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### FIVE GIRLS AND A CAMERA.

YES; there are just five of us—Clara, tall and stately; Jennie, bright and active; Olive, dark and dignified; Kitty—that's me—so I can't say much about myself; and, last of all, Bab, our youngest. "Bab" is short for baby, though "our baby" is now a well-grown girl of seventeen, and the sharpest and cleverest of any of us. We live in the Isle of Wight, in a dear old-fashioned house, covered over with roses and ivy. It has a wide staircase, and the walls, as you go up, are covered with curious old engravings. I think they must have given us a taste for the picturesque, as we are always imagining fancy scenes, and figuring in them ourselves. Three of us paint, and the other two make models of our pigs, our poultry, our donkeys, and our doves.

Last Christmas our uncle sent us a present, but we were not to know what it was till we saw it. It might be a tricycle, or it might be a tambourine, for all we knew. At last, one cold, snowy morning, the carrier from Newport stopped at the door, and dragged in a large box addressed to us—to the five Miss Huntingdons. It had come by train, and only fancy! it had been four days at the station, while we were dying to know what this mysterious present could be! And what was it?

We all tried to guess as we undid the cords that fastened it. Olive guessed a punch-and-judy show, Clara a barrel-organ, Jennie a type-writer; Bab was the only one that guessed right, and she said it was a camera. And so it turned out to be—a very good camera, with all the necessary chemicals and appliances. From that day we began to photograph, and I was the principal operator. At first our attempts were wretched; our sitters had either two noses, or no nose at all; they grinned ghastly smiles; and our dogs had generally two or three tails, for they would wag them just at the wrong time. However, with practice, we improved, and soon had no scarcity of subjects. All our acquaintances wanted to be taken, though they generally grumbled that they did not come out well. And sometimes we got out of heart when we saw the stiff, stony faces of our sitters reproduced by the relentless sun. They looked thoroughly uncomfortable; there seemed to be no life about them.

"I tell you what it is, girls," said I one day; "we really must make pictures and dress up. I'm tired of taking people in cold blood. Let's have scenes, just as they have in tableaux."

"The very thing!" cried Bab. "It would be capital. We've lots of old dresses that we used to have for charades."

"We've plenty of Normandy caps and handkerchiefs," said Jennie, "that we had for the bazaar last summer; they would come in well."



"SELLING BASKETS AND BROOMS."

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"And anything that we want we can easily run up in the sewing-machine," suggested Olive.

"And we can get the L'Estrange girls to help us," said Clara, "if we want any other figures."

"Let's begin at once!" cried Bab, clapping her hands; "I am full of ideas. We can have woodland scenes, gipsy encampments, and all sorts of things." She has a taste for posing, the little witch, and she knows it; it comes quite naturally to her; she can tell by instinct how to look surprised or terrified; and the others take the cue from her.

All that afternoon (it happened to be a wet one, so we could do nothing with the camera), we spent overhauling our stores of costumes and making preparations. We arranged that our first scene should be at the lodge—we have a very pretty rustic lodge—and that we would call it, "Selling baskets and brooms." Our aunt, who lives with us, has a great fancy for collecting baskets, so we have a large variety of them, in all shapes and sizes.

We had great fun next day settling our positions and arranging our baskets and brooms to the best advantage.

Here we are (Fig. 1). Clara is standing at the door of the lodge in her apron—she is mistress *pro tem.*, and Jennie is the basket-woman, kneeling on the ground to show her wares; Olive, standing up, is to look like her daughter; and Bab, just behind, with a handkerchief tied round her head, has another load of baskets.

I was the operator, so I don't count, but I enjoyed it as much as any of them. Just as I had the attitudes all beautifully settled, old Amos White, the owner of the lodge, who works in our garden, peeped at us from behind, and quite shook with laughter. There he went

on: He! he! he! Ha! ha! ha! as if he couldn't stop.

"What are you doing, Amos?" I cried; "you'll spoil everything. Be quiet, can't you!"

"I'm forced to laugh, miss," was all he could say. The idea of ladies wanting to pose as basket-women and lodge-keepers was too much for his gravity—and we certainly did look rather funny. But that was what we wished to do. I succeeded in getting a tolerably good negative, and, encouraged by success, we proceeded to still more ambitious attempts.

In our second scene, "Carrying water up hill," only Clara and Olive take part. We had immense trouble with the pitchers. At last, a travelling hawk brought round two earthenware pitchers, that seemed the very thing. They look almost classical; and mother's striped satin skirt makes quite a picturesque costume for Clara, along with a discarded muslin jacket which had lain by for years. (See next page.)

I love out-of-door scenes. They seem so much freer than when one is poked up in a drawing-room, with tables and chairs and sofas. We are only half an hour's walk from Carisbrooke Castle, and one day our father said, "Girls, why don't you take your camera and do some photos of the old castle?"

"Oh, it has been done so often before."

"Well, but you can avoid taking it in a hackneyed way. There is the old Roman window which was bricked up for centuries—it has been opened lately. Why don't you take that? I don't think it has been done often."

No sooner was this suggestion thrown out than we proceeded to act upon it. We loaded the donkey, and set off. Everyone knows

Carisbrooke Castle, I suppose, so I need not attempt to describe it. Of course we know every inch of it—the moat, the battlements, the keep, the bowling-green, and the draw-well. But the lately-opened window was quite a treasure-trove. We dressed up Olive as a Puritan maiden, in a muslin pelerine of our grandmother's, with a long muslin apron to match, and a red hood about her head. I think she looks very well standing on the step of the window—(Fig. 3). She looks rather thoughtful and sad, as I think every girl must look when she thinks of the gloomy days that poor imprisoned King Charles I. must have spent in that old castle, chafing to get away, and to see his subjects and children again. As he looked out, he could see, spread out like a map before him, the pretty village of Carisbrooke, with its old grey church, and the town of Newport, with Cowes and Osborne, and the blue Solent stretching beyond. But there he was, in prison pent, and could not get out. And poor Princess Elizabeth, too, after her father was beheaded—she died at Carisbrooke, in her sixteenth year. We have often seen the monument put up to her by our good Queen in Newport Church. She is lying—a white marble figure—with her cheek resting on her Bible—the Bible her father gave her during their last interview. We have many more photographs, both of Carisbrooke and of ourselves in a variety of groups and attitudes; but there is not room for more. Perhaps our kind Editor will give us a nook some other time. I think there is no pleasure so great as photographing, especially when one makes up fancy scenes. It becomes then more interesting and amusing, and the trouble of posing and re-posing is well repaid. We always make great fun out of our groups, and very often, like old Amos White at the lodge, we are "forced to laugh."

## SACKCLOTH AND ASHES.

By RUTH LAMB, Author of "One Little Vein of Dross," "Work, Wait, Win," etc.



CHAPTER X.  
RS. WILKINS had told Susan Meade the simple truth about what she called the "shirt trade," but neither the picture presented nor the advice given deterred her from carrying out her plan.

She resolved to buy a suitable machine and to seek work at the warehouse whence her next-door neighbours obtained theirs. It was too late to make her purchase that evening, but on the following morning she went to town, made her choice, and paid down the money.

The machine was to be adjusted and sent to Morton Place that same afternoon. Previous to applying for work, she determined to make up some materials she had in hand, so as to get into practice before beginning on what belonged to others.

"I've not touched a machine for

years," she said to herself, "and must get my hand well in. It is well for me that I can afford to work or wait, as the slack time is coming on. I had forgotten that, until I had paid the money down."

Having nothing to call her homeward until the time came for her to receive her purchase, Susan decided to spend a little while amongst brighter surroundings than Morton Place could boast of.

A precious gift had lately been bestowed on the dwellers in dingy Mill-caster. A large house, with twenty acres of ground about it, had been purchased and made over to the town. Many noble trees already adorned the grounds, and all that skill and money could effect had been done to turn the place into a delightful resort for young and old.

The mansion was used as a receptacle for works of art, and its permanent contents were supplemented by loans of pictures and objects of interest.

During the summer months the place had proved a delightful resort. Weary wayfarers turned off the hot road—for this park lay close to a great main thoroughfare—and rested on seats beneath the older trees, whilst those more recently planted gave present adornment and promise of future usefulness.

There was a large building which secured a pleasant shelter in case of rain, and beneath its roof the youngsters might play also within reasonable limits. There was a space covered with softest greensward, the use of which was limited to little nurses and their baby charges, and a wider playground for the eldier children.

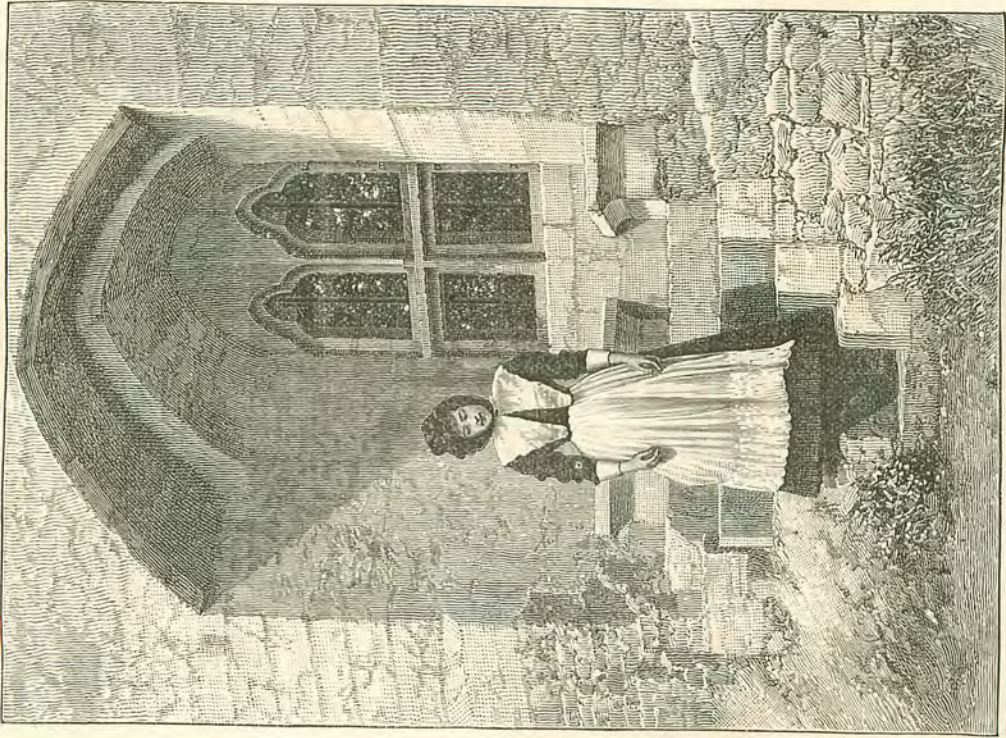
Well-dressed ladies sat and worked or read in the open air, enjoying the while a sight of the small people whose perfect bliss was a sight to stir the sympathy of the coldest and least motherly-hearted amongst them.

Summer was over now, but the sun was shining overhead; and though the leaves lay on the paths, and there had been a "snap of frost" that morning, the New Park was well peopled.

When Mr. Cutclose praised the many attractions of Morton Place as a home for Susan Meade, he did not forget to tell her that a good walker could do the distance between No. 11 and New Park in a quarter of an hour. Thither she now directed her steps, and having reached the park, she sat down in a place whence she could command a view of the children's playground.

There were many groups of youngsters





"THE PURITAN MAIDEN."



"CARRYING WATER."