

**CHRISTMAS CLASSICS**



**ANNIE FELLOWS JOHNSTON**

**THE LITTLE  
COLONEL'S  
CHRISTMAS  
VACATION**

# **The Little Colonel's Christmas Vacation**

**Annie Fellows Johnston**

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## **The Little Colonel's Christmas Vacation**

### **Chapter I. Warwick Hall**

Warwick Hall looked more like an old English castle than a modern boarding-school for girls. Gazing at its high towers and massive portal, one almost expected to see some velvet-clad page or lady-in-waiting come down the many flights of marble steps leading between stately terraces to the river. Even a knight with a gerfalcon on his wrist would not have seemed out of place, and if a slow-going barge had

trailed by between the willow-fringed banks of the Potomac, it would have seemed more in keeping with the scene than the steamboats puffing past to Mount Vernon, with crowds of excursionists on deck.

The gorgeous peacocks strutting along the terraces in the sun were partly responsible for this impression of mediæval grandeur. It was for that very purpose that Madam Chartley, the head of the school, kept the peacocks. That was one reason, also, that she proudly retained the coat of arms in the great stained glass window over the stairs, when circumstances obliged her to turn her ancestral home into a boarding-school. She thought a sense of mediæval grandeur was good for girls, especially young American girls, who are apt to be brought up without proper respect for age, either of individuals or institutions.

In the dining-room, two long lines of portraits looked down from opposite walls. One was headed by a grim old earl, and the other by an equally grim old Pilgrim father of *Mayflower* fame. The two lines joined over the fireplace in the portraits of Madam Chartley's great-grandparents. It was for this great-grandmother, a daughter of the Pilgrims and a beautiful Washington belle, that Warwick Hall had been built; for she refused to give up her native land entirely, even for the son of an earl.

At his death, when the title and the English estates were inherited by a distant cousin, the only male heir, this place on the Potomac was all that was left to her and her daughter. It had been closed for two generations. Now it had come down at last to Madam Chartley. Although it found her too poor to keep up such an establishment, it also found her too proud to let her heritage go to strangers, and practical enough to find some way by which she might retain it comfortably. That way was to turn it into a first-

class boarding-school. She was a graduate of one of the best American colleges. The patrician standards inherited from her old world ancestors, combined with the energy and common sense of the new, made her an ideal woman to undertake the education of young girls, and Warwick Hall was an ideal place in which to carry out her wise theories.

The Potomac was red with the glow of the sunset one September evening, when four girls, on their way back to Washington after a day's sightseeing, hurried to the upper deck of the steamboat. Some one had called out that Warwick Hall was in sight. In their haste to reach the railing, they scarcely noticed a tall girl in blue, already standing there, who obligingly moved along to make room for them.

She scrutinized them closely, however, for she had seen them in the cabin a little while before, and their conversation had been so amusing that she longed to make their acquaintance. Her face brightened expectantly at their approach, and, as they leaned over the railing, she studied them with growing interest. The oldest one was near her own age, she decided after a careful survey, about seventeen; and they were all particular about the little things that count so much with fastidious schoolgirls. She approved of each one of them from their broad silk shoelaces to the pink tips of their carefully manicured fingernails.

As the boat swung around a bend in the river, bringing the castle-like building into full view, a chorus of delighted exclamations broke out all along the deck. The four girls hung over the railing with eager faces.

"Look, Lloyd, look!" cried one of them, excitedly. "Peacocks on the terraces! It's the finishing touch to the picture. We'll

feel like Lady Clare walking down those marble steps. There surely must be a milk-white doe somewhere in the background."

"Oh, Betty, Betty!" was the laughing answer. "You'll do nothing now but quote Tennyson and write poetry from mawning till night."

"They're from Kentucky," thought the girl in blue. "I'm sure of it from the way they talk."

As the boat glided slowly along, Lloyd threw her arm around the girl beside her, with an impulsive squeeze.

"Kitty Walton," she exclaimed, "aren't you *glad* that the old Lloydsboro Seminary burned down? If it hadn't, we wouldn't be on ouah way now to that heavenly-looking boahding-school!"

The sudden hug loosened Kitty's hat, held insecurely by one pin, and in another instant the strong breeze would have carried it over into the river had not the girl in blue caught it as it swept past her. She handed it back with a friendly smile, glad of an opportunity to speak.

"You are new pupils for Warwick Hall, aren't you?" she asked, when Kitty had laughingly thanked her. "I hope so, for I'm one of the old girls. This will be my third year."

"How perfectly lovely!" exclaimed Kitty. "We've been fairly crazy to meet some one from there. Do tell us if it is as fine as it looks, and as the catalogue says."

"It is the very nicest place in the world," was the enthusiastic reply. "There are hardly any rules, and none of them are the kind that rub you up the wrong way. We don't

have to wear uniforms, and we're not marched out to walk in wholesale lots like prisoners in a chain-gang."

"That's what I used to despise at the Seminary," interrupted Lloyd. "I always felt like pah't of a circus parade, or an inmate of some asylum, out for an airing. Keeping in step and keeping in line with a lot of othahs made a punishment out of the walk, when it would have been such a pleasuah if we could have skipped along as we pleased. I felt resentful from the moment the gong rang for us to stah't. It had such a bossy, tyrannical sawt of sound."

"You'll not find it that way at Warwick Hall," was the emphatic answer. "There are bells for rising and chapel and meals, but the signal for exercise is a hunter's horn, blown on the upper terrace. There's something so breezy and out-of-doors in the sound that it is almost as irresistible a call as the Pied Piper of Hamelin's. You ought to see the doors fly open along the corridors, and the girls pour out when that horn blows. We can go in twos or threes or squads, any way we please, and in any direction, so long as we keep inside the grounds. There's an orchard to stroll through, and a wooded hillside, and a big meadow. On bad days there is over half a mile of gravel road that runs through the grounds to the trolley station, or we can take our exercise going round and round the garden walks. The garden is over there at the left of the Hall," she explained, waving her hand toward it. "Do you see that pergola stretching along the highest terrace? That is where the garden begins, and the ivy running over it was started from a slip that Madam Chartley brought from Sir Walter Scott's home at Abbotsford.

"It is the stateliest old garden you ever saw, and the pride of the school. There's a sun-dial in it, and hollyhocks from Ann Hathaway's cottage, and rhododendrons from

Killarney. There's all the flowers mentioned in the old songs. Madam has brought slips and roots and seeds from all sorts of places, so that nearly every plant is connected with some noted place or person. I simply love it. In warm weather I get up early in the morning, and study my Latin out in the honeysuckle arbour. Latin is my hardest study, but it doesn't seem half so hard out there among the bees and hummingbirds, where it's all so sweet and still."

"Oh, will they let you do things like that?" came the same amazed question from all four at once.

"You wait and see," was the encouraging reply. "That isn't the beginning."

The four exchanged ecstatic glances.

"Oh, we haven't introduced ourselves," exclaimed Kitty, bethinking herself of formalities. "I am Katherine Walton, and this is my big sister, Allison. That is Lloyd Sherman and Elizabeth Lewis. They're almost as good as sisters, for they live together, and Lloyd's mother is Betty's godmother. And we're all from the same place, Lloydsboro Valley, Kentucky."

"And I am Juliet Lynn from Wisconsin. That is, I lived there till papa had to come to Washington. He's a Congressman now. I was sure that you were from Kentucky, and I've been hoping that you were new girls for the Hall ever since I heard you talking about some house-party where you all did such funny things."

"Oh, yes, that was one we had this summer at The Beeches," began Kitty, glibly, "when we all took turns—"

But, with a big-sister frown of warning, Allison said, in a low aside: "For pity's sake, don't stop to tell all that long

rigmarole over *now*. We want to hear some more about the school."

"What is Madam Chartley herself like?" she asked, turning to Juliet. "She must be something of an old dragon if she can keep forty girls straight with so few rules. We've pictured her as a big British matron, dignified and imposing,—a sort of lioness rampant, you know, with a stern air, as if she was about to say in a deep voice, 'England—expects—every—man—to—do—his—duty,—sir!'"

"But she isn't that way at all!" cried Juliet, almost indignantly. "She's just as American as you are, for she was born and educated in this country. She has the gentlest voice and sweetest manner. Her hair is snow-white, and there's something awfully aristocratic about her, for she is—sort of—well, I hardly know how to express it, but just what you'd expect the 'daughter of a hundred earls' to be, you know. But you won't feel one bit in awe of her. The girls simply adore her."

"But isn't she something to be afraid of when you break the rules?" queried Kitty, anxiously. "When you have midnight feasts and pillow-case prowls and all that?"

Juliet shook her head. "We don't do those things. I tell you it isn't like any other boarding-school you ever heard of."

"Then I know I sha'n't like it," declared Kitty. "All my life I've looked forward to going off to school just for the jolly good times I'd have. You see we were only day-pupils at Lloydsboro Seminary, and there wasn't a chance for that kind of fun, except the one term when Lloyd and Betty boarded in the school while their family was away from home. We managed to stir up a little excitement then, and

I'd hoped for all sorts of thrilling adventures here. I'm horribly disappointed that it's so tame and goody-goody."

Juliet's face coloured resentfully. "It isn't tame at all!" she declared. "It's only that we are always so busy doing pleasant things and going to interesting places that nobody cares for stolen spreads. Some girls don't like the place just at first, because it's so different from what they've been used to. But by the end of the term they're so in love with Warwick Hall and everything about it that nothing could induce them to change schools. There's only one girl I ever heard of who didn't like it."

"And why didn't she?" asked Lloyd and Allison, in the same breath.

"Well, she came from some ranch away out West, Wyoming or Nevada or some of those places, where she'd been as free and easy as a squaw, and she couldn't stand so much civilization. You see, from the minute you enter Warwick Hall you feel somehow that you're a guest of Madam Chartley's instead of a pupil. She uses the old family silver and the china has her great-grandfather's crest on it, and she brought over a London butler who grew up in the family service. She keeps him for the same reason that she keeps the peacocks, I suppose. They give such a grand air to the place.

"Lida Wilsy—that's the girl from the ranch—couldn't live up to so much stateliness, especially of the stony-eyed butler. Hawkins was too much for her. She told her roommate that she thought it was foolish to have so many forks and spoons at each place. One was enough for anybody to get through a dinner with. Life was too short for so much fuss and feathers. She never could learn which to use first, and she would get her silverware so hopelessly mixed up that by

the time dessert was brought on maybe she would have nothing to eat it with but an oyster fork. I've seen her ready to go under the table from embarrassment. Not that she cared so much what the girls thought. She joked about it to them. Her father owned the biggest part of a silver mine, and they could have had Tiffany's whole stock of forks if they'd wanted them. It was Hawkins she was afraid of. Of course he was too well trained to show what he thought of her mistakes, but you couldn't help feeling his high and mighty inward scorn of such ignorance. It fairly oozed from his finger-tips."

Kitty's black eyes sparkled, anticipating times ahead when she would certainly make it lively for Hawkins.

"There's grandfathah!" cried Lloyd, catching sight of a white-haired old gentleman who had just come up on deck. "I want to tell him about the garden before we lose sight of it."

Juliet's glance followed her with interest as she darted away, for it was a distinguished-looking old gentleman who lifted his hat with elaborate courtesy at her approach. He was dressed in white duck, and the right coat-sleeve hung empty.

"It's Colonel Lloyd," explained Allison, noting Juliet's glance of curiosity. "He's bringing us all to school, for it wasn't convenient for mother or Mrs. Sherman to come."

"They don't look alike," remarked Juliet, surveying them with a puzzled expression. "But what is it about them—there is such a startling resemblance?"

"Everybody notices it," said Kitty. "When Lloyd was smaller, they used to call her the Little Colonel all the time, but

especially when she was in a temper. They call her Princess now."

"Princess," echoed Juliet. "That name suits her exactly."

She cast another admiring glance at the slender, fair-haired girl, standing with her hand in her grandfather's arm, pointing out the beauties of the place they were slowly passing.

"And she will suit Warwick Hall," she added, with a sudden burst of schoolgirl enthusiasm, "just as the peacocks suit it, and the coat of arms, and Madam Chartley herself. She's got that same 'daughter-of-a-hundred-earls' air about her that Madam has."

"Oh, it all sounds so delightful and fascinating," sighed Betty, pushing back the brown hair that blew in little curls about her face, and smiling at the slowly disappearing Hall with a happy light in her brown eyes. "I can hardly wait for to-morrow."

The boat had glided on until only the high, square tower was left in view, with the red sunset glow upon it.

"The splendour falls on castle walls  
And snowy summits old in story"—

Betty sang half under her breath, with a farewell flutter of her handkerchief, as the boat rounded a bend in the river which hid the tower from sight. Already she was in love with the place, and already, as Lloyd had predicted, she was fitting some line of Tennyson to it at every turn.

Acquaintance progressed rapidly in the next half-hour. Long before they reached Washington, Juliet knew, not only

that she had guessed Allison's age correctly at seventeen, that Betty was sixteen, and Lloyd and Kitty a year younger, but that each girl in her own way would make a desirable friend. Incidentally she learned that Allison and Kitty had lived in the Philippines, and were daughters of the brave General Walton who had lost his life there in his country's service. When they parted at the boat-landing, it was with delightful anticipations of the next day, and with each one eager to renew an acquaintance so pleasantly begun.

###

If Warwick Hall suggested ancient stateliness on the outside, it was informal and frivolous enough within, when forty girls were taking possession of their rooms on the opening day of the school year. In and out like a flock of twittering sparrows, the old pupils darted from one room to another, exchanging calls and greetings, laughing over old jokes and reminiscences, and settling down into familiar corners with an ease that the new girls envied.

Juliet Lynn, quickly establishing herself in her last year's quarters, started down the corridor to announce at every door that she was the first one unpacked and settled. All the other rooms were in hopeless confusion, beds, chairs, and floors being piled with the contents of open trunks.

At the first door where she paused, a shower of shoes and slippers was the only answer to her triumphant announcement. At the next a laughing cry of "Help! help!" greeted her. At the third she was informed that there was standing-room only.

"Don't you believe it, Juliet!" called a gay voice from the chiffonier, where an earlier visitor was perched. "There's

always room at the top. I've discovered where Min keeps her butter-scotch. Come in and have some."

"No, I'm going the rounds to see what everybody is about," she answered. "You're all in such a mess now, I'd rather look in later. I'm one of the early settlers, and have been in order for ages."

"What's the odds so long as you're happy?" called the girl on the chiffonier. "Besides, it's no better next door. They'll invite you to make yourself at home under the bed, as they did me. Come on back and tell us your summer's experiences. Min has had one dizzy whirl of adventures after another."

But Juliet kept on down the hall. She wanted to find what rooms had been assigned to the girls whom she had met the day before on the boat, and to hear their first impressions of Warwick Hall. Presently, through a half-open door, she caught sight of Betty, sitting at an open window overlooking the river. With chin in hand and elbows resting on the sill, she was gazing dreamily out at the willow-fringed banks, so absorbed in her thoughts that she did not hear Juliet's first knock. But at the second she started up and called cordially: "Oh, I'm so glad to see you! Come in!"

"Why, you're all unpacked and put away, too!" exclaimed Juliet, in surprise, looking around the orderly room. "I thought that I was the only one, but I see you've even hung your pictures."

"Yes, we don't know any of the other girls yet, so we didn't lose any time running back and forth to their rooms, as everybody else is doing. We've been through ever so long. Lloyd is out exploring the grounds with Allison, but I was

too tired after all the sightseeing we have done. I'd be glad not to stir out of my room for a week."

She pushed a rocking-chair hospitably toward her guest, and leaned back in the opposite one.

"I don't want to sit down," said Juliet. "I'm just exploring. I think it's so much fun to poke around the first day and see how everybody is fixed. You don't mind, do you, if I walk around and look at your pictures?"

"No, indeed!" answered Betty, cordially. "Help yourself."

Catching a glimpse of herself in the mirror, she sat up straight in her chair, and adjusted the side-combs which were slipping out of her curly hair. It was a pleasing reflection that the mirror showed her, of a slim girl in a linen shirt-waist and a dark brown skirt just reaching to her ankles. But it held her gaze only long enough for her to see that her belt was properly pulled down and her stock all that could be desired. The friendly brown eyes and the trusting little mouth never needed readjustment. They always met the world with a smile, and thus far the world had always smiled back at them.

"Last year," said Juliet, as she wandered around, "the girl who had this room simply plastered the walls with posters. It was so sporty-looking. She had hunting scenes between these windows, and there was a frieze of hounds and a yard of puppies where you have that panel of photographs. Oh, what perfectly beautiful places!" she cried, moving nearer. "Do tell me about them. Is that where you live?"

"Yes, this is our Lloydsboro Valley corner—the Happy Valley we call it," answered Betty, crossing the room to point out the various places: "Locust," her home and Lloyd's, a

stately white-pillared mansion at the end of a long locust avenue; "The Beeches," where the Waltons lived; the vine-covered stone church; the old mill; the post-office, and a row of snap shots showing Lloyd and her mounted on their ponies, Tarbaby and Lad.

"What good times you must have there!" sighed Juliet, presently.

Betty opened a drawer in the writing-desk and took out six little books, bound in white kid, her initials stamped in gold on each cover.

"Just see how many!" she exclaimed. "I started to keep a record of all my good times when I went to Lloyd's first house-party. When godmother gave me this volume, number one, I thought it would take a lifetime to fill it, but so many lovely things happened that summer that it was full in a little while. Then I went abroad in the fall, and that trip filled a volume. Now I am beginning the seventh."

Juliet stared at the pile of white books in amazement. "What a lot of work!" she cried. "Doesn't it take every bit of pleasure out of your good times, thinking that you'll have to write all about it afterward? I tried to keep a diary once, but it looked more like the report of a weather bureau than anything else, and my small brother got hold of it and mortified me nearly to death one night when we had company, by quoting something from it. It sounded dreadfully sentimental, although it hadn't seemed so when I wrote it. That's the trouble in keeping a journal, don't you think so? You'll often put down something that seems important at the time, but that sounds silly afterward."

"No," said Betty, hesitatingly. "I always enjoy going back to read the first volumes. It's interesting to see how one

changes from year to year in opinions as well as handwriting. See how little and cramped the letters are in this first volume. It's good exercise, and, as I expect to write a book some day, every bit of practice helps."

Betty made the announcement as simply as if she had said she intended to darn a stocking some day, and Juliet looked at her in open-mouthed wonder. She had never encountered a girl of that species before, and more than ever she felt that her friendship would be worth cultivating. When she finally took her departure, there was no time for any further tour of inspection, but she ran into several rooms on the way back to her own to say, hastily: "Girls, do all you can to get that Kentucky quartette into our sorority! I'll tell you about them later. We must give them a grand rush to-morrow night at the old girls' welcome to the new. I hope I'll get to take Elizabeth Lewis. My *dears*, she's a perfect genius! She's written poems and plays that have been published, and she's at work on a *book!*"

As Juliet closed the door behind her, Betty took up the new volume in the series of little white records, and began turning the blank pages. Like the new school year, it lay spread out before her, white and fair, hers to write therein as she chose.

"And I'll try my hardest to make it the best and happiest record of them all," she said to herself. As she dipped her pen into the ink, there was a knock at the door, and a white-capped maid looked in.

"Madam Chartley would be pleased to see you at once in the pink room, miss," she announced, and Betty, much surprised, rose to answer the unexpected summons.

## Chapter II. "The Old Girls' Welcome To The New"

As Betty opened the door, she ran into Kitty Walton, who at sight of her struck an attitude on the threshold, crossing her hands on her breast, and rolling her eyes upward until only the whites were visible.

"What new pose is this, you goose?" laughed Betty, shaking her gently by one shoulder.

"Don't laugh," was the solemn answer. "This is pious resignation to fate." Then her hands dropped and she turned to Betty tragically.

"I've just come from an interview with Madam Chartley," she explained. "And what do you think? That blessed old soul expects me to live up to the motto on her teacups! But how can I give Hawkins his just due *if* I do? I had the loveliest things planned for his tormenting, but I'd be ashamed to look her in the face if she ever found me out after this interview.

"Oh, Betty, I don't want to renounce the world and the flesh and all the other bad things this early in the term, but I'm afraid that I've already done it. She's laid a spell on all of us."

"Has she sent for Lloyd and Allison, too?"

"Yes, Allison was the first victim. She came back in a regular dare-to-be-a-Daniel mood, and announced that she intended to start in, heart and soul, for the studio honours this year. Then Lloyd had her turn, and she came back looking like Joan of Arc when she'd been listening to the voices. I vowed she shouldn't have that effect on me, but here I am, perfectly docile as you see, fangs drawn and claws cut. I tremble for the effect on you, sweet innocent. Your wings will sprout before you get back."

Betty laughed and hurried past her down the stairs. Evidently it was Madam's custom to make the acquaintance of her new girls in this way, one at a time. Only fifteen freshmen were admitted each year, so it was possible for her to take a personal interest in every pupil.

Betty's heart fluttered expectantly as she paused an instant in the door of the pink room. Madam Chartley had looked very imposing and dignified as she presided at the lunch-table that noon, with the stately Hawkins behind her chair and the stately portraits looking down from the walls.

She looked now as if she might be the original of one of these old portraits herself, as she sat there in the high-backed chair, with the griffins carved on its teakwood frame. Her gray gown trailed around her in graceful folds. There was a soft fall of lace at wrists and throat, and her white hair had a sheen like silver against the pink brocade with which the chair was upholstered.

With a smile which seemed to take Betty straight into her confidence, she held out her hand and drew her to a seat beside her. An old-fashioned silver tea-service stood on a table at her elbow, and when the maid had brought hot water, she busied herself in filling a cup for Betty.

"There!" she said, as she passed it to her. "There's nothing like a cozy chat over a cup of tea for warming acquaintances into friends."

Betty wondered, as she took a proffered slice of lemon, if Madam began all her interviews in this way, and if she was to hear the same little sermon about the crest on the ancestral teacups that Kitty had heard. It certainly was an interesting crest. She lifted the fragile bit of china for a closer survey. A mailed arm, rising out of a heart, clasped a spear in its hand, and under it ran the motto, "I keep tryst."

But Madam's conversation led far away from the crest and its lesson. At first it was about a quaint old English inn, where is served delicious toasted scones with five o'clock tea. When she mentioned that, it was as if they had discovered a mutual friend, for Betty cried out joyfully that she had been there, and had spent a long rainy afternoon in one of its rooms, where Scott had written many chapters of "Kenilworth." Betty remembered afterward that not a word was said about school and its obligations. It was of the Old Curiosity Shop they spoke, and the House of Seven Gables. Madam promised to show her the autographs of Dickens and Hawthorne, which she had in her collection, and a pen which had once belonged to George Eliot.

Then Betty found that Madam had known Miss Alcott, and, before she realized what she was doing, she had thrown herself down impulsively on the stool at her feet, and, with both hands clasping the griffin's head on the arm of the high-backed chair, was asking a dozen eager questions about "Little Women" and the author who had been her first inspiration to write.

Nearly an hour later, when she went back to her room, it was with something singing in her heart that made her very

solemn and very happy. It was the immortal music of the Choir Invisible. She had been in the unseen company of earth's best and noblest, and felt in her soul that some day she, too, would have a right to be counted in that chorus, having done something really great and worth while.

That evening after dinner Kitty bounced into the room where Allison sat talking with Lloyd and Betty during recreation hour.

"To-morrow night there's to be the Old Girls' Welcome to the New!" she cried. "Come on in, Juliet, and tell them about it."

Juliet thrust her head through the half-open door.

"Haven't time to stop," she answered, "but I'll tell this much. It's the first of the great social functions. Everybody wears her party clothes and a sweet smile. It's the first lesson of the year in How to attain Ease under New and Exacting Conditions. No matter how the seniors snub you later on, in order to teach you your proper place, you'll all be birds of a feather that one time, and flock together as peaceably as pet hens.

"Each new girl has an escort appointed by the entertaining committee, who sends her flowers and calls for her and sees that her programme is filled. So there are never any wallflowers the first night. No, Allison, it isn't a dance. The programmes are for progressive conversation. Somewhere in the background there's a piano playing waltzes and two-steps, and so forth, but you talk out the numbers instead of dancing them. Changing partners so often keeps you from getting bored, and strangers can tell who is talking to them, for there are the names on their programmes. You can refer to that when anybody comes up to claim you. I'm

to take Lloyd, and Sybil Green is to take Kitty. I haven't found out the other assignments yet. I'll let you know as soon as I do. Continued in our next."

With an airy wave of the hand she withdrew, leaving them to an animated discussion of what to wear.

"You must remember that this isn't the only time you're to appear in public, Katherine Walton," said Allison, severely, when Kitty proposed her best array. "There's to be a reception at the White House next week, and Friday night we're to go in to Washington to see Jefferson in 'Rip Van Winkle,' and there's to be a studio tea soon, and a recital, and all sorts of things. I saw the bulletin of the term's entertainments in the hall this evening."

"We'll never be seen at those things," insisted Kitty.

"We'll scarcely be a drop in the bucket. But to-morrow night, isn't the whole affair for us? We'll be the whole show. We'll be *it*, Allison, and 'it's my night to howl.' I intend to wear my rose-pink mull and a rosebud in my raving tresses, and carry the gorgeous spangled fan that the dear old admiral gave me in Manila. So there!"

"Then don't come near me," said Allison, with a warning shake of her head, "for I am going to wear my cerise crêpe de chine. It's lovely by itself, but by the side of anything the shade of your pink mull it's the most hideous, sickly colour you ever saw. I *wish* you'd wear that pale green dress, Kitty. You look sweet in that, and it goes so well with mine."

"But, my dear sister," laughed Kitty, "I don't expect to spend any time getting acquainted with *you*. I'll probably not be near you the whole evening. It's not expected that, just because we are from Kentucky, we have to pose as

those two devoted creatures on the State seal,—stand around with our hands clasped, exclaiming 'United we stand, divided we fall!' to every one that comes up."

"Nevah mind, Allison," said Lloyd, laughing at Kitty's dramatic gestures and her sister's worried expression. "I'll play 'State seal' with you. I have a pale green almost the shade of Kitty's, and I'll wear the coral clasps and chains that were Papa Jack's mothah's. He gave them to me just before I left home. I'll show them to you."

She began to rummage through her trunk. Betty sat looking at the ceiling, trying to decide the momentous question of dress for herself. Finally she announced: "I'll just wear white, then I'll harmonize with everybody, and can run up to the first one of you I happen to see when I need a spark of courage. I know I'll be terribly embarrassed. It makes me cold right now to think of meeting so many strangers."

But Betty's courage needed no reinforcing next evening, when Maria Overlin, one of the seniors, took her in charge. The reception took place in what had been the ballroom, in the days when Warwick Hall was noted for its brilliant entertainments. Even its first hostess could not have received her distinguished guests with courtlier grace than Madam Chartley received her pupils, when, to the music of a stately minuet, they filed past her down the long line of teachers.

For once, each of the new girls, no matter how timid or inexperienced in social ways, tasted the sweets of popularity, and the four whom Juliet Lynn had dubbed the Kentucky quartette were overwhelmed with attentions.

Juliet, who had hoped to escort Betty, was glad that Lloyd had fallen to her lot when she saw what an admiring little court flocked around her wherever she turned. In the pale green dress, with its clasps of pink coral carved in the shape of tiny butterflies, she looked more princess-like than ever. She wore a bracelet of the coral butterflies also, and a slender circlet of them about her throat. They gave a soft pink flush to her cheeks.

No sooner had she passed the receiving line than she was surrounded by a group of white-gowned girls clamouring for an introduction and a place on her programme.

"Whose initials are these?" she whispered to Juliet presently when the card was all filled and there were still several girls asking to be allowed to write their names on it.

"Couldn't I give Miss Bartlett this line where there's nothing but G. M. scrawled on it?"

"Mercy, no!" exclaimed Juliet. "That's for Gabrielle Melville. It would never do for you two to miss each other to-night. I put them down for her, as she's to play later in the evening on the violin, you know, and I knew she'd never get here in time to do it herself. She always has such frantic times dressing. Just struggles into her things, never can find half her clothes, and what she does manage to fall into catches and rips in the struggle. Her hat is always over one ear, and her belts never make connection in the back, but she's so adorable that nobody minds her wild toilets. They laugh and say, 'Oh, it's just Gay.' That's her nickname, you know. Here's Emily Chapman coming to claim you. Emily, you can tell Lloyd some things about Gay, can't you?"