

VACATION DAYS ON THE "CIRCLE S"

By  
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# To "Greta" from her mother.

## THE START

On a warm day early in July two teen-age girls walked slowly down the main street in Macleod. Both were bareheaded, so we will just observe that one of them was fair, while the other had dark hair; both were without curl or wave, but were shining and well brushed.

While they walked they were scanning the parked cars as if they were looking for one in particular. Meanwhile they were debating whether or not to get one more ice cream sundae before calling it a day.

Suddenly a horn honked right behind them, and when they both whirled round and with one accord jumped for the wall, a laughing voice asked: "Where are you going in such a hurry?"

"Oh, dad! How you scared us!" cried Peggy, who was the dark-haired one; "if you had tooted at us at that place where the ground slopes down to the river I'll just bet you would have had to fish us out of the water there now."

"Sorry to have frightened you, girls; but you see, this old horn has been out of commission so long and I have just had it fixed, and I really had no idea myself that it carried so potent a sound. Are you two ready to go home now?"

"Yes," responds Peggy, "only we have to stop at Ann's house to get her suitcase and coat and hat. And where is mother?"

"Oh, she's visiting right now with Ann's mother. So, if you're ready, jump right in both of you and we'll pick up mother and Ann's war bag at one fell swoop, and get started away from this darned burg."

"Why do you say that, Uncle Jim?" asked Ann, whose full name was Elizabeth Borden. "I thought you liked Macleod."

"It's those blamed stones that get my goat. It's a crime how bumpy some of these streets are; and see what they do to your tires and your springs, to say nothing of the feelings of your lady passengers. "If ever I Ann; and, Peggy, tell your mother to sell my ranch and need to make a lot of money I'll start in the repair business in Macleod. It sure looks to me as if there should be a lot to do here in that line. Well, here we are! Run in and get your things, step on it. You know I can't drive

fast after the sun gets just so low down in the west."

"O K.!" chorused the girls as they dashed up the steps of the comfortable vine-covered bungalow. In a few minutes they re-appeared loaded down with suitcases, cameras, tennis rackets, golf clubs, coats and sweaters. In their wake followed the two mothers, still chatting and laughing.

"Harry up, mother!" called Peggy from the back seat of the roomy Buick sedan, as she struggled frantically to arrange parcels and luggage so that she and Ann could be able to ride comfortably; "if you don't help me with these groceries and things Ann and I will have to ride on the running board."

"I'm coming, I'm coming," called Mrs. Stuart as she hurried out through the gate.

"Goodbye, mother!" shouted Ann, "don't get too lonesome. Be sure and come out on Sunday; and don't forget to bring my mail when you come."

"Goodbye, Ann dear! I won't; I will; I won't. Oh, dear! Stop a minute! Did you take your bathing suit? and your vanishing cream?"

"Yes, mother, every single thing I could think of."

"Well then, goodbye dear! Be a good girl; and don't forget to brush your teeth! Don't fall into the creek! And don't try to race . . ."

The rest of Mrs. Borden's instructions were lost in the roar of the car, as Mr. Stuart let in the clutch, and, with a final burst of goodbyes and pleasure-excited handwaving the car speeded away on the first lap of what the girls fervently hoped would be "the most gorgeous vacation in history."

## THE CIRCLE S

The Stuarts owned a fair sized ranch about 30 miles west of Macleod. Perhaps one should not call the Circle S a ranch. Mr. Stuart had followed the trend of the times and had converted a lot of his lands into grain farming. But he still ran a few hundred head of cattle in brushy slopes of the hills on his own land and on the government lease land he held. He only kept four riders as a rule, and a general foreman; but when he needed more help at seed-time or haying, he could always depend on his neighbors for an extra man or two. Most of the buildings

on the ranch were old, but substantially built, predominantly of logs. But there was nothing old about the main ranch house, neither inside nor out. There was the big basement, where Mr. Stuart had installed a Delco-Light plant and a water system, including a big concrete water tank. The water was piped from a natural spring up on the slope west of the house—a spring that never froze up—and as the overflow was dammed up in a tree shaded pool above the level of the family vegetable and flower gardens, it provided a wonderfully efficient irrigation system. And besides, the pool furnished the modern equivalent for "the old swimmin' hole."

The Stuart's foreman was a married man. His wife was a capable, even-tempered woman who looked after the cooking for all the ranch help. They lived in the old house on the far side of the corrals and the big ranch barns.

Mr. Stuart had a hobby. He had gone in for Jersey cattle in a big way. He kept daily records of production. His stables were a real adventure in cleanliness and convenience. So, by careful selection and elimination over a number of years he had built up an enviable herd of twelve high class milking Jerseys.

His friends had told him that he was foolish; that this breed of cattle was not hardy enough, and that the Jerseys had the reputation of being the meanest cattle on earth. But Mr. Stuart just told them that "he was from Missouri." They finally washed their hands of him and his pet cows.

This hobby herd naturally meant a properly constituted dairy, with a herdsman in charge, and a dairymaid. Mr. Stuart had been lucky enough to find some very intelligent and conscientious helpers. Through his friendship with the staff of the Claresholm School of Agriculture he had been able to pick out two honor graduates from that college, a brother and sister, Bob and Betty Anderson.

Bob was a natural born mechanic, and was responsible for all the engines and mechanics about the farm buildings, from the milking machine to the electric dumb waiter.

The dairy was in a separate building, with comfortable living quarters for the help upstairs.

After the Anderson's had been



working for Mr. Stuart for awhile and made good, Mrs. Stuart had to let her maid, Minnie, go home. Minnie had come from the Hutterite colony west of Granum, but her father needed her at home as the mother was sick and not able to do the heavy work any more. Though this was not so good for Minnie, "it's an ill wind . . ."—you know the rest.

It happened that Bob and Betty had a sister who right then was looking for a job; and where would she get a better one than right on the same spot with her brother and sister. Without more ado Mr. Stuart went to Monarch and brought Greta home, where she immediately settled down and fitted into the life of the ranch in a way that Minnie never had. There was really not much work to do in the main farm house, so it was possible for Greta to spend part of every day with her sister.

Then, when the Stuart's entertained large parties of friends from Lethbridge over holidays or week-ends, she slept with Betty in the dairy building, till finally this arrangement was accepted as satisfactory and permanent.

#### DID THE GIRLS PASS

Some of these changes in the Stuart ranch staff had taken place while Peggy was away at Macleod attending high school. She boarded with Ann's father and mother, who were at the same time her uncle and aunt.

Peggy and Ann were the same age, having been born within a week of each other. They were in the same grade in the high school, the eleventh. They were great chums, better perhaps, than they would have been had they been sisters.

But just now they were all up in the air.

Had they passed?

If so, had they passed with honors or just scraped through?

Hadn't the exam papers been hard?

Ann was positive she had flunked in French. "I ask you", she said, "how can anybody keep on trying for ages to learn French, and learn as little of it as we do? What's the use of all that work and agony? We don't learn to talk it fluently, we don't understand it when we hear it spoken, and we can't read it, ever; and if—we ever get to France everybody we'll ever talk to there will be able to

speak English. So, why French

But Peggy who had done well in French, always, had another song to sing.

"Why do you suppose they keep algebra in the course of studies, dad?" she asked. "Surely that is something one must have a special bent for; and only so few ever need it, anyway, in their work. I know they tell us it teaches us to think, but I don't believe that's true. What does anybody use algebra for, dad?"

Mr. Stuart was not a university graduate but he was not ashamed of it. In fact he did not feel such a thing was necessary to a great many of the people.

Half smothering a smile that rose to his face, Mr. Stuart ventured an interruption into the argument. He didn't know exactly algebra's place in the high school curriculum but he did know that those who did use the mathematical science set a great store by it.

But Peggy persisted. "Well then, let those who need it take time to learn it; and let the rest of us off. How would that be?"

Mr. Stuart, not being in an argumentative mood, and since the school term was closed and there was no point to be gained in upholding the educational powers that be, agreed that Peggy's argument might possibly be the fairer all round.

The road, at its best never very good, got worse the farther they travelled. Conversation between front and back seat had to stop.

Mrs. Stuart, however, was apparently explaining something to "dad" that amused him a great deal. So it wasn't long till the girls became uncontrollably curious and demanded to be let in on the joke.

Mrs. Stuart then explained that Mr. Stuart had agreed to give the girls a party of some kind if they both passed with honors. If they did not pass, or if only one of them passed, he would think up some terrible punishment for them both.

This information was received with joyous exclamations; and Peggy even tried to hug her dad, nearly strangling him and landing them all in the ditch.

After recovering his breath Mr. Stuart pointed out to his daughter that there surely would be no party if she killed all of them before they

got home.

But Peggy and Ann refused to be squelched, and for the next mile the two talked as if their very life depended upon it. By that time they had the party all planned out. Who they would invite, what they would serve for lunch, how they would trim the dance in the new barn loft.

"Haven't we improved this road since last winter?" asked Mrs. Stuart, when the girls stopped for breath. "See all the new grading, and the new culverts, and all the small bridges we have repaired."

"What do you mean 'we'?" queried Ann.

"Well, all the neighbors that use this road turned in and smoothed out the worst places. The Local Improvement District gave us the new lumber we needed and your Uncle Jim here let Ted take the caterpillar and hook onto the grader and work on the bad stretches for most of a week. Everybody who had trucks hauled gravel to put on the low springy spots. It sure looks as if the depression has done wonders towards bringing out the natural spirit of co-operation between the neighbors in this district."

"It certainly is oceans better than it was at Easter", Peggy agreed, "and it would have been still better if somebody hadn't driven over this road just after it rained. Those deep ruts look just like snake tracks, don't they? There must have been a cloudburst here not so long ago by the looks of the ditches."

"Don't you remember papa telling us at supper Friday night that our boy friends from out west would not be able 'to make it to the dance' unless they had an aeroplane? Don't you remember mama telling him not to use that horrid expression and he pretended not to know what he was talking about?"

"Yes, I remember, and then when we got down to the town hall the first partners we had were the Williams twins, and they told us it hadn't rained a drop at their place, but they thought that there had been hail a mile or so farther west."

"Yes, yes, I remember perfectly," said Ann.

And this started the girls off reminiscing on the past winter's festivities; and they spent the rest of the time on the road home recalling the



various funny experiences at the New Year's masquerade and on other equally merry occasions.

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#### THE GIRLS DECIDE TO LEARN TO COOK

The sun did not get too far down for driving comfort before they drove through the big gate, around a short drive, and stopped by the side door of the big ranch house. The girls tried to extricate themselves from their parcels without much success, until Greta came to the rescue. She cleared the car door of bundles, and this of course helped wonderfully. But the girls finally got out, picked up as much as they could carry, and rushed pell mell into the house, followed by Mrs. Stuart, who was already removing her hat and coat in anticipation of many little things to be done.

"Is supper ready?" asked the girls with one voice, just as if they hadn't had anything to eat all day.

"As soon as you are washed and powdered up it will be," answered Greta smiling as she disappeared into the kitchen.

The girls took the hint and wildly tore to their upstairs room. And they were down again in record time, all freshened up and changed to cooler, lighter frocks. Mr. Stuart had carried in the grips and he had washed in the washroom just off the kitchen. Mrs. Stuart joined them and soon all the travellers of the afternoon had gathered in the cool, shady diningroom. Greta had the supper ready to serve and the table all set.

There was delicious, home cured cold ham, a cooling salad, a tempting shimmering jelly topped with oceans of whipped cream. Then there was the angelfood cake and iced tea. Surely this was no meal to set before anybody who was trying to reduce. Mrs. Stuart, who was getting plumper than Peggy wanted her to, mildly complained about it. "Blame Greta if I get too fat," she said. "I ask you, how can I turn down this heavenly food while the rest of you go on eating it and enjoy it so? Besides," she continued in an effort at self justification, "it would hurt Greta's feelings. You ought to teach 'her' how to count calories, Peggy, for you know, I never can learn how they go; and if she counts them I don't have to."

Everybody enjoyed a good laugh at

the expense of Mrs. Stuart's feeble philosophy.

"I'm not blaming you for liking Greta's cooking mother," said Mr. Stuart. "I would willingly walk miles for a meal like this, even if I weighed three hundred pounds."

"Do you suppose, auntie, I could ever be such an inspired cook as Greta? I am sure I would love to learn to cook. Nothing could possibly interest me more, and I have been thinking so all along while I have been going to school."

This from Ann, the aristocrat!

Mr. Stuart looked at her a second, as if debating with himself whether she was in earnest or not; then he turned to Greta, who had taken her place at the table after she had served them all. "Well, how is that for a compliment?" he asked. "How would you like to sign Ann on as assistant cook? We'll likely have a lot of visitors this summer and there's always a lot of cooking to do when there's extra people around, if I remember right. What do you say, Greta?"

Greta smiled, but before she could say a word Peggy broke in: "If Ann is going to learn to cook, I am too! I can be cookee. I don't want to be a nurse or a stenographer, and I already know enough book-keeping to keep dad's books and records. That's all the book learning I'll ever need, so I'm signing on too!"

"I just think that's splendid," said Mrs. Stuart. "It would be too much for Greta to do it all alone this summer; and if you plan your work like I'm sure you will, you will still be able to have all the fun you have planned on for the summer."

"I propose three cheers!" said Mr. Stuart. However, he did not submit his proposal to action: "I have often wondered when you girls were going to realize that you absolutely have got to have some training in your real life work."

"What real life work?" chorused the two. "Haven't we just told you we would 'not' train for nurses?"

"You ought to know, Peggy, you have heard me express my views often enough. I'm talking about homemaking, and with a capital H!"

"Oh, Uncle Jim, you sound just like papa. He thinks it's wonderful that girls can go to school and learn about cooking and laundering, and churning

and housekeeping—yes—and they even learn to sew and make hats—and count calories!" ended Ann, quite out of breath.

"It is astonishing, as you say, Ann; and if you really are in earnest, I am very, very sorry that both Agricultural Schools here in the South have been closed. I think we could have afforded to send you to Claresholm for two winters, Peg, and we know several families there, and it would not be so bad at first, and it is not so far away, either. But as Hoadley has seen fit to close them both, I think you are doing the very best thing you can, by apprenticing yourselves under Greta, that is, if Greta wants to bother with you." Here Mr. Stuart having said his say, laid down his napkin and excused himself.

But the girls remained around the table discussing their new plan. Mrs. Stuart and Greta, of course, had to help them lay out their "course of studies", and they exchanged many a smile over the heads of the enthusiasts.

Finally Mrs. Stuart broke the spell: "The first thing on your program will be to help Greta with these dishes; when they are out of the way I'll give you a notebook I have upstairs and you had better write everything down in it. If you do that there won't be any forgetting or mixing up of duties."

"You surely have some swell ideas, mother!" said Peggy. "We will now proceed to clear the tables. How do you go about it, Greta? Don't forget you are to boss us."

Greta was fully able to cope with the new situation.

"Here are three trays," she said. "Ann, you take one and collect all the silver and glassware on it; Peggy, you stack all the china on yours, and I will take care of all the food. Is that fair?"

"Yes, yes, ma'am!" answered the girls in a tone of servile obedience—and started on their "careers".

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#### THEY ALL GO TO A PICNIC

This is not going to be a short course in cooking and housekeeping, but we'll acquaint you with a few of the rules and regulations the girls laid down for themselves. Their daily routine went something like this:

Up at 7:30 a. m.; a hasty toilet;



then, in as simple clothing as possible they go down to breakfast; but not before turning the beds back to air.

Greta always had breakfast ready by 7:30, and everybody began breakfast as soon as they arrived at the table.

At breakfast Mr. Stuart expected to be informed of any plans the women-folks had for the day which might in any way concern him. After breakfast the household saw no more of Mr. Stuart till 12:00 o'clock when he came in for dinner. In these morning hours the women generally managed to do all the work that had to be done in order to keep the household machinery working smoothly.

The girls took turns, each having to help Mr. Stuart do the upstairs work for a week, while the other helped Greta in the kitchen. Those who did the bedrooms had to do the washing—on Tuesdays—there never being any eatables left in the house Monday mornings. So Monday was mostly given over to picking up after Sunday's company, cooking, baking, and sorting the laundry ready for Tuesday morning.

On Wednesday they took turns ironing, on Thursday there was usually some sewing, patching or darning to do. Friday all the rooms except the kitchen and washroom were mopped up, dusted and waxed. On Saturday there was the baking to do, the cooking for Sunday, and the kitchen to clean up afterwards—though Mr. Stuart was right enough when he complained he could never tell where they had cleaned, it was always clean enough for him.

Mrs. Stuart and Greta did the planning of the meals a week ahead, but it fell to the girls' lot to get the vegetables from the garden, to prepare them for cooking, to pick what fruits and berries Mr. Stuart raised in the garden, to set the table, to help with the dishes, and, when there were no visitors, they practiced baking cakes, making frostings and salad dressings.

Every two or three days one of them would make a batch of candy.

By changing from week to week, both the girls gained an all round experience in the science of housekeeping; and the strain on Greta was not too great, for both her pupils had been called upon to pinch-hit before, and they also showed both talent and common sense.

This arrangement left the girls with a good deal of leisure, both in the afternoon and evening, as most of the suppers were prepared in the morning. They always had time for a long swim in the pool above the garden, a walk, or a visit to Betty in the dairy. And the big verandah that ran around two sides of the house was a splendid loafing place, airy and shady, with swinging seats, hammocks, lounging chairs, magazine racks and writing tables. There the whole household loved to spend their idle hours. Sometimes even impromptu dances were staged there, when either Peggy's, or her big brother Donald's friends dropped in in sufficient numbers.

For the first couple of days the two girls didn't do much but get acquainted with their jobs, and they also equipped themselves with a lot of aprons, something their wardrobe had not included up to now.

On the Wednesday there was a Junior U. F. A. meeting at the school house, and on Thursday morning Mr. Stuart, who had attended the meeting, informed them all that there would be a U. F. A. picnic the coming Saturday. It would be at the usual place, six miles farther north in a bend of the creek where some enterprising member of the community had built not only several tables and benches among the trees, but also a platform on which the young people could dance.

An old cookstove, still able to steep many a boiler of steaming coffee, was a part of the landscape. There was lots of dead wood near by to serve the stove.

The girls worked hard all that week. There was the bread, cake, pies and cookies to bake, also sandwich fillings to make; and they were glad to get to bed early Friday night, so that could get a good long night's rest before the picnic.

Mrs. Stuart and Greta packed the picnic hampers in the morning, not only with food but with cups, plates, pitchers and silver—after a system of their own that had been tried and approved of before. They did not need Ann and Peggy's help, so the girls were allowed to sleep a little longer than usual, for which they were duly thankful before the day was over.

The picnic was a great success.

Everybody was there, and among the other things brought in profusion was just oceans of ice cream. There were races of all kinds, two ball games, and pitching horse shoes. Four of the boys had brought ropes and put up swings for the small children. One old-timer had brought his fiddle, another a guitar, and no less than six of the boys had harmonicas with them and were willing to play them. So when the shadows began to lengthen a truck was backed up to the platform, the musicians climbed in and everybody danced for awhile.

Ann and Peggy had a glorious time. All their old friends were there. A lot of the boys and girls with whom Peggy had gone to school with out here had also gone to high school in Macleod, so they were well known by Ann as well.

The girls covered themselves with glory in the ball games, won first prize in the three-legged race and second in the threading-the-needle race.

The Williams twins were there and danced impartially with them both. So did Bob and the rest of the boys. Even Teddy, who was only a few years older than the others.

But all good—and bad—things come to an end, and everybody was ready to go home when the sun went down.

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#### SINGING IN THE MOONLIGHT

All the picnic paraphernalia went home in the big truck with Teddy and Molly O'Brien. Greta and Betty drove home with Bob, of course, and Mr. and Mrs. Stuart, Peggy and Ann drove home in their own car and enjoyed the quiet peaceful ride after the din and noise of the picnic hours.

"How did you come out pitching horseshoes?" asked Peggy, on the homeward ride.

"When we get home I'll show you; I have the marks yet, I am sure."

"What marks, mother? Did you get hit by one? Who threw it at you?"

"Well, you see, I was wearing this old loose sweater and some of the horseshoes had bent nails in them, and once a nail caught in my sweater-front and the horseshoe just flew around me and stuck on my back. Everybody looked for it on the ground, and did we laugh when we discovered where it was? I was sure glad it didn't hit me in the face. But what about you, Jim. How did you



come out in the races?"

"Oh, I was only the starter. Not much fun at that end."

"But the tug-o-war, dad. I saw you in that?"

"Well, in a tug-o-war heft is what counts, and I tried to get as many heavyweights on our side as I could; but you know, it was the Scots against the Irishmen, and Scotchmen seldom are fat, at least not around here, so it was no wonder we lost out. Thank heaven there were no such conditions in this contest as in the one they had in Clavesholm the 5th of July."

"Tell us about that, Jim. We haven't heard about it."

"Oh yes, tell us! We don't ever hear ay gossip." This from the girls.

"This is not exactly gossip, girls, though I took it with a grain of salt myself. The facts as I got them were: The Scots and Norwegians agreed that if the Scots lost the tug-o-war they, the Scots, would eat a certain quantity of lutefisk; but if the Norwegians lost, they would as penalty be compelled to eat a like quantity of haggis. Each side to pay its own doctor's bills."

How the girls laughed at this. They had not yet quieted down when they drove up to their own porch; but on seeing Greta open the door for them they fell on her and demanded between giggles if she could tell them what "lutefisk" and "haggis" was.

Greta could and would if they would only calm down long enough to let her.

It was almost dark when the two girls, who had come downstairs for a little chat before going to bed, heard the tinkle of a ukelele from the dairy house verandah, while somebody was trying to sing 'Home, Home on the Range', so, of course, they had to investigate. When then appeared on the porch, several voices called to them to "come over and help with the singing".

Greta, who had also come out onto the porch, advised softly, "Better ask your dad, Peggy!"

Peggy paused, then flew excitedly back to the livingroom door. "May we go over to the dairy for awhile, dad?"

"Sure, but don't stay too long."

Peggy was quickly back to Ann and Greta, who were waiting for her on the steps. "What did Uncle Jim

say?" asked Ann.

"We mustn't stay so very late. But that's OK, we're too tired anyway, aren't we?"

"Well, it isn't so very wearing on your feet, singing isn't," said Greta; and then had to laugh, too, when the others laughed, as if she had said something witty.

The company on the dairy porch consisted mostly of young men—Bob and the four cowboys and a carload of their friends, six in all, who did not live very far away and so were in no hurry to go home. Teddy and Molly O'Brien arrived at the same moment the three girls did, and Betty also appeared from the upstairs with an armful of cushions and pillows as upholstery for the hard porch floor. The visitors proudly pointed out the car cushions they themselves had brought in, and invited the ladies to share their comforts. But the girls had already pre-empted the big old porch swing, so declined with thanks, enquiringly sarcastically if the concert was over.

The boys took the hint and everybody began to sing when Teddy's mandolin joined the ukelele in "Moonlight on the Silvery Colorado."

After that someone asked for "Red River Valley", and then everyone had their choice—"Moonlight and Roses," "Painting the Clouds with Sunshine," "Happy Days are Here Again," "Let Me Call You Sweetheart," "Springtime in the Rockies,"—and though all of them didn't know all the words to all the pieces, they were sufficiently familiar with all the pieces so that from distance the harmony sounded swell; at least that's what Mr. Stuart declared when he appeared just after they had sung "Goodnight, Sweetheart." He was carrying a giant aluminum pitcher in which ice tinkled musically. "We just thought you would like to wet your whistle, boys," he said as he came up the steps. "Mother is bringing some tumblers."

Everybody cheered at this, and the girls clapped their hands. Mrs. Stuart brought not only the tumblers, but a basket filled with Greta's delicious cookies as well.

When Greta saw them, she said to Ann in a dismayed tone: "Those are the cookies we kept for tomorrow, now what will we have when your folks come? I could just cry!"

But Betty, who overheard, came to

the rescue. "You know, I made a big batch just like these for the picnic, and I just now discovered the box all packed as they were out on the back porch. We never took them along at all. You can take them over to the house in the morning and then you will have plenty for almost anybody's tea."

"You are a wizard!" cried Ann and Peggy, and hugged her on the spot, while Greta looked more cheerfully upon the boys as they devoured her precious cookies.

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#### THEY GET AN INVITATION TO A DUTCH WEDDING

Sunday morning came all too soon, though the breakfast gong didn't sound till 9:00 o'clock. Everybody felt tired and stiff, for a couple of hours; but it was a nice cool day, looking a little like rain. Nobody wanted to "lorf", as they surely would have done had it been as hot as the day before.

Ann worked in the diningroom after breakfast, with an eye on the road to the east. But it was not until the girls had gone upstairs to dress before lunch that the Borden's car slid quietly around the curve in the driveway and stopped at the side door. Ann and Peggy raced each other down the stairs and arrived in the hall the moment Mr. Stuart opened the door for the Borden family.

Ann kissed both her mother and father hastily, and inquired at once after her mail.

There was mail for everybody Mr. Borden said, "but why be so feverish about it?"

"Examination results, of course!"

"Well, but the results will not be out for a month yet."

"Oh, fudge! But isn't there any other mail?"

"Yes, there is some. But you kids just keep your shirts on till I get it all sorted out."

Mr. Borden had picked up the mail for the whole ranch on Saturday night, and it was seen why it took a little time to separate it out, especially since everybody seemed to be getting a share in it this time.

Mrs. Stuart retreated to the diningroom and kitchen as soon as they had helped the visitors to remove wraps and hats. The mail disposed of individually, they then all gathered round



the lunch table.

Mrs. Borden had not yet been told of Ann's new plans for her vacation, so was greatly surprised when that young lady appeared on the scene carrying a big tray full of steaming soup plates. Explanations followed the soup all around the big table.

Then Peggy removed the empty plates while Ann served the meat and vegetables. This course ended and Greta brought in the dessert.

The three girls then sat down to their lunch, feeling that they had done credit to themselves and to their teachers.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Borden were enormously pleased. Mr. Borden, after having had it all explained to him, got up and proposed three cheers for Greta, as he considered it was her ability to cook that had kindled Ann's ambition.

Mrs. Stuart agreed with him, but also assured him that if Ann was not a born cook, neither she nor Greta had ever seen one.

This tickled both Ann and her mother so much they had to shake hands, while Peggy vigorously slapped Ann on the back, till she nearly upset her plate in her lap.

Mr. Stuart had finished his lunch and was looking over his mail. He turned to the rest, who were still sitting cosily around the table, and said: "I would like you all to hear what's in this letter. I think perhaps Greta already knows something about it, but the rest of you will probably be surprised. This letter is really a wedding invitation. Mr. van Hofstad of Monarch wants us to witness the wedding of his daughter, Genevieve, to Charles Andersen, and of his son, Timothy, to Wilma Brinkhof, at 11:00 o'clock on July the 15th., in the Dutch Reformed Church at Monarch."

"Well, well, a double wedding!" said Mr. Borden. "You don't hear of them every day."

"Wedding? Double?" asked Peggy, uncomprehendingly. "Who is going?" "Everybody!" laughed Mrs. Stuart. "Jim and I wouldn't miss a chance to go to a Dutch wedding for a hundred dollars. We went once, and did we have a swell time?"

"I'd tell a man!" spoke up Mr. Stuart. "They sure know how to get fun out of a crowd. That was the best entertainment I have seen since I came West."

"But who is getting married?" asked Ann, of Peggy, whose wits had been wool-gathering. Truth to tell, weddings were a little out of their line—yet.

"Why, you little goslings," Mrs. Stuart gave reply, "Who is Charles Andersen? Why, Greta's brother! The one that helped dad lay out the barns and corrals for Jerseys. Yes, dear, the same young man; and I think it is very nice of him to include us among his friends. Greta, you and Bob and Betty are going, aren't you?"

Peggy and Ann turned to Greta with question marks written all over their inquisitive smiling countenances. But Greta would not give them any information until they had cleared the table.

So they both fell to and cleared things up in a jiffy. While the dishes were being washed Greta told them what she knew about Charles and Genevieve and their love affairs.

Charles was the oldest of the Andersen children, about thirty. He had a good education, was a reliable engineer and a good farmer. He had long been a chum of the Hofstad boys, but Greta did not know any of them very well. But Betty had known Genevieve for ages. They were great friends and had even gone to college together, and she thought it was a splendid match. She said Genevieve was as smart as a whip, a wonderful cook and housekeeper, raised a big garden and just simply flocks of chickens and turkeys every year. She often milked, and made the best butter of any she (Betty) had ever tasted. This was praise indeed!

Genevieve's mother and father lived in Washington, but they would surely be up for the wedding.

It was Genevieve's twin brother who was also being married. Could anything be more exciting?

Mrs. Stuart and Mrs. Borden had been talking wedding presents. Presently they appeared in the kitchen to get some advice from Greta. "Where are they going to live, do you know, Greta?"

"Yes, they are going to live out east of Lethbridge in an irrigation district. Charles has got a position as agent for the Pool Elevator there. He has been working in an elevator the last year, helping the buyer, you know, and now he has an elevator on his own."

"Then, they will not live on a farm?" said Mrs. Borden.

"No, but it's only a little town, so it won't be so strange."

"Well, we were thinking of what to give them that would be suitable."

"I'm afraid I don't know anything that would help you. Betty would know, though, I think," said Greta, regretfully.

"Have you finished your work, girls?"

"Yes!"

"Well then, let's all go over and call on Betty and see if we can't find out about things."

The men had long ago disappeared out of the house; and the five women lost no time in going over to the dairy for their conference with Betty Andersen.

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#### THE GIRLS DRESS UP FOR THE BIG WEDDING

Betty was very glad to see them. "I nearly always get the blues," she said, "when it's cloudy. I am so glad you came over."

"We would like to consult you about what to get for Charles," said Mrs. Stuart. "Do you happen to know what they are getting, or have they been promised anything special?"

"Mother and dad are giving them a dinner set, china, you know; and Bob ordered a linoleum rug. Greta and I are giving them a set of breakfast dishes with table linens to match, and that is about all I know of."

"Well, anyway, we now know something about what not to buy," said Mrs. Borden. "I would like to give table linen or blankets, but if she is such a good manager as you say, she will probably have lots of both."

"I know she has oceans of all kinds of embroidered things, both for her table and bedding, and I am sure she has made wool quilts, several of them. Mother said she would give them lovely colored wool blankets. She was supposed to go to Lethbridge this last week to buy them. But you don't have to worry over presents. You won't be expected to give anything."

"Oh yes, but we will," returned Mrs. Stuart, "but I should have found out from Jim how much he wants to spend on one."

But Mrs. Borden had both money and ideas of her own, and she was going to buy a present on her own hook. So, after consulting Eaton's



general catalogue she announced: "I love to give silver. It's so beautiful, and it lasts. I can get a chest of silver for \$24.00. That means about \$30.00 in Lethbridge. That's what I'll do!"

"But isn't that too much to spend?" asked Betty, "after all—"

"After all, we have been friends of both the Hofstand's and the Andersens for twenty-five years, more or less, so I don't think we can do less."

"Well, no one else has promised them silver that I know of. Won't they be surprised? Of course there are always odd pieces at every wedding—gravy ladles, meat forks, sugar shells—but a whole chest! Won't that be splendid?" cried Betty, at last convinced that Mrs. Borden meant what she said.

But Ann and Peggy were worried. "What are we going to wear?" they wanted to know, after a whispered conversation.

Mrs. Stuart turned to Mrs. Borden: "Did you get that parcel from the store yesterday I asked them to send up?"

"Yes, surely!" said Mrs. Borden.

"Well then, girls, you will have enough to wear, if—if you can sew it; and listen, I got a pattern for a hat, too, when I bought that length of organdie. I wonder if we can make hats, too?"

"We used to have to make hats in college," said Betty slowly; "but I don't know if I can remember enough about it to make a real pretty one."

"Oh Betty, I'm sure we can make some if you will help us." "And girls, don't you think I had a hunch? I bought enough organdie for four or five dresses, and if we can get hats, too, wouldn't it be a lovely idea for you four girls to all go dressed alike? I will be glad to give you the goods if you will only help us sew for Ann and Peggy. Don't say you won't!"

"Of course, I'll be glad to help you sew and make the hats, but I don't think that's enough in exchange for the organdie."

"Don't start an argument," begged Peggy. "You can settle that afterwards. Let's begin looking at that dressgoods and hunting patterns."

"Betty and I have to have new dresses anyway," said Greta. "We really have nothing to wear, and we will be glad to pay for the goods we will use."

"You won't either!" said Peggy, in a determined tone. "Where is that organdie?"

The others all laughed and dropped the subject.

The wedding was to be on Friday and the next four days were busy ones. No hectic days on the Stuart ranch. Mr. Stuart and Bob ate with the other boys and also claimed that they had to make their own beds. The diningroom was strewn with silk, organdie and patterns. The sewing machine whirred at all hours, and Bob had to make a flying trip to town once for buckram, wire and sewing silk. But by Thursday noon the four hats and the four dresses were finished. The house was spotless and Mr. Stuart and Bob ate supper with the family.

Betty, who by right of her training, had been the boss of the sewing, and the results certainly justified her apparent pride. But it was the hats that gave the finishing touch of perfection. They were chic!

Mrs. Stuart and Mrs. Borden had arranged it so that the girls should dress in Ann's home before going on to the wedding. Thus their new dresses would not get so badly crushed.

Mr. Stuart, when he was shown all their finery, said the hats reminded him of his young days when the Merry Widow hats were so popular. Two of these could not get into one top buggy!

The girls wished and hoped that there would not be any wind, as their hats were neither stiff nor heavy.

But wind or no wind, the four of them made a pretty picture Friday morning when they left Macleod Friday morning for Monarch.

The Bordens had had a visit from Genevieve and she and Mrs. Borden had agreed to let "our quartette" be included as bridesmaids. So it was with their arms full of lovely flowers they walked up the aisle of the church in front of the two bridal couples.

After the ceremony, which was simple and impressive, the whole congregation that wended its way to a nearby school house that was to be the setting of the wedding feast.

And "feast" is the only word that could adequately describe that celebration.

After everybody had arrived dinner was served to all. There were num-

erous varieties of cold meats and fish, ten or twelve different kinds of salads, jellies with or without whipped cream, ten or twelve kinds of pie, cakes galore, gayly frosted and decorated, and all the tea and coffee anybody could want.

When everybody was satisfied the tables were cleared off and moved out, and an impromptu program was staged. A sort of chairman who knew everybody present called for volunteers, and they responded generously and performed their best tricks. There were songs, recitations, dialogues, choruses and tap-dancing. The 8-piece brass band from Monarch was in attendance and filled in any gaps which appeared in the program.

The old folks visited, the children played, and it surely looked like a holiday.

There was oceans of lemonade to be had for the asking, port wine for the ladies, and beer, fresh from kegs, for those that wanted it. There were boxes upon boxes of cigars and cigarettes, all offered free to the guests.

Mrs. Stuart shuddered when contemplating the cost of this entertainment. "How could they get all these loads of food and drink ready?" she asked Mrs. Andersen.

Her friend explained it to her: "There is a big family, you know, lots of married brothers and sisters, and they have all had to chip in and prepare the food. The grooms have to provide the drinks and the smokes. Mr. Hofstad has arranged for the minister, the church and the school house."

"Well, even if the expenses have been spread out like that, it must have been a hard week for a lot of cooks," exclaimed Mrs. Stuart; and Mrs. Andersen silently agreed with her.

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#### A HAIL STORM PASSES CLOSE

While the band was playing outside, because it was too hot to stay in the house, a queer looking cloud took formation in the southwest and the wind grew stronger. Mr. Stuart, Mr. Borden and Ann were sitting in Borden's car, and after watching it for awhile Mr. Stuart said uneasily: "I don't like the looks of that cloud. I wonder where mother and Peggy are?"

"I'll go and find them," said Ann, and disappeared in the crowd. Sev-



eral men, passing the two men on their way to turn their cars around or to close their windows, spoke of the appearance of the cloud. Soon everybody came out to look at it.

When the womenfolk showed up, warm and worried, Mr. Borden said: "Do you girls want to stay here if it hails, or do you want to make a run for it?"

"It doesn't look as if it was going to come this way," said Mrs. Borden, "but it sure looks like hail. Look at that line of breakers on top!"

The two older women would rather have left then and there, but the girls wanted to stay and see more of the fun. So they stayed on and the storm passed to the northeast without even a sprinkling of rain on the wedding guests. An hour or so later, however, a carload of people from Barons arrived on the scene, telling about a terrible hailstorm striking Barons, breaking hundreds of windows and raining all grain in a strip going from southwest to northeast. Later the Bordens heard about a woman being struck by lightning only four miles from the schoolhouse where they were at the time.

After the excitement had blown over everybody had supper. Again there was brought out the abundance of food—fancy sandwiches, salads, cakes and cookies were served along with the tea and lemonade.

Soon after this our friends bade their hosts goodbye, and wishing the newly wedded young couples the best of luck, departed for Macleod.

Betty and Greta went with them, though their friends pressed them to stay for the dancing. The road home was long and they both thought they had had enough excitement for the one day.

At Borden's house they stopped just long enough for the girls to change into their heavier dresses, and to have a cool drink before starting for home. Bob overtook them before they had more than cleared town, and drew up to ask if anybody wanted to ride with him. Greta changed over to his car "so she could get the house lighted and the kettle on before the rest gets home."

As it turned out Bob got home just 15 minutes earlier than Mr. Stuart, only to find that all human beings had apparently left the ranch. What on earth had happened?

When Mr. Stuart pulled up to the door Bob was there talking to Greta. The "boss" immediately sensed something was wrong. "What is it, Bob?" he asked.

"I don't know," replied Bob, "but there doesn't seem to be anybody home at all. I have been all over the place and haven't found a soul. All the saddles are hanging on their pegs, so they didn't leave on horseback."

"Mr. Stuart!" cried Greta from the livingroom, "your telephone is ringing."

"Thanks, Greta. Now we'll maybe find out what has happened." And with that he passed on into the hall and took down the receiver. In a few minutes he reappeared, wiping his face with his handkerchief.

"What was it, Jim?" asked Mrs. Stuart.

"It was Teddy," answered Mr. Stuart. "He is at Johnson's. So are the rest of the bunch. Johnson's barn was wrecked by a cyclone this afternoon and caught fire somehow afterwards, and the Johnsons naturally called up everybody to help save the rest of his buildings."

"Oh, dad, do you think that was the cloud we saw?"

"It might have been, it came from this direction all right. But it's hard to tell now."

"Imagine all this happening and us not home to see it!" said Peggy. "Though our day has been terribly exciting, too! What was it you and Uncle Borden laughed so hard about when Charles and Mr. Andersen were talking to you?"

"Let's all sit down here on the porch and I'll tell you while it's still fresh in my memory. You know, Charles runs an elevator out east not far from the river. Well, one day a customer of his came in and told of having driven over a big rattlesnake that was coiled up in the middle of the road, but he didn't think he hit it. When he was ready to leave, he stepped around and was just going to crank his car, when a big snake started to stick its head out of the hole. The man gave a yell and fell backwards over the bumper. But Charles, who had also seen the snake, grabbed the crank out of the man's hand and broke the snake's back before it got out of the opening. Charles said that afterwards that man went on the water wagon, and said he didn't ever

want to see any more snakes. I don't wonder he was scared; it must have been such a surprise."

"I don't think that's a good story to go to bed on," said Mrs. Stuart.

"Bob, look! If that's a light in Molly's bedroom somebody must be home. Hadn't you better go and see?"

"I'll go," said Bob.

"We'll both go," said Mr. Stuart, and off they went.

Ann looked after them, and then said: "Why don't they simply call Molly on the ranch phone; she's probably been home all along?"

"I guess they just forgot about the phone. They were kind of upset."

Betty who had been over in the dairy since she came home, now came across the lawn.

"Come in out of the wind. It sure gets chilly once the sun gets well down. I thought I might as well wait here as anywhere till Bob gets back. But I saw a light in O'Brien's kitchen when I took my hat off; I think Molly must have come home by the fields from Johnson's."

"Here come the men," said Ann.

"Did you find anybody?" asked Peggy as soon as she saw her dad in the light from the porch lamp.

"Yes, it was Molly. She and one of the boys came home up the back lane in Johnson's democrat to get some bread. The fire is out but it has been a tough job, and Mrs. Johnson is out of bread, so Molly offered to go home and send back what she had. Have you anything you can send over? There must be a big crowd over there and it will take a lot to feed them, even once."

"We must have lots, Greta," said Mrs. Stuart. "Let's go and gather up what we can send."

The boy who had come home with Molly drove up to the door a few moments later, and, stowing away the various bundles Greta handed him, he was off, back to Johnson's.

Bob, who had made a hasty inspection of his own domain, accompanied him. Mr. Stuart told Bob to bring all their own boys back home for lunch, and not to let them eat at the Johnson's. They would get all they wanted as soon as they got home.

Betty and Greta went over to the dairy, gathered all the eatables they could carry, and went down to Molly. They found her busy heating the giant



coffee pot and setting out lunch on the long table. Mr. Stuart had already called her on the ranch phone and had asked her to get the lunch ready for the crowd.

Up at the big house Ann and Peggy and Mr. and Mrs. Stuart just simply gave up the fight to stay awake any longer, and went to bed.

#### THE GIRLS FIND A PAPOOSE

The day after the wedding was very dull, or so the girls claimed; and so after an early lunch Mrs. Stuart gave them permission to help Molly O'Brien take the men's lunch up to the upper meadow where they were haying. Molly drove a team to the democrat, for the road up was too rough for a car. The boys were glad to see the lunch wagon, and "fell to" as soon as the girls got the food unpacked, and it was not before the girls were on their way back to the farm house again.

At a point on the road where it ran close to the Indian reservation their horses suddenly pricked up their ears, looking steadily to the west. Molly didn't see anything, but Ann stated positively she had seen something move in the brush. Peggy, after listening hard for a second after Molly had stopped the horses, said in a disgusted tone: "Puma!" And indeed they all heard the wailing, yowling cry that seemed to come from the underbrush.

"But the horses don't act as if it was a puma," said Molly.

Ann and Peggy looked at them. No, they didn't.

"I'm going to take a look over here," said Ann, preparing to jump down.

"I'm coming with you," said Peggy, hitting the ground a second after her cousin.

Together they parted the bushes at the side of the trail, and what did they see? An Indian child, about two or three years of age, dirty and ragged, full of scratches on its face, and dragging a piece of blanket that was fastened to its belt or tied some way to its little person. When it saw the girls it stopped crying and only looked stonily at them.

Molly, who could not leave the horses, called frantically: "Have you found anything, girls? Hurry up and find out what it is!"

"It's a baby, a papoose!" returned Ann.

"It must have wandered away from the reservation," said Peggy.

"Bring it out here," said Molly.

So the girls slowly advanced on the poor little mite, took its grimy paws in a gingerly grip, and led it carefully out to the astonished Molly.

"What are we going to do with it?" they asked each other. But Molly soon made up her mind.

"Peggy, will you stand at the head of these horses while I go and take a look." Peggy did as she was told while Molly penetrated the bushes for quite a distance without finding any clues. She came back to the democrat as puzzled as before. "We can't stay here," she said firmly. "We will have to take it home with us. It needs to have its scratches tended to. Mrs. Stuart will decide what to do with it afterwards. Lift it up here in the back, Ann. Bring the blanket it had and climb in. No use waiting around her for somebody to turn up."

When the baby had got its washed and its bruises treated, it turned out to be a real nice little girl. She was patient and didn't fret, but sat where Molly put her, looked around but didn't try to touch anything.

Molly's phone rang. "Is it a boy or girl baby you have found, Molly?" asked Mrs. Stuart.

"A girl," replied Molly.

"Then Ann and Peggy are coming right down again to bring it up here. I promised they could, if possible, dress it up in some of Peggy's old clothes and keep it till her father has time to investigate. You haven't any objections to that, have you Molly?"

"My goodness, no," said Molly. "I was just wondering if I should call Betty over to help me make some clothes for it when you rang up."

"That's fine then. Come up later if you want to see the show. So long!"

Just as Molly hung up the receiver, Peggy and Ann opened the door. "We brought my old doll buggy along, Molly. She has such little feet and they are so full of cuts and bruises. Will you put her in it?"

But the little foundling would not sit in the doll buggy. She showed plainly that she wanted to push it herself, though she hadn't the faintest notion how to go about it. Finally Molly lifted the child down to level ground. Ann brought the carriage and then Peggy, by stooping over the baby, guided them both up the smooth

path, around the dairy and up to the big house. Both Betty and Greta were in the dairy, but Molly must have told them to go out and look, for they both came out on the porch when the little group moved past.

Their looks said plainly "What on earth!" But Peggy didn't stop to explain, but let the baby trundle on. Ann dropped behind a few steps and told them to come over, as their help probably would be badly needed before "our baby" could be dressed properly. So it was not long before they too arrived at the big house. They came in the door just as Mrs. Stuart came down the stairs with some clothing in her arms that she deposited on the sewing machine. The girls had the baby in a tub of warm water in the washroom and were debating how to get its hair cut. When Betty came to the door they both in one breath asked her: "Can you cut hair, Betty? We simply can't comb it, and mother won't let us cut it; but you can do it, can't she, mother?"

"Of course she can," said Mrs. Stuart; while Greta added: "She is a regular barber when she is home. I'll go and fetch the scissors and clippers while you all decide how you want her hair cut."

Greta sped on her way.

"I think she would look sweet with bangs," said Ann.

"No, a boyish bob would be better," said Peggy.

"The more you can cut off the better, when it's so hot," said Mrs. Stuart.

"I can shingle it in the back real short and leave it a little longer on the top," said Betty, borrowing a rubber apron from Greta.

"See, mother, she likes to be washed. She tries to wash her hands and arms," cried Peggy. "Isn't she cute?"

"Here is a warm towel, Peggy," said Ann. "I think we have got the first layer off anyway. Let's get her hair cut while Betty has plenty of time. Here comes Greta with the clippers and scissors. Greta, please will you measure this baby and then help me to remodel a nightgown and a little shirt for her?"

"I will be glad to help you with the sewing, but where in the world did Peggy and Ann get that child?"

"Come into the diningroom with your tapemeasure and I'll tell you."

Greta measured the baby's various



dimensions and then followed Mrs. Stuart into the diningroom, where the sewing machine was already opened, dusted and threaded.

"Here are some old shirts of Donald's. They are nice and soft and still strong. Can you sew a couple of vests for that poor child? We burnt what she had on. We may not keep her more than a day but she has got to have some clothes while she is here, that's one thing I am sure of."

Mrs. Stuart clipped and talked and Greta sewed and listened, while the others out in the wash room cut the baby's hair, dressed all its wounds, shampooed it, till finally it looked like a little bronze statue.

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#### MR. STUART DISCOVERS HE HAS A DOCTOR AS A FARM HAND

"Well, well, what have we here?" cried Mr. Stuart, surprised, when he walked into the kitchen where all the women were grouped around the latest addition to the Stuart household. "Whose baby is that?"

Peggy and Ann began at once to explain, when they suddenly noticed that Mr. Stuart's hands and coat were covered with blood and that he was looking white and sick.

"How did you get hurt, Jim?" asked Mrs. Stuart anxiously; "and how bad?"

"It isn't my blood," replied Mr. Stuart. "Run me some water so I can wash, will you?"

"What happened, and who got hurt?" Peggy wanted to know. But Mr. Stuart was telling Betty that she was needed over in the dairy, and that he would be over right away.

To Greta's startled look, he said "No, Bob isn't hurt, Greta; it's a stranger we found on the trail."

The baby, who had been fed bread and milk in plenty, after its bath, had fallen asleep in Mrs. Stuart's lap, so the girls put it softly to bed in a big clothes basket in the diningroom. Thus they could go in and out and still keep an eye on it.

Mr. Stuart went over to the dairy as soon as he had washed the blood stains off, saying that he would be back soon and explain everything. Greta had gone with Betty, and as the girls were too excited to be hungry, Mrs. Stuart decided to wait for Mr. Stuart's return before getting supper.

He came back in an hour or so, still looking sick, but also somewhat re-

lieved.

"Now tell us what happened?" they all wanted to know, and Mr. Stuart enlightened them as well as he could.

"I haven't got it all clear in my mind yet, but if I tell you maybe I will get it figured out. First, when we were coming back from the bench with a load of the new hay, our horses would not go past the old trail that leads to the reservation. We had to stop and one of the boys went down the trail a little ways. Pretty soon he came back and hollered to the rest of us to come on, and said he had found a dead Indian. So the rest of us went down to him; but we just stood there with our mouths open. There didn't a one of us have any idea what to do about it till that Englishman the boys all call 'Duke'—you know him by sight, I guess—calmly walked up to the poor lad, knelt down, listened to his heart, then examined him quickly all over, as if he had been one of these specialists, then he stood up, looked straight at me and said: 'this young woman has to have more attention than I can give her here—what do you propose to do?' I was all rattled, but had just sense enough to say we would of course take her to the ranch with us. But we first had to find poles and make a stretcher out of our coats, for she was too badly hurt to be loaded on the hay. The Duke said she probably had several ribs broken, besides a fractured collar bone. So we took turns carrying him—her—here. The Duke didn't say a word till we got in the yard, then he told me in a most matter of fact way that he would be obliged to me if I would arrange for him to use Bob and Betty's living room for an operating room; and would I also be kind enough to summon Betty first, and he would also need Mrs. O'Brien for a while, as he understood she was a trained nurse. I was all bewildered and said: 'Don't we need a doctor?' How do you think I felt when he looked at me and said simply: 'I am a doctor. When this case has been attended to I will show you my diploma.' I did as I was told, came up here and got washed, then went down to the dairy. I was only on the porch though, and looked through the window, and say, he, the Duke I mean, is a sure enough doctor. He was working away, Molly was right there handing him things, and Betty was bring-

ing him bandages and boiling instruments. It looked just like I have always thought a hospital looked like. Bob was helping Betty, stoking the fire and bringing ice, so I just asked Bob was there anything I could do, and there wasn't. So I just came away before I got too sick. I can't stand the sight of blood, you know!"

"But dad, this Duke person—how is it he is working here if he is a doctor?"

"Well, he was pretty green of course, when he first came; but the boys all liked him fine and didn't mind showing him how things were done, so he has done fairly well, even if he knew very little about stock. Personally I think he came out here to get over the flu, or maybe he had a touch of T.B. Anyway, Teddy tells me he has slept in the hayloft all the time he has been here, instead of in the bunkhouse."

The girls were speechless until they remembered their own adventure, and that they related to him while they all ate their supper.

"I wonder," said Mrs. Stuart, "if there is any connection between these two happenings?"

"I don't know, but that girl looked as if a puma had attacked her, or if she is as banged up as the Duke says, she may have been thrown from her pony. We'll hear more when the Duke finishes with the poor lass."

"Will he come over to report?" asked Mrs. Stuart. "Has he had time to eat any supper, do you think? Where is Greta? Didn't you see her when you went out?"

"Greta is doing Molly's job of giving the men their supper; and it would be a good idea if you girls went down and helped her, seeing you have not much work to do here."

"All right," said Peggy and Ann, and they took their big aprons off the hook and went out.

After Mr. and Mrs. Stuart had finished their supper they went in took a look at the little sleeping papoose.

"That's the cleanest papoose I've ever seen," said Mr. Stuart with a chuckle. "Wonder whose it is?"

"I think the girls used up a whole cake of soap on its bath; and it certainly needed it."

"Are you going to keep this baby if nobody claims it?"

"I don't know, Jim. This is so sudden! Do you want me to keep it?"



You are the boss, you know, after all."

"Come on now, I know better than that. Do what you think is best and it will be all right with me."

At this moment Bob came up on the porch where Mr. Stuart had stretched out on the hammock. "I forgot to give you the mail, Boss. There are a lot of letters, some from the Old Country."

"Thanks, Bob. Put them all here on this magazine table, and then tell us, how is the patient coming?"

"Not out of the ether yet, but finished otherwise. Did you know that it was a girl in a man's shirt and pants?"

"Not until the Duke said so."

"That was queer, you not knowing whether it was a boy or girl; didn't you all see it?"

"Yess, but I told you we didn't go near it. Only the Duke touched it at all. We thought it—he—she was dead. And the Duke said not to expect him over to-night. He will have to stay with the case. He is afraid of concussion. But if you want him you can call him on the phone."

"That's O.K. Bob. I don't want to bother him. Would you like some supper; you haven't had any, have you?"

"No, I haven't; but the way I feel now I don't care if I never eat again. I would sure never make a doctor."

"Nor me," said Mr. Stuart. "It gets me, too—blood does. If you are going down to the bunk house, see how Greta and the others are getting along, will you? It's almost bed time and they have a baby to take care of."

"Yes, I heard about that. I will. Goodnight. And with that Bob left.

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#### DR. SCOTT IS INVITED TO DINNER

When the girls came back from the cookhouse they were weary enough to want to go to bed at once. As Molly had to stay at the dairy all night it was necessary for Greta to sleep with Peggy or Ann. So they took the baby basket and all, upstairs with them and turned in for the night. They had fully anticipated waking every hour at least on account of the baby, but the sun was way up and shining brightly when they actually opened their tired eyes. Greta had already dressed and gone downstairs, taking

the baby with her, and Peggy and Ann lost no time in doing likewise.

Mr. Stuart had gone down in the storeroom and hunted up Peggy's old high chair. The baby was already in it and being fed cream of wheat by Mrs. Stuart. It was a strange sight and the two stopped still to watch the charming scene. Then Greta brought their breakfast and the two sat down to it, still watching Mrs. Stuart and the baby. After it's cereal the baby was given a soft-boiled egg with soft toast, and a little glass with orange juice. This it would not drink, however, plainly preferring its warm milk. Mrs. Stuart finally decided it had had enough, so she wiped its face with the wash cloth and set it down from the high chair. She then joined the three girls in the breakfast nook.

"How did you come to be as deft as that with a baby?" asked Peggy. "I have never seen you handle one before."

"Well my dear, I came from a large family, all younger than myself, and I took care of both Donald and you alone, so why shouldn't I know how to handle a baby?"

"But I think it must have to be a gift," said Ann. "Remember the woman at the picnic who had all those kids and yet didn't know how to hold one on her lap properly?"

"But maybe that was the child's fault," returned Mrs. Stuart. "Some sit stiff as a stick and won't bend or cuddle. But speaking of Donald reminds me, we had a letter from him last night. He is coming home soon, and maybe he will bring your cousins with him. We will have to get the spare bedrooms fixed up, if he does."

"But mother, how perfectly scrumptious!" cried Peggy. "Why didn't you tell us before?"

"What was the use? You were sound asleep before," laughed Mrs. Stuart.

The baby had wandered around, quietly looking at things, but never touching anything. Mr. Stuart, opening the door this minute, got the surprise of his life, as the baby ran to him, clung to his leg and gurgled delightedly. "Poor little thing!" he said, and picked it up.

"Why, dad, have you found out anything about it?"

"Well yes, some. This morning two squaws drove up to the corral

gate and asked about the girl we found last night, or so Teddy supposed. He is not strong on the Indian language, but he thought they asked about a papoose, too, though he doesn't know exactly just what they wanted to know."

"Is the patient in the dairy going to get well?"

"The doctor thinks it's likely if he can only keep her quiet, but she seems determined to get up to hunt for something. Last night when she was delirious she kept calling a name, at least that's what Doctor Scott and Molly thought it was."

"Dr. Scott! Is that the Englishman's name?"

"Yes. He told me this morning he had been an interne in one of the big hospitals in Edinburgh, when the head surgeon told him he had better seek a sunnier climate for the next few years if he didn't want T.B. So he dropped everything, packed up and came to Alberta. He thinks he will stay here the rest of his life, but not as a ranch-hand, of course."

"I should think not, Jim; and you simply must ask him to dinner as soon as you can. Did you see if he had his instruments right here with him?"

"Yes, everything he needs to set up a hospital is right in his trunks down in the basement of the dairy. His operating clothes, uniform or what you call it, and trays and drawers full of instruments! Believe me, that boy is well heeled! And say, I like him, though I must admit he is about as chatty as a clam. I think that must be due to the Scotch strain in him. He told me his mother was Scotch."

"That's a joke Dad, coming from you," said Peggy; and they all had a good laugh.

That afternoon Mr. Stuart had a caller. It was the priest from the Catholic Mission on the reservation; and he explained a great deal before he left. First, he and Mr. Stuart made a visit at the dairy for the purpose of identifying the patient, of course, obtaining permission from the doctor. Then the baby was brought into the livingroom for inspection, and after that Hig Reverence painted a very livid word picture for them all. The baby had been asleep in the back of the spring wagon when it must have rolled off, just where the road branched, and was not missed till the Squaws and children had reached



home, when the baby's sister began to make inquiries about it. Not having been able to locate it, she grabbed her fiery pony and had ridden back over the trail, perhaps guessing what had happened. The next thing anybody knew, the pony was back, with several probably the work of a mountain lion. Several half-grown boys then went off on the pony's bloody trail, but it was too dark to go very far last night. This morning the children's brother's wife, with whom they were staying, sent word to the Mission asking his help in locating the two children.

"Haven't they got any parents?" asked Mr. Stuart.

"Their father lives down south, but he has a young wife who can't manage the many children very well. Their own mother was killed last winter. Maybe you heard about it? No? Well, the father was driving home from Pincher Creek with his wife and some of the kiddies; they were in a sleigh, and it was one of those awfully cold, blizzardy nights we had so many of last winter. The horses were young and only half broken, they ran away and the squaw was thrown out. It took a long time to get the horses under control, and by then the Indian didn't have any idea about where to look for his squaw. In the morning, when the storm had blown over she was found frozen to death. She probably was stunned by falling on the rocky ground and did not regain consciousness in time to fight the frost."

"Oh, the poor thing!" said Mrs. Stuart, wiping her eyes, while the girls who were weeping openly retired to the kitchen in search of a kerchief to wipe their eyes.

Before His Reverence left he had promised to use his influence to get permission for the two waifs to stay at the ranch, at least till well again.

When the patient was not delirious any more, Mrs. Stuart took the baby over to see its sister, who had practically laid down her life for it. At first they didn't recognize each other, the eldest so swathed in bandages, the younger scrubbed and brushed, with her hair trimmed, and dressed in lovely cool gingham, half hose and soft slippers. But when the older sister spoke, wondering if she was seeing things, the baby ran to her, tried to climb onto the bed, and babbled Piegan Indian babytalk. After

that episode Greta and the baby slept in the room next to the patient, and in the daytime she was in the sick room as much as Dr. Scott would permit.

The patient improved wonderfully fast now that she didn't worry any more. Dr. Scott was over for supper several times; and Mrs. Stuart also found him charming, though he never grew talkative.

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#### BUT THE GIRLS SAY "THE DOCTOR NEVER LAUGHS"

The girls had aired the guest rooms and Donald's room, put up fresh curtains, waxed the floors and polished the windows, till everything shone like new. Donald was Peggy's elder brother, who had gone abroad to round out his education. After visiting the best known dairy counties in England, he took what he thought would be a flying trip up to Scotland to see his father's family. When he got there he found that his uncle, who was his father's only brother, had passed away a few weeks earlier, leaving a son, Alex, about Donald's age, and a daughter, Ellen, a little older than Peggy. He had also left his business in a very sorry muddle. His son didn't know anything about his system of bookkeeping and the two young people were at their wits' end trying to decide what they should do.

Donald had been giving them a helping hand, and also writing his dad every week or so, reporting his activities; and his dad felt that he had shown good judgement in nearly all of his decisions.

Now that his cousins had sold their farm, and they all had sailed for Canada, would in fact be in Macleod this week. The girls speculated at first a lot about this new girl-cousin, Ellen Stuart. They only knew that she was twenty years old; not much information to build a personality on, and they gave it up very soon. But Alex was a farmer. They all felt they would have lots in common with him.

On Wednesday a telegram was phoned out to the ranch: "The Stuart party would arrive in Lethbridge Saturday morning, barring accident."

At first Peggy and Ann thought they would like to go down to meet them, but it was finally decided that only Mr. and Mrs. Stuart should go

in the big car, then there would be plenty of room for the three travellers coming home. This plan was carried out and it was Saturday evening before the girls had their curiosity satisfied. The day had been a busy one, and after all was done that could be done to make the travellers feel welcome, Peggy and Ann took up their post on the porch where they could watch the road for miles to the east.

"I wonder if Donald will have changed much," said Ann. "Won't it be fun if he has grown real English looking, like—like the Duke, for instance?"

"Why don't you say 'Doctor Scott'? I think 'the Duke' sound silly."

"I never can remember till after I've said it. Have you ever heard the—Doctor laugh?"

"No, but he often smiles, at least at the baby. But he certainly is not very jolly."

"Did you know dad asked him to go over to Johnsons and take a look at that boy who got his leg mangled under a horse the other day?"

"Yes, I heard him ask him to do it, and Dr. Scott seemed glad to go. I wonder what Donald will say to 'Sunbeam' and 'Rainbow'?" These were the nicknames the girls had bestowed upon the two Indian children.

"He will think we did just right, never fear. He always approves of everything dad and mother does."

"Well then, why worry?"

"Oh, Ann! You are such a comfort to me."

"Thanks, but will you look at that cloud of dust way down by the school, maybe that's them!"

"Oh Greta, here they come—we think!"

When the car stopped the travellers walked stiffly up the steps to the porch, and you could see how deadly tired they were after their ten day journey. Mrs. Stuart introduced Ellen to the three girls, and then told Peggy and Ann to show their cousin to her room and the bath, and to carry her grip up. Ellen was plainly tired, but she also seemed bewildered by something or other. The girls got a line on what it was after they had helped her to warm water, brushed her hair and helped her on with her simple black dress. At the start she didn't talk, but when she heard the two chattering away explaining the water system, the electric lights and the



laundry chute, she exclaimed in wonder: "Donald said your father had a dairy farm, but this house is like a castle!"

This amused the girls immensely; but now the supper gong had sounded, and after a last look in the mirror, the three tripped gaily down the stairway to the dining room.

Mr. Stuart was waiting for them and held open the door for them to pass through; and they all sat down to the flower bedecked table to such a meal as only the culinary artist, Greta could produce.

Greta herself stayed in the kitchen arranging platters and dishes. Ann and Peggy serving, as usual. When Greta finally appeared with the dessert, as was her custom, both Donald and Alex stood up in surprise, till Mr. Stuart laughingly introduced her as "our perfect gem of a housekeeper!"

Then Donald found his tongue, and burst out: "But—but where is Minnie?"

"You must have thought a lot of Minnie to remember her so long," said Mrs. Stuart.

"He hid it well," said Mr. Stuart; and at that they all laughed, to the mystification of Peggy and Ann. To tell the truth, Donald and Minnie had not gotten along at all. Donald objecting to many of Minnie's little ways, and Minnie plainly demonstrating that she didn't give a darn for Donald's opinions.

After the pleasant meal had come to an end, Mr. Stuart took the men into the livingroom for a smoke and a chat, while the ladies still lingered over the dessert. Dr. Scott, who had just got back from the Johnsons, came up on the verandah to report to Mr. Stuart. The boss greeted him cordially and asked him to come in and meet his son and his nephew.

The young man had hardly entered the room when Alex sprang up as if shot, seized the Doctor's hand and pumped it up and down, to the great astonishment of both Donald and Mr. Stuart.

"How on earth, old chap?" "What lucky wind has blown you here?" and other similar exclamations mingled unheard until a sudden commotion from the diningroom door arrested their attention. "Dr. Scott!" "Dr. Scott!" called Peggy and Ann in unison. "Come quick! Ellen has fainted!"

In a couple of strides the Doctor

was in the diningroom, bending over the unconscious girl. "Will you give me a hand here, Alex?" he said, briskly. "Let's put her out on the porch swing. Has she ever had any fainting spells before this?"

"Never!! But then she has never been so run down as she is now."

"It's probably due to the shock, on top of the long trip and the ride up in the car," the Doctor went on. "Cold water, Greta, please. And if you have any spirits of ammonia, Mrs. Stuart, you might bring that at once."

Mrs. Stuart and Greta departed on their various errands while the two girls huddled in the darkening livingroom, scared half out of their wits. They had neither of them seen anybody faint before.

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#### THE GIRLS FIND THAT THEIR SCOTCH DOCTOR IS ALREADY PRE-EMPTED

Nobody said a word until Ellen opened her eyes and looked at Dr. Scott bending over her, so they all heard plainly the words she spoke: "Darling, did you die, and are we in heaven?"

At these words a light seemed to break over Dr. Scott's face, he fell on his knees, took Ellen in his arms—and the audience melted silently away, too astounded to speak till they were safe in the diningroom, where Greta had switched on the lights, and had already started to clear the table.

"Well, Alex, it does seem as if you ought to do some explaining," said Mr. Stuart, after the diningroom door had been closed. "Surely you don't think the womenfolks will be able to sleep tonight if they don't get any more light on the subject than has been visible so far. Come out with it, boy! If it has been a secret, it isn't one any longer, so no harm can come of your telling us."

"Well—but really, I don't know anything about it, Uncle Jim," protested Alex. "John and I went to school together, and after he became an interne in Edinburgh he used to spend his vacations with us. His mother had been a good friend to our mother so we treated him like one of the family. But this last winter we didn't see much of him, and this spring we had a short letter from him saying he wished to thank us for all our kindness to him; he was going away for

an indefinite stay and was unable to come out to see us before he left. If, as I now suspect, Ellen had fallen in love with him, then I can better understand what has ailed her since then. By Jove! that explains a lot of things!"

But Donald was still in the dark. "How did he get here, and why?"

Alex didn't know. But Mr. Stuart did: "He told me his head doctor in Edinburgh had told him to get out in the sun for the next few years if he didn't want T.B."

"Well then, I can understand him not trying to come out to see us before he left, even if he was in love with Ellen, which of course I don't know anything about."

"But how did he come to work for you, Dad?"

"I don't know. It just happened that way, I guess. Teddy brought him out once, I remember. Better ask the Doctor if you want to know."

"But he didn't hire out to you as a Doctor, did he?"

"Of course not; but when we found the Indian girl that day it just naturally popped out."

"Whatever are you talking about, Uncle Jim—Indian girls? I didn't know there were any Indians close to your holdings."

"Oh yes, the reservation is right here next door, so to speak, and you can see Indians going by on the road any day in the week."

"How did you find this Indian you are talking about, Dad?"

"We might as well make ourselves comfortable in here, seeing the porch is occupied," chuckled Mr. Stuart.

"Sit down all of you and I'll tell you about our Indian invasion, if you would like to hear it. Peggy and Ann can help me out if it gets too much for me."

And now Mr. Stuart related to the interested young men the happenings of the last two or three weeks and ended up by saying it was his opinion Dr. Scott could soon work up a good practice here if he decided to stay.

"But where is he keeping his patient, and who takes of her when he is not there?"

Mr. Stuart then explained about Molly O'Brien being a trained nurse, and from there he went on to tell how the Andersens had been turned out of their comfortable quarters to make room for the Doctor and his patient; how Bob had to sleep in the



bankhouse, while Betty gave all her spare time to the two Indian children. Lastly Mrs. Stuart, who had been helping the girls, described how Betty and Greta, helped by Peggy and Ann, had cut and sewed the various pieces of goods she had provided till the two strangers were as well equipped with clothes as they themselves were.

Donald knew both Betty and Bob, and had it not been so late would have gone down to call on them. However, he was prevented from going anywhere, even to bed, which they all needed badly, by Ellen and Dr. Scott appearing in the livingroom. The girls coming in from the kitchen where they had been working feverishly, hardly recognized Ellen. She had been pale, tired and listless; now her eyes sparkled, her cheeks glowed and her whole being was animated; and her voice, colorless before, was now clear and musical. Mrs. Stuart gave a little gasp when she saw her, and said softly to Mr. Stuart: "Why, the child is beautiful!"

Dr. Scott was also changed, in fact he seemed to have put on another personality altogether, and Peggy and Ann were startled to hear him laugh—actually laugh! Mr. Stuart was the first to speak: "Well, young people, what do you say for yourselves?" He could not keep the twinkle out of his eyes nor the chuckle out of his voice, and both Ellen and Dr. Scott could see he was not displeased.

"Mr. Stuart, I can explain my conduct in a few words. I was madly in love with Ellen when I found out I had insipient tuberculosis. Seeing her here so unexpectedly, I felt as if the earth suddenly started turning the other way round; when Ellen spoke as she did, I simply lost my head, as I guess you all saw—and now I think I had better ask Alex for permission to marry Ellen. Do I get it Alex?"

Mrs. Stuart gave Alex a little shove, and whispered: "Speak up, Alex!" But Alex was tongue-tied. He stepped forward instead, wrung the Doctor's hand, then turned to Ellen, took her in his arms and kissed her softly on the forehead. Then he found his voice: "I wish mother could have lived to see this day. I am sure she always hoped this would happen some time. But if you want my blessing, you have it in the fullest measure.

Then Ellen went to Mrs. Stuart, who gave her a warm kiss and promised herself she would always be a

bidden them all goodnight. "Can you imagine it?" said Ann. "Here was poor Ellen eating her heart out summer while we had all those good times, picnics and weddings and everything. We will have to make it up to her. She has never had any real good times, I don't believe. What do they do in Scotland to amuse young people, do you suppose?"

"Oh, curling, and golf, and hiking places—that's all I know of."

"Don't you think they have parties there, Peggy?"

"No, I don't; and the only eats they are porridge and oatcakes and haggis!"

"Ugh! That's not a party dish, Peggy. I believe it's horrid stuff, though I never saw any, but they actually serve it up cooked right in a sheep's stomach!"

"I never saw any of it either, but I sure don't like the sound of it, and I'm afraid I wouldn't have nerve enough to eat any of it."

At this point sleep caught up with them and they didn't worry any more about Scotch foods, either plain or fancy.

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#### THE GIRLS SEE ROMANCE ALL ABOUT THEM

The next morning Greta and her two pupils were extra busy. Mrs. Stuart had asked Dr. Scott to join the family at breakfast, which was at nine o'clock as usual on Sunday mornings. So the three girls decided to have everything as lovely as possible. Peggy set the table with the best china, on an embroidered cloth, with cut glass for the fruit, and the newest silver. Ann plucked flowers from the garden, filled all the vases and the low centrepiece for the table, until the diningroom looked like a conservatory. Greta came forth with her best breakfast culinary skill—crisp bacon with golden toast, Betty's famous Jersey butter and a delicious home-made marmalade, a platter of delectable eggs, fragrant coffee in the big silver percolator, luscious fresh picked strawberries from the garden, served with cream so thick that the spoon would almost stand upright in it.

Alex and Donald had gone out about eight o'clock, "taking a look round" as they put it. Mr. Stuart, whom they found in the strawberry patch,

them to go ahead, everything was ready for inspection. At this sally the two cousins said: "We'll see!"

When the first gong had sounded for breakfast Mrs. Stuart went up to Ellen's door and knocked softly. At Ellen's "come in" she found her standing at the window looking out over the garden. She was rested and rosy this morning, and charming in her reserved way. When Mrs. Stuart entered Ellen went at once to her aunt and kissed her warmly: "Good morning, Aunt Mary. Was that the church bell I heard a minute ago?"

"No, dear," said Mrs. Stuart, reflecting back her radiance, "that was the breakfast bell. It will ring again in a few minutes. If you are not down then your eggs will be cold."

"That's a terrible punishment, Aunt Mary," laughed Ellen.

"Have you everything you need, dear? We will be glad to let you have anything you want. I'm so glad to see that you have put on a colored dress this morning. It looks as if we have a very hot day ahead of us, and black is so warm."

"I put this grey dress on because black makes me look so old and lousy; and I want to look nice to-day if I can. Do you think I can ever get such a lovely color as Peggy and Ann have?"

"Dear child, they are very active you know and their color is good, but they also use lipstick and rouge and powder to emphasize their natural color; and there is no reason why you should not do the same; but you have enough sparkle in you to-day without any such aids. Now there's the last bell. Will you come down with me, or aren't you quite ready?"

"Yes, I'm ready, Aunt Mary." And together they went down the stairway. At the foot of the stairs stood Dr. Scott. Mrs. Stuart gave him her hand and a cordial "good morning", and then discreetly disappeared, closing the door after her. Five minutes afterwards Alex and Donald came into the diningroom with broad smiles upon their faces, but would not tell why they were laughing. All the girls could get out of them was: "And they never even saw us!"

Mrs. Stuart then had Peggy ring the gong once more, and this time Ellen and the Doctor showed up in the diningroom for the "engagement breakfast."

The young men praised the food,

\*turn to first column.  
-next para. 4 lines then resume above of this column.



First Four Lines are a  
Continuation of first  
column on previous page.

(mother to this poor girl as long as) she would need her.

It was two excited girls who went upstairs to bed, after Dr. Scott had the flowers, the table appointments, and ate . . . lots. Ellen and the Doctor ate what was set before them, looked at each other happily, but said very little. Their understanding was complete. Words seemed superfluous. When Greta came in and sat down with the family at the breakfast table her radiant countenance added to the glory of the already shining day.

Donald somehow couldn't keep his eyes off Greta; her every movement brought them flashing upon her. She could not help but sense the situation, and it brought the blushes furiously and uncontrollably. Mr. Stuart also noticed it; but he did not worry! Everybody was bowled over by Greta's looks anyway; and if her looks didn't get them, they invariably went down before her cooking.

Shall we try to picture Greta? She had deep blue eyes, fair skin, golden hair with a soft natural wave in it, delicately tapered fingers, well-shaped and proportionate feet below a trimness of ankle that was most alluring; and Mr. Stuart often swore she had the evenist disposition this side of heaven! And Donald had expected to find Minnie. No wonder he stared!

Alex took note of it, and began to tease. Alex would never fall for a blonde girl, no sir! He knew a lot of inside dope about their dispositions, their vanity, their craving for flattery. All this he told Donald under cover of the general talk and bustle. All he won for his pains was an emphatic "baloney!" That puzzled him greatly. He was not up to Canadian slang as yet.

After breakfast the family went their various ways. Mrs. Stuart and Ann did the bedrooms, Greta and Peggy did the after-breakfast work, Ellen and the Doctor went for a walk in the big garden, while Mr. Stuart, Alex and Donald made a bee line for the Jersey barn. After thoroughly inspecting the whole layout they naturally proceeded to the dairy so that Alex could see all the equipment used in the manufacture of the butter for which the ranch was renowned. And it was at the dairy that Alex met his Waterloo! It was Betty! Betty was fully as attractive as Greta, in her own way; but where Greta was fair Betty was dark. Her beautiful eyes

were the same deep blue, but her hair was black as night, and she wore it curled around her delicately pink ears in a most bewitching fashion. She was taller than Greta by a couple of inches, perhaps a trifle heavier but fully as neat and trim of limb. And did she look capable?

Alex had never before seen a dairy with running water and with unlimited supplies of ice available. Nor had he ever seen a dairy maid in action, all dressed in white, from the cap on her head to the durable slippers on her feet. She was speedy. She was professional in her manner. No wonder such inanimate objects as the cream separator and the cream cooler hardly drew an audible response. Donald and the Dad exchanged knowing and amused glances behind Alex's back. This was too priceless not to share.

The whole situation was an outcropping of a typical Scotch trait of character, for what really appealed most to Alex at the first instance was Betty's obvious ability to do her work, without lost time or wasted energy. But that was only at first!

Who can tell when the fascination penetrated through Alex's apparently guarded exterior? Was it the slight embarrassment of the first meeting, that flashing smile, those alluring curls, or the fire of living youth in those sparkling blue eyes? But Alex felt. He was completely and willingly submerged. He went under without a struggle.

#### BETTY TAKES THINGS INTO HER OWN HANDS WITH ALEX

Peggy and Ann watched Alex's "case" with fascinated interest. Would it not be fun if Betty was to become a member of the Stuart family? If they only had suspected how hard Donald had really fallen for Greta! Donald was head over heels in love with Greta, though no one but his mother appeared to suspect it. She subtly became aware of the interesting fact one day when Donald, in a very round-about and diplomatic method was enquiring if Greta was engaged to anyone. Poor Donald! His blushes betrayed him. Then his mother with a smile asked him if he was really serious about Greta; and his sincerity was revealed by an emphatic "Greta or nobody!"

But everybody was so busy watch-

ing first the Doctor and Ellen, and then Betty and Alex, that Donald's infatuation for Greta didn't become known till the day after Dr. Scott, Alex and Donald had been in Lethbridge.

Dr. Scott went down openly to look at rings, engagement rings preferably. Donald of course had to show him around town, but when the rings were brought out for inspection he surprised them all by making a purchase for himself, but as a matter of fact at that time he did not know even if Greta would wear it or if the size was right.

The young men got home in time for supper and found Mrs. Stuart alone in the livingroom. Donald marshalled his doubtful courage and went straight up to her.

"What mischief have you been up to now, boys?"

Donald produced the jeweller's box, snapped the lid open and displayed his purchase. He had chosen a ring set with one big pearl inside a circle of smaller pearls; and it was a ring any girl might be proud to wear.

"But you should have seen the ring John bought for Ellen," said Alex. "Oh, boy! He went the whole hog, and no mistake. He paid a cool five hundred for it, and then didn't seem to think it was good enough."

"But I had to count my money twice before I bought even this one," confessed Donald. "And mother, do you think it is nice enough?"

"Dear boy, I could not have picked a prettier one myself, I'm sure," said Mrs. Stuart, comfortingly; and with that her son was satisfied.

The gong sounded just then and they all went in to supper. After the meal was over Donald insisted on helping with the dishes, claiming he was an expert at wiping them. The girls wondered at this, and began to think that they maybe had overlooked something. And while the girls were out of earshot in the diningroom, Donald managed to entice Greta out for a short walk, as soon as the work was finished, anyway, up to the swimming pool. So he was frantic when the phone rang, and he answered it to find that it was Betty, wanting Greta to stay with Sunbeam and Rainbow while she, Betty, went for a ride, presumably with Alex—or maybe only Bob. Greta could see he was in trouble, and guessing what Betty wanted, said quickly: "Tell her we



will send Peggy and Ann over at once."

"O.K.!" This was perfectly satisfactory to Betty, and Donald himself hunted up the two victims and sent them on their way unsuspecting.

The sun had gone down when Donald and Greta sauntered slowly through the garden and up to the swimming pool, so nobody saw just what means she used to persuade her to accept the ring. But when she went to bed hours later she was wearing it on the ring-finger on her left hand.

Donald was too excited and happy to want to go to bed at once, and he was walking up and down the garden paths, smoking, when Alex came up from the dairy. "Hello, old man!" said Alex when he saw Donald. "What's up? Not feeling sleepy, eh?"

"Not a bit, Alex. I'm too excited I guess. I think I'll tell you; Greta is wearing my ring right now. What do you think of that?"

"I think you are a fast worker, Boy, I wish I were in your shoes."

George, congratulations, Donald! And "What? Are you in love with Greta too? I thought you didn't like blondes?"

"I mean I wish Betty could be won as quickly as you won Greta."

"But Alex, she hardly knows you, while Greta—bless her heart—has known me a long time."

"Say, Donald, isn't that a bit thick? You never saw her until two or three weeks ago, you said so yourself. Remember?"

"Oh yes, that's right enough; but you know that big photograph mother has of me on the piano? Well, Greta confessed she fell in love with me the first time she got a good look at that picture. Lucky for me, what?"

"Yes, I think you must have been born lucky, Donald."

"I'm beginning to think so myself; but don't feel so down in the mouth, old man, wait a little till Betty knows you better. She'll soon see you are O.K., even if you are Scotch."

"Maybe if you put in a good word for me, Donald, it would help. Your word seems to be taken for good around here by everybody."

"So will yours, boy, when they get to know you as well as I do," comforted Donald.

"But what will your dad say when he hears about your engagement, Donald?"

At this moment there was a creaking and a stirring in the porch swing and Mr. Stuart's voice fell on the startled young men's ears: "What engagement? Do you mean to say you have been dumb enough to get engaged to one of those cold-blooded, stiff English girls?"

"No, Dad!" cried Donald joyously, springing up on the porch and flinging himself into one of the big chairs, "To the loveliest, sweetest, most gorgeous girl in the whole world!"

"That sounds bad, boy! Alex, is he by any chance raving about Greta?"

"Of course I'm raving about Greta. As far as I am concerned there are no other women in the world; and she is wearing my ring this very minute. Now, do you wonder why I am acting like a lunatic?"

"Well, Well! I must say that's fast work, son; but what will your mother say?"

"Donald was striding up and down, he stopped in front of his Dad: "I am sure she knows and approves; so now I want your opinion, though I tell you, nothing can change my mind!"

"Son, I can't think of a single thing that would detract from the high opinion you have of Greta; and you are one of the luckiest men in the world if she has really given you her word."

"Good old Dad" Donald almost shouted. "I thought you would approve. Now, I want you to help me find another cook for mother!"

"Help! I had not thought of Greta leaving us. Can't you two stay here? Well, never mind for to-night. We had better sneak up to bed before somebody comes looking for us; it's almost twelve o'clock. Good-night, boys!"

"Goodnight, Dad!"

"Goodnight, Uncle Jim!"

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#### MR. STUART ANNOUNCES THE ENGAGEMENTS

The next day was Sunday and Donald spent every minute he could manage in the kitchen. The Bordens came out to dinner and brought all the mail as usual; but so busy were the two youngest girls that they did not find time to look theirs over till bedtime. The dinner was a lot more elaborate than usual, and when the dessert was brought in by Greta and she took her place beside Donald, who had contrived so that his place

would come beside hers, Mr. Stuart stood up, and lifting his glass of grapejuice, asked them all to drink to the happiness of John and Ellen—and of Donald and Greta.

When everybody had quieted down Ellen walked over to Greta and Donald, kissed them both warmly, and said: "I don't wonder Donald loves you, lass. You are the sweetest girl I have ever met."

"Donald looked at Ellen with pride, and said: "You are some picture yourself, Ellen, since you came to Alberta!"

"It must be the climate!" said Ellen hastily; and they all laughed for her furtive evasion.

Alex was quite a mechanic and his uncle had given him one of the old cars, a green roadster, for his use; and since his land deal he had been going and coming at all hours. He had bought a small ranch on the south side of the road with a tumble-down house on it. He had put several men to work on this but was not satisfied with the progress they were making. He usually stopped the car by the dairy gate, and when Betty would come out to see who was calling, she nearly always would ask him up on the porch, give him a cold drink or a snack of lunch, and lend a sympathetic ear to the tale of his woes. One day she said, unthinkingly, "I'll bet I could make those carpenters do what I wanted them to! You're too easy for this country. They walk all over you."

"Well, I am willing to let you try. Will you come over with me and see the place, and help me put the fear of God into those men? They say 'Yes, Sir!' just as you say; and then they turn right around and do things their own way."

Betty really felt sorry for Alex, he was so much like Donald, but much slower of speech and movement. He was too slow in getting angry, and on this account many people took advantage of him. So she put her hand to the plow, metaphorically speaking, and promised that she would go with him the next day. As the house was not more than a mile from the Stuart place this would not interfere with duties in any way.

Had Betty only known it, that was really the beginning of the end! Nearly every day Alex drove away from the dairy with Betty in the old roadster, or whether it was the fear



of God or the fear of being fired she put into those carpenters, they speeded up their work until it began to look as if Alex would be able to move in, as he had planned, before the winter came.

When Betty and Alex were off, the Indian children, Sunbeam and Rainbow, to make it short, kept to the porch of the dairy till Rainbow was able to move around more. Then one day Peggy and Ann took them along up to the swimming pool. The thick green grass made a dandy carpet, a large canopy was spanning the space between four trees and under this was a hammock, a swinging seat, several lounging chairs and a dozen or so oilcloth and leather covered cushions. Here the whole ranch population would gather on Sundays and on warm evenings to talk and play and smoke. After the first day had been spent there you might find one there at most any hour—Rainbow in one of the long chairs or in the hammock, Sunbeam trotting around picking flowers or paddling in the shallow water. Rainbow was getting strong again. Mr. Stuart was as proud as Doctor Scott over it. Mr. Stuart had helped "John", as he now called him, as much as the Doctor would let him, and as a result Dr. Scott had bought forty acres just west of the ranch house and was having a small but up-to-date bungalow built on it. Because he was so close he was having water piped from the same spring; and he also made connections with Mr. Stuart's generating plant. He had registered himself as a physician in the Province of Alberta, had purchased a new coupe, and was becoming established in a medical practice. The cowboys and Ted called him "Doc" and were as friendly as ever, while he for himself had the highest regard for Molly's ability, and liked Teddy and the boys "no end".

He was still living at the dairy, sharing a room with Bob, who firmly believed the Doctor could perform miracles. But as soon as their house was finished he hoped to persuade Ellen to be married quietly, when he could "hang out his shingle" and settle down happily to a country doctor's life.

### THE GIRLS WIN THEIR RIGHT TO A PARTY AND GET IT

Into this busy but peaceful scene a bomb was exploded one early warm August day. Peggy's best friend, next to Ann of course, phoned out from Macleod. Exam results were out! Had they seen the papers?

Ann, who answered the phone, just about passed out before her informant got through telling her. But she revived when she heard the glorious news! Both of them had passed—in everything—and their averages were above 80. "Hip, hip, horrah!" yelled Ann the quiet, and brought everybody in the house out into the hall. And when Peggy was told, she and Ann did a regular Indian war dance around Mrs. Stuart, Greta and Ellen, and kept it up till they were positively dizzy and out of breath.

Mrs. Stuart and Greta understood of course right at once what that "80 average" signified to the girls; but it took a little time to explain it all to Ellen.

Then after awhile when the men came in with Dr. John it had to be told all over again.

Mr. Stuart said he had hoped they would fall, and had been afraid he would be out a lot of money if they passed with honors, like they had. But one only had to give him a look over; to understand that he was indulging in a wordy fantasy in order to hold back an outburst of pride in the girls' achievement.

Ann and Peggy took great delight in explaining all over again with further elaboration how Mr. Stuart had promised them a party if they passed. And were they going to have a party? "But you tell them," said Ann, who preferred to keep in the background of the excitement.

"We would like to have a dance in the barn loft, Dad, with flowers and evergreens for decorations; and all kinds of eats—sandwiches, cakes, doughnuts, pie, ice cream in cones, and lemonade with chunks of ice in it clinking around. We're going to get that swell orchestra from Claresholm, or maybe one from Lethbridge, and we will invite everybody!"

"O, my gosh!" groaned Donald. "It was a good thing I went abroad before this shindig came up; Dad won't have any more money for years to come."

But then Ann spoke up: "But my Dad will pay half the expenses, Uncle

Jim. I asked him and he said he would, if I didn't want to go to school next term."

"Oh, that's better," said Donald; "but still we'll need all the help we can get."

"Ann and I went down to the barn right after we heard the news, and say, Dad, some of the floor boards curl up edgewise as much as half an inch. We can't dance on that."

"Well, we will have time to see to the floor, I guess. How soon do you want this celebration to be girls?"

"On Friday night, Dad. Is that too soon?"

"Ask your mother and Greta. They are the ones who will have to manufacture the eats. Or ask Donald, he spends so much time in the kitchen he surely must know what supplies we will have to get."

Everybody laughed heartily at this dig, and the women went into the house to see about supper, while all the men went down to inspect the aforesaid barn-loft floor. It was bad for dancing, but Mr. Stuart thought it could be fixed up quite satisfactorily without too much trouble. He simply went down to Teddy's and left orders for four men to report in the morning, after the chores were done of course, and they were to drive down all the nails well into the floor boards. Then he asked both the Doctor and Alex to lend him their carpenters the next afternoon to plane the floor down smooth. This decided upon, the men went in to supper.

The next day Bob went to town in the truck and brought home a load of assorted groceries, and for the rest of the week the women cooked and baked and stored food away till the whole place was smelling like a bakery. Molly baked the bread—hundreds of loaves it seemed. And there were simply piles of cakes. Betty baked buns and rolls and pies, while the entire cream production of the Jersey herd was set aside for three days to provide the ice cream.

Ellen gave a helping hand when it was needed and enjoyed the excitement and the bustle, even if it did make her shudder to think of the cost of this "extravagance."

But both Peggy and Ann declared that this was their "coming out" party, and please, "was anything too good for them?"

The invitations were sent out in the usual way, Mrs. Stuart calling up



a friend on each of the neighboring phone lines and asking them to call up and invite everybody on their list.

Friday was bright and clear. A cool breeze sprang up towards evening, but didn't grow very strong, so didn't bother the colored lanterns the boys had hung up in the loft that afternoon. The girls were ready by seven o'clock, all dressed in their organdie dresses, for, as Mrs. Stuart insisted, they had to help her receive the crowd that was sure to be there.

Mr. Stuart laughed at the idea of "receiving" at a barn dance; but Mrs. said firmly: "I have been to many barn dances in my life, and I know what I am doing. Just leave it to me."

So they did, and the result was very gratifying to everybody concerned.

When the guests arrived they were met at the outside staircase by the Stuarts, Mr. and Mrs. Stuart on the right side and Peggy and Ann and Donald on the left; and the older people, after a nod and a smile, just naturally turned to Mr. and Mrs. Stuart, who had a welcoming word and a hearty handclasp for everyone.

The musicians had come early and had had a chance to rest up a bit after the long trip, and they turned out to be a well trained, harmonious ensemble.

Mr. Stuart also had ideas of his own concerning how a barn dance was to be conducted, and the first dance was—of all things, a march—and Mr. and Mrs. Stuart lead it, with Mr. and Mrs. Borden next in line. Before the music was well started every old-timer and his lady were on that floor, all following the leader in all the convolutions a real able leader can put into a Grand March.

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#### THE DANCE WAS A BIG SUCCESS

The Grand March started off the evening in the jolliest of ways, and the girls had a most glorious time.

Greta and Betty also wore their organdie dresses and when all the four girls were together they presented a picture that attracted all eyes. Ellen at first wasn't going over to the barn at all, but Alex and John argued her into at least going over to look on. After all, her father had been dead half a year, and anyway, over here nobody stayed in mourning for the conventional periods as they did in the Old Country. So she put on

her light dress, and with Alex and John escorting her, joined the family in the barn loft.

Mrs. Stuart had persuaded the carpenters when they planed down the floor to put up half a dozen wide shelves on the gable opposite the one where the door opened. The tables from the garden and the lawn by the pool had been brought up earlier in the day, while Teddy and his cowboys had collected all the food the women had prepared, and had arranged it on the shelves. The tables formed a splendid counter and when supper time came, the crowd was served in record time. Mrs. O'Brien poured the coffee, Betty and Ann presided over the pastry counter, while Greta and Donald arranged sandwiches and coffee cups on the dozens and dozens of paper plates ready for the first course. After the more solid foods had disappeared Teddy and Bob brought up the big tank of ice cream. The younger element in the crowd sent up three cheers when they saw this coming; and from then on one man was kept busy filling the cones as they were passed out to waiting hands. But there was plenty for all, for even though Mr. Stuart might be Scotch he would not permit the dignity of his hospitality to be marred by insufficient supplies or incomplete arrangements.

The bareness of the barn was completely hidden by the profuse decorations. The colored lanterns, electrically lighted, reflected against the evergreens in all colors. The floor soon attained a polish like unto a real dance hall, and there were plenty of benches to accommodate the big crowd.

The music was sufficiently loud that even in that big loft it could be held by the dancers on all parts of the floor, yet not so loud as to drown out conversation. The supper, especially the ice cream, had been delightful.

Many were the verbal bouquets handed to Mr. Stuart, and some from the very men who had made fun of his Jerseys so many times.

Those with younger children began to leave about the midnight hour, but young people were loathe to leave the swell company, the dandy floor and the splendid music, as one of the guests freely confided to Donald.

Donald stayed till the last guest had left. A lot of his old chums had been present and given him the glad

hand. They had stayed around more or less and wanted to hear his opinions of the Old Country ways and things. But Donald's mind wandered; he was busy keeping track of Greta, and soon the boys gave him up as a source of information. Greta was bewitching to-night. In his opinion, at least, not one of the other girls could hold a candle to her. She simply glowed with health and happiness; and Donald caught his breath at times at her loveliness. And she was his girl—his promised bride!

But Donald himself was nearly as good looking as the law of nature will permit mere man to be. In fact while on his trip abroad fellow travellers had often questioned if he was not a certain popular screen actor travelling incognito. And when he and Greta danced together the crowd actually if unconsciously drew aside to admire their supreme grace and rhythm.

Betty was also a splendid dancer. But whenever she happened to miss a dance you could see her sitting it out with Alex in the corner that held Ellen and John as well as Mr. and Mrs. Stuart and Mr. and Mrs. Borden.

By three o'clock the orchestra begged to be let off, and as only a few couples were left, Mr. Stuart was willing that the dance should stop. So they played "Goodnight, Sweetheart" for the next ten minutes, then folded up their instruments and departed.

Mr. and Mrs. Borden stayed over, and by four o'clock in the morning one of the biggest days so far in both Peggy's and Ann's lives was at an end.

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## ELLEN OVERCOME BY THE GENEROSITY OF BETTY AND GRETA

When Ellen first came to the Circle S Ranch she was in despair when contemplating the ins and outs of housework as it was done in Canada. But by listening to her aunt and Greta she soon mastered the fundamentals of meal-planning, and after the first week she asked to be given work like the others. Soon she was a real help, and as she was no dunce, she quickly caught on to the many ways of doing housework in Canada that she had never dreamed about in Scotland. She never ceased to wonder at Greta's deftness, and tried to do everything as much like her as she could. Greta and Betty, Mrs. Stuart, Peggy and Ann were helping Ellen with her trousseau, and although she had never heard about mail-order houses before, she soon got to be an expert in comparing prices and finding bargains in the big catalogues.

One day Betty asked all the girls over for tea in the afternoon. After lunch she showed them her "hope chest"; and did she have one worth showing? This interested Ellen. But Betty had been working on hers for years and had a lot more in it than Ellen could hope to have collected in the short space of time that matrimony had seriously occupied her attention. And Betty had had more spare time before the Indian children came, yes and Alex!

The girls looked and admired, and when Ellen expressed her admiration for a beautifully embroidered runner, Betty gave her not only the runner, but the complete set—buffer scarf, dollies and all. Ellen was overcome by such generosity, and there were tears in her eyes when she tried to express her thanks.

Greta had almost as big a hope chest at Betty, and when she saw the girls' interest, she also brought her treasures out for inspection. Now Greta had two embroidered bedspreads, beautifully worked in colors. She had half intended them for Betty, that is, if Betty should happen to get married first, but when she saw how Ellen appreciated her sister's gift she made up her mind Ellen should have them. Ellen, however, would not take them. It was too much, she protested. "I'll take some other small thing

if you really want me to have some of your lovely work, but two bedspreads, that's too generous!" And after this little speech she sat down and cried as if her heart would break.

Peggy and Ann didn't understand in the least what she was crying about, but after a little, when she was more composed, Ellen explained: "I have never had so much kindness shown me in my life as I have since I came to Alberta. I've never had any girl friends, and of course no one has ever given me expensive things like these; and if they had, father wouldn't have let me keep them. He was always looking for a motive behind the most innocent act, and he was suspicious of everybody. So you see, I can hardly imagine anybody doing all this fine embroidery and then giving it away to a perfect stranger."

"Indeed you're not a perfect stranger, Ellen, and you know we don't look upon you as one; and I want you to take them, darling. I'll be so proud if you will use them on your twin beds."

"Come on, Ellen, be a good sport. Can't you see you are hurting Greta's feelings if you don't take them? Shall I think you don't feel they are nice enough. Where is some wrapping paper?" This was Peggy and she won the battle, as usual. Ellen thus added a whole parcel of lovely linen to her trousseau.

While our girls were busy planning and shopping and sewing, the men were even more busily occupied. Mr. Stuart and Donald had the threshing and stacking to look after, besides getting the young stock rounded up and made familiar with the corrals, the feedracks and the water troughs. The lofts had to be filled with hay and greenfeed, and the winter wood brought home from the hills and sawed in suitable lengths. This kept both them and the bunch of boys busy from daylight till dark; but at that they didn't work any harder than Dr. Scott and Alex.

Dr. Scott spent nearly all his waking hours hurrying first his carpenters along, and later the painters. But now the house would soon be finished, and as he and Ellen already had sent for some furniture, he had hopes of being able to have his house-warming around Thanksgiving time. And then one day when everybody was working

like heavers, one of Alex's men came galloping up to the dairy, where all knew by now that Dr. Scott was living. He asked for the Doctor in anxious haste. The Doctor was down at the new house. Betty informed him pleasantly—"was anything wrong?"

"Well, we don't know; a heavy plank fell down from the ridge of the barn and hit Mr. Stuart, and we can't get him to come to, so I came for the Doc."

Betty turned as white as a sheet as she stammered: "Not the old Mr. Stuart—you mean Alex Stuart don't you?"

"Yep, that's the guy!"

"Then ride over to the bungalow and get the Doctor. Tell him I'll have the fliver ready, so he won't stop for his coupe—and hurry!"

The boy already was halfway to the new house and only waved his hand to show he had heard.

When Dr. Scott ran up to the garage a few minutes later, Betty had phoned the ranch house, put some quilts in the back of the light delivery Ford, filled the radiator with water and had it humming and ready to go.

Dr. Scott cast an admiring glance at her set face as the car shot out of the open gate and up the road; but before he could say a word Betty said: "Don't talk—hang on!" So the Doctor perforce had to obey orders, as she whirled the car through the gate of Alex's ranch and down the dirt road that led to the ranch buildings.

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## ALEX GETS BUMPED ON THE HEAD AND BETTY IN THE HEART

Alex was still "out" and the men were ready to give up in despair and declare him dead, so they all breathed a sigh of relief when Betty and the Doctor rolled to a stop beside the half finished barn. Betty stayed in the car and turned it around, heading for home, while Dr. Scott went at once to Alex and made a hurried examination. The men stood around, keeping a respectful distance, and watched him. Betty wanted desperately to know how badly Alex was hurt, but didn't dare ask till the Doctor had finished with his examination. After he had stood up again, he spoke a sentence or two to the men and then came over to the car. When he saw



Betty's white face he patted her hand that lay on the steering wheel and said brightly. "Cheer up, Betty, he is not killed; just knocked out. He will be alright in a couple of hours. We'll put him in the house if we can make some sort of cot with the blankets you brought. I think you had better let one of the men drive you home—"

"I am not leaving, Dr. John, till— till Alex is able to talk to me!"

"If you want to stay, of course—" began the Doctor, when to his dismay Betty began crying quietly, the big tears running down her cheeks. Dr. John hastily shook out his big handkerchief and placed it in her hand before he turned back to the men who were making ready to carry Alex into the house.

One of the men had already gone inside and scraped together a big bunch of shavings, while another had taken in the blankets that Betty had thrown into the car, so they soon had Alex comfortably placed on this improvised bed. One of the carpenters took a dipper of ice cold water out to Betty and this seemed to help her a lot in regaining her self control. So when they got Alex established on the temporary bed, Dr. Scott called to Betty to come in and showed her the lump, half the size of a duck egg, on the back of Alex's head. But outside of that he felt safe in assuring her that Alex was not damaged seriously, and that the effect of the blow would soon wear off.

Betty seemed more of her own capable self after that, but the strain she had been under must have opened the way for the confession she now made to Dr. Scott: "If Alex had been killed I could never have forgiven myself, Dr. John. He has been so wonderfully patient and courteous all the time I have known him, while I have been, oh, so mean. I let him go on thinking I didn't care for him, just to tease him; and here I let him get almost killed before I had told him. If I had come over with him today like he wanted me to, he would perhaps not have been hurt, and now . . ." Here Betty broke down again and cried bitterly into Dr. John's handkerchief, which prevented her from seeing that Alex had opened his eyes, and had turned his head to look at Dr. John.

The Doctor must have read the wish in Alex's eyes, for he arose at once and went out, closing the door softly after him.

Betty looked up at the sound, and

saw that Alex had regained consciousness. She sprang up from the nail keg she had been sitting on, knelt down by Alex's side and said tearfully: "Oh, Alex, are you really not dead? I was so afraid—"

But Alex interrupted her. "I heard what you just said to Doctor John; and Betty, did you really mean it?" When Betty saw she was fairly cornered she didn't try to hedge any more.

Dr. John, coming in a few minutes later, found Alex had completely recovered consciousness, though his head was still sore when he tried to raise it. After another hour he was able, by Betty's steady assistance, to walk out to the car, and they three arrived back to the ranch before dark.

Ellen had at first been frantic, but had soon been reasoned into calm again; so she had busied herself getting Alex's room and bed ready—just in case! So when she saw Alex come walking up the path, with Betty on one side and Dr. John on the other, she gave a little cry of relief and ran to open the door for them.

Dr. John's sunny smile told her at once that Alex was really not much injured, and she and Peggy and Ann marvelled greatly at the toughness of his skull when they had heard all the details of the near tragedy.

But while everybody was talking, Alex kept a firm grip on Betty's hand, and when the ejaculations and exclamations had died down, he calmly announced that for him this would always be held as the luckiest day in his life; and would they please congratulate him, as he had finally succeeded in wearing down Betty's stubbornness.

Our two youngsters, who had often felt sorry for Alex, were jubilant now for his sake. They profusely congratulated them both on their good judgment.

Mrs. Stuart kissed Betty warmly before she left and told her she was sure the whole Stuart family approved of Alex's choice.

Dr. Scott and Ellen put Alex to bed, the happiest man in Alberta—with and in spite of the big lump on his head.

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#### CONCLUSION

Dr. Scott and Ellen were married quietly before Thanksgiving by the Anglican Church minister from Macleod. They went to live at once in their new home, which was Ellen's pride to keep as clean and neat as a

pin. The only complaint she had to make was that she didn't have enough to do. Almost every day one or more of the girls would come down for a visit, or she walked up to the ranch for awhile.

Alex and Betty had gone home to Monarch for a visit to see the folks before the snow flew; and they had gone on into Lethbridge at the same time to buy Betty's engagement ring. Alex had insisted on Betty choosing her own, a fact Peggy and Ann were not slow in pointing out to Donald and John.

Alex and Donald would have liked to have been married the same day as John and Ellen, but Betty and Greta wanted to wait until Christmas, and so they had to practice patience for awhile.

Alex had sent his men packing after his accident. There was really no urgency about the barn, as he didn't have any stock on the place yet, and Mr. Stuart was only too glad to have Betty keep on at the dairy.

Poor Bob, he would have to move down into the bankhouse permanently when Alex moved into the dairy; but he seemed to be as happy as ever over it.

Christmas, which always meant much visiting and merry-making at the Circle S, saw the two young couples married. The big living room was decorated as prettily as Mr. Stuart and Mr. Borden could do it. Mr. and Mrs. Andersen, Charles and Genevieve and the sister next to Greta were present to see the beautiful ceremony take place.

Peggy and Ann had a terribly exciting time at the wedding dinner. Greta, whom they usually had to fall back on, sat at one end of the bridal table with Donald, at the other end were Betty and Alex. If the girls had not been so well trained they might easily have made a mess of serving the dinner. But as it happened, everything went like clockwork. No soup was spilled, the turkeys were deliciously browned and tender, the salad wasn't messy, the pies were perfect. Of course Greta and Betty had both helped Mrs. Stuart and Mrs. Borden for days before. But the final touch to a meal is added by perfect serving, as all good housekeepers know. So the two girl apprentices were justly proud of themselves.

And here let us say goodbye to the whole happy population of the Circle S.

THE END



