

HAPPY HOUSE

By Jane D. Abbott

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"Yes'm! Caught him jes' agoin' to take the stage."

"Going away?" Nancy cried.

"Yes'm. He had a big bag and he give me a handshake like he was going to be away for a spell, thought it's most harvest-in' and he's not the kind to leave Judson short handed—not him."

After a moment Nancy grew conscious that old Jonathan was staring curiously at her. So she turned and walked slowly back to the house.

Peter Hyde had gone away—without a word! He would read her letter; he would always think of her as she had pictured herself in it! And he might never know how the curious tangle had come out!

CHAPTER XXVII

Archie Eaton Returns.

Liz, returning from her afternoon's work at the meeting house, blew breathlessly into the Hopworth kitchen.

"As I live, Archie Eaton's comin' home—this blessed day! His ma got a telegram last night; Sammy Todd brought it over from Nor' Hero on his bicycle. And Webb's put a notice in the postoffice—he wants every man, woman and child to meet on the Common tonight at seven to sort o' welcome Archie to home."

"Everybody? Me and Davy," broke in Nonie, excitedly.

"Of course, when Webb says every man, woman and child it means all of us," answered Liz with importance, smoothing out her gingham apron.

Three days had entirely made over Liz Hopworth. Sarah Hopkins' death had given Liz, hitherto, an outcast, a position of importance in the community. However unfitting Freedom's ladies might have thought it, nevertheless it was an undisputable fact, and everyone knew it, that Liz's hands had "done for" the stricken family; she had cleaned and comforted, dusted and baked and stitched together suitable mourning for poor Jennie, the oldest Hopkins girl. At the simple funeral it had been Liz who had greeted the neighbors and had urged them to "just look at Sarah Hopkins—you'd think she was enjoyin' it all, she's that happy lookin'!" What no one else knew was that it had been Liz who had put her arms around Jennie Hopkins when a complete realization of her loss had swept over the girl and had had her "just lay your poor little head right here and cry all you want to!" Never in all her life had Liz's arms known such a labor of love. Jennie had cried all she wanted to—great, heart-breaking sobs that had, though they exhausted, finally soothed her.

From his corner where old Dan'l, with hanging head waited his supper, came a grunt of unbelief. Liz turned reprovingly.

"Anyway, Archie Eaton's a soldier even if he be an Eaton!" Then, to Nonie: "I met Mis' Sniggs comin' up the village and she wants all the little girls to wear white and throw bouquets at Archie as he's gettin' off the stage and sing America. She's goin' to get the flowers at Mis' Todd's and Mis' Brown's. Miss Nancy's white's too nice, but I guess your gingham's faded most white 'nough. Anyways, it's plenty good."

"Have I time to run up and tell Miss Nancy?"

"Lan' sakes, no! We gotta get supper spry so's to have the work cleared away. Nancy Leavitt knows it, I callate—ain't much happens Webb doesn't carry straight off up to Happy House. I guess maybe they're pretty busy, too. Things is certainly changin', I said, when Sabrina Leavitt goes to poor Sarah Hopkins' funeral, sittin' right on the plush chair over in the right hand corner near the waxed flowers. And sure's I'm alive, she's taken the Hopkins baby up to Happy House to do for. She wanted it to keep regular like her own, but Timothy Hopkins wouldn't listen for a minit—his children wa'n't a goin' to be separated if they all starved! Seems to me he was foolish, but he was awful set and mebbe he was right. Dan'l Hopworth, take off your slippers! Of course you're goin' to see Archie Eaton come home! I guess you're as patriotic as any other folks."

Liz's determination won its point so that a little before 7 the entire Hopworth family

joined every other "man, woman and child" on the village common. The common presented a pretty sight, big and small flags fluttering, the weather worn service flag again hoisted to its place of honor and women and children in their best attire. Mrs. Eaton, upon whom every glance turned with frank curiosity, did not need her gorgeous purple poplin with its lace ruffles swelling over her bosom, to make her the most conspicuous figure in the gathering—that she was the mother of the returning soldier was enough! And her eyes, as they strained down the road like the others, for a first glimpse of Webb's horses, were wet with tears.

Someone saw a little cloud of dust and set up a shout: "He's comin'!" Others took up the cry. Mrs. Sniggs frantically gathered her flock of little singers around the carriage block in front of the meeting house, where Webb had promised to pull up his team. Some one pushed Mrs. Eaton toward the spot.

"There he is," piped a small boy, pointing to the khaki figure that leaned out of the stage, violently waving a hat.

"Who's the other fellar?" asked Mr. Todd, but no one around him seemed to know.

All ceremony was thrown to the four winds; the hysterical piping of the little girls was lost in the wild rub-a-dub dub of the Freedom's drummers and the clamor of excited voices from the pushing, jostling crowd. However, Archie Eaton was utterly unconscious of it all, for in less than a second he was tightly enveloped in folds of purple poplin!

After a moment he sprang back to the step of Webb's wagon and raised his hand.

"Mebbe you think it ain't good to get home! I'll say it is! I've laid awake nights dreamin' of this. I ain't goin' to make a speech, folks, but I've got to tell you something. I wanted to send word to you back a time but my buddy here wouldn't let me! Mebbe you don't remember my buddy—he's changed a lot, I guess, but he's from Freedom, all right!" He pulled at the arm of his companion. "Stand up, so folks can see you! Give a cheer, now, for Eric Hopworth, the best and bravest soldier in Uncle Sam's army!"

Not a throat in Freedom could have made a sound for utter surprise. They gaped at the big bronzed fellow in khaki while Archie Eaton went on, speaking rapidly.

"Mebbe you folks up here don't know yet that he led a bunch of us after a machine gun nest that was holdin' back the fellows there in the Argonny and that when every man of us dropped he went on single handed, with a nasty hole in his side, and got every Jerry of 'em! But I guess before he done that he pulled Archie Eaton back where the Jerries couldn't finish me with their shot pepperin' the lot of us as we lay there and—well, he's done a lot more'n that and mebbe you don't know that the other day some fellers down at Washington gave him a distinguished service medal which I guess puts him pretty near next to Ethan Allen himself! So set up a shout that'll split your throats for Eric Hopworth, 'cause if it wasn't for him Archie Eaton wouldn't be here holdin' his mother's hand and cryin' real tears, he's that tickled to be home, and this old North Hero wouldn't be on the map like 'tis! So let her rip, fellows! My buddy, Eric Hopworth!"

Something, pent up while Archie Eaton was speaking, burst with a roar. Each person, big or small, tried to shout louder than anyone else; each tried to press close enough to lay a hand on the hero. And, strange sight, Mrs. Eaton was now clasping Eric Hopworth in her arms!

Nancy, standing a little apart with Miss Sabrina, shouting like the others, suddenly felt her throat choke with a sob, for she saw Dan'l, stung to life, leap forward through the crowd to reach his son, his face lifted and lighted by a great pride. Then, as they clasped hands, the crowd parted suddenly, and through it flashed two small figures. In less than a moment Nonie and Davy were both in their father's

arms. No one stopped to recall the stories of Eric Hopworth's youth nor of his bringing the two babies back to his father. It was enough that he was there among them, one of the country's heroes.

Mrs. Eaton was excitedly begging everyone to come to her home and have ice cream and cake, and there was a general movement of young and old to accept her hospitality. But when she urged Eric Hopworth he shook his head, slipping one arm over his father's shoulder.

"I guess we want to go home," he explained, a little embarrassed. "You see, it's been a long time—Pa and I have got a lot to say to each other! And we've got to get acquainted," nodding at the youngsters who were clinging to his arm.

There was a great deal that Eric Hopworth could not tell his father, for the simple reason that he had not at his command the words that could tell of the lessons the war had taught him. But in one simple, awkward sentence he tried to express his remorse and penitence.

"Well, Pa," they had stopped before the door of the dilapidated house. "I guess it took the war to make a man of me! I went into it 'cause it looked pretty excitin', but it didn't take me long to find out it was a big job and the kind of a job that meant a fellow had to give the very best in him—and only the best! I've had time to think a lot and things sort a come to me different, over there. I guess I know now that I've got a job right here most as big as the war and I'm goin' to do it! I'm goin' to make a home for you and Liz and the kids—a real home!"

Nonie, standing off, a little shyly and uncertainly, was steeling herself for a test. Out of a clear sky had dropped a real father. He looked very big, but his face was kind, and he had a nice voice. Perhaps—perhaps one of her dreams was coming true! She slipped away to her room and made ready for bed with trembling fingers. For a long time she lay listening to the voices below. After a little Davy came in and crawled sleepily into the cot in the corner. Still she waited, her hands clasped tightly under the covers. At last she heard a step—not like her grandfather's, nor Liz's, she knew their—a cautious, tip-toe step. As it came nearer she shivered with exquisite anticipation.

Eric Hopworth leaned over the bed. He had thought Nonie would be asleep. She held her eyes shut tight for a moment. He laid his hand on her head with a shy, caressing movement. Suddenly the child threw her two arms around his neck. He held her close, then he kissed her and laid her gently back upon the pillow.

"Good night, kiddie," he whispered softly, and tip-toed out of the room.

Nonie gave one long, happy sigh, then, cuddling down under the covers, dropped off into dreamless slumber.

CHAPTER XXVIII

A Letter From the Master.

Four days had passed since Nancy had written her confession and sent it off to Peter Hyde. They had seemed endless, too, in spite of all the strange changes at Happy House. Aunt Sabrina and Aunt Milly were pathetically and helplessly busy over the new member of the family, and his coming had necessitated momentous reforms in the habits of the household and long arguments as to the proper care of infants. B'indy had finally found somewhere in the back of a "Household Helper" a chapter on the "Care of the Child," and went about all day with a finger between its pages and a superior look on her face.

Nancy had spent one entire afternoon at the Hopworth's. Nonie and Davy had come for her and had dragged her back with them to see their "Dad".

"Ask him to tell you 'bout—" and Davy had, breathlessly, rattled off a dozen or more of the war tales that he had liked best.

Nancy had thought, that afternoon, that, somehow or other, the Hopworth kitchen had changed since that first day she had visited it. It was cleaner, homier; there was less litter, the air was not so heavy with the stale odors of cooking. Old Dan'l sat near the open door smoking the pipe Eric had brought him, his eyes following Eric's every movement. Liz, fussing about over household tasks, was less dominant, less forbidding, and the tired look had gone from her face.

With the children's chatter

Eric Hopworth's shyness soon wore off. Nonie had told him of the pleasant days at Happy House with Nancy; he felt a deep gratitude to these people who had been doing for his two "kiddies" what he should have done. At Davy's coaxing he had repeated for Nancy some of the incidents of the war in which he had shared. Davy had proudly exhibited the precious trophies that had come home in his father's luggage.

"And Dad's going to stay home always and always now" Nonie had announced. Then Eric Hopworth explained that he had taken a position in a big manufacturing plant at Burlington.

"The boss there was my captain. It'll do for a start. After a bit, maybe, I can take the family there, though Pa'll likely want to always stay here in Freedom," he had added with a squaring of the shoulders that said plainly that the burdens of the household now rested upon him.

Nancy had gone away from the cottage that afternoon with a feeling in her heart that Nonie and Davy would no longer need her. Davy, with his first hand war stories and trophies and a real hero for a father, from now on had an assured standing among the youths of the village, and Nonie had some one to love and to love her.

So the little loneliness that this thought created added to Nancy's restlessness and made the hours seem endless. And it made her, too, haunt the doorway watching for Jonathan and possible letters.

She told herself, sternly, that, of course, it was silly to expect Peter Hyde to write—that was a closed chapter. But she had written a long letter to Anne, telling her of the strange things that had transpired at Happy House and of the two dear little sisters who were undoubtedly Anne's relatives. Surely Anne must answer that letter.

Old Jonathan was too simple-hearted to wonder why Nancy ran out each day to greet him or why she asked, each day, in a manner she tried to make casual, if "Mr. Judson had anyone to help him yet?" But on this fourth day, his smile was broad with satisfaction as he proudly placed in her hand a big, flat envelope.

A week before Nancy would have exclaimed—for it was from Theodore Hoffman. Now she turned away in disappointment.

In the excitement of the last few days she had forgotten her play. She opened the envelope now with steady fingers. By some intuition she knew just what she would find inside. There they were—all the sheets over which she had toiled so long, familiar, yet unfamiliar, their freshness gone from handling—tired looking. Before she opened the master's letter she gave them a tender little pat, as though she felt very sorry for them.

The master's letter told her that her play had much merit and a great deal of promise, but that it was "young". "You must know more of life, my dear young lady; live close to love and close to sorrow and learn life's lessons, before you can portray them. . . . And never lose faith in your work. After failure, try again—and again—and again. . . . Work, work, work, greatness is in effort."

Nancy read the words with a thrill—it was as though he was speaking to her.

Her labor of the last few months should not be in vain; her little play, though it had been a failure, had brought her this golden message from the one who had, through the effort he preached, risen to the very top.

Then the last two paragraphs of the master's letter made her forget everything else.

"I have had constantly in my mind that strange child who played and danced in your garden. She has haunted me. You told me her name was Nonie Hopworth. I have looked up records and have learned that the young student who, 15 years ago, gave such promise of dramatic ability, was Ilona Carr and that she married an Eric Hopworth. This Nonie is without doubt her child.

"Will you ask the child's guardians if they will allow her to come to my school at Tarrytown for a few years? There she will have the best schooling and dramatic training that my teachers can give and her talent will have an opportunity for development and growth. When she is older she shall choose for herself whether or not she will follow the calling."

(To Be Continued Next Week.)

"THEY SAID I HAD T. B. AND WOULD NOT LIVE THREE MONTHS"



Mr. Harold W. Schmidt, Box 98, Breesee, Clinton Co., Ill., believes he has reason to praise Dr. Hartman's Remedy for Catarrhal conditions.

"I used Pe-ru-na eight months for Chronic Bronchitis. I do not get tired, feel like a giant, am six pounds over normal weight and able to work every day. In March, 1918, I contracted a severe cold with spitting and took to my bed. They said I had T. B. and would not live three months. After taking a couple bottles of Pe-ru-na and a box of Man-a-Lin Tablets, I could walk around and in seven months was back to work. My trouble was due to Chronic Catarrh of the nose and throat, which I had ten years, extending down into the bronchial tubes. "Pe-ru-na was my life savior."

"FEEL LIKE A GIANT SINCE USING PE-RU-NA"

TABLETS OR LIQUID

A HALF CENTURY IN USE

SOLD EVERYWHERE

Question of Sex.

It happened on a College avenue car the other morning. Two women were discussing the headline in the morning paper which read "Arbuckle Indicted for Manslaughter." One of the women remarked to the other: "You know, I can't understand how they can arrest him for manslaughter, when a woman was killed."—Indianapolis News.

Only One That Counted.

Tommy had a little brother and a little sister.

One day a neighbor met him going to the market and pleasantly asked: "Are you the only child?"

"Nope," he importantly replied, "but I'm the only one working."

CROPS AND PROFIT

PROBLEMS JUST NOW PRESSING ON AGRICULTURISTS

Farmer on Low-Priced, Fertile Lands, Still to Be Had, is in Best Possible Position.

The economic problems connected with the advantageous marketing of farm crops and the financing of the movement of those crops are pressing upon agriculture most severely. They will be solved, however, and while that solution is being worked out it is simply good sense on the farmer's part to make his efforts toward production tell to the very maximum, as best carrying him through the period of depression and hard times and placing him in the best position to take the greatest possible advantage of the better times to come. We may repeat that the cheapest farm crop, whether from fields or from live stock, is almost invariably the largest crop which can be obtained. Or in other words, the greater the crop, the greater the net profit. To attain such crops and to place himself in the advantageous position referred to above, the farmer must study, and must apply the results of his study to such problems as soil fertility, its conservation and increase; soil moisture, its control; cultural methods, suitable and productive varieties, etc., etc.

The question is how can you best accomplish and secure these things? Can they be done on high-priced lands, by paying high rents, with the prices you get for your produce no greater than may be had from that grown and raised on much cheaper lands, whose production is fully as great as that of the high-priced lands? The answer is unquestionably in favor of the low-priced lands, when they are selected because of their soil fertility and the other requirements necessary. It is not the purpose here to point out merely that the lands of Western Canada would prove a splendid and ready solution, but to emphasize the fact that in order to overcome your present difficulty, to remove some of the burden that you are laboring under, you must secure some line of cheaper operation, whether it be removal to other parts in your own country where such opportunity may offer, or take advantage of that which Western Canada affords.

For information regarding these advantages apply to any Canadian government agent.—Advertisement.

Why Not?

The human fly was scaling the outside of the tall building at a dizzy height and an anxious throng watched in the street.

"What's he doing?" asked an old gentleman.

"He's going to the top of the building," said a bystander.

"Well," asked the old party, "why don't the darned fool take an elevator?"

As Usual.

"What are cold-storage eggs selling for now?" "Strictly fresh, as usual."—Boston Transcript.

WHY THAT BAD BACK?

Does spring find you miserable with an aching back? Do you feel lame, stiff, tired, nervous and depressed? Isn't it time then, you found out why you are unable to enjoy these fine spring days? Likely your kidneys have weakened. Winter is hard on the kidneys. Colds and chills and a heavier diet with less exercise tax them heavily. It's little wonder spring finds you with backache, rheumatic pains, headaches, dizziness and bladder irregularities. But don't be discouraged. Use Doan's Kidney Pills. Doan's have helped thousands and should help you. Ask your neighbor!

A South Dakota Case

Mrs. Ellen Olson, Salem, S. Dak., says: "My kidneys were so disordered and I suffered with my back. There was a steady, dull ache over my kidneys which kept me feeling miserable. My back ached as if it would break. My kidneys acted irregularly so I used Doan's Kidney Pills. Doan's helped me wonderfully, strengthening my kidneys and removing the aches and pains."

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DOAN'S KIDNEY PILLS
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SIoux CITY PTG. CO., NO. 18-1922.

A Fresh Start.

"Jack's married."
"Got through sowing his wild oats, eh?"

"No, he's already started a new crop with his wife's money."—Boston Transcript.



WARNING! Say "Bayer" when you buy Aspirin.

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