

Raymond Evelyn

Dorothy's Tour



Evelyn Raymond
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CHAPTER I. AT BELLEVIEU

“Dorothy!” called Jim as he quickly searched the garden at Bellevieu for her.

“Yes,” answered Dorothy, “I am here sitting under the big oak tree.”

“I have something for you,” cried Jim. “Guess what?”

“Guess what?” echoed Dorothy. “Well it might be – Oh! there are so many, many things it could be.”

“Here, take it. Its only a letter from New York, and never mind what might be in it, read it – ” said Jim, who was altogether too practical and never cared to imagine or suppose anything. All he wanted was real facts and true and useful facts at that, which is not a bad trait in a youth's character.

Dorothy broke the seal carefully and read the letter through once and then started to read it all over again, exclaiming every once in a while to herself, “Oh, oh, dear. I am so glad!” and finally, “I must tell Aunt Betty at once.”

Jim, who had been standing there forgotten all this time, broke

in: “Oh, I say, Dolly Doodles, can you tell me what this message is that so excites you that you have clear forgotten me?”

“Oh, Jim dear,” said Dorothy, “it’s too wonderful. Just think, I am to start in two weeks for New York, where Mr. Ludlow will meet Aunt Betty and I.”

By this time Jim and Dorothy were walking rapidly toward the house, where at once they sought Aunt Betty to tell her the news, only to find that Mrs. Calvert had gone visiting.

Seeing Old Ephraim in the hall, Dorothy ran up to him and said: “Ephraim, do tell us where Aunt Betty has gone.”

“Ah certainly does know, Misses,” answered old Ephraim. “She o’de’d Metty” (whom we remember as Methuselah Bonapart Washington from the previous books, House Boat and, and other volumes wherein our little heroine’s story is told). “Metty, he ’lowed he take her see dat lil lady. De man what gibs de music lessons’ wife.”

“Oh, I know now, Ephy,” said Dorothy, “Aunty went to see Frau Deichenberg. Well, Jim, we shall have to wait till Aunt Betty comes back to tell her our wonderful news. But dear me, what a forgetful girl I am. I haven’t told you all yet. Well, Jim, it’s a long story, so let’s go back to the garden and I will tell you all there.”

So back to the old oak tree with the rustic seat beneath it they went. The garden in Bellevieu looked its loveliest. It was early in September and all the fall flowers with their wondrous hues made the garden a regular fairy land. And Lem, the little boy the campers had found on a memorable night, had been true to his

word and had tended the garden faithfully.

You will remember how Lem Haley had cried out at night and when found and protected by the little camping party had ridden back to Bellevue in the huge automobile. He, like all who knew Aunt Betty, Mrs. Cecil Somerset Calvert, had grown to love her and now tried hard to please her by keeping the garden at old Bellevue a feast for the eyes and a delight to all who came there.

Dorothy and Jim seated themselves beneath the tree and Dorothy started out by saying: "Oh, Jim, dear, I really am dreadfully nervous every time I think of starting out on that long trip through the United States and Canada, as Mr. Ludlow says I must. You see this letter says that Mr. Ludlow will expect Aunt Betty and I to be at the Pennsylvania station on September 27. That's, let's see - . Oh, Jim, what day does the 27th of September fall on?"

Dorothy at this period was a winsome girl indeed. She had good looks, which is always a worthy asset, then her artistic temperament and perhaps her musical training had combined with other natural attributes in the building of a character charmingly responsive. She had been frequently complimented for her musical talent, but bore her honor simply and unaffectedly.

As a protege of Mrs. Calvert, Jim had grown to be a fellow of manly aspect, and while in no way related to her, filled in some degree the place of a son in her heart and was a brother to every one else in the household.

Jim, who had been calculating the same while Dorothy was talking, quickly responded, "Tuesday."

"Oh, dear, I might have known that myself if I had only read on a ways instead of stopping just in the wrong place. Mr. Ludlow said that he would like me to play at a concert or two in New York before I start traveling for good. Oh, I must play at a concert on Thursday, the 29th. That is why he wants me to be in New York on Tuesday so I can have one day to rest in. Dear, thoughtful man to think of giving me a rest after my trip. Oh, Jim, if you could only come to New York with us!"

"I can," said Jim. "In fact I was going to keep that as a surprise, but I have saved enough money this summer to go to New York and be near you and with Aunt Betty when you play for the first time under this new contract."

"Jim," Dorothy said, "you are just as thoughtful and kind as you can be and it will be so nice to have you with Aunt Betty, and I shall play all the better for knowing that out in the big, big audience there are you two whom I really care to please more than anyone else in the wide, wide world. Jim, every one is so good to me and so kind in all things. Oh, dear, oh, dear; do you really suppose that I will be a very great violinist?"

"Why Dorothy Calvert!" Jim reproached. "You funny girl. You are a great violinist already, and in time you will be a very, very great violinist perhaps – who knows but what you might be the most famous violinist in the world? Why, Herr Deichenberg thinks you are doing very wonderfully now, and you will practice

just the same even if you are going on a concert tour. In fact you will have to practice harder – ”

“Oh, Jim, I must do my very best all the time and you can trust me to do that. But, come, let’s go inside now. It’s getting dark and Aunt Betty will soon be back.”

But the boy did not move, and finally said: “You stay here and finish telling me your plans and then we will go in.”

So Dorothy reseated herself and told Jim how Mr. Ludlow would tell her when she got to New York her future plans and that now all that he had written was for her to get ready for her trip, and on Tuesday, the 27th of September, for her and her Aunt Betty to be in New York.

“To think, Jim,” said Dorothy, “that my one ambition in life has commenced to be realized. I have always longed for this day to come when I could really play to people, and now to be in a company with so many other artists and to tour all over. There are so many, many people who can play the violin better than I can, and for me to be chosen!”

“Dorothy, girl, it was because you worked so very, very hard, and as Herr Deichenberg, you know says, ‘You have, mine girl, accomplished the impossible,’ and now we are all so proud of you,” Jim gladly responded.

“I tried so hard and all for dear, darling Aunt Betty, and she has been so good to me and to you and to everybody, no wonder everyone loves her,” added Dorothy.

“Jim, I am worried about Aunt Betty. You know how she lost

so much money last year in those old investments that foolish lawyer made for her. Well, she has always done so much for me that I am going to show her that I can take care of myself, and her too. Just think, \$200 a week and all my expenses paid. And a private car for the party, Aunt Betty, and an attendant. I just couldn't go and leave aunty, so they managed to let me take her with me. Do you think, Jim, that traveling will hurt Aunt Betty?"

"Hurt her? Indeed I do not," the boy said gravely, for he was thinking that Aunt Betty was no longer young and that she had been worried and tired most all summer, for she had insisted on staying near Dorothy who couldn't leave Baltimore because of her lessons and preparations for the fall, as Herr Deichenberg was working hard over his little protege so as to have a great success come of the tour.

"You know, Dorothy, the change will be good for her," Jim volunteered. "And Aunt Betty enjoys nothing more than travel. She will enjoy the music, too, and most of all the very one thing that will give her most pleasure is the fact that she will be with you and near you to keep you from all kinds of harm and such things as are apt to go with such a trip. But, Dorothy, dear girlie, don't think I mean that anything is going to hurt you or harm you in any way, but you see I mean Aunt Betty will be with you and it's not many a girl who has an Aunt Betty like yours."

"Jim, what a long, long speech for you. Let's go inside," said Dorothy.

The two slowly walked around the garden, exclaiming at its

beauty, till they reached the house. Dorothy led Jim into the music room, pushed him playfully into a chair, and taking her violin in her hand, said, "Listen."

Jim sat there listening to what he thought was the most wonderful music in all the world. Piece after piece the girl played, bringing out with clear, vibrating tones, the tunes she loved best, her body swaying to the music's rhythm.

"Surely," thought Jim, "if the audiences do not care for Dorothy's playing, and how they can help that I cannot see, they will immediately fall and worship at her personal charm and beauty," of which, thanks to Aunt Betty and the good Mother Martha's training, Dorothy was wholly unconscious.

How long they stayed there, neither of them could have told. And Aunt Betty, who had entered quite unseen, remained till old Ephraim said from the doorway, "Ah most surely wanted to excuse myself, but ah has been dere standing for most a hour and more than likely the dinner is spoilt, cause ah simply couldn't interrup' dat beautiful music."

Dorothy carefully put away her violin and ran to Aunt Betty telling her she had some brand new news.

"Let it wait, Dorothy," said Aunt Betty, "till we are all at the dinner table. Come, Jim," and then they all went to the table, Jim saying as he did that music sure did give him an appetite, and that that must be the reason they had music at so many of the New York hotels at meal time, or, as Dorothy corrected him, at dinner.

CHAPTER II.

ALFARETTA'S LETTER

“Alfa, Alfy,” called Ma Babcock. “Come ’ere quick, there’s something ’ere fer ye.”

“Ma, where are you,” yelled Alfy from the barnyard.

“Ere in the kitchen,” answered Ma Babcock.

“All right,” said Alfy. “Dunno as I know what you want,” she continued to herself. “What is it, ma?”

“Ere’s a letter fer ye,” Ma Babcock rejoined.

“Must be from Dorothy. Can’t think of anyone else writing me, can you? I’ll open it and see.

“Oh, ma! Listen, listen! Dear Dorothy wants me right away. Oh, how can I get to her; you couldn’t get on without me, now. Oh, dear, oh dear,” wailed Alfy, most in tears.

“Alfaretta Babcock, come to your senses. A big girl like you, crying,” scolded Ma Babcock. “Tell me what Dorothy says in her letter.”

Alfaretta, reading —

“Dear, dear Alfy — .

“In two weeks I start on my concert tour, and as I had not expected to go for more than a month at least, I want you to come and stay with me and I’ve got such a good proposition to make you. I will be very busy and will need

you to help me get my clothes and things together. Oh, Alfy, dear, please, please come. Don't you disappoint me. I just must see you again. It's been such an awful long time since you have stayed with me. Tell Ma Babcock she simply must let you come. Metty will meet you at the station. Take the noon train. Give my love to all the little Babcocks and to ma. Tell ma, Baretta and Claretta can help her while you are away, and I am sure that Matthew will help too. Oh, Alfy, do, do come. With love,

"Ever your affectionate,

"Dorothy.

"There, ma, that's what she says."

"Well, well, things do come sudden always. I must get my things on and drive down and tell 'em all at Liza Jane's Thread and Needle Store to start the news a-spreadin'."

"Then I may go?"

"Matthew, hitch up Barnabas, quick now," responded Mrs. Babcock, by way of response. "You, Alfy, go inside in the front room and get your clothes out so we can see what's clean and what ain't."

"Ma! Then I can go! Oh, goody, goody! I am so glad. And I can start to-morrow – yes? Oh please say yes!" coaxed Alfy.

Inside in the front room, Alfy working quickly, sorted things out and before Ma Babcock got back with a new pair of shoes for her, she had most of her things mended (as she was real handy with the needle), and nearly all packed in the old suit case Pa Babcock brought home with him from Chicago.

“Alfy!” called ma from the kitchen. “Try on these shoes and see as they’re all right.”

“Yes, ma,” answered Alfy, coming into the kitchen with thread and needle in one hand and shirt-waist in the other. “What shall I do with these? I can’t take those shoes with these in my hand.”

“Go back and take those things in and put them on the bed,” said ma, getting vexed at Alfy’s excitement and trying to calm her down.

Alfy, after laying the things down, came back and took the shoes and some new ribbons ma had brought her from Liza Jane’s and went back to the front room.

“My, but these shoes are real smart. I think that they are and hope Dorothy will. And shucks, no one has such pretty ribbons. Black, that’s kind of old and dull looking. I like the red much the best. The blue ones are real pretty, too. And my, but those red ribbons are pretty.” And thus Alfy talked to herself as she fussed around and tried to remember all the little things she wanted.

“Ma, ma,” and Alfy ran in the kitchen calling louder as she went: “Where did you put my raincoat? You know I haven’t used that one – the good one – since I was to California with Dorothy.”

“Well, let me see. Reckon I did see you have it. So long ago I can’t just remember. Must a been last year some time. Oh, did you look in the closet in the barn? Upstairs in the room I had fixed for the boys to sleep in, but they got scared and wouldn’t. You remember I put all the things we didn’t use much up there.”

"I'll look. Maybe it's up there," and Alfy went out still talking to herself, while ma went all over the house, in all the closets, looking for that raincoat. It was a very fine raincoat, one just like Dorothy's, only Alfaretta's was red while Dorothy's was gray. Mrs. Calvert had bought one for each of the girls in San Francisco. Alfy had put hers away when she reached home, hoping to be able to use it some time again, thinking it was too good for use "up mounting."

Alfy was now in the barn and had just reached the closed door when she heard a curious "tap-tap." Alfy was not afraid. She never had been what the boys call a "scare-cat," but it seemed kind of funny, so she stood still and listened. "Tap-tap."

"My," thought Alfy. "What's that? Oh, it's -"

"Tap-tap," again and this time the sound came from right over Alfaretta's head, making her start and her heart go thump, thump so loud she thought whoever it was tapping could hear it. She tried to move, but stood rooted to the spot. "Tap-tap." This time to the right of the girl. Then Alfy summoned her lost courage and said as calmly as she could, "Who's there?"

No one responded, and in a few seconds, "Tap-tap," came the sound to the left of the girl. Then thoroughly scared, as the room was half dark and rapidly growing darker, Alfy turned and ran, stumbling over an old stool as she tried to make the door in great haste.

Matthew heard her and came running up, saying: "What's the matter, sis?" He had been unhitching Barnabas, as Ma Babcock

was through with him now.

“Oh!” moaned Alfy. “It’s some one in the closet. I heard them tap-tapping and got scared and ran. Gosh, my shin hurts! There!” giving the stool that had caused the disaster a vicious kick.

“Maybe – oh, Alfy! Maybe – ” chimed in Matthew. “Maybe its a ghost.”

“Ma! Ma!” screamed Alfy.

“Ma! Ma!” yelled Matthew.

Both by this time were rapidly approaching the kitchen.

“Well,” said Ma Babcock, “You – land o’ livin’ – you look as though you’d seen a ghost.”

“Ma,” murmured Alfy, “we didn’t see him, I heard him. He’s in the closet in the barn.”

And then both children started in to talk and explain at the same time so that ma couldn’t understand a word.

“Here, you – you Alfy, tell me all. You, Matthew, keep still,” she exclaimed.

Then Alfy told her how she heard the tapping on the door of the closet.

“Come, we’ll all go back and see,” said Ma Babcock, and with that they all started for the barn, Alfy limping after ma and Matthew.

When they reached the upstairs room they tip-toed to the closet and listened, and after waiting a few minutes and hearing nothing, ma called loudly, “Is anyone in there?” No answer came. Then she quickly flung open the closet door, and what did they

hear but the flutter, flutter of wings, and then they saw, perched high on the lintel of the door, a little wood-pecker.

“There,” said Ma Babcock, “there is what made those tap-taps, a wood-pecker. Just as if I didn’t know there couldn’t be any ghosts. And a great big girl like you, Alfaretta, being scared of a little bird.”

With that they all breathed a sigh of relief, and Matthew and ma went down out of the barn, leaving Alfaretta to look over the contents of the well packed closet, to find, if possible, her raincoat.

“My, my, just think what a lot I shall have to tell Dorothy. I wonder what she will say. Just a bird. Shucks. I thought it was a real ghost. But ma says there are no really real ghosts. But, well, I don’t know.”

All this time Alfy had been opening boxes and shutting them, putting them back where she had found them, when suddenly she came across an old sampler about a foot square. Alfy looked at it, then brought it to the lamp and could see lots of new and hard stitches she had never learned. She didn’t see how anyone could sew them at all. And, my – what was that in the corner? A name. “Well,” thought Alfy, “here is a find. Maybe I can beg it off ma, and then I can take it to Dorothy.”

She had almost forgotten her raincoat, when she went back to the closet and looked in the box again to see if there was anything else new there, and then discovered her precious raincoat in the bottom of the big box. Hastily closing the box and shoving things

back in the closet, with her raincoat and the queer old sampler, Alfy ran hurriedly downstairs and through the yard and into the kitchen.

Ma Babcock had by this time prepared dinner and just as Alfy came in she called all the children to the dinner table.

“Ma,” exclaimed Alfy, “I found my raincoat, and this, too. What is it?”

“Let me see.” “Let me see.” “And me,” chimed in all the little Babcocks, trying to get possession of what Alfy was holding.

“Be quiet,” said ma, sternly. “Give it to me, Alfy.” Alfy handed her the sampler and Ma Babcock exclaimed: “Poor Hannah! Poor Hannah!”

“What Hannah? And was she very poor – poorer than we?” lisped little Luke, the youngest of the Babcocks.

“Ma, who did you say?” demanded Alfaretta.

“Why, Alfy, this is a sampler made by one of my little playmates years and years ago. A delicate little girl was Hannah Woodrow. She came up here summering, and then ’cause she was broken in health stayed all one year with me. She could sew so very well. She made that sampler and left it with me when the folks did take her back to Baltimore with them. She married – deary me – maybe she married some one named – Haley, I think. That’s what it was; and I ain’t heard from her since.”

“Ma, can I have the sampler?” asked Alfy. “I would like to take it to Baltimore to show Dorothy.”

“Well, I s’pose I must say yes, if you want to show it to Dorothy

Calvert, and 'pears to me Mrs. Calvert might like to see it, too," remarked ma. "But come now, dinner is getting cold and you must get to bed early, Alfaretta, if you want to catch that early train for Baltimore, and like as not you've fooled your time away and haven't packed a single thing."

But Alfy showed her mother she had been very busy and had all her things ready to start. So she went off gladly to bed, dreaming that all was ready and that she had departed for Dorothy, which, indeed, the next morning was a reality.

CHAPTER III.

THE PREPARATIONS

“You dear, dear Alfy,” piped Dorothy, joyously as she ran to meet Alfy, whom Metty had just brought up from the station to the house.

“Oh, Dorothy, I am so glad to see you,” rejoined Alfy with none the less joy than Dorothy had displayed. “I just must kiss you again.”

“Did you have an uneventful trip?” asked Dorothy, drawing her friend into the house.

“Just simply took train and arrived, that was all.”

“Metty, you see that Alfy’s things are taken up to the blue room.”

Then turning to Alfaretta again, “Aunt Betty is upstairs in the sewing room. We shall go straight to her. I believe she is just longing to get a sight of you again, just as much as I was when I wrote you.”

“Oh, Mrs. Calvert, I am so glad to see you again – Aunt Betty,” said Alfy, going over to Aunt Betty’s chair and putting both arms around her and kissing her several times.

“Why, Jim, I do declare. You here, too? Dorothy didn’t say you were here in her letter.” Alfy then went to the doorway where Jim was standing and gave him a hard hug.

“Oh, it’s just like the old times.” Jim blushed a rosy red and said awkwardly, “I’m so glad to see you, Alfy. It’s been more than a year since you have seen me, isn’t it?”

Jim decidedly disliked to be fussed over, and although he had known Alfy all his life just as he had Dorothy, he always felt confused and ill at ease when either of the girls kissed him or embraced him in any way. Now all the other boys, so Gerald often told him, would only be too glad to stand in his shoes.

“Come, Alfy,” said Dorothy, leading Alfaretta upstairs one more flight. “Here is your room. And see, here are all your things. Now hurry and clear up, and put your things where they belong. When you have finished, come down to the sewing room and we will talk as we work.”

“I’ll be there in less than no time,” called Alfy.

Dorothy then went back to the sewing room and picked up her sewing. There she and Aunt Betty worked till Alfy put in an appearance.

“See, I have my needles, thimble, thread and all, all in this little apron pocket. And this apron will save me lots of time, for when I’m through sewing all I have to do is take the apron off and shake the threads into the waste basket and not have to spend most half an hour picking threads off my dress,” said practical Alfy.

“Well, Alfy,” said Mrs. Calvert, “that is surely a very good idea. What can I give you to sew? We must all be kept busy, and then Dorothy will tell you her plans. Maybe you could baste

up the seams of this skirt,” handing the skirt to Alfaretta, who immediately began to sew up the seams.

Dorothy then unburdened herself of the good news and told Alfy how Mr. Ludlow, her manager, had written for her to be in New York on Tuesday, the 27th, and be ready to play at a concert on Thursday, and shortly after to start on her trip. Then, best of all, how besides a very liberal salary, she could have accompanying her, with all charges paid, her dear Aunt Betty and a companion. Would Alfy be the companion?

Alfaretta was astonished and delighted, and her joy knew no bounds. She felt sure Ma Babcock would allow her to go. Such wonderful vistas of happiness the plan suggested, it was long before the subject was exhausted.

Aunt Betty then told Alfaretta that she and Dorothy were making some simple little dresses for Dorothy’s use while away.

“But, Aunt Betty,” asked Alfy, “what are you going to wear?”

“Why, Alfy,” replied Aunt Betty. “I have ordered a black serge suit for traveling, and some neat white waists. Then I am having Mrs. Lenox, Frau Deichenberg’s dressmaker, make me a couple of fancy dresses, too, both of them black, but one trimmed more than the other.”

“And Alfy, Mrs. Lenox is making me a couple of dresses, too. One pink one for the very best, and one white one for the next best. These I shall have to wear at some of the concerts,” added Dorothy.

“I would like to know what these are that we are sewing on,”

demanded Alfy.

“Why,” answered Dorothy, “these are simple white dresses, the kind I have always worn, and most always shall.”

“Dorothy Calvert,” remarked Alfy, very sternly, “they are as pretty as they can be, even if they are plain. They are very substantial and can be washed and worn many times without hurting the dress. You know very well fancy dresses are so hard to launder.”

“And, dear,” said Aunt Betty, “you know, Dorothy, the people go to the concerts to hear you play, not to see what you wear and I have always liked my little girl best in just this kind of white dress. Now, dear, go down and practice awhile so as you will be able to play just the best you know how to when you go to Herr Deichenberg to take your lesson. For, Dorothy, you will not have many more lessons from Herr before you go away. And maybe if we finish up some of this sewing I will let Alfaretta go with you to Herr’s for your lesson. Frau Deichenberg said that Herr was not feeling very well and had a bad cough, so that when I was there night before last she said, ‘Maybe Miss Dorothy would not mind coming here for her lesson.’ I told her you would come.”

With that Dorothy walked slowly from the room, very much worried about her dear Herr Deichenberg, as she knew he was getting old and was afraid his cough might develop into something worse. She reached the music room and practiced faithfully for more than an hour.

When she had put the violin away and was about to leave the

music room, some one called her. She turned and saw Jim on the veranda outside the window, and crossing the room and lifting up the French sash she said, "What is it, Jim?"

"I just wanted to tell you something," the boy answered. "While you were practicing, Gerald Banks came up here in his automobile. He wanted to see you. I told him he couldn't as you were very busy practicing."

Dorothy liked to have Jim assume authority over her in this manner, and questioned gayly: "Well, Father Jim, what did he want?"

"He just wanted to take you autoing in the morning," Jim replied, "so I went upstairs to Aunt Betty and told her."

"Dear, thoughtful Jim," interrupted Dorothy. "What did Aunt Betty have to say?"

"Aunt Betty said," replied Jim, "that he could come around about ten o'clock to-morrow morning and take you and Alf to Herr Deichenberg's when you could take your lesson. Then – well, I guess I won't tell you. I will let you be surprised. You wait and see!"

"Oh, Jim! Please, please tell me? I must know now, really I must. Please, please," begged Dorothy.

"I shan't tell," remarked Jim, slowly walking away from her.

"Jim! Jim!" called Dorothy, running after him. "Dear Jim, please, please tell me."

"Girls certainly are curious creatures," soliloquized Jim, as Dorothy had turned on her heel and was walking quickly toward

the door, saying to herself, but loud enough for Jim to hear, "Well, Aunt Betty will tell me, I'm sure."

"Aunt Betty. Oh, Aunt Betty!" called Dorothy as she burst into the sewing room where Aunt Betty and Alfie were still sewing. "Jim says – oh, I mean, you must tell me what the surprise is for to-morrow. He said Gerald would take me to Herr Deichenberg's for my lesson in the morning and then he wouldn't tell me any more."

"Well, can't my little girl wait till then and see what more, for herself? That's much better than having some one tell you," remonstrated Aunt Betty.

"I'll tell you, Dorothy," said Alfie.

"You will?" interrupted Dorothy, "you dear."

"Don't interrupt me, Dorothy. I was going to say – what was I going to say?" said Alfie. "I know. I said I'd tell you – well, I meant to say I would tell you that a surprise isn't a surprise if you know beforehand."

"I thought you were going to tell me," remarked Dorothy, "but you didn't even intend to."

"I guess my little girl will have to wait," severely murmured Aunt Betty, kissing Dorothy, who by this time was standing very near her aunt's chair.

"Well," said Dorothy, "I guess I shall have to." So she sat down and took up her sewing again.

All three carefully sewed in silence for some time till Aunt Betty said: "Dorothy, girl, I think you could try on this dress,

now.”

“Certainly,” replied Dorothy. “I am sure I ought to be quite willing.”

Aunt Betty and Alfy fitted the dress carefully, altering the seams in the shoulders and cutting out the neck some. Before they had stopped sewing they had nearly finished this dress and had two others well under way.

Putting away their sewing carefully so as they could start again early in the morning, they all went to their rooms to dress for dinner.

They had a quiet meal after which Dorothy played for them awhile, and then they all sang songs, each choosing the songs they liked best. Thus they spent a quiet but most enjoyable evening. They retired early as Alfy was quite tired after her long journey and wanted to get a good night's sleep.

They had an early breakfast of pancakes and maple syrup of which Alfy was very fond, and soon after, the three were busy again in the sewing room. There they stayed, quietly working and talking, Alfy telling of the little Babcocks, till it was time for the girls to get ready for the automobile ride. Dorothy had apparently forgotten all about the surprise for she never even mentioned it at all.

“Alfy,” said Dorothy, when they were most ready, “when we get to Herr Deichenberg's you must be very quiet as I take my lesson and not say anything at all. You know Herr does not like to be disturbed while he gives a lesson. You will find many curious

things to look at, and if you want to ask about any of them, you just remember what you want to ask about and tell me after.”

Alfy promised, and in a few minutes the girls heard Gerald toot his automobile horn. Quickly they ran, waving good-bye and throwing kisses to Aunt Betty, who was looking out of the second story window. With Jim seated beside Gerald, they started.

Dorothy told Gerald the direction to take and after a very short time they drew up at Herr Deichenberg's little cottage. The girls descended and bade Jim and Gerald good-bye.

“Oh, Dorothy,” Gerald called back, “when shall I return for you?”

Dorothy, greatly surprised, questioned, “You are coming back, Gerald?”

“Surely.”

“Oh, goody, goody. Be here at twelve o'clock. That will bring us back home in time for lunch at one o'clock.”

Alfy, who thought the previous ride had been too short altogether, exclaimed “Oh, I'm so, so, so glad. We can have another ride. Oh, Dorothy, I do just love automobiling, I really do.”

Frau Deichenberg came to the door just then and ushered the two girls into the cozy living-room where they laid aside their wraps. “Herr is in the studio,” murmured Frau. “He is awaiting you there, Miss Dorothy.”

“I'll go right up,” answered Dorothy. “Now Frau Deichenberg, do not bother with Alfy at all. She can amuse herself till I finish.”

With that Dorothy ascended the stairs and Frau, after excusing herself by saying she must tend dinner as they always had dinner at noon – Herr wanted it so – left Alfy alone.

Alfy roamed about the room and examined all kinds of curios, – queer baskets, curious vases, old fans and precious paintings and etchings. So quickly did the time pass that she never noticed Dorothy as she came into the room.

“Well, Alfy, all ready to go home?” chirped Dorothy from behind her.

“Well, well, I never knew you were through. When did you come into the room, just now?” asked Alfy.

“Yes, Alfy, just now, and if I’m not mistaken, there is Gerald tooting his horn outside – he must be hailing us,” remarked Dorothy. The girls quickly donned their coats, bid good-bye to Frau, and departed.

Dorothy exclaimed in delight, “Look, look, Alfy, its dear Aurora, she must have come too! Oh, you dear, dear girl, I am so glad to see you!” And Dorothy embraced her, fondly kissing her several times. “Alfy, this is Aurora Banks, Gerald’s sister. Aurora, you have heard me speak of Alfaretta many times, I am sure.”

“Oh, I am so glad to know you,” heartily responded Aurora, “Dorothy is always talking of you.”

“Well, Jim, now I know what the surprise is,” laughed Dorothy, “its Aurora.”

“Now, that’s all wrong,” warned Gerald, “altogether wrong.”

“No it isn’t, is it Jim?” remarked Dorothy.

“Well, yes and no,” tactfully put in Jim. “The real surprise is this, – Aunt Betty has ordered a luncheon for all of us, a farewell luncheon for you, Dorothy, and we are all invited; so let’s hurry home. I’m hungry for one.”

“And I – I am most near starved,” cried Alfie.

The young people reached home just as luncheon was ready, and my! what a luncheon it was; all declared there never was a finer.

CHAPTER IV. IN NEW YORK

“Good-bye – good-bye – dear old Bellevieu,” sang Dorothy. “Good-bye all for a long, long time, for to-day has my career begun.”

Aunt Betty looked sadly at the dear old home and felt very loathe to part from it and its comforts.

Then all, Dorothy, Alfaretta, Jim and Aunt Betty, waved fond farewells to the faithful old force of servitors who stood lined up in the doorway.

“Oh, Jim, boy,” wailed Alfaretta, “we will soon be in New York and then I shall have to say good-bye to you for, goodness only knows how long it will be before I see you again.”

“That’s right, Alfy dear,” replied Jim, “always look for trouble. Just think of the good times we’ll all have in New York before Dorothy really starts to travel.”

“Well, I suppose I might have thought of that, but I didn’t,” answered Alfy.

“There is only a short drive now to the station,” added Aunt Betty, “and I think you could get our tickets, Jim. Take this money and get four tickets for New York on the noon train, I think we have plenty of time to catch it.”

“I am so sorry that Herr and Frau are not with us. I just hate

to go without him. It hardly seems right, does it, Aunty,” asked Dorothy.

“You know, Dorothy, that Herr has a very bad cold, and such a cough, I am quite worried about him. He would have come in spite of all that but Frau would not let him. I think Frau Deichenberg did a wise thing in keeping him home,” replied Aunt Betty.

“Seems as if I am not going to have a very happy start,” lamented Dorothy. “I wanted Herr to hear me play and criticise.”

“Dorothy, girl, cheer up. That’s no way to be when you are about to start on a career,” sternly admonished Jim. “You have every reason to be happy.”

In the rush and excitement of getting the tickets and finding out just when and where the train came in, Dorothy forgot her sorrow. They all bid good-bye to Metty, who had driven them to the station and who drove away mourning to himself as he went, “Deedy, deedy. Lonesome, ve’y, ve’y lonesome will ole Bellevieu be wi’out de Misses and de li’le Misses dere.”

They were at last all seated on the train and quickly were speeding toward New York. Dorothy and Alfaretta were sitting together talking happily of the people in the car and of the passing, ever changing scenery. Aunt Betty and Jim were in the seat just in back of them. Suddenly the latter reached into his pocket and procured a letter, handing it to Aunt Betty to read, explaining he had written the Edison Co., of New York, and that that was their answer.

Aunt Betty carefully read the letter through and turning to Jim, asked, "What are you going to do about it, my boy?"

"That's just what I would like to know," answered Jim. "I always wanted to go to college, and have saved as much as I could, but I can't quite see my way clear to go there yet. I have studied very hard all along and have learned a great deal about electricity. The books Mr. Winters left me have helped me very much, but I am very far behind in some subjects required for entrance to college. My languages are very poor as is my history, and I write a very poor hand."

"Well, Jim," answered Aunt Betty, "I am sure I do not know just what I would have you do in this case. The offer is for work in the – what department is it?"

"The position is in the department of installation as assistant to the superintendent. The company is a very desirable one to be in. I have heard that they are very fair and that one who works well stands good chances," replied Jim.

"I think we had better talk this over with someone before you decide one way or the other," added Aunt Betty. "Maybe Mr. Ludlow could tell us something of it."

"I would have to live in New York," remarked Jim, "and where I do not know."

"I should see that you were well established in your new place before I left New York," Aunt Betty said.

"You are always so good, Aunt Betty," answered Jim. "The salary they have offered me is not very large, but is is twenty-

five dollars a week.”

“Did Mr. Sterling have anything to do with trying to get you the place, Jim?” asked Aunt Betty.

“Yes and no,” responded Jim. “I used a letter from him for reference.”

“Well,” rejoined Aunt Betty, “I think we had better leave the matter open and not say anything more about it till we talk it over with Mr. Ludlow. Don’t say anything to the girls as yet for it will be quite a surprise for them.”

By this time the train was nearing New York and Dorothy asked Aunt Betty if they had not better get fixed up. Quickly gathering their things together, they left the train to find Mr. Ludlow waiting for them.

Mr. Ludlow expected to take Aunt Betty and Dorothy right to the Martha Washington, where they could stay till Dorothy was ready to start on her tour, but Jim presented a new problem for the Martha Washington was a hotel for ladies only and no men can stay there. So calling a couple of taxicabs, he hustled Dorothy, Aunt Betty and Alfaretta in one, and taking the other with Jim he ordered the man to drive to the Prince Arthur. They reached their destination very quickly and Mr. Ludlow arranged for rooms for all. Leaving them in the possession, so to speak, of a bell-boy, he departed, saying he would see them early in the morning for a little while to tell Dorothy briefly what she would have to do for the next few days.

The bell-boy conducted Alfaretta, Dorothy and Aunt Betty to

the seventh floor, where, unlocking a door, he disclosed to them three very nice connecting rooms, and leaving them there he took Jim down the hall a few doors and showed him his room.

Once inside the room, Alfy murmured faintly three or four times, "Oh!"

"What's the matter, Alfy?" asked Dorothy.

"I just can't get used to elevators," replied Alfy. "What nice rooms" – walking through them – "three rooms" – looking at them again – "two bedrooms – one parlor."

"Two bedrooms and one sitting room," corrected Dorothy. "You take the single bedroom, Aunt Betty, and Alfy and I can use the double one."

Alfy picked up her things and took them to the smaller bedroom and taking off her hat and coat and hanging them in the closet, she started immediately to unpack. "What a lovely room ours is," remarked Alfy, "it's such a pretty pink and white."

Aunt Betty took off her things and Dorothy insisted she go in the sitting room and stay there till they had unpacked everything.

Shortly they heard a knock at the door. Alfy ran to open it. It was Jim. Coming into the room, he said, "I have a nice little room, but as I finished unpacking my things I thought I would come in here and see how you were."

"We are all settled now," said Aunt Betty. "Dorothy and Alfy have been quite busy. But children, come now, we must all dress for dinner. When you are ready, Jim, come back here."

Jim was ready in no time, so he went into Dorothy's sitting

room and waited there, reading a magazine. Very shortly the girls were ready and they all descended into the large dining room.

Alfy, clinging to Dorothy's hand, said, "Oh, Dorothy dear, I am quite scared. What shall I do?"

"Do just as I do," whispered the more experienced Dorothy, quietly leading Alfy into the room. Odd it is that those accustomed to hotel life are inapt to think of the trepidation of the novice or new comer.

The head waiter conducted them to a table in the corner, then handed them his bill of fare.

"What would you like to have?" Aunt Betty asked Alfaretta.

"Oh, dear, most anything suits me, just what I would like to have I can't think. I want just what Dorothy orders," answered Alfy.

"Well, Dorothy girl," said Aunt Betty, turning to her, "what will it be?"

"I would like – oh, let me see. Can we have oysters, Aunt Betty?" asked Dorothy. "Then steak and baked potatoes. For salad just plain lettuce with French dressing."

"Yes, that will do very nicely, dear, and we can have ice cream for dessert," answered Aunt Betty, who gave the order to the waiter. Shortly after they were served and all voted that they were enjoying a delightful repast.

"What kind of ice cream would you like, Alfy?" asked Aunt Betty.

"Strawberry," promptly answered Alfy, "it's so nice and pink."

“Chocolate for me,” cried Dorothy. “And for me, too,” joined in Jim. “I think I shall have plain vanilla,” added Aunt Betty, laughing.

When dinner was over and a very pleasant meal it was, they all went up to Dorothy’s sitting room for a quiet evening.

“Oh, Dorothy and Aunt Betty, I had just the best dinner I have ever had. I must, I just must write it all to Ma Babcock, she will sure want to tell it at Liza Jane’s.” With that Alfie crossed the floor and entered her room where she wrote a long, long letter home telling her mother of the wonders of a New York hotel.

“Ting-ling-ling-ling,” buzzed the telephone in the hall. Dorothy answered the call saying, “Hello. Oh! Why we are all up here. Where? Oh, yes, in the sitting room. Yes. Yes. Now? All right. Good-bye.” Turning to Aunt Betty, Dorothy said, “It’s Mr. Ludlow.”

“What did he want, dear?” asked Aunt Betty.

“He is coming right up here,” replied Dorothy. “There, that’s him now. Didn’t you hear a knock?” Opening the door she found Mr. Ludlow there. “Come in, Mr. Ludlow.”

Mr. Ludlow came in and deposited his gloves, cane and hat on a vacant space upon the table, then he sat down and turning to Dorothy said: “I suppose, little girl, you are very, very curious to know where you are going to play to-morrow – no, not to-morrow – the next day.”

“Yes, I am,” timidly responded Dorothy.

“Well, I am going to give you a treat. To-morrow I am going

to ask Aunt Betty to take all you young folks to a matinee. I hope I have picked out a play that will suit you all. I have chosen 'Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm.' I suppose you are quite familiar with the little heroine, Dorothy."

"No, Mr. Ludlow, I am sorry to say I do not know her."

"Oh dear, Dorothy didn't I get you the book to read?" asked Aunt Betty.

"Yes, Aunt Betty," answered Dorothy, "but Molly took it home with her. She wanted something to read on the cars."

"Well, well, never mind, you will enjoy the play all the more for not having read the story. Here are the seats, Mrs. Calvert. And, Dorothy, I would like you to notice the naturalness of the characters in the play, and profit by it. Naturalness and ease mean a great deal for you, – self possession – poise, my dear."

"What about the concert? Where is that? When? Here I am asking questions faster than you can answer them," remarked Dorothy.

"In time, in time, my dear," responded Mr. Ludlow. "Thursday I will call for you here and take you with me to Carnegie Hall, where, my dear, you will render two pieces. The rest of the concert has been arranged for, and the small part left for you will not scare you, but only help to get you used to playing before large audiences. Now, Dorothy child, what would you like to play? This time you can choose your own pieces."

"I should like to play what Aunt Betty and Jim like best," answered Dorothy; "they hear me play oftener than anyone else."

“My choice is ‘Das Gude vom Lied,’ by Schuman,” replied Aunt Betty.

“And mine is ‘Rondo a capriccio,’ by Beethoven,” said Jim.

“All right, all right, they will suit exactly,” added Mr. Ludlow.

“Mr. Ludlow,” remarked Aunt Betty, “I would like to take up a few minutes of your time when you are finished with Dorothy.”

“I shall be through in just a few minutes, madam,” answered Mr. Ludlow.

“Do you want me to play again in New York?” questioned Dorothy.

“Yes, just once more, my dear,” answered Mr. Ludlow. “That is on Saturday night at the Hippodrome, at 8.15 p. m. It’s a benefit concert for the blind babies of New York. Many famous people are offering their talent. You do not mind playing there, do you? Your future plans we will discuss later, but that will be all for now. No – I shall have to know what you are going to play there. May I suggest that ‘Southern Medley’ you play so well, and one other piece, say Schubert’s ‘Serenade.’ Now have a good time tomorrow and be ready at one o’clock sharp, on Thursday.”

“What I wanted to say, Mr. Ludlow, was concerning Jim. He is thinking of taking a business proposition with the Edison Company as assistant in the department of installation,” added Aunt Betty.

“Why, really, Mrs. Calvert, I hardly know much about that line of business, but judging from hearsay I should say that Jim was very lucky indeed to get such an offer,” answered Mr. Ludlow.

“Haven’t you any business friends in New York?”

“Why Mr. Ford, the railroad man might help,” announced Jim from his corner.

“By all means see Mr. Ford,” said Mr. Ludlow. “It’s getting very late and I must go.”

“I will be ready for you in time on Thursday. And thank you, oh so much, for the tickets for to-morrow,” replied Dorothy.

CHAPTER V.

THE CARNEGIE HALL CONCERT

“Oh, dear, what a lazy girl I am. Nine o'clock and I have not had breakfast. What day is it? Thursday, – and Mr. Ludlow coming here at one o'clock. I must hurry for I must practice some,” murmured Dorothy to herself.

“Dorothy girl, are you still in bed?” called Aunt Betty from the next room.

“I'll be with you in just a minute, Aunty dear. I'm most ready. Oh, Alfy, please help me, – please,” called Dorothy.

“All right,” replied Alfy, “do you need me to do up the back of your dress?”

“Yes, and that's all. I'm so late. I did want to write Frau this morning, too,” said Dorothy crossly. “Come, let's go to breakfast.”

After breakfast Dorothy practiced and Aunt Betty and Alfaretta took a walk and visited some of the large stores where they did a little shopping, Aunt Betty buying the girls each a pair of long white gloves and an Irish-lawn collar at Altman's.

Dorothy was all dressed and waiting for them when they got home. She had on a very simple white dress, one they had made, with just a touch of pink, a small pink bow, at the waist, and a pink hair ribbon. She had practiced the two compositions

thoroughly and felt that she knew them perfectly. True, she did feel a slight bit nervous, but in her past experience when she had her violin in her hands she lost self-consciousness and became wrapped up in her music.

“Dorothy,” called Alf, “we are home, and, see, Aunt Betty bought me these. They are so pretty and I always did want them. I’m so glad I have them. But you go to Aunt Betty, she has something for you.”

“You are a funny girl, Alf,” answered Dorothy. “You have been talking away and I haven’t any idea what you were trying to get at. Aunt Betty, where are you?”

“In the sitting room, dear,” answered Aunt Betty.

“What is Alf talking about, Aunt Betty?” asked Dorothy, walking into the room.

“This and this,” replied Aunt Betty, holding up two packages. “These are for you, dear.”

Dorothy, taking the two packages and kissing her aunt, murmured: “You dear, dear Aunt Betty. I must see what’s inside.”

She carefully opened the first and exclaimed as she drew forth a long pair of white gloves, “Oh, goody, goody. Just what I have been longing for.” And then opening the second package she found it contained a very beautiful Irish crocheted collar. “Aunt Betty! You dear, dear Aunt Betty. Just think how fine this will look with my gray coat. Just like all the girls we see here in New York. You are the best aunt ever a girl had.”

Dorothy then gathered up her treasures and took them with

her into the next room to put them away.

Aunt Betty went into Alfy's room and said, "Alfy dear, if you will give me your coat I will help you sew the collar on it so you can wear it this afternoon."

"Oh! that will be fine! I can wear it to the concert. And can I wear the red hair ribbon Ma Babcock bought me from Liza Jane's?" said Alfy.

"Ting-a-ling. Ting-a-ling," rang the telephone bell. Dorothy rushed across the room to answer it and found that Mr. Ludlow was waiting for her below in a taxicab.

"Good-bye, Aunt Betty, dear," called Dorothy; then running into her Aunt's room she kissed her several times. "You will all surely come. I do need you all there."

"We'll be there in plenty of time, Dorothy dear," answered Aunt Betty. "Now run along girlie, and don't forget your violin."

"Here it is," cried Alfy from the next room, "I'll bring it to you."

"You're a dear, Alfy," called Dorothy, who by this time was already in the hall.

Mr. Ludlow escorted Dorothy to the taxicab, getting in with her and, shutting the door, he directed the driver to go to Carnegie Hall.

"Well, Dorothy, child," asked Mr. Ludlow, "is everything all right? You are not scared, are you? You just try to do your best and everything will be fine."

"I'm not scared, I'm sure of that; but do you think the people

will like me?” questioned Dorothy.

“Sure of that, my dear, sure of that. All you must do is just be your very own self,” laughed Mr. Ludlow. “But here we are and we must get out.”

The driver stopped the cab and they quickly descended and walked into the building.

“Now, Dorothy, I am going to show you around the place. Just follow me,” directed Mr. Ludlow.

Dorothy looked at the large room and the many chairs and said hesitatingly, “Will it be crowded?” – and when Mr. Ludlow said he hoped so, she sighed and murmured: “My, what a lot of people I shall have to please!” then she added softly to herself, “Jim, Alfie and Aunt Betty; they will surely be pleased and the rest will, too, if I can make them.”

Mr. Ludlow then led Dorothy to the stage and made her walk up and down and all over the place so that she would get familiar with it.

“Mr. Ludlow,” asked Dorothy, “where shall I stand?”

“Right about here,” answered Mr. Ludlow, walking to the front of the stage and a little to the left. “Don’t face directly front.”

“Is this right?” asked Dorothy, taking the position Mr. Ludlow requested.

“That will do, – that will do just right,” answered Mr. Ludlow. “Now come inside and I will take you to see some of the noted artists who are going to play or sing.” He led Dorothy in from the stage and through a long narrow passage which terminated

in a large room where there were numerous chairs, tables and couches. Dorothy noticed three or four girls talking together in the center of the room but those in other groups all seemed to be older.

Mr. Ludlow walked over to the group in the center of the room and addressing a small, fair girl, said, "Good afternoon, Miss Boothington."

The girl turned and seeing Mr. Ludlow, exclaimed, "Mr. Ludlow, I am so glad you are here. I did want you to hear my singing and criticize. You will, will you not?"

"Miss Boothington, that shall be as you please. But now let me present you to a little friend of mine. This," remarked Mr. Ludlow, turning to Dorothy, "is Miss Dorothy Calvert, and Dorothy, this is my ward, Miss Ruth Boothington. Miss Boothington sings, and will be one of our companions on your trip."

"I am so glad to meet you, Miss Calvert," replied Miss Boothington.

"As we are to be so much together, please call me Dorothy if you will," interrupted Dorothy.

"And you will call me Ruth," Miss Boothington remarked. "I know we shall have some very fine times together. And you are a solo violinist?"

"Yes, I play the violin," answered Dorothy. "Are you going to sing to-day?"

"Yes," answered Ruth. "At least I am going to try to."

“Here, here. That will never do, Miss Ruth. You should have said that you would sing. Of course you would sing,” remarked Mr. Ludlow. Turning to Dorothy, he said, “Well, Dorothy, I think I shall leave you here with Miss Boothington. I guess she can take care of you. I am going to the front and will sit with your Aunt Betty.”

With that Mr. Ludlow left the two girls and walked out and around front where he looked for Aunt Betty.

“Is this the place? My, ain’t it big!” exclaimed Alfy, as Aunt Betty and Jim followed her to the door.

“I have our tickets here,” remarked Jim, presenting them to the doorkeeper.

“I guess we shall have to go right in and get our seats,” added Aunt Betty. “Keep close to me, Alfy, and Jim, you see that Alfy doesn’t get lost.”

They were at last ushered into a large box on the right side of the house.

“My, what a lot of seats. Is there going to be people in all of them?” asked Alfy, leaning so far out of the box that she almost fell over the rail.

“Here! You sit still,” sharply corrected Jim. “And, Alfy, try to act like a young lady, not like a back-woods little girl. Sit still.”

Alfy reluctantly subsided and appeared to be rather angry. Aunt Betty, noticing this said, “Watch me, Alfy, and do as I do and you will be all right.”

“Good-afternoon, Mr. Ludlow,” said Jim, making room for

him.

“Good-afternoon, all,” answered Mr. Ludlow, seating himself next Aunt Betty.

“Did you come to keep us company all the afternoon?” asked Aunt Betty. “Or did you just wish to hear Dorothy play?”

“I thought you wouldn’t mind if I sat with you,” replied Mr. Ludlow. “I have quite a few young friends who are to help entertain us this afternoon. I do hope you shall enjoy them.”

Ruth had, in the meantime, presented Dorothy to the other girls in the group, and they all chattered gayly for a while.

Ruth glanced at her watch, and drawing Dorothy aside, said, “Let’s sit down quietly for a few minutes, and say nothing at all. It always helps to calm you and give you self-possession.”

The girls walked to a far end of the room and sat down, keeping silent for several minutes.

Then Ruth broke the silence by asking, “Where is your violin, Dorothy?”

“I guess it’s over there where we were standing before,” replied Dorothy, rising and making her way quickly to the spot. But no violin was visible.

“My!” exclaimed Ruth. “What did you do with it?”

“Oh,” lamented Dorothy, “I don’t know.”

“Where did you have it last?” questioned Ruth.

“I had it home in the hotel,” moaned Dorothy, most in tears. “I remember I did bring it. Alfie handed it to me and I took it in the taxi.”

“In the taxi? That’s where you left it, you foolish child,” interrupted Ruth.

“How, oh how, can I get it? I must have it. I have to play,” groaned Dorothy.

“Run! Run and telephone. Call up the New York Taxicab Company,” breathlessly exclaimed Ruth. “Oh, oh, Dorothy, I must go! I must! I just must, yet how can I leave you here – but I have got to sing now. Oh, I am all out of breath.”

“Stop talking, you dear girl, and go and sing your best so as to make them give you an encore, anything to gain more time for me. Now go!” And Dorothy kissed her and pushed her forward.

Running down the length of the room, she flew into a telephone booth, and hastily searching out the number called up Columbus 6,000.

“Hello, hello,” called Dorothy, frantically. “Hello! Is – has – a man come back with a violin in his taxicab – I must have it! I have to play! Yes. Yes. Yes. No. No. Good-bye.”

She hung up the receiver, and sat back despondently. The cab had not returned in which she had ridden to the hall.

“Oh, what shall I do! No violin and my turn to play next. What shall I do, oh, what shall I do?”

“Miss Calvert,” called the boy. “Your turn next.”

“Oh, dear,” moaned Dorothy, “see if you can borrow an instrument for me from one of the musicians in the orchestra.”

Just then a man rushed into the room carrying a violin under his arm. Dorothy ran up to him and fairly snatched the precious

thing out of his arms, exclaiming, "I can play now. I can. I can! Oh, thank you, thank you! But I must go. Please come to the Prince Arthur to-night at 8.30 p. m. I will see you then."

With that she dashed off, and trying to calm herself, walked upon the stage.

She carefully positioned herself just where Mr. Ludlow had told her to stand, and waiting for the introduction to be played by the orchestra, looked around the house, and discovering the box party, smiled at them gayly. When the last few bars of the music were played, gracefully placing her violin in position she commenced to draw her bow gently across the strings and produced clear, vibrant tones. Her body moved rhythmically, swaying back and forward in perfect accord with the music.

The audience listened spellbound, and when she had finished the whole house echoed with applause. She then walked slowly off the stage, only to be motioned back again to play an encore which she did with as much success as she had scored with her first piece.

When she turned from the stage the second time Ruth, who was waiting in the wings, whispered in her ear, "Dorothy dear, you did just splendidly, and you will surely be a great success. The people applauded you so very much I thought they would never stop."

"Oh, I'm so glad. I do hope Mr. Ludlow liked it, and is satisfied with me," murmured Dorothy.

"I can answer that, Dorothy," said a voice in back of her that

belonged to Mr. Ludlow, who had left the box just as Dorothy had finished playing and come to speak to them. "Both of you girls did very well indeed. Very well indeed. But come now with me and we'll go around and sit in the box and listen to the rest of the concert. I want to hear it all."

With that they traced their way back and soon were seated with the rest of the party. Dorothy told them all about how she had lost her violin and at the last minute recovering it vowed that she would be more careful of it in the future.

The little party was loud in its praises of Dorothy's playing and Ruth's singing, for Dorothy presented her new friend to them as soon as she could.

That evening they learned that it was the chauffeur of the taxicab who had found the violin in the auto before he had returned to the garage, and he had immediately started back for the hall with it, knowing it would be needed. Dorothy sent a letter of thanks and a reward, and Aunt Betty, learning the next day that he had a little boy with a broken leg in the hospital, sent a large basket of fruit for the young sufferer.

CHAPTER VI.

THE OPERA

The girls spent the next day in a very quiet manner. The morning passed quickly as they wrote letters and fixed up their rooms. About dinner time Jim knocked at the door and Dorothy answered.

“Dorothy, I have written and ’phoned Mr. Ford and I can’t seem to get any answer from him,” announced Jim.

“What did you want him for, Jim?” questioned Dorothy.

“Why, I wanted to get his opinion on that position I want to take with the Edison Co.,” answered Jim.

“I have it!” exclaimed Dorothy. “Send him a telegram.”

“I might try that, though I have about made up my mind – ”

Just at that moment Aunt Betty called from her room, “Dorothy, Dorothy, girl!”

“Yes, Aunt Betty,” answered Dorothy, going to her aunt’s door. “What may you want?”

“Don’t you think it would be real nice if we four went for a drive this afternoon? It’s a nice warm afternoon and we can go up Fifth avenue and into the park,” suggested Aunt Betty.

“That will be fine. I’ll run and tell Alfy and we’ll get ready,” responded Dorothy, going quickly out of the room. “Alfy! Alfy! Where are you?”

“In here,” called Alfy from her room.

Dorothy rushed into the room, crying, “Alfy dear, just think, we are going driving this afternoon, Aunt Betty, Jim, and you and I. We are going driving – driving.”

“Oh, that’s just great,” exclaimed Alfy, dancing round the room. “It’s fun to go driving in a big city.”

“Let’s get ready right away,” said Dorothy, taking Alfy’s hand and dancing round in a circle with her, singing, “Let’s get ready, let’s get ready, let’s get ready right away.” And then they let go of each other’s hands and danced away to accomplish the art of “getting ready right away.”

Very soon the girls were in the sitting room waiting for Jim and Aunt Betty.

Just then Jim burst into the room crying, “Dorothy, I can’t get a horse and carriage here to drive myself like one has in Baltimore, but I did get a nice automobile. I guess it will not cost any more, for we cover so much ground in a short time. I found a large, red touring car that just holds five and the chauffeur is downstairs now waiting for us, so hustle into your things.”

“An auto ride! That’s better still,” responded Alfy as she rushed to put on her hat and coat.

“I am all ready, dear,” called Aunt Betty from the next room.

“Well, then, come on,” answered Jim. “All come with me.” And they followed him down and out to the automobile.

They were very much delighted with the auto car, and the three, Aunt Betty, Dorothy and Alfy, climbed into the back seat,

and Jim took his place with the driver.

Aunt Betty called, "Jim, Jim, please tell the chauffeur to drive slowly and to go up Fifth avenue."

Away they went. "Oh, oh, oh!" gasped Alfy at the first corner. "Oh, I most thought we would bump into that trolley car!"

"Well," said Jim, "we didn't, but it was a pretty close shave."

"Just think of all the people we might have hurt if we had," said Dorothy.

"I guess," replied Jim, "that the only ones hurt would have been ourselves, for the trolley is so heavy we couldn't have bothered that much."

Just then they turned into Fifth avenue and joined the procession of already too many machines that were slowly wending their way up and down that old thoroughfare.

"Dorothy and Alfy," said Aunt Betty, "in those large houses live the very rich of New York."

"Oh, I wouldn't live in a house like that," said Alfy, "if I was rich. I couldn't, I just could never be happy in one like that," pointing to a large gray stone mansion. "It hasn't any garden and windows only in the front, and looks like a pile of boxes, one on top of the other."

"Don't the people in New York care for gardens, aunty dear?" questioned Dorothy.

"Yes. Yes, indeed, dear. But these are only their winter homes," laughed Aunt Betty. "They have summer homes in the country where they have very beautiful gardens. They only spend

a few months here in these houses each winter.”

“Well, I would rather have a real home for all the time,” said practical Jim. “A real home, like Bellevieu.”

“Dear, dear old Bellevieu, I wouldn’t exchange it either for all of these places,” whispered Dorothy. “And after this trip is over, and I have made a lot of money, we will all go back there again, and I will build that new sun-parlor Aunt Betty has so long wanted.”

Aunt Betty sighed, for she and she only knew how badly off was the poor old estate. The mortgage that must be paid and the repairs and other things that were needed. She hoped that Dorothy’s trip would be a success, and that she could pay off the mortgage at last.

Then answering Dorothy, she said, “Dear, dear little girl, you are always trying to think of something pleasant for someone else. Never mind your old Aunt Betty, dear.”

“But I do,” whispered Dorothy in her ear, “because I love you more than anyone else in the world.”

“Yes, dear, maybe now you do,” rejoined Aunt Betty, “but some day, some day wait and see.”

They eagerly looked at the beautiful homes, the large and handsome hotels and most of all the happy throng of people who filled the streets, remarking that they had never before seen quite so many people, each hurrying along apparently to do his or her special duty.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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