

HAPPY HOUSE

By Jane D. Abbott

COPYRIGHT, 1920, BY J. B. LIPPINCOTT COMPANY

Nancy's face was alight with enthusiasm. With her vivid imagination she pictured a glorious army of Peter Hydes going out over the land, rescuing the poor farmers, putting new weapons into their hands!

"It's wonderful! And it's—brave!" she added, "because it isn't as if you went off with a whole lot of others with bands and flags flying!"

She was suddenly struck with remorse that she had, in her heart, so wronged Peter Hyde! She had thought him a slacker when he had shouldered the hardest task! Something in the earnestness still reflected on his face made her own her guilt.

"I can't be glad enough you've told me all this! I didn't know! I never lived in the country. I just thought things to eat grew up any old way. And all this time I have been thinking horrid things about you because I thought you hadn't gone to war! I thought, maybe, you were way off up here to escape the feeling everyone had for slackers! You can imagine, now, when I see what you really are doing, how ashamed I feel! Will you forgive me?"

Peter's frank amusement made Nancy feel very uncomfortable and small. But then she deserved it! He held out his hand as a sign of his forgiveness. There was still laughter in his eyes as he regarded her.

"I suppose that was very natural! Most of the young fellows you know must have gone over!" he said, seriously enough.

She wanted very much to tell him of her father—how he had followed the men over the top; how he had worked day after day getting the stories back to the people at home and spent night after night tracing the "missing", or writing letters for the boys who never got further back than the first dressing stations and who wanted mothers and fathers and sweethearts to know that they'd had their chance and had made the most of it! But she couldn't, for she was supposed to be Anne and Anne's father had died when she was a little girl.

She told him of a few of the college men she had known, who had gone, eagerly, at the first call.

"They didn't even want to wait to get commissions! They just wanted to fight!"

The revelation of Peter Hyde made her think of Claire's brother. She told him about Claire and Anne—she called Anne, vaguely, "another girl." "Claire's a darling and we just love her, but we can't abide her brother! Of course it's not reasonable, because we've never laid eyes on him, but we've heard enough from Claire to know just what he's like. I suppose the war made a few like him—he was brave enough over there and lucky to have all his recommendations recognized, but it made him so conceited! He came back here and just strutted around, everywhere. Claire says her mother's friends used to have teas for him—he'd go to them and speak and show his medals! Claire was mad over him. She was so disappointed because I came here instead of going to Merrycliffe. But I couldn't see myself spending my time petting her beloved lion! I knew I'd be rude and say just what I thought."

Nancy and Peter were sitting upon the stump of a tree near the cliff. Peter suddenly rose and walked to the edge—his back square to Nancy. After a moment he turned.

"Thought I heard something down there," he explained, at her questioning glance. "Don't blame you for disliking that sort—like Claire's brother! They're a rummy kind! I had a friend a lot like him. But—maybe, it wasn't all his fault—about the teas and things! Maybe his mother got 'em started and he didn't want to hurt her!"

It was like Peter Hyde, so gentle with children and animals, to stand up now for even Barry Wallace's kind.

"You're just like dad," Nancy cried warmly, then stopped a little frightened. But of course Peter had not been in Freedom long enough to know anything about the Leavitts.

He bowed with great ceremony, one hand over his heart.

"If Dad's like daughter, I

thank you for the compliment. Now, if you will linger longer with me I'd like to show you Mrs. Sally and her babies. Sally is my experimental pig. I've built a piggery for her with a plunge and a sunken garden, and if you don't declare that Sally enjoys such improved surroundings, I'll know my whole summer's work's a failure."

Nancy walked over the rough ground toward the barns with a light heart. She had a delightful sense of being "pals" with this new Peter Hyde—who, while the Barry Wallacees were swaggering around with their medals, was up here in an out of the way corner of the nation, fighting a new sort of a fight! He actually wanted her approval of his new piggery!

CHAPTER XVI.

It was quite natural that Nancy should take her problems to Peter Hyde.

More correctly, she did not take them—Peter Hyde discovered them when, a few days later, he found Nancy alone in her birdnest, completely surrounded by sheets of paper, a frown wrinkling her entire face, furiously chewing one end of her pencil.

There had, of course, to be some explanation of the manuscript. Nancy told him of the play she was writing, how she had really come to North Hero to finish it!

"I thought I'd have hours and hours to work. And I was so glad when I found this hiding place. I've been here, now, weeks and weeks, and have done scarcely a thing!"

"Is it because the Muse will not come?" asked Peter, eyeing the scattered sheets with awe.

"Oh, it would come—if it had a chance! My head's just bursting with things I want to write and I dream about them in my sleep. But—it sounds silly—I'm so busy. Maybe the things I do don't seem important but I just can't escape them."

She made room for Peter on the seat beside her. Then she told him of Aunt Milly; of that first trip to the orchard, how it had been the beginning of a new life for the little woman.

"I bring her downstairs every day now, right after breakfast, and she's one of the family. I'm going to coax Webb to make another sort of a chair; one she can wheel herself—I've seen them. She's learned to knit beautifully; she's so proud because she is working on a sock for the Belgian children—she says it's the first time she's ever felt useful! She helps B'lindy, too. It makes you want to cry to see how happy she is. But with all her independence she wants me all the time. When I start to leave her there's something in the way she looks at me that is just as though she reached out and caught me by the hand!"

Nancy described, too, how B'lindy was constantly finding little tasks for her that would keep her in the kitchen or on the back porch within sound of her voice.

"You see talking's the joy of B'lindy's life and my ears are new—they haven't heard all the things she has to say. Just when I think I can escape she begins telling me of the cake her mother baked for Miss Sabrina's mother the day the governor of Vermont came to Happy House—or something like that!"

Anxious that Peter should understand everything Nancy made a vivid word picture of Miss Sabrina and of the difficulties she had had in winning her. "I believe she's fond of me now, but she just doesn't know how to show it! She's never displayed one bit of affection in her whole life, I'm sure. She's stone. But sometime she's going to break—I'm doing my best to make her! I know she enjoys having dear little Aunt Milly around, but do you think she'd say so? Goodness no. But there's a lot of good in Aunt Sabrina and I'm bound to know it all, so I make it my duty to sit with her just so long each day while she tells me about the Leavitts and the other families of this Island. And there is something heroic about them all!"

"So here I am, just tingling to finish the last act of my play and not a moment to myself! If it isn't precious Aunt Milly or Aunt Sabrina or B'lindy or even dear old Jonathan, it's Nonie or Davy

or—"
"Or me," finished Peter Hyde, glancing significantly at the neglected work. "You're hands are full!"

Nancy went on earnestly. "And it all seems so worth while! Look at Nonie—she's a different creature already. I don't believe she pretends as much, either—her little body is catching up with her spirit. And Davy doesn't hang his head when he looks at you!"

Peter Hyde could understand her feeling toward the children. They had planned together to bring something more into those two starved young lives. Like Nancy, he was delighted at the results already apparent. It was work too worth while to be abandoned—for anything.

"Nonie fairly eats up the books I give her but she always wants to read them with me—it's so that she can ask questions. And the questions she asks! Every new thing she learns she immediately adapts to her own life. We've begun 'Little Women' and of course she plays Amy! Poor little flower, sometimes I think of old Dan! and Liz and wonder from where on earth the child got her gift. And what a precious blessing it is to her!"

Recalling Davy's contempt for his sister's "actin' lies," they both laughed.

"How could anyone think bad things of Davy," cried Nancy, indignantly. "He's the soul of truth and honor! But up here he won't have a chance."

"Oh, yes, he will!" Peter contradicted. "If I'm any good reading character in a 10-year-old he'll make a chance. He's a leader, now. Look at the way the other boys follow his slightest suggestion!"

Davy's "club" was flourishing. The attractions that Peter and Nancy had added to its program had made it boom. Several new "fellars" had come in. The meetings were even more frequent than Liz cleaned the meeting house, and now, because it had become known that Miss Sabrina's niece was a member of the club, no lickings awaited the members upon their return, rather impatient mothers eager to hear "what that girl at Happy House was up to now." There was some talk about turning the club into a Boy Scout troop; Mr. Peter had promised to organize them and train them.

"Oh, dear," Nancy sighed, perplexed and torn, "it's like having a dream you've dreamed crumble all to pieces! I wanted to have my play done before my—I mean, I wanted to finish it up here and then send it straight to Theodore Hoffman himself. Of course you don't know him. He's one of the greatest dramatists and play producers in the world. I know it's daring in me and maybe he won't even give a minute to my little insignificant effort, but—whatever he may say, I'll know it is the best criticism I can get!"

To Nancy's surprise Peter displayed a considerable knowledge of plays and actors, critics and producers. He could see her problem, too—how she was torn between the claims of Happy House and her beloved work.

Nancy was grateful for his sympathy and because he did not laugh at her. But of course, why should anyone who could find music in waving corn not understand her own dreams!

Peter's face looked very much as though he was tackling some problem of drainage—or a new incubator.

"When you get right down to plain facts, it's a question of conserving time. You're wasting it—somewhere. I believe you can double up a bit. Let Aunt Milly listen to Belinda, and teach Aunt Milly to help Nonie. I'll take care of Davy. You say Aunt Milly likes to feel she's useful—if you start her she can help Nonie a lot and Nonie'll give her something to think about, too."

Nancy considered this with brightening eyes. "I believe you're right! I've just been selfish, trying to do everything myself just because I loved to, and stupid—to think no one else could do it! Of course Aunt Milly can read with Nonie—and play with her, too. I'll begin this very day. I'll have a school here in the orchard and Nonie and B'lindy and Aunt Milly shall come. It'll be the funniest school you ever heard of," Nancy laughed. "I'll teach B'lindy the joy of seeing Hopworth 'young uns' eat her best molasses cookies!"

Nancy's face showed that she was mentally leaping far ahead in her plans. Peter felt that he had been left out.

"Let me be the head taskmas-

ter or whatever you call it. You'll doubtless need a strong hand now and then. Anyway, you don't know how much it helps my work mixing a little fun with it!"

Now that her problems were straightening Nancy felt very kindly and gracious and happy.

"Of course, you may come to the orchard—whenever you want! Oh, you have helped me so much," she cried, with a smile that brought a sudden gleam in Peter Hyde's eyes. "Now, if you'll give me a hand putting these pages together, I'll run in and prepare Aunt Milly and B'lindy."

Following along the lines of Peter's suggestion, Nancy's "school" developed rapidly. She covered sheet after sheet of paper with "schedules" and finally to her satisfaction, blocked off every waking moment of her pupils' day. Aunt Milly fell heartily in with her plans; she was proud to know that she could help. The books for Nonie that Nancy had spirited to Lappy House were as fascinating to her as to Nonie.

After the first day Aunt Milly thought of a great many new "lessons" they could begin for Nonie. With the promise that after awhile she could make for herself a "pinkie" dress, like Nancy's, Aunt Milly taught her to hem and seam and tuck. At the same time Nonie learned that it was quite as bad to wear a torn, soiled dress as to say "him and me" or "I ain't."

"You're wonderful, Aunt Milly," Nancy had declared, after this innovation in the school. "I never would have thought of it, myself." She laughed, ruefully. "I'd better study with Nonie, I guess, and learn to mend, myself."

Nancy had told Aunt Milly, too, of Nonie's pretend mother. Perhaps that was why Aunt Milly's voice was very sweet and tender as she and Nonie talked and played and read together. Nonie liked to wheel the chair; she began to look forward to bolder excursions beyond the gate to the village.

B'lindy, in her heart still a little distrustful that "no good could come from encouragin' them Hopworths," nevertheless found countless excuses to join the little group under the apple trees, sometimes bringing some hideous lace crocheting that had been years in the making but would some day—if B'lindy lived long enough to complete it—cover a bed. Sometimes she brought a basket of goodies and other times came empty handed and just sat idle with a softened look in her old eyes as they rested on the purple rim of mountains across the water.

"I guess it makes a body work better for restin' a spell," she said, after one of these intervals.

But with the success of Nancy's new plans were two little clouds—small at first but growing with each day. One was the realization that very soon her work for these dear people could go on without her. And though in one breath she told herself that this was fortunate, because her stay at Happy House must end with her father's return, in the next she was swept with a sharp jealousy that, after she had gone, Aunt Milly and B'lindy and Nonie and Davy would still gather under the apple tree.

Since the afternoon Peter Hyde had found her with the manuscript she had not laid eyes upon him!

A sense of hurt at his neglect did not grow less when she learned from old Jonathan, after one or two questions, that he had gone over to Plattsburg; rather it gave way to a resentment that Peter, considering what good chums they had grown to be and the "school" and everything, should have gone off on any such trip without one word of parting!

"He'll see how well we can get along without him," she had declared to herself after the third day. After all he probably was hiding something; this sudden disappearance must have some connection with it.

His comradeship had grown very pleasant, she admitted, but she told herself, it belonged to the real Anne Leavitt, like Aunt Milly and Nonie and the others, he must drop out of her life when she left Happy House.

So that he might not even be missed by Davy and his cronies, Nancy devoted one entire afternoon to teaching the boys of the club how to build a fire without matches. When, after repeated and discouraging failures, the last one had joyfully succeeded, Nancy had promised to teach them to wigwag at the very next meeting.

(To be Continued Next Week.)



Feel Stiff and Achy After Every Cold?

Do You Have Constant Backache? Feel Old and Lame and Suffer Sharp, Rheumatic Pains? Then Look to Your Kidneys!

DOES every cold, chill or attack of grip leave you worn-out and utterly miserable? Do you feel old and lame, stiff and rheumatic? Does your back ache with a dull, unceasing throb, until it seems you just can't stand it any longer?

Then look to your kidneys! Grip, colds and chills are mighty hard on the kidneys. They fill the blood with poisons and impurities that the kidneys must filter off. The kidneys weaken under this rush of new work; become congested and inflamed.

It's little wonder, then, that every cold leaves you with torturing backache, rheumatic pains, headaches, dizziness and annoying bladder irregularities.

But don't worry! Simply realize that your kidneys are overworked at such times and need assistance. Get a box of Doan's Kidney Pills and give your weakened kidneys the help they need. Assist them, also, by drinking pure water freely, eating lightly and getting plenty of fresh air and rest. Doan's Kidney Pills have helped thousands and should help you. Ask your neighbor!

"Use Doan's," Say These Grateful Folks:

C. A. Peck, salesman, 497 E. 3rd St., Huron, S. D., says: "I know the value of Doan's Kidney Pills and have used them with benefit. My kidneys at times, caused me to have a lame back that annoyed me when I stooped. The action of my kidneys was irregular. When I took a cold, usually it settled on my kidneys. I used Doan's Kidney Pills as directed and in a short time, I was free from all signs of the trouble."

Mrs. J. Gettsel, 414 S. 3rd Ave., Sioux Falls, S. Dak., says: "I can recommend Doan's Kidney Pills highly. I had kidney complaint for sometime and suffered a great deal with severe backache. I couldn't rest well and I tired easily when doing my housework. Dizzy spells came over me suddenly and spots floated before my eyes, blurring my sight. My kidneys acted too frequently but I used Doan's Kidney Pills and they soon gave me relief from the backache and other signs of kidney trouble."

DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS

At All Dealers, 60c a Box. Foster-Milburn Co., Mfg. Chem., Buffalo, N. Y.

Mistaken Identity.
Helen was a freshman at Shortridge High school and was proud of her new ring bearing the school insignia.

The waiter at the restaurant where she went said something that to Helen sounded like "Shorbridge?" to which she promptly replied, gazing at her ring, which she supposed he had noticed: "Yes, are you from there, too?" The waiter looked bored, and then repeated his request: "Short ribs or roast beef?"—Indianapolis News.

TAKE ASPIRIN ONLY AS TOLD BY "BAYER"

"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.

Early Cretans.
Excavations in Crete have established the existence of a people whose form of civilization was the earliest in Europe. A huge palace has been unearthed at Knossos with a drainage system described as "absolutely English."



Mrs. Viola French

Danville, Ill.—"I think Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery is the best medicine I have ever used or heard of. I learned of it through a friend when I was in a weak and highly nervous condition. I had lost interest in almost everything—just dragged on in a listless sort of way. A few doses of the 'Discovery' gave me a brighter view of life and I began to gain strength. No one but those who have used this helpful medicine are in a position to speak fully of its merit."—Mrs. Viola French, 115 N. Collett St.

So that he might not even be missed by Davy and his cronies, Nancy devoted one entire afternoon to teaching the boys of the club how to build a fire without matches. When, after repeated and discouraging failures, the last one had joyfully succeeded, Nancy had promised to teach them to wigwag at the very next meeting.

No Rubber but More Stretch in

Na-Nay or EXCELLO RUBBERLESS SUSPENDERS and a Year's Wear Guaranteed Ask Your Dealer Price 75c

If he hasn't them, send direct, giving dealer's name. Accept no substitute. Look for guarantee label and name on buckle. Na-Way Stretch Suspender Co., Mfrs., Adrian, Mich.

WATCH THE BIG 4

Stomach-Kidneys-Heart-Liver
Keep the vital organs healthy by regularly taking the world's standard remedy for kidney, liver, bladder and uric acid troubles—

GOLD MEDAL HAARLEM OIL CAPSULES

The National Remedy of Holland for centuries and endorsed by Queen Wilhelmina. At all druggists, three sizes. Look for the name Gold Medal on every box and accept no imitation



Vaseline

Reg. U.S. Pat. Off.

PETROLEUM JELLY

For sores, broken blisters, burns, cuts and all skin irritations. Also innumerable toilet uses.

REFUSE SUBSTITUTES
CHESEBROUGH MFG. CO. State Street New York

A Reliable Firm to Ship to
Rice Brothers
Live Stock Commission
Cattle—Hogs—Sheep
Sioux City Stock Yards