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THREE TIMES THREE



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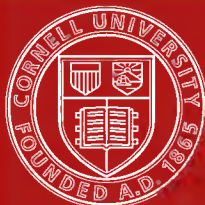


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THREE TIMES THREE

Three Times Three

A Story for Young People

BY

MRS. G. R. ALDEN (PANSY), FAYE HUNTINGTON
AND OTHERS

A triple cord, twisted from threefold strands! Three families, three children in each home! Three times three friends have told the tale.



NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO
Fleming H. Revell Company
Publishers of Evangelical Literature

Edgar Erwin ~~Erwin~~
in memory of
Prof. Dora W. Erwin



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TO THE BOYS AND GIRLS
WHO HAVE CHOSEN AS THEIR WATCHWORD,
"TREMBLE, KING ALCOHOL, WE SHALL GROW UP."

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THE PRIZE BOY

Mrs. Lucy A. Scott



"I GOT IT! I GOT THE PRIZE!" HE CRIED.

I

THE PRIZE BOY

MARTIE and Beth stopped at the corner of the street, for they saw Malcolm coming from the school yard. He was with another boy who waited while he ran to his sisters, his cheeks glowing and his eyes very bright.

“I got it! I got the prize!” he cried.

“Truly? Oh, I’m so glad,” exclaimed Beth. Martie said “you *never!*” but her eager little face grew bright, for she fully believed the good news.

Malcolm tore a hole in the paper that concealed his treasure. “Look!” said he. “It’s Whittier’s poems, all white and gold. Take it home, will you, and tell mother and Aunt-Rene I’ll be along by and by.”

“Oh, come with us,” pleaded Beth. “Mother’ll want to hear all about it.”

“Malcolm Courtney, you *never* walk with us nowadays, hardly. Where you going?” This was Martie’s question.

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“Sh! You talk as if this was Rocky Hill. I’m just going down street with Spotty Marx. He’s one of the boys who spoke, you know. Now you skip home.” Malcolm thrust the book into Beth’s hands and ran away, while the little girls stood looking after him—one with tears in her blue eyes, the other with reproach in her black ones, and an upward tilt of her small chin. “He never acted that way up home,” said Martie.

“No,” faltered Beth.

The girls were twins, but Martie’s sturdy figure was an inch higher than Beth’s, and she often acted as if she were years older. They had lived in the city but six months—since the dear father died and they had to leave the old parsonage at Rocky Hill—and were still in terror of street cars, strange people and dogs. But Aunt Rene, who had taken the bereaved family to her own modest home, was a dressmaker, and often sent the twins here and there with bundles of finished work, so they had learned to find their way, hand in hand, through the busy streets.

“O dear!” said Martie, as an electric car came buzzing around the corner. “I just hate

The Prize Boy

to live where things hurry me so. If we were up home to-night we would hear frogs. It's warm enough, I know."

"Yes," sighed Beth. "Frogs to-night, robins to-morrow morning, and pussy willows down by the bridge, and—and—Mallie to go with us after 'em."

She choked and swallowed, but the tears would come. Martie's lips quivered, but she shook her head impatiently. She could not bear to have her "twinnie" cry.

"Stop it, Beth Courtney! Spring comes here, too, and I can see it this minute in the sky. There's three baby carriages in the street, too, and—the giant has got his old door open. Let's go on the other side." This place, which the twins always dreaded to pass, had painted windows, and rough-looking men went in and came out with unsteady feet.

They soon turned into the quiet street where Aunt Rene lived, and there Martie saw another sign of spring. "There's Mrs. Heffner standing in the door without a thing over her head," she cried as she pointed gleefully toward the lively little German woman who

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kept what she called a "homemade bakery" in one corner of a block.

"'Victuals and drink were the chief of her diet, and yet this little old woman could never be quiet,'" sang Martie. "She *is* a Mother Goose woman, Beth. She's twinkling around every minute when we go in there."

Martie's little world was full of curious people, partly real, partly imaginary, and her stories were a constant delight to Beth.

At last they reached their own home. "I smell cookies!" said Beth, as they opened the street door. "Mother made 'em for Mallie, I guess, so if he got the prize it would be a little treat."

"And if he didn't it would be a little comfort," added Martie. Up one flight of stairs they ran and opened another door.

"Malcolm got the prize all right, and here it is. Can I have just one cooky now?" said Beth.

Mrs. Courtney, a small, fair-faced woman in black, rose from the sewing-machine and took the book. Her face grew very bright. "Rene!" she called, "Malcolm has won!"

From the large front room came a tall, thin

The Prize Boy

lady, with quick, nervous step. "Is it possible? Well, I am surprised!" she exclaimed.

"But I told you he was like his father, and Mr. Courtney had a wonderful voice. If he had had his health he would have been famous." Mrs. Courtney's eyes rested upon a small bookcase which held the remnant of her husband's library—sacred old books they were—and then wandered to the gentle, unworldly face framed above it.

As Malcolm had been winning prizes in Sunday-school and public school ever since he wore kilts, Martie and Beth did not realize that this victory was anything unusual. He was a "prize boy," as the *Rocky Hill Gazette* had once stated. His mother, who had drilled him night after night until "Bingen on the Rhine" was as familiar to her as it was to him, was perhaps more surprised, and yet she had expected he would win. But Aunt Irene Kimball, who knew what the city schools were, went back to her work with sparkling eyes. "He must be a remarkable boy—a very remarkable boy," she said to herself, pausing a moment to examine the lovely book. "I wonder what the teachers thought to have a coun-

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try boy come in ahead! Let me see! Next year he goes into the high school—then,—well, he won't go to college if I stop to day-dream like this," and with a little laugh she gathered up her scattered sewing.

The twins were inclined to think that Aunt Rene sat by the east window all night, for she was there when they went to bed, and when they came down in the morning. All around her were parts of dresses, linings, steels, pins, spools of thread, and "sniffings" of silk, velvet and lace which they vainly coveted for their dolls' wardrobe. "O what fun to make dresses! And mamma just runs the sewing-machine and puts on the trimming," said Martie. She did not suspect that the two women were working harder than ever before, for the children's sake. Aunt Rene thought of it as she basted a skirt with rapid fingers. But if Malcolm could make a minister, or a lawyer, or a splendid doctor,—that would repay her for all the extra hours. Then another thought came, and she asked, "Martie, why didn't Malcolm come home with you?"

"He said he was going down street with Spotty Marx."

The Prize Boy

“Spotty Marx!” echoed her aunt. “What kind of a boy is he, I wonder.”

“Mallie says he’s nice. He has lots of money, and buys soda water, and candy, and all such things, to treat the boys.”

“Spotty doesn’t sound nice.”

“Oh, he’s freckled, that’s why,” explained Martie. “They have a special name for every boy. Mallie says they call him ‘Country’ instead of Courtney, but he doesn’t care. He says he can whip any boy in his class.”

Mrs. Courtney’s face grew anxious, and after a long silence she said, “I shall be glad when John gets home. He will know how to manage Malcolm.”

“Yes, if he is as good as he used to be, and will give up going to sea, it will be a great comfort. But I suppose a ship’s captain is apt to grow—well, careless,” replied Aunt Rene.

“Not our brother John,” said Mrs. Courtney, confidently.

Just then the street door slammed and some one came bounding up the stairs, whistling a merry tune. “It’s Malcolm!” cried Martie, and every face grew bright. ““Hold the fort, for I am coming!”” shouted a boyish voice,

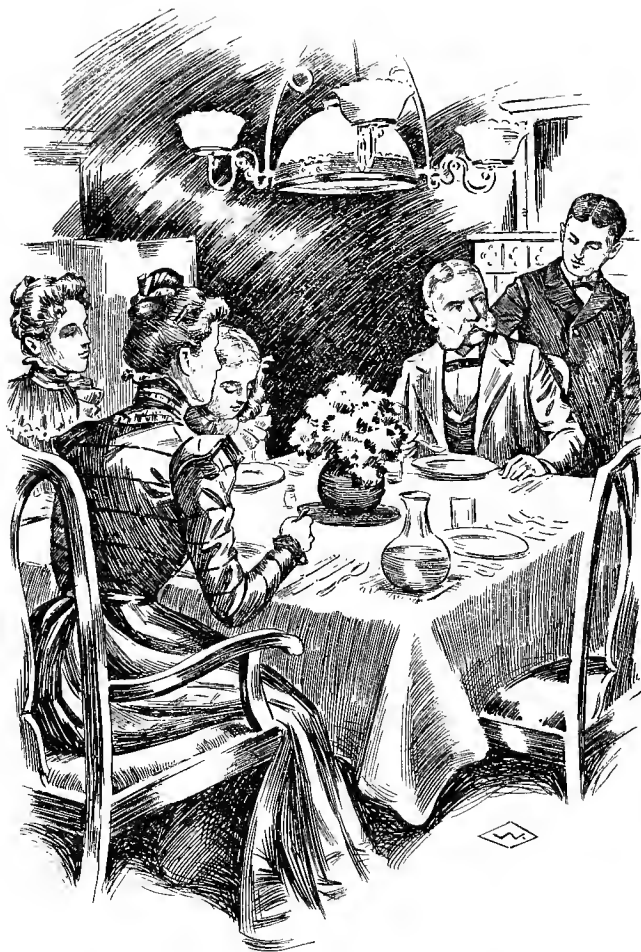
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and with that the door flew open and Malcolm charged upon the twins, who fled to their mother with shrieks of delight.

It was very evident that the "prize boy" had reached home.

AT MADEL'S PARTY

M. V. M.



"'SCUSE ME, PAP; COULDN'T HELP IT THIS TIME."

II

AT MADEL'S PARTY

“DEAR me! I wonder where Renwick can be!” Mrs. Marx rose as she spoke, to look out once more upon the busy street. “He knows how it annoys his father to have him late at dinner, and I have begged him over and over again to be more careful. I think he might consider my feelings in the matter.”

The speaker was a fair, stately woman, faultlessly dressed, but a fretful note sounded in her voice, and fretful lines marred the beauty of her face.

“As if Ren would stop his fun long enough to think of any one's feelings!” The tall, blonde girl who spoke was strikingly like the older lady. “You know, mamma, *I* consider Ren decidedly a spoiled child.”

“Well, I can't help it, I'm sure. I do the best I can, and yet I am blamed all 'round. Here is your father now, and the child not here yet!”

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A few minutes later the man of business entered the handsome library, and almost immediately dinner was announced.

“Where is Renwick? Not late again, I hope,” was the quick question.

“I have not seen him since lunch. Perhaps he is in his room.” Mrs. Marx sighed as she spoke.

“James, see if Master Renwick is in his room,” ordered Mr. Marx, sharply.

But before James could return there was a bang of the front door, and a round, laughing face looked into the dining-room. “Late again!” cried a merry voice. “Excuse me, I’ll be back in a minute,” and away sped the boyish figure, giving Mr. Marx no time to excuse him altogether from the dinner-table for that day.

Five minutes later the boy rushed in, and, as he passed to his place, gave his father a little pat on his shoulder, bending over him to say in a low tone, “’Seuse me, pop, couldn’t help it this time—explain later.”

Mrs. Marx looked relieved as she saw the cloud lift from her husband’s brow, and she murmured in her gently fretful voice, “You
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At Madel's Party

must be more prompt, Rennie. I shall insist upon it."

"Say, Ren, did you get the prize?" eagerly asked Madel, the youngest, a girl of ten, with a keen eye and a beautiful top to her head.

"Prize? No, of course I didn't, but I stood treat to the prize boy, and that's what made me late. He's a stunner, he is!"

"Who did get it?" asked Madel. "Wait a minute—let me guess. Country, I say. Was it?"

"To be sure it was. No other fellow stands a ghost of a chance when he's 'round. My, but how he reeled it off! He's bound to be a Patrick Henry, or some sort of a big gun, one of these days."

"Suppose, before you forget it, you tell us about the 'treat' that made you late to dinner," suggested Mr. Marx, a little doubtfully.

"Oh, yes, certainly. I asked Country to go down to Bell's and have some soda, just to show that I had nothing laid up against him for getting ahead of me, you know. And then somehow it came out that he had never been inside a dime museum, and so I stood treat and took him to Waller's—a ten-cent

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lark and no end of fun. But what do you think? Not a step would the good boy budge till he had run home and told the folks that he had been invited to see some 'natural curiosities.' I advised him not to mention dime museum, for fear, you know. His father was a dominie, they say."

"What a singular name—'Country,'" said Miss Ethel, languidly.

"Oh, that's not his real name, we just call him that. His name's all right—Courtney—Malcolm Courtney."

"Everybody has a nickname at that school. They call Ren, 'Spotty.' I don't think it's nice, and I don't think dime museums are nice, either," commented Madel.

"Ho! Boys don't have to bother about being 'nice' as girls do. A fellow has to have a little fun."

"I hope this Malcolm Courtney—a very good name, by the way—has no bad habits if you are taking him up as your friend," said Mrs. Marx. "I am very anxious that your companions should be of the best."

Madel laughed. "Indeed, mamma, I think Mrs. Courtney's the one to feel anxious," she

At Madel's Party

began, but her father's grave "Madel!" silenced her.

Renwick's eyes dropped for an instant, while a little amused smile played about his lips. Then he spoke in a low tone :

"Sis is about right, I'm afraid."

This free-handed, light-hearted "Spotty" needed a wise, firm hand to guide him through the devious ways of boy-life in the great city. His mother dimly realized it sometimes, but for the most part she was too much absorbed with herself and her society interests to give thought to her one boy, even had she known how to minister wisely to his higher needs. As for Mr. Marx, he had his hopes and aspirations for the merry boy, and a vague sense that all was not just as it should be, but "business" ate up his time, and what could he do? So "Spotty" went his way, and mostly it *was* his way.

After dinner Madel teased her brother to tell her all he knew about the "prize boy." "Has he any sisters?" she asked, eagerly.

"Yes, two kids, about as big as you are."

"Kids! as big as I! I like that! Tell me how they look."

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“Oh, I don't know. They're nice little country girls enough. Their aunt's a dress-maker. They've lived with her since their father died, you know. The kids carry home work for her sometimes.”

“I'd like to do that! I wish I could be like other girls and have good times. Mamma and Ethel want me to be so proper all the time! I wish I knew Country's sisters—I just know they're nice. Maybe mamma'll let his auntie make my dresses now that Madame is sick. I wish she would. Perhaps I could get acquainted with the girls then. I'll ask.”

“Pshaw! She won't let you. Girls can't do like boys can. You can't go to public school 'cause you're a girl, and you can't go with girls you like unless they're just so well off and dress nice and all that! I tell you, I'm glad I'm a boy!”

But Madel did not have that beautiful top to her head for nothing. She “managed” mamma, and so it came to pass that her dresses were made by Aunt Irene that spring, and before they were finished, Madel had come to feel quite well acquainted with Martie, and to have a very high opinion of shy little Beth.

At Madel's Party

She determined all by herself to invite them to her birthday party.

It needed more "managing" to accomplish this, but Mrs. Marx yielded at last, though the fear of what "they" might say was strong upon her.

"I would not allow it, mamma," Ethel declared, with emphasis. "The child is far too ready to associate with all sorts now. She should learn to think of our position."

"But she has set her heart on this. I hardly know what to say or do about it. Of course the father of these little girls was a clergyman, and that counts for a great deal in polite society. I will take care to have that understood," and so it was settled.

It was a pretty little speech that Mrs. Marx composed to meet the emergency. "The little strangers are the daughters of the eloquent clergyman, Dr. Courtney, of whose untimely death you have doubtless heard. They have not been long in the city, and dear Madel, thoughtful child that she is, has found them out and wants to give them a little pleasure. They are from a really superior family, you understand."

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How utter would have been her astonishment could she have known the fears and misgivings of heart which assailed Mrs. Courtney when the invitation to the party arrived! "Nonsense! let the girlies go! I'll risk their taking any harm," said Aunt Irene. "If I'm not mistaken, that little Madel is a girl with sense in her head. I'm not so sure about her mother. But it's only for once, and the twinies will enjoy it."

"I don't want to deprive them of pleasure, I'm sure," answered their mother, "but I do want my little girls to grow up as sweet and pure as they are now."

Martie was radiant at the prospect of a real party in a big, fine house, but Beth looked forward rather timidly to the ordeal. Two sweet wild flowers they were as they set out, escorted by Malcolm, and a weary but happy little pair they were when it was over and they were safely home again.

"But, mamma, we were so early," said Beth. "I was glad, though, for we had such a nice chance to see the pictures and all the pretty things."

"They all laughed at us for having to come

At Madel's Party

home so early," added Martie. "But I didn't care. It was long enough. Say, Beth, why didn't you take lemonade? You always like it so."

"It was so red I thought it must have wine in it," said Beth. "Did it?"

"Why, I never thought," answered Martie. "I don't believe it was wine, it didn't taste strong enough, I guess. Dear me, I do hope I haven't broken my pledge."

"I know what it was," broke in Malcolm. "It was claret. They always put it in lemonade at Spotty's. 'Tisn't much wine, you know. It just flavors the lemonade a little, and couldn't hurt a kitten."

"Have you taken it, too, Mallie?" There were tears in Beth's soft eyes. "Then you and Martie have both broken the pledge. Oh, I'm so sorry."

Mrs. Courtney looked grave, but Aunt Irene said cheerily,

"Let the past go and begin over again." But as she left the room she said to herself, "I *am* glad John is coming home soon. It's no small matter to bring up a family in a city."

A SURPRISE VISIT

Mrs. George Archibald



A ROSY YOUNG WOMAN SPRANG IN UPON THEM.

III

A SURPRISE VISIT

As was natural, the victory in the prize contest had given Malcolm a feeling of elation as well as of hope. The approval of his teacher, the generous praise and championship of Renwick Marx, who was the richest and most influential boy in the school, and the evident growing respect of the other scholars, inspired him as even the partiality of his home folks had failed to do. It seemed to him a foretaste of what the big world had waiting for him, and he was eager to win the possible laurels.

But he failed to realize that his sudden prominence, and the praise and preference of a rich man's son, were the smallest part of an honest triumph. And because he did not understand this, he was led away somewhat from the thought and work needed for his daily study by the pleasure of his popularity out of school hours and the joys that became his as a favorite of "Spotty" Marx. His new friend-

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ship grew constantly warmer, and gave promise of an early and close intimacy.

But this same friendship was a source of more anxiety than pride to Malcolm's aunt and mother. While they wished to see him respected, they feared the associations might weaken his devotion to principles which they had tried very earnestly to establish. And they were still more uneasy after the little girls had given their report of the party where claret lemonade had been served to the children.

They were not worldly-wise women, these two, but they had the fear of the Lord which is the beginning of truest wisdom, and to this beginning they had sought to lead the three young lives for whom they planned and labored. And Malcolm was their special care. He was one of those boys who seem born for the express purpose of being the centre of family love, sacrifice and anxiety.

Malcolm would never be a mean-spirited boy, a sly nor a heartless boy. But his mother and aunt knew that it was possible for such a boy as he to grow careless and pleasure-seeking, and they longed to share the care of his

A Surprise Visit

development with some man who loved and understood boys, and could add authority to the loving understanding.

“When John comes,” said Mrs. Courtney to her troubled heart. “When John comes, if he comes as he went away,” said Aunt Rene to hers.

One morning, about a week after the party, the two women sat together, stitching, silent for the most part, with minds full of the work in hand, and of the fact that Malcolm was to bring “Spotty” Marx home with him that night for the first time.

“Just wait until you see him, mommie and Aunt Rene, and if you don’t like him—well, I won’t either, if I can help it, but I may as well own up that I can’t help it,” Malcolm had said.

“He *is* nice,” declared Martie, warmly. “He was so nice to the little girls at Madel’s party. And Madel says he’s lots of fun.”

“Yes,” said Beth. “But then you know Madel says he worries his mother. She says he hasn’t any—any respect for the proprieties—I think that’s what she called it. Boys shouldn’t worry their mothers.”

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“Of course they shouldn’t but they do—and we have to like them, anyway,” replied Martie.

The women smiled at this, seeing more in the words than the little girls had had in mind. On this night they had put the room to rights with much pains. They felt that it would look like a poor place, at the best, to Malcolm’s rich friend, but it should at least be neat, and they did themselves the justice to realize that it was refined.

The books in the sitting-room bookcase were well chosen and well preserved: a country minister’s library, for the most part, but with a fair proportion of the poets, of historians, some volumes of Washington Irving and other standard works. A few good prints and engravings hung on the walls, and a pair of silver candlesticks that would have delighted a lover of the antique, adorned the mantel. They were dear, as an heirloom, to the possessors, who were little aware of their value as specimens of old silver.

Why were Aunt Rene’s ears the quicker? Perhaps because as she worked and waited her

A Surprise Visit

thought did not go back to dwell with patient sorrow on the memories of the past, but was chiefly alive to the work and to the nearest coming event.

“How early they are!” she exclaimed, and Mrs. Courtney looked up with surprise which increased as the door was suddenly pushed open, and a rosy young woman sprang in upon them with so much vigor as to make a small cyclone in the tidy room.

“So you didn’t expect me! Well, you should be ashamed of yourselves! You know I make a practice of coming when no one is looking for me, and knowing *that* you should have felt certain of seeing me!”

“But,” explained Aunt Rene, “you were in Europe a month ago.”

“*To* be sure! And that’s one reason why I’m here to-day. You see, I saw an old friend in Europe who persuaded me that I couldn’t do a better deed than to come home with him.”

“With *him*? With a *man*? Who was it?” asked Mrs. Courtney, trembling with a sense of something tremendous. “Who *is* it?”

“Well, it *is* my husband. And it is—now

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don't faint!—your brother, John Malcolm. So instead of being Kate Courtney, sister-in-law to one of you, I am Kate Malcolm, sister-in-law to both, and I want to be received accordingly.”

The women looked at her, and stood speechless for a moment.

“ But where is he ? ” gasped Mrs. Courtney, as soon as she could speak.

“ Well, he's detained. There was some sort of ship business in New York, and it occurred to me there would be less of a shock to you if I came on two days ahead and broke it to you—easy ! ”

“ Easy ! ” exclaimed the other two women. But they took her into their arms with quivers of delight and love. Somehow, all the hard things of life seemed to drop away in that sunny presence. And to Aunt Rene came the thought, “ If Kate Courtney has married John, John is just as good as he used to be. ” For she knew that Kate Courtney, intelligent, beautiful mentally and physically, enjoying life and helping others to enjoy it, was not one to demand less than the truest manhood in the man she would marry.

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“Tell me everything,” said Kate, when she had divested herself of hat and veil and gloves, and, bringing her little “grip” from the hall where she had dropped it, had freshened herself from the contents thereof. And for the next hour they exchanged as much information as could well be crowded into the time. Mrs. Courtney and Aunt Rene learned that John’s last sea venture had been unusually profitable, and that he would spend a month, at least, with his sisters.

“If you can find us room,” said Kate, and then it came out that this was just what those two unfurnished rooms must have been waiting for.

But Kate refrained from saying that at the end of the month, while the newly married pair combined business and pleasure by again sailing across the ocean together, their less fortunate relatives were to be installed in a suburban cottage, which was to be bought meantime, not too far from school privileges, but far enough out to give the tired women and the children fresher air and sweet freedom. This had been John’s idea before his meeting with Kate had united their lives and

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plans, and it was heartily Kate's as they talked it over together.

“I shall do half myself,” she said, with enthusiasm. “A cottage does not cost much, and everything can be nice and convenient. As for their sewing, I know there is always a lack of dressmaking help in the outskirts of a town, and if they own a house think how much easier it will all seem. And to think that I have the privilege of helping !”

This privilege, so dear to Kate, had been hers but a short time—only since the death in England of the eccentric maiden aunt with whom she had gone abroad as companion, and who had left her a snug little fortune—at once a great surprise and a reward for long patience. But if Mrs. Courtney and Aunt Rene had known what was plotted in their behalf they could hardly have felt gladder than now. For they had found a rush of sweet rest in the thought that Kate and John together would show them their way with Malcolm. They were sure of it. And Malcolm would be shown his own way, his right way.

For had not Kate once taught in a boys' school with phenomenal success? Was she

A Surprise Visit

not always the friend of every boy she saw, and able to win him to the right without alarming his boyish fear of goody-goodyism? What could not Kate do in a month, with John to help her? They poured out their souls to her in swift words as they recounted their trials and fears. And just as they were well through, up the stairs came the boy Malcolm, and following him, rather embarrassed but friendly, frank and courteous, Renwick Marx.

And in the funny time they had between the boisterous welcome Malcolm gave his Aunt Kate, and the comical awkwardness of getting Renwick introduced all around, and the second tumult of the arrival of the little girls, they were all in splendid humor and free as possible, in short order.

“I only staid a little while,” said Renwick to his mother at the dinner-table that night, “for I thought I might be one too many. But they are real jolly folks, and that Aunt Kate from abroad is the jolliest.”

“Well, if they have an aunt who has been abroad, and are a clergyman’s family, they must be genteel. I’m sure I hope so, since

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you and Madel are bound to take up with the children.”

“O ginger!” exclaimed Renwick. “If they turn out genteel!”

“Renwick,” said his father, “don’t speak in that way to your mother.” But a faint flicker of a smile drew the corners of a mouth that looked as if it had been made for smiles, but somehow cheated of its dues.

THE GIANT'S HOUSE

Margaret Allys



"ACH, GUTEN MORGEN," SAID FRAU HEFFNER, CHEERFULLY.

IV

THE GIANT'S HOUSE

“GIRLS are different!” Mrs. Courtney had often said as she counselled with Aunt Rene concerning the snares with which a boy’s pathway is beset. “There’s always the possibility of home-making in a girl’s life, and that helps wonderfully. But boys, somehow, seem to be pushed into contact with all the evil there is in the world.” What the two anxious women would have said had they known of one new, though, alas! familiar danger, that lay in wait for the boy of their love and prayers at this particular moment, I cannot pretend to say.

From their earliest childhood, under the teachings of a father whose creed included the clause, “I believe in the utter destruction of the liquor traffic,” the children had hated all that intoxicates. “King Alcohol” had been personated in their childish fancy as a powerful giant, with arms ever outstretched to seize

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his victims, and the "giant's house" was the place of all others to be avoided. No ordinary saloon, with its array of bottles and its red-faced barkeeper, could have attracted Malcolm Courtney for a moment. But it is no less true to-day than in Shakespeare's time, that

"Often times to lead us to our harm,
The instruments of darkness tell us truths,
Win us with honest trifles, to betray's
In deepest consequence."

And so it came to pass that the envoy of the giant whom they had most occasion to fear at this time, was a young man with all the outward appearance of a gentleman. Carefully and stylishly dressed, bland in manner, with a certain air of good-fellowship, and possessing strong personal magnetism, Carl Elmont was likely to win the following of boys and young men with whom he came in contact.

"Fine thing that young Elmont has done," said one good man to another. "We ought to have had a reading-room here long ago. Anything to keep the boys off the street."

"Yes," answered his friend, though in slower

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tone. "I reckon it's all right. Somehow, I'm a bit suspicious of that soda fountain."

"Now, don't be an old foggy, Phillips," returned the first speaker, half impatiently. "A soda fountain's all right. Of course the fellow's got to have something to pay expenses. Ever been in?"

"No."

"Well, I have—was in last night. Got some first-rate ice cream soda, too."

"Many there?"

"Yes, a good many."

"What were they doing?"

"Mostly reading, in the front room—*Century* and *Harper's*, and the other magazines. I didn't go into the back parlor, but I could hear the balls clicking."

Yes, the *Century*, and *Harper's*, and other reputable magazines were on the tables, and numerous enough to hide everything of lower grade from an unpracticed eye. And neither good Mr. Phillips nor his less suspicious neighbor dreamed that a full supply of the worst brain poisons lay upon those shelves and tables—papers and magazines, respectable in outward form, but hiding under a guise of

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decency that which would wreck body and soul.

The click of the billiard balls was a recognized feature in the "Good Cheer Parlors." And but few save those who were its regular patrons, knew of the existence of another room whose doorway, concealed by heavy draperies, admitted to all possibilities of card-playing and other forms of gambling, and whose corner cupboard held sundry bottles whose contents were very different from the soda water that served as a bait for the thoughtless, ignorant, or venturesome victim. Conrad Elmont, the agent of a far-seeing and unscrupulous brewing firm, had planned well, and the results were according to his plans.

"A loaf of bread! A loaf of bread!" said Martie, over and over, in singsong rhythm, as the twins came to the "homemade bakery." "I do wonder," she added, interrupting the song, "what Mrs. Heffner will have to tell us this morning. It's always something."

"Don't you know, Martie, she said we ought to call her *Frau* Heffner? I suppose German folks like their own names best if

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they aren't so pretty as ours," said Beth, thoughtfully.

"Yes, I suppose so," answered Martie. "If I was such a funny little old woman, I should think 'Frau' fitted me better than 'Mrs.,' I suppose. Why, Beth, see there! Who's that boy? And there's a baby in the bakery yard! And there's a girl 'bout as big as we are! Do you s'pose she's got homemade company?"

There was only time for Beth's merry laugh in answer, for they had reached the door of the little shop. Frau Heffner was behind the counter, round and rosy-cheeked and "twinkling" as ever. But a newcomer sat at the other end of the room—a woman, however, who was plainly a younger edition of the sturdy Frau, and nearest of kin to the children whom the girls had seen in the yard.

"*Ach, guten Morgen,*" said Frau Heffner, cheerfully. "Und how are *die kleine Mädchen* this mornin'? *Ach*, I haf some news for you. Dis ist *meine Tochter*—how you say?—mein daughter—und she haf mit her *Kinder* come to stay mit me for a long, long time—haf you not, Minna?"

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“I hope so, mother,” answered the younger woman, smiling. Then she continued, in good English, “It depends somewhat on Carl, you know.”

“Oh, but Carl vill mit the good captain stay, und so you vill stay mit me—you und the blessed *Kindel*. Carl ist her man, you see,” she continued in explanation, the girls feeling very proud of the confidence thus given them, “und he ist a sailor-man. But he ist not a little sailor-man, who only goes on the rivers, ach, nein, but in a big ship, und this last time he has mit such a good captain been, und he vill surely mit him stay, for der captain vill not let Carl go, he ist so good a sailor.”

“Where has he been?” asked Martie, interested at once.

“Nach Hamburg, the last, und he has just come back, und to-day he vill come to Minna und her *Kindel*, und ve all togedder vill haf die guten times.”

“To Hamburg!” exclaimed Beth. “Why, that is where Uncle John has been.”

“What is the name of Mr. Carl’s ship?” asked Martie.

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“It iss the Columbia,” answered Frau Heffner, and then both girls clapped their hands gleefully. “Oh, I knew it, I knew it! I was sure of it just as soon as you said Hamburg,” cried Martie, and Beth added,

“It’s Captain Malcolm, isn’t it?” Then, forgetting to be shy, as both women nodded assent, she continued, “He’s our very own uncle—Uncle John—and of course he’s splendid—and he’s coming home to-morrow—and, why, Martie, we’re ’lations, aren’t we? Oh, isn’t it nice!”

“Of course we are,” assented Martie, joyfully. “Don’t you see, Mrs. Heffner—excuse me, Frau Heffner—and Mrs. Carl—don’t you see? Mr. Carl is the bestest sailor on Uncle John’s ship, and you are Mrs. Carl, and you’re here, and that makes us really truly cousins.”

The excited English speech was too rapid for full following, even by Frau Minna. But both women smiled a happy assent to that which they read in the fresh, glad young faces, confident that all must be right that was in any way connected with Captain Malcolm.

Suddenly a new and delightful thought came to Martie.

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“Why, Beth, we forgot! Say, does Mr. Carl know Aunt Kate? Of course he does, and she’s here—she’s Mrs. Captain, you know, and she’s just splendid! Come on, Beth, let’s go and tell her quick! Good-bye”—turning their heads for a moment as they sped through the door, quite forgetting the errand on which they had come—“Good-bye! We’ll come back pretty soon.”

Down the street went the twins, as fast as eager feet could carry them, till arrested by a sight that surprised and troubled them.

“There’s Mallie!” cried both in a breath. And after a pause Beth added slowly, “It looks just as if he’d come out of the ‘Good Cheer Parlors,’ and you know what Aunt Kate said.”

ADRIFT

Faye Huntington



HE TOOK THE UNCONSCIOUS BOY IN HIS ARMS.

V

ADRIFT

THE refrain, "When John comes," was changed, and the song in the hearts of the two over-burdened women was, "John has come."

When Mrs. Courtney looked into the honest face of her brother, felt his kisses upon her cheek, heard his cheery voice and noted his firm step, she said to herself, "It is the same John, only more of him."

Aunt Rene laughed as she released herself from his somewhat rough embrace and said, "O John, I thought you would come home a man! But you are a boy still." And Captain John joined in the laugh as he responded,

"You used to say you liked a manly boy. How about a boyish man?" He gave her another tremendous hug as he spoke, spinning around the room to the great danger of the supper-table, which was set out with their grandmother's old china in honor of his home-coming.

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When they had calmed down enough to think of such everyday matters as bread and butter, a very happy company sat down to supper. As the hot rolls from Frau Heffner's bakery were passed, Aunt Kate suddenly turned to her husband, saying,

"O John, one of your men is staying close by, with his mother-in-law, the dearest little German Frau you ever saw. His wife is nice, too, and they are dying to see you."

"Are they? It would be a pity to let them die," said the captain. "Do you think I'd better sail 'round there at once, or can I finish my supper first?"

"Stop making fun of me," said Mrs. Malcolm, in mock indignation, adding demurely, "Frau Heffner and her family will be very much pleased to meet Captain John Malcolm, of the Columbia." Then they all laughed—it was so easy to laugh—they were all so happy! John had come!

A whole month! it seemed so long in anticipation, but so short in passing. But if the days went quickly they were full of good times. Malcolm went everywhere with his uncle and his uncle went everywhere with

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him. Malcolm's father had been a quiet, earnest man, whose gentle, studious ways would scarcely have been suited to the tastes of the rollicking boy. But Uncle John was, as Malcolm said over and over to himself, "So jolly!" and yet "Mother and Aunt Rene seem to think him just perfect." The boy could not at first understand how it was that they approved the ways of the man when they were often inclined to disapprove the ways of the boy who had the same fun-loving spirit; but after a little he began to see more clearly.

The two were going down street together one afternoon. As they passed the dime museum Malcolm said,

"Spotty Marx took me in there the day I got the prize. It's no end of fun."

"Yes? That is good, so far," said his uncle.

"I'm glad you don't think it's wicked," returned the boy, quickly. "Mother and Aunt Rene didn't like it, my going there. Spotty told me to tell them we were going to a museum, to see some natural curiosities—he said 'dime museum' didn't sound so well to some people. But afterward Aunt Rene asked

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just where we went, and of course I had to tell her, and she and mother felt badly. I'm glad you think it's all right. They'll like it better when I tell them that."

"You are jumping at conclusions, my boy. I said the 'no end of fun,' as you call it, was good. But I was going to ask, 'Is it clean fun?'"

"I—I don't think I quite know what you mean," said Malcolm, the color coming into his face.

"Don't you? Well, suppose I were to give your mother and Aunt Rene, and Aunt Kate, too, a treat, and you were to choose what it should be, would you choose the dime museum for them?"

"Why, no—I don't suppose they would enjoy it—women don't enjoy fun as we boys do."

"I am not so sure of that. I am certain your Aunt Kate likes fun, or she never would have married me. But how about Beth and Martie—would you take them there?"

Malcolm hesitated; he saw where his uncle was leading him, but he finally said, "N-o, I don't think I would."

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“ But surely they like fun, and if it is ‘ no end of fun,’ why not give them the treat? I’ll buy the tickets and you can run home and get the girls, and we’ll all go this afternoon.”

Recollections of some of the scenes in the play—some of the tableaux—rose before Malcolm’s mind, and he said, without hesitation, this time, “ I see the point! I think I won’t take the tickets.”

“ Not for Beth and Martie—but for yourself? ”

“ No, not for myself.” Malcolm spoke with energy. “ I tell you, uncle, when I see a thing I see way through it, and if I ever give a boy a treat I’ll take him somewhere else. But Spotty Marx is a nice boy—he just didn’t think.”

“ ‘ Didn’t think ’ is a dangerous excuse. If I were you I’d drop it, both for myself and for my friends. My boy, you have life before you, and if you spend a little time investigating things before you drop into them you’ll keep out of some snares. The world is full of traps, but you’ll soon come to detect them.”

They were passing the “ Good Cheer Parlors,” and Malcolm exclaimed, “ Well,

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here is a place that I have investigated ! They have just the finest ice cream soda, and all the papers and magazines, and everything so clean and nice."

Captain Malcolm came to a standstill before the inviting "Parlors." Some way, the old rhyme of the spider and the fly was in his mind, and he hummed it under his breath. Then he said aloud, "It looks all right on the outside," adding, as he looked at his watch, "It is later than I supposed. We must go home now, but some other time we'll look into this matter of ice cream soda."

That evening, while Malcolm and the twins were studying their lessons, Captain Malcolm went quietly out into the street. As he heard the door close the boy looked up and made a movement as if to follow, then, glancing at the clock and back to the book before him, settled himself to study with a weary sigh. The children had begged to be allowed to stay from school while their uncle's visit lasted, and I am not sure but the mother and aunt would have consented. But Uncle John said, "That would be foolish. Out of school and study hours I will belong to you ; while you are

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busy with school your mother and Aunt Rene will have a chance. Isn't that fair?"

With this understanding, the three children went promptly to their school work, and claimed the other part of the contract to the letter. But the evening study hour seemed an infringement upon their rights, and especially did Malcolm rebel at his uncle's going out without him. Upon this particular evening Aunt Kate watched the boy as he fidgeted, twisted and scowled, put down figures and rubbed them out, and put down more, winking fast as if to hold back the tears. Finally she came to the rescue. Looking over his shoulder she said,

"Why, Malcolm, I do believe you are puzzling over that old problem of the cellar wall. Let me help you a bit. We'll figure it out in a jiffy."

A little wise explanation, a diagram or two, and Malcolm, encouraged and diverted from his disappointment, was able to master not only the wall problem but the others that were waiting solution.

Leaning back in her chair, Mrs. Malcolm watched the boy. She had been watching

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him ever since she came, and studying him. Mrs. Courtney and Aunt Rene were in the front room, and the twins, having finished their lessons, had gone to bed, so the two were alone. As Malcolm pushed aside his books and looked up, his aunt smiled and said,

“Malcolm, I want to talk.”

“All right, auntie, go ahead!”

“I am going to tell you what kind of a boy you are. May I?”

“Of course—if you don’t make me out too bad a specimen.”

“You are this kind of a boy—you don’t know the first thing about self-denial.”

“O auntie, you are mistaken! I just live a life of self-denial! I want a dozen things this minute that I can’t have.”

“Just so! And you call being obliged to do without things, self-denial? Circumstances deny you, but if circumstances allowed you these things you would not be able to deny yourself one of them. You have never learned to say ‘No’ to Malcolm Courtney. The thing you want to do, or have, is the thing to do, or have, if possible, without any regard to the effect the doing or having will have on the fu-

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ture. At your age it is natural to live in the present, and I think we all ought to do that, but we ought, also, to take into account the relation of the present to the future. Now, my dear boy, I am going away soon, and I want to leave you a motto—perhaps you will call it a lesson to learn. It is this, ‘Learn to say “No” to Malcolm Courtney.’ It may not seem much to you now, but you will find it not the easiest thing to learn and practice.”

Aunt Kate was one of the women who know when enough has been said, so she only added, “I have written my advice on a card, and you can put it into your pocket-book, where you will see it now and then. Now let’s have a history game while we wait for the Captain.”

Captain Malcolm, stopping on the way for his man Carl, had gone to the “Good Cheer Parlors.” The two men were readily recognized as sailors, and this fact, with their careless air, threw the young proprietor off his guard. It did not take long, therefore, for Captain Malcolm to penetrate to the inmost recesses of this gilded trap for unwary feet.

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He remained long enough in the back room to find out exactly what was going on, and then returned to the reading-room, where several boys of Malcolm's age were sitting at the tables: some of them were reading the better class of magazines and papers, others poring over the sensational and even vile literature, whose location on the shelves they had already learned.

"Let's sit down here a while," said the Captain to his companion. "I think there are some German papers over there that may interest you."

"Too bad! Too bad!" he said to himself. "What can be done to save these boys?" He held a paper in his hand, but he was studying the problem before him rather than reading when he heard one boy say to another,

"Come, let's go into the back room and watch 'em play."

"Oh, I don't care about it! I'm sick and tired seeing folks playing billiards."

"Oh, I don't mean that! Mr. Elmont let me into the real back room—beyond the curtain, you know—the other night. I tell you,

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Jack, there's a lot more to this than most of the boys have found out. Come on! I shouldn't wonder if we found Spotty Marx there—he said he was coming down to-night."

Captain Malcolm rose—perhaps he could save his nephew's friend. Turning to the boys, he said, "Will you tell Spotty Marx, as you call him, that some one wants to see him in the front parlor?"

"All right!" was the ready response. Presently one of the boys came back, evidently somewhat excited. "Spotty can't come—he—he isn't there." The boy stumbled over the words and rushed away as if to avoid questioning. Suddenly the Captain remembered the figure of a boy lying upon the couch in the inner room, and the thought forced itself upon him that it was Renwick Marx. Reëntering the room and pointing to the boy he asked a lad who stood by, "Is that Spotty Marx?" Receiving an affirmative answer, he took the unconscious boy in his arms and strode through the rooms, followed by young Elmont, who tried to interfere. The stalwart captain thrust him aside, calling, "Come, Carl,

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quick! Lend a hand here!" and they passed out into the night, carrying the boy.

An hour or so later, the door-bell at the Marx residence rang as if touched by a determined hand.

"Can I see Mr. Marx?" asked a strong voice, as the servant opened the door. Mr. Marx, who was alone in his library, arose to meet his visitor, who said,

"Pardon this intrusion, but I have come to tell you of your son."

"My son! What has happened?"

"Just this—pardon me if I am abrupt. Two hours ago I picked him up in the 'Good Cheer Parlors' overcome by liquor, and carried him out. Not knowing where he belonged, I took him to my sister's on Spring Street. Everything has been done that was necessary, and he seems to be sleeping it off. He is safe for the night, and can be brought home in the morning."

Mr. Marx sank into a chair, overcome for a moment: then rousing himself, he exclaimed in some excitement, "And you come here to tell me that my boy is drunk? How dare you!"

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“Excuse me—I did not say so. You can call it what you like. I said he was overcome by liquor.”

“Have you called a physician?”

“I have not. It was not necessary—and we thought the boy’s parents would be glad to avoid publicity.”

“Hm! Very thoughtful! But I do not believe your statement. The boy is probably ill, and must have a doctor at once.”

“I tell you,” said Captain Malcolm, rising as his host moved with evident intention to seek his son, “I tell you I know what I am talking about, and those villains who gave him the liquor know it, too.”

“Who are you?” asked Mr. Marx, excited and suspicious.

“I am Captain John Malcolm, of the steamship Columbia. I am here for a few days only, but I have discovered what your people seem blind to, that the ‘Good Cheer Parlors’ are a device of the devil for ruining the boys of this town, and it seems to me that good citizens like yourself, who have boys, should stamp it out.”

Had Captain Malcolm known how the enter-

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prise touched both the business and political interests of Mr. Marx, he would have understood how unlikely that gentleman was to join in any effort to "stamp it out."

SNARES AND TRAPS

Maude Lorene Greene



“LIE STILL, SPOTTY AND TAKE THIS HOT MILK.”

VI

SNARES AND TRAPS

“MISSED your mark that time, old fellow, didn’t you? Too bad! But you can’t always spot your bird by his chirp, or the cut of his feathers. The Governor of that youngster will be apt to make it warm for the ‘Good Cheer,’ won’t he?”

“Don’t fool yourself, Metzner! That sea-captain wasn’t quite the sort I thought him, to be sure. But my pulse is all right so far as Marx is concerned. That little fool kid goes too fast. He’s a bright lad and a general favorite. I like the boy. But ’twixt you and me, there’s nothing to fear from the father. Silent partners aren’t usually dangerous. See?” Conrad Elmont chuckled a little nervously as he sank into a chair beside a slight, dark-visaged man after returning from his fruitless attempt to intercept Captain John Malcolm and his unconscious burden.

The stranger to whom Elmont spoke had been turning the leaves of a magazine during

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the exciting episode, his seeming indifference being but a cover to the really keen interest he was taking in the affair and in his surroundings in general. In speaking to Elmont his tones had been low, and his words rapidly, almost impatiently spoken.

“Silent partner, eh? So that’s the way of it! Yes, I see. Very good, Connie. Your head is level, I reckon, and I’ll pass in a good report of your enterprise at headquarters. But, Con, you’d better put a small check rein on that boy. It’ll pay better in the end. Play the part of confidential friend, or guardian, or anything you please. Only remember he is good bait, and a steady increase in business is always more healthful than a boom, even in ‘Good Cheer’ commodities. See?” and the little man tapped Elmont’s knee with the magazine he was holding.

The proprietor nodded and arose to meet some newcomers, pausing to say in an undertone,

“Hunt up those two kids who gave Marx away to the Jack tars. It won’t do to let them go into the publishing business. Give them a merry evening at my expense. You

Snares and Traps

know how, pard, I can vouch for that. My memory's good. Fix it so they'll forget the little affair."

Fritz Metzner, one of the travelling agents of the brewing establishment that stood sponsor for the "Good Cheer Parlors," who had "dropped in" to look after the stock of the inner room, nodded his head and sauntered into the back parlor. Here he found the two boys talking excitedly by themselves, heedless of the clicking balls.

"Good-evening, boys," he said, in a friendly tone. "I wonder if you are not just the fellows to tell me something I want to know."

The boys were all attention in an instant.

"You see," continued the wily Metzner, coming closer, "I'm writing up a little history of the country 'round about here, and I usually find a wide-awake boy can give me more really valuable information about a locality than half a dozen men. But pardon me, were you busy?" he added, with an air of apology.

"Busy? Oh, no, we haven't anything to do. We came in here to see Spotty Marx, but he"—

"Spotty Marx? Was that the sick boy the

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sailors carried out? Queer name, isn't it? Probably he's got a little heart trouble. He'll come out all right."

"Heart trouble? No, sir, mister, he wasn't sick, and I'll warrant you his heart is as sound as an old bootjack. He was drunk, and Mr. Elmont's no business to"—

"Oh, I see, I see! But it must all have been a mistake, and Mr. Elmont will make it right, I'm sure. He seems a very fine fellow, and a friend to boys every time. What a nice thing he's done for your town! These are beautiful rooms, rooms for gentlemen, not for roughs. Boys have no excuse for spending their evenings on the street when they have this cozy place, with its books and games, to come to. You see, I'm a traveller, and I've learned to know a good thing when I find it. But, bless me, I didn't intend to give you a free lecture. That isn't in my line of business," and Metzner laughed gleefully at his own wit, as he leaned on the back of a chair and watched the boys. "Well, if you're really not too busy," he continued, seemingly well pleased with his progress, "what do you say to going into the front room, where we can have a corner to our-

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selves? Maybe we'll have time for a game. Do you play checkers? I used to know how when I was a boy, but I reckon you can beat me sixteen to one, now."

The boys laughed merrily and led the way into the outer room, where they placed the chairs eagerly at a small table, quite won over by the flattering attentions of the well-dressed stranger.

The series of games with their attendants of orange wine and cake, had the desired effect; an hour or so later, the boys left the "Good Cheer Parlors" after a delightful evening. Elmont had said, in his most friendly manner, "Come again, boys, and bring your friends. We're going to have something new to-morrow night," and they had smiled back to him, and gone out with quite the feeling of partners in the concern.

"Too bad about Spotty," said the elder, "but Mr. Elmont wasn't to blame, sure! Guess we'd better not tell anybody, just as Mr. Metzner said, 'cause it would make Spotty feel badly, and"—with a little shrug of his shoulders, "maybe he'd get mad, and that wouldn't pay you and me, would it, Bob?"

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“I s’pose not,” Bob answered, slowly, “but I was thinking of what Mr. Metzner said about keeping boys off the street. Don’t seem to me Spotty would have been any worse off on the street than in here, to-night.”

“Oh, hush up! If Mr. Metzner should hear you, guess he’d think you was a queer one after the way he’s treated you. Don’t b’lieve you’d figure very big in the book he’s writing.”

“Oh, I didn’t mean nothin’,” answered Bob. “Only it kind of scared me when I saw Spotty lookin’ ’zif he was dead. Say, do you s’pose he’ll put us in his book? I told him everything I could think of ’bout everybody, and he acted real pleased.” So the boys parted at the corner, staunch friends of the “Good Cheer” and its crafty owners.

“Country, you’re a brick!” was Spotty’s exclamation as in answer to his puzzled question, “How under the sun did I get here?” Courtney told him the events of the previous night. “To think I should let the fellows make a fool of me that way,” he added, sadly. “But I always knew you were the right kind of stuff.”

Snares and Traps

“Oh, it wasn’t I who did it. Uncle John’s the brick—and he *is* one, too. I tell you he knows how to look after boys. You see he was out on an investigating tour last night, and you were one of the specimens he picked up in the Good Cheer Parlors. Tell you what, Spotty Marx, I don’t believe that *is* a good place for boys.”

Spotty winced at this, but answered lightly, “Oh, fudge, Country, the place is well enough. My father says so. It’s ‘an honor to the town,’ and all that. But sometimes folks abuse their privileges. Jim Cracky, but my head aches!”

“Lie still, Spotty, and take this hot milk that mother just sent up. She said you were to sleep just as long as you could.”

“Thanks, but I must go right home this minute. Pop’ll have out all the police, and I don’t know what the rest of them’ll do. Pretty bad for the first offence, isn’t it?”

“I reckon so, Ren, but you needn’t hurry now. Uncle John attended to everything last night. He saw your father”—

“He told my father! Well, I *am* in for

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it!" and Spotty sank back upon the pillow, a picture of despair.

"Why, he had to, Ren. Your father came back with him to be sure you were all right, and said you might stay here. Of course he felt badly, and he wouldn't believe Uncle John at first. Nobody could blame him for that, though. Everybody don't know Captain John Malcolm. But it's all right now, and nobody knows it at your home but your father, and you needn't be afraid of my folks, they're all right. Beth and Martie don't know anything about it," Malcolm hastened to add, anxious to comfort his friend. "Now drink this quick, and go to sleep to cure your headache. You shall have some breakfast by and by."

Renwick took the cup and swallowed the milk in great gulps, trying with all his might to keep back the tears that would come.

A LIFE-SAVING CRUISE

Mrs. G. R. Alden (Pansy)



“GOOD FOR YOU! THAT IS THE QUESTION OF A SEAMAN!”

VII

A LIFE-SAVING CRUISE

CAPTAIN JOHN MALCOLM walked the street with slow step and eyes bent on the ground. Throngs were passing and repassing, jostling against him ; all the bustle of a great city was around him, but he had neither eyes nor ears for it. The truth was, Uncle John was in a deep study ; he had a serious problem to solve. What could he, in the short time at his disposal, do for those two boys—his own nephew and namesake, and Renwick Marx ?

Almost his first thought, after the disgraceful scene of a few nights before, had been to remove his nephew as quickly and as far as possible from any association with a boy who had fallen so low. But this was by no means an easy matter to accomplish. True, there was the suburban home which was now the delight of his wife's heart, although still a secret from those most concerned. That would take the boy Malcolm fully two miles away from the

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“Good Cheer Parlors.” But what were two miles to an active boy, especially when he would come in each day to school? It might even make matters worse, for Uncle John could conceive of rainy nights, and snowy nights, when his nephew might be coaxed to stay in town with his friend Spotty, and spend the evening at the “Parlors,” without fear of disturbing his mother and aunt by late hours. Moreover, there was little use in talking about separating two boys who were fond of each other and who attended the same school. Laying down laws against their association would be the surest way to increase their friendship.

“Besides,” said Uncle John to himself, “I can’t help liking the young scamp in spite of everything. There is a good deal in the fellow, if it could be drawn out. I don’t know whom he is like with his genial ways. My! but that’s a father for you! And the mother, according to Malcolm, doesn’t count for much. The poor boy has got to be saved in spite of his father and mother! If one could only get hold of him! But there’s so little time.”

Captain Malcolm gave over trying to think

A Life-Saving Cruise

connectedly, and moved on again, away from the residence part of the city, to where the bustle was greater, if anything, than up-town; but it was a different kind of a bustle; and when the captain had a knotty problem to solve, he was very apt to take it down within sight of the harbor.

The bay was dotted over with vessels of every sort. His own good ship was not one of the number, however; more extensive repairs than had at first been planned, were taking place in her, and Captain Malcolm had but the day before been notified that somewhat more than another month would be added to his vacation because of this. There had been great rejoicing in the little home where they were visiting, over this bit of news, and the captain had agreed to his wife's whisper that now they would have time to make the suburban cottage perfect. But he had said to himself that it ought to give him time to do something for those boys, if he only knew what to do.

"Let's see," he said, sitting down on a long timber at the end of the lower wharf; "what is there that could be done? If I could get a

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downright influence over that boy Marx, somehow! He's a fellow to depend upon if one could once get him anchored to anything."

Rocking back and forth for very glee at being there at all, was a trim little steam yacht directly in front of the captain. He could no more help looking at it and admiring it than you can help looking at a trim little girl all freshly dressed for the day. The steam yacht was dressed in fresh paint that glittered in the sunlight, and she courtesied and bowed and swayed with more grace than Captain Malcolm thought any little girl in the world possessed. While he gazed, his scraps of thought began to take shape and settle down to business. He knew all about that steam yacht; its owner was a friend of his, and was just now so engaged in other business that there was nothing in the world for the yacht to do.

"I suppose he would rather have me try her than not," murmured the captain, "and the boys would be wild over it, of course; boys always are. And there would be chances for good talks, and no end of fun for them. It would take a good two weeks out of my vacation, it is true. But the vacation has

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been prolonged beyond all expectation. Malcolm's mother might be anxious—but then she is anxious now. I rather think she would agree to anything that I might propose. There's Kate, to be sure, bless her!"—and just here the captain's thoughts made a period and waited.

"It won't do to be selfish over my wife," he said at last. "There isn't a selfish streak in her, and I'll have her all to myself on the voyage, later. I believe I'll try for it. I can't think of another place besides the sea where a fellow can have a chance to get people away from interruptions and try what he can do for them."

Neither Spotty Marx nor the nephew ever knew how much thinking it took to make that lovely plan that morning; nor what quiet little sacrifices of one sort and another the uncle had to make to bring it to pass. All they knew was that one morning, one glorious, never-to-be-forgotten morning, they received, they two, an invitation from Captain Malcolm to take a cruise with him in a steam yacht—just the handsomest steam yacht, everybody said, that had ever danced and courtesied over

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the bay. Oh, the wonder and delight of those two boys! It is surprising that two houses held them during the hours of preparation. Nobody placed any obstacles in the way. Malcolm's timid mother, who dreaded the sea, if she trembled and cried over the plan, did it all in secret, understood her brother, and kissed his bearded face, and blessed him once more for coming to their aid: only—*did* he think it was the best thing to take that Spotty Marx? Why, the boy was actually intoxicated!

“Yes, and will be again unless somebody takes hold and helps steer him into safer waters,” said Uncle John, with energy.

Even Mr. Marx was mollified. The half-indignant feeling he had nourished for what, in spite of common sense, he could not help calling Captain Malcolm's “interference,” faded into the background under the spell of so fine an invitation as this for Renwick. The boy's headaches and his heavy eyes occasionally worried his father; a short sea voyage might be the making of him. He told the captain so, with an air of gratitude: and Captain Malcolm said heartily, “I think so myself, sir; I hope it will.”

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Oh, the wonders of that two weeks' voyage! No pen of a mere landsman could begin to do justice to its delights. How those two boys revelled in their experiences! The "yarns" they would have to spin forever afterward! The knowledge they acquired of ships! They believed, they two, before they had been three days from home, that the largest ship that sailed the ocean could safely be put into their hands, so skillful and so wise were they becoming. How entirely Uncle John gave himself up to their company! From morning till night he attended them, explained and described and narrated and laughed with them, until it was sometimes a question which was the more fond of him, the nephew and namesake, or the boy who had never been really taken into fellowship with a grown person before.

One evening, one moonlight evening that none of the three ever forgot, they sat down on deck for a talk.

"Are we to have a yarn to-night, Uncle John?" asked his nephew.

"Oh, yes, a first-class yarn. I have saved my best one for to-night."

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The boys laughed gleefully and drew closer to him. Those wonderful "yarns" of sea life that had been already spun for them! They could not believe that even Uncle John had anything better, though by this time their faith in his possibilities was almost boundless.

Certainly it was a remarkable story, though a true one, as all Uncle John's were; his eventful life had afforded him material for an unlimited number. This one told of a night at sea, great peril and a hairbreadth escape. He told it in a way calculated to thrill his listeners.

"And so you see," he added, after a moment's solemn hush had rested upon them, "we escaped once more. But if I hadn't consulted my chart, and obeyed it, I shouldn't have been here to-night. I've often thought what if I had been foolish enough to pay no attention to my chart."

"I guess there was never a man so foolish as that!" remarked Renwick, who had heard more about charts in the last few days than he had imagined could be said, and whose respect for them increased hourly.

"Ho!" said Uncle John, "that goes to show

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that you are not acquainted with men. I've known them to pay no sort of attention to their chart for days and weeks together."

"And what happened?" asked the astonished boy.

"Why, they made a mess of it, of course; spoiled their lives, some of them, as well as the lives of others. Now and then I've seen a man who repented in time; but I've known some awful shipwrecks on account of such folly."

"But, Captain Malcolm, what could possess them?" asked Renwick. "What did they ever want to be sailors for if they didn't mean to do the best they could?"

"Sure enough!" said Captain Malcolm. "I've often thought of that. They got to be sailors, some of them, through no plan of theirs, but just because it was so arranged. But why they shouldn't try to do the best for themselves after they were fairly started, is more than I ever could understand. I've seen boys, for instance, make the worst shipwreck imaginable. It gives one the horrors to think of it!"

The two boys turned their eyes toward each

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other in the moonlight and smiled consciously ; they began to understand that Captain Malcolm was not confining his meaning entirely to those who sail ships on the sea. " You two fellows," he continued, in the same business-like, matter-of-fact tone, " how often do you consult your charts, I should like to know, and steer your course by them ? "

" We weren't thinking of that kind of chart," said his nephew, at last, after waiting in vain for Renwick to reply.

" Perhaps not ; but that doesn't make it any less queer. The question is, why shouldn't you think of that kind of chart ? You are as quick as any two fellows I ever saw, to condemn the folly of a sea captain who doesn't steer his ship according to chart and compass. But look at the difference between you. He may make a dead failure of a voyage to Europe, or China, and yet come out safe in the end, after all—sail into port at last with his colors flying. But here are you two boys started out on the voyage of life ; just this one chance given you. A short voyage at the longest, and plain sailing, with the harbor you are to make for so carefully described that the

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chart says, 'The wayfaring men, though fools, need not err therein.' And from sheer neglect of orders and wanton disrespect to your Commander, you are likely to make an awful shipwreck of it. If that is a true statement, aren't you two, fools?"

"The Bible is such an awful big book," said Renwick, kicking restlessly at a chain at his feet.

"Yes, that's true. And there are some awful big charts. I've got a roll of them. But when I'm going to China, for instance, I don't have to hunt up the South American chart and study that. I look for the one that belongs to the trip I'm taking. More than that, when I first start out on a trip, I don't keep looking away to the end of the route to see how to sail my vessel. I'm on the lookout for the plain path for that day's run. Do you get my meaning? We don't have to read the Bible through every day to find our sailing orders; they are very plain and easily turned to. There's just one thing that is important. A sailor who means to manage his vessel well, wants to get started right. Let him sail out of his course in the first place, and the mis-

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chief will be to pay ; there's no use in his talking about following his chart after that."

"Of course not," said Renwick, who prided himself on his knowledge of nautical matters, and had a secret wish to be himself a sea captain ; "if he didn't know enough to make the first start, he wouldn't be much of a captain."

"Just so! Now, Renwick, my boy, what do you think of yourself, in the light of that statement? Here you are, starting out on your one voyage, the most important that a boy could possibly take, a dangerous voyage unless the right channel is found and the chart carefully studied for rocks and shoals! And so far as I can discover by watching the course of your vessel, you haven't made even an attempt to get into the correct channel! Talk about a sea captain not knowing much who would do such a thing! That's true enough, I'll own. But how does it compare with you and Malcolm here? Both of you in the same ship, or I'm mistaken."

The boys looked at each other again. They tried to laugh, but there was something so earnest in the captain's manner, and the power of the story of peril and all but ship-

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wreck to which they had listened was still so strong upon them, that laughter seemed out of place. As if he could read their thoughts, Captain Malcolm spoke again, after a moment's silence :

“ It is very different, after all, boys, this journey of life, from my trips across the ocean. That all but shipwreck I told you of, it was through no fault of mine. The ship's owners gave me the biggest compliment of my life after that storm ; they said no one but a seaman who knew his business could have weathered it, and that was true enough. If the ship had gone to the bottom there wouldn't have been a word of blame for me ; I did my best.

“ But in that other voyage, my life-journey, I have no fear of shipwrecks, bless the Lord ! My Commander is too great for any storm that may rise. He is bound in honor to see the old hulk, weather-beaten though it is, safely through, and He'll do it—that is, if I'm true to my chart. I'm to do my level best, and He will look out for all the rest. And we shall make port safely, as sure as the sun will rise to-morrow morning.

“ Can you fellows afford to take the awful

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risk of sailing down the wrong channel? Come, now, I picked out two boys that I thought had common sense for this trip. I wonder if I was mistaken in them. Says I to myself to-night, 'This will be a good time to talk to them about turning their crafts square around and sailing against the stream back into the right channel. They understand a good deal about seamanship, and they have heard a good deal about shipwrecks, and know how they come, and I believe in my heart that they will both take the common-sense tack.' Was I mistaken?"

There was silence on board the steam yacht for several minutes after that. Only the soft "swish-swish" of the waves could be heard as the boat slipped through the moonlight: only in the distance the sound of Carl's voice as he gave some direction to his men—faithful Carl who was seeing to it that all went well on the yacht while his captain tried to steer two stray souls into the channel. Suddenly the voice of Renwick Marx broke the silence:

"What would be the first thing, Captain Malcolm?"

The captain reached forth his arm and laid

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it lovingly across the boy's shoulder. "Well done, my hearty!" he exclaimed, joyfully. "Good for you! That is the question of a seaman. I hoped for it, my lad, I did, indeed. You are not the sort of fellow to have the first thing pointed out and then not follow it, are you? Why, the first thing, the *very* first, is to choose your Commander. There is only One who is sure to weather all the storms, and make the harbor every time. You know His name, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Captain of our salvation. If you, and my nephew here, will choose Him to-night, and sail under His flag from this time forth, I'll risk all the rest. The chart you can make out at your leisure. You'll find it interesting work to study the channel. But getting under orders is the first thing. What do you say, lads, shall it be the Lord Jesus Christ, and will you begin from this hour to sail under His flag, and by the chart that He provides? I reckon you both understand just what is meant by that; we've had talks before; and you are boys who know what you are about. If you mean business, let's kneel right down here in the moonlight and ask Him to take command."

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There was a longer silence than before. Captain Malcolm leaned his head on his hand and breathed hard. He had staked a great deal on this venture. If he failed, the boys would be in more dangerous waters than ever before. While he waited he prayed. His whole soul cried out to the "Captain of his salvation" to come to save those two whom shipwreck awaited.

It was again Renwick Marx who spoke first. "Captain Malcolm," he said, his voice grave and full of decision, "I mean to do it."

Said Malcolm Courtney, "So do I."

"Amen! bless the Lord!" said Captain Malcolm, and the three were on their knees.

NEW HOMES

Alice M. Guernsey



"O MARTIE, IT'S MAMMA AND AUNT RENE!"

VIII

NEW HOMES

“THE privilege of helping!” It had been Kate Courtney’s dearest delight from the days when, a wee mite of a child, she had begged to be allowed to “help mamma.” And now that the sunny-faced young bride had the opportunity, as well as the will, to carry out her heart’s desires, life seemed overflowing with happiness.

Of course the whole matter of the voyage on the “Arrow” had been talked over between the captain and his wife, for these two common-sense people were neither ashamed nor afraid to talk together of their dearest and most sacred wishes and thoughts. And so while Captain Malcolm set sail for the rescue of two life barks that were adrift, Aunt Kate was to direct the changes at home that would make all their lives better and safer.

“Mrs. Captain,” as Frau Heffner called her, had some very definite ideas in her head, and

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among them was the conviction that girls had rights as well as boys. So when a fine trip was arranged for Malcolm, it was just like her to plan that the "twinnies" should have the first news of the pretty suburban home.

"Who wants a trolley ride?" called a cheery voice an hour or so after they had said good-bye to Uncle John and the boys.

"I do," shouted Martie, and Beth echoed the words in a voice that was just a bit shaky.

"Come on, Beth," cried Martie. "We haven't time to be lonesome-sick now. I knew Aunt Kate had something in her head by the way her eyes twinkled."

"Mamma looked as if she would go, too, if I'd invite her," said Aunt Kate as they passed out of the door. "But I'm not going to do any such thing. This is a secret—we're going on an exploring expedition, you and I. If we find anything worth reporting, maybe we'll tell about it when we get home."

Mrs. Courtney and her sister watched the trio from the window as they went down the narrow sidewalk toward the main street. "What shall we do when Kate and John have gone?" sighed Aunt Rene.

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“And when Malcolm has to go too,” responded her sister. “We can’t keep him in school much longer, and when he begins to work he may not be able to board at home.”

“There, now, don’t borrow trouble,” said Aunt Rene. “Some way will open. If it didn’t take so much money for rent every month, Malcolm could stay in school and graduate. Perhaps we can find a cheaper place somewhere. I think we’d better talk it over with John before he goes for good.”

“I haven’t much faith in a cheaper place unless it’s a tenement house,” answered Mrs. Courtney, “and I couldn’t take the children into such a place. But here comes Frau Minna—with something to say,” she added, as the shining eyes and bustling air of “Mrs. Carl” told a story of happy thoughts.

“*Guten Morgen,*” cried the little woman, forgetting to speak English in the excitement of the moment. “Oh, I have something so nice to tell, only it is not all nice. We are not going to stay here, we are going to live out in the beautiful country with the birds and the trees and the flowers, where *die Kinder* out of doors all day long can play.

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Carl and the captain have fixed it already, and Carl did keep it a secret till this morning. Then he told it to me; I have the key, and now we are going, *meine Mutter* and me, to see the new little home. And it is only bad because we can no more see the friends of our good captain."

"How nice!" exclaimed both women together. But they meant to approve of the plan and not the parting, for Mrs. Courtney and Aunt Rene had grown very fond of the honest, sturdy, sweet-tempered German women.

"Where is it?" asked Aunt Rene. "Can't we go out with you? The girls have gone off with their Aunt Kate, and a ride will do us both good."

Carl's wife was only too glad to have them join the party, and soon they were in the "hurry-cars," as Beth called the trolleys. Half an hour's ride took them away from "walls and pavements and folks" into a pretty suburban region, where neat cottages were sheltered by trees and surrounded by lawns with garden space at the back.

"Go to the end of the trolley line," read

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Frau Minna from the directions Carl had given her; "turn to the right, walk one block to Elm Street, and then walk into No. 29."

The little cottage would have seemed mean and small to many a comer from the noisy city. But to the happy party that entered its door and explored its waiting rooms, it appeared a veritable Eden.

"Here iss your room, *meine Tochter*," said the elder Frau. "See, it has *ein gros*—how do you say?—ein big window where the sun comes in. Und outdoors, where you can see them all the time, iss the yard where *die kinder* vill play."

"Oh, it is so beautiful!" was Minna's eager response. "And here is your room, right next, so we can together be, all the time. And the dear little kitchen, with the shelf for the shining tins, and the new stove, and all. Oh, it is too good to be true, I think."

Mrs. Courtney and her sister joined sincerely in the expressions of delight. The place was small, the house plain. But the imagination of the true housewife saw it transformed into an attractive and comfortable home.

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“I do wish we could move out here, too,” said Mrs. Courtney, in an undertone, to Aunt Rene. Then she added, raising her voice, “Do you know what the rent is, Frau Heffner?”

“Oh, it is nothing, that is best of all. Mein Carl is a good sailor, and the captain has paid to him much money. So he has saved enough to buy the dear little home all for a surprise, and I did not know it at all.” Her eyes shone brighter than ever; Mrs. Courtney made no reply, but she caught her breath in a way that made Aunt Rene’s heart ache.

Meanwhile, “Captain Kate” and the twins had taken the same route, but somewhat in advance of the others. “Where are we going, Aunt Kate?” questioned Martie.

“Oh, as far as the trolley goes, and then we’ll see what we can find,” was the careless answer.

They found swelling tree-buds and white and yellow crocuses in garden-beds, and a few forerunners of the flock of home-returning birds soon to arrive. Beth’s nature-loving heart drank in the whole scene with a quiet

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eagerness that made Aunt Kate happier than ever to think she had "the privilege of helping." Martie could not keep still.

"Oh, see that cunning little house!" she cried. "Say, Beth, let's choose. I don't want that one, but I'd like to have somebody I know move into it. There's somebody living in the next house. I guess they're nice for they've got a wheel and a baby-carriage. I don't like the next so very well, but the next to that—O Beth, let's play we lived here. There isn't anybody here now, I know by the looks. Oh, don't you wish we could move into it? See the garden on the back side, and room for lots of flower-beds, and the dear little bay-windows and the cunning little piazza! Which room do you s'pose we'll have, Beth?"

Beth smiled. She was used to her sister's fancies that seemed to become realities. "I'd like that one on the side, looking right out into the trees and over the garden," she said.

"Let's see how it looks inside," was Aunt Kate's word, entering the yard as she spoke.

"Oh, we can't, Aunt Kate," cried Martie. "We mean the upstairs room."

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For answer Aunt Kate produced a key from her pocket, placed it in the keyhole of the front door, then threw the door wide open and turned to the twins with a low bow of invitation.

Even Martie was too surprised to speak. Aunt Kate enjoyed their puzzled faces for a moment, and then said, "It's all right. The house belongs to a friend of mine who's going to move out from the city in a few days. So come and look at your room from the inside."

Inviting as was the exterior, it was still more charming within. The principal furnishings were in place, and gave evidence of careful taste in selection. In the room which the girls had chosen as their own, were two little beds, side by side, draped in white and blue, to match the colors of the walls and carpet.

Beth's large grey eyes simply feasted on the pretty room. But Martie, after one glance, turned quickly away saying, "Let's see something else. I'm afraid I won't like those girls who are coming here if I stay any longer."

But the spirit of envy was soon driven away, and they began to plan things in the house as if it were really their own. Here

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would be the sewing-room, there the tiny parlor—this would be mother's special nook, and this other would be reserved for Uncle John and Aunt Kate. As for Malcolm, there was a room just fitted up for a boy, with shelves for books, and hooks on which a baseball bat and tennis racquet were already hung.

At last, after a thorough exploration, they sat down in the parlor for a moment's rest. Then Aunt Kate said, "Girls, were you afraid Malcolm was going to have all the good times?"

Martie hung her head, but Beth answered, "Why, no, auntie, we wanted him to go. But we didn't know we were going to have such a lovely trip. Thank you ever so much. But I do wish I knew the folks who are going to move here, so I could think how they will really look."

"You do," answered Aunt Kate.

Martie glanced up quickly. "Why, we don't know anybody, hardly, but Carl's folks, and Madel, and our Sunday-school teacher and the minister, and it isn't any of them, I'm sure."

"But you know the people who are going

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to move into this pretty home the very next week," answered Aunt Kate, smiling. "There are two women whom you and I think deserve the very best kind of a home, and a boy and two girls."

The eyes of the twins were growing very large. Beth gave a little gasp, as if her thoughts were too much for her strength. "It's a family that is very dear to your Uncle John and to me, and we think they ought to have a better home than the one where they live now. So I've brought you out here to show you the secret Uncle John and I have had ever since we were married, and to tell you and let you tell mamma and Aunt Rene."

"Aunt Kate! Aunt Kate!" Martie sprang to her feet as she spoke. "You don't mean it's our really-truly home—that we're coming out here to live—and get all fixed before Malcolm comes? Do you mean that honest, Aunt Kate?"

"Honest, Martie. Mamma and Aunt Rene won't have to pay rent any more, for this new home is a present to them from Uncle John and myself."

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried Martie. "Just think,

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Beth! What will Malcolm say? Oh, it's ever so much better than his trip with Uncle John. Come, Beth, let's go see our room again and then we must hurry back to tell mother." But Beth's arms were around Aunt Kate's neck, and great sobs shook her little body.

Neither of the girls had noticed that Aunt Kate's eyes kept wandering to the window. But now she said, "There, little Beth, it's all right. Auntie knows just how glad you both are. Now dry your eyes and we'll look around outdoors." As they stepped into the yard, Martie caught sight of some ladies coming along the sidewalk, and said, carelessly, "Do you suppose those are some of our new neighbors?" Little Beth's eyes were not too dim with tears of joy to recognize the familiar forms.

"Why, it's Frau Heffner and Frau Minna," she cried. "And—O Martie, it's mamma and Aunt Rene!" and she sprang eagerly forward, followed by Martie, both shouting,

"O mamma, come see our new house—Uncle John bought it—no, Aunt Kate—or both of them together—or somehow! And,

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mamma, there's two little white beds in our room, and there's place for a lovely flower-garden, and a bay-window and everything."

The voices were too eager, the secret too great, for coherent telling. The twins dragged their mother and Aunt Rene forward, Frau Heffner and Frau Minna following, and Aunt Kate, the arch-conspirator, smiling as innocently as if she had not known for a month all about the two new homes.

Little real knowledge of what it all meant could be gathered from the confused talk. But somehow or other they all got into the house and seated in the parlor. Then Aunt Kate took pity on the puzzled faces before her.

"This will tell you all about it," she said, handing a paper to Mrs. Courtney. "It is just a wedding gift from John and me, that's all."

THE SUNNY BRAE LEGION

Julia Mills Dunn



“RENWICK CALLED THE MERRY CROWD TO ORDER.”

IX

THE SUNNY BRAE LEGION

IT was really spring now, with a strong prophecy of summer close at hand. Out at Sunny Brae, the Courtney cottage, the robins had already built their nests, and along the edges of the woodside, where scanty patches of grass were growing, the dandelions here and there lifted a golden blossom to the sun.

There had been much discussion on the part of the whole family, including Uncle John, Aunt Kate, and Renwick—who insisted on being “counted in”—in regard to a name for the new home. The boys had offered unnumbered suggestions, mostly of a nautical character, only to have them rejected. At last Sunny Brae was accepted as most appropriate, and the warm spring days seemed to express approval of the choice.

The garden beds had been laid out on a sunny southern slope behind the cottage, by Uncle John and the two boys—for Renwick

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took as much interest in all that belonged to the cottage as did Malcolm himself.

“Let’s have big beds and plenty of flowers,” he said, while Malcolm hesitated a little at the thought of all the long hours of weeding and care the beds would need. “Let’s have everything that Hinckley has in his greenhouse, and he’ll tell us all about the care of them.”

He came one day bringing a basket piled with packets of seed, their covers filled with printed directions, which he proceeded to read in a loud voice to drown the clamor of the girls, who just couldn’t keep still, for delight. They saw already, in imagination, a blossoming bit of Paradise, a blaze of color and mass of fragrance over which the gracious dews and summer sunshine fell softly, where bees and humming-birds waxed bold with riotous living.

Very early in the morning, while the cat-bird, mimicking the songs of half a dozen different birds, was piping merrily in the tall lilac bush in the front yard, the twins would slip out of their warm beds to take a peep at the garden “to see if the seeds were waking up.” Then they would creep back to bed and

The Sunny Brae Legion

cuddle down to sleep again with the songs of the birds ringing in their ears, and Beth would say sleepily,

“Seems to me, Martie, that catbird sings too loud for comfort. First he’s a jay, then a bluebird, and then his song’s just like Madel’s canary’s. He’s a whole concert himself.” Then she would doze off to sleep again.

There were tulips in blossom, flaming cups of red and yellow, mottled and striped with gold and bronze, that filled the twins’ hearts with ecstasy as they hovered over them. “They look like big cups to catch the dew,” said Beth; and one morning when they found a robin-redbreast really drinking from one of the blossoms, and then walking around the bed in a grave and solemn manner, looking for any stray worm that might be wriggling up out of the black earth, they laughed with delight.

“I guess he’s a Loyal Temperance Legion robin, don’t you, Beth?” said Martie. “He’s certainly a cold water bird.”

Beth’s face grew grave. “O Martie—I forgot to tell you—I heard the grammar-room girls talking about Renwick the other day,

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and they said"—Beth's voice sank to a whisper—"that he got drunk. Isn't it dreadful, Martie? I wonder if mamma knows it."

Martie thought a moment: "I think, Beth Courtney"—when she was excited Martie always gave Beth her full name—"we'll just have to get up a Loyal Temperance Legion to save the boys. If we can only get Malcolm and Renwick int'rested, the other boys will follow, and you know if they are Legioners they just *can't* drink one single bit."

"I wonder if Madel knows about Renwick, and if she'd join," said Beth, thoughtfully.

"'Course she would," answered Martie, promptly, all her natural liking for making plans coming into full play. "We must have a lawn party, Beth, and invite the boys and girls we want to have join, and start it right here—call it the Sunny Brae Loyal Temperance Legion. We can have some games first, and a supper on the lawn—just like a church sociable, you know, the way we used to do in Rocky Hill when papa was the minister. And after that somebody could explain it all to everybody, and then we could organize. Mamma would help us."

The Sunny Brae Legion

But when the scheme was reported to mamma and Aunt Rene they looked quite sober, and did not at once reply. At last Aunt Rene said, "It would take some one's time for a long while, to say the least, to look after the society and keep the children interested, and we have all we can do now. How can we possibly take up any new work when our hands are full?"

Martie and Beth went to bed that night with their hopes quite crushed. "If only mamma had as much time as Mrs. Marx," sighed Beth, "how many nice things she could do."

"Don't you feel bad one bit now," replied Martie, who was always full of hope and courage when any new enterprise was under way. "We'll have our lawn party and our Legion, too, see if we don't," and she dropped quietly off to sleep, while Beth lay awake for some time listening to the twitter of the young robins in the maple-tree that was so close to the cottage that its branches swept across their window-panes.

Downstairs Malcolm and his mother sat long that evening, and for the first time Mrs.

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Courtney learned from Malcolm's lips the story of the cruise with Uncle John. When they bade each other "good-night" the kiss she gave her boy expressed all that the tear-wet eyes and tremulous "Thank God, my son," failed to convey.

Then the twins were informed that the lawn party would come, and, if it seemed best after further consultation, the Loyal Temperance Legion, too.

At last the day for the lawn party arrived, and I wish you could have been there! There were swings and a hammock, and a merry-go-round that Renwick had coaxed his father to hire for the occasion; and there were seats scattered about under the trees, and one, a round one, which encircled the big maple, had been made by an old sailor who had been one of Uncle John's crew, and who seemed to take as much interest in the party as if he had been the host himself.

He had brought his green parrot, Dandy, and the new gilt cage was hung from one of the branches of a great elm that stood in a corner of the yard. There Dandy swung in

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great glee, and whistled and laughed and coughed, varying the performance by calling, "Get out! get out!" to the half-frightened girls, and crying, "Come here, boys, you rascals," when they flocked around his cage. So pleased was Dandy with the merriment and noise that he fairly outdid himself, and screamed till he was hoarse in his desire to do his part.

Beth and Martie were in great demand, and Madel, who helped to start the games, and took special care of the younger children, seemed to be everywhere at once. The flower-beds, where tiny green shoots were already showing, were her special care.

"You see this little spot that looks like a green mist," she explained to a group of little girls, "that will be a great bunch of poppies some day, with big double flowers, red and white and purple ones that will nod as if they were sleepy in the hot sunshine. And here on this wire lattice will be the sweet pea hedge, and there in that corner will be asters and nasturtiums, and oh, such tall, tall hollyhocks all covered with flowers, white and crimson and yellow."

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She danced about the lawn in a whirl of excitement, pushing the swings and helping the little ones into the merry-go-round; and when supper was served from little tables on the lawn, she passed the heaping plates of sandwiches and seed cakes, and the glasses of lemonade.

Such a merry supper as it was! They were simple, home-cooked dishes, but the children thought they had never eaten such delicious food, to say nothing of Aunt Rene's chocolate creams. And there was such laughing and shouting that it quite set the parrot wild.

But when they were sobered down a little, Renwick mounted one of the seats and called the merry crowd to order.

"We've all had a good time here this afternoon," he began, in his frank, honest way, "and I've enjoyed my share of it. But I believe we are old enough to know, most of us, at least, that a good time is not all there is to be gained in this world. And I've made up my mind, and so has Malcolm, that we ought to help make the world better, if we can do only a little toward it. I've done some things that were not right,"—and he glanced at

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Madel, who was trembling with pride and excitement to hear Renwick "make a speech,"—"and I know what it is to hate to look my little sister in the face. But, please God, that's all over with now, and from this time forth I'm going to be different. Malcolm says he will, too, though he's a first-rate boy, if there ever was one, now.

"I don't think we are cowards, but there's one thing we've learned to be afraid of, and that's the 'giant's house,' as Beth calls it—the saloon which makes boys into drunkards. And we want to fight against everything of that kind, and we don't mean to wait till we're grown up before we begin.

"So we're going to start a Loyal Temperance Legion, to keep ourselves straight, and help the rest of you to grow up temperance boys and girls—especially the girls," with a merry twinkle in his eyes as he glanced at Madel and the twins. "All of you who want to join the Sunny Brae Legion are invited to come here next Saturday afternoon, to organize the society and vote for officers."

A murmur of approval went around the circle, for Renwick usually inspired others to

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want what he wanted. Then a thin, piping voice rang out as little Johnnie McKinney pushed his way through the crowd to the front and called out, "No time like this! I nominate Renwick Marx for chairman. All in favor of this say 'Aye!'"

A perfect storm of "Ayes" rang out, each gaining courage from his neighbor. Renwick read the pledge of the Legion :

"Trusting in God's help, I solemnly promise to abstain from the use of all alcoholic drinks, including wine, beer and cider, from the use of tobacco in any form, and from profanity."

Mrs. Courtney explained the meaning of the promise, and told the children about the Loyal Temperance Legions all over the world with their thousands of members who have signed the triple pledge. When she asked who wanted to join in the fight against King Alcohol by becoming members of the Legion, all the children raised their hands. Then the pledge was signed and officers were named and voted in with a will, and the Sunny Brae Loyal Temperance Legion was begun. Malcolm was made president, and Renwick Marx secretary, while Madel and the little

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boy who had proposed to start at once having received the same number of votes for treasurer, the office was "cut in two," as Renwick said; Madel was made treasurer with Johnnie McKinney for assistant. And so one more little company escaped the giant's clutches and started to reach manhood and womanhood by the safe road of temperance.

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