

Speed Nell

Molly Brown of Kentucky



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CHAPTER I.

A LETTER

From Miss Julia Kean to Mrs. Edwin Green.

Giverny, France,

August, 1914.

Dearest old Molly Brown of Kentucky:

You can marry a million Professor Edwin Greens, B.A., M.A., Ph.D., L.D. (the last stands for lucky dog), and you can also have a million little Green Olive Branches, but you will still be Molly Brown of Kentucky to all of your old friends.

I came up to Giverny last week with the Polly Perkinses. They are great fun and, strange to say, get on rather better than most married folks. Jo is much meeker than we ever thought she could be, now that she has made Polly cut his hair and has let her own grow out. Polly is more manly, too, I think and asserts himself occasionally, much to Jo's delight. I should not be at all astonished if his falsetto voice turned into a baritone, if not a deep bass. He walks with quite a swagger and talks about my wife this and my wife that in such masculine pride that you would not

know him.

Paris was rather excited when we came through last week. I have been at Quimperle all summer and only stopped in Paris long enough to get some paints and canvas. I had actually painted out. Jo had written me to join her in this little housekeeping scheme at Giverny. I wish you could see the house we have taken. It is too wonderful that it is ours! Such peace and quiet! Especially so, after the turmoil in Paris. I have seen so few papers that I hardly know what it is all about; no doubt you in Kentucky with your *Courier Journal* know more than I do. They talk of war, but of course that is nonsense. Anyhow, if there is a war, I bet I am going to be Johnny on the Spot. But of course there won't be one.

I miss Kent, – but I need hardly tell you that. I almost gave in and sailed with him, but it was much best for me to wait in France for my mother and father. They are now in Berlin waiting for the powers that be to give some kind of a permit for some kind of a road that Bobby is to build from Constantinople to the interior; that is, he is to build it if he can get the permission of the Imperial Government. What the Germans have to do with Turkey, you can search me, but that is what Bobby writes me. He has done a lot of work on it already in the way of preliminary plans. I am to hang around until I hear from them, so I am going to hang around with the Polly Perkinses.

No doubt Kent is home by this time. I envy him, somehow. It is so wonderful to have a home to go to. Now isn't that a silly

line of talk for Judy Kean to be getting off, I, who have always declared that a Gypsy van was my idea of bliss? I never have had a home and I never have wanted one until lately. I fancy that winter in Paris with your mother in the Rue Brea was my undoing. Of course, if Bobby had been anything but a civil engineer and Mamma had been anything but so much married to Bobby that she had to trot around with him from one end of the earth to the other, why then, I might have had a home. But Bobby is Bobby and he wouldn't have been himself doing anything but building roads, and I certainly would not have had Mamma let him build them all by his lonesome. The truth of the matter is, I was a mistake. I should either never have been born or I should have been born a boy. Geewhillikins! What a boy I would have been! Somehow, I'm glad I'm not, though.

I am wild to see little Mildred. It seems so wonderful for you to be a mother. I know you will make a great job of being one, too. Are you going to have her be an old-fashioned baby with the foregone conclusion that she must "eat her peck of dirt," or is she to be one of these infants whose toys must be sterilized before she is allowed to play with them, and who is too easily contaminated to be kissed unless the kisser gargles first with corrosive sublimate? Please let me know about this, because kiss her I must and will, and if I have to be aseptic before I can do it, I fancy I had better begin right now. Here is Polly with the mail and Paris papers. Will finish later.

It has come! Actual war! We feel like fools to have rushed

off here to the country without knowing more about the state France was in. I can hardly believe it even now. They are asking Americans to leave Paris, but I can't leave. How can I, with Mamma and Papa in Berlin? I am going to stay right where I am until things settle themselves a little. The peasants even now do not believe it has come. We are not much more than an hour from Paris, but there are many persons living in this village who have never been to Paris. The old men stand in groups and talk politics, disagreeing on every subject under the sun except the one great subject and that is Germany. Hatred of Germany is the one thing that there are no two minds about. The women look big-eyed and awestruck. There are no young men – all gone to war. They went off singing and joking.

What I long for most is news. We don't get any news to speak of. I am filled with concern about Bobby and Mamma. It is foolish, as they are able to take care of themselves, but Bobby is so sassy. I am so afraid he might jaw back at the Emperor. He is fully capable of calling him to account for his behavior. Some one should, but I hope it won't be Bobby.

Polly Perkins is going to drive a Red Cross Ambulance. He is quite determined, so determined that he has actually produced a chin from somewhere (you remember he boasted none to speak of). It is quite becoming to him, this determination and chin, and Jo is beaming with pride. I believe if Polly had wanted to run, it would have killed Jo.

Excuse the jerkiness of this, but I am so excited that I can only

jot down a little at a time. Things are moving fast! The artists and near artists at Madame Gaston's Inn are piling out, making for Paris, some to sail for United States and others to try to get into England. Jo and I had determined to sit tight in our little house with its lovely walled garden that seems a kind of protection to us – not that we are scared, bless you no! We just felt we might as well be here as anywhere else.

This morning Jo came to breakfast looking kind of different and yet kind of familiar – she had cut off her hair!

“I mean to follow Polly,” she remarked simply.

“Follow him where?”

“Wherever he goes.” And do you know, Molly, the redoubtable Jo burst into tears?

I was never more shocked in my life. If your Aunt Sarah Clay had dissolved into tears, I would not have been more at a loss how to conduct myself. I patted her heartily on the back but the poor girl wanted a shoulder to weep on and I lent her one. I tell you when Jo gets started she is some bawler. I fancy she made up for all the many years that crying has been out of her ken.

My neck is stiff from the wetting I got. Nothing short of the plumber could have stopped her. When she finally went dry, she began to talk:

“By I'b glad Bolly didn't zee be bake zuch a vool ob byself!”

“Well, you had better look after your p's and s's or you'll be taken up as a German spy.” That made her laugh and then she went on to tell me what she meant to do, the p's still too much

for her but her s's improving.

"What's the use of my brofession now? I'd like to know that. Miniature painting will be no good for years to come. This war is going to be something that'll make everybody baint on big canvasses. Who will want to look at anything little? I tell you, Judy, the day of mastodons is at hand! There'll be no more lap-dogs, no more pet canaries. The one time lap-dogs will find themselves raging lions; and the pet canaries will grow to great eagles and burst the silly wires of their cages with a snap of their fingers – "

"Whose fingers?" I demanded.

"Never mind whose! Mixed metaphors are perfectly permissible in war time." I was glad to see she could say such a word as permissible, which meant that her storm of weeping had subsided.

"Are you going as a Red Cross nurse?" I asked.

"Nurse your grandmother! I'm going to drive an ambulance or maybe fly."

"But they won't want a woman in the thick of the fight!"

"Well, who's to know? When I get a good hair-cut and put on some of Polly's togs, I bet I'll make as good a man as Pol – no, I won't say that. I'll never be as good a man as he is. I'm going to try the aviation racket first. If they won't take me, I'll get with the Red Cross, somehow. I know I could fly like a bird. I have never yet seen the wheels that I could not understand the turning of. I believe it is not so easy to get aviators. It is so hazardous

that men don't go in for it. I am light weight but awfully strong."

"But, Jo, what are you going to do about your feet?" You remember, Molly, what pretty little feet Jo has.

"Oh, I'll wear some of Polly's shoes and stuff out the toes. I bet I'll walk like Charlie Chaplin, but when one is flying, it doesn't make much difference about feet."

Nothing is going to stop her. She is to start to Paris to-morrow, and I will go, too. I know all of you think I should stay here in G – until I can get into communication with Bobby, but Molly Brown, I can't do it. When history is being made, I simply can't stand aside and see it. I've got to get in it by hook or crook.

Don't be scared – I am not going to fly! I wish I could, but I promised Kent Brown I would never fly with any man but him, and while it was done in jest, in a way I still feel that a promise must be kept. I wish I were not made that way. I'd like to dress up like Jo Bill Perkins and pass as a man, and I could do it quite as well as Jo, in spite of her having practiced being a boy all her life, but I can't help thinking what Bobby has always said to me: "Just remember you are a lady and you can't go far wrong." Somehow, I am afraid if I cut off my hair and discarded skirts, I might forget I am a lady. It is an awful nuisance being one, anyhow.

I don't know just what I am going to do, but I certainly can't cross the Atlantic, with Bobby and poor little Mamma somewhere in Germany, maybe locked up in dungeons or something. I know it won't help them any for me to be in France, but at least I will be nearer to them geographically.

My letter of credit on the Paris bankers will put me on easy street financially, so as far as money is concerned, Bobby will know I am all right. I can't think the war will last very long. Surely all the neutral countries will just step in and stop it. The French are looking to United States. It is very amusing to hear the old peasants talk about Lafayette. They seem to think tit for tat: if they helped us out more than a century ago, we will have to help them out now.

I can't tell what I think just yet. Everything is in too much of a turmoil. I wish I knew what Bobby thinks. He is always so sane in his political opinions. I get more and more uneasy about them, Bobby and Mamma. Such terrible tales of the Germans are coming to us. I don't believe them, at least not all of them. How could a kindly, rather bovine race suddenly turn into raging tigers? Why should any one want to do anything to Bobby? I comfort myself with that thought and then I remember how hot-headed and impulsive he is, inherited directly from me, his daughter, and I begin to tremble.

Jo and I are settling up our affairs here. Madame Gaston is to take charge of our few belongings. I have a hunch it will be best to lighten our luggage all we can. Jo is not going to turn into a man until we get to Paris. She is too funny in her envy of old Mère Gaspard because of her big moustache. You know how many of the French peasant women have quite mannish beards and moustaches. Mother Gaspard has the largest and most formidable one I have ever seen, although she is a most motherly

old soul, not a bit fatherly.

I will write from Paris again. I know Kent is in a state of grouch with himself for sailing when he did. I believe he feels as I do about things happening. I don't want houses to burn down, but if they do burn, I want to see the fire; I don't want dogs to fight, but if there is a dog fight going on, I am certainly going to stand on my tiptoes and look over the crowd and see them tear each other up; I certainly don't want the Nations to go to war, but if they will do it, I am going to have experiences.

Please give my best love to all the family and a thoroughly sterilized kiss to that marvelous infant. I verily believe if it had not been for Kent's overweening desire to behold that baby, he would have waited over for another steamer and in that way found himself in the thick of the fight. I am glad he went, however. If Polly Perkins developed a chin and rushed off, what might Kent have done with an overdevelopment of chin already there?

Yours always,

Judy.

CHAPTER II.

THE ORCHARD HOME

“R. F. D., late as usual,” laughed Molly, as Mr. Bud Woodsmall’s very ramshackle Ford runabout came careening through the lane and up the hill to the yard gate. “I fancy he has had to stop and talk war at every mail box on his route.”

“I think I’ll go meet him,” said Professor Edwin Green, rather reluctantly arising from the chaise longue that seemed to have been built to fit his lack of curves, he declared. He had been sitting on the porch of the bungalow, eyes half closed to shut out everything from his vision but the picture of Molly holding the sleeping baby in her arms.

“You know you want to gossip with him – now ’fess up!”

“Well, I do like to hear his views of the situation in Europe. They are original, at least. He says Yankee capitalists are the cause of it all. Don’t you want me to put Mildred down? She has been asleep for half an hour,” and the young husband and father stood for a moment and looked down on his treasures with what Judy Kean always called his faithful-collie-dog eyes.

“I know I oughtn’t to hold her while she is asleep, but she seems so wonderful I can’t bear to let her go. I think she is growing more like you, Edwin.”

“Like me! Nonsense! That would be a sad thing to have

wished on the poor innocent when there are so many handsome folks in the Carmichael and Brown family from whom she could inherit real beauty.”

“But Edwin, you are handsome, I think. You are so noble looking.”

“All right, honey, have it your own way,” and he stooped and kissed her. “I will allow that the baby has inherited my bald head if you like – Hi there!” he called to Mr. Woodsmall, who was preparing to unlock the mail box, “I’ll come get it,” and he sprinted down the walk where the garrulous postman held him enthralled for a good fifteen minutes. A blue envelope with a foreign postmark told him there was a letter from Julia Kean that would be eagerly welcomed by Molly, but there was no stopping the flow of R. F. D.’s eloquence. The causes of the war being thoroughly threshed out, he finally took his reluctant departure.

“A letter from Judy Kean! Now you will have to put the baby down!”

So little Mildred was tenderly placed in her basket on the porch and Molly opened the voluminous epistle from the beloved Judy.

“Oh, Edwin, she is not coming home! I was afraid she would want to do something Judyesque. Only listen!” and Molly read the Giverny letter to her husband.

“What do you think Kent will say to this? I know he is very uneasy about her anyhow since the war broke out, and now – well, I’m glad I’m not in his shoes. She is not very considerate

of him, I must say.”

“Oh, you men folks!” laughed Molly. “I can’t see how she could leave France until she knows something about her mother and father, and after all, I don’t believe Kent and Judy are engaged.”

“Not engaged! What do you think Kent has been doing this whole year in Paris if he wasn’t getting engaged?”

“Studying Architecture at the Beaux Arts. Sometimes persons can know one another a long time and be together a lot and not get engaged,” she teased. It was a very well-known fact that Professor Edwin Green had been in love with Molly Brown for at least five years, and maybe longer, before he put the all important question.

“Yes, I know, but then – ”

“Then what? My brother Kent is certainly not able to support a wife yet, and maybe they are opposed to long engagements.”

“Well, all the same I am sorry for Kent. It was bad enough when you went abroad and the ocean was between us and I knew you were being well taken care of by your dear mother, – but just suppose it had been war time and you had been alone! The news from France is very grave. It looks as though the Germans would eat Christmas dinner in Paris as they boast they will.”

“Oh, Edwin, no!” and Molly turned pale.

“Well, look at these head lines in to-day’s paper. It looks very ominous. When did you say you were expecting Kent home?”

“By to-morrow at latest. He wrote Mother he was to stay

some time in New York to try to land a job that looked very promising.”

“Here she comes now!” he exclaimed, his face lighting up with joy as it always did when his mother-in-law appeared on the scene.

Mrs. Brown was coming through the orchard from Chatsworth. Her hair had turned a little greyer since Molly’s marriage, but not much; her step was still light and active; her grey eyes as full of life; and in her heart the same eternal youth.

“Well, children! Did you get any mail? How is my precious little granddaughter? I’ve a letter from Kent. It just did beat him home. Paul ’phoned from Louisville that he is in town now, just arrived and will be here with him this afternoon. I am so excited!”

Dear Mrs. Brown’s life was made up of such excitements now: her children always going and returning. Mildred, Mrs. Crittenden Rutledge, had left for Iowa only two days before, having spent two months with her little family at Chatsworth; now Kent was almost home; and in less than a month the Greens would make their annual move to Wellington. Sue, the eldest daughter, married to young Cyrus Clay, lived within a few miles of Chatsworth and seemed the only one who was a fixture. Paul’s newspaper work kept him in Louisville most of the time and John, the doctor, made flying visits to his home but had to make his headquarters in the city for fear of missing patients. Ernest, the eldest son, was threatening to come home and settle at Chatsworth, but that was still an uncertainty.

"I must read you Judy's letter, Mother. I know you will feel as uneasy as we do about her. Edwin thinks she should come home, but I think she could hardly leave, not knowing something more definite about her mother and father, who may be bottled up in Germany indefinitely."

"Only think of the sizzle Mr. Kean will make when they finally draw the cork," laughed Mrs. Brown; but when Molly read the whole of Judy's letter to her, the laughter left her countenance and she looked very solemn and disturbed.

"Poor Kent!" she sighed.

"I wonder what he will do," from Molly.

"Do? Why, he will do what the men of his blood should do!" Mrs. Brown held her head very high and her delicate nostrils quivered in the way her family knew meant either anger or high resolve. "He will go to France and either stay and protect Judy or bring her back to his mother."

"But, Mother, are you going to ask this of him? Maybe he won't think it is the right thing to do."

"Of course, I am not going to ask it of him. I just know the 'mettle of his pasture.'"

"But the expense!"

"Expense! Molly, you don't sound like yourself. What is expense when your loved ones are in danger?"

"But I can't think that Judy could be in real danger."

"I can't think anything else. You surely have not read the morning paper. The Germans are advancing so rapidly... The

atrocities in Belgium! Ugh! I can't contemplate our Judy being anywhere in their reach."

"But, Mother, they must be exaggerated! People could not do what they say they have done, not good, kind German soldiers."

"Molly! Molly! Your goodness will even let you love the Germans. I am not made that way. The Anglo Saxon in me is so uppermost and I feel such a boiling and bubbling in my veins that nothing but my grey hairs keeps me from joining the Red Cross myself and helping the Allies!"

"Well, then you don't blame Miss Judy Kean," laughed Professor Green, who never loved his mother-in-law more than when, as old Aunt Mary expressed it, "her nose was a-wuckin'."

"Blame her! No, indeed! If I were her age, I'd do exactly what she is doing, but I should certainly have expected Molly's father to come over and protect me while I was being so foolhardy."

"Judy doesn't say she is going as a nurse," said Molly, referring to the letter. "Jo Williams is to fly and Judy seems uncertain what she is going to do, – just see the fight, as far as I can make out. I know Judy so well I just can't feel uneasy about her. You mustn't think I am mercenary, Mother, or careless of my friend. Judy always lands on her feet and is as much of an adept in getting out of scrapes as she is in getting in them."

"My darling, of course I didn't mean you were mercenary," cried Mrs. Brown, seeing in Molly's blue eyes a little hurt look at the vigorous tone she had taken when Molly merely suggested expense. "I just think in your desire to think well of every one,

nations as well as individuals, that you are blind to the terrors of this war. If Judy will only go to Sally Bolling, she will be taken care of. I fancy Sally is at La Roche Craie now.”

“Oh, I had forgotten to think of what this must mean to Cousin Sally!” exclaimed Molly. “The truth of the matter is that it is so peaceful here my imagination cannot picture what it is over there. I am growing selfish with contentment. Of course Philippe d’Ochtè will join his regiment and poor Cousin Sally and the Marquis will suffer agonies over him.”

“Yes and over France!” said Edwin solemnly. “I remember so well a conversation I had with the Marquis d’Ochtè on the subject of his country. I believe he really and truly puts his country above even his adored wife and son. That is more patriotism than I could be capable of – ”

“Not a bit of it, my dear Edwin,” broke in Mrs. Brown.

“I could not love thee half so well
Loved I not honour more.’

“Molly and your little baby Mildred are but a part of your country, and if the time should come and your country called you, you would answer the call just as I hope my own sons would.”

“Oh, Mother, you are a Spartan! I am not so brave, I am afraid,” said Molly. “Even now at the thought of war, I am thanking God my Mildred baby is a girl.”

Little Mildred, at mention of her name, although it would be many a day before she would know what her name was, awakened and gave an inarticulate gurgle. Mrs. Brown dropped the rôle of Spartan Mother and turned into a doting grandmother in the twinkling of an eye.

“And was um little tootsie wootsies cold? Come to your Granny and let her warm them. Molly, this baby has grown a foot, I do believe, and look what a fine, strong, straight back she has! And does oo want your Granny to rub your back? Only look, her eyes have brown lights in them! I said all the time she would have brown eyes.”

“And not Molly’s blue eyes! Oh, Mother, that is very bad news to me. Why, the baby’s eyes are as blue as the sea now. They could not change,” and Edwin Green peered into his offspring’s face with such intentness that the little thing began to whimper.

The proper indignation being expressed by the females and the baby dangled until smiles came and a crow, Mrs. Brown informed the ignorant father that all young animals have blue eyes and there is no determining the actual colour of a baby’s eyes until it is several months old, but that the minute brown or golden lights begin to appear in blue eyes, you can get ready to declare for a brown-eyed youngster.

“Well, she will surely have Molly’s hair,” he insisted.

“That we can’t tell, either,” said the all-knowing grandmother. “You see, she is almost bald now except for this tiny fringe that is rapidly being worn off in the back. That does seem a little

pinkish.”

“Pinkish! Oh, Mother-in-law, what a word to express my Molly’s hair!”

“Can’t you see she is getting even with you for making Mildred almost cry?” laughed Molly. “I know she is going to have my hair because when you slip a little bit of blue under that little lock that is on the side, where it hasn’t rubbed off, the ‘pink’ comes out quite plainly. My Mildred will be a belle. I have always heard it said that a girl with brown eyes and golden hair is born to be a belle. Oh, yes, I will call the baby’s hair golden although I have always called my own red.”

“I don’t know whether I want her to be a belle or not,” objected Edwin. “She might be frivolous.”

“Frivolous with your eyes! Heavens, Daddy, she couldn’t be!”

Mrs. Brown contentedly smiled and rocked the baby, who crowed and cooed and kicked her pretty pink tootsies. The sun shone on the orchard home and a particularly obliging mocking bird burst into song from one of the gnarled old apple trees, heavy with its luscious fruit. Mocking birds are supposed not to sing in August, but sometimes they do, and when they do, their song is as wonderful and welcome as an unlooked-for legacy.

Molly looked over the fields of waving blue grass to the dark beech woods that bordered the pasture, a feeling of great happiness and contentment in her heart. How peaceful and sweet was life! She leaned against her husband, who put an ever-ready arm around her, and together they gazed on the fruitful

landscape. Mrs. Brown crooned to the baby a song ever dear to her own children and one that had been sung to her by her own negro mammy.

“Mammy went away – she tol’ me ter stay,
An’ tek good keer er de baby,
She tol’ me ter stay an’ sing dis away:
Oh, go ter sleepy, little baby!

Oh, go ter sleep! sleepy little baby,
Oh, go ter sleepy, little baby,
Kaze when yer wake, yo’ll git some cake,
An’ ride a little white horsey!

We’ll stop up de cracks an’ sew up de seams —
De Booger Man never shall ketch you!
Oh, go ter sleep an’ dream sweet dreams —
De Booger Man never shall ketch you!

Oh, go ter sleep! sleepy little baby,
Oh, go ter sleepy, little baby,
Kaze when you wake, you’ll git some cake,
An’ lots er nice sugar candy!”

How could whole countries be at war and such peace reign in any spot on the globe?

The whirr of an approaching motor awoke them from their musings and stopped the delightful song before one-third of the

stanzas had been sung. It was Kent with John in the doctor's little runabout.

"My boy! my boy!" and Mrs. Brown dropped the baby in her basket and flew across the grass to greet the long-absent Kent.

"I couldn't wait for Paul but had to get old Dr. John to bring me out. Mumsy, how plump and pink you are. I declare you look almost as young as the new baby," said Kent after the first raptures of greeting were over. "And Molly, you look great! And 'Fessor Green, I declare you are getting fat. I bet you have gained at least three-quarters of a pound since you got married. Positively obese!"

"You haven't said much about the baby," objected Molly.

"Well, there's not much to say, is there? She is an omnivorous biped, I gather, from the two feet I can see and her evident endeavor to eat them, at least, I fancy that is why she is kicking so high. She has got Edwin's er – er – well – his high forehead – "

"She is not nearly so bald-headed as you were yourself," declared his mother. "You were such a lovely baby, Kent, the loveliest of all my babies, I believe. I always adored a bald-headed baby and you had a head like a little billiard ball."

They all laughed at this and Kent confessed that if he had been bald-headed himself, he believed the little Mildred must be, after all, very charming.

"Any letters for me?" he asked, and Molly thought she detected a note of anxiety below all the nonsense he had been talking.

“No, I have not seen any.”

“Well, have you heard from – from Judy Kean?”

“Yes,” confessed Molly. “I got a letter to-day.”

“Please may I see it?”

“Yes, of course you may.”

But Molly felt a great reluctance to show Julia Kean’s letter to her brother. She knew very well he was uneasy already about their friend and was certain this letter would only heighten his concern. Kent was looking brown and sturdy; he seemed to her to have grown even taller than the six feet one he already measured when he went abroad. His boyish countenance had taken on more purpose and his jaw had an added squareness. His deep set grey eyes had a slight cloud in them that Molly and her mother hated to see.

“It is Judy, of course,” they said to themselves.

“I landed my job in New York,” he said, as he opened the little blue envelope.

“Splendid!” exclaimed Molly.

Mrs. Brown tried to say splendid, too, but the thought came to her: “Another one going away from home!” and she could only put her arm around her boy’s neck and press a kiss on his brown head.

They were all very quiet while Kent read the letter. Dr. John, alone, seemed disinterested. He very professionally poked the infant in the ribs to see how fat she had grown and, also, much to the indignation of Molly, went through some tests for idiocy,

which, of course, the tiny baby could not pass.

CHAPTER III.

KENT BROWN

“Mother, will you come and take a little walk with me?” asked Kent as he finished Judy’s letter. With his hand trembling, although his eyes were very steady and his mouth very firm, he tucked the many thin blue sheets back in their envelope.

“Yes, my son!” Mrs. Brown held her head very high and in her expression one could very well read: “I told you so! Did I not know the ‘mettle of his pasture’?”

“Mother,” he said, as he drew her arm in his and they took their way through the orchard to the garden of Chatsworth, “I must go get Judy!”

“Yes, my son, of course you must.”

“Oh, Mother, you think it is the only thing to do?”

“Of course, I know it is the only thing to do. I told Molly and Edwin only a few minutes ago that you would want to do it.”

“And what a mother! I – well, you know, Mother, I am not engaged to Judy – not exactly, that is. She knows how I feel about her and somehow – I can’t say for sure – but I almost know she feels the same way about me, at least, feels somehow about me.”

“Of course she does! How could she help it?”

“You see, I knew it would be some time before I could make a decent living, and it did not seem fair to Judy to tie her down

when maybe she might strike some fellow who would be so much more worth while than I am – ”

“Impossible!”

“I used to think maybe Pierce Kinsella would be her choice, when they painted together so much.”

“That boy! Why, Kent, how could you?”

“Well, he was a very handsome and brilliant boy and is pretty well fixed by his uncle’s generosity and bids fair to make one of the leading portrait painters of the day. His portrait of you has made every lady who has seen it want him to do one of her. Of course, he can’t make all of ’em look like you, but he does his best.”

“It may have been wise of you not to settle this little matter with Judy, son, but somehow – I wish you had.”

“It was hard not to, but I felt she was so far away from her parents. I thought she would be back in America in a month, at least. I wanted her to come with me, but she felt she must wait for them, and of course, I had to hurry back because of the possible job in New York. I am afraid that I will lose that now, but there will be others, and I just can’t think of the things that might happen to my Judy – she is my Judy, whether we are engaged or not.”

“When will you start, son?”

“Why, to-night, if you don’t mind.”

“Certainly to-night! I have money for you.”

“Oh, Mother, the money part is the only thing worrying me. I

have a little left, but not enough to get me over and back. I must have enough to bring Judy back, too. You see, a letter of credit now in Paris is not worth the paper it is on.”

“No, I did not know. That is the one part of Judy’s letter that put me at ease about her. I thought she had plenty of money, and money certainly does help out.”

“Well, that is the part of her letter that made me know I must go get her. The Americans who are abroad simply can’t get checks cashed. She might even be hungry, poor little Judy.”

“Thank goodness, I have some money – all owing to Judy’s father, too! If he had not seen the bubbles on that puddle in the rocky pasture, we would never have known there was oil there. What better could we do with the money that Mr. Kean got for us than use it to succor his daughter?”

“Oh, Mother, you are so – so – bully! I know no other word to express what you are. I am going to pay back every cent I borrow from you. Thank goodness, I saved a little from the money I made on the architectural sketches I did for the article Dickson wrote on the French country homes. I’m going over steerage.”

“You are going over in the first class cabin! Steerage, indeed! I lend no money for such a trip.”

“All right, Mother! You are the boss. And now, don’t you think I’ll have time to go see Aunt Mary a few minutes?”

“Of course you must go see the poor old woman. She has been afraid she would not live until you got home. She is very feeble. Dear old Aunt Mary!”

They had reached the Chatsworth garden and Kent noticed with delight the hollyhocks that had flourished wonderfully since he had dug them up that moonlight night more than three years ago and transplanted them from the chicken yard, where no one ever saw them, to the beds in the garden, and all because Miss Julia Kean had regretted that they were not there to make a background for the bridal party, after they had determined to have Mildred's wedding out of doors.

"Haven't they come on wonderfully? I know Judy would like to see how well they have done. I think hollyhocks are the most decorative of all flowers. I wonder we never had them in the garden before, Mother."

Both of them were thinking of Mildred's wedding on that rare day in June. Kent remembered with some satisfaction that in the general confusion that ensued after Mildred and Crit were pronounced, by Dr. Peters, to be man and wife, and everybody was kissing everybody else, he had had presence of mind to take advantage of the license accorded on the occasion of a family wedding and had kissed his sister Molly's college friend, Miss Julia Kean.

"By Jove! I think war ought to give a fellow some privilege, too," he declared to himself. "I think I'll do the same when I see the young lady in France."

They found Aunt Mary lying in state in a great four poster bed, while her meek half-sister, Sukey Jourdan, administered to her wants, which were many and frequent.

"Lawsamussy, if that ain't that there Kent! Whar you come from, son? I done got so old an' feeble I can't say mister ter nobody. You alls is all Ernest and Sue and Paul and John and Mildred and Kent and Molly ter me. Cepn Molly is Molly Baby. I still got strenth fer that. Law, Miss Milly, ain't he growed?"

"Yes, Aunt Mary, he is looking so well, and now he is going to turn right around and go back to France to-night."

"Don't say it! Lawsamussy, Miss Milly, did he fergit somethin'?"

"Well, not exactly," laughed Kent, "but I didn't bring something with me that I should have."

"Well, you be sho ter make a cross an' spit in it. If'n you fergits somethin' er fin's you has ter tu'n aroun' an' go back 'thout res'in' a piece, if'n you makes a cross an' spits in it, you is sho ter have good luck. Here you, Sukey, set a better cheer for Miss Milly. Werfo' you done give her sich a straight up'n down cheer?"

"Oh, this will do very well, Sukey," said Mrs. Brown.

"You bring another, Sukey. I don' see what makes you so keerless. I low if'n 'twar that no count Buck Jourdan, you'd be drawin' up the sofy fer his triflin' bones."

Poor Sukey had no easy job to keep Aunt Mary satisfied. The old woman, having been a most energetic and tireless person in her day, could not understand that the whole world of darkeys could not be as she had been. Sukey's son Buck, the apple of her mild eye, was the bane of Aunt Mary's existence. She never missed a chance to make her younger half-sister miserable on his

account. Indeed, Sukey, mild as she was, would not have stayed with Aunt Mary except for the fact that Aunt Mary had insured her life for her with the understanding that she was to minister to her to the end. It was dearly paid for, this service, as the old woman was most exacting. Lenient to a degree of softness with white folks, she was adamant with those of her own race.

"How do you feel, Aunt Mary?" asked Kent, looking with sorrow on the wasted features of the beloved old woman.

"Well, I'm a feelin' tolerable peart this mornin' although endurin' of the night I thought my hour had struck. I got ter dreamin' 'bout my fun'ral, an' I got so mad cause Sis Ria Bowles done brought a fun'ral zine like one she done tuck ter Brer Jackson's orgies! An' dead or not, I wa'nt gonter stan' fer no sich monkey shines over me."

"Why, what did she take to Brother Jackson's funeral?" laughed Kent.

"Ain't you heard tel er that? She cut a cross outn that there sticky tangle yo' foot fly paper en' she kivered it all over with daisy haid an' call herse'f bringing a zine. I riz up an' spoke my mind in my dream an' I let all these here niggers in Jeff'son County know that if they don't see that I gits a fust class fun'ral, I gonter rise up when I ain't a dreamin' an' speak my min'."

Sukey Jourdan listened to this tirade with her eyes bulging out of her head, much to Aunt Mary's satisfaction, as she very well knew that the way to manage her race was to intimidate them.

"I done been carryin' insuriance in two clubs an' a comp'ny,

an' betwixt 'em I's entitled ter seventeen hacks. I'm a trustin' ter Miss Milly an' that there Paul ter make 'em treat me proper. Paul done say he will black list 'em in his newspaper if'n they leave off one tit or jottle from the 'greement. I sho would like ter see my fun'ral. I low it's a goin' ter be pretty stylish. I done pinte my pall buriers an' bought they gloves an' I low ter be laid out myself in my best black silk what Miss Milly done gimme goin' on sixteen year, come nex' Christmas. I ain't a wo' it much, as I had in min' ter save it fer my buryin'. Some of the mimbers gits buried in palls made er white silk. They do look right han'some laid out in 'em, but then palls is made 'thout a piece er back an' I has a notion that when Gabrel blows his trump on that great an' turrerble day that ole Mary Morton ain't a goin' ter be caught without no back ter her grabe clothes. It mought make no diffrence if'n Peter will let me pass on in, 'cause I low that the shining robes will be a waitin' fer me – but sposin' – jes' sposin' – ” and the dear old woman's face clouded over with anguish, “jes' sposin' Peter'll say: ‘You, Mary Morton, g'long from this here portcullis. You blongs in the tother d'rection,’ an' I'll hab ter tun 'roun' an' take the broad road ter hell! What'll I feel like, if'n I ain't got no back ter my frock? No, sir! I's a goin' ter have on a dress complete. It mought be that Peter'll think better er me if I shows him sech a spectful back.”

“You not get in Heaven!” exclaimed Kent. “Why, Aunt Mary, there wouldn't be any Heaven for all of us bad Brown boys if you weren't there.”

“Well, now them is words of comfort what beats the preacher’s. I done always been b’lievin’ in ’fluence an’ I mought er knowed my white folks would look arfter me on the las’ day jes as much as ever. I kin git in as Miss Milly’s cook if’n th’aint no other way. I been a ’lowing whin I gits ter Heaven I wouldn’t have ter work no more, but sence I been a laid up in the baid so long I gin ter think that work would tas’e right sweet. Cookin’ in Heaven wouldn’t be so hard with plenty of ’gredients ter han’ and no scrimpin’ and scrougin’ of ’terials. A lan’ flowin’ with milk an’ honey mus’ have aigs an’ butter. Here you, Sukey Jourdan! Whar you hidin’?”

“Here I is, Sis Ma’y, I jes’ stepped in the shed room ter men’ the fire ginst ’twas time ter knock up a bite er dinner fer you.”

“Well, while I’s a thinkin’ of it, I want you to git my bes’ linen apron outn the chist – the one with the insertioning let in ’bove the hem, an’ put it in the highboy drawer with my bes’ black silk. I low I’ll be laid out in a apron, ’cause if’n I can’t git inter Heaven no other way, I am a thinkin’ with a clean white apron on I kin slip in as a good cook.”

“Dear Aunt Mary, you have been as good as gold all your life,” declared Mrs. Brown, wiping a tear from her eye, but smiling in spite of herself at Aunt Mary’s quaint idea of a way to gain an entrance through the pearly gates.

Aunt Mary had had many doubts about her being saved and had spent many weary nights, terrified at the thought of dying and perhaps not being fit for Heaven, but now that she had thought

of wearing the apron, all doubts of her desirability were set at rest; indeed, her last days were filled with peace since she felt now that even Peter could not turn back a good cook.

"I must be going, Aunt Mary," said Kent, taking the old woman's withered hand in his strong grasp. "I'll be home again in a few weeks, I fancy, maybe sooner."

"They's one thing I ain't arsked you yit: whar's that there Judy gal? I been a dreamin' you would bring her back with you."

"She is the thing I am going back to France for, Aunt Mary."

"Sho nuf? Well, well! They do tell me they's fightin' goin' on in some er them furren parts. Sholy Miss Judy ain't nigh the fightin' an' fussin'?"

"Yes, I am afraid she is. That's the reason I must go for her."

"Oh, Kent son! Don't you git into no scrap yo'sef. It's moughty hard fer young folks ter look on at a scrap 'thout gittin' mixed up in it. Don't you git too clost, whin you is lookin', either. Them what looks on sometimes gits the deepes' razor cuts with the back han' licks. You pick up that gal an' bring her back ter you' maw jes' as fas' as yo' legs kin carry you."

"I'll try to," laughed Kent.

"Don't try! Jes' do it! That there Judy gal is sho nice an' 'ristocratic, considerin' she ain't never had no home. She done tell me whin she was here to little Miss Milly's weddin' that she an' her folks ain't never lived in nothin' but rented houses. That's moughty queer to me, but 'cose niggers don't understan' ev'y thing. Well, you tell her that ole Mary Morton say she better pick

up an' come back to Chatswuth."

"I certainly will, Aunt Mary, and good-by!"

The old woman put her hand on his bowed head for a moment, and while she said nothing, Kent took it for a benediction.

CHAPTER IV.

AFTERNOON TEA

Molly had established the custom of afternoon tea in her orchard home, and while she had been greatly teased by her brothers for introducing this English custom into Kentucky country life, they one and all turned up on her porch for tea if they were in the neighborhood.

"It is one place where a fellow can always find some talk and a place to air his views," declared John, as he reached for another slice of bread and butter. "It isn't the food so much as the being gathered together."

"Well, you are gathering a good deal of food together in spite of your contempt for it," put in Paul. "That's the sixth slice! I have kept tab on you."

"Why not? I always think plain bread and butter is about the best thing there is."

"Yes, why not?" asked Molly, calling her little cook Kizzie to prepare another plate of the desirable article. "Aunt Clay, you had better change your mind and have some tea and bread and butter."

Mrs. Sarah Clay had driven over in state from her home when she heard Kent had arrived. She wanted to hear the latest news, also to tender her advice as to what he was to do now. She

presented the same uncompromising front as of yore, although her back had given way somewhat to the weight of years. Judy Kean always said she had a hard face and a soft figure. This soft figure she poured into tight basques, evidently determined to try to make it live up to her face.

“Tea!” she exclaimed indignantly. “I never eat between meals.”

“But this is a meal, in a way,” said Molly hospitably bent, as was her wont, on feeding people.

“A meal! Whoever heard of tea and bread and butter comprising a meal?” and the stern aunt stalked to the end of the porch where the baby lay in her basket, kicking her pink heels in the air in an ecstasy of joy over being in the world.

“Molly, this baby has on too few clothes. What can you be thinking of, having the child barefooted and nothing on but this muslin slip over her arms? She is positively blue with cold.”

Molly flew to her darling but found her glowing and warm. “Why, Aunt Clay, only feel her hands and feet! She is as warm as toast. The doctor cautioned me against wrapping her up too much. He says little babies are much warmer than we are.”

“Well, have your own way! Of course, although I am older than your mother, I know nothing at all.”

“But, Aunt Clay – ”

“Never mind!”

Poor Molly! She could never do or say anything to suit her Aunt Clay. She looked regretfully at the old lady’s indignant back

as she left her and joined Kent, who was sitting on a settle with his mother, holding her hand, both of them very quiet amidst the chatter around the tea table. They made room for their relative, who immediately began her catechism of Kent.

“Why did you not come home sooner?”

“Because I had some work to do, sketches illustrating an article on French country houses.”

“Humph! Did you get paid for them?”

“Yes, Aunt Clay!”

“Now, what are your plans?”

“I have landed a job in New York with a firm of architects, that is, I had landed it, but I am not so sure now since – ”

“Good! You feel that you had better stay at home and look after Chatsworth.”

“Oh, no! I am sure I could not be much of a farmer.”

“Could not because you would not! If I were your mother, I would insist on one of you staying at home and running the place.”

“Ernest is thinking of coming back, giving up engineering and trying intensive farming on Chatsworth.”

“Ernest, indeed! And why should he have wasted all these years in some other profession if he means to farm?”

“Well, you see,” said Kent very patiently because of the pressure he felt from his mother’s gentle hand, “farming takes money and there wasn’t any money. Ernest always did want to farm, but it was necessary for him to make some money first.

Now he has saved and invested and has something to put in the land, and he is devoutly hoping to get out more than he puts in.”

“If putting something in the land means expensive machinery, I can tell him now that he will waste money buying it. But there is no use in telling Ernest anything – he is exactly like Sue: very quiet, does not answer back when his elders and betters address him, but, like Sue, goes his own way. Sue is very headstrong and simply twists my husband’s nephew around her finger. I was very much disappointed in Cyrus Clay. I thought he had more backbone.”

Sue Brown, now Mrs. Cyrus Clay, had been the one member of the Brown family who always got on with the stern Aunt Clay; and Kent and his mother were sorry to hear the old lady express any criticism of Sue. It seemed that Sue had done nothing more serious than to persuade Cyrus to join the Country Club, but it was against Mrs. Sarah Clay’s wishes, and anything that opposed her was headstrong and consequently wicked.

“But to return to you – ” Kent let a sigh escape him as he had hoped he had eluded further catechism, “what are you going to do now?”

“Well, to-night I go back to New York, and day after to-morrow I take a French steamer for Havre.”

“Havre! Are you crazy?”

“I don’t know.”

“What are you going to do in France with this war going on?”

“I am not quite sure.”

This was too much for the irate old lady, so without making any adieux, she took her departure, scorning the polite assistance of her three nephews. Professor Green called her coachman and helped her into the great carriage she still held to, the kind seen now-a-days only in museums.

“Kent, how could you?” laughed Mrs. Brown, in spite of her attempt to look shocked.

“I think Kent was right,” declared Molly. “How could he tell Aunt Clay he was going to France to get Judy? She would never have let up on it. I’m glad she has gone, anyhow! We were having a very nice time without her.”

“Molly!” and Mrs. Brown looked shocked. She always exacted a show of respect from her children to this very difficult elder sister Sarah.

“Oh, Mumsy, we have to break loose sometimes!” exclaimed Molly. “The idea of her saying Mildred was blue with cold! Criticising poor Sue, too! Goodness, I’d hate to be the one that Aunt Clay had taken a shine to. I’d almost rather have her despise me as she does.”

“Not despise you, Molly, – you don’t understand your Aunt Clay.”

“Well, perhaps not, but she puts up a mighty good imitation of despising. I think it is because I look so like Cousin Sally Bolling and she never forgave the present Marquise d’Ochtè for making fun of her long years ago. And then to crown it all, Cousin Sally got the inheritance from Greataunt Sarah Carmichael and

married the Marquis, at least she married the Marquis and then got the inheritance. It was too much for Aunt Clay.”

Mrs. Brown looked so pained that Molly stopped her tirade. Aunt Clay was the one person whom Molly could not love. She had a heart as big as all out doors but it was not big enough to hold Aunt Clay.

“Here comes Sue! How glad I am! She ’phoned she would be here before so very long. What a blessing she missed Aunt Clay! See, she is running the car herself and isn’t it a beauty? Cyrus just got it for her and Sue runs it wonderfully well already. I forgot to write you about it, Kent. But best of all! What do you think? Cyrus has had the muddy lane that was the cause of Sue’s hesitating whether to take him or not all drained and macadamized. The approach to Maxton is simply perfect now.”

“Good for Cyrus!” said Kent, jumping up to meet his sister, who drove her big car through the gate and up the driveway as though she had been running an automobile all her life.

“Only think, five Browns together again!” exclaimed Paul, as they seated themselves on the porch of the bungalow after duly admiring the new car. Molly had Kizzie brew a fresh pot of tea and John was persuaded to eat some more thin slices of bread and butter.

“Yes, five of you together again,” said Mrs. Brown wistfully. “Ah, me! I wish I could get all seven of you at Chatsworth once more. Indeed, I wish I had all of you back in the nursery again.”

“But where would I come in then?” said Edwin Green

whimsically.

“And little Mildred?” from Molly, hugging her infant.

“And Sue’s new car, not to mention Cyrus?” teased Kent.

“You are right, children. I should be more of a philosopher.

““The Moving Finger writes: and, having writ,
Moves on: nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all your Tears wash out a Word of it.””

Molly stood over Kent with a cup of steaming tea and taking her cue from her mother’s quotation from the Rubaiyat and prompted by his know-nothing attitude with his Aunt Clay, she got off the stanza:

“Yesterday This Day’s Madness did prepare;
To-morrow’s Silence, Triumph, or Despair:
Drink! for you know not whence you came nor why:
Drink! for you know not why you go, nor where.”

CHAPTER V.

LETTERS FROM PARIS AND BERLIN

From Miss Julia Kean to Mrs. Edwin Green.

Paris, and no idea of the date.

No fixed address, but the American

Club might reach me.

Molly darling:

Things are moving so fast that even I can't quite catch on, and you know I am some mover myself. Jo and I came to Paris as I wrote you we would, but I haven't seen her since. She told me in as polite words as she could command that she couldn't be bothered with me any more. At least that was the trend of her remarks. She has the business before her of making up to look as much like a man as possible and then of being taken into the aviation school.

I met an art student from Carlo Rossi's on the street and he told me Polly was already the proud driver of an ambulance. Lots of the American art students have enlisted or joined the Red Cross. If I liked sick folks or nursing, I think I'd join myself. I feel that I should be doing something while I wait to hear from Bobby. I hope to see the American Ambassador next week. He is simply

floored under with duties just now. I don't want any help from him, but just to find out something about Bobby and Mamma.

If you could see Paris now! Oh, Molly, our gay, beautiful, eternally youthful city has grown suddenly sad and middle-aged. There is no gaiety or frivolity now. Her step has changed from a dance to a march. Her laughter has turned to weeping, but silent weeping – she makes no outcry but one knows the tears are there. Her beautiful festive clothes are laid away and now there is nothing but khaki and mourning. The gallant little soldier is to discard his flaming red trousers and blue coat for khaki. The German finds him too easy a mark.

I begin to tremble for Paris, but strange to say I have no fear for myself.

I have seen the Ambassador! He was very grave when I told him about Bobby. There was some English capital involved in the railroad that Bobby was to build in Turkey, and for that reason there may be some complication. He is to communicate with Gerard immediately. In the meantime, he advises me to go home. I told him I had no home, but would wait here until I found out something. He asked me if I had plenty of money and I told him yes, indeed, my letter of credit was good for almost any amount. I had not had to draw on it as I had stocked up before I went to G – to keep house with the Polly Perkinses. The Ambassador actually laughed at me. Do you know, I can't get any more money? What a fool I have been! I have been so taken up with Paris and the sights and sounds that money has never entered my head. I have

quite a little left, though, and I intend to live on next to nothing.

The Bents have left for America and have given me their key to use their studio as I see fit. Mrs. Bent wanted me to go with them, but I can't go until we hear from Gerard. Now I am back in the Rue Brea! It seems strange to be there again where we had such a glorious winter. The studio where Kent and Pierce Kinsella lived all last year is vacant. I don't know where Pierce is. Gone to war, perhaps!

I spend the days on the streets, walking up and down, listening to the talk and watching the regiments as they move away. I ran across some old friends yesterday. You remember a wedding party I butted in on at St. Cloud that day I scared all of you so when I took the wrong train from Versailles and landed at Chartres? Well, I ran plump against the bride on Montparnasse (only she is no longer a bride but had a rosy infant over her shoulder). She came out of a little delicatessen shop and her husband in war togs followed her, and there I witnessed their parting. I seem fated to be present at every crisis in their lives. The girl did not recognize me but the young man did. I had danced with him in too mad a whirl for him to forget me. Then came the old father and his wife who looked like a member of the Commune. They keep the little shop, it seems. I shook hands with them and together we waited for the young man's regiment to come swinging down the street. With another embrace all around, even me, he caught step with his comrades and was gone. The bonnemère clasped her daughter-in-law to her grenadier-

like bosom and they mingled their tears, the rosy baby gasping for breath between the two. The old father turned to me:

“This is different from the last time we met, ma’m selle!”

“Yes, so different!”

“Come in and have a bite and sup with us. There is still something to eat in Paris besides horse flesh.” His wife and daughter-in-law joined him in the invitation and so I went in. I enjoyed the meal more than I can tell you. The grenadier is some cook and although the fare was simple, it was so well seasoned and appetizing that I ate as I have not done since I got back to Paris. The truth of the matter is, I am living so cheap for fear of getting out of money and I am afraid I have been neglecting my inner man. I can’t cook a thing myself, which is certainly trifling of me, and so have depended on restaurants for sustenance. I dressed the salad (you remember it is my one accomplishment) and it met with the approval of host and hostess.

I told them of my trouble and how I felt I must wait until I heard something definite of my mother and father, and they were all sympathy. I have promised to come to them if I get into difficulty, and you don’t know the comfortable feeling I have now that I have some adopted folks.

I might go to the Marquise d’Ochtè, but I know she has all on her hands and mind that she can attend to. I don’t need anything but just companionship. I am such a gregarious animal that I must have folks.

I am dying to hear from you and to know if Kent landed his

job. Is he – well, angry with me for staying over? I would not have missed staying for anything, even if he should be put out. I can't believe he is, though. I had rather hoped for letters when the American mail came in this morning, but the man at the bank was very unfeeling and had nothing. Nobody seems to be getting any mail. I wonder if they are stopping it for some reason or other. I have a great mind to take this to some American who is fleeing and have it mailed in New York. I will do that very thing. Good by, Molly – don't be uneasy about me. You know my catlike nature of lighting on my feet.

Your own,

Judy.

From Mr. Robert Kean to his Daughter Julia.
Berlin.

My dear Judy:

I know you are intensely uneasy about us, but down in your heart you also know that we never get into scrapes we can't get out of, and we will get out of this. This letter will probably be postmarked Sweden but that does not mean I am there. In fact, I am in durance vile here in Berlin. I am allowed to walk around the streets and to pay my own living expenses but leave Berlin I cannot. Your mother can't leave, either – not that she would. You know how she thinks that she protects me and so she insists that she will stay. I am allowed to write no letters and can receive none. I am getting this off to you by a clever device of your mother's, which I shall not divulge now for fear it might be seized

and thus get an innocent person in bad with this remarkable Government.

I am kept here all because I know too much about the geography and topography of Turkey. Of course I have made careful maps of the proposed railroad from Constantinople, the one we have been trying to get the concessions for. Well, they have naturally seized the maps. But before I dreamed of the possibility of this war, for, like all of us fool Anglo Saxons, I have been nosing along like a mole, I had a talk with a high Prussian Muckamuck at dinner one evening about this proposed road and I drew the blame thing on the table cloth, and with bits of bread and salt cellars and what not I explained the whole topography of the country and the benefit it would be to mankind to have this particular railroad built, financed by my particular company. That was where I “broke my ’lasses pitcher.” Of course, having surveyed the country and made the maps, at least, having had a finger in the pie from the beginning, I can reproduce those maps from memory, if not very accurately, at least, accurately enough to get the Germans going if that particular information should be needed by the Allies.

Do you know what I see in this? Why, Turkey will be in this war before so very long.

I am hungry for news. I feel that I will go mad if I can't get some information besides what is printed in these boot licking newspapers of Berlin. They speak of their soldiers as though they were avenging angels – avenging what? Avenging the insult

Belgium offered them for not lying down and making a road of herself for them to walk over. Avenging France for not opening wide her gates and getting ready the Christmas dinner the Kaiser meant to eat in Paris. I'd like to prepare his Christmas dinner, and surely I would serve a hors-d'œuvre of rough-on-rats, an entrée of ptomaines, and finish off with a dessert of hanging, which would be too sweet for him. Now just suppose this letter is seized and they see this above remark – what then? I must not be allowed to write my opinion of their ruler to my own daughter, but these Prussians who go to United States and get all they can from our country, feel at perfect liberty to publish newspapers vilifying our President and to burst into print at any moment about our men who are high in authority.

Berlin is wild with enthusiasm and joy over her victories. Every Belgian village that is razed to the ground makes them think it is cause for a torch-light procession. I can't understand them. They can hardly be the same kindly folk we have so often stayed among. They are still kind, kind to each other and kind in a way to us and to all the strangers within their gates, but how they can rejoice over the reports of their victories I cannot see.

They one and all believe that they were forced to fight. They say France was marching to Berlin for the President to eat Christmas dinner here, and that Belgium had promised they should go straight through her gates unmolested and did not regard the agreement of neutrality. I say nonsense to such statements. At least I think nonsense. I really say very little for

one who has so much to say. I am bubbling over to talk politics with some one. Your poor little mumsy listens to me but she never jaws back. I want some one to jaw back. I have promised her to keep off the subject with these Prussians. They are so violent and so on the lookout for treason. There is one thing I am sure of and that is that no Frenchman would want to eat Christmas dinner or any other kind of dinner here if he could eat it in Paris. I am sick of raw goose and blood pudding and Limburger cheese.

As I write this tirade, I am wondering, my dear daughter, where you are. Did you go back to America with Kent Brown, who, you wrote me in your last letter, was sailing in a week, or are you in Paris? I hope not there! Since I see the transports of joy these law-abiding, home-loving citizens, women and men, can get in over an account of what seems to me mere massacre, I tremble to think what the soldiers are capable of in the lust of bloodshed.

From the last bulletin, the Germans are certainly coming closer and closer to Paris. I hope they are lying in their report. They are capable of falsifying anything.

I am trying to get hold of our Ambassador to get me out of this mess, but he is so busy it is hard to see him. I think he is doing excellent work and I feel it is best for me to wait and let the Americans who are in more urgent need get first aid. I have enough money to tide us over for a few weeks with very careful expenditure. Of course I can get no more, just like all the rest of,

the Americans who are stranded here.

I feel terribly restless for work. I don't know how to loaf, never did. I'd go to work here at something, but I feel if I did, it would just mean that these Prussians could then spare one more man for their butchery, and I will at least not help them that much. Your mother and I are on the street a great deal. We walk up and down and go in and out of shops and sit in the parks. I keep moving as much as possible, not only because I am so restless but because I like to keep the stupid spy who is set to watch over me as busy as possible. He has some weird notion that I do not know he is ever near me. I keep up the farce and I give him many anxious moments. Yesterday I wrote limericks and nonsense verses on letter paper and made little boats of them and sent them sailing on the lake in the park. If you could have seen this man's excitement. He called in an accomplice and they fished out the boats and carefully concealing them, they got hold of a third spy to take them to the chief. I wonder what they made of:

“The Window has Four little Panes:
But One have I.
The Window Panes are in its Sash, —
I wonder why!”

or this:

“I wish that my Room had a Floor —
I don't so much care for a Door,

But this walking around
Without touching the ground
Is getting to be quite a bore!"

I only wish I could see the translations of these foolish rhymes that must have been made before they could decide whether or not I had a bomb up my sleeve to put the Kaiser out with. Fancy this in German:

"The poor benighted Hindoo,
He does the best he kindo;
He sticks to caste
From first to last;
For pants he makes his skindo."

Some of the ships sank and they had to get a boat hook and raise them. My nonsense seems to have had its effect. I saw in this morning's paper that some of the foreigners held in Berlin have gone crazy. I believe they mean me. I must think up some more foolishness. I feel that the more I occupy this spy who has me in charge, the better it is for the Allies. I try to be neutral but my stomach is rebelling at German food, and who can be neutral with a prejudiced stomach?

We are trying to cook in our room. You know what a wonder your little mumsy is at knocking up an omelette and making coffee and what not, and we also find it is much more economical to eat there all we can. When we are there, we are out of sight

of the spy, who, of course, can't help his job, but neither can I help wanting to kick his broad bean. He is such a block-head. He reminds me of the Mechanician Man, in our comic papers: "Brains he has nix." He is evidently doing just exactly what he has been wound up and set to do. I can't quite see why I should be such an important person that I should need a whole spy to myself. I can't get out of Berlin unless I fly out and I see no chance of that.

I have had my interview with the Ambassador. He sent for me, and the wonderful thing was that it was because of the ball you had set rolling in Paris. When one Ambassador gets in communication with another Ambassador, even when it is about as unimportant a thing as I am, there is something doing immediately. You must have made a hit, honey, with the powers in France, they got busy so fast. It seems that the Imperial Government is very leary about me. My being an American is the only thing that keeps me out of prison. They are kind of scared to put me there, but they won't let me go. I had to wait an hour even after I got sent for, and I enjoyed it thoroughly because it was raining hard and blowing like blazes and I knew that my bodyguard was having to take it. Indeed I could see him all the time across the strasse looking anxiously at the door where he had seen me disappear. I also had the delight of reading

a two weeks old American newspaper that a very nice young clerk slipped to me. I suppose the American Legation gets its newspaper, war or no.

Nothing can be done for me as yet. I have been very imprudent in my behaviour, reprehensible, in fact. The paper boats were most ill advised, especially the one that goes: "My Window has Four little Panes." That is something to do with maps and a signal, it seems. "The Window Panes are in its Sash," is most suggestive of information. Ah, well! They can't do more than just keep us here, and if our money gives out, it will be up to them to feed us. The time may come when I will be glad to get even blood pudding, but I can't think it.

Your poor little mumsy, in spite of the years she has spent with me roughing it, still has a dainty appetite, and I believe she would as soon eat a live rat, as blood pudding or raw goose. She makes out with eggs and salad and coffee and toast. So far, provisions are plentiful. It is only our small purse that makes us go easy on everything. But if the war goes on (which, God willing, it will do, as a short war will mean the Germans are victorious), I can't see how provisions will remain plentiful. What is England doing, anyhow? She must be doing something, but she is doing it very slowly.

Your being in Paris is a source of much uneasiness to us, but I can't say that I blame you. You are too much like me to want to get out of excitement. I feel sure you will take care of yourself and now that the French are waltzing in at such a rate, I have no

idea that the Germans will ever reach Paris. After all, this letter is to be taken by a lady who is at the American Legation and mailed to Mrs. Edwin Green and through her sent to you. They could not get it directly to you in France, but no doubt it will finally reach you through your friend, Molly. I am trusting her to do it and I know she will do it if any one can, because she is certainly to be depended on to get her friends out of trouble. In the meantime, the Ambassador here is to communicate formally with the Ambassador in Paris, and he is to let you know that all is well with your innocent if imprudent parents. Of course, your mother could go home if she would, but you know her well enough to know she won't. In fact, there is some talk of making her go home, and she says if they start any such thing she is going to swear she can draw any map of Turkey that ever was known to man, and can do it with her eyes shut and her hands tied behind her.

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