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BETTY LEE, SENIOR

By

HARRIET PYNE GROVE

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BETTY LEE, SENIOR

FOREWORD

While settings and activities for this Betty Lee High School Series have been freely taken from a real city high school, the characters are entirely fictitious. It is hoped, however, that they may to some degree present the life and ambitions of the very attractive girls whom it has been the author's pleasure to meet there.

CHAPTER I—VACATION DAYS

Betty Lee's vacation before her senior year cannot be passed over with only casual mention, for it was the "best yet" as declared by Betty and her two closest chums, Kathryn Allen and Carolyn Gwynne. After the last exciting activities of June days as juniors and the pleasing freedom from examinations won by good scholarship, the three girls found themselves, with others of their class, equipped with cards that certified completion of the junior work. Before them stretched long weeks when, Betty said, they "didn't have to know anything," and that state of mind obviously gave them all great pleasure.

Up in the girls' gym, almost vacant now, they took a last swing and jump, as they happened to have reason to pass through; and Betty and Carolyn performed a few funny steps to express their happy state of mind before they finally left halls to which they would be just as glad to return in the fall.

However, Betty was expecting to swim in "something beside pools and rivers." She gave a little skip as they ran down the walk toward the Gwynne car, which this time was waiting for them. "I can't believe it, Carolyn! 'Are I' really going with you to the seashore? I never saw the ocean but once, when I went East with Father, you know. I said appropriately, 'Roll on thou deep and dark blue ocean roll,' but it wasn't dark blue a bit. It happened to be a perfectly horrid gray morning. It was wonderful, all the same."

"Oh, but you ought to see it sometimes, Betty! I hope we'll have good weather, no cold 'nor'easters' or anything. But I'm as excited as can be myself. Think of it, Betty—a perfectly new cottage in a different place this time. Daddy had such a good chance to sell the old one and we may buy this if we like it. But we're renting it for the summer."

"It doesn't seem right that we should just *visit* you," said Kathryn.

“Listen! We’ve had that out before, Gypsy Allen. I’m to have my own room and I can have whomever I want—*all summer*. I expect to keep it full! That’s my reward for being a good girl and getting my lessons, in spite of, well, you know how hard it is to get ’em.”

“We do!” said Kathryn and Betty, “*una cum voce*.”

“So,” continued Carolyn, “why shouldn’t *I* have the girls I like best as long as I can induce—them—to—stay?” Carolyn uttered formally the last part of her sentence, with her head in the air and a high and mighty look.

The girls giggled as they settled themselves in the car. “Drive around to Kathryn’s and Betty’s first, please,” said Carolyn to the Gwynne chauffeur, “then home.”

Betty had not had a chance to call up home since Carolyn had invited her and Kathryn “to come out and celebrate.” Both she and Kathryn wanted to get rid of certificates and books, not to mention certain other articles that seemed to persist in staying in lockers. Carelessness or forgetting had nothing to do with that, of course.

“Do you like clams and chowders and things, Betty Lee?” asked Carolyn, after the last stop and delivery of goods, with pleasant permissions to stay at Carolyn’s.

“I liked everything we tried at New York,” replied Betty, “and I know that I’ll just adore all the sea food.”

“You’re going to get it,” Carolyn leaned back against the cushions and stretched forward her stylishly shod toes. “We have beach parties and everything.”

That sounded delightful. Betty had never heard of a beach party. Yet, she supposed she must have read of them in stories. But this was different. She was going to be in one. “And I haven’t told you one delicious secret!”

“Oh, tell us, Carolyn!” Kathryn spoke beseechingly.

Carolyn laughed and looked mysterious. “I haven’t decided whether to keep it a secret and surprise you, or to tell you now.”

“Tell us now,” urged beaming Kathryn.

“Maybe it would be more of a thrill if she surprised us,” Betty suggested, smilingly regarding Carolyn and wondering what the surprise or secret might be.

“Well,” Carolyn drawled, “I’ll have to make up my mind about it. The trouble is, you might find out about it some other way, and then I’d miss the fun of seeing you surprised.”

“That gives us our cue for going right up in the air over whatever it is, Betty—to please Carolyn!” But Kathryn was regarding Carolyn affectionately as she said this.

“Suppose you give us a hint of what it is and let us guess,” said Betty.

Carolyn shook her head negatively. “Spoil it all. Maybe I’ll announce it later. We are going to have our lunch inside, find the coolest spot in the house to talk over our plans and decide what to take and so on, as you wanted to do, Betty, and then have our dinner *a la* picnic under the trees by the fountain, nothing but cool lemonade and ice cream!”

It was a hot day, but Betty knew there would be more on the menu than lemonade and ice cream, which would probably be included in their lunch. Oh, it was always so *nice* at Carolyn’s!

In Carolyn’s own room after lunch the girls took off frocks and shoes and lay on the bed to plan for their month together at the seashore. Not that it was the only topic of conversation, for school affairs were too recently over for dismissal. Lucia Coletti’s departure for Italy with her father and mother was one interesting subject.

“Yes,” said Betty, “they were awfully rushed at the last, you know, but Lucia called me up, just before they were driving to the station, to say another goodbye. I would have gone to the station with her,

only under the circumstances it didn't seem appropriate. You know how it is, and Lucia and I had had our final visit before."

"Don't you go and think more of Lucia than you do of us," reminded Kathryn with, a grin.

"Couldn't," laughed Betty, "but Lucia is a fine girl just the same; and she had to have some friends, didn't she?"

"Yes, more than she wanted of some sorts," wisely said Carolyn.

"They naturally would have a good deal of attention," said Betty. "I was the first girl Lucia knew. But Lucia will not forget any of us. The countess is prettier than ever and they are all so perfectly happy to be together again. The count rather wanted to go back before, but Lucia persuaded them to wait till she could finish her work. It was a good thing she didn't have to stay for the examinations."

"Do you have any idea, Betty, that she will come back for her senior year?"

"Not in the least," said Betty, to whom the recent romantic situation at the Murchison home had appealed greatly. "Lucia would like to finish the course here, and I think Countess Coletti would like to have her do it. But Lucia was too excited about going back home to think much about returning. She promised to write and I gave her all the addresses, and dates, I would have this summer."

Neither Kathryn nor Carolyn would ever ask Betty questions that would pry into Lucia's secrets, though Betty knew that there had been a great deal of comment over the count's long absence in travel and the fact that the countess had remained in America with Lucia for so long. Betty herself would never betray Lucia's worried confidences, and now it was so easy to speak of the happy reunion that she had herself seen and to pass over anything else she might know. Betty had learned by this time not to tell everything she knew to everybody.

But she frankly went on to say that she, too, had a piece of news which she could tell now. "It's a real happy one, girls. Mr. Murchison has gone East with them and they will go to some place in Connecticut for his wedding! He is marrying somebody that he has known for a long time and they are all going abroad together. That is why Father has to be very busy this summer and has a lot on his hands."

"My, what a disappointment to several people here!" exclaimed Kathryn. "Oh, I oughtn't to say that, I suppose."

"I gathered, from what Lucia said, that her mother is real pleased with her brother's choice and knows the lady. And it is fixed all right for Rose Sevilla and her mother to stay just as they are at Murchison's. Rose is awfully busy with new draperies and things that the countess ordered for her brother; and her mother actually looks younger and talks about when Ramon comes back."

"Is there any news of him at all?"

"Not a bit, but they have a little hope now. It just makes me sick that I didn't find out about them in time to send him word before he left Detroit! But he'll turn up some time, I hope—unless the 'villain' finds him and does something terrible. They didn't tell the mother about the villain's having tried to find out from Father."

Under the trees, not far from the fountain, in the midst of all the attractions of the lovely Gwynne estate, the three girls at a little table had their dinner alone, "*a la picnic*," as Carolyn had said, and cool salad, an ice, lemonade and fruit did compose a good and refreshing part of it.

The girls dawdled over their meal and wondered why they felt so "lazy." "It's the weather, girls," said Carolyn. "I'm glad we're through school—though I believe I've said that several times. But don't expect me to be original!"

“It’s not only the weather, Carolyn. We’re just sort of let down about everything. I imagine that the sea air will revive us, won’t it?”

“Yes, Gypsy, if we need reviving by that time.”

Conversation ran on by fits and starts. Daylight began to fade and little fireflies flashed their lanterns here and there in the shrubbery or the lower branches of the trees. It was decided that nothing was “so rare as a day in June” if this one *had* been rather too warm, and finally Kathryn inquired if Carolyn had made up her mind in regard to the great surprise.

“Sure enough, girls!” cried Carolyn. “I believe I *have* made up my mind! I’ll tell you!”

Betty assumed a thrilled expression, clasped her hands together tragically and leaned forward in pretended suspense, not so deeply pretended, either, for she knew that any surprise so regarded by Carolyn Gwynne would be “nice.”

“Don’t be silly,” laughed Carolyn, while Kathryn clutched her black hair with one hand and held the other to her heart.

“It’s about some very splendid people who are going to be in a cottage—oh, not so very far away. The cottages are scattered up there, you know.”

Kathryn put both hands to her head now. “Let me think, Carolyn! Who said she was going to the coast?”

“Never mind thinking, Gypsy. It might be dangerous. You know how unaccustomed exercise——”

Carolyn was obliged to break off as laughing Kathryn leaned over to threaten violence.

But at last the news was told. “The Waites have taken a cottage there and Marcella is going up about the time we do, I think.”

“How fine!” cried Kathryn. “Betty—‘the Pirate of Penzance!’”

But Betty was already thinking of that romantic youth, Marcia Waite's brother. "Will the Pirate be on hand?" she asked, after her first pleased exclamation at the news.

"Very likely," impressively said Carolyn.

"He will not mean much in our young lives, Kathryn," continued Betty, "if he *was* awfully nice to us at Marcella's party and other places. He is all grown up and at *just the age* when they have terrible cases in college."

"Who knows?" sang Carolyn, "but he seemed to like you, Betty. However, I'd advise you to stick to our friend Chet. There aren't any boys nicer than the Dorrance boys."

Betty assented to that but added that when Chet went into the university the next year there would probably be an end of good times with him. "It will be a case of saying farewell, and Chet will be the one to do it, you see. But it will be simply grand to have Marcella there, somebody we know and she will be having company, too, I suppose. Honestly, Carolyn, I can scarcely wait to go!"

"That wasn't intended as a pun, I suppose, since there's no point in it. But the Waites will be waiting, all right. They go some time next week, perhaps a day or two before, according to what Marcella said. She said she would telephone."

"Then there is one thing more; but I'm not going to tell this."

"*Another* secret! Carolyn?"

"Another secret!"

CHAPTER II—A GOLDFISH IN THE OCEAN

Betty Lee, who was sometimes jokingly called father's little goldfish, had acquired that title by reason of her ability to swim and her golden head, though that was usually covered tightly by a rubber cap. As her taking part in most of the swimming contests among the girls of Lyon High necessitated good bathing suits, Betty was already prepared in that respect for her visit at the seashore.

Secrets were all very well. Betty had interest in everything. But her greatest interest was in the new experience ahead of her, the new country and the delights of the ocean. Her father warned her of new conditions, but she would quickly learn. Though there were no river current, there would be the undertow. Betty promised to use her common sense and swim within the boundaries allowed at the resort to which she was bound.

With the highest anticipations, then, Betty accompanied the Gwynnes and Kathryn Allen on the fascinating trip East and to New England. Dick Lee was at a boys camp. His twin, Doris, would soon be at a corresponding girls' camp, for it "had to be fair," at the risk, said Mr. Lee, of depleting the treasury. Mother and Amy Lou would remain in the city with Father, but would take an outing with him later, when a business trip would take him East again. Then Betty, returning from the visit with Carolyn, would meet other girl friends at a "wonderful" Girl Reserve camp. Truly the summer could offer no more! Betty's former chum at the little town of Buxton, Janet Light, with whom Betty still corresponded fitfully, as her full life permitted, wrote Betty that she was a "lucky girl," and Betty thought so too.

It was all the better that it was a motor trip, with the opportunity to stop in all sorts of fascinating places, little and big, where there were thrilling associations of history; and these were as much for Carolyn's benefit as for Kathryn and Betty. There were no embarrassing and hampering ideas of obligation, for Mr. and

Mrs. Gwynne had assured the Lees that their itinerary would be carried out with or without their guests. There were only the three Gwynnes, with Kathryn Allen and Betty Lee; for Carolyn's older sister and others of the household had other plans of travel.

At the quiet places where they stopped, Betty and Kathryn were permitted to pay modest hotel bills, but that was all; and many a happy time they had lunching it on the way, with a big supply of good things, rather than stop. Mr. Gwynne, with Mrs. Gwynne to rest him at times, did the driving; for their chauffeur had left their service, very conveniently, Carolyn said, and they would not engage another until their return home. Mr. Gwynne's type of humor made Betty think of her own father. The families were well acquainted by this time. Mr. and Mrs. Lee would take the trip to New England from New York, after business was completed, and with an excited little Amy Lou, who was, however, very dignified about it at present. Was she not going into the third grade?

Then the Lees would attach Kathryn and Betty, and possibly, as Betty hoped, Carolyn, for the return and delivery at camp. But Carolyn said that she could not go so soon. There was the pleasant pressure on the girls to stay longer, but that could be decided later on. Never was Betty to forget her first motor trip East. Apparently everybody else was going, too, or it seemed so after they had reached certain routes of traffic and travel. The Gwynnes met some old friends at different hotels, till at times there would be quite a little cavalcade of acquaintances, travelling together for a while, and there were a number of boys and girls in some of the parties.

Once they traveled for two days in company with a family whom Carolyn said they had known "summers." Passengers in the cars were changed and the young people were together in the car newly attached to the Gwynnes. This was driven by Arthur Penrose, eldest son of the new friends, probably nineteen or so, Carolyn said, a brown-eyed, brown-haired youth, polite but friendly, though he said less, engaged in driving, than a younger brother, Archie, who did all the arranging in seats. Betty could not be sure at

first which was “Art” and which was “Arch,” but at last she straightened it out. Their sister “Gwen” was about Betty’s age, she thought, a pretty vivacious girl, who was delighted to see Carolyn and reminded her at first about “old times” till she saw that it would be better to include the new acquaintances, doing her best to make up for temporary forgetfulness.

Betty liked Gwen at once. That was the nice thing about this traveling and you could be sure that any one the Gwynnes liked were worth knowing. They were in Connecticut at the time of this meeting and at once planned a picnic dinner, stopping here and there to purchase a heterogeneous collection, left entirely to the young people to manage. “Have your picnic,” Mr. Gwynne said, “but don’t expect *us* to do any cavorting around over it.” Mr. and Mrs. Penrose and a sister of Mrs. Penrose occupied the room left by the three girls in the Gwynne car, though there was some shifting; for the men must talk over affairs and the ladies must be together.

What Betty did not know at all this time was that the Penroses had come into her life to stay there. But those things happen in the most casual meetings.

The Penrose car was a seven-passenger car and at first Arthur drove by himself while Archie and Gwen did the honors behind. Then Art complained whimsically that he was being left out; and in some way Betty found herself elected to sit in front with the driver, a move which pleased her, with its view of the “Blue Hills,” where they were now, and less necessity of talking; for they could listen to the rest or talk as they liked.

But Arthur’s “nice” face was turned to her often, as he called attention to some scene or made some other comment. Betty told him how it had happened that she took the trip, where they were going, what a thrill she had over it and how she enjoyed seeing everything.

“I suppose I notice the scenery more particularly since I want to be an artist,” said Arthur Penrose. “They tell me that ‘Art’ is the proper name for me, though Archie makes fun and says he’ll have to support his artistic brother in the years to come.”

Arthur’s face was full of amusement as he said this. “But I am already doing a little in commercial art lines, so perhaps it is not so bad.”

“How wonderful!” cried Betty, interested. “I wish I knew more about it. I draw a little. We have an art course in school, you know, but I like music best—just play the violin some. Then I like athletics, not so much the competitive games, you know, but swimming and skating and riding, that is I’m going to have lessons in that next year. I can ride in the country, though. Are you in college?”

“Yes, but it may be a waste of time for me to finish. We have to decide that. I am taking art on the side, but I want to go to a regular art school, and next summer, if I can raise the cash, I’m going to walk or swim to Europe and see what the big guys have done.”

Betty laughed at that statement and told “Art” that her father was always asking her when she was going to swim to Europe. This brought on more confidences, till Betty felt that she was quite well acquainted. Art Penrose was as nice as Chet, and presently she found that he knew the “Dorrance boys” and was glad to hear news from them.

The picnic dinner was more fun. They found a place with a cool spring, and made the older members of the party comfortable with seats and rugs from the cars. The boys were used to this sort of thing and as our girls were accustomed to all sorts of hikes and picnics, it was a small matter and “loads of fun” to make coffee, “hot dog” sandwiches, and have heaping plates of good things in a short but happy time, short, Art said, because it was not possible to handle their elders. They *would* think of such things as routes and time and how far they had to go.

Art came with his full plate to sit on a log near Betty and to talk more about his beloved art to sympathetic ears; and when they rose to go, he lifted a firm finger before her face to say, “You are going to see more of me, Betty Lee. I have to hear you play on your violin, for one thing.”

“And I must see some of your pictures,” pleasantly Betty responded. “It is awfully interesting to hear about it—*very*, I mean. I’m really trying to improve my English!”

“Don’t worry about your English. Has Gwen told you yet that the Penroses might possibly move to your little city?”

“‘Little city,’ indeed!” said Betty, though her smile accompanied this mild rebuke. “And we have a fine art school,” she added, hopefully.

But Arthur Penrose shook his head. “I’m going to Boston—New York—Philadelphia—Chicago—who knows? But at that I may visit my family occasionally!”

It was later that Gwendolyn said something of the same sort to Betty and Kathryn. “And I do hope that I see you girls again. I’m going to write to Carolyn once in a while now and if we *should* decide to move there, we’ll see to it that we live where I can attend the same high school. I certainly like what you tell about it!”

So they parted, with last smiles and salutes and promises to see each other again. “The nice thing about life, girls,” said Betty Lee, “is that you never know what is going to turn up. It’s like a big mystery story, with little clues that you miss when you’re reading it; and if you decide one way, it’s one thing and if you decide another way—about something important, I mean—it’s another way.”

“Listen to our philosopher, Carolyn,” said Kathryn.

“There *are* girls that don’t think life’s interesting at all,” remarked Carolyn. “But Betty would find something, even if she lived back in the Buxton she talks about.”

“It isn’t the *size* of the *place*, Carolyn,” began Betty, with an air of wisdom that she knew was comical. “It’s what you’ve got in your little insides, I guess. But I *am* ‘lucky,’ as Janet wrote me, to have so much happening.”

The objective of this trip was a quiet little village on the coast of Maine, with its rocks and inlets and rivers and lakes. It was such a place as city people love to find, for while it was being developed as a resort, it was small, and the outlying homes of the summer residents were scattered.

From the main highway they drove upon a road which was being repaired, or made into a respectable road for automobiles. Driving was difficult now in places, but at last they came upon a smooth road between woods full of new kinds of trees and growths that made Betty exclaim with pleasure, as she had before, passing through this to her new country. She had kept account of all states through which she had passed and concluded that she was becoming quite a traveled girl. But a wood peewee called from the depths of the forest and a flock of quail whirred as they hastened from the bushes by the roadside. Molly Cottontail ran to cover, and Betty concluded that it was still America and home!

But why call this a cottage! After more driving they came into the village and beyond it to a bit of a grove, where stood a large house, new but of a “dear old-fashioned” colonial type; and Mr. Gwynne stopped the car to let his passengers have a view of it. “Still like it, dear?” he asked his wife.

“Yes. The setting is exactly what I like, no hard hill to climb, just this gentle rise and the house among the trees, all white and green.”

So far as Betty was concerned, she could have welcomed the place forever, and although at this moment she could not see the ocean, she could hear its waves beating upon the shore not too far away! Its fresh breezes gently moved the trees and through them in the other direction a red sun was sinking toward the irregular contour

of the land. Betty needed no camera to remember this, but Carolyn planned at once for pictures of the house and grounds.

“Tomorrow, girls, we’ll get out and take a lot of pictures of the house and grounds and get down to the beach, too, in our bathing suits.”

“Please take a picture of me, Carolyn, right *in* the ocean, to send to my father!”

“Daddy’s little goldfish among the sharks?” teased Carolyn.

“Ow! You don’t have those, I hope.”

“I never heard of any around here,” laughed Carolyn, “and we’ve been near this place before, you know. You stay within bounds and you’ll be all right.”

Supper, a real New England supper served by a cook and a maid already there to take care of them, came next, then a stroll around the grounds, whose limits were uncertain as they strayed off into a little grove chiefly of spruces and pines. Hasty letters home were written by Kathryn and Betty and a little later three young heads, on as many different pillows in Carolyn’s big room, drowsed off to the distant booming of the surf.

In the morning, Betty blinked her eyes and wondered where she was. She must hurry to get up, for the alarm had gone off and she would be late for school! For a moment all the old feelings of wanting to stay in bed and having to get up to get ready for school came over her. Then she laughed and sat up, looking across at the two other cots, where Carolyn, by whose bed the alarm was still ringing intermittently, was rubbing her eyes and reaching down to the floor to shut it off. Kathryn sat up suddenly in bed and asked, “Where’s the fire?”

But three bathing suits had been laid out ready to be put on. They had planned a cold dip before breakfast and fearing that they would not be wakened in time by more or less weary parents or maid and cook who had been instructed not to have breakfast too early,

Carolyn had set the alarm. The sun was streaming into their East room, chosen by Carolyn, who wanted to “hear the sea.”

Wrapped in their warmest coats over their bathing suits, the girls made their way, by a side exit of which Carolyn knew, down a little hill, down a few steps, then to the beach not far from the accredited bathing place where Carolyn said they should do their swimming. A few other people were on the beach for the same purpose.

It was an icy dip this morning and Betty privately thought that she would prefer the tropics; but at that it was the great old Atlantic Ocean and she missed none of the thrill that she had expected. A short swim in the unaccustomed element, salty and “different,” and Betty was ready for the quick return to the Gwynne cottage, where a shower bath and a vigorous rub put her in a glow. Three merry faces met Mr. and Mrs. Gwynne at the breakfast table.

“Did you have your early dip, girls?” inquired Mr. Gwynne.

“Don’t we look like it, Daddy?” asked Carolyn.

“Something has made you all very rosy, I should say, and our little Gypsy sparkles like a—well, whatever does sparkle.”

“Betty has had her swim in the Atlantic Ocean at last,” laughed Carolyn. “She found it a little bit chilly, but I think she’s going to try it again later in the day.”

“Of course. Oh, Mr. Gwynne, it is perfectly lovely here! I’m so delighted that you brought me!”

“So are we. I’m sure that you will help our enthusiasms, Betty Lee.”

CHAPTER III—A MERRY WHIRL OF GOOD TIMES

It was as Betty had said. One never knew what interesting happening would come next, though some were planned. New adventures in daily pleasures and one almost tragic event were here for Betty Lee in the few weeks that lay before her in Maine. But she never could get satisfactory photographs of the old sea that stirred her so. Clouds and surf never did come out as they really looked. She concluded that Arthur Penrose or some real artist, who could give the coloring to sky and sea and paint the clouds as they looked, ought to be there to do justice to water and sky. But Betty did not talk much about her feeling of the sea, aside from the joking about the consummation of her desire to swim in it.

The Waites were the first friends to look them up. Marcella came over the next day from a cottage at no great distance, for the Waites had come on by train and arrived before the Gwynne party. She invited them at once to a beach party, "by moonlight," said she. "We'll not swim this time, but have a great picnic, with *everybody* there." Marcella looked meaningly at Carolyn as she said this.

"Larry's visiting some of his college friends and will be home in time for the beach party, I think. He may bring his chum with him. We don't know. If I weren't so busy, I'd tell you more about everybody. Several girls from our sorority are driving over this afternoon and Peggy Pollard is going to stay.

"Peggy!" exclaimed Carolyn. "Why I invited her with us and she couldn't come!"

"It's all changed," explained Marcella. "After you left, her mother made different arrangements, to go West with one of her sons and his family, I think; and she told Peggy that if she still wanted to come East, she could. Peggy was in a great quandary, but crazy to come. I found it out through one of the girls; and so Peggy's dear little red head will repose on either your pillow or mine, Carolyn,

as you like. Peggy is up the coast a little, with the girls I mentioned, though she came with us.”

“You didn’t mention their names, Marcella, but I can guess or be surprised. If you don’t mind, Marcella, we’ll have Peggy here. Another cot in my room, or two of us in a different room, will fix it.”

“Oh, let’s all be together, Carolyn! It’s such fun!”

“Just as you say, Kathryn.”

The beach party, then, was to be full of surprises. The three girls exhausted the possible list of guests in their surmises and then concluded that it was a waste of time. Unpacking, investigating their surroundings, another swim and a walk up the shore for some distance pretty well filled the day until it was best to “rest up” for the beach party, which began at eight o’clock. “It may be a little ‘spuzzy,’ girls,” suggested Carolyn, “though Marcella did not say so. But if it is to be a sorority affair and perhaps Larry and his chum coming, not to mention others that evidently Marcella means to spring upon us, there will probably be some dressing up.”

“You don’t mean party dresses, do you?” asked Betty, “thin things? I thought at beach parties you wore sweaters or jackets and easy things to rough it in.”

“Sport things, Betty, this time. Yours are all right, and take your white sweater if you wish.”

“I ‘wager’ you know whom Marcella is going to spring upon ‘us’,” remarked Kathryn.

“I know—some,” Carolyn acknowledged. “That is the other secret.”

With great care did the three girls dress for the beach party. There was a “gorgeous” moon and a mild air. Betty scarcely knew herself, she thought, as she looked from the elevation and the shadows of the group of trees about the Gwynne house toward where a line of rollers restlessly met the beach and the light of

a full moon fell across the waters. And oh, *who* would be at the party?

Active figures were darting about on the sands by the time Betty, Carolyn and Kathryn arrived and hurried toward where they saw Marcella by the light of a fire already started on the beach. And who was that, hatless, merry, throwing a big piece of wreckage upon the fire?

“Ted Dorrance!” exclaimed Kathryn. “That’s the other surprise, Carolyn!”

“M’m,” lightly replied Carolyn. “And now don’t faint or anything, Betty. Chet’s here, too.”

Betty did not much like this suggestion and replied that she was not likely to faint at seeing Chet Dorrance anywhere, especially as it was only the other day that she had seen him receive his high school diploma. Betty, usually very sweet about all her friends, felt really annoyed for about two minutes. But Chet’s own hearty and un sentimental greeting assured her.

“Didn’t Carolyn tell you that Ted and I were coming to visit Larry and Marcella?” asked Chet. “Of course it was all fixed up at the last minute. We’ve got Mother settled down at Cape Cod and drove up here with Larry and his room-mate, you know, and a couple of cousins of his room-mate. Come over and meet them, or it would be more proper to bring them to you, wouldn’t it? But they’re with those girls. We didn’t know anything about the other fellows’ coming till Larry telegraphed us about meeting us and all coming on together in Judd Penrose’s car. We’ve taken a cottage of our own now, since Marcella’s house is full up with girls. You ought to see where we are going to ‘bach’ it, though I see where we don’t do any cooking to speak of!”

“Penrose,” said Betty. “We met some boys by that name on the way up here. I wonder——”

But she did not wonder long. There, with an armful of driftwood, was Archie Penrose, whose face, like Ted's before, was lit up by the fire as he stooped. A crowd of girls and boys were around the fire and Betty, greeting those she knew and introduced to those she had not met, was soon in the midst of the friends and fun.

"You didn't expect me to carry out my threat so soon, did you?" grinned Arthur Penrose. "Neither did I; but we're well met. Will you go sketching with me tomorrow?"

"I'd love to, but Carolyn is my hostess and you'll have to find out what she's going to do."

"From all the plans, I take it that we'll have a picnic of some sort all the time we're here, every day."

Like the Dorrance boys, the two Penroses had settled their parents and Gwen in a summer resort further South. Then came a telegram from their cousin, Judd Penrose, and an invitation for Gwen from Marcella in another urgent telegram, a night letter. Gwen had come by train. The boys waited to be picked up by Judd and Larry with the Dorrances.

Gwen Penrose almost fell into Betty's arms, such was her enthusiasm at seeing her. "Isn't this *marvellous*?" she asked, "and to think that we hadn't the *slightest idea* of it when we met before! I did not even remember the name of Judd's room-mate! I was crazy to come with Marcella when she went to see Carolyn and you and Kathryn; but she wouldn't let me. She wanted the surprise to be complete, she said."

"Well, it certainly was—is!" answered Betty. "And now Art can make me a sketch of this lovely place—if he will."

"Oh, he will all right," Gwen assured her. "He thinks you're just about the sweetest thing he's seen for a long while."

Betty laughed. "We like scenery—that's all."

Lawrence Waite, who was with another small group of girls, Betty did not meet at first; but presently he came quickly over to where

she stood talking with one and another, and cordially took her hand. "Hello there, Titania. I saw you by the light of the moon. Any other fairies abroad?"

"It is a night for them, isn't it?" brightly replied Betty. "But they might be afraid of pirates on this coast, mightn't they?"

"Not of the Pirate of Penzance," Larry assured her. "Long ago, in a gloomy cave, *by the light of one flickering candle*, the queen of the fairies was not afraid of him, was she?"

"Not a bit," laughed Betty. "She thought he was real nice."

"Is *that* all?" began the smiling former "Pirate of Penzance," but Judd Penrose joined them at this moment and was introduced.

The sorority girls who were visiting Marcella were for the most part older. Marcella, too, had received her high school diploma and was a little inclined to attend an Eastern school instead of continuing in the "home town" university. Two of her visitors were girls from this school. Other girls and boys were from this summer colony. Peggy Pollard was the only girl of Marcia's high school sorority from Betty's class, and how she was welcomed by her classmates! "That is all that is necessary to make this summer a success, Peggy—your being here," warmly said Kathryn Allen.

Visiting, strolling on the beach with one and another, toasting marshmallows, hearing all "the latest" about everybody, preparing and eating the excellent lunch provided—and all on the rocky coast of Maine, made Betty Lee's cup of happiness full. Chet did not try to monopolize her. Everybody was "jolly" with everybody else and great plans were made for coming days. "*Carpe diem*," folks, said Judson Penrose, "or in other words, 'Gather ye roses while ye may'"—and his eyes were upon "dear old Marcella," as he said this and suggested a chowder party for the next day and a trip by car to a lake further inland on the following day. Betty whispered to Kathryn that she would have to pinch herself to make sure that it wasn't a dream.

Like Betty, though in college, Larry Waite would be a senior next year, a senior at Yale. And he had not forgotten that crazy Hallowe'en! Betty's little experience with candle and mirror still remained unmentioned to the other girls. She sometimes wondered if Larry had ever spoken of it. Otherwise, it was an amusing secret between them—and, of course, a bit romantic, though nothing would ever come of it. Of course not.

Chowder was duly served on the beach at the next beach party. The trip to the beautiful little lake was a second exciting excursion. Not even the mornings were exempt from gala events especially when long trips were planned. Inland they went by car and for water trips the boys secured a motor boat of moderate size which would accommodate all of Marcella's and Carolyn's visitors and the boys of their bachelor cottage. It was supposed to be "Welcome Inn," which sign adorned the doorway; but Ted said that a better name would be "Never At Home" or, if one must make a pun, "S'm' Other Time Inn."

But in a few days the girls from the other resort had departed, leaving two recent seniors with their classmate, Marcella, and the two younger girls, Peggy Pollard and Gwendolyn Penrose, who finally spent part of their time at Marcella's and the rest at Carolyn's.

Betty enjoyed all the trips, but she still liked the water best, in it to swim, or on it to explore the coast, with its bays and inlets or to go out upon the bounding billows that Chet teased Betty about, as far as it was wise for the boys to take the motor boat.

And this was how it happened that Betty was drawn into one tragic occurrence which might have entirely spoiled the summer's pleasure for her and brought distress upon some of her friends.

CHAPTER IV—THE STORM

It was curious. Betty often thought and commented upon it afterwards at home. Sometimes it seems as if in such curious, almost intentional ways, lives cross each other. Yet Betty wondered how she happened to come into the design in this instance. Her father told her that she was just one instrument of Providence, used because she could be of service and was “good in the humanities.”

And who would have thought that here, away off from home on the coast of Maine?—but one must take events in order.

It was in the second week of good times. One night there was a sudden and terrific storm, or so it seemed to Betty. The sea boomed and lashed the shore. Lightning flashed and thunder resounded or crashed with the bolts close at hand. Such small shipping as the village boasted had come hurrying to the protection of the small bay and breakwater.

The girls, rather frightened at first, bravely tried not to show it, though they were wondering whether the boys had gotten in safely from a fishing trip. “Don’t worry,” said Mr. Gwynne. “The sky was lowering about dusk. If they were too far up the coast they would put in somewhere and land.”

But the girls were uneasy and Betty was very much interested in her first big storm by the sea. “I wish we could go down to the dock to see things,” she said.

“Well, why not?” asked Carolyn. “As soon as it stops pouring, we’ll put on our ponchos and galoshes and go down. It’s not thundering much now. The storm’s gone out to sea!”

Mrs. Gwynne had no objection. A little later, protected from the still falling rain and equipped with flashlights, the girls ran or slipped on rocks and sand to the shore, warned against going too close. “No big wave is going to carry us off, Mother,” Carolyn assured Mrs. Gwynne. “We’ll look at it from a safe distance I promise you.”

At first they went by the usual “back way,” but found that at one point they could not safely pass. Waves dashed in against rocks that even at high tide they had found at some distance from the line of water. Accordingly they returned, by the ascent and steps, to the Gwynne grounds, from which a longer way led to the village and small docks.

Other people were out. Lanterns, rubber-coated men and women, with umbrellas, rubbers or galoshes, splashing through puddles, were in evidence. “Hello there!” cried a familiar voice. It was Chet Dorrance whose big flashlight had discovered the girls. There were the boys!

“Oh, we were worrying a little about you boys,” said Betty, as Chet took her arm and fell into step, guiding her around an immense puddle. “We tried to telephone Marcella and ‘Welcome Inn,’ too, but the fuse had burned out or something.”

“The storm has knocked everything out,” returned Chet. “We got home all right. I pity any boat that got caught tonight. We found good luck, not so far away, and when we saw that there was going to be a storm, we came back. Perhaps we wouldn’t have come if we hadn’t already had more fish than we could use. How about Gwynne Haven. Want any fish, or shall we have a big fish fry tomorrow?”

This last was in a louder tone to Carolyn, who with Kathryn was behind, accompanied by several more of the boys.

“Oh, the fish fry by all means,” called Carolyn.

“How can we have a fish fry after this?” asked Betty.

“Very likely tomorrow will be as bright as can be, Betty,” said Chet. “Gee whilikers, look at the dock!”

By this time they had reached the dock, where more than one boat owner had come down to see how his shipping fared. The boys found their boat intact and uninjured, and when Carolyn found that

they had intended to come later on to “Gwynne Haven,” the new name for the new cottage, she told them to “come right along.”

“We’ll stop for Marcella and the rest,” continued Carolyn, “and have a fudge party. Then we can plan the fish fry.”

Not all the boats had fared as well as the launch used by the boys of “Welcome Inn.” Betty felt troubled over several rather distracted women whose “men-folks” had not come in. She overheard some woman assure them that they were “probably safe ashore somewhere,” but Betty knew that this was said only to cheer them a little. Oh, dear, the sea and fishing and boating were not all fun!

The fudge party was a success. Wet ponchos and coats and overshoes were hung around to dry while the savory odor of cooking fudge made pleasant anticipations. Arthur Penrose drew a funny sketch of Ted almost falling out of the boat in the effort to land a big fish. Then, on a piece of cardboard which Carolyn furnished, he made a poster of the fish fry. Art’s imagination ran riot and Betty watched his bold strokes and the funny figures that resulted, with as much hilarity as the rest. “Oh, you ought to do comic strip, Art,” she exclaimed. “You’d make a fortune.”

“Sh-hh!” returned Arthur, in a loud whisper. “It’s a secret. That is my present ambition. All I need is the idea!”

“That is *good*” was Larry Waite’s verdict, when he and Judson Penrose surveyed the result, with Marcella and another Kappa Upsilon. “Unless some of you girls want it, we’ll tack that up in ‘Nobody T-Home’ tomorrow.”

“But don’t throw it away when we go home,” said Marcella. “We need that as a souvenir of the summer. Arthur, may I sit for my portrait?”

“Yes, ma’am,” said Arthur, with affected timidity, “but I’m very expensive, you know.”

“What is that to me,” scornfully Marcella replied. “I could raise a thousand as easily as a—hundred.”

“Yes,” laughed her brother. “Marcella said this morning that she had just five cents left of her allowance.”

“Now, Larry! You know it is not polite to tell family secrets, especially about money.”

“Well, who mentioned money first, I ask the assembled company?”

Betty, laughing, caught Larry’s eye, and he stretched a hand to lift her from her seat by Arthur. “Come, Titania; you have wasted enough time in encouragement of *art*, with or without a capital letter. Let’s turn on the victrola. No radio tonight, I reckon. It was sputtering to beat the band at our shack awhile ago.”

“A lot of interference from ships and shore,” said Ted Dorrance, “beside the weather—naught but static this eve.”

Hot fudge was good and the evening was merry, yet all of the young company were more or less conscious of the sea and its restless menace.

Yet when morning came, it was as Chet had said, bright and sunny, with a blue sky. The waves were still high and the stretch of water to the skyline a glorious sight. Betty selected a high rock, back of the beach proper, some distance from the Gwynne cottage, where she could sit and watch the incoming rollers with their white crests. The girls had gone down early in the hope of finding new shells brought in by the storm. Betty had a little market bag full of pretty ones. “I have to watch this a long time, Kathryn,” said she soberly to her friend, who had followed her. “Do you suppose it could fade out of a body’s mind, just like a film that you had taken full of pictures and then didn’t have developed?”

“Well, you *are* original, Betty! Who else would think of that? I’d like to remember it, too. I feel as if something is going to happen, Betty. Why, do suppose?”

“Something *is* going to happen, the fish fry this afternoon.”

“I know.”

“Are you like that sometimes, Gypsy?”

“Yes. It must be my ‘gypsy blood!’”

“As you haven’t any, it must be something else. How about nerves from staying up till all hours last night?”

“Perhaps. But the whole village was up and we stayed in bed as late as we could and not miss getting shells.”

This conversation was interrupted by the arrival of more of their friends. Ted had his big camera and took Betty and Kathryn on their rock as well as snap-shots of shore and surf and groups of people here and there.

The fish fry in the afternoon was a source of more fun. All of them were more or less accustomed to picnics and cooking in the open. Larry and Ted had for fun brought immense cooks’ aprons and announced that they were chefs and “chief cooks and bottle washers.” Some spills occurred and a few fish were rather overdone but that was better than not to be done enough. Pickles and rolls were “easier” than making sandwiches; and for dessert they had new England doughnuts and various sorts of fruit, according to the taste of those who chose the contributions. Lemonade, brought in “joy hats,” and bottles of pop regaled them when thirsty.

Not a plan was made for the next day. Every body was too lazy. “Something will turn up, girls,” said Larry Waite. “If nothing else we can always take a ride in the launch. It’s a little too rough today, though.”

The local movie was well attended that night. Ted, to Betty’s pleased surprise, invited her to accompany him. Carolyn went with Archie Penrose, Kathryn with Arthur, Gwen with Chet Dorrance and Peggy Pollard with Judd Penrose. Marcella and the other Kappa Upsilon had “other arrangements” at a party outside of this resort.

The “theatre party,” as Ted called, it, attended the “first show,” and after more or less attractive refreshments at the local ice-cream shop, the girls were duly taken home by boys that said they must have their “beauty sleep” and left with nothing beyond a visit on the front porch.

Gwen Penrose and Peggy Pollard were staying at Carolyn’s now and Gwen giggled a little when they went to their rooms, rather relieved, after all, that the boys had not come in for another party. One did have to have a little rest sometimes. “The boys have something on hand tonight,” said Gwen. “I got an inkling from Archie, though he wouldn’t tell me what they’re going to do—some boy stuff. My, doesn’t being outdoors so much make you sleepy?”

“Yes,” Betty happened to be the one to reply, she would be “as hoarse as a gull if she didn’t make so much noise tonight. It’s going to put me to sleep and that soon!”

But Betty reckoned without considering how many things are absolutely necessary to talk over. As there was another room connecting with Carolyn’s, Gwen and Peggy had been put there; but the girls went back and forth and Gwen in gay pajamas sat on Betty’s bed to talk for an hour, till Peggy called her and told her she would be “as hoarse as a gull if she didn’t either come to bed or get her robe around her.”

At that Betty made room for Gwen under her soft covers and never knew when Gwen, whispering to deaf ears, finally, went to her own bed in the next room.

CHAPTER V—A SURPRISING RESCUE

Whatever it was that the boys had in mind or carried out that night, it must have kept them up till late or early hours, in spite of their joking about “beauty sleep.” Although the girls were on the beach more or less the next morning, not a sign did they see of any one from “Welcome Inn” or “Nobody At Home.” Everybody must have been at home. But all that any of the girls ever knew about performances was what Gwen told them, as Archie informed her it was “some sort of an initiation.”

Betty Lee wondered how it was possible for the sea to be so calm on only the second day after a storm like the one she had witnessed. There was the swell, to be sure, and the rollers came in as usual. The surf was just as beautiful and she experienced the delights of cutting the waves as she and Carolyn swam out as far as they dared. But the rocks lashed by the storm were now dry. No heaving, tossing maelstrom met the eye. Gently the boats at the little docks rocked up and down, lapped by such waves as reached them.

It was after lunch when Larry Waite, in his “adorable” yachting outfit and looking like a captain, Gwen said, stood at the Gwynne door, cap in hand. “Oh, come in, Larry,” welcomed Carolyn, jumping up from a low rocker and dropping the bit of embroidery that she was doing.

Larry entered and looked around with some amusement. “What!” said he teasingly, “is this the sewing circle? Can’t you find anything else to do on Maine shores?”

“Oh, we’ve been out all morning and ate so much lunch that we’re past going for awhile. Besides, Gwen is showing us a new stitch.” This was Peggy Pollard, who offered the explanation.

“Your excuses are accepted,” laughed Larry, “and I’ll not mention what *we* have been doing all morning.”

“Snoozing!” cried Gwen. “I know!”

“And didn’t we need it!” replied Larry. “But that is all by the way, girls. I’ve come to deliver an invitation from the crowd. Ted and Art are routing out some provisions from the groceries and such. How about a trip in the old boat and dinner some place?”

“Oh—grand!” cried Gwen.

“You’ve saved our lives,” said Carolyn, with exaggerated gratitude, resigning her circle of embroidery with an air of “nothing more to do with you!” “When do we start?”

“Meet me by yonder swelling wave in half an hour,” grinned Larry, looking at Betty, who had said nothing but looked her approval of the plan. “In other words, I’m going down now to see that the tug’s in shape and if you will be down at the dock in half an hour or so, it will give us time to do anything necessary and stow away the hardtack. Besides, don’t you girls always have things to do like powdering your noses or being sure that the vanity what you call it is along?”

“You are only forgiven because of the nice invitation, Larry,” said Kathryn. “You forget that we are laying on a fashionable coat of tan these days.”

“Sure enough.” Larry was on the porch by this time, fleeing in pretended fear from threatening looks. “I’m glad you want to go, girls, and if you want to bring any fishing tackle of your own, we may fish a little before we get back. The sea is fine and we may go as far as a little island I know.”

There was great scurrying around for a little while, also much wagging of tongues. Costumes were quickly changed, for with Larry looking as he did, they must dress the part. Besides, the boat was pretty fit, and Betty asked Gwen again if you “could call it a yacht.”

“It’s as big as some that have the name,” replied Gwen, “and it’s big enough to go to sea in, though I’d hate to be caught in it if there were a storm like the one we just had.”

“Oh, sailors weather them, in littler boats than that,” Kathryn declared.

Soon, on board, the boat guided by Larry Waite’s experienced hand, Betty Lee, Carolyn Gwynne, Kathryn Allen, Peggy Pollard and Gwendolyn Penrose were the guests of Larry, Ted and Chet Dorrance, Arthur and Archie Penrose. Judd Penrose had motored up to join Marcella and her friends, but as Ted told Betty privately, he and Larry “escaped.” “You see, Betty, there’s a girl that I’d a little rather—well I don’t mean that she exactly likes me, but anyhow I didn’t want to go and Larry felt the same way. With a lot of nice girls right here, what’s the use?”

This amused Betty, who knew that some girls did more or less pursue Ted. “Thanks for the compliment to us, Ted,” she answered. “I’m glad you and Larry didn’t go. A picnic is just what I’m wanting, too.”

Facing the ocean, just as if she were going to land in Spain or France or some other delightful country, Betty felt that the world was a large place this afternoon. Larry took them out from bays and rocks to where the going was safe. Strange birds dived into waves ahead of them after their prey, or floated upon the water, rising and falling with the movement of the sea, to fly as the boat approached them. And just as young appetites began to be ready for the good picnic supper, there in sight was the island of which Larry had spoken. The course had been changed after they were well away from the shore, toward the north first, then toward the coast again, as Larry executed a curve, as it were, to approach this island from the proper angle. Carefully he took the boat into the bay scarcely worthy of the name, so shallow was it. But there was a rickety floating dock attached to the shore and a rocky way cut, by which they all were soon ascending to the top of a low cliff. Other rocks beyond were higher and a little woods invited them to picnic. There was a spring of clear water, which was probably what made the island a resort for picnics.

The first thing was to appease hunger. Carolyn had gathered up some fresh doughnuts made that morning by their New England cook and had taken bodily a fresh veal loaf, but with her mother's permission. This bit of homemade cookery added pleasantly to what the boys had purchased at the village stores. They would be able to satisfy hunger at least!

For possibly half an hour or more they regaled themselves and talked, then discussed whether they should do any fishing, for this was supposed to be a good place, or whether they should merely roam over the island a little and then take to the boat again. While this more or less important decision was being made, they were suddenly quite surprised by the arrival of a stranger, who came over a little rise of the rocky land beyond the trees and approached them. He was a somewhat haggard-looking man, whose clothing was tumbled and mussed. He wore an old sweater and his old felt hat was pulled down almost over his dark eyes.

He sharply looked over the little company before him, then came more rapidly toward them. "It is fortunate for me that you came here for your picnic," said he. "I *thought* I heard voices! I was wrecked here in the storm and I wonder if I can get you to take me over to the mainland."

"Of course we can," said Larry pleasantly. He had risen and was taking in the stranger as keenly as that man was regarding the group.

"Were you hurt? And did you lose your boat and companions?"

"There's nobody here but me," the man replied, rather too hastily, Larry thought. "I'm not hurt very much, but I ought to get to a doctor as soon as I can."

"All right," said Larry. "We want to run over the island a little, to show it to the girls, and then we'll be ready to go. You must be hungry, if you've been here with nothing to eat since the storm. Girls, isn't there something we can fix for him right away?"

But the man was waving his hands rather distractedly. “Oh, why must you wait? There’s nothing but rocks here! Let’s go at once! Besides, if I can get some one to come back and fix my boat for me I may save it before the waves beat it to pieces!”

“Maybe we can fix it for you,” suggested Ted, springing to his feet, but winking at Archie, as he turned. Afterwards he said that he had his suspicions of all’s not being as it seemed.

“No, no, no,” excitedly said the man, with a gesture as if he would keep Ted back. “Take me away at once!” he cried, and as if to prove his need he sank to the ground, startling the girls, who jumped up at once.

“Oh, the poor fellow!” exclaimed Carolyn.

“Ted, we’d better take him right away! He’s all used up, shipwrecked and everything!”

“So he is,” said Ted, starting toward the man. “Pour me a cup of that coffee, Carolyn. We’ll get something hot inside of him. Larry, I’d suggest that we get him down into the boat right away. Pack up the stuff, kids.”

Larry was bending over the man, lifting him to a sitting position, for he had not fainted. His hat had fallen off and he reached for it himself, pulling it down over his forehead again. Betty Lee was staring at him. Where had she seen that man before and heard that voice?

The coffee was gratefully swallowed and he accepted a doughnut with it, though Carolyn was not sure that a doughnut was the best thing for a starving man. “I can wait to eat more until you all come,” suggested the man. “I am feeling pretty good now. If I can just get to the mainland. I’ll tell you just where to land me.”

“Never mind now,” said Larry. “We’ll take you where you want to go.” Larry was not to carry out that statement, but he did not know it as she made it.

There was a little group of the boys around the man now and Ted, speaking to Archie, who had said something Betty did not hear, said, “All right, Archie—you help Larry take him to the boat and I’ll help here. We’ll be away in a jiffy.”

Larry and Archie kindly helped the man over the rocks and down to the boat, while Ted turned to the other boys and girls speaking now in a low tone. “I’m suspicious of that chap,” said Ted. “I think Larry is, too. Don’t hurry too much and go down one at a time carrying something, girls. Come on, Chet. You and I will go over the island a bit and see what this wreck is.”

Arthur, who had been making a funny sketch of the picnic party when the man appeared, now put his paper in his pocket and told the girls that it seemed to be “up to him to pack the stuff.”

“Not a bit of it,” said Carolyn. “Didn’t you hear Ted tell us not to hurry. Go on with the boys.”

“I’ll see where they’re going,” returned Arthur, “and come back to protect you!”

The girls laughed at this, and Carolyn began to separate some of the most attractive remains to be packed together, ready for a good lunch for the “shipwrecked sailor.” She was the first one to go down to the boat, carrying this. Gwen followed her shortly, then Peggy. Kathryn and Betty were beginning to gather up the rest of the equipment, except the heavier articles, which they had been “ordered” to leave for the boys, when there came a hail and Chet came leaping over the rocks in the background, crossing from the rise of ground as the stranger had done before him. “Where’s the rest of that coffee?” he demanded. “We’ve found the boat all right, out of commission and there’s a fellow in it—bound and gagged he was—that old scoundrel!”

“Oh, Chet!” cried Betty. “Why, Carolyn took the thermos bottle and the coffee to the boat, for the man if he should want anything more.”

“What *that* fellow needs is a rope and a limb!” growled Chet, not waiting to be polite, but scrambling down the rocks to where the boat stood waiting. Betty and Kathryn left their baskets to run in the direction of the rocks. They had hoped to see something of this pretty island as it was. Through and over the rocks they speedily went and there stretched before them an irregular path, winding among more trees and disappearing in the direction of another shore where the wash of the surf could be heard.

They started down the path, but were surprised to see Ted and Arthur, slowly approaching and half carrying some one between them. “You’ll be all right, old fellow, as soon as you get limbered up a little,” Ted was saying.

“Shall we set you down for a moment or can you keep going?”

Something indistinct was replied. It does not help communication to have been gagged for some little time. And Ted was *laughing* at the reply! Betty and Kathryn were horrified; but all in a moment they saw who it was that was being carried as more than once he had been helped from the football field at Lyon High. It was the Don! Obviously Chet had not waited to see who it was.

Ted grinned when he saw Betty. “He says it’s a little worse than athletics, Betty, but he can make it.” Then Ted’s expression changed.

“Please hurry up Chet with that coffee and then tell him to see to it that the boys tie up that old villain!”

In a flash Betty sensed the situation. It was the “villain!” She had only seen him once, and then not any too well—but she should have known the voice, though not quite so suave as when he had called upon her father to inquire for Ramon.

“Ramon Sevilla!” she gasped. But it was no time to learn how all this had happened. She turned back with Kathryn, but Chet in a great hurry passed them and was giving Ramon a drink of the coffee.

Affairs moved rapidly after this. Betty and Kathryn gathered up the rest of the picnic supplies and hurried to the boat. There Larry and Archie had secured the “villain,” who was angry and dangerous, they said. “Oh, you’d go off and leave somebody to die, would you?” belligerently queried Chet.

“I would have come back with my friends for him,” growled the angry man.

“And what would you have done with him then? Yes, you’ll tell that to the judge!”

But they fed the villain as well as Ramon, the “Don” of football fame, over whom they all rejoiced. Ramon was in no condition to tell his story and interested as they all were, they waited and asked no questions. The boys made him comfortable in the little cabin, fed him and left him to sleep. They told the girls how they had found the boat, really disabled as the man had said, and as they investigated they heard a low moan. Ramon could not call to them for the man had gagged him, presumably when he knew that the picnickers had landed there. There had evidently been a struggle against the gagging process, though Ramon had been securely tied before, he had given them to understand. Half conscious now, he had still recognized Ted and when freed had gradually come to himself. “You can’t get a good football player down!” declared Chet, referring to the characteristic nerve with which Ramon insisted on trying to walk up the path and over the rocks to the boat. “I didn’t recognize him, though—and the other boys untied him.”

The trip home was quiet but beautiful. The boys were more or less disturbed over their captive, and the girls kept far away from him. What a pity it was, thought Betty, that people should be so bad in such a beautiful world. The sunset colors were just as glorious as ever and the sky was mirrored upon the water. “Where every prospect pleases and only man is vile,” she quoted to Larry, at the wheel, to his amusement. To him she related all the story of Ramon as far as she knew it. “How glad he will be to know about

his mother and sister,” said she, “and that they are safe! And it will be wonderful for them. I believe I’ll send a telegram in the morning—or would you?”

“I’ll send one if you like, Betty—for you. But perhaps we’d better find out what Ramon wants first. He might like to be the one to open communication.”

“Yes. You are right, Larry.”

“Stay right by me, Betty Lee,” said Larry at this juncture, for Betty, drawn by his beckoning hand had joined him. “Don’t you want to learn how to steer a boat, much as you like the sea?”

“Yes, I do. Will you show me, Larry? You like the water, too, don’t you? I didn’t know it till this summer.”

“I’m very fond of any kind of water and most of all the sea, though I’m no goldfish,” and Larry laughed, looking at the waving golden locks now blown by the ocean breeze.

“How did you ever hear that!” cried Betty. “I wish the girls wouldn’t tell everything!”

“Don’t worry. I’ll not think of you as a goldfish, though that’s funny, Betty. But I think of you as Titania—on All Hallowe’en, you know.” Larry looked at Betty meaningly, and Betty smiled, but dropped her eyes before Larry’s. Fortunately Gwen and Carolyn came up just then to comment on Betty’s having the wheel. “Don’t upset us, Betty,” said Gwen.

“I won’t; Larry is watching me, and it’s only for a minute.”

The boys took Ramon to their own shack, while the villain was lodged in the village jail, after Ramon had been consulted in regard to the charges to be brought against him. There were plenty, Ramon said, theft, practical kidnapping and the cruel treatment that might have resulted in death. But Ramon was too exhausted to talk much. The man gave his name as Peter Melinoff, very different from that he had given Betty’s father, and the boys said it was a

joke, for he was “no more Russian than a rabbit.” “It’s just one of his aliases,” suggested Archie Penrose.

But the great disappointment to all, and a tragic one to Ramon, apparently was that on the third night from the one on which the two had been brought to the village, the man who had done so much to injure Ramon broke jail and fled. It was very likely that he had gotten word in some way to his friends, Ramon said. And worst of all, Ramon would not allow word to be sent as yet to his mother and sister. He had told them to wait at first. Then, after the jailbird had flown, he said that he would not send word at all.

“The reason is this,” said Ramon. “He has finally gotten hold of even the jewels that I have kept so long, for my mother and sister if I ever found them. He was trying to get me to sign a paper finally putting it out of our power to get the property that he has and that is ours. I must follow him, and it is none too safe, as recent events indicate. I *will not* permit him to rob us; and now I have some grounds on which to hold him.”

“But please don’t do it all by yourself,” said Betty, who was having this final conversation with Ramon.

“Betty, if I get what belongs to us, it is all right. If I do not, how could I pay for a detective? I will do this, though. If I succeed in getting the jewels again, I will see that they get to your father for my mother. Now that I have all of you back of me I will not be afraid of being arrested for having ‘stolen jewels,’ as that fellow always threatened. Then, if the jewels come, there will be a letter for my mother and Ramona Rose. But it would be cruel to stir them up about me now. Don’t you see?”

Betty did see. The story was not complete yet, but Ramon had told them all about how he had had an offer of a good salary in Canada by people who proved to be carriers of liquor into the United States, merely Detroit rum-runners after all. There were some “big people” in it, Ramon said, and he was having difficulty in getting safely out of the toils when this man appeared, having

relations with the ring of rum-runners, and took charge of Ramon. That was how in one of the trucks he had been brought to the coast where he had at first thought that escape might be easy. He had made no objection to the proposed trip for that reason and was inveigled into the boat, where he found “Peter Melinoff” and had to endure his unholy joy and a species of torture while the man made the effort to have Ramon sign the paper. He had held out until the storm, which for a time ended his troubles, though, he was still tied and expected to go down in the sea. But at the end of the storm they were cast on the island and the man who was with “Peter” either fell overboard and was drowned or was assisted to that fate by Peter. There seemed nothing too desperate for him to do.

“Well, Ramon, remember,” said Betty at the last of their interview, “that any mother and sister I know would rather have you safe than any amount of property or jewels or anything.”

“Yes,” thoughtfully said Ramon. “My mother and sister are like that. But I am no weakling and I know more than when I was brought to this country. I’ll promise you just one thing, for their sakes—not to take such risks again. I have a little money sewed in my clothing. They did not find that. In fact, for some time I have been in the habit of always having something hidden for an emergency. If you knew, Betty—well, if I never get back you may tell my mother and sister that I constantly thought of them. In six months I expect to see you all.”

There was only one consolation to the girls who had taken such an interest: the authorities would now get after the ring. Ramon would not be alone in his search, after all; but the day after the man called Peter Melinoff had broken out of jail, Ramon was gone.

CHAPTER VI—VACATION’S LAST FLING

“Gid-ap!” cried Betty, waving a willow switch, but not touching her old horse with it. Four or five girls were urging their gentle steeds along the pretty country road near the camp to which Betty Lee and Kathryn had come for their last fling before school.

“This is like old days at the farm,” remarked Betty, rather jerkily, as her horse picked up his pace and stride and jolted her. One of the girls that Betty had recently met at camp passed now with a clatter of horse’s hoofs and a flapping of girl elbows.

“She can’t ride any better than we can,” cried Kathryn, grinning. “It’s us for riding lessons this fall, isn’t it Betty?”

Betty only nodded. This was great fun, riding up hill and down dale in the country-side near the camp to which Betty had duly come, although all that they had planned had not been carried out. Mr. Lee had not brought Mrs. Lee and Amy Lou to New England, since business in New York held him there. But the Penroses, driving up to the Maine village to investigate all its delights, of which they were hearing in letters from Gwen and cards from their sons, left at the psychological moment, Gwen said, to take Kathryn and Betty with them.

It was a little hard to leave Carolyn behind. She had given up all idea of camp and Betty really did not see how any one could leave the ocean unless she had to. But the restless boys had been making ready to leave on some other trip, by boat, if Larry Waite had his way. There would be some scattering.

Betty and Kathryn were taken by car to Boston, where they embarked for New York, going on a “delirious” jaunt by a coast steamer to New York. There they joined the Lees, Amy Lou doing the honors of the city with great dignity and telling the girls where to see different things of importance. Betty would not spoil Amy Lou’s enthusiasm by reminding her that she had been there before. That was one pleasant custom in the Lee family, to give each

member a fair chance with enthusiasms or accomplishments. To take the wind out of anybody's sails—well, that was too deadly!

But Betty and Kathryn had a gay time for a a week. They ate lobster in one delightful place and had French dainties in another. And both agreed that no summer which they ever should have could come up to this one. Here they were now in this wonderful camp; and Betty declared that having seen her father and mother and Amy Lou had been quite enough to stave off any homesickness. She never *would* want to go home now. Imagine! School!

This was more like school in numbers, this Indiana camp of Girl Reserves. The group in the Maine village had been more or less an exclusive, or small one. Here were about sixty girls, only a few of whom Betty knew, though there were some from other high schools in her home city. And were they *friendly*—and *noisy*, at certain times? So Betty queried in her home letter written the day after arrival. But it was only the camp freedom, supervised, to be sure, that found expression here as in all camps.

Betty and Kathryn, rather expecting this to be something of an anti-climax after Maine, were pleasantly disappointed. Why, it was “gorgeous!” And it may be that the extravagant expressions of youth were justified. It was “like being away to school—and without lessons!” Betty's only other camp experience had been a week-end attendance upon a Fall Retreat. That she had “loved” and it had made her happy in her interest in Lyon “T,” but it did not last long enough. By arrangement she was here for three weeks and would see some changes in the personnel of the girls. Many of them came for only a week; some, for two weeks.

The camp had been a gift to the Y. W. C. A., and consisted of the buildings and grounds of a country resort, close to a tiny country town. The main building, originally a country hotel or club house, was a three-story structure and had been adapted to its present use, very much like a girls' dormitory. Wide porches, a large room with a fireplace for the open fires they sometimes had in cool evenings,

an immense dining room, a big “back porch” which was practically a large room and now glassed in and screened, to be thrown open often—all these were prominent features.

There were several small cottages and because the next group of Girl Reserves was a large one, Kathryn and Betty had been placed in one of these, as they were to stay over into the next period. The girls were at first a trifle disappointed, but when they found that a phoebe was nesting on the ledge above their very door, undisturbed with their passing in and out, they were quite delighted.

Main building, cottages and all were perched on a wooded bluff above the banks of a beautiful little river. It was not the ocean, to be sure, but Betty was satisfied when she first realized the loveliness of the place, its tall trees, the birds nesting close by and their songs in the morning. And oh, the nice space! Little country roads, deep hollows, thick woods, all sorts of growths with the wild flowers of the late season! There was a safe backwater in which to swim and bathe—and the water was warm, and did not taste salty! Inland country had a beauty of its own. Moreover, there was some one to tell you about everything.

A young science instructor from one of the colleges had charge of a nature interest group, for which Betty and Kathryn promptly signed. Betty joined the dramatic group and Kathryn signed up for handicraft. Both were in the recreation group, and they concluded that a poetry club would be “instructive.”

Yet it was not in the least like school and classes. The nature group met out under the trees and planned or executed a hike. The recreation group played tennis, volley ball and other outdoor games or scampered over the country on horseback, as Betty and Kathryn were doing now. The dramatic group took the lead in the funny plays or masquerades or stunts with which the whole camp was entertained.

And now the girls were jogging slowly home from their ride. The horses would be given a little rest and another set of riders would have their turn.

“I had a note from Ramon this morning, Kathryn,” said Betty, as she tied her horse to the proper place and joined Kathryn in a stroll down the hill to the bridge that crossed the river. “I haven’t had a good chance before to tell you without somebody around.”

“Then he’s still alive,” said Kathryn, her eye on a rabbit that popped out of the bushes and went scurrying down the little road.

“He was when he wrote it,” giggled Betty. Then she sobered, thinking that it was not very nice of her to make a joke of anything connected with that harassed boy.

“You didn’t tell us much about your talk with Ramon, Betty,” remarked Kathryn, with an air of inviting confidences.

“There was so little of it,” musingly returned Betty. “Look! There’s that Kentucky warbler that we’ve been trying to see! I didn’t know that they nested here till Miss Davenport told us.”

“Well, Kentucky is the name of it, and if this *is* Indiana, camp isn’t so far north of the Ohio River.”

Even the girls’ low voices had made the bird whisk out of sight again. Quiet indeed must she who follows the birds learn to be! There was no further conversation while the girls stealthily tiptoed to a vantage point and watched the thick bushes that concealed the warbler. Then—oh joy!—there were both of the mates. First the male bird flew from the bush to a tree above. On a lower limb, in plain sight, he rested for a few moments, a ray of sunlight catching the bright yellow of his breast and showing clearly the black markings of the head. But whisk—they were both there on the same limb for a second, then gone! Bird study was like that!

“Now you see them and now you don’t see them!” said Betty, wishing that she had her notebook. “Don’t let me forget, Kathryn, to put all that down for our reports, and about the little field

sparrow's nest we found at the foot of that tree. Gracious! I'm afraid now of *stepping* on some nest when we dash around!"

"Go on about Ramon, Betty."

The girls stopped on the great bridge and leaned on its railing to look down at the water below. A little green heron started from a thicket close to the river and a spotted sandpiper flew close to the sands or gravel upon a "sand-bar" and kept on its low flight for some distance up the stream.

"I suppose I told you how relieved he was to hear that his mother and sister were found and all right. I tried to get him to see how much more his mother would want him than any money, but he doesn't look at it that way."

"Maybe there's some reason we don't know, Betty. Then folks are different about those things. Perhaps they *do* care about the jewels and their family and all more than about *living*, without them."

Betty considered. "I suppose they do hate to be taken advantage of and I suppose awful things must have happened through that old scoundrel." Betty looked around almost as if she expected to see him. "Oh, let's forget about it. Ramon Sevilla-sky will just have to have his old adventures if he will be so obstinate. All he said in his letter was that he *was* still alive and on the trail. He just wrote to thank me for everything, he said, and he could write to Father later on, if he had any success."

Kathryn, who had laughed at Betty's combination of Ramon's name, repeated meaningly "*if he has any success!*"

When the girls went back to headquarters again, they found things humming as usual in the merry beehive of activity. Bernadine Fisher, one of the dramatic group, handed them each a large scrap of brown paper, torn in irregular shape and written upon with a very black pencil. This was the invitation to a barn dance, to take place that evening. "Look as crazy as you can," said Bernadine. "And after the barn dance we're going to put on our masterpiece."

Don't forget, Betty, that you are the heroine that gets kidnapped and everything. Ask Miss Mercer about costume. You remember we talked about that."

"Yes—but what do I *say*?"

"Oh, make it up! The heroine doesn't have to say much. She will probably be gagged anyhow if she is kidnapped!"

"Yes, but I'm one of the villains," said Kathryn, "and we didn't write up anything but the plot!"

"That's all right. We almost never do for a stunt like this. Just get the general idea and work out the details as you do it."

Kathryn and Betty looked at each other with large-sized smiles as Bernadine left them, though Betty was thinking to herself that kidnapping and being gagged was not so funny in real life. She had seen Ramon after such an experience.

"This goes in my stunt-book," said Kathryn, holding up the artistically torn piece of brown paper. "It's loads of fun, Betty, but I guess we'd better see Miss Mercer about when to come in with our speeches. It wouldn't do to be standing around waiting for each other before the audience. What did I ever let you work me into this play for?"

"You know you wouldn't miss it, Gypsy! Oh, yes, Miss Davenport, I should say we *will* help you put up the bird pictures! Wait till I get the thumb tacks for you. Have we really seen that many?"

On the big sun porch Kathryn and Betty were soon busy helping put up, from the excellent portfolio of bird pictures published by the New York State Museum or the "University of the State of New York," such pictures as represented birds actually seen by the nature group in camp. "We have not as many as we would see in the migration season," Miss Davenport explained, "but it is easy enough to get at least fifty birds that nest about here on our list. I'm making a tree list now for the camp; and don't forget to report all the wild flowers, girls."

The play that night was a great success, a few bad moments for the actors, when something wrong was done, resulting only in shrieks of delight and enjoyment from the audience. It was rather entertaining to hear several startled and perfectly distinct remarks from a heroine that was supposed to be unable to speak or call for aid. But Betty thought she was going to be dropped by the excited villains and spoke before she thought. "Oh!" she finished much mortified, and Kathryn saved the day by clapping a hand over the heroine's mouth and calling for "another gag."

"She will rouse the neighbors yet!" cried Kathryn with a dramatic gesture, "and all will be lost! See, varlets, that you make a good job of it this time!" True, "varlets" and "job" scarcely seemed to belong to the same vernacular, but what mattered a little thing like that? Besides, they were giving a "real play" at the end of the week.

Ah, the fun they had, the friendships they made and the lessons they learned in "good sportsmanship" and living together! From reveille to taps they went from one activity to another, or slept in rest hour, or sang at meals. Two things Betty declared that she could never forget. One was a wet evening when a fire in the big fireplace was comfortable. It was their hearth fire and camp fire in one and the girls sat around on the floor before it or ranged themselves in comfortable seats at a greater distance, while one of the young teachers who was a fine story-teller told all that they asked for of the old tales, and more amusing or thrilling newer ones.

The other great moment came during the beautiful ceremonial at the end of the period. Betty and Kathryn had been leaders in the school organization and found themselves useful here. Both received honors at the recognition service. And oh, that lovely night, with its moon, its firelight outdoors, its lights carried by the girls among the shadows and its inspiration!

"I like you, Betty Lee," facetiously, yet truthfully said one of the camp directors as Betty bid her goodbye on the big bridge. A whole procession of girls was walking across it to take the train at

the village station and a loaded old truck was ahead of them with suitcases galore.

The young director withdrew her arm which she had linked with Betty's as she strolled with the girls as far as the bridge.

"I mean it," laughed she. "You are a wholesome, happy girl, and I like your influence upon other girls. I hope you'll be president of Lyon 'Y' this year again."

Betty shook her head in the negative, looking ahead at Kathryn who was walking with one of their many new friends. "No—I've had that and I want Kathryn in this year, if possible. But I'll work for it just as hard and all the more for having been here! Thank you for your good opinion of me—I'll try to deserve it. And we all just love *you*! Thank you for everything! I've had just the *happiest* time!"

"I'm glad of that, my dear. Come back next year for we have bigger plans than ever. Remember, Betty Lee, that wherever you go you are going to have an influence you do not realize on other girls."

"Mercy, Miss Dale, don't tell me that! I don't *want* to! If there's anything I hate it's trying to manage anybody!"

"I don't mean that," smiled Miss Dale. "You may find out what I do mean some day."

But Betty dismissed this thought. The train was late and as the crowd of girls waited they sang *Skin-a-ma-rink-a-dink-a-dink*, *Sing-a-linga-ling*, *Yawning*, and other camp classics, varied by their own versions and their hiking and goodbye songs. A tear or two had to be wiped away over a few sentimental partings. But after the train came in, demure and bright-eyed travelers happily boarded it.

CHAPTER VII—SENIORS!

Could it be possible that the short summer was over? The Lee family had exchanged news and experiences and made ready for a busy school year. Dick, whose new name for the family was the "Foxy Five," had changed most of all since his summer at camp. All at once Dick seemed to have grown up and to be as old as his twin, who had shown an earlier maturity. He was rather heady and important upon his first arrival, but had calmed down somewhat by the time of school's opening. He and Doris rather took the house, to use their father's expression, and regaled their parents with stories of camp life. They took a mild interest in Betty's trips and spent some time together in arguing over camp matters, or comparing notes on canoeing, swimming and the like.

And now here they all were, in the same old scramble to get to school on time.

"It seems to me," said Mr. Lee, "that Betty might be more simply dressed for school."

He and Mrs. Lee were standing before the wide window of their front room to watch Betty, Doris and Dick start to school. Amy Lou's active little figure had already disappeared around the corner as she hurried off to the grade school, near enough to be reached by walking. There Amy Lou would be in the advanced class and felt very old indeed.

The September morning was quite warm. Both girls wore cool, light frocks and had taken great pains with their toilets; and Betty, as Doris had told her, did not look as "schoolish" as usual.

The three were talking and laughing as they swung their books and walked with light, rapid steps toward the usual corner, where they would catch the street car. Mr. Lee sometimes drove them to school; but this morning he was working out something at home before going to his office. Betty carried a new, shining brown brief-case. Doris had a gay bag. Dick swung his books from a strap.

In spite of Mr. Lee's critical remark, the paternal eyes that followed the three were fond and smiling. Mrs. Lee laughed a little, as she linked her arm in that of her husband and smiled up at him. "Betty is a little more dressed up than usual, Father, I will admit. But there is the first auditorium session this morning and Betty for the first time will sit in the senior section!"

"Ah!—I understand. No further explanation is necessary."

"She can be a senior only once in this big school," reflectively added Betty's mother. "I hope the child will have a happy year."

"And not kill herself with all she wants to do," finished Mr. Lee, "but I insist on the honor roll."

"Betty's pride will keep her on that. We've talked things over, Betty and I; but by this time we have found out that there is no way of settling things beforehand. I'm not going to waste any time or energy in worry."

"Good!" laughingly returned Mr. Lee. "See that you keep to that resolution. Doris is going to be more of a handful than Betty, for she has great ideas sometimes and is more impulsive—ready to try anything new. And Dick—I shall have to be a good father this year and keep an eye upon what companions he has, any new ones. Perhaps I can get out to some of the athletic events with him. I understand he's going to try to get on some team or other."

"Is that so?" queried Mrs. Lee, rather dismayed. "Get us an extra supply of liniment then!"

Meanwhile, Amy Lou had reached her school and her young friends. The other three were on a crowded street car, full of high school pupils, sitting and standing. Ignorant of their parents' plans for oversight, they were naturally and properly filled with anticipations of the day or making their own plans for the interesting program of events and activities that lay ahead.

Betty was not a little excited and happy over her new dignity as a senior. Had she entered upon it unprepared, she might have been

confused. But three years in the large and well-organized high school of which she was so proud and to which she was so loyal, had made her entirely at home there. Now their classes had the opportunity to lead and give tone to affairs. In some respects they must show what they could do. This morning, taking their places in the large, central senior section was the source of some thrills indeed. And boys and girls who had successfully passed through the first three years of high school had some reason to be proud. Senior complacency is another thing; but life has a great way of taking that out of all of us.

This morning, as the crowds of young people filled the doors and swarmed up the aisles of the assembly hall, Carolyn, who was ahead in Betty's small group of friends, deliberately stepped back at the row of seats toward the front that was vacant, and gently pushed Betty in first. "This is all right for this morning, isn't it?" she asked Kathryn, who was next. "We want to hear everything."

Betty gasped a little, for she knew that if she went in first she would have to sit next to some boy coming in from the right hand aisle. It was understood that the boys had the right half of the senior section; the girls, the left. But the girls were pushing into the seats behind her, so with no choice she obeyed Carolyn. Gwen was there, too, and Kathryn was sending her in after Carolyn. It had happened, and Gwen was a conditional senior in Lyon High.

"You clever old skeezicks!—making me go in first!" Betty paused a little to say this in Carolyn's ear.

But Carolyn only grinned, then had the grace to change expression as she said, "Betty, I'm sorry! Look who's coming."

Betty looked, glanced back at the crowd of girls following and sat down in a seat not quite midway, only to hop up again as she saw that the whole row must be filled. "Oh, it's all right, Caro'. I'll not mind."

Nonchalant, as nattily dressed as ever, Ted Dorrance had appeared in his most effective suit, better looking than ever. Jack Huxley

came toward Betty, stopped in the exact middle of the row and looked down at her from a somewhat superior height.

“Lo, Betty,” said he in friendly fashion.

“Hello, Jack,” she responded. She sat down, tucked her books under the seat and rose again to wait till the principal was ready to lead in the salute to the flag, with which every assembly session began.

Carolyn, repentant, began to talk to her, but Gwen was asking questions on the other side of Carolyn. They were early. The room was not yet full.

“Have a good vacation, Betty?” asked Jack.

“Ever so nice,” replied Betty.

“You didn’t know that I saw you, did you in the East?”

“No—where?” Betty looked up wonderingly. It was pleasant to have Jack rather friendly, but the memory of that experience at his birthday party and of her necessary frankness to him about it later was not a happy one. And for him it had doubtless been more annoying. Well, she couldn’t help it.

“I was with a party at an inn on a little Maine lake. We were just leaving when you drove up. I knew some of your girls, but only the Dorrances and Larry Waite of the boys.”

“Oh—yes—I remember. But I didn’t see you at all. Of course I wasn’t looking for any one that I knew. I didn’t look at you and not speak, did I?”

“No. One of the boys was out and snapping a picture of you all in the car.”

“Oh, that was Archie Penrose! Funniest thing—we met the Penroses on the way East. I was with the Gwynnes, motoring. We all got acquainted, of course, and they said they were thinking of moving here. Then we were together in a lot of fun in Maine; Kathryn and I motored to Boston with them, and I never knew at

all that Mr. Penrose was considering going into the same firm my father's in, not until I was home and Father asked me 'who are these Penroses you talk about? There's a man by that name in the firm now!'"

"Probably Penrose was undecided and not talking about it," Jack suggested.

"That was it—so Father supposed. And Father was awfully busy in New York, too full of his own affairs to listen to my babblings. And probably I didn't babble to him much, either."

Betty was babbling now and knew it. She had always tried to be as friendly to Jack in public as would ordinarily be natural.

Some thought of the sort seemed to occur to Jack. All at once he bent toward her and said, "You're a peach, Betty Lee. I've forgiven you." He said it with a laugh and turned to speak to the boy standing on his other side.

Betty sighed with relief and turned to Carolyn; but a hush fell over the assembly and all eyes were on the principal and the flag.

Busy, pushing hours followed. After all, there was something good about being at work. You were getting somewhere and there wasn't any time going to waste!

After school some of the girls were playing hockey and a number were at the tennis court. There, tired after games, a group of the reunited seniors were gathered. On a grassy elevation, heels dug into the slight incline, Betty, Carolyn and Mary Emma Howland were recovering breath from their last effort.

"One thing," Mary Emma was saying, "about playing hockey with seniors is that they know how to play by this time and you're not in danger of having some girl swing her stick over her head and give you a side swipe!"

That amused Carolyn Gwynne. "Did I ever hit you when I was a freshman, Mary Emma?"

“Never, Carolyn. *You* don’t get excited when you’re learning anything. Who beat at tennis?”

“Betty beat, you might know,” laughed Carolyn, looking at her recent opponent. “But I don’t care. I can play tennis all right and I occasionally beat even Betty.”

Betty was too pre-occupied just now to do more than give Carolyn a smiling look. The two girls understood each other.

Kathryn Allen now strolled up with Gwen Penrose and Betty hopped up, saying that she forgot to tell Gwen to save a certain date for “something doing.” And as Betty moved toward the girls, near at hand, Mary Emma said softly to Carolyn, “Remember, Carolyn, that we simply must have Betty as President of the G. A. A. this year. I’ve got to talk to you about it. Mathilde has something started already about it and there is another girl that would like to be it.”

“Mathilde! Why, she couldn’t do it any more than a—rabbit!”

“Mathilde has some following, Carolyn, and she is a sorority girl. I doubt if Mathilde could get it herself, but she might fix it up so Betty couldn’t divide the vote and—you know—get a ‘second best’ girl in to keep Betty out, even if she couldn’t get it for herself.”

“Does she dislike Betty that much?”

“She has always been jealous of her.”

“By the way, does anybody know whether Lucia Coletti is coming back or not? Betty hadn’t heard at last accounts.”

“Well, Betty would be the first one. I wish she would come back. She and Peggy Pollard have a good deal of influence with the sorority girls. I sometimes think Betty should have gone in. She had the chance, I know, with the Kappa Upsilon.”

Carolyn did not reply to this, and Betty was turning back with the girls, who selected a grassy seat and dropped down to join

their friends. “Can you realize it, girls?” queried Kathryn. “We’re actually seniors at last!”

“Let’s have a club,” suggested Betty. “I was thinking about that just before you and Gwen came up.”

“Another club?” asked Carolyn. “Seems to me Lyon High needs most anything more than any new organization.”

“I didn’t mean a big club. I mean a little club of our own, not a sorority and not exactly secret; but just to get together sometimes, for fun and to plan things if we want to.”

“A secret caucus!”

“That’s it, Kathryn,” laughed Betty, who had no such intention at all. “We could have it a hiking club or a swimming club or even a literary club—for collateral reading.”

“Now wouldn’t *that* be wonderful!” cried Carolyn, as sarcastically as generous Carolyn ever could manage. Betty giggled.

“Think of the time we’d save, reading together,” suggested Mary Emma, in pretended sincerity.

“No,” urged Betty, “but here we are together this year for the last, maybe. Carolyn’s going East to school, Mary Emma’s folks may move to California, I don’t know *what* I’m going to do, and anyhow we’ve this grand senior year together. Besides, what’s the matter with taking a book along if we go on a picnic together and having—*Carolyn*, who is so *so enthusiastic* about the literary idea—read us some famous poem, or whatever they give us this year? Somebody think up a name for it, though if you all don’t want it, I’m too lazy to urge it.”

“I think that the Hiking Hoodlums or some pretty name like that would be least revealing of our real object,” giggled Mary Emma.

“Lovely,” assented Betty. “We can consider that suggestion. By the way—I ought to get home before too late. I called up Mother at noon about something very important—a change in my schedule,

and she told me that a letter from Lucia had come and was ‘waiting for me!’ I hope it is to tell me that she’s coming back to Lyon High, don’t you!”

The assent was general and emphatic. “I was just talking to Carolyn about Lucia,” said Mary Emma. “Do call us all up and tell us the news after you have read it.”

“I will if I have time,” promised Betty. “Come on, seniors. Let’s make up a senior song of our own and sing it on the first hike of the Happy Hoodlums.”

“Oh, Betty!” cried Carolyn. “You wouldn’t really have such a name for a club, would you?”

“Unless you promise to read poetry to us,” threatened Betty.

“I don’t know which would be worse,” laughed Carolyn.

In high spirits the senior girls separated; but Mary Emma caught up with Betty before they left the grounds. “By the way, Betty,” said she, “wasn’t it terribly dramatic and wasn’t Ramon Balinsky simply *thrilled* to find out that his mother and sister were living?”

It was all Betty could do not to show her surprise and a certain dismay at this speech from Mary Emma. “Gwendolyn Penrose told me *all about it* this noon at lunch,” Mary Emma added.

“Why no, Mary Emma,” said Betty. “You would expect it to be dramatic, I know. But you see Ramon was so nearly dead when the boys told him, partly to rouse him, Ted said; and when he finally took it in, he was by himself, I suppose, though the boys would never make a big story of it anyhow. But you must be careful, Mary Emma, not to tell about it, because Ramon had to go after that man, he said, and they might worry if they knew. So we’re not telling his mother and sister yet, because he asked us not to.”

“I think that’s all nonsense,” said Mary Emma, “but I won’t tell anyhow. I promised Gwen I wouldn’t. And isn’t Gwen Penrose an addition to the class and our crowd! Everybody that meets her likes her so far.”

“Gwen is nice, Mary Emma, and you must meet her brothers. One is a real artist already. They’re just getting settled now. And what do you think? We may move, the first of the month to a whole house instead of an apartment. Father and Mother are looking, to decide now. It is a terrible undertaking, but it will be wonderful to have more room. If we do, I’m going to have a party first thing!”

But Betty wondered, on her way home, how in the world, with all the people knowing about it that did, “the facts were to be kept from Mrs. Sevilla and Ramona Rose.” That was what Ramon had called his sister, Betty remembered.

CHAPTER VIII—ONE OF THOSE A-D PARTIES

“It will probably not reach them very soon, Betty,” comfortably said Mrs. Lee when Betty expressed her concern over “the way Gwen was telling the girls” about Ramon. “Moreover, that is a risk that Ramon runs, not you, by his request and not sending them word himself. Other people can only try to be considerate. So far as I am concerned, I should prefer to know all about my children, to bear the trouble with them if necessary. Never keep anything from *me* with the idea of sparing me, Betty!”

“All right, Mamma. We’ll probably need you too badly to do any stunts of the sort!”

Betty was soon in the midst of Lucia Coletti’s letter, running excitedly to find her mother again after she had finished reading it. “Why, Mother, she *is* coming! Isn’t that great? And moreover she said that she might get here before the letter.

“See—it’s mailed at Milan. They were in Switzerland for the hot weather, but when they decided to have Lucia come to finish her senior year at Lyon High, she and her mother ‘ran down to Milan’ to their ‘palazzo’ for some things Lucia wanted and Lucia might just go right on and sail as soon as she was all packed up. It all depended on what reservations or accommodations or whatever you call it they could get on a steamer. That also made it uncertain what route she’s coming by, whether from Naples or Cherbourg or what. Here, read it Mother. It’s a short one. She has stacks of things to tell me, she says.”

Mrs. Lee smilingly read the brief letter, enclosed in a noticeable envelope, very elegant, Betty said, and having the “family crest” or some “Italian sign” on it. It amused Betty’s mother to hear her running comments as she read and she handed back the letter with the remark that Lucia had “not neglected to acquire some of the American vocabulary.”

“Certainly,” said senior Betty. “And she thinks about it when she writes to *me!*”

“I wonder what arrangements she will make here. I suppose she will stay at her uncle’s. If you like to invite her to be with you, Betty, part of the time or for any visit, we could manage it. We have just decided, your father and I, to take the house we looked at this afternoon. I’m almost sorry that it could not be the one out in the same suburb as the Gwynne’s your sake, or the one Mrs. Dorrance recommended, not very far from their fine place. But this seems suitable in every way. The only one of your friends that I know lives anywhere near is Marcella Waite—though our place is much more modest. Marcella is not in your class, of course, but I understand that she is to attend the university.”

“Yes, she is not to be away from her mother this year. And besides, Marcella does not want to leave the crowd that’s going to the university this year. Why, Mother, it does not matter about living near Carolyn. We see each other every day at school and at other times, too, though it would be convenient to be near. I am crazy to see the house. Did you just find it for the first or is it one you looked at?”

“Just discovered it. It is for sale, too, and after living in it a while to try it out, so to speak, we might buy it.”

“Oh, Mother! Then it wasn’t a mistake to come to the city?”

“Your father is doing very well now,” said Mrs. Lee with her customary reserved way of putting things.

This decision and the immediate prospect of change was even more exciting than the news from Lucia. Betty expected to call up her friends as she had almost promised, but not until more of her curiosity had been satisfied in regard to the new home. Would they sell the old home at Buxton? No, that was to be kept. It was well rented now. Would they have to have much new furniture? Very little. They would add good furniture as it seemed advisable.

“Our oldest things are the best, Betty, you know, the ‘antiques’ that Mrs. Dorrance admires so much. And I think I can persuade one of my friends in Buxton to let me have some that she has, at a fair price. I happened, too, to think of old Mrs. Buxton, for whose family the town was named—and she has no one to leave her things to—she has closed her house, I think, and has a tiny apartment in Columbus, with some one to take care of her.”

In great enthusiasm Betty called up Carolyn first. Good news was always shared first with her, though Kathryn was “a close second.”

“Yes, Lucia is actually coming! Isn’t that wonderful? I can scarcely wait to hear all about it,” said Betty at the telephone, outlining Lucia’s letter after this burst of rejoicing. “And we’re moving, and I haven’t yet seen the place! Mother and Father just found the house they want.”

Carolyn naturally wanted street and number and the conversation was so prolonged that some one who wanted the line impatiently took a receiver off and replaced it several times, till Betty realized the situation. “Somebody wants the line, Carolyn, so I’ll have to ring off. So long.”

After dinner that evening, Mr. Lee, who had a key to the recently rented house, drove his interested family around to it. Betty was secretly not particularly sorry to have the new home in the suburb that held the Waite home. She had always liked Marcella very much, even if she were not intimate and had not joined the sorority to which Marcella belonged. Then, to be sure, there was Larry! But Betty did not mention him when Doris on the way was saying that with Chet “so attentive to Betty” it would be better for him if they had taken “that house Mrs. Dorrance wanted us to have.” Doris had seen that.

“I fancy that if Chet wants to see me he will be able to find us,” demurely said Betty to Doris. “And, you know what pretty trees and big yards they have out near Marcella.”

Doris nodded assent and approval began to increase as Mr. Lee drove into a comparatively quiet street and drew up before an attractive place in the middle of the square or block. "We'll be more peaceful in the center of things," said he. "Our yard is wide and fairly deep and you see that pretty little wooded ravine at its end? There are *some* advantages about a city with hills. There is room enough for Amy Lou to slide down hill in winter, though the land does not all belong to this place. It is shared by the various owners."

It was fascinating to go into the house with its vacant and echoing rooms and halls. It was modern, comparatively new, and with enough bedrooms! Dick said that it would be pretty foxy to have a "real room" of his own instead of the "den." Doris and Betty could now have separate rooms and Amy Lou was to have a small room perhaps intended only as a dressing room. But she was happy over it. "What shall we do when Amy Lou grows up?" asked Doris, though executing a lively dance with Betty about the empty room that was to be hers.

"I think we need not worry about that," replied Mr. Lee. "From present indications I should say that if we keep both our older girls till that happens we shall do well."

"Father!" cried Betty, giving Doris a whirl and stopping the evolutions.

"I think I'd like Betty's room," soberly said Amy Lou, "when she marries Ch——"

But Betty had clapped a hand over that pretty and mischievous mouth of her small sister. "Amy Lou, your imagination works overtime!"

Amy Lou struggled, but laughed. "Doris says that the girl Kathryn calls 'Finny' and Jack Huxley got engaged this summer. Senior girls do!"

“Not if they have any sense,” said Betty, but her mother shook her head at her. “What, Mother—do *you* approve? Is the world coming to an end?”

“I do not approve for you, Betty, or Doris,” said Mrs. Lee, much amused by the whole incident, “but I should not say that it is out of place for *all* girls to marry early.”

“I shall remember that, Mrs. Lee,” said Doris, walking off with quite an air while Mr. Lee who had heard from the next room, came in to add his last contribution to the affair.

“See what you have done, Mother! But we’re going to have such a pretty home of it here that I defy any lad to carry off one of my girls for a while! Now come on into this other room for a moment, Mother, and tell me what furniture we need for it.”

“Silly!” Dick was saying to Doris. “Before *you* like anybody too much just let your old twin pick him out. I’m likely to know more than you do about the kids.”

Doris gave Dick a rather impertinent glance, then brightened, replying, “All right, provided you let me do the same for you!”

Betty, going into the upstairs room which would be hers, stood there alone, deciding where the furniture should be placed, but she thought of what Amy Lou had said. Amy Lou dashed after her to say that she thought Betty’s room was the best bedroom of all because it overlooked the ravine at the rear. “I meant it, Betty,” she said earnestly, “but you mustn’t think that I want it for—oh, the *longest* time!”

Betty stooped, took the pretty face between her palms and kissed it. “That is all right, Amy Lou! Just please don’t pick out whom I’m going to marry yet, will you?”

Eyes as blue as Betty’s looked up and a golden mop of almost as bright as Betty’s hair was shaken back. “Yes, of course. You might change your mind, mightn’t you?”

“And perhaps I’ve never made it up at all,” whispered Betty.

Amy Lou nodded and went away, satisfied that she had had a confidence from that big sister of hers. Chet needn't think Betty wondered where her sister had heard about "Finny." But if there were anything in the report she would soon hear at school.

Long they tarried in the empty house and about the yard. There were flowers and shrubs and some pretty trees, beside those of the ravine, with its thickets and the one long track or path to the bottom. "May I have a party right away?" asked Betty, looking around at the large front room whose hall was almost a part of it, and the room which Doris said should be a library widely opening behind it. Doris and Amy Lou immediately asked the same question, till Mrs. Lee suggested that they move in first.

"Yes," said she. "That is one pleasure for us in this roomy house. I plan some entertaining myself. You shall have your turn all of you, Dick, too."

It was dark when at last the Lees reached home; and Betty, though called by lessons to prepare, remembered one more responsibility and ran to call up Marcella Waite.

"Oh, but I'm glad to have found you in, Marcella. Why, they've made me chairman of the committee for the A-D party, Marcella, and I thought I'd better ask you what you did. I missed the party when I was a freshman myself and now that we give it, I ought to know a few details. I asked one of the teachers about it after assembly this morning, and she said, 'Oh, yes, one of those A-D parties,' with *such* a bored air that I thought I'd better ask somebody who might have a speck of enthusiasm. I suppose they do get tired of some things, though."

Betty could hear Marcella's low laugh. Then her friends briefly outlined the usual A-D program and wound up her remarks by saying that Larry would make a flying visit home before 'college began.' "I'll have him drive over for you and bring you over for dinner," said Marcella, "and then we can discuss A-D parties and other things. Will you come?"

“Will I? How soon does the university start, Marcella? All right. It will seem good to see Larry. What fun we all had this summer! 'Bye.”

CHAPTER IX—THE SENIORS ENTERTAIN

The A-D party was probably the first “official” senior duty, or pleasure, said Betty. It was the entertainment of the D class, or freshmen, by the A class, or seniors. By long custom it was celebrated at the beginning of the year and constituted a sort of initiation or adoption of the freshman class into Lyon High. There was nothing difficult about it and much that was sheer fun, including the refreshments. Oh, yes, it might be mentioned that it was confined entirely to the senior and freshman girls. No masculine member of the freshman class was ever asked to dress in more or less infantile fashion and so appear, at a party and even in some fashion that marked them, at least, during the day at school which preceded the party.

One morning, as Betty was getting her locker open, a shy, attractive little freshman girl came up to her. “Please, Miss—Betty Lee, are you too busy to tell me something?”

“Always ready to impart knowledge,” jokingly Betty replied, putting a book on the shelf of her locker and taking another out. “What can I do for you, Eileen? Did you get my invitation to the A-D party?”

“Yes—that’s it. Thank you so much for asking me to be your ‘little sister.’ I’ve felt better ever since to have a girl like you ask me.” The slight girl looked at Betty and continued.

“I thought I’d better ask you about it because I’ve heard so many things about what the freshman girls have to do, dressing up like babies and going around all day at school that way. And must we look *crazy*?”

“No,” laughed Betty, “just ‘cute,’ and while you are supposed to have some badge of childhood all day, you needn’t be dressed that way at classes. Bring whatever you are going to dress up in to school and put it in your locker. You have such nice hair—why

don't you have long curls and tie them with a ribbon. You would look *darling!*"

The rather worried face brightened. "Why, I used to have curls! I'll just do it, Betty Lee. Thanks awfully."

"You'll make a hit in classes," said Betty. "Excuse me, I'll have to run. See me again if you have any doubts about anything."

"That is Betty Lee," explained Eileen to the freshman girl she joined on leaving the vicinity of Betty's locker. "I just *adore* her! She's going to take me to the A-D party."

"Oh, I've seen her. She's a *very* prominent senior and wins swimming matches and everything."

It was a pity that Betty could not hear this sincere freshman tribute, but as it was she was likely to be spoiled enough, if Betty could be spoiled, before her senior year was over.

"Girls," Betty, chairman of the A-D entertainment committee, said that day after school, to an assembled few whom she had asked to stay, "there absolutely isn't time to get up a real play or anything we have to *learn*. How are we going to entertain the freshmen? Speak up, ladies, or else 'forever after,' and so forth."

"Are we supposed to be the 'cast?'" asked Mary Jane Andrews.

"You are."

"Then I speak for a pantomime."

This statement met with a general giggle from the seniors as well as some applause.

"What pantomime do you *know*, Mary Jane?" severely asked Betty, rapping for order and pretending to glare at Mary Jane.

"Well—I don't just think of one right now!"

"Why not give the Tragedy of the Lighthouse Keeper?" Selma Rardon suggested.

“Has that been given lately?”

“Not that I know of.”

“Who does know?”

“I know positively,” said Dotty Bradshaw, “what the seniors have done since we were freshmen ourselves. It’s always written up in the *Lyon Roar*, you know. What they did back in the ages doesn’t concern us, you know.”

“Is it as old as that?” asked Carolyn.

“I’m sure I don’t know how old it is, but the freshmen could stand it if they’ve heard it before—I mean, *seen* it. It’s all in the funny costumes and acting anyhow and with the present *cast* anything could be done.”

“Yes,” laughed Betty, “I’m afraid of that!”

At that the girls all claimed to be desperately offended and Kathryn said she was sure she could not act after such an implication.

“I take it all back. It was too good an opportunity to lose, Dotty. You are always getting things off on us. Well, now, shall we decide to take Selma’s suggestion? I’m just swamped with work and with Mary Jane and Mary Emma saying that they will see to ordering the refreshments and getting somebody to bring the ice-cream over to the gym, that is one load off. Now if we decide on this, one practice will be enough, just to know when to do what. Dotty, will you be director?”

“You don’t need a director, Betty. I’d rather be the villain. I have a lovely pirate costume of my brother’s.”

“Good. You’ll make a beautiful villain, then. Be sure your knife is made of pasteboard.”

“What else?” laughed Dotty.

“Do you think, Betty, that our freshman children ought to see such a pantomime?”

“We might change it, Carolyn, and have the lighthouse keeper only slightly injured and the villain caught. Carolyn, *you* be director!”

“All right. I’d rather do that than act in that dizzy thing.”

Plans were at last all made, parts assigned, the time for the one practice in the gym set. Betty knew that she could count on these girls and went off to the next thing on hand as school girls do, dismissing all immediate responsibility.

The freshmen naturally took the event more seriously than their senior entertainers, for they were the ones who had to make themselves conspicuous all day at school. They blossomed forth in childish arrangement of hair as far as possible, if it were nothing more than wearing a hair ribbon, and that whether the children of the period wore hair ribbons or not. Bibs or wide collars were the order of the day. Sashes decorated otherwise ordinary dresses, though lockers were full of childish outfits.

As the freshmen girls much outnumbered the seniors, it was necessary for a senior girl to escort more than one freshman. And to the relief of the freshmen, they remained in the home room until called for, each senior doing her best to make her freshmen girls feel at ease and happy over the fun.

“We might call it a ‘tea dance,’” said Betty, as she escorted her two freshmen over to the girls’ gymnasium. “First we’ll have a bit of a program, a sort of welcome to the freshmen. Then there will be a silly little play; and then we’ll dance, and have refreshments. It’s easy gym dancing, you know. You look just lovely, girls! How in the world did I happen to pick two long-haired freshmen?”

Betty’s “baby sisters” did happen to have a taking arrangement of their hair. Eileen had long black curls, caught back at the proper places by ribbons, and the other, known as Ann, wore her hair in two tight brown braids. Although her hair was drawn straight back from her face, oddly enough the effect was becoming.

The first event was announced as the “Freshman Initiation” and little “ohs,” and “oh dear, how awful!” ran through the assembled freshmen. But the initiation turned out to be only a “Baby Parade” in which the freshmen marched in time to music and rather enjoyed showing off themselves and their funny costumes. There was also a ridiculous pledge read by one of the senior girls with great sobriety, hard to maintain amid the giggles and occasional shrieks of laughter from the freshmen who listened. All the ridiculous things that Dotty Bradshaw could think of were included in this freshman pledge, such as sweeping curtsies to the senior girls whenever they met them in the halls or on the street. But by some “oversight,” as Betty announced later, Dotty forgot to have the pledge passed to be signed.

Whether or not any of the freshmen had seen or taken part in a “Tragedy of the Lighthouse Keeper” did not appear to matter, for they laughed as heartily as could be desired. First appeared Selma as the lighthouse keeper, wearing a long coat and an ancient vest over her own dress. True, her pretty silk hose and low shoes looked a bit incongruous, but Betty had announced that imagination had a good deal to do with this pantomime.

The lighthouse keeper picked up his lantern and began to go around before the audience in large circles, gradually narrowing. His steps began to grow slower as he was supposed to ascend the circular stair to the light. And now, what was that figure that stealthily entered the outer circles, crept round and round and within the narrower circles gradually approaching the lighthouse keeper? Dotty, in full pirate costume, velvet knee breeches, sash and large pasteboard knife, painted red, was received with shrieks of delight, though Eileen said to Ann that it almost made her nervous to see them going round and round.

But every one’s imagination could picture the ascending circular stairs to the top of the lighthouse. Presently the dramatic moment came; the pirate pounced, and the lighthouse keeper lay stretched in the middle of the inner circles. Round and round, down the

imaginary stairs, ran the pirate, with comical and shifty glances here and there and glaring eyes turned upon the audience—such expression as only Dotty could give. The pirate disappeared, presumably having satisfied a revenge “or something.”

Next came three happy children, hand in hand at first. These were the two Marys, Mary Emma Howland and Mary Jane Andrews, with Kathryn Allen, all dressed in extreme childish costume. They danced and cavorted before the audience and finally started upon the circles. Naturally, after climbing, with the usual change of gait as they rose higher and higher, they came upon the tragic figure of their father. With silent grief and much expressive action, the children performed their part, rapidly going “down” the circles once more.

More action. Another senior girl appeared, dressed in a disreputable old house dress. She hears the news, rather sees it in pantomime and starts up the stairs. Tragic action again. Down from the dizzy height in dizzy circles, whirling in her haste. The telephone, the doctor with his case, the ascent. Gwen Penrose made a good doctor and had great difficulty, puffing and panting, in making the “ascent.” Between them the wife and the doctor had to carry down the lighthouse keeper, the most difficult feat of all, and one which, shocking to relate, aroused neither sympathy nor sorrow in their audience. It was too ridiculous. And with this the pantomime suddenly ended, as it is supposed to end, though one freshman in front said, “Well, what next? How does it turn out?”

But Gwen, whisking off her cotton wrapper because it was too hot, overheard and laughingly replied, “It doesn’t turn out at all. That’s the end and the rest is left to the imagination.”

They were just serving the sandwiches when some one came, to stand in the door of the gym and look in. There was a rustle among those near the door and Betty Lee almost dropped the plate she was passing when she looked to see an easily poised, well-dressed figure in the door and recognized the black eyes and smiling face of—Lucia Coletti!

“Lucia!” cried several of the girls and in a moment Lucia was surrounded.

“I heard that you seniors were up to something, so we drove around and I came over here,” Lucia explained, to answer the “who, where and what” expressed and unexpressed by her friends. Then Betty insisted that she must meet all of the freshmen and clapped her hands for order. “I want you all to know one of our finest senior girls, Lucia Coletti, from Milan, Italy. Don’t forget how to pronounce her name, Loo-*shee*-a! And that you may appreciate your school all the more, let me tell you that her father and mother, Count and Countess Coletti, are letting her come to finish her high school course here because she wants a Lyon High diploma! Let’s give her a Lyon High cheer!”

Even the experienced Lucia was almost overcome at this, as in feminine treble seniors, and freshmen cheered. “Lucia, rah! Lucia, rah! Rah-rah—Lucia!”

“Oh, you Betty!” said Lucia, her face flushed; but she smiled at everybody and carried it off as best she could.

“Speech!” cried Dotty, her face full of mischief. “Speech! Speech!”

“All right,” said Lucia. “I might as well say something first as last, I suppose, Dotty. I am ever so glad to meet you freshmen and I am sorry that I could not get here in time for the whole entertainment. I almost wish I were a freshman, too, to have all the good times over again. Yes, I *do* want a Lyon High diploma, and besides that I have made friends here that I can never give up in my whole life. I am pretty well torn to pieces between loving my own country and this one, too, but I believe that one can have—opportunities and friends everywhere!”

This was quite a long speech for Lucia. “If I had thought I’d have to say anything, I probably wouldn’t have come; but I just stepped right into Lyon High atmosphere, didn’t I? and it seemed natural.” So she told Betty presently. Lucia’s bit of Italian accent

was a little more pronounced since having talked in her own tongue all summer, and it made quite an impression. She was new for most of the freshmen, but Eileen explained to Ann that she was Mr. Murchison's niece and that she had been in America with her mother "for some reason or other" at the Murchison place and had attended Lyon High till the Count came for them.

"I imagine that Betty Lee knows her terribly well, or she wouldn't have introduced her like that."

Meanwhile Lucia's special friends were making a fuss over her with which her father's title had nothing to do. Mathilde, to be sure, was assiduous in her attentions.

"You're here in time for ice-cream, Lucia," said Dotty. "Mary Emma, hurry a plate of it around. Lucia is almost melted, but I hope the ice-cream isn't."

"The ice-cream is just right, Dotty," firmly said Mary Emma and Lucia added, "Like every other senior attempt."

"Good for you, Lucia. You are always loyal. How does it seem to be a senior?"

"Glorious! It may seem better after I get my work made up, though. What do you think, Betty? Mother and Father came over, too, deciding at the last minute and they are going to take an 'all-American' tour this fall, be here for Christmas, go to Florida, sail for South America, come back to see me graduate and take me home. That is, all that is *planned*."

The Murchison chauffeur, who came back to the school for Lucia, took a full load of girls to their different homes. Betty was the last to be delivered and Lucia had whispered to her, in the retirement of the back seat, "It's just like one continuous honeymoon with them now, Betty, and I am the very happiest girl you ever knew. A lot of it is due to your good advice, Betty."

"Nonsense!" said Betty. "You would have seen what to do anyway."

“I’m not so sure.”

CHAPTER X—THE COVETED HONOR

Being President of the Girls' Athletic Association, or "G. A. A." would be no light undertaking; but there was not a girl of those particularly interested in some athletic line who would not consider it a great honor to be chosen for the post. At times some girl would be openly "out for it." Others waited to be suggested by their friends.

This year the election of a president was likely to be accompanied by some "lobbying." Betty Lee was not the only outstanding girl in the association, and then there were a few who would have been quite willing to accept the honor while not likely to offer their best service. Of these the most noticeable was Mathilde Finn, always desiring first place, of a certain ability, but selfish and unstable.

In her heart Betty Lee knew that she would be happy to have her friends elect her. She had plans for the G. A. A., yet she was modest enough to concede that at least two other girls might do as well for the association. Then it would be a relief not to carry such responsibility, to have only her regular work with what she wanted to "get in" this last senior year.

To Betty the swimming, as usual, was of first importance, and all the more so since her summer with its opportunities at the shore and at camp, where her prowess made quite an impression. She was pleased to think that both Dick and Doris were now excelling in that line, too.

Riding was a comparatively new ambition. At least she could "stick on" a horse as she had on her grandmother's farm and more recently at camp. But she was meaning to ride properly by the end of this year, and her intention was strengthened, it must be said, by Larry Waite's having suggested that they must ride together "next summer." Lucia, also was a fine horsewoman. If she ever did have the opportunity, as Lucia insisted, of a visit to her in Italy, she

would want to know how to manage a horse and how to ride with grace.

She could play all the games, but she preferred to do it as she liked and to keep off a regular class team this year. But perhaps she could not refuse altogether. They were after her to lead the team in field hockey. Basketball was taboo as last year, by parental request.

None of the girls' games ever became as professional as the boys' football and basketball with their inter-school games. Yet there was great effort and much rivalry between classes as well as a great deal of fun. If Betty *should* accept the probable opportunity of leading the team in hockey, the senior team should *beat*, she thought to herself!

To have her own room was going to be a great help in her lessons. With the school study halls and regular hours at home, she could handle her schedule of senior studies, for Betty was quick at her lessons. The new home would be nearer Lyon High, too, as it happened. Not so much time to be wasted on street cars. *Could* she keep up being in the orchestra, too? Oh, she *must* do that!

Most of these problems she talked over with Carolyn and Kathryn, for they, too, had their own problems. But they did not take them too seriously. It would all come along some way!

"I expect to be at school till four or five o'clock practicing something or other most days, Mother," she informed Mrs. Lee. "So don't worry. If I do get home it's so much gained. I imagine it's a good thing Chet's in the university now. There won't be anybody to dawdle around with between times."

Mrs. Lee did not look much impressed with this statement, for it was quite likely that there would be some one yet to take an interest in Betty Lee. "Most of your hikes and picnics will be on Saturday, I suppose," she suggested and Betty assented.

“We girls, the ‘Happy Hoodlums,’ or something like that,” she said, “are having a hike right away, and the G. A. A. is to have a big picnic again very soon.”

While the G. A. A. election was still to take place and discussions and suggestions and urgent appeals for candidates were rife, the almost greater excitement of the exodus and “*in-o-dus*,” a word of Dick’s coining, occurred. They all thought it “terrible” that it had to happen in school time, but Mrs. Lee, good manager that she was, told them not to get upset about it. She gave them cartons, in which they could pack the odds and ends and various treasures, and told them to be sure that they had the books they wanted in their lockers at school. “Now goodbye, kiddies mine,” she said on Friday morning. “When you come home this afternoon—come to the new address!”

“Gee, Mom—I bet I forget,” said Dick.

“It was wonderful,” Betty told the girls on the hiking club expedition Saturday afternoon. “We did walk on almost bare floors for several days, because Mother sent the big rugs to the cleaners; but there, we left everything almost as usual, and after a while regular spiffy movers came, and when we went after school to the new place, there were the big rugs all down and all our furniture and things in place and Mother, with a woman to help, arranging the ‘pots and pans!’ It was all newly decorated anyhow, and Mother had had a man and a woman get the new place ready first before the move. Then Father left the car for her and a lot of the best china and ornaments and things went over that way, though they could have gone by truck, of course.

“I’ve worked all morning, getting my books in my own little bookcase in my new room, and unpacking my trunk, and hanging my clothes in my own big closet. Oh, I’m crazy about it, and Mother says I may have the first party. You are all invited. I’ll have it after the G. A. A. picnic.”

Lucia, swinging the same alpenstock which had so interested Mathilde in times past, was an interested listener. "Betty," she said, "you can make the most uninteresting things sound funny! Now I should think moving would be the last thing on earth!"

"Oh, but it is such fun to fix things," cried Betty. "Mother and Father had the responsibility, of course, but Mother had plenty of help, so it could get done quickly, and I think she is just as excited as I am over it all. You see, Lucia, we may buy this place and have it for our very own."

"Well, that is different, I suppose," said Lucia, thinking of the old *palaszo* in Milan, that had belonged to the Coletti's for ages. But here in America they moved as casually as anything, first to this apartment, then to that, or some of their friends did!

It was due to Betty's morning at home that the hike had been put off till afternoon. In consequence they did not go far. On the banks of a little stream not far from a bus line which could take them home, they found a lovely spot for their little picnic supper. There they sat and told each other all about summer days, not forgetting great plans for their senior year. Kathryn was already the president of Lyon "Y" and made all the girls promise to do anything on a program they were asked to do.

"Just not too often, Gypsy," suggested Betty, "but I'll be at the meetings. We almost never have orchestra practice on that day and other things can be put off."

"I'll excuse you any time, Betty, for you're going to be president of something else," promptly returned Kathryn. "See if you aren't!"

Betty knew what Kathryn meant and would not pretend that she did not, but she smiled and shook her head. "It is a great uncertainty, Kathryn, and anyhow I'm not sure that I can do it."

"What do you mean, Betty?" hastily asked Mary Emma Howland. "You'll run, won't you if you are put up for G. A. A. president?"

“Yes, Mary Emma, and I think it is a compliment to have you girls want me to be it. But I hate it a little and I think that the result is very uncertain.”

“Oh, as far as that is concerned, you never can tell,” said Mary Emma. “We know that being Betty, you won’t work for yourself, but as for spreading ‘propaganda’——”

Mary Emma left her sentence unfinished to make a comical gesture, toward herself first, then including the entire group.

Lucia’s dark eyes sparkled. “Betty is the reliable head of anything,” said she, “besides being the prettiest swimmer in the school and having all sorts of honors to her credit. Where can I do the most good, Mary Emma?”

Mary Emma, delighted, clapped her hands. “Everywhere, Lucia, and particularly, I should say, with any new members among the freshmen. After that jolly speech of yours at the A-D party, Lucia, those nice little girls will lend an ear to anything you say.”

“Oh, girls, this sounds like—politics!” exclaimed Betty.

“Betty Lee, every one of us thinks that you will make the best G. A. A. president the school could possibly have. Why not show a little sense, then, and try to get you in?”

Betty was silenced more effectively by a large chocolate held to her lips by Mary Jane Andrews, and Gwen Penrose remarked, “I haven’t joined the G. A. A. yet. How do you do it? I forgot?”

“Mercy on me, Gwen,” cried Kathryn. “I forgot that you hadn’t seen to that. You can’t vote if you’re not a member! That will certainly have to be fixed at once. See me Monday, Gwen.”

Names like Happy Hoodlums, or Horrible H-Examples (suggested by Dotty Bradshaw) did not seem quite suitable for dignified seniors and were dismissed from their consideration. “We’ll be just a little G. A. A. hiking club, why not?” suggested Carolyn, to the satisfaction of everybody concerned.

Over this week-end Betty and Doris gloated over their respective rooms and arranged them to a least temporary satisfaction. It did seem so funny to take a different street car home, at times when some one did not give them a lift in a “real car.”

“I need pictures,” said Betty, looking at her walls; and as if in answer to her wish, there was a ring at the bell Sunday afternoon, late, and Mrs. Lee came to the foot of the stairs to call Betty.

“Lucia is here, Betty. Shall I tell her to come up?”

“Oh, please, Mother,” but Betty came halfway down the stairs to meet her friend.

Lucia was carrying a rectangular package and straightway handed it to Betty. “This is a contribution to your new room, Betty,” said she with a smile. “I thought about it this morning in church. It is only a print, Betty, in color, such as they sell at the galleries in Milan, but I had it framed for myself, to make me think of home, last year, and never put it up. It is Leonardo Da Vinci’s Last Supper, you know, from the fresco on the refectory wall in Milan. If you would like it, I have a pretty Madonna that I can have framed for you, too.”

“Oh, Lucia! Why it isn’t an hour ago that I was wishing I had just the right pictures! Thank you! I shall love it! But I can’t let you have anything more framed for me.”

“Why not? You will let me do something once in a while for my *very dearest* friend, won’t you?”

“Am I that, Lucia?” Betty asked, surprised and not a little touched. As they talked they were unwrapping the picture, but paused a moment.

“You are indeed, Betty,” earnestly said Lucia. “I can’t tell you how much you mean to me, though it didn’t look like it, did it? the way I didn’t write to you this summer!”

Lucia laughed and the sentimental moment passed, rather to the relief of both, though Lucia had intended to say that to Betty.

“I wish I knew all that you do, Lucia, about the wonderful old paintings and sculpture and everything,” sighed Betty, looking with pleasure on the appropriately framed reproduction of the famous work of art.

“Come home with me for our Sunday supper, Betty, and we’ll look through such things as I have with me and have a good talk. You can pick out your own Madonna!”

After selecting the proper spot upon which Betty would hang her gift, where the light would properly fall upon it, the two girls went down stairs to visit with the rest of the family a few moments and arrange for Betty’s carrying off.

“I had to see your new place, Mrs. Lee,” said Lucia, “and find my way to it. Doris, the next time Betty comes to dinner with me you must come, too. I haven’t realized that Betty’s sister was so grown up! My new auntie is very pleasant about telling me that I may have my friends, so I must begin.”

Betty had not had a glimpse of the Murchison home since she came back to the city after the summer’s trips. She would not have thought of it, of course, till after Lucia’s arrival. Now she met the very charming lady who was Mr. Murchison’s second wife and had a quiet visit with Lucia in her own room. They looked at pictures and Betty took the opportunity to tell Lucia all about Ramon’s recent experience.

“I thought you’d better know all about it, Lucia,” said she. “Imagine being an *assistant* ‘unbeknownst’ to that sort of men! But he found out what they were really doing, of course, and planned to run away. Then that man got him! Maybe he would have been killed if the boys hadn’t found him! I hope it isn’t going to be hard for you not to tell Mrs. Sevilla and Rose. Anyhow, I thought I’d better tell you.”

“I’m used to keeping secrets, Betty,” returned Lucia. “It is just as well not to stir up poor old Mrs. Sevilla, though it’s odd—she

does not seem so old now that she is comfortable. She is learning English, too. Could I tell Rose, do you think, if it seemed best?"

"Really, Lucia, *I* should think so. But that was Ramon's request, that they should not hear about all this and get all worried about where he was and what they were doing to him."

"I see," thoughtfully said Lucia.

The day of the G. A. A. "presidential election" arrived. Mathilde knew that she was out of the running, but she concentrated her efforts on one of Betty Lee's two opponents, fine girls, both of them. Much pressure had been brought to bear by different groups and the meeting was a full one with old and new members present. The new members were particularly open to influence, but Betty's friends had not been idle.

"I don't believe I'll come at all," declared Betty, "and I simply won't vote for myself!"

"All right, stay away, then," laughed Mary Emma. "I've just got three new members of the freshmen and they're all going to vote for you!"

"Maybe I'll not be even nominated."

"Maybe you will. I'm on the nominating committee myself and I know who's going to be presented. There may be even more candidates than we have simply had to put up because of the requests; but there certainly won't be less. We make our report and then I understand that opportunity will be given for more names to be presented if anybody wants them."

"H'm," said Betty. "Well, it isn't the only thing on earth. I'll come and not vote at all. To tell the truth, girls, I hate to beat anybody that wants it, and I hate to think that anybody has had to be asked to vote for me!"

"Elizabeth Virginia Lee, all that your friends have done is to call attention to your superior qualities as a leader and also performer

in athletics. If you go in as our president it will be a mere tribute to your worth.” Mary Emma was laughing but she meant what she said.

Possibly the fact that Betty had recently been selected to be captain of the hockey team had something to do with it, but when the vote was taken Betty was elected. Her majority was not so much over the vote given to the other girls by their friends that it made her any enemies; and both of the other candidates came straight to her to tell her that they thought she was the one to have the office. Betty begged them to help her and said that she felt “aghast” at the prospect, which was true. But perhaps the incident that made her happiest among the congratulations was when one of the athletic directors came up to her in the hall.

“I am glad that the G. A. A. has chosen you, Betty Lee, for you are not only good in every sort of athletics you undertake but you have a sense of responsibility and carry out what you undertake. If you want any help, or suggestions, let me know. We shall have to call you into consultation about some features, you know. The election should have been last spring, you know.”

It was pleasant to have the faculty with her, Betty thought. She wondered if it were really true that she carried responsibility well. To tell the truth she had been planning to—or thinking that she must—neglect some things in order to carry out what she liked best. She would try to live up to what they thought of her, anyhow, and do the best she could.

CHAPTER XI—AN INTIMATE VIEW FOR JANET

“I shall have to begin with apologies again,” commenced Betty Lee’s letter to her earliest chum, with whom she still carried on the fitful correspondence. “But one good thing is that you know how it is yourself. And the longer you wait to get at writing the more likely you are to put it off, since there keep coming more things to tell.

“However, I’ve had a letter in mind for ages and I’m going to tell you EVERYTHING and answer all your questions. So this may string out for PAGES. Be PREPARED. As you see, I’m using Father’s typewriter and I’m learning to use it fairly well now. Shi\$ i\$ the way I began @nd 8 though*t it w@S greAT Fun. amy LOU¢Who i\$ allowed to 5ry if She is very c@reful¢had a g@me wi5h me to \$EE if we cou#d re@d eaCH Others writing. I hope you get it!

“By the way, don’t start in reading this to Sue, if I’m going to tell you EVERYTHING as of yore, since All that I shall say will not be for publication. Do you remember how in our notes to each other we printed in capitals the words we desired emphasized? What good times we used to have! Well, we have good times now, only different, and I wish I could see you oftener.

“I’m thinking right now that it’s a real consolation to have somebody who knows you of old, somebody that you grew up with. No matter how wildly I RAVE ON, you will understand, I rather think, and will not be too critical—supplying a grain of salt here, if I’m extravagant in my remarks, and a bit of imagination there, when I give you a hint! Now don’t think that any dark secret is to be revealed, but I’m sure that you will *instinctively* know what I am confiding just to you.

“I wrote you after we moved, I’m sure, and told you how much we like the house. For fear I omitted something I’ll just say that it is a brick colonial, with a pretty approach and entrance, shrubbery

and trees and flower beds and vines that will look wonderful again after winter is over. I've had one party in the big rooms downstairs and Mother has had a few teas and friends in to dinner. She likes to entertain in small numbers best, to visit.

“Doris had her party, too, and I thought I'd perish with mirth when I overheard Dick tell his best chum, as they clattered down from Dick's room one day, that he 'thought he'd sling a stag party pretty soon.' He 'slung' it and we all pitched in to make the boys have a good time with especially good things to eat. But the twins want to entertain together, for the most part and most of their friends are in their class—sophomores, now!

“Best of all, Father is pretty sure that he will buy the place, and then we *shall* feel settled. It depends, naturally, on when the necessary SPONDULICS are at hand and Father does not speak of that. But it is pleasant to have a nice home, and though we'll never try to live up the the MURCHISON MILLIONS, we are glad to have a whole house to ourselves, with plenty of room to spread out and somebody to help Mother. We girls still do little things and are supposed to take care of our own mending, etc.; but Mother gives us our time for lessons and other things and I'm sometimes in such a rush that I wish I had a maid, like Lucia, to pick up after me! Father does not seem to think that I am PERMANENT here and teases me a little sometimes. But more of that anon. You know how he is!

“Now to give you a bird's eye view of what I am doing. First and foremost, I'm trying to run the G. A. A. The girls usually elect the spring before but it was put off and put off until it was not done at all. So several of us were nominated and I was elected, and although I was pleased with the honor my heart almost sank at the JOB! Still, it hasn't been so bad because our class has always been greatly interested in athletics and I can head almost any committee with a capable senior girl and leave it to her to carry things out. We've had membership campaigns and pep squads and the usual

games and contests. I must remember to send you copies of the *Roar*, from time to time. Sometimes the write-up is real cute.

“It would take me a week to write you about all the doings, from home room elections and meetings, Girl Reserve programs—under Kathryn as president this year—to the exciting football games of the boys’ teams. Our school won the championship and the boys are working hard to make the basketball record as good.

“Our senior hockey team, of which I was the captain, WON! I certainly was glad of that! I’m not on the basketball team because the folks don’t want me to be, but I’m almost as interested. Both Carolyn Gwynne and Kathryn Allen are playing. ‘Finny’ could not get on this time. Gwen Penrose turned out to be a wonderful player and is captain! We ought to win the inter-class contests, which are already posted. We play each class, of course—I’ll scribble off the schedule and enclose it. The seniors begin the games, playing the sophomores on February eleventh. We have the usual crazy names for our teams.

“But what is most interesting of all to me is the annual mileage swim, or MARATHON, and I hope to have chevrons and points and so on. I’ve told you all about honors before. That is one reason for this letter. I am supposed to be resting after swimming ‘lengths.’ Then we seniors want the class championship, and so many of us are good swimmers, easy swimmers, that we stand a good chance of getting it. All that is going on now and the last copy of the *Roar* calls us the mermaids. Can you realize, Janet, that it is actually February now, and of our senior year? When you write, tell me everything about all of them in our old class in Buxton High now, and some of them dropped out, I know, and some I don’t know at all that have come in since I left.

“To go back a little, we had all the lovely Christmas season as usual, with the customary carolling and gift making and looking after our poor. I’m glad to think that now ‘Ramona Rose’ and her mother are happy as they can be before they have Ramon back, all cosy at the Murchison’s. The new Mrs. Murchison had been very

glad to have Rose, for there was a change of butler and everybody, almost, after the countess went away.

“I have seen a good deal of Lucia Coletti. She is more or less lonesome without her mother there, but both parents were here at Christmas time and now they are in South America. The count is a great traveler, but has his wife with him this time. Lucia is doing splendid work in her lessons and they are so proud of her!

“To tell the truth, I suppose the things we think about most are lessons, getting them and how to find time to get them! But I don’t know that they are the *main objects in life!* Wouldn’t you find it interesting to have me quote a page of Virgil, or give you extracts from my last English theme! After the Christmas parties we buckled down to work again, and we have recently survived the ‘mid years.’

“It certainly was hard to keep up my work the first semester, but I concentrated on the main things, and then it did help having Chet Dorrance and the other boys we know so well busy with their freshman work in the university! Well, some of them went away to school, too—other colleges. There wasn’t much social life till the holidays—a few parties and meeting each other at games and so on. I am still on the honor roll. I wouldn’t dare drop down from that, or Father would have me drop some other things. Anyhow, there is only one way for me to study and that is to *get* the work. We still have Latin and Math and other clubs, but the meetings for the most part are in the class period, so that isn’t so bad. They are interesting, too. I shudder to think how many of my different activities will be listed in our year book that will be published the end of the year. I’m on that staff, too, but I haven’t much to do yet. A teacher has it in charge, for it is too important to trust it altogether to our ignorance!

“But oh, Janet, we are growing up! Yes, the report was true about Mathilde and Jack Huxley. Mathilde wears a big diamond and they are always together. Mathilde is very snippy to me, a little more so than ever, and I can’t imagine why, unless it is because Jack

started out by being quite attentive to me last year, for just a little while, you know. I gave you a hint of that affair—which you must not *breathe* to any one—ever! Mathilde and Jack are both a little older than the average of our class and the latest is that they are to be married soon after they graduate, with a big wedding, and go abroad for their wedding trip. Jack has only part work with us this year and is doing something at the university, too. But he told me himself that he did not want ‘any more school.’

“You ask me about ‘love affairs,’ but I gasped when I read what you wrote about Jo’s being so attentive. Was it to prepare me? ‘Janet and Jo,’ I said to myself. I haven’t seen Jo for so long that I probably would not know him. If he is going so far away he will probably want a pledge from you before he leaves. It looks like a good opportunity for him. I couldn’t tell from what you wrote just how you felt about it yourself. If this keeps on you will have to decide whether you want to be engaged or not and whether you like Jo enough. As I read your letter, I could remember the row of heads in the family pew in church, toward the front, and Jo’s was the highest up, among the three Clark boys. He was ‘one of the big boys’ to me after we began to go to school.

“And now telling you ‘EVERYTHING’ doesn’t seem to be so much, after re-reading your letter again and thinking about how little I really have to tell. I was in what Mother calls an ‘expansive’ mood when I began this letter and as it’s been written in ‘hitches’ it seems to be more or less of a boiled down record of what has happened. And on second thoughts it seems silly to write down some things, that I should probably blather about if I saw you. You will probably like to hear about the boys that I wrote of last summer in my long letter from Maine. Chet was pretty nice. I do like him ever so much, Janet, but he knows that I’ll not stand for anything sentimental, at least yet, and all he does is to take as many dates as he has time for and, I imagine, keep an eye on me. I don’t really *know*, Janet, that Chet himself thinks of any *permanent arrangement* between us. I’d be very conceited, I think, to suppose

that any boy is very much in earnest when he hasn't said so—yet Chet has been a friend for so long that there may be a little excuse for being on guard to ward off anything else. I certainly haven't the least idea how to handle it, if it needs handling at all—for Chet is going clear through college somewhere.

“Father says to me, ‘Please, daughter, no high school engagement.’ I suppose I agree with him that his ideas are always sensible. Probably I *am* too young to know how to choose a ‘life partner.’ Still, he and Mother weren't awfully old. They can't say *much*. And if a *certain person* should ask me—well, it might be a little hard to refuse! I'm ‘going on’ eighteen, after all. Father says, if I want to go, he will give me a year in a girls' college somewhere. But that takes a long time to arrange ahead, so I think it will be the ‘home town’ university at first.

“Oh, yes, I started in to tell you about the boys. No, I can't tell who that ‘certain person’ is. Besides, I might change my mind. Ted, the boy that impressed me so when I first came to the city, is still a dear but does not figure in my dreams any more at all. He is just as fine a boy as could be, but he likes too many girls and I have to be the one and only! I think that Chet is less—temperamental, as they say. But nobody can help loving Ted.

“Larry Waite, about whom I've told you a little at different times, is very much of a gentleman, adores the water, just as I do and seemed to find me a congenial spirit this summer. That doesn't mean a thing, however. I had one little note from him after I came home and perhaps I'll have a valentine from him and from Chet on Valentine's day, coming so soon now. He is Marcella's brother, you remember, but isn't home much because he has been East to school. But like me, he will be graduated this June and I don't know what he is to do after that. We didn't talk about it last summer.

“Arthur Penrose is in art school and writes to me once in a while. Chet didn't like it much when I showed him a letter from Arthur, so I never showed him any more! The Penroses live here, you know,

so it's perfectly natural for us girls to see Archie and Arthur once in a while. Gwen we see every school day and some more!

“I shall have to hurry this up, though I'm not half through. Yet it's a *book* already! I'll try not to be so long again in getting to a letter. Yes—we have a Valentine Party—well, I'll write you a card at least after that is over. I want to mail this tomorrow morning on the way to school, or give it to Father to mail for me, and Mother says I *positively* must go to bed now!

“Please tell me if anything has happened in your young life and I will do better next time.”

With the usual affectionate close, Betty finished her closely scribbled sheets and put them in an envelope. It was something to have gotten off so long a letter in the intervals of one afternoon and evening.

CHAPTER XII—VALENTINES

“Marcella specializes in costume parties, doesn’t she!” brightly asked Peggy Pollard of Betty Lee as they fell in together going to gym. “Do you remember that first party we went to there, when we were sophomores, wasn’t it? That Hallowe’en party?”

Did Betty remember that? Well, rather! But Betty merely said “’M-h’m—nice, wasn’t it?”

“Yes. Marcella is an awfully capable girl. People at the university are taking notice of her, they say, even if she is only a freshman. I’m glad I was in the same sorority with her. She’s gone right into one of the best now in the university.”

“And I’m glad that for some unheard of reason Marcella’s been a friend of mine. Besides, she is inviting all of us that were up in Maine with her last summer. Dear me—it all seems too long ago now, and yet how this year has simply flown!”

“More than half over, Betty, and we’ll have our little diplomas before we know it.”

“Yes, but don’t forget that we’ve a few things more to do before we earn ’em!”

“Don’t bring up anything disagreeable, Betty,” laughed Peggy. “But there are lots of good times ahead, too. And we’re going to win the basketball class contest or know the reason why!”

Betty nodded affirmatively.

“The team work between Carolyn and Kathryn is simply marvelous. Have you been to any of the practice games recently?”

“No, I haven’t. I’ve been too busy even to play a game of anything myself. But you must remember that the sophomore team is especially good. They were fine as freshmen last year. I hope our girls realize that. I haven’t more than just seen Carolyn and Kathryn for a week! The sophs are better than the juniors, I think.”

“How’s the old swimming coming on?”

“All right. I think I’ll be one of those that get chevrons.”

“‘Think!’ You will probably be ahead of them all in number of lengths, provided you want to be. When do the senior Red Cross tests come on?”

“The last of next month or the first of April. O joy! We’ll soon be riding again over the old bridle paths! Peggy, you ought to have gone into it last fall.”

“Not me. Too many other things. If I ever want to learn to ride, there is time yet.”

“The younger the better. Doris wants to begin next year.”

“By the way, that little sister of yours has grown up all at once.”

“Hasn’t she! And Doris is making her own mark—says she; isn’t going to be known as ‘Betty Lee’s sister!’ She is going in for swimming, too, for we’re all like frogs for the water; but she is choosing her own activities and has the benefit of all my mistakes to warn her.”

“You never made any mistakes, Betty Lee.”

“What nonsense! But you *mean* well, Peggy.”

With smiles the girls parted, Betty to go to the pool and Peggy to swing and exercise with the general equipment. Rosy and invigorated after her swim and shower, Betty reached home at last to find everything in an atmosphere of valentines. Doris had stopped to purchase a dozen or more and called Betty into her room to see them. She was addressing envelopes at her desk, a cherished acquisition of Christmas time.

“Aren’t these pretty ones, Betty? I don’t think I’ll send any comics, unless some pretty respectable ones to a few of the girls. I almost got one for you, Betty—a real cute and crazy one of a girl, with a violin, that thought she could play. But the verse wasn’t very smart. I could have made up a better one myself.”

“Hum,” said Betty. “This is Betty Lee—who thinks that she can play.”

“But she may find out better,” suggested Doris, and Betty finished it with, “At no far distant day.”

“Let’s write a book of ‘pomes,’ Betty,” laughed Doris, “like Alice and Phoebe Gary.”

“Great! You write the first few; and we’d better let Dick in on it, too, for some way I don’t feel the poetic urge just now.”

“What’s that about the poetic urge?” asked Dick Lee, appearing at Doris’ open door. “May I come in? Gee, it’s nice and warm in here. The wind’s blowing in the direction of my room and we’re having some snow—ha-ha! Won’t it be great if we have skating again? No February thaw for me!”

Dick had his hands full of papers and asked if the girls wanted to see a work of art. Naturally they did, though Doris did remark that it depended on whose work of art it was.

“Here’s the best one,” said Dick, laying out on the desk a large sheet of paper. “It’s only the design, you understand, girls. This is to be worked out in color—perhaps.”

“Say—this is cute, Dick!” exclaimed Doris. “Why, it’s all right as a pen and ink drawing. Why color it?”

Betty was laughing as she read. “I hope this is to an intimate friend,” said she.

“It is, all right,” replied Dick. “It’s for Buster and he’ll know who sent it, believe me. He knows my artistic style and we have a big joke about his Cicero. He hates it and if he ever gets through in Latin it will be with a couple of summer schools!”

Scallops and various marks around this picture of a valentine indicated that Dick might cut it out in fanciful form. In the middle of the top, above the verse which Dick had composed, was the drawing of an ink bottle and pen, with various blots, here and there.

At the right hand corner an arrow, marked *Sagitta*, pointed toward the poetic lines. On the left, in the corner was a good drawing of a book, large enough to bear the small inscription, two words, one below the other, "*Cicero Interlinear*." An array of small arrows pointed to the book, from the expression, "*Liber Malus et Noxius!*"

Below the verses was a comical picture, in bare outline, of a boy bending over a book, while a candle shed very definite rays around, though the inscription read "Burning the Midnight Oil."

Other sketchy decorations showed "Bustum" tearing his hair, very crinkly pen-strokes, with "*Horribile dictu*" and original principal parts, long and short vowels carefully marked: "*Hate-o, play-ere, fail-i, flunkum*."

The verses Doris read out loud, while Dick grinned and looked uneasy. "There's nothing to 'em," said he.

"If you're so dumb, this valentine
I send in vain; but heed it,
Unless for years you want to stay,
Translating—work, and beat it!"

Betty laughed and pointed out where a change of punctuation was advisable. "What's your '*Factum Romae*' that you sign it?"

"Made in Rome. Now you *are* dumb, Betty. Locative for Rome, and I thought I'd better use the neuter singular—don't know what 'Valentine' would be."

"I see. *Hoc Romae factum est*, as it were."

"Ye-ah. I'd have put in more Latin, but it would give Bustum a pain and he wouldn't take the trouble to translate it. I hope he realizes the trouble I'm taking."

"That's an idea, Dick," said his twin. "I think I'll fix up something like it myself. Do you care?"

"Nup, only I'd rather Bustum got his first."

“All right. I’m not going to send very many through the mail anyhow—mostly leave them on the desks or get somebody else to hand them out. It isn’t like the good old days in the grades!” Doris laughed over her own memories.

“Amy Lou is going through that now, and it’s lots of fun, Doris. Let’s see that she gets plenty through the mail, too. She’ll smell a mouse if valentines in the mail box haven’t any stamps on them.”

“Oh, I don’t know. Some of her friends might slip up and put them there.”

As Dick’s efforts had started them, the girls began to make up verses. Betty brought her pencil and paper for scribbling and hunted up some old materials for valentines that she had kept from former times. “We’ll get some at the ten cent store,” said Betty, “but if we can make a few pretty ones out of our old ones and this stuff, Amy Lou will like them and wonder who sent them.”

“Numbers of valentines have a lot to do with fun on Valentine’s day,” said Doris. “Let’s keep it going for Amy Lou—ring the bell and run, you know, and all that.”

It was a pretty thing for the two sisters to do for the younger one. Amy Lou might know about it some day, or she might not, but it was a pleasant mystery, and as Amy Lou was away, playing with two of her chums, there was no danger that the girls would be interrupted for a while. Pasting and finding envelopes would be done with remarkable speed by experienced hands. More time was spent over verses, for Amy Lou would recognize those taken from old valentines, whose laces and hearts and darts they were using. What matter if meter was lame? So was it in many of the valentines sold in the stores.

“My very heart I send to you,
For there’s nobody quite like Amy Lou!”

“O hearts and darts and pretty dove,
To Amy Lou take all my love.”

“Please welcome this heart and a Cupid;
If I didn’t like you I’d be stupid.”

“There’s a sweet little girl that St. Valentine knows
And he’s taking my heart in this letter.
Can you guess who she is?
Well, her name’s in plain sight
And if you can’t guess—you’d just better!”

With such couplets and longer poetic attempts, Doris and Betty prepared a number of suitable offerings for Amy Louise, hoping that she would be pleased. Doris locked them in her desk and both girls went to the window to stare at snow coming thickly down. Busy as they had been, they had not noticed except that it was growing dark. “Did you ever!” cried Doris. “Dick won’t get his skating, but we’ll have sleds out if this keeps up. Hurray for bobsleds!”

“We’ll have to feed that robin in the ravine, Doris,” remarked Betty, looking out, rather dreamily, however. “He seems to be the advance guard and he’ll certainly wish he’d stayed behind!”

But Betty went back to her own room thinking of other things. A savory smell from the roast cooking for dinner came up through open doors in the well heated house. Gloria, the present light-footed, capable colored help, had made one of her “gorgeous” chocolate cakes that afternoon, too. Life was pretty nice. But *could* it be possible that right in the middle of the term Larry Waite would come back for Marcella’s party, as he had before? Of course not! But then the unbelievable occasionally happened. It had happened at the Hallowe’en party. Larry had changed a little since then, but

when he laughed it was the same merry face that had looked over her shoulder into that mirror!

What costume *should* she wear for the Valentine party? Mother did not seem to have any ideas and had told the girls that she should think they were old enough and into enough things to have scads of ideas of their own. Mother had not said “scads,” of course. Mother had been into a lot of things herself lately, since she had been entertaining a little and had helped the new Mrs. Murchison who was a later comer than herself in the city. They had had a *grand* Washington’s Birthday party at the Murchison’s and Mother had received with Mrs. Murchison, in the most *adorable* costume. If only that were suitable for a Valentine party!—provided Mother would let her wear it.

Well, if the worst came to worst she could always use something old. She’d go up to the attic and see what she could rout out. Thank fortune, Mother had not made them throw away any such treasures when they moved.

Betty went up into their “nice new attic” and rummaged in trunks till Dick’s most stentorian tones finally reached her. “Coming, Dick,” she called.

“For pity’s sake, Betty, what have you been doing?” asked Dick, as Betty threw off the sweater which she had wisely donned before going into less well heated quarters. “Mother called and Father called, thinking that you were in your room, and Amy Lou ran up and came down scared, thinking something must have happened to you. Doris said you weren’t going out anywhere. Then I went up and thought of the attic and yelled.”

“You certainly yelled all right, Dick!” returned Betty, laughing. “I’ll make my apologies to Mother. I never heard anything at all!”

“Dreaming over old love letters, I suppose,” said Dick. “Isn’t that what girls are supposed to do in attics?”

“Old love letters, indeed! I don’t get any *now*, let alone having any old ones. How old do you think I am, Dick?”

“Seems to me it’s several years that certain persons of what Grandma calls the male persuasion have been coming around here, off and on.”

Betty said nothing to this, but made her apologies by asking the family to help her conjure up a proper costume for the important party, only two days off. “Tomorrow is the thirteenth,” said Betty, as if something of the utmost importance was approaching. Indeed it was, for not always did Betty get invited with the older boys and girls to a full party of them. But a healthy appetite and a fine dinner had great effect in making the present pleasant. The chocolate cake melted in the mouth and Father had stopped to bring ice cream to go with it.

Then, on the morrow—which became today—came the answer to Betty’s problem, through a valentine which came from—New Haven. The handwriting was disguised, Betty thought, at least it was not like that of the only two people who might have sent it to her. It was most likely to have come from Larry, and oddly enough, Betty felt disappointed, lovely as the valentine was. But its coming meant that he would not be here, of course.

Arthur Penrose was in Philadelphia now, but he sometimes visited Larry, with whom he had become quite good friends, and might *possibly* have been in New Haven. Matters of trains and distances and all that sort of thing were more or less hazy in Betty’s young mind. Anything could happen, and after all, couldn’t it? Arthur’s letters were only occasional now, but very friendly.

So she was in a pleasing state of uncertainty over the sender.

“It came on the morning mail, Betty,” said Mrs. Lee, who had noted the postmark and saw that Betty opened it first before several others from friends away from town. Valentines from friends in the city were likely to arrive on the day itself.

“Look at it, Mother,” said Betty at that, handing the large square of dainty white and colors and figures to Mrs. Lee. “I believe it is the prettiest one I ever saw. Look at that darling old-fashioned couple with Washington Birthday costumes, just beginning one of those square dances, and Cupid shooting darts straight at them!”

“He leads her out as if he likes her, doesn’t he?” said Mrs. Lee, “and the verse is good, though rather too much of a declaration. However, that it permitted on St. Valentine’s day. As your natural guardian, I am wondering *who* could have sent it!”

“Let’s see it, Betty,” suggested Doris, who with a lapful of her own valentines was sitting near. The girls had come home together from school.

Betty took the valentine from her mother to hand to Doris. “I think it a little hard,” said she, “to think that the family has to know all about these tender messages of love!”

“Well,” said Doris, “I’m not so sure but this one *does* mean something. Who knows whom Betty’s charms may not have smitten in the East this summer? Confess, Betty. Who’s in New Haven?”

“I told you, several. That’s enough, Doris. Turn about, you know—I’d love to see that big one of yours. And please hand mine back.”

“Just a minute, Betty. It is a peach of a valentine:

“My heart is yours,
And yet, dear me,
I keep old-fashioned
Courtesy.”

Doris properly read “courtesee” to make the rhyme. “I’m glad he’s properly respectful,” laughed Doris, handing Betty her valentine. “I’ll give you mine in a minute.”

Mrs. Lee's smiling eyes met Betty's for a moment, and Betty let hers fall with a toss of her golden head. "They'd *better* mind their manners," said she. "Oh, here's one from Janet, I know. It's her writing, and dear old Sue—and Auntie—and Grandma. How nice to have friends!"

"Betty," said Mrs. Lee, "your valentine has given me an idea. Why not go to the party as a valentine. Wear my colonial costume and paste this valentine to a bag, or your fan, and have some other cunning trappings that will be like valentines."

"Mother! You perfect dear! Do you mean that you will let me wear that splendiferous costume? Oh, but it would be just the thing and all my worries about fixing something would be over!"

"I may never want to wear the costume just as it is again," said Mrs. Lee, "and yet I may, so be careful. Doris may wear it sometime, too."

"I'll not be jealous, Mother," said Doris quickly. She had been sometimes jealous in the past but had wakened to the fact that her parents had no real favorites and that "her turn" came surprisingly often. The difference in age between herself and Betty was lessening, so far as it made so much difference in interests and pursuits and Betty's attitude was so generous as a rule that Doris would have been ashamed not to respond. The sisters were growing nearer this year.

"I will be just as careful as careful can be. Mother," Betty made reply, with great enthusiasm, "I think that you are the best mother I ever heard of, even! And speaking of ideas! I never even thought of it, looking with all my eyes at that valentine, too. Now let me skip off and think out the whole costume!"

CHAPTER XIII—HEARTS AND MASKS

Although the colonial costume, which Betty's mother permitted her to wear to the Valentine party, was new and in order, there was much else in decoration which concerned Betty and indeed the costume itself needed to be taken in a little to fit Betty's more slender figure. She rushed home, accordingly, on the thirteenth, to spend the rest of the afternoon and evening on her preparations. "I studied like mad, Mother, in study halls; and Carolyn, Kathryn and I cut lunch to get out our Latin together!"

"I am afraid you should not omit lunch, Betty."

"Oh, that was all right, Mother. We each had a chocolate bar and a cream puff and some peanuts, got 'em on the way to school, that is, I did. It was very obliging of St. Valentine to have his day this year toward the end of the week. Carolyn and Kathryn think that they will be valentines, too. Kathryn may dress as a 'comic,' though it depends somewhat on what costume she can get up the easiest. Carolyn has a lot of them that her sister has used at one time or another, and you know what nice ones they would be. O Mother, I think you are so lovely to let me wear this! You see, it isn't as if it were an ordinary children's party or just we girls dressing up as usual. I don't know, indeed, whom Marcella may not have."

"Well, come here and let me fit you, child. Allow me to remark that there isn't as much change as might be expected from the difference in our ages."

"O Mother, you are the youngest and best looking of us all! Ask Father."

"He might either be prejudiced or hesitate to tell the truth," laughed Mrs. Lee, and the fitting went on.

Another day of school was put through before the party. But it was St. Valentine's Day and lessons were in the background of thought, it must be said. There were delightful interludes of receiving and giving valentines, with little mysteries even more interesting now

than in childish days. And as the messages of St. Valentine might be regarded as carrying more romantic meaning now, the whole was more interesting.

One of the girls handed Betty a valentine which she was sure was from Mickey Carlin. He had probably bought it that morning and had not thought she would get it in time if he mailed it. Another, which she had taken from their mail box before she left home, also before the arrival of the mail man, bore in tiny letters on a corner inside the name *Andy*. Andy Sanford *was* a good friend of hers and had been ever since a certain freshman party at Betty's. The sentiment was somewhat sugary, Betty thought, but "anything goes on Valentine day," she said to Carolyn, to whom she showed all her valentines without reservation.

Carolyn laughed at the verse, which expressed undying devotion, and remarked that even if Chet and "others" had gone to the university, they still had a few nice senior boys to make life interesting! There were quite a number, in fact, in the large senior class; and common interests, with working things out together made good friends. The "others" might be supposed, from Carolyn's standpoint, to include Chauncey Allen, who had all at once become deeply interested in Carolyn during the latter part of his senior year.

But all other fun paled into insignificance at last in comparison with the evening's entertainment. Betty tucked away her valentines, to be looked over again at some other time. In some excitement she made ready, running back and forth between her own and her sister's room, for Doris, also was going to a party, though no costume was demanded.

"You look lovely, Betty," said Doris, "and *very* different"—then both girls laughed at the implication.

"No hint that you are not 'always beautiful,' understand! And your black silk mask is fetching—but they may know you by those dimples, and your mouth, of course."

“Oh, I don’t care,” said Betty. “I’ll do my best to ‘keep my identity hidden,’ the way the detective can always do in stories. But if they find out—after the first—let ’em. Besides other girls have dimples. What in the world did I have to have them for!” Betty was rather disgusted as she looked closely into the mirror and practiced on expressions.

As the gentlemen of the party were not to know the costumes of the ladies, the girls were either brought by their natural protectors, or sent for by Marcella, or arriving by taxi. Mr. Lee said that he would “martyr himself for the cause,” and tucked Betty’s colonial skirts inside of the family car with great assumption of concern. “May you be brought home as safely,” said he, letting her scramble out of the car as she would, when they reached the Waite home. “It’s not very far,” said she.

A few flakes of snow were falling, lit up by the electric lights everywhere. It was a lovely world that February night. Betty’s heart beat high as with several girls as excited as she, doubtless, she climbed the steps toward the hospitable door.

Not long after, she descended the stair into the wide hallway, almost a part of the drawing-room, full of gayly costumed young people by this time. It happened that no one was coming to enter with her, for the dressing room to which she had been shown was empty and the girls who were supposed to follow her had dashed into Marcella’s room with an exclamation over some picture there. They were Marcella’s friends, either from the university, or of the “sub-debs” who were not in school at all now. Marcella numbered some of these among her friends, girls who were waiting for their entrance into society.

So as Betty hesitated a moment, looking at the bright decorations, the space clear before her, she made a pretty picture.

Hearts were in evidence everywhere. A flying Cupid, with bow and arrow, was suspended by a wire in a corner prettily fitted up as a sort of shrine to St. Valentine. Flowers gave fragrance and the

spacious rooms were at a comfortable temperature. Marcella had spared no pains to make a pretty setting for her party.

She, too, was to be unknown till the unmasking. Accordingly, her mother and father and a visiting grandmother received the young guests and stood just within the limits of the drawing-room proper.

“Look at that sweet valentine standing there, wife,” said Mr. Waite, just aware of Betty and adjusting his glasses. “Who is she?”

“As I cannot lift her mask, I can not tell you, Lawrence,” returned Mrs. Waite, “but you are right. She looks as if she had just stepped out of an old-fashioned valentine. How cleverly that little lacy head-dress, with the heart in the middle of it, is arranged above her powdered hair! Larry ought to see her! Where is he, anyway?”

Betty glanced up the stairs, to see if the other girls were coming, but just at that moment, while the Waites were making their comments and Betty paused, St. Valentine himself in the person of one of Marcella’s friends, bethought himself of the duties which he had assumed to announce the guests. He detached himself from a little group which he had joined and came hurrying toward Betty.

His performance varied from the usual procedure; for he took her hand with a deep bow and led her to Mrs. Waite as he announced loudly, “Miss Valentine, a member of my own family!”

So led, with her quaint skirt and flowered silk overdress, a cascade of little pink hearts draped across her breast, Betty, like a pink rose from some old garden, went to give her hand in greeting. Very much grown up looked Betty in this costume, as her mother had regretfully told her. “But I *am* grown up,” Betty had replied.

She spread her fan a little, to act her part, and spoke in the formal manner of a polite stranger, though now, living only a few squares away, she had been here often and knew both Mr. and Mrs. Waite. Marcella’s mother was “a dear,” and Mr. Waite, slight, active, grey-haired, keen, was interesting.

“As you must be one of Marcella’s friends,” said Mr. Waite, extending his hand, “I shall dare to say that any lad here might be glad to see a valentine like this one coming his way. Don’t you agree with me, Mother?”

Marcella’s grandmother smiled assent and Betty made a sweeping curtsey to Mr. Waite as she turned to Marcella’s grandmother. She was afraid that they would recognize her voice, if she said too much.

“She does not want us to know who she is, of course; so don’t detain her, Father,” suggested Mrs. Waite. “I hope that you will enjoy yourself tonight. Marcella is somewhere about, but you will have to guess who she is. And she is the only one who will know you—for she, as you know, had to have a list of guests and characters to arrange the partners for the supper tables.”

In low but cordial tones, Betty finished her brief conversation with her host and hostesses and moved on to give her place to the other girls, who were now coming. A group of masked and costumed guests were right at hand and Betty joined them, to be greeted with gay laughter and compliment.

Meanwhile a conversation was going on, in the privacy of the library, in which Betty would have been interested.

“But I tell you, it simply can’t be done at this late date! It will just upset everything! I’ll have to change a lot of them all around. For mercy’s sake, why not see her all you want to all the rest of the evening? I’ll not tell the boys what character they’re to take out till the last minute. And there are the colonial dances for those dressed that way. Lucky so many of them dressed so—though I did ask some of my friends to do it.”

“Fat chance to talk in a square dance. My dear sister, have a heart! Why did I come all this distance to spend the week-end if not for the fun of saying some things masked that I can’t say without a mask?”

“I certainly don’t think much of that argument. I think I see myself listening to what a man hasn’t the nerve to tell me face to face!”

“You fail to understand, sweet chuck. It is less embarrassing and will lead up to what I intend to say ‘face to face.’ Moreover, I intend to say it in my own *character*, if behind a mask at first. Now, please! *Pretty* please! If there weren’t another in the running, and two or three of those nice kids, so far as I know, it wouldn’t make so much difference. Something Art Penrose said rather woke me up and I hired this costume, sent a valentine and took a train.”

“Then, honestly, are you in earnest where she is concerned?”

“I suppose I am, though it is a little early, perhaps, and I don’t know that I shall enter the waiting list. See?”

“Through a glass darkly! Still I have a lot of faith in you, too, and I’ll do it this *once*. But if you don’t tell me in time again, there’s going to be trouble in the family! Now come and help me with this list, if you think it so easy and will have your way!

“If you want my advice—faint heart ne’er won fair lady. She’s pretty mature in some ways and maybe, after all, you did well to come and see the situation yourself. You’d better write to her, too, and keep in touch until you both find out whether you’re as congenial as you think or not—or care enough for each other. I’ve admired more than one hero from afar and I ought to know.”

“Get over it, do they—the girls? Don’t think this one makes a hero of me, Sis, though our first meeting was a little romantic.”

“How was that?”

“I’m not telling.”

“I thought you saw her first at a party I had. You asked enough about her.”

“Did I? Well, you’re a sister worth having. Let me apply my keen intellect to that list of yours now. Seat us far away from that one fair youth that she was holding off, I judged, last summer.”

“Oh, it’s such a nuisance. I’ll have to change place cards and everything! Why do you always come rushing in at the last minute?” But this was said with a smile.

“Wait! Don’t despair. When I bought my valentines to mail I saw a lot of place cards and thought of your party. You had plenty, I saw, so I didn’t bring them out. I’ll run up and get them.”

“They won’t match, but—all right. Silly—but I kind of like you at that!”

CHAPTER XIV—AN EXCHANGE OF HEARTS

“Look who’s here,” and kindred expressions, with frank comments on her idea and costume, greeted Betty at the beginning.

“There are some other ‘valentines,’ but none quite like yours,” said one gypsy, who wore an arrow caught through her belt, a silver one in her hair, and large red hearts sewed on her flowing sleeves.

Almost every one had on some emblem that recognized the day. Some of the boys had made themselves into clever representations of comic valentines, but Betty thought that Kathryn must have changed her mind about being one, as she could not find among them all any of Kathryn’s height. As to features, Betty had been sure that she could tell; but among so many shifting figures it was confusing. In general, there was the usual conglomeration of different characters.

Once Betty caught her breath at the appearance of a pirate, for all the world like the “Pirate of Penzance.” But while the costume seemed identical, so far as Betty remembered, after all, Marcella might have lent the costume. And when the young man drew near, whoever it might be, it certainly was not Larry. Well, of course. It had been silly to half expect—and hope—to see him.

There were compensations, however. She did not lack attention and she thought that she had been able to “fool” Chet, whom she had recognized by his laugh first. Her own voice she kept low and had practiced on a different laugh, though when amused she could not keep it up and smothered her natural laugh with her handkerchief. Even that was gay with hearts. She had seen it in a show window a week before and rushed in to buy it.

Guessing who people were was great fun and Marcella had something planned for every moment, it seemed. A tall clown announced the games, or what came next in the way of program. He wore a placard on his back that declared “I am Your Valentine.”

That, certainly, could not be Larry. His fun would be more—um—elusive!

And now some musicians arrived. Betty happened to glance out of the window and saw them stamping snow from their feet and shaking the flakes from their hats. Their taxi must have delivered them outside, instead of bringing them around the drive inside the grounds, a natural mistake, perhaps, since the distance to the street was not great. And how it was snowing! Betty liked it, the beautiful dark and white rays from the lights, near or distant.

Inside, some one relieved them of coats and hats at once, and the bulky instruments in their cases were disposed about the hall, until they disappeared while a last game was going on, only to take their places in a palm-decorated corner near the piano, tune their instruments and start to play. Instantly feet began to tap in time to the measures, and some of the boys and girls began to dance in couples.

Betty's feet fit snugly in the high-heeled shoes of her mother's that matched the costume. They were none too comfortable and Betty thankfully sank into a big over-stuffed chair recently vacated, refusing an invitation prettily and deciding to rest first. But one could stand anything if it were fun, and when in a short time colonial square dances were announced, lo and behold, who should walk up to Betty, with an engaging, somehow familiar smile and an exaggerated, old time bow, but the duplicate of the picture upon her valentine!

Dancing eyes through their opening in the mask enjoyed her amazement. Velvet knee breeches, silk hose, shoes, powdered wig tied by a ribbon, even to coloring, the likeness was complete.

This was no accident. He did not look like the others. Could it be? "Oh!" she said in surprise, blushing under the bit of rouge and the tiny square of courtplaster supposed to be characteristic of that time gone by.

“Fair damsel,” said the stranger, “will you tread the mazes of the dance with me?”

“With great pleasure, sir,” coquettishly replied Betty, recovering from her astonishment and bethinking herself of her part.

She raised her fan, only to have it gently taken from her hand. “Permit me,” said the colonial gentleman with great courtesy. He tucked her arm in his own and walked with her to the space being cleared for them and the others.

“I haven’t happened to see you before,” said Betty, to make conversation.

“I have been about, but I did not come to the circle about Miss Valentine till now.” Then the formality was dropped and the voice became natural. “I came a long distance to dance this with you, Betty, though I knew nothing of the Colonial dances. And I didn’t dream that you would be wearing this costume—even to the lacy border in your hair, the rose, and the heart that proclaims you my valentine!”

Betty said, “Oh,” again. “Then you are—and you sent——”

“Yes, I am, and I sent, and I’m going to keep those kids away from you the rest of the evening, that clown with the hearts all over him in particular.”

Betty laughed. She was recovering, and oh, how happy! “Why that’s only Chet Dorrance. Why the dislike to him? Wasn’t he in all our fun last summer?”

“Yes.” Larry Waite bent attentively toward Betty, fanning her in the character of the old time gallant. Much could be said in the few moments before the music should begin. Precious little attention did either of them pay to the directions being given.

“But Marcella, at my *urgent request*, has fixed it up that I am to be your partner at supper. I suddenly decided to come for this, though I find that Father needs me on another matter and I must make the

most of this opportunity. I hope that you do not mind *very* much, Betty!

“I am—surprised—and *pleased*, Larry. I had a shock when I saw the costume of the Pirate of Penzance.”

The erstwhile Pirate of Penzance laughed. “I like you in this costume, even better than I did when you were Titania. Tell me, Betty. Did you think that perhaps I sent the valentine and could it have influenced you to wear this?”

“Is this the game of ‘Truth,’ Larry?”

“Heaven knows I hope so!”

“I did think that you had sent the valentine and I thought it adorable. But the idea of this costume was Mother’s, because, you see, she had had it made for her own party, and I never dreamed of asking for it. Then fixing it up this way like the valentines as much as I could, was my doings.”

“Sweet doings, Betty.” Was Larry’s voice shaking a little?

“I have a million things to say to you, but they are going to strike up the music now. Yes, we’re coming to line up!”

This last was in answer to a summons. Betty, demure and self-possessed, took her place and the pretty mazes of the dance took her attention. But she had learned it in “gym” and she saw that Larry was at home in it. She was still somewhat thunderstruck. Was this the self-contained Larry of last summer? Of course there had been times when she had had a look from him, or—but *what* could he be going to say to her?

There was no opportunity for private conversation now, though Larry with a twinkle whispered as they performed an evolution of the dance together, “How I wasted last summer!” He seemed to know her very thoughts! Betty’s hands were cold and she was rather highly keyed all through the dances.

But afterward Larry conducted her to where some one was beckoning them and told her on the way that he would have to mingle with the guests a little after all. "That's Marcella beckoning. I know what she's going to tell me; but I shall have you at supper at least, and may I take you home?"

Rather bewildered, yet decidedly radiant, Betty beamed upon Marcella, who said, "Excuse me, but I have a message for your partner."

"The dance is over and you may have him," laughed Betty, next smiling up at the clown with "hearts all over him," who had taken pains to be at hand. Betty saw that Larry observed the clown; but there was nothing to be done except to be the same friendly girl to Chet that she had always been. They had the remembrance of many a good time together between them.

"I know you, Betty," said Chet, "and I suppose you know me. Who is that guy that was with you!"

"I may have my ideas, Chet, but it wouldn't be fair to tell. *Is* that gypsy Kathryn? I thought she wouldn't take such an obvious character."

"Probably, since she is called Gypsy, that is the very reason she is one, because she would not be expected to do the obvious."

"I think that you have grown very wise, Chet, since you have been going to the university. Tell me who some of these university girls are. Marcella was going to invite some sophomores, I know, like your brother Ted, and she is in that new sorority and would be likely to invite them all, wouldn't she?"

"I suppose so. But you said it wasn't fair, Betty, to tell." Chet was looking humorously at her now.

"Now you have me! True enough. I'll have to wait till the unmasking. But guessing is all right."

"Suppose *I* do some guessing," meaningly said Chet.

“Why not?” countered Betty; but fortunately for Betty’s not having to respond to Chet’s surmises, one of the girls, a pretty shepherdess, came up to look more closely at Betty’s costume.

“If I had only thought of it, I might have been a real valentine, too,” regretfully said the shepherdess.

But events, the mingling, the talking, the varied entertainment arranged by Marcella Waite and her assisting sorority, moved rapidly. Betty was soon found by the colonial gentleman of her valentine, and formally escorted to the dining-room, spacious, and accommodating, tables arranged into one continuous and festal board, “like double T’s,” Betty said. “Oh, *isn’t it pretty!*” she exclaimed softly to Larry.

From the hanging lights above ran ribbons, gay in color and abounding, like everything else about the house, in appropriate decorations. The place cards were especially pretty. Betty’s represented Cupid carrying a cluster of hearts as well as his bow and quiver full of arrows. Below him was the outline of a single heart and within this an individual four-line “poem” ready for Betty’s reading:

“Sweet and pretty and dear and fine,
She’s a peach of a girl—Miss Valentine!
Let Eros whisper, as flies his dart,
‘Your lover is waiting and waits your heart.’”

Betty dimpled as she read, “I wonder if Marcella copied that or made it up. It doesn’t sound like her.”

“It wouldn’t,” said Larry, who had been reading his own lines. “She didn’t write them; but she did pretty well with mine in the hurry she was tonight. See? It’s a prophecy, I hope. I’m not sure that Marcella knows that Eros is the same as Cupid.”

“Larry Waite! Of course she does. But you haven’t *read* mine yet, how do you——”

Betty stopped, for Larry turned a mischievous look upon her, then sobered. "I wasn't in fun when I scribbled those lines, Betty," said he. But it was no place in which to embarrass Betty and he quickly placed his own card before her. "Read what Marcella tells me," and Betty read:

"If Cupid only has success,
You're on your way to happiness."

"Now I hope that is so," said Larry lightly. "I'm quite content right now."

Others were doing the same thing, exchanging cards and reading funny or clever or sugary verses, collected or composed by Marcella and her good friends. Larry had insisted that Betty's card match his own and in the short time he gave to Marcella's change of arrangements he had written the verses.

Betty was past being surprised now and had entered into an exhilarated stage of feeling in which the fun, the light and inconsequential conversation, the lights, the decorations, the costumes, masks and general gayety all played a part. And now, from the middle of the long part of the table and almost opposite Betty, Marcella rose to announce that they would unmask before the serving began.

Then came hilarity indeed, though properly restrained, for this was no school picnic in the woods! Surprises and congratulations were the order of the moment. The gypsy, with a clown in Lyon High colors, sat just beyond Betty. "Why, Kathryn, I couldn't tell you at all!" she exclaimed. "Chet thought it was you, but I had my doubts."

The clown with Kathryn was Brad Warren. Chet Dorrance, Betty saw, was farther down on the opposite side of the table and she sighed with relief, for Betty never wanted Chet's feelings hurt. Marcella had placed him with a senior at the university, one of her sorority sisters, and Chet was evidently much interested and

pleased. It was rather nattering to be selected for a senior, and indeed, Marcella had known that Chet Dorrance must not be placed with some one whom he would not like, no matter what Larry wanted to do.

Mathilde's diamond flashed directly opposite and with Jack Huxley in gala mood, she, too, was happy and beamed on Betty with all the rest. Mathilde was bright and entertaining, too, when she was out with her friends. And Jack—well, he would be served with nothing here that would make him unfit to see any one safely home. The ring seemed more appropriate here than at school.

It was a great surprise to most that Larry Waite was there. He was greeted with enthusiasm and played his part of host with cordiality, the life of the party, Betty thought. More “grown-up” than so many, his fun had some point to it, she thought, and Larry would have felt glad to know her flattering opinion, which she was not to have much opportunity to tell him, even supposing that she wanted to do so.

The idea of the day was carried out in the supper. Larry said that he “didn't know but it was cannibalistic” to eat so many hearts. Heart-shaped sandwiches, salad in hearts—it was amazing how much in that line could be done. The ice-cream servings, in fanciful molds, each looked like a vari-colored and heart-shaped valentine, and little cakes, in hearts, with “heavenly” frosting, were toothsome indeed.

Larry seemed to have an idea just as the ice-cream was arriving and said something across the table to Marcella, who hopped up at once and lightly clapped her hands together for attention.

“Larry says that the celebration will not be complete unless we exchange hearts. So that is the next thing on the program. Who wants my heart?”

There was laughter and quick compliance. But Larry was already detaching a heart from the little array which Betty wore and

whispered, "That was by way of an excuse to get one of these, Betty. Do you mind?"

"You may have them all, Larry," laughed Betty, stirred, nevertheless. Oh, this couldn't be just his "line," as she had once thought! He *liked* her. She knew he did.

"And where is the one I am supposed to have?" she asked, as Larry tucked the little pink heart in his inner pocket.

"It's beating not far away," said Larry in her ear. But he detached a small heart that had dangled from his lapel all evening and handed it to her.

"No," said she, "badge me with it."

It all had to be with the air of badinage and fun, in the presence of so many, but Larry, under cover of fastening his heart in the place of the one he had detached, and under the louder buzz of conversation and the laughter, spoke once more into her ear.

"You darling! I hope this means half as much to you as it does to me!" A hand crept over hers in her lap and held it tightly for a long moment, while Betty returned a slight pressure.

Then things were as they were before. Larry gave some attention, as he had done before, to the university girl who sat on his other side. Betty talked to Kathryn and Bradford, but she "felt like somebody else," as she confided to her diary the next day. An entirely new probability was hers, and a new faith in Larry Waite.

But Larry did not take her home. After the supper he told her that as soon as "they" began to go, he would be waiting for her and would take her home in "the roadster." But he had scarcely finished telling her when Marcella came up and soberly said that a telegram had come for their father and that he wanted to see Larry right away. With a brief "Excuse me," Larry hurried off, while Betty wondered why anybody would send a telegram so late, unless it was a case of life or death! The older Waites had disappeared not long after the guests had all been received. Could they still be up?

The girls began to go up for their wraps and Betty went with them, coming down to wait in the library, as he had told her. No one was there, but she had only a few minutes to wait till he came in and closed the door. "Betty! My plans to see you are all upset. Father has had a business telegram, delayed, by good luck for me, and something has come up which must be attended to. He can not go and I shall have to go for him. A train leaves in half an hour. Marcella will arrange for your getting home with the rest.

"I—I had something to tell you, Betty. You can guess what it is, of course, though I was not going to ask you for a pledge so soon. But I only wanted to make sure that no one else would—have your pledge, before we had a chance to—become better acquainted."

That was rather a lame close. Larry was trying not to say too much either for his own sake or Betty's, and Betty looked up archly at this and smiled. "Yes," said she, gravely, "and let us hope that our friendship will improve on acquaintance."

"Don't tease me, please, Betty," said Larry, but he relaxed into a smile, too. "I'll write you as soon as I can. Remember that you are my valentine, Betty—and now I think you'll let me say goodbye as I want to!"

Before Betty knew it, she was caught in the embrace of a big soft overcoat, hugged and kissed all in a moment, held a second while Larry whispered a soft statement in her ear again; and then he turned and rapidly left the room as he heard Marcella call "Larry" from without.

Oh, what a wonderful Valentine's Day! Larry *loved* her. He *said so*. *Larry!*

CHAPTER XV—ONCE MORE BASKETBALL

“Father, do you care if I’m on the squad, you know, in basketball?” asked Betty at breakfast one morning shortly after the Valentine party. She had not heard from Larry and was beginning to think it all a dream. It hadn’t happened!

“I’ll not be on the regular team, you understand, and I’m not likely to be called into the games at all, but the inter-class games are on now and the sophomores are *too* good, and, bless you, the little freshmen are amounting to a real menace!”

“A *menace*! That will never do,” said Mr. Lee.

“Hurray for the sophomores,” said Dick.

“I hope we beat you,” laughed Doris, “though it will be a sort of disgrace if this senior class doesn’t win. It’s always been good in athletics.”

“I am glad to see that you can look on both sides, Doris,” said Mrs. Lee.

“Oh, don’t give me credit for wanting Betty’s class to beat, Mother. I’d *love* to see the sophomores win!”

“It is a good thing Betty is going to the university next year,” laughed Mr. Lee.

“Oh—am I? I’m glad to hear it’s decided, Father,” spoke Betty. “I did want to go away, but I don’t now.”

“What has changed you?” quickly asked Doris. “Is it Ted’s or Chet’s being there?”

“Doris,” rebuked Mrs. Lee, who thought her daughter too pert in manner and her question too personal.

But Betty replied to her sister, “So far as I know, either may be going away. I understand that both of them expected to sample some other school, for the experience. But when they once start

in here they get to liking it and make their friends and all. I think talking to Marcella Waite and her friends influenced me.”

Betty knew that Doris would not think of Larry in this connection.

Returning to the discussion on basketball, Betty told her father that one of the girls on the team was just down with mumps and another had a bad ankle. Her father asked her if she wanted to risk getting one, too, but Betty said that her playing was not likely and anyway no worse than the practice games that she was doing now a *little*.

“I was throwing the ball into baskets in the gym yesterday, Father, and they just begged me to help out, or be where I could legitimately be called on. Carolyn and Kathryn were both after me. And, Father, I’m not going to do a thing in the university but get my lessons, take music and swim!”

“Very well, then. I suppose you must. Vale. *Cura ut valeas.*”

This was her father’s frequent way of telling them, in the language of Cicero’s Letters, to take care of themselves. He excused himself and left the table, the sound of the car being taken from the garage reaching those left at table as soon as it was possible for Mr. Lee to get there. He was leaving early and the children could get to school by street car.

So it came about that Betty “sat on the side lines” during the last competitive games, when everybody was highly keyed. The seniors, in spite of losses, for another girl came down with mumps in the midst of events, were still eligible to win the contest when their last game was called. It reminded Betty of that other contest, when Mathilde almost succeeded in giving the game to Marcella’s team against whom they were playing. Mathilde was such a cheat. Whenever Betty was inclined to feel sorry for her marrying a boy with a taste for liquor so pronounced, she thought that Jack was not doing so much better. And Mathilde, though not on the team, was not far from Betty today in the familiar old “gym” where quite a crowd had gathered to see the last game that the seniors would play against any of the others. And it was the sophomores again,

the class team that had done so well. There sat Doris, rooting for the sophomores, but waving her hand once in friendly fashion at her sister. But it was hard to keep to good sportsmanship. Besides, Betty had had enough successes!

The game was an eager one, tense. The seniors had the advantage of superior public poise, perhaps, and longer experience. The sophomores, however, were out to win. One senior girl finally, to Betty's dismay, began to blunder and play badly, giving a big advantage to the sophomores, who needed no prompting in regard to taking it. Then the girl was taken out of the game and there was a consultation. Mathilde moved over to Betty's side, where they were watching the game, and hoped that she would be called to take her place. "I just wanted to jump right up and take that ball!" cried Mathilde. "What made her so stupid?"

"I think she must be sick, Mathilde. Carolyn had her arm around her." But Betty had felt the same way. Could they win now? They must! Then the championship game would be the last.

But the director was coming in their direction. Mathilde hopped up hopefully, but again was disappointed in having Betty chosen before her. Betty felt almost sorry, though she was in the mood to do anything—all to save the game. Ah, Betty could make baskets, and with Carolyn and Kathryn there!

Fast and furious went the last part of the game. Rooters called and gave the Lyon High cheers to encourage the players. The sophomore rooters grew quiet as the score began to pile up for the seniors. "Well, it begins to look as if we'd have to wait till next year to smite 'em in class contests," sighed Doris to her chum.

"Never mind, if they do beat us this time, we'll be the ones to play against them in the championship games unless we lose our next game with the freshies."

Breathless and delighted with victory, Betty after distinguishing herself in brave help and rescue at an important juncture, talked

it all over with Carolyn and Kathryn. “Oh, you girls are simply marvelous, the way you pass to each other!”

“Yes, and the way you got on to everything just as if you had been playing with, us all along!”

“I have, in spirit,” laughed Betty. “I’ve seen every game and noted every thing you did.”

Carolyn and Kathryn were forwards and had, indeed worked up a “system” as they declared to Betty, but that amounted only to an almost instinctive knowledge of each other’s probable action under the rules and suggestions of their coach. “Now if we just had you for captain,” laughed Carolyn, “we could play the whole game without anybody else! Don’t tell Gwen I said that, though. She’s great.”

“Wouldn’t that make an interesting game,” said Betty, “three on the floor!”

But Carolyn said that she was a true prophet when Gwen Penrose, senior captain, before the championship game came down with the prevalent and disgustingly childish disease. The ranks were decimated indeed and the other class was rejoicing. The other girls on the senior team were worried. They were all needed in their own particular duties. No one wanted to take the responsibility of being captain. Then with one accord, coach and girls decided that Betty could do it, and Betty, hesitatingly, said that she would try.

“You led a team to victory once, Betty—just do it again,” urged Kathryn.

“It’s a risk, girls, but then, somebody’s got to do it—only it should be one of the original second team.”

“The best ones are down with mumps, too, Betty, and it looks as if the fates have elected you to do the job.”

“Well,” Mickey Carlin told a sophomore boy, “if Betty Lee is captain of the senior team, it’s goodnight for your girls. She’s president of the G. A. A. anyhow, and seems to have a *gift* for

leadership and any sort of athletics. But the mumps seems to be the seniors' Waterloo. If Betty gets it, you may have hope."

"She's had 'em. Dick Lee said so," replied the sophomore boy, grinning. "But I'll not mention it to the girls."

"You forget about Doris," suggested Mickey. "I don't want to mention anything else discouraging, but it isn't impossible for the sophomores to get the mumps playing this way with the seniors, you know."

"Forget it! Mumps, indeed!" But the next day he did not come to school. Mumps had struck even a sophomore.

Fortunately the little epidemic spread no farther, once recognized. Betty, neglecting other things temporarily, practiced basketball till the championship game, the center of so much interest, was on. Cool outwardly, but tense within and alert to every play, Betty as captain almost prayed for success. This year was her farewell to competitive athletics. Her mother, saying that she could not stand the excitement and hoped that Betty would not get hurt, refused to attend the game. Betty did not know whether she spoke in earnest or was joking; but the ticket she had for her mother she gave to Amy Lou, who had begged to go and was now in a state of high delight, saying that one of her school chums had a cousin on the squad and that she was to be taken over from school in an automobile, if she could only have an excuse to get out early.

That matter was attended to and Doris shook her finger at Amy Lou with a comical expression, asking her which team she "would root for." "Will it be Betty's class or mine?" she cried, shaking her head to suggest dire consequences if Amy Lou chose Betty's.

"Well, but *Betty* is *playing*," decided Amy Lou on the spot.

The hour arrived and a game fast and furious was on, closely watched, well played by both sides. Never before had it seemed so difficult for any senior on the team to make a basket. The sophomores were "set against it," said Doris Lee to Amy Lou and

her friend, both of whom would ask questions at the most exciting moment!

Again swift passing and long shots were employed by the seniors. There was little scoring on either side till almost the last of the game. And then it was Betty, who at the last minute made another basket and gave the seniors what was necessary to win over the sophomores by *one point!*

Both teams were due for congratulations. "Now that was what we call a good game," said Doris decidedly to Amy Lou. "Of course, whoever wins would like to win with a higher score, but it makes more excitement this way."

"My oldest sister," explained Amy Lou to her schoolmate, "is president of the G. A. A. and the best swimmer in school, that is, of the girls. That was her, captain of the senior team. She gets prizes and things, too."

"I know all those girls on the team," airily replied Amy Lou's friend. "My cousin tells me about them. But I guess your sister is real good. I saw her make that basket at the end."

"Betty can do anything she tries to do," said loyal Amy Lou, more loyal than wise on some occasions. "She is going to see if I can't come to the game the faculty has with the regular team. It's terribly funny, always, and they have all sorts of stunts. The worst is getting Mother to let me get excused from school early."

"Oh, that is never any trouble for me," said the other child. "Sometimes they come for me and just take me to a movie."

Amy Lou was rather envious at that statement and wondered what her parents would say if she repeated it at home.

"I'll take you some time," offered the child.

"Thank you, but I wouldn't be allowed," said Amy Lou. She had already expressed her thanks for the kindness of this trip.

Meantime a tired and excited Betty was receiving congratulations for the team and for herself. While Amy Lou went home with Doris, Betty took a plunge and shower and was carried off to Carolyn's, for the Gwynne car was to call for Carolyn. They scarcely talked on the way and the only bit of energy shown by Carolyn that evening was when she called up to see if Betty could stay all night. It was one of those quiet, restful visits that Betty could have with Carolyn and that Carolyn enjoyed with her. She almost told Carolyn about Larry's arranging with Marcella to be with her at supper that night of the party. But it might lead to other things and the only thing that Carolyn said about it was to comment on how nice it was of Marcella to put Betty with Larry.

"I always did think that Larry Waite was interested in you, Betty. 'Always' means last summer, of course. He must be four or five years older than you are. I imagine he must have asked Marcella to place him with you. She was telling me how his father depends on him. It seems the older brother went into the navy and is somewhere way off, in the Philippines, I imagine."

Betty looked interested, responding by smiles and attention. "I never heard Marcella say," she answered, "and Larry never spoke of it that I can remember."

Betty's memories of Larry were still too precious to be talked about, even with Carolyn. Perhaps she would have the promised letter soon. But if he made this trip for his father and had lessons to make up, he might not have time. That he would not forget, she was sure. It was different now.

CHAPTER XVI—A PAUSE IN ROMANCE

A healthy body and plenty of wholesome activities, with books and sane thinking at home, kept Betty Lee from any morbid ideas or tendencies in regard to early love affairs. She was romantic, to be sure, having had Larry in mind as her Prince Charming for some time. But with the pushing lessons and performances of her senior year there was not much time for dwelling upon "Love and Larry," an expression of her own and held in her young heart in connection with that evening of Valentine's day. It was "Eros, god of Love," that she remembered, not St. Valentine. Now that she had a room of her own, she could sleep every night with Larry's little valentine heart under her pillow, and his writing on the place card with its astonishingly revealing verses was equally cherished. Not every girl had a lover who was a poet.

And Larry had said that he loved her! She always came back to that. It was a little harder to get lessons now, for her thoughts had a trick of wandering off and even in study hall she could sometimes see in her mind's eye that half embarrassed but very earnest young man who had bid her goodbye.

"What are you smiling about?" somebody would ask her, perhaps. "Oh, just a pleasant thought," she would reply. "I occasionally have one!"

G. A. A. affairs took much of her extra time. The Girl Reserves were having a banquet. Fortunately she was not on one of the committees. She hoped to have a Girl Reserve ring at the spring ceremonial, when they had a beautiful service at one of the churches and the girls would be in full white uniform to march in. That ring, given not for advance in scholarship but in recognition of development in character, would mean something to Betty. She had tried, not only to meet the various demands, but to be fair and just and kind and lend an ear to the various ideals suggested as graces in the well-rounded character. Betty loved the Girl Reserves

and all that they stood for. And what fun they could have, too, just like the scouts and camp-fire girls. If “nothing happened” she would be allowed to go to camp again during some period after school was out. Yet she could not plan beyond her diploma, for receiving that would mark one “jumping off place.” Would there be anything left of her by that time?

Her “grand rush” was occasionally recognized by her mother with a formal welcome when she came home late. “Miss Lee, I believe?” her mother would inquire, offering her the tips of her fingers from a hand held high.

“Yes,” Betty would reply, extending her own fingers, “glad to meet you.” Then she usually received an embrace and a motherly kiss with a searching look into what was usually a blooming face. Sometimes she would be tired out and then she was promptly told to stretch out for half an hour and “think of nothing.” In the pleasant process of thinking of—Larry Waite—she usually dropped to sleep, waking refreshed for dinner and the evening.

The inner hiking club of the G. A. A.’s had one winter hike, almost a spring hike, indeed, for a few birds were back in warm late February days before March winds began. But pussy willows were in bud. Betty saw a bluebird, several robins, some downy and hairy woodpeckers, a whisking titmouse and two of his cousins, the black-capped titmice, or chickadees. But they were Carolina chickadees Betty thought, though they did not make identification sure by singing. Only “chickadee-dee-dee,” they said. The hike was almost a committee meeting of those prominent seniors, for there was so much to plan. Betty was selling tickets already for the orchestra concert. She was in the “senior” orchestra indeed, in these days. Ted Dorrance and she had always that in common, love for the violin.

“It’s a pity that Ted doesn’t see more of you, Betty,” said Doris, one time when she had been unusually thoughtful, sitting in Betty’s room to hear all about an orchestra practice when three boys had

been sent to “D. T.,” otherwise known as “detention,” by a leader whose patience was exhausted in enduring various capers.

“Why?” asked Betty.

“Because you are both so crazy about the violin. Wouldn’t it be fine to marry somebody like Ted?”

“Ted is nice enough for any one,” said Betty and meant it. “But imagine two people practicing on violins. The neighbors would never stand it.”

This seemed to amuse Doris very much and after she finished laughing she announced that she quite agreed. But Doris never knew that once Betty had had almost the same idea, never fully acknowledged, even to herself. Then there was Arthur Penrose, so congenial in every way, always to be a friend. But some one else had become so dear. Betty was sure that she never would change this time.

In March the results of the endurance swim were proclaimed and published in the Lyon’s *Roar*. Betty Lee led with the highest individual score, and naturally this senior class stood highest of the classes. Perhaps Betty’s influence and swimming had helped make swimming popular with the girls of her class, for she had taken honors almost from the first.

The faculty played its annual game with the boys’ basketball team, with the usual fun. But some of the faculty played well and though the boys, as usual, beat, it was not without some effort. Then the ladies of the faculty who could play had a game with the girls of basketball fame, in a game which Amy Lou pronounced a “scream.” Betty saved her adorable Miss Heath from a bad fall which seemed imminent, but made the basket instead of her.

Betty attended to the matter of a nominating committee for G. A. A. officers for the next year. That would be accomplished in advance this time and the junior girls would have the advantage of planning with the present officers. Then came the life-saving

tests for juniors and seniors. Betty, as she practiced for hers, tried to imagine how it would seem in the ocean waves that she remembered from the last summer. Her thoughts of Larry became less of a beautiful dream. They faced the reality that she had not heard from him.

How fortunate that she had made a confidant of no one. She felt sure that he had been in earnest. Betty could trust a friend. Yet after all, he had merely told her that he loved her. Perhaps it was a sudden impulse. Some people were like that, she knew. A kiss didn't mean anything to them. But she had felt that Larry was of a higher type. She had all the experience of last summer and her acquaintance with him to prove that.

Very well. Something might have happened. She most certainly would not assume that Larry had bound himself to her in any way. Her pride, if nothing else, would keep her friendly. And oh, how fortunate that he had not asked her if *she* loved *him*! That would have been hard, though Betty did not reason that hurt pride would enter into that situation.

At all events, whatever the cause, budding warmth in love was decidedly chilled. With her usual determination, Betty filled her mind as well as her time, with all that was going on in relation to school. She did not see Marcella, as it happened, for Marcella was as busy as she, and after a few little trips back and forth between the houses, shortly after the important party, each girl was busy with her separate school and friends. Marcella had merely said once that it was such a pity Larry had to rush off that way but that her father had to call on him often. "Father isn't very well, you know, and the business seems to bother him a good deal lately."

Betty had looked sympathetic and interested, but asked no questions. Another pleasant outlook was hinted at by Marcella, when she said that several of her very special friends were "absolutely charmed" by Betty. That meant the sorority girls that were there. But that matter would take care of itself in the future. Time enough when she was in the university.

One consolation, the weeks flew by so fast that there was no time to grieve over anybody's neglect. Betty was so tired that she fell asleep almost as soon as her head rested upon her pillow every night. But she ceased to have that pleasant anticipation of a letter. Happy expectancy changed into as calm an acceptance as she could master. The heart and the bit of verse were put away gently in a repository for special treasures, though not without regret. There was no tucking her hand under her pillow to see if Larry's "heart" were safely there.

One good result of keeping her mind on school was that she "positively" could not give way to "spring fever." She told Carolyn that she was going on every G. A. A. hike and get her fifty points for fifty miles toward the school letter, as announced.

"Seems to me your astonishing speed this spring is almost feverish," jokingly returned Carolyn, who was taking matters more easily. "Why not have a good time this last stretch?"

But Betty shook her head. "I'll have a better time if I take in everything," said she, "but last fall's hikes and our Christmas hike *a la* the G. A. A. winter bird census are counting, of course."

"How many 'all around' L's do you want, Betty?"

"Never mind. I'm going to try for Miss Heath's Latin prize, too, and you'll see me with my Virgil and prose comp under my arm on every hike."

"I think you've lost your mind, Betty. They'll put over your grave, 'Ambition killed her!'"

"Not likely," laughed Betty, "but you shouldn't joke on serious subjects. Honestly, now that we've passed our life-saving tests, outside of our getting ready for senior examinations there isn't much left but pure fun. Yes, I do feel a little nervous over the big concert, for the first violins have a lot to handle in some of the music, but that will soon be over. By the way, I'm selling tickets

for that; so if you think you or any of your friends would enjoy the concert, please buy them of me.”

“Goose! I’m in it, too! But I’m not selling tickets, so I’ll order those for the family of you.”

Betty knew well that Carolyn was singing with the chorus, but both girls were in high spirits that afternoon, swinging along on their own private little hike in the Gwynne grounds. February and March had passed. It was more than six weeks since the great occasion at Marcella’s. The central feature of this walk and visit with Carolyn was to talk over the committee to be appointed by the vice-president of the G. A. A. in regard to the “Honor Girl.” This committee would consist of several teachers and representatives of each class, who would receive and consider the petitions, presented at an early date and naming candidates for the honor.

Selma Rardon was the vice-president and had consulted with Betty about the appointments. “I told Selma that I wasn’t going to make a single suggestion, but she has a good committee and I think that there will be a number of petitions. We’ll have almost too good a variety to choose from. O Carolyn, you are the loveliest girl in the class and my name is going on a petition for you!”

“I wonder if you could guess whom *I’m* going to suggest as Honor Girl. I’d love to wear the ring, I’ll confess. All of us want it; but I know who deserves it most!”

CHAPTER XVII—SHARING JOY

Mrs. Lee sometimes detected a wistful look on Betty's face, as if she had found out some of the world's disappointments. There was some little problem in friendship, perhaps, or something about school relations that annoyed her, or she was merely having too much on hand. But for the most part Betty was in good spirits at home and with delightful spring weather she was outdoors with the rest of her friends. She saw a great deal of Lucia Coletti when they had their riding together. Betty's riding, with all her late instruction, was quite good. She had learned proper posture and all the details necessary to make a good horsewoman. Not at all nervous about horses, she was good material.

"You will be proud of me yet, Mother," she said, "when some time you see your little Betty take a prize at the Horse Show!"

"Mercy on us! You haven't that ambition, have you!"

"You never can tell, Mother, what may develop."

"No—I think by this time that you are right!"

But this was by way of badinage. Betty's only ambition was to be a good rider.

And so it happened that one afternoon after school Lucia and several other girls were with Betty upon the pretty bridle paths that their teacher frequented. As they slowly walked their horses together, upon a wider road toward the end of their ride, Lucia drew her horse beside Betty's and said, "I forgot to tell you that we've had great excitement at our house. Well, I didn't want to worry you and I was so late getting here today."

"Worry? Then it isn't a pleasant excitement? Nothing the matter with the count and countess, I hope."

"Oh, no! They mail me a card almost every day and they are having the most marvelous time. It's the Sevillas. An immense legal envelope came from somewhere, Auntie said, and that

seemed to upset Rose a good deal; and then a letter came, all scribbled on and forwarded, and I wondered if it could be from Ramon. But no, it could not have been, Auntie said, because that seemed to be worse than ever. It all looks bad, that no one has heard from Ramon.

“Rose came to her, looking so troubled and said that she was afraid they would have to go away. So I went and talked to Rose. This was yesterday afternoon. She said that it was some one different but just as bad as the original villain we know about and that he threatened all sorts of things to her mother if she didn’t produce the jewels, and I don’t know what else.”

“Why, how *could* she when she hasn’t them? Oh, do you *suppose*, Lucia, that Ramon has gotten them away from that man? There might be a gang of them, you know!”

“Yes, there might. I hadn’t thought of that. I’m going to telephone for the car to come after me. Suppose you call up home and tell your mother that you want to go home with me. You haven’t been to dinner for ages. Or we can just drive around there. That would be better. Then you can get your books and stay all night with me. I don’t know what on earth Auntie will do without Rose now, and besides, they are safer there than anywhere they could go. I told Rose so. I wondered if I ought not to tell her at once about Ramon, but I’d promised. I wanted to ask you about that, but you were flying about everywhere and I was late getting to lunch because I had to stop at the office and wasted ten perfectly good lunchtime minutes, precious as they are, in a necessary confab.”

“Did you have to drink a bottle of milk and swallow a sandwich whole?”

“Almost!”

The plan was carried out. Fortunately, there was nothing but lessons ahead for that evening. The matter of telling Rose and Mrs. Sevilla was discussed between the girls on the way. Betty thought that it should be done, disregarding Ramon’s request. Something

might have happened to him, that was true, but Betty said that Mrs. Sevilla “had a right to the facts” as far as the girls knew them.

“Shall I decide to do it, then?” asked Lucia.

“I wouldn’t hesitate a minute,” replied Betty.

“Then you tell Rose all about it, please, Betty. I’ll call her into my room after dinner and we’ll have the whole thing out!”

“Agreed,” said Betty, immediately engrossed in thought as to how she should break the good news to Rose.

The Murchison home was arrayed in fresh spring draperies and Betty thought she never had seen it look so pretty. Rose, sober, and giving Betty only a half smile, as the girls entered the dining-room to find her, was arranging some flowers on the buffet. She answered Betty’s “Good afternoon, Rose,” but started to leave the room at once.

“Just a minute, Rose,” said Lucia. “I know you are busy now, but after dinner, as soon as you can, please come to my room. There is something that Betty knows about and it may cheer you up a little. She thinks so, anyhow.”

“I will come, Miss Lucia.” Rose was always respectful to those who employed her, but she had considerable dignity of manner herself and one saw that there was none of the servility of an inferior.

Dinner was quiet. Mr. Murchison telephoned about five o’clock that he was having dinner with some men at a club, to talk over important affairs. He would be “home early,” however. So reported the butler, who had answered the telephone.

“That may mean early in the evening, or early in the morning, if those men are discussing what I think,” said Mrs. Murchison. But that meant little to Betty. Possibly her father was to be present at the conference which would follow the dinner, or he might be with them at dinner. If Mr. Murchison had come home early and

to dinner, however, it would have made a little difference to Rose, and Betty might have missed some interesting information.

She enjoyed the dinner and liked “the new Mrs. Murchison” more than ever. Immediately afterward several friends came in to visit with Mrs. Murchison and the girls shortly retired to Lucia’s pretty room. “Don’t worry, Betty, over how to tell Rose,” Lucia suggested, noting Betty’s thoughtfulness. “You always do things nicely and sometimes, if you are like me, I can do it better if I don’t think up how beforehand and then stammer around trying to think how I *had* thought it up! Let’s get at the lessons and get ahead, so if it takes some time with Rose, we can still get along.”

“Lucia, the wise one,” laughed Betty. They began on their lessons and were studying away, almost forgetting about Rose and her troubles till a light knock on the door roused them.

Rose, her large dark eyes serious, came in and took the chair indicated by Lucia. “We think that you ought to know something, Rose, that Ramon did not want us to tell you, but I’m sure that you will be glad to be told and you can use your own judgment about telling your mother. Betty is going to tell you all about it.”

Rose turned frightened eyes on Betty, who hastened to speak. “Oh, don’t be scared about it, Rose. Part of it is good news. We saw Ramon in Maine this summer.”

Betty did not have a chance to continue, for Rose exclaimed something in Spanish, then—“saw my Ramon in Maine and never told us about it?”

“He *asked* us not to tell, Rose.” Betty paused, to let Rose get this point.

Rose’s expression changed now. “Excuse me. I should know—some good reason.”

“No, I don’t think that it was a good idea of Ramon’s at all. It was all right to keep it from your mother, but you should have known

at once. It was only because he was going after that old villain that he was afraid you would worry.”

Rose nodded, then smiled a little. “It is not the first time. Ramon went after—‘villains’ before—much trouble came.”

“I can imagine,” said Betty, recalling Ramon’s intensity and his sudden leaving. But this gave Betty an easy opening to tell the events of the summer before in which Ramon had a part. Rose sat, intent, tense, a frown on her brow, her eyes glowing.

When Betty was all through, undisturbed by a single question from Rose, for Betty was good at describing scenes and events, Rose sighed, relaxed somewhat and said, “That explains a little, perhaps. I will not tell my mother yet. May God preserve my Ramon! I think he has. If you would like to see what we had by the mail, I will bring it.” In answer to Lucia’s nod of assent and expression of interest, Rose left the room, returning presently with the long envelope, which Lucia had mentioned to Betty, and the other letter as well.

While Rose was out, Lucia’s comment to Betty was that both mother and daughter were “rather excitable. Rose has had to learn to control herself, but the mother, though she is so dignified most of the time, goes all to pieces over some things.”

Rose was evidently in good command of herself as she showed the girls a legal document of some sort, though probably a forgery, as all the three thought. It was a summons to appear in a court at some place of which the girls had never heard. Rose thought that it was near Chicago.

The letter was threatening, as Lucia had said. Rose gave them only the gist of it, and she had the same idea as Betty’s first thought. “I think that perhaps my Ramon has gotten the jewels back again and they think that he has sent them to us. But how—have they made him tell where we are?”

That was a thought not so pleasant. Rose's brows contracted again as she thought of Ramon in their hands.

"I can't believe that they have got him! He was going to get the jewels and the papers that they tried to get him to sign; and while Ramon does very risky things, he will be more careful this time, especially since he knows that he has practically found you and your mother!" So Betty said, rather explosively.

Rose then gave the girls a brief account of how this had come about. As every one knew, there had been many revolutionary activities in Spain. Her father, loyal to the crown, had been caught in a plot. "They call it 'framed' in this country," said Rose. "Men deceived him. He was put in prison. He was sick and died. They came to steal our jewels and money and papers and took Ramon away—these men, I mean, not the government, though they *told* us so. We followed Ramon, and the plot was to get us away from the country, too. We spoke no English and were in a strange country. This bad man pretended to be kind and help us find Ramon. At last we found him out. He was, from what you tell me, writing lies to Ramon about where we were and trying to get Ramon to send money and the jewels that Ramon had finally gotten—to send them to us. Then he would take them away from us, of course. It would take too long to tell just how he did all this. But such terrible things can be done and no one knew us. We were afraid to do anything until we had found Ramon. Then we thought Ramon must be dead—until you told us! Never will I forget!" Rose put her head in her hands and her shoulders lifted from the sobs she was trying to suppress.

Betty was thinking to herself, "*Can* such things happen in the United States?" But then she had thought that last summer, too.

Then they heard the doorbell ring and it seemed to rouse Rose from her tears that she was trying to wipe away, though more would fall.

“Well, anyhow, Rose,” said Betty, “stay right here, where we know all about you. This is just some more wicked work. Don’t even answer, and put that paper in Mr. Murchison’s hands!”

But there was a tap on Lucia’s door and Rose jumped to her feet, thinking that she might be wanted. She was, indeed, but not for any household duty.

It was Mr. Murchison who stood there, rather shamefacedly holding out two letters. “Rose, I came home early after all, and till this minute I forgot to give you a letter which came addressed to my office today. It’s from Spain, too! I never thought of it till this special delivery letter came this minute, also for you, I think. Don’t worry, Rose, if it is bad news. Mrs. Murchison has been telling me of your new troubles. Just let me handle this for you.”

But Rose had gotten a look at the address upon the letters. Although Betty was not taking Spanish, nor did she belong to the “Spanish Club” at school, as Lucia did, she probably understood as well the meaning of the Spanish phrase in which Rose thanked God, fervently, tears again beginning to fall, but not tears of grief.

“Ramon, *Ramon*,” she said softly. “Mr. Murchison, both these letters are from my brother!”

“And that one was on my desk almost all day, till I rushed off to dinner with my friends and thought to tuck it in my pocket!”

Rose’s hands were shaking. “Sit right down this minute, Rose,” said Lucia, “and read enough to find out where Ramon is. Uncle says that one is from Spain!” Mr. Murchison himself was already gone.

The girls stepped into the bedroom which Betty always occupied, to allow Rose the privilege of reading her letter alone. “There were all sorts of things on that letter from abroad,” said Betty. “I think it may have been sent to the wrong place and forwarded. The special delivery means that he is either here in this country or has sent on a letter to some one to have mailed.”

“He wouldn’t do that,” said Lucia. “I’ll not be surprised to see the Don walking in at any time.”

“Please come in and let me tell you,” gently said Rose, appearing in the door. The two girls joined her. “I must take these to my mother,” said Rose, folding her hands over the precious letters. “I would let you read them but they are in my language. Ramon has been to Spain. He has seen the king himself. He has proved to him that our father had no part in a plot. He even visited our old home and found letters and papers that we had hidden there. Those he showed to the king. By the grace of God he believed, and it will be safe for us to go home! Oh, I can not tell you what it means! Ramon has found the jewels and the papers he wanted on that little boat, which he followed after they had fixed it up. He put them in a safe place and though he was almost taken again by these bad men that are here, he got away, sailed, and they are waiting for us in Spain with our other property, unless he has thought it safe to bring back and sell here, some of them.

“This was in the letter from Spain. The quick letter here says that he has sailed right away after writing, for a great nobleman there made him a loan and he is to come for us very soon. We are to be ready and I must prepare my mother to see him.”

“Do it, Rose,” said Lucia. “Thank you for telling us. I’ll let Auntie know about it at once, or as soon as her guests go. So you and your mother can be glad all by yourselves.”

“How nicely Rose talks the English since she has been going to night school,” admiringly Betty commented. “She made that as clear as could be to us. It’s as romantic as a novel, only there isn’t any love story in it.”

“Who knows?” asked Lucia. “Rose may have some lover somewhere.”

“Oh, I’m so *glad!*” cried Betty. “The Don’s troubles worried me from the start. Now it is all explained and when he once comes,

their troubles will be over. Did you notice what Rose called the special delivery letter?"

"No."

"The *quick* letter!"

CHAPTER XVIII—CONCERNING LOST LETTERS

Considering what had happened some weeks before, Betty thought it one of the most important moments of her life when she was called to the telephone a day or so after her visit at Lucia's and heard Marcella Waite's voice at the other end of the wire.

"Betty?" inquired Marcella.

"Yes."

"Oh, I am in sackcloth and ashes, Betty, and I hope that you can forgive me. Listen. Two weeks ago or so, I had a letter from Larry, a short one, such as he writes to his *relatives*, and in it he asked me if Betty Lee were sick. He said that he had written you after his hasty leaving at the party—you remember?"

"Yes," said Betty, who after the first gasp of astonishment, which Marcella could not have heard, had had time to recover herself. (Larry had written! And she certainly *did* remember.)

"Well, I forgot all about it—I'm living in such a rush, and you will understand, I'm sure, since you are in a rush yourself as a senior."

"Of course, Marcella." Betty was cordial. She could forgive anything. Larry *had* written.

"So I didn't even answer his letter—*he* waits for ages sometimes; and I supposed if he'd written to you, you'd gotten the letter and answered it, if it called for an answer."

"No, I have not heard from Larry at all, Marcella."

"Yes? It dawned on me, Betty, after I received a special delivery letter this afternoon. I'm going down town for dinner with some girls and I'll stop with his letter. I'm sending him a special delivery letter and I'll put in, shall I—that you haven't received a word from him?"

"Certainly, Marcella," replied Betty, wondering what Larry had written.

“The letter will give you the facts, Betty. I’m writing an abject apology, but reminding him of certain delays on his side. If I’d had any idea that—well—see you later. ’Bye.”

About four o’clock, just as Betty was feeling that she could not wait any longer, a car stopped in front of the house and Marcella flew up the walk to the steps, where Betty met her with smiles. “I thought you would be in a hurry, Marcella. Thank you so much for bringing this. I did wonder not to have heard, since Larry *spoke* of writing.”

Marcella gave her a meaning glance. “Well, for my sake, be nice to Larry, when you do hear from him, and answer!”

“I will,” promised Betty. It was just as well, she thought, that Marcella would never know the heart-aches she had had over the missing letter. What could have become of it? And why hadn’t Larry written again? No, he would think she didn’t care.

Betty flew to the privacy of her room. Larry’s letter was brief but very much to the point. “Respected Sister,” he began. “In view of what I said to you on the evening of your party, it might have occurred to you that my question about Betty Lee was important. *I enclose addressed envelope with special delivery stamps.* Please reply at once. Is Betty sick? Have you seen her? Can you suggest any reason why she should not reply? The first letter was rather important because it explained something. I also wrote a card, inquiring, after I had not heard. Still no reply. Could I have offended her? But it is not like her—not to show the courtesy of a reply.” That was all except his “as ever, Larry.”

Betty looked out of the window over the ravine, straight at a nest which a little bird was building, and she never saw it! Her heart’s impulse was to write to Larry at once. But that would not do at all. Marcella’s letter would carry the news. She had seen some mail in Marcella’s hand. She was, doubtless, going to mail it at the general post office instead of at the nearest station. Larry would know very soon.

Then Betty did a funny thing, “silly,” she told herself. She opened her top drawer and from a box she took the little heart. On it she laid her cheek a moment, then slipped it within the scented sachet cover in which it had been accustomed to rest under her pillow. It was all right. Larry cared. He was true and good. Now she could enjoy the rest of her senior year. It would have been much more comfortable if she had not cared herself; but since she did, it was nice that Larry cared, too—some, at least.

Sedately Betty walked downstairs, but just then Doris sat down at the piano and began a gay, jazzy tune. “See if you could ‘tap’ it off to this, Betty,” cried she. “I’ve got to play for some of them tomorrow in a show we’re getting up—a sophomore jazz-fest.” And Betty’s feet celebrated her restlessness, while Dick came in—to execute a sort of clog dance, and Mr. Lee, just home, stood laughing in the doorway.

“What’s this?” he asked, “my house turned into a vaudeville stage?”

“Don’t worry, Father,” breathlessly replied Betty, stopping to throw herself into a chair. “We’ve only been working off some of our extra steam!”

Betty found it hard to study that evening, but for the next few days she threw herself into school work with great zeal. “When has Betty been so gay?” asked Mary Emma Howland.

“Spring has ‘CAME,’ Mary Emma,” declared Betty, in reply.

Next came the expected note from Larry. Betty found it waiting when she came from school and held it, almost too carelessly, with some other mail, invitations, she thought, from Janet and Sue, to their early Commencement. She visited and chatted with some friends of her sister’s, with whom she and Doris had come from high school. Then they went into the kitchen with Doris to make fudge, and Betty could slip away to her room.

It is needless to say that the mail from Buxton went unopened until she should read the message from New Haven.

“I have only just found out,” wrote Larry, “that you have not received a letter and a later note which I wrote you. I can not understand what has become of them and I am trying to find out. But I hasten to tell you, meanwhile, that I wrote, as I said I would, and I know that you must have thought me—well, I don’t know what you must have thought, if you thought of me at all!

“I have been anxiously waiting a reply from you, wondering, thinking that you were sick, or offended—about that at the last, you know. Yet I felt that you would have written me some sort of a reply, if only out of courtesy. Now Marcella writes me that you have not heard from me at all.

“I shall write in full again, but hurry this off at once. This is only to say that what I said to you at that last short moment was only too true for my peace of mind and that my missing letter went into matters between us. My Commencement comes shortly before yours, I believe, and I expect to be home to see the sweet girl graduate receive her diploma. Do I dare to hope that she will be glad to see me?”

The heart of that sweet girl graduate was thrilling over Larry’s letter then. Yes. She would be glad to see Larry, without a doubt. So he had meant it. What difference did it make about lost letters now? Yet—she would enjoy knowing just what had been in that first message.

School *would* go on, of course, no matter what interesting and important things were happening outside. Betty managed to concentrate on her lessons now. Those senior examinations! Then “at last” the expected letter came:

“Dear Valentine Lady:

“I am seeing you as you looked in the library that night. No wonder my resolution failed me. But since you are

not offended, I am not sorry. Your note assuring me of that fact came promptly and relieved my very much disturbed feelings. Thank you, dear girl. So far there is no trace of the letter. Judd declares that he mailed all the letters he carried to the post that day. There is no one at your end of the route that would be interested in holding back a letter from me, I am sure. We can let it go, and since I am to see you so soon, I shall not write, or try to remember all the details I mentioned in that missive. But there were one or two important points that I think I'd better mention.

“The first is that I have been interested in you, Betty, for a long time. But after that first meeting, when I found how very, very young you were, I decided that a love affair might better be postponed, if there were any chance of one with you. I have had little of what is called college society here, for reasons that I will mention in a moment. I have been a busy fellow all through the university, with most of my recreation with the fellows, as we say.

“Of course, every time I saw you, I was tempted to begin a courtship. It was good, but harrowing last summer to be with you, and to tell the truth, it was when I got to thinking that those other youngsters whom you knew so well would perhaps carry you off after all, that is, some one of them—one in particular—well, that is what brought me flying, after my valentine. And with your looking like a young lady of the olden time, so sweet and lovely, it quite finished me.

“If the circumstances were ordinary, Betty, I would merely start in to win your love, with no explanation. But you probably do not remember stating, in some conversation with the other girls on the boat last summer, that your parents would never hear to an engagement

while you were in high school and that you would have to be ‘awfully in love’ to go against anything they wanted or did not want. I could not blame them, though for a girl not yet eighteen you seem mature and able to choose whom you like. But of course I am no cool-headed parent on this question! I’m not on their side of the argument at all! But that is why I am not going to ask you for a *pledge* when I come. I am going to ask you for permission to win your love if I can and to find out how your heart does stand on that important point. Then I am going to see all I can of you, unless I find that you—I am not sure, though, that I could keep away from you under any circumstances. There might be some chance that you could learn to like me enough.

“The other matter that has made me hesitate is what I will tell you more about. Please do not mention this to Marcella, but the business my father is in may go on the rocks. He has not said a word about it at home. Money is still available, you understand, and my father’s income so far is not materially lessened. So we are letting things go on as usual, with Marcella having a great time in school and entertaining as she does. I sold the small yacht we had on the excuse that it was old and a good opportunity offered, which was true. We did not get the new car that Marcella wanted. There have been big losses and a crooked executive who has been dismissed.

“On the other hand, there will be enough to liquidate and Dad and I will start something else. That is one reason why I have been working so hard and taking extra courses and so on, besides making flying trips when he wanted me. And the fact that you are so young isn’t so bad when I think that maybe you will be willing to wait for me till I get a start and am able to take care of you properly.

“So you are hereby told again, and I wish that it could be in the same way, that one Larry Waite is desperately in love and means to find out what the prospect is for him when he sees the lady of his dreams. Don’t discourage me, Betty, when you answer this, though I am not expecting that you give me an answer now. But I’ve got to live through these last weeks of school. How does *Betty Lee Waite* look on paper? I hope that you may write it so some day. I am *deeply in earnest*, Betty, and though it was publicly in a spirit of fun that we exchanged hearts, mine is in your keeping. Be good to it!”

So ended Larry’s letter, and he signed himself simply “Yours.”

It was Betty Lee’s first and only love letter, and how like Larry, bless him! Betty was very sober as she read the letter through several times. Possibly she would show it to her mother, some time, but not until after Commencement. It would explain matters. Betty’s head was in a whirl. Be good to Larry’s heart? Well, rather! But Larry would be anxious to know about the receipt of this letter. She must write, and what should she say?

Betty took out her writing materials and sat at her desk thinking. A little note was best. Presently she began to write.

“Dear Larry:

“I have just received and read your letter, and I know that you will want to hear from me at once, especially since one, no, two letters have been lost. I am not really capable now of replying to such a beautiful letter as it should be answered, and I’m just a little dazed over it, I suppose. I did not really know that you have been thinking of me in that way for so long. But I do not even *want* to say anything to ‘discourage’ you for these last weeks, and I will be good to the ‘heart.’

“As ever,

“Betty.”

The answer to this was a telegram and a box of flowers, all of which was quite thrilling to Betty Lee. Her mother looked surprised and asked why Larry Waite should send Betty flowers “now.”

“Oh, because the spring flowers are so pretty, I suppose,” said Betty, burying her nose in them. “I had a letter, too.”

“You must have made a hit with Larry at the Valentine party,” said Doris, crossing the room to see the blossoms whose fragrance had reached her.

“It is awfully nice of him, anyway,” said Betty, turning away to look for vases. “I’ll put a bunch of these on my desk,” she said, “and the rest we’ll all enjoy downstairs.” But while Betty did not permit her family to discover all that these flowers meant to her, a few were later pressed and found their way into the repository of treasures.

CHAPTER XIX—OF A NUMBER OF THINGS

While other things were uppermost in Betty Lee's mind just now, the committee on Honor Girl were considering her as well as half a dozen or more of the fine girls that were G. A. A. candidates, made so by the "petitions" of their friends. No girl goes through a high school course without being pretty well estimated, in one way or another, by her friends, but this was a little more definite. The school paper, indeed, published the main requirements which the choice of Honor Girl, or points upon which the choice rested: character, appearance, leadership, school spirit and scholarship of not less than eighty per cent for the four years of high school work.

Betty's grades were good, for not once had she fallen below the honor list, thanks to pride and the stimulus of pleasing her parents. Her leadership was not to be doubted, for more than one team had she led to victory, though she had not taken part in as many competitive games as some of the other girls. And was she not the president of the G. A. A.? "Betty Lee is efficient," said one of the teachers on the committee. "Yes, and she is to be relied on absolutely," replied another.

Appearance, did not mean beauty, it was to be supposed, but it did include neat and suitable dressing, and presumably a certain poise of manner, not impossible to be attained by the young. "Betty Lee's experience at the head of some of these organizations has given her that modest but rather confident manner in the class room, I suppose," said one.

"No," said Miss Heath, "she has always had that. She has been in my classes from the first. She gets that at home I think. They are all rather self-contained, good control and all that. I've been entertained there. I'm glad I'm not on your committee, ladies. There's Carolyn Gwynne. She is one of the most charming girls I know, quite as generous as Betty and as friendly, with all the school spirit any one could desire. If you chose her, you would have a fine honor girl, one that represents the best Lyon High has. Yet Betty

has a few more gifts and has made a better president of G. A. A. than Carolyn would have made. She is just as bright as Carolyn, though her grades are not quite as high. How she has kept up to the mark with all your athletic performances, I don't see."

Miss Heath had been called into one of the class rooms where members of the committee were discussing the choice, and this was her laughing thrust at two of the athletic directors. "Oh, yes, one more thing in favor of my favorite," added Miss Heath. "Betty has cool judgment. She thinks things out, which is more than you can say for all of our youngsters. That is one of the best points in leadership. Betty expresses herself well, too, in class."

"How about pep and enthusiasm?" queried one lady.

"I presume all of these girls would make one hundred per cent on that, wouldn't they? Witness this morning's assembly?"

The choice was not an easy one, but it was made, to be kept a secret until the G. A. A. banquet when the honors were to be given.

Meanwhile last senior hikes and picnics took their place in history, during the lovely days of April, May and early June. Color Day, a girls' affair, marked by class stunts and contests, was a jolly occasion. Betty's only honor was winning the basketball throw and that was an accident, she claimed. But she had helped get up the senior stunt, which won the prize, filling the senior girls with delight. "Betty, you made a grand class manager," declared Mathilde, amazing Betty, who did not suppose that Mathilde thought she could do anything right. But Betty had never retaliated nor seemed to notice Mathilde's little slights, except to avoid contact more or less. "That's nice of you to say, Mathilde," responded Betty with a bright smile. "I'm going to miss all the times we girls have had," she added, "and these field days have been such fun. I'll miss all of it."

"So shall I," said Mathilde, thoughtfully. "I'm going to be married, Betty. Tell you some more some time."

A successful and almost too well attended concert of glee clubs and orchestra finished Betty's "fiddling" for the year, she said, though she still attended practices. She was happy over having the largest "score" and thus winning that past swimming meet. Swimming and music ought to go together, she told her father. He agreed and reminded her how fishermen were lured to their doom by the Lorelei and other sirens.

"Oh—you're a great daddy!" Betty told him, "but you'll be proud of your little goldfish yet!"

"I am now, Betty. There isn't a girl as fine as mine over there!"

"Why, Father! That's better than the diploma! I know you're prejudiced, but it's very pleasant!"

Then came a day when Ramon Sevilla came "home." Tall, big, strong, confident, he had gotten past fear, established in his own country, with backing now in America as well. But plans changed. Mrs. Sevilla was not quite strong enough yet to be taken across the Atlantic. The school paper, known as the *Roar*, came out with a little account which gave a summary of Ramon's experiences:

A Former Football Hero Returns.

Who does not remember the Don, otherwise known as Ramon Balinsky? He is the man who came to fame after Freddy Fisher and in turn was followed by "Kentucky," our synonym for victory.

The Don was the man of mystery. We always knew that he had some romantic history and it turns out that he was the victim of a frame-up in his native land. Separated from his relatives, who feared that he was dead, not knowing what had become of them, he drifted here, always followed by the villains of the piece.

Last summer he was kidnapped and almost killed, though rescued by friends that included some of our most prominent seniors. It made a romantic tale of the

Maine coast, stolen jewels and smuggled liquor. The Don has been to Spain and it is whispered that he has even talked to the king. He has regained his stolen property and while he goes now by the name of Sevilla, no one knows just what his rank may or may not be.

However, the Don makes a fine American and until he thinks best to return to his native land, he has established a home for his mother and sister and is going to work for the Murchison Company. The *Roar* congratulates him and says, "Long live the Don!" Good work, Ramon. The cheer squad will now lead in Lyon High yells for the Don, and the band will strike up "El Capitan!"

It was true that a quiet little place had been chosen by Ramon for his mother and sister, who could now rest from most of her labors and all of her anxieties. For the present Ramon was to be found suitable work, in one of the Murchison interests, which would take care of them all and begin to settle the loan which he had accepted in Spain.

One curious feature about Betty's new relation with Larry Waite was that her family knew practically nothing about it. She had no desire to keep anything from her mother, in one respect, but she had really seen so little of Larry, and under such circumstances when she did that it was not natural to speak of it. Mrs. Lee had noted Betty's depression and a little change of manner, and while attributing it chiefly to her being tired with all the various enterprises, she wondered if seeing so much less of Chet was worrying her at all. "After Commencement," Betty thought, "they'll see."

Chet, on the other hand was not worrying Betty in the least. He had seemed not to like it particularly that Betty was Larry's partner at supper on that eventful evening, but Chet was not much older than Betty and like her had had no real experience with a deep attachment. Just now he was absorbed in his work and a university

fraternity. He and Ted with a few others came around in a car one afternoon to carry Betty off to a picnic party on the Dorrance grounds, but aside from that there were no “dates.” It was a natural dropping of rather too constant attention and Betty was glad to think that her budding romance would not bring any particular pain to Chet.

Mathilde, whose chief interest was in those lines and whose town acquaintance was wide, took some little pleasure, Betty thought, in repeating something that Jack had told her. “I hear that you are being cut out, Betty, with Chet,” said she.

“How is that?” asked Betty, knowing that Mathilde wanted to have her ask that very thing.

“Jack says that Chet has a new girl—I forget her name, a new member of Chet’s class. Chet’s taking her around quite a little. I hope you don’t mind.” Mathilde looked at Betty curiously. Perhaps that was what was the matter with Mathilde, curiosity.

“How interesting,” murmured Betty, annoyed, to be sure, but a little amused, too. “No—Chet and I will always be the best of friends, I think, but it’s only natural that we should not be together so much now. I think I know the girl you mean. There were a lot of us on a picnic together the other day.” Blessings on that recent picnic, Betty thought. She really did not enjoy having Mathilde “crow over her,” and she knew that before the conversation ended, Mathilde would try to worm the last detail of that picnic and who were there out of her. As if uninterested in telling any more, she pleasantly answered the rest of the questions, for with some people, Betty could be “diplomatic,” too.

In the comforting assurance that everything would be “all right” when Larry came, Betty laid aside her happy dreams of the future to work hard just before the “senior exams.” One scholarship prize she would win, if possible, and she was not going to have it said that a girl prominent in athletics could not get her lessons. As a senior, she could not play with the orchestra at Commencement.

Freedom from practice there was one gain, though arrangements for the G. A. A. banquet lay partly on the shoulders of the president.

At last the examinations were over. Class day was ushered in with sunshine and entire relief from lessons. Betty was not even in the pretty Maypole dance or any of the stunts, but with some regrets she formed a part of the senior parade and carried her part of the long, long rope of living green and twining flowers that marked the senior class. As she followed the rest along the track of the athletic field before the big stadium she tried not to let herself think that "all these good times" were over, but she winked more than once, to keep a tear from forming. One big chapter in her life was closing, and Betty vaguely realized it.

But her mother was in the stadium to hear the brief program and to see Betty come forward not only for her Latin prize from Miss Heath, but for another, given to each of the three best Latin students in the entire senior class.

And afterwards, when the class had its own private meeting there was nothing but fun for Betty. The class prophet foretold a wonderful athletic future for Betty as the world's champion swimmer. "As Lindy was the first to fly alone, so Betty Lee is to be the first swimmer to cross the Atlantic!"

"How about the sharks?" someone asked, but was frowned upon by the speaker of the day.

CHAPTER XX—TROPHIES

Was it herself? So thought Betty once during the G. A. A. banquet which was such an important occasion to its president.

There was the buzz of conversation, the tinkle of some bit of silver, the subdued laughter of some prettily dressed girl, or other natural accompaniment of a meal. Students, guests and teachers sat about the long, flower-decked tables in the familiar lunch room, arranged for the occasion, and were engaged in the pleasant pastime of disposing of an excellent banquet menu's offerings.

But Betty's chief thoughts were upon her little speech of welcome, with which the program was to be opened. She sat at the speakers' table, in the line of those who were to give toasts or present awards. Rather overcome at first by being next to the principal himself, Betty faced her G. A. A. world and glanced from time to time at her notes, concealed from view in her program. She had attended more than one G. A. A. banquet, but it was the first time that she had borne any responsibility.

Tonight she was in front of everybody, for the speakers' table ran across the end of the room and was seated upon the one side only, which thus faced the ends of the other tables. Betty would not be particularly embarrassed in receiving before every one her coveted pin for riding, chevrons, or other marks of honors won. But that speech! Well, if she forgot what she intended to say, she could make up something cordial and courteous. She had had experience with the Girl Reserves and often had to say something that she had not expected to. But she had to manage the program, too, and she did hope that she wouldn't make any mistakes or let down into what her father called the school vernacular.

Rather keyed up, Betty rose with senior dignity at the proper time and made her little speech of welcome and introduction to the purpose and points of the banquet. She introduced the principal as the first upon the program and sat down during the applause which

both approved of her speech and recognized the principal. Relieved that there was a favorable start, Betty had a chance to think of what she was to say next, while the principal spoke briefly. Two others made short toasts, Carolyn Gwynne, then one of the girls who lauded the opportunities of the school for healthful activities. Then, since so many awards were to be made, the business of presentations began.

Betty had only to call on each teacher who made the presentations, but she kept her mind strictly on the order of the program, though interrupted by receiving and acknowledging with smiles her own awards. Hockey, riding, swimming, basketball, numeral and letters made trophies for Betty, who disposed them near her as best she could.

The new officers for the next year were installed, another thing to have done properly. But it was all going off promptly with no dragging, no time wasted. What else should they learn in this big school except to have everything go promptly, according to schedule? Lucia, happy with both her father and her mother beside her, her guests at the banquet, gave Betty a smiling look once in awhile. Count and Countess Coletti were evidently very much interested in the whole affair, and the dark-eyed, distinguished looking count took from Lucia the pin which was the award of the riding club, to examine it smilingly and pass it on to Mr. and Mrs. Lee, who sat near. The Murchisons, though urged to come by Lucia, had another important engagement. The count and countess had arrived from their travels just in time to attend.

Gwen's father and mother were there, too, for was not Gwen receiving recognition for her one year of excellent efforts? Carolyn, sweet old Carolyn, had made the best speech of all, Betty thought. From certain indications, Betty thought that it was most likely that Carolyn would be named the honor girl. Yet not a word had any member of the committee said to betray their secret, so far as Betty knew.

And tired, though relieved, when Betty called upon the chief athletic director to make the announcement of the Lyon High Honor Girl, she was almost past thinking at all. All that she had to do now was to announce the speaker, who would offer the toast to that honor girl. Thank fortune, it had all gone off without a hitch! Betty leaned back in her chair and pinned below her flowers on her gay chiffon frock, new for the occasion, the silver pin with its outlined horse jumping over a low gate.

She saw Amy Lou smiling at her from beside her mother, and back among a sophomore group was Doris. But she was all attention as the experienced and charming director began to speak, saying what Betty knew to be true that her class had offered an unusual number of girls prominent in athletic events.

“It is too bad that there can be only one Honor Girl. However, I know that you will all agree in regard to the qualifications of the one whom we have selected. Fair and considerate, loyal to the school, striving for excellence rather than to win over another, friendly, efficient, dependable, always working toward high ideals, with an excellent record in scholarship and athletics, with gifts in influence and leadership, our young president, Betty Lee, is the one whom we name as Lyon High Honor Girl!”

Betty had clasped her hands tightly together when the director had said “our young president.” Now, prettily gowned, smiling assurance to Betty, she was bending to her and giving her a hand to present her as Betty rose, scarcely believing her eyes and ears.

Trying to collect herself, Betty listened while the director placed the beautiful ring on Betty’s finger with a few more well-chosen and almost affectionate words. And Betty must make some response—a speech that she had not made up beforehand!

Betty’s voice trembled a little, as in a few words, which she could never remember, she thanked the director and the society and sank into her chair, apparently in command of herself, but really very

much shaken. She would not have believed that she could feel it so!

Fortunately, the director announced at once the name of the teacher who was to give the toast to the Honor Girl, saving Betty the embarrassment and “making it snappy,” as Doris said afterwards. This closed the program and Carolyn, sitting so near Betty, was the first one to reach her and hug her in congratulation.

“Oh, Carolyn, I was almost sure it would be you! You are ten times more worthy of wearing this ring than I am!”

“No, Betty, and I’m honestly glad you have it.”

“It is just like you, Carolyn, and I’ll never be able to equal your generous spirit in a thousand years!”

But others, teachers and pupils, were surrounding Betty now. Her parents were also receiving congratulations and did not try to reach Betty for some time. Countess Coletti, presently, was turning up Betty’s chin with a light touch of her jeweled hand, to kiss her and threaten to carry her off with Lucia to Switzerland for the summer. The count offered his congratulations with dignity and stopped to talk with the principal on American public schools.

It was late before the combined Lee family felt sleepy. Mrs. Lee came into Betty’s room to say goodnight again to her honor girl, and found Betty, half undressed but sitting on her bed “just thinking.”

They talked for a few moments, then Betty sprang up suddenly. “Mother, this would be a good time to show you something. I have never said much to you about Larry Waite, Marcella’s brother, and you have scarcely seen him. Well, you did hear all about last summer, of course, and how nice he was. But there is something special, Mother, and a letter that he wrote me will explain it to you better than I can. You can understand, can’t you, why I haven’t told you anything before? It was only the time of Marcella’s party that I knew he cared.”

Startled, Mrs. Lee looked inquiringly at Betty; but the motherly smile was ready for her “little girl.” “And are you—interested in him, Betty?” she asked.

“No girl could help being interested, Mother. I’m—afraid I care a good deal already. Here is the main letter, and that is a note written before. He wrote me a letter and a note that never reached me.”

“Do you care if I take these to my room, Betty?”

“I’d much rather, Mother—but don’t let anything happen to them!” Betty was smiling a little now. The moment had been a little awkward.

“I understand. And may I speak of it to Father? He’ll probably not want to read the letters.”

“Say anything you want to Father, if he will keep it to himself, you know. You see it is really not all fixed up.”

“Depend on me to manage it,” said Mrs. Lee, taking her daughter in her arms for an especial good night, yet leaving the room with a frown of anxiety. Betty was too young. But she turned to say, “Betty, I shall make it a point to become acquainted with this young man. We shall invite him around.” And Betty, selecting her “nightie” from a hook in her closet, looked around the open closet door to say, “All right, Mamma. Goodnight.”

The situation did not seem so distressing, however, after the letters were read. There would be nothing immediate. Mrs. Lee smiled at more than one point, but Betty could safely trust her letters to her mother. She was not one to take humorously or lightly what was earnest in young love. This seemed to be a sensible young man, carrying more responsibility than most at his age, and sufficiently older than Betty. She decided to tell Mr. Lee at some later date, when he was not so tired. The lad was coming home, they would soon have an opportunity to judge for themselves.

Commencement was held in the school auditorium, though so many were the demands for tickets that it had been considered taking the seniors to one of the city's larger platforms. That Betty was excited with all the accompanying glories, is scarcely necessary to mention. Presents from dear friends, little gifts exchanged with the girls, the new white frock, flowers from "The Dorrances," flowers also from "Arthur and Archie," the Penrose boys, gave Betty little ecstasies at different times, when they arrived or were presented.

Larry Waite had written that he would be there. Betty saw to it that there should be a ticket for him, and that she gave to Marcella, with earnest adjurations that it should not be lost.

"Don't worry, Betty," said Marcella. "I'll see that he gets it. It will not go with the letter where the lost pins go!"

Marcella herself would be elsewhere. University affairs were more "intriguing," though she gave Betty a pretty remembrance and made the remark that Betty was "already like a sister—sorority sister, of course," she explained with a merry look.

On what Mr. Lee called the fatal day, a great box of crimson roses was delivered at the house. They were accompanied by Larry's card, and his roses should be the ones Betty carried, to be sure. Singing with the rest of her class was the only duty left to be performed. The speaker, the orchestra and organ, and the principal would do the rest. She could carry all the roses she could hold and still receive her diploma, made out to Elizabeth Virginia Lee, whose high school days would then be over.

Music, roses, prettily dressed senior girls, dignified senior boys in their best attire, a whole platform crowded with them—such was the familiar scene in the school auditorium that happy night. It was the formal, impressive exercise known as Commencement; and when it was over Betty Lee carried a diploma, earned by many a sacrifice of ease, to testify now to her hours of study and effort.

That and her roses, except a few that she wore, she put into the parental hands, used to relieving their children of their burdens. And Larry came around at once to claim her and to greet Betty's parents, with whom she waited for him. Betty was proud of his appearance and manner, but that temporary satisfaction was swallowed up by the excitement of her first real conversation with Larry, which impended.

Then and in the next few days there was plenty of opportunity to explain everything. Even the lost letter had been found, sopping wet in the pocket of Judd's sweater, which had been thrown into a little launch that the boys sometimes used in the harbor and rained upon. "I will mail my own important letters after this," said he. But he had dried the letter and brought it to read with Betty such parts as were decipherable.

Betty, whose talk with her mother had taken place soon after Mr. Lee had read the letter from Larry, explained that her father and mother were friendly but hoped that the "arrangement" would be an "understanding" rather than an open engagement. "They think that we don't know each other well enough yet, Larry, and that I am too young, as you said. But one thing I must say to you and that is that your troubles with the business are not important to me, only as they make it hard for you. Why, I can cook and keep house pretty well, and it would be much more fun to live in just a little place with you—if we ever should be married."

This, to be sure, was after Larry had again gone over the points of his letter. His repeated assurances of what he had told Betty in the Waite library had been given at once on Betty's graduation night, and Betty had been asked for her confession, as well. They were both happy and expectant.

They were sitting, during this conversation, on a hill overlooking one of the most beautiful views in the city. Marcella and some of her friends were having a picnic in the wooded park. Larry took Betty's hand and looked at the honor ring that she wore. "I suppose that it must be just an understanding now," said he. "But perhaps

by your birthday they may let you wear a ring for me. Not for nothing did I look over your shoulder into that Hallowe'en mirror, Betty—you—sweetheart!”

Meanwhile, Mrs. Lee, gathering up various articles at home, was carrying Betty's diploma into her room. There, on Betty's table, cleared for the purpose, were her trophies. The year book, which Betty had helped compile, adorned one corner. It contained, with much else, serious and otherwise, the pictures of the faculty, of Betty's school-mates and of Betty herself, with the list of her clubs and activities during the four years. On this were a few copies of the *Roar*, for Betty, too, had been written up among the prominent seniors.

Here were Betty's gifts, her chevrons, a medal, the little gold pin from Miss Heath, with its Latin motto, "*Ad Astra*," the Girl Reserve ring, the long-worn senior pin, more prizes, all Betty's cherished senior trophies. For a moment Mrs. Lee stood looking at them. Then, smiling, on top of the array, she laid Betty's diploma.

THE END

[The end of *Betty Lee, Senior* by Harriet Pyne Grove]