WELLS CAROLYN

PATTY IN PARIS

Carolyn Wells
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Содержание

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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."

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."

CHAPTER 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:

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.