

FOR EVERY BOY AND GIRL

The "S. P. O. U."

By AGNES LOUISE PROVOST.

WHAT do you suppose it is?" Four heads clustered together over a bit of a note, four voices chattered in chorus, and a fifth from the doorway announced a new-comer.

"Girls, did any of you get a note from Nan Howland?"

"Yes, all of us!" the chorus exclaimed. And Margery Winson danced into the room. "I never was so curious in all my life! Can you imagine what it is? Listen! You are invited to attend and participate in the charter meeting of the S. P. O. U.,—the Society for the Prevention of Uselessness,—to be held in Room 138, Marsden Hall, at eight o'clock on Thursday evening, December the eleventh. 'Prevention of Uselessness!' Of all mysterious things! And our frivolous Tess is invited, too."

"It looks suspicious, girls. Methinks I sniff a rodent," Alice Murray waved one hand dramatically, as with the other she deftly abstracted a corpulent chocolate from the box in her sister Olive's lap. "I am beset with a harrowing suspicion that it is less by accident than design that this wise Nan of ours has selected six of the most useless girls in college for her extraordinary society."

"Yo' insult meh dignity," drawled Marvin Ayers. In moments of excitement Marvin's Georgia drawl was always intensified, although she never entirely lost her pretty, slow intonation.

"Now, Dixie Ayers, tell me honest, tell me true, did you ever do anything of deadly practical usefulness in your life?"

Marvin smiled ruefully as Alice pressed her point home. Marvin was a good student, but on all points involving unnecessary exertion she was frankly indolent.

"I reckon I could if I wanted to," she laughed; "but so long as I don't have to, honey, I'd rather not."

"Alas, that I must go!" mourned Tess. "I hate to leave such fascinating society and a box of bonbons, but I must get to work and improve my mind, if only to set a good example to Dixie. Think of me in ten minutes as with rumpled locks and anxious brow, an ink-smudge on my chin and a dozen ponderous tomes about me. Dear me! I don't see how Nan can be so amazingly in earnest, and have so much fun too. If I were as wise as our Nan I should be a perfect muff!"

The Society for the Prevention of Uselessness was in session, eight in all, counting Margery and her room mate, Bess Van Arsdale, and seven inquiring faces turned toward the promoter of this mysterious scheme.

Nan Howland was a popular girl, loving, generous, and unusually well endowed with mental and physical gifts. She was at once the girl most in demand for all manner of entertainment, and one of the best students in college.

"I shall begin by asking you a question," she announced, after she had laughed in spite of herself at the rustle of expectancy which greeted her. "Suppose, for a moment, that your father should fail in business, or should die and leave you without a penny. What should you do to support yourselves?"

Nan's voice was drowned in a chorus of protesting exclamations.

"Do!" echoed Tess Haines. "Why, I—I—I don't know what I'd do! I'd sit down and wail in despair."

"Well," ruminated Alice Murray, who was of a practical turn of mind. "I suppose I should turn to the first thing that offered, from grim necessity, and it would probably be the wrong thing, and I'd make a mess of it."

"That's just it!" said Margery, eagerly. "To fit yourself then for a profession or clerical position would require time and money, which might not be possible for you to give. Now does it seem only right that we should be prepared for emergencies like that, and have something to rely on which we know we could do well?"

"Nan, you dear old trump, it's a scheme!" applauded Helen Cuyler, ever enthusiastic, and half a dozen voices chattered at once, as their owners were fairly caught by the spirit of the new idea.

"I'll spend less time in drawing cartoons of the faculty and turn my precocious artistic talents to—designing!" announced Olive Murray, in triumph, and Nan beamed with delight.

"I know what I could do! I'll get papa to let me take a librarian's course at one of those jolly summer schools," Margery Winson called out over the babel of tongues, and Bess Van Arsdale followed with: "And I love gymnastics so, why could n't I learn to teach physical culture?"

But it was Marvin Ayers, lazy little Dixie, who astonished them all.

"I reckon that while we're fitting ourselves for professions, we might earn something hoth. I'll open a dancing-class. Yes, I really will honey!"—this to the astonished Tess. "I've taken dancing lessons all my life, neahly."

"I'll trim over your old hats," sighed Tess, resignedly. "My sole talent!"

"And since we're none of us really poor," supplemented Alice Murray, flushing with sudden shyness, "suppose we put the money we earn into a common fund, to pay the tuition of some girl who can't afford a college education."

"You old dear!" cried Tess, impetuously. And in this manner the Society for the Prevention of Uselessness began.



"I SHALL BEGIN BY ASKING YOU A QUESTION NAN ANNOUNCED"

present went to their homes bubbling with zeal and enthusiasm in their respective schemes.

Summer passed, full of its own pleasures, and with autumn the school came together once more. The Society for the Prevention of Uselessness held its first meeting of the school year in the Murray girls' room, but there was a shadow over them all.

Nan was not there. What was worse, Nan was not coming back at all! News had come to all of them that Mr. Howland had failed, a business crash resulting from a partner's recklessness, and the Howlands were ruined. Mr. Howland was bravely beginning again, quietly burying his pride and ambitions in a clerkship, since money must be had to live on; but the dream of Nan's life must be laid aside. She had been preparing herself at college for a profession which was the pride of her heart, but two years were needed yet before she could take the high place which her talents and energy would have given her, and these were costly.

"Oh, I think it's a shame! Nan must come back!"

Tess Haines sat up on Olive's couch and mopped her eyes defiantly as she delivered her ultimatum, and Dixie added just two words, with more Northern vigor and briskness than she had ever displayed before:

"Nan shall!"

The Society for the Prevention of Uselessness held a late session that night. The speeches were whispered, the lights low, but there was joy in the hearts of the conspirators. Before the meeting adjourned a little slip of paper went around. At the top were the words "Cash in treasury," with a neat sum following, and below, each girl's name and other amounts, smaller, but representing self-denial and an abundance of generous love.

Nan Howland stood at one of the windows of her new home as the postman came up the walk. It was a plain little home in a plain neighborhood, but it was not this which made Nan's pillow suspiciously moist nights, although her face was bright enough by day. She had bravely put aside the dear old ambitions, for several years at least, and had turned her hand to what she found to do, but it was a bitter disappointment. It was almost a pain now to take the two letters with the familiar postmark. She opened the thin one first, recognizing with surprise the clear, decided writing of no less a personage than the president of the college.

My Dear Miss Howland: I have recently had a sum of money placed in my hands, with the request that it be used as a scholarship fund. It gives me great pleasure, with the full approval of the donors, to offer the scholarship to one of my best students.

SARAH SAMANTHA

Here's sweet little Sarah Samantha,
Whose smile would have softened
a panther.
She lisped, I am told,
But whoever might scold,
She always returned a thot
anther!

We shall be glad to welcome you among us again if you see your way clear to accept it.

Nan tore open the other letter with trembling fingers. She knew where that money came from!

Dear, Blessed Old Nan: The Society for the Prevention of Uselessness cannot exist without its President. Do come back. Now we have a scheme. In order to demonstrate to the frivolous and skeptical that we are something more than a long name, we want one of us to start a tea-room just on the edge of the college grounds. There's lots in it, because it has been done in other college towns, and the girls would just swarm there. You are just the one to do it, and you could take some bright girl from the town to assist, and to be there when you

had to be away. Please, Nan; we do miss you terribly.

Alice Murray,
Helen Cuyler,
Dixie Ayers,
Tess Haines,
Committee.

P. S. If the tea-room is n't enough, we have two of the dumbest little freshies you ever saw this year, and they are in desperate need of tutoring.

Nan read it twice, with brimming eyes. "Those dear girls!" she said chokingly, catching her breath in a laugh which was half a sob, and the president of the Society for the Prevention of Uselessness laid her head on her arms and cried from pure gratitude and joy.

THE CLEVER YANKEE

By MINNIE W. TORREY

There was a man in Yankeetown,
And wondrous wise was he,
For, with an ax and many whacks,
He once cut down a tree.

And when the tree was wholly down,
He worked with might and main,
And straightway took another ax
And cut it up again.

THE DANCING CLASS

By

Ester H. Staples



"One, two," the professor said,
And again, "a one two three."
"One, two, and a one two three,
Is the polka time" said he.



One, two, three," professor said,
And again a one, two, three,
"One, two, three, and one, two, three,
Is the waltzing time" said he.