

WELLS

CAROLYN

PATTY'S

FRIENDS

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CHAPTER I

AN AFTERNOON TEA

“I wish I had a twin sister,” said Patty; “no, that wouldn’t do, either. I wish I were twins, and could be both of them myself.”

“What a sensible wish!” commented Nan. “But why do you want to double yourself up in that way?”

“So I could go to two places at once. Here I have two lovely invitations for this afternoon, and I don’t know which I want to accept most. One is a musicale at Mrs. Hastings’, and the other is a picture exhibition at the New Gallery.”

“They sound delightful. Can’t you manage to go to both?”

“No, they’re too far apart; and they’re both at four o’clock, anyway. I think I’ll choose the musicale, for I’ll surely get another chance to see the pictures.”

“Yes, of course you will,” agreed Nan, a little absently, for she was reading some newly arrived letters.

The Fairfields were in London, and were comfortably established in the Savoy Hotel. It was April, and though they intended to travel later in the summer, their plans were as yet indefinite, and they were enjoying the many and varied delights of the London season.

To be sure, Nan and Mr. Fairfield were invited to many dinners and elaborate entertainments which Patty was too young to attend, but her time was pleasantly filled with afternoon garden parties or teas, while mornings were often devoted to sight-seeing.

Patty was almost eighteen, and though not allowed quite the untrammelled freedom she would have had in America, she was not kept so utterly secluded as English girls of her age. Sometimes she would go all alone to Westminster Abbey or to the National Gallery, and enjoy hugely a solitary hour or two. At other times, Nan or her father, or some girl friend, would go with her.

The Fairfields had begun their stay in London with only a few friends, but these had introduced others, until now their circle of acquaintances was large, and the immediate result of this was a sheaf of invitations in every mail. For, during the season, Londoners are hospitable folk, and give entertainments morning, noon, and night. At first, the Fairfields had thought they would take a house, and so have a home of their own. But Mr. Fairfield concluded that if Nan had the duties of a housekeeper, her trip would not be a holiday, so he declared they would live at a large hotel, and thus have a chance to observe the gay life of London.

And so cosy and comfortable were their apartments at the Savoy, that they soon began to feel quite at home there. And Patty, as we all know, was one who could adapt herself to any mode of living.

Of a naturally happy and contented disposition, she accepted everything as it came, and enjoyed everything with the enthusiasm so often seen in American girls.

It greatly amused her to note the differences between herself and the English girls.

To her mind, they seemed to have no enthusiasm, no enterprise, and little capacity for enjoyment, while Patty enjoyed every experience that came to her, whether a visit to Windsor Castle, a day at Stratford, or a simple afternoon tea in their own rooms.

“I seem to have been set back two or three years,” she said to Nan, one day. “In New York I was almost a full-fledged young lady, but over here, I’m treated as a little girl.”

“It doesn’t matter,” said Nan, sensibly. “You are what you are, and if the different countries choose to treat you differently, it doesn’t matter, does it?”

“Not a bit. I’m Patty Fairfield, and I’m almost eighteen, whether I’m in California or the Fiji Islands. But it does amuse me, the way the Londoners think we live at home. They really believe American ladies go to market in the morning, loaded down with diamonds. You don’t often see that in New York, do you, Nan?”

“No, I don’t think I ever saw a New York matron wearing elaborate jewelry to market. But then I never go to market myself, and I don’t know many people who do. I think that bediamonded marketer story is an old tradition, which is really pretty well worn out.”

“And the London ladies needn’t talk, anyway. If we did wear jewels to market, it wouldn’t be a bit more absurd than the way they dress to go shopping in the morning. Long, trailing, frilly gowns of pink and blue chiffon, with swishing lace-ruffled petticoats, that just drag through the dirt of the streets.”

“Now aren’t you criticising them as unfairly as they describe us?”

“No, for what I say is true. I’ve seen them fluttering about. And, anyway, I don’t mean to be mean. I like them lots. I just love the London ladies, they’re so kind to me, and invite me to such lovely things. Of course I don’t care if they choose to wear garden-party clothes along Bond Street. We all have some ridiculous ways.”

Pretty Patty was fond of pretty clothes, and the shops of Bond Street held great attractions for her, though she herself wore a real tailor-made costume when shopping. At first, Nan had exercised a supervision over her purchases, but Patty had shown such good taste, and such quick and unerring judgment as to fabrics and colors, that it had come about that Patty more often advised Nan in her choosing, than the other way.

And so, many a pleasant morning was spent in the beautiful London shops, buying things they wanted, looking at things they did not want, or noting with interest the ways and means peculiar to English shopkeepers.

Thus the days went happily by, and they had already been more than a fortnight in London, while as yet their plans for future travel were unmade. Mr. and Mrs. Fairfield wanted to go to Germany, Switzerland, and other countries, but Patty didn’t care so much for that as for English country, or small nearby towns. So the matter was left unsettled, though short and desultory discussions were held now and then.

But oftener their minds were taken up with the doings of the moment, and they complacently left the future to itself.

“Well, then I think I’ll go to the musicale,” said Patty. “What would you wear?”

“That new light blue chiffon of yours, with the lace bolero, is just the thing.”

“Yes, and my new broad-leafed chip hat, with the roses piled all over it.”

Patty ran away to her own room, and after a time returned in the pretty summer costume.

“How do I look?” she asked, smilingly, of Nan.

Nan smiled back at the lovely vision, for Patty’s vanity was of a mild and innocent sort, and was rather a childish delight in dainty colors and fabrics, than any conceit over her own beauty.

For beautiful Patty certainly was, in a sweet, wholesome, girlish way, and not the least of her charms was her naturalness of manner and her entire lack of self-consciousness.

She looked especially winning in the light, filmy dress, and the big hat, weighed down with roses.

“You look all right, Patty,” answered Nan. “That’s a duck of a frock, and suits you perfectly. Are you going alone?”

“Yes; father says I may go alone in our own carriage to any afternoon thing. The Hartleys will bring me home, so sha’n’t I send the carriage back for you?”

“Yes, I wish you would. I’m going to a tea or two, and then we’re dining out. You’re to dine with the Hartleys, aren’t you?”

“Yes, if it is dinner. It’s more likely to be schoolroom tea. Mabel Hartley is sixteen, but I doubt if she’s allowed at dinner yet.”

“Nonsense, of course she is. Well, then, if they’re sending you home, Louise needn’t go after you?”

“No; they’ll send somebody. Good-bye, Nan.”

“Good-bye, Patty. Have a lovely time.”

“Oh, yes; I always do.”

Away went Patty and her frills, and when she reached Chesterton Mansions, she was soon established under the wing of her hostess, Mrs. Hastings.

That lady was very glad to have the pretty American girl as her guest, and she introduced Patty to so many people that it was almost bewildering. But after a time, the music began, and Patty was glad to sit still and listen.

It was very fine music, for that is the sort that Londoners usually offer at their teas, and Patty thoroughly enjoyed the singing and the violin-playing. She was a little afraid that Mrs. Hastings would ask her to sing, but as it was a programme of professionals this did not happen.

When the Hartleys came, Mabel at once made her way to Patty’s side and sat down by her.

“I’m so glad to see you again,” she said, “and it’s so lovely that you’re going home with us.”

“I’m glad, too,” returned Patty, “it was lovely of you to ask me.”

Mabel Hartley was an English girl, and was about as different from Patty as could well be imagined, and perhaps for this reason the two were very good friends. Although they had met only a few times, they liked each other from the beginning, and both were ready to continue the friendship.

Mabel was large and stout, with the solidity which characterises the British young girls. She was large-boned and not very graceful, but she carried herself with a patrician air that told of past generations of good-breeding. Her complexion was of that pure pink and white seen only on English faces, but her pale, sandy hair and light blue eyes failed to add the deeper color that was needed. Her frock was an uninteresting shade of tan, and did not hang evenly, while her hat was one of those tubby affairs little short of ridiculous.

Patty fairly ached to re-clothe her, in some pretty clear color, and a becoming hat.

The girls were politely silent while the music was going on, but in the intervals between the numbers they chattered glibly.

“That’s Grace Meredith and her brother Tom just coming in,” said Mabel. “I hope they’ll come over here; you’ll like them, I know.”

The Merediths did come over, and were promptly introduced to Patty.

“Do you know,” said Tom Meredith, as he shook hands in cordial, boyish fashion, “you’re the first American girl I’ve ever met.”

“Am I, really?” laughed Patty. “Now don’t ask me if we always wear our diamonds to market, for truly the American women who go to market rarely have any diamonds.”

“I never believed that diamond story, anyway,” responded Tom, gravely, “but I’m glad to have you tell me it isn’t true. I’m perfectly unprejudiced about America, though. I’m ready to believe it’s the best country in the world, outside of our own little island.”

“Good for you!” cried Patty. “Then I’m ready to acknowledge that I like England next best to America.”

“Have you been here long?” asked Grace.

“No, only about two weeks, but I love London better every day, and I know I shall love the English country. Just the glimpse I caught coming in the train from Dover was delightful.”

“You should see the Hartleys’ country place,” declared Tom, with enthusiasm. “It’s a ripping old house, two hundred years old, and all that. And such parks and orchards! Well!”

“I hope you will come to see it, Patty,” said Mabel, a little wistfully, and Patty wondered why the girl’s tone had in it a note of sadness.

But just then, as the music was over, Mrs. Hastings asked them to go to the tea-room, and the group of young people followed in her wake.

“You girls sit here,” said Tom, selecting a jolly-looking alcove, with window-seats and red cushions, “while I stalk some food.”

He was back in a few moments, followed by a waiter, who brought a tray of teacups and plates of sweet cakes.

Tom, himself, bore triumphantly a covered silver dish.

“Muffins!” he announced, in a jubilant voice. “Hot, buttered muffins! Crickets, what luck!”

The hot muffins, buttered and quartered, were indeed delicious, and England and America seemed at one in showing an appreciative appetite for them.

“We don’t have these in America,” said Patty, surveying her bit of muffin with admiration. “We have good sandwiches, though.”

“We almost never have sandwiches,” said Grace.

“You don’t need to,” said Patty, quickly. “Your wonderful bread and butter is too good to be spoiled with a sandwich filling of any sort.”

“Most all things are good eating at an afternoon tea,” observed Tom. “Somehow, at five o’clock I’m always so hungry I could eat a brickbat if it were toasted and buttered.”

“Afternoon tea is really an acquired taste with us,” said Patty. “You seem to have it naturally, even when you’re alone, but we only have it when we have guests.”

“Really?” said Mabel, in astonishment. “Why, we’d as soon think of omitting breakfast or dinner as tea.”

“It’s a lovely meal,” said Patty, giving a little sigh of satisfaction, as her last crumb of muffin disappeared. “Such good things to eat, and then it’s so cosy and informal to sit around in easy chairs, instead of at a big table.”

“But the ideal place for tea is on the lawn,” said Tom. “The open air and the trees and birds and flowers are even a better setting for it, than an interior like this.”

“I hope I shall have that kind this summer,” said Patty. “I’m invited to several country houses, and I know I shall enjoy it immensely.”

“Indeed you will,” said Mabel, and again Patty thought she detected a shade of sadness in her friend’s eyes.

But if Mabel was not exactly gay, Grace Meredith made up for it. She was full of fun and laughter, and both she and Tom made comical speeches until Patty feared she would disgrace herself laughing.

“What’s the joke?” asked Mrs. Hartley, coming to collect her young people and take them home.

“Tom is making verses about the people here,” explained Grace. “Tell Mrs. Hartley the one about the violinist, Tom.”

“Don’t think it’s rude, Mrs. Hartley,” said young Meredith; “truly, it isn’t meant to be. But for that classic-browed genius, with his chrysanthemum of tawny-colored hair, isn’t this a pleasant token of regard and esteem?”

“This is our latest social lion,
So, to look modest, he’s tryin’ and tryin’.”

“It’s very beautiful,” said Mrs. Hartley, smiling, “and I daresay Professor Prendergast would enjoy it himself, were he to hear it.”

“He might,” said Tom, doubtfully, “but musicians rarely have a sense of humour, at least, about themselves.”

“That’s true,” agreed Mrs. Hartley, “and now, Mabel and Miss Fairfield, we must be going on.”
Good-byes were soon said, and in the Hartleys’ carriage Patty was taken away to her first visit in an English home.

CHAPTER II

RIDDLES AND GAMES

Much to Patty's satisfaction Mabel Hartley was in the habit of dining with her elders and was not condemned to "schoolroom tea."

The family was not large, consisting only of Mrs. Hartley, her mother, Mrs. Cromarty, her two sons, and Mabel. The sons, Sinclair and Robert, were big, stalwart fellows, a few years older than Mabel.

Patty liked them at once, for they were cordial and hearty in their greetings, and quite at ease in their conversation.

"I say, Mater," began Bob, after they were seated at dinner, "there's a stunning garden-party on at Regent's Park next week. Don't you think we can all go? Tickets only two shillings each."

"What is it, my son? A charity affair?"

"Yes. Rest cure for semi-orphans, or something. But they've all sorts of jolly shows, and the Stagefright Club is going to give a little original play. Oh, say we go!"

"I'll see about it," answered Mrs. Hartley. "Perhaps, if we make up a party, Miss Fairfield will go with us."

"I'd love to," said Patty. "I've never seen a real English garden party."

"Oh, this isn't a real English garden party in the true sense," said Sinclair. "To see that, you must be in the country. But this is a public London garden party and typical of its sort. You'll like it, I'm sure. Will you go with us, Grandy?"

At first it seemed incongruous to Patty to hear the dignified Mrs. Cromarty addressed by such a nickname, but as she came to know her better, the name seemed really appropriate. The lady was of the class known as *grande dame*, and her white hair and delicate, sharply-cut features betokened a high type of English aristocracy. Her voice was very sweet and gentle, and she smiled at her big grandson, as she replied:

"No, my boy; I lost my taste for garden parties some years ago. But it's a fine setting for you young people, and I hope Emmeline will take you all."

"Mother said she'd see about it," said Mabel, "and that's always the same as 'yes.' If it's going to be 'no,' she says, 'I'll think it over.'"

"It's a great thing to understand your mother-tongue so well," said Patty, laughing; "now I shouldn't have known those distinctions."

"We have a wonderful talent for languages," said Sinclair, gravely. "Indeed, we have a language of our own. Shall I teach it to you?"

"You might try," said Patty, "but I'm not at all clever as a linguist."

"You may not learn it easily, but it can be taught in one sentence. It consists in merely using the initial of the word instead of the word itself."

"But so many words begin with the same initial," said Patty, bewildered at the idea.

"Yes, but it's ever so much easier than you'd think. Now listen. Wouldn't you understand me if I said: 'D y w t g t t g p?'"

"Say it again, please, and say it slowly."

Sinclair repeated the letters, and Patty clapped her hands, crying: "Yes, yes, of course I understand. You mean 'Do you want to go to the garden party?' Now, listen to me while I answer: Y I w t g i i d r."

"Good!" exclaimed Mabel. "You said: 'Yes, I want to go, if it doesn't rain.' Oh, you are a quick pupil."

"But those are such easy sentences," said Patty, as she considered the matter.

“That’s the point,” said Bob, “most sentences, at least, the ones we use most, *are* easy. If I should meet you unexpectedly, and say H d y d? you’d know I meant How do you do? Or if I took leave, and said G b, you’d understand good-bye. Those are the simplest possible examples. Now, on the other hand, if I were to read you a long speech from the morning paper, you’d probably miss many of the long words, but that’s the other extreme. We’ve talked in initials for years, and rarely are we uncertain as to the sense, though we may sometimes skip a word here and there.”

“But what good is it?” asked Patty.

“No good at all,” admitted Bob; “but it’s fun. And after you’re used to it, you can talk that way so fast that any one listening couldn’t guess what you are saying. Sometimes when we’re riding on an omnibus, or anything like that, it’s fun to talk initials and mystify the people.”

“D y o d t?” said Patty, her eyes twinkling.

“Yes, we often do that,” returned Bob, greatly gratified at the rapid progress of the new pupil. “You must be fond of puzzles, to catch this up so quickly.”

“I am,” said Patty. “I’ve guessed puzzles ever since I was a little girl. I always solve all I can find in the papers, and sometimes I take prizes for them.”

“We do that too,” said Mabel; “and sometimes we make puzzles and send them to the papers and they print them. Let’s make some for each other this evening.”

After dinner the young people gathered round the table in the pleasant library, and were soon busy with paper and pencils. Patty found the Hartleys a match for her in quickness and ingenuity, but she was able to guess as great a proportion of their puzzles as they of hers.

After amusing themselves with square words and double acrostics, they drifted to conundrums, and Bob asked:

“Which letter of the Dutch alphabet spells an English lady of rank?”

“That’s not fair,” objected Patty, “because I don’t know the Dutch alphabet.”

“That doesn’t matter,” said Mabel, “you can guess it just as well without.”

“Indeed I can’t, and besides I don’t know the names of all the English ladies of rank.”

“That doesn’t matter either,” said Sinclair, smiling; “it spells a title, not a name; and one you know very well.”

“I can’t guess it, anyway,” said Patty, after a few moment’s thought. “I give it up; tell me.”

“Why, Dutch S,” said Bob, and Patty agreed that it was a good catch.

“Now, I’ll catch you,” said Patty. “You all know your London pretty well, I suppose, and are familiar with the places of interest. Well, Mabel, why is your nose like St. Paul’s?”

Mabel thought hard, and so did the boys.

“Is my nose like St. Paul’s, too?” asked Bob, thoughtfully, stroking his well-shaped feature.

Patty looked at it critically. “Yes,” she said, “and so is Sinclair’s. But why?”

At last they gave it up, and Patty said, triumphantly, “Because it is made of flesh and blood.”

They all screamed with laughter, for they quickly saw the point, and realised that it was the historic character referred to, and not the cathedral.

“Here’s one,” said Sinclair: “Where did the Prince of Wales go on his eleventh birthday?” But Patty was quite quick enough for this. “Into his twelfth year,” she answered promptly. “And now listen to this: A man walking out at night, met a beggar asking alms. The man gave him ten cents. He met another beggar and gave him fifteen cents. What time was it?”

“Time for him to go home,” declared Bob, but Patty said that was not the right answer.

“Springtime,” guessed Mabel, “because the man was in such a good humor.”

“No,” said Patty, “it was quarter to two.”

Her hearers looked utterly blank at this, and, suddenly realising that they were not very familiar with American coins, Patty explained the joke. They saw it, of course, but seemed to think it not very good, and Sinclair whimsically insisted on calling it, “a shilling to Bob,” which he said was equally nonsensical.

“Give us one of your poetry ones, Grandy,” said Bob to Mrs. Cromarty, who sat by, quietly enjoying the young people’s fun.

“Miss Fairfield may not care for the old-fashioned enigma, but I will offer this one,” and in her fine, clear voice the old lady recited her verse with elocutionary effect:

“Afloat upon the ocean
My graceful form you see;

The protector of the people,
The protector of a tree.

I often save a patient,
Though a doctor I am not;

My name is very easy,
Can you tell me, children? What?”

The others had heard this before, and when Patty promptly guessed “Bark,” Mrs. Cromarty was distinctly pleased with her quick-wittedness.

Then lemonade and wafery little cakes were brought in, that the puzzlers might refresh themselves.

The atmosphere of the Hartley household was very pleasant, and Patty felt much more at home than she had ever expected to feel among English people. She made allusion to this, and Bob said: “Oh, this place isn’t homey at all, compared with our real home. You must come to see us down in the country, mustn’t she, mother?”

“I should be very glad to welcome you there, my dear,” said Mrs. Hartley, smiling at Patty, “and I trust it may be arranged. We have this apartment for only a few weeks longer, and then we shall go back to Leicester.”

“I’m in no haste to go,” declared Mabel. “I love Cromarty Manor, but I want to stay in London a little longer. But when we do go, Patty, you surely must visit us there.”

“Indeed I will, if I can manage it. My parents want me to go with them to Switzerland, but I’d much prefer to spend the summer in England. I have ever so many delightful invitations to country houses, and they seem to me a lot more attractive than travelling about. I suppose I ought to care more about seeing places, but I don’t.”

“You’re quite young enough yet,” said Mrs. Hartley, “to look forward to travelling in future years. I think some experiences of English life would be quite as advantageous for you.”

“I’ll tell father you said that,” said Patty. “Then perhaps he’ll let me have my own way. But he usually does that, anyway.”

“You’d love Cromarty Manor,” said Bob, enthusiastically. “It’s so beautiful in spring and early summer.”

“But not half as grand as other houses where Patty’s invited,” said Mabel, and again the shadow crossed her face that seemed always to come when she spoke of her country home.

“Grandeur doesn’t count in the country,” declared Bob. “That belongs to London life. Other places may be larger or in better condition than ours, but they *can’t* be more beautiful.”

“That is true,” said Mrs. Cromarty, in her quiet way, which always seemed to decide a disputed point. And then it was time to go home, and Mrs. Hartley sent Patty away in her carriage, with a maid to accompany her. The woman was middle-aged, with a pleasant voice and a capable manner. She chatted affably with Patty, and dilated a little on the glories of the Cromarty family.

Patty realised at once that she was an old family servant, and had earned a right to a little more freedom of speech than is usual to English domestics.

“Oh, yes, Miss,” she said; “it’s a wonnerful old place, that it is. And if the dear lady only ’ad the money as is ’ers by right, she’d keep it up lordly, that she would.”

Patty wondered what had become of the money in question, but Sarah said no more concerning it, and Patty felt she had no right to ask. “You live with them, then, in the country?” she said.

“Yes, Miss, I’ve allus lived with them. My mother was housekeeper at the Manor when Miss Emmeline married Mr. ’Artley. Oh, he was the fine gentleman. Dead now, this ten year come Whitsuntide. Master Bob, he’s the image of his father. Are you warm enough, Miss?”

Sarah’s quick transit from reminiscences to solicitude for her comfort almost startled Patty, but she was getting used to that peculiarity of the British mind.

“Yes, thank you,” she said, “and anyway, we’re home now. Here’s the Savoy.”

Mr. Fairfield and Nan had not yet arrived, so the good Sarah attended Patty to her own apartment and gave her over to Louise, who awaited her coming.

Louise helped her off with her pretty frock, and brought her a beribboned negligée, and Patty curled up in a big armchair in front of the fire to think over the evening.

“These wood-fires are lovely,” she said to herself, “and they do have most comfortable stuffed chairs over here, if they only knew enough to put rockers under them.”

Patty was a comfort-loving creature, and often bewailed the absence of the rocking-chairs so dear to her American heart. Soon her parents came in and found her sound asleep in the big chair.

She woke up, as her father kissed her lightly on the forehead.

“Hello, Prince Charming,” she said, smiling gaily at the handsome man in evening clothes who stood looking down at her.

“I suppose you want a return compliment about the Sleeping Beauty,” he said, “but you won’t get it. Too much flattery isn’t good for a baby like you, and I shall reserve my pretty speeches for my wife.”

“Oh, I’ll share them with Patty,” laughed Nan, “but with no one else.”

“Tell us about your evening, girlie,” said her father. “Did you have a good time?”

“Fine,” said Patty. “The Hartleys are lovely people; I like them better than any I’ve met in London, so far. And they do puzzles, and ask riddles, and they’re just as clever and quick as Americans. I’ve heard that English people were heavy and stupid, and they’re not, a bit.”

“You mustn’t believe all you hear. Are they a large family?” “Not very. Two sons, one daughter, and the mother and grandmother. Mabel’s father has been dead for years. And they want me to visit them at their home in Leicester this summer. Can’t I go?”

“Desert your own family for foreigners!”

“Yes; I do want to go there and to some other country places while you and Nan go touring about. Mayn’t I?”

“We won’t decide now. It’s too near midnight for important matters to be discussed. Skip to bed, chickabiddy, and dream of the Stars and Stripes, lest you forget them entirely.”

“Never!” cried Patty, striking a dramatic attitude.

“Though English people may be grand,
My heart is in my native land!”

And humming the Star-spangled Banner, she went away to her own room.

CHAPTER III

THE WHITE LADY

"I feel in a gay mood," said Nan, as she clasped Patty round the waist, and always ready for a dance, Patty fell into step, and the two waltzed round the room, while Patty sang tum-te-tum to the air of a popular song.

"As if you two ever felt any other way!" exclaimed Mr. Fairfield, smiling at them from the depths of his easy chair. "But what does this gay mood betoken? I suppose you want to drag me out to the theatre or opera to-night."

Mr. Fairfield's pleasant smile belied his pretense at sharpness, and he waited to hear a reply.

"That would be lovely," said Nan, "and we'll go if you invite us. But what I had in mind is this: I'd like to dine in the Restaurant."

"Good!" cried Mr. Fairfield. "I feel gay enough for that, myself, and we haven't dined there for nearly a week."

The Fairfields had a complete apartment of their own, and when not invited out, usually dined quietly in their own dining-room. But occasionally, when the mood took them, they dined in the great Savoy Restaurant, which was a festive pageant indeed.

Patty loved to sit at a table there, and watch the beautiful women in their elaborate gowns, and their handsome, stalwart escorts, who were sometimes in brave uniforms.

The splendid scene would have palled upon them, had they dined there every evening, but as a change from their small family dinner it was delightful.

"We'll wear our dress-up frocks," said Patty, "and perhaps my White Lady will be there again."

"Your White Lady?" asked Nan. "Who is she?"

"That's just what I can't find out, though I've asked several people. But she's the most beautiful lady, with a haughty, proud face, and sad eyes. She always wears white, and there's an elderly lady who is sometimes with her. A strange-looking old lady in black, she is; and her face is like a hawk's."

"Oh, I remember those people; they always sit at the same table." "Yes, I think they live here. But she is so sweet and lovely I'd like to know her. I make up stories about her all to myself. She's like Ginevra or the Lady of Shalott."

"You're too fanciful, Patty. Probably she's the Duchess of Hardscrabble."

"She looks like a Duchess, anyway. And also, she looks like a simple, sweet, lovely lady. I'm going to ask father to find out who she is."

A little later the Fairfields went down to dinner.

Nan wore an exquisite gown of embroidered yellow satin, and Patty wore a frilled white silk muslin. It was a little low at the throat, and was very becoming to her, and in and out of her piled-up curls was twisted a broad white ribbon, which ended in front in a saucy cluster of bows, after the prevailing fashion.

"This is great fun," said Patty, as she took her seat with a little sigh of content. "I just love the lights and flowers and music and noise—"

"Can you distinguish the music from the noise?" asked her father, laughing.

"I can if I try, but I don't care whether I do or not. I love the whole conglomeration of sounds. People laughing and talking, and a sort of undertone of glass and china and waiters."

"That sounds graphic," said Nan, "but the waiters here aren't supposed to make any noise."

"No, I know it, but they're just part of the whole scene, and it's all beautiful together. Oh, there's my White Lady!"

It was indeed a charming young woman who was just entering the room. She was tall and very slender, with a face serene and sweet. Her large, dark eyes had a look of resignation, rather than sadness, but the firm set of her scarlet lips did not betoken an easily-resigned nature.

With her was the elder lady of whom Patty had spoken. She was sharp-featured and looked as if she were sharp-tempered. She wore a rather severe evening gown of black net, and in her gray hair was a quivering black aigrette.

In contrast to this dark figure, the younger lady looked specially fair and sweet. Her trailing gown was of heavy white lace, and round her beautiful throat were two long strings of pearls. She wore no other ornament save for a white flower in her hair, and her shoulders and arms were almost as white as the soft tulle that billowed against them.

It chanced that Mr. Fairfield's table was quite near the one usually occupied by these two, and Patty watched the White Lady, without seeming to stare at her.

"Isn't she exquisite?" she said, at last, for they were not within earshot, and Nan agreed that she was.

As the dinner proceeded, Patty glanced often at the lady of her admiration, and after a time was surprised and a little embarrassed to find that the White Lady was glancing at her.

Fearing she had stared more frankly than she realised, Patty refrained from looking at the lady again, and resolutely kept her eyes turned in other directions.

But as if drawn by a magnet, she felt impelled to look at her once more, and giving a quick glance, she saw the White Lady distinctly smiling at her. There was no mistake, it was a kind, amused little smile of a most friendly nature.

Patty was enchanted, and the warm blood rushed to her cheeks as if she had been singled out for a great honour. But frankly, and without embarrassment, she smiled back at the lovely face, and returned the pleased little nod that was then given her.

"Patty, what *are* you doing?" said Nan; "do you see any one you know?"

"No," said Patty, slowly, almost as one in a dream, "my White Lady smiled at me,—that's all,—so I smiled back at her, and then we bowed."

"You mustn't do such things," said Nan, half smiling herself, "she'll think you're a forward American."

"I am an American," replied Patty, "and I'd be sorry to be called backward."

"You never will be," said her father. "Well, I suppose you may smile at her, if she smiles first, but don't begin sending her anonymous notes."

"Nonsense," said Patty, "but you two don't know how lovely she is when she smiles."

Mr. and Mrs. Fairfield were seated with their backs to the lady in question, and could not see her without slightly turning their heads, while Patty, opposite them at the round table, faced her directly.

"You're fortunate in your position," observed her father, "for were you seated here and we there, of course she would have beamed upon us."

"She isn't beaming," cried Patty, almost indignantly; "I won't have that angelic smile called a beam. Now, you're not to tease. She's a sweet, dear lady, with some awful tragedy gnawing at her heart."

"Patty, you're growing up romantic! Stop it at once. I'll buy the lady for you, if you want her, but I won't have you indulging in rubbishy romance like that, with nothing to base it on."

Patty looked at her father comically.

"I don't believe you'd better buy her, Daddy, dear," she said. "You know you often say that, with Nan and me on your hands, you have all you can manage. So I'm sure you couldn't add those two to your collection; for I feel certain wherever the White Lady goes the Black Lady goes too."

The subject was lost sight of then, by the greetings of some friends who were passing by the Fairfields on their way out of the Restaurant.

“Why, Mrs. Leigh,” exclaimed Nan, “how do you do? Won’t you and Mr. Leigh sit down and have coffee with us? Or, better yet, suppose we all go up to our drawing-room and have coffee there.”

After Patty had spoken to the newcomers and was sitting silent while her elders were talking, she looked up in surprise as a waiter approached her. He laid a long-stemmed white rose beside her plate, and said, quietly, “From Lady Hamilton, Miss.”

Involuntarily, Patty glanced at the White Lady, and seeing her smile, knew at once that she had sent the rose.

As Patty explained the presence of the flower to the others, Mrs. Leigh glanced across, and said: “Oh, that’s Lady Hamilton! Excuse me, I must speak to her just a moment.”

“Who is Lady Hamilton?” asked Nan of Mr. Leigh, unable longer to repress her interest.

“One of the best and most beautiful women in London,” he replied. “One of the most indifferent, and the most sought after; one of the richest, and the saddest; one of the most popular, and the loneliest.”

All this seemed enough to verify Patty’s surmises of romance connected with the White Lady, but before she could ask a question, Mrs. Leigh returned, and Lady Hamilton came with her. After introductions and a few words of greeting, Lady Hamilton said to Mr. Fairfield: “I wonder if you couldn’t be induced to lend me your daughter for an hour or so. I will do my best to entertain her.”

“Indeed, yes, Lady Hamilton; and I think you will find her quite ready to be borrowed. You seemed to cast a magic spell over her, even before she knew your name.”

“I must confess that I have been wanting to meet her; I have searched this room in vain for some mutual friend who might introduce us, but until I saw Mrs. Leigh over here, I could find no one. Then, to attract Mrs. Leigh’s attention, in hope of her helping me, I sent over a signal of distress.”

“I took it as a flag of truce,” said Patty, holding up the white rose as it trembled on its stem.

“I thought it was a cipher message,” said Nan, smiling. “Patty is so fond of puzzles and secret languages, I wasn’t sure but it might mean ‘All is discovered; fly at once!’”

“It means ‘all is well,’” said Lady Hamilton, in her gracious way; “and now I must fly at once with my spoil.”

She took possession of Patty, and with a few words of adieu to the others, led her from the room. The lady in black rose from the table and followed them, and Patty entered the lift, blissfully happy, but a little bewildered.

“We’ll have our coffee right here,” said Lady Hamilton, as having reached her drawing-room, she proceeded to adjust some dainty gilt cups that stood on a small table. “That is, if you are allowed to have coffee at night. From your roseleaf cheeks, I fancy you drink only honeydew or buttercup tea.”

“No, indeed; I’m far too substantial for those things,” said Patty, as she dropped into the cosy chair Lady Hamilton had indicated; “and for over a year now, I’ve been allowed to have after-dinner coffee.”

“Dear me! what a grown-up! Miss Fairfield, this is Mrs. Betham, my very good friend, who looks after me when I get frisky and try to scrape acquaintance across a public dining-room.”

If Lady Hamilton was lovely when she was silent, she was doubly bewitching when she talked in this gay strain. Little dimples came and went in her cheeks, so quickly that they had scarcely disappeared before they were back again.

Mrs. Betham bowed and spoke politely to Patty, but her voice was quick and sharp, and her manner, though courteous, was not attractive.

“I doubt the coffee’s hot,” she said, as a waiter, who had just brought it in, was filling the tiny cups.

“It’s steaming,” said Lady Hamilton, gaily, and Patty saw at once that whatever it was that made her new friend sorrowful, it was not the grumbling tones of Mrs. Betham.

“It’s quite too hot, Julia,” she went on; “unless you’re careful, you’ll steam your throat.”

“Not I,” growled Mrs. Betham. “I’m not such a stupid as that. But I must say I like my coffee at a table like a Christian, and not setting my cup in my lap, or holding it up in the air.”

“Dear me, Julia,” said Lady Hamilton, with great solicitude expressed on her face; “dear me, your gout must be very bad to-night. It makes you quite cross. Poor dear!”

Mrs. Betham sniffed at this, but a grim smile came into her eyes, and Patty concluded she was not quite so grumpy as she seemed.

After the coffee was finished, and the tray taken away, Mrs. Betham excused herself and went off to her own room.

“The way it began,” said Lady Hamilton, as if to explain her interest in Patty, “was one day when I went through the corridors and passed your drawing-room, and the door was a little mite ajar, and I heard you singing. I am very fond of just that high, sweet kind of voice that you have, and I paused a few moments to listen to you. Then afterward I saw you in the dining-room two or three times at luncheon or dinner, and I took a fancy to know you, for I felt sure I should like you. Do you mind coming to see me once in a while, my dear? I am very lonely.”

“Mind! No, indeed!” cried Patty, impetuously throwing her arms around her new friend. “I loved you the first time I ever saw you. But why do you say you are lonely? You, a great lady.”

“I will tell you my story in a few words,” said Lady Hamilton. “For I suppose you would hear it from others, and I would rather tell it you myself. I am the daughter of Sir Otho Markleham. Of course, if you were a Londoner, you would know all this, but as you’re not, I’ll tell you. Well, I am Sir Otho’s only daughter, and four years ago, when I was just eighteen, I ran away from home and married Lord Cecil Hamilton. He was a good man, but he had quarrelled with my father on a point of politics, and my father disapproved of the match. He disowned me as his daughter, though he said he would always continue the allowance I had had as a girl. I was glad of this, not only because Lord Hamilton, though a man of good fortune, was not a wealthy man, but also because it seemed to show my father had not entirely cast me off. But he forbade us to go to his house, and we went to Paris and lived there for a year. After one year of happy married life Cecil died, and since then my only aim in life has been to be reconciled to my father. But he will not have it, or at least he won’t have it unless I make the first overtures toward peace.”

“And won’t you?” cried Patty, in astonishment.

“Not I! I am not to blame. The two men quarrelled, and now that Cecil is gone, why should my father hold the feud against me? It is not my place to ask his pardon; I’ve done nothing wrong.”

“You ran away from home,” said Patty, thinking only of the justice of the case, and quite forgetting that she was seeming to censure a titled English lady.

“Yes, but that was not wrong. Father knew that Cecil was a fine, honourable man, of an old family. He had no right to forbid my marriage because of a foolish personal disagreement.”

“Your mother?” said Patty.

“My mother died when I was a child,” said Lady Hamilton, and at once Patty felt a new bond of companionship.

“I lived alone with my father, in our great house in London, and I had a happy and uneventful life, until Cecil came. Since his death, I’ve longed so to go home to my father, and be at peace with him, but though many kind friends have tried to bring about a reconciliation, they haven’t been able to do so.”

“And so you live here alone at the Savoy?”

“Yes, with Mrs. Betham, who is really an old dear, though sometimes she grumbles terribly.”

“And do you go into society?”

“I’ve begun to go a little, of late. Cecil made me promise I’d never wear black dresses, so I’ve worn white only, ever since he died, and I suppose I always shall. That is, in the house. I have black street gowns. But I can’t seem to care for gay parties as I used to. I want father, and I want my home.”

“Is your father in London?”

“Oh, yes; he’s a Member of Parliament. But he’s of a stubborn and unyielding nature.”

“And so are you?”

“And so am I. Now, let’s drop the subject of myself for the present, while you sing for me. Will you?”

“Yes, indeed,” said Patty, warmly; “with more pleasure than I ever sang for any one else.”

CHAPTER IV

A FLORAL OFFERING

As the days went by, Patty and Lady Hamilton became close friends. Mr. and Mrs. Fairfield approved of the intimacy, for the elder woman's influence was in every way good for Patty, and in return the girl brought sunshine and happiness into Lady Hamilton's life.

They went together to concerts and picture exhibitions, but Patty could rarely persuade her friend to go to a social affair.

"It's absurd, Lady Hamilton," said Patty, one day, "to shut yourself up as you do! All London wants you, and yet you won't go 'round and play pretty with them."

Ignoring this outburst, Lady Hamilton only smiled, and said: "Do you know, Patty, I think it's time you dropped my formal title, and called me by my first name. I'd love to have you do so."

"I've often wondered what your first name is, but I haven't the slightest idea. Tell me."

"No, guess. What name do you think suits me?"

Patty considered.

"Well," she said, at last, "I think it must be either Ethelfrida or Gwendolyn Gladys."

Lady Hamilton laughed merrily. "Prepare yourself for a sudden shock," she said. "I was named for my grandmother, Catharine."

"Catharine! What an absurd name for you! You're not even a Kate. But you are Lady Kitty, and I'll call you that, if I may."

"Indeed you may. Father used to call me Kitty, when I was a child, but as I grew older, I preferred my full name."

"Lady Kitty is just right for you, and when you're in the mood you're a saucy puss. Now, listen, the reason for my invasion of your premises this morning is that I want you to go with me this afternoon to a tea on the Terrace of Parliament House."

Patty's tones were very persuasive, and she looked so daintily attractive in her fresh morning gown that few could have refused any request she might make.

Lady Hamilton in a soft, frilly white *négligée*, was sipping her coffee and looking over her letters when Patty had interrupted the process. She looked at her eager young guest with a slow, provoking smile, and said only:

"Nixy."

"But why not?" said Patty, smiling too, for she knew the Englishwoman had learned the slangy word from herself. "You'd have a lovely time. It's so beautiful there, and the people are always so cordial and pleasant."

"But I don't want to go."

"But you *ought* to want to. You're too young to give up the pomps and vanities of this world. How can I *make* you go?"

"You can't."

"I know it! That's just the trouble with you. I never saw such a stubborn, self-willed, determined—"

"Pigheaded?"

"Yes! and stupidly obstinate thing as you are! So, there now!"

They both laughed, and then Lady Hamilton said more seriously, "Shall I tell you why I won't go?"

"Yes, do, if you know, yourself."

"I know perfectly. I won't go to the Terrace because I'm afraid I'll meet my father there."

"For goodness' sake! Is that the real reason? But you *want* to be reconciled to him!"

“Yes, but you don’t understand. We couldn’t have a ‘Come home and all will be forgiven’ scene on the Terrace, in sight of hundreds of people, so if I did see him, I should have to bow slightly, or cut him dead; it would depend on his attitude toward me which I did. *Then* the episode would merely serve to widen the breach, and it would break me up for days.”

“I can’t understand such conditions,” said Patty, earnestly. “Why, if I were at odds with my father, and I can’t even imagine such a thing, I’d rush at him and fling myself into his arms and stay there till everything was all right.”

“That’s just because you’re of a different temperament, and so is your father. My father is an austere, unbending man, and if I were on the Terrace and were to fling myself into his arms, he’d very likely fling me into the Thames.”

“You’d probably be rescued,” said Patty, gravely; “there’s always so much traffic.”

“Yes, but father wouldn’t jump in to rescue me, so I’d only spoil my gown for nothing. Give it up, dear, it’s a case outside your experience. Father and I are both too proud to make the first advance, and yet I really believe he wants me as much as I want him. He must be very lonely in the great house, with only the servants to look after him.”

“Perhaps he’ll marry again,” said Patty, thoughtfully; “my father did.”

“I wish he would, but I’ve no hope of that. Now, never mind about my troubles, tell me of your own. Who’s taking you to the tea?”

“Mrs. Hastings. But she isn’t giving it. We’re to sit at some Member’s table; I don’t know whose. The Merediths will be there, too. Tom and Grace, you know. I like them very much.”

“Yes, they’re nice children. I know them slightly. Patty, some day I’ll give a party for you, here in my rooms. How would you like that?”

“Oh, Lady Kitty, I’d love it! You’d have to come to that, wouldn’t you?”

“Yes, indeed, you couldn’t drive me away. Let’s have a children’s party. All dress as children, I mean; little children, or babies.”

“Just the thing! I always wanted to see a party like that. I’ve only heard of them. Can we have it soon?”

“Next week, I think. I’ll consult Mrs. Betham, and I think I can coax her ’round to it; though she’s bound to wet-blanket it at first.”

“Oh, yes, you can coax her, I know. How good you are to me! I do have beautiful times. Really too many for one girl. Honestly, Lady Kitty, do you think it’s right for me to lead such a butterfly life? I just fly about from one entertainment to another; and even if I’m at home, or alone, I always have a good time. Sometimes I think I’m a very useless member of this busy world.”

Lady Hamilton smiled kindly. “How old are you?” she said.

“I’ll be eighteen next month.”

“And you haven’t set the Thames on fire, or won the Victoria Cross yet? But you’re just at the age when your type of happy girlhood is often beset with over-conscientious scruples. Don’t give way to them, Patty. It is not your lot to do definite, physical good to suffering humanity, like a Red Cross nurse, or the Salvation Army. Nor is it necessary that you should work to earn your bread, like a teacher or a stenographer. But it is your duty, or rather your privilege, to shed sunshine wherever you go. I think I’ve never known any one with such a talent for spontaneous and unconscious giving-out of happiness. It is involuntary, which is its chiefest charm, but whoever is with you for a time is cheered and comforted just by the influence of your own gladness. This is honest talk, my child, and I want you to take it as I mean it. Don’t *try* to do this thing, that would spoil it all; but just remember that you *do* do it, and let that satisfy your desire to be a useful member of this busy world.”

“You’re such a dear,” said Patty, as she caressed her friend’s hand affectionately; “if that’s all true, and of course it is, since you say so, I’m very glad. But can’t I do something more definite, more voluntary?”

“Of course there are always opportunities for doing good,—organised charities and those things that everybody takes part in. But if you want to widen your own field of benefaction, simply know more people. Whether you know them socially or as casual acquaintances, you will almost invariably add happiness to their lives, though it be in the merest trifles. Now, I’m assuming that you have sense enough not to overdo this thing, and thrust yourself upon people who don’t want you.”

“Madam,” said Patty, in mock indignation, “you may trust me. I am an American!”

“You are indeed; and you have what is known as Yankee good sense, if you are a mere infant.”

“Eighteen is pretty old, *I* think; and you’re not so very ancient, yourself,” retorted Patty; “but I’m willing to sit at your feet and acquire wisdom.”

When dressed to go out that afternoon, Patty stopped at Lady Hamilton’s door to say good-bye.

“Come in, and let me see if you’ll pass muster. Yes, that frilly, flowered muslin is just right for the Terrace; and that hat with long streamers is truly pastoral.”

“What’s pastoral about the Terrace, pray?”

“Nothing but the ladies’ clothes, and the lamb-like demeanour of the M.P.’s.”

“I may see your father there.”

“You may. But he’ll be an exception to the lamb-like ones. Here, let me put these valley lilies in your belt. They rather suit your costume.”

“Oh, thank you; they’re beautiful. If I see your father, I’ll give him a spray and say you sent it.”

“Very well; he’ll then pitch you and the flowers all in the Thames together.” “Well, at least we’ll cause a sensation among the lambs. Good-by, Kitty lady.”

“Good-bye, little one. Have a good time, and come in to tell me about it when you return.”

The tea on the Terrace was a new delight. Patty had been through the Houses of Parliament before, but this was her first experience of that unique function known as the Terrace Tea.

The broad, beautiful space was crowded with tables, and the tables were crowded with people. Merry, chatting, laughing Londoners, Americans, and foreigners mingled in groups and drank tea together.

Mrs. Hastings and Patty were met by their host, Mr. Pauncefote, and escorted to a table, already surrounded by several people.

Patty felt greatly pleased when she found herself seated between Grace and Tom Meredith, and listened with interest as they designated various celebrated people who were strolling by.

“But, after all,” she said, at last, “Dukes and Duchesses don’t look very different from ordinary people.”

“Of course they don’t. Why should they? They aren’t any different,” said Tom. “Indeed, Miss Fairfield, I’ve vanity enough to believe you’d find me more interesting than some of the Dukes.”

“I’m sure you are,” laughed Patty, “but if I were introduced to a real Duke, I’d be so scared I wouldn’t know what to say.”

“Now I call that too bad,” declared Tom, with an aggrieved look. “And, pray, why aren’t you scared when in my august society?”

“I am,” said Patty, dimpling, as she smiled at him, “only I’m successfully striving not to show my quaking fright.”

“That’s better. I hope the longer you know me, the more awed you’ll be of my,—of my—”

“Of your what?” calmly inquired his sister.

“Pon my word, I don’t know,” confessed Tom, good-naturedly; “of my awesomeness, I suppose.”

“How do you like London?” said a loud voice, in the tones that are sometimes called stentorian, and Patty suddenly realised that her host was addressing her.

A bit embarrassed at finding the eyes of all at the table upon her, she answered, shyly: “I love it; it is so—so kind to me.”

“Bravo! Pretty good for an American,” shouted Mr. Pauncefote, who seemed unable to moderate his voice. “And which do you like best, the people or the show-places?”

“The people,” said Patty, her embarrassment lost sight of in a flash of mischief. “I like the Members of Parliament better than Parliament House.”

“Good! Good!” cried the portly M.P., striking the table with his fist until the cups rattled; “that’s true Yankee cleverness. You’re a good sort, my child. Are they all like you in America?”

“Yes, I think so,” said Patty, demurely; “are they all like you in England?”

Patty’s innocent air of inquiry robbed the speech of all effect of pertness, and the genial Mr. Pauncefote roared with delight.

“Ha, ha!” he cried; “all like me in England? No, my child, no! Heaven be praised, there are very few after my pattern.”

“That’s too bad,” said Patty. “I think your pattern is a good one.”

“It is,” said Tom Meredith. “If we had more statesmen after Mr. Pauncefote’s pattern, the House of Commons would be better off.”

This speech called forth applause from the other guests, and the host said, loudly: “Pshaw, pshaw!” but he looked greatly pleased.

When the tea was over and the party rose from the table, Mr. Pauncefote detained Patty for a moment’s chat, while the others broke up into smaller groups or wandered away.

“I want you to meet my daughter,” he was saying; “the young lady in gray over there, talking to Sir Otho.”

“Sir Otho who?” said Patty, quickly, forgetting to respond in regard to Miss Pauncefote.

“Sir Otho Markleham; see the large gentleman with gold-rimmed glasses. She is my youngest daughter, and I know she’d be glad to meet you.”

“I’d be delighted,” said Patty, but her attention centred on Sir Otho.

Could it be that was Lady Hamilton’s severe father? He did not look so obstinate as she had imagined him, but as she drew nearer, she observed the firm set of his square jaw and reversed her opinion.

Sir Otho was very tall and big, and his smoothly brushed hair was light brown without a trace of gray.

He wore closely-trimmed whiskers, of the style known as “mutton-chop,” and his cold gray eyes almost glittered as he looked through his glasses. The introduction to Miss Pauncefote implied also an introduction to Sir Otho, and in a moment Patty found herself chatting in a group of which Lady Kitty’s father was one.

There was something about the big man that awed her, and she naturally fell into conversation with Miss Pauncefote, while the two gentlemen talked together. But as they were all about to separate, and even after Sir Otho had said good-afternoon, Patty hesitated irresolutely for a second, and then turned back toward him again.

“Sir Otho,” she said, timidly.

“Well, ma’am, what is it?” was the response as he turned in surprise to look at her.

“I am very glad to meet you,” said Patty, and as soon as the words were uttered, she realised how absurd they were.

“Thank you, ma’am,” said the puzzled gentleman. He was very unresponsive, and showed in his face that he thought little of this exhibition of American forwardness.

“Especially so,” Patty went on, “because I know your daughter, Lady Hamilton.”

“Bless my soul!” ejaculated Sir Otho Markleham, the red blood dyeing his large face crimson, and his eyes fairly snapping with anger.

“Yes, I do,” went on Patty, resolved now to plunge in desperately, “and she sent you these flowers.”

Patty had previously detached two or three of the prettiest sprays of the lilies of the valley, and now held them out, with the air of one fulfilling a trust.

For a moment Sir Otho Markleham looked as if he would really like to pitch the American girl and her flowers into the river, and then, almost mechanically, he took the blossoms from Patty's hand.

Then, with a straight, cold stare at her, he said, in a hard voice: "I have no daughter," and after a stiff, formal bow, he walked away.

CHAPTER V

MISS YANKEE DOODLE

“You didn’t, really!” exclaimed Lady Hamilton, as Patty gleefully described giving the flowers to Sir Otho Markleham.

“But I did, Kitty, and truly, he *was* mad enough to pitch me into that yellow muddy old river. I greatly admire his self-control in not really doing it. But what eyes he has! So gray and steely, they cut right through me! And he just said, tragically, ‘I have no daughter,’ and stalked away. But—and this is the main thing—he kept the flowers!”

“How do you know?”

“I watched him. I fully expected he’d fling them straight over Parliament House, but he didn’t. He didn’t even throw them on the stone floor of the Terrace, and gr-r-rind them ’neath his iron heel! I can’t say that he put them in his button-hole, for his back was toward me, but I *know* he kept them.”

“Oh, Patty, you are a silly! You think you’ve gone far toward healing the family feud of the Marklehams. But you haven’t. My father gave the whole episode no thought at all, unless it was to think of you as an impertinent child.”

“Well, it was a wedge,” said Patty, doggedly, “and if I ever get another chance at him, I’ll hammer it in.”

“No, don’t, Patty dear; you mean well, I know, but you don’t know father’s disposition. If he thought you were an intermediary, he’d be more stubborn than ever.”

“Huh!” said Patty, more expressively than politely; “I’m not going to make any trouble. Trust your Aunt Patty for that!”

Lady Hamilton laughed, as she always did at Patty’s funny American phrases, and the subject of Sir Otho was dropped.

“Better not mix yourself up in other people’s quarrels,” said Mr. Fairfield, when Patty told him about it. “Your motive is a good one, but an Englishman is not apt to brook interference from an outsider, especially an American.”

“Oh, pshaw, Fred; Patty won’t do any harm,” said Nan. “Patty’s tact is a match for any English temper, and if she could bring about a reconciliation, I’d be so glad for that sweet Lady Hamilton.”

“All right; I give in. When you two are against me, I hold up my hands.”

“We’re not against you, Daddy,” said Patty, smiling fondly at her father. “You’re on our side, only you don’t quite realise it.”

“I told you she had tact,” laughed Nan, “and she grows cleverer every day; don’t you, Stepdaughter?”

“Yes, Stepmother,” replied Patty, gazing at Nan in mock adoration; “since I have you for a model, how could I do otherwise?”

“You’re a pair of sillies,” said Mr. Fairfield, laughing at their nonsense, “and in a vain endeavour to improve your minds, I think I’ll read aloud to you.”

“Oh, goody!” cried Patty, for they both loved to hear Mr. Fairfield read. “And mayn’t I ask Lady Kitty to come in? She’ll sit still as a mouse, I know.”

“Certainly, my child; ask any one you like. If you see any people in the corridors, bring them back with you. Perhaps the elevator man will come.”

“Deed he won’t be asked,” said Patty, indignantly. “I just want my sweet, lovely Lady Kitty.”

The sweet, lovely lady was pleased to come, and did indeed sit still as a mouse, listening to Mr. Fairfield’s fine reading.

Then Patty sang one or two of her newest songs, and then Nan declared they must all go down to the Grill Room for a Welsh Rabbit.

This plan enchanted Patty, and after a moment's hesitation, Lady Hamilton agreed. So the evening proved a merry little festivity, and Patty went to bed healthily tired, but healthily happy.

Bob Hartley did not forget his promise to ask Patty to the Garden Party at Regent's Park, and Patty gladly accepted the invitation.

"The only thing that bothers me," she said to Nan, "is that the Hartleys don't seem to have much money, and at a Charity Garden Party there are so many ways to spend, that I fear I'll be a burden to them. It makes me awfully uncomfortable, and yet I can't offer to pay for myself. And with those young men present, I can't offer to pay for the whole party."

"No," agreed Nan. "But you might do something yourself. Invite them all to be your guests at some especial side-show, or booth. There are often such opportunities."

"I hope there will be. The Hartleys are a funny kind of poor. They have a good apartment in London, and their country place is fine. They have old servants, and keep a carriage, and all that, and yet they never seem to have spending money."

"English people are often like that. The keeping up of an establishment comes first with them, and little personal comforts afterward."

"That isn't my idea of economy," said Patty, decidedly; "I'd rather spend all I want on flowers and books and pretty hats, and go without a butler and a footman and even a team of horses."

"You can't judge, because you've always had whatever you want."

"Of course; because father is indulgent and has plenty of money. But if he hadn't, I'd be just as happy, living in a plainer way."

"Yes, Patty, I believe you would," and Nan looked at the girl affectionately. "Well, do your best to help the Hartleys financially this afternoon without offending them."

"Ah, that's just the trouble. They're so dreadfully proud they won't accept so much as a glass of lemonade from one who is their guest."

"Try it, and see. It may not be so difficult as you think."

So Patty went gaily off to the Garden Party. Mrs. Hartley called for her in her carriage. Mabel was with her, and they were to meet the boys at the park.

It was a beautiful drive, in the open victoria, along the busy streets of the city, and then on out to the green slopes of Regent's Park.

The portion of the park devoted to the Garden Party was gay with booths and flower-stands, tents and arbours, and catch-penny shows of all sorts.

Sinclair and Robert were awaiting them, and also another young Englishman, whom Bob introduced as Mr. Lawton. The latter was a typical Briton, with a slight drawl, and a queer-looking monocle in his right eye.

"Awfully jolly to meet you," he exclaimed, as he shook Mrs. Hartley's hand, and bowed formally to the girls.

He fascinated Patty, he was so exactly like the young Englishmen pictured in *Punch*, and she waited to hear him say "Bah Jove!" But he didn't say it, he contented himself with "My word!" by way of expletive, and though it didn't seem to mean anything, it was apparently useful to him.

"You must jolly well let me be your guide," he declared; "Mrs. Hartley and I will lead and the rest of you will follow wherever we go. First, we make the grand tour."

This meant joining a long procession that were sauntering along a board walk, on either side of which were settees filled with people.

Patty, with Sinclair, followed the leaders, and Mabel and Bob followed them.

But their progress was slow, for continually some of the party recognised friends seated alongside, and stopped to speak to them. Patty was introduced so often that she became bewildered, and soon stopped trying to remember who was who.

"You're getting jolly well fagged," said Mr. Lawton, suddenly noticing her expression. "Now, we'll stop this merry-go-round and adjourn to the tea tent."

This they did, and were soon comfortably seated round a tea table.

“Great show, isn’t it?” said Bob, enthusiastically. “And you haven’t seen half of it yet. There’s fortune-telling, and Punch and Judy, and the hat-trimming contest, and I don’t know what beside.”

Sinclair adroitly paid the tea bill, before Mr. Lawton could do so, though the latter tried.

“Never mind, old fellow,” he cried, “I’ll get even with you! I hereby invite you all to supper at six o’clock.”

“We’re pleased to accept,” said Patty, promptly; “and I hereby invite you all to the play, or whatever it is, given by the Stagefright Club. I think that’s such a lovely name for a dramatic club. Can’t we go at once?”

Mrs. Hartley looked a little disturbed at Patty’s invitation, but did not demur, and tea being over, they all went toward the tent where the play was to be given. Patty managed to walk ahead with Mr. Lawton, this time, and when they reached the big tent, she offered him her little gold chain-purse, saying, quietly, “Won’t you see to the tickets, please?”

“Trust me,” said Mr. Lawton, and taking Patty’s purse, he bought seats for them all. It was gracefully done, and they all went in in gay spirits and without a trace of embarrassment, thanks to Patty’s tact.

The play was very funny. Though only a trifling farce, it was written by professionals, for the benefit of the charity, and was played by the clever amateurs who had chosen such an odd name for their club. The situations in the play were screamingly funny, and Patty shook with laughter as she listened to the jokes and the merry by-play.

“Hist, she comes!” declared a weird figure in a sepulchral voice, as he waited in the middle of the stage.

“Hist, she comes!”

But nobody came.

“That’s her cue,” he muttered; “what can be the matter? I say,” he cleared his throat and spoke louder: “Hist, she comes!” As the expected entrance was still delayed, he only said: “Well, she ought to be hissed when she does come!” And calmly sat down to wait for her, amid the applause of the audience.

The short playlet soon came to an end, and still shaking with laughter, the party went out again into the beautiful atmosphere which is found on a spring day in Regent’s Park.

“Now, my children,” said Mrs. Hartley, “I simply cannot walk about any more. I’m going to sit in one of those chairs yonder, for I see some people I know over there. You can amuse yourselves with Punch and Judy, or Ring Toss or whatever you like, and come back to me in an hour or so. Sinclair, look after the little ones, won’t you?”

It was a great joke that Sinclair, the oldest Hartley boy, should look after the others. He had reached the age of twenty, and was much more grave and dignified than Bob and Grace. Mrs. Hartley often declared she could even trust him to match samples for her, so careful was he. So the young people wandered away and spent a delightful hour looking at the beautiful or grotesque sights that adorned the fair.

Patty could not do much financially, but under cover of giving to charity, she bought pretty souvenirs for Mabel and Mrs. Hartley, and laughingly invited the group to be photographed by a Camera Fiend.

This personage was clothed in red, and with black horns and Mephistophelean countenance was made to look as much like a fiend as possible. With outlandish hoots and yells, he posed the group and took several snapshots, which they were to call for later.

As they concluded it was nearly time to drift back to Mrs. Hartley, Patty noticed a gentleman who stood at a little distance, looking at her intently.

“Who’s your friend, Patty?” asked Mabel. “Do you know him?”

“Yes,” said Patty, slowly. “He’s Sir Otho Markleham.”

“So he is,” said Bob. “I’ve seen him often, but I don’t know him personally.”

Sir Otho, still looking at Patty, took a few steps toward her, and then paused irresolutely.

“Please excuse me,” said Patty to the others, “I think I’ll go speak to him for a minute.”

“Do,” said Mr. Lawton; “we’ll wait for you right here.”

Following an impulse, Patty walked directly toward Sir Otho, who looked as if he would like to run away.

“How do you do?” she said, pleasantly, as they met.

“Quite well,” he said, but there was no responsiveness in his manner. “Do you wish to speak to me?”

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