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DEAR ENEMY

Джин Уэбстер
Dear Enemy

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Dear Enemy:

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Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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Jean Webster

Dear Enemy

DEAR ENEMY

STONE GATE, WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS,
December 27.

Dear Judy:

Your letter is here. I have read it twice, and with amazement. Do I understand that Jervis has given you, for a Christmas present, the making over of the John Grier Home into a model institution, and that you have chosen me to disburse the money? Me—I, Sallie McBride, the head of an orphan asylum! My poor people, have you lost your senses, or have you become addicted to the use of opium, and is this the raving of two fevered imaginations? I am exactly as well fitted to take care of one hundred children as to become the curator of a zoo.

And you offer as bait an interesting Scotch doctor? My dear Judy,—likewise my dear Jervis,—I see through you! I know exactly the kind of family conference that has been held about the Pendleton fireside.

"Isn't it a pity that Sallie hasn't amounted to more since she left college? She ought to be doing something useful instead of frittering her time away in the petty social life of Worcester. Also

[Jervis speaks] she is getting interested in that confounded young Hallock, too good-looking and fascinating and erratic; I never did like politicians. We must deflect her mind with some uplifting and absorbing occupation until the danger is past. Ha! I have it! We will put her in charge of the John Grier Home." Oh, I can hear him as clearly as if I were there! On the occasion of my last visit in your delectable household Jervis and I had a very solemn conversation in regard to (1) marriage, (2) the low ideals of politicians, (3) the frivolous, useless lives that society women lead.

Please tell your moral husband that I took his words deeply to heart, and that ever since my return to Worcester I have been spending one afternoon a week reading poetry with the inmates of the Female Inebriate Asylum. My life is not so purposeless as it appears.

Also let me assure you that the politician is not dangerously imminent; and that, anyway, he is a very desirable politician, even though his views on tariff and single tax and trade-unionism do not exactly coincide with Jervis's.

Your desire to dedicate my life to the public good is very sweet, but you should look at it from the asylum's point of view.

Have you no pity for those poor defenseless little orphan children?

I have, if you haven't, and I respectfully decline the position which you offer.

I shall be charmed, however, to accept your invitation to visit

you in New York, though I must acknowledge that I am not very excited over the list of gaieties you have planned.

Please substitute for the New York Orphanage and the Foundling Hospital a few theaters and operas and a dinner or so. I have two new evening gowns and a blue and gold coat with a white fur collar.

I dash to pack them; so telegraph fast if you don't wish to see me for myself alone, but only as a successor to Mrs. Lippett. Yours as ever,

Entirely frivolous,

And intending to remain so,

SALLIE McBRIDE.

P.S. Your invitation is especially seasonable. A charming young politician named Gordon Hallock is to be in New York next week. I am sure you will like him when you know him better.

P.S. 2. Sallie taking her afternoon walk as Judy would like to see her:

I ask you again, have you both gone mad?

THE JOHN GRIER HOME,

February 15.

Dear Judy:

We arrived in a snowstorm at eleven last night, Singapore and Jane and I. It does not appear to be customary for superintendents of orphan asylums to bring with them personal maids and Chinese chows. The night watchman and housekeeper, who had waited up to receive me, were thrown into an awful flutter.

They had never seen the like of Sing, and thought that I was introducing a wolf into the fold. I reassured them as to his dogginess, and the watchman, after studying his black tongue, ventured a witticism. He wanted to know if I fed him on huckleberry pie.

It was difficult to find accommodations for my family. Poor Sing was dragged off whimpering to a strange woodshed, and given a piece of burlap. Jane did not fare much better. There was not an extra bed in the building, barring a five-foot crib in the hospital room. She, as you know, approaches six. We tucked her in, and she spent the night folded up like a jackknife. She has limped about today, looking like a decrepit letter S, openly deploring this latest escapade on the part of her flighty mistress, and longing for the time when we shall come to our senses, and return to the parental fireside in Worcester.

I know that she is going to spoil all my chances of being popular with the rest of the staff. Having her here is the silliest idea that was ever conceived, but you know my family. I fought their objections step by step, but they made their last stand on Jane. If I brought her along to see that I ate nourishing food and didn't stay up all night, I might come—temporarily; but if I refused to bring her—oh, dear me, I am not sure that I was ever again to cross the threshold of Stone Gate! So here we are, and neither of us very welcome, I am afraid.

I woke by a gong at six this morning, and lay for a time listening to the racket that twenty-five little girls made in the

lavatory over my head. It appears that they do not get baths,—just face-washes,—but they make as much splashing as twenty-five puppies in a pool. I rose and dressed and explored a bit. You were wise in not having me come to look the place over before I engaged.

While my little charges were at breakfast, it seemed a happy time to introduce myself; so I sought the dining room. Horror piled on horror—those bare drab walls and oil-cloth-covered tables with tin cups and plates and wooden benches, and, by way of decoration, that one illuminated text, "The Lord Will Provide"! The trustee who added that last touch must possess a grim sense of humor.

Really, Judy, I never knew there was any spot in the world so entirely ugly; and when I saw those rows and rows of pale, listless, blue-uniformed children, the whole dismal business suddenly struck me with such a shock that I almost collapsed. It seemed like an unachievable goal for one person to bring sunshine to one hundred little faces when what they need is a mother apiece.

I plunged into this thing lightly enough, partly because you were too persuasive, and mostly, I honestly think, because that scurrilous Gordon Hallock laughed so uproariously at the idea of my being able to manage an asylum. Between you all you hypnotized me. And then of course, after I began reading up on the subject and visiting all those seventeen institutions, I got excited over orphans, and wanted to put my own ideas into practice. But now I'm aghast at finding myself here; it's such

a stupendous undertaking. The future health and happiness of a hundred human beings lie in my hands, to say nothing of their three or four hundred children and thousand grandchildren. The thing's geometrically progressive. It's awful. Who am I to undertake this job? Look, oh, look for another superintendent!

Jane says dinner's ready. Having eaten two of your institution meals, the thought of another doesn't excite me.

LATER.

The staff had mutton hash and spinach, with tapioca pudding for dessert. What the children had I hate to consider.

I started to tell you about my first official speech at breakfast this morning. It dealt with all the wonderful new changes that are to come to the John Grier Home through the generosity of Mr. Jervis Pendleton, the president of our board of trustees, and of Mrs. Pendleton, the dear "Aunt Judy" of every little boy and girl here.

Please don't object to my featuring the Pendleton family so prominently. I did it for political reasons. As the entire working staff of the institution was present, I thought it a good opportunity to emphasize the fact that all of these upsetting, innovations come straight from headquarters, and not out of my excitable brain.

The children stopped eating and stared. The conspicuous color of my hair and the frivolous tilt of my nose are evidently new attributes in a superintendent. My colleagues also showed plainly that they consider me too young and too inexperienced to be set in authority. I haven't seen Jervis's wonderful Scotch doctor

yet, but I assure you that he will have to be VERY wonderful to make up for the rest of these people, especially the kindergarten teacher. Miss Snaith and I clashed early on the subject of fresh air; but I intend to get rid of this dreadful institution smell, if I freeze every child into a little ice statue.

This being a sunny, sparkling, snowy afternoon, I ordered that dungeon of a playroom closed and the children out of doors.

"She's chasin' us out," I heard one small urchin grumbling as he struggled into a two-years-too-small overcoat.

They simply stood about the yard, all humped in their clothes, waiting patiently to be allowed to come back in. No running or shouting or coasting or snowballs. Think of it! These children don't know how to play.

STILL LATER.

I have already begun the congenial task of spending your money. I bought eleven hot-water bottles this afternoon (every one that the village drug store contained) likewise some woolen blankets and padded quilts. And the windows are wide open in the babies' dormitory. Those poor little tots are going to enjoy the perfectly new sensation of being able to breathe at night.

There are a million things I want to grumble about, but it's half-past ten, and Jane says I MUST go to bed.

Yours in command,

SALLIE McBRIDE.

P.S. Before turning in, I tiptoed through the corridor to make sure that all was right, and what do you think I found? Miss Snaith

softly closing the windows in the babies' dormitory! Just as soon as I can find a suitable position for her in an old ladies' home, I am going to discharge that woman.

Jane takes the pen from my hand.

Good night.

THE JOHN GRIER HOME,

February 20.

Dear Judy:

Dr. Robin MacRae called this afternoon to make the acquaintance of the new superintendent. Please invite him to dinner upon the occasion of his next visit to New York, and see for yourself what your husband has done. Jervis grossly misrepresented the facts when he led me to believe that one of the chief advantages of my position would be the daily intercourse with a man of Dr. MacRae's polish and brilliancy and scholarliness and charm.

He is tall and thinnish, with sandy hair and cold gray eyes. During the hour he spent in my society (and I was very sprightly) no shadow of a smile so much as lightened the straight line of his mouth. Can a shadow lighten? Maybe not; but, anyway, what IS the matter with the man? Has he committed some remorseful crime, or is his taciturnity due merely to his natural Scotchness? He's as companionable as a granite tombstone!

Incidentally, our doctor didn't like me any more than I liked him. He thinks I'm frivolous and inconsequential, and totally unfitted for this position of trust. I dare say Jervis has had a letter

from him by now asking to have me removed.

In the matter of conversation we didn't hit it off in the least. He discussed broadly and philosophically the evils of institutional care for dependent children, while I lightly deplored the unbecoming coiffure that prevails among our girls.

To prove my point, I had in Sadie Kate, my special errand orphan. Her hair is strained back as tightly as though it had been done with a monkey wrench, and is braided behind into two wiry little pigtales. Decidedly, orphans' ears need to be softened. But Dr. Robin MacRae doesn't give a hang whether their ears are becoming or not; what he cares about is their stomachs. We also split upon the subject of red petticoats. I don't see how any little girl can preserve any self-respect when dressed in a red flannel petticoat an irregular inch longer than her blue checked gingham dress; but he thinks that red petticoats are cheerful and warm and hygienic. I foresee a warlike reign for the new superintendent.

In regard to the doctor, there is just one detail to be thankful for: he is almost as new as I am, and he cannot instruct me in the traditions of the asylum. I don't believe I COULD have worked with the old doctor, who, judging from the specimens of his art that he left behind, knew as much about babies as a veterinary surgeon.

In the matter of asylum etiquette, the entire staff has undertaken my education. Even the cook this morning told me firmly that the John Grier Home has corn meal mush on Wednesday nights.

Are you searching hard for another superintendent? I'll stay until she comes, but please find her fast.

Yours,

With my mind made up,

SALLIE McBRIDE.

SUP'T'S OFFICE, JOHN GRIER HOME,

February 27.

Dear Gordon:

Are you still insulted because I wouldn't take your advice? Don't you know that a reddish-haired person of Irish forebears, with a dash of Scotch, can't be driven, but must be gently led? Had you been less obnoxiously insistent, I should have listened sweetly, and been saved. As it is, I frankly confess that I have spent the last five days in repenting our quarrel. You were right, and I was wrong, and, as you see, I handsomely acknowledge it. If I ever emerge from this present predicament, I shall in the future be guided (almost always) by your judgment. Could any woman make a more sweeping retraction than that?

The romantic glamour which Judy cast over this orphan asylum exists only in her poetic imagination. The place is AWFUL. Words can't tell you how dreary and dismal and smelly it is: long corridors, bare walls; blue-uniformed, dough-faced little inmates that haven't the slightest resemblance to human children. And oh, the dreadful institution smell! A mingling of wet scrubbed floors, unaired rooms, and food for a hundred people always steaming on the stove.

The asylum not only has to be made over, but every child as well, and it's too herculean a task for such a selfish, luxurious, and lazy person as Sallie McBride ever to have undertaken. I'm resigning the very first moment that Judy can find a suitable successor, but that, I fear, will not be immediately. She has gone off South, leaving me stranded, and of course, after having promised, I can't simply abandon her asylum. But in the meantime I assure you that I'm homesick.

Write me a cheering letter, and send a flower to brighten my private drawing room. I inherited it, furnished, from Mrs. Lippett. The wall is covered with a tapestry paper in brown and red; the furniture is electric-blue plush, except the center table, which is gilt. Green predominates in the carpet. If you presented some pink rosebuds, they would complete the color scheme.

I really was obnoxious that last evening, but you are avenged.

Remorsefully yours,

SALLIE McBRIDE.

P.S. You needn't have been so grumpy about the Scotch doctor. The man is everything dour that the word "Scotch" implies. I detest him on sight, and he detests me. Oh, we're going to have a sweet time working together

THE JOHN GRIER HOME,

February 22.

My dear Gordon:

Your vigorous and expensive message is here. I know that you have plenty of money, but that is no reason why you should waste

it so frivolously. When you feel so bursting with talk that only a hundred-word telegram will relieve an explosion, at least turn it into a night lettergram. My orphans can use the money if you don't need it.

Also, my dear sir, please use a trifle of common sense. Of course I can't chuck the asylum in the casual manner you suggest. It wouldn't be fair to Judy and Jervis. If you will pardon the statement, they have been my friends for many more years than you, and I have no intention of letting them go hang. I came up here in a spirit of—well, say adventure, and I must see the venture through. You wouldn't like me if I were a short sport. This doesn't mean, however, that I am sentencing myself for life; I am intending to resign just as soon as the opportunity comes. But really I ought to feel somewhat gratified that the Pendletons were willing to trust me with such a responsible post. Though you, my dear sir, do not suspect it, I possess considerable executive ability, and more common sense than is visible on the surface. If I chose to put my whole soul into this enterprise, I could make the rippingest superintendent that any 111 orphans ever had.

I suppose you think that's funny? It's true. Judy and Jervis know it, and that's why they asked me to come. So you see, when they have shown so much confidence in me, I can't throw them over in quite the unceremonious fashion you suggest. So long as I am here, I am going to accomplish just as much as it is given one person to accomplish every twenty-four hours. I am going

to turn the place over to my successor with things moving fast in the right direction.

But in the meantime please don't wash your hands of me under the belief that I'm too busy to be homesick; for I'm not. I wake up every morning and stare at Mrs. Lippett's wallpaper in a sort of daze, feeling as though it's some bad dream, and I'm not really here. What on earth was I thinking of to turn my back upon my nice cheerful own home and the good times that by rights are mine? I frequently agree with your opinion of my sanity.

But why, may I ask, should you be making such a fuss? You wouldn't be seeing me in any case. Worcester is quite as far from Washington as the John Grier Home. And I will add, for your further comfort, that whereas there is no man in the neighborhood of this asylum who admires red hair, in Worcester there are several. Therefore, most difficult of men, please be appeased. I didn't come entirely to spite you. I wanted an adventure in life, and, oh dear! oh dear! I'm having it! PLEASE write soon, and cheer me up. Yours in sackcloth,

SALLIE. THE JOHN GRIER HOME,

February 24. Dear Judy:

You tell Jervis that I am not hasty at forming judgments. I have a sweet, sunny, unsuspecting nature, and I like everybody, almost. But no one could like that Scotch doctor. He NEVER smiles.

He paid me another visit this afternoon. I invited him to accommodate himself in one of Mrs. Lippett's electric-blue

chairs, and then sat down opposite to enjoy the harmony. He was dressed in a mustard-colored homespun, with a dash of green and a glint of yellow in the weave, a "heather mixture" calculated to add life to a dull Scotch moor. Purple socks and a red tie, with an amethyst pin, completed the picture. Clearly, your paragon of a doctor is not going to be of much assistance in pulling up the esthetic tone of this establishment.

During the fifteen minutes of his call he succinctly outlined all the changes he wishes to see accomplished in this institution. HE forsooth! And what, may I ask, are the duties of a superintendent? Is she merely a figurehead to take orders from the visiting physician?

It's up wi' the bonnets o' McBride and MacRae!

I am,

Indignantly yours, SALLIE.

THE JOHN GRIER HOME,

Monday.

Dear Dr. MacRae:

I am sending this note by Sadie Kate, as it seems impossible to reach you by telephone. Is the person who calls herself Mrs. McGur-rk and hangs up in the middle of a sentence your housekeeper? If she answers the telephone often, I don't see how your patients have any patience left.

As you did not come this morning, per agreement, and the painters did come, I was fain to choose a cheerful corn color to be placed upon the walls of your new laboratory room. I trust

there is nothing unhygienic about corn color.

Also, if you can spare a moment this afternoon, kindly motor yourself to Dr. Brice's on Water Street and look at the dentist's chair and appurtenances which are to be had at half-price. If all of the pleasant paraphernalia of his profession were here,—in a corner of your laboratory,—Dr. Brice could finish his 111 new patients with much more despatch than if we had to transport them separately to Water Street. Don't you think that's a useful idea? It came to me in the middle of the night, but as I never happened to buy a dentist's chair before, I'd appreciate some professional advice. Yours truly,

S. McBRIDE.

THE JOHN GRIER HOME,

March 1.

Dear Judy:

Do stop sending me telegrams!

Of course I know that you want to know everything that is happening, and I would send a daily bulletin, but I truly don't find a minute. I am so tired when night comes that if it weren't for Jane's strict discipline, I should go to bed with my clothes on.

Later, when we slip a little more into routine, and I can be sure that my assistants are all running off their respective jobs, I shall be the regularest correspondent you ever had.

It was five days ago, wasn't it, that I wrote? Things have been happening in those five days. The MacRae and I have mapped out a plan of campaign, and are stirring up this place to its

sluggish depths. I like him less and less, but we have declared a sort of working truce. And the man IS a worker. I always thought I had sufficient energy myself, but when an improvement is to be introduced, I toil along panting in his wake. He is as stubborn and tenacious and bull-doggish as a Scotchman can be, but he does understand babies; that is, he understands their physiological aspects. He hasn't any more feeling for them personally than for so many frogs that he might happen to be dissecting.

Do you remember Jervis's holding forth one evening for an hour or so about our doctor's beautiful humanitarian ideals? C'EST A RIRE! The man merely regards the J. G. H. as his own private laboratory, where he can try out scientific experiments with no loving parents to object. I shouldn't be surprised anyday to find him introducing scarlet fever cultures into the babies' porridge in order to test a newly invented serum.

Of the house staff, the only two who strike me as really efficient are the primary teacher and the furnace-man. You should see how the children run to meet Miss Matthews and beg for caresses, and how painstakingly polite they are to the other teachers. Children are quick to size up character. I shall be very embarrassed if they are too polite to me.

Just as soon as I get my bearings a little, and know exactly what we need, I am going to accomplish some widespread discharging. I should like to begin with Miss Snaith; but I discover that she is the niece of one of our most generous trustees, and isn't exactly dischargeable. She's a vague, chinless, pale-eyed creature, who

talks through her nose and breathes through her mouth. She can't say anything decisively and then stop; her sentences all trail off into incoherent murmurings. Every time I see the woman I feel an almost uncontrollable desire to take her by the shoulders and shake some decision into her. And Miss Snaith is the one who has had entire supervision of the seventeen little tots aged from two to five! But, anyway, even if I can't discharge her, I have reduced her to a subordinate position without her being aware of the fact.

The doctor has found for me a charming girl who lives a few miles from here and comes in every day to manage the kindergarten. She has big, gentle, brown eyes, like a cow's, and motherly manners (she is just nineteen), and the babies love her.

At the head of the nursery I have placed a jolly, comfortable middle-aged woman who has reared five of her own and has a hand with bairns. Our doctor also found her. You see, he is useful. She is technically under Miss Snaith, but is usurping dictatorship in a satisfactory fashion. I can now sleep at night without being afraid that my babies are being inefficiently murdered.

You see, our reforms are getting started; and while I acquiesce with all the intelligence at my command to our doctor's basic scientific upheavals, still, they sometimes leave me cold. The problem that keeps churning and churning in my mind is: How can I ever instil enough love and warmth and sunshine into those bleak little lives? And I am not sure that the doctor's science will accomplish that.

One of our most pressing INTELLIGENT needs just now is to get our records into coherent form. The books have been most outrageously unkept. Mrs. Lippett had a big black account book into which she jumbled any facts that happened to drift her way as to the children's family, their conduct, and their health. But for weeks at a time she didn't trouble to make an entry. If any adopting family wants to know a child's parentage, half the time we can't even tell where we got the child!

"Where did you come from, baby dear?"

"The blue sky opened, and I am here,"

is an exact description of their arrival.

We need a field worker to travel about the country and pick up all the hereditary statistics she can about our chicks. It will be an easy matter, as most of them have relatives. What do you think of Janet Ware for the job? You remember what a shark she was in economics; she simply battened on tables and charts and surveys.

I have also to inform you that the John Grier Home is undergoing a very searching physical examination, and it is the shocking truth that out of the twenty-eight poor little rats so far examined only five are up to specification. And the five have not been here long.

Do you remember the ugly green reception room on the first floor? I have removed as much of its greenness as possible,

and fitted it up as the doctor's laboratory. It contains scales and drugs and, most professional touch of all, a dentist's chair and one of those sweet grinding machines. (Bought them second-hand from Doctor Brice in the village, who is putting in, for the gratification of his own patients, white enamel and nickel-plate.) That drilling machine is looked upon as an infernal engine, and I as an infernal monster for instituting it. But every little victim who is discharged FILLED may come to my room every day for a week and receive two pieces of chocolate. Though our children are not conspicuously brave, they are, we discover, fighters. Young Thomas Kehoe nearly bit the doctor's thumb in two after kicking over a tableful of instruments. It requires physical strength as well as skill to be dental adviser to the J. G. H.

Interrupted here to show a benevolent lady over the institution. She asked fifty irrelevant questions, took up an hour of my time, then finally wiped away a tear and left a dollar for my "poor little charges."

So far, my poor little charges are not enthusiastic about these new reforms. They don't care much for the sudden draft of fresh air that has blown in upon them, or the deluge of water. I am shoving in two baths a week, and as soon as we collect tubs enough and a few extra faucets, they are going to get SEVEN.

But at least I have started one most popular reform. Our daily bill of fare has been increased, a change deplored by the cook as causing trouble, and deplored by the rest of the staff as causing

an immoral increase in expense. ECONOMY spelt in capitals has been the guiding principle of this institution for so many years that it has become a religion. I assure my timid co-workers twenty times a day that, owing to the generosity of our president, the endowment has been exactly doubled, and that I have vast sums besides from Mrs. Pendleton for necessary purposes like ice cream. But they simply CAN'T get over the feeling that it is a wicked extravagance to feed these children.

The doctor and I have been studying with care the menus of the past, and we are filled with amazement at the mind that could have devised them. Here is one of her frequently recurring dinners:

BOILED POTATOES BOILED RICE BLANC MANGE

It's a wonder to me that the children are anything more than one hundred and eleven little lumps of starch.

Looking about this institution, one is moved to misquote Robert Browning.

"There may be heaven; there must be hell;
Meantime, there is the John Grier—well!"

S. McB.

THE JOHN GRIER HOME,
Saturday.

Dear Judy:

Dr. Robin MacRae and I fought another battle yesterday over a very trivial matter (in which I was right), and since then I

have adopted for our doctor a special pet name. "Good morning, Enemy!" was my greeting today, at which he was quite solemnly annoyed. He says he does not wish to be regarded as an enemy. He is not in the least antagonistic—so long as I mold my policy upon his wishes!

We have two new children, Isador Gutschneider and Max Yog, given to us by the Baptist Ladies' Aid Society. Where on earth do you suppose those children picked up such a religion? I didn't want to take them, but the poor ladies were very persuasive, and they pay the princely sum of four dollars and fifty cents per week per child. This makes 113, which makes us very crowded. I have half a dozen babies to give away. Find me some kind families who want to adopt.

You know it's very embarrassing not to be able to remember offhand how large your family is, but mine seems to vary from day to day, like the stock market. I should like to keep it at about par. When a woman has more than a hundred children, she can't give them the individual attention they ought to have.

Monday.

This letter has been lying two days on my desk, and I haven't found the time to stick on a stamp. But now I seem to have a free evening ahead, so I will add a page or two more before starting it on a pleasant journey to Florida.

I am just beginning to pick out individual faces among the children. It seemed at first as though I could never learn them, they looked so hopelessly cut out of one pattern, with those

unspeakably ugly uniforms. Now please don't write back that you want the children put into new clothes immediately. I know you do; you've already told me five times. In about a month I shall be ready to consider the question, but just now their insides are more important than their outsides.

There is no doubt about it—orphans in the mass do not appeal to me. I am beginning to be afraid that this famous mother instinct which we hear so much about was left out of my character. Children as children are dirty, spitty little things, and their noses all need wiping. Here and there I pick out a naughty, mischievous little one that awakens a flicker of interest; but for the most part they are just a composite blur of white face and blue check.

With one exception, though. Sadie Kate Kilcoyne emerged from the mass the first day, and bids fair to stay out for all time. She is my special little errand girl, and she furnishes me with all my daily amusement. No piece of mischief has been launched in this institution for the last eight years that did not originate in her abnormal brain. This young person has, to me, a most unusual history, though I understand it's common enough in foundling circles. She was discovered eleven years ago on the bottom step of a Thirty-ninth Street house, asleep in a pasteboard box labeled, "Altman & Co."

"Sadie Kate Kilcoyne, aged five weeks. Be kind to her," was neatly printed on the cover.

The policeman who picked her up took her to Bellevue

where the foundlings are pronounced, in the order of their arrival, "Catholic, Protestant, Catholic, Protestant," with perfect impartiality. Our Sadie Kate, despite her name and blue Irish eyes, was made a Protestant. And here she is growing Irisher and Irisher every day, but, true to her christening, protesting loudly against every detail of life.

Her two little black braids point in opposite directions; her little monkey face is all screwed up with mischief; she is as active as a terrier, and you have to keep her busy every moment. Her record of badnesses occupies pages in the Doomsday Book. The last item reads:

"For stumping Maggie Geer to get a doorknob into her mouth—punishment, the afternoon spent in bed, and crackers for supper."

It seems that Maggie Geer, fitted with a mouth of unusual stretching capacity, got the doorknob in, but couldn't get it out. The doctor was called, and cannily solved the problem with a buttered shoe-horn. "Muckle-mouthed Meg," he has dubbed the patient ever since.

You can understand that my thoughts are anxiously occupied in filling every crevice of Sadie Kate's existence.

There are a million subjects that I ought to consult with the president about. I think it was very unkind of you and him to saddle me with your orphan asylum and run off South to play. It would serve you right if I did everything wrong. While you are traveling about in private cars, and strolling in the moonlight on

palm beaches, please think of me in the drizzle of a New York March, taking care of 113 babies that by rights are yours—and be grateful.

I remain (for a limited time),

S. McBRIDE.

SUP'T JOHN GRIER HOME.

Dear Enemy:

I am sending herewith (under separate cover) Sammy Speir, who got mislaid when you paid your morning visit. Miss Snaith brought him to light after you had gone. Please scrutinize his thumb. I never saw a felon, but I have diagnosed it as such. Yours truly, S. McBRIDE.

SUP'T JOHN GRIER HOME,

March 6.

Dear Judy:

I don't know yet whether the children are going to love me or not, but they DO love my dog. No creature so popular as Singapore ever entered these gates. Every afternoon three boys who have been perfect in deportment are allowed to brush and comb him, while three other good boys may serve him with food and drink. But every Saturday morning the climax of the week is reached, when three superlatively good boys give him a nice lathery bath with hot water and flea soap. The privilege of serving as Singapore's valet is going to be the only incentive I shall need for maintaining discipline.

But isn't it pathetically unnatural for these youngsters to be

living in the country and never owning a pet? Especially when they, of all children, do so need something to love. I am going to manage pets for them somehow, if I have to spend our new endowment for a menagerie. Couldn't you bring back some baby alligators and a pelican? Anything alive will be gratefully received.

This should by rights be my first "Trustees' Day." I am deeply grateful to Jervis for arranging a simple business meeting in New York, as we are not yet on dress parade up here; but we are hoping by the first Wednesday in April to have something visible to show. If all of the doctor's ideas, and a few of my own, get themselves materialized, our trustees will open their eyes a bit when we show them about.

I have just made out a chart for next week's meals, and posted it in the kitchen in the sight of an aggrieved cook. Variety is a word hitherto not found in the lexicon of the J.G.H. You would never dream all of the delightful surprises we are going to have: brown bread, corn pone, graham muffins, samp, rice pudding with LOTS of raisins, thick vegetable soup, macaroni Italian fashion, polenta cakes with molasses, apple dumplings, gingerbread—oh, an endless list! After our biggest girls have assisted in the manufacture of such appetizing dainties, they will almost be capable of keeping future husbands in love with them.

Oh, dear me! Here I am babbling these silly nothings when I have some real news up my sleeve. We have a new worker, a gem of a worker.

Do you remember Betsy Kindred, 1910? She led the glee club and was president of dramatics. I remember her perfectly; she always had lovely clothes. Well, if you please, she lives only twelve miles from here. I ran across her by chance yesterday morning as she was motoring through the village; or, rather, she just escaped running across me.

I never spoke to her in my life, but we greeted each other like the oldest friends. It pays to have conspicuous hair; she recognized me instantly. I hopped upon the running board of her car and said:

"Betsy Kindred, 1910, you've got to come back to my orphan asylum and help me catalogue my orphans."

And it astonished her so that she came. She's to be here four or five days a week as temporary secretary, and somehow I must manage to keep her permanently. She's the most useful person I ever saw. I am hoping that orphans will become such a habit with her that she won't be able to give them up. I think she might stay if we pay her a big enough salary. She likes to be independent of her family, as do all of us in these degenerate times.

In my growing zeal for cataloguing people, I should like to get our doctor tabulated. If Jervis knows any gossip about him, write it to me, please; the worse, the better. He called yesterday to lance a felon on Sammy Speir's thumb, then ascended to my electric-blue parlor to give instructions as to the dressing of thumbs. The duties of a superintendent are manifold.

It was just teatime, so I casually asked him to stay, and

he did! Not for the pleasure of my society,—no, indeed,—but because Jane appeared at the moment with a plate of toasted muffins. He hadn't had any luncheon, it seems, and dinner was a long way ahead. Between muffins (he ate the whole plateful) he saw fit to interrogate me as to my preparedness for this position. Had I studied biology in college? How far had I gone in chemistry? What did I know of sociology? Had I visited that model institution at Hastings?

To all of which I responded affably and openly. Then I permitted myself a question or two: just what sort of youthful training had been required to produce such a model of logic, accuracy, dignity, and common sense as I saw sitting before me? Through persistent prodding I elicited a few forlorn facts, but all quite respectable. You'd think, from his reticence, there'd been a hanging in the family. The MacRae PERE was born in Scotland, and came to the States to occupy a chair at Johns Hopkins; son Robin was shipped back to Auld Reekie for his education. His grandmother was a M'Lachlan of Strathlachan (I am sure she sounds respectable), and his vacations were spent in the Hielands a-chasing the deer.

So much could I gather; so much, and no more. Tell me, I beg, some gossip about my enemy—something scandalous by preference.

Why, if he is such an awfully efficient person does he bury himself in this remote locality? You would think an up-and-coming scientific man would want a hospital at one elbow and a

morgue at the other. Are you sure that he didn't commit a crime and isn't hiding from the law?

I seem to have covered a lot of paper without telling you much.
VIVE LA BAGATELLE! Yours as usual,
SALLIE.

P.S. I am relieved on one point. Dr. MacRae does not pick out his own clothes. He leaves all such unessential trifles to his housekeeper, Mrs. Maggie McGurk.

Again, and irrevocably, good-by!

THE JOHN GRIER HOME,

Wednesday.

Dear Gordon:

Your roses and your letter cheered me for an entire morning, and it's the first time I've approached cheerfulness since the fourteenth of February, when I waved good-bye to Worcester.

Words can't tell you how monotonously oppressive the daily round of institution life gets to be. The only glimmer in the whole dull affair is the fact that Betsy Kindred spends four days a week with us. Betsy and I were in college together, and we do occasionally find something funny to laugh about.

Yesterday we were having tea in my HIDEOUS parlor when we suddenly determined to revolt against so much unnecessary ugliness. We called in six sturdy and destructive orphans, a step-ladder, and a bucket of hot water, and in two hours had every vestige of that tapestry paper off those walls. You can't imagine what fun it is ripping paper off walls.

Two paperhangers are at work this moment hanging the best that our village affords, while a German upholsterer is on his knees measuring my chairs for chintz slip covers that will hide every inch of their plush upholstery.

Please don't get nervous. This doesn't mean that I'm preparing to spend my life in the asylum. It means only that I'm preparing a cheerful welcome for my successor. I haven't dared tell Judy how dismal I find it, because I don't want to cloud Florida; but when she returns to New York she will find my official resignation waiting to meet her in the front hall.

I would write you a long letter in grateful payment for seven pages, but two of my little dears are holding a fight under the window. I dash to separate them.

Yours as ever,

S. McB.

THE JOHN GRIER HOME,

March 8.

My dear Judy:

I myself have bestowed a little present upon the John Grier Home—the refurnishing of the superintendent's private parlor. I saw the first night here that neither I nor any future occupant could be happy with Mrs. Lippett's electric plush. You see, I am planning to make my successor contented and willing to stay.

Betsy Kindred assisted in the rehabilitation of the Lippett's chamber of horrors, and between us we have created a symphony in dull blue and gold. Really and truly, it's one of the loveliest

rooms you've ever seen. The sight of it will be an artistic education to any orphan. New paper on the wall, new rugs on the floor (my own prized Persians expressed from Worcester by an expostulating family). New casement curtains at my three windows, revealing a wide and charming view, hitherto hidden by Nottingham lace. A new big table, some lamps and books and a picture or so, and a real open fire. She had closed the fireplace because it let in air.

I never realized what a difference artistic surroundings make in the peace of one's soul. I sat last night and watched my fire throw nice highlights on my new old fender, and purred with contentment. And I assure you it's the first purr that has come from this cat since she entered the gates of the John Grier Home.

But the refurnishing of the superintendent's parlor is the slightest of our needs. The children's private apartments demand so much basic attention that I can't decide where to begin. That dark north playroom is a shocking scandal, but no more shocking than our hideous dining room or our unventilated dormitories or our tubless lavatories.

If the institution is very saving, do you think it can ever afford to burn down this smelly old original building, and put up instead some nice, ventilated modern cottages? I cannot contemplate that wonderful institution at Hastings without being filled with envy. It would be some fun to run an asylum if you had a plant like that to work with. But, anyway, when you get back to New York and are ready to consult the architect about remodeling,

please apply to me for suggestions. Among other little details I want two hundred feet of sleeping porch running along the outside of our dormitories.

You see, it's this way: our physical examination reveals the fact that about half of our children are anemic—{anemic} {anaemic} (Mercy! what a word!), and a lot of them have tubercular ancestors, and more have alcoholic. Their first need is oxygen rather than education. And if the sickly ones need it, why wouldn't it be good for the well ones? I should like to have every child, winter and summer, sleeping in the open air; but I know that if I let fall such a bomb on the board of trustees, the whole body would explode.

Speaking of trustees, I have met up with the Hon. Cyrus Wykoff, and I really believe that I dislike him more than Dr. Robin MacRae or the kindergarten teacher or the cook. I seem to have a genius for discovering enemies!

Mr. Wykoff called on Wednesday last to look over the new superintendent.

Having lowered himself into my most comfortable armchair, he proceeded to spend the day. He asked my father's business, and whether or not he was well-to-do. I told him that my father manufactured overalls, and that, even in these hard times, the demand for overalls was pretty steady.

He seemed relieved. He approves of the utilitarian aspect of overalls. He had been afraid that I had come from the family of a minister or professor or writer, a lot of high thinking and no

common sense. Cyrus believes in common sense.

And what had been my training for this position?

That, as you know, is a slightly embarrassing question. But I produced my college education and a few lectures at the School of Philanthropy, also a short residence in the college settlement (I didn't tell him that all I had done there was to paint the back hall and stairs). Then I submitted some social work among my father's employees and a few friendly visits to the Home for Female Inebriates.

To all of which he grunted.

I added that I had lately made a study of the care of dependent children, and casually mentioned my seventeen institutions.

He grunted again, and said he didn't take much stock in this new-fangled scientific charity.

At this point Jane entered with a box of roses from the florist's. That blessed Gordon Hallock sends me roses twice a week to brighten the rigors of institution life.

Our trustee began an indignant investigation. He wished to know where I got those flowers, and was visibly relieved when he learned that I had not spent the institution's money for them. He next wished to know who Jane might be. I had foreseen that question and decided to brazen it out.

"My maid," said I.

"Your what?" he bellowed, quite red in the face.

"My maid."

"What is she doing here?"

I amiably went into details. "She mends my clothes, blacks my boots, keeps my bureau drawers in order, washes my hair."

I really thought the man would choke, so I charitably added that I paid her wages out of my own private income, and paid five dollars and fifty cents a week to the institution for her board, and that, though she was big, she didn't eat much.

He allowed that I might make use of one of the orphans for all legitimate service.

I explained—still polite, but growing bored—that Jane had been in my service for many years, and was indispensable.

He finally took himself off, after telling me that he, for one, had never found any fault with Mrs. Lippett. She was a common-sense Christian woman, without many fancy ideas, but with plenty of good solid work in her. He hoped that I would be wise enough to model my policy upon hers!

And what, my dear Judy, do you think of that?

The doctor dropped in a few minutes later, and I repeated the Hon. Cyrus's conversation in detail. For the first time in the history of our intercourse the doctor and I agreed.

"Mrs. Lippett indeed!" he growled. "The blethering auld gomerel! May the Lord send him mair sense!"

When our doctor really becomes aroused, he drops into Scotch. My latest pet name for him (behind his back) is Sandy.

Sadie Kate is sitting on the floor as I write, untangling sewing-silks and winding them neatly for Jane, who is becoming quite attached to the little imp.

"I am writing to your Aunt Judy," say I to Sadie Kate. "What message shall I send from you?"

"I never heard of no Aunt Judy."

"She is the aunt of every good little girl in this school."

"Tell her to come and visit me and bring some candy," says Sadie Kate.

I say so, too.

My love to the president,

SALLIE.

March 13.

MRS. JUDY ABBOTT PENDLETON,

Dear Madam:

Your four letters, two telegrams, and three checks are at hand, and your instructions shall be obeyed just as quickly as this overworked superintendent can manage it.

I delegated the dining room job to Betsy Kindred. One hundred dollars did I allow her for the rehabilitation of that dreary apartment. She accepted the trust, picked out five likely orphans to assist in the mechanical details, and closed the door.

For three days the children have been eating from the desks in the schoolroom. I haven't an idea what Betsy is doing; but she has a lot better taste than I, so there isn't much use in interfering.

It is such a heaven-sent relief to be able to leave something to somebody else, and be sure it will be carried out! With all due respect to the age and experience of the staff I found here, they are not very open to new ideas. As the John Grier Home was

planned by its noble founder in 1875, so shall it be run today.

Incidentally, my dear Judy, your idea of a private dining room for the superintendent, which I, being a social soul, at first scorned, has been my salvation. When I am dead tired I dine alone, but in my live intervals I invite an officer to share the meal, and in the expansive intimacy of the dinner-table I get in my most effective strokes. When it becomes desirable to plant the seeds of fresh air in the soul of Miss Snaith, I invite her to dinner, and tactfully sandwich in a little oxygen between her slices of pressed veal.

Pressed veal is our cook's idea of an acceptable *PIECE DE RESISTANCE* for a dinner party. In another month I am going to face the subject of suitable nourishment for the executive staff.

Meanwhile there are so many things more important than our own comfort that we shall have to worry along on veal.

A terrible bumping has just occurred outside my door. One little cherub seems to be kicking another little cherub downstairs. But I write on undisturbed. If I am to spend my days among orphans, I must cultivate a cheerful detachment.

Did you get Leonora Fenton's cards? She's marrying a medical missionary and going to Siam to live! Did you ever hear of anything so absurd as Leonora presiding over a missionary's menage? Do you suppose she will entertain the heathen with skirt dances?

It isn't any absurder, though, than me in an orphan asylum, or you as a conservative settled matron, or Marty Keene a social

butterfly in Paris. Do you suppose she goes to embassy balls in riding clothes, and what on earth does she do about hair? It couldn't have grown so soon; she must wear a wig. Isn't our class turning out some hilarious surprises?

The mail arrives. Excuse me while I read a nice fat letter from Washington.

Not so nice; quite impertinent. Gordon can't get over the idea that it is a joke, S. McB. in conjunction with one hundred and thirteen orphans. But he wouldn't think it such a joke if he could try it for a few days. He says he is going to drop off here on his next trip North and watch the struggle. How would it be if I left him in charge while I dashed to New York to accomplish some shopping? Our sheets are all worn out, and we haven't more than two hundred and eleven blankets in the house.

Singapore, sole puppy of my heart and home, sends his respectful love. I also, S. McB.

THE JOHN GRIER HOME,

Friday. My dearest Judy:

You should see what your hundred dollars and Betsy Kindred did to that dining room!

It's a dazzling dream of yellow paint. Being a north room, she thought to brighten it; and she has. The walls are kalsomined buff, with a frieze of little molly cottontails skurrying around the top. All of the woodwork—tables and benches included—is a cheerful chrome yellow. Instead of tablecloths, which we can't afford, we have linen runners, with stenciled rabbits hopping

along their length. Also yellow bowls, filled at present with pussywillows, but looking forward to dandelions and cowslips and buttercups. And new dishes, my dear—white, with yellow jonquils (we think), though they may be roses; there is no botany expert in the house. Most wonderful touch of all, we have NAPKINS, the first we have seen in our whole lives. The children thought they were handkerchiefs and ecstatically wiped their noses.

To honor the opening of the new room, we had ice-cream and cake for dessert. It is such a pleasure to see these children anything but cowed and apathetic, that I am offering prizes for boisterousness—to every one but Sadie Kate. She drummed on the table with her knife and fork and sang, "Welcome to dem golden halls."

You remember that illuminated text over the dining-room door—"The Lord Will Provide." We've painted it out, and covered the spot with rabbits. It's all very well to teach so easy a belief to normal children, who have a proper family and roof behind them; but a person whose only refuge in distress will be a park bench must learn a more militant creed than that.

"The Lord has given you two hands and a brain and a big world to use them in. Use them well, and you will be provided for; use them ill, and you will want," is our motto, and that with reservations.

In the sorting process that has been going on I have got rid of eleven children. That blessed State Charities Aid Association

helped me dispose of three little girls, all placed in very nice homes, and one to be adopted legally if the family likes her. And the family will like her; I saw to that. She was the prize child of the institution, obedient and polite, with curly hair and affectionate ways, exactly the little girl that every family needs. When a couple of adopting parents are choosing a daughter, I stand by with my heart in my mouth, feeling as though I were assisting in the inscrutable designs of Fate. Such a little thing turns the balance! The child smiles, and a loving home is hers for life; she sneezes, and it passes her by forever.

Three of our biggest boys have gone to work on farms, one of them out West to a RANCH! Report has it that he is to become a cowboy and Indian fighter and grizzly-bear hunter, though I believe in reality he is to engage in the pastoral work of harvesting wheat. He marched off, a hero of romance, followed by the wistful eyes of twenty-five adventurous lads, who turned back with a sigh to the safely monotonous life of the J. G. H.

Five other children have been sent to their proper institutions. One of them is deaf, one an epileptic, and the other three approaching idiocy. None of them ought ever to have been accepted here. This as an educational institution, and we can't waste our valuable plant in caring for defectives.

Orphan asylums have gone out of style. What I am going to develop is a boarding school for the physical, moral, and mental growth of children whose parents have not been able to provide for their care.

"Orphans" is merely my generic term for the children; a good many of them are not orphans in the least. They have one troublesome and tenacious parent left who won't sign a surrender, so I can't place them out for adoption. But those that are available would be far better off in loving foster-homes than in the best institution that I can ever make. So I am fitting them for adoption as quickly as possible, and searching for the homes.

You ought to run across a lot of pleasant families in your travels; can't you bully some of them into adopting children? Boys by preference. We've got an awful lot of extra boys, and nobody wants them. Talk about anti-feminism! It's nothing to the anti-masculinism that exists in the breasts of adopting parents. I could place out a thousand dimpled little girls with yellow hair, but a good live boy from nine to thirteen is a drug on the market. There seems to be a general feeling that they track in dirt and scratch up mahogany furniture.

Shouldn't you think that men's clubs might like to adopt boys, as a sort of mascot? The boy could be boarded in a nice respectable family, and drawn out by the different members on Saturday afternoons. They could take him to ball games and the circus, and then return him when they had had enough, just as you do with a library book. It would be very valuable training for the bachelors. People are forever talking about the desirability of training girls for motherhood. Why not institute a course of training in fatherhood, and get the best men's clubs to take it up? Will you please have Jervis agitate the matter at his various

clubs, and I'll have Gordon start the idea in Washington. They both belong to such a lot of clubs that we ought to dispose of at least a dozen boys.

I remain,

The ever-distracted mother of 113.

S. McB.

THE JOHN GRIER HOME,

March 18.

Dear Judy:

I have been having a pleasant respite from the 113 cares of motherhood.

Yesterday who should drop down upon our peaceful village but Mr. Gordon Hallock, on his way back to Washington to resume the cares of the nation. At least he said it was on his way, but I notice from the map in the primary room that it was one hundred miles out of his way.

And dear, but I was glad to see him! He is the first glimpse of the outside world I have had since I was incarcerated in this asylum. And such a lot of entertaining businesses he had to talk about! He knows the inside of all the outside things you read in the newspapers; so far as I can make out, he is the social center about which Washington revolves. I always knew he would get on in politics, for he has a way with him; there's no doubt about it.

You can't imagine how exhilarated and set-up I feel, as though I'd come into my own again after a period of social ostracism. I must confess that I get lonely for some one who talks my kind

of nonsensical talk. Betsy trots off home every week end, and the doctor is conversational enough, but, oh, so horribly logical! Gordon somehow seems to stand for the life I belong to,—of country clubs and motors and dancing and sport and politeness,—a poor, foolish, silly life, if you will, but mine own. And I have missed it. This serving society business is theoretically admirable and compelling and interesting, but deadly stupid in its working details. I am afraid I was never born to set the crooked straight.

I tried to show Gordon about and make him take an interest in the babies, but he wouldn't glance at them. He thinks I came just to spite him, which, of course, I did. Your siren call would never have lured me from the path of frivolity had Gordon not been so unpleasantly hilarious at the idea of my being able to manage an orphan asylum. I came here to show him that I could; and now, when I can show him, the beast refuses to look.

I invited him to dinner, with a warning about the pressed veal; but he said no, thanks, that I needed a change. So we went to Brantwood Inn and had broiled lobster. I had positively forgotten that the creatures were edible.

This morning at seven o'clock I was wakened by the furious ringing of the telephone bell. It was Gordon at the station, about to resume his journey to Washington. He was in quite a contrite mood about the asylum, and apologized largely for refusing to look at my children. It was not that he didn't like orphans, he said; it was just that he didn't like them in juxtaposition to me. And to prove his good intentions, he would send them a bag of peanuts.

I feel as fresh and revived after my little fling as though I'd had a real vacation. There's no doubt about it, an hour or so of exciting talk is more of a tonic to me than a pint of iron and strychnine pills.

You owe me two letters, dear Madam. Pay them TOUT DE SUITE, or I lay down my pen forever.

Yours, as usual,

S. McB.

Tuesday, 5 P.M. My dear Enemy:

I am told that during my absence this afternoon you paid us a call and dug up a scandal. You claim that the children under Miss Snaith are not receiving their due in the matter of cod-liver oil.

I am sorry if your medicinal orders have not been carried out, but you must know that it is a difficult matter to introduce that abominably smelling stuff into the inside of a squirming child. And poor Miss Snaith is a very much overworked person. She has ten more children to care for than should rightly fall into the lot of any single woman, and until we find her another assistant, she has very little time for the fancy touches you demand.

Also, my dear Enemy, she is very susceptible to abuse. When you feel in a fighting mood, I wish you would expend your belligerence upon me. I don't mind it; quite the contrary. But that poor lady has retired to her room in a state of hysterics, leaving nine babies to be tucked into bed by whomever it may concern.

If you have any powders that would be settling to her nerves, please send them back by Sadie Kate.

Yours truly,
S. McBRIDE.

Wednesday Morning.

Dear Dr. MacRae:

I am not taking an unintelligent stand in the least; I am simply asking that you come to me with all complaints, and not stir up my staff in any such volcanic fashion as that of yesterday.

I endeavor to carry out all of your orders—of a medical nature—with scrupulous care. In the present case there seems to have been some negligence; I don't know what did become of those fourteen unadministered bottles of cod-liver oil that you have made such a fuss about, but I shall investigate.

And I cannot, for various reasons, pack off Miss Snaith in the summary fashion you demand. She may be, in certain respects, inefficient; but she is kind to the children, and with supervision will answer temporarily.

Yours truly,
S. McBRIDE.

Thursday.

Dear Enemy:

SOYEZ TRANQUILLE. I have issued orders, and in the future the children shall receive all of the cod-liver oil that by rights is theirs. A wilfu' man maun hae his way.

S. McB.

March 22.

Dear Judy:

Asylum life has looked up a trifle during the past few days—since the great Cod-Liver Oil War has been raging. The first skirmish occurred on Tuesday, and I unfortunately missed it, having accompanied four of my children on a shopping trip to the village. I returned to find the asylum teeming with hysterics. Our explosive doctor had paid us a visit.

Sandy has two passions in life: one is for cod-liver oil and the other for spinach, neither popular in our nursery. Some time ago—before I came, in fact—he had ordered cod-liver oil for all of the {aenemic}—Heavens! there's that word again! anemic children, and had given instructions as to its application to Miss Snaith. Yesterday, in his suspicious Scotch fashion, he began nosing about to find out why the poor little rats weren't fattening up as fast as he thought they ought, and he unearthed a hideous scandal. They haven't received a whiff of cod-liver oil for three whole weeks! At that point he exploded, and all was joy and excitement and hysterics.

Betsy says that she had to send Sadie Kate to the laundry on an improvised errand, as his language was not fit for orphan ears. By the time I got home he had gone, and Miss Snaith had retired, weeping, to her room, and the whereabouts of fourteen bottles of cod-liver oil was still unexplained. He had accused her at the top of his voice of taking them herself. Imagine Miss Snaith,—she who looks so innocent and chinless and inoffensive—stealing cod-liver oil from these poor helpless little orphans and guzzling it in private!

Her defense consisted in hysterical assertions that she loved the children, and had done her duty as she saw it. She did not believe in giving medicine to babies; she thought drugs bad for their poor little stomachs. You can imagine Sandy! Oh, dear! oh, dear! To think I missed it!

Well, the tempest raged for three days, and Sadie Kate nearly ran her little legs off carrying peppery messages back and forth between us and the doctor. It is only under stress that I communicate with him by telephone, as he has an interfering old termagant of a housekeeper who "listens in" on the downstairs switch. I don't wish the scandalous secrets of the John Grier spread abroad. The doctor demanded Miss Snaith's instant dismissal, and I refused. Of course she is a vague, unfocused, inefficient old thing, but she does love the children, and with proper supervision is fairly useful.

At least, in the light of her exalted family connections, I can't pack her off in disgrace like a drunken cook. I am hoping in time to eliminate her by a process of delicate suggestion; perhaps I can make her feel that her health requires a winter in California. And also, no matter what the doctor wants, so positive and dictatorial is his manner that just out of self-respect one must take the other side. When he states that the world is round, I instantly assert it to be triangular.

Finally, after three pleasantly exhilarating days, the whole business settled itself. An apology (a very dilute one) was extracted from him for being so unkind to the poor lady, and full

confession, with promises for the future, was drawn from her. It seems that she couldn't bear to make the little dears take the stuff, but, for obvious reasons, she couldn't bear to cross Dr. MacRae, so she hid the last fourteen bottles in a dark corner of the cellar. Just how she was planning to dispose of her loot I don't know. Can you pawn cod-liver oil?

LATER.

Peace negotiations had just ended this afternoon, and Sandy had made a dignified exit, when the Hon. Cyrus Wykoff was announced. Two enemies in the course of an hour are really too much!

The Hon. Cy was awfully impressed with the new dining room, especially when he heard that Betsy had put on those rabbits with her own lily-white hands. Stenciling rabbits on walls, he allows, is a fitting pursuit for a woman, but an executive position like mine is a trifle out of her sphere. He thinks it would be far wiser if Mr. Pendleton did not give me such free scope in the spending of his money.

While we were still contemplating Betsy's mural flight, an awful crash came from the pantry, and we found Gladiola Murphy weeping among the ruins of five yellow plates. It is sufficiently shattering to my nerves to hear these crashes when I am alone, but it is peculiarly shattering when receiving a call from an unsympathetic trustee.

I shall cherish that set of dishes to the best of my ability, but if you wish to see your gift in all its uncracked beauty, I should

advise you to hurry North, and visit the John Grier Home without delay.

Yours as ever,

SALLIE.

March 26. My dear Judy:

I have just been holding an interview with a woman who wants to take a baby home to surprise her husband. I had a hard time convincing her that, since he is to support the child, it might be a delicate attention to consult him about its adoption. She argued stubbornly that it was none of his business, seeing that the onerous work of washing and dressing and training would fall upon her. I am really beginning to feel sorry for men. Some of them seem to have very few rights.

Even our pugnacious doctor I suspect of being a victim of domestic tyranny, and his housekeeper's at that. It is scandalous the way Maggie McGurk neglects the poor man. I have had to put him in charge of an orphan. Sadie Kate, with a very housewifely air, is this moment sitting cross-legged on the hearth rug sewing buttons on his overcoat while he is upstairs tending babies.

You would never believe it, but Sandy and I are growing quite confidential in a dour Scotch fashion. It has become his habit, when homeward bound after his professional calls, to chug up to our door about four in the afternoon, and make the rounds of the house to make sure that we are not developing cholera morbus or infanticide or anything catching, and then present himself at four-thirty at my library door to talk over our mutual problems.

Does he come to see me? Oh, no, indeed; he comes to get tea and toast and marmalade. The man hath a lean and hungry look. His housekeeper doesn't feed him enough. As soon as I get the upper hand of him a little more, I am going to urge him on to revolt.

Meanwhile he is very grateful for something to eat, but oh, so funny in his attempts at social grace! At first he would hold a cup of tea in one hand, a plate of muffins in the other, and then search blankly for a third hand to eat them with. Now he has solved the problem. He turns in his toes and brings his knees together; then he folds his napkin into a long, narrow wedge that fills the crack between them, thus forming a very workable pseudo lap; after that he sits with tense muscles until the tea is drunk. I suppose I ought to provide a table, but the spectacle of Sandy with his toes turned in is the one gleam of amusement that my day affords.

The postman is just driving in with, I trust, a letter from you. Letters make a very interesting break in the monotony of asylum life. If you wish to keep this superintendent contented, you'd better write often.

Mail received and contents noted.

Kindly convey my thanks to Jervis for three alligators in a swamp. He shows rare artistic taste in the selection of his post cards. Your seven-page illustrated letter from Miami arrives at the same time. I should have known Jervis from the palm tree perfectly, even without the label, as the tree has so much the

more hair of the two. Also, I have a polite bread-and-butter letter from my nice young man in Washington, and a book from him, likewise a box of candy. The bag of peanuts for the kiddies he has shipped by express. Did you ever know such assiduity?

Jimmie favors me with the news that he is coming to visit me as soon as father can spare him from the factory. The poor boy does hate that factory so! It isn't that he is lazy; he just simply isn't interested in overalls. But father can't understand such a lack of taste. Having built up the factory, he of course has developed a passion for overalls, which should have been inherited by his eldest son. I find it awfully convenient to have been born a daughter; I am not asked to like overalls, but am left free to follow any morbid career I may choose, such as this.

To return to my mail: There arrives an advertisement from a wholesale grocer, saying that he has exceptionally economical brands of oatmeal, rice, flour, prunes, and dried apples that he packs specially for prisons and charitable institutions. Sounds nutritious, doesn't it?

I also have letters from a couple of farmers, each of whom would like to have a strong, husky boy of fourteen who is not afraid of work, their object being to give him a good home. These good homes appear with great frequency just as the spring planting is coming on. When we investigated one of them last week, the village minister, in answer to our usual question, "Does he own any property?" replied in a very guarded manner, "I think he must own a corkscrew."

You would hardly credit some of the homes that we have investigated. We found a very prosperous country family the other day, who lived huddled together in three rooms in order to keep the rest of their handsome house clean. The fourteen-year girl they wished to adopt, by way of a cheap servant, was to sleep in the same tiny room with their own three children. Their kitchen-dining-parlor apartment was more cluttered up and unaired than any city tenement I ever saw, and the thermometer at eighty-four. One could scarcely say they were living there; they were rather COOKING. You may be sure they got no girl from us!

I have made one invariable rule—every other is flexible. No child is to be placed out unless the proposed family can offer better advantages than we can give. I mean than we are going to be able to give in the course of a few months, when we get ourselves made over into a model institution. I shall have to confess that at present we are still pretty bad.

But anyway, I am very CHOOSEY in regard to homes, and I reject three-fourths of those that offer.

LATER.

Gordon has made honorable amends to my children. His bag of peanuts is here, made of burlap and three feet high.

Do you remember the dessert of peanuts and maple sugar they used to give us at college? We turned up our noses, but ate. I am instituting it here, and I assure you we don't turn up our noses. It is a pleasure to feed children who have graduated from a course

of Mrs. Lippett; they are pathetically grateful for small blessings.

You can't complain that this letter is too short.

Yours,

On the verge of writer's cramp,

S. McB.

THE JOHN GRIER HOME,

Off and on, all day Friday.

Dear Judy:

You will be interested to hear that I have encountered another enemy—the doctor's housekeeper. I had talked to the creature several times over the telephone, and had noted that her voice was not distinguished by the soft, low accents that mark the caste of "Vere de Vere"; but now I have seen her. This morning, while returning from the village, I made a slight detour, and passed our doctor's house. Sandy is evidently the result of environment—olive green, with a mansard roof and the shades pulled down. You would think he had just been holding a funeral.

I don't wonder that the amenities of life have somewhat escaped the poor man. After studying the outside of his house, I was filled with curiosity to see if the inside matched.

Having sneezed five times before breakfast this morning, I decided to go in and consult him professionally. To be sure, he is a children's specialist, but sneezes are common to all ages. So I boldly marched up the steps and rang the bell.

Hark! What sound is that that breaks upon our revelry? The Hon. Cy's voice, as I live, approaching up the stairs. I've letters

to write, and I can't be tormented by his blether, so I am rushing Jane to the door with orders to look him firmly in the eye and tell him I am out.

On with the dance! Let joy be unconfined. He's gone.

But those eight stars represent eight agonizing minutes spent in the dark of my library closet. The Hon. Cy received Jane's communication with the affable statement that he would sit down and wait. Whereupon he entered and sat. But did Jane leave me to languish in the closet? No; she enticed him to the nursery to see the AWFUL thing that Sadie Kate has done. The Hon. Cy loves to see awful things, particularly when done by Sadie Kate. I haven't an idea what scandal Jane is about to disclose; but no matter, he has gone.

Where was I? Oh, yes; I had rung the doctor's bell.

The door was opened by a large, husky person with her sleeves rolled up. She looked very businesslike, with a hawk's nose and cold gray eyes.

"Well?" said she, her tone implying that I was a vacuum-cleaning agent.

"Good morning." I smiled affably, and stepped inside. "Is this Mrs. McGurk?"

"It is," said she. "An' ye'll be the new young woman in the orphan asylum?"

"I am that," said I. "Is himself at home?"

"He is not," said she.

"But this is his office hour."

"He don't keep it regular'."

"He ought," said I, sternly. "Kindly tell him that Miss McBride called to consult him, and ask him to look in at the John Grier Home this afternoon."

"Ump'!" grunted Mrs. McGurk, and closed the door so promptly that she shut in the hem of my skirt.

When I told the doctor this afternoon, he shrugged his shoulders, and observed that that was Maggie's gracious way.

"And why do you put up with Maggie?" said I.

"And where would I find any one better?" said he. "Doing the work for a lone man who comes as irregularly to meals as a twenty-four-hour day will permit is no sinecure. She furnishes little sunshine in the home, but she does manage to produce a hot dinner at nine o'clock at night."

Just the same, I am willing to wager that her hot dinners are neither delicious nor well served. She's an inefficient, lazy old termagant, and I know why she doesn't like me. She imagines that I want to steal away the doctor and oust her from a comfortable position, something of a joke, considering. But I am not undeceiving her; it will do the old thing good to worry a little. She may cook him better dinners, and fatten him up a trifle. I understand that fat men are good-natured.

TEN O'CLOCK.

I don't know what silly stuff I have been writing to you off and on all day, between interruptions. It has got to be night at last,

and I am too tired to do so much as hold up my head. Your song tells the sad truth, "There is no joy in life but sleep."

I bid you good night.

S. McB.

Isn't the English language absurd? Look at those forty monosyllables in a row!

J. G. H.,

April 1.

Dear Judy:

I have placed out Isador Gutschneider. His new mother is a Swedish woman, fat and smiling, with blue eyes and yellow hair. She chose him out of the whole nurseryful of children because he was the brunettest baby there. She has always loved brunettes, but in her most ambitious dreams has never hoped to have one of her own. His name is going to be changed to Oscar Carlson, after his new dead uncle.

My first trustees' meeting is to occur next Wednesday. I confess that I am not looking forward to it with impatience—especially as an inaugural address by me will be its chief feature. I wish our president were here to back me up! But at least I am sure of one thing. I am never going to adopt the Uriah Heepish attitude toward trustees that characterized Mrs. Lippett's manners. I shall treat "first Wednesdays" as a pleasant social diversion, my day at home, when the friends of the asylum gather for discussion and relaxation; and I shall endeavor not to let our pleasures discommode the orphans. You see how I have taken to heart the

unhappy experiences of that little Jerusha.

Your last letter has arrived, and no suggestion in it of traveling North. Isn't it about time that you were turning your faces back toward Fifth Avenue? Hame is hame, be 't ever sae hamely. Don't you marvel at the Scotch that flows so readily from my pen? Since being acquent' wi' Sandy, I hae gathered a muckle new vocabulary. The dinner gong! I leave you, to devote a revivifying half-hour to mutton hash. We eat to live in the John Grier Home.

SIX O'CLOCK.

The Hon. Cy has been calling again. He drops in with great frequency, hoping to catch me IN DELICTU. How I do not like that man! He is a pink, fat, puffy old thing, with a pink, fat, puffy soul. I was in a very cheery, optimistic frame of mind before his arrival, but now I shall do nothing but grumble for the rest of the day.

He deplores all of the useless innovations that I am endeavoring to introduce, such as a cheerful playroom, prettier clothes, baths, and better food and fresh air and play and fun and ice-cream and kisses. He says that I will unfit these children to occupy the position in life that God has called them to occupy.

At that my Irish blood came to the surface, and I told him that if God had planned to make all of these 113 little children into useless, ignorant, unhappy citizens, I was going to fool God! That we weren't educating them out of their class in the least. We were educating them INTO their natural class much more effectually than is done in the average family. We weren't trying to force

them into college if they hadn't any brains, as happens with rich men's sons; and we weren't putting them to work at fourteen if they were naturally ambitious, as happens with poor men's sons. We were watching them closely and individually and discovering their level. If our children showed an aptitude to become farm laborers and nurse-maids, we were going to teach them to be the best possible farm laborers and nurse-maids; and if they showed a tendency to become lawyers, we would turn them into honest, intelligent, open-minded lawyers. (He's a lawyer himself, but certainly not an open-minded one.)

He grunted when I had finished my remarks, and stirred his tea vigorously. Whereupon I suggested that perhaps he needed another lump of sugar, and dropped it in, and left him to absorb it.

The only way to deal with trustees is with a firm and steady hand. You have to keep them in their places.

Oh, my dear! that smudge in the corner was caused by Singapore's black tongue. He is trying to send you an affectionate kiss. Poor Sing thinks he's a lap dog—isn't it a tragedy when people mistake their vocations? I myself am not always certain that I was born an orphan asylum superintendent.

Yours, til deth,

S. McB.

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE, JOHN GRIER HOME,

April 4.

THE PENDLETON FAMILY,

Palm Beach, Florida.

Dear Sir and Madam:

I have weathered my first visitors' day, and made the trustees a beautiful speech. Everybody said it was a beautiful speech—even my enemies.

Mr. Gordon Hallock's recent visit was exceptionally opportune; I gleaned from him many suggestions as to how to carry an audience.

"Be funny."—I told about Sadie Kate and a few other cherubs that you don't know.

"Keep it concrete and fitted to the intelligence of your audience."—I watched the Hon. Cy, and never said a thing that he couldn't understand.

"Flatter your hearers."—I hinted delicately that all of these new reforms were due to the wisdom and initiative of our peerless trustees.

"Give it a high moral tone, with a dash of pathos."—I dwelt upon the parentless condition of these little wards of Society. And it was very affecting—my enemy wiped away a tear!

Then I fed them up on chocolate and whipped cream and lemonade and tartar sandwiches, and sent them home, expansive and beaming, but without any appetite for dinner.

I dwell thus at length upon our triumph, in order to create in you a happy frame of mind, before passing to the higeous calamity that so nearly wrecked the occasion.

"Now follows the dim horror of my tale,
And I feel I'm growing gradually pale,
For, even at this day,
Though its smell has passed away,
When I venture to remember it, I quail!"

You never heard of our little Tammas Kehoe, did you? I simply haven't featured Tammas because he requires so much ink and time and vocabulary. He's a spirited lad, and he follows his dad, a mighty hunter of old—that sounds like more Bab Ballads, but it isn't; I made it up as I went along.

We can't break Tammas of his inherited predatory instincts. He shoots the chickens with bows and arrows and lassoes the pigs and plays bull-fight with the cows—and oh, is very destructive! But his crowning villainy occurred an hour before the trustees' meeting, when we wanted to be so clean and sweet and engaging.

It seems that he had stolen the rat trap from the oat bin, and had set it up in the wood lot, and yesterday morning was so fortunate as to catch a fine big skunk.

Singapore was the first to report the discovery. He returned to the house and rolled on the rugs in a frenzy of remorse over his part of the business. While our attention was occupied with Sing, Tammas was busily skinning his prey in the seclusion of the woodshed. He buttoned the pelt inside his jacket, conveyed it by a devious route through the length of this building, and concealed it under his bed where he thought it wouldn't be found.

Then he went—per schedule—to the basement to help freeze

the ice-cream for our guests. You notice that we omitted ice-cream from the menu.

In the short time that remained we created all the counter-irritation that was possible. Noah (negro furnace man) started smudge fires at intervals about the grounds. Cook waved a shovelful of burning coffee through the house. Betsy sprinkled the corridors with ammonia. Miss Snaith daintily treated the rugs with violet water. I sent an emergency call to the doctor who came and mixed a gigantic solution of chlorid of lime. But still, above and beneath and through every other odor, the unlaid ghost of Tammas's victim cried for vengeance.

The first business that came up at the meeting, was whether we should dig a hole and bury, not only Tammas, but the whole main building. You can see with what finesse I carried off the shocking event, when I tell you that the Hon. Cy went home chuckling over a funny story, instead of grumbling at the new superintendent's inability to manage boys.

We've our ain bit weird to dree!

As ever,

S. McBRIDE.

THE JOHN GRIER HOME,

Friday, likewise Saturday.

Dear Judy:

Singapore is still living in the carriage house, and receiving a daily carbolic-scented bath from Tammas Kehoe. I am hoping that some day, in the distant future, my darling will be fit to

return.

You will be pleased to hear that I have instituted a new method of spending your money. We are henceforth to buy a part of our shoes and drygoods and drug store comestibles from local shops, at not quite such low prices as the wholesale jobbers give, but still at a discount, and the education that is being thrown in is worth the difference. The reason is this: I have made the discovery that half of my children know nothing of money or its purchasing power. They think that shoes and corn meal and red-flannel petticoats and mutton stew and gingham shirts just float down from the blue sky.

Last week I dropped a new green dollar bill out of my purse, and an eight-year-old urchin picked it up and asked if he could keep that picture of a bird. (American eagle in the center.) That child had never seen a bill in his life! I began an investigation, and discovered that dozens of children in this asylum have never bought anything or have ever seen anybody buy anything. And we are planning to turn them out at sixteen into a world governed entirely by the purchasing power of dollars and cents! Good heavens! just think of it! They are not to lead sheltered lives with somebody eternally looking after them; they have got to know how to get the very most they can out of every penny they can manage to earn.

I pondered the question all one night, at intervals, and went to the village at nine o'clock the next morning. I held conferences with seven storekeepers; found four open-minded and helpful,

two doubtful, and one actively stupid. I have started with the four—drygoods, groceries, shoes, and stationery. In return for somewhat large orders from us, they are to turn themselves and their clerks into teachers for my children, who are to go to the stores, inspect the stocks, and do their own purchasing with real money.

For example, Jane needs a spool of blue sewing-silk and a yard of elastic; so two little girls, intrusted with a silver quarter, trot hand in hand to Mr. Meeker's. They match the silk with anxious care, and watch the clerk jealously while he measures the elastic, to make sure that he doesn't stretch it. Then they bring back six cents change, receive my thanks and praise, and retire to the ranks tingling with a sense of achievement.

Isn't it pathetic? Ordinary children of ten or twelve automatically know so many things that our little incubator chicks have never dreamed of. But I have a variety of plans on foot. Just give me time, and you will see. One of these days I'll be turning out some nearly normal youngsters.

LATER.

I've an empty evening ahead, so I'll settle to some further gossip with you.

You remember the peanuts that Gordon Hallock sent? Well, I was so gracious when I thanked him that it incited him to fresh effort. He apparently went into a toy shop, and placed himself unreservedly in the hands of an enterprising clerk. Yesterday two husky expressmen deposited in our front hall a crate full of

expensive furry animals built to be consumed by the children of the rich. They are not exactly what I should have purchased had I been the one to disburse such a fortune, but my babies find them very huggable. The chicks are now taking to bed with them lions and elephants and bears and giraffes. I don't know what the psychological effect will be. Do you suppose when they grow up they will all join the circus?

Oh, dear me, here is Miss Snaith, coming to pay a social call.

Good-by.

S.

P.S. The prodigal has returned. He sends his respectful regards, and three wags of the tail.

THE JOHN GRIER HOME,

April 7. My dear Judy:

I have just been reading a pamphlet on manual training for girls, and another on the proper diet for institutions—right proportions of proteins, fats, starches, etc. In these days of scientific charity, when every problem has been tabulated, you can run an institution by chart. I don't see how Mrs. Lippett could have made all the mistakes she did, assuming, of course, that she knew how to read. But there is one quite important branch of institutional work that has not been touched upon, and I myself am gathering data. Some day I shall issue a pamphlet on the "Management and Control of Trustees."

I must tell you the joke about my enemy—not the Hon. Cy, but my first, my original enemy. He has undertaken a new field

of endeavor. He says quite soberly (everything he does is sober; he has never smiled yet) that he has been watching me closely since my arrival, and though I am untrained and foolish and flippant (sic), he doesn't think that I am really so superficial as I at first appeared. I have an almost masculine ability of grasping the whole of a question and going straight to the point.

Aren't men funny? When they want to pay you the greatest compliment in their power, they naively tell you that you have a masculine mind. There is one compliment, incidentally, that I shall never be paying him. I cannot honestly say that he has a quickness of perception almost feminine.

So, though Sandy quite plainly sees my faults, still, he thinks that some of them may be corrected; and he has determined to carry on my education from the point where the college dropped it. A person in my position ought to be well read in physiology, biology, psychology, sociology, and eugenics; she should know the hereditary effects of insanity, idiocy, and alcohol; should be able to administer the Binet test; and should understand the nervous system of a frog. In pursuance whereof, he has placed at my disposal his own scientific library of four thousand volumes. He not only fetches in the books he wants me to read, but comes and asks questions to make sure I haven't skipped.

We devoted last week to the life and letters of the Jukes family. Margaret, the mother of criminals, six generations ago, founded a prolific line, and her progeny, mostly in jail, now numbers some twelve hundred. Moral: watch the children with a bad heredity so

carefully that none of them can ever have any excuse for growing up into Jukeses.

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