BETTY'S PRINCESS

By TEMPLE BAILEY

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The Martha Washington was an hour behind time. On the pier at Old Bay was piled a waiting cargo—coops of restless chickens, watermelons whose dark green rinds proclaimed their inner lusciousness, barrels of vegetables and a disconsolate calf in a crate, which gave forth occasional complaining moans, protests against the strangeness of its position and its separation from its kind.

Betty sympathized with the calf. She, too, was lonely. The only other visible occupant of the pier was Pink Johnson. Pink was crabbing, and Betty wondered if it would be beneath the dignity of her position as a traveler if she went over and watched him until the boat came. On ordinary occasions she and Pink visited freely, but Pink had recognized an extraordinary event and with true negro instinct had kept his distance.

Before Betty decided, however, there appeared just above the horizon a faint streak of smoke, then a dark body, which, growing larger, proved to be the Martha Washington. She came along slowly, throwing up a crest of white water in front of her and leaving behind a broad road of dancing, foam tipped waves.

As she steamed up to the wharf many hands were ready to receive the lines thrown to hold her fast, for negroes of various ages and sizes rolled out from behind boxes and barrels, while from the ox carts on the shore descended lazy drivers, who lounged down to get the small stores which the boat would bring.

Pink Johnson was on his feet, winding up his crab line. He threw the chicken head which had served for bait back into the water.

"Hit cert'n'y do seem a pity to was'e good haids," was his reflection, "but I'ze got to he'p Mis' Betty Ma'shall on to dat boat, seein' she ain' got no white folks dat'll do hit."

He went over and picked up Betty's satchel and lunchbox.

"To waw'm fo' de cun'l, wasn' hit, Mis' Betty?" he questioned.

"Oh, yes, Pink. Grandfather couldn't come. Some gentlemen called, and he had to stay to talk over business."

Perhaps the "cun'l" might have had the grace to blush over the excuse he had given had he heard the trustful words, but as he was at the moment engaged in compounding mint juleps for four "gentlemen" who had dropped in to discuss the merits of the new horse which was to be entered for the Pimlico races it is not likely that thoughts of lonely little Betty weighed him down.

But Betty was not unhappy. This was the first great event of her life. How it had come about she hardly knew, but "Cousin Mary Marshall" was to be married, and Aunt Lelia, Betty's dead mother's favorite sister, had written that the little girl was to come to the wedding.

So Dilsey, Betty's mammy, had packed Betty's simple white dresses and had promised to take good care of grandfather, and, with a kiss, Betty had started away in the old surrey. Upon her arrival at the wharf she had sent Calvin, the driver, home at once, that he might wait on the colonel's guests. Hence it happened that Pink Johnson was the only person to bid Miss Betty Marshall of the "Hall" goodby when she started on her first trip from Old Bay.

To the man and woman, passengers from a famous watering place down the bay, who leaned over the rail lazily watching the loading and unloading of freight, the Martha Washington appeared merely an old tub of a boat, but in Betty's eyes it was glorified.

Betty knew every one on board, from Captain Warfield to the stewardess, for, while Captain Warfield was a Maryland man and the Marshalls were Virginians, still the captain's mother had married Colonel Marshall's third cousin, and if that does not constitute kinship nothing does, at least in the opinion of these clannish and warm hearted southerners. As for the stewardess, she talked of Dilsey and Calvin in a tone which bespoke familiarity, while the unqualified respect with which she asked after Colonel Marshall showed the marks of certain pickaninny days, when the colonel was "Marse Bob."

It was supper time before Betty finished exploring the boat. Betty had a place of honor near the captain, and she answered his questions and told him the news of her little community in the charming fashion and unconsciousness of self which are the inheritance of the well born child of the south.

The princess watched the eager, sweet face from the other side of the table. She was not really a princess, but that was the name Betty had given her when first she came on deck. She was tall and fair, and there was something about her gown which was different from anything Betty had ever seen. It was straight and plain and dark, but there was a dash of bright color in her silk blouse, and Betty thought it beautiful.

The gentleman with her Betty called the prince. He was very handsome, but he looked tired, at least his eyes did. The princess looked tired, too, or perhaps bored would be a better word, but Betty had not yet added to her vocabulary some words which the dreary experiences of maturer life make necessary.

When they all went upstairs and out on deck, it was growing dark, and the captain left Betty to her own devices; so she went aft and leaned over the rail, watching the flashes of phosphorescence in the foaming wake of the steamer, which seemed reflections of the stars above. Betty called them the mermaids' lamps. She was hanging breathless over the rail, her curls damp with the spray and forgetful of the chilliness of the evening—for was not Wavaletta walking through the halls beneath the waves, carrying high above her head the lamp which was to light her lover, the Knight of the Foamy Crest, to the cavern of that monster, the Crab of the Deep?—when she felt a soft wrap folded about her and the pressure of arms that were withdrawn reluctantly.

"Oh, thank you!" said Betty. "But would you mind waiting just a minute until I finish with Wavaletta?"

Presently she turned to the princess and told her all about it and that she was sure the knight would conquer the Crab of the Deep.

"And then what will happen?" asked the princess.

"Then the knight will marry Wavaletta."

"And then?"

"Oh, they will live happy forever afterward," said little Betty.

All of which goes to show that Betty was not a worldly wise little woman and that she still believed in love and many other things which it pleases the world to call old fashioned, while many a woman with an ache in her heart wishes that the old fashion might become a new fashion and that she might have some of the sweetness of the romance and roses of her grandmother.

Now, the princess was wiser than little Betty, and she knew that in the great world there are other things than love and that to have money is a very great thing and to have name and fame is greater and that to have a coronet on one's note paper is the greatest of all.

So for a long time the princess was silent, and Betty thought she must be counting the stars, so steadily did she look up into the heavens.

But the princess was thinking of a girl who had believed in fairy tales—once. And now this girl had been married three weeks, and she had married not her prince, her knight, but a title, an estate, a fine house and a position in society. For the first time she loathed it all. In the quiet night beneath the stars, in the fresh, sweet presence of a little child, there came to her a longing for something beyond that at which she had grasped.

Suddenly Betty spoke. "There comes the prince." Then she laughed a little. "You see, I made a fairy tale about you too."

The woman turned and looked at the man coming up the steps. Yes, he was good to look upon, and he was good, and he loved her. She had not thought of it before. You see, there had been the title and the estate.

He stood there for a moment with the light from the saloon window shining full upon him, then came toward them in the darkness and stood behind the princess' chair, tall, straight, indifferent.

The princess rose and stood beside him. There was a light in her eyes, but the moon was hidden, and he could not see her face. The night was not dark to her, but glorious—glorious in the light of a new resolve.

"This is Betty Marshall, Otto," she said, "and you must thank her for entertaining me while you were away. She has been telling me a fairy tale. Would you like to hear it?"

"If you wish."

"Well, a prince loved a princess—Isn't that it, Betty?"

"Yes," said Betty, "and the princess loved the prince."

The man laughed—a little bitterly. "That was only in a fairy tale," he said.

The princess protested. "No, no; listen, Otto. The princess did not know her heart at first, but afterward, afterward"—

"Oh, you are telling it all wrong!" cried a mystified little voice. But no one listened.

"Afterward she found that love was the only thing in the world, and so"—Her voice faltered.

"And so?" questioned the indifferent listener.

The princess finished breathlessly. "They lived happy forever after."

Her hand rested on his now, and in the unusual action and in the gladness of her voice he felt that some change had come to her.

Then the moon came out, and he saw her face, and slowly over his own there crept a dawning comprehension, and when little Betty went sleepily to bed to be coddled by the stewardess and told tales of "When yo' ma was a girl" she left on deck two people whom fate had willed should be brought together by the faith of a little child in the sweetness and beauty of life.

A Seasonable Remedy.

A poor woman, understanding that Oliver Goldsmith was a physician and hearing of his great humanity, solicited him by letter to send her something for her husband, who had lost his appetite and was reduced to a most melancholy state. The good natured poet waited on her instantly, and after some discourse with his patient found him sinking with sickness and poverty. The doctor told the honest pair that they would hear from him in an hour, when he would send them some pills which he believed would prove efficacious.

He immediately went home and put ten guineas into a chip box with the following label: "These must be used as necessities require; be patient and of good heart." He sent his servant with this prescription to the comfortless mourners, who found it contained a remedy superior to anything Galen or his disciples could ever administer.

Change of Work.

"Change of work is often real rest," says a writer in Ainslee's. "Every one ought to have an avocation as well as a vocation and cultivate an amateur interest in some form of exercise, game or culture very remote from his line of breadwinning activity. Perhaps no tire is so acute as that which is very partial and involves certain muscles, movements and brain centers, leaving others perhaps overrested. By exercising the latter and, as it were, equalizing the area of fatigue or making it more symmetrically distributed many of the best effects of rest are secured. Many of even the diseases of exhaustion are because energy of one part or our psycho-physic organism is overdrawn while that of other parts is overrested. This may make even sleep partial and haunted by the specters of the night. Every one who works with his muscles should carefully reserve some fraction of the day for reading and intellectual work. We are prone to forget that this is just as important as for literary men to take exercise. It is really amazing what one can do with only a fragment of a day and of their total strength if it is systematically used in one direction. Those who seek recreation in mere amusements of a frivolous nature are wasting precious time and capacity."

A Witty Conductor.

The street car conductor with a talent for repartee of the neat and polished order is rare, and note should be made of him when found. A dissatisfied passenger found one out in the neighborhood of Bronx park last week when two women who had been trying to get to the zoological show complained of the difficulty they had had in eliciting any information about its whereabouts.

"Yes, madam," the dissatisfied man—a stranger to them—chimed in; "I can

Very Helpful.

A provincial clergyman during his sermon caught sight of a member of his congregation wearing a very worried look. Suddenly the man's face brightened, and during the remainder of the service his appearance betokened a perfect freedom from care.

"I am pleased to think, William," remarked the clergyman after the service, "that my words helped you somewhat this morning. I noticed during my discourse that your face lit up and the sunshine of smiles chased the clouds of worry away. Now, what portion of my sermon appealed so strongly to you, eh?"

"To tell the truth, sir," replied William, "I wasn't payin' so much attention to your preachin' as I ought to hev done. I was balancin' up the week's cash in my mind and found myself two and three pence short. I worried and worried about that money, but couldn't fit it in nohow.

"Then I happened to catch a word or two of what you said about the preparations that man made for his prodigal son, and it came into my mind like a flash of lightnin' that I'd spent two and three pence for a new horsewhip to give my boy Jim a thunderin' good hidin'. It's wonderful, as you say, sir, what a help a chance word may be. Good mornin', sir."—London