Patty in Paris

Carolyn Wells

Table of Contents

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CHAPTER I. PLANS FOR PATTY

The Fairfields were holding a family conclave. As the Fairfield family consisted of only three members, the meeting was not large but it was highly enthusiastic. The discussion was about Patty; and as a consequence, Patty herself was taking a lively part in it.

"But you promised me, last year, papa," she said, "that if I graduated from the Oliphant School with honours, I needn't go to school this year."

"But I meant in the city," explained her father; "it's absurd, Patty, for you to consider your education finished, and you not yet eighteen."

"But I'll soon be eighteen, papa, and so suppose we postpone this conversation until then."

"Don't be frivolous, my child. This is a serious matter, and requires careful consideration and wise judgement."

"That's so," said Nan, "and as I have already considered it carefully, I will give you the benefit of my wise

judgment."

Though Nan's face had assumed the expression of an owl named Solomon, there was a smile in her eyes, and Patty well knew that her stepmother's views agreed with her own, rather than with those of her father.

It was the last week in September, and the Fairfields were again in their pleasant city home after their summer in the country.

Patty and Nan were both fond of city life, and were looking forward to a delightful winter. Of course Patty was too young to be in society, but there were many simple pleasures which she was privileged to enjoy, and she and Nan had planned a series of delightful affairs, quite apart from the more elaborate functions which Nan would attend with her husband.

But Mr. Fairfield had suddenly interfered with their plans by announcing his decision that Patty should go to college.

This had raised such a storm of dissension from both Nan and Patty that Mr. Fairfield so far amended his resolution as to propose a boarding− school instead.

But Patty was equally dismayed at the thought of either, and rebelled at the suggestion of going away from home. And as Nan quite coincided with Patty in her opinions on this matter, she was fighting bravely for their victory against Mr. Fairfield's very determined opposition.

All her life Patty had deferred to her father's advice, not only willingly, but gladly; but in the matter of school she had very strong prejudices. She had never enjoyed school life, and during her last year at Miss Oliphant's she had worked so hard that she had almost succumbed to an attack of nervous prostration. But she had persevered in her hard work because of the understanding that it was to be her last year at school; and now to have college or even a boarding−school thrown at her head was enough to rouse even her gentle spirit.

For Patty was of gentle spirit, although upon occasion, especially when she felt that an injustice was being done, she could rouse herself to definite and impetuous action.

And as she now frankly told her father, she considered it unjust after she had thought that commencement marked the end of her school life, to have a college course sprung upon her unaware.

But Mr. Fairfield only laughed and told her that she was incapable of judging what was best for little girls, and that she would do wisely to obey orders without question.

But Patty had questioned, and her questions were reinforced by those of Nan, until Mr. Fairfield began to realise that it was doubtful if he could gain his point against their combined forces. And indeed a kind and indulgent father and husband is at a disadvantage when his opinion is opposed to that of his pretty, impulsive daughter and his charming, impulsive wife.

So, at this by no means the first serious discussion of the matter, Mr. Fairfield found himself weakening, and had already acknowledged to himself that he might as well prepare to yield gracefully.

"Go on, Nan," cried Patty, "give us the benefit of your wise judgment"

"Why, I think," said Nan, looking at her husband with an adorable smile, which seemed to assume that he would agree with her, "that a college education is advisable, even necessary, for a girl who expects to teach, or indeed, to follow any profession. But I'm quite sure we don't look forward to that for Patty."

"No," said Mr. Fairfield; "I can't seem to see Patty teaching a district school how to shoot; neither does my imagination picture her as a woman doctor or a lady lawyer. But to my mind there are occasions in the life of a private citizeness when a knowledge of classic lore is not only beneficial but decidedly ornamental."

"Now, papa," began Patty, "I'm not going to spend my life as a butterfly of fashion or a grasshopper of giddiness, and you know it; but all the same, I can't think of a single occasion where I should be embarrassed at my ignorance of Sanscrit, or distressed at the fact that I was unacquainted personally with the statutes of limitation."

"You're talking nonsense, Patty, and you know it. The straight truth is, that you don't like school life and school restraint. Now some girls enjoy the fun and pleasures of college life, and think that they more than compensate for the drudgery of actual study."

"'An exile from home, pleasure dazzles in vain,'" sang Patty, whose spirits had risen, for she felt intuitively that her father was about to give up his cherished plans.

"I think," went on Nan, "after you have asked for my valuable advice, you might let me give it without so many interruptions. I will proceed to remark that I am still of the opinion that there are only two reasons why a girl should go to college: Because she wants to, or because she needs the diploma in her future career."

"Since you put it so convincingly, I have no choice but to agree with you," said her husband, smiling. "However, if I eliminate the college suggestion, there still remains the boarding−school. I think that a superior young ladies' finishing school would add greatly to the advantages of our Patty."

"It would finish me entirely, papa; your college scheme is bad enough, but a 'finishing school,' as you call it, presents to my fancy all sorts of unknown horrors."

"Of course it does," cried Nan. "I will now give you some more of my wise advice. A finishing school would be of no advantage at all to our Patty. I believe their principal end and aim is to teach young ladies how to enter a room properly. Now I have never seen Patty enter a room except in the most correct, decorous, and highly approved fashion. It does seem foolish then to send the poor child away for a year to practise an art in which she is already proficient."

"You two are one too many for me," said Mr. Fairfield, laughing. "If I had either of you alone, I could soon reduce you to a state of meek obedience; but your combined forces are too much for me, and I may as well surrender at once and completely."

"No; but seriously, Fred, you must see that it is really so. Now what Patty needs in the way of education, is the best possible instruction in music, which she can have better here in New York than in any college; then she ought to go on with her French, in which she is already remarkably proficient. Then perhaps an hour a day of reading well− selected literature with a competent teacher, and I'll guarantee that a year at home will do more for Patty than any school full of masters."

Mr. Fairfield looked at his young wife in admiration. "Why, Nan, I believe you're right," he said, "though I don't believe it because of any change in my own opinions, but because you put it so convincingly that I haven't an argument left."

Nan only smiled, and went on.

"You said yourself, Fred, that Patty disliked the routine and restraint of school life, and so I think it would be cruel to force her into it when she can be so much happier at home. Here she will have ample time for all the

study I have mentioned, and still have leisure for the pleasures that she needs and deserves. I shall look after her singing lessons myself, and make sure that she practises properly. Then I shall take her to the opera and to concerts, which, though really a part of her musical education, may also afford her some slight pleasure."

Patty flew over to Nan and threw her arms about her neck. "You dear old duck," she cried; "there never was such a dear, lovely, beautiful stepmother on the face of the earth! And now it's all settled, isn't it, papa?"

"It seems to be," said Mr. Fairfield, smiling. "But on your own heads be the consequences. I put Patty into your hands now, so far as her future education is concerned, and you can fix it up between you. To tell the truth, I'm delighted myself at the thought of having Patty stay home with us, but my sense of duty made me feel that I must at least put the matter before her."

"And you did," cried Patty gleefully, "and now I've put it behind me, and that's all there is about that. And I'll promise, papa, to study awfully hard on my French and music; and as for reading, that will be no hardship, for I'd rather read than eat any day."

Mr. Fairfield had really acquiesced to the wishes of the others out of his sheer kind−heartedness. For he did not think that the lessons at home would be as definite and regular as at a school, and he still held his original opinions in the matter. But having waived his theories for theirs, he raised no further objection and seemed to consider the question settled.

After a moment, however, he said thoughtfully: "What you really ought to have, Patty, is a year abroad. That would do more for you in the way of general information and liberal education than anything else."

"Now THAT would be right down splendid," said Patty. "Come on, papa, let's all go."

"I would in a minute, dear, but I can't leave my business just now. It has increased alarmingly of late and it needs my constant attention to keep up with it. Indeed it is becoming so ridiculously successful that unless I can check it we shall soon be absurdly rich people."

"Then you can retire," said Nan, "and we can all go abroad for Patty's benefit."

"Yes," said Mr. Fairfield seriously, "after a year or two we can do that. I sha'n't exactly retire, but I shall get the business into such shape that I can take a long vacation, and then we'll all go out and see the world. But that doesn't seem to have anything to do with Patty's immediate future. I have thought over this a great deal, and if you don't go to college, Patty, I should like very much to have you go abroad sooner than I can take you. But I can't see any way for you to go. I can't spare Nan to go with you, and I'm not sure you would care to go with one of those parties of personally conducted young ladies."

"No, indeed!" cried Patty. "I'm crazy to go to Europe, but I don't want to go with six other girls and a chaperon, and go flying along from one country to the next, with a Baedeker in one hand and a suit case in the other. I'd much rather wait and go with you and Nan, later on."

"Well, I haven't finished thinking it out yet," said Mr. Fairfield, who, in spite of his apparent pliability, had a strong will of his own. "I may send you across in charge of a reliable guardian, and put you into a French convent."

[Illustration with caption: "'There never was such a dear, lovely, beautiful stepmother on the face of the earth!'"]

Patty only laughed at this, but still she had a vague feeling that her father was not yet quite done with the

subject, and that almost anything might happen.

But as Kenneth Harper came in to see them just then, the question was laid before him.

"There is no sense in Patty's going to college," he declared. "I'm an authority on the subject, because I know college and I know Patty, and they have absolutely nothing in common with each other. Why, Patty doesn't want the things that colleges teach. You see, she is of an artistic temperament "

"Oh, Kenneth," cried Patty reproachfully, "that's the most fearfully unkind thing I ever had said to me! Why, I would rather be accused of I don't know WHAT than an artistic temperament! How COULD you say it? Why, I'm as practical and common sensible and straightforward as I can be. People who have artistic temperaments are flighty and weak−minded and not at all capable."

"Why, Patty," cried Nan, laughing, "how can you make such sweeping assertions? Mr. Hepworth is an artist, and he isn't all those dreadful things."

"That's different," declared Patty. "Mr. Hepworth is a real artist, and so you can't tell what his temperament is."

"But that's just what I mean," insisted Kenneth; "Hepworth is a real artist, and so he didn't have and didn't need a college education. He specialised and devoted all his study to his art. Then he went to Paris and stayed there for years, still studying and working. I tell you, it's specialisation that counts. Now I don't know that Patty wants to specialise, but she certainly doesn't need the general work of college. I should think that you would prefer to have her devote herself to her music, especially her singing; for we all know that Patty's is a voice of rare promise. I don't know myself exactly what 'rare promise' means, but it's a phrase that's always applied to voices like Patty's."

"You're just right, Kenneth," said Nan, "and I'm glad you're on our side. Patty and I entirely agree with you, and though Mr. Fairfield is still wavering a little, I am sure that by day after to−morrow, or next week at the latest, he will be quite ready to cast in his lot with ours."

Mr. Fairfield only smiled, for though he had no intention of making Patty do anything against her will, yet he had not entirely made up his mind in the matter.

"Anyway, my child," he said, "whatever you do or don't do, will be the thing that we are entirely agreed upon, even if I have to convince you that my opinions are right."

And Patty smiled back at her father happily, for there was great comradeship and sympathy between them.

CHAPTER II. THE DECISION

It was only a few days later that Nan and Patty sat one evening in the library waiting for Mr. Fairfield to come home to dinner.

The Fairfield library was a most cosey and attractive room. Nan was a home−maker by nature, and as Patty dearly loved pretty and comfortable appointments, they had combined their efforts on the library and the result was a room which they all loved far better than the more formal drawing−room.

The fall was coming early that year, which gave an excuse for the fire in the big fireplace. This fire was made of that peculiar kind of driftwood whose flames show marvellous rainbow tints. Patty never tired of watching the strange−coloured blaze, and delighted in throwing on more chips and splinters from time to time.

"I can't see what makes your father so late," said Nan, as she wandered about the room, now adjusting some flowers in a vase, and now stopping to look out at the front window; "he's always here by this time, or earlier."

"Something must have detained him," said Patty, rather absently, as she poked at a log with the tongs.

"Patty, you're a true Sherlock Holmes! Your father is late, and you immediately deduce that something has detained him! Truly, you have a wonderful intellect!"

"I don't wonder it seems so to you," said saucy Patty, smiling at her pretty stepmother; "people are always impressed by traits they don't possess themselves."

"But really I'm getting worried. If Fred doesn't come pretty soon I shall telephone to the office."

"Do; I like to see you enacting the role of anxious young wife. It suits you perfectly. As for me, I'm starving; if papa doesn't come pretty soon, he will find an emaciated skeleton in place of the plump daughter he left behind him."

As Mr. Fairfield arrived at that moment, there was no occasion for further anxiety, but in response to their queries he gave them no satisfaction as to the cause of his unusual tardiness, and only smiled at their exclamations.

It was not until they were seated at the dinner table that Mr. Fairfield announced he had something to tell them.

"And I'm sure it's something nice," said Patty, "for there's a twinkle in the left corner of your right eye."

"Gracious, Patty!" cried Nan, "that sounds as if your father were cross− eyed, and he isn't."

"Well," went on Mr. Fairfield, "what I have to tell you is just this: I have arranged for the immediate future of Miss Patricia Fairfield."

Patty looked frightened. There was something in her father's tone that made her feel certain that his mind was irrevocably made up, and that whatever plans he had made for her were sure to be carried out. But she resolved to treat it lightly until she found out what it was all about.

"I don't want to be intrusive," she said, "but if not too presumptuous, might I inquire what is to become of me?"

"Yours not to make reply, yours not to reason why," said her father teasingly. "You know, my child, you're not yet of age, and I, as your legal parent and guardian, can do whatever I please with you. You are, as Mr. Shakespeare puts it, 'my goods, my chattel,' and so I have decided to pack you up and send you away."

"Really, papa!" cried Patty, aghast.

"Yes, really. I remember you expressed a disinclination to leave your home and family, but all the same I have made arrangements for you to do so. It was the detailing of these arrangements that kept me so late at my office to−night."

Patty looked at her father. She understood his bantering tone, and from the twinkle in his eye she knew that whatever plans he may have made, they were pleasant ones; and, too, she knew that notwithstanding his air of

authority she needn't abide by them unless she chose to. So she waited contentedly enough for his serious account of the matter, and it soon came.

"Why, it's this way, chickabiddy," he said. "Mr. Farrington came to see me at the office this afternoon, and laid a plan before me. It seems that he and Mrs. Farrington and Elise are going to Paris for the winter, and he brought from himself and his wife an invitation for you to go with them."

"Oh!" said Patty. She scarcely breathed the word, but her eyes shone like stars, and her face expressed the delight that the thought of such a plan brought to her.

"Oh!" she said again, as thoughts of further details came crowding into her mind.

"How perfectly glorious!" cried Nan, whose enthusiasm ran to words, as Patty seemed struck dumb. "It's the very thing! just what Patty needs. And to go with the Farringtons is the most delightful way to make such a trip. Tell us all about it, Fred. When do they start? Shall I have time to get Patty some clothes? No, she'd better buy them over there. Oh, Patty, you'll have the most rapturous time! Do say something, you little goose! Don't sit there blinking as if you didn't understand what's going on. Tell us more about it, Fred."

"I will, my dear, if you'll only give me a chance. The Farringtons mean to sail very soon in about a fortnight. They will go on a French liner and go at once to Paris. Except for possible short trips, they will stay in the city all winter. Then the girls can study French, or music, or whatever they like, and incidentally have some fun, I dare say. Mr. Farrington seemed truly anxious to have Patty go, although I warned him that she was a difficult young person to manage. But he said he had had experience in that line last summer, and found that it was possible to get along with her. Anyway, he was most urgent in the matter, and said that if I agreed to it, Mrs. Farrington and Elise would come over and invite her personally."

"Am I to be their guest entirely, papa?" asked Patty.

"Mr. Farrington insisted that you should, but I wouldn't agree to that. I shall pay all your travelling expenses, hotel bills, and incidentals. But if they take a furnished house in Paris for the season, as they expect to do, you will stay there as their guest."

"Oh," cried Patty, who had found her voice at last, "I do think it's too lovely for anything! And you are so good, papa, to let me go. But won't it cost a great deal, and can you afford it?"

"It will be somewhat expensive, my dear, but I can afford it, for, as I told you, my finances are looking up. And, too, I consider this a part of your education, and so look upon it as a necessary outlay. But you must remember that the Farringtons are far more wealthy people than we, and though you can afford the necessary travelling expenses, you probably cannot be as extravagant in the matter of personal expenditure as they. I shall give you what I consider an ample allowance of pin money, and then you must be satisfied with the number of pins it will buy."

"That doesn't worry me," declared Patty. "I'm so delighted to go that I don't care if I don't buy a thing over there."

"You'll change your mind when you get there and get into the wonderful Paris shops," said her father, smiling; "but never fear, puss; you'll have enough francs to buy all the pretty dresses and gewgaws and knick− knacks that it's proper for a little girl like you to have. How old are you now, Patty?"

"Almost eighteen, papa."

"Almost eighteen, indeed! You mean you're only fairly well past seventeen. But it doesn't matter. Remember you're a little girl, and not a society young lady, and conduct yourself accordingly."

"Mrs. Farrington will look out for that," said Nan; "she has the best possible ideas about such things, and she brings up Elise exactly in accordance with my notions of what is right."

"That settles it," said Mr. Fairfield; "I shall have no further anxiety on that score since Nan approves of the outlook. But, Patty girl, we're going to miss you here."

"Yes, indeed," cried Nan. "I hadn't realised that side of it. Oh, Patty, we had planned so many things for this winter, and now I shall be alone all day and every day!"

"Come on, and go with me," said Patty, mischievously.

"No," said Nan, smiling at her husband; "I have a stronger tie here even than your delightful companionship. But truly we shall miss you awfully."

"Of course you will," said Patty, "and I'll miss you, too. But we'll write each other long letters, and oh! I do think the whole game is perfectly lovely."

"So do I," agreed Nan; and then followed such a lot of feminine planning and chatter that Mr. Fairfield declared his advice seemed not to be needed.

The next morning Nan and Patty went over to the Farringtons to discuss the great subject. They expressed to Mrs. Farrington their hearty thanks for her kind invitation, but she insisted that the kindness was all on Patty's side, as her company would be a great delight, not only to Elise, but also to the elder members of the party.

"Isn't Roger going?" asked Patty.

"No," said Mrs. Farrington; "this is his last year in college, so of course he can't leave. The other children are in school, too, so it seemed just the right year for us to take Elise abroad for a little outing. A winter in Paris will do both of you girls good in lots of ways, and if for any reason we don't enjoy it, we can go somewhere else, or we can turn around and come home, and no harm done." Although the trip seemed such a great event to Patty, Mrs. Farrington appeared to look upon it merely as a little outing, and seemed so thoroughly glad to have Patty go with them that she almost made Patty feel as if she were conferring the favour.

Elise and Patty went away by themselves to talk it all over, while Nan stayed with Mrs. Farrington to discuss the more practical details.

"I didn't care a bit about going," said Elise, "until we thought about your going too, and now I'm crazy to go. Oh, Patty, won't we have the most gorgeous time!"

"Yes, indeed," said Patty; "I can hardly realise it yet. I'm perfectly bewildered. Shall we go to school, Elise?"

"I don't think so, and yet we may. Mother's going to take a house, you know, and then we'll either have masters every day, or go to some school. Mother knows all about Paris. She has lived there a lot. But we sha'n't have to study all the time, I know that much. We'll go sight− seeing a good deal, and of course we'll go motoring."

"I shall enjoy the ocean trip," said Patty; "I've never been across, you know. You've been a number of times, haven't you?"

"Yes, but not very lately. We used to go often when Roger and I were little, but I haven't been over for six years, and then we weren't in Paris."

"I'm sure I shall love Paris. Do you remember it well?"

"No; when I was there last I was too little to appreciate it, so we'll explore it together, you and I. I wish Roger were going with us; it's nice to have a boy along to escort us about."

"Yes, it is," said Patty frankly; "and Roger is so kind and good− natured. When do we sail, Elise?"

"Two weeks from Saturday, I think. Father is going to see about the tickets to−day. He waited to see your father yesterday, and make sure that you could go. The whole thing has been planned rather suddenly, but that's the way father always does things."

"And it's so fortunate," went on Patty, "that I hadn't started away to college or boarding−school. Although if I had, and you had invited me, I should have managed some way to get expelled from college, so I could go with you. How long do you suppose we shall stay, Elise?"

"I don't know, I'm sure. You never can tell what the Farringtons are going to do; they're here to−day and gone to−morrow. We'll stay all winter, of course, and then in the spring, mother might take a notion to go to London, or she might decide to come flying home. As for father, he'll probably bob back and forth. He doesn't think any more of crossing the ocean than of crossing the street. Have you much to do to get ready to go?"

"No, not much. Nan says for me not to get a lot of clothes, for it's better to buy them over there; and papa says I can buy all I want, only of course I can't be as extravagant as you are."

"Oh, pshaw, I'm not extravagant! I don't care much about spending money, only of course I like to have some nice things. And I do love to buy pictures and books. But we'll have an awful lot of fun together. I think it's fun just to be with you, Patty. And the idea of having you all to myself for a whole winter, without Hilda, or Lorraine, or anybody claiming a part of you, is the best of it all. I do love you a lot, Patty, more than you realise, I think."

"You've set your affections on a worthless object, then; and I warn you that before the winter is over you're likely to discover that for yourself. You always did overestimate me, Elise."

"Indeed I didn't; but as you well know, from that first day at the Oliphant school, when you were so kind to me, I've never liked anybody half as much as I do you."

"You're extremely flattering," said Patty, as she kissed her friend, "and I only hope this winter won't prove a disillusion."

"I'm not at all afraid," returned Elise gaily; "and oh, Patty, won't we have a jolly time on board the steamer! It's a long trip, you know, and we must take books to read and games to play, for as there'll probably be mostly French people on board, we can't converse very much."

"You can," said Patty, laughing, "but I'm afraid no one can understand my beautiful but somewhat peculiar accent."

III

SOUVENIRS

Marian came over to spend a few days with Patty before her departure. She was frankly envious of Patty's good fortune, but more than that, she was so desperately doleful at the thought of Patty's going away that she was anything but a cheerful visitor.

Although sorry for her cousin, Patty couldn't help laughing at the dejected picture that Marian continually presented. She followed Patty around the house wherever she went, or she would sit and look at her with her chin held in her hands, and the big tears rolling down her cheeks.

"Marian, you are a goose," said Patty, exasperated by this performance. "When I left Vernondale you cried and carried on just this way, but somehow you seemed to live through it. And now that I live in New York you don't see me so very often anyhow, so why should you be so disconsolate about my going away?"

"Because you're going so far, and you'll probably be drowned those French steamers are ever so much more dangerous than the English lines and somehow I just feel as if you'd never come back."

"Well, the best thing you can do then is to change your feelings. I'll be back before you hardly realise that I'm gone; and I'll bring you the loveliest presents you ever saw."

This was a happy suggestion of Patty's, for Marian's tears ceased to flow and she brightened up at once.

"Oh, Patty, that is just what I wanted to talk to you about! If you are going to bring me anything in the way of a gift or a souvenir, wouldn't you just as lieve I'd tell you what I want, as to have you pick it out yourself, and likely as not bring me something I don't care for at all? Everybody who brings me home souvenirs from Europe brings the most hideous things, or else something that I can't possibly use."

"Why, Marian, dear, I'd be only too glad to have you tell me what you want, and I'll do my best to select it just right."

"Well, Patty, I want a lot of photographs. The kind we get over here are no good. But I've seen the ones that come from Paris, and they're just as different as day and night. I'd like the Venus of Milo and the Mona Lisa and the Victory and oh, well I'll make you out a list. There are several Madonnas that I want, and several more that I DON'T want. And I do NOT want any of Nattier's pictures or a "Baby Stuart," but I do want some of Hinde's hair curlers the tortoise−shell kind, I mean and you can only get them in Paris."

By this time Patty was shaking with laughter at Marian's list, and she asked her if she didn't want anything else but photographs and hair curlers.

"Why, yes," said Marian, astonished; "I've only just begun. You know photographs don't cost much over there, and of course the curlers won't count for a present. I thought you meant to bring me something nice."

"I do," said Patty, looking at her cousin, who was so comically in earnest. "You just go on with your list, and I'll bring all the things, if I have to buy an extra trunk to bring them in."

"All right, then," said Marian, encouraged to proceed. "I want a bead bag one of those gay coloured ones made of very small beads, worked in old−fashioned flowers, roses, you know, or hibiscus not on any account the tulip pattern, because I hate it."

"You'd better write out these instructions, Marian, or I shall be sure to get tulips by mistake."

"Don't you do it, Patty; I'll write them all down most explicitly. And then I want a scarf, a very long one, cream−coloured ground, with a Persian border in blues and greys. But not a palm−leaf border I mean that queer stencilled sort of a design; I'll draw a pattern of it so you can't mistake it."

"But suppose I can't find just that kind, Marian."

"Oh, yes, you can! Ethel Holmes has one, and hers came from Paris. And you've all winter to look for it, you know."

"Well, I'll devote the winter to the search, but if I don't find it along toward spring I'll give it up. What else, Marian?"

"Well, I'd like a lot of Napoleon things. Some old prints of him, you know, and perhaps a little bronze statuette, and a cup and saucer or pen−wiper, or any of those things that they make with pictures of Napoleon on. And then oh! Patty, I do want some Cyclamen perfumery. It's awfully hard to get. There's only one firm that makes it. I forget the name, but it's Something Bros. Co., and their place is across the Seine."

"Across the Seine from what?"

"Why, just across. On the other side, you know. Of course I don't know across from what, because I've never been to Paris; but everybody who has lived there always just says 'across the Seine,' and everybody knows at once where they mean. You'll know all right after you've lived there a little while."

"Marian, you're a wonder," declared Patty. "I don't think I ever knew anybody with such a perfect and complete understanding of her own wants as you seem to have. I hope you haven't mentioned half the things I'm to bring you, but don't tell me the rest now. I might change my mind about going. But you buy a large blank book and write out all these orders at full length, giving directions just when to cross the Seine and when to cross back again, and I'll promise to do my very best with the whole list."

"Patty, you're a darling," said Marian, "and I'm almost reconciled to having you go when I think of having souvenirs brought to me that I really want."

"Marian," said Patty, struck with a sudden thought, "your idea of the difference between desirable and undesirable souvenirs is an interesting one. Now I shall bring little gifts to all my friends and relatives, I expect, and if you happen to know of anything that would be especially liked by Uncle Charlie or Aunt Alice or any of your family, or the Tea Club girls, I wish you'd make another list and put those things all down for me. It would be the greatest kind of a help."

Marian promised to do this, and Patty felt sure that she would be glad of the lists later on.

Aunt Isabel and Ethelyn also came to say good−bye to Patty, but their demeanour was very different from Marian's.

Aunt Isabel was much impressed by the fact that Patty was going to travel with the rich Farringtons, but she expressed a doubt as to whether it would do Patty much good in a social way after all. For she knew something of Mrs. Farrington's habits and tastes, and they in no way corresponded to her own.

Ethelyn informed Patty that she need not bring her any souvenir unless she could bring something really nice. "I do hate the little traps and trinkets most people bring," she said; "but if you want to bring me a bracelet or locket or something really worth while, I'd be glad to have it."

"Well," exclaimed Patty, "I certainly have most outspoken cousins! They don't seem to hesitate to tell me what to bring and what not to bring them. But I'm sure of one thing! Bumble Barlow won't be so fussy particular; she'll take whatever I bring and be thankful."

"So will I," said Nan, laughing; "anything no one else wants, Patty, you may give it to me."

"Don't spend all your money buying presents, child," said Aunt Isabel; "you'd better buy pretty clothes for yourself. I will give you a list of the best places to shop."

"Thank you, Aunt Isabel, I'll take the list with pleasure; but of course my purchases will be at the advice of Mrs. Farrington. She dresses Elise quite simply, and will probably expect me to do the same."

Aunt Isabel sniffed. "You ought to have gone to Paris with me," she said. "You're growing up to be a good−looking girl, Patty, and the right kind of clothes would set you off wonderfully."

Patty said nothing, but as she glanced at Ethelyn's furbelows she felt thankful she was not going to Paris with Aunt Isabel.

But Patty found that there was quite a great deal of shopping to be done before she sailed.

Nan took these matters in charge and declared that Patty needed a complete though not an elaborate steamer outfit.

Nan dearly loved buying pretty clothes and was quite in her element making Patty's purchases. A dark blue tailor−made cloth, trimmed with touches of green velvet, was chosen for her travelling costume.

Her "going−away dress" Marian persisted in calling it, just as if Patty were a bride; but as Marian burst into tears every time she mentioned Patty's going away, her words were so indistinct that it mattered little what terms she used.

Then Nan selected one or two pretty light gowns of a somewhat dressy nature for dinner on board the steamer, and one or two simple evening gowns for the ship's concert or other festive occasions. A white serge suit was added for pleasant afternoons on deck, and some dainty kimonos and negligees for stateroom use.

Patty was delighted with all these things, but could scarcely take time to appreciate them, as she found so many other things to do by way of her own preparations. So many people came to see her and she had to go to see so many other people. Then she had to have her photographs taken to leave with her friends, and she was constantly being invited to little farewell luncheons or teas.

"Indeed," as Patty expressed it, "the whole two weeks of preparation seems like one long, lingering farewell; and when I'm not saying good− bye to any one else, I'm trying to stop Marian's freshly flowing tears."

The girls bought Patty parting gifts, and though they were all either useful or pretty, Patty appreciated far more the loving spirit which prompted them.

"I made this all myself," said Hilda, as she brought Patty a dainty sleeping gown of blue and white French flannel, "because it's utterly impossible to buy this sort of thing ready−made and have it just right. If you don't say this is just right I'll never make you another as long as I live."

"It's exactly right, Hilda," said Patty, taking the pretty garment. "I know I shall dream of you whenever I wear it, and that's too bad, too, for I ought to devote some of my dreams to other people."

"This is a cabin bag," said Lorraine, bringing her offering. "I didn't make it myself, because this is so much neater and prettier than a homemade one. You see it has a pocket for everything that you can possibly require, from hairpins to shoehorn. Not that you'll put anything in the pockets nobody ever does but it will look pretty decorating your cabin wall."

"Indeed I shall put things in it," said Patty. "I'm a great believer in putting things in their right places, and I shall think of you, Lorraine, whenever I'm trying to get the things out of these dinky little pockets, and probably not succeeding very well."

"This is my gift," said Adelaide Hart; "it isn't very elaborate, but I made it all myself, and that means a good deal from me."

Patty opened the parcel and found a piece of cretonne about a yard square, neatly hemmed along each of the four sides, and having a tape loop sewed on each corner.

"It's perfectly beautiful," said Patty, "and I never saw more exquisite needlework; but would you mind telling me what it is for? It can't be a handkerchief, but I don't know of anything else that's exactly square."

"How ignorant you are," said Adelaide with pretended superiority. "That, my inexperienced friend, is a wrap for your best hat."

"Oh," said Patty, not much enlightened.

"You see," Adelaide kindly went on to explain, "as soon as you get on board your steamer you take off your best hat and put it exactly in the middle of this square, having first spread the square out smoothly on the bed or somewhere. Then you take up these four corners by the loops and hang the whole thing on the highest hook in your stateroom. Thus, you see, your best hat is carried safely across; it is not jammed or crushed, and it is protected from dust."

"I see," said Patty gravely; "and I suppose the dust is something awful on an ocean steamer."

The laugh seemed to be on Adelaide at this, but she joined in it and prophesied that when Patty returned she would confess that that gift had proved the most useful of all.

Clementine Morse brought a large post−card album which she had filled with views of New York City.

"I know you will be homesick before you're out of sight of land," she said; "but if you're not you ought to be, and I hope these pictures will make you so. When you look at this highly colored representation of Grant's tomb and realise that it is but a few miles from your own long− lost hearthstone, I'm sure you will feel qualms of patriotism or something."

"I think very likely," said Patty, laughing. "But, Clementine, how many trunks do you suppose I shall need to hold my farewell gifts? This album will take up considerable space."

"I know it," said Clementine, "but you needn't put it in your trunk. You can carry it on board in your hand, and then when you go ashore you can carry it in your hand. I don't believe they will charge you duty on it, especially as it will probably be nearly worn out by that time."

"I'm sure it will," said Patty, "not only from my own constant use of it, but I know everybody on board will want to borrow it and enjoy these works of art."

"Yes," agreed Clementine; "and then, Patty, when you're in Paris you can throw away all these New York cards and fill it up with Paris views and bring it home and give it back to me."

"I certainly will, Clem; that's a first−rate idea."

Mary Sargent brought a French phrase book. It was entitled "French Before Breakfast," and as Mary explained that the French people never had breakfast until noon, Patty would have ample time to study it.

Patty accepted the little book with many thanks and promised Mary she would never eat breakfast, at noon or any other hour, until she had thoroughly mastered at least one of the phrases.

CHAPTER IV. AN AQUATIC PARTY

Of course all were agreed that Patty must have a farewell party of some sort; and as Nan dearly loved elaborate affairs, she had decided that it should be an Aquatic Party.

Patty frankly confessed her ignorance as to what an Aquatic Party might be, whereupon Nan informed her that she had only to wait until the occasion itself to find out.

So busy was Patty herself that she took no hand in the preparations for the party, and indeed Nan required no help. That capable and energetic young matron secured the services of some professional decorators and able−bodied workmen, but the direction and superintendence was entirely in her own hands.

Patty was consulted only in regard to her own costume for the occasion.

"You see," said Nan, coming into Patty's room one morning, "I don't know whether you would rather say good−bye to your friends in the guise of a kelpie or a pixy or a jelly−fish."

"Cut out the jelly−fish," said Patty, laughing, "for they're horrid, floppy old things, I'm sure. As to the others, what's the difference between a kelpie and a pixy?"

"Oh, a great deal of difference," declared Nan, wagging her head wisely; "a kelpie is an imaginary water sprite, you know, and a pixy is a a why, a sort of make−believe fairy who lives in the water."

"Well, I'm glad that you see a difference in your two definitions. For my part I don't see anything to hinder my being a kelpie and a pixy both, even if I'm not twins."

"Well, they're not so very different, you know. One is a kelpie, and one is a pixy; that's about all the difference."

Patty laughed. "Well, if it will help you out any to have me make a choice," she said, "I'll choose to be a kelpie. What's the latest thing in kelpie costumes?"

"Oh, it will be lovely, Patty! I'll have it made of pale green silk, with a frosted, silvery, shimmering effect, you know, and draped with trailing green seaweed and water grasses."

"Lovely!" agreed Patty. "And what would the pixy costume have been, if I had chosen that?"

"Just the same," confessed Nan, laughing; "but it's easier to have something definite to work at. You can wear my corals, Patty, and, with your hair down, you'll be a perfect kelpie."

Patty smiled at her young stepmother's enthusiasm, and Nan ran away to begin preparations for the kelpie costume.

The night of the party the whole Fairfield house was so transformed that it must scarcely have recognised itself.

The large front drawing−room represented the arctic regions in the vicinity of the North Pole. Frames had been erected which, when covered with sheets, simulated peaks of snowy mountains and snow−covered icebergs. Here and there signs, apparently left by explorers, told the latitude and longitude, and a flag marked the explorations Farthest North. Over these snow peaks scrambled white polar bears in most realistic fashion, and in one corner an Esquimau hut was built.

The ceiling represented a clear blue sky, and the floor the blue water of the open polar sea.

By a clever arrangement of electric lights through colored shades a fair representation of the Aurora Borealis was made to appear at intervals.

The library, which was back of the drawing−room, had been transformed into an aquarium. All round the walls, waves of blue−green gauze simulated water, in which papier−mache fish were gliding and swimming. The illusion was heightened by other fishes, which, being suspended from the ceiling by invisible threads, seemed to be swimming through the air.

Altogether the effect, if not entirely realistic, was picturesque and amusing, and coral reefs and rocky cliffs covered with seaweed gave aquatic impressions, even if not entirely logical.

But Nan's pride was what she chose to call the Upper Deck. This was a room on the second floor, a large front room, which had been made to represent the upper deck of a handsome yacht. Sail−cloth draped and held up by poles formed the roof and sides, and a realistic railing surrounded it. A dozen or more steamer chairs stood in line, strewn with rugs, pillows and paper−backed novels. Coils of rope, lanterns, life−preservers, and other paraphernalia added to the realism of the scene, and at one side a carefully constructed window opened into the steward's cabin. The steward himself, white−duck−suited and white−capped, was prepared to serve light refreshments exactly after the fashion of a correct yachting party.

When the guests began to arrive and were dressed in various costumes, each representing some type or phase of water pleasures, the scene took on a gay and festive air.

Patty's kelpie costume was a great success, and the girl never looked prettier than as she stood receiving her guests in the pretty green silk gown, trailing with seaweed and shimmering with silver dust. Her curly golden hair was wreathed with soft green water−grasses, and her rosy cheeks and dancing eyes made her look like a mischievous water sprite.

Nan's own costume was that of a fish−wife, and though very different from Patty's, it had all the picturesqueness of the quaint costume of the Breton fisher−folk. A basket slung over her shoulder held realistic− looking fishes, and Nan looked quite as if she might have stepped out of the frame of a picture in the French Academy.

Mr. Fairfield, not without some difficulty, had been induced to represent Neptune. False flowing white hair and beard, a shining crown and trident, and a voluminous sea−green robe made him a gorgeous sight.

The three stood near the North Pole to receive their guests, and formality was almost lost sight of in the hilarity caused by the procession of picturesque costumes.

There were pirates of fierce and bloodthirsty mien; there were jolly Jack Tars and natty ship officers; there were water babies, mermaids, fishermen, and many dainty yachting costumes. Then there were queer and grotesque figures, such as a frog, a lobster, and a huge crab.

Altogether the motley procession presented a most interesting appearance, and Patty was glad when the guests had all arrived and she could leave her post and mingle with the crowd.

It was not long before a group of Patty's most intimate friends had gathered on the Upper Deck to chat. Patty herself had been snugly tucked into a deck chair by Kenneth, who insisted on showing her just how the proceeding should be accomplished.

"Nothing shows your ignorance, my child, on board ship," he was saying, "like not knowing how to manage your steamer rug and pillow."

"But," said Patty, "I shall then have on a suitable gown that will stand rough usage; but I beg of you, Ken, stop tucking that rug around my delicate kelpie decorations.

"Oh," said Kenneth, "you're a kelpie, then! Strange I didn't recognise you at once, but I so rarely meet kelpies in the best society. Now I'm Captain Kidd."

"Are you?" cried Elise gaily; "now I had an idea you were Admiral Farragut; but then one so rarely meets Captain Kidd in the best society."

"That's so," said Kenneth; "and think how long it will be, girls, before you have the pleasure of meeting this particular Captain Kidd in any society. I tell you, I envy you. You're going to have the time of your life in Paris, and I wish to goodness I could go along with you."

"Oh, do, Kenneth," cried Patty; "we'd have just the best time ever! Can't you give up college and put in a lot of study over there?"

"No, indeed, I can't; I'm only just wishing I could. There's no harm in wishing, you know. But if you'll stay until next summer, perhaps I'll come over and see you during vacation, and then we can all come home together."

"That would be fine," said Elise, "and we're just as likely to stay until summer as not. But then, on the other hand, we're just as likely to come home as soon as we get there. You never can tell what those absurd parents of mine are going to do."

Meantime a strange−looking figure was walking across the Upper Deck toward the group that surrounded Patty. It was impossible not to recognise the character, which was meant to be a representation of Noah. But it was the well−known Noah of the children's Noah's ark, and the straight−up−and−down, tightly fitting brown garment, with yellow buttons down the front, was exactly like the patriarch as shown in the wooden toys. A flat, broad−brimmed hat sat squarely on his head, and as he held his arms straight down at his side, and as his cheeks bore little round daubs of red paint, Mr. Hepworth was exactly like a gigantic specimen of the nursery Noah.

He came across the deck with a staggering, uncertain motion, as if the ship were rolling and pitching about. His realistic acting made them all laugh, and when he dropped into a deck chair and, calling the steward, asked faintly for a cup of weak tea, Patty declared she believed she wouldn't go to Paris after all.

"For I'm sure," she said, "that I don't want to go wabbling across a deck and looking as ill and woebegone as

you do."

Mr. Hepworth smiled at her. "You'll have so many remedies and preventives given you," he said, "and you'll be so busy pitching them overboard that you won't have time to be seasick. Really I don't believe you'll think of such a thing all the way over, let alone experiencing it."

"You're a great comfort," said Patty heartily; "you always tell me the most comforting things. Now everybody else declares that after I've been at sea for a day I'll be so ill that I won't care whether I live or die."

"Nonsense," declared Mr. Hepworth; "don't pay any attention to such croakings."

"I agree with you," said Elise. "I've made up my mind that I'm not going to be seasick, but I'm going to have a perfectly jolly time all the way across."

"Of course you'll have jolly times," said Marian, who was in one of her doleful moods; "but think of us who are left behind! We won't have any jolly time until you come back again."

"Oh, I don't know!" said Kenneth. "Of course I'm devoted to these two girls, but I'm not going to let it blight my young existence and crush my whole career, just because I have to live without them for six months."

"But you don't love Patty as I do," said Marian with a sigh, as she gazed at her adored cousin.

"No, Marian, I don't," said Kenneth; "not as YOU do, for I assume that you love her as a first cousin. Now my affection for Patty is more on the order of a grandmother's brother−in−law once removed. You can't be too careful about the exact type of attachment you feel for a young lady, and I think that expresses my regard for Patty. Now toward Elise I feel more like a great niece's uncle's brother−in−law. There is a very subtle distinction between the two, but I know that both girls are acutely aware of the exact kind and degree of my regard for them."

"I am, anyway," said Patty; "and I must say, Ken, that it's much easier to leave you, with that definite affection of yours, than it is to go away from Marian and leave her floundering in her deep and somewhat damp woe."

Marian vouchsafed a sad sort of smile, and said it was all very well for them to make fun of her, but she couldn't help missing Patty.

"Nobody can help missing Patty," declared Mr. Hepworth; "and for my part, if I find that I miss her very much I shall go straight over to Paris and bring her back."

"I hope you will," cried Patty; "that is, I hope you'll come over, and perhaps we can persuade you not to be in such a dreadful hurry to come back."

"I had expected to run over in the early spring, anyway," said Mr. Hepworth carelessly, as if it were a matter of no moment; "I want to do certain French sketches that I've had my mind on for some time."

"Well, if you do come," said Elise cordially, "come right to our house and I know we can put you up. The Farringtons are erratic, but always hospitable; and I hereby invite this whole crowd to visit us in Paris, either jointly or severally, whenever the spirit moves you."

"If I find a spirit that can move me over to Paris, I shall come often," declared Kenneth; "but I'm afraid I'm too substantially built to be wafted across the ocean in the clutches of any spirit."

Just then the notes of a bugle sounded clear and sweet from below.

"That's the ship's bugler," declared Mr. Hepworth, "and that's the bugle call for supper. Shall we go down and refresh ourselves?"

"Yes, indeed," cried Patty, jumping from her nest of steamer rugs; "I'm as hungry as a hawk."

But it somehow happened that all of the gay young crowd left the Upper Deck to go to the supper room before Patty and Mr. Hepworth started. He detained her for a moment while he said: "Little girl, will you miss me while you're away?"

"Even if I expected to I wouldn't own up to it," said Patty, as she gave him a mischievous glance.

"Why wouldn't you own up to it?" Mr. Hepworth spoke quite seriously and looked intently at the pretty face before him, with its golden hair crowned by the shining green sea−wreath.

"I don't know," said Patty slowly. She felt herself forced by his impelling gaze to raise her eyes to his, and for the first time it occurred to her that Mr. Hepworth felt more interest in her than she had ever suspected. "I don't know why I wouldn't own up to it, I'm sure," she went on; "in fact, now that I come to think of it, I believe I should own up to it."

"Well, own it then. Tell me you will miss me, and will sometimes wish I might be with you."

"Oh," cried Patty, laughing merrily, "I only meant I would own it if it were true. Of course I sha'n't really miss you; there'll be so much to amuse and interest me that I sha'n't have time to miss anybody except papa and Nan."

"That's just what I thought," said Mr. Hepworth.

CHAPTER V. GOOD−BYES

At last the day of sailing came. The steamer was to leave her dock at three o'clock on Saturday afternoon, and soon after two Patty went on board, accompanied by Nan and her father.

A crowd of friends had also gathered to bid Patty goodspeed, and besides these the Farringtons had many friends there to say good−bye to them.

With the exception of Marian, it was not a sad parting. Indeed it seemed rather a hilarious occasion than otherwise. This was partly because most of the persons concerned felt truly sorry to miss Patty's bright presence out of their lives, and feared that if they showed any regret the situation might become too much for them.

Hilda and Lorraine felt this especially, and they were so absurdly gay that it was quite clear to Patty that their gaiety was assumed. But she was grateful to them for it, for, as she had previously confided to Nan, she didn't want a weepy, teary crowd to bid her good−bye; she wanted to go away amid laughter and smiles.

As the brief hour before sailing passed, more and more people came to see them off, and Patty began to think that everybody she ever knew would be there.

Many of the friends brought gifts, and many had already sent fruit or flowers, both to the Farringtons and to Patty. Down in the dining−saloon a whole table was occupied with the gifts to their party, and more than a

fair proportion of these belonged to Patty. She was quite bewildered, for sailing away from her native land was a new experience to her, and it had never occurred to her that it would include this elaborate profusion of farewell gifts.

There was a great basket of red roses from Winthrop Warner, and Bertha had sent a box of candy. Roger had sent candy, too, and Kenneth had sent a beautiful basket of fruit that seemed to include every known variety. Nor were the gifts only from Patty's intimate friends. She was surprised to learn how many of her acquaintances and relatives and casual friends had sent a token of good wishes for her voyage. The truth is that Patty was a general favourite and made friends with all whom she met.

Mr. Hepworth had once told her that she was a Dispenser of Happiness. If so, she was now reaping the reward, for her friends had surely showered happiness upon her.

And besides the table full of gifts there were many letters and telegrams in the ship's little post−office. These delighted Patty, too, and she laid the budget aside to enjoy after the trip had fairly begun.

Among the last to arrive was Mr. Hepworth. He brought no fruit or flowers, but he was followed by a messenger boy fairly staggering under the weight of his burden.

"I knew, Patty," he said, "that you'd have all the flowers and fruit and sweets you could possibly want, so I've brought you a different kind of gift."

"There seems to be plenty of it," said Patty as she looked at the small boy. His arms were full of papers and magazines, which, as they afterward discovered, included every newspaper, magazine, and weekly periodical published in New York.

"You know," said Mr. Hepworth, "you can't get current reading matter after you start, and a good deal of this stuff you won't find in Paris, either; though you can get American publications there more easily than you can in London. But read what you want, Patty, and pitch the rest overboard."

The boy was directed to carry his load to Patty's stateroom and deposit it there. Patty thanked Mr. Hepworth for his thoughtful gift, and said she would read every word of it and probably carry a great deal of it ashore with her.

"Come on, Patty," said Kenneth, "we're going to see where your deck chairs are, so we can have a mental picture of just how you're going to look for the next week or so."

About a dozen merry young people trooped up the next deck and found the chairs that had been reserved for the Farrington party. But when Patty saw them she burst out laughing. The two that were intended for herself and Elise had been decorated in an absurd fashion. They were tied with ribbon bows and bunches and garlands of flowers. They were filled with fancy pillows, and tied on in several places were letters and small packages done up in paper.

"They look like ridiculous Christmas trees," cried Patty. "I'm crazy to open those bundles, for I know they're full of foolishness that you girls have rigged up for us."

"Don't open them now," said Hilda, "for we have to leave you and go ashore in a few moments. Now, Patty, you will write to us, won't you?"

"I rather think I will," cried Patty; "you've all been so good to me I never could thank you enough if I wrote every day and all day."

"Come with me, Patty," said Kenneth; "I want to show you something up at this end of the ship."

So Patty went off with Kenneth, and when they were well away from the laughing crowd he drew a small box from his pocket and gave it to her, saying: "Patty, you mustn't think I'm a sentimental fool, for I'm not; but I wish you'd wear that while you're away, and sometimes think of me."

Patty flashed a comical glance at him.

"Good gracious, Ken," she exclaimed, "it's an awful funny thing, this going away; it makes all your friends so serious and so afraid you'll forget them. Of course I shall think of you while I'm away."

"Who else has been asking you to think of him?" growled Kenneth; "that ridiculous Hepworth, I suppose! Well, now look here, miss, you're to think of me twice to his once. Do you understand that?"

"Yes, I understand," said Patty demurely; "and now may I look in the box before I promise to wear your gift? It might be a live beetle. I saw a lady once who wore a live beetle attached to a tiny gold chain. Oh, it was awful!"

"It isn't a live beetle," said Kenneth, smiling, "but it is attached to a tiny gold chain. Yes, of course you may look at it, and if you don't like it you needn't wear it."

So Patty opened the box and discovered a little gold locket, set with tiny pearls and hanging from a slender gold chain. It was very graceful and dainty, and Patty's first impulse was one of delight. But as she looked up and met Kenneth's serious gaze she suddenly wondered if she were promising too much to say she would wear it.

"What's inside of it?" she inquired, as if to gain time.

"Look and see."

Patty opened the locket and found it contained a most attractive picture of Kenneth's handsome, boyish face.

"What a splendid likeness!" she exclaimed; "you're awfully good−looking, Ken, and I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll wear the locket with pleasure sometimes, you know, not all the time, of course until I find somebody who is handsomer than you, or whom I like better."

"Pooh," cried Kenneth, "I don't care how often you replace it with a picture of a handsomer man, but, Patty, I don't want you to find any one you like better. Promise me you won't."

"Oh, I can't promise that, Ken. Just think of the fascinating Frenchmen I shall probably meet, with their waxed moustaches and their dandified manners. How can I help liking them better than a plain, unvarnished American boy?"

"All right, my lady; if you set your affections on a French popinjay, I'll come over there and fight a duel with him. I know you're too sensible to look at those addle−pated dandies, but I wish you'd promise not to like anybody better than THIS plain, unvarnished American boy."

"I won't promise you anything, Ken," said Patty, not unkindly, but with a gentle, definite air. "I thank you for your locket. It is beautiful, and I do love pretty things. I'll wear it sometimes; let me see, to−day is Saturday; well, I'll wear it every Saturday; that will insure your being thought of at least once a week."

And with this Kenneth had to be content, for a roguish laugh appeared in Patty's eyes and he knew she would not treat matters seriously any further.

Dropping the locket in her little handbag, Patty turned to go back to the others.

"But you're not keeping your promise," said Kenneth, detaining her.

"What promise?"

"You said you'd wear the locket on Saturdays, and to−day is Saturday."

Patty was a little embarrassed. She knew if she went back to the group with the trinket hanging round her neck, every one would know at once that Kenneth had given it to her, and they would surmise far more than the simple, truth. And she was especially conscious that Mr. Hepworth would notice it, and would think it meant all Kenneth had wanted it to mean, which was far more than she had accepted it as meaning.

Kenneth saw her hesitation and stood watching her.

"Wear it, dear," he said quietly; "an old friend like myself has a perfect right to give you a little keepsake." Then Patty had an inspiration. She clasped the little chain about her neck and then tucked the locket down inside her collar so that it was entirely out of sight.

"You little witch!" cried Kenneth as she raised her laughing eyes to his; "but at any rate you're wearing it, and that's all I asked of you."

"Yes," said Patty; and, as gaily and unaffectedly as a child, she grasped Kenneth's hand and ran down the long deck to join the others.

Although determined to ignore the episode, Patty's cheeks bore a heightened colour and she let poor Kenneth severely alone, devoting her attention to the others.

But it was nearly time: for the last farewell to be said, and indeed some of the party had said good−bye and left the steamer.

And then again Patty was carried off for a little confidential talk at the other end of the deck, and this time it was by her father.

He seemed to have many final bits of advice to give her regarding the minutiae of her journey, her money matters, her relation toward the Farringtons, and her correct demeanour in many ways.

"I'm not at all afraid to trust you out of my sight, Patty, girl," he said, "for I have absolute faith in your common sense and your good judgment. I know you won't do anything wrong or unladylike, but I want to warn you, my little girl, not to get mixed up in any romantic adventures. You're altogether too young for that sort of thing, and I warn you I sha'n't allow you to be engaged to anybody for years and years to come." Patty laughed merrily at this. "Indeed, papa," she said, "nothing is further from my mind than any such performance as you suggest, and I haven't the slightest desire to think of being engaged until I'm at least as old as Nan. And anyway, I don't believe anybody would like me well enough to want to be engaged to me. Oh that is unless it might be Kenneth."

And then Patty told her father the whole story of Kenneth and the locket.

"You did just right, Patty," said her father. "Kenneth is a nice boy, but he is altogether too young, and you are, too, to attach any sentimental significance to his gift. Wear the locket if you want to, or when you want to, but let it be understood that it means nothing more than the merest friendly keepsake."

"Yes, that's just what I think," said Patty, with an air of satisfaction at this prosaic settlement of the subject. "Oh, papa, you're the only one I'm going to miss very much, you and Nan; but especially you."

"I know it, my girl; we have been a great deal to each other all these years, and of course we shall miss each other. But the time will soon pass away, and since we have to part we must be brave about it, and we must not spoil the happiness of it by the sorrow of it."

"Dear papa," said Patty, squeezing his hand, "you are always so wise and good. That's just the point; we must not spoil the happiness by the sorrow, though that is what Marian is always trying to do. Poor Marian, she's such a pathetic creature; I wish she would cheer up."

"I think she will, Patty. Nan and I are going to take her home with us and keep her for a fortnight or more, and we'll make her so gay that she'll forget you're gone."

"Good for you, papa; that's lovely! You do think of the nicest things for people!"

"Well, now, chickabiddy, I suppose I'll have to leave you. Keep up a good heart and a spirit of cheerfulness. Stick to your sense of proportion and your sense of humor. Remember that the time will soon pass, and pass happily, too; and then you'll come sailing back to this very dock, and I'll be here waiting for you."

They rejoined the group and then the farewells began in earnest. Patty was embraced and kissed by all the girls, until Nan declared there would be nothing left for her to say good−bye to. The men shook hands and expressed hearty good wishes, and with one last kiss from her father Patty was left alone with the Farringtons.

As the steamer sailed away there was much waving of handkerchiefs and flags, and the friends on shore were kept in sight just as long as possible.

But when they could no longer be distinguished, Patty said: "Come on, Elise; let's do something to occupy our minds, or I feel sure I shall cry like a baby in spite of my noble and brave resolutions."

"All right," said Elise, "I'm with you. Let's go down and put things to rights in our stateroom."

So down they went on their errand. The girls were to share the same stateroom, and as it was large and conveniently arranged, they were glad to be together. But as they entered the door they nearly fell over in astonishment, for sitting on the sofa, with his paws extended in welcome, was a very large, very white, and very fleecy "Teddy Bear." In one paw he held a card on which was written:

Oh Patty dear,
Oh Elise dear,
We don't want you to go away;
But if you will,
Keep with you still
This merry little stowaway.

CHAPTER VI. THE OLD MA'AMSELLE

The girls laughed heartily over the Teddy Bear, and agreed that it was a delightful companion for their trip. Elise set him up on the little shelf above the washstand, and he gazed down upon them like a fat and good−natured patron saint. Patty named him Yankee Doodle, and gave him an American flag to hold; but Elise, not wishing to seem to slight the French nation, gave him a silken tri−colour of France to hold in his other paw. Apparently unprejudiced in his sympathies, Yankee Doodle held both flags, and continued to wear his jolly and complacent grin.

It was great fun for the girls to arrange their stateroom. As they expected to occupy it for the next ten days, they proceeded to make it as homelike as possible. They both had so many cabin bags and wall pockets and basket catchalls which had been parting gifts that it was difficult to find wall space for them all. Patty was to occupy the lower berth and Elise the wide and comfortable sofa. For they concluded they could chatter better if on a level. This left the upper berth as a broad shelf for books and magazines, boxes of candy, and all the odds and ends of their belongings.

"Isn't it perfectly wonderful," said Patty, "to think we are already miles away from land, and dancing away over this blue water!"

As Patty was standing on the sofa, with her head stuck out through the porthole, Elise could not hear a word of this speech; so unless the fishes were interested it was entirely lost. But this mattered little to Patty, and soon she pulled her head in and made the same remark over again.

"Well," said Elise, who was matter−of−fact, "when people take passage on an ocean steamer they often expect to get a few miles away from land after they start."

"Oh, Elise," cried Patty, "have you no imagination? Of course it isn't wonderful to consider the FACT of our sailing out to sea, but the IDEA of dancing away over the blue water is poetic and therefore wonderful."

"I'm glad you explained it to me, and I dare say the more the ship dances, the more wonderful it will be. And so let's get these things straightened out before the dancing grows mad and hilarious."

"All right," said Patty good−naturedly; and she went to work with a will, stowing away things and tacking up things, until everything was snugly in place.

Mrs. Farrington's maid accompanied the party, but both Elise and Patty, being energetic young Americans, had small use for her services. She was a help, though, in the matter of back buttons and hair ribbons, and she came now rapping at the stateroom door with a message from Mrs. Farrington that the girls were to dress for dinner. At the same moment the pretty bugle−call rang out that marked the half hour before dinner− time.

"Isn't it fun," cried Patty, "to have the dressing−bell a trumpet? Except at my own party the other night I've never been bugled to my meals. What shall we wear, Elise?"

"Not our prettiest dresses. We must save those for the concert, or whatever gaieties they may have. Put on that blue checked silk of yours, Patty; it's the sweetest thing, and just right for dinner, and I'll wear my light green one."

With slight assistance from Lisette, the French maid, they were soon ready. Patty envied Lisette her fluency in the French tongue, for though all the officers on board and most of the passengers spoke English, Patty wished she could talk French more readily than she did. She found it good practice to talk to Lisette in her own language, as the mistakes she made did not embarrass her. Lisette, of course, was a great admirer of

pretty Patty, and was only too glad to be of assistance to her linguistically or any other way.

Another bugle−call announced dinner, and, joining Mr. and Mrs. Farrington, the girls went down to the dining saloon. Their seats were at the captain's table, and Patty thought she had never seen such a profusion of beautiful flowers as graced the board. The stewards had placed the flowers of all the passengers upon the tables, and, with the lights and ornate decorations of the Louis XVI. saloon, it was like fairyland. The walls and ceiling were elaborately decorated in dainty French fashion, and the table service was exceedingly attractive. Patty was much amused at the revolving chair which she had to learn how to get into, but after being twirled to her place she concluded it was a wise provision for a dining−room of such uncertain level.

Mrs. Farrington sat at the captain's right hand, and next to her was her husband, then Elise, and then Patty. Patty at once began to wonder who would occupy the chair next beyond herself, and was exceedingly interested when the steward turned it around to accommodate a lady who was approaching.

The newcomer was without doubt a Frenchwoman, somewhat elderly, but very vigorous and active. She had masses of snow−white hair, and large, alert, black eyes that seemed to dart quickly from one point of interest to another. She was a little lady, but her gait and manner were marked by an air not only of aristocracy, but as of one accustomed to exert absolute authority. Nor was she apparently of a mild and amiable disposition. She spoke sharply to the steward, although he was doing his best to serve her.

"And is it that you shall be all night in arranging my chair?" she exclaimed. Then, as she was finally seated, she continued her grumbling. "And is it not enough that I must be delayed, but still I have received no MENU? One shall see if this is to be permitted!"

The steward did not seem unduly alarmed at the little old lady's angry speech, but hastened to bring her the daintily printed bill of fare.

Raising her jewelled lorgnon, the French lady scanned the MENU, and having made a choice of soup, she laid the card down, and turning toward Patty surveyed her leisurely through her glasses.

Her manner as she scrutinised Patty was by no means rude or impertinent. It had rather the effect of an honest curiosity and a polite interest.

"There is no denying, my dear," she said at last, "that you are of a beauty. And of a sweetness. An American of Americans. New York is it not so?"

There was an indefinable charm about the old lady's manner that won Patty's heart at once, and though in any case she would have been polite, she answered with cordiality:

"Yes, madame, I live in New York, although I was born in the South and lived there for many years."

"Ah, then, it is explained. It is your Southern States that make the charm, the aplomb, without the what you call the the freshness. Is it not so? But I do not mean the freshness of the cheek; and yet, in the argot do you not say freshness is cheek? Ah, I am bewildered; I am mixup with your strange words; but I will learn them! They shall not conquer me! And you will help me; is it not so?"

"I will help you with pleasure, madame," replied Patty, dimpling with fun as she heard the old lady's unsuccessful attempts in American slang. "My name is Patty Fairfield; and though I seldom use the slang of my country, I'm more or less familiar with its terms, and can enlighten you concerning them, at least to a degree. To me your language is difficult; but perhaps we may by conversation help each other."

"Patty Fairfield; a pleasant name for a pleasant child. But I'm not madame; pray call me ma'amselle. I am Ma'amselle Labesse."

"You are a Frenchwoman, of course?" inquired Patty.

"A Frenchwoman, yes; but of an admiration for your strange American country. I go home now, but I shall return again. Your country is of an interest."

As Patty looked around at the others at their table, she felt that she had been fortunate in sitting next to the old ma'amselle. For though she could not judge entirely by appearances, no one else at the table seemed to be so quaintly interesting as the old French lady.

Patty soon discovered that even a "few miles of dancing upon the blue water" had decidedly sharpened her appetite, and she did full justice to the delicate viands and delicious French cookery placed before her. She and Elise chatted happily, and after introducing her companions on either side to each other the conversation became general.

Under the influence of the comradeship always felt on a French liner, the people across the table became sociably inclined, and acquaintances were made rapidly.

After dinner our party went out on deck, and though warm wraps were necessary, the crisp, clear air was delightful, and the starry sky and tumbling black water fascinated Patty beyond all words. She leaned against the rail, watching the waves as they dashed and plashed below, breaking into white foam as the steamer ploughed through them. Patty was very susceptible to new impressions, and the great expanse of black water beneath the dome of the star−studded black sky filled her with an awe and reverence which she had never known before.

Elise stood quietly beside her, with her hand through Patty's arm, and together the girls silently enjoyed the sombre beauty of the scene.

"Are you afraid, Patty?" asked Elise.

Patty laughed a little, and then she said: "I don't know as I can make you understand it, Elise, for it sounds so ridiculous when it's put into words. But it's this way with me: In my imagination, when I think of this little cockleshell of a boat tossing on this great, deep, black ocean, which may engulf it at any moment, I have a certain feeling of fear, which seems to belong to the situation. But really, my common sense tells me that these staunch steamships are constructed for the very purpose of carrying people safely across the sea, and that there is almost no danger at all of their doing otherwise. So you see it only depends on whether I'm in a mood of poetical imagination or practical common sense as to whether I'm afraid or not."

"Patty," said Elise, with a little sigh, "you are certainly clever. Now I never could have reasoned the thing out like that, and yet I see just what you mean."

"Throw bouquets at yourself, then, Elise," said Patty, laughing, "for you're a great deal more clever to see what I mean than I am to say it!"

After a brisk walk up and down the deck for a time the girls tucked themselves snugly into their deck chairs by the side of the elder Farringtons.

"How do you like it so far, Patty?" asked Mr. Farrington.

"It's simply perfect," declared Patty enthusiastically. "It's awfully different from what I thought it would be, and ever so much nicer. I thought it would be impossible to walk across the deck without tumbling all over and catching hold of everything. But we can walk around just as if in a house, and everything is comfortable, even luxurious, and it's all so clean."

Mrs. Farrington laughed at this. "Of course it's clean, child," she said; "it's only on land that we are under the tyranny of dust and dirt. But as for tumbling around the deck, that may come later. Don't imagine the sea is never rougher than it is to−night."

"I hope it will be rougher," said Patty. "I don't want a fearful storm, but I would like a little pitching and tossing."

"You'll probably get it," said Mr. Farrington. "And now, my cherished ones, let us take a look in at the library and drawing−room, and then let us seek our staterooms."

So the parry adjourned to the brilliantly lighted saloon, where many of the passengers had congregated to spend the after−dinner hour. It was a beautiful apartment, even more gorgeous and elaborate than the dining−room, and furnished with inviting−looking easy−chairs, sofas, and divans of puffy upholstery. Gilt−framed tables were scattered about for the benefit of the card−players, and attractively appointed writing−desks made Patty suddenly realise that she wanted to write letters home at once. But remembering that they could not possibly be mailed for ten days to come, she decided to defer them at least until the morrow.

Well−filled bookcases attracted the girls' attention, and notwithstanding the large amount of reading matter they had of their own, they were glad to see some well−known favourites behind the glass doors.

Patty was surprised when Mr. Farrington proposed that they should all go to the dining−room for a bit of supper before retiring. It seemed to her but a short time since they had dined; and yet she realised the suggestion was not entirely unwelcome.

"Is it imperative that we shall eat more meals on sea than on land?" she inquired, as they took their places at the table.

"Not imperative, perhaps," the captain answered her, smiling, "but unless you seem to appreciate my cook's efforts to please you I shall have to pitch him overboard; and it is not easy to find another chef in mid−ocean."

"Then," said Patty gaily, "I shall certainly do all I can to save the poor man from a dreadful fate. And it does not seem to me that I shall have any difficulty in keeping my part of the bargain." As Patty spoke she was nibbling away with great satisfaction at a caviare sandwich and bestowing a pleased glance on a glass of orange sherbet which the steward had just brought to her.

The captain was a large and important−looking personage, with the black moustache and imperiale of the true Frenchman. His manner was expansive and very cordial; and as he had known the Farringtons for many years he was quite ready to welcome Patty for their sake as well as her own. Indeed, he had taken an immediate liking to the pretty American girl, and as French captains are prone to make favourites among their passengers, Patty was immediately assigned in his chivalrous heart to such a position.

He bade her a pleasant good−night as she left the dining−room, and was delighted with her naive expressions of admiration and appreciation of his beautiful ship.

When the girls reached their stateroom they suddenly realised that they were quite tired out after the

excitements of the day, and were very glad to let Lisette brush their hair and assist them in preparing for bed. As Patty nestled snugly between the coarse linen sheets she felt a drowsy enjoyment of the gentle rolling motion of the steamer, and almost immediately fell into a sound, dreamless sleep.

CHAPTER VII. WESTERN FRIENDS

The girls slept restfully all night, and were awakened in the morning by the entrance of Lisette, who was followed by the pleasant−faced and voluble French stewardess. The day was bright and sunshiny, and half a dozen times while she was dressing Patty stuck her head out of the porthole to gaze at the sparkling blue water. On these occasions Elise grasped her by the feet lest she should fall out. But as Patty's substantial frame could not possibly have squeezed through the porthole, the precaution was unnecessary.

After breakfast the girls prepared for a delightful morning on deck. The breeze had freshened considerably, so Patty put on a long, warm ulster that enveloped her from throat to feet. A long blue veil tied her trim little hat in place, and when fully equipped she looked over the piles of literature to make a selection.

"Do you know," she said to Elise, "I don't believe I shall read much; I think I shall just sit and look at the water and dream."

"All right," said her practical friend; "but take a book with you, for if you don't you're sure to want one; while if you do, you probably won't look at it."

"Elise, you're a genius. I'll take the book, and also some of this candy. I'm glad Hilda gave me this bag; it's most convenient."

The bag in question was a large, plain affair of dark green cloth, with a black ribbon drawstring. It proved to be Patty's constant companion, as it was roomy enough to hold gloves, veils, handkerchiefs, as well as pencil and paper, and anything else they might need through the day. It hung conveniently on the back of Patty's deck chair, and became as famous as the bag of the lady in "Swiss Family Robinson."

As Patty had anticipated, she did not do any reading that morning, but neither did she gaze at the ocean and dream. She discovered that life on an ocean steamer is apt to be full of incident and abounds in occupation.

No sooner had she and Elise arranged themselves in their chairs than along came two gay and laughing girls, who stopped to talk to them.

"We're going to introduce ourselves," said one of them. "I am Alicia Van Ness, and this is my little sister Doris. We're from Chicago, and we like the looks of you girls, and we want to be chums. Though, of course, it's up to you, and if you don't like our looks you've only to say so and we'll never trouble you again."

"Speak out!" chimed in the other girl, who was quite as vivacious as her sister. "We're not a bit stupid, and we can take the slightest hint. I can see you don't quite approve of us" and she looked shrewdly at Patty, who had unconsciously assumed an air of hauteur as she watched the frank−mannered Western girls "but really and truly we're awfully nice after you get acquainted with us."

Patty was amused, and a little ashamed that a stranger should have read her feelings so accurately, for she had felt slightly repelled at the somewhat forward manners of these would−be friends.

As if to make up for her coolness she said heartily: "I'm sure you are delightful to know, and I'm quite ready to be friends if you will allow it. I'm Patty Fairfield, and this is my chum, Elise Farrington."

"We knew your names," said Alicia Van Ness; "we asked the captain. You see, we thought you two were the nicest girls on board, but if you had thrown us down we were going to tackle the English girl next."

Though this slangy style of talk was not at all to Patty's liking, she saw no reason to reject the offered friendship because of it. The Van Ness sisters might prove to be interesting companions, in spite of their unconventional ways. So two vacant chairs were drawn up, and the four girls sat in a group, and very soon were chatting away like old friends.

"Do you know the English girl?" asked Doris; "she sits at your table."

"No," said Elise; "she's way down at the other end from us. But I like her looks, only she's so very English that I expect she's rather stiff and hard to get acquainted with."

"You can't say that about us, can you?" said Alicia, laughing; "I'm as easy as an old shoe, and Doris as an old slipper. But we hope you'll like us, because we do love to be liked. That English girl's name is Florrie Nash. Isn't that queer? She doesn't look a bit like a Florrie, does she? More like a Susan or a Hannah."

"Or more like a Catharine or Elizabeth, I think," said Patty. "But you never can tell people's names from what they look like."

"No," said Alicia; "now a stranger would say you looked like my name, and I looked like yours."

"That's true enough," said Elise, laughing; "your jolly ways are not at all like your grand−sounding name; and as for Patty here, it's a perfect shame to spoil her beautiful name of Patricia by such a nickname."

Two young men in long plaid ulsters with turned−up collars and plaid yachting caps came into view at the other end of the deck. They were walking with swinging strides in the direction of the group of girls.

"Now I'll show you," said Alicia in a low voice, "how we Chicago girls scrape acquaintance with young men."

As the young men drew nearer Alicia looked at them smilingly and said "Ahem" in a low but distinct voice. The young men looked at her and smiled, whereupon Doris purposely dropped a book she had been holding. The young men sprang to pick it up, Doris took it and thanked them, and then made a further remark as to the beauty of the weather. The young men replied affably, and then Alicia asked them to join their group and sit down for a chat.

"With pleasure," said one of the young men, glancing at Patty and Elise, "if we may be allowed."

Patty was surprised and shocked at the behaviour of these strange girls, and very decidedly expressed her opinion in her face. Without glancing at the young men, she turned on the Van Ness sisters a look of extreme disapproval, while Elise looked frightened at the whole proceeding.

The two horrified countenances were too much for the Van Ness girls, and they burst into peals of laughter.

"Oh, my children," cried, Alicia, "did you really think us so unconventional, even if we are from Chicago? These two boys are our cousins, Bob and Guy Van Ness, and they are travelling with us in charge of our parents. Stand up straight, infants, and be introduced. Miss Farrington and Miss Fairfield, may I present Mr. Robert Van Ness and Mr. Guy Porter Van Ness?"

The young men made most deferential bows, and, greatly appreciating the joke, Patty invited them to join

their party, and offered them some of her confectionery.

"But it's a shame to sit here," observed Guy, "when there's lots of fun going on up on the forward deck. Don't you girls want to go up there and play shuffleboard?"

"I do," said Patty readily; "I've always wanted to play shuffleboard, though I've no idea whether it's played with a pack of cards or a tea set."

Guy laughed at this and promised to teach her the game at once.

So they all went up to the upper deck, which was uncovered, and where, in the sunlight, groups of young people were playing different games.

Both Patty and Elise delighted in outdoor sports, and the Van Ness girls were fond of anything athletic. During the games they all made the acquaintance of Florrie Nash, who, though of an extreme English type, proved less difficult to make friends with than they had feared.

They also met several young men, among whom Patty liked best a young Englishman of big−boyish, good−natured type, named Bert Chester, and a young Frenchman of musical tastes. The latter was a violinist, by the name of Pierre Pauvret. He seemed a trifle melancholy, Patty thought, but exceedingly refined and well−bred. He stood by her side as she leaned against the rail, looking at the water, and though evidently desirous to be entertaining, he seemed to be at a loss for something to say.

Patty felt sorry for the youth and tried various subjects without success in interesting him, until at last she chanced to refer to music. At this Mr. Pauvret's face lighted up and he became enthusiastic at once.

"Ah, the music!" he exclaimed; "it is my life, it is my soul! And you do you yourself sing? Ah, I think yes."

"I sing a little," said Patty, smiling kindly at him, "but I have not had much training, and my voice is small."

"Ah," said the Frenchman, "I have a certainty that you sing like an angel. But we shall see we shall see. There will be a concert on board and you will sing. Is it not so?"

"I don't know," said Patty, smiling; "I will sing with pleasure if I am asked, but it may not give my audience pleasure."

"It will be heaven for them!" declared the volatile young Frenchman, clasping his hands in apparent ecstasy.

His exaggerated manner amused Patty, for she dearly loved to study new types of people, and she began to think there was a varied assortment on board.

Suddenly several people rushed wildly to the side of the boat. They were followed by others, until it seemed as if everybody was crowding to the rail. Patty followed, of course, and found herself standing by the side of Bert Chester.

"What is it?" she exclaimed.

"A porpoise!" he replied, as if announcing an event of greatest importance.

"A porpoise!" echoed Patty, disgusted. "Such a fuss about a porpoise? Why, it's nothing but a fish!"

"My dear Miss Fairfield," said the Englishman, looking at her through his single eyeglass, "tradition demands that steamer passengers shall always make a fuss over a passing porpoise. To be sure it's only a fish, but the fuss is because of tradition, not because of the fish."

Patty had always thought that a single eyeglass betokened a brainless fop, but this stalwart young Englishman wore his monocle so naturally, and, moreover, so securely, that it seemed a component part of him. And, too, his speech was that of a quick−witted, humorous mind, and Patty began to think she must readjust her opinion.

"Is it an English national trait," she said, "to be so in thrall to tradition?"

"I'm sorry to say it is," young Chester responded, somewhat gravely. "In the matter of the porpoise it is of no great importance; but there are other matters, do you see, where Englishmen are so hampered by tradition that individual volition is often lost."

This was more serious talk than Patty was accustomed to, but somehow she felt rather flattered to be addressed thus, and she tried to answer in kind.

"But," she said, "if the tradition is the result of the wisdom of past ages, may it not be of more value than individual volition?"

"By Jove!" exclaimed Mr. Chester, "you have a clever little head on your young shoulders, to take that point so adroitly. But let us defer this somewhat serious discussion until another time and see if it is a porpoise or something else that it attracting the curious crowd to the other side of the ship."

As they followed the hurrying people across the deck, Mr. Chester went on: "After you have crossed the ocean a few more times you will discover that there are only two things which make the people rush frantically and in hordes to the rail. The one that isn't a porpoise is a passing steamer."

Sure enough, the object of interest this time was a distant steamer, which was clearly visible on the horizon. It was sharply outlined against the blue sky, and the sunlight gave it its true value of colour, while the dark smoke that poured from its smokestack floated back horizontally like a broad ribbon. But owing to the distance there was no effect of motion, and even the smoke as well as the vessel seemed to be stationary.

"That isn't a real steamer," said Patty whimsically; "it's a chromo− lithograph. I've often seen them in the offices of steamship companies. This one isn't framed, as they usually are, but it's only a chromo all the same. There's no mistaking its bright colouring and that badly painted smoke."

Young Chester laughed. "You Americans are so clever," he said. "Now an English girl would never have known that that was only a painted steamer. But as you say, you can tell by the smoke. That's pretty badly done."

Patty took a decided liking to this jesting Englishman, and thought him much more entertaining than the melancholy French musician.

She discovered that very evening that Mr. Chester possessed a fine voice, and when after dinner a dozen or more young people gathered round the chairs of the Farrington party, they all sang songs until Mrs. Farrington declared she never wanted to attend a more delightful concert.

Mr. Pauvret brought his violin, and the Van Ness boys produced a banjo and a madolin. Everybody seemed to sing at least fairly well, and some of the voices were really fine. Patty's sweet soprano received many

compliments, as also did Elise's full, clear contralto. The girls were accustomed to singing together, and Mr. Pauvret proved himself a true musician by his sympathetic accompaniments.

Everybody knew the popular songs of the day, and choruses and glees were sung with that enthusiasm which is always noticeable on the water.

The merry party adjourned to the dining−room for a light supper after their vocal exercises.

Patty was sorry that her friend and tablemate, the old Ma'amselle, had not been visible since that first dinner. Upon inquiry she learned that the old lady had fallen a victim to the effects of the rolling sea.

"But she'll soon be around again," said the captain in his bluff, cheery way; "Ma'amselle Labesse has crossed with me many times, and though she usually succumbs for two or three days, she is a good sailor after that. She is passionately fond of music, too, and when she is about again you young people must make the old ship ring for her."

This they readily promised to do, and then they wound up the evening by a vigorous rendition of the "Marseillaise," followed by "The Star Spangled Banner" and "God Save the King."

It was all a delightful experience for Patty, who dearly loved lights and music and flowers and people and gay goings on, and she felt that she was indeed a fortunate girl to have all these pleasures come to her.

CHAPTER VIII. DAYS AT SEA

The time on shipboard passed all too quickly.

Each day was crammed full of various amusements and occupations, and Patty and Elise enjoyed it all thoroughly.

Although the majority of passengers were French, yet they nearly all spoke English, and there were a number of Americans and English people, who proved to be pleasant and companionable.

The young people from Chicago seemed to wear well, and as she grew to know them better Patty liked them very much. The Van Ness girls, though breezy in their manner, were warm−hearted and good−natured, and their boy cousins were always ready for anything, and proved themselves capable of good comradeship.

The English girl, Florrie Nash, Patty could not quite understand. Florrie seemed to be willing to be friends, but there was a coldness and reserve about her nature that Patty could not seem to penetrate.

As she expressed it to Elise, "Florrie never seems herself quite certain whether she likes us or we like her."

"Oh, it's only her way," said Elise; "she doesn't know how to chum, that's all."

But Patty was not satisfied with this, and determined to investigate the matter.

"Come for a walk," she said, tucking her arm through Florrie's one morning. "Let's walk around the deck fifty times all by ourselves. Don't you want to?"

"Yes, if you like;" and Florrie walked along by Patty's side, apparently willing enough, but without enthusiasm.

"Why do you put it that way?" asked Patty, smiling; "don't you like to go yourself?"

"Yes, of course I do; but I always say that when people ask me to do anything. It's habit, I suppose. All English people say it."

"I suppose it is habit," said Patty; "but it seems to me you'd have a whole lot better time if you felt more interest in things, or rather, if you expressed more interest. Now look at the Van Ness girls; they're just bubbling over with enthusiasm."

"The Van Ness girls are savages," remarked Florrie, with an air of decision.

"Indeed they're not!" cried Patty, who was always ready to stand up for her friends. "The trouble with you, Florrie, is that you're narrow− minded; you think that unless people have your ways and your manners they are no good at all."

"Not quite that," returned Florrie, laughing. "Of course, we English have our prejudices, and other people call us narrow; but I think we shall always be so."

"I suppose you will," said Patty; "but anyway you would have more fun if you enjoyed yourself more."

"It's good of you, Patty, to care whether I enjoy myself or not."

Florrie's tone was so sincere and humble as she said this that Patty began to realise there was a good deal of character under Florrie's indifferent manner.

"Of course I care. I have grown to like you, Florrie, in these few days, and I want to be good friends with you, if you'll let me."

"If you like," said Florrie again, and Patty perceived that the phrase was merely a habit and did not mean the indifference it expressed.

"And I want you to visit me," went on Florrie. "I'm travelling now to Paris with my aunt, who took me to the States for a trip. From Paris I shall soon go back to my country home in England, and I wish you would visit me there you and Elise both. Oh, Patty, you have no idea how beautiful England is in the springtime. The may blooms thickly along the lanes, till they're masses of pink fragrance; and the sky is the most wonderful blue, and the birds sing, and it is like nothing else in all the world."

The tears came into Florrie's eyes as she spoke, and Patty was amazed that this cold−blooded girl should be so moved at the mere thought of the spring landscape.

"I should dearly love to visit you, Florrie, but I can't promise, of course, for I'm with the Farringtons, and must do as they say."

"Yes, of course; but I do hope you can come. You would love our country place, Patty; it is so large, and so old, and so beautiful."

Florrie said this with no effect of boasting, but merely with a sincere appreciation of her beautiful home. Then as she went on to tell of the animals and pets there, and of the park and woods of the estate, Patty found that the girl could indeed be enthusiastic when she chose.

This made Patty like her all the better, for it proved she had enthusiasm enough when a subject appealed to

her.

But when they were joined by the crowd of gay young people begging them to come and play games, Florrie seemed to shut up into herself again, and assumed once more her air of cold indifference.

But if Florrie was lacking in enthusiasm, it was not so with another of Patty's friends.

Ma'amselle Labesse, who had recovered from her indisposition, had taken a violent fancy to Patty and would have liked to monopolise her completely.

Patty was kind to the old lady and did much to entertain her, but she was not willing to give up all her time to her. The old ma'amselle greatly delighted to carry Patty off to her stateroom, there to talk to her or listen to her read aloud. Except for her maid, ma'amselle was alone, and Patty felt sorry for her and was glad to cheer her up. Not that she needed cheering exactly, for she was of a merry and volatile disposition, except when she gave way to exhibitions of temper, which were not infrequent.

One morning she called Patty to her room, and surprised the girl by giving her a present of a handsome and valuable old necklace. It was of curiously wrought gold, and though Patty admired it extremely, she hesitated about accepting such a gift from a comparative stranger."

"But yes," said ma'amselle, "it is for you. I wish to give it to you. I have taken such a fancy to you, you could scarce believe. And I adore to decorate you thus." She clasped the necklace about Patty's throat, with an air that plainly said she would be much offended if the gift were refused. So Patty decided to keep it, at least until she could get an opportunity to ask Mrs. Farrington's advice on the subject.

When she did ask her, Mrs. Farrington told her to keep it by all means. She said she had no doubt the old ma'amselle enjoyed making the gift far more than Patty was pleased to receive it, so Patty kept the trinket, which was really a very fine specimen of the goldsmith's art.

"And, my dear," the old lady went on, the day that she gave Patty the necklace, "you must and shall come to visit me in my chateau. My home is the most beautifull an old chateau at St. Germain, not far from Paris, and you can come, but often, and stay with me for the long time."

Patty thanked her, but would not promise, as she had made up her mind to accept no invitations that could not include the Farringtons.

But Ma'amselle Labesse did include the Farringtons, and invited the whole party to visit her in the winter.

Mrs. Farrington gave no definite answer, but said she would see about it, and perhaps they would run out for the week−end.

For the first five or six days of their journey the weather was perfect and the ocean calm and level. But one morning they awoke to find it raining, and later the rain developed into a real storm. The wind blew furiously and the boat pitched about in a manner really alarming. The old ma'amselle took to her stateroom, and Mrs. Farrington also was unable to leave hers. But the girls were pleased rather than otherwise. Patty and Elise proved themselves thoroughly good sailors, and were among the few who appeared at the table at luncheon.

After the meal, Bob and Guy Van Ness came up to the girls and asked them if they cared to brave the storm sufficiently to go out on deck. Elise, though not timid, declared that she could see all she wished through the windows; but Patty, always ready for a new experience, expressed her desire to go.

She put on her own little rain−coat and tied a veil over her small cap, but when she presented herself as ready the boys laughed at her preparations.

"That fancy little mackintosh is no good," said Bob; "but you wait a minute, Patty; we'll fix you."

Bob disappeared, and soon returned, bringing from somewhere an oilskin coat and cap of a brilliant yellow color. These enveloped Patty completely, and as the boys were arrayed in similar fashion, they looked like three members of a life−saving corps, or, as Patty said, like the man in the advertisement of cod−liver oil.

Although the yellow oilskins were by no means beautiful, yet Patty's rosy face peeping out from under the queer−shaped, ear−flapped cap was a pretty picture.

Laughing with glee, they stepped out on the deck into the storm. The stepping out was no easy matter, for the wind was blowing a hurricane and the spray was dashing across the decks, while the rain seemed to come from all directions at once.

With the two big boys on either side of her, Patty felt no fear, and as they walked forward toward the bow of the ship she felt well repaid for coming out by the grandeur of the sight. It was impossible to distinguish sea from sky, as both were of the same leaden grey, and the torrents of rain added to the obscurity. The ocean was in a turmoil, frothing and fuming, and the waves rolled over and broke against the ship with angry vehemence. Patty, though not frightened, was awed at the majesty of the elements, and did not in the least mind the rain and spray in her face as she gazed at the scene.

"You're good wood!" exclaimed Guy; "not many girls could stand up against a storm like this."

Patty shook the wet curls out of her eyes as she smiled up at him. "I love it!" she exclaimed, but she could hardly make her voice heard for the roar of the sea and the storm.

Up and down the decks they walked, or rather tried to walk, now battling against the wind, and now being swept along in front of it, until almost exhausted, Patty dropped down on a coil of rope in a comparatively sheltered corner. The boys sat down beside her, and they watched the angry ocean. At times the great waves seemed as if they would engulf the pitching ship, but after each wave the steamer righted herself proudly and prepared to careen again on the next.

After a time Patty declared she'd had enough of it, and also expressed her opinion that oilskins were not such a positive protection against the wet as they were reputed to be.

So indoors they went, warm and glowing from their vigorous exercise, and their appetites sharpened by their rough battle with the weather.

Every day there seemed to be something new to do.

"I've been told," said Patty, "that life on an ocean steamer is monotonous, but I can't find any monotony. We've done something different every day, haven't we, Elise?"

"Yes; and next will be the concert, and that will be best of all. What are you going to sing, Patty?"

"I don't know. I don't want to sing at all, but your mother said I'd better sing once, because they all insist on it so, and I do like to be accommodating."

"I should think you did, Patty; you're never anything but accommodating."

"Oh, pooh! It's no trouble to me to sing. I'd just as lief do it as not; only it seems foolish for me to sing when there are so many older people with better voices to do it."

"Well, sing some simple little ballad, and I don't believe but what the people will like it just as much as the arias and things sung by the more pretentious singers."

So Patty followed Elise's advice, and when the night of the concert came her name was on the programme for one song.

And, as Elise had thought, it pleased the audience quite as well as some of the more elaborate efforts.

Patty wore one of her pretty new dresses, a simple little frock of white chiffon cloth, with touches here and there of light blue velvet. Her only ornament was the necklace that Ma'amselle Labesse had given her, and in her curly golden hair was a single white rose.

Very sweet she looked as she stood on the platform to sing her little song. She had chosen "My Ain Countree" as being likely to please a popular audience, and also not difficult to sing.

Mr. Pauvret accompanied her on his violin, and so effective was his accompaniment and so sweet pretty Patty's singing of the old song, that their performance proved to be the most attractive number on the programme. So prolonged was the applause and so persistent the cry of "Encore!" that Patty felt she really must respond with another song.

So she sang Stevenson's little verses, "In Winter I Get Up at Night," which have been set to such delightful music. Again Mr. Pauvret's accompaniment added to the charm of the song, and Patty returned to her place in the audience, quite embarrassed at the praises heaped upon her.

Elise sang, too, in a quartette of four girls. They had practised together considerably, and sang really well. There were many other musical numbers, interspersed with monologues and recitations, and the programme wound up with a series of tableaux.

Patty was in her element in these, and had helped to arrange them. She took part in some of them herself, and in others she arranged the groups to form effective pictures. An immense gilt picture frame, stretched across with gauze, was at the front of the stage. This was held up on either side by two able−bodied seamen of the ship, in their sailor costume. All of the tableaux were shown as pictures in this frame, and they called forth enthusiastic and appreciative applause.

Old Ma'amselle Labesse had been induced to appear in one of the tableaux, and as she possessed strikingly handsome costumes, she wore one of the prettiest, and made an easily recognisable representation of a painting by Nattier. Altogether the concert was a great success and everybody had a good time. It was expected that they would see land the next day, and so the concert partook of the nature of a farewell function. Everybody was shaking hands and saying good−bye to everybody else, and after many good wishes and good−nights our two tired and sleepy girls went to their stateroom.

CHAPTER IX. PARIS

The next morning the girls spent in packing and getting ready to go ashore. "I'm sure I don't know where all these things came from," said Patty; "but I know I have just about twice as many earthly possessions as I had when I came aboard. I hate to pitch them out of the porthole, but I simply can't get them all in my trunks."

"Nor I," said Elise. "People have been giving us things ever since we started, and we must be greedies,

because we haven't given anything away, and now what shall we do with them?"

"Let's give a lot away," said Patty. "We've pretty much read all we want to of this mountain of light literature. Let's give it all to the stewardess; and what do you think, Elise, about giving Yankee Doodle to the captain? He is a blessed old bear, and I hate to look forward to life without him, but I don't see how we can cart him to Paris, unless we carry him in our arms, and that's where I draw the line."

"So do I," declared Elise. "We might ask Lisette to carry him, but I know she wouldn't want to do it. Yes, let's give him to the captain as a souvenir of our trip."

This plan was carried out, and the captain was really delighted at the comical gift. He said he should always keep it as a remembrance of the donors, and he hoped that when they returned to America they would again travel on his ship.

The steamer stopped at Plymouth and then went straight on to Havre. Everybody was in a great state of excitement; passengers were getting off and mails getting on at Plymouth, and plenty of wonderful and interesting things to look at as they sailed along the channel.

Patty felt truly sorry to say good−bye to many of the friends she had made on board. But from others she would not be parted until they reached Paris. The Van Ness party, the old Ma'amselle, Florrie Nash, Bert Chester, and Mr. Pauvret were all going in the special train to Paris, as the Farringtons were.

Patty thought this meant they could all travel together, but to her surprise she found the French trains very different from those on American railroads.

The special boat−train which they were to take left directly from the steamer's dock and was an express direct to Paris without stop, landing them there in less than four hours.

The Farrington party had a whole compartment in this train, and as a compartment only holds six people, they comfortably filled it, using the extra seat for hand luggage and so forth.

Patty thought the appointments more luxurious than our own parlour−cars, for the seats were beautifully upholstered in a pearl−grey material, and everything was lavishly decorated, after the French fashion. All of these compartments opened on to a corridor which ran along the side of the car, and Patty soon discovered that thus she could visit her neighbours in the other compartments.

Both Patty and Elise were greatly excited and interested in watching the French landscapes, and trying to make out the names of the towns through which they rapidly flew. But with the exception of some of the larger towns they could not read the names, and so gave that up for the more interesting occupation of watching the villages and hamlets as they succeeded each other.

Bert Chester came in to visit them, and expressed a hope that he might see them in Paris.

He was to remain there only a week, and then he was to join some of his friends, some young Englishmen, and go for a short motor tour in southern France.

Mr. Farrington said that he expected to take his party motoring along the same route, but did not expect to go at present.

Young Chester was sorry that they could not go together, but said that perhaps when Mr. Farrington was ready he and his friends would come over again for another spin.

Bert Chester was a son of a wealthy English squire, and though distinctly British in his ways, was broad−minded enough to like Americans, and moreover was a young man of innate politeness and affable manners. The elder Farringtons liked him extremely, and cordially invited him to come to see them while in Paris.

"We sha'n't have a house of our own just at first," explained Elise; "we're going to a hotel while father and mother look around and select a house for the winter."

"I'm glad," said Patty, "to go to a hotel first. I've never stayed at a big hotel, and I'm sure it will be delightful for a time."

[Illustration with caption: "The next morning the girls spent in packing and getting ready to go ashore"]

"You'll like the one you're going to," said Chester. "The Ritz is really the old palace of the Castiglione, an ancient French family, and though it is, of course, somewhat rebuilt, much of the original remains, especially the beautiful old garden with its wonderful trees and fountain. I'll give you a day or two to 'find yourselves,' and then I shall come around to call, and shall expect you to be glad to see me."

"We'll be very glad to see you," said Patty cordially, for she had a sincere liking for the young Englishman.

Then Patty and Elise went with Bert to look in for a little chat with the Van Ness party. Although Patty liked the Van Ness girls in a way, she was rather relieved to find that they were not going to the same hotel.

Patty had an intuitive sense of the fitness of things, and she couldn't help thinking that the Van Ness sisters, though good−hearted and good− natured, were of a type apt to be a trifle too conspicuous in a large hotel. The Farringtons were quiet−mannered folk, and Patty had often noticed and admired the dignified yet pleasant manner which Mr. Farrington invariably showed to officials or to servants.

He never gave orders in a loud voice or dictatorial manner, yet his orders were always carried out obediently and willingly, and everybody showed him the greatest respect and deference. Mr. Van Ness on the other hand was imperious and ostentatious. He was prone to be critical, and often became annoyed at trifles. Patty was rapidly learning that the true character can be very easily discovered among one's travelling companions. There is something about the friction of travel that brings out all that is worst and best in one's disposition.

And so when Patty found that the Van Nesses were going to a different hotel from themselves she was really glad, though she hoped to see them occasionally during their stay in Paris.

The train reached the Gare du Nord at about six o'clock, and when our party went into the rather dimly lighted station Patty thought she had never before seen such pandemonium. Everybody seemed to be in trouble of some sort. Some were running hither and thither, exclaiming and expostulating, but apparently to no avail. Others sat hopelessly and helplessly on their own luggage, seeming to despair of ever getting any further.

The luggage room was an immense place, stone−floored and rather damp. There were several separate counters where passengers were supposed to attend to the checking of their baggage; but though there were plenty of officials and porters about, none of them seemed anxious or even willing to wait upon anybody. Patty saw many people appeal to one man after another in a vain hope of getting their wants attended to. But it seemed to be almost impossible. To those who could not speak French the situation was hopeless indeed. Patty watched one poor lady, who seemed to be travelling alone, and who continually inquired of the stolid and unobliging porters, "Do you speak English?" and invariably received the reply, "Non, madame; non, madame." The lonely little lady seemed to be in despair, and Patty wished she could help her, but she did not

know herself what made the difficulty. At last she discovered that it was necessary to get a customs inspector and a porter and a railway official all together in one place and at one time. This done, the rest was easy, at least to the traveller who knew sufficient French to make his wants known.

This Mr. Farrington managed to accomplish after some delay. The official ceremonies then being soon over, and our travellers having repeatedly declared that they were transporting nothing eatable, they were allowed to drive away in cabs. The cabs in Paris are of the low, open pattern, like a victoria, and they looked very strange and informal to Patty, who had never seen any but closed cabs or hansoms. Mr. and Mrs. Farrington rode in the first cab, which was followed by another, containing Patty and Elise, with Lisette, who sat on the small, folding front seat.

Patty held her breath with excitement when she realised that she was in Paris at last.

They drove through the streets, which were not very well lighted, gazing eagerly at the strange sights everywhere about them.

Their hotel was in the Place Vendome, and the drive there from the station was not through the beautiful boulevards, but through some narrow and not particularly clean streets.

But when they rolled into the Rue de la Paix and drove toward the Place Vendome, the girls began to think that Paris was beautiful, after all.

It was rather more than dusk, but not dark, and the great square, with its circumference of colonnaded buildings, and the wonderful column in the centre, was exceedingly impressive, and filled Patty's soul with a rapturous awe.

"Oh, Elise," she cried, grasping her companion's hand; "I never supposed Paris would be like this! I thought it would be bright and gay and festive; but instead of that, it's grand and solemn and awe−inspiring."

"So it is, here," said Elise; "but there is plenty of brightness and gaiety in some parts of the city, I expect. Of course, this is historic ground, and I suppose it was pretty much as it is now in the days when they were building French history. That's Napoleon on top of that statue, though you can't recognise him from here. You know about the column, of course. It's been overthrown and rebuilt three or four times."

"Yes, I remember studying about it in French history. It was torn down at the time of the Commune, and later re−erected from the fragments. But you know when you study those dry facts they don't seem to mean anything; but to be here, really in Paris, looking at that wonderful column, in this dusky light, and the stars just beginning to show oh, Elise, it's more like fairy tales than history!"

"I love it, too," said Elise; "and I'm so glad to be here with you. Oh, Patty, we are going to have a beautiful time!"

"Well, I rather guess we are!" said Patty, with true Yankee enthusiasm.

Then their cabs drove in at the arched entrance of the Hotel Ritz, and a most important looking personage in blue uniform assisted them to alight. Other attendants in unostentatious livery swung open the glass doors and our party entered. The proprietor, who advanced to meet them, was a courtly, polite Frenchman, in correct evening dress, whose suave and deferential manner was truly typical of his race. He seemed to take a personal interest in his newly arrived guests, and himself conducted them to their apartments.

Patty followed with the rest, feeling almost like pinching herself to see if she were awake or in an enchanted

dream. The hotel was particularly beautiful, and the furnishings unlike any she had ever seen before. Carpets, furniture, and decorations were all in the palest tints of lovely colours. Doors and windows and many of the partitioned walls were of glass, in ornate gilt frames, through which one could see fascinating rooms beyond. A few choice pictures hung on the walls, and here and there were French cabinets of curios and rare laces.

The elevator seemed to be entirely of glass, and was furnished with dainty white upholstery and gilded woodwork. Bouquets of fresh flowers were here and there on small tables in the rooms and halls.

The suite of rooms allotted to the Farringtons looked out upon the Place Vendome, and Patty flew to the window to gaze again upon the beautiful scene.

The rooms were daintily furnished with the same exquisite taste that prevailed throughout the house. Lace curtains framed the deep−seated windows, an Empire clock and candelabra graced the carved mantel, and the furniture was rich and abundant.

"I don't think," said Patty, "that I ever saw a more beautiful palace. And I'm so glad I'm here I don't know what to do! Just think of it, Elise, we'll live here in this lovely room for a fortnight anyway!"

"It is lovely," said Elise; "but I expect we'll get tired of hotel life and be glad to have a home of our own."

"Very likely," said Patty, with a little sigh of content; "but I shall be perfectly happy wherever we are."

"I believe you will, Patty," said Elise, laughing; "you love this beautiful place, but if it hadn't been half as pretty, you would have made just as much fuss over it."

"I know it," said Patty, rather apologetically; "but I can't help it, Elise. I seem to be made that way. When I like anything, you know, I enjoy it just as much as I possibly can, and that's all I can do, anyway."

The room which the two girls were to share was a large double−bedded apartment, with dressing rooms and bath adjoining. It was perfect in every detail of comfort and luxury as well as beauty, but when Lisette came in to assist the girls in dressing for dinner she found them both hanging out of the front windows gazing at the Vendome Column.

However, they expressed themselves as quite ready to prepare for dinner, and after doning pretty light costumes, they joined Mr. and Mrs. Farrington, and went down to the dining−room.

The dining−room proper of the hotel was an indoor apartment, but all through the summer the guests were accustomed to dine under the open sky, at small tables in the garden.

Owing to an unusually late season, it was still warm enough to dine outside, and when Patty saw the scene in the garden she thought Paris was fairyland indeed. Though called a garden, it was really a stone− paved court, but all round its edge on two sides were large old trees with gnarled and twisted trunks and thick foliage of glossy green. Under the trees were flower−beds full of blossoming plants, and in the branches of the trees themselves were hung vari−coloured globes of electric lights about the size of an orange. The effect of these brilliant spheres in the dark trees was as beautiful as it was unusual, and the scene was further made bright by arches and festoons of brilliant coloured lights, which crossed and twined above their heads in every direction. At the end of the garden was an immense fountain surrounded by statues, and playing many jets of water, which flashed and sparkled in the light.

Around two sides of the garden ran the verandas of the hotel, and the diners could sit on these verandas or out in the open, as they preferred.

The gay scene was completed by the throngs of people; the French women in their dainty costumes, the French men with their correct garb and demeanour, as well as a good sprinkling of strangers from other countries.

So interested was Patty in looking at it all that she declared she didn't want a thing to eat. But when the choice selections of French cookery were placed before her, she changed her mind and did full justice to the repast.

After dinner they sat for a short time in the drawing−room, and then Mr. Farrington declared they must all go to rest, as he had planned a busy day for them on the morrow.

CHAPTER X. SIGHTSEEING

They rose next morning to find a perfect autumn day awaiting them. To Patty's surprise, dainty breakfast trays were brought to their bedsides.

"It is the custom of the country," Elise explained; "nobody ever goes downstairs to breakfast in Paris."

"It's a custom that suits me well enough at least, what there is of it. I'm free to confess that this rather smallish cup of chocolate and two not very large rolls and a tiny bit of butter do not seem to me all that a healthy appetite can desire."

"I'm afraid you're an incorrigible American," said Elise, laughing. "Now, this little spread is ample for me, but I dare say you can have more if you want it."

"No indeed," said Patty; "when I'm in Paris, I'll do as the Romans do, even if I starve."

But Patty didn't starve, for it was not long before Mr. Farrington sent word that the girls were to come downstairs as soon as possible, equipped for a drive.

But before the drive he insisted that they should eat a good and substantial breakfast, as he wanted them to put in a long morning sightseeing.

Mrs. Farrington had concluded not to go with them, as she was resting after her journey, and, moreover, the sights were not such a novelty to her as they would be to the young people.

So when they were all ready to start they found an automobile at the door, waiting for them.

"This is the most comfortable way to see Paris," said Mr. Farrington as they got in. "I have taken this car for a week on trial, and if it proves satisfactory we can keep it all winter."

A chauffeur drove the car, and Mr. Farrington sat in the tonneau between the two girls, that he might point out to them the places of interest.

If Patty had thought Paris beautiful by night she thought it even more so in the clear, bright sunshine. There is no sunshine in the world quite so clearly bright as that of Paris, or at least it seems so.

"I want you to get the principal locations fixed in your minds," said Mr. Farrington, "so now, as you see, we are starting from the Place Vendome, going straight down the short Rue Castiglione to the Rue de Rivoli. Now, we have reached the corner, and we turn into the Rue de Rivoli. This is a beautiful street, crowded with shops on one side, and on the other side at this point you see the garden of the Tuileries. We turn to the right

and go directly to the Place de la Concorde. As we reach it you may see to the right, up through the Rue Royale, the Church of the Madeleine. That is one of the most beautiful of the Paris churches, and you shall visit it, of course, but not now. To−day I want you to get merely a birdseye view, a sort of general idea of locations. But here we are in the Place de la Concorde. The Obelisk, which you see in the centre, was brought from Egypt many years ago. It is very like our own Obelisk in Central Park, and also Cleopatra's needle in London. From here we turn into one of the most beautiful avenues in the world, the Champs Elysees. This avenue extends from the Place de la Concorde to the Arc de Triomphe. Viewing it as we do now, rolling along this perfect road in a motor car or automobile, as we must learn to call it while in France you are taking, no doubt, one of the most perfect rides in the world. The full name of the arch is Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile. This means a star, and it is called thus because it is a centre from which radiate no less than a dozen beautiful avenues. We will drive slowly round the arch, that you may see its general beauty, but we will not now stop to examine it closely."

"It is so different," exclaimed Patty, "to see these things in reality, or to study about them in history. I've seen pictures of this arch lots of times, but it never seemed before as if it were a real thing. Isn't it beautiful! I think I could spend a whole day looking at it."

Patty's love of the beautiful was intuitive and all embracing. She knew little of architecture or sculpture technically, but the sublime majesty and imposing grandeur of the noble arch impressed her, as it does all true beauty lovers.

"The continuation of the Champs Elysees beyond the arch," went on Mr. Farrington, "changes its name and becomes the Avenue de la Grand Armee. But we will not continue along that way at present, but take the next avenue to the left, which is the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne."

"Why, I thought that was a forest," said Patty; "is it a street?"

"It's an avenue," replied Mr. Farrington, "and it leads to the forest, or rather park, which is called the Bois de Boulogne. We can take only a short drive into the park, but you may see a few of the beautiful chateaus, which are the homes of the wealthy or aristocratic French people. You will not meet many equipages at this hour in the morning, but late in the afternoon there is a continuous stream of fine turnouts of all sorts. There are many, many places of interest in the Bois, but as we have all winter in which to visit them, we will content ourselves to−day with a brief visit."

"It begins to look," said Patty, "as if even a whole winter would be all too short to see the beauties and glories of this wonderful Paris."

"Indeed, it would be too short to see everything of interest, but I can assure you, my child, that with an automobile and some idea of systematic sightseeing we can do a great deal even in one winter."

Mr. Farrington pointed out various prominent buildings as they passed them, and then, turning round, went back to the city. A swift ride about Paris showed to the girls such interesting places as the Louvre, and the Hotel de Ville, the Place de la Bastile, the Hotel des Invalides, the Pantheon, and the Church of Notre−Dame.

At the last named Mr. Farrington proposed that they get out and make a short visit to the cathedral.

They did so, and both Patty and Elise were much impressed by the noble beauty of the interior.

As they passed around the church Patty noticed a little Frenchwoman, who seemed to be selling candles. The candles were of an unusual type−long, slender and very tapering. It occurred to Patty that she would like to take some home to Nan, as they would be most effective in an odd brass candlestick which was one of Nan's

chief treasures. The candlestick had seven branches, and as her French seemed to desert her at the critical moment, Patty indicated her wants by holding up seven fingers, pointing to the candles and then taking out her purse.

The Frenchwoman seemed to understand, and began counting out seven candles. Patty looked anxiously after Mr. Farrington and Elise, who had gone on ahead, not noticing that Patty had stopped. But she knew she could soon catch up to them if only she could get her candles and manage to pay for them in the confusing and unfamiliar French money. As she was counting out the change, greatly to her surprise, the Frenchwoman lighted her seven candles, one after the other. Patty exclaimed in dismay, wondering if she did it to test their wicks, or what could be the reason. But even as she watched her the woman placed the candles, all seven of them, in a sort of a branched candlestick on the wall above her head.

"Non! Non!" cried Patty; "they are MINE, MINE! comprenez−vous? Mine!"

"Oui, oui, oui," exclaimed the Frenchwoman, nodding her head complacently, and taking Patty's money, which she put in a box on the table before her.

"But I want them!" cried Patty. "I want to take them away with me!"

Still the woman smiled amiably, and Patty realised she was not understanding a word. But all Patty's French, and it was not very much at best, seemed to fly out of her head and she could not even think how to say, "I wish to take them away with me." So seeing nothing else to do, she cut the Gordian knot of her dilemma by reaching up and taking the candles from the sockets. She blew them out, and holding them in a bundle, said pleasantly, "Papier?" having thought of a French word at last that expressed what she wished.

The woman looked at her in amazement, as if she had done something wrong, and poor Patty was thoroughly perplexed.

"Why, I bought them," she exclaimed, forgetting the Frenchwoman could not understand her, "and I paid you for them, and now they're mine, And I'm going to take them away. If you won't give me any paper to wrap them in, I'll carry them as they are. Eon jour!"

But by this time Mr. Farrington and Elise had returned in search of their missing comrade, and Patty appealed to Mr. Farrington, explaining that she had purchased the candles.

"Why, yes, they're yours, child, and certainly you may take them away if you like. But it is not customary; usually people buy the candles to burn at the shrine of their patron saint, or in memory of some friend, and, of course, the woman supposed that was your intention."

"Well, I'm glad to understand it," said Patty, "and I wish you'd please explain it to her, for I certainly do want to keep the candles, and I couldn't make her understand."

So Mr. Farrington explained the state of the case in French that the woman could understand, and all was well, and Patty walked off in triumph with her candles.

Then they went back past the Louvre, and leaving the automobile again, they went for a short walk in the garden of the Tuileries. This also fascinated Patty, and she thought it beautiful beyond all words.

After that Mr. Farrington declared that the girls must be exhausted, and he took them to a delightful cafe, where he refreshed them with ices and small cakes.

"Now," he said, "I don't suppose the Eternal Feminine in your nature will be satisfied without doing a little shopping. The large shops the Bon Marche and the Magasin du Louvre are very like our own department stores, and if you choose you may go there at some other time with Mrs. Farrington or Lisette, for I confess my ignorance of feminine furbelows. But I will take you to one or two interesting shops on the Rue de Rivoli, and then if we have time to a few in the Avenue de l'Opera."

Their first stop was at a picture shop, and Patty nearly went wild over the beautiful photographs and water colours. She wanted to purchase several, but Mr. Farrington advised her to wait until later, when she should perhaps be better able to judge what she really wanted.

"For you see," he said, "after you have been to the Louvre and other great galleries, and have made favourites, as you will, among the pictures there, you will then be able to collect your photographs more intelligently."

Patty was quite ready to abide by this advice, and she and Elise enjoyed looking over the pictures and anticipating future purchases.

But though the shops along the Rue de Rivoli were attractive, they were not nearly so splendid as those on the Avenue de l'Opera. Indeed, Mr. Farrington almost regretted having brought the girls there, for they quite forgot all else in their delight in looking at the beautiful wares. They seemed content just to walk along the avenue looking in at the shop windows.

"I don't want to buy anything yet," declared Patty. "Later on I expect to get souvenirs for all of the people at home, and I have any amount of orders to execute for Marian."

"Won't it be fun to do our shopping here?" exclaimed Elise. "I never saw such lovely things, and truly, Patty, the prices marked on them are quite cheap. Much more reasonable than in New York, I think."

"So do I. And oh, Elise, just look at the lovely things in this window! See that lovely pen−wiper, and that dear paper−cutter! Aren't they unusual?"

"Yes," exclaimed Elise, equally rapturous; "I don't wonder, Patty, that people like to shop in Paris. It is truly fascinating. But just wait until we get mother out here with us instead of father. She won't fidget around as if she wanted us to go home before we've fairly started!"

Elise looked reproachfully at her father, who was undeniably fidgeting.

"I'm glad you appreciate the fact," he said, "that I am impatient to get away from these shop windows. Never again will I introduce two young girls into the Parisian shopping district. I've learned my lesson; I'll take you sightseeing, but Mrs. Farrington must take you shopping."

Patty laughed good−naturedly, and expressed her willingness to return at once to the hotel.

CHAPTER XI. AN EXCURSION TO VERSAILLES

One evening, as our party sat in the drawing−room of the hotel, after dinner, some callers' cards were brought to them. The guests proved to be Bert Chester and his three friends, of whom he had told Patty before. The four young men were about to start on a motor tour, and were spending a few days in Paris first.

They were all big stalwart young Englishmen, and when Bert introduced Paul and Philip Marchbanks and Arthur Oram, Patty thought she had never seen more pleasant−looking boys.

"We're jolly glad to be allowed to come to see you," said Phil Marchbanks, addressing Mrs. Farrington, but including them all in his conversation; "we know almost nobody in Paris, and we're so glad to see some friendly faces."

"We may as well own up," said his brother Paul, "that we're just a bit homesick. We're going to have a fine time, of course, after we get started, but it takes a few days to get used to it."

It amused Patty to think of these great, big boys being homesick, but she rather liked their frank admission of it, and she began to ask them questions about their automobile.

The boys had no chauffeur with them, and Arthur Oram drove the car, with occasional assistance from the others. Of course, the boys were enthusiastic regarding their car, and young Oram particularly fell into discussions with Mr. Farrington as to the respective merits of various makes.

"We've done up Paris pretty well," said Bert Chester; "we've only been arrested for speeding once; but that's not surprising, for they let you go about as fast as you like here, and with their marvellously fine roads, it's more like skating than anything else."

"But you only arrived here when we did," said Elise; "how can you have done up Paris so soon?"

"Well, you see," said Bert, "we're not going to write a book about it, so we didn't have to take it all in. We've seen the outside of the Louvre, and the inside of Napoleon's tomb; we've been to the top of the Eiffel tower, and the bottom of the Catacombs; so we flatter ourselves that we've done up the length and breadth and height and depths, at least to our own satisfaction."

"It's a great mistake," said Phil Marchbanks, "to overdo this sightseeing business. A little goes a great way with me, and if I bolt a whole lot of sights all at once, I find I can't digest them, and I have a sort of attack of tourist's indigestion, which is a thing I hate."

"So do I," agreed Patty, "and I think you do quite right not to attempt too much in a short time. We are taking the winter for it, and Mr. Farrington is going to arrange it all for us, so that I know we'll never have too much or too little. How much longer are you staying here?"

"Only a few days," replied Bert Chester, "and that brings me to our special errand. We thought perhaps that is, we hoped that may be you might, all of you, agree to go with us to−morrow on a sort of a picnic excursion to Versailles. We thought, do you see, that we could take our car, and you could take yours, and we'd start in the morning and make a whole day of it."

"Gorgeous!" exclaimed Patty, clapping her hands; "I do think that would be delightful, I'd love to go."

"Me too," chimed in Elise; "mother, do say yes, won't you? You know you're just as anxious to go there as we are, because you spoke of it only yesterday."

"Yes, indeed," said Mrs. Farrington heartily; "I quite approve of the plan, and if your father has no objection, we can make a charming picnic of it."

Mr. Farrington was quite as interested in the project as the others, and they immediately began to arrange the details of the expedition. Bert Chester had a road map in his pocket, which showed exactly the routes they could take, but the decision of these things was left to Mr. Farrington and Arthur Oram, who put their heads together over the complicated−looking charts and decided upon their way.

"Do you know," said Paul Marchbanks, "you're the first American girls I have ever known socially? I've seen tourists in railway stations or restaurants, but I never talked to any Americans before."

"For goodness' sake!" exclaimed Patty, "have they kept you walled up in a dungeon tower all your life, or what?"

"Not exactly that; but we English fellows who go to school and then to college, and meantime live in our country homes, with an occasional run up to London, have almost no opportunity to meet anybody outside of our own people. And I haven't jogged about as much as a good many fellows. This is the first time I've been to Paris."

"Then that explains your homesickness," said Patty, smiling kindly at the big boy, whose manner was so frank and ingenuous.

"Yes," he said; "I suppose I do miss the family, for they ARE a jolly lot. Oh, I say, won't you people all come down to our place and see us? You're going to England, of course, before you return to the States, aren't you ?"

"I don't know," said Elise, smiling; "our plans are uncertain. But if we accept all the delightful invitations we're continually receiving, I don't know when we ever shall get back to New York."

The next day proved to be a most perfect one for an excursion of any sort. They started early, for they wanted to make a long, full day of it, and return in time for dinner.

The two automobiles were at the door by nine o'clock, and the party was soon embarked. As Mr. Farrington did not drive his own car, he went in the other car, sitting in front with Arthur Orara. In the tonneau of this car were Patty and Bert Chester. So in the other car rode Mrs. Farrington and Elise and the two Marchbanks. This arrangement seemed highly satisfactory to all concerned, and the procession of two cars started off gaily. Away they sped at a rapid speed along the Champs Elysees, through the Arch and away toward Versailles. The fresh, crisp morning air, the clear blue sky, and the bright sunlight, added to the exhilaration of the swift motion, endowed them all with the most buoyant spirits, and Patty felt sure she had never looked forward to a merrier, happier day.

She chatted with Bert Chester, and asked him many questions about the trip on which he was starting.

"I don't know just where we are going," he said. "I leave all that to Oram. The rest of us don't care, and Oram loves to spend hours hunting up reasons why we should go to this small village that is picturesque, or that tiny hamlet that is historic. I'm sure the queer little French towns will all look alike to me, and I'm not awfully keen about such things anyhow. I go for the out−door life, and the swift motion, and the fresh air and all that sort of thing."

"I love that part of it, too," said Patty, "but also I like seeing the funny little towns with their narrow streets and squealing dogs. I think I have never been through a French village that wasn't just spilling over with squealing dogs."

"That's because you always go through them in an automobile. If you were on a walking tour now, you'd find the dogs all asleep. But the paramount idea in a French dog's brain is that he was made for the purpose of waking up and barking at motor cars."

"Well, they're most faithful to what they consider their duty, then," said Patty, laughing, for even as she spoke they were whizzing through a straggling, insignificant little village, and dogs of all sizes and colours seemed

to spring up suddenly from nowhere at all, and act as if about to devour the car and its occupants.

But notwithstanding the dogs, the villages were exceedingly picturesque, and Patty loved to drive through them slowly, that she might see glimpses of the life of the people. And it was almost always necessary to go slowly, for the streets were so narrow, and the sidewalks a mere shelf, so that pedestrians often walked in the road. This made it difficult to drive rapidly, and, moreover, many of the streets were steep and hilly.

"It never seems to matter," observed Patty, "whether you're going out of Paris or coming in; it's always uphill, and never down. I think that after you've climbed a hill, they whisk it around the other way, so that you're obliged to climb it again on your return."

"Of course they do," agreed Bert; "you can see by the expression of the people that they're chuckling at us now, and they'll chuckle again when we pass this way to−night, still climbing."

Neither of the cars in which our party travelled were good hill− climbers, although they could go fast enough on the level. But nobody cared, and notwithstanding some delays, the ground was rapidly covered.

"There's one town I want to go through," said Patty, "but I'm not sure it's in our route. It's called Noisy−le−Roi. Of course, I know that, really, Noisy is not pronounced in the English fashion, but I like to think that it is, and I call it so myself."

"There's no harm in that; I suppose a free−born American citizen has a right to pronounce French any way she chooses, and I like that way myself. Noisy−le−Roi sounds like an abode of the Mad Monarch, and you expect to see the king and all his courtiers and subjects dancing madly around or playing hilarious games."

"Yes, a sort of general racket, with everybody waving garlands and carrying wreaths, and flags floating and streamers streaming −"

"Yes, and cannon booming, and salutes being fired, and rockets and fireworks going off like mad."

"Yes, just that! but now I almost hope we won't pass through it, for fear it shouldn't quite come up to our notion of it."

"If we do come to it, I'll tell you in time, and you can shut your eyes and pretend you're asleep while we go through."

But the town in question was not on their route after all, and soon they came flying in to the town of Versailles. Of course, they made for the Chateau at once, and alighted from the cars just outside the great wall.

Patty, being unaccustomed to historic sites, was deeply impressed as she walked up the old steps and found herself on an immense paved court that seemed to be fairly flooded with the brightest sunlight she had ever seen. As a rule, Mr. Farrington did not enjoy the services of a guide, but for the benefit of the young people in his charge, he engaged one to describe to them the sights they were to see.

The whole royal courtyard and the great Equestrian Statue of Louis XIV. seemed very wonderful to Patty, and she could scarcely realise that the great French monarch himself had often stood where she was now standing.

"I never seemed to think of Louis XIV.," she said, "as a man. He seems to me always like a set of furniture, or a wall decoration, or at most a costume."

"Now you'ye hit it," said Paul; "Louis XIV. was, at most, a costume; and a right−down handsome costume, too. I wish we fellows could dress like that nowadays."

"I wish so, too," said Elise; "it's a heap more picturesque than the clothes men wear at the present day."

"I begin to feel," said Patty, "that I wish I had studied my French history harder. How many kings lived here after Louis XIV.?"

"Two," replied Mr. Farrington, "and when, Patty, at one o'clock on the sixth of October, 1789, the line of carriages drove Louis XVI. and his family away from here to Paris, the Chateau was left vacant and has never since been occupied."

"In October," said Patty, "and probably just such a blue and gold day as this! Oh, how they must have felt!"

"I wouldn't weep over it now, Patty," said the matter−of−fact Elise; "they've been gone so long, and so many people have wept for them, that I think it wasted emotion."

"I believe it would be," said Patty, smiling, "as far as they're concerned; but I can't help feeling sorry for them, only I could never weep before, because I never realised what it was they were leaving."

The party went on into the Chateau, and visited rooms and apartments one after the other. It was necessary to do this quickly if they were to do it at all, and, as Mr. Farrington said, a hasty tour of the palace would give them an idea of it as a whole, and sometime he would bring the girls again to enjoy the details more at leisure.

Patty was discovering that she was susceptible to what Elise chose to call wasted emotion, and she found herself again on the verge of tears when they entered the Chapel. Though she did not know enough of architecture to survey intelligently the somewhat pompous apartment, she was delightfully impressed by the rich adornments and the wonderful sculptures, bronzes and paintings.

Rather rapidly they passed through the various SALONS of the museum, pausing here and there, as one or another of the party wished to examine something in particular. The State Rooms and Royal Apartments were most interesting, but Patty concluded that she liked best of all the Gallery of Battles. The splendid pictures of war enthralled her, and she would have been glad had the rest of the party left her to spend the entire day alone in the great gallery.

But this, of course, they had no wish to do, and with a last lingering glance at the picture of Napoleon at the battle of Jena, she reluctantly allowed herself to be led away.

Napoleon was one of Patty's heroes, and she was eagerly interested in all of the many relics and souvenirs of the great man.

Especially was she interested in his bedroom, and greatly admired the gorgeous furnishings and quaint, old−fashioned French bedstead.

Having scurried through the palace and museum, Mr. Farrington declared that he could do no more sightseeing until he had eaten some sustaining luncheon.

So again they climbed into the automobiles and were whisked away to a hotel in the town.

Here they were provided with a most satisfying meal, which was partaken of amid much merry conversation

and laughter.

CHAPTER XII. SHOPPING

The afternoon was devoted to the gardens and the Trianons.

Elise was enraptured with the garden, but Patty, while she admired them very much, thought them too stiff and formal for her taste. Laid out, as they are, according to the laws of geometrical symmetry, it seemed to Patty that grace and beauty were sacrificed to squares and straight lines.

But none the less was she interested in the wonderful landscape, and amazed that any grass could be so green as that of the marvelous green carpet. The multitude of statues and fountains, the walks and terraces, and the exquisite colours of the autumn trees, made a picture that Patty never forgot.

The Trianons presented new delights, and Patty fancied herself transported back to the days of Marie Antoinette and her elaborately planned pleasures.

A place of especial interest was the carriage house, where are exhibited the Royal State carriages.

As they were about to enter, Phil Marchbanks, who was ahead, turned round with a look of comical dismay on his face.

"We can't go in," he said; "we can't fulfil their requirements!"

"What do you mean?" said Patty.

"Why here's a sign that says 'wet umbrellas must be left in the cloak room.' You see, it's imperative, and as we have no wet umbrellas to leave in the cloak room, whatever shall we do?"

"Isn't it awful!" said Patty. "Of course, we can't go in if we don't fulfil their laws. But it's a foolish law, and better broken than kept, so I propose we march on in spite of it."

So they marched on and spent one of their pleasantest half hours admiring the royal coaches.

The Coronation Carriage of Charles the X. pleased Patty most, especially as it had been restored by Napoleon and bore the magic initial N. on its regalia.

Mr. Farrington slyly volunteered the information that it stood for Napoleon the Third, but Patty declared that she didn't care, as any Napoleon was good enough for her.

SHOPPING

Then the various sights of the Trianons claimed their attention, and they visited the farm and the dairy, and the Temple of Love, and the Swiss Cottage, and the Presbytery, and the Music Pavilion, and the Mill, until they were all mixed up, and Patty declared that her mind was nothing but a kaleidoscope full of broken bits of gay scenes.

Then the party went to the Grotto of Apollo, and sat down there for a short time to rest before returning home.

"This is the first time," said Patty, "that it has seemed like a picnic, but this is a real picnic place, though a

much more grand one than I ever picnicked in before."

"You can probably make up your mind," said Bert, "that it's about the grandest picnic place there is; and speaking of picnics, I'd like to invite all this party to dine with me on our way home."

"Where is your dining−room?" asked Mrs. Farrington.

"I'll show you," said Bert eagerly, "if you'll only go with me. It isn't quite time to start yet, but it soon will be, and I'll take you to an awfully jolly place and not a bit out of our way, either."

Mrs. Farrington agreed to go, and the rest eagerly accepted the invitation, and after resting a little longer, the party leisurely prepared to start.

At Bert's direction they spun along the Bois de Boulogne until they reached the Pavilion d'Armenonville, one of those fairyland out−of−door restaurants which abound in and near Paris.

As it was rather chilly to sit outside, they occupied a table in a glass−protected court, and Bert proved himself a most satisfactory host.

"We've had an awfully jolly day," he observed, "at least I have, and I hope the rest of you put in a good time. It's a satisfaction to feel that we've done up Versailles, but I may as well confess that I didn't go for that purpose so much as to spend a pleasant day with my friends."

Patty declared that she had enjoyed the society, not only of the friends who went with her, but the companionship of the invisible ones, whose presence seemed to haunt every nook and cranny of the palace and park.

As Patty looked about at their gaily decorated dining place, and looked out at the brilliantly lighted scene outside, where the vari−coloured electric lights hung in shining festoons, she came to the conclusion that Paris was a gay and bright place after all, though when she had entered it that first night, less than a week ago, she had thought it rather dark and oppressive,

"It is dark," said Phil, as Patty expressed her thoughts; "to be sure, a place like this is illuminated, but the streets are not half lighted, and I think it's a shame."

"London streets at night aren't much better as to light," said Bert, "but I say, you fellows, you just ought to see the streets in New York at night. Whew! they're so bright they just dazzle you, don't they, Patty?"

"Broadway does, but the other streets aren't so awfully light."

"Well, they're a lot lighter than they are over here. But Paris is the worst of all. Why, I'm scared to be out after nightfall."

"If that's the case," said Mrs. Farrington, laughing, "we'd better be starting now; and at any rate, it's high time my young charges were at home. I hadn't expected Patty and Elise to indulge in quite such grown− up gaieties as dining out here, but I hadn't the heart to refuse for them your kind invitation."

Bert expressed his gratitude that Mrs. Farrington had made an exception in his favour, and then the whole party started homeward.

When she reached there, Patty was so tired she could scarcely talk over the pleasures of the day with Elise,

and she tumbled into bed without so much as a look at her beloved Vendome Column.

But the next day found the two girls entirely rested and quite ready for more jaunting about.

But Mrs. Farrington declared that she could do no sightseeing that day, as the somewhat fatiguing trip to Versailles made her quite contented to rest quietly for a time.

So Patty employed her morning happily enough in writing letters home and in arranging her post−card album.

"I'm so glad," she said to Elise, "that Clementine gave me this great big album, for I see already it is none too large. I've taken out all the New York views and laid them aside. I shall probably give them to somebody, as there is no sense in carrying them home again. And I'm filling the book with Paris views. Isn't it fortunate they invented post−cards, for unmounted photographs do curl up so, and I hate those little books of views."

"Indeed, it's fine, Patty, and you're arranging them beautifully. I can't do that sort of thing at all; I'm as clumsy at it as a hippopotamus. But I'd love to have a book like yours to take home."

"I'll give you this one," said Patty quickly, and she truly meant it, for she was generous by nature, and, too, she was glad to give Elise something that she really wanted.

"I wouldn't take it! you needn't think I'm a pig if I AM a hippopotamus!"

"Well, I'll tell you what I will do, Elise. The first time we go shopping we'll get a big album exactly like this, and then we'll always get duplicate post−cards, we have so far, anyway, and I'll fix both the books."

"Oh, Patty, that will be lovely! you do it so neatly and daintily; and I always tear the corners and smudge the cards and every old thing. I wish we could go and buy the book this very afternoon."

"We can't; your mother won't go; she's too tired, and she'd never let us bob about Paris alone. And your father hates to shop, so he wouldn't take us."

"I know it, Patty, but perhaps mother would let us go with Lisette. Anyhow, I'm going to ask her."

"Why, yes," said Mrs. Farrington, when the project was laid before her; "I see no reason why you shouldn't go out and do a little shopping in charge of Lisette. She is a native French girl herself, she knows Paris thoroughly, and she's most reliable and trustworthy. But you must promise to do only what she allows you to do, and go only where she advises. In this expedition she must direct, not you."

The girls willingly promised, saying that they only wanted to buy the album and a few little things.

"Very well, then," said Mrs. Farrington; "you may go out for the afternoon. I'm glad to have you out in the sunshine, and you'll also enjoy looking at the pretty things in the shops."

So the girls arrayed themselves in their quiet pretty street costumes, and with Lisette in her tidy black gown, they started out.

They walked at first along the Rue de Rivoli, fascinated with the lovely trinkets in the shop windows. Unlike Mr. Farrington, Lisette did not care how long her young charges tarried, nor was she averse to looking at the pretty things herself.

"It's a funny thing," said Elise, as they came out of a shop, "that the things in a window are always so much prettier than the things inside the shop."

"That's Paris all over," said Patty; "I think the French not only put the best foot forward, but the foot they hold back is usually not very presentable."

"Yes, I believe that's true; and they always seem to make the best of everything, and that's why they're so happy and light−hearted. But here we are at a stationer's. Let's buy the album here."

The stationer's proved to be a most distracting place. They bought the album, and then they discovered a counter piled with post−cards, in which they were soon deeply absorbed.

"But you mustn't get so many, Elise," cried Patty, as she looked at the great pile Elise had laid aside to buy. "It's no fun at all to get them all at once and fill the book. Then it's all over. The fun is in collecting them slowly, a few at a time."

"But I want all these, Patty, so why not take them now?"

"No, you don't, either. Now look here, Elise, I'm making your book for you, so you take my advice in this matter, and you'll afterward admit that I'm right."

"You're always right, Patty," said Elise, smiling lovingly at her friend; "that's the worst of you! But I'll do as you say this time, only don't let it occur again."

Patty laughed and allowed Elise to select cards illustrating the places she had already seen, persuading her to leave the others until some future time.

Then they looked round the shop further, and discovered many attractive little souvenirs to take to friends at home.

"I think," said Patty, "I'll just buy some of these things right now. For surely I could never find anything for Frank and Uncle Charlie better than these queer little desk things. Aren't they unusual, Elise? Are they rococo?"

"Patty," said Elise, in a stage whisper, "I hate to own up to it, but really, I never did know what rococo meant! Isn't it something like cloisonne, or is it ormolu?"

Patty laughed. "To be honest, Elise, I don't exactly know myself, but I don't think you've struck it very closely. However, I'm going to buy this inkstand; I don't care if it's made of gingerbread!"

"And here's a bronze Napoleon; didn't Marian want that?"

"Oh, yes, indeed she did! I'm so glad you discovered him. Isn't he a dear little man? Just about three inches high; I believe the real emperor wasn't much more than that. Isn't he on a funny little flat pedestal?"

"It's a seal," explained the shopkeeper kindly.

"A seal!" echoed Patty blankly; "why no it isn't! a seal, indeed! why it isn't a bit like a seal; you might just as well call it a Teddy Bear! It's a man!"

Elise was giggling. "He doesn't mean that kind of a seal, Patty," she said; "he means a seal to seal wax with."

"Oh," said Patty, giggling, too; "why, so much the better. I beg your pardon, I'm sure, and I'm glad it's a seal. I can have Marian's monogram cut on it, and she can seal her letters by just letting Napoleon jump on them."

She left the order for the monogram, and the affable shopkeeper promised to send the finished seal home the next day. He seemed greatly interested in his two young customers, and had it not been for Lisette's sharp eye he would have urged them to buy even more of his wares.

But the canny young French girl had no notion of letting her charges be imposed upon, and she glared haughtily at the shopkeeper when he seemed too officious.

As they were about to leave the shop, some young people entered, and to the surprise of all, they proved to be the Van Ness girls and their cousins.

The four young people were out by themselves, and though quite capable of finding their way about alone, Lisette's French notions were a trifle shocked at the unchaperoned crowd.

But Patty and Elise were so glad to see their friends again that they gave little thought to conventions, and fell to chattering with all their might.

"Why haven't you been to see us?" asked Alicia; "you had our address."

"I know," said Elise, "but we've been so busy ever since we've been here that there hasn't seemed to be time for anything. But we're glad to see you now, and isn't it jolly that we chanced to meet here?"

"Yes, indeed, because we're going on to−morrow, on our travels, I mean, and we wouldn't have had a chance to see you again. But now that we have met, let's put in a jolly afternoon together. Where are you going?"

"Nowhere in particular; we're just walking around Paris."

"That's exactly our destination; so let's go nowhere in particular together."

CHAPTER XIII. CHANTILLY

This plan seemed to please everybody except Lisette, who was a little troubled to have her young ladies going around with these Chicago people, of whom she did not quite approve.

But Patty only laughed at the anxious expression on the French girl's face. She knew well what was passing in her mind, and she said to her quietly: "It's all right, Lisette, they're our American friends, and I assure you Mrs. Farrington won't mind a bit, since you are with us. You're dragon enough to chaperon the whole State of Illinois."

It's doubtful if Lisette knew what the State of Illinois was, but she was devoted to Patty, and waved her scruples in deference to Patty's wishes, although she kept a stern watch on the big Van Ness boys.

But Bob and Guy behaved most decorously, and two more polite or well− mannered young men could not have been found among the native Parisians themselves.

Leaving the shop, they continued down the Rue de Rivoli till they reached the Louvre.

Doris proposed their going in, and as Patty was most anxious to do so, and Lisette saw no objection to visiting the great museum, they all entered.

It was Patty's first glimpse of the great picture gallery, and she began to wish she was not accompanied by the chattering crowd, that she might wander about wherever her fancy directed. But she remembered she would have ample opportunity for this all winter, so she willingly gave up her own desire to please the Van Ness girls.

They cared little for pictures, but were really good historical students, and they wanted to visit the rooms which contained curios and relics of famous people.

So the whole crowd followed the lead of Doris and Alicia, who had visited the Louvre before, and Patty found herself learning a great deal from the experienced way in which the girls discussed the exhibits. She found, too, that historical relics were more interesting than she had supposed, and she almost sighed as she thought of the many things she wanted to see and study during the winter.

"I hope you'll be here when we come back," Guy Van Ness said to her, as they stood together, looking at some old miniatures.

"I hope so, too," said Patty. "When are you coming?"

"I don't know exactly; it depends on uncle's plans; but probably about January."

"Oh, yes, we shall surely be here then, and probably living in a home of our own. Of course, I mean a temporary home, but not a hotel. I hope you will come to see us."

"Indeed I will. I wish we could have seen more of you this week, but uncle has rushed us about sightseeing so fast that there was no time for social calling."

"We saw Bert Chester and his crowd," said Patty; and then she told about the day at Versailles.

"What a lark!" exclaimed Guy; "I wish I had been along. But you must go somewhere with us when we're here in January, won't you?"

"I'd like to," said Patty, "but I can't promise. It all depends on the Farringtons. I'm their guest, so of course I'm under their orders."

"Well, it won't be my fault if we don't have some fun when we come back here," declared Guy, "and I shall do all I can to bring it about."

When they left the museum it was getting late in the afternoon, and Lisette decreed that her young ladies must go home at once. The Van Ness crowd raised great objection to this, but Lisette was obdurate, and calling a cab, she ushered the girls in, and then getting in herself, gave the order for home.

Patty couldn't help laughing at the serious way in which Lisette took care of them, but Mrs. Farrington told her it was quite right, and she would have been displeased had Lisette done otherwise.

"You don't quite understand, my dear," she said kindly, "the difference between the conventions of Paris and our own New York. It may seem foolish to you to be so carefully guarded, but I can't quite explain it to you so you would understand it, and therefore I'm going to ask you to obey my wishes without question, and more than that, when Lisette is temporarily in charge of you to obey her."

"Indeed I will, dear Mrs. Farrington," said Patty heartily; "and truly I wasn't rebelling the leastest mite. I'm more than ready to obey you, or Lisette, either, only it struck me funny to be put into a cab, like babies in a

baby−carriage by their nursemaid."

"You're a good girl, Patty, and I don't foresee a bit of trouble in taking care of you. To−morrow I shall feel better, and I'll go shopping with you girls myself, and perhaps we may have time to look in at a few other places."

So Patty danced away, quite content to take things as they came, and sure that all the coming days were to be filled with all sorts of novelties and pleasures.

Their purchases had been sent home, reaching there before they did themselves, and Patty immediately fell to work on the albums, placing the cards in the little slits which were cut in the leaves to receive them.

The days flew by like Bandersnatches. Patty herself could not realise what became of them. She wrote frequently to the people at home and tried to include all of her young friends in America in her correspondence, but it seemed to be impossible, and so finally she took to writing long letters to Marian, and asking her to send the letters round to the other girls after she had read them.

Mr. and Mrs. Farrington had begun their search for a furnished house which they might rent for the winter. When they went to look at various ones suggested to them by their agent, they did not take the girls with them, as Mrs. Farrington said it was too serious a matter in which to include two chattering children.

So Patty and Elise were left pretty much to their own devices while the elder Farringtons went on these important errands.

But one bright morning when Mr. and Mrs. Farrington were preparing to start off in the automobile for the day, Elise begged that she and Patty might be allowed to go off on an excursion of some sort.

"Indeed, I think you ought," said Mr. Farrington kindly, "and I'll tell you what I think would be a first−rate plan. How would you like to go with Lisette to the Chateau of Chantilly for a day's outing? You could go on one of those 'personally conducted tours,' in a big motor van, with lots of other tourists."

"I think it will be lots of fun," cried Elise; "I've always wanted to climb up on one of those moving mountains and go wabbling away."

"I, too," said Patty; "just for once I think that sort of thing would be great fun."

"Then you must hustle to get ready," said Mr. Farrington, "for the cavalcade sets off at ten o'clock, and I don't believe they'd wait, even for two nice little girls like you. So run along and get your bonnets, and be sure not to forget to remember to feed the carp."

"What is a carp?" asked Patty, as she and Elise ran away to dress.

"Fish, I think," said Elise, "but we'll probably find out when we get there."

The girls were soon ready, and with Lisette they walked out in the bright sunshine and along the Rue de la Paix until they came to the corner where the personally conducted tourists were to start from.

Mr. Farrington had telephoned for tickets, so all they had to do was to clamber into their seats. This was done by mounting a stepladder placed at the side of the big vehicle. The seats of the van were graduated in height, so that the back ones were as good as the front, and, indeed, a full view of what was passing could be commanded from any position.

They had to wait until the tourists had all arrived, and then they started off at a good speed toward the country.

"I feel as if I were riding in one of the old royal state carriages," said Patty, "although there isn't the slightest resemblance in the vehicle, or the means of locomotion."

"No," said Elise, laughing; "nor in the people. I don't believe these tourists bear much resemblance to the ladies and gentlemen who rode in the Royal carriages. But I think it's more fun than our own car, because we sit up so high and can see everything so well."

"And hear, too," said Patty, as they listened to the man in the front seat, who had turned around and was announcing through a megaphone the names of the places as they passed them.

"He seems to know his lesson pretty well," whispered Patty, "but his French pronunciation is even worse than mine."

"Your pronunciation isn't so bad, Patty, but you haven't any vocabulary to speak of."

"To speak with, you mean. But never you mind, miss; as soon as your respected parents decide upon a house, and we get settled in it, I'm going to study French like anything, and French history, too. I used to hate these things, but times have changed since Patty came to Paris!"

"I'm glad you're so energetic, but I don't feel much like studying; I'd rather drift around and have fun as we are doing."

"We'll have time enough for both, and you want to take some painting lessons, don't you?"

"Yes; but seeing all the pictures I've seen since I've been here discourages me. I used to think I was quite an artist, but I see now that if I ever do anything really worth while, I'll have to begin all over again and go into a drudgery drawing class."

"It won't be drudgery; you love it so, and you'll make rapid progress if you're as desperately in earnest as all that. Do you think your mother will decide to take that house they're going to look at to−day?"

"Yes, I think so; her mind is pretty well made up already. It must be a lovely house, judging from what she says about it."

It was not very far to Chantilly, and when they reached there the girls were almost sorry that the pleasant ride was ended.

The megaphone gentleman informed his personally conducted crowd that they were to alight and eat luncheon before proceeding to the Chateau.

The hotel where they were to lunch was a quaint, old−fashioned house, built around three sides of a garden. It was called the Hotel du Grand− Conde, and Patty said, "I suppose we shall see and hear of nothing but the Condes for the rest of the day. I believe the whole interest of Chantilly centres in that Conde crowd."

"You seem to know a lot about it," said Elise banteringly.

"I've been reading up," confessed Patty, "and besides, La Grande Mademoiselle has always been one of my favourite characters in French history. She was a wonderful woman, and though not of the Condes, she is

mixed up in their history."

"She is an unknown quantity to me," said Elise, "but I'm willing to learn, so tell me all you know, Patty; it won't take long."

"You'll get no instruction from me after that unflattering speech," retorted Patty, and then luncheon was announced, and the girls sat down at the table reserved for them.

They were much interested in their fellow−tourists, and as most of them were socially inclined, Patty and Elise were included in the general conversation. As the tourists seemed to have a great deal of general information, and as they were quite ready to impart it, the girls picked up quite a store of knowledge, more or less accurate.

Then they left the hotel, with its quaint old gateway and carefully kept gravel walks, and proceeded on their way to the Chateau.

It was necessary at the entrance to cross a bridge over the moat, and here Patty discovered the reason for feeding the carp.

To begin with, the carp themselves were exceedingly old, and had been swimming around in the same moat for hundreds of years.

"I'm not quite sure of the number of years," volunteered a Boston tourist, to any one who might listen, "but it's either hundreds or thousands. Anyway, the carp are dreadfully old."

"They don't look it," declared Patty, as she leaned over the railing of the bridge and watched the frisky fish darting around like mad.

An old woman sat nearby with a bushel basket full of French rolls, which she was willing to sell to the tourists at prices which increased as her stock of rolls decreased. Patty and Elise bought a quantity of the rolls and began the fun of throwing them to the fishes. It turned out to be even more fun than they had anticipated, for the moment a roll reached the water, scores of carp would make a mad dash for it, and a pitched battle ensued for possession of the bread. Sometimes the roll was torn to pieces in the fight, and sometimes a fortunate carp would secure it and swim away, followed by all the others in angry pursuit. Another roll flung in would, of course, divert their attention, and the squabble would begin all over again. The fun was largely in watching the individual peculiarities of the fishes. One sulky old thing disdained to fight, but if given a roll all to himself he would swim away with it, and sticking his head in a small corner of the stone parapet, would eat it greedily, while he kept off the other fishes by madly lashing his tail. Another brisk little fish didn't seem to care to eat the rolls at all, but mischievously tried to prevent the others from eating them, and played a general game of interference.

The actions of the fish were so ridiculous, and the sport so novel and exciting, that the girls would not leave until they had bought up all the rolls the old woman had and thrown them down to the comical carp.

The personal conductor of the tour affably waited until the moat performance was over, and then conducted his party inside the park to the Chateau.

Though only a toy affair compared with Versailles, Chantilly is one of the most beautiful of the historic Chateaus of France, and is in many respects a gem. The great paved Court of Honor shone white in the sunlight, and the noble statues and sculptures bore witness to the art and taste displayed in its construction.

CHAPTER XIV. MAKING A HOME.

The party was marshalled up on the peristyle, where they received, collectively, instructions in a loud voice to leave their sticks and umbrellas before entering the Chateau.

Patty and Elise agreed that the beauty and dignity of the situation was somewhat impaired by the personally conducted effect, but they thought that was compensated for by the funny side of it all. The tourists followed the conductor like a flock of sheep, one or another occasionally straying away for a time, and nearly all of them making notes in little note−books. Indeed, some of them were so intent on their notes that they merely gave glances at the beautiful things exhibited, and spent most of their time scribbling in their books and referring to their Baedekers.

The interior of the Chateau was delightful. As Patty had surmised, it was largely devoted to pictures and relics of the Conde family. She was greatly pleased to discover a gallery of battles which, though not large, illustrated the battles of the great prince who was called the Grand Conde. Although Patty was of a peaceful enough nature, she had a special liking for the glory and grandeur of paintings of battle scenes, and she tarried in this gallery as long as she could.

Both she and Elise adopted the Grand Conde as one of their favourites, and greatly admired the numerous portraits of him, with his handsome face and generally gorgeous effects.

In one of the halls of the Chateau post−cards were on sale, and Patty eagerly looked them over to make the selection she wanted.

But the Personal Conductor discovered that time was flying, and that if he let all of his charges delay over the post−cards, other sights must be omitted.

So he scurried them along through the various galleries and salons, pausing in the Library and the Chapel. The Chapel awed Patty, as the impressive burial places of kings always did, and especially was she interested in a Cippus, which was a receptacle for the hearts of several of the princes of Conde.

"It seems wonderful," she said to Elise, "to take out their hearts and put them all away together like that, but they had strange ways in the times of my friends, the Condes."

"I'm beginning to be very much interested in your friends, the Condes," replied Elise, "and I think, after all, I shall join your French history class this winter."

Then they proceeded to the beautiful park of Chantilly, which was laid out by the same landscape gardener who afterward designed the gardens of Versailles.

The park was enchanting, and the many buildings in it most interesting.

"There's one thing certain," said Patty, "I shall come here some day and camp out for the day in this park and wander around without being personally conducted."

"And I shall do myself the honour to accompany you," said Elise; "I'm sure I can persuade father to send us out here in the car some day and let us play around by ourselves."

All too soon the megaphone's voice called them to start on their homeward trip. Patty and Elise were among the first to take their seats in the great motor car, and as Patty was looking over her beloved post− cards, she suddenly discovered that she had no portrait of her friend, the Grand Prince.

But by good luck she saw a woman standing near, and suspended by a strap round her neck was a tray of post−cards.

Calling the woman to her, Patty made known her desire for a picture of the Grand Conde.

"Oui, oui," exclaimed the woman as she offered various portraits of other members of the Conde family.

"Non, non," cried Patty, shaking her head, vigorously, "le Grand Prince,−le Grand Conde!"

At length the woman discovered the proper card, and when Patty accepted it, and paid her for it, she burst into voluble thanks and begged her to buy more.

Remembering Elise's album, Patty bought another copy of the same picture for that, and then, thinking she would like to take one to Marian, she asked for a third copy.

This the woman did not have in stock, but anxious to please her pretty young patron, she flew over to another post−card vender, of which there seemed to be several near by, and demanded the required card from her. But a search through her stock proved unavailing, and both women, chatting volubly in French, tried to procure one from a third post−card seller.

Patty and Elise became much amused at the excitement they had created, and suddenly to their surprise one of the tourists expressed her desire also for a portrait of the Grand Conde.

Patty surmised at once that she had no particular reason for desiring it save an idea that if it was in such great demand it must be of a special value.

And then following the example of the first, several other tourists set up a clamour for the same picture, and the scene became one of great excitement. The post−card venders put their heads together, and still jabbering rapidly, produced all sorts of portraits which they endeavoured to foist upon the buyers as portraits of the Grand Prince. But the tourists were shrewd, and they knew what they wanted, though they had no idea why they wanted it.

The natural result of this situation was a rise in price of the desired picture. The original price of ten CENTIMES was doubled and then quadrupled, and finally the tourists began to bid for the picture until the affair became an auction.

Patty and Elise were convulsed with laughter at the absurdity of it all, and finally the motor man whizzed away, leaving the Frenchwomen chuckling over their marvelous sales, and carrying some excited tourists, who wondered why they had paid so much for ordinary post− cards.

Patty's recital of the affair at dinner that night greatly amused the Farringtons, and Mr. Farrington declared that the whole scene was typical of human nature.

"As you had cornered the market, Patty," he said, "why didn't you sell your Conde pictures at top prices, or else put them up at auction?"

"For the very good reason that I wanted them myself," replied Patty, "and if I had sold them, perhaps I never could get any more."

"Well, we, too, have achieved an important success to−day," went on Mr. Farrington; "we have secured a foothold in this somewhat uncertain city, and we shall soon have a roof over our heads that we can call our

own, for a time, at least."

"Oh, you took the house, then," exclaimed Elise; "how jolly! and when are we going there to live?"

"As soon as it can be made habitable," said Mrs. Farrington; "they call it a furnished house, but it is not at all my idea of furnishing. It's about as well appointed as a summer cottage might be at home. The drawing−room is all right, and the dining−room is fairly good, but the bedrooms must be almost entirely refurnished. Some day, my children, you shall go shopping with me to select things for your own rooms."

This shopping expedition took place soon, and Patty, with her usual happy enthusiasm, thought it was quite as much fun as any other mode of entertainment.

Mrs. Farrington and the two girls, driven by the chauffeur, went flying around in the automobile, stopping now at one beautiful shop, and now at another, and buying lovely things.

"It seems foolish," said Mrs. Farrington, "to buy a lot of furniture for a rented house, but we must be comfortable through the winter, and then the prettiest of the things we'll take back to America with us."

The girls were allowed to make their own selections, and Patty decided that her room should be green and white, while Elise chose pink.

The girls had not yet seen the house, but Mrs. Farrington told them that two large rooms adjoining each other on the third floor were to be for their use, and though the principal articles of furniture were already in them, they might choose some pretty appointments, such as writing− desks, work−tables or book−racks.

Also, they selected some little French gilded chairs and queer−shaped ottomans, Patty thinking the while how pretty these would look when transported back to her New York home.

After about a week more of hotel life the Farringtons moved to their own home.

It was a good−sized house on the Bois de Boulogne, and stood in a small but well−laid out park or garden.

There were stone porticos on which opened long, French windows, and the high ceilings and winding staircase with broad landings gave the house an attractive, though foreign air.

Like all French houses, the decorations were elaborate, and mirrors were everywhere, and crystal chandeliers and painted panels abounded.

It was all of great interest to Patty, who dearly loved home−making, and who saw great possibilities for the unusual combination of American cosiness in a Paris house.

Mrs. Farrington was delighted when she discovered Patty's capabilities in domestic matters, and declared that she would not wish for a better assistant.

It was Patty's deft fingers that transformed stiff and formal rooms into apartments of real comfort and homelikeness. It was very often Patty's taste that selected simple decorations or ornaments which toned down the gorgeousness of the original scheme.

The two girls' own rooms were greatly successful.

Patty had bought a number of pictures and statuettes and various Parisian ornaments, which she was delighted

to arrange in a room of her very own. She helped Elise with hers, too, for though Elise had good taste and a fine appreciation of the fitness of things, she had not Patty's capability of execution and facility of arrangement.

As they sat for the first time around their own family dinner table, Mr. Farrington exclaimed, "Now this is what I call comfortable! It's unpretentious, but it's way ahead of that gorgeously dressed−up hotel, which made one feel, though well taken care of, like a traveller and a wayfarer. But I expect you were sorry to leave it, eh, Patty?"

"No I wasn't," said Patty; "I liked it tremendously for a time, as it was a novel experience for me; but I'm quite as pleased as you are, Mr. Farrington, to be in a home once more."

"And the next thing to do," said Mrs. Farrington, "is to get masters for you girls."

"Shall we go to school, mother?" asked Elise.

"No, I think not. I don't like the idea of your going to a French school, and, too, I think you'd enjoy it better, to study a little at home. You needn't have a great variety of lessons. I think if you study the French language and French history, it will be enough for you in the way of school books. Then Patty ought to take singing lessons, and if Elise wants to learn to paint pictures, she will probably never get a better opportunity to do so."

This plan seemed to suit perfectly the young ladies most interested, and Mr. Farrington said he would take it upon himself to find the right masters for them.

So the family settled down into a life which was quiet compared with the first few weeks of their stay in Paris.

The masters came every morning except Saturday, and that day was always devoted to sightseeing or pleasures of some sort. Occasionally, too, a whole holiday was taken during the week, for Mr. Farrington said he had a vivid recollection of a certain proverb which discussed the result of all work and no play.

Patty declared she was never afraid of any lack of play hours in the Farrington family, and she enjoyed alike both her morning tasks and her afternoon pleasures.

Twice a week a professor came to give her singing lessons, and it was arranged that at the same hour Elise should be busy with her drawing master. Though Elise did not show promise of becoming a really great artist, her parents thought it wise to cultivate such talent as she possessed, if only for the pleasure it might give to herself and her friends.

So Elise worked away at her drawing from casts, and occasionally painted flowers in water colours, while Patty practised her scales, and learned to sing some pretty little French ballads.

Though neither of the girls was possessed of genius, they both had talent, and by application to study they found themselves rapidly improving in their arts.

As Patty had expected, she developed an intense interest in French history, and as Elise shared this taste, they learned their lessons well, and also read books of history outside of school hours quite from choice.

[Illustration with caption: "They also read books of history outside of school hours quite from choice"]

There were a great many Americans residing in Paris, and it was not long before Mr. and Mrs. Farrington renewed old acquaintances there, and also made new ones among the American colony.

This meant pleasant associates for the girls, and they soon became acquainted with several American families.

Indeed, the house next to their own, was occupied by an American family named Barstow, with whom the Farringtons soon made friends.

The young people of the family were Rosamond, a girl of seventeen, and her brother Martin, a few years older.

The first time they met, Elise and Patty took a decided liking to the Barstows, and Rosamond often spent the afternoon with them, while they chatted gaily over their work, or went driving with them along the beautiful Bois, or visited the galleries with them.

CHAPTER XV. ST. GERMAIN

The weeks went happily by. Patty became quite accustomed to French ways and customs, and was becoming proficient in the language.

One of her greatest treats was the Opera. Mr. Farrington had engaged a box for the season, and the girls attended nearly every matinee performance. The first few times Patty could scarcely listen to the music for her admiration of the wonderful building, but after she became more accustomed to its glories, it did not so distract her attention from the stage. Mr. and Mrs. Farrington occasionally gave opera parties, and dinner parties, too, but the girls were not allowed to attend these. Although indulgent in many ways, Mrs. Farrington was somewhat strict about the conventions for her young people; but so gently were her rules laid down, that they never seemed harsh or stern.

On nights when dinner parties were given, the girls had their dinner in the family breakfast−room, and often were allowed to invite Rosamond, and sometimes Martin to their feasts.

Another delight to Patty was the fact that she was learning to drive a motor−car. It had always fascinated her, and she had always felt that she could do it if she only knew how. Once when she timidly expressed this wish to Mr. Farrington, he replied, "Why certainly, child, I'll be glad to teach you, and some day, who knows, you may have a car of your own."

So whenever opportunity allowed Mr. Farrington gave her lessons in the art, and often Patty would sit in front with the chauffeur and he would teach her many things about the mechanism, until she became really quite accomplished as a driver.

Of course, she was never allowed to run the car alone, nor did she wish to, but it was great fun to handle the wheel herself and feel the car obey her lightest touch. Sometimes she would grow elated at her success and put on the high speed, but always under the supervision and protecting guidance of Mr. Farrington or the affable and amiable chauffeur.

It was a great surprise to Patty when she learned that Christmas was not made so much of in Paris as with us, but that the great fete−day was New Year's Day, or, as they called it, JOUR DE L'AN.

But Patty was not baffled by French customs entirely, and decreed that the Farrington household should hold a Christmas celebration all by themselves. This they did, and the day to them was a pleasant one indeed.

But this was a minor episode compared to the fact that old Ma'amselle Labesse sent them all an urgent invitation to come to her at St. Germain to spend New Year's Day.

The girls were rejoiced at this invitation, but feared they could not accept it, as Mr. and Mrs. Farrington had an engagement in Paris for the festival.

But after much discussion of the matter, and much pleading on the part of the young people, it was arranged that Patty and Elise should go two days before the New Year Day and spend a whole week with the old Ma'amselle in her chateau. A little tactful managing on Patty's part secured an invitation also for Rosamond Barstow, and the three girls, who had become almost inseparable, started off together in great glee.

Mr. Farrington sent them out in the motor−car, in care of his chauffeur, and Patty, to her great delight and satisfaction, drove the car all the way there.

St. Germain is a beautiful town, which dates back about eight centuries, when it was a favourite summer residence of French royalty. The forest is among the most beautiful of all French woods, and as Patty drove through the roads of the deep forest it seemed like enchanted ground. They spun along the Terrasse, enjoying the view below, and after passing many beautiful villas and residences came to the old chateau of Ma'amselle Labesse.

After passing a porter's lodge at the entrance, they went on for a long distance through the park before reaching the house Then alighting at the main portal, the doors were thrown open by footmen, and the girls were ushered in.

Ma'amselle herself received them in the entrance hall. She looked quite different from the way she had appeared on board the steamer, as she was now attired in very elegant and formal robes, with her white hair arranged after the fashion of Madame de Pompadour.

She cordially welcomed the three young girls, making emphatic assertions at her delight in seeing them, but her warmest welcome was bestowed upon Patty.

"But it is herself!" she cried; "of a certainty, it is ma petite Patty. Ciel! but it is that I am glad to see you!"

Patty returned the greetings with polite warmth, and indeed she was really fond of the quaint old lady.

The girls were all amazed at the grandeur and beauty of Ma'amselle's home, and were unable to repress their admiration; but Ma'amselle was pleased rather than otherwise that they should express their pleasure.

"But surely," she said, "it is indeed the beautiful home. This hall! It is not of a smallness! And in the old days it welcomed royal guests."

The hall was indeed magnificent. It was decorated with frescoes and mural paintings by well−known French artists. It contained statues and paintings and clocks and vases that might have graced a museum. The armour of knights stood about, and valuable trophies graced the wainscoted walls.

A wide carved staircase wound spirally up from one end; and at Ma'amselle's suggestion, the girls were ushered at once to their room. French maids were sent to them to unlock their boxes and assist with their toilettes, and Patty was glad that she now knew enough French at least to make herself understood.

Rosamond Barstow was a girl who never hesitated to get what she wanted if possible, and now it suited her purpose to dismiss the French maids; in her voluble if somewhat imperfect French, she told them that the

young ladies wished to be alone for a time and would ring for the maids later.

"I just HAD to talk to you girls alone for a minute," she exclaimed, "or I should have exploded. Did you EVER see such a gorgeous castle in this world? I didn't know your old Ma'amselle lived like this! How shall we ever live up to it?"

"I didn't know she lived like this, either," said Patty, laughing at Rosamond's expressions; "and I don't care whether we can live up to it or not. We'll put on our best frocks and our best manners, and that's all we can do. But, oh girls, I feel like a princess in this room!"

"Then just come and look at mine," cried Elise, who was in the next apartment.

The girls had been given rooms near each other and which, with their anterooms and dressing−rooms, filled up the whole of a large wing of the chateau.

Patty's, as she expressed it to the other girls, looked more like a very large cretonne shirtwaist box than anything else. For the walls and ceiling were covered with a chintz tapestry; the lambrequins, window curtains and door hangings were all of the same material and pattern, and the bed itself was draped and heavily curtained with the same. The bed curtains and window curtains were fastened back with huge rosettes of the chintz, and Patty remarked that it must have been brought by the acre.

The furniture was of the quaintest old French pattern, and so old− fashioned and unusual were the appointments all about, that Patty knew neither the names nor the use of many of them.

"I'd rather sleep in a "cosy−corner" than in that bed," remarked Rosamond; "I know that whole affair will tumble on your head in the night. It's perfectly gorgeous to look at, but seems to me these old things are 'most too old. If I were Ma'amselle I'd root them all out and refurnish."

"You'd be sent home if Ma'amselle heard you talk like that," admonished Patty, "and I'm not a bit afraid of that tent arrangement tumbling down. It's most picturesque, and I shall lie in it, feeling like a retired empress."

"Come, Rosamond," said Elise, "call back those comic opera maids you sent away, and let's get dressed. We mustn't keep Ma'amselle waiting, though I'd ever so much rather perch up here and talk by ourselves. But she's a dear old lady, and we must do our part as well as she does hers."

So Rosamond rang and the maids came back, wondering what strange young demoiselles they had to wait upon now.

Patty allowed herself to be dressed by the deft−fingered maid, and being ready first, stepped out on the little balcony opening from her window to wait for the others.

A beautiful view met her eye. The lawn was terraced in many slopes, and the flower−beds and shrubberies, though arranged with French precision, formed a beautiful landscape. There were fountains playing, and here and there arbours and trellises and pleasant paths.

But the girls called to her, and Patty joined them, and twining their arms about each other's waists, they walked down the broad staircase.

They were all in white, and their pretty frocks and dainty slippers made a modern note that contrasted strangely but pleasantly with the antique relics and ancient atmosphere of the chateau.

When they reached the great hall, a footman ushered them into the grand drawing−room where they were to await Ma'amselle.

She soon appeared, resplendent in her old−time grandeur, and going to greet her, the girls kissed her hand, an old custom which greatly pleased their hostess.

"But it is of a joy to see you!" she exclaimed. "Me, I am so much alone. It is not good to be alone, and yet, it is my choice. I stay in the home of my ancestors, therefore I stay alone. Voila!" she shrugged her shoulders, as if to emphasise the fact that it was more joy to live alone in the old chateau than to be anywhere else.

"But I am not always alone," she went on; "no, it is that my Henri, my nephew, comes to me at occasion. And he comes soon. Jour de l'an always brings him. He spends the day with me. He makes me a pleasure. And you shall see him, you young ladies. Ah, how he is beautiful!" The old lady clasped her hands and turned her gaze upward, and the girls were fain to believe that her nephew was indeed a wonderful specimen of humanity.

Then the dinner was announced, and leaning on the arm of an old footman, who was quite as dignified as she was herself, Ma'amselle led the way to the dining−room.

The table appointments, Patty thought, would have done justice to any of the most celebrated characters in French history, had they been there to enjoy them.

Although not exactly embarrassed, the girls were a little bit awed at splendour so unusual to them. To Rosamond it seemed distinctly humorous that three such young American girls should be honoured guests in such a regal household; to Elise it seemed extremely interesting, and the novelty and strangeness of it all impressed her more than the grandeur.

But Patty, with her usual quick ability to accept a situation, seemed to take everything for granted, and made herself quite at home. The wonderfully garbed footmen who stood behind their chairs like statues, except when they were wound up, nearly made Rosamond giggle; but to Patty, they were merely part of the performance, and once accepted as such, of course, they belonged in the picture.

This readiness to adapt herself to any circumstances was inherent in Patty's nature, and she sat there and conversed with her hostess as charmingly and naturally as if at a plainer board.

Rosamond was much impressed by what she chose to consider Patty's "nerve," and determining not to be outdone, she exerted herself to be bright and entertaining, and as Elise was always more or less of a chatterbox, the three girls provided much entertainment, and their hostess was delighted with her congenial guests.

After the rather lengthy dinner was at an end, the old Ma'amselle took the girls through various apartments, and showed them many of the treasures of the Chateau.

Then they went to the music room and Patty was persuaded to sing.

She sang several songs, and then they all sang choruses together, in some of which the old Ma'amselle joined with her thin but still sweet voice.

"And now," she said at last, "it is to tear the heart but I must send you babies to bed. Me, I sleep so badly, but you young girls, of a surety, must have the tranquil rest. It is then 'Bon Soir,' and in the morning you are to amuse yourselves. You have but to ring for your chocolate, when you awake, and then pursue your own

pleasures until noon, when I will meet you at dejeuner."

After affectionate good−nights, the girls went to their rooms, and a half hour later, wrapped in kimonos and with their long braids hanging down their backs, they were all perched on Patty's big bed alone at last.

"But it is of a gorgeousness," exclaimed Rosamond, mimicking, but not unkindly, the old Ma'amselle's imperfect English; "me, I never have so many feetmen at home! Is it that you do, Patty?"

"But I like it all," exclaimed Patty, giggling at comical Rosamond, but standing up for her own opinions; "of course I'm not envious a mite, and I don't know even as I'd care to live in this way all the time, but it's lovely for a few days, and I'm just going to pretend I'm La Grande Mademoiselle."

"Do," cried Elise, "and I'll be Empress Josephine. Who'll you be, Rosamond?"

"Oh, I'll be Queen Elizabeth, who has come to visit you. There's nothing French about me, so there's no use pretending, but I might be an English Queen."

"Well, Josephine and Elizabeth, you'd better run to bed now," said Patty, "for I'd like the exclusive occupancy of this upholstered tennis− court myself."

Amazed to find that it was after midnight, the other girls ran laughing away, and Patty climbed in behind the chintz curtains, almost persuading herself that she was a royal Princess after all.

Next morning the Queen and the Empress came bounding in, and shook La Grande Mademoiselle till she awoke.

"This bed is the biggest," announced Queen Elizabeth, "and so we're all going to have our chocolate in here."

"Well, I like the way you monopolise my apartments!" exclaimed Patty.

"I'm glad you like it," said Rosamond; "but we'd come just the same if you didn't. Now stop your giggling, while I ring the bell, and see what happens."

A dainty French waitress answered the summons, and smilingly asked for orders.

Patty modestly asked for chocolate and rolls for them all, but the French maid volunteered the information that Ma'amselle was of the opinion that the young ladies would like an omelette, and perhaps a jar of marmalade.

[Illustration with caption: "They were all perched on Patty's big bed alone at last"]

"Heavenly!" exclaimed Rosamond, rolling her eyes in ecstacy, and the waitress departed on her errand.

"This is the jolliest picnic yet," declared Elise, a little later as she sat, propped up by pillows, in a corner of the big chintz tent, and devoured flaky hot rolls and apricot marmalade.

The girls were each in a corner of the great bed, which left ample room in the centre for the tray full of good things, and though perhaps an unusual place for a picnic, it was a most hilarious festivity.

CHAPTER XVI. AN EXPECTED GUEST

The three girls spent a delightful morning exploring the old Chateau, and its park and garden. The clear air was brisk and keen, and a few hours out of doors sent them back into the house with rosy cheeks and bright eyes.

They discovered a delightful room that they had not seen before, which was built out from one of the wings, and whose walls and ceiling were entirely of glass.

"This is something like your room at home, Elise," said Patty, as they seated themselves there.

"Not very much; my room is glass, to be sure, but it's square, and this circular apartment is quite a different matter. And did you ever see such exquisite furniture? I can quite believe myself an Empress when I sit gracefully on this gilded blue satin sofa."

"I'm glad you think you're sitting gracefully," said Rosamond, laughing at Elise, who, in her favourite position, had one foot tucked up under her.

"I don't care," said Elise. "Probably Josephine would have liked to sit on her foot, only she didn't dare."

"Her empire would have tottered if she had done such a thing as that," observed Patty, "but as it tottered anyway, she might as well have sat as she pleased."

Ma'amselle joined the young people at luncheon time, and although she called it breakfast, the repast was quite as elaborate and formal in its way as dinner had been. But the girls brought to it three healthy young appetites, that did full justice to the exquisite viands set before them.

At the table, Ma'amselle announced to the girls her plans for their entertainment.

It seemed that she expected her nephew that evening, to spend a few days, and as the next day would be the great festival of New Year's Day, she had planned a celebration of the event.

So she proposed that except for a short automobile drive that afternoon the girls should rest and keep themselves fresh for dinner−time, when she expected the arrival of her paragon of a nephew.

From her description of the young man, the girls were led to think that he must be a sort of fairy prince in disguise, and not very much disguised, either.

So in the afternoon the three girls and Ma'amselle went for a drive in one of the great touring cars, of which Ma'amselle had several.

Patty begged to be allowed to sit in front with the chauffeur, and rather astonished that impassive factotum by asking to be allowed to drive.

He was very much disinclined to grant her request, lest it should displease the old Ma'amselle, of whom all her servants stood greatly in awe; but when Patty appealed to her hostess, and received a not very willing permission, the chauffeur allowed her to change seats with him, and really drive the car.

He was greatly surprised at Patty's skill, and became more than ever convinced that Americans were a strange race.

Their route lay past the railway station and along the beautiful terrace which skirts the forest of St. Germain on one side, and commands such a marvellous view of the valley and the Seine.

Returning home, the girls were left to their own devices until dinner− time, when they were adjured to array themselves appropriately to do homage with the wonderful Henri.

"Henri must be something out of the ordinary," declared Elise, when the girls were alone.

"Probably not," said Patty; "only Ma'amselle thinks him so."

"At any rate I'm anxious to see him," declared Elise, "for I don't know any real live French boy except that Pauvret who was on the steamer, and he was too lackadaisical for any use."

"Well, I don't apprehend M'sieu Henri will be much better," said Patty; "I don't care much about Frenchmen, anyway. What are you going to wear, girls?"

"I shall wear my red chifon," said Rosamond; "it's most becoming to me; I'm a perfect dream in it, and I shall quite cut out you other girls with our foreign prince."

"Pooh!" said Elise; "he won't look at you when he sees me in my white tulle. I'm the Frenchiest thing in that you ever saw!"

"Oh girls," cried Patty, "I'm going to wear my light blue crepe de chine. And then we'll be red, white and blue! Won't that be a graceful compliment to the French colours, as well as to our own dear flag!"

"Long may it wave!" cried Rosamond, and then following Patty's lead, the girls sang the "Star Spangled Banner" with true American heartiness and patriotism. This they followed up with the "Marseillaise," in which they were interrupted by the appearance of one of the maids in a great state of excitement.

In breathless haste, which made her French difficult for them to understand, she explained that Ma'amselle had had a telegram of dreadful import, and would the young ladies attend upon her at once.

The maid ushered the wondering girls to Ma'amselle's apartments and found her in her dressing−room, in the hands of her maid, who was assisting her in a hasty toilette.

The tears were rolling down the old lady's cheeks, and she seemed to be in a state of trembling agitation.

"Ah, mes enfants" she cried, "but it is news of the most dreadful! Mon Henri, my well−beloved nephew, his arm, it is broken! Ah the sadness for the poor boy. Me, I fly to him at once, but at once! You, but you will excuse me, you will forgive, because of the dear boy! I go to Paris, but I return, bringing my boy with me."

It was rather a mixed−up explanation, but the girls finally gathered that Henri had had the misfortune to break his arm, and had sent for his aunt to come to Paris and spend the New Year Day with him instead of taking his intended trip to St. Germain.

Henri had not known that his aunt had the young ladies visiting her, and so had no idea that he was disarranging her plans to such an extent.

"He can come!" she exclaimed; "bah, it is not his legs; it is but his arm. Of a certainty, one does not walk on one's arm! But the dear boy! I shall go to him and explain all. Then we will return, and there shall be feasting and happiness. A broken arm is not so much, it will mend, but to him I must fly!"

Patty endeavoured to find out definitely the old lady's plan, but she could only gather that there was no time to be lost, that Ma'amselle must catch the seven o'clock train.

To be sure of this, she must leave the house at half−past six.

And so she started, in her swift touring car, accompanied by her maid and a groom, in addition to her capable and trusty chauffeur.

Away they went, and the girls returned to the drawing−room to consider the situation.

"It was all over so quickly," said Patty, "that I hardly know whether I'm on my head or my heels. What a whirlwind Ma'amselle is!"

"Yes, she flew around like a hen with its head off, or whatever French hens do," said Rosamond; "if she whisks that broken−armed boy home as fast as she whisked herself off they'll be here in a minute."

"She can't," said the practical Elise. "If she takes that seven o'clock train, she won't get to Paris until nearly eight, and then, I don't know where the interesting invalid lives, but anyway, to kidnap him and get back here again is a matter of several hours. I don't expect to see them before midnight."

"What shall we do?" said Patty; "shall we have our dinner?"

"I don't believe we'll have any say in the matter," volunteered Elise. "I think that waxwork butler, and the 'feetmen,' as Rosamond calls them, will arrange our lives for us, and we'll be simply under orders."

"What an exciting experience," exclaimed Patty; "to think of us three American girls, alone except for the servants, in a gorgeous old French Chateau! I feel as if I must do something to live up to my privileges."

"Suppose anything should happen that Ma'amselle never came back," suggested Rosamond; "we could take possession of the place and live here forever."

"I don't think much of that plan," declared Patty; "New York is good enough for me, as a permanent residence. But I do want to do somethink in keeping with the atmosphere of this place. If there's a dungeon keep on the premises, I think I'll throw you two girls into it, after having first bound you in chains."

"You mean a donjon keep, Patty," said Elise; "you're so careless with your mediaeval diction."

A noise in the hall, as of an arrival, startled the girls, and rising impulsively, they flew out to see what it was all about.

To their astonishment, they found the footmen holding open the great front doors, while three stalwart young men entered.

The middle one, who was partly supported by the other two, had his arm in a sling, and as he was undoubtedly a Frenchman, the girls were sure at once that he was no other than the worshipful Henri.

At sight of the three astonished girls the three young men looked equally amazed, and whipping off their caps, they made profound bows to the strangers.

It was a comical situation, for doubtless Henri had expected to see his aunt, and was instead confronted by three unmistakably American misses.

Of the six, quick−witted Patty grasped the situation first.

"You are Monsieur Henri Labesse, is it not so?" she said, advancing toward the broken−armed one.

In her haste and bewilderment, Patty spoke in English, forgetting that the young man might not understand her native tongue.

But he answered in English quite as good as her own, though with a decided French accent, "Yes, Mademoiselle, I am Henri Labesse. I make you my homage, These are my two friends, Cecil Villere and Philippe Baring."

"We are glad to welcome you," said Patty, in her pretty, frank way; "these are my friends, Mademoiselle Farrington and Mademoiselle Barstow. We are guests of your aunt."

"Ah, my aunt!" said Henri, as the other boys acknowledged the introductions, "where is she? Did she not get my telegram?"

"She did, indeed," returned Patty, smiling, "and she went flying off to Paris."

"But my second telegram; I wired again, saying I would come here."

"No, she did not get your second telegram, only the first one announcing your accident."

"And she has gone! oh how dreadful! but can we not stop her? Let us send post haste after her."

"It's no use," said Elise; "she has been gone about ten minutes, and in her fast car she is now more than half way to the station."

"Did you boys come in an automobile?" asked Patty.

"No," replied Mr. Villere; "we came in a rickety old cab from the station, and it has gone back."

Patty's thoughts were flying rapidly. It seemed dreadful to let the old Ma'amselle go to Paris on a wild−goose chase, when if she could but be stopped, and brought back home, it would save the long and troublesome journey and be a delight to them all.

She not only thought quickly, but she determined to act quickly.

"Can either of you boys drive an automobile?" she demanded of the two uninjured guests.

With voluble lamentations the two confessed their inability in that direction.

"Elise," cried Patty, turning upon her a look, which Elise well knew demanded implicit obedience, "you stay right here and play you're the hostess of this Chateau, and see that you do it properly. Rosamond, you come with me!"

Without a further glance at the astonished young men, without a word to the pompous butler who was hovering in the background, Patty grasped Rosamond by the arm and pulled her away with her.

CHAPTER XVII. A MOTOR RIDE

Bareheaded, and still dragging the astonished Rosamond, Patty rushed outdoors, into the gathering dusk, and down toward the stables.

Confronting an astonished groom, she asked him in forcible, if not entirely correct French, whether there was an assistant chauffeur, or any groom who could run a motor car.

She was informed that there was not, that Ma'amselle's chauffeur himself and the groom who had accompanied him were the only ones in the establishment who knew anything about automobiles. If Mademoiselle desired a coach, now?

But Mademoiselle did not desire a coach, and, moreover, Mademoiselle seemed to know perfectly well what she did desire.

Beckoning to the groom, who followed her, she went straight to the garage where the automobiles were kept. There was a touring car there, almost the same as the one she had driven that afternoon, and Patty looked at it uncertainly.

There was also a small runabout, but that was of a different make, of which she knew nothing.

"Get in," she said briefly to the groom, and she pointed to the tonneau.

Accustomed to implicit obedience, the groom got in, hatless as he was, and folding his arms stiffly, sat up as straight as if it were a most usual experience.

"Hop up in front, Rosamond," went on Patty, "and don't try to stop me, for I'm going to do exactly this; I'm going to the station and catch Ma'amselle before she gets on that seven o'clock train. There isn't one− half second to spare; we can't even get our hats, and if we should stop to talk it over with anybody, there'd be no use in going at all. Now hush up, Rosamond, don't say a word to me, I've all I can do to manage this thing!"

As Rosamond hadn't said a word, Patty need not have insisted on her silence. But Patty was so excited that it made her quick of speech and a little uncertain of temper.

She started slowly out of the garage, trying to remember exactly the instructions she had so often received about starting. They went safely out into the park road, and along toward the porter's lodge. Patty's heart beat fast as she wondered uncertainly whether the porter would open the gate for her or not, but she carried off matters with a high hand, and ordered in the name of Ma'amselle Labesse that the gate be opened, and it was. Through it they went, and out on to the high road. Patty put on a higher speed, and they flew along like mad.

"Now you can speak if you want to, Rosamond," she said in a strained, tense voice; "or no, perhaps you'd better not, either. There's something the matter! The engine thumps; but it's all right, I know what to do. If only the road keeps smooth, if we come to no ditches, if we don't burst a tire! speak to me, Rosamond, do for goodness' sake say something!"

"It's all right, Patty," said Rosamond, in a quiet voice, for she knew that the greatest danger that threatened Patty was her own over− excitement. "You're all right, Patty; keep on just as you are; be careful of this down grade, and you can easily take the next hill."

"Good for you, Rosamond," said Patty, with a really natural laugh; "you're a brick! My nerves ARE strained, but I won't think of that, I'll think only of my car. Oh Rosamond, if only the road isn't bad in any place!"

"It isn't, Patty, the road is perfect. Steady, now, dear, there's a motor coming, but you can easily pass it. Don't you reverse or something?"

"Keep still, Rosamond, do keep still! I know what to do!"

Rosamond kept still.

On they flew, the wind in their faces cutting like a cold blast; their hair became loosened as it streamed back from their foreheads.

It was the excitement of danger, and 'way down in their hearts both girls were enjoying it, though they did not realise it at the moment. What the statuesque groom who sat up behind felt, nobody will ever know. He kept his head up straight, and his arms folded, and his face showed a brave do−or−die expression, though there was nobody to notice it.

"Oh, Rosamond," Patty went on, still in that breathless, gasping voice, "if I only knew what time it was. There's no use whizzing at this break− neck speed if we're not going to make the train after all! If I thought it would be of any use I'd coast down this hill, but why should we kill ourselves if we don't accomplish our object?"

"Patty, don't be a goose!" and again Rosamond's cool, common−sense tones acted as a dash of cold water on Patty's overstrung nerves. "I'll tell you what time it is. You keep right on with your knitting, and I can get out my watch as easily as anything, and the next time we pass a light I'll inform you the hour."

Reassured by Rosamond's sense and nonsense, Patty drove steadily on.

"It's five minutes to seven," announced Rosamond quietly, "but we can already see the railroad lights in the distance, and besides, the train is sure to be late. But, Patty, you can't go quite so fast as we get into the town. You musn't! You'll be arrested!"

"They can't catch me," cried Patty, as she flew on, "and do keep still, Rosamond, for goodness' sake keep still!"

Rosamond smiled to herself at Patty's command to her to keep still, for she well knew it was merely a nervous exclamation and meant nothing.

On they went, Patty sounding the horn when it was unnecessary, and failing to sound it when it was needed, but this made no difference in their speed. Fortunately they met very few vehicles of any sort, and had the good luck not to run over any dogs, but as they came in full view of the station, they saw the train also approaching from the other direction.

Patty knew that she had just about time to cross the track, but no more.

Instead of worrying her, this sudden last responsibility seemed to steady her nerves, and she said quietly:

"It's all right, Rosamond. Don't speak, please, we've just time to cross the track safely, SAFELY. See, I'll open up the throttle, just a little more power, and here we go, bounding over the track!"

They seemed to jump over the track, and with a round turn, Patty made the corner, put on the brake and came to a full stop at the station just as the funny little French train wheezed in.

But the girl could do no more; as the car came to a standstill Patty's hands dropped from the wheel, and she promptly fainted away.

With no notion of losing the game at the last moment, Rosamond sprang from the car, calling to the groom to look out for Patty, and then ran, panting, to the train.

She grasped the old Ma'amselle as she was about to step on the train, and forcibly pulled her away.

Owing to the old lady's angry and excited exclamation at being thus detained, she could not understand what Rosamond was trying to tell her.

"Make her comprehend!" she cried to the maid, who was accompanying her mistress, "make her understand, quick! she must not go to Paris! Monsieur Henri is at the Chateau!"

But the French maid could understand no English, and in despair Rosamond turned to the group of people who had gathered about them.

Her dignity suddenly returned, and her common sense with it.

"Will somebody who can talk French," she said, "explain to this lady that she need not go to the house of her nephew with the broken arm, because he is already at the Chateau of his aunt."

The moment she had uttered this sentence, its resemblance to the Ollendorff exercises struck Rosamond as very funny, and she began to giggle.

But the old Ma'amselle at last understood the state of the case, and, her face beaming with smiles, she turned away from the train and back to the station.

Patty had come to herself after her momentary unconsciousness, and was all right once more, though physically tired from her exciting exertions.

Ma'amselle's own chauffeur was overcome with amazement when he learned what Patty had done, and took off his cap to her, with the air of one offering homage to a brave heroine.

As for Ma'amselle, she petted Patty, and cried over her, and thanked her, and blessed her, to an extent that could not have been exceeded had Patty saved her from the guillotine.

Then Patty was packed into the back seat of the big car, with Ma'amselle on one side of her and Rosamond on the other. And with this precious freight the chauffeur started off, leaving the groom who had gone with the first party to bring home the other car.

Though there was not much talking done on the way home, Ma'amselle held Patty's hand closely clasped in her own, and the girl felt well repaid by the old lady's unspoken gratitude for the trouble and danger she had undergone.

When they reached home, and Ma'amselle had warmly welcomed her nephew, there was great to−do over Patty's daring journey.

"All's well that ends well," said Elise, "but you'll catch it, Patty Fairfield, when mother hears of your performance. If I had been in Rosamond's place you would have had to drive that car out over my dead body!"

"That's why I didn't take you, Elise," said Patty, laughing; "I knew you'd raise a terrible row about my going, while Rosamond obeyed my orders like a meek little lamb."

"You should at least have let me accompany you, Mademoiselle Fairfield," said Philippe Baring; "I cannot drive an automobile, I regret to say, but I might have been a protection for you."

Patty didn't see any especial way in which Mr. Baring could have protected her, but she didn't say so, and only thanked him prettily for his interest in her welfare.

Henry Labesse was enthusiastic in his admiration and praise of Patty, and declared that American girls were wonders.

Ma'amselle was so pleased to think she had been saved a useless trip to Paris, and to think that she should be able now to spend the evening with her young guests, and above all, to think that her beloved nephew was with her, that she hovered around like an excited butterfly from one to another.

Then she sent them all away to dress for dinner, which, though belated, was to be a merry feast.

And, indeed, it proved so.

Old Ma'amselle came down first, and stood in the grandest drawing−room to receive her honoured guests.

The three boys came next, in their immaculate evening dress, which Henri had managed to get into in spite of his sling.

Then came the girls, the three, as usual, walking side by side, with their arms about each other. They had carried out their plan of red, white and blue dresses, and made a pretty picture as they entered the drawing−room, and bowed in unison to their hostess.

The dinner was especially elaborate as to decorations, and confections that would please the young people, and the chef had done his very best to make his part of the occasion a worthy one.

Henri Labesse proved to be an exceedingly jolly young man, quite bubbling over with gay spirits and witty sallies He did not hesitate to joke with his aunt, who, notwithstanding her dignity, was never offended at her nephew's bantering speeches.

The other two boys, though a trifle more formal than Henri, and perhaps a little bit shy, after the manner of very young Frenchmen, were willing to do their share, and as our three American girls were in the highest of spirits, the feast was a gay one, indeed.

Ma'amselle gazed around at her brood with such delight and satisfaction that she almost forgot to eat.

Over and over again she wanted it explained to her how Henri had broken his arm in his gymnasium class, how he had thought he would not be able to go to St. Germain, and so had telegraphed his aunt to come to him, and how, later, the doctor had patched him up so that he could go, and he had followed close upon the heels of a second telegram.

The delayed message arrived while they were at dinner, and Henri twisted it up, and lighting it at a candle flame, burned it, saying it was a bad spirit which had worked them ill, but which should trouble them no more.

Then Ma'amselle wanted to hear again all about Patty's wonderful ride, the difficulties she had encountered, the nerve strain she had experienced, and the help and comfort Rosamond had been to her.

"And," concluded Patty as she wound up her recital, "I don't want any one to tell Mrs. Farrington about it, because I want to tell her myself."

Elise smiled, for she well knew that Patty's wheedlesome ways would persuade Mrs. Farrington to look leniently on the episode, although it had, indeed, been a desperately dangerous piece of business.

But Ma'amselle Labesse asserted that after she had said what she had to say to Mrs. Farrington, she knew that Patty would not be reprimanded by her, but rather be deemed worthy of the Cross of the Legion of Honour.

Patty smiled at them all, in reality caring little, even if she were reprimanded. She knew she had done a daring thing, but she had kept her head, and had come through it safely, and having won, she felt it was her right to laugh.

"Are all American girls so brave and fearless?" inquired Mr. Villere.

"I think most of them are," said Patty, "but you must understand I was not recklessly daring. I have had many lessons in motoring, and I'm a fairly expert driver. Of course, everybody is liable to accidents, and I took my chances on them, but not on my driving."

"You took chances on losing your head," remarked Rosamond.

"So did Marie Antoinette," returned Patty saucily, "but you see I fared better than she did."

CHAPTER XVIII. A NEW YEAR FETE

The next morning was the day of the New Year. As usual, every one did as he or she chose during the morning hours, but luncheon time brought them all together again.

The three boys had been out of doors all the morning, and seemed glad to return again to the society of the American strangers.

The girls had been happy enough by themselves, and though they liked the French boys well enough, had privately agreed that they were not half as nice as American boys.

But half a dozen young people, if good−natured and enthusiastic, are bound to have a merry time together, and as the six grew better acquainted their national differences wore away somewhat.

Ma'amselle announced that the fete of the day would be an early evening party, followed by a supper.

She had invited the neighbouring gentry, both young and old, as was her custom on Jour de L'AN, and, as she explained, she was making it "more of an elaborateness" this year by asking her guests to come in fancy costumes.

This delighted the girls, for they all loved dressing up, but they had no notion where their fancy costumes were to come from.

But Ma'amselle replied, "It is arranged," and during the afternoon she led them to a large apartment which she called the Room of the Robes.

Here she displayed to the enraptured girls costume after costume of wonderful beauty and magnificence.

The Labesse line had been a long one, and apparently its ladies had never worn out or given away any of their robes. Nor its men either, for there were costumes of knights and courtiers, some of which would surely fit the three young men at present under the Chateau roof.

The girls were bewildered at the maze of costumes, and scarcely knew which to select.

Finally Patty chose a bewitching Watteau affair, with a short quilted petticoat, and a looped overdress made of the daintiest flowered silk imaginable. The petticoat was of white satin, and the overdress of palest blue, with garlands of pink roses. The pointed bodice laced up over a dainty neckerchief, and it was further adorned with borders of pearls.

Rosamond pounced upon a scarlet and gold brocade, which she declared was her ideal of a perfect gown.

Elise found a pink brocatelle, embroidered with silver, and after they had selected head−dresses, fans, and many accessories to their costumes, they scurried away to their own rooms to try them on.

"Aren't we having the time of our life?" exclaimed Rosamond, as she peacocked about, gazing over her shoulder at her long court train.

"Yes, indeed," said Patty, with a little sigh of content; "I adore this dressing−up performance, and really, girls, those boys are quite human under their French polish."

"They're not so bad," said Elise, "if only they wouldn't bow so often, and so exactly like dancing masters."

"Well, it's all fun," said Patty, "and I'm going to get that awfully nice Francoise to do my hair. She can make it just like an old French picture. Would you powder it?"

"No," said Elise, after a moment's consideration; "the powder shakes off all over everything and you can't make it really white, anyway; and besides, Patty, your hair is too pretty a colour to disguise with powder."

"Thank you for the compliment, Elise, though a little belated; all right, then, I'll leave my tow−coloured tresses their natural shade, and decorate them with strings of pearls and light blue ostrich tips."

The pearls and feathers and the manipulations of Franchise's artistic fingers transformed Patty's head into the semblance of an old French miniature, and even Patty herself cast an approving glance at the pretty reflection in the gilt−framed mirror.

The girls were wild with enthusiasm over Patty's appearance, though truth to tell, their own effects were scarcely less picturesque.

But Patty's style lent itself peculiarly well to the Watteau dress, and her little feet with their dainty silk stockings and high−heeled paste− buckled slippers twinkled beneath the quilted petticoat with all the grace of a real Watteau picture.

When they were ready, they walked down stairs, single file, with great pomp and dignity, to find awaiting them three polished young courtiers, who might have belonged to the Court of Versailles.

Ma'amselle herself was scarcely disguised, for in her ordinary costume she never strayed very far from the styles and materials of her beloved ancestors.

But she had on a royal robe, with a great jewelled collar, and strings of gems depending from her throat. She wore a coronet that had belonged to some of the ladies of her family, and she seemed more than ever a chatelaine of a bygone day.

The rooms were decorated with flowers and plants, in honour of the occasion, and hundreds of wax lights added to the brilliancy of the scene.

An orchestra of stringed instruments played delightful music, and Patty tried to forget entirely that she lived in the twentieth century, and pretended that time had been turned back many, many years.

The guests began to arrive, and though their costumes were of great variety, they were nearly all of French effects, and quite in harmony with the scene. Patty did not seem to care much to converse, or even to dance, but wandered around in a blissful state, enjoying the picturesque scene.

"Probably I shall never see anything like this again," she thought to herself, "and I just want to gaze at it until it is photographed on my mind forever. Oh, won't it be fun to tell Nan and papa about it!"

Just then she saw Henri Labesse approaching her.

"I fear I shall be awkward, Mademoiselle," he said, glancing at his arm in a sling, "but if you would forgive, and dance with me just once?"

"Of course I will," said Patty, her kind heart full of sympathy for the poor fellow. "We can manage quite nicely, I'm sure."

Henri put his good arm round Patty's waist, and lightly laying her hand on his shoulder, they glided away. Like most Frenchmen, young Labesse was a perfect dancer, and as Patty was skilled in the art, they danced beautifully together and seemed to be in no way impeded by the young man's broken arm.

"What a dance!" exclaimed Patty, as the music stopped; "I never met any one who dances as well as you do. If you dance like that with one arm, what would do with two ?"

"All the merit of my dancing was due to my partner," said Henri, with one of his best bows, "you are like a fluff of thistledown, or a will o' the wisp. Forgive me, but I had imagined that American ladies danced like like automobiles."

Patty laughed. "If you hadn't already paid me such a pretty compliment," she said, "I should be angry with you for that speech. But if you wish to know the truth of the matter, go and dance with Elise and Rosamond, and then come back and tell me what you think of American dancing."

Henri went away obediently, leaving Patty to decide among the group of partners who were begging her for a dance.

Later on Henri returned. "You are right," he said gravely; "the American demoiselles are, indeed, divine dancers; but, may I say it? they are yet not like you. Will you not give me one more turn, and then I must dance no more to−night; my aunt forbids it, on the absurd score that I'm an invalid."

Willingly, Patty danced again with the young man, and as this time it was a fancy dance, the exquisite grace of the couple soon attracted the attention of the onlookers. One by one the other couples ceased dancing, until at last Patty and Henri were alone upon the waxed floor, while the others looked admiringly on. Inspired by the moment, Patty indulged in some fancy steps, which were quickly understood and repeated by Henri, and

depending on a whispered word now and then for direction, they advanced and retreated, bowed and chasseed in an elaborate and exquisite minuet.

Henri's disabled arm, so far from being an obstacle to his grace, seemed to lend a certain quaint dignity to his movements, and in his court dress he looked like a wounded knight who had returned triumphant from the tourney, to dance with his fair lady.

Great applause followed the final figure of their dance, and Henri led pretty Patty, blushing with the honours heaped upon her, to his aunt. The old Ma'amselle kissed her dear little friend, and the tears in her eyes told Patty how much she had enjoyed the scene.

Then came the feast, which was all gaiety and merriment, and finally, by general acclamation, Patty was about to be crowned Queen of the New Year.

This, however, she would not allow, and taking the crown which was offered her, she went over and placed it on the white hair of her hostess, remarking that Ma'amselle was queen, and she herself the first lady in waiting.

The picture of pretty Patty as she stood by the side of the regal old lady, who sat, crowned, in her own chair of state, was worthy of a painter, and many who saw it wished it might have been transferred to canvas.

The festival broke up early, for the old Ma'amselle would not allow late hours for her children, and as soon as the last guest was gone she sent them scampering to bed, with strict injunctions for them not to reappear until noon the next day.

The next day was ushered in by a dismal, pouring rain, and certain outdoor pleasures which were planned for the afternoon had to be given up.

"But I'll tell you what we will do," announced Patty as they gathered in the great hall after luncheon, "we'll have an afternoon of American fun, and we'll show you French boys some tricks you never saw before."

Having asked permission from Ma'amselle, who would not have refused her had she asked to build a bonfire on the drawing−room carpet, Patty took her friends to the kitchen.

The fat old chef was amazed, but greatly pleased that the American demoiselles should honour his precincts, and he put himself, his assistants and all his pantries at their service.

"First," said Patty, "we're going to have a candy pull."

The French boys had no notion what a candy pull might be, but they were more than willing to learn.

A difficulty arose, however, when Patty undertook to explain to old Cesar, the CHEF, that she wanted molasses. She didn't know the French word for molasses, and when she tried SIROP, Cesar affably flew around and brought her such a variety of SIROPS that she was overwhelmed. Nor were they of any use to her, for they were merely sweet essences of various fruits, and nothing like good old New Orleans molasses.

Cesar was desolate that he could not please Patty, and berated his assistants down to the scullion for not knowing what the American young lady wanted.

As soon as he could for laughter, Henri helped matters out by explaining that what was desired was MELASSE.

"Ah! OUI, OUI, OUI!" exclaimed the delighted Cesar, and he sent the kitchen boys flying for the right thing at last.

Laughing herself at the absurdity of making molasses candy, with the assistance of half a dozen French cooks, Patty proceeded to measure out cupfuls of the treacle and pour it into a skillet.

She was enchanted with the immaculate purity and spotlessness of the French kitchen, which even that of a New England housewife cannot rival.

She had set the boys to cracking nuts and picking them out, and when the time came, she added butter and a dash of vinegar to her boiling candy, watched with great interest by Cesar, whose French repertoire did not include any such strange mess as this.

After the candy was poured out into the pans, and partly cooled, the pulling began.

Patty never liked this part of the performance herself, and she frankly said so, stating that if the others wanted to pull the taffy she would show them how. Elise declined, but Rosamond pulled away briskly, using only the tips of her fingers, and with a practiced touch, until her portion of candy became of a beautiful cream colour and then almost white. After watching her a few moments, Cesar caught the trick, and taking a large panful, pulled and tossed it about with such dexterity that they all applauded.

Henri, of course, could not join in the sport, but Philippe and Cecil undertook it bravely, though, meeting with difficulties, they soon gave it up.

"It Is a knack," said Patty, "and though I can do it fairly well, I hate it because it's so messy. But Cesar is an artist at it, so suppose we let him do the rest."

Cesar willingly consented to this plan, and the young people ran away, leaving him to finish the taffy.

"Next," said Patty, as after much washing of hands they had again assembled in the glass parlour, "I'm going to teach you to play bean bags."

Elise and Rosamond set up a shout of laughter at this, and the boys looked politely inquisitive.

Calling a footman, Patty, who greatly enjoyed the joke of being waited upon to such an absurd degree, asked him pleasantly to bring her some beans. She chose her French carefully, designating what she wanted by the term haricots.

"Oui, Mademoiselle," said the obsequious footman, hurrying away on his errand. He quickly returned, bearing a tin of French beans on a silver tray.

Patty burst into laughter, and so did the rest of them, though only Elise and Rosamond knew what the joke was about.

"Non, Non!" exclaimed Patty, between her peals of laughter; "beans, beans! oh, wait a minute, I'll tell you, I'll tell you; stop, let me think!"

After a moment's hard thought, she triumphantly exclaimed, "Feve!"

"Oui, oui, oui," exclaimed the footman, comprehendingly, and away he stalked once more. This time he returned with a large silver dish full of coffee beans, neither roasted nor ground.

These Patty accepted with many thanks. "I don't believe," she said, "that they have real bean−bag beans in this benighted country, and these will answer the purpose just as well."

Then again summoning her best French to her aid, she asked the footman to procure for her some pieces of material cloth or cotton and she indicated the size with her finger, also asking him to bring a work− basket. Then with an exhausted air she sat back in her chair and waited.

"Patty, you do beat the Dutch!" said Elise; "you know he can't find such things."

"Can't he?" said Patty complacently; "something tells me that that able footman will return with material for bean−bags."

The boys were looking on with great amusement, though only half understanding what it was all about. They understood English, and nearly all of Patty's French, but BEAN−BAGS was an unknown word to them.

True to Patty's prophecy the clever footman returned, still grave and immovable of countenance, but bearing a well−filled work−basket, and a quantity of pieces of magnificent satin brocades which had been cut in six−inch squares that being the size indicated by Patty.

Patty took them with a gracious air of satisfaction, and rewarded the footman with thanks in French and a smile in American.

"Now," she went on calmly, "I shall be pleased to have the assistance of you two ladies, as I fancy these young men are not any more accustomed to sewing than to pulling taffy."

But to her surprise Cecil declared himself an expert needleman, and proved it by stitching up a bean−bag, under Patty's direction, in most praiseworthy fashion.

Each of the girls made one, too, and when they were filled with the coffee beans, and sewed up, Patty was again overcome by merriment at the regal appearance of their satin brocaded bean−bags.

Then into the long hall they went, but alas! the girls could not bring themselves to toss bean−bags in an apartment so filled with fragile objects of value.

In despair Patty again consulted her friend the footman. As soon as he understood her dilemma, he assured her he would arrange all; and in less than fifteen minutes he came back to her, almost smiling, and invited the party to follow him.

They followed to the picture gallery, where the ingenious man had carefully placed a number of large, folding Japanese screens in front of the pictures to protect them from possible harm.

Patty was delighted at this contrivance, and then followed such a game of bean−bags as had probably never been seen before in all France.

The only drawback was that Henri could not take part in this sport, but as Patty said wisely, "One cannot have everything in France; and, at any rate, he can eat some of our American taffy, which must be cooled by this time."

CHAPTER XIX. CYCLAMEN PERFUME

It didn't seem possible they had been at the Chateau for a week when the day came to go home. "It was lovely at St. Germain," said Elise, as they were once again settled in Paris, "but I'm glad to be back in the city, aren't you, Patty?"

"Yes, I am, but I did have a lovely time at the Chateau. I think I like new experiences, and the memory of them is like a lot of pictures that I can look back to, and enjoy whenever I choose. I think my mind is getting to be just like a postcard album, it's so filled with views of foreign places."

"Mine is more like a kaleidoscope; it's all in a jumble, and I can't seem to straighten it out."

But after a day or two the girls settled down into a fairly steady routine of home life. They were both interested in their various lessons, and though there was plenty of work, there was also plenty of play.

They did not become acquainted with many French people, but the members of the American Colony, as it was called, were socially inclined, and they soon made many friends.

Then there was much shopping to be done, and Mrs. Farrington seemed quite as interested in selecting pretty things for Patty as she did for her own daughter.

The girls had especially pretty winter costumes of dark cloth, and each had a handsome and valuable set of furs. In these, with their Paris hats, they looked so picturesque that Mrs. Farrington proposed they should have their photographs taken to send to friends at home.

The taking of the photographs developed into quite a lengthy performance; for Mrs. Farrington said, that while they were about it, they might as well have several styles.

So it resulted in their taking a trunk full of their prettiest dresses and hats, and spending a whole morning in the photograph gallery.

"It's really more satisfactory," observed Patty, "to do these things by the wholesale. Now I don't think I shall have to have photographs taken again before I'm seventy, at least."

"You ought to have them at fifty," replied Elise; "you'll be such a charming middle−aged lady, Patty. A little prim, perhaps, but rather nice, after all."

"Thanks for the flattering prospect. I prophesy that when you're fifty, you'll be a great artist, and you'll look exactly like Rosa Bonheur, and you'll wear short grey hair and a linen duster. So you'd better have plenty of photographs taken now, for I don't believe the linen duster will be very becoming."

The photographs turned out to be extremely successful, both as likenesses and as pictures. The girls sent many copies to their friends in America, and Nan wrote back that she thought the girls ought to hurry home, or they would become incorrigible Parisiennes.

Both Elise and Patty thoroughly enjoyed the hours they spent in the great picture galleries. Although Elise had herself a talent for painting, Patty had quite as great a love for pictures, and was acquiring a true appreciation of their value. Sometimes Elise's teacher would go with them, and sometimes Mr. or Mrs. Farrington. But the girls liked best to ramble alone together through the Louvre or the Luxembourg, and although the watchful Lisette walked grimly behind them, they followed their own sweet will, and often sat for a long time before their favourite pictures or statues.

"'The time has come, the Walrus said,'" said Patty one day, "when I really must hunt up those things for Marian. She made a list of about fifty things for me to take home to her, and though they're mostly trifles, I expect some of them will not be very easy to find. Suppose we start out with that Cyclamen perfumery she wanted. It's a special make, by a special firm, but I suppose we can find it."

So that afternoon the girls started on their Cyclamen hunt. Lisette was to have accompanied them, but she was suffering from a headache, and, rather than disappoint the girls, Mrs. Farrington said that just for this once they might go shopping alone in the motor−car with the chauffeur.

In great glee the girls started off, and went first to several perfumers in search of Marian's order.

But Cyclamen extract, made by Boissier Freres, was not to be found, although many other French Brothers signed their illustrious names to Cyclamen extracts, and although the Boissier Freres themselves seemed to manufacture an essence from every known blossom except Cyclamen.

"It's no use," said Patty, "to take any other kind, for Marian simply won't have it, and she'll say that she should think I might have found it for her. Let's go to the Magasins du Louvre, they're sure in that big place to have every kind there is."

Leaving the motor−car at one of the entrances to the great building, the girls went in. After following devious directions and tortuous ways, they found the perfumery counter, and as they had now sufficient command of the French language to make their wants accurately known, they inquired for the precious Cyclamen. The affable salesman was at first quite sure he could supply it, but an exhaustive search failed to bring forth the desired kind.

Desolate at his inability to please the young ladies, he informed them that nowhere could they find the object of their search, unless it might be at the establishment of the Boissier Freres themselves, which was across the Seine.

"Why, yes," cried Patty; "that's just what Marian said. She said I would have to go across the Seine for it, and I didn't know what she meant. Let's go, Elise; when I start out to do a thing I do like to succeed."

"So do I. We'll take the whole afternoon for it, if necessary, but get that stuff we will."

The obliging salesman wrote down the address for them, and, taking the paper with polite thanks, the girls went away.

But when they reached the street their motorcar was not to be seen. In vain they looked and waited, but could see nothing of the car or the chauffeur. They returned to the shop and stood just inside the door, where they watched and waited a long time.

"Something must have happened," Patty said at last, "and Jules has taken the car away to get it fixed. But he ought to have let us know that he was going. What shall we do, Elise?"

"I don't know what to do, Patty. I hate to waste this beautiful, bright afternoon, when we might be doing our shopping and having a good time. And I'm worried about Jules. The car seemed all right when we left it."

"Yes; nothing ever happens to that big car. I think Jules has gone away on purpose. Perhaps he'll never come back."

"Oh, Patty, I don't know what to do, I'm sure. Let's telephone home."

"We can try it; but I know the telephone will be out of order. It always is. I never knew a Paris telephone that wasn't."

Sure enough, when they tried to telephone, after much delay and many unsuccessful attempts, they were informed that there was some difficulty with the wires and that connection with the Farrington house was impossible.

The girls returned to their post at the glass−doored entrance and stood looking out with a discouraged air. Still no car appeared that they could recognise as their own.

At last Patty said: "There's no use, Elise, in standing here any longer. Jules has absconded, or been kidnapped, or something. Now, I'll tell you what we'll do. Let's take a cab over to this perfumery place and back again, and then if Jules isn't here waiting for us we'll go right home in the same cab. I know your mother doesn't let us go in a cab alone, but this is an emergency, and we have to get home somehow; and while we're about it we may as well go over to the perfumery place. It isn't very far."

"How do you know it isn't far?"

"Because I know a lot about Paris now, and I know the names of the streets, and I know just about where it is, and of course the cabman will know. We can talk French to him and we can act very dignified, and anyway we'll be back here in fifteen or twenty minutes, so come on."

Elise was a little doubtful about the matter, but she yielded to Patty's argument and they went out in the street. Patty stopped a passing cab, and giving the driver the address, the girls got in.

As they rolled smoothly along Patty's spirits rose. "You see, we did just the right thing," she said; "and we'll be back there now before Jules is."

On they went, across the Seine and into a strange district, unlike any they had ever seen before.

But it was not long before they came to the address written on the paper. The girls went into the shop and found to their dismay that the perfumery company was there no longer, but had moved some time since to another address.

With great dignity, and fairly good French, Patty inquired the present address of the firm, and, receiving it, returned to the cab.

"I'm determined," she said to Elise, "to go on with this thing, now that I've begun it. I'm going to find that Cyclamen, just because I've made up my mind to do so."

The cabman seemed to know the address indicated, and started his horse off at a jog trot. On they went, farther and farther, and getting into a more and more disagreeable district. The streets grew narrower, the houses shabbier, and the people along the streets were noisy and boisterous.

Patty did not like to admit it, but she began to wish she had not come, and Elise was plainly frightened, for the people along the street stared at the pretty American girls driving about alone in a public conveyance.

At last Patty said in a low voice: "It's horrid, Elise, and I'm truly sorry I insisted on coming. Shall we ask the man to go back?"

"Yes," said Elise; "that is, if you think best. But I hate to go any farther in this horrid quarter."

So Patty explained to the driver that they had concluded not to go to the perfumer's that day, and directed him to take them back to the Magasins du Louvre.

But the cabman objected to this proposition, and said they were now not far from the place they were in search of, and he would go on till they reached it.

Patty expostulated, but the cabman was firm in his decision. He was not impertinent, but he seemed to think that the young ladies were too easily discouraged, and assured them they would soon reach their destination. So they went on, and Patty and Elise grew more and more alarmed as their situation became more unpleasant. It was certainly no place for them to be, unattended, and the fact that they could not persuade the cabman to go back dismayed them both.

But Patty's pluck stood by her. Grasping Elise's hand firmly, she whispered: "Don't you collapse, Elise! If you cry I'll never forgive you! Brace up now and help me through. It will be all right if we don't act afraid."

"How can I help acting afraid?" said poor Elise, her teeth chattering, "when I'm s−scared to death!"

"Don't be scared to death! I tell you there's nothing to be afraid of! Brace up, I say!" Patty gave Elise's arm such a pinch as to make her jump, and just then the cab stopped at the establishment of Boissier Freres.

It proved to be the right place this time, and the girls went in. Behind the counter stood a dapper young man, who waited on them obsequiously. But when he heard Patty's request he said they did not have that essence in their regular stock and only made it when ordered.

"Then," said Patty, at the end of her patience, "I'll order some. Will you make it for me, please?"

"For that," said the young man, "I must refer you to another department. You'll have to go to see M. Poirier, who takes such orders."

"And where shall I find him?" asked Patty.

The obliging young man began to write down an address. "It is some distance away," he said, "and not a very accessible place to get to."

Patty looked at Elise and laughed. "I give it up," she said; "I thought I could do Marian's errand, but it's proving too much for me!"

She thanked the young man for the address and put it away in her purse, with but slight intention of ever using it. She bought a bottle of another sort of perfumery, and, saying good afternoon, left the shop.

But when she and Elise regained the sidewalk there was no cab in sight. They looked in every direction, but could see nothing of it.

"He can't have gone away," said Patty, "for I haven't paid him."

"But he has gone away," said Elise; "and oh, Patty, I just remember! I left my purse on the seat!"

"Was there much in it?"

"Yes, a good deal. I haven't done any shopping yet, you know."

"Well, that explains it. He's gone off with your purse, for he knew that very likely we didn't have his number, and of course we can never find him again. Elise, don't you dare to cry! We're in an awful scrape now, but we'll get out of it somehow if you'll only be plucky about it! Don't you fail me, and I'll get out of it somehow!"

Patty's admonitions were none too soon, for Elise was on the very verge of bursting into tears. But when Patty appealed to her for aid she tried hard to overcome her fears and be a help instead of a hindrance.

Patty considered the situation. "I hate to go back into that shop and ask that young man to call me a cab," she said, "for he was so fawning and officious that I didn't like his manner a bit. But there doesn't seem to be anything else to do, for there's no policeman in sight, and of course no telephone station, and of course it wouldn't work if there was one, and there's no other place about here that looks as if I dare go in, and so we must go back and ask that horrid man. Now brace up, Elise; put on your most haughty air and look as dignified as a duchess."

[Illustration with caption: "'I just remember! I left my purse on the seat!'"]

CHAPTER XX. THE BAZAAR

Elise tried hard to follow Patty's directions, but she did not represent a very haughty type of duchess as she tremblingly followed Patty into the shop.

But Patty herself held her head high, and assumed the dignity of a whole line of duchesses as she stalked toward the counter. She chose her French with much care, and in exceedingly formal diction informed the young man that she desired to call a cab.

Without expressing astonishment at this, the young man politely assured her that he would call a cab for her at once; that it would take some time to procure one, as there were none save at a considerable distance.

There being nothing else to do, poor Patty expressed herself as willing to wait, but coldly desired that all possible haste be made.

The fifteen minutes that the girls waited was perhaps the most uncomfortable quarter of an hour they had ever spent in their lives, and indeed it seemed more like fifteen hours than fifteen minutes. They scarcely spoke to one another; Patty, feeling the responsibility of the whole affair, was thinking what she should do in case a cab didn't come, while Elise was entirely absorbed in her earnest endeavours not to cry.

But at last a cab appeared and the two girls got in.

Patty gave the order to drive back to the great shop from which they had started on their adventure.

It seemed an interminable distance through the unpleasant streets, but when at last they reached the Magasins du Louvre and drew up to the entrance Elise gave a delighted cry, and said: "Oh, there's our car, and Jules in it!"

The car was across the street, and the chauffeur sat with his arms folded, in an attitude of patient waiting. The girls got out of the cab, Patty paid the cabman, and as they beckoned to Jules, he started the car across the street toward them.

"Where have you been?" inquired Elise, in a reproving tone.

But the chauffeur declared that he had sat the whole afternoon in that one spot, waiting for the young ladies.

When Elise said that they had come to the door and looked for him in vain, he only asseverated that he had not moved from the spot opposite the entrance, but had been there all the time watching the door for their reappearance.

As she had never known Jules to be untruthful, Elise was bewildered at this statement, but presently a light dawned on Patty.

"I see, Elise," she cried; "it's the other entrance! The doors are almost exactly the same! This is the one where we went in, but we came out at the door on the other street, and we were such idiots we didn't know the difference!"

"And we flattered ourselves that we knew Paris!" exclaimed Elise. "Well, Patty, let's go home. We're not fit to be trusted out alone."

So home the girls went, feeling decidedly light−hearted that they were so well out of their scrape.

Patty went at once to Mrs. Farrington and gave her an exact narrative of the whole affair. She took all the blame on herself, and it was rightfully hers, saying that she had persuaded Elise against her will to go in the cab across the Seine to the perfumer's.

Mrs. Farrington laughed at Patty's extremely penitential air, and said: "My dear child, don't take it quite so seriously. You're not to blame for mistaking the doors. That big shop is very confusing, and after waiting for Jules, and telephoning, and all that, you did quite right to take a cab, as it was really an emergency. But you did not do right to go exploring an unfamiliar quarter of Paris on an uncertain errand. However, you certainly had punishment enough in your bewilderment and anxiety, and I think you have learned your lesson, and nothing more need be said about it."

Nothing more was said about it by way of reprimand, but many times Patty was joked by the Farrington family, and often when she started out anywhere was advised not to try to buy Cyclamen perfumery.

Toward the end of January the Van Ness girls came to call. They had returned to Paris as they expected, and were truly glad to see Patty and Elise again.

"We've had a lovely trip," Doris declared; "but we're awfully glad to get back to Paris. And oh, girls, I want to tell you about a plan in which we're awfully interested. There's a poor girl, an American, and her name is Leila Hunt."

"Let me tell," broke in Alicia; "she's an art student, and she's trying to support herself in Paris while she studies. And the other day we were walking through the Louvre, and we saw her there."

"Copying a picture," chimed in Doris.

"Yes, copying a picture," went on Alicia; "and she was so faint, because she doesn't have enough to eat, you know, that she fell off the stool and fainted away from sheer exhaustion."

"How dreadful!" cried Patty; "can't we help her?"

"That's just it," said Doris; "we want to help her, and we're getting up a bazaar for her benefit. But she mustn't know it, for she's awfully proud, and wouldn't like it a bit."

"You know her personally, then?" asked Elise.

"Yes; we hunted up her address and went to see her, and the poor thing is so weak and thin, but awfully brave and plucky. And papa says he'll give some money, and I thought perhaps Mr. Farrington would, too; and then we thought it might help to have a bazaar and make some money that way, and then we'll send it to her anonymously, for I don't believe she'd take it any other way."

Rosamond Barstow was present at this conversation, and she said: "I think it's a lovely plan, and I'll be glad to help. Where are you going to hold the bazaar?"

"That's the trouble," said Alicia; "we don't know any place that's just right. You see, we're at a hotel, and a bazaar in a hotel is so public. I suppose there isn't room in this house?"

"No," said Elise; "there are plenty of rooms, but no one is big enough for an affair of that kind."

"But we have one," exclaimed Rosamond eagerly. "Our house has an immense ballroom. We almost never use it, but it would be just the place for a bazaar."

"Would your people like to have us use it?"

"Oh, yes; mother lets me do anything I like. And, anyway, she'll be awfully glad to help an American girl you said an American girl, didn't you?"

"Yes, Miss Hunt is from New England. Oh, it will be lovely if we can have the bazaar in your house, and all the American colony will come, and we'll make a lot of money."

The plan was laid before Mrs. Farrington, who entirely approved of it, and then the five girls went over to Rosamond's to ask Mrs. Barstow's consent, and to look at the ballroom.

Mrs. Barstow was greatly pleased with the idea and consented at once that the bazaar should be held in the ballroom, and she went with the girls to look at the big apartment and to make plans.

As the Van Ness party were only to remain in Paris a week, it was necessary that the affair should be arranged speedily and the plan quickly carried out.

Mrs. Van Ness, Mrs. Farrington, and Mrs. Barstow were to be patronesses, but the girls, the two Van Ness boys, and Martin Barstow were to do the actual work and make all arrangements.

It was a somewhat original scheme of entertainment, and as Alicia described it the rest all agreed that it would be great fun.

It was to last only one afternoon, from three to six, and it was called the "Bazaar of Arts and Manufactures."

The girls called upon many members of the American colony and asked them to donate material of any kind, such as silks, satins, ribbons, fancy paper, materials or fabrics of any sort.

They responded generously, and also gave many articles to be sold at the bazaar, and promised to send contributions for the refreshment room.

The boys declared that their part was the decoration of the ballroom, and they not only ornamented the room, but built various little booths and arranged such counters and tables as were needed.

When the day of the bazaar came nobody knew quite what the entertainment was to be, but were prepared for an original amusement of some kind.

After a large crowd of people had assembled Guy Van Ness mounted a platform and announced that there would now be held a contest of arts and manufactures. Everybody present, on the payment of a certain sum, would be allowed to compete, and prizes were offered to the successful competitors in each department.

Then, greatly to the amusement of the audience, he announced that the various achievements arranged for were such easily accomplished feats as the trimming of hats, the painting of pictures, modelling in clay, making paper flowers, and various other arts and handicrafts, among which each might select a preference.

After every competitor had qualified, and was fully prepared to begin, a gong would be sounded. Exactly at the end of a half hour another gong would sound, when every one must cease at once, whether the work was finished or not.

As soon as the guests thoroughly understood what they were to do great interest was displayed and competitors were rapidly entered for the different contests.

Those who were artists took their places at a table provided with water colors, oil paints, pastels, and drawing materials. The clay modellers were at another table, with ample provision for their art.

Many ladies who declared they had no talents prepared to trim hats. All sorts of material, such as velvet, lace, flowers, feathers, and ribbons were provided, as well as the untrimmed shapes.

In another booth ladies prepared to make Japanese kimonos or dressing− jackets, and in another booth were materials for paper flowers.

There was a burnt−wood outfit and sets of woodcarvers' tools, and Robert Van Ness declared that he knew he could take the prize for whittling.

Another booth held crepe paper for lampshades or other fancy work, and it was not long before every one had selected an occupation and was prepared to begin work.

Elise, of course, was going to draw a picture, and Patty concluded she would trim a hat.

As it neared the time, Patty threaded her needle and put on her thimble, but was not allowed to touch her material until the signal was given.

Henri Labesse was at the bazaar, and though his arm was still a little stiff, he entered the competition and was to model a figure of clay.

The gong struck, and everybody flew madly at their work, anxious to complete it within the half hour.

Elise, who was methodical, began her drawing as slowly and carefully as if she had the whole day for it, reasoning to herself that she would rather hurry the finishing than the beginning.

Patty, on the other hand, dashed impatiently at her hat−trimming, pinning things on here and there, thinking she would sew them if she had time, and if not they could stay pinned.

Both the Van Ness girls were making paper lamp−shades, and Rosamond was already well along on a picturesque Japanese kimono. She sewed up the breadths like a wind−mill, and whipped on the bordering

rapidly, but with strong, firm stitches.

She would easily have taken the prize in her department, but the girls had agreed among themselves that they would accept no prizes, even if they won them.

When the gong struck at the close of the half hour some of the work was still unfinished, but most of the articles were completed. And it was indeed marvellous to see what could be done by people working at their utmost speed.

Elise's picture was charming, and Patty's hat was among the prettiest. Competent judges awarded the prizes, and then the articles, whether finished or unfinished, were sold at auction. And they brought large prices, for many of them were well worth having; and, too, the buyers were quite ready to give liberally in aid of the worthy charity.

Henri Labesse had made a clay model of an American girl, which was a gem in its characteristic effect and its skilful workmanship. It was not quite finished, but of course was offered at auction along with the other things.

There was lively bidding for the little figure, as everybody seemed to recognise its artistic value. But, after being bidden up to a high price, it was finally sold to a young man who, it turned out, was merely acting as an agent for Henri Labesse himself. He had instructed this young man to buy the figure in at any price, with a result that a goodly sum went into the charitable treasury.

After receiving his own work back again Mr. Labesse took it across to where Patty sat, and begged her acceptance of it, adding that he would take it home and complete it before sending it to her.

Patty was delighted to have the little statuette as a souvenir of the occasion, and also as a memento of Mr. Labesse, whom she thoroughly liked.

The rest of the afternoon was spent in serving ices and cakes and fruit to the patrons of the bazaar, and after it was all over the girls were delighted to find that they had realised about twice as much money as they had hoped for.

Alicia Van Ness was ecstatic, and declared it would make Miss Hunt independent, and free of all financial worry during the rest of her term in the art school. And as it was to be sent to her without a hint as to its source, she could not refuse to accept it.

"I do think it was lovely of those Van Ness girls," said Patty, as they discussed the bazaar at dinner−time, "to do all that for a perfect stranger."

"I do, too," said Elise; "they're awfully good−hearted girls. When I first met them I didn't like them much; they were so unconventional in their manners. But travelling about has improved them, and they certainly are generous and kind−hearted."

"Yes, they are," said Patty; "and I like them, anyway. I'm sorry they are going away from Paris so soon."

"Well, I'm glad we're not going away," said Elise; "at any rate, not just yet. How much longer do you suppose we shall stay here, mother?"

"I don't know, my child; but I'm getting about ready to go home. What do you think, Patty?"

"Since you ask me, I must confess I should like to stay a while longer. But if you're going home, Mrs. Farrington, I feel pretty sure we shall all travel on the same boat."

CHAPTER XXI. A SURPRISE

But nothing more was said about going home, and the weeks slipped by until it was March.

Everything seemed to be winding itself up. Patty's music term was finished; Elise's drawing lessons were nearing their close for the season, and Mrs. Farrington, though she said nothing about going home, somehow seemed to be quietly getting ready.

Patty didn't exactly understand the attitude of her hostess. If she were going home soon, Patty wanted to know it; and one day she laughingly said so.

"I suppose," said Mrs. Farrington, looking at her quizzically, "it's not unnatural that you should want to know when you're going to see your native land again; but truly, Patty, I cannot tell you. I'll promise you this, though: to−morrow you'll know more about it than you do to−day."

Patty was mystified at this, for Mrs. Farrington's tone was even more enigmatical than her words.

"And wait a minute, girls," said Mrs. Farrington, as they were about to go to their rooms to dress for dinner; "put on your pretty new dresses to−night, will you?"

"Why, mother?" said Elise in astonishment; "those are company gowns, and there's no company here!"

"No, there's no company here, but put them on, as I tell you. I want to see how they look."

"I don't see what's the matter with mother," said Elise, as they went upstairs; "she's been restless and fidgety all day. And now the idea of telling us to put on those new frocks!"

"I just as lieve do it," said Patty; "they're awfully pretty ones, and I want to see how they look myself."

When the girls went downstairs they found Mrs. Farrington already in the drawing−room.

She herself wore a more elaborate toilette than usual, and there seemed to be an extra abundance of flowers and lights.

"What is the matter?" said Elise. "There's something about the atmosphere of this house that betokens a party; but I don't see any party. Is there any party, mother?"

"I don't see any, my child," said Mrs. Farrington, smiling.

"Where's father?" asked Elise.

"He's out," said her mother; "we're waiting for dinner until he comes."

Just then a ring was heard at the front door−bell.

"There's your father now," said Mrs. Farrington abruptly; "Patty, my dear, won't you run up to my bedroom and get me my vinaigrette?"

"Why, you have it on, Mrs. Farrington," said Patty, in surprise; "it's hanging from your chatelaine."

"Oh, yes, of course; so it is! But I mean my other one my gold one. Oh, no; I don't want two vinaigrettes, do I? I mean, won't you run up and get me a handkerchief?"

"Why, mother!" exclaimed Elise, in surprise; "ring for Lisette, or at least let me go. Don't send Patty."

"No, I want Patty to go," said Mrs. Farrington decidedly. "Please go, my child, and get me a handkerchief from the drawer in my dressing−table. Get the one that is fourth from the top, in the second pile."

"Certainly," said Patty, and she ran upstairs, wondering what whim possessed her hostess to send her guest, though ever so willing, on her errand.

Patty had some little difficulty in finding the right handkerchief, in spite of the explicit directions, and when she again reached the drawingroom Mr. Farrington was there, and both he and his wife were smiling broadly. Elise, too, seemed overcome with merriment, and Patty paused in the doorway, saying: "What is the matter with you people? Please let me into the joke, too!"

"Do you want to know what is the matter?" asked Mrs. Farrington, as she took the handkerchief from Patty's hand. "Well, go and look behind those curtains, and see what's in the alcove."

"I suppose," said Patty, as she deliberately walked the length of the long drawing−room, "you've been buying the Venus of Milo, and it's just been sent home, and you've set it up here behind these curtains. Well, I shall be pleased to admire it, I'm sure!"

She drew the crimson curtains apart, and right before her, instead of a marble statue, stood her father and Nan!

Then such an exciting time as there was!

Patty threw her arms around them both at once, and everybody was laughing, and they all talked at the same time, and Patty understood at last why they had been directed to put on their new dresses.

"Can it be possible that this is my little girl!" exclaimed Mr. Fairfield, as he drew Patty down up on his knee, quite as he used to when she was really a little girl.

"Nonsense!" cried Nan; "you haven't changed a bit, Patty, except to grow about half an inch taller, and to be wearing a remarkably pretty dress."

"And you people haven't changed a bit, either," declared Patty; "and oh, I'm SO glad to see you!"

She flew back and forth from one of her parents to the other, pinching them, to make sure, as she said, that they were really there.

"And now tell me all about it," she said, looking at the others; "did you all know they were coming?"

"No," said Mrs. Farrington; "Mr. Farrington and I have known it for some weeks, but we didn't dare tell Elise, for she's such a chatterbox she never could have kept the secret, and we wanted so much to surprise you."

"Well, you HAVE surprised me," said Patty; "and it's the loveliest surprise I ever had. Oh, what fun it will be to take you benighted people around to see Paris."

So Elise declared it was a party after all, and the dinner was a very merry one, and the whole evening was spent in gay chatter about the winter just past, and making plans for the summer to come.

Patty didn't gather very definitely what these plans were, but she soon learned that Mr. and Mrs. Fairfield had come to Paris really to get her, and then they were going on to London; and where else, Patty neither knew nor cared.

The Farringtons were to return soon to America, and so the whole change of outlook was so sudden that Patty was bewildered.

"You look as if you didn't quite know yet what has happened," said Mr. Fairfield to Patty, as the whole party stood in the hall saying their good−nights.

"I don't, papa," said Patty; "but I'm very happy. I've had a delightful winter, and Mr. and Mrs. Farrington have been most beautifully kind, and Elise is just the dearest chum in the world; but you know, papa, home is where the heart is, and my heart belongs just to you and Nan, and so now I feel that I am home again at last."

"And we're mighty glad to have you, little girl, again in our heart and home. It was pretty lonesome without you all winter in New York. But now we're all three together again, and we'll help each other enjoy the good time that's coming."

"It seems too good to be true," said Patty, as she kissed her parents good−night, and ran away to all sorts of happy dreams.