

The Little Tin Cottages.

By Virginia Blair.

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The sky was blue, and the lake was blue, and there were four blue birds against the silver gray of the birches. "It's like a chain of sapphires," Peggy said as she and her mother followed the narrow path among the trees. "Yes," murmured her mother faintly.

Peggy looked back at her. "Mother," she protested, "you are tired out," and she took the heavy bag that her mother had carried, and, thus weighted with two, she plodded on until she came to an intersection of the path.

"I'm not sure which way to turn to go to our cottage," she said. "Doesn't



"THIS IS THE WAY WATER OUGHT TO BE HANDLED."

It sound too good to be true to say 'our cottage,' mother?"

"Yes, it does, and the rent is so cheap," Mrs. Linton said.

"We couldn't have come if it hadn't been cheap," Peggy remarked philosophically.

"No, we couldn't," her mother agreed, and again they plodded on.

Presently a man appeared among the trees. He wore blue overalls, and he was wheeling a barrow.

"Oh, can you tell us where Miss Brownlee's cottages are?" Peggy called eagerly.

"The tin cottages?" the man inquired.

"The what?" Peggy gasped.

The man grinned. "The tin cottages. Those are the ones Miss Brownlee rents. You go on till you come to a path toward the lake, and you'll find them."

"Mother," Peggy demanded when he had gone on, "what do you suppose he meant?"

"I'm sure I don't know, and I don't care," said Mrs. Linton pensively.

"Poor little mother," Peggy worried. "You're tired out."

Again they went on, and at last they saw before them a row of diminutive houses like inverted bathtubs. They were painted gray, and they were very compact and neat, but to Peggy, who had dreamed of a picturesque rustic bungalow, they were nightmares.

"Oh," she said in dismay, "they are hideous, mother!"

And after one glance Mrs. Linton sat down on the moss and laid her umbrella beside her. "It's the last straw," she said dejectedly.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Peggy. And her mother echoed the plaint.

But presently they saw a woman beckoning to them from the porch of a large rustic cottage at the end of a row of tin caricatures.

"That must be Miss Brownlee," Peggy said. "I am going to tell her that I think she should have told us that the cottages were made of tin."

But as they came up to the porch the beaming face of the rather massive lady disarmed criticism.

"I thought you would be here about this time," she said. "I want you to have lunch with me."

"Oh," Peggy demurred, "we don't like to trouble you."

"I'm dead homesick," Miss Brownlee hastened to explain, "and I like company. That's why I built the cottages."

"Aren't they a little odd?" Peggy asked.

"I think they are beautiful," Miss Brownlee declared radiantly. "After the big fair they were for sale—they had been models, you know—and I bought them cheap, and they are nice and comfortable inside. I have rented the one next to you to a young man, an artist. He comes tomorrow."

"Has he seen them?" Peggy quavered, not daring to look at her mother.

"No, but I told him how nice they were."

"Oh," Peggy murmured, and went on eating hot biscuits.

A half hour later she said to Miss Brownlee, "I have never tasted such a perfectly delicious lunch."

Miss Brownlee laughed. "Well, I am a right good cook," she said. "I always wanted to have an opportunity to learn things, but after mother died I was too old to take up painting or music, so I just went on cooking. After all, I don't know but it's just as worth

while to be a good cook as a bad artist."

"Indeed it is!" said Peggy heartily. "I paint some myself. But I wish I could make cake like this."

"Oh, do you paint?" cried Miss Brownlee. "Some time I am going to get you to make a picture of the cottage."

In the morning Peggy set her easel up on the bluff, but the magic of the lake eluded her, and when she came in she had nothing to show but a sketch of Sally.

She gave it to Miss Brownlee. "Well, well," said that delighted lady, "it's just like Sally. I'm going to have it framed. By the way," she added, "it's time for that young man to come. And there he is now." And she hurried to the door.

He was a handsome young fellow, with a gray cap on the back of his head.

"I wanted to ask about my cottage. Where is it?"

"There," said Miss Brownlee, pointing to the one next to Peggy's.

"That? Oh, by George!" the young man ejaculated, and Peggy laughed to herself.

"It's the one I told you about in my letter," Miss Brownlee went on.

"Yes," he murmured feebly, "you told me."

"This young lady and her mother have the one next to it." And Miss Brownlee stepped back and showed Peggy behind her—Peggy, whose blue eyes danced wickedly.

The young man looked at her, taking in with appreciation the grace of the slender girlish figure.

"I think I shall like—the cottage," he said slowly, and when they had talked for a few minutes Peggy went back to her mother.

"He is very nice," she remarked, "and his name is Meredith." And with that she took her portfolio and started for the bluff.

"Look here," said some one over her shoulder two hours later, "you ought not to try that sort of thing."

It was Mr. Meredith. "Why not?" asked Peggy.

"I saw your sketch of Sally," he told her. "You do it better than water things. Your lake and sky aren't right."

Peggy flushed. "Oh," she said, "I don't want to paint pussy cats! I want to paint the silver water and the silver trees and a silver spirit of the woods."

"Silver tommyrot!" said the young man. "You ought to do things like the studies your mother showed me just now."

"Pot boilers!" Peggy murmured. "This is the way water ought to be handled," and he opened his portfolio and handed her a sketch.

"Oh!" Peggy said as she looked at it, and when she had handed it back to him there was real humility in her tone.

"I have never seen anything so wonderful."

"It is no more wonderful than yours," he told her, "but I have studied longer—abroad and all that."

"Oh, have you?" said the eager Peggy, and they sat there and talked until the shadows fell.

That night Meredith said to Miss Brownlee, "I think it is beautiful here," and Peggy, watching the moonlight through the small square window of her room, smiled in the darkness as she thought how deliciously Mr. Meredith said "By George!" when he looked at her best work.

The next morning she took his advice and sketched the six curly tailed pigs, Sally over a saucer of milk and Miss Brownlee among her pots and pans.

"That's the best thing you have done yet," Meredith told her as he examined the sketch of Miss Brownlee. "The light of the fire and the sunlight through the window give a chance for values."

"I wish I knew as much as you do about such things," Peggy sighed.

"We will work together for awhile," he said, "and I will teach you all I know."

But he taught her other things than art as their easels stood side by side on the bluff, and the white gulls dipped to the sapphire lake, and the wind ruffled the curls on Peggy's forehead.

And one morning as Peggy finished a sketch of silver birches with a bit of lake beyond he looked over her shoulder.

"You are getting on wonderfully," he said, "but you ought to have a year abroad."

"But I can't," Peggy told him.

"You can if you will marry me," was his unexpected proposition.

And "Oh!" said rosy Peggy.

"And to think," said the radiant Miss Brownlee when they told her, "that I should have a romance right here in my tin cottages!"

"Dear cottages!" murmured Peggy.

And as the lovers went down the path the moonlight touched the little gray houses with magic light and made of each of them a castle of dreams.

Tragic.

Scene—A railway carriage.

First Artist—Children don't seem to me to sell now as they used.

Second Artist (in a hoarse whisper)—Well, I was at Stodge's yesterday. He had just knocked off three little girls' heads, horrid raw things, when a dealer came in, sir, bought 'em directly, took 'em away wet as they were on the stretcher and wanted Stodge to let him have some more next week.

Old Lady (putting her head out of the window and shrieking)—Guard, stop the train and let me out or I'll be murdered!—London Tit-Bits.

His Daily Income.

"What is your husband's income?"

"Twice a day—6 p. m. and 2 a. m.—Puck.

Humor and Philosophy

By DUNCAN M. SMITH

LIGHTNING EXPRESS.

How swift the wheels of time proceed Along their busy way When you have bought some furniture For which you did not pay, For when the prompt installment man Drops in for what is due It seems as if a week rolled round Most every day or two!

They say that time is fitted out With pinions like a bird, And to the one who owes a bill This does not seem absurd. In fact, the way it flits along Much swifter than a lark Might make one think the wings were run By an electric spark.

You gather in your weekly pay, And stifle sum of money, Which is a sign, you may be sure, A caller soon will come. He wants a dollar for the rug— Two if you have a pair— A dollar for the looking glass And fifty cents a chair.

The poets in a frenzy fine The flight of time have sung And told how you were growing old Ere you were fairly young, But poets cannot bring it home Or rub it in as can The purchasing of furniture On the installment plan.

Relative.

A San Francisco man and a Boston man met on a train coming north from New Orleans and fell into a conversation as to changes they were both about to make in their places of abode.

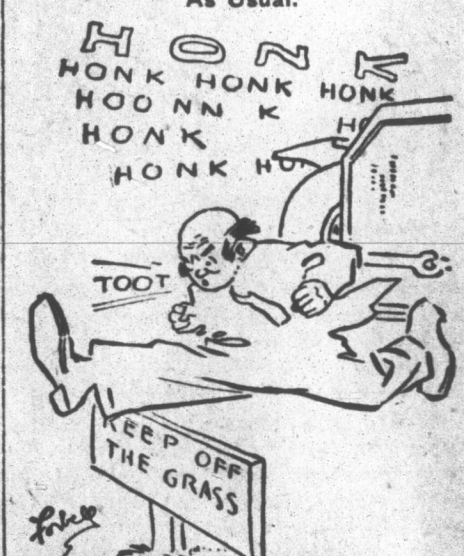
"Where do you expect to locate?" asked the Boston man.

"In the far east," replied the San Francisco man. "And where do you intend to settle down?"

"In the far west," replied the Boston man.

They bemoaned the fact that since they were such congenial company they would be so far apart, but it transpired on further explanation that they were both going to live in Chicago.

As Usual.



"Hear about the common people getting automobiles?"

"That so?"

"Yes."

"Where are they getting them?"

"In the neck."

She Knew He Could Make Good.

"His wife doesn't have much faith in him, it seems."

"Of course not. It isn't necessary."

"Why not?"

"Faith is only essential where you lack proof."

Easy Loss.

The wealthy plutocrat was calm, Though cash was tight and times were bad.

For in the shuffle he had lost A million that he never had.

PERT PARAGRAPHS.

It is pleasant to be successful, but it isn't always successful to be pleasant.

Getting into trouble is expensive, but some people just will have expensive things.

Some men are so stupid that it makes a clever person feel immodest just to be in their society.

Being original has its drawbacks; it looks to some people like deadly insult.

When fiction discovers truth it seldom mentions the encounter.

The ancestors of some of us make us extremely grateful to them for their consideration for us in being some three hundred years or so removed from our intimate acquaintance.

Some men are bound to save themselves even if they have to use every dollar in sight irrespective of the little matter of ownership.

When a woman gives you a piece of her mind it is not as a guarantee that she has a peaceful mind.

Trust your friends, certainly; but remember that a chattel mortgage is a good thing to feel safe with.

Why doesn't the woman's club movement do something original—organize an expedition to the south pole, discover it and set up a colony there or something like that?

The man entirely able to fight his own battles seldom is required to do so.

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