tidy; the writing table was in glorious confusion; the "household" corner seemed just a collection of kerosene boxes turning their backs on the world.

Betty stood in the middle of the room, looking radiant, glowing eyes, scarlet lips and cheeks. She was in evening costume, or, to be correct, she wore an evening blouse Dot had sent to her eighteen months before—a white silk one, with white lace and soft ruchings upon it—and a dark walking skirt.

"Isn't it a splendid room!" she said. "Right up at the top of the house, away from everyone! Look at my floor, isn't it pretty?"

"Um," said Cyril—"only paint."

Betty's face fell a little, just a little. She was brave and bright, but a word or two in praise of her house and new life would have filled her heart to overflowing.

Then her eyes opened widely.

"Where did you get your coat?" she asked.

"I borrowed another fellows—Chalmers'. It fits alright, doesn't it?"

"Yes," said Betty slowly, and added, "I wish though you had your own."

Cyril strutted across the room.

"Where's your glass?" he inquired.

"In the bathroom," said Betty; "but you don't want it. I never saw you look so nice in your life."

She spoke in all sincerity.

She turned out the gas, and they went downstairs. Mrs Thornton came out of her sitting-room, and was introduced to the good looking youth by his proud sister.

And after they had left her and slammed the front door she went to her balcony to watch them go up the street.

How young they were! All life seemed to open up beneath their feet! How blithe, how bonnie they looked!

The best of the earth was theirs—all possibilities were their own, she thought.

But—how poor, how undisguisedly poor!

They took the tram to Elizabeth Bay, and Betty smuggled into Cyril's hand the money for their fares.

They had a short walk when they got out, and a little difficulty in finding the house, but at last they stood before it—a many-windowed, brilliantly lighted mansion.

Quite a stream of people from carriages was entering the front door.

"I daren't go in," said Betty, and pressed her hand suddenly to her heart.

Cyril was nervous too.

"Let's go back," he said; "it's an awfully silly game. Let's go back."

Then his twin perceived he needed some of that courage she had so frequently to instil.

She laughed.

"One to be ready, two to be steady, three to be off and away," she said, and marched in the doorway in the wake of a portly lady, and Cyril had perforce to follow.

A white-capped maid led her to the dressing-room, and looking over her shoulder she beheld the nervous Cyril following other swallow-tails in an opposite direction.

They met again in the hall, and before they could consider whither to direct their steps, a stately man servant met them, indicated that they were to follow him, and near the doorway of a handsome room, inclined his ear to Betty's mouth. She coughed, but he did not move; so she coughed again; he still waited.

Then book knowledge came to her rescue, and crimsoning to the tips of her ears, she said—

"Miss Bruce."

The next moment the sound of her name seemed to fill space. From every corner of the room came back the echo of the man's loud announcement—"Miss Bruce!"

Then "Mi Bruce!" even louder.

And the two white young things glided into that, to them, most dreadful room.

A lady with very kind but puzzled eyes took Betty's hand.

"So very pleased," she murmured. Still she seemed to be waiting—like all the rest of the world.

"For the 'Sydney Times,'" said Betty, and pathos was in her eyes.

"Oh," said the lady. "Oh, I was looking for Mrs Swanson."

"I am Mrs Swanson," said the girl. "I—I mean, I and my brother are instead of her."

"I see. I am very glad to meet you. Do find a comfortable seat. A lovely night, is it not?"

"Sir James and Lady McIntosh," shouted the servant, and an ancient looking couple followed the boy and girl into the room.

"Everyone's looking at us," said Cyril.

"Let them!" said Betty defiantly.

"Let's get out of that verandah door, and cut home," said Cyril as they reached a side of the room.

"I won't," said Betty. "Imagine we're war correspondents and have just got to the front. We wouldn't run away again as soon as we saw smoke. Isn't this a beautiful window seat? Lean back and imagine you're a judge, and I'm your old maiden sister."

But Cyril was far too wretched to allow his imagination to play.

He sat down next to Betty, and tugged at his upper lip, which was as guiltless of any signs of moustache as Betty's own.

"It's all very well for you," he said, "but I hate being stared at. My coat doesn't fit on the shoulder, and I'm the only fellow not in proper evening dress."

"Look at that pretty girl over there," said Betty; "isn't she a picture! I wonder who she is? Her name is Pearl.

"Let's get out on the verandah," whispered Cyril.

"Don't be so silly," said Betty. "It would be a great deal worse coming in again. I was getting on very well as your Worship's sister. Oh, for goodness sake, let us forget who we are for a little while. Here's Mrs. Robertson. I believe she is coming to us. I've got to notice what her dress is, etc."

Cyril broke into a cold perspiration, stood up, and precipitately fled through the open door to the verandah.

And Betty sat on alone. She watched her hostess' progress down the room, admiring intensely her easy, graceful carriage and simple manners.

But Mrs. Duncan Robertson was far too busy to notice the lonely girl in the window seat.

Music struck up in the next room, and she, with three or four other ladies, moved there, presumably to listen.

Cyril did not come back—he absolutely lacked the courage, and Betty felt it incumbent on her to leave her sheltered seat.

"In the interests of my letter," she told herself, "I must try and find out who is who."

So she went round on the edge of the crowd as it were. She lingered in the doorway of the music-room; she got lost in a little crowd in the hall, and she noted the floral decorations of the drawing-room.

Then, crossing the hall again, to return to the reception-room, she came upon Cyril hiding, in misery, behind a pillar in the hall.

"Betty!" he whispered. She saw his face.

"We'll go if you like!" she said.

"Oh!" he said gratefully. "Come on."

So they sought each their respective cloak-room. They had been there, in all, perhaps an hour and a-half, and no one in all that happy seeming throng had given them a kindly smile or word.

They had been as unnoticed as the flies on the high-art ceilings.

Betty saw happy girls under their mothers' wings—gay mothers, proud mothers. And for some reason her heart was stirred.

Everyone seemed to know everyone else. Only no one had even a half-smile for Betty or Cyril.

As they left the hall, to step into the night, a singer's passionate voice was pleading:—

"Oro pro nobis. Ora pro nobis!"

And a great wave of emotion passed over sensitive Betty, to whom few beautiful songs ever came. The house, the lights, the beautiful dresses, and jewellery, and the song, all played upon feelings she knew not that she possessed.

She caught Cyril's arm.

"How beautiful!" she said.

"What?" asked Cyril.

"Something—somewhere. I—I don't know what." She looke dat the stars, and they walked on down the quiet street.

"I never felt such a stuffed monkey in my life," said Cyril.

"Let us take an omnibus," said Betty wearily. "Let us get home."

She was too young to analyse her feelings, but as they stepped into the omnibus she said wistfully to Cyril:—

"Now I know what it is to feel an outcast. Don't you?"

(To be Continued.)