

HAPPY HOUSE

By Jane D. Abbott

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"You're very nice to me, Webb, and I'm glad to have made a friend so soon! I think the trouble has been forgotten. Anyway, I'm only going to stay a little while."

"And a good thing it'll be for Miss Milly, too."

"Miss Milly—?" asked Nancy. "It ain't no easy life for her livin' with Miss Sabrinny holdin' the sword of wrath over her poor head, and there's lots of folks think Miss Milly'd be a heap happier in the old graveyard than in Happy House, 'lowin' as how both feet are in the grave anyway. But this ain't no cheerful talk to hand out to you, Miss, only I cal-late you'll make Miss Milly a heap happier—shut up the way she is."

"How far are we from Freedom?" asked Nancy, abruptly, thinking as she did so that, if they were a very long way, she would have an opportunity to learn from her garrulous friend all she needed to know!

"Two mile from the turn yonder by the oak," the old man answered.

For a few moments both maintained a deep silence. Nancy, her thoughts in a tumult, was wondering what question she would ask first—there was so much she wanted to know—the "trouble," "Miss Milly and the sword of wrath" or what he meant by "Happy House." The last most stirred her curiosity; then, too, it did not seem just nice to pry from this old man.

"Why do they call the Leavitt place 'Happy House'?"

"Wal, I guess it ain't because it's exactly happy, and some sez nebber as how it's been a curse! Folks comes here to Freedom and looks at the old place and there's somethin' printed about it in a little book they sell up at Tobias in Nor' Hero, only I ain't much on readin'. B'indy Guess knows the story by heart, and she can tell you more'n I can."

"Oh, please, Webb, I can't make head or tail out of what you are saying," laughed Nancy pleadingly. "Who called it Happy House first?"

"B'indy sez the book sez that it was the first Anne Leavitt as come to Nor' Hero called it Happy House and they had one of these here mantels made out o' marble over in London and fetched across with the letters right in it spellin' Happy House! And she helped fix it up with her own hands she'd kind o' set such store by the idee, right thar in the settin' room and the very next day she slipped off sudden like and died like a poor little flower. And there ain't been much happiness in Happy House from them days since! B'indy knows the hul story; jes' sits writin'."

"Oh, how thrilling!" cried Nancy, breathing very fast. She had an uncontrollable desire to halt Webb and the Freedom stage right on the spot in order to write to Claire Wallace. But at that moment, around the turn by the old oak galloped a horse and rider. Because it was the first living creature Nancy had seen since leaving North Hero, she was startled.

"Hey there, Webb," the rider cried, whirling out of the path of the old wagon.

And Webb called back in cheery greeting: "Hey, Pete!"

Through the cloud of dust Nancy had caught a glimpse of a pair of merry eyes set deep in a face as brown as the dark shirt the man wore. Turning impulsively in her seat she noticed, with an unexplainable sense of pleasure, that the bare head of the rider was exceptionally well shaped and covered with short curly hair. Then, to her sudden discomfiture, the rider wheeled directly in the road and pulled his horse up short.

It was, of course, because he was the first real person she had seen on this big lonely island that prompted her to nod ever so slightly in response to his friendly wave! Then she turned discreetly back to Webb.

"Who is he?" she asked, in what she tried to make an indifferent tone.

"Peter Hyde, an' as nice a young fella as ever come to Freedom! Ain't been here much more'n a week and knows everybody. He's old man Judson's hired man and he's goin' to make somethin' of that 10-acre strip of Judson's some day or my name

ain't Cyrenus Webb!" "Judson's hired man!" cried Nancy, chagrined. What would Anne think of her—to have recognized, even in the slightest degree, the impertinence of this fellow! Her face burned at the thought.

"Seems to have a lot of learnin' but he's awful simple like and a hustler. Nobody knows whereabout he come from—jes' dropped by out of some advertisement old Judson put in the papers up Burlington way."

"Tell me more about Freedom," broke in Nancy with dignity. "Is it a very old place?"

"Wal, it's jest as old as this island, though I ain't much on readin' or dates. Folks on Nor' Hero's pretty proud of the hul island and B'indy sez as how it's printed that folks settled here long 'fore anyone, exceptin' the Indians, ever heard of Manhattan Island whar New York is. Used to be French first round here but they didn't stay long, and then the English come down 'fore the revolution and the Leavitts with them, I guess. This here island's named for Ethan Allen, you know, and folks sez old Jonathan, that works up at Happy House, is a connection of his. All the folks round here's related some way or other to them pi-neers and I guess if we hed to put up a fight now we'd do it jest as brave as them Green Mountain boys! The old smithy's been standin' on the four corners for nigh onto 100 years and the meetin' house facin' the commons, B'indy sez, is older than the smithy. And up the Leavitt road thar's a tablet these here Daughters of somethin' or other from Montpelier put up for some pi-neers that died fightin' the Indians while their women folks set off in boats for the mainland. I heard B'indy tell that at the last social down at the meetin' house. I cal-late some of them pi-neers were Leavitts, at that, fur it want long before that the pretty lady came who hed the name built in the mantel. B'indy knows—she can tell jes' what day the pretty lady come and the very room she died in. B'indy was born in the old house and she and Miss Sabrinny grewed up like sisters though B'indy's a good sight younger and spryer like than Miss Sabrinny!"

From the warmth of his tone Nancy guessed that there was a weak spot in Webb's heart for B'indy.

"Tell me more about B'indy," she asked, softly.

"Wal, if you jus' take a bit of advice from an old man you be purty nice to B'indy! Folks sez that Miss Sabrinny's high and mightier than the worst Leavitt, and they're a mighty proud lot, but I jus' got a notion that the only person who runs Miss Sabrinny is B'indy and I sort o' think she runs the hul of Happy House! And now here I am a gossipin' so with a pretty passenger that I clean furgot to leave off that chicken wire for Jenkins. Whoa, there, whoa, I say!"

Nancy guessed that the cluster of housetops she glimpsed ahead, almost hidden by the great elms and maples, was Freedom. She stared at them reflectively. Through Webb she seemed suddenly to feel that she had known the little tragedies and joys of Freedom all her life. She was not a bit afraid now to meet Aunt Sabrinna or this Miss Milly or B'indy. And she was eager to see the old, old house and the spot where Leavitts had been massacred as they protected their women! After all, it was going to be very pleasant—this playing at being one of the old Leavitts! She wished Webb would hurry.

When Farmer Jenkins followed Webb to the wheel of the wagon, Nancy knew that Webb had lingered to tell of her coming. She met the farmer's open stare with a pleasant little smile so that, an hour later, he "opined" to the thin, bent-shouldered woman who shared his name and labors, that "if that young gal wouldn't set things stirrin' pretty lively up at Happy House, he'd miss his guess!"

As they approached the outlying houses of the village Webb assumed an important air. "This here's Freedom, Missy, and I'm proud to do the honors for Miss Sabrinny's niece! It's not big as places go but it's record can't be beat since Ethan Allen's day. Webb knows, fer I marched away

with the boys in blue back in '61, though I was a barefooted youngster, long 'bout 14, and couldn't do nothin' more useful than beat a drum. And thar's our service flag, Missy, and every last one of the six of 'em's come through hul—thanks be to God! And thar's the hotel by the post-office and cross here's the school house, which I helped build the winter they wa'n't no call fur the stage. This is the Common and that's the meetin' house, as anyone could see, fur it ain't a line different from the meetin' houses over at Bend and Cliffsdale and Nor' Hero and all over Vermont, I guess. Funny how they never wanted only one kind o' meetin' houses! And here's the old smithy lookin' like it was older than B'indy 'lowed, and here's whar we turn to go up the Leavitt road. Seein' how you're sort of a special passenger I'll go right along up to Happy House, though it ain't my custom!"

Nancy was tremendously excited. She stared to right and left at the little old frame and stone houses set squarely in grass grown yards flanked by flower beds, all abloom, and each wearing, because of tightly closed blinds, an appearance of utter desertion. On the wooden "stoop" of the place Webb had dignified by calling a "hotel" were lounging a few men who had scarcely stirred when Webb in salutation had flourished his whip at them. The Commons, hot in the June sun, was deserted save for a few chickens pecking around in the long grass. The green shutters of the meeting house were tightly closed, too. From the gaping door of the smithy came not a sound. Even the great branches of the trees scarcely stirred. Over everything brooded a peaceful quiet.

"Oh, how delicious," thought Nancy. "How very, very old everything is. How I shall love it!" She leaned forward to catch a first glimpse of Happy House.

"Back by the smithy thar's old Dan'l Hopworth's place. Shame to have it on Miss Sabrinny's road only I 'low most as long as the Leavitts been here thar's been some of the no-good Hopworths! Poor old Dan'l's 'bout as shiftless as any o' them, B'indy sez, and his grandchild-eren ain't any better. And that thar leads down to old man Judson's. His 10-acre piece runs right up to Miss Sabrinny's. And thar's Happy House."

Through the giant elms Nancy caught her first glimpse of the vine covered old stone walls. Her first feeling was of disappointment; in the square lines of the house there was little claim to beauty. But its ugliness was softened by the wonderful trees that arched over its roof; the gray of its walls and the tightly blinded windows gave a stirring hint of mystery.

The door, built squarely in the middle of the house, opened almost directly upon a stone flagged path that led in a straight line to the road. There was something sternly formidable about it; Nancy, staring at it with a rapidly beating heart, wondered, when it opened, what might lie in store for her beyond it!

Webb, with much ado, was swinging her big bag over the wheel.

"Wal, we're makin' history, I guess, with another little Anne Leavitt comin' to Happy House! Them horses'll stand and I'll jus' carry this bag up fer you. Come along, Missy, and remember what Webb tells ye—ye make up to B'indy!"

Nancy followed him up the path to the door. To herself she was whispering, over the quaking of her heart:

"Well, good-by Nancy Leavitt—you're Anne now and don't you forget it for one single minute!"

CHAPTER III. Happy House.

In the long, dim, high ceilinged hall of Happy House Nancy felt very small and very much afraid. Though Miss Sabrinna was standing very close to her it seemed as though her voice came from a long way off. It was a cold voice, and although Miss Sabrinna was without doubt trying to be gracious, there was no warmth in her greeting. She was very tall, with a long Roman nose that gave her entire appearance a forbidding look.

Following her, Nancy stumbled up the long stairs and down an upper hall to a door where Miss Sabrinna stopped.

"This is the guest room," she explained, as she opened the door.

Someone had opened one of the blinds so here there was more

light. Nancy looking about, thought that it was the most dreadfully tidy room she had ever seen. It had a starched look—the heavy lace curtains at the window were so stiff that they could have stood quite alone without pole or ring; the stiff backed cushioned chairs were covered with stiff linen "tidies", edged with stiff lace; the bureau and washstand were likewise protected and a newly starched and ruffled strip, of a sister pattern, protected the wall behind the bowl.

"I think you'll find it comfortable—here. There is a pleasant land breeze at night and it is quiet," Miss Sabrinna was saying.

"Quiet!" thought Nancy. Was there any noise anywhere on the whole island? She gave herself a little mental shake. She must say something to this very tall, very stately woman—she was uncomfortably conscious that a pair of cold gray eyes was closely scrutinizing her.

"Oh, I shall love it," she cried with an enthusiasm she did not feel. "And it is so nice in you—to want me!"

The gray eyes kindled for a moment.

"I wanted you to know us—and to know Happy House. In spite of all that has happened you are a Leavitt and I felt that it was wrong that you should have grown up to womanhood out of touch with the traditions of your forefathers. We are one of the oldest families on this island—Leavitts have always been foremost in making history of the state from the days when they fought side by side with Ethan Allen. Any one of them would have laid down his life for the honor of his name and his country. You will want to wash, Anne—the roads are dusty. And no family in all Vermont is held in higher esteem than the Leavitts since the first Leavitt came down from Montreal and settled here in the wilderness. Put on a cooler dress, if you wish, and then come down to the dining room. We always eat dinner at 12:30, but B'indy has kept something warm. Yes, if you are a true Leavitt you will soon grow to revere the family pride and honor for which we Leavitts live!" And with stately steps, as measured as her words, Miss Sabrinna withdrew from the room.

"Whe-w! Can you just beat it!" Nancy flung at the closed door. She turned a complete circle, taking in with one sweeping glance the heavy walnut furniture, dark and uninviting against the ugly wallpaper and the equally ugly though spotlessly clean carpet; then threw out both hands despairingly.

"Well, Nancy, you are in for it—forefathers and everything—family pride and honor!" she finished with a groan. "So be a sport!" And taking herself thus sternly in hand she went to the wash bowl and fell to scrubbing off the dust as Miss Sabrinna had bidden her.

The clean, cool water and a change of dress restored her confidence. At least Aunt Sabrinna had accepted her without a question—that ordeal was over. Everything would go easier now. As she opened the door there came up from below a tempting smell of hot food—Nancy suddenly remembered that she had not eaten a crumb since her hasty, early breakfast in Burlington.

The dining room was as dim and cool as the rest of the house and as quiet. Miss Sabrinna herself placed a steaming omelette at Nancy's place. Then sat down stiffly at the other end of the table. The omelette was very good; Nancy relished, too, eating it from a plate of rare old blue and white china; her quick eyes took in with one appraising glance the beautiful lines of the old mahogany highboy and the spindle legged chairs which one of the "forefathers" must have brought over from England, years and years ago.

"The meat pie was cold so B'indy beat up an omelette," Miss Sabrinna was saying. "I guess you must be hungry, Anne."

And then, because there had been the slightest tremble in the older woman's voice Nancy realized, in a flash, that Miss Sabrinna was as nervous as she! Of course she had dreaded the coming of this strange grandniece whom she had invited to Happy House merely from her sense of duty to Leavitt traditions. In her relief Nancy wanted more than anything to laugh loudly—instead she flashed a warm smile and said coaxingly:

"I wish you'd call me Nancy! Everyone does and it sounds—oh, jollier."

(Continued next week.)

OCEANS HARD TO IMAGINE

People of the Middle Ages Found It Difficult to Conceive Extent of Waters.

Eratosthenes was right; the earth was a globe. But what philosopher ever imagined that it was so large! Homer was right when he sang of the "mighty flood," but he was thinking of the insignificant Mediterranean. What poet had imagination enough to picture the vastness of the Pacific! Many had surmised the truth, but none had realized its extent. When the caravels of Columbus had sailed and returned the wide eyes of the Renaissance were astonished by the story brought home. It seemed impossible that there could be so much water. And still the girth of the seas was uncomprehended. It was only when Magellan's Santa Vittoria had circumnavigated the globe and dropped anchor in the Bay of San Lucar that a realization of the world of water began to dawn. The Atlantic was astonishing enough in all conscience; but the Pacific was overwhelming and dumbofounding.—John C. Van Dyke.

MOTHER, QUICK! GIVE

CALIFORNIA FIG SYRUP FOR CHILD'S BOWELS

Even a sick child loves the "fruity" taste of "California Fig Syrup." If the little tongue is coated, or if your child is listless, cross, feverish, full of cold, or has colic, a teaspoonful will never fail to open the bowels. In a few hours you can see for yourself how thoroughly it works all the constipation poison, sour bile and waste from the tender, little bowels and gives you a well, playful child again.

Millions of mothers keep "California Fig Syrup" handy. They know a teaspoonful today saves a sick child tomorrow. Ask your druggist for genuine "California Fig Syrup" which has directions for babies and children of all ages printed on bottle. Mother! You must say "California" or you may get an imitation fig syrup.—Advertisement.

Rich Autumn in Mannahata.

It was one of those rich autumnal days . . . upon the beautiful island of Mannahata and its vicinity, not a floating cloud obscured the azure firmament, the sun rolling in glorious splendor through this ethereal course, seemed to expand his honest Dutch countenance into an unusual expression of benevolence, as he smiled his evening salutation upon a city which he delights to visit with his most bounteous beams; the very winds seemed to hold in their breaths in mute attention, lest they should ruffle the tranquillity of the hour; and the waveless bosom of the bay presented a polished mirror, in which nature beheld herself and smiled.—Washington Irving.

Then Fur Flew.

"Were you and Daddy good boys when I was gone?" asked the mother. "Oh, yes, mother," replied the child. "And did you treat nurse respectfully?" "I should say we did!" "And did you kiss her good night every day?" "I should say we did!"—Washington Dirge.

Two Tunes.

Ambrose, the piano tuner, had tuned the piano, and found it in good condition.

A few days later he received a letter from the owner of the piano, stating it had not been properly tuned.

The tuner made another trip, and tested every note, only to find no fault with the instrument.

He told the lady so. "Well," she said, "it does seem all right, doesn't it, when you play on it; but as soon as I begin to sing it gets all out of tune!"

There are always warning signs in every life; when in doubt, heed them.

Lots of men who claim to be gentlemen don't work at it.

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"Bayer" Introduced Aspirin to the Physicians Over 21 Years Ago.

To get quick relief follow carefully the safe and proper directions in each unbroken package of "Bayer Tablets of Aspirin." This package is plainly stamped with the safety "Bayer Cross." The "Bayer Cross" means the genuine, world-famous Aspirin prescribed by physicians for over twenty-one years.—Advertisement.

HAVE NEW RINGWORM CURE

Roentgen Rays Are Being Used Successfully in Treatment of Most Annoying Affliction.

Ringworm is now successfully treated by removing the hair with Roentgen rays and then applying a lotion which will penetrate the hair follicles and kill the parasites that are the cause of the trouble.

Drs. Howard Fox and T. B. H. Anderson, both of the United States public health service, described in the Journal of the American Medical Association the latest technique and cite a few of the strange results that have followed when the new hair grew in again.

They have observed that sometimes a golden-haired child is transformed into a brunette, a straight-haired into a curly-headed and the kinky wool of negroes becomes straight. But they express much doubt as to the permanency of these changes.

PROVERBS HELD IN COMMON

Remarkable Similarity of Ideas Noted Among Nations, Both of the Old and New World.

The similarity of ideas all over the world is found in the similarity of expressions to convey the ideas. The old English proverb "A fool and his money are soon parted," finds its counterpart in the phrase, "There is no medicine for a fool." But the Japanese also claim that by good management they can do something even with fools, when they say, "Fools and scissors move according to the mode of using them." Some of us carry our Latin with us all our lives, just because we had a good teacher. To these, the old Latin saying, "The eagle does not catch flies," (Aquila non capit muscas) will recall old memories of the pride and sarcasm of the Romans. So also will they be pleased to read the Japanese aphorism, "The falcon does not peck at ears of corn," which is true, as falcons, especially those of the peregrine type, are much more likely to seize and carry small animals like lambs, rabbits, chickens.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Mysterious Stove.

At a recent electrical exposition a "mystic stove" attracted no little attention. This idea is by no means new; in fact, in one of its most spectacular forms it consists of a kettle of water boiling on a cake of ice. The solution of such mysteries is powerful magnetic induction, which causes the generation of powerful electric current in the pot, pan or kettle. The layman is, of course, greatly mystified, since water can be boiled, eggs fried, and so on, with no visible source of heat. The hand can be passed over the tapestry-covered table without feeling any trace of heat.—Scientific American.

True.

My neighbor and I were discussing our husbands' likes and dislikes in food while Robert was playing with his tops nearby. Neighbor said: "My husband doesn't like chicken at all." Up piped Robert: "Why, that's funny, isn't it? Most men like chicken."—Exchange.

The microbe never bothers the man who is unaware of its existence.

Overwork may wear a man to death and underwork bore him to death.

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