

HAPPY HOUSE

By Jane D. Abbott

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"The fairy godmother has bursting in upon the Hopworth come," declared Nancy, later, family with her strange news. She had to read and re-read the letter so that they could understand and Eric Hopworth had to hear all about the afternoon at Happy House when the great Theodore Hoffman had called.

At first he had decidedly opposed the plan. Liz had snorted in disapproval. Nonie had stared at first one, then another, with round, bewildered eyes.

"You ought not to throw away such a chance.

It's a wonderful school—I've visited there. Nonie will have splendid training—"

"I know all about it," Eric Hopworth had broken in, and Nancy suddenly remembered what the master had told her.

"Tell me about Nonie's mother," she begged.

There was not much to tell—she had come into Eric Hopworth's life and gone out again, in a few years.

"I always had a feelin' I'd cheated her of a lot," Eric Hopworth said humbly, turning in his hand the photograph he had brought out from old Dan's bureau to show Nancy.

It was a cheap little photograph, taken a few months after they had been married. But the pretty face that smiled out of it was a happy face. Nancy, as she studied it closely, wondered if it had ever been shadowed by a regret for the dreams she had sacrificed by her marriage.

"Then—don't cheat Nonie now," Nancy answered.

So before she went away it was decided that Nonie should go to Tarrytown and while little Nonie was pinching herself to be sure she was awake and not dreaming, Nancy's and Liz's minds, in true feminine fashion, leaped ahead to the question of "clothes". Upon their perturbed planning came Mrs. Cyrus Eaton, walking into the Hopworth kitchen with the air of one familiar with its threshold.

Too many strange things had happened for Nancy to be amazed at this. And when she saw Mrs. Eaton pat Eric Hopworth's arm as she sat down beside him, Nancy knew that in the woman's heart, all silly prejudices had been swept away by a deep affection for the man who had saved her boy's life.

Mrs. Eaton had to hear all about the master's letter and Nonie's wonderful chance to go to the school at Tarrytown.

"Clothes—land sakes, Liz Hopworth, you've got enough to do without fussing over clothes. Let me get the child ready. I always did want to sew for a girl. Besides, it isn't much for me to do, considering—"

she could not finish, but she laid her hand, again, on Eric Hopworth's arm.

Nancy realized, more than Liz, how much Mrs. Eaton wanted to have this opportunity to do something for Nonie, so she answered quickly, before anyone could make a protest:

"That will be splendid if you will help out that way, Mrs. Eaton," and she made her tone very final, as though they must all consider the matter settled.

Nancy left Mrs. Eaton and Liz fussing over the wearing qualities of various fabrics hitherto absolutely unknown to Nonie and walked slowly homeward. It was a sunny, still afternoon, conducive to meditation. And Nancy, in a pensive mood, had much to meditate over.

A moment's whim had brought her to Happy House and how much had happened because of her coming. How curiously intermixed everything had been; her acquaintance with Judson's hired man had brought her in touch with the great Theodore Hoffman and then he, through her, had found Nonie.

Life was so funny—Nancy suddenly remembered a game she had played when she was very, very small. She had had a box of queer shaped and many colored Japanese blocks, that, if placed together in just the right way, made a beautiful castle upon the highest peak of which she could place a shining red ball. But it had been very difficult to build; Nancy had, often, in impatience, thrown the blocks down, but her father had always come, then, to her help and had laughingly coaxed her to try again.

Life was like that—if one could

successfully fit all the queer edges together and build up, piece by piece one could have the reward of the shining ball at the top. But Nancy, thinking of it now, felt the tugging impatience that she had used to feel toward the pile of colored blocks.

A few weeks had so changed her own life—she must take up the little pieces and begin to build again.

At the gate of Happy House she paused, and turning, looked down the road. In the last few days she had caught herself often looking down that road and yet she would not admit to herself—she was too proud to admit it that she was always wishing that she would see Peter Hyde coming. It was very lonesome at Happy House without him.

Suddenly, in a swirl of dust, a motor turned the corner at the smithy and approached toward her at a tremendous speed, its outline barely distinguishable because of the cloud that enveloped it. No one came up that road unless they were coming to Happy House.

Then someone, swathed in linen and green, floating veiling, spied Nancy and waved wildly from the tonneau.

Scarcely believing her eyes, Nancy took a step forward. With a swerve and a roar the car came to a stop and from the front seat, throwing off goggles and cap, sprang Eugene Leavitt.

"Daddy!" cried Nancy, throwing herself into his arms.

"I thought it was Anne, but I couldn't—"

she began, finally withdrawing from his tight clasp to greet the others. "I just—couldn't believe it."

Anne was standing now beside her, and behind Anne, unwinding yards of dust-covered veiling, laughed Claire.

"Oh, it's too good, good, good to be true," Nancy cried, trying to embrace them both at the same time. "To have you all come—at once. I'm so happy, I just want to cry."

"And, Nancy, at that you're going to meet my brother Barry," interrupted Claire, her eyes sparkling. "You wouldn't come to Merryville, so you see I had to bring him here."

Nancy was so happy that she could even turn to greet the despised "lion" with a radiant smile. Claire's brother, who, forgotten by the others in their joyous reunion, had been busying himself with the engine of his car, now turned and removed from a dust stained face the goggles that had almost completely hidden it.

"Peter. You—" and Nancy, her face crimson, put her two hands behind her back.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Barry.

Nancy presented such a picture of bewilderment and unbelief that the others all laughed—except Peter; his face was very grave.

"You see I thought the only way I could get you—to forgive me—was by bringing them all back with me."

But Nancy had no intention of forgiving—at least, at once—the trick that had been played upon her. She lifted her chin with meaning disdain and turned to the others.

"Let's go up to the house. My aunts will be so glad to see you all," and slipping one hand through her father's arm and another into Anne's she turned up the path, leaving Claire and her brother to follow.

Miss Sabrina had seen the car stop at the gate and had come to the door. She knew at once that this was Nancy's father. A color swept her cheeks and faded. She tried to say some word of welcome but her trembling lips could not frame a single syllable. But almost instantly her fears were set at rest, for Eugene Leavitt took her two hands in his clasp and lightly kissed her cheek in a cheery way that put aside forever the trouble that had separated them.

In the hub-bub and chatter that followed, Nancy did not realize that Peter Hyde had slipped away; not until Aunt Sabrina had carried her father off to Aunt Milly's room and B'lindy, radiant, had gone back to the kitchen to prepare a supper "fit for folks," leaving the three chums together. Claire

gave her friend an affectionate shake.

"Now, Nancy Leavitt, don't be silly and stay cross at Barry. It's my fault. I knew he was here and that you were here, and that he knew you and you knew him, and neither of you—"

"Please, please Claire," begged Nancy, trying to stop her friend. Her face turned scarlet. Of course she could not be offended at his deception, had she not, herself, been masquerading? But burning in her mind was the recollection of that afternoon when she had opened her heart to Peter and had told him how she despised Barry Wallace and his kind. And he had let her talk—she could not forgive that, ever.

"After you'd been here a few weeks," Claire went on, "Barry wrote to me. I suppose he'd gotten to the point where he simply had to confide in someone. You can imagine, I nearly dropped when I saw the postmark and knew what he was doing, but picture how I felt when he wrote that he'd met the 'best girl ever'—no frills and fropperies like mother's crowd, but a regular girl." Of course I knew he meant you. I let him write a few more letters—I don't think Barry ever wrote so often to me before—and then, I told him everything."

"You did?" exclaimed Nancy. "Then—" she stopped short. Now she understood why he had refused to accept her answer as final—that last evening they had been together.

"And I made him promise on his honor not to tell you that I had told. So don't be cross at him," Claire pleaded, a little worried at Nancy's expression. "He has gone back to Judson's and he said—he asked me to ask you if you would go out to Bird's Nest—after supper—and—"

Claire, failing in words, threw her arms around Nancy's neck and kissed her. Anne, who had been impatiently waiting for an opportunity, took up her part of the story.

"Goodness, Nancy, you can be thankful you've been up here and not at the apartment—it's unbearably stuffy and hot. Although it ought to have seemed like paradise after my quarters in London, snapping her lips together. Poor Anne, her dream of service was now only a bitter recollection. "I was sitting there as forlorn as could be when in blew—no other word could describe it—Claire's brother. You wouldn't have dreamed from the way he acted that he'd never laid eyes on me before. He told me about the confession you'd written him and he said he knew you were unhappy up here because of your false position and that I ought to come back up here with him and get you out of it. He didn't want me to lose a moment. Then, while we were talking, your letter came with its astonishing news. Isn't it all like some nightmare—all the aunts and things mixed up the way they were? We had to read your letter over and over to understand it. Then when we finally got it through our heads, we decided we'd get Claire and start the next day for North Hero."

"But Dad?" asked Nancy.

"We were all ready to go when a taxi drove up to the door and out jumped your father. Of course he had to hear the whole story way back to the letter Noah brought to our room. Barry didn't give him a chance to even wash his face, he bundled him straight into the automobile as though it were a matter of life and death. And here we are. And this place looks like Heaven," Anne finished.

It was a merry party that gathered around Miss Sabrina's table. B'lindy wanting to express all that was in her heart, had spread a supper fit for the gods. Nancy's father had carried Miss Milly downstairs and sat between her and Nancy. Every now and then Nancy slipped her hand into his, under the tablecloth. Miss Sabrina, at the head of the table, beamed down upon them all in a pathetic ecstasy of happiness. From the kitchen came the insistent "goo's" of the smallest Hopworth, to the accompaniment of a silver spoon beating against a silver mug.

Through all the light chatter in the room there was an undertone of deep happiness and contentment. Only occasionally Claire's eyes flashed a worried, pleading message to Nancy that Nancy wilfully ignored. But when, after supper, the others all went to the Hollyhock porch and Nancy slipped away, the watchful Claire drew a sigh of relief and proceeded to feel riotously happy.

As Nancy walked slowly down

the path to the orchard she felt her heart grow inexplicably, foolishly light. She was so glad that Peter Hyde had come back.

The gladness shone in her eyes as she let him clasp her two hands. He did not even ask her if she would forgive him; they both laughed joyously, like two children.

"Wasn't it funny? Both of us up here pretending to be someone else."

"But it wasn't fair. You knew—and I didn't."

Peter hastened to defend himself. "I didn't—at first. And then Claire made me promise not to let on that I knew. Anyway, I'd grown so downright sick of that Barry Wallace that I wanted to just see if I could make someone like plain Peter Hyde. Did I?" he asked.

Nancy ignored the direct question and avoided the pleading in Peter's eyes.

"Why did you come here, Peter—Barry?"

"I wonder if you will understand, Nancy?" Peter's voice was serious. "Mother thought I was crazy and Claire would have, too—at the time. But when I heard you tell—that afternoon—what you thought of Claire's brother, I decided I'd done just about the right thing. You see, when I came back from the other side, just because father and mother are quite prominent, I found that a lot of stuff had been printed about all the things I'd done—"

"But you did do them," cried Nancy, warmly.

(To be continued next week.)

"The railroads have been slowly starving," said J. H. Beek, of the National Industrial Traffic League, at the traffic gathering in Sioux City. Reports of net income of the railroads for the last five years do not tell the same story. It is not "starvation" that hurts the railroads. It is manipulation by financiers. The railroads' troubles are rooted in mismanagement and wrecking in past years, not in "vindictive legislation." They are trying to make the government shoulder the sins of the Harrimans and the Goulds.

Does mind control matter? Yes, also life and death. You need read no book on faith healing to prove it. In Berlin Mr. Kobler disliked a merchant, ill from consumption. Daily Mr. Kobler called up the unfortunate man to ask "have you still got your lung?" Or to suggest "you had better hang yourself, you will fall anyway before you die." The victim died prematurely.

Millions of fathers and mothers, constantly putting into the minds of children thoughts of fear, disease, etc., thus diminish their mental powers of resistance.

It is possible to protect children without frightening them. This is not written by a Christian Scientist but by one who believes in worldly science. You can use science to combat disease without frightening the patient to death while using it.

The French are agitated because the "European balance of power has been upset." Upset is putting it mildly. Against a little more than 100,000,000 inhabitants of England, Italy and France are now arrayed 200,000,000 of Germans and Russians, to say nothing of the Turks and the possibility of other hundreds of millions farther east.

The European balance is a delicate thing, to be established only by a common sense determination to work and build, instead of fighting and tearing down.

An Italian paper alleges that Germany and Russia already have an agreement as to foreign policy with the new Turkish government at Angora. That was inevitable. It will interest Rumania, nestling close to bolshevism and other Balkan states. Also the big allies. Countries like Germany, Russia and Turkey with not much to lose except their debts, may try dangerous things.

Just The Place.
From the New York Sun.

Madge—I'd call on one of my friends only I'm coughing and sneezing all the time.
Marjorie—In that case, my dear, why don't you go to the theater?

Where It Was Needed.
From London Answers.

Willie was being measured for his first made-to-order suit of clothes.
"Do you want your shoulders padded, my little man?" inquired the tailor.
"No," said Willie significantly; "pad the trousers!"

That's Different.
From the Boston Transcript.

"Folks all well this morning, Johnny?" asked a friend of the family.
"Yes'm."
"Glad to hear it. The last time I heard from your father was suffering from rheumatic gout and your mother had neuralgia."
"Oh, yes, they've still got 'em. I thought you meant was any of us sick."

A Passing Acquaintance.
From Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph.

They had just been introduced in the smoking room of the club.
"Do you know, colonel," said the major, "I cannot help thinking I have met you before?"
"And strangely enough sir, I have a similar feeling with regard to you."
"Were you at the storming of Flare-upatum?"
"I was, major."
"And were you present at the time the fort exploded and blew up the entire place?"
"I had that honor!"
"Then I know where I have seen you before. I passed you as you were going up and I was coming down."

HOW TWO WOMEN ESCAPED OPERATIONS

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St. Joseph, Missouri.—"Both of my sides swelled and hurt me so that I could not move or do any of my work. There was heavy pressure and pains through my lower organs and the doctor told me to try Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound for these troubles. He said I had this one chance, and if the Vegetable Compound did not help me nothing but an operation would. After taking several bottles I felt it was helping me and now I am able to do my own work. If my testimonial will help others I shall be glad for them to read it and hope your Vegetable Compound will do them as much good as it did me."—Mrs. Wm. LOCKMAN, 513 N. 4th St., St. Joseph, Mo.

White Plains, N. Y.—"I had such a pain that I could hardly walk and the doctor said that I needed an operation. I was sick for a year before I started taking your medicine and I could not work. I saw your advertisement in a little book and that is how I came to take Lydia E. Pinkham's medicine. I have been taking the Vegetable Compound and Lydia E.

Pinkham's Blood Medicine, also Lydia E. Pinkham's Liver Pills and used Lydia E. Pinkham's Sanative Wash and the capsules and prescription recommended. I am doing all my work and have gained twenty pounds. I am taking the medicines still, but I feel fine. You have my permission to use this letter for the good of others."—Mrs. MARY MARK, 37 Hamilton Ave., White Plains, N. Y.

Some female troubles may through neglect reach a stage when an operation is necessary. But most of the commoner ailments are not the surgical ones; they are not caused by serious displacements, tumors, or growths, although the symptoms may appear the same.

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Lydia E. Pinkham's Private Text-Book upon "Ailments Peculiar to Women" will be sent you free upon request. Write to the Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Massachusetts. This book contains valuable information.

Gent of the Old School.

Gipsies apparently do not take much stock in the newer feminist theories. A swarthy nomad and his gaily-dressed wife came into a cigar store on Cadillac square. He bought some good cigars for himself and a package of pipe tobacco for her. She demonstrated with him in gipsy language about something, turned her back to him and started for the door. His face clouded with anger, he raised his large foot and administered a lusty kick that was forceful enough to She made no protest and they walked away together.—Detroit News.

One of the First.

The auto salesman, after a great deal of hesitancy, had agreed to take the old car in part payment for the new.

"What is the number of the motor?" he asked.

The owner poked his head down on the bonnet a moment and then bobbed up again. "Eighteen sixty-three," he answered.

"I asked," said the salesman, "the number of the motor, not the date of manufacture."—New York Sun.

Changing Color Scheme.

"Father, are all bolsheviks red?"
"No, my boy; some of them are pretty blue."—Der Brummer (Berlin).

Some men try to do others they are dunned by.



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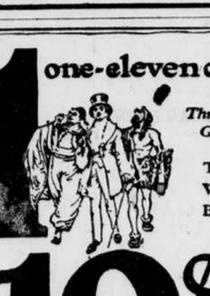
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