

David called in the evening, little Molly ran to me calling:

"It's your Aunt Kias, Daisy!" She was so innocent about it that I couldn't scold her, and I was too proud to tell my other cousins how repulsive such a name was to me when applied to David.

However, I was very glad to see him again, in spite of all the talk that had gone on, which had left me the feeling of having my spirit stripped naked, because it's awful not to have any privacy for your thoughts. I soon forgot all about the unpleasant things that had happened and felt freer with David than I ever had before. But as he said, "Finding one of one's own intellectual kindred in a city like New York gives one a rare sense of fellowship." So with Pauline and Uncle Solon and Aunt Matilda in the end of the flat I had a feeling of tranquillity that I never expected to have after David's first call. The place was quiet, and altogether there was an aspect about it that made David say, "How restful it is to be with you, Daisy!" I gave myself up to the charm of being with someone I understood and that understood me. I remember we were talking about how long we had known each other and how this meeting had caused our friendship to flower, when the door bell rang. The little burr of the electric bell sounding far off, made my heart feel queer. David, not knowing the sounds of the flat as I did, went right on talking, but I could hardly answer him. I heard someone asking in New York tones if Miss Shoemaker was in. Then it flashed over me that it was Thursday night and it was Will Mason come to call on Pauline!

surprise I saw David staring at Pauline as if he thought she was extremely good looking. I am the least jealous person in the world, but I felt surprised that anyone of Pauline's type should appeal to him. I would be the first one to deny that Pauline isn't a very pretty girl—but under the bloom of her youth she is just as hard as an iron sauceman. There isn't a gleam of sympathy about her. I don't mean this in criticism any more than if I said her eyes were large and blue, which they are. Pauline had no intention of keeping the conversation general. Very soon she and Mr. Mason were chaffing each other along, each one handing out more slang, every minute, just as if we weren't in the room at all. The talking with David was for me like walking in a ploughed field. We have always talked of Real Things, and simply hadn't any small talk whatever to fall back on; so for the first time in my life I respected small talk and realized its value.

I would have given ten years of my life to have been able to chat along as Pauline did. To tell the truth, we both got more self-conscious every moment until our conversation sounded more like conversation in a German grammar than anything else. Beside that, the light fell upon Pauline and made her look to her best advantage, and David's glance kept falling on her in an absent-minded way.

Just as things began to get a little better I heard Aunt Matilda and Uncle Solon going to bed. For some reason I felt awfully embarrassed. Pauline didn't

much—for a man you've met for the first time.

"Why, yes," I replied coldly. "Don't you?"

"No," he answered, "I don't. He's too smooth and too glib. He's not the kind of fellow I'd want hanging around my sister. You can't tell what that sort of man is like under his veneer of good fellowship."

Now there's nothing I hate more than injustice and suspicion unless it's jealousy, and I saw right away that David's dislike of Mr. Mason was founded on this unworthy emotion. I had no idea before that he had such things in his disposition.

"I notice," I said, "that it didn't prevent your accepting his hospitality."

"No," he answered gloomily, "I didn't know how to get out of it."

"You can be sure," said I, pretty exasperated by this time, "he would have known how to get out of accepting yours."

"Oh, he, he'd know how to get out of anything."

I said something sharp in answer but David only replied with a queer note of pathos.

"I don't know how to do things like that, and neither do you, Daisy." I felt softened toward him, when he spoiled it all by saying: "I'm sorry a nice girl like your cousin does."

Well, I suppose we got very near a quarrel, for David didn't make me feel any pleasanter by saying that Pauline was "so natural and so full of the joy of life." I wanted to answer, "So is a cat," but refrained for fear of being misunder-

brow like you, but I can settle this faculty a lot better than if I were. I'll fix 'em so you won't see one of 'em."

"Well," asked Bob, "what you goin' to do about me, Daisy? You needn't say to me, 'It's the real fun for yours,' because two of the fellers are coming down tomorrow night. They're coming from awfully far."

"Your Uncle Solon and I," Aunt Matilda suggested, "can just sit in our own room, and you needn't be afraid, my dear, that we will make a sound. I have had to do it for Pauline more than once."

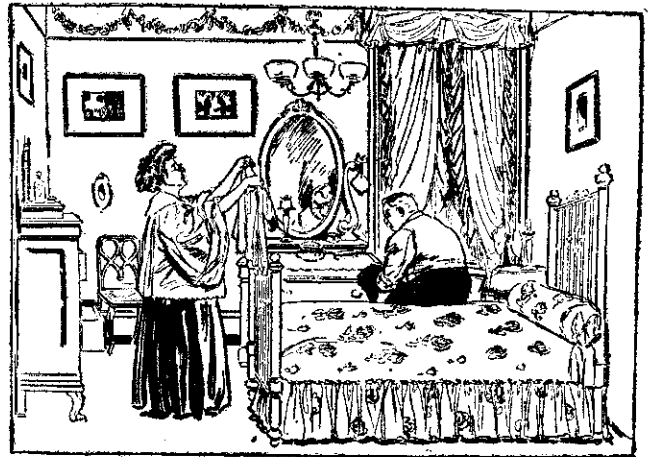
I said nothing, but I saw that Pauline would have to sit in there, too, with Bob and his friends in the dining-room, and the children in the bedroom.

Still, by that time I had gotten so I wanted to see David awfully, and I was glad enough to have him come even under those unfavourable circumstances. I think David had wanted to see me, too, for there was a different expression in his face from any I had ever seen, and as soon as he came in he said in a voice that seemed to me loud,

"Oh, Daisy, I can't tell you how I have been looking forward to to-night! Seeing you has brought me back to myself! I did not know how far away I had been drifting from what's real."

Some way I wished he had not said it just that way. I knew Pauline couldn't help hearing everything, so I answered in a very low tone. He did not take the hint and it seemed to me that he fairly yelled.

"It's strange how the isolation of a great city throws people together."



"Just then there came a pause in the conversation, and I heard Aunt Matilda's voice saying with awful distinctness, 'I don't believe your last year's flannels are warm enough, father! Seems to me they washed awful thin last year!'"

I could hear him taking his things off in the hall, and the maid telling him to go in and be seated. I am sorry to say that both David and I were provincial enough to let a silence fall on us and it made me feel angry at David. It's a man's place to help one out in an uncomfortable situation. I was so cross at David that I couldn't gather my wits about me to break the awful silence—you know that silence creeps about you sometimes when you feel as if you had been doing something wrong. After a long time something made me glance at Will, Mr. Mason I suppose I ought to call him. As I peeped up he was looking at me and there passed between us one of those looks that sometimes you can't help giving to strangers, a quick glance of comprehension which made me feel more uncomfortable and more angry at David, and also made me wonder if I ought to bow to Mr. Mason and speak, even though he hadn't been introduced, and altogether I felt like a little country jay; and in the bottom of my heart I had a funny little triumphant feeling.

I knew just as well as anything that Will Mason would like me whether I was a country jay or not, and perhaps all the better because I was. There! I can't tell how long we three sat there without speaking, and while we sat there it flashed through my mind that I ought to have known Will Mason was coming, because Pauline was all dressed up. I kept getting angrier at David and angry at myself, because I couldn't help looking sideways at Will Mason sitting perfectly self-possessioned in his chair waiting, I knew, for me to look at him. After an age Pauline appeared, and in a moment more we were all introduced; then to my

appear to notice and chatted on as if we weren't sitting talking like two stone bottles on one hand, and her mother going to bed on the other. Just then there came a pause in the conversation, and I heard Aunt Matilda's voice saying with awful distinctness:

"I don't believe your last year's flannels are warm enough, Father! Seems to me they washed awful thin last year."

If I'd had anything to say this would have taken it from my mouth, but Pauline was quite equal to the occasion. She rose to her feet and said,

"Let's all go out and make a rarebit," but Mr. Mason proposed we all go out with him and get a lobster, and, as if he hadn't heard Aunt Matilda going to bed, asked if Mrs. Shoemaker wouldn't go with us. He came over and began talking to us so we wouldn't hear Pauline talking in the other room. For the first time in my life I realized what the meaning of *savoir faire* was.

Of course, Aunt Matilda couldn't go, so Bob was fished out of the cellar, where he was talking with the janitor, to go as chaperon in her place. By some chance I found myself walking with Mr. Mason, while Bob and David and Pauline walked on ahead a few steps. I found Mr. Mason surprisingly easy to talk to. I wanted awfully to tell him that he seemed to me like a nice, frank boy with a lot of tact, but of course I couldn't. We had a very good time, except that David's conversation died as soon as we were all together.

On the way home David walked with me, and he surprised and pained me by saying right away,

"You seem to like Mr. Mason very

stood. So by the time we said good-night I felt perfectly wretched. David and Mr. Mason walked off together, and as we climbed the stairs (the elevator had just stopped), Bob said,

"Look out for storms, Daisy, you've made a bit with Pauline's best young man," which vulgar word sent me to bed still more unhappy. Why couldn't I have a pleasant time with Mr. Mason without Bob's saying such things, and why need Pauline mind? I went to bed feeling that I had offended everybody, and that David would never come to see me again, and that I didn't much care if he didn't, which made things awfully desolate.

You see how soon that miserable flat had made trouble between old and dear friends. That Pauline put it gently to me that she would see I had an evening all to myself if I would see she had an evening clear, only made me furious.

"Well, you'll never have any fun if you're as stuffy as that," Pauline told me.

"I don't want any," said I, but I did want fun and companionship—and everything just like any girl, and wished awfully that I didn't have something in me that wouldn't let me accept Pauline's suggestion, but I just couldn't, it seemed so awfully cold-blooded to arrange like that to be alone with David.

So I have to confess that I was glad enough when Pauline took matters in her own hands. She happened to be at home one afternoon when David came to call on me, and told him that she thought I would be there the next evening.

"And I can tell you one thing, Daisy dear," said she, "I may not be a high-

"Yes, isn't it?" said I, rather nervously. "What's that book you have in your hand?"

"It's a play of Yeats that I brought to read. It's got some beautiful passages—"

"What's the matter, Daisy," he broke off. "You don't seem yourself. Are you nervous?"

An awful desire to laugh came over me. Not myself! I would like to know what girl would feel herself when her Uncle Solon and Aunt Matilda were separated from her by only the thinnest kind of folding doors and a grating over them, and besides that, her cousin Pauline. I grew hot all over, for I could just see Pauline's puffs shaking at the things David was saying. I cannot explain it, but I felt as if I was Pauline myself, and the things David said sounded silly to me, and yet they were just the sort of things I always liked to talk about.

"I'm all right," I answered, "I'm just a little tired. It would rest me to hear you read." For anything, I felt, would be better than having them listen to David's tender speeches.

"Have I done anything you don't like, Daisy," he asked, "You seem so different some way."

"Oh no, of course you haven't, David," I answered rather shortly. "Do read, please."

"Poor little girl," said David, "this big city has gotten on your nerves."

He began to read and soon looked up to me for appreciation, but I had not heard what he said; I was listening to some stealthy noises in the other room, followed by two little thuds. I knew what it was; it was Uncle Solon removing his shoes with great care, and I don't