

BRENTWOOD

By Grace Livingston Hill

11th INSTALLMENT

Synopsis
When the wealthy foster parents of Marjorie Wetherill both die she finds a letter telling that she has a twin sister, that she was adopted when her own parents couldn't afford to support both of them and that her real name is Dorothy Gay. Alone in the world, but with a fortune of her own, she considers looking up her own family whom she has never seen. A neighbor, Evan Bower, tries to argue her out of it and tells her he loves her and asks her to marry him. She promises to think it over but decides first to see her family. She goes to their address, finds that they are destitute and gradually persuades them to accept things they need. When the doctor calls to see her mother she notices that he seems particularly interested in her sister. Marjorie goes to church in Brentwood, where her family used to live, and becomes very much interested in the young minister there, with whom she later has lunch in the city. While at Brentwood she sees the home her family formerly owned, buys it back for them and gives the deed to it for her father on Christmas morning.

It was a long time before the Gay family simmered down to real life again. Betty was just taking the turkey out of the oven and Marjorie was filling the water glasses when there came a ring at the door again. Ted went to open it and there stood Gideon Reaver with a small white package in his hand. It wasn't tied up in ribbons or seals like a Christmas present, though it looked as though it would like to have been. It just had a rubber band around it.

Ted welcomed the young man joyously. "Come in!" he cried as though Santa Claus himself had appeared at the door.

"Oh, I mustn't," said Gideon smiling. "I just stopped in to leave this little book for your sister. I told her I'd send it over and this is the first chance I've had. Also I wanted to ask if you folks wouldn't come over to our Christmas service tonight at nine o'clock."

"Oh, come on in," said Ted. "I want you to meet Dad and Mother. You aren't in such a hurry you can't stop a minute, are you?"

"No, I'm not in a hurry at all!" said Gideon smiling, "but I don't believe in intruding on Christmas Day."

"Intruding?" said Ted, opening the door wide and pulling his adored pastor in. "Where do you get that word?"

Then he suddenly turned and caught the look on Betty's face as she came into the dining room exactly opposite the hall door, with the great brown steaming turkey on its platter.

Betty didn't like him to invite Gideon Reaver in! Betty would be sore! Now probably Christmas would all be spoiled! Poor Ted! He could hardly get through the introductions.

But Marjorie came shining into the room and welcomed the guest, and Ted felt better. Then his father and mother were both very cordial too, and Ted beamed, though conscious all the time of Betty and the turkey in the background.

Betty put down the platter and came and stood frowning in the hall door, but the frown suddenly died down. Betty was surprised to find how young and good-looking Ted's boasted minister was. She hesitated, wondering just what to do about the turkey, and as she hesitated Marjorie turned and introduced her.

"This is my twin sister, Mr. Reaver. This is the one you saw before."

And suddenly Betty was swept into the circle much against her will. But he was interesting-looking, and she roused out of her annoyance and greeted him pleasantly enough.

But Gideon Reaver had a lot of intuition and he had seen that turkey. "I'm just delighted to see you all," he said with a comprehensive glance which took them all in, "but I'm not going to stop now. I can tell by the delicious odors that are going around that dinner is on the table, so I'll just run away now and come back another time and call if I may. Far be it from me to delay a Christmas dinner!"

Suddenly the mother spoke up, almost eagerly it seemed. "Why not stay and share it with us?" she asked. She had seen the eager look in her boy's eyes.

"Yes, do stay," said the father heartily. "I know everybody will be delighted."

"Oh, I couldn't think of intrud-

ing that way. Indeed I couldn't. I was just passing and thought I would leave the message."

"But you haven't had your dinner yet, have you?" challenged Ted wistfully.

"No, I'm just on my way back to my boarding house."

"That settles it," said Father. "Ted go and see if there are enough chairs to go around and Betty, put on another plate!"

But suddenly the front door which had the night latch off, opened again, and in walked the doctor.

"Well, now, upon my word, if I haven't walked in on a party!" he said. "I beg your pardon. I won't stay but a minute. I just wanted to make sure my patients were all right and fit for turkey."

"You're just in time!" said Mr. Gay happily. "Have you had your Christmas dinner yet?"

"Well, no, I haven't yet, but I'm used to waiting. I'll just look at Mrs. Gay's pulse and then I'll be moving on."

"We'll call it brunch then," called out Betty suddenly from the doorway. "Come on, there's plenty to eat. You get the chairs, Ted. The turkey is already on the table. The more the merrier."

They all turned and looked at Betty's gay face, so changed from a moment before. Ted breathed a sigh of relief, and the rest gave quick furtive glances at the doctor.

Mr. Gay introduced the minister and the doctor and they studied each other a bit cautiously. But they were both staying, there was no question about that.

"Dinner is served!" said Betty, suddenly appearing in the doorway looking very pretty indeed in Marjorie's green knit dress with a bit of red ribbon knotted in her hair and a scrap of holly on one shoulder.

"It's going to be a tight squeeze, friends, but we thought it was better than waiting to put another leaf in the table and eating a cold dinner."

Betty's cheeks were rosy and her eyes were twinkling. She seemed like a new Betty to Marjorie.

The doctor, without waiting on the order of his going, marched straight over to Betty and pulled out her chair, and then took the one next her. Mrs. Gay smiled and took her place where cushions had been arranged at her back and feet. The minister found himself seated between Marjorie and Ted. Then Mr. Gay's voice broke into the laughter of getting seated.

"Mr. Reaver, will you ask the blessing, please?"

Marjorie stifled a quick look of surprise. There had been no asking of blessings so far in the meals she had eaten in her new home, although she reflected they had been most informal, and her father had generally eaten upstairs with her mother. But her heart warmed to the words that were spoken and she thrilled at the sweet silence that had settled over them all. This minister certainly was a rare one. How great for Ted to have such a man for a friend!

As the heads were lifted the doctor shot a quick keen glance at the minister across from him. But it was the minister who spoke first.

"Do you mean to tell me, Doctor, that you can always tell which of these twins is which?" he asked looking from Betty to Marjorie at his side.

"Well," said the doctor, "I can always tell that this one is Betty, but I'm not always so sure which one the other one is!"

They all laughed heartily at that.

It was a delightful occasion, and everyone enjoyed it to the full.

Strange to say neither doctor nor minister seemed to be in a hurry to leave.

By this time they were excellent friends, having discovered a number of tastes in common. The doctor had inquired where Gideon preached, and Gideon had suggested that he'd better come over his way and open an office. The doctor said he'd think about it, and Betty told him they were going to move back there and needed to have their doctor handy. He said he didn't know but he would look into it.

Suddenly Gideon turned around to them all.

"Now, why don't we have a little sing?" he said. "Christmas isn't complete without carols."

It was just as they were singing the last line of "Silent Night," that Evan Bower walked contemptuously up the narrow steps, and failing to identify the small insignificant, doorbell in the darkness gave a thunderous knock on the door.

Coming as it did into the sweetness of that "Silent night, holy night" of long ago, it was somewhat of a shock.

Ted snapped on the lights and opened the door, and there stood a tall haughty young man.

"Does this happen to be number 1465 Aster Street?" he asked. Ted nodded gravely.

UNION HILL

Rev. A. F. Walker filled his regular appointment at the Baptist church here Saturday and Sunday. On Saturday the church, in conference, voted unanimously to have annual decoration day on the first Sunday in June, as has been the custom for many years.

The church extends a cordial invitation to the public to attend, especially those who have loved ones and friends buried at Union Hill.

Mrs. Weatherspoon and daughter, Barbara, of Greensboro, spent Sunday at their summer home here.

Mr. and Mrs. Britton, of Greensboro, were the Sunday guests of friends here.

We are sorry to note that L. D. Perry is quite ill at this time.

Mrs. Molley Tilley has returned to her home in Mt. Airy following a visit with her brother, L. D. Perry.

Mr. and Mrs. L. B. Norman, of Mt. Airy, spent Sunday here with Mr. and Mrs. G. L. Crouse, the latter a sister of Mrs. Norman.

Couldn't Bribe Him
Soph: "I'd like for you to come over and have dinner with me."
Professor: "Thank you, sir, but your class work is already satisfactory."

Cheerful Outlook
Interne: "Did you say anything to cheer up Sandy McPherson after his operation?"
Nurse: "Yes, I told him he might not live to pay for it."

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