from their quarters. Everyone hoped Aunt Martha still slept, and she apparently did, for her white maple door presented a marble-like slab, as just outlined in the gray light of dawn.

Patsy led the way, and, as it usually happens, the investigation stopped all the evidence—there was no more noise! Neither was there any broken glass visible, although the girls looked at each window bravely, and Patsy kept her revolver ready for action.

"Queer," commented Bee tritely.

"We must look into the bathrooms," said Patsy.

The door of the tiled bathroom at the west end

of the hall was cautiously opened. At the entrance was a lavatory, separated from the tub room by green and white chintz hangings.

"Touch the button," ordered Patsy. "I don't want to brush into those curtains in the dark."

The electric light was promptly switched on and Patsy went forward with her really glittering revolver (it was silver mounted) raised in her hand. First she jerked the curtains aside, and then she shook them. No one was hiding within those folds, for they fell freely with each move.

"Look in the closet," suggested Bee. Both girls were gaining courage as they proceeded, for already a number of seemingly dangerous quarters had been searched and no terror discovered.

But something was surely stirring in the east bathroom. At the sound the girls came to a sudden stop when within a few feet of the outer door.

"Someone groping around," whispered Bee, for a rustle was still audible.

Patsy threw up her auburn head in defiance and pressed on to that threatening door.

"Be careful!" cautioned Bee, but she stayed bravely at Patsy's bare heels, in spite of the new danger.

The knob was turned and now the door opened!

Both girls stepped back expectantly, but nothing happened.

Again came the sound from within.

"It's back of the curtains," said Patsy. "And I'm going to find out what it is this very minute."

"Oh, Pat!" breathed Beatrice, placing her detaining hand on Patsy's arm. "I am afraid to let you——"

But before either girl could move a step nearer to the inner door a glaring, hideous face appeared framed in the opening of the curtains!

"Oh!" screamed Bee, but Patsy raised her hand that held the revolver. "Don't shoot, Patsy! See! It's such a small face."

"And only a face!" Patsy managed to gasp. "But look at the eyes."

At the word "eyes," the face began to blink those little popped-out orbes, and the frightful-looking visage almost cracked under its deadly whiteness.

The girls had stepped back in the hall, and as they stood speechless, the thing in the curtains remained there like some sinister imp, glaring at them. The face was deadly white, the lips blazing red, while above the inhuman eyes were streaks of blue or black, so absurd that did the

visage not move, blink, and stare, the girls would not have believed that it possessed life.

"Oh, Bee!" exclaimed Patsy in another moment. "That is neither man nor child; it is—some sort of——"

"It's a monkey!" almost yelled Bee. "A big, real, live monkey! Slam the door, Patsy! If he gets out there will be an awful time!"

The door was closed but not slammed. Then the girls ran down the hall to tell the news and seek counsel.

"Come in Nell's room," suggested Beatrice. "She has a water-set, and I'm almost choked."

"But His-nibs!" said Patsy. "He may open the door and come down here. Did you ever see such a face?"

"Never did! Girls! girls!" called Bee. "Are you under the bed? It's a monkey. A movie monkey, of course; and he's all made up even to the lips sticked."

They were in Nell's room, but it took some time to convince the frightened girls that the intruder was really a monkey and nothing more dangerous.

"I am sure of it," insisted Patsy. "First, I thought it might be a deformed man or wizened boy, but now I know it's a monkey, and I don't

see why we didn't know it the moment we set eyes on the framed picture in the curtains."

"It was the dim light," explained Beatrice. "Only the outer bulb was lighted, and the door is shaded by the arch. But wasn't it too funny how he held those green hangings up tight to the scary face and close to his chin? That was why we didn't see his tell-tale whiskers—I am sure he has whiskers."

"But what do you suppose he is doing here now?" asked Mabel. "Are you afraid of monkeys, Pat?"

"Not a bit," braved Patsy. "I love them. Used to follow hand organs for blocks on account of the monkeys. And I'm going into that room now and find out what glass is broken. Maybe he's drunk up all our alcohol. Come, Bee, beard the monkey in his den."

"Better be glad he didn't grab you by the hair," said Eleanor. "Pat, dear, put on this cap. It would be dreadful if he ever got his horrid claws in your lovely hair," and she slipped over the auburn head a dainty little cobwebby thing, such as girls call boudoir caps.

"Put it on, it's pretty and I want to make a good impression," assented the facetious Pat. "Now come along, Bee. You are to interview

His-nibs and give the report to the *Silverpage*. I'm sure it will make a lovely story."

Beatrice was not really anxious to interview His-nibs, but she had no idea of letting Patsy outdo her in a showing of bravery; consequently, she shuffled down the hall after the girl in the borrowed cap.

"Now be careful! He may grab you," she warned, as Patsy very deliberately opened the outer door.

"Very likely he's scared to death and just chattering his little gray head off," replied Patsy.

The curtains were now hanging in soft folds with no monkey face formed in their draperies. Rather cautiously Patsy grasped the hangings, shook them gently, then being sure the little animal was not clinging to the folds, she pushed them aside and entered the tub room.

"Look!" she exclaimed.

Beatrice stepped beside her chum and gazed at the object before them.

There sat His-nibs on the chair in front of the dressing-table and he certainly was "making-up."

First he used a lip stick, then a huge powder puff, after which he would pull a pencil over the

place where eyebrows generally grow, and again pat the powder puff on his enameled face.

Nor did he pause in his task at the entrance of the girls, although beside the wizened face in the big mirror there was now shown the faces of Patsy and Beatrice reflected "over his shoulder."

"But where did he ever get those things?" questioned Patsy.

"Look!" said Bee, "he carried a big vanity bag. Here it is."

"Take it up and let us go out quietly," whispered Patsy. "Perhaps it would be best to let him go out—the way he got in."

The latter words of the sentence were spoken out in the hall, where the girls, with the purloined make-up box, were now very quietly closing the white enameled door.

"Did you see what was broken?" asked Bee. "Not a looking glass, I hope?"

"A couple of big empty bottles in the corner," replied Patsy. "I saw them this afternoon. They were some sort of after-bathing rubs. No loss, for I know they were empty. I wouldn't wonder but he was trying to get a drink out of them."

"Come on, girls," called Bee, down at the sleeping-room doors again. "There's Aunt Martha

and it's really daylight. Let's all inspect this make-up box. It may bear the owner's name, and we can telephone the monkey's whereabouts."

"What is the matter, girls?" anxiously asked Aunt Martha. "I was sure I heard noises but feared I would disturb you if I came out. What is it?"

"Only a poor little lost monkey, Auntie dear," said Patsy, "and he surely belongs to the screen, for he's down in your room making up as fast as his black fists can grab the implements. Oh, it was the funniest sight! Mab and Nell, don't you want to go take a look?"

"No, thank you," replied Mab, diving under her coverlet. "We are quite satisfied to accept your vivid description."

"Let's examine that make-up box," said Bee. "We may have to arouse central very early and call up the owner of His-nibs."

Aunt Martha dropped into a rocker while the girls gathered around the chintz-covered divan, where Patsy and Beatrice proceeded to empty the make-up box of its queer assortment of "tools and supplies." They were hoping to discover therein some clue to its owner, and the monkey's manager.

“What funny colored pencils!” remarked Mabel. “They’re purple.”

“For the eyes,” informed Bee.

“And these, of course, are lip sticks, non-poisonous. I suppose the girls eat the stuff when they become nervous.”

“And just see the size of this powder puff.” Patsy held up, rather gingerly by a piece of appended ribbon, a puff that looked like a face mop. It was huge, and a fog of powder flew from it even in the careful handling.

But as every small article was removed, and the interior of the little leather box was carefully scanned, it failed to disclose a clue to the owner.

“Oh!” exclaimed Patsy suddenly, dropping a lip stick in with the eyebrow pencils. “I must keep that little animal safe and not allow him to escape again. He is certainly valuable and undoubtedly afflicted with wanderlust. The colony will be scoured for him in the morning, and how foolish it would be for us to say we had him and did not try to detain him? Coming, Bee? He likely knows you and me by now, and we will be best able to meet him amicably.”

“But girls,” protested Aunt Martha. “Those animals are sometimes very fierce, I wish you would just leave that creature alone and not risk

any further danger." The lady in the lavender cap and gown was following Patsy and Beatrice to the door, but the girls gave her a smiling assurance of their perfect safety.

"He's quite cultivated and has good manners," said Patsy. "Don't worry, Auntie. I shall just close the window, take the key from the outside of the door, and allow the intruder to enjoy himself in broken glass and powder boxes. He seemed to have a second set of this stuff in the box, and I am certain he must be very prettily made up by this time."

Cautiously the girls opened the white door, and daylight was now streaming in from every pane of glass, creating wonderful shades and tints as it pierced the colored squares and diamonds of the brilliantly stained-glass Spanish window.

"He's not here!" murmured Beatrice, for the chair at the dressing-table was vacant, and in all the ivoried room no black spot, indicating monkey fur, was visible. The curtain at the casement window blew out into the vines guiltily.

"The bird has flown!" quoth Patsy, when something like a snore attracted her attention to the bathtub.

"Oh, my! Just look!" she whispered, drawing Beatrice over to the edge of the sunken basin.

And there, in a shower of towels and bath mats, lay the comical little animal, its grotesque face, all made up with colors, even thicker than before, and just peeking out over the edge of Mabel's baby-blue scalloped shower robe.

"Come," whispered Beatrice. "Let the darling sleep, he needs it," and the chairman of the house committee, with the Chief of the Wayfarers, went out and locked the enameled door, and wearily turned to their respective rooms.

"We may get a couple of more winks before breakfast," said Patsy. "And remember, Bee, you now have another mouth to feed."

CHAPTER XVI

BINGO AND BOUNTY

EVEN the plans of Wayfarers must be subject to interruption, for the incessant ringing of the telephone aroused the girls again, much earlier than they had planned to wake after the disturbed hours of dawn.

"I'll answer," chirped Patsy, who was out in the hall making her way to the extension 'phone, before any of the other girls had become fully conscious.

She picked up the receiver and said "Hello!"

"I want Miss Patricia Carroll," came the voice of the operator. "This is the telegraph company."

"I am she," replied Patsy, a little anxiously, hoping the urgent call was not a message bearing any ill news concerning Mr. Carroll.

"I have a telegram for you," went on the di-

datic voice over the wire. "Shall I read it?"

"Yes, please." Patsy was impatient now.

All the address and directions were first carefully repeated by the operator, however, before the message itself was transmitted. Finally Patsy heard:

"Will reach the West Thursday P.M.
Ready for work Friday. Will look for you
on arriving. Sincere thanks.

"Signed,

"ALENE SHERWOOD."

"Do you understand it?" asked the telephone voice.

"Yes, perfectly," replied Patsy, and the next moment the magical instrument was silent, while the girl in the rose-colored negligee sat smilingly before it.

"Good news," she murmured. "Alene will get here in time. I must tell the girls and then——" She paused before finishing the sentence even mentally. It had to do with the advisability of letting Miss Rosalee of the *Silverpage* share the good news.

"The girls first, at any rate," Patsy decided, gliding toward her own room, just as Ah Wee

turned her latch key in the kitchen door, coming in for her morning's work.

"As one little night this has been a first-rate circus week," said Patsy to the girls, who were now intercepting her in the corridor. "I have just had a wire from Miss Sherwood."

"Goody-good!" gurgled Mabel. "Now, we will have fun. Whatever will become of the Blue Jay?" with a chuckle.

"You mean she will lose her place in the set?" said Eleanor. "She should, of course. But, Pat, dear, don't you think it would be wisest to make sure Alene does get here before spreading the news?"

"Nell, you show the benefit of slumber snatched while Bee and I sleuthed. Your brain is phenominally clear. Yes, it would be best, obviously, to say nothing of her arrival until she has arove. If you want better English please wait until I am dressed for it. I feel now like a serial nightmare in the gasping act."

"Poor dear," soothed Mabel, throwing her arms around the rose silk robe. "You have had a dreadful night or was it morning? How's your patient?"

"We left him snoring beautifully in your shower robe, Mab. And it was really very be-

coming to his brunette beauty, although the make-up rather marred the effect." Beatrice gave out that bulletin.

"You don't mean that horrid hairy thing is all wound up in our robes?" wailed Mabel.

"He was sort of draped in them," went on Beatrice in a drolling monotone. "But e'er now I fancy he is waiting for chow. Shall I have Ah Wee serve him up here, Pat?" she called to the retreating figure.

"Oh, Bee," sang back Patsy, "how do we know what to feed him? You better look it up in the encyclopedia. I see we have one in the living-room."

"That's true, Pat. We might poison him with coffee or cereal. I know they like nuts and fruit. Mab, dear, you are almost ready to go down. Will you, like a good child, look up monkey food for me? He must be still in the bathtub, and perhaps anxious to eat, unless he has slipped down the drain pipe."

It was two hours later that Ah Wee announced Miss Rosalee. The girls were all hidden somewhere, straightening out and unpacking the baggage which arrived on the morning delivery.

Everyone ceased her especial task as the name

of the caller was given; and all promptly trooped down to the living-room, happy at the prospect of news.

“I won’t apologize for calling so soon again,” began Miss Rosalee. “The fact is, I thought I had to come to ask you to help in the Sherwood matter. At the studios and all over the ‘lots’ Nettie Nankin is doing her best to spread the report of Alene’s illness. She may even induce Director Broadbent to make the last ‘set’ a day in advance of the plan, just to be sure she, Nett, gets the star cast. You see, girls, there is so much at stake. This isn’t just an ordinary case of one girl stealing the other’s part. But Alene Sherwood is a heart-broken girl, and everyone in the profession would be glad to see her take courage and go on with her work. If she comes now she will do exactly that. If Nett tricks her out of it, she will go back just where she was after the tragedy.”

“I had a wire from her early this morning,” blurted out Patsy, “and she is coming. She will be here to be ready for her part on the day arranged.”

“Oh, joy!” exclaimed the enthusiastic scribe. “I just felt you girls would be able to see that through. But you must tell the news to the di-

rector immediately. Otherwise the Nankin girl may yet succeed in spoiling all our plans."

"But I shouldn't just like to do that," demurred Patsy. "I am not sure Daddy would like it."

"You really must," insisted Miss Rosalee. "You have no idea how much is involved in this set. And I have heard such unpleasant rumors from Nettie Nankin's work. It is incredible how even a half-sister could be so unfair."

"Ambition, I suppose," condoned Patsy. "All right, Miss Rosalee. I'll do as you suggest, but woe is you if they gobble me up into another picture. I am not sure I crave the glory of that profession now."

"Lovely girl," Miss Rosalee complimented, her sincerity showing beyond the frivolity of her words. "And now what's new? I will send a boy around this evening with a copy of the *Silverpage* containing news of the Wayfarers."

"New?" echoed Patsy. "We have a perfect thriller of a story for you. Get ready!"

"Ready!" chimed back the reporter.

"It's about a monkey," began Patsy. "He broke in here last night, smashed things around——"

"A monkey! The monkey! Do you mean to tell me Bingo came in here?" and the reportorial voice lost its level.

"I'm not sure about Bingo, but I am positive it's a monkey," replied Patsy. Then she proceeded to relate the most thrilling and most humorous details of the experiences they encountered about dawn.

Miss Rosalee was stricken almost speechless.

"It's too good to be real!" she gasped. "There has been a reward for his monkeyship for the past month, and not a sight of him could be discovered. And no one ever thought of watching this cottage. Yet he lived here with Marcia Marlow. Girls, one of our most important pictures has been held up waiting for that imp. And a whole thousand dollars has been offered for his capture."

"It's yours," said Patsy tritely, "for all you have to do is to go upstairs and ask him to go home. He's having a lovely time, and Beatrice fed him scientifically, according to the encyclopedia."

"Really, Miss Carroll," and the reporter fell into a truly serious mood, "I can claim that reward, and do you know what it will mean for me?"

"What?" asked Mabel, with an expectant smile.

"College. I can go back to college if I get that money," declared the bright little woman, who was not more than a girl, except for her business experience. "But I am not sure it should be mine," she qualified. "You girls really found Bingo."

"But you identified him. We only found a plain monkey. Your good luck is the very best that could come to us. We knew at once the little animal was highly trained, for he made up as naturally as any movie queen," insisted Patsy.

"Now I know!" exclaimed the reporter irrelevantly. "He was accustomed to making up in that room. Marcia Marlow had him trained here, and when she left the coast the little imp refused to work, or to do anything, because he was not accustomed to the new surroundings. Girls, you may have to rent a room in this Trellis to Bingo. He simply must be induced somehow to go on with that picture."

Nothing short of a cyclone of fun followed all this. In fact, the girls howled and yelled, giggled and gasped, until Ah Wee appeared at the door, her slant eyes almost round with consternation. She had made friends with Bingo and her

appearance reminded Patsy the little Celestial might want a part in Bingo's bounty.

Ah Wee was looking more than ever like a figure on the Japanese screen, and her new blue bloomers with lavender blouse made a very gorgeous costume indeed.

"It's all right, Wee-wy," said Patsy, using the queer French-sounding name the girls had coined. "We are just having a good time, and you may bring us a nice cool pitcher full of that fruit juice you make so deliciously—so good," amended Patsy, lest the big word might occasion the wrong sort of mixture in the iced fruit juice.

Ah Wee bowed prettily, smiled till her white teeth stood out like pearly corn kernels against her very red lips, then she withdrew with the shuffling step always so marked a part of the Oriental personality.

"Do you suppose she knows about the Bingo reward?" asked Mabel.

"Hardly," replied Miss Rosalee. "These girls seem to understand English but they scarcely learn to read, in spite of our compulsory educational laws. And the reward offer was made through the press."

"At any rate," decided Patsy, "I think you had better get Bingo safely back to quarters soon,

Miss Rosalee, as we hardly know how to entertain him, and really we don't want him to entertain us again to-night."

"I'll be back with a taxi in half an hour," replied the reporter. And when she came she brought with her Mr. Fairfax, the very much elated manager of the lost monkey. Aside to the girls the reporter managed to whisper that the bounty for Bingo would be turned over to her as quickly as they returned to the studio office.

"And please, Miss Carroll," she urged, "manage to see the director first thing in the morning, for the big company is preparing to go out 'on location' and they may only return here in time for the final set."

CHAPTER XVII

ON THE BIG LOT

IT was out on the big lot that Patsy and Eleanor sought Director Broadbent. The gate-keeper allowed them to enter on the pass signed and left by the thoughtful Mr. Carroll, and once within the gate the girls found themselves surrounded by conditions very similar to those in a circus grounds.

“I see now why they call it the lot,” remarked Eleanor. “It is an immense lot with everything built around in it.”

“Yes, the term, I believe, is stolen from circus folks,” said Patsy. “But did you ever see such buildings? With and without tops, with and without sides, with most everything else and without almost anything. Like a major operation on architecture, isn’t it? Everything seems so dissected. I wonder where the Internals are located? Let us ask at this office.”

Through the manufactured streets and villages the girls felt their way along. Here was little Ireland, and there little Italy; directly alongside of both ran a street obviously the grand center of a city in Spain.

"This is the way I like to study geography," said Patsy. "Fly to the east, fly to the west, fly to any old town that you love best. However do you suppose the potential enemies of such countries exist so peaceably side by side?"

"And no wars," filled in Eleanor. "This ought to furnish a universal object lesson in equanimity.

"There are wars, dear. Are you and I not out here to arbitrate one? Oh, see the funny costumes! If we laugh I suppose they will suspect we are interlopers. But behold that giant in a full evening outfit! And there goes our old friend or enemy Cæsar. Now, if we are still strong enough to bear more of these sights I expect a train of all our ancient enemies will shortly troop along. Yes, there goes the first school teacher who ever tortured me, Miss Hayes. Observe the—everything, even the bunch of flowers for her desk. Let's stand a few minutes and observe. This is really a city of worlds."

"Patsy, look, look!" exclaimed Eleanor ex-

citedly. "There's a whole colony of Arabs! We had better keep moving and look business-like, or they'll surely kidnap us. And look, do Patsy, quick! There goes a lovely little wedding into that church with a steeple and no side walls. Could you ever imagine anything like this?"

"I thought I imagined a lot of queer things about the world's city but I see now my brain was feeble," answered Patsy. "Just see what's directly back of us. Doesn't it look like toy town?"

"So it is surely——"

"No, those miniature houses all photograph regular size—just a camera trick. I'd love to spend the morning here, Nellie, and everyone seems too busy to bother putting us off the lot, but we must find that director. He may be packing up his bag this very minute, and instead of 'shooting a picture' he may shoot out that big iron gate."

They started off in earnest this time, for, as Patsy had remarked, directors seemed to be hurrying out the gate, long processions of all sorts of characters following them.

As the girls passed a sunken lake, in which a young girl was floundering frantically, while her lover raced over a hill and threw himself in

the same puddle, Patsy and Eleanor could not resist stopping to see the camera man wind the film.

"She's very wet, and that's real water," testified Patsy, "though I doubt if there would be any lake left if the picture called for one more ducking. Her clothes and those of the brr-a-ve lover seemed to have created a regular drought."

"Hey there, Estelle," called a boy running toward them, evidently such a lad as might be termed a page, had the movie city a hotel roof over its head. "The boss is shouting his head off for you two. Busted two meggies (megaphones) already."

"We're not working," answered Patsy. "We are looking for Director Broadbent."

"He's the man who's looking for a couple of girls," reflected the boy, now seeming to realize he had mistaken his quarry.

"Where's his—place?" asked Patsy. They had left all the offices behind them.

"He's making that fire scene. Don't be afraid of it, can't blaze, all smoke bombs, safety stuff in here."

"Thank you," said Patsy feebly, and the boy ran along.

Over near the church with the false front, the

fire set was being made evidently, for heavy black smoke curled up over the steeple, and a tongueless bell was being rung silently, for the bell swayed back and forth wildly without uttering a sound.

"The wedding is over," said Eleanor. "Look, Pat, they're running out at the cry of fire. I wish we could get the name of that picture. I'd like to see it as a finished product."

"If we are good little girls and don't antagonize any of the Interals, perhaps the city clerk will furnish us with a list of local attractions," said Patsy. "Hurry along, Nell. The director may get hurt in the fire, and then our interview would surely have to be postponed."

"Pat, there's Terry!" exclaimed Eleanor suddenly, as a young fellow in a perfectly gorgeous Greek costume approached them. He was just leaving a temple, and all of Terry Marbury's good looks shone forth in rare perfection as he grasped the flowing velvet robes and sauntered along in the good old U. S. A., himself a spirit from ancient Rome. He recognized Patsy with a gay wave of his free hand, and hurried toward the girls.

"Well, little rescuer!" he exclaimed cordially. "This is rare luck. I have been wondering if you

were ever going to keep that promise you made. You remember you said you would run across us this summer." He bowed to Eleanor and favored her with a recognizing scrutiny.

"We have only been here a short time," replied Patsy, "and we are already wondering if the close proximity to a business world"—waving a hand at the industry flourishing about them—"is going to keep us all as busy as we have been thus far. We like it, but sort of feel——"

"A part of the big picture," he helped out the floundering sentence. "Yes, everyone in the territory gets in a set sooner or later. Are you enjoying it?"

"Hugely," said Eleanor. "We were just now speculating on which century we existed in."

"If you girls will come some day when I'm off duty I'll be glad to show you around," offered the actor. "There really is a lot to see—besides the lot," he qualified facetiously.

"We would love to," replied Patsy, "but just now we are on an errand of business. I wonder if you could help us?"

"Try me," he said, with a star smile. "Shall we step in here out of the traffic?"

They "stepped into" a big wooden cave. The

boards were ingeniously covered with cement or plaster, and a dripping hose over a huge rock emptied very practically into a nearby sewer basin. The cave opened into the street but was walled at the rear.

"Sit down," invited Terry, and the Wayfarers were rather glad to comply. They chose a wonderful nook in the patent rocks—a place just made for two to sit in, so that Patsy and Eleanor looked very pretty and very appropriate in the embryo "set."

"It's about Miss Sherwood," began Patsy, and she did not pause although his face showed pleasure instantly. "She is coming back in time to finish the important scene in your 'Shadows Dispelled.'"

"She is? Are you sure?" The girls were not sure his voice evinced all pleasure.

"Yes, I had a wire from her last night. And, Mr. Marbury, I know a little of the sorrow Miss Sherwood has been crushed under: that is the reason we girls are presuming to interfere in the business of the Interl Company. Also, you know, my father is counsel for Miss Sherwood in her suit on contract."

"I realize all that, Miss Carroll, but the sister of Miss Sherwood told our director only this

morning that Alene had left New York for a rest, and that she absolutely refused to finish the picture. I happen to know and understand Miss Nankin's motive, and we may overlook its flagrancy on the ground of all being fair in ambition: still——" He removed his Greek head-dress and stroked his brow in real earnest. Mr. Marbury was obviously perplexed.

"Shall I seek out the director and tell him personally?" asked Patsy. "A friend advised me to do that."

"He's in a bear's mood this morning—girls are always disappointing, you know," replied the actor. "Besides, Miss Nankin is hanging around and she might contradict. Was your message a direct wire?"

"It was read over the phone to me," Patsy answered.

"Then suppose you turn into the office and get a copy of it. The strongest argument in that case would be documentary evidence, as they say in court; and you know, of course, a telegram given by phone is always written out on request. Do you know where the office is?"

"At the station, isn't it?" asked Eleanor.

"Yes. Miss Carroll," he began anew, "I am deeply interested in the return of Miss Sherwood

to the studios. She was such a promising figure when tragedy swept her whole family, consisting of her husband, baby and herself, from the screen. Then, because I have been cast for Mr. Davidson's parts, he is her husband you know, I feel doubly conscious of the delicacy of the situation. More than once I thought I had a line on the solution of the real mystery involved, but somehow the clue always led to a blind end."

"You mean about the little child?" asked Patsy. She felt obliged to let this stranger know she had some knowledge of the nature of Miss Sherwood's sorrow.

"Yes, that is the one awful, awful, irretrievable loss," murmured the young man, dejectedly.

"Was the baby lost?" pressed Patsy.

"Yes, swept away under our eyes. I was working with Ferd and I'll never forget that hour. We do see some trying sights, Miss Carroll, but that was the worst I ever want to take part in!" He rose from his place in the gray rocks, and for a moment heavy lines seemed to fairly break through his handsome young face.

"You are sure the little one perished?" asked Eleanor. She had choked back a sigh, for with the story came a memory of the sorrowing figure

of Alene Sherwood, as she collapsed at her work in the Fort Lee studio some weeks before.

“The horrible uncertainty of its fate is the most cruel part of the whole thing,” said the actor. “Some of the children were picked up—there were a number in the cast when an improvised raft was suddenly swept away. The confusion was so terrific, and we had such difficulty in rescuing Alene and Ferd, that for a time, the work with the children was left to another corps of rescuers; and when it was all over Pearl was gone!”

“Pearl!” repeated Patsy. “A little girl, of course.”

“Yes, the darling of our studios. She was known as the Pearl of the Pacific, and, although only two years of age, she acted like a little veteran. She was a perfect doll—a cherub,” he enthused. “I have a picture of her, you must see it some time. By the way, I expect to meet your honored father soon,” he said, brightening, “then we may be able to arrange a more conventional hour than this.”

“This has been very convenient,” Patsy hurried to say, “and I shall be glad to extend your kind offer to the girls. I know they will be delighted to look over this wonderful place some

time when we can arrange it. Now I'm off for that telegram."

The Roman prince showed the girls to the gate, and along the way back to the station the sad fate of the little darling "Pearl of the Pacific" had cast a shadow over the day, in spite of the glorious storm of sunshine deluging the earth.

CHAPTER XVIII

A COMPLICATED RESCUE

ONE week later the Wayfarers were anxiously watching the railroad situation, which a day previous had been disrupted by a trainmen's strike. All traffic by rail was at a dead standstill, and Miss Sherwood was on the Overland, stalled forty miles from Movie City.

"We could send out an auto," reasoned Patsy, who was holding serious counsel with the girls. "But the demand is so heavy no driver could be expected to adhere to an order. I heard only an hour ago that autos were so thick at the bridge it would take hours for the stream to get moving. And that picture must be finished this morning," she concluded with a sigh.

"Doesn't it seem as if chance is favoring Nettie Nankin?" grumbled Eleanor. "Just when we had everything so beautifully arranged."

“Only forty miles,” Patsy murmured. “There ought to be some way of getting her out here.”

“But there is no possible way of reaching her with a message,” wailed Mabel. “If we could only find out what is happening out there in the Rockies.”

“I believe Mr. Marbury would know what to do,” said Patsy suddenly. “Suppose we phone Miss Rosalee. She will be in the office of the *Silverpage* about now.”

“That’s a good idea,” agreed Beatrice. “I feel as you do, Patsy, there should be some way of covering that little forty miles. Shall I call the number for you, dear?”

“If you will, Bee. My head is buzzing. Just fancy a foolish old railroad strike tying up everything.”

Beatrice was but a few moments getting a telephone answer, and presently she was talking with Miss Rosalee. Patsy then took up the message.

“What do you suggest?” the girls heard the latter ask.

“Do you think that would be possible?” came the next question. Then there was a long pause.

“All right, Nance. I’ll call Mr. Marbury up immediately and ask him. Good-bye.” Patsy turned to the girls.

“She suggests Terry going after her in an airplane,” she said. “He was a pilot in the Canadian service, she says, and often flies a car on the field. There, didn’t I know there must be a way? Bee, will you look up the Laurel Inn number? Nance says we may find him there now. I’m too excited to see straight. Can you imagine the glee of Nettie Nankin about now? If she ever had any idea Alene was coming on the Overland?”

Fortune and the telephone company seemed to favor the plans of the Wayfarers, however, for very quickly Patsy was in an animated conversation with Terry Marbury, and when she again turned away from the phone her face was beaming.

“He will fly as quickly as he can don his togs and get a ‘boat,’ as he expressed it,” she said. “Now, girls, let’s away to the big lot. We may miss the fun if we stay glooming around here.”

“As a gloom dispeller, Pat, you are a bright little star,” commented Eleanor. “Who would have thought of flying over stalled autos and dead railroad trains? Who, indeed, but a girl named Pat?”

“Pat, Pat, rat-tat-tat!” Mab began the refrain, but no one had a chance to finish it, for nothing but the important letters Aunt Martha had com-

missioned the girls to mail, served for a moment to deter them in the rush they were now making toward the movie field.

"There goes a plane," cried Mabel. "I am sure our old friend Ter-ree is in that." She trilled the name as the girls had first enjoyed doing when on the steamer *Oragrandia* they discovered the identity of this same Terry Marbury.

"Nance Rosalee told me that Nettie Nankin was doing everything possible to rush the picture through," said Patsy. "She seemed to sense the possibility of Alene getting in on that train, should it move in time. I suppose Nett has a corps of her own friends keeping track of the situation from the other end," she finished.

"That is like a movie story in itself," commented Eleanor. The Race for Place or A Final Set. Wouldn't that make an attractive screen title?"

"I am not a timid child," said Patsy, as they came up to the private avenue leading into the studio territory, "but I do fear something like a fracas if Alene gets here just in time for work, and too late for any office explanation. Terry said this morning that the only way to squelch Nett Nankin was to do it. That he had tried all sorts of diplomatic measures, and professional

strategy, and failed. Now, he insisted, it must be a case of subduing her deliberately."

"If we only have the means," soliloquized Mabel. "But Alene Sherwood has not arrived yet."

"Suppose we sit out here in the grove and watch the sky," suggested Beatrice. "Somehow I feel awfully excited. You don't suppose Nett will do any hair-pulling, do you, Pat?"

"I wouldn't care to predict just what will happen if Alene appears suddenly," said Patsy. "Nett's shade of hair is a much more violent red than is mine."

During all this time quiet little Mabel had curled herself up on a bench alone, and a little apart from her chums. She didn't seem interested in the sky, so deeply absorbed she appeared in something really serious. Patsy and Beatrice were making cabalistic signs to each other, trying to tease Mab out of her morbid mood.

"He'll come back, Mabsie," joked Eleanor. "And he's a perfectly good pilot."

"Oh, I'm not thinking of your old Terry Marbury nor Nettie Nankin, nor even our own nice little friend, Nance Rosalee," and Mabel pulled her hat down viciously over her pretty blue eyes. "Honestly, girls, I am seriously unhappy."

"Mab, darling," cooed Beatrice, leaving her own bench and edging in beside the disconsolate one. "Won't you tell us what it is?"

"You'll think I'm queer, nervous or some forbidden thing," choked Mabel, "and I'm sure I don't want to break a Wayfarer's rule and turn baby."

"No need to worry on that score, Mabsie," assured Patsy. "We know very well, dear, you would not be fretting about yourself. Tell us what it is? We may see that sky trolley shoot back any minute, and then we will all want to run and see what happens? Come on, dear, take us into your gloomy confidence."

"It's about that baby," declared the girl with eyes like blue bells under water. "I just know that darling was never drowned, and here you are all fussing about a mere moving-picture stunt and no one is——"

The girls did not laugh. In fact, their heads almost nodded in acquiescence. They too, evidently, had all been pondering on that very possibility.

"Why, girlie," said Patsy, "we are everyone working quietly along that line, and my especial reason for wanting to get Alene Sherwood back to the coast is just to find out, if possible, what

she knows that may furnish us with clues. Of course, they have done everything that could be done professionally, I mean they have hired the most skilful detectives and covered all those lines, but somehow it is always different—when one has a real, personal, vital interest. Besides all that, we have time, that is always a chief consideration in working on a mystery. So cheer up, Mab, and we will all promise to search for little Pearl, quickly as we can get any reasonable clues to start with.”

The blue-eyed girl smiled a little sheepishly now. “It was silly of me,” she admitted, “but I just kept dreaming about that baby——”

“There now! Look! A plane, and it’s Terry’s, of course,” cried Beatrice. “See, he’s going to make a landing in the big field.”

“What time is it?” asked Eleanor. Patsy glanced at her wrist watch and it showed there were yet a very few minutes before the all-important “set” was to be staged.

“Will Alene have all her togs?” asked Mabel, now united with the others in keen interest for the possible arrival of Alene Sherwood.

“We thought of that, and Nance helped us,” said Patsy. “She’s a perfect wizard about everything around here.”

The plane was whirring nearer and nearer, and the girls watched eagerly to determine its place of possible landing.

"Come on," urged Patsy. "See, he is circling to locate the field. Girls, don't build your hopes too high; it might be just possible Alene is not in that plane."

Gaily they raced along; down the avenue to a pretty little natural stream from which many an artificial movie lake was fed and fostered; then over a low fence and into the great broad meadow that served as an aeroplane field for the various films requiring that sort of spectacular action.

The plane was descending. The girls held back to give the monster machine full play over the broad stretch of land.

"He's down!" shouted Patsy, for the wheels of the great car now grazed along, scorning the earth, as if reluctant to touch its sordid surface.

"Yes, that's Terree!" called Mabel, and all four girls raced over the big field to where the car had now finally settled.

"And there she is!" fairly yelled Patsy. Somehow it was like seeing an old friend, a very, very dear friend, yet they had only met Alene Sherwood once! And then only for a very few minutes.

"Aren't we just crazy?" Beatrice managed to say between skips and jumps.

"We are," admitted Patsy, "and we're glad of it."

"Here comes an auto!" called Mabel. "See, yes, it's Nance! She's waving!"

"Trust little Nancy to remember we have to get back to the big lot in a hurry," said Patsy, coming to a standstill, as the large open car swung into the field. "And she fetched a machine big enough to give us all a ride. When my car gets here, if it ever does, I'm going to drive that girl around on all her assignments to make up for this."

"Hello, kiddies!" came a shout from the eulogized young lady. "Jump in or hop on! There's the air boat and look! There's Alene! Hurrah!" and she stood on the seat of the car to wave a pitifully small handkerchief, just to make a flutter of welcome to the popular little movie queen.

The auto only slackened to take on the girls, so alert were they to jump aboard, and presently they, too, were waving hats and handkerchiefs in a frantic effort to speak louder than human voice could carry.

"Yes, there she is!" Patsy fairly gasped in relieved tones, for until that moment she had felt a

fearful apprehension that something else might happen to spoil the plans which actually originated in the studio at Fort Lee—to get Alene Sherwood back in her place, as a popular member of the screen world.

“Just a minute, girls,” begged the alert reporter. “I am going to snap a picture of her as she stands waiting for the Wayfarers—her rescuers. Can you imagine the story I have now for the *Silverpage*! Jump out, Patsy Carroll, and every one of you, and just run along over that field. I want you all in the picture and please don’t object. There, that’s it! Wave your handkerchief,” and a click of the reliable camera, “shot” from the vantage point of an automobile, caught one of the embryo scenes for a movie yet to be named.

CHAPTER XIX

A DOUBLE SET MOVIE

IT was a new kind of picture, this modern pastoral; but no sooner did Nance Rosalee snap her camera on it than she prepared to hustle the participants into her car, and urge the chauffeur to make all speed back to the Interal studio.

"Swept off my feet literally," said Miss Sherwood, but the way she smiled and the light in her eyes showed how much she liked that sort of "sweeping."

"Isn't it great!" exclaimed the busy little newspaper woman. "I wish we could take Terry along, but he has to attend to his plane first."

"Why all the excitement?" asked Miss Sherwood, after she had warmly greeted the Wayfarers and, in turn, had received their enthusiastic welcome. "It is wonderful to get here, and to be

on time for that set, but why, just why is it so overwhelmingly important?"

"Perhaps because we girls had our hearts set on it," answered Patsy evasively. "It's something like a victory to win over a railroad strike, and——" she would like to have added "over Nettie Nankin," but a glance from Nance warned her to be cautious.

Eleanor and Beatrice were chatting merrily, quite as if the morning ride were purely a matter of routine pleasure; Mabel and Patsy were sitting with Alene and shared honors in entertaining the visitor, while Nance Rosalee just kept directing the driver and incidentally hoping to reach that studio before eleven o'clock. She turned to Miss Sherwood and attempted to explain the confused proceedings.

"You see, Alene," she said, "this set has to be finished this morning on account of a labor snarl. We have labor troubles here thicker than they have them in New York, and not even a popular little lady like Alene Sherwood is now allowed to hold up a crew of celluloid workers. Queer, isn't it? But it sort of keeps us humble, so there's that compensation."

"Oh, I was delighted to come," answered the actress, "but Nettie said in her last letter there

was some trouble at the studio, and naturally I didn't feel quite brave enough to run into any real difficulty."

"Nettie is queer," the reporter did not hesitate to state emphatically, "but she may have thought you were not physically fit for all the excitement. I can tell you, Alene, these young ladies have been keeping me busy since their arrival. I have a wonderful story to tell you," she rambled on, for Nance and Alene were evidently well acquainted. "Our old friend Bingo, the monkey, was lost—gone for a whole month, and the big picture he was working in had to stand still, of course. Well, Fairfax got so desperate he offered a thousand dollars' reward for Bingo, and all Nancy had to do was to walk in and collect—after the Wayfarers found the monkey. And you know what that means to me. I'm going back to college next fall," she fairly sang out. "Here, right in here!" she was again directing the driver, who seemed lost in the labyrinth of fantastic streets, and quaint little alleys rambling through the city of movie land.

"Come on in, girls," the reporter next called out. She seemed to have the right-of-way in every direction. "They know you here and I guess Mr. Broadbent will be glad to see you,

when he finds out who blew in, and you did blow in, Alene. Hope friend Terry gets here in time."

In her blue traveling suit, little toque and trim veil, the actress stepped from the auto a very picture of charming competency. Even the sudden flight in Terry Marbury's airship had not disarranged that effect so much a part of the successful actress. Her cheeks were flushed, and her eyes sparkled under their fringed lids. As Nance Rosalee glimpsed her with the critical eye of publicity she turned away with a broad smile of satisfaction.

The Wayfarers were fairly quivering with excitement. Perhaps each hoped silently that Nettie Nankin, by some chance, had not come to the studio. Girls, who may be brave where action is called for, usually quail at the prospect of suppressed antagonism, when unfair methods are suspected.

"Like old times," murmured Alene. "How good it is to be back," she said directly to Patsy. "But how I did dread it!"

Unconsciously, Patsy squeezed the hand that seemed to seek hers. These girls, the one a woman by crowded years, the other still a child by fortunate circumstances, seemed strangely

drawn together. But sympathy is indeed a magic bond, and happy they who know its power.

In through the office trooped the arrivals; Miss Sherwood was forced to stop more than once to answer calls of welcome and surprise at her presence, and while each greeting was markedly cordial, not everyone who called it out succeeded in hiding its abruptness.

“Thought you were in Europe?” shouted the good-natured wardrobe woman.

“Did you drop from the sky?” exclaimed the make-up girl. “I heard you were off on a long furlough.”

And so it went on until Nance Rosalee took a hand, by leading the way and discouraging criticism as she went.

“There’s Director Broadbent,” said the reporter, catching sight of the big man in the Panama hat, who was crossing the lot in something of a hurry. “Now be ready, Alene. He may fall on your neck.”

Patsy and the girls stood back a little as the man stopped and stared.

“On my word!” he gasped. “How on earth did you get here?” and his voice rang with pleasure. “These girls,” with a sweeping bow to the Wayfarers, “seem to know more ways of doing

things than do we old stagers. Trot along. Don't stop. Jump into your things. I'll hold that set if it 'busts' the union," and he finally relinquished his grasp on the hand he had been shaking rather too violently in the excitement of his joy.

"It's a little mysterious," murmured the actress. "First I am wired to come, then I almost get here and am side-tracked by a full-fledged railroad strike, only to be picked up by handsome Terry Marbury, shot across the sky to the field, again grabbed by Nance Rosalee and the—Wayfarers, and finally here I am. Mr. Broadbent, when you run out on scenarios give me time and I'll whip this together for you. You will miss something if you don't." She was laughing like a girl, and the director had not failed to notice how much she had improved in health and spirits since the day in the Fort Lee studios.

"Wonder where the Blue Jay is?" whispered Mab to Bee. "But we should fret."

Was there ever a girl so busy as Nance Rosalee? No sooner did she jot down a note dragged from the unwilling lips of Director Broadbent, than she scribbled some code stuff following "a word" with Alene Sherwood.

"She's getting a great story," remarked Patsy.

They were waiting a few minutes while Alene found her wardrobe, and proceeded to make up. It was in one of the big buildings where "interiors" were filmed, and, unlike most of the surrounding houses, this boasted of a real roof and genuine glass windows. The Interal Company was one of the most important in the business, and under the same roof not a few famous pictures were "shot" into the life of screen publicity.

Presently the men took their places on the big platform beside the cameras.

"Guess they are all ready," remarked Patsy. Everyone seemed to flutter toward one end of the studio, where men were busy shifting scenes and arranging the details for the grand entrance of the modern Cinderella, who was to be magically made real when the "Shadows were Dispelled," and the wonder-girl would come into her own.

"Do those things only happen in studios?" Patsy asked Nance, as the latter stopped long enough beside the Wayfarers to exchange a few commentary words.

"No, girlie. Behold a Cinderella beside you, transformed by the Bingo reward!" replied Nance. "You have yet to know the joy of falling heir to one thousand. See that man with the

General Pershing shoulders over there? He's the gent who is to forward me that check. And I know it is forthcoming on the first day of the month, for Director Fairfax is noted for being a prompt payer even in the thousands."

"Where's Nettie?" asked Patsy. "I fancied she would be here when we arrived."

"I managed a detainer," admitted the adroit scribe. "Couldn't take a chance on her spoiling this by any—rudeness. I had a messenger boy call her out the other way," and she smiled pardonably at her own cleverness.

"Oh, that's it, is it?" asked and answered Beatrice. "We were quite at a loss to account for the omission. Expected things to happen, you know."

"They will, never fear. But not while that final set is being made, if I can help it," declared the resourceful Nance. "We want Alene Sherwood to surprise the whole colony on this, and she's such a little sensitive plant a word might blast—her beauty—I mean as a star, of course. Too temperamental for rough-and-ready Nett Nankin handling."

While they thus chatted the big set was being arranged, for a troop of "extras" were being "draped" around the ballroom floor.

“Those girls come out here, fetch an evening gown and get five or ten dollars for standing in,” explained Nance. “They think it quite an adventure to be filmed, of course.”

“We had one just like it,” Patsy reminded Bee, “except we didn’t bring our gowns——”

“And we didn’t get any money,” finished Beatrice. “There’s Alene! Oh, isn’t she just gorgeous!”

From the dressing-rooms over near the huge ventilator, came the resplendent Cinderella, all jewels, spangles and glitter, while in her train a group of fairy-like children paraded along quite solemnly.

“They ought to dance,” remarked Mabel, referring to the sprites.

“They will when the set is ready,” replied Nance. “They are wonderful little dancers, all from the Kingdom Academy. That school furnishes groups of fairies and sprites for a number of the companies. Come over nearer. The band is ready to play.”

“The band?” questioned Eleanor.

“Yes, you know most scenes are made to music; it inspires! Look at that vamp over there, and see that funny coon playing the fiddle under the big box? That’s to give atmosphere, although I

always think it would give me fits. Hear it squeal."

"How queer?" said Beatrice. "That's the first time I noticed music in the studio. Perhaps we did not happen in at the heavy sets. Oh, how lovely Alene looks!"

"And just wait until the folks realize she is back," said Nance. "I'm putting my time in here on a story, you know. It will be headed, *The Return of the Interal Star, Alene Sherwood*; and I'm counting on using your picture. You made a splendid little scene as you raced for that airplane."

"Nothing serious can happen now," remarked Patsy. "Everything is ready and the camera men are aiming to shoot. I believe that's the way they express action, isn't it?"

"Yes, shoot a picture is the term. And to your first question I would say, nothing serious can happen."

But at that moment there was a rustle of confusion a few feet away. And it was Nettie Nankin who was responsible.

"What does this mean?" she demanded loudly. "That's my place and I don't care how I've been tricked out of it, it's mine, my contract calls for it, and——"

“Wait a minute, wait a minute,” ordered Director Broadbent. “You stand back there, Miss Nankin,” he said in heavy tones of authority. “This is not your part. It was you who tried to trick Alene Sherwood out of it. Now, she’s here and she’s going to make it. You either keep quiet or get out. I’ve had enough of your nonsense. Shoot!” he called to the camera men, and even Patsy stepped back a little fearfully as Nettie Nankin, defeated but yet daring, was forcibly obliged to cease her wild denunciations.

“I’ll get even with those kids,” she insisted, meaning the Wayfarers. “And Nance Rosalee, you had better watch your step. You haven’t that cold thousand yet. I know who found the monkey.”

“She means Ah Wee,” whispered Patsy, “and now we may have another battle to fight.”

CHAPTER XX

PLANS FOR NEW ADVENTURE

BUT Nettie's anger and her loud denunciation of the "kids" who tricked her, and thus managed to get Alene Sherwood back to the coast studio—all this only served to advertise the fact that the popular star had actually returned. The scene that followed the taking of her "set" amounted to an innovation, for everyone seemed to flock around her, delighted to see her back, and anxious to tell her so. For a time it seemed impossible for the directors to go on with their scenes, and not until Terry Marbury and Nance Rosalee promised that Alene would meet "all comers" in the big studio tea room late that afternoon, did the good-natured, happy movie folks consent to go back to their places, and let the camera men finish up the morning's work.

"I'm glad they crowded the sister out," said Patsy. "All this excitement kept Nettie's anger from reaching Alene. I think it would be best to keep those two apart for a few hours at least. Having red hair myself I know it does cool off under proper conditions, and, after all, it is a little hard on Nett."

"Hard on her, indeed!" said Beatrice indignantly. "If it were not for the way Director Broadbent handled her she would have confused Alene so that the set might have been spoiled. Of course that was what she tried to do, to make a failure of it."

"And I heard the scenario director say it was perfect; no retake on that, he said, just as they passed out," Mabel remarked.

"Alene was radiant," commented Eleanor. "I wouldn't wonder but the trip in the airplane did her good, sort of set her up, you know. I should think it would have been more inspiring than all that queer music."

"Come on, girls," urged Patsy. "Aunt Martha will withdraw our freedom cards if we are late for lunch, you know. But it was hard to get away from the excitement. You have no idea how nervous I was when it came to the point of Alene's entrance. I sort of feared Nett would

run out and make a scene, you know. I have heard of actresses pulling each other's hair and all that."

"What interested me most was her threat to get even with us," said Beatrice, as they turned out from the big lot into the general thoroughfare. "What do you suppose she meant?"

"Nance said not to pay any attention to her," replied Patsy. "Likely she will go around and try to stir up trouble about finding the monkey. She may even meet Ah Wee somewhere outside, and urge her to make a claim for the reward. But I talked with Ah Wee yesterday, and she seemed to understand perfectly that it was really Nance who identified Bingo. We had no idea what monkey he was, and very likely would have soon turned him over to anyone who would take him off our hands."

The girls were not losing any time in covering the distance back to the Trellis, and now, leaving Magnolia Lane, they were in sight of the pretty bungalow.

"A car is at the door!" exclaimed Patsy. "Just who could be calling at this hour?"

"It's a taxi," added Eleanor. "One of those from the station."

Lightly they tripped up the steps, and the next

moment Patsy was smothered in a pair of strong arms. The caller was none other than her very welcome daddy, otherwise Mr. Robert Carroll.

“Oh, Daddy!” she exclaimed, when the first embrace gave way to a breathing spell. “I didn’t want to say so, but I have needed you dreadfully. And we have all been lonely, haven’t we, girls?”

“As a composite father, Mr. Carroll,” said Eleanor, “you are carrying a big responsibility, and I, for one, have to admit I was lonely for a daddy.”

“That’s lovely,” replied the happy man, who was browned and handsome in his own splendid way. “I had a letter from your dad, Nellie, and he is satisfied this trip is the best thing to sort of touch off your education. Beatrice, I don’t have to ask you if you are happy, for Sister Martha has been telling me you are fairly crammed with book material, and we may hope soon to see your literary talent shaping itself. Of course, Pat,” and he slapped the girl’s hand with a loving sort of patter, “Pat, here, I know has been turning things upside down, for Broadbent just met me and told me about beating Fate and getting Mrs. Davidson back.”

“You mean Alene Sherwood,” said Patsy,

glowing happily, but refusing to leave the reach of her father's arms. "Yes, we did get her back, and we are about used up with this morning's part of the contract. We all but disrupted the Interl Studio."

"Robert, you must come upstairs and get into another coat," insisted Aunt Martha who had been hovering near, eager to offer some administration of comfort to the traveler. "You can't help being dusty."

"No dust in this verdant pasture," replied Mr. Carroll, "but as you wish, Sister, I will attempt to freshen up a bit. This pongee wrinkles worse than a collar at a political meeting," he said, referring to the light silk summer suit he wore.

"But Daddy, just a minute," begged Patsy. "Did anything wonderful happen that we are favored with this delightful surprise?"

"Well, sort of," he answered quizzically, with a series of winks, any one of which was intended for whomever might catch sight of it. "And I have to admit, Patsy dear, you had a hand in its development."

"Oh, do tell us, Dad," teased Patsy. "We are starved for a morsel of business news, and our new friend, Nance Rosalee, the newspaper girl, is so full of business it just makes us envious. How

have we helped you to get back here? No police summons or anything like that, I hope?"

"Now, little girl, don't insist upon too many particulars and I'll tell you this. Three stars are fighting for the same cast. Alene Sherwood is the rightful owner of the contract, but on account of a long absence it was found necessary to get someone else ready. Her step-sister had been helping in smaller parts, and she just jumped for the big raise. Then it was found she was not exactly the type, and another girl was taken in—a star loaned from a friendly company. Now we have the original back, which ought to settle it all satisfactorily. But the Double Diamond Company is suing the Interals, claiming the right to a big picture, the scenarios of which was written expressly for Alene Sherwood. Only her personal claim can be considered, and you little children have actually coaxed that girl back; she just needed such courage as you seem to have given her."

"But Daddykins, how does all that account for your lovely surprise?"

"Because by coming here I can get a statement from Miss Sherwood, and I hope that will clear up the situation," and he kissed the upturned face before turning to comply with the very urgent

appeal of Miss Martha Carroll, who had been standing all this time, waiting to show her loved big brother to his pretty room.

"Girls, I'm so happy!" declared Patsy, dancing around first to one end of the room then to the other. "Did you quite realize or understand all that legal deposition? You see, I guess a lot of it, but I think it means we won out more prominently than we had any idea of, because we brought the little lady here, set her to work, and thereby proved Daddy's claim. And when he wins the suit for the Interl, girls, I'll set you all up in the most important parts on the screen. You may begin to choose them right now."

"I was so glad to see the dear big man I can hardly think of anything else," said Eleanor. "After all, girls, what is home without a daddy?"

The Chinese maid appeared at the door just then, and hesitated before coming further.

"What is it, Ah Wee?" asked Patsy.

"A lady come to-day," she said. "She is movie girl and she say I find Bingo"—at this she grinned until her teeth stood like a little picket fence outlining her thin lips. "I say no, not so, I just feed Bingo and she slammed door velly mad."

“Don’t mind her, Ah Wee,” said Patsy, now realizing her suspicion on the threat of Nettie Nankin was correct. “She is not honest, not fair. She wants to make Ah Wee say yes, when it is no, Ah Wee did not find Bingo.” Patsy said this very emphatically. “But Miss Carroll, Aunt Martha, you know, will ask Mr. Carroll, my father, to give Ah Wee something very nice for being always—true, trusted servant here.”

Patsy delivered herself of this promise as if it were involved in something a little beneath her usual high standard, but she knew Ah Wee would understand best if a material gift were given her, and aside from the Bingo matter, the little Chinese girl had indeed proven herself a most trustworthy maid.

She was now smiling and bowing, and there was no question about her fullest understanding of Patsy’s offer.

“Not a bribe,” said Bee, as the girl glided through the latticed door, “but it was a clever little trick to keep Ah Wee on our side. It seems to me the Oriental has more honor than has Nett Nankin, the erstwhile movie star.”

Mr. Carroll was back in his fresh linen, and otherwise slicked up. Aunt Martha followed him, and her beaming countenance was a strong

testimonial in his favor. It was good to have a man around.

"Now, little Wayfarers," he began, taking the big chair Patsy had smoothed the cushions in, "I did not bring you much in the way of presents, though there are a few trinkets in my bag, but I brought a new plan. Are you ready for it?"

"All ready!" sang out Patsy.

"Very well. You know I haven't forgotten my promise to give you an adventure on a desert island——"

"Oh, Daddy, are we going some place else?" demanded Patsy, as eager as a child for the new adventure.

"You may go if you wish, and if you can fix it up with the little Aunt Martha."

"I would not really mind a change, Robert," spoke Miss Martha. "This is charming here, but seeing the West means we should keep moving."

"Bravely spoken, sister," applauded Mr. Carroll, "and that is exactly how I feel. I think the girls should see as much of the wonder country as they can assimilate. This is charming here, but it might be a change to get away for a while from all these professionals."

"Just for a while," said Patsy wistfully. "You

know, Daddy, we are very much interested in this big discussion between Alene and Nett."

"Oh, you won't lose track of that issue, don't worry about that. The big suit is just about ready to start its proceedings. You see, there is still another angle to this. Alene, as you call her, has a husband, Ferd Davidson. He has been seriously ill, but is said to have improved. You must have heard about the loss of little Pearl?"

"Oh, yes, we have, Daddy, and we have been wondering if she really was drowned," said Patsy.

"That is a tragic question, and it remains unanswered. By a coincidence the little island we are going to visit is directly off the beach where the tragedy occurred. You may take a hand at clearing up the mystery. I am sure the task would suit you, especially since it concerns your dear friend. Now," he stretched out to a more comfortable position, "is everyone in favor of going to the coast and from there paying a visit to a really wonderful little cliff island? You haven't had a trip in the glass-bottomed boats yet, I suppose."

"No, we haven't, Robert," spoke Miss Carroll, while the girls were gasping in joyous anticipa-

tion. "I have heard so much about them, I am rather anxious to take such a trip."

"Auntie Mattie!" gurgled Patsy. "You are a perfect love. You just make it all so lovely and easy for us, we scarcely have to pack our bags. When do we go, Dad? Girls, aren't you just wild for the new kind of fun?"

"We are," sang out a Wayfarers' chorus, and before the sun had set that evening, they were already packing bags and telephoning preliminary arrangements for the new adventure.

CHAPTER XXI

CHATTER AND CLATTER

“RING up Nance and ask her to run over for a few minutes,” Patsy suggested to Mabel. “We can keep ourselves informed on all the Internal affairs through our progressive little friend, and if it were not for having her on the field I hardly think I would have been satisfied to leave it. You have no idea, Mab, how desperate that foolish Nettie Nankin can be. Last evening she was talking so loudly down at the messenger office, everyone was listening and wondering.”

“Isn’t she queer?—sort of eccentric, I think; everyone is talking about her, and I’m sure she’s spoiling any chance she ever had,” replied Mabel. “I’ll call Nance over and we’ll see what she thinks about it.”

Everyone at the Trellis was hustling about preparing for the little trip to Wonderland, a delightful coast town of lower California with a magic island not too far off to visit in the glass-bottomed boat Aunt Martha had expressed a desire to sail in.

Mr. Carroll was busy at the film office, so he left the bungalow early, after making a promise to return in time for lunch. Beatrice was off to the village getting cameras "loaded" and attending to the home mailing lists, while Eleanor was assisting Aunt Martha and Ah Wee with gathering the last ends for bag packing. To Patsy and Mabel had been committed the charge of all arrangements to be made over the telephone, and it seemed now all bills were paid, checks mailed, phone good-byes said, and only the conference with Nance Rosalee was left as a final clean-up of the Wayfarers' interests in movieland.

"We hope to come back," Patsy said, snapping shut the steamer trunk, "but there's no telling where our steps will wander, so we must finish as we go. There's the bell. That's Nance, I suppose. Fetch her up, Mab, we can talk more quietly here."

The reporter tripped up the steps and descended upon Patsy.

"Oh, I've had the awfulest time," she gasped, and though usually calm and serene, was now flushed and excited. "That Nettie Nankin seems—well, she just seems flighty. She went to Mr. Fairfax and insisted I had nothing to do with Bingo. She even said you girls had him hidden here, and she insinuated Ah Wee had found him in Chinatown. I never saw a girl so desperately jealous, and I wouldn't be surprised but she is holding up Alene's mail from the sanitarium. She is equal to most anything."

"You mean from Ferd Davidson, Alene's husband?" asked Patsy, making a place in the magazine chair for Nance to drop into.

"Yes. You see, she had sort of charge of all of that business while Alene was sick, and now, naturally, everything goes into her hands just the same. If you girls had not overheard her plotting aboard that steamer, I do believe no one would have doubted her at all. Even Terry Marbury wanted to believe she was just temperamental."

"Nance, I think I have discovered a reason back of all her seeming red-headed foolishness," said Patsy. "Of course, I can call her head names, since the same would apply to my own noodle," and she shook the auburn tresses into

a little gale of glints and glows. "Nettie Nankin is no simpleton. She does act like one, I'll admit, but there's a method in her madness, and it has to do with Daddy's lawsuits. You see, girls," and Patsy squatted right down, Turk fashion, between the steamer trunk and the duffle bag, "the Double Diamond Company is after the picture made expressly for Alene and Ferd, and to be directed by the Interals. It has a very complicated copyright, and the picture is so big it promises to be the sensation of the year. Something like a throwback to nature at her best or worse, whichever way you look at it. They say it has more big scenes than all those encyclopedias they pictured a few years ago, but that the novelty of the story is truly artistic in its irrefutable simplicity."

"Pat, love, where have you been getting all that?" asked Nance, surprised at Patsy's technical knowledge of the film fight.

Her gray eyes were soft as a dove's when Patsy told that the evening before she had "helped Daddy fix up some papers."

"You see, girls," she said very gently, "my dear daddy is doing a lot of work outside his own office, and he cannot always depend on strange clerks. So it occurred to me I was just as well

qualified to help him check up his notes on this case as some strange girl would be, and so Daddy and I sat up until almost midnight, but we practically prepared the case for a hearing. And I'm so interested in law I feel like taking a course in Blackstone. It's just fascinating to have a scientific plan for everything, and to weigh the smallest matter on the marvelously delicate scale of legal logic. There, haven't I learned a lot at one sitting?"

"Patsy Carroll, bard," announced Mabel with a bow.

"Bard?" repeated Patsy with a chuckle. "Do you mean bart? That's baronet for me, Mab, when I know law. Beatrice might become the bard. She's the literary songster of the crowd. But I'll accept the compliment with thanks, dear. Now, Nance, time is flying, and we hate to leave you. Do you ever get a chance to run down to the beach?"

"I'm counting on a little vacation soon. You see, my wealth has sort of gone to my head, and I find it hard to keep up the office grind," admitted Nance. "Mother's letter, she is in Oakland, you know, was so full of surprise I just wonder it traveled without igniting the mail packet. Mother was so grieved when I left col-

lege, but I determined to get back this fall and now—— Oh! I wish I could explain what it feels like to be worth a whole one thousand dollars!”

“It is a great deal of money,” Mabel added, “and I don’t believe such astonishingly large sums are paid in anything outside of the movie companies. But the monkey was all trained, and the picture a complete loss without him. So it is understandable, and we are all delighted with your good luck, Nance. I’m sure you deserve it.”

“You see, even I have taken inspiration from you, and now I’m in law. A new kind of inlaws, you know—the harmless, common garden variety,” joked Patsy. “But what about Nettie and Alene? Can we do anything further to help out with that queer tangle? Do you really think she is holding up the mail, Nance?”

“I do. I’ll tell you why. One of the actors had a very brief note from Ferd the other day, and he said it showed a great improvement in Ferd’s condition. Now Alene says she gets no letters at all, and the last were most discouraging. Doesn’t that look like a discrepancy, to say the least?” asked the reporter.

“Don’t you remember the day we left the Fort Lee studio, Pat, a messenger boy was just running out of the office, and he said something about

that girl not delivering messages? I think he said written messages, didn't he, Patsy?" asked Mabel, digressing suddenly.

"You are right, the boy was angry because he left a note or letter for Alene with Nettie, and Alene had not been given it. We thought then it was all a contract matter, but it might just as well have been a more personal affair. But how can we do anything? Where is Ferd Davidson?"

"I think the sanitarium is on the beach near Solhaven," replied Nance. "I can find out and drop you a line. It might not be far from your new quarters."

"Have you ever heard any more about the lost baby?" asked Patsy. "That tragedy seems to haunt all of us. Even Daddy says there is something very queer about it. He has been down to that part of the coast, and he says he cannot see how the little one could have been washed away from that basin. You see, beyond the raft there was a sandbar, and at that time the tide was low and the basin only held enough water to make the picture. Daddy, too, is inclined to feel the baby was lost somehow, but not drowned."

"And Alene says she had Pearl wound up in a cork boat," declared Nance, "and the feeling

that the baby couldn't drown and yet could not be found has almost tortured her to death."

"Shall we be near that picture isle?" asked Patsy reflectively.

"Yes, you are going to Placida Beach and that's just a little way north on the coast, while the islands run around the gulf," said Nance. "I have only been out there once, and I was so busy then I didn't see much but my pad and pencil, but perhaps I'll try the trip again while you girls are there. You may run into a few more thousand-dollar monkeys, sleeping in your bathtubs. No telling, for your limitations are not yet ready for publication, as we say in the *Silverpage* office. By the way, don't forget to see that celebrated sheet this evening. It is to be graced with a long, panel effect illustration of the Wayfarers' welcome to Alene Sherwood, after a sensational trip over the stalled roads in Terry Marbury's airship. Oh, it's thrilling, I can tell you, and that I have a headache to-day is almost excusable, for it was one of the biggest stories I ever put together."

"You poor girl," consoled Mabel. "Why didn't you call on our literary Beatrice? She is really a clever writer, and, I am sure, like Patsy, she would have been glad to give some practical

help. But since it's all over now, we can only hope to do better next time. But I'm crazy to see the paper. I fancy that camera caught me on the wing, so to speak, for I remember meeting with a big rock and I was obliged to vault it. There's Beatrice now, back from the 'cleany-yupp' trip, as Ah Wee might say. Hello, Bee! What's new?"

"Girls!" exclaimed Beatrice, breathless and panting. "It is well for us we are about to leave this little town. Else we might find ourselves unpleasantly famous. Our friend, Nettie Nankin, has literally pasted the place with stories of our daring, not to say dash. And the biggest headline is that we have presumed to invade sacred precincts of moviedom! That we have interfered with the business plans of more than one star (observe the number, please), and that we should be excluded from this restricted colony. Now what do you think of that as a neighborly act?"

"Smaller and smaller," commented Patsy, "but be careful, girls, that no hint of this reaches the ears of Aunt Martha or Dad. While it is unpleasant it is only silly jealousy, and I don't want our protectors to get upset over it. Dad, I do believe, would be apt to take the matter up with the

Interal Company, and that would surely be the end of Nettie as a movie star."

"How can you be so generous, Pat, when that girl has been so despicable?" asked Eleanor.

"Patsy is right," put in Nance, the wise one. "Nett just has to blow off, and you must know this has been dreadfully hard on her. She must be a little bit human, and anyone would feel injured under such circumstances. So, as Pat says, just let it all blow over. Things are surely coming our way."

"And besides," agreed Beatrice, "who will listen to a deposed figurehead? Nettie is all out of luck, and we ought to be a little bit sorry for her, even if she does say unpleasant things about the Wayfarers."

"As an itinerant preacher, Bee, you're a big hit. Pass the hat for my appreciation coin," joked Patsy. "Also see the clock! Stay to luncheon, do, Nancy? We won't have you for so long a time we hate to have you go. Really," and she grasped the reporter's hand in warm friendship. "We have had such a lovely time here fighting battles you have lined up, we will miss you dreadfully."

The firm step of Mr. Carroll on the veranda checked any further protestation of affection.

"Hello, Dad!" called Patsy. "We're all ready but to tip the cabby. Come and eat. Ah Wee has something fixed up, and she declared only a big man like you could eat it properly."

"All right, baby," answered Mr. Carroll, after greeting Miss Rosalee. "But things are happening. Wait till you see your new quarters! I have just hired the weirdest place on Placida Beach and you are to have real Indians for neighbors. There now, does that suit your romantic taste?"

"Indians and cave dwellers. Oh, Nancy, can't you come along? Wouldn't your paper give you a chance to write material from that sort of colony? It's the only drawback—we have to leave you."

"Just wait until I see what happens here in the next few days. Then you may expect me with my pad and pencil, bag and baggage. Good-bye, I'll see you at the station," and the busy little woman left the Wayfarers to their final preparations for Placida Beach.

"Injuns!" said Mabel.

"Spooks!" added Beatrice.

"Mystery!" put in Eleanor.

"You may have all that and more!" declared Patsy, "but I'm going to look for little Pearl."

CHAPTER XXII

OFF FOR THE CLIFFS

WHEN the big open automobile drew up in front of the Trellis, every Wayfarer, including Aunt Martha and Mr. Carroll, was ready to jump in and dash off to the little station, for there remained but just time enough to make the train. Ah Wee was to go along to help carry bags, etc., and just as Patsy turned the key in the lock (she insisted on locking up) Ah Wee uttered a queer sort of yell.

“See! See!” she said. “The men! What for?”

Patsy turned to the end of the bungalow that faced the corner, and she, too, saw the men! There appeared a string of Chinamen or Japs, or whatever variety of Oriental cast that the loose blouse, flapping trousers and flying pigtailed might represent, and they all were running toward the Trellis.

"Whatever is the matter?" Patsy demanded of Ah Wee. "Quick, ask them, Wee-wee, or we shall miss that train."

Jabbing her hands deep in her flowing sleeves, as Ah Wee always did to gesticulate excitement, the little Chinese girl glided like a mouse across the veranda, jumped to the rustic swing that faced the corner in vines and flowers, and called to her fellow countrymen to halt and explain.

At least Patsy believed that was what the queer sounds meant, for the men quickly drew up to the lawn and faced the porch, like a formidable audience, while Patsy sprang up beside Ah Wee in a weak attempt to find out quickly what had caused the avalanche to descend upon them.

The rolling Celestial tongues sounded like a big chorus of throat gargling, and for the next moment Patsy realized she was quite helpless. Outside in the car her father and the others were too surprised to do more than stare, and, of course, the girls did make noises, but they had no effect whatever on the fantastic scene.

"Quick, Ah Wee! What is it?" demanded Patsy.

"They say girl say much monkey here, for lots of money. Come to find monkey. Red-head girl do that," she shouted, meanwhile dancing up



“Quick, Ah Wee! What is it?” demanded Patsy.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY

ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R L

and down on the swaying swing, while Patsy held firmly to the side ropes to insure her balance.

"Send them away!" demanded Patsy.

"No go! Want monkey!" cried little Ah Wee, plainly in despair, for her hands shot in and out of her big sleeves in a perfectly helpless way.

By this time Mr. Carroll had recovered himself sufficiently to realize that the men really wanted something at the Trellis, and he jumped from the car to take his place near Patsy and Ah Wee.

"They want money," said Patsy, her voice falling to zero in a sigh of despair. "And, Daddy, we shall miss that train."

"Go to office," shouted Mr. Carroll.

"Tell them to go to the movie office, Ah Wee," ordered Patsy. "Tell them plenty of work with monkeys there," and the absurdity of this last remark revived Patsy's spirits to the point of real laughter; for as the men now turned to run again down the street—the half-dozen Orientals looked so curious, nothing but laughter, and that of the most uproarious kind, possessed the Wayfarers.

"A queer trick," remarked Aunt Martha, when the gales of joy died down finally to the speaking point. "I am sure that jealous little

actress is responsible for that display of nonsense."

"Right, Auntie," answered Patsy. "But she had her trouble for her pains, as we will make our train after all, and that really furnished us with the best piece of comedy we have seen since we came to the coast. Wasn't it too rich?"

"What did they come for?" demanded Mabel.

"Monkeys," replied Patsy crisply, "and there's our train."

As little Ah Wee reluctantly handed the last bag to the indifferent porter, and Patsy, who insisted on tending to every last business matter, pressed a five-dollar bill into the hand of the trustworthy little servant, and then stepped aboard, Nance Rosalee rushed up to wave them a belated good-bye, and as she did so she pointed with her sunshade to a group of girls standing watching the departure.

"There's Nett," said Eleanor, "her hair is so conspicuous she can't even hide it under a big hat. I am sure she is one, at least, glad to see us go."

"But we haven't left the field uncovered," remarked Mabel. "There goes Nance right up to talk to her. I hope she brings her to her senses, if she has any," and then the train rattled on.

The trip to Placida Beach was made in so short a time it seemed the girls had scarcely finished discussing the "Chinese raid," as Patsy dubbed the descent of the Celestials on Trellis Lodge, when the station, Solhaven, was announced.

"I warn you, young ladies," said Mr. Carroll, as they alighted, "that here I am going to spend a real holiday. Right off this island is situated one of the greatest game-fishing grounds of the world, where they take in tuna, yellow tails, rock bass——"

"Don't tell us, Daddy, or we shall all beg to go with you," interrupted Patsy. "And I know you must want a real man's holiday, without any tiresome girls tagging along. Oh, how wonderful! And we thought we had seen the beauties of the Golden West."

"And just look," begged Beatrice, as they now stood for a moment beside the artistic little mission station. "There's the ocean, here are wild flowers, and over there snow-capped mountains! For varieties of beauty, this is a riot! Oh, why can't we forget the Bowery!" she exclaimed in a serio-comic voice.

"And all the pepper trees!" added Mabel, sniffing the delicate spicelike odor of that gorgeous monarch of the ways, that in its mighty growth

had not been too proud to bear the dainties of red-pink dotted blossoms. "I think," said Mabel, "the pepper tree the most beautiful of all, for it has such a snarly trunk, and by contrast such tiny blossoms."

"Girls! Girls!" called Aunt Martha, "just look at that bower of black-eyed Susans. Can you imagine anything growing so thickly beautiful? I scarcely see room for another stem, yet everyone is happy in its place."

"I wonder if they feel the ill-effects of such congestion?" said Patsy, for the Wayfarers were gazing upon the most solidly woven piece of natural floral tapestry it could be possible even to imagine might exist. Nestled in that growth were brown and terra-cotta bungalows and what color schemes could be more ideal!

"Beauty never fails the eye here," said Mr. Carroll, "and when you get around to it you must see the raisin fields. There's a basin in that valley over there that gives us the most magnificent raisin crops in the world. So you see our beauty can also have an economic value."

"I wonder humans brought up here are not physically superior to all others?" said Patsy. "I've a notion to take a root and try it."

Thus they enthused as they were ever sure to,

on entering new scenes of nature's wonderland.

"Shall we stay at the beach a while or go directly to our cliff dwelling?" asked Mr. Carroll.

"Oh, let's go to the cliffs," suggested Patsy. "That is, if Aunt Martha feels like it. But we are just crazy to see the funny little hanging-basket house against the mountains."

"Very well. Then we take that queer little car over there and wind along the serpentine road, right up into yon mountain. Come along. I'll have the baggage attended to while you find seats."

"Oh, Daddy, is that a cog-rail car?" asked Patsy, as they started over to the small open conveyance which was already well filled with passengers.

"Right, first time, daughter. There's a cog-rail car, and I hope the cogs are strong enough to keep us from slipping down the hills."

"I think we should have taken six months for this trip," said Eleanor. "And it seems to me the only blur on the picture is the fact that all the dear folks at home can't see it with us. Mabel, where did you put mother's letter? I want to read it again as I climb up that hill."

"I have almost forgotten the heathen Chinese with his pig-tail as seen in our last look at the

Trellis," sighed Patsy. "And my eyes are already peeling for the sight of Injuns!"

Along the winding path, that led to the mountain side, they were now being carried in the super-checked electric car, and not even the caterpillar crawl of the war-time tanks, could have seemed more secure in its tenacious grip as it went.

In open caves that pierced the mountain sides, the remains of real cliff dwellings could now be seen, and in imitation of these famous habitations, the modern summer-resort houses were built like little plaything palaces set on their rocky shelves.

"I suppose you know all about the mysterious people who must have lived here before the Apaches came?" said Mr. Carroll, "although there is little to know—absolutely no records of these people; these gigantic cliff dwellings give us a clear idea of what intelligent people they must have been."

"There's my Injuns!" exclaimed Patsy. "See the blankets and in mid-summer!"

"They don't dare leave them down or someone else will pick them up—irretrievably," said Mr. Carroll, who was exultant in giving out so much interesting information.

“Tontonia!” called the erstwhile conductor, and in front of a wonderful old mission place, shelved in a rock like all the other cliff dwellings, the Wayfarers were again introduced to an ideal habitation, in the golden hills of Southern California.

“See that old Indian woman staring at us?” asked Patsy. “I’m going to choose her as my guide.”

CHAPTER XXIII

A QUEER DISCOVERY

“**T**HE marvels of this place seem sufficiently absorbing,” remarked Patsy, “but we have simply got to follow the trail of lost little Pearl. I do not believe that child ever left the territory where the accident occurred, and Dad says that basin over there is the very spot where it all happened.”

“We all feel exactly as you do, Patsy,” spoke up Beatrice, “and in spite of the almost irresistible attractions, we must first see what we can do to unravel the mystery. If we fail, we will at least have done our best, and then we may finish our vacation with easy consciences.”

It was the day after their arrival at the little cliff house, and already the picturesqueness of the quaint Indian village had wrought its fascinating spell over the Wayfarers. Aunt Martha de-

clared she would postpone the sail to Quito Island at least for a few days, as she was so charmed with the new surroundings, it was her wish to remain quietly and enjoy it all. Nor could anyone be blamed for such scenic intoxication—in fact, the human mind seems too puny to grasp the varied grandeur of the West as seen by Patsy Carroll and her party.

“We will try the glass-bottomed boats after all this has been viewed and deliberated upon,” Miss Carroll told the girls that morning. “But I feel quite as if I had entered another life. I fancy, Patsy, you would call that soul expansion.”

“Auntie mine!” exclaimed the fair-haired girl, gently tucking the soft Indian scarf over the willow chair back, “don’t you dare go into anything so elusive. You may expand your soul to your heart’s content, but see to it that the exercise takes place on the home field. There!” and she pressed an explosive kiss somewhere on the faintly flushed cheek. “We are going bathing in that wonderful pool of salt water, that has crept in from somewhere and can’t get out again. Come on, girls! Let’s surprise the Injuns with our speed to the basin, but be careful of flint rocks or other impediments, and have slippers well tied on.”

“And this is really the scene of the tragedy!” Mabel repeated, when they had reached the water’s edge.

“Yes, Dad tells me a raft was built right here, and, as the pool was so shallow and actually built in by a sandbar, there was no thought of accident, when suddenly something gave way, and all the children (there were four, I believe) were upset into the water. Then Ferd Davidson, who was outside in the ocean scene, saw the accident and knew his baby was in it, and he jumped from the raft he was supposed to be clinging to, and tried to swim back. In the effort he was almost lost, and the whole thing was simply frightful.”

Patsy paused and glanced about reflectively. Somehow the gentle day seemed vibrant with a baby’s cry, and as the girls looked in the direction the sound came from they saw children playing along the water’s edge.

“And Alene is such a girl herself,” mused Beatrice. “I don’t wonder such a thing would blight her life.”

“It could not be possible that step-sister would in any way be implicated in the child’s disappearance?” asked Mabel. The girls made no attempt to enter the water, but just sat on the sand there pondering. The lure of mystery and the

possibility of finding the dearest of life's treasures—a little child—had completely engrossed them.

"No, it does not seem reasonable to think of anything so monstrous as that," replied Patsy. "Nettie is foolishly ambitious, and would do very silly things, but not anything really malicious," declared the champion of all girls.

"What do you propose doing, Pat?" asked Eleanor. "Are we going in the pool or shall we take a run down to the ocean?"

"Suppose we just walk along where those children are playing?" said Patsy. "Somehow I have a weakness for babies this morning. This air is just heavenly with flowers and sea mist, perhaps that all makes me think of darling little cherubs."

It was delightful to stroll along in the soft, damp sand, and it did seem as if more kinds of shells managed to pile up along the edge there than the girls had ever before seen at the seashore.

"Even the shells are more prolific," said Beatrice. "It is surely a luxuriant country."

"See those children scamper!" cried Mabel suddenly. "I guess they are afraid of us."

"And do look at that funny little boat! That's an Indian child in it," said Patsy. "And what

wild efforts he makes to get to shore? I wonder why they are afraid of us."

"Perhaps our bathing suits are too startling," suggested Eleanor. "Mab, I always told you that sash would raise a riot—and now here is my promise fulfilled."

"The sailor is in, and see! He abandons his craft!" exclaimed Beatrice, for the little Indian who had been paddling around was now ashore, and ran off, leaving the queer bark to bob up and down on the small wavelets.

The girls hurried along to see what the odd boat really looked like close by.

"I don't see how the child stayed put in that," said Mabel. "Let's run in after it, and see how the Indians make their canoes, although I am sure that is a broken washtub," she finished.

"And I think it looks more like an old wooden basin," said Patsy. "But it is so odd, do let us catch it, and then decide the puzzle."

They dove into the creek-like pool, and it took but a few strokes to reach the curious craft.

"It's a big wooden shell!" exclaimed Beatrice. "No wonder we were fooled with it. Just see!"

"Oh, it must be some part of movie paraphernalia," said Patsy. "Look at the deep little

basin, and see! It is just like a fountain shell, only it is all made of wood."

"That's it," agreed Eleanor, as all four stood around in the shallow water and examined the curiosity. "It is just like a fountain basin, and it must certainly have been built for movie work."

"You don't suppose the prehistoric monsters we studied about last year ever used that sort of thing for a soup dish?" asked Beatrice. "You know they grew those sort of animals thirteen feet high, and I remember they bathed on these very shores."

"You remember?" joked Patsy.

"I remember the lesson said so," corrected Beatrice. "But suppose we take the shell into shore and further satisfy our morbid curiosity? I do really wonder if this thing is the work of a plain movie carpenter or some ingenious Indian?"

It was only a playful task to push the little wooden basin into shore, and then, turning it over on the beach, the girls squatted in the sand to examine it.

"Oh, look! Here are letters!" cried Patsy, excitedly. "And, girls, really—look! It spells P-e-a-r-l! Pearl! That's the baby's name! That baby must have been in this shell!" she fairly gasped in her excitement.

“So it is!” added Beatrice, running her finger over the letters to trace their outline. “That is really the name of Alene’s baby. How do you suppose those Indian children came by this play boat?”

“They might have salvaged it, of course,” said Patsy, “but it seems to me something of a clue.”

So intent were they on examining the wooden shell they did not hear a stealthful step come up behind them, until a big, rough Indian woman was fairly upon them.

“Ugh!” she grunted fiercely. “Me boat!” and she brushed her heavy, bulky form into the group so roughly that Mabel actually fell over in the sand. Her coarse blanket swished in their faces and the girls drew back as quickly as their unfavorable positions would allow.

There was no mistaking her manner—she was angry and threatening. She grunted and scowled until the girls lost all interest in the toy she was now trying to lift in her powerful arms. Her moccasined feet fairly trod upon the bathing caps the Wayfarers had placed beside them; and nothing short of the quickest possible spring to her feet saved Beatrice from actual disaster under the awkward trampling of the Indian.

"What's the matter?" demanded Mabel.
"Speak English?"

"No good, come here!" growled the woman.
"This Indian place, no white man." She now had a sort of portable hold on the queerly carved wooden shell, and, as she shambled off, she managed to shift it to her head, carrying it thus perhaps in imitation of the Mexicans.

For a few seconds the girls could do nothing more comprehensive than stare after her and gasp. Then Eleanor said:

"Why did we let her take it? That was an important clue!"

"And we will lose all trace of it if we do not find out where she goes," added Patsy. "We shall have to follow her."

"Oh, I'm afraid of her!" protested Eleanor.
"She is fierce enough to scalp us."

"Hardly that," put in Mabel. "But I'll admit she is by no means a gentle little lady. Come along, girls. Hurry! She will dodge under those rocks and be lost forever if we do not run!"

"But why do we follow her?" demanded Eleanor, who was, however, running along with just as much determination as the others. "What can we do about the old tub shell, anyway?"

“Know where it is if we want it,” replied Patsy crisply. “Although even finding her hut will be no guarantee that we shall ever see her again.”

“All Injuns look alike to me,” sang out Beatrice. “Except this particular one looks like all the others—in composite, you know.”

“And did you ever notice how those foreigners, including native Indians, always get mad in their own language?” asked Patsy, between jumping over a rock and tying her bathing slipper. “They may speak a little English but they never get mad in English, not strong enough I suppose.”

“She halts,” said Beatrice melodramatically. “See, she shifts the tub, and prepares to duck. Now, girls, peel your eyes and note the rock she chooses. Then we may undertake some subterranean exploration.”

And when last seen the Wayfarers were close on the heels of the big blanket Indian, who was now unable to keep up her pace with the unwieldy wooden shell.

CHAPTER XXIV

BRAVING REAL DANGER

“OH, do you think we dare go in that cavern?” asked Eleanor, her voice betraying fear and alarm.

“Yes, of course,” scoffed Patsy. “You can see that group of rocks only extends a short distance, so there must be an outlet where the boulder ends. We will be sure to come out the other side.”

“Or find ourselves in an Indian pirate cave,” said Beatrice gaily. “Can’t tell what we may discover in there. Wish I had my tomahawk.”

“I’ll tell you,” said Patsy in a decisive tone. “You two, Mab and Nell, stay out here to guard this end, so there will be no danger of an Apache uprising closing in on us. If you see any more Indians coming, shout at the top of your voices, and we will come back quickly.”

It was spooky, to say the least, and the girls were determined to know as much about it as possible before entering the dark, rocky cave. For this purpose Patsy climbed to a little shelf that formed like a cornice over the aperture, and from that rugged balcony she leaned, her feet stretched out flat behind her, and her two arms clinging determinedly to the jagged rocks. In this position she almost hung head down to peer into the cavern.

“I can see light, so I don’t believe it is very risky,” she decided, as Beatrice assisted her to make a safe landing. “Come on, Bee. You can use my head for a flashlight, I’ll show the way.”

The Indian woman had disappeared within that rock, but, as the girls watched her, it was very apparent that the front door to the cave was never built to accommodate anything so sizeable as the carved wooden shell. In fact, how she did finally manage to thrust it in ahead of her was not entirely clear to the watchers from their safe distance on the sands.

And now the girls were determined to follow up the trail. They sensed mystery in the fact that the woman was so angry at their discovery of the shell, and that fact, with the carved letters,

indicated a clue to the mystery of little Pearl's disappearance.

"All ready!" exclaimed Beatrice, striking a comical attitude and turning a few jerky steps of the sun dance.

"Wayfarers we!" announced Patsy. "Give me that stick, Mab. In lieu of a tomahawk it might serve to stay a horned toad—if any such frequent these caves."

"Please, please, Patsy," begged Eleanor, "don't go too far in. I am sure Aunt Martha would never permit it."

"All right, Nellie. I'll promise not to go past the first dangerous turn, and really I don't blame you for being scary, for friend Injun did look 'blankety-blank,' and all that. I think we have about given her time to emerge at the other end. I have been purposely delaying to provide for that contingency. So come, valiant one," to Beatrice. "Take care of your bathing slippers and keep your cap well down on your ears. These togs are just right for subterranean exploration. Bye-bye, girls!"

"Careful!" breathed Eleanor; then Patsy and Bee disappeared.

For a few seconds the girls on the outside of the cave seemed panic-stricken. It was awful to

have their chums go in there, but Patsy was determined to follow up the Indian woman, and would not listen to the word delay.

"I'm so frightened," said Mabel, taking her sister's hand while her own trembled in the attempt to gain comfort in that gentle way.

"Oh, they'll be all right, Mab," the other assured her. "Pat and Bee have both gone into lots more dangerous holes than this. You remember the tussle out in Wilderness Lodge, and the real fight we had with that dreadful old woman down South? Surely this is tame compared to those experiences."

"I'll watch this way, and you keep your eyes on the trail along the beach," said Mabel, seeming to gain courage as she became accustomed to the adventure. "I'm sure the girls will only stay in there a few minutes."

But it already seemed like ages since Patsy's bright head lost itself in the darkness of the rocks. Mabel and Eleanor stood alone there, a queer sort of guard, uniformed in their fashionable bathing suits.

"Oh, Nellie!" suddenly exclaimed Mabel. "There's an Indian coming! Quick, let us call!"

"Yes, but he may not be coming this way," demurred the sister momentarily. "But we'll call

to make sure. I'll go in to the mouth of the cave."

As Eleanor poked her head in the cavity and shouted, Mabel clung to her skirts, fearful of letting her go too far into the uncertain darkness, and the next moment both girls called:

"Pat! Bee! Come out!" they shouted clearly. Then they waited.

"Perhaps they can't come, someone may be within hearing," said Mabel. "Shall we call again?"

"Yes, once more. Then we will wait. Ready!"

In one voice the girls shouted again, and as the echo of their voices died down, they stepped outside and waited, dread and fear stamped on their youthful faces.

"Oh, sister," murmured Mabel. "I would not have been so frightened if we had gone. It's just the awful dread for Bee and darling Patsy."

"Here they come! I hear them!" exclaimed Eleanor exultantly. "Oh, I know they are all right, for I can hear Pat laugh."

"Hurry! Hurry!" called Mabel into the cave. "Someone is coming!"

The next moment Patsy and Beatrice emerged from the rocks. They both showed signs of rough traveling, but their faces were merry, and their

sparkling eyes answered the question the watchers eagerly asked.

“Yes, we are all right,” panted Patsy. “But we have had a great adventure. What was wrong at this end?”

“There’s an Indian creeping along that path,” breathed Eleanor. “Quick, let’s get out on the roadway. You can tell us when we reach safety.”

Without attempting to right their disheveled appearance, Patsy and Beatrice followed willingly. The torn rubber caps told of hard fighting for passage under the rocks, and Patsy’s hair stood out like an electrified brush, around her prettily flushed face.

“Home, James,” called Beatrice facetiously. And as they finally found footing on the open roadway a unanimous sigh of relief was sent up by the Wayfarers.

“I prefer to make my investigations in the open,” said Patsy. “As an adventure that jaunt was a thrill. Girls, where can we sit down? I’m tuckered out, if I do admit it. Come over on the beach, and let us grab a few mouthfuls of clean air. I hate murky caves.”

“See that old Indian go in. Now what would we have done if you hadn’t come out in time?” murmured Eleanor.

"I know, I would have died—simply died," declared Mabel. "I almost collapsed as it was. You have no idea, girls, what an eternity it seemed."

"But now tell us—what?" demanded Eleanor.

"Enough to make your hair straight," said Patsy, serious and betraying anxiety. "There is an Indian village or camp on the other side of that rock, and we saw the woman with the big shell!"

"You did!" gasped Eleanor.

"Yes," Beatrice added to Patsy's telling, "and they have a lot of children in there. They are Indian children, we suppose, but I felt, and so did Pat, it would be very easy to hide a white child in that colony."

"And I think we may as well tell you girls, we saw something that made us very suspicious. We sort of felt we ought not to frighten you with the story just yet, but I am sure you want to know all about it."

"Of course," Eleanor said, almost indignantly. "We were only fearful for your safety."

"We know that very well, my dear, but the sight back of that rock rather took our breath if we had any left. It was that awful old woman holding a little boy over the shell, while another

woman poured something over the child. The youngster kicked and yelled, but the liquid was not hot, we are sure of that, for there was no hint of suffering in the child's cry—just kicking mad, you know."

"What could that have meant?" interrupted Eleanor.

"Perhaps some religious rite," suggested Patsy, "for a lot of young Indian girls were shouting, or chanting, or they may even have been protesting for all we could tell. You can believe us, girls, we stayed all set to run, and we didn't go too near the opening of the tunnel either."

"I should think not," said Mabel. "I shouldn't have waited to see all that, I would have run first thing."

"Yes, and we saw the youngster squirm from the grasp of the old squaw and run about shaking like a dog just out of a pond. We were so glad to see that the baby wasn't hurt, we, too, turned and ran when the queer bath was over. And here we are," she concluded with a sigh of genuine relief.

"Do you suppose the old woman was angry about the shell on account of some religious significance?" asked Mabel.

“Even at that the name ‘Pearl’ is carved on the big basin, and, oh, yes, we forgot to tell you. Friend squaw never crawled through there with the shell. There is a big rift in the rocks just a little way in, and a rope ladder could be seen from the top. Also we saw a big, strong rope fixed up as a pulley, so we guessed Dame Striped-Blanket had help to get the shell to camp.”

“And did you girls go up the rope ladder?” asked Eleanor excitedly.

“No, indeedy,” replied Patsy. “We were not quite as wild as all that. Just fancy being pulled up by a couple of fighting-mad Injuns! Whoo-pee!” she exclaimed. “Not indeed did we do anything so rash. We just crawled, and crept for the light we could see through the tunnel, and we came back in the same subway. But I like the Manhattan Tubes best,” she finished, tossing a capfull of sand at the startled little Nellie.

“Shall we take a dip?” suggested Beatrice. “I’m sure we shall enjoy it. Come along, girls, and forget the Injuns for the nonce.”

They had chosen a secluded corner of the beach and the morning bathers were almost gone. It was delightfully refreshing to swim against the playful waves.

But the departure of the grown-ups seemed to mark the incoming of the children, for quickly as the fashionable folks left the water's edge the little ones ran down from the hills, and seemed to pop up on the beach like animated driftwood.

The Wayfarers swam about for a while, and then, as if feeling the need of local companionship, they left off the exercise to make friends with the children.

"We can only stay a few minutes longer," warned Patsy. "But I would like to ask these kiddies about the Indians. They may know something about the big shell."

In one group of the playful youngsters, a sturdy little fellow was delighting his companions with wonderful antics. Just now he managed to stand on his head while Jimmie counted ten. The Wayfarers watched on the edge of the circle, but quickly as their presence was discovered the play stopped.

The performer, whom his companions called Noisy, left off all capering and came directly up to Patsy in a friendly, questioning attitude.

"Hello," said Noisy, crisply. "Who' you lookin' fer?"

"No one 'special," answered Patsy. "Just

watching your jolly play. Do you live around here?"

"Yep."

"Where?"

"Over there," a stubby thumb pointing to a settlement on the hillside.

"Do you know the Indians?" ventured Mabel.

"Sure, everyone does," said Noisy with a deprecating grin.

"Who are they who live behind that big rock?" asked Beatrice, following the boy's own direct manner.

"Oh, you don't want to bother with them, they're fierce," said Jimmie, who was evidently Noisy's second or backer.

"How are they fierce?" urged Patsy, tossing pebbles to a fair-haired little girl to assure the children of her genuine good fellowship.

"Oh, they take the little Indians to the movie places and get money for lettin' them work in the pictures, and they never want them to mix up with Americans. 'Fraid we'd get in on the work, I guess," said Noisy wisely.

"Did you ever see the big wooden shell they play with?" Eleanor asked next. The children did not seem to resent the questioning.

"Oh, sure, lots of times. They make pictures

with that," insisted the little girl, smiling as if the shell were a personal play-toy.

"And what's that stuff they wash the children in?" Patsy put the question indefinitely, believing the children might understand it best in that way.

"You mean the dye? Oh, they put that on to color the kids. Some of 'em ain't dark enough," said Noisy.

"Come on, fellers," called a larger boy, who just then came dripping from the water. "I'll race you! It's eatin' time," and without further ado the happy youngsters scampered off, leaving the girls to make their way back to the cliff bungalow.

"I feel a little more human since I spoke to real children," commented Beatrice. "But the sight of the Injuns behind the rock still blurs my vision."

"But did you hear what they said about coloring the children, that some were not dark enough?" exclaimed Patsy. "Didn't that make you suspicious?"

"Not dark enough! Why——" Beatrice pulled Patsy to a complete standstill. "Do you mean to say they might have a white child mixed up with their own?" she exclaimed.

"I don't see why they would use a dye on their own swarthy skins," answered Patsy. "But do let us hurry. Time always drags so to Auntie when we wander in strange places. Besides, Dad may be back from the office, and there is so much to talk about. We must tell him of our adventure, and get his expert opinion on the Indian cave dwellers. Also on the curious man-made shell," she finished.

And five minutes later they were unfolding the tale to Aunt Martha. Needless to remark, the adventure was well toned down and discreetly censored, before the sensitive ears of their chaperone were treated to it.

Mr. Carroll had not returned to lunch.

CHAPTER XXV

THE PANORAMA OF MYSTERY

“**A**ND it was the most picturesque sight, Auntie,” continued Patsy. “A whole colony of Indians just huddled up back of the rocky hill, doing woosy things.”

“But to get there, wasn’t it rather dangerous to go through that sort of tunnel?” asked the little lady with the white silk scarf over her silvery head.

“Just close quarters; and Bee would insist upon seeing how tall she could make herself every time we struck a low bridge,” replied Patsy. “But here’s a messenger. Now I know Dad isn’t coming home to-day. Isn’t that mean?”

They had lunched and were sitting on the dove-cote portico, that hung over a big rocky ledge, the rugged winding way to and from their bungalow. The boy with the yellow message envelope stick-

ing out of his irresponsible pocket tacked along on his wheel, until he reached the corkscrew turn; then he dismounted, dropped the bicycle against the big pine tree, and, espying the party on the porch, brought forth his message. It was addressed to Miss Carroll.

"Read it, Pat dear," she said. "I hope nothing has happened to your father."

"No, thank goodness, he is all right but called away suddenly," said Patsy after a glimpse at the brief message. "Letter will follow," she finished reading. "Mab, please sign and pay the boy. Now, what do you think has called Dad away?"

The boy, overhearing this conversation, doffed his ragged cap, and said the special mail would be out in forty-five minutes, inferring the letter to follow might answer the anxious question.

Patsy thanked him, and, as he coasted away down the uncertain path over the foothills, the girls fell to pondering. What was the new trouble that now detained Mr. Carroll?

"I am sure it is something connected with the Inter-al suit," commented Patsy when Miss Carroll stepped into the living-room, thus leaving the young folks to their own reflections. "And I must admit I am a little apprehensive. It may

be our experience of the morning—those Indians with their hideous blankets and their cable braids of hair, have just seared my brain—scorched it, you know, and I can't get the sight of that wiggling baby out of my mind."

"That's reaction," said Mabel. "Let us take a stroll down over the little path by the summer house. We haven't been around that way yet, and I want a close view of the flowering hedge. Isn't it gorgeous?"

"That's the purple-bud," described Beatrice, "and it won't grow in the lowlands. Yes, it is wonderful. Come along, Pat, and brush the cobwebs from your brain with a broom of flowering purple-bud," she poetized.

Rather reluctantly, Patsy complied with the girl's demands. Everyone seemed to sense impending trouble, and considerately the others tried to hide it from their hostess.

"I don't want to wander far," qualified Patsy, as they started on, "as I am sure Dad's letter will come along next special post. I hope nothing serious has happened out in movieland. Nettie has more time for mischief now that we are out of her field, and that fact is a little disconcerting."

"I hope she sends that troop of Chinamen into Mr. Broadbent's studio," commented Mabel

facetiously. "I am sure they would make a wonderful picture."

"And can you imagine any brain evolving humor out of a joke of that kind?" ruminated Patsy. "'Till my wedding day I shall never forget the scene with Ah Wee on the swing! so stagey, and the pig-tailers out front for an audience."

"And you were in that picture yourself, Pat," Eleanor reminded her. "Seems to me you looked pretty well, all framed in with the Rambler roses. But why qualify the memory to your wedding day? Isn't that rather limited?"

"Yes, but I am not even going to mention dying day—it's a gloomy old adage. Besides, it seems to me a wedding day is sufficiently long enough to remember such things. There comes the special delivery boy. Come along—or do you want to stay for more flowers, Mabel?"

"No, I have plenty, and I am as eager as the rest to hear the news," replied Mabel, gathering a few more especially tempting sprays of golden poppies.

A few minutes later the girls were sitting on a tree stump, reading the letter.

"Just as I thought," said Patsy, "it is about Alene. Dad says she has lost all the animation

she seemed to have regained, and the Interal Company expects to release her. That would mean a triumph for Nettie, although her part need not concern us, but the entire production goes to the other company unless Alene plays it."

Patsy allowed the letter of explanation to fall in her lap. Her youthful face showed the frown of anxiety, and her gray eyes were misty with the hint of tears.

"Just when everything was going so beautifully," sighed Mabel. "Oh, Pat, you know things always come your way in the end, why do you feel so blue?"

"Because I need Dad's advice and he isn't here to give it. But I'll just shake myself out of it. And girls! to-morrow we are going to find out about those Indian children. I can't get that scene off my mind until I do," she wound up emphatically.

"No more can I," declared Beatrice, "and the children's explanation of that coloring process makes me feel all the surer there is a clue there. Don't you suppose that little youngster we saw the old squaw sprinkling was about three years old, Pat?"

"Yes, and I also think the child's hair was soft

and fine, even if it was dark. The way the baby fluffed it up after the wetting looked to me as if it were not a bit like the close, heavy Indian crop the others were adorned with. Now, girls, we must see the inside of that camp, or we must see the babies out of it. And how are we going to do either?"

"Please don't crawl through that awful place again!" protested Mabel. "I feel just as you do, Pat, that there may be a clue to the missing baby back of the big rock, but please don't go over there again." Mabel was so serious in her protestation she had seized Patsy's hands and was pleading earnestly.

"All right, little girl," replied Patsy. "I do not think we would want to try that again ourselves. But the shell marked Pearl, and the coloring of the little tot——" she paused and glanced over the beauty of the landscape with eyes dead to all beauty, and only seeing a great dim possibility. "I'll tell you, little sisters," she exclaimed suddenly, "I'll telegraph Nance Rosalee to come down! She will know if there is any real ground for all our suspicion."

"The very thing!" chimed in Eleanor, who had been unusually quiet. "Nance will surely be able to solve the riddle of the shell at least. She knows

so much about the making of the pictures. What a joke it would be——”

“If the shell should turn out another find like Bingo,” Patsy finished. “Oh, jolly! I’m no longer blue, but a beautiful yellow, just blazing at the thought of Nance on the mystery scent! Besides, girls, don’t you think it is a little lonely here after all the life at Trellis? I think Nance the very cure for all our worries, and I know Auntie will be delighted, for she looked sort of glum when Dad’s first message came. Come along, chicabees, we’ll just tell Auntie, then over to the telegraph office. We will just about get Nance in at dinner time, and I shall beg her to come immediately.”

“There’s that crowd of urchins we met on the beach,” Eleanor pointed out as they hurried along and caught sight of the boys picking flowers and gathering them in baskets. “I suppose they sell those wild flowers at the hotels.”

“At the trains, I fancy,” said Patsy. “But I want to say a word to the little fellow they call Noisy. I wonder what his civilized name might be?”

“Call ‘him Oh-boy or Attaboy,” suggested Mabel. “Wait, I’ll get him for you, Pat. In fact, I’ll do a lot more for you to show you how

glad I am you are not going to crawl through that rock again. I think I lost pounds in the minutes I waited on the ingoing end," and she raced off to get the boy called Noisy.

"He will think we want to buy his flowers," said Eleanor.

"So we shall," assented Patsy, "Those are beautiful and Aunt Martha will love them."

"Here's the boy," said Mabel, returning with the freckled-faced little fellow. "Aren't his flowers wonderful?"

"I'm going to have that big bunch of wild azelia, they're like a painting," declared Patsy, genuinely pleased with the display in the basket.

The offer to buy, as a commercial introduction, was all the child needed to set him talking; and presently Patsy wondered how she was going to stop him long enough to ask a single question. He talked of the bungalow folks, the cliff dwellers, the movie stars, the big company working on the ocean front, where he declared the "greatest picture in the world" was being made, and altogether his volubility seemed almost too big a bargain thrown in with flowers.

"Isn't he interesting?" said Mabel aside to Beatrice. "Really a bright little fellow," she

commented, as Patsy plied question after question upon the accommodating native.

"Do the Indians come down to the beach with their children?" Patsy asked presently, taking another bunch of poppies from the big basket and making a picture of herself between the armfull of colorful decorations.

"I'll go with you and show you where you can see them close up," offered Noisy, and his use of the movie term "close up" betrayed his familiarity with the local art.

"Oh, that will be splendid," Patsy answered, brightening visibly. "When can we go?"

"To-morrow morning—that's Tuesday, isn't it?" the boy answered and asked. "Yep, that's the day they all go to Pete's market to buy their grasses. You see, old Pete is a big Indian that gets the grasses from another bunch of Indians out on the prairies," explained Noisy. "And these here rocky cliff dwellers buy the stuff from him and weave their baskets out of 'em. Did y'u see the baskets they make? They sell them, but they're awful cheats if you don't watch them!" declared the boy.

"But wouldn't they be friendly if we offered to buy their baskets and then we would have a chance to get acquainted?" suggested Patsy,

eager to take advantage of the boy's offer to bring her in touch with the Indians.

"Yep, they'll fall quick fer money," said Noisy. "Well, I'll come up to your place and get you."

"Suppose you do," Beatrice took a hand in the plans. "We will be ready any time you say. And you positively won't disappoint us?"

"I'll be there," declared the boy, smiling his thanks for Patsy's generous payment. "And I'll come alone. The Indians don't like some of the kids."

The "kids" referred to were now shouting for Noisy, and, in spite of the lure the Wayfarers offered, he did manage finally to break away, and lug his basket of perfumed color with him, to the waiting group on the big black rock.

"Now we are getting at it," declared Patsy as they were left alone. "We may talk to the Indians, offer to buy baskets, and perhaps have a chance to look over their better babies contest."

"But it doesn't seem likely they would take those very little tots to old Pete's grass market," objected Eleanor.

"Yet we might find an excuse to go into their village——"

"Now you promised, Pat," cried out Mabel.

"You are positively not to go to those dreadful places."

"Girlie! Girlie!" soothed Patsy with a smile. "One would think the poor old Indians were actually scalping folks and war-dancing over their unfortunate remains. Instead of which, the very worst thing we can accuse them of is bathing babies in hair dye, to tint them up for the movies. Mabsie, dear, don't think so hard of the Indians: they gave us the wherewithal for corn muffins, you know. Now, here we are home and there is Auntie waiting for us. Look pleasant, that's the cue, you know."

But Aunt Martha's face told its own story. Her face showed fright, and, before the girls reached her side, Patsy's critical eye discerned trouble.

"I am so glad you are back," said the little lady, her voice tremulous. "I have been so anxious—those awful Indians have been here."

"I am so sorry we all went out together, Auntie dear," soothed Patsy, pressing a great bunch of golden poppies into the trembling hands. "But the Indians go to all the cottages. Were they selling baskets?"

"Yes, they said they were, that is, they offered the baskets; but they talked so wild, and kept

pointing to things around this cottage. Patsy, dear, I feared they knew that you lived here."

A perfect gale of laughter greeted this naïve remark.

"Feared they knew I lived here," repeated Patsy, her tone embodying an apology for the laugh and a reason for the joke. "Am I a sort of thing to be feared, dearie?"

"I don't mind your laughing, girls; in fact, I am glad of its invigorating influence, for I have been a little dull," said Miss Carroll in her most gracious way. "But what I meant was, I feared the Indians were angry with Patsy and Beatrice for following them to their hidden camp, and somehow they may know this is where the invaders live."

"Did they say anything you could understand?" asked Patsy.

"One very clumsy old woman, with the tightest-woven braids of hair I have ever seen even on an Indian's head, was especially cross," replied Miss Carroll. "She wore a blanket with a big black and green stripe—I think I have seen her before down in the village selling papers, and if I am not mistaken she usually has a couple of little Indian children with her. One little boy I noticed was so quaint. He wore an American

boy's cap all decked out in chicken feathers, and over his little shoulders he had stretched a big red bandanna handkerchief. It was his attractive face that led me to scrutinize the old woman. Patsy dear, are you sure you are not antagonizing those savages with your search for that lost child? You know they are very sensitive and a word said about them stirs their ire."

"But nothing really happened to frighten you, did there, Auntie?" asked Patsy, cataloging the old Indian woman as she who reclaimed the shell. She was anxious to break the news contained in Mr. Carroll's letter, and feared it would cause additional worry to Aunt Martha.

"I am not sure, but I fancied the old woman kept saying, 'Come back, come back,' and I thought she might be threatening to come back. But there, I have indulged my whims more than usual, and I am going to be very good," offered Aunt Martha. "Shall we all freshen up before dinner and take a walk down to the beach? I'll do anything you say," and she threw her arms around her niece like the girl that she was, in spite of her silvery years.

"Let's go out on the sunset porch first," suggested Patsy. "I have a letter from Dad, and I'm going to invite Nance Rosalee down for a

week. There, Auntie, which subject shall I discuss first? The letter, of course. Come along. It isn't very newsy, but infers his lawsuit is becoming complicated. I am afraid I'm not a very good law partner. I operate by long distance," rattled on the sunny-haired girl, who knew better how to cheer than to sadden. "See those colors! The sunset doubles its glow in the lake. I'm sure that floral display over there is the only bit of heaven in captivity. This Golden West must be the end of the trail over which paradise passed out!"

"Poet-Pat!" exclaimed Beatrice. "That's a great thought, yet may we pause and memory wake, the muse of paradise to take," she quoted. "The line is mine, dear, but I am going to embellish it with your Paradise Trail."

And it was a path of glory that dipped the sunset glow in the little lake and hid there, while Patsy read her letter to Aunt Martha. But Indian shadows frowned over rocky cliffs, and the very peaks seemed hewn in formidable giant faces. What would the morrow bring forth?

CHAPTER XXVI

THE INDIAN TRADING STATION

NOISY knew the way. The girls decided that when he had led them along the beach, up into little forests of black-green pines, up again into baby cliffs, paths choked by granite rocks only to pick up their determined way on the other side with renewed purpose: winding out about tortuous streams—such a variety of scenic effects as can never be imagined from a feeble printed page—along this chaotic, teasing way their sturdy little guide led the Wayfarers.

“Is it much farther?” asked Eleanor, shaking sand, pebbles and brushwood from her low shoes (Patsy called the collection “pedal scenery” and always advised real boots against the uncomfortable accumulation).

“No, it’s only just over by that big cactus tree.

Pete has his camp against Zigzag Rock," replied the boy. "Want to rest?" he asked considerately.

"Yes, for just a few minutes," suggested Patsy. Beatrice and Eleanor had come with Patsy, while Mabel remained to keep Aunt Martha company, and, if necessary, "scare off" the Indians whom the little lady so disliked.

All about them the Wayfarers viewed the world's wonders, but they cared only to reach the end of the trail—to-day was not a sight-seeing period for them.

"Here come a lot of Indians!" exclaimed Eleanor, getting to her feet quickly, although the few minutes for rest had not expired.

"They're just some Hopis—the weavers from the falls," explained the well-informed Noisy. The Indians were close to the girls now, and while not timid of the rough-looking mountain natives, the Wayfarers felt better to keep moving; so they stepped out of the path, and made pretense of gathering flowers in the underbrush. On the road a few paces away tourists traveled on mule back, and their guides calling out the points of interest gave an assurance of safety to the Wayfarers, with their own miniature guide. He greeted the Indians as they passed along and

seemed to know many of them by name, nevertheless, the girls breathed more freely when the last big pair of shoulders turned the curve at Clothespin Pass.

"Are they going to Pete's?" asked Patsy.

"Yes, they all live over there. That's where they make the great Navajo blankets and rugs," said Noisy. "We are almost there now, but you can't see the huts until you get right alongside of them, in old chocolate Zigzag Rock."

"Those tourists seem to be going to the trading station," Eleanor remarked. "I'm glad we will have company."

"Can we ride back somehow, Noisy?" Patsy asked. "I don't believe we would enjoy that rough trip over again. I think my heels must be tatooed with pictures of the sharp scenery."

"Guess we could. A stage comes in. Here we are. This is Pete's," he announced quite guide-like.

"Oh, how splendid!" Beatrice exclaimed, as a turn through the pines disclosed a view of the trading station. "See the looms! Why didn't we bring our cameras?"

It was, indeed, a novel sight. All about were Indians, men, women and children. Squatted on rugs, the women wove their striped grass bas-

kets industriously, while the men stood idly by complacently smoking very straight pipes. Looms, suspended between the trees, were hung with half-finished rugs or blankets, and at these, too, the women plied their skilled fingers. The Wayfarers noticed that these women were much more gentle in caste and dressed almost like Americans, and Noisy told the girls these were of the Hopi tribe, and very good workers.

In another group among the traders a very homely girl attracted attention. Her hair was cut in a bang that threatened to blind her, and a conspicuous feature of her dress was the panel arrangement of four big bright-colored handkerchiefs, two back and two front, hanging like an apron from the shoulders.

She approached the girls and offered to sell them a string of all-color beads, which Patsy bought. Again Noisy assisted as a real guide by whispering this was a Supai girl from the canyon.

“But what good is that handkerchief shield?” asked Eleanor aside. “It may be artistic but surely no protection.”

But it was the children who most interested the visitors. They swarmed all over the rugs and blankets, and their garb was as varied as the very

scenery of the mountains. One peculiarity was strikingly noticeable. The babies didn't play and seemed to require no toys—a strong contrast to the restless, nervous American child.

Patsy talked with some of the young girls who were able to express themselves in English.

Now Noisy was beckoning the Wayfarers.

"Here's Pete," he told the girls. "See all those Indians? They're from the cliffs. Do you see any you know?"

"They all look alike," answered Beatrice, "but I think I've seen that blanket before, the green and black stripe. Pat, see over by that pair of mules."

"The lady of the shell," replied Patsy. "Yes, that's she. Come on and see if she has anything to sell. Try to make friends with her."

"Like Aunt Martha, I'm afraid she knows you, Pat. Better watch your step," demurred Beatrice.

Patsy pulled a wry face to indicate compliance. Then she walked boldly up to the green and black piece of upholstery.

"How much is your basket?" she asked bravely.

"No sell," replied the woman with a scowl.

"Got any beads?" Patsy followed, determined

not to show chagrin at this blunt refusal. A man pushed the squaw aside and offered baskets, beads and blankets. The three Wayfarers proceeded to examine the wares. Beatrice took a string of many-colored beads, Eleanor selected two sweet-grass baskets, and Patsy wanted a wonderful blanket, but refused to buy it until Noisy made sure they could travel back by the stage which had just rumbled in. Gaining assurance that they could be accommodated, Patsy bought the beautiful sample of Navajo weaving.

"Did you say you wanted to see how the kids play?" asked Noisy presently. Even he seemed to know that the pilgrimage had been made in the interest of some child.

"Yes, may we go over there? I see something like a school, or is it a playground?" asked Patsy.

"Both," replied the boy. "Come on. I'll introduce you," he offered grandly, enjoying the rôle of guide and prompter immensely.

"Show us the hand-tinted ones," whispered Beatrice. "You know, the kind they wash in hair dye."

"Sure. I'll show you. There's one, see the streaks." He pointed to a little boy, dark enough surely, but still the streaks could be noticed, and

the effect of the day's wear on this liquid was extremely grotesque.

"There's a cute little one over there," remarked Patsy, pointing to a child younger than the others and decidedly more active.

"That's the one they use in the pictures," volunteered Noisy. "Just see how she's painted up."

The girls tried to get closer to the baby that crawled around on the big blankets like a pretty little human bug.

"Bee," whispered Patsy, "doesn't that look like the one we saw in the rocks?" Her voice showed a tenseness the girls were all quick to interpret.

"Yes, it does," answered Beatrice. "Come over behind those pines and perhaps we can get a better chance to see the child. Noisy says it's a girl. See the queer coat?"

"Why do they fetch the children in here so far from the other camps?" Eleanor asked Noisy as they worked their way along.

"They may stay a couple of days—till they buy a lot and sell a lot, and so they fetch the babies along on the mules. That old squaw wouldn't trust anyone with her young 'uns, 'cause she gets a lot of money when they work in the pictures," he explained.

Patsy and Beatrice were getting around by the

grass-covered huts near which the children played.

"Yes, that's the very one," insisted Patsy. "I couldn't forget the hair. Look, Bee, it is light I am sure, see the streaks." They were near enough now to get a pretty fair look at the child they found most interest in.

"I wonder would we dare offer them candy," suggested Beatrice. "That would be an excuse to get up closer to them."

Patsy was gazing intently at the child, trying to discern any feature or resemblance that would lead to its identity—if only this baby could be the lost Pearl!

But before Beatrice had a chance to offer the candy she now held in her hand, the old squaw in the hideous blanket brushed her way through the playing little ones, snatched the dyed baby from its swing in a low tree, and hid it so completely under the big heavy blanket she wore, the girls could scarcely keep from crying out in protest.

"She'll smother it!" gasped Patsy, her own short breath indicating sympathy for the child.

"Naw, they're used to that," Noisy declared. "These are the Blanket Indians, you know. They

wear those big heavy robes all summer and all winter."

The woman was moving out of the queer market place or camp, and Patsy felt a precious chance was slipping away from her. That baby was not like the others. What if it should be the lost child, whose disappearance furnished the mysterious tragedy of the previous summer in Picture Land?

"Oh, Bee!" she moaned. "Why can't we ask someone about that baby? I feel instinctively it is an American child; even if it should not be little Pearl, it most certainly is not an Indian."

"But our boy says she lets the baby play in pictures," objected Beatrice. "If that were true, wouldn't the film folks discover it?"

"Oh, I don't know about that," answered Patsy. "But from the finding of that shell I have been convinced the lost baby was somewhere near it. Now, there goes that tribe, and, of course, the children go with them."

Eleanor was talking to the homely girl with the bandanna decorations.

"Come on over to that queer creature—she speaks English, for Eleanor seems interested," said Beatrice. "Let us see what she can tell us."

"This is Luza," said Eleanor by way of in-

roduction. "She goes to the government school."

A few words with the Indian convinced the Wayfarers of her intelligence. She even offered to sell the handkerchief shield when Patsy politely admired it.

"Tell us about the babies," Beatrice began determinedly. "Some of them are Americans, aren't they?"

"No, no!" exclaimed the girl. "No Americans here. All Indians," and her ugly features scowled with indignation.

"But that one baby—the little one with the soft hair," insisted Patsy, determined not to be frightened off the scent. "Surely this is an American child."

"Where?" demanded the girl, scanning the faces of the children who were still grouped about.

"They have just gone down the hill," replied Patsy, "and we know they live over behind the big rock near the sea. We have seen them there, and we saw the women washing that baby in a black kind of water."

The girl shook her head until her hair stood out like wire.

"No, no!" she insisted. "Never one American

baby with Indians, against law," she said in creditable English.

"Perhaps the old woman just takes care of it for someone," suggested Eleanor, anxious to placate the indignant Indian.

"Nurse you mean?" asked Luza. "I don't t'ink. That's squaw Minitah, from Mexico mebby. She lives by ocean, Little Snake Road."

"Where could we find out about the Indians who work for the movies?" Patsy asked impatiently. It seemed impossible to get any information other than the flattest generalities.

"Oh, I know all about that," interrupted Noisy. "But folks are pilin' in that stage, if we want to ride we had better be movin'," he warned his charges.

"Yes, do," begged Eleanor. "I don't believe I could ever walk back to the bungalow. Good-bye, Luza," as all now started for the stage. "Perhaps we will see you again some day on your way to school."

This friendliness evidently pleased the semi-savage, for she thrust her hand into an invisible pocket and produced a palm full of red berries. These she offered to Eleanor.

"For beads," she said simply. "See dry, and hard, you put on string."

"Oh, yes indeed, thank you," replied Eleanor, fearful the stage would start off without the Wayfarers. "Be sure to call out to us if you see us on the beach. Good-bye," and the Indian girl almost smiled in spite of the handicap of her impregnable expression.

Patsy was too disappointed to speak, as she found a place in the crowded stagecoach. Her mind was filled with a vague hope of finding little Pearl, but now, as the scene moved away down again into the civilized summer colony, that hope was fading like the pines against the cluttered gray hills.

"Do you think Nance will come?" asked Eleanor, when all were comfortably settled. "I do hope our message has reached her."

"We shall know this evening," replied Patsy, "but I hoped to have something more definite to work on. I can just about imagine Nance raiding that camp, if we ever gave her a hint of our suspicions."

"Please don't tell her," begged Eleanor. "I have felt from the first that the striped blanket woman bore us a grudge, and if we should again antagonize her I would be afraid to stay around here. Wouldn't you?"

Beatrice laughed in reply. Noisy was arguing

loudly on the steps of the stage, and the girls fell to listening.

“They are not movie girls,” he was insisting.

Patsy grasped the hands of both her chums as she sat with one of them on either side of her.

“I have it!” she exclaimed. “We will go to the camp and offer to hire it for the pictures. Then, let the old Indians prove it is their own child, if they can.”

And this time Patsy was not to be shaken in her resolve to learn the real identity of the pretty little hair-dyed stranger.

CHAPTER XXVII

NANCE AND NEWS

MABEL ran out to meet the pilgrims. "Girls, Nance is coming! She will be here on the one-o'clock train. Are you very tired? Can we go to the station?"

"Mabsie, dear, please offer the question in shifts. We are too tired to think collectively," said Patsy, "but we are so glad Nance is coming. Where is the message?"

"Come along and you shall see, hear and know presently," sang out Mabel, much better able to enthuse than were the dust-stained travelers.

Aunt Martha was also rejoicing. The good news acted like a general tonic, and promised to speedily wipe out the Indian shadows.

"If Robert would only come along now we would be a happy family once more," said Aunt Martha, after ordering lunch served promptly.

A girl from Frisco held the office of maid-of-all-work at the bungalow, and, although the lure of the beach offered a very strong temptation, she did manage to stay within call at meal hours.

Patsy and Eleanor were trying to tell Mabel something of their experience.

"Could you see the baby's eyes?" Mabel asked.

"No, it squirmed around so we couldn't see anything but fat little legs and a fuzzy head," declared Eleanor.

One hour later Nance Rosalee was sitting on the dove-cote over the rocky steps. The girls were eagerly devouring every crumb of news from the movie colony, and it is safe to guess Nance knew well how to dress the items up in the most attractive and delectable style.

"Alene simply went to pieces directly after you left," she told her audience. "I guess Nettie's spite had something to do with it, but more than that I learned it was a letter from Ferd, Alene's husband, that served as the final stroke. He is recovering his memory and insists the baby wasn't drowned. Of course, that has almost distracted poor Alene."

Iced drinks were being sipped, and the first hour of her visit was indeed a delightful one to the enterprising little reporter. She was charmed

with the cliff bungalows, and simply enthralled with the view of the ocean, rocks, and snow-capped mountains.

But the Wayfarers felt too serious to allow much time to pass without plunging into the subject nearest their hearts. It was Patsy who attempted presently to sum up all the important points discovered since they came to the cliffs.

"The first thing that aroused our suspicions," she began, "was the finding of a big wooden shell. We were watching the children the day we arrived, and one little fellow was paddling around in something like a tub. When we managed to get close to it we found it was a sort of shell, made from a big tree stump, and on the back were the letters P-E-A-R-L. Of course, that fairly electrified us."

"Pearl," repeated Nance. "Carved on a big wooden shell? That surely must have something to do with the mystery, but I haven't heard of it."

"Do you think I could see Ferd Davidson if I went to the sanitarium?" asked Patsy directly. "I haven't said anything about it before, but Dad told me why he is so deeply interested in this case. Ferd Davidson's father and Daddy were room-mates at college, and when Alene came to

Daddy, as she was directed to by the Interal Company, he recognized the name, as Ferdinand was also the father's name. Now, the legal tangle of the big picture involves many thousands of dollars, and Daddy has to keep after that end for the company, but he is personally more interested in assisting the Davidson's, and when he left here the last time he was bound to seek out the sick man."

"That was why you went into partnership with your daddy, was it, Pat?" asked Beatrice.

"I promised to do all I could, and knew I might also pledge the service of you girls," replied the pretty, sunny-haired one, who looked like a real picture to-day in the daintest of flowered organdies.

"You were safe in that, Pat," spoke up Eleanor. "We are willing to do anything but to let you crawl under the earth again. You know there is a better route to China now," she added pleasantly.

"Who has been going under the earth?" demanded Nance, her ear for news tingling expectantly.

Briefly the cave adventure was related, but none of its salient points suffered by the concise recitation.

"Girls!" exclaimed Nance, quickly as she could interrupt the tale, "I think you are regular Argonauts and I expect to bring the Golden Fleece back home with me. But why, oh, why did you not let little Nance in on that tour with you? Think of the story for the big city papers!"

"That is where we had to take a different viewpoint, Nance, dear," said Patsy, "and it was a question of purpose, not story," she said gently, but with unmistakable meaning. "Suppose a single line of that appeared in a paper. We would immediately be swamped with real live reporters demanding a big story from the four winds, and they would naturally want to crawl out into the hidden camp. If our prize is there, wouldn't that scare it off?"

"Wise Packie," agreed Nance. "You are right, of course. The question of true values applies to each of us as it concerns us most. And I am here now, you know. That was lovely of you. Also I am fairly quivering at the prospects ahead. When do we raid the camp?"

A gale of laughter followed the question.

"We knew it!" exclaimed Mabel. "We said first thing you would want a big raid, but Patsy has a different plan. Also," she spoke in a much lower tone, "don't let Aunt Martha hear us plan-

ning anything that sounds like danger. She has been lovely, and brave as I am at least" (a deprecating shrug of her shoulders served as an apology for that clause), "but you know she *is* timid of the Indians."

"Since the big blanket squaw came around growling ominously," explained Patsy. "And that's the lady we have to cope with in this Pearl shell affair. Nance, she dyes the baby and hides it under her blanket at a stranger's approach. It looks all so clear the real issue seems to be how are we to get hold of that baby?"

"My raid," insisted Nance, ever alert for the spectacular.

"And have the Injuns scale the rocks to Mexico," observed Patsy. "No, Nance, my plan is to see Ferd Davidson, find out about the home-made shell, if we can, then go to squaw Minitah (I think that's the song the Indian girl applied to her as a name), and just offer to hire two of her children for a picture. Then, if that works as beautifully as the words imply, we shall insist Little Dyed-in-the-Wool be one of our hirelings. Doesn't that sound like a fairly good plot?"

"A hummer," declared Nance. "So good, in fact, I am willing to countermand the raid. But, girls, can you imagine a troop of bluecoats prowling

ing in that tunnel? Bull's-eye lanterns, big thick clubs, shiny badges——”

“Hold, Nancy,” interrupted Beatrice. “You are mixing your plots. That description tallies beautifully with a howling comedy, whereas the situation calls for a heart-throbbing drama.”

“I am glad you didn't say tragedy,” said Patsy, “for I intend to make this a regular Old Homestead scene at the wind-up. Please don't think my poor red head is swelling dangerously,” she apologized. “I really don't mean to sound like an egotist with all my personal pronouns, but it's a question of haste, just now. Of course, it is too late to-day to try for the sanitarium,” she concluded.

“But I'd love to go out on your Indian trail,” proposed the reporter. “And I'll promise to keep my hands off all possible raids.”

“Do tell me,” begged Mabel, “what happened to all the Chinamen that stormed the Trellis as we were leaving? I wondered if they might have taken revenge on little Ah Wee?”

“I am glad you reminded me,” returned Nance. “Mr. Broadbent has taken Ah Wee into the movies. She brought him a message you left with her, I suppose it was a good-bye for Alene,

and he was so struck with her appearance he asked her to sign up. Now, when you see a pretty wisteria picture, with the quaintest of Jap girls or Chinese, you may look for Ah Wee's smile. It will surely be there."

"Oh, I am so glad!" exclaimed Beatrice, while the others smiled a chorus of pleasure. "She was the most faithful little maid, and really too cute to be wasted in a kitchen. And anything new in the Bingo enterprise? Got your big check all right, Nance?"

"I expected to spend hours telling you that story, but since you anticipate me I may break into it now," replied Nance. "You know little Bingo was the most temperamental monkey, and after being brought back to the studio wouldn't work or do anything but snarl and squeak. I happened to recall that some of you girls said you believed he came to your cottage on account of the familiar fixings, and do you know they rigged up a room like yours, from my description, and if that monkey didn't steal one of the girl's sweetest slumber robes, wrap himself in it like some funny child, and turn right in to have a good sound sleep in the made-to-order bathtub?"

"There!" exclaimed Patsy. "I just guessed

he was the mimicking kind of monkey. And would he pose after that?"

"Beautifully, worked in any way that showed him how, and now he is adopted by one of the most popular stars in the Interals, Jacqueline Demott. She knows all about such pets. Besides all that, when Mr. Fairfax paid me the check he said Bingo was worth twice as much to him, as no other animal had ever performed such tricks. Why, he acts almost human. And oh, girls! the funniest part. He does an act in which he makes up before a lady's dressing-table, paints and pencils, and primps and dolls up like a little queen!"

"That's the very stunt we saw him perform in," said Eleanor. "And will you ever forget his face in the curtains?"

"With the enamel and paint and the straight eyebrows," added Patsy. "At any rate, he was a good find for us," she concluded.

"So good I am going to be back East in the fall and to college again," mused Nance. "I feel like a robber to have taken the reward——"

"But it was yours," insisted Patsy. "We would have turned Bingo loose in another hour, if you had not identified him."

"That's decidedly Patsyesque," replied Nance.

“But when you need a monkey reward, some day, when I’m a famous writer, just let me know and I’ll turn a whole menagerie loose for your benefit, and be most happy to oblige.”

“There’s a messenger,” interrupted Beatrice. “I’ll take it, Pat. From your daddy, I expect, and let’s hope he is coming to the cliffs.”

“That’s just what it is,” announced Patsy, when she had glanced over the yellow page. “‘Back at Placida to-night. Everything fine,’” she read. “There, that means more than it says. It means Daddy’s end of this affair is clearing up. I wonder has he seen Ferd Davidson?”

Aunt Martha stepped in just then. She had been out over the garden of mounds, and her arms were now laden with blooms of which there seemed an ever endless variety to select from. She had heard the good news and, sister-like, proceeded to celebrate it by decorating the brother’s room with the very choicest of her posies.

“I saved a treat till Nance came, Auntie,” Patsy managed to say, drawing the busy lady to a standstill and hugging her breath away. “We have just time to take that long-promised trip in your glass-bottomed boat.”

“But with Robert coming——” began Miss Carroll in objection.

“Not until late to-night, and we have promised Nance a trip. Come, lady-love, just slip into your pretty silk coat, and doff the darling little forget-me-not bonnet, and off we go.”

A little more persuasion and the party was ready for the afternoon trip to Catalina Island, still one more wonder of the Golden West. Here the mountain island, with the town of Analon, baby in size, but fullgrown in unique beauty, displays such oddities of nature that the place becomes a veritable cabinet of natural curios.

“You know,” said Eleanor, as they sailed off, “the marine life in the waters about Catalina are so interesting that to view them these peculiar glass-bottomed boats have been constructed. Just look! Don’t miss a flash! They’re fish.”

“And girls!” exclaimed Patsy, “look sharp on this trip, for many of the best motion pictures have been set here. Do you wonder that Enterprise went into the movies and invented the way to show the whole world such wonders as these?”

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE PEARL OF THE PACIFIC

“IT must be midnight, and there’s a knock. A message from Dad, I’m sure.” Patsy was in her robe and slippers telling this to Beatrice. The next moment she had answered the summons.

“I do hope nothing is wrong?” Aunt Martha said that from her door.

“No, it’s all right. Dad missed the train and will be here in the morning. And he says he’s bringing company. Whoever can it be?”

The echo of the brass door knocker had hardly died away, yet everyone at the bungalow was now up, robed, and discussing the news.

“I knew he must have missed the train, otherwise he would have sent a message earlier. Now scamper off to bed, everyone,” Patsy ordered, sweeping about with her Chinese gown, like an

impromptu empress. "We have a big day coming. And who knows what company Dad is bringing?"

"If only it would be Terr-ree," trilled Beatrice. "We haven't heard a word from him since——"

"Since he entertained us in the pasteboard cave," said Patsy. "I'm sorry, Bee, but I can't promise you Terry. I know it is not to be he. To bed now. I feel more thrills seething. Nance, you surely brought excitement. I don't expect to get any sleep to-night."

Aunt Martha had hidden herself again promptly the late message was read, otherwise Patsy would not have openly apprehended more disturbances.

"This is the life!" quoted Nance. "I'm so glad I joined the Wayfarers, I don't care a rap about my position on the *Silverpage*," and she did a very pretty little dance all the way down the hall, Mabel and Eleanor collecting her flying slippers as they followed along.

When sleep came again to the Wayfarers it wrapped them in a very blanket of oblivion—the way delayed repose usually acts to punish defiant humans. "Dead to the world" was no meaningless phrase now, for even the restless Aunt Martha forgot to dream.

It must have been about daybreak when Patsy suddenly became conscious of a tapping on the glass of her window. Being on the second floor, this seemed unexplainable. She listened and heard something roll lightly along the pane.

"Pebbles," she told herself aloud. "Someone calling from the big rock, Beatrice?" she murmured in a subdued voice. "Do you hear that?"

"Yes, what is it?" The ever-alert Beatrice was always ready to answer Patsy's emergency summons. Both girls were now on their feet in robes and slippers. Patsy reached the window and threw up the latticed sash.

"Come down," called a girl's voice. "It's Luza."

"Luza!" repeated Patsy. "The Indian girl from the trading station. Whatever can be the matter?"

Noiselessly the girls reached the side door, opened it and admitted the Indian.

"I find out Minitah go to-day for mountains," she began. "Take away baby. Yes? No Indian baby? Painted?"

"You mean they are going away to-day?" asked Patsy.

"Yes, for prayer in hills, take all children," said the girl in good English.

"What time?" asked Beatrice.

"Sun-up," answered the girl.

"I'll get that baby," determined Patsy, "if I have to go out now and steal it. Suppose I say I'm from the government?" she suggested.

"Good, much good, government all right. Say to Minitah 'officer,' she give baby quick."

"Tell us all you know," said Patsy, pulling chairs in a secluded corner so their voices could not reach upstairs.

"Minitah not bad," began the girl. "She find baby in water, strapped in big shell. She t'ink from Heaven," and a pause with gestures explained that the old Indian had supposed the baby strapped in the shell had come down from Heaven. "But baby grow white, not Indian," she continued. "Minitah must fix——"

"That's why she dyed it," Beatrice assisted the girl's meager English.

"Yes, all right, no hurt baby. Now chief say no sky baby, come from movies. Squaw 'fraid, she run mountains, pray much to-day," and now the girl showed sympathy for the old squaw's predicament. She was running to the mountains to pray and to hide the little one who had been washed ashore by the gentle waves of the Pacific, one year before.

"Then I must get the child," insisted Patsy with determination.

"Baby no mudder, no fadder! They no want pretty one? Minitah every day she bring in big shell, she fix pretty, she wait, no come mudder."

"Oh, that's it," breathed Patsy. "The poor old woman expected the child's mother or father to come and claim it."

"Sure," interrupted Luza. "Baby much pretty, good for mudder."

"And we have been blaming the poor old squaw." Patsy felt very contrite, and her task now had assumed an entirely different aspect.

"The sun is coming up," said Beatrice, "and the Indians will start for the mountains with the sun, Luza?" she asked, holding the curtain aside to let the first sharp golden streaks plough up the night's soft shadows.

"Yes, I go, too, now."

"You stay here, Luza, you show us the way? Yes?" asked Patsy.

"Sure," agreed the Indian girl, brushing her mane from her eyes and smiling happily.

"All right. Soon we get coffee," said Patsy, omitting all words that might confuse her meaning. "You stay here, we dress, then eat quick

and go," finished the chief of the Wayfarers, crisply.

"Sure, sure," said Luza, and even in their haste and excitement the girls privately marveled at the comprehensiveness of that provincial expression, "Sure." What would English be to the stranger without it?

In less than an hour's time Patsy and Beatrice with Luza, were ready to leave the bungalow without so much as disturbing the other members of the household. A note flying from the hall lamp would explain their departure to the one first passing down the stairs. A few swallows of coffee, made in the percolator by Beatrice, and a bite of biscuit had served as breakfast, Patsy insisting on the Indian filling her pockets with fruit, as the roads along the beach would offer no temptations in that line.

At the end of the little basin where the Wayfarers had first discovered the children and the improvised shell, Luza stopped, said she would go in through the cave and see if the Indians were moving, while the girls watched from that point. She raced over the rocks now like some huge goat, and presently was lost to sight of Patsy and Beatrice.

Morning was bathing the day in its golden ab-

lutions, and all about them the scene was too wonderful to ignore, but anxiety may blind even amid such grandeur, and the girls scarcely paused to view the beauty of Paradise Trail.

“You stay here, Bee,” said Patsy, “and I’ll go to the turn. They might come out from the far end and descend to the path this way.”

“But Pat, dear, please don’t go out of sight!” begged Beatrice. “That turn will completely hide you from me here.”

“I’ll keep calling and you can call back to me,” replied Patsy, racing off along the basin-like inlet, that had left the big waters to seek more interesting adventures among the rocks and sand-bars.

Never had a day dawned more beautifully, and never had two young girls done more to make a day perfect, than did Patsy and Beatrice, now in their bright summer frocks, hair flying unbound to the gentle zepthers which were spraying the perfumes of marine incense over the world, in that holy hour of angelic sanctuary.

Turning toward the big rock, Patsy drew up suddenly. What was that in the very tail of the inlet? Surely an Indian, and with her a child!

And the conspicuous stripes, yes—it was Mini-

tah, and she was pushing the baby out into the water in that man-made shell!

Unable to move, Patsy stood there! Then a sudden rush of water almost covered the speck on its surface, but as the playful roller receded the little bark rushed out with it—out and toward the ocean!

“Beatrice!” yelled Patsy, so shrilly her voice cut from the cove out into the very breakers, and before a thought of answer could come back, she had thrown herself upon the water and was working her way to the bobbing chip on the waves.

“Patsy! Patsy!” cried Beatrice, who was now up to the turn on the beach. “Shall I come?”

“No, I’m all——” and the last word was only a splash, but Beatrice knew it meant “right.”

Breathlessly, the girl on the beach watched, unable to do more; but the skilful stroke of Patsy in the waves reassured her companion, and each returning friendly breaker smoothed out a better path back to the shore.

“She’ll make it, great girl!” exclaimed Beatrice. “Oh, she has it!” came so ardent an exclamation it composed a reverent prayer.

Patsy had her hands on the bobbing shell! Now she was behind it. Taking advantage of a good strong wave, she gave it a thrust with one

hand, then hurried forward to it before the wave could return. One, two more such thrusts, and the sands made firm footing. Now she gained her feet, got a hold on the fateful shell, and, pushing it ahead, finally urged it safely ashore.

"Patsy! Patsy!" cried Beatrice. "Oh, it is little Pearl! See, the color is washed from her face! See, she is the very picture of Alene!" and the playful baby tried to talk but the chunky words were not formed from English.

Patsy was panting a little, but so happy; her own part in the rescue lost itself entirely in the joy of her success.

"Yes, it is Pearl! Darling little Pearl! Oh, what a wonderful day you have brought us all?" and she kissed the little one rapturously. "See how firmly she is all strapped in."

"The Indians have all gone," said Beatrice, noting her companion looked in inquiry toward the cove. "They fled directly you jumped in the water."

"Poor old Minitah! We must send her something by Luza. Here comes Luza now," said Patsy, as the Indian girl emerged from the rocks. "But, Beatrice, just see this baby! She actually enjoyed the whole performance."

Never was a child happier than the little one

in the deep shell. She was strapped in securely as she must have been that first day when "making a movie" had changed three lives, and bits of cork were tied about the little body.

"Let us carry her back in the shell," suggested Patsy. "Won't it be wonderful? And Dad will be with us soon."

"Look!" exclaimed Beatrice. "Here comes everyone! And there's your dad! He must have come in on the Morning Glory."

"Sure enough," breathed Patsy. "Quick, Bee. Get hold of the shell."

"But your wet clothes——"

"They only add to the picture," replied the indomitable Patsy. "Dripping is an important part of this scene. But Bee, look! Who is that with Dad? Oh, hold tight or I will drop the baby, for—that's—Alene!"

"Girls! Patsy! Beatrice!" everyone was shouting and running along the shell-sprinkled sand, towards the girls with the baby.

"Alene! Alene!" yelled Patsy, ignoring everybody else. "Just look what drifted in!" and in another instant the little woman stood transfixed before the two girls holding that shell, with the cupid figure laughing and muttering from its carved basin, like a real tableaux of Dawn, too

fine for camera, too sacred for film. The Pearl of the Pacific was found at last!

* * * * *

"I'll never forgive you, never, never, never, never!" wailed Nance Rosalee. "To think I missed that big spectacular!"

"But you are here for the fade-out," replied Eleanor. "In another hour this bungalow will make old-home week look like a lawn party. This is going to be the real thing."

"Patsy and Alene have gone for Ferd, I know," said Nance more seriously. "Honestly, Nell, I'm so excited I'm breathing through my ears."

"And Mr. Carroll found Ferd well enough to come down here and search, even if little Pearl hadn't been recovered! Doesn't it all seem like a golden dream?"

"That's just what I'm going to head my story," came back the irrepressible reporter. "I'll call it 'The Day of Golden Dreams,' and maybe I can make a scenario out of it."

"Bee and Pat, with that baby in the shell, surpassed any film I've ever seen," declared Eleanor. "But do hurry and finish primping. They'll all be here before you get through admiring yourself." This playful thrust was given in that in-

imitable way girls have of complimenting by suggestion.

"Here they come! Here they come!" directly sang out Mabel from the lower hall, and before the tardy ones could reach the veranda a great seven-seated automobile rumbled up, and in it were Alene and Ferd, with little Pearl between them, then Patsy, Beatrice and Mr. Carroll, and on the end seat were Nettie Nankin, Terry Marbury and little Ah Wee.

"They all wanted to come, the whole company," called out Mr. Carroll, alighting first. "But this car would not guarantee the hills with any more weight," he finished.

"The camera men are trailing along! Hello, everybody," sang out the irresistible Terry. "Let me introduce my new leading lady, Nettie Nankin. We are forming a new company and Nettie has found her particular niche in my proposed hall of fame," he explained merrily.

"I think I'll have to apologize first, before I'm accepted here——" began the confused Nettie, flushing hotly.

"Nothing of the sort," interrupted Patsy. "If it had not been for mistakes we could never have made this picture. Just look at it. Oh, Alene, you have got to lend me that baby, I haven't had

one good hug yet," and Patsy grabbed up the precious baby that was still swaddled in queer Indian clothes, not even wet after the adventure in the trustworthy shell-bark boat.

"You must know," said Mr. Carroll, "this clears everything up for me. Patsy, dear, you are a wonderful little side partner. Here's the troupe all in fine working order, and that settles the big lawsuit for the Interals. Makes everyone happy, too, with a new company in prospect for Mr. Marbury and Miss Nankin. I feel like a boy myself, and Martha, you are as young as any girl here," the big man now stepped aside and exchanged felicitations with his own little sister, Miss Martha Carroll.

The Wayfarers were busy exchanging greetings.

"Hello, 'Ah Wee,'" called Mabel next, "why didn't you fetch Bingo? He's the only one left out."

The Chinese girl was prettier than ever, and still wore the Oriental costume, posing as she went, always ready for her "set." Luza, the Indian girl, had returned from the village. She left the party on the beach and followed her own private plans of informing the tribe of the happy outcome of Minitah's sacrifice. Now she stood

beside Ah Wee, all lined up in front of the rustic porch, waiting for the cue to take their selected places.

A boy with fish net and pole, bare feet, a big torn-brimmed hat, swung up from the stone wall. "And here's Noisy," called out Patsy. "Come right along, Noisy," she invited. "You should be a part of this picture. Hurry, here come the camera men."

"But where's Aunt Martha?" demanded Eleanor, who was helping Beatrice arrange the positions.

"Here I am," came a faint voice from behind a huge bunch of cabbage roses. "And these are for you, dear," she said to Patsy.

"They should be for baby Pearl," suggested the girl whose cheeks doubled the blush of the roses she held.

"For Patsy Carroll!" yelled Terry Marbury from the rear, his hand forming an imitation megaphone. "She's the star of this picture. All ready? Now, fellows, shoot!" he ordered.

There was a breathless pause—at least no one of all the group was conscious of breathing at that moment. Obviously baby Pearl and her reclaimed father, Ferd Davidson, were special objects of attention, if the joyous, resplendent

Patsy and her companion Wayfarers could become secondary. But the finale was rather overwhelming; even the embarrassed Nettie Nankin, now plainly glad to be allowed a place among the elect, did not pretend to hide her unspoken admiration. Alene was perfect as a mother, and that baby in the absurd Indian togs!

Patsy and Beatrice were holding the big shell, and in it the chuckling youngster respected the camera—a natural faculty. The mother and father stood with hands outstretched, and, while the pose was theatrical, Terry insisted it told the story. Mr. Carroll and Aunt Martha furnished just the needed balance, while Ah Wee and Luza afforded the novelty of character and costume. Noisy was quiet for the once, but his outfit fairly whistled. It all seemed very perfect—the newest grade in superlatives.

And that was exactly how the famous picture, "The Day of Golden Dreams," came by its most important set. Have you seen it? Did you recognize all these players?

It had a tremendous vogue, and the next volume of this series promises a story equally popular. It will be entitled "PATSY CARROLL IN OLD NEW ENGLAND."

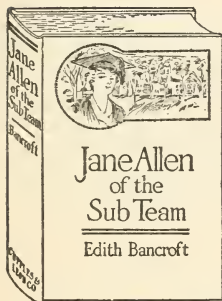
THE END

THE JANE ALLEN COLLEGE SERIES

BY EDITH BANCROFT

12mo. Illustrated. With cover inlay and jacket in colors

Price per volume, \$1.00



This series is a decided departure from the stories usually written of life in the modern college for young women. An authoritative account of the life of the college girl as it is lived today.

1. JANE ALLEN OF THE SUB TEAM

When Jane Allen left her home in Montana, to go East to Wellington College, she was sure that she could never learn to endure the restrictions of college life.

2. JANE ALLEN: RIGHT GUARD

Jane Allen becomes a sophomore at Wellington College, but she has to face a severe trial that requires all her courage and character. The result is a triumph for being faithful to an ideal.

3. JANE ALLEN: CENTER

Lovable Jane Allen as Junior experiences delightful days of work and play. Jane, and her chum, Judith, win leadership in class office, social and athletic circles of Sophs and Juniors.

4. JANE ALLEN: JUNIOR

Jane Allen's college experiences, as continued in "Jane Allen, Junior," afford the chance for a brilliant story. A rude, country girl forces her way into Wellington under false pretenses.

5. JANE ALLEN: SENIOR

Jane and Judith undertake Social Service, wherein they find actual problems more thrilling than were those of the "indoor sports."

Send For Our Free Illustrated Catalogue

CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, Publishers

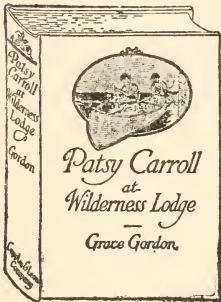
New York

THE PATSY CARROLL SERIES

BY GRACE GORDON

12mo. Illustrated. With cover inlay and jacket in colors

Price per volume, \$1.00



This fascinating series is permeated with the vibrant atmosphere of the great outdoors. The vacations spent by Patsy Carroll and her chums, the girl Wayfarers, in the north, east, south and west of the wonderland of our country, comprise a succession of tales unsurpassed in plot and action.

PATSY CARROLL AT WILDERNESS LODGE

Patsy Carroll succeeds in coaxing her father to lease one of the luxurious camps at Lake Placid, for the summer. Established at Wilderness Lodge, the Wayfarers, as they call themselves, find they are the center of a mystery which revolves about a missing will. How the girls solve the mystery makes a splendid story.

PATSY CARROLL UNDER SOUTHERN SKIES

Patsy Carroll and her three chums spend their Easter vacation in an old mansion in Florida. An exciting mystery develops. It is solved by a curious acrostic found by Patsy. This leads to very exciting and satisfactory results, making a capital story.

PATSY CARROLL IN THE GOLDEN WEST

The Wayfarers journey to the dream city of the Movie World in the Golden West, and there become a part of a famous film drama.

PATSY CARROLL IN OLD NEW ENGLAND

Set in the background of the Tercentenary of the landing of the Pilgrims, celebrated in the year 1920, the story of Patsy Carroll in Old New England offers a correct word picture of this historical event and into it is woven a fascinating tale of the adventures of the Wayfarers.

Send For Our Free Illustrated Catalogue

CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, Publishers

New York

THE MOTOR GIRLS SERIES

By MARGARET PENROSE

Author of the highly successful "Dorothy Dale Series"

12mo. Illustrated. Price per volume, \$1.00 postpaid.



Since the enormous success of our "Motor Boys Series," by Clarence Young, we have been asked to get out a similar series for girls. No one is better equipped to furnish these tales than Mrs. Penrose, who, besides being an able writer, is an expert automobilist.

THE MOTOR GIRLS

or A Mystery of the Road

THE MOTOR GIRLS ON A TOUR

or Keeping a Strange Promise

THE MOTOR GIRLS AT LOOKOUT BEACH

or In Quest of the Runaways

THE MOTOR GIRLS THROUGH NEW ENGLAND

or Held by the Gypsies

THE MOTOR GIRLS ON CEDAR LAKE

or The Hermit of Fern Island

THE MOTOR GIRLS ON THE COAST

or The Waif from the Sea

THE MOTOR GIRLS ON CRYSTAL BAY

or The Secret of the Red Oar

THE MOTOR GIRLS ON WATERS BLUE

or The Strange Cruise of the Tartar

THE MOTOR GIRLS AT CAMP SURPRISE

or The Cave in the Mountain

THE MOTOR GIRLS IN THE MOUNTAINS

or The Gypsy Girl's Secret

WUPPLES & LEON CO., Publishers,

NEW YORK

THE DOROTHY DALE SERIES

BY MARGARET PENROSE

Author of "The Motor Girls Series," "Radio Girls Series," &c.

12mo. Illustrated

Price per volume, \$1.00, postpaid



Dorothy Dale is the daughter of an old Civil War veteran who is running a weekly newspaper in a small Eastern town. Her sunny disposition, her fun-loving ways and her trials and triumphs make clean, interesting and fascinating reading. The Dorothy Dale Series is one of the most popular series of books for girls ever published.

DOROTHY DALE: A GIRL OF TO-DAY
DOROTHY DALE AT GLENWOOD SCHOOL
DOROTHY DALE'S GREAT SECRET
DOROTHY DALE AND HER CHUMS
DOROTHY DALE'S QUEER HOLIDAYS
DOROTHY DALE'S CAMPING DAYS
DOROTHY DALE'S SCHOOL RIVALS
DOROTHY DALE IN THE CITY
DOROTHY DALE'S PROMISE
DOROTHY DALE IN THE WEST
DOROTHY DALE'S STRANGE DISCOVERY
DOROTHY DALE'S ENGAGEMENT
DOROTHY DALE TO THE RESCUE

Send For Our Free Illustrated Catalogue

CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, Publishers

New York

THE RUTH FIELDING SERIES

BY ALICE B. EMERSON



12mo. Illustrated. Jacket in full colors

Price per volume, 65 cents, postpaid

Ruth Fielding was an orphan and came to live with her miserly uncle. Her adventures and travels make stories that will hold the interest of every reader.

Ruth Fielding is a character that will live in juvenile fiction.

1. RUTH FIELDING OF THE RED MILL
2. RUTH FIELDING AT BRIARWOODHALL
3. RUTH FIELDING AT SNOW CAMP
4. RUTH FIELDING AT LIGHTHOUSE POINT
5. RUTH FIELDING AT SILVER RANCH
6. RUTH FIELDING ON CLIFF ISLAND
7. RUTH FIELDING AT SUNRISE FARM
8. RUTH FIELDING AND THE GYPSIES
9. RUTH FIELDING IN MOVING PICTURES
10. RUTH FIELDING DOWN IN DIXIE
11. RUTH FIELDING AT COLLEGE
12. RUTH FIELDING IN THE SADDLE
13. RUTH FIELDING IN THE RED CROSS
14. RUTH FIELDING AT THE WAR FRONT
15. RUTH FIELDING HOMEWARD BOUND
16. RUTH FIELDING DOWN EAST
17. RUTH FIELDING IN THE GREAT NORTHWEST
18. RUTH FIELDING ON THE ST. LAWRENCE
19. RUTH FIELDING TREASURE HUNTING
20. RUTH FIELDING IN THE FAR NORTH
21. RUTH FIELDING AT GOLDEN PASS
22. RUTH FIELDING IN ALASKA
23. RUTH FIELDING AND HER GREAT SCENARIO

THE BETTY GORDON SERIES

By ALICE B. EMERSON

12mo. Cloth. Illustrated. Jacket in full colors

Price per volume, 65 cents, postpaid



A series of stories by Alice B. Emerson which are bound to make this writer more popular than ever with her host of girl readers.

1. BETTY GORDON AT BRAMBLE FARM
or *The Mystery of a Nobody*

At twelve Betty is left an orphan.

2. BETTY GORDON IN WASHINGTON
or *Strange Adventures in a Great City*

Betty goes to the National Capitol to find her uncle and has several unusual adventures.

3. BETTY GORDON IN THE LAND OF OIL

or *The Farm That Was Worth a Fortune*

From Washington the scene is shifted to the great oil fields of our country. A splendid picture of the oil field operations of today.

4. BETTY GORDON AT BOARDING SCHOOL

or *The Treasure of Indian Chasm*

Seeking treasures of Indian Chasm makes interesting reading.

5. BETTY GORDON AT MOUNTAIN CAMP

or *The Mystery of Ida Bellethorne*

At Mountain Camp Betty found herself in the midst of a mystery involving a girl whom she had previously met in Washington.

6. BETTY GORDON AT OCEAN PARK

or *School Chums on the Boardwalk*

A glorious outing that Betty and her chums never forgot.

7. BETTY GORDON AND HER SCHOOL CHUMS

or *Bringing the Rebels to Terms*

Rebellious students, disliked teachers and mysterious robberies make a fascinating story.

8. BETTY GORDON AT RAINBOW RANCH

or *Cowboy Joe's Secret*

Betty and her chums have a grand time in the saddle.

9. BETTY GORDON IN MEXICAN WILDS

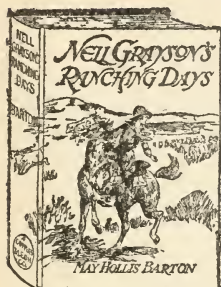
or *The Secret of the Mountains*

Betty receives a fake telegram and finds both Bob and herself held for ransom in a mountain cave.

Send For Our Free Illustrated Catalogue

THE BARTON BOOKS FOR GIRLS

By MAY HOLLIS BARTON



12mo. Cloth. Illustrated. With colored jacket

Price per volume, 65 cents, postpaid

May Hollis Barton is a new writer for girls who is bound to win instant popularity. Her style is somewhat of a mixture of that of Louise M. Alcott and Mrs. L. T. Meade, but thoroughly up-to-date in plot and action. Clean tales that all girls will enjoy reading.

1. THE GIRL FROM THE COUNTRY

or *Laura Mayford's City Experiences*

Laura was the oldest of five children and when daddy got sick she felt she must do something. She had a chance to try her luck in New York, and there the country girl fell in with many unusual experiences.

2. THREE GIRL CHUMS AT LAUREL HALL

or *The Mystery of the School by the Lake*

When the three chums arrived at the boarding school they found the other students in the grip of a most perplexing mystery. How this mystery was solved, and what good times the girls had, both in school and on the lake, go to make a story no girl would care to miss.

3. NELL GRAYSON'S RANCHING DAYS

or *A City Girl in the Great West*

Showing how Nell, when she had a ranch girl visit her in Boston, thought her chum very green, but when Nell visited the ranch in the great West she found herself confronting many conditions of which she was totally ignorant. A stirring outdoor story.

4. FOUR LITTLE WOMEN OF ROXBY

or *The Queer Old Lady Who Lost Her Way*

Four sisters are keeping house and having trouble to make both ends meet. One day there wanders in from a stalled express train an old lady who cannot remember her identity. The girls take the old lady in, and, later, are much astonished to learn who she really is.

5. PLAIN JANE AND PRETTY BETTY

or *The Girl Who Won Out*

The tale of two girls, one plain but sensible, the other pretty but vain. Unexpectedly both find they have to make their way in the world. Both have many trials and tribulations. A story of a country town and then a city.

Send For Our Free Illustrated Catalogue

CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, Publishers

New York

THE GIRL SCOUT SERIES

BY LILIAN GARIS

12mo. Cloth. Illustrated. Jacket in full colors

Price per volume, 65 cents, postpaid



The highest ideals of girlhood as advocated by the foremost organizations of America form the background for these stories and while unobtrusive there is a message in every volume.

1. THE GIRL SCOUT PIONEERS

or Winning the First B. C.

A story of the True Tred Troop in a Pennsylvania town. Two runaway girls, who want to see the city, are reclaimed through troop influence. The story is correct in scout detail.

2. THE GIRL SCOUTS AT BELLAIRE

or Maid Mary's Awakening

The story of a timid little maid who is afraid to take part in other girls' activities, while working nobly alone for high ideals. How she was discovered by the Bellaire Troop and came into her own as "Maid Mary" makes a fascinating story.

3. THE GIRL SCOUTS AT SEA CREST

or The Wig Wag Rescue

Luna Land, a little island by the sea, is wrapt in a mysterious seclusion, and Kitty Scuttle, a grotesque figure, succeeds in keeping all others at bay until the Girl Scouts come.

4. THE GIRL SCOUTS AT CAMP COMALONG

or Peg of Tamarack Hills

The girls of Bobolink Troop spend their summer on the shores of Lake Hocomo. Their discovery of Peg, the mysterious rider, and the clearing up of her remarkable adventures afford a vigorous plot.

5. THE GIRL SCOUTS AT ROCKY LEDGE

or Nora's Real Vacation

Nora Blair is the pampered daughter of a frivolous mother. Her dislike for the rugged life of Girl Scouts is eventually changed to appreciation, when the rescue of little Lucia, a woodland waif, becomes a problem for the girls to solve.

Send For Our Free Illustrated Catalogue

CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY, Publishers

New York

