

BRENTWOOD

By Grace Livingston Hill

SIXTEENTH INSTALLMENT

But the next day wasn't half long enough, and sped away so fast they were aghast. Marjorie was here and there and everywhere, with her mother and the children, and everybody restless because the time was getting shorter and shorter. How they were going to miss her, the daughter who had only known them a few short days!

Finally Marjorie and Gideon were seated in the train as it moved off, waving to the father and Ted. Then the train swept out of the station and they were alone.

The minister got out his pocket Bible and again and again the two heads were bent over the text. Marjorie took out her pencil and notebook and kept a great many references for her help when she got back to Chicago alone. So the time flew fast. It seemed only a brief space before Gideon had to put on his overcoat, seize his hat and suitcase, grasp her hand for a quick instant, and hurry to get off at Harrisburg.

He waved to her from the platform an instant, and then the train moved on and she was alone. A great desolation came over her. Would she ever see him again?

It was strange the next morning to wake and find herself almost back in Chicago, to dress hurriedly just in time to get out and to find her own chauffeur waiting at the station with her car according to orders.

The house was immaculate, the servants all there in their places, welcoming her, thanking her for their holiday, apparently ready to go on with life as she had left it.

After breakfast she went from room to room and tried to take up the thread of life. For this one week at least she was committed to do nothing definite about leaving her home. But that did not include Evan Brower. In the afternoon she wrote a note to him.

"Dear Evan:
This is just to tell you that I got home today and shall be glad to see you whenever you feel like calling.

Sincerely,
Marjorie.

The time passed very quickly and in the afternoon she went to see her lawyer and check up on business matters. Then just after dinner Evan Brower came.

Evan told her of the news since she had been gone, and at last he got out the little velvet box again. "Marjorie," he said in a calm voice, "I want you to put my ring on now and wear it."

Then Marjorie looked calmly at Evan Brower and answered in a clear voice.

"Evan, I do appreciate your kindness and your thought for me, and I feel sorry that I had to be so uncertain in the past when you talked to me about these things. But now that I am home again I have thought it all over and made my decision. Evan, I am not going to marry you, either now or at any other time. I am quite sure that I do not love you as a woman ought to love a man she marries."

Evan Brower looked at her steadily, calmly, and slowly put the ring back in its box and the box away in his pocket.

"Very well," he said quietly, de-

terminedly, "if you haven't come to your senses yet, I can wait, of course, till you do."

So presently he took his leave.

Finally there came a letter from Gideon and her heart leaped up to welcome it singing a little song even before she opened it. It wasn't a long letter. It was mostly about his work and the questions she had asked, and some books he was sending. But it did say how much they missed her.

The next day Gideon sent flowers. They were crimson roses, deep and dark. She buried her face in their sweetness and closed her eyes as she carried them upstairs to her own private sanctum. She did not want them out of her sight.

And then the week was up.

Marjorie arose with a feeling that great things might happen today. Would her mother write at once, or wasn't the week long enough for them to decide? She had decided. She was only waiting for their word. Would the morning mail bring her answer? But it came sooner than that. The letter brought it up to her before she was dressed. A telegram. "We have kept our contract. The time is up. We want you with all our hearts. We feel that this is your place if you still want to come to us. But not unless you would rather come. Letter follows."

It was signed with all their names.

Marjorie wasn't long in answering that. She caught up her telephone and dictated a telegram.

"Was coming anyway, whether you wanted me or not. Could not stand it without you. Brentwood for me! Love to you all. Glory hallelujah!

Marjorie."

Next morning Ted appeared on the scene. A very properly-dressed Ted, looking handsome and capable.

"Mother said I was to come and help pack," he said simply. "She said you oughtn't to be alone. Dad would have come but he couldn't leave his new job, of course."

And then when his sister fell upon his neck and embraced him, crying for very joy, he remarked quite casually though in a jubilant tone:

"Gideon Reaver said he was coming over on Monday to drive us back home. He said you were bringing your car, and I haven't any driver's license yet. He said I was to wire him when we would be ready. He's crazy to come!"

They were hard at work packing and there was a large van drawn up before the door taking away furniture, some that was to be sent to the auction rooms for sale, and some that was to be given to the mission, when Evan Brower arrived.

Evan Brower glared at Ted, with scarcely an inclination of his head, and then he said savagely to Marjorie:

"Can I see you alone somewhere?"

Marjorie gave him an absent-minded smile.

What was said behind that closed door Marjorie never told him, but it must have been decisive for the caller presently came out walking as if he were following to the grave after a dead hope.

The last truck was filled, and started on its way; the cook had wept a farewell and had been taken to her train en route for her sister's in the far west; the house was locked and the key handed over to the lawyer's representative for the new owner; and they were all comfortably seated in the big luxurious car ready to start.

"It's a beautiful house," remarked Gideon. "I'm so glad to have seen where you were brought up," and he smiled at Marjorie. "Yes, it's a lovely home. But you're going to one just as pleasant, I think!"

"Sure thing!" said Ted fervently. "Though this one's all right," he added as if he feared Marjorie's feelings might be hurt.

Then they wound down along the lake shore, into the city and out on the highway for home.

And such a drive as they had! But oh, that homecoming. How precious it was! To be folded in her mother's arms and to know that she was at home! To watch the lovelight on her father's face as he said: "Welcome home, my daughter!" To feel the children's eager sticky kisses and hear their screams of welcome. To see real joy in Betty's face, real welcome!

Ah! That was better than all the other world had to offer her.

And then to drive hastily over to Brentwood and meet the trucks which had just arrived, and with Betty direct where things should go. It was great!

There was Betty in the parlor with Keith Sheridan to help, taking off the covers from the upholstered furniture. And there was Gideon going quietly about doing things without having to ask what to do next, just as if he were a son of the house and had always lived with this furniture and these rooms.

"You want this here, don't you, Marjorie?" he would say, and proceed to put it there.

And once in the back hall, toward dusk, those two came hastily upon each other. Marjorie from the way of the kitchen, and Gideon from the big pleasant library where he had just deposited an armful of books that had

been misplaced by the now departed movers, and they ran right into each other. Gideon put out his arms and unfolded her, perhaps to save her from falling, but it became more than that of itself as suddenly they were close to one another, and Gideon stooped and placed a tender kiss on her lips.

Then, just as suddenly, while they were still under the spell of the wonder of each other's lips, and did not know anyone else was in the world for the moment, there stood Betty and Keith hand in hand.

"Might a mere brother-in-law offer congratulations?" saluted Keith joyously, "because we're in a position ourselves to understand."

He grinned and bowed low with his hand upon his heart. That is, one hand. The other Betty had.

Then he looked up at the embarrassed two who had been taken unawares and grinned.

"It's a little soon, I suppose, to spring all this on the assembling multitudes," he offered.

Marjorie with glowing cheeks and dancing eyes was laughing now.

"We didn't know anything about this ourselves till a minute ago!" she announced shyly.

"I believe you!" said Betty solemnly. "That's the way it came to me, all suddenly."

"Well, I'm not ashamed of it, though I didn't think I dared announce my intentions so soon. But I'm glad!" said Gideon solemnly.

"Yes!" said Marjorie. "Aren't we?"

But the rest were scurrying to the front door to welcome the family.

The mother walked into her house and stood and looked around with eyes full of wonder.

"Oh, it's too good to have all these things at once!" she said. "My girl come home to Brentwood, and all my children here!"

"Yes, Mother, dear," chirped Betty from the doorway, her hand again in Keith's who winked across at Marjorie and Gideon, "even more children than you had bargained for!"

THE END

NEWS FROM THE COUNTY CAPITAL

Court adjourned Thursday after only four days of work. No cases of much importance were tried. Two manslaughter cases were continued.

Mr. and Mrs. Colon Spoon and children left Friday for Max Meadows, Va., to attend the china anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. R. E. Tilley, held at their home Sunday afternoon, to which more than one hundred guests were invited.

Misses Mary Cooper and Lula Betsy Folger have returned from the Woman's State College at Greensboro, and will spend their summer vacation with their parents in Dobson.

Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Hancock and daughter, Linde, returned from Prosperity, S. C., Thursday after spending some time with Mrs. Hancock's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Pugh.

Wilson Comer, student at Chapel Hill, has returned to Dobson for a summer vacation.

Miss Katherine Irwin, of Harrison, Tenn., who is now attending summer school at Boone, is spending a few days with Miss Edythe Reece and will return to Boone Tuesday to resume her work.

Norman Burkholder is very seriously ill in the Davis hospital in Statesville.

Alice Louise Adams, of Statesville, is visiting the family of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Evan, on Kapp street.

Mrs. Wade B. Hampton has many friends in Dobson who will be glad to know that she arrived

at her Washington, D. C., home after spending one year touring the Orient and studying some months in Berlin.

Marianne Mook is a week-end guest of Ettie Steele at her home, Route 1.

Miss Lucille Freeman is attending the summer session at Greensboro Woman's College.

Bausie Marion, Robert Freeman, Jr., and Spencer Norman spent the week-end at Mouth of Wilson, Va., on a fishing expedition.

Miss Mary Bettie Norman has gone to Chapel Hill to attend six weeks of the summer session on the "Hill."

Mr. and Mrs. Sebastian Southwestern and children were Sunday visitors in the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Llewellyn.

Mrs. Blanche Norman spent Saturday and Sunday with Mrs. Daisy Norman. She is attending summer school at Catawba College, Salisbury.

Mr. and Mrs. George Sandneg and children, Mary Jean and Jerry, visited in the home of Mr. and Mrs. V. J. Myrick several days last week en route to their home in Gibsonville after spending some time with relatives in Elk Mound, Wis.

Miss Clara Freeman is attending the World's Fair in New York this week.

Geese

A teacher asked her class to write an essay on geese. This paper was turned in by an eight-year old miss:

"Geese is a low, heavy-set bird which is mostly meat and feathers. His head sits on one end and he sits on the other. He ain't got no between-his-toes and he's got a balloon in his stummick to keep him from sinking. Some geese when they get big has curls on their tails and is called ganders. Ganders don't haff to sit and hatch but just eat and loaf and go in swimming. If I was a goose I'd rather be a gander."

Cherub
Mrs. Chuzz—I'm sorry, dear, but I'll just have to have some new clothes.
Chuzz—Not this month, my cherub, the money just isn't available.
Mrs. Chuzz (suspiciously)—Say, why do you always call me "my cherub?" That's all I've heard lately.
Chuzz (bravely)—Well, it's like this: You never seem to have any clothes, you're always up in the air, and you keep harping.

"I let the Math Prof kiss me before the exam."
"Did he give you 100?"
"A hundred? Say, I'll bet he gave me a thousand!"

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