

"It is a very good one; for it has what many lack, — the merit of being true. Put it up, dear, and I'll make a wreath to hang on the gravestone."

Much gratified, Ned planted the board at the head of the grave, Posy gathered the brightest leaves, and mamma made a lovely garland in which to frame the "eppytap."

Then they left old Major to his rest, feeling sure that somewhere there must be a lower heaven for the souls of brave and faithful animals when their unrewarded work is done.

Many children went to see that lonely grave, but not one of them disturbed a leaf, or laughed at the little epitaph that preached them a sermon from the text, —

"Blessed are the merciful."

VI.

WHAT THE GIRLS DID.

"I'M so disappointed that I can't go; but papa says he can't afford it this summer. You know we lost a good deal by the great fire, so we must all give up something;" and Nelly gave a sigh, as if her sacrifice was not an easy one.

"I'm sorry, too, for I depend on hearing all about your adventures every summer. It is almost as good as going myself. What a pity Newport is such an expensive place," answered Kitty Fisher, Nelly's bosom friend.

"I dare say papa could manage to let me go for a week or so; but my outfit would cost so much I dare not ask him. One must dress there, you know, and I haven't had a new thing this summer," said Nelly.

"I'm sure your old things as you call them, are nice enough for any place. I should think I was made, if I had such a lovely wardrobe;" and Kitty's

eye roved round the pretty room where several gowns and hats were strewn as if for a survey.

"Ah, my dear, you don't know how quickly fashionable women spy out make-shifts, and despise you for them. All the girls I should meet at Newport would remember those clothes and I shouldn't enjoy myself a bit. No, I must stay at home, or slip away to Aunt Becky's, up in New Hampshire, where no one minds your clothes, and the plainer they are the better. It is as dull as tombs up there, and I long for the sea, so it seems as if I *couldn't* give up my trip."

"Why not go to a cheaper place?" asked Kitty, adding, with sudden excitement, "Now look here! This is just the thing, and I can go too, so you won't be lonely."

"Mary Nelson wrote me the other day, begging I'd come down to Oceana, and stay with her. It's a nice, quiet place, with a beach all to ourselves, lighthouse, rocks, fishing, boats, and all sorts of agreeable things. Not a bit fashionable, and every one wears old clothes and enjoys him or her self in a sensible way."

"What's board there?"

"Ten a week, with bath-house, boats, and an old carriage thrown in."

"Who is there?"

"Several teachers resting, a family or two of children, and a lot of boys camping out on the Point."

"And old clothes really will do?"

"Mary says she lives in her boating-dress, and went to an evening party in a white morning-gown I'd quite decided to go and have a nice free time, after you were off; but now you come with me, and for once see what fun we poor folks can have without any fuss or feathers."

"I will. Papa wants me to go somewhere, and will not think my expenses down there are extravagant. I'll pack to-day, and to-morrow we will be off."

Next day they *were* off, to be heartily welcomed by Mary, and speedily made at home by Marm Wolsey, as the old lady who kept the house was called. It was a delightfully quiet, pleasant place, with big rooms plainly furnished, but clean and full of fresh sea breezes day and night. Being founded on a rock, the boats were moored almost at the door, the bath-house was close by, on a smooth beach, and the lighthouse twinkled cheerfully, through fog or moonlight, just over the Point.

Such pleasant times as the girls had; taking early

dips in the sea, lying in hammocks on the airy piazza through the hot hours, rowing, fishing, scrambling over the rocks, or sitting in shady nooks, working and reading.

No one thought of clothes; and when Nelly timidly put on a delicate silk one day, she was told finery was not allowed, and a merry resolution was passed that no one should "dress up" under penalty of a fine. So flannel boating suits were all the fashion; and Miss Phelps would have rejoiced at the sight of half-a-dozen rosy-faced girls skipping about the rocks in a costume as simple and sensible as the one she recommends.

Of course the campers on the Point soon discovered the mermaids in the Cove, and, by a series of those remarkable accidents which usually occur at such times, got acquainted without much ceremony.

Then the fun increased amazingly, and the old house saw gay doings; for the lads had bonfires, concerts by moonlight on the rocks, and picnics in every available cove, grove, and sea-weedy nook the place could boast.

The mothers of the flocks of riotous children were matrons to the girls; and the shy teachers came out amazingly when they found that the three friends

were not fashionable city ladies, but lively girls, bent on having an agreeable and sociable time.

Nelly particularly enjoyed all this, and daily wondered why she felt so much better than at Newport, forgetting that there her time was spent in dressing by day, and dancing in hot rooms half the night, with no exercise but a drive or a genteel sail, with some one to do the rowing for her.

"It is the air and the quiet, I fancy," she said one day, when a month had nearly gone. "I'm getting so brown papa won't know me, and so fat I have to let out all my things. I do believe I've grown several inches across the shoulders with all this rowing and tramping about in a loose suit."

"Just so much health laid up for next winter. I wish I could afford to bring down a dozen pale girls every season, and let them do what you have been doing for a month or two. Poor girls, I mean, who lose their health by hard work, not by harmful play," said Mary, who knew something about the dark side of life, having been a governess for years, with little brothers and sisters to care for, and an invalid mother.

"It is so cheap here I should think most any one could afford to come" said Nelly, feeling a virtuous

satisfaction in the thought of the money she had saved by this economical trip.

"Ah, what seems cheap to you would be far beyond the means of many a poor girl who only makes three or four dollars a week. I've often wondered why rich people don't do little things of that sort more. It must be so pleasant to give health and happiness at such small cost to themselves."

"If papa were as well off as he was before the fire, I *could* do something of that sort, and I'd like to; but now I can do nothing," and Nelly felt rather uncomfortable at the memory of the seventeen easy years she had passed without ever thinking of such things.

"Girls, I've got an idea, and you must give me your advice at once," cried Kitty, bouncing in with her hat half off and her eyes full of fun.

"Tell on. What is it?" asked Nelly, ready for any thing.

"Well, you know the boys have been very polite to us in many ways; they break camp in two days, and we ought to give them a farewell of some sort, to show that we are grateful for their civility. Don't you think so?"

"Of course! What shall we do?"

"We have had picnics and water parties, and sings and dances in our parlor, so we *must* get up something new."

"Have a masquerade; it's such fun to fix up dresses," said Nelly, who rather longed to show some of her neglected splendor.

"We might borrow the old barn, to have a grand time. There's no hay in it, so we could light it up splendidly," added Kitty, seizing upon the idea with delight.

"How about supper?" asked prudent Mary, remembering the appetites of a dozen hearty lads sharpened by sea air and exercise.

"I'll pay for the supper. I've saved so much by my cheap trip, I can spare twenty dollars as well as not," cried Nelly, bound to have the thing done handsomely if at all.

"Bless you, child, it needn't cost half that! Don't go and be extravagant, for we can have cake of Marm Wolsey, and make lemonade ourselves; it won't cost much, and the boys will be just as well off as if we had a grand spread."

"You let me manage that part of the affair. I have ordered suppers at home, and I know what is proper. I will go up to town by the first boat to-mor-

row, and be back in time to help about dresses, and trimming up the barn. Marm will lend us sheets, and with green boughs, flowers, and candles, we can make a lovely room for our little party. I'll bring down some colored candles, and get some old-fashioned dresses at home, and do any errands for you."

Here Nelly stopped for breath, and the others fell to discussing what they would "go as." Their fellow-boarders were taken into the secret, and in an hour Marm Wolsey's whole establishment was in a ferment. Notes of invitation were dispatched and replies on birch-bark came pouring in with most agreeable promptitude.

The campers accepted to a man, and were soon seen ravaging the little town for red flannel and fisherman's toggery, or shouting with laughter in their tents as they fabricated horse-hair beards, Indian wampum and Roman armor.

Next morning Nelly departed, charged with sundry very important commissions, and the rest fell to work decorating the barn and overhauling their wardrobes, while good-natured Marm "het the big oven" and made cake till the air smelt as if a gale from the Spice Islands had blown over the Point.

At four, the boat came in; but no one saw Nelly

arrive, for the whole flock had gone over the rocks to get hemlock boughs in the grove.

When Mary and Kitty returned, they ran to the big room where they held their confabulations, and there found Nelly looking over a bundle of old brocades. Something odd in her face and manner made them both say at once, —

"What's the matter? Has any thing gone wrong?"

"I'm afraid you will think so, when I tell you that I have ordered no supper, got no pretty candles or flowers, and only spent two dollars of my money," said Nelly, looking both amused and anxious.

"Lost your purse?" cried Kitty.

"No."

"Thought better of it, like a wise child," said Mary.

"I brought something down that you didn't ask for, and may be sorry to have; but I couldn't help it. Look out there and see if that isn't better than bon-bons or finery."

Nelly pointed to a rock not far from the window, and both her friends stared in surprise; for all they saw was a strange girl sitting there, gazing out over the sea with an expression of wordless delight in her tired, white face and hungry eyes.

"Who is it?" whispered Mary.

"My little seamstress," answered Nelly. "I went to get her to fix my dress, and found her looking so pale and used up my heart ached. All the while she was fitting me, and I was telling her about our fun down here, she kept saying with a little gasp as if for fresh air, —

"How beautiful it must be, Miss Nelly! I'm so glad you are enjoying so much and look so well."

"Then what you once said, Mary, came into my head, and my money burnt in my pocket till I broke out all of a sudden, saying, —

"Wouldn't you like to go down with me for a week and get rested and freshened up a little, Jane?"

"Girls, if I had asked her to go straight to heaven, or do any lovely thing, she could not have looked more amazed, delighted, and touched.

"O, Miss Nelly, you are too good. I'm afraid I ought not to leave work. It seems almost too splendid to believe."

"I wouldn't hear a word, for my heart was set on doing it when I saw how she longed to go. So I said she could help us with our dresses, and I must have her come on that account if no other.

"Then she said she had nothing fit to wear, and I was so glad to be able to tell her that none of us wore nice clothes, and hers were quite fit. I just made her put on her bonnet, brought her away in the twinkling of an eye, and there she is enjoying rest, fresh air, sunshine and her first view of the sea."

"Nelly, you are an angel!" and Kitty hugged her on the spot, while Mary beamed at her with tears in her eyes, as she said, quietly, —

"I did not think my little sermon would be so soon and beautifully taken to heart. The sight of that poor child, sitting there so happy, is better than the most splendid supper you could have ordered. I shall always love and honor you for this, dear."

Nelly's face was a pretty mixture of smiles and tears, as her friends kissed and praised her. Then she said, brightly, —

"Now we will have nothing but our cake and lemonade, and make up in good spirits for the supper we have lost. Flowers will do for favors, and tallow candles will help the moon light up our 'hall.' See my Bo-Peep dress; and here are lots of things for you. To-morrow Jane will help us, and we will be splendidous."

Three happy faces bent over the old brocades

three busy tongues chattered gaily of trains and flounces, and three pairs of friendly eyes peeped often at the quiet figure on the rocks, finding greater satisfaction in that sweet little tableau than in any they could plan.

Merry times they had next day, for Jane's skilful fingers worked wonders, and gratitude inspired her with all manner of brilliant ideas. She was introduced as a friend; any deficiencies in her wardrobe were quietly supplied by Nelly, and she proved herself an invaluable ally, enjoying every minute of the precious time.

Nothing could have been prettier in its way than the old barn, draped with sails and sheets, with flags and pennons from the boats, great peonies and green boughs for decorations. Candles and lanterns twinkled their best, and the great doors at both ends stood wide open, letting in floods of moonlight, fresh air and lovely glimpses of the sea.

The neighbors all came to "peek," and the hearty laughter of the big brown fishermen clustered round the door was good to hear, as the comical, quaint, or charming figures entered the room. Tow-headed children roosted on the beams, women in calico gowns sat staring in the stalls, while babies slept

placidly in the hay-racks, and one meek cow surveyed the scene with astonished eyes.

Powhattan, St. George, Brother Jonathan, Capt. Cuttle, Garibaldi and other noble beings came from the camp, to find Bo-Peep in a ravishing little costume, with a Quakeress, Sairey Gamp, Dolly Varden and a host of other delightful ladies ready to receive them.

What happy hours followed, with the promenades, and plays, and homely yet delightful surroundings. The barn was so cool, so spacious, and every thing was so free and simple, that every one "went in and enjoyed himself like a man," as Capt. Kyd gracefully remarked to Mary Nelson, who was capitally and cheaply got up as the Press, dressed in newspapers, with a little telegraph, posts, wires and all, on her head.

Fruit, cake and lemonade was all the feast, spread on the big rock in front of the barn, and no one complained; for moonlight, youth and happy hearts lent their magic to the scene.

"Never had such a good time in my life," was the general verdict when the party broke up at eleven, and the gallant guests departed, to return the compliment by a charming serenade an hour later.

"Now that just puts the last touch to it. So romantic and delicious!" sighed Nelly, listening luxuriously to the melodious strains of that college favorite, "Juanita."

"It's all like a beautiful dream to me," sighed Jane, who was peeping through the blinds with the other pretty white ghosts, and enjoying the whole thing to her heart's core.

Kitty threw out some flowers, and when each youth had stuck a relic in his button-hole, the sailor hats disappeared, leaving only the musical assurance that "Her bright smile haunts me still," to echo over the rocks and die away in the lapping of the tide upon the shore.

A quiet week followed, and the girls spent it teaching Jane to row and swim, taking her to drive in the old wagon, and making her "have a good time."

She was so blissfully happy and improved so much that Nelly had serious thoughts of applying to her father for more money, so that Jane might stay longer. But though she said not a word about her little charity, the truth crept out, and several of the ladies quietly made up a handsome sum for Jane.

They gave it to Nelly, asking her to use it and say nothing of them, lest it should annoy the little

seamstress. So Nelly, when her own time was up, had the pleasure of telling Jane she was to stay some weeks longer, and of slipping into her hand the means so kindly provided for her.

She had no words in which to thank these friends, but her happy face did it as she bade them good-by, when they left her smiling, with wet eyes, among the roses in the lane.

"Our visit has been a success, though it wasn't Newport, hey, Nelly?" said Kitty, as they rumbled away in the big omnibus.

"Oh, yes! I've had a lovely time, and mean to come next summer and bring another Jane, to go halves with me; it gives such a relish to one's fun somehow," answered Nelly, contentedly tying on her last year's hat.

"Old clothes, wholesome pleasures and a charitable deed are all the magic that has made your month so happy and so helpful," said Mary, putting an affectionate arm about the shoulders in the now faded jacket.

"And good friends; don't forget to add *that*," answered Nelly, with a grateful kiss.