

within a tall, angular woman whom they called mother, but she paid no more attention to him than did the others, though she had never seen him before. Milo came around once as the pretty girl passed near by and said:

"Maud, I want to introduce to you a young city swell from New York. What's your name?"

Alec answered.

"She's Maud. She's my girl. I call her my little duck. Do you think they have nicer girls in the city, now?" went on Milo after learning Alec's name.

Maud paused a moment and then went on with her work, apparently quite indifferent to the "young city swell." Alec had been standing before the little looking glass combing his wet hair and would have been very much embarrassed had he not been invited at that moment to move up to the table, where, with the others, he partook of an ample dinner of baked beans and pork, cold brown bread, boiled beets, green peas, potatoes, radishes and baked rice pudding, with cranberry tarts to top off. He found afterward that in this family baked beans and potatoes were the staple of every meal, and pie of some kind usually appeared for breakfast, supper and frequently for dinner too. They had cold cider, but Milo and Mr. Condon were the only ones who partook of it, and consequently Alec felt impelled to refuse.

CHAPTER IV.

HE TAKES MAUD TO THE CIRCUS.

As they returned to the field in the afternoon the boys laughed and joked with Alec as they did with each other, and Milo seemed to wear a mildly indulgent expression, though he said nothing. Alec's hands were rather sore, and his back ached without ceasing, but life wore a more cheerful aspect. The prospect of immediate starvation was removed, and he was actually earning his board.

During the afternoon he worked rather less steadily than he had started out. He was getting only his board, he said to himself, and Milo would respect him less rather than more if he did too much, though he had an impression that New England farmers would screw out of a man everything they could get and be greedy for more, and when he sat in the shade a full hour after he had been working for two hours he could not help watching to see if Milo did not start in his direction to give him a little gentle warning. But Milo said nothing, and when the boys came near him they joked him about the tenderness of his hands—fun which was meant good naturedly enough, but which pricked his pride and set him to work quite as effectively as any authority of the boss.

About a quarter to 6, though no supper bell had rung, Milo remarked that he guessed it was about time to quit and started off across the fields toward the barn alone. As they stood leisurely cleaning their hoses the boys laughed and joked and called out to Alec that it was time to stop and put sweet oil on his hands. Mr. Condon had promptly shovelled his hoe and started off across the fields in the opposite direction toward his own home, while the two boys and Alec leisurely walked around by the road to the house and big barn on the hill.

As they came up to the kitchen door they found Maud standing there, and she said supper was ready. Alec could not help admiring her. She was so straight, and her cheeks were so rosy, and her features seemed made for sweetness had not necessity put in the firm, stiff lines. She evidently got no tenderness from any one. Her mother was a tall, angular woman and known as a great worker. Alec smiled to himself as he guessed what a reputation in that way she must have. She worked all the time with a muscular steadiness that was truly surprising in a woman, and she kept Maud at work quite as steadily. Evidently the girl had been used to it all her life and expected nothing else. Milo was evidently fond of her, but his wife did not think his indulgent manner was good for Maud, so he had to be tender at a distance, as it were, and Maud had been too rigidly brought up to encourage his awkward kindness in any way except by passive gratitude.

The next day hoeing went more easily, though Alec's hands were rather sore, and his back was stiff. He felt unusually tired when he woke up in the morning, but he noticed that Dally, the younger of the two boys, seemed tired, too, and Jerry, who was usually full of dry jokes, seemed rather glum. When he got into the field, he began to learn the art of taking his work more easily, though he kept at it rather more steadily than he had the previous afternoon. He saw by observing the rows of the others that it wasn't necessary to be so thorough and painstaking, quite as he had been, and there were a number of ways in which the dirt could be shuffled over the weeds without digging them out, as he had done before. Two months later Milo observed that the few rows Alec had hoed that first day had very few weeds in them, while the others were badly grown up. But Alec never knew that, for his labors for Mr. Bennett were destined to end five days later because of an unforeseen contingency.

They finished the hoeing the following Monday. The next day was the Fourth of July, and the day after that they were to begin haying. The boys talked about it constantly, for they were exceedingly happy to get out of the dirt of the potato patch into the clean, sweet work of handling the dried grass. On every farm a change is looked forward to with expectancy, but haying is particularly attractive, and the men probably enjoy it better than anything else. Dally had privately confided to Alec that he had no doubt Milo would employ him and give him \$1 a day, the full price being \$1.50. Alec already regarded this as a settled thing and put all his personal worries out of his mind.

When they finished supper on Monday night, they all sat around the table listlessly and planned what they would do to celebrate the Fourth. The Fourth is a great day in the country, a genuine

holiday for everybody. There was the circus to go to at Pavonia, five miles away. Maud evidently wanted to go to the circus and said she had never been. But Dally said he didn't care a rap for the circus. He had been the year before. This year he wanted to go fishing over in Beaver pond. He had heard that there were some fine pickerel and pout over there, and he meant to have a try at the pickerel in the morning and at the pout in the evening. Jerry said nothing whatever about his plans, but Alec was privately informed by Dally that Jerry was going over "to take his girl to the Baptist picnic." It seemed that, though the Bennetts were orthodox, Melly Seaton's folks were Baptists. But naturally that made no difference to a devoted lover like Jerry, who was quite willing to become a Baptist for Melly's sake. Alec could not help laughing at the idea of the tall, ungainly, droll fellow in the role of lover. But he had no doubt that Jerry and Melly managed it perfectly.

Maud complained that she was always left out and never could go anywhere, for the boys wouldn't take her. Her mother said she had plenty to do at home, and there was no need of her going off to the circus or anywhere else. Milo said he would have taken her to the circus himself if he didn't have to go over to see Plimpton Jones' colt, which he was thinking of buying to pair with Jerry, a namesake of his stepson. He said they must have an extra team for haying, since the old white horse John had died.

Mrs. Bennett seemed to have no idea of doing anything but stay at home and work, as she was always working. A holiday would have appeared to her a sheer waste of so much time.

Alec wondered at first what he would do himself, but finally took pity on Maud and decided to ask her if she wouldn't go to the circus with him. He hardly knew whether Milo would let him have a horse and buggy; but, considering the old gentleman's tender feeling toward Maud, he presumed he would. It was also a question whether Mrs. Bennett would permit her daughter to go off for the whole day with a stranger like himself, and this was his most doubtful point of all. He decided to speak to Milo first:

He followed the boss, as the boys familiarly called their stepfather, when he went to the barn with a big milk pail in each hand, and as the sturdy old gentleman sat down on his three-legged stool, and, leaning his forehead against the side of the cow, began sending long, steady streams of milk rattling against the sides of the tin, Alec ventured to say:

"It has occurred to me, Mr. Bennett, that if you were willing to let me take your third horse and the open buggy Miss Maud might go over to Pavonia with me tomorrow."

Mr. Bennett seemed to be meditating, for he did not reply immediately. Alec thought perhaps the noise of the milk had prevented him from hearing, but that was not so.

"Have you spoken to the girl?" he inquired at last.

"I thought I'd better ask you about the horse first," replied Alec, feeling that there was something in the other's mind which he had not anticipated.

There was another pause, varied only by the steady swish of the long streams of milk, but at last Mr. Bennett said something slowly:

"Well, I guess you can hev the horse. But I wouldn't mention nothin' about goin' to the circus to the women folks. I'll speak to the girl about it when I git done milking. You'll hev to start pretty early in the morning, but if it's a pleasant day, as it looks like tonight, I guess you'll get along all right. I can tell mother after you git started."

Alec appreciated the situation immediately and judiciously walked away. He felt as if he ought to chat with Maud a little, but he didn't feel like sitting in the kitchen again after Mrs. Bennett's dismissal of the first evening. So he lay down on a long wagon seat and decided to let Mr. Bennett manage the whole thing and said nothing to any one until Milo had broached the subject again himself.

Just before he went to bed that night Milo said to him in a confidential tone that they had better start about 7 o'clock, and he would see that the horse and buggy were ready. That was all that was said until he drove away with Maud the next morning. It was plain that Milo had managed the whole affair, spurred on by the desire to give his daughter a pleasant holiday.

When they got fairly started, Alec had an opportunity to observe his fair companion. As for himself, he had borrowed a better suit of clothes than his tramp suit (the only one he had) from Dally. It was very ill fitting and cheap, but it was of a sensible brown, and he flattered himself it made him look like a genuine country boy. Maud was dressed very demurely and simply in a gray calico dress, with red and green ivy leaves dotted over it. The skirt was a full, round one, with a belt of the same material, and at her neck and in her sleeves the girl wore simple white ruching. She had on a broad leghorn hat trimmed with white lawn in the simplest style. Her rosy cheeks, steady gray eyes and healthy hands completed the picture. Alec felt awkward and rough beside her and wished he had been better dressed. But Maud was apparently not displeased with him, for she talked simply and cheerfully of a thousand commonplace little subjects, such as the hoeing, the haying, the daisies, the brooks and the people of the village whom Alec did not know, but about whom she told him. He had never heard her talk before, and her simple little effort to entertain him was altogether agreeable. He did his best to keep up his end and told her a good many things, which evidently suited her wonderful, and gave her an insight into his previous condition, which he had not meant at this point to betray. But he solaced himself by thinking that he had confidence in her discretion.

The drive of five miles to the town

was the pleasantest part of the day. They arrived in Pavonia about 9 o'clock, and Maud told Alec where he could put up his horse in a stable and have him fed for 25 cents. By the time the horse was disposed of the parade of brightly colored wagons supposed to be filled with animals was about to start from the circus tents, toward which they went. There were some beautiful white horses, with nodding plumes on their heads, and several elephants and camels and a few less common animals such as the llama.

Maud seemed quietly drinking in everything and followed about close beside her escort, saying little. Alec was quite as much interested in the crowd of people. The girls were simple, and in a rustic way pretty and well dressed, and Alec wondered again and again how they could put up with such awkward, hulking fellows as invariably escorted them. These young men all seemed to have hard, horny hands, grimy with their labors, trousers two inches too short for them and plain gingham shirts garnished by neckties that looked much out of place or else they had on white shirts that seemed to make them excessively uncomfortable.

They were all out in holiday costume and evidently having a good time. They walked about in crowds, saying little apparently to each other, but looking curiously at everything, fairly drinking



Maud seemed quietly drinking in everything.

the circus. Alec was perfectly astonished at the number of people. It seemed as if every one for 15 miles around was there, old and young alike, bent old men and little children and grandmothers and a good many pairs of young men and women ranging in age from 15 to 45. There was one pair that looked fully 45, and Alec was sure they were on their honeymoon.

At 2 o'clock the performance began, and they had quite a jolly time watching it. Afterward they spent some time in looking at the animals, which Maud seemed to study with a serious interest, for she evidently felt that here was some really useful knowledge which would keep the day from being entirely wasted. Alec was weary and in a hurry to get away, but she looked at each object with none of the less consciousness of curiosity.

The drive home was a silent one, for they were both tired. Alec felt very well content. Maud seemed to him an agreeable sort of girl, though she did not inspire the least sentimental feeling in his breast. He had had a pleasant day with her, which had made him quite forget his own hardships and doubts. Tomorrow he hoped to be earning \$1 a day, and that amply consoled him for not having a single cent in his pocket.

But disaster awaited his arrival at the house of the Bennetts. It was nearly 9 o'clock when the tired horse walked slowly up to the barn, where Milo came promptly forward to meet them and take charge of the horse. He inquired if the animal had been fed, and if they had driven fast coming home, and finally if they had had a good time. Also jumped out to help the young lady over the wheel, but before he knew just how she did it he found she was herself on the ground on the other side. She went directly into the house, and he followed her at a little distance.

"Well, Miss Petted Bennett," he heard sharp voice say as Maud entered the kitchen, "have you enjoyed going off and disgracing yourself with a strange young man without thinking your own mother good enough to know what you were doing? You shall find out who rules this house. This house belongs to me. It belonged to my own husband, and now it is my house, and while you are under my roof you are not going to do as you please without suffering for it. Besides, Mr. Bennett has promised to send your fine young city swell packing tomorrow, coming around fooling with my daughter without saying nothing to nobody. It's a disgrace!"

CHAPTER V.

MRS. BENNETT TURNS HIM OUT OF THE HOUSE.

When Alec came down to breakfast the next morning after a good night's sleep and with only a vague remembrance of what he had heard the night before, every one was remarkably quiet. Maud said good morning in answer to his greeting, but Mrs. Bennett did not, and Milo seemed very much depressed. Jerry made one or two forlorn drivel remarks, and Dally had something to say about his look at fishing. They, too, had not heard the news, but very soon they felt the suffocation of the atmosphere and were silent too. There they sat at table, all as silent as the grave.

Alec felt the first oppression of fear and doubt and rebellion come over him, for he knew that he was being put out of the house as much as if Milo were driving him with a stick and kicks. Had Milo been putting him out that was the way he would have done it, but this was the woman's way. It was Mrs. Bennett who was putting him out, not

Milo. Alec looked at the old man and saw that he was really miserable, though stolid enough about it, and he had a vague thought of doing or saying something to break the oppressive silence and cheer the others up. He tried one or two remarks, but they did not go. There sat Mrs. Bennett at the other end of the table, and she was master of the situation.

As soon as breakfast was finished Milo and the boys escaped to the barn. Alec would have gone, too, but Mrs. Bennett detained him and at the same time sent Maud to do the chamber work a full hour before the regular time.

"I wish to say that we will not need your services any further," began Mrs. Bennett, standing like a soldier, a hand on each hip, terror in her eyes. "A miserable, picked faced brat out of the slums of New York to come here and pretend to be somebody and disgrace me and my family!"

She had counted evidently on pouring out all her wrath and vituperation for at least once in her life, but Alec felt his blood rising, his recent meekness seemed to slip from him, and to the utter astonishment of the angry woman before him he took on an air of wounded dignity of a sort quite new to Mrs. Bennett and said:

"Madam, excuse me. I will not trouble you further."

With that he walked away like a king. Hurrying up the back stairs three steps at a time, he snatched from his room his little rubber bag, with the blanket tied to it, just as it was when he came a week before, and hurried out of the house. As he went he looked about for Maud, but she was nowhere to be seen. He was sorry for her and partly angry at Mrs. Bennett on her account, for the attitude the woman had taken seemed to him to reflect on her daughter far more than it did on him, and if in any way he could have avenged the innocent child he would have done so. But he saw nothing for it but to go away.

It was a clear, cool morning, like the one on which he had first come, and in his present condition of mind walking was a genuine pleasure. He felt as if he could walk at least 25 miles, since 25 miles would be so far away from the house he hated so.

As the sun rose continually higher the day grew warmer, but the air was not sultry, and Alec rather enjoyed the exercise of walking, though the perspiration streamed from every pore and the dust rose and stuck to his hands and face until they were quite black. He felt stronger and more vigorous in body than when he set out, and, though he had not a cent in his pocket, he felt more secure by far than on that first day. Moreover, his pride was up with his anger, and he could not very well mourn in discouragement over the possibility of starving. That was too ridiculous.

His plan was to walk as far as he could and then inquire for work, or at least beg a night's lodging and promise to work it out on the morrow. The people seemed hospitable enough, and he felt that his simple, earnest manner was convincing proof of his honesty. But he did wonder that Milo and the boys should seem to have turned against him so suddenly, as if he had indeed committed a fault for which he could be blamed.

The thought of that whole affair rankled in his breast that he resolutely put it entirely aside and allowed himself to enjoy as well as he could the beautiful scenery through which he was passing. Far in the distance he could see from a hilltop now and then the faint outlines of the White mountains cut vaguely against the sky like hazy clouds. Behind him was the lake, of whose shining water he caught stray glimpses between the hills and through the trees. About him on every side were hills and valleys innumerable, long level slopes with sheep grazing on them or scarred, bush grown hillsides from which the timber had been cut not many years before or granite ledges standing out bare and white. And at every step the scene shifted. Here there was a beautiful little glen overgrown with young box and maple, while out of its bosom poured a little stream that ran down into a meadow, where cattle were standing to their knees in the cooling mud and water. Again it was a broad view of a valley following the course of a larger stream, along which lay towns and villages at scattered intervals, and yonder to the left on the horizon were the dim outlines of the Green mountains, and between, out of sight, flowed the Connecticut.

It was past noon, and the young man felt so hot and weary that he decided to rest. At a farmhouse he was passing he stopped for a drink, and, though it was hateful to his assumption of importance, he asked for something to eat, frankly stating that he had no money. But the rather well dressed woman who came to the door curtly refused. The sting revived his anger of the morning, but he turned doggedly away. Just beyond the house, however, was a fine garden. He could see ripe strawberries and some lettuce. He paused a moment, looking at it, and rapidly thought that since the woman had refused his honest request he would not scruple to help himself. The garden was hidden from the house by some thick trees, so he leaped the fence, and sitting down in the shade at one side of the strawberry bed began to pick and eat.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A LONG SEARCH.

Everywhere Kitty had sought the quotation—Browning and Tennyson, Shelley and Lang—Shakespeare she handled with great veneration.

Shutting, however, the tomes with a bang,

Byron she searched, and Swinburne as burn-

ing—

Gosse, Austin Dobson, Stevenson, Moore,

Leaves of each one she was futilely turning,

Hopkins her search as ever before.

Then wearied, tearful, she angrily flitted

Out of the library—rushed she distraught.

"Let's give it up," then she pointedly blurted,

"For I have forgotten the line that we sought."

—Exchange.

THE LOAVES AND FISH

TROUBLE IN STORE FOR MCKINLEY IN GIVING THEM OUT.

The Quadrennial Agony Which Every President Must Go Through—Army of Place Hunters That Besiege Him—He Will Not Know Rest For Months.

Mr. McKinley will not really realize that he is president until the rush for office begins, and then he will know beyond a doubt that he is not only in the highest office within the gift of the American people, but that one of the most important duties of that office is the appointment of several thousand other fellows to office.

Neither in the civilized nor in the uncivilized world can the scenes attending the first days in office of a president of the United States be duplicated. They are unique. Dear to the heart of every American who wants to undertake the great trust of holding a public office, they are to some extent food for the amusement and satire to the remainder of Christendom.

We do things on a gigantic scale. We have the biggest trees, the biggest waterfall, the biggest public buildings, the biggest (and possibly the ugliest) monument, the biggest political campaigns and the biggest inaugural pageant. No other country can hold a candle to us. We take the patisserie, as the French would say.