

been so successful in business, that we have been able to buy a little house of our own, with a piece of land to it. My son is a soldier, and your foster-sister is very happily married. Very well, then, you see we have no need of anything for ourselves, but if a few hundred francs will be of any use to you, we will have much pleasure in lending them to you for as long as you like, without any interest. If you will accept the loan, you will gratify very deeply several people who love you, although they only know you through hearing of you from me. My husband himself says:—'She ought to come here to us, Justine. She could live with us as long as ever she liked, and if she is a good walker we would show her our glorious mountains. If she liked, she could be our village schoolmistress. It would be better for her, surely, than being at the beck and call of some proud old marquise. Write, and tell her so, Justine.'

"So, *chère mademoiselle*, I am writing, not only because a good wife ought to do as her husband tells her, but because I also am very anxious that you should come. We have a little room in our house which no one uses, and which we will keep for you, and wild but beautiful scenery to show you. You will not be afraid of our mountains, you, who used to climb everywhere, when you were quite a little girl, so that your papa called you his little *chamois*.'

"If you are not happy where you are, remember that our little home is always open to you, and that we pray the good God every night and morning to bring you here to us, where you may be so safe and so happy."

Damaris responded gratefully and affectionately; and after thanking the good woman and explaining her situation to her, concluded her letter with the following assurance:—

"I will not cease to hope that some time before very long I may come to you for a short visit. I should dearly like to occupy the little chamber of which you tell me, to become acquainted with the beautiful mountainous district in which your home is situated, and to explore the scenes amidst which my mother's and my grandmother's happy girlhood were passed. If ever I have a fortnight to spare, I promise you, my dear Justine, that it shall be spent as you so kindly suggest. Commend me to your good husband, and with many loving recollections of your past and present kindness, Believe me always

"Your grateful foster-child,
"DAMARIS HARTLEY."

(To be continued.)



MY SISTER'S WEDDING, AND HOW WE ORGANISED IT.

MY DEAR KATIE,—

The great event to which we have all been looking forward so long, our dear Gertrude's wedding, is really over, and become a thing of the past.

I have taken a few days to rest, for I can assure you we were all tired out, and now begin to give you the promised full, true, and particular account of the whole affair, hoping you may be able to glean a few ideas for your own approaching marriage.

First, I must say a word about the trousseau. You know we have been busy over it for weeks, as we made nearly everything at home, only buying a very few articles so as to ensure having good patterns for our own work. Although her outfit included a large dress-box, as the honeymoons are now so short Gertrude did not require much luggage; so she only took with her the large portmanteau papa had bought for her, and a fitted travelling-bag, which was one of the presents.

Mamma has quite a superstitious dread of having the linen marked with the married name before the ceremony is really performed; so Gertrude's clothes, with the exception of what she required on her journey, and which she took unmarked, are all left here, and we shall mark them and send them to their dear little house before their return.

Although it is the usual custom in England for the bridegroom to provide the house-linen, mamma gave it in this instance, and I have heard of several cases lately in which it has been provided by the bride's mother. Mamma always says she thinks it is so unfair for the whole expense of furnishing to fall on the husband that she shall always relieve him of that part of it whenever any of her girls are married. Mamma would not have that marked either, but the marking and sending of it all off to the house will be something to occupy our minds in the vapid state one gets into after an excitement.

The six bridesmaids were dressed precisely alike, and according to the present fashion, in reasonable dresses that will be useful afterwards, instead of the full-dress half evening costumes which used to be worn. All those who lived within reach had their dresses made by our own dressmaker, but two friends of Gertrude's, who live too far off, had to get theirs done at their own homes. We bought all the materials and trimmings for them, and sent them a coloured plate with full and minute directions as to the make, and the result was almost identical with our own dresses; but generally speaking it is less trouble for one dressmaker to make them all, and I advise you if you have any bridesmaids from a distance, to let your dressmaker send to them for the measurements she requires, and make them all herself. She can be at your house to try them on, and make any necessary alterations, when they arrive, the night before the wedding.

The invitation cards were very pretty; a pale blue ground, with quaint Japanese figures in silver all round, and a monogram, and the words:

"Mr. and Mrs. Bruno request the pleasure of—'s company on Thursday, Sept 8th, at St. John's Church at 11.15, and to breakfast at their house afterwards, on the occasion of the marriage of their daughter, Gertrude, with Mr. Arthur Nicholson. "R.S.V.P."

"Elm House, Ledbury."

Arthur Nicholson, the bridegroom, gave us each (the bridesmaids, I mean) a splendidly painted fan for a remembrance. He had them sent up to the house early in the morning, and of course we wore them at the ceremony. His present to Gertrude, a most lovely

suite of pearls, he presented himself the evening before. We were quite a large party that night, with a house full of friends and relations from a distance; so we got up a little dance, and were as merry as possible. We found it necessary to keep our spirits up by artificial means, even when there was so much excitement, for the prospect of parting altogether with a daughter and sister was a very trying one to us. Arthur was in the highest possible spirits, as well he might be, seeing that next day he was going to marry the very nicest girl in the world. Before he left we had to make a few final arrangements with him and his best man, as of course after his departure we knew we should not see him again till we met at the church.

Gertrude had always had such an idea of being married in the afternoon, as is now becoming fashionable, but as the necessary special license would be so expensive, she did not say anything about it, though I believe if she had given the slightest hint of her wish, Arthur would have procured the license at once, he is such a devoted lover.

We were up betimes on the eventful morning, had an early breakfast, and began to dress, I should think, an hour before we were to start. No one would believe what a long time it takes to put on a simple light silk (or satin in the one case) dress—would they? We were all perfectly ready a few minutes before it was time to start, and found Uncle John standing in the hall; he was our master of the ceremonies, you know; so he stood there, paper in hand, telling us who was to go in which carriage, and he looked after us so carefully we had not a chance of going wrong.

There was our own carriage, and Mr. Nicholson's, senior, and Uncle John's, and three more which we hired. The carriages first all, went taking guests from our house to the church, and then came back for the bridesmaids, who in the meantime had all assembled here.

The ceremony was fixed for a quarter past eleven, and by ten minutes past we bridesmaids were all at the church-door, and stood just inside the porch, three on each side, for about ten minutes, waiting till our own carriage drove up with papa and Gertrude. He had brought mamma previously, and gone back for Gertrude.

As she walked up the aisle on papa's arm we arranged ourselves after her, I, as chief bridesmaid, being in the first couple; Arthur and his groomsmen were already in their places. We all thought the fashion of having only one groomsmen a great improvement, as it makes less crowding and confusion.

My small duties of taking off Gertrude's glove and holding her bouquet were performed in a very creditable manner; the former task was not as difficult as it sometimes is, as I fortunately remembered in time to see that her left hand glove was not at all tight, and so easy to take off.

The service being cut as short as possible, we soon trooped off to the vestry to witness the signing of the register, and then we felt she was indeed married.

The newly made husband and wife walked radiantly down the aisle, and drove off home, the bridesmaids followed; and then the guests who had been invited to the breakfast followed as fast as their carriages could take them, Uncle John remaining till the last, in order to see that everyone was properly looked after.

Arthur and Gertrude stood in the drawing-room to receive everyone as they arrived from church, and everyone passed on into the library to look at the presents which were displayed there. Some people do not like this usage, but I think it rather nice; at any rate you will find it a great comfort to have something to fill up the inevitable time of waiting till all the guests are assembled and breakfast

is served. We did not, however, attach the names of the donors.

At one o'clock breakfast was announced, and the head waiter stood at the door calling out the names of each couple as they were to go in to breakfast, beginning of course with the bride and bridegroom. The names were arranged on his plan in the order in which they were to sit at table, so there was no confusion in getting to their seats. A waiter at the table had a duplicate plan, so he pointed out their seats as they entered the room. I need hardly remind you that the only way to avoid great confusion is for your M.C. to have all these matters carefully planned out beforehand.

As we had not a number of groomsmen, according to the old-fashioned arrangement, equal to that of bridesmaids, we six were taken into breakfast immediately after the bride and bridegroom, by gentlemen apportioned to us like the other guests.

Our rooms, as you know, are not very large, and we thought at first we should have to hire rooms at a hotel, and this would have had the advantage of not upsetting our house so much, but in the end mamma thought it would be more comfortable to have the breakfast at home—so we had it in the conservatory. It was rather warm certainly, but it looked so pretty. The plants were arranged so that Arthur and Gertrude sat in a sort of bower of ferns, with the tall tree ferns at the back, and the different plants and creepers all about made a very pretty setting to the bright dresses and gay and glittering table.

All down the centre of the table was a strip of white satin, bordered with maidenhair and white flowers; the cake was much decorated with flowers and maidenhair, and each guest had a small bouquet of the same, the ladies' all white, the gentlemen's having a faint colour, such as a pink rosebud, so that altogether the table looked very lovely.

We had the whole breakfast sent in from a confectioner's, it saves such an immense amount of trouble and thought, and really does not cost very much more in the end than if one did it in the house—at least so mamma says—when you consider all the extra help you have to employ, and the wastefulness and carelessness of hired professional cooks. We had hot soup handed first; though all the other dishes were ready at the table, like at a supper, till it was time for the ices, which of course had to be handed.

After Gertrude had with superhuman strength, and the assistance of Arthur's right arm, plunged a knife into the cake, and it had been carried to the side, cut, and pieces handed by the waiters, came the toasts, which were restricted to "the bride and bridegroom," proposed by Mr. Richardson, as our oldest friend, and replied to by the bridegroom; then "the parents," proposed by another of papa's friends, and lastly "the bridesmaids," proposed by a friend of Arthur's, and responded to by the best man.

Gertrude then rose, which was the signal for the guests to move back into the drawing-room. I, with a favoured friend or two, went up with Gertrude to change her dress. It was time for them to start as soon as she was ready, for of course they had fixed upon a train as soon as possible after breakfast. Arthur's best man drove off first to the station with the luggage, and soon the illustrious couple followed, being very mercifully treated in the matter of rice and slippers.

All the guests, except those staying in the house, left very soon after, and all of us were glad to go and remove some of our finery for a time, and have a good rest.

The party went off very well in the evening, and just after we sat down to supper we received a telegram from Arthur, announcing their arrival at their destination.

Next day we were busy getting the house in order again, and in "speeding the parting guests;" so it was not till the following day that we were able to begin sending off the cake to all our friends. You would see from the portion you received that we had bought square boxes, large enough to hold a nice little piece of cake. Those wedge-shaped boxes are absurd, for that is the one shape in which wedding-cake is never cut. In each box we enclosed the card bearing the name of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Nicholson, with their future address, and written at the top, "At home every Thursday afternoon during October."

The smaller cake, which was on the other one, Gertrude is to have; it is to be sent to the house with the other things, for her to dispense at afternoon tea to those who pay wedding visits.

The announcement of the wedding is to be sent to the papers in a few days' time, according to present fashion. I think I have mentioned all the points upon which you would be likely to want information. No doubt you will have a few things differently arranged at your own wedding, as it will be on a much grander scale, but the general plan is much the same in all.

I have spun out my letter to an inordinate length, and will only add the hope that your wedding day may pass off as smoothly and well as did Gertrude's; and remain, dear Katie, your sincere friend,

JANET HADDON.

FAIRVIEW REST; OR, WHAT THE GIRLS DID.

By the Author of
"Wrapped in the Robes
of Mercy."

CHAPTER II.

CHRISTMAS DAY, with its happy service of praise and its home festivities, was nearly over, and Mrs. Gresham and Alice, who always spent this day at the vicarage, were standing ready, enveloped in warm cloaks for the short run home.

The Rev. Charles Frere had been vicar of Holliton for many years, and his elder daughter, Bertha, now twenty years of age, and Edith—the younger—not quite seventeen, were Alice's only near friends.

"Now mind, Alice," said the vicar, as he bade her good-bye, "you are to go to Sir Gervis to-morrow, and ask him for a Christmas-box."

They had been talking over Alice's castle-building, and the vicar had laughingly told her to ask Sir Gervis to give her Fairview to do what she liked with.

"Oh, papa," said Bertha, a gentle-looking girl, but one who was apt to take her father's humour as matter-of-fact; "how could Alice do such a thing?"

"I believe Alice is brave enough for anything she thinks would do good," said Edith, who had a profound admiration for her friend.

"Of course I should not ask for it for myself. But after all, perhaps, Sir Gervis is not so cold-hearted as we think." Alice had

felt rather penitent at the remembrance of some of her bitter speeches about him since hearing the little tale of bygone days.

"Well, think about it, Alice," said Mrs. Frere, as she gave her a parting kiss.

"Yes, my child, and pray about it also," continued the vicar. "Who knows but this may be the work ready for that superabundant energy of yours, for which you were complaining there is not scope enough in Holliton!"

Alice blushed and shook her head, as she remembered having been overheard telling the girls she longed for some great work to do, like Mrs. Fry or Florence Nightingale.

On the following day the girls had set off on a walk to a neighbouring village, having a call to make on an old servant of Mr. Gresham's. They had not proceeded far before they espied Sir Gervis coming towards them.

"Now is your time, Alice," said Edith, jokingly.

"Don't be ridiculous," cried Bertha.

"I don't think it a bad proposition," said Alice. "No time like the present. Besides, were I to start off with the intention of going to the great house, my courage would fail me before I got to the end of the long avenue."

However, Sir Gervis passed with a bow and a "Good-morning," without Alice commencing the attack.

But he had but passed a moment when Alice turned round with a decided step.

"I'll do it; he is just as likely to listen to me now as at any time;" and in another minute she was by his side, leaving her companions in considerable alarm at her temerity.

"Sir Gervis, may I speak to you?"

"Certainly," he said, courteously, and standing still.

"I want to ask a great favour," began Alice, her heart beating quickly and her colour rising.

"I shall be happy if I can grant it, Miss Gresham," replied Sir Gervis, though looking slightly astonished.

"I want you—it is a very great favour—but here poor Alice seemed in danger of breaking down altogether. The shadow of a smile hovered around the usually rather stern mouth, and the grey eyes had a suspicion of merriment in them.

"Is it *very great*? I can scarcely imagine it is in my power to do you a very great favour."

"Oh, yes! indeed it is; it is about Fairview."

The mouth resumed its wonted expression.

"What about Fairview?"

"I should be so much obliged if you will let me have it for a—" Alice did not know exactly how to explain.

"Let you have it! Do you intend setting up housekeeping on your own account?"

"No, I did not mean for myself—I meant—" Alice, beginning to regain a little confidence, seeing that she could not leave Sir Gervis in his present mystified state, told in as few words as she could of her scheme.

Sir Gervis listened quietly.

"Your desire shows the kindness of your heart, Miss Gresham, but I am afraid this idea of yours is slightly Utopian, and I certainly must decline devoting Fairview to such a purpose."

Alice's eager face flushed still more.

"I am sorry to refuse you, but I think your mother would scarcely think the plan a practicable one."

"My mother thinks it would be most desirable," replied Alice, almost defiantly, yet in her heart she thought it possible her mother would consider her rather too impetuous over the matter.

"Really it is impossible for me to entertain the idea," said Sir Gervis, putting out his hand to the young petitioner, which she reluctantly

