

him in public; so I had ultimately to tell Mr. Bretland, with finality and flatness, that Allegra was out of the question. Would he not reconsider Sophie?

No, he'd be darned if he'd reconsider Sophie. Allegra or nobody. He hoped that I realized that I had weakly allowed the child's entire future to be ruined. And with that parting shot he backed to the door. "Miss MacRae, Dr. McBride, good afternoon." He achieved two formal bows and withdrew.

And the moment the door closed Sandy and I fought it out. He said that any person who claimed to have any modern, humane views on the subject of child-care ought to be ashamed to have considered for even a moment the question of breaking up such a family; and I accused him of keeping her for the purely selfish reason that he was fond of the child and did n't wish to lose her. (And that, I believe, is the truth.) Oh, we had the battle of our career, and he finally took himself off with a stiffness and politeness that excelled J. F. B.'s.

Between the two of them I feel as limp as though I'd been run through our new mangling-machine. And then Betsy came home, and reviled me for throwing away the choicest family we have ever discovered!

So this is the end of our week of feverish activity; and both Sophie and Allegra are, after all, to be institution children. Oh dear! oh dear! Please remove Sandy from the staff, and send me, instead, a German,

a Frenchman, a Chinaman, if you choose — anything but a Scotchman.

Yours wearily,

SALLIE.

P.S. I dare say that Sandy is also passing a busy evening in writing to have me removed. I won't object if you wish to do it. I am tired of institutions.

*Dear Gordon:*

You are a captious, caviling, carping, crabbed, contentious, cantankerous chap. Hoot mon! an' why shouldna I drap into Scotch gin I choose? An' I with a Mac in my name.

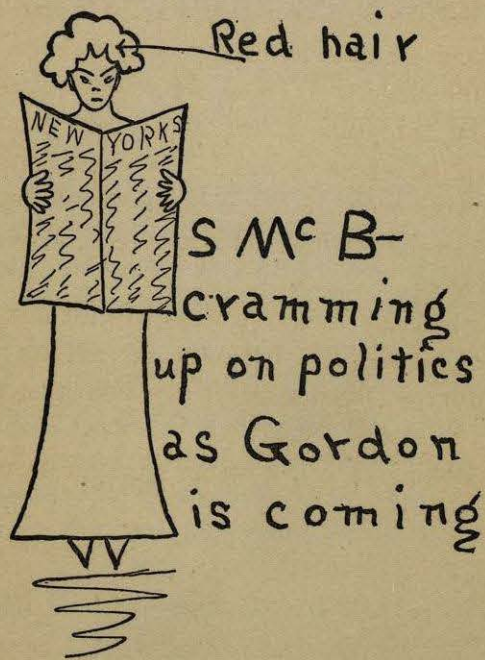
Of course the John Grier will be delighted to welcome you on Thursday next, not only for the donkey, but for your sweet sunny presence as well. I was planning to write you a mile-long letter to make up for past deficiencies, but wha's the use? I'll be seeing you the morn's morn, an' unco gude will be the sight o' you for sair een.

Dinna fash yoursel, Laddie, because o' my language. My forebears were from the Hielands.

MCBRIDE.

Dear Judy:

All's well with the John Grier — except for a broken tooth, a sprained wrist, a badly scratched knee, and one case of pink-eye. Betsy and I are being polite, but



cool, toward the doctor. The annoying thing is that he is rather cool, too; and he seems to be under the impression that the drop in temperature is all on his side.

He goes about his business in a scientific, impersonal way, entirely courteous, but somewhat detached.

However, the doctor is not disturbing us very extensively at present. We are about to receive a visit from a far more fascinating person than Sandy. The House of Representatives again rests from its labors, and Gordon enjoys a vacation, two days of which he is planning to spend at the Brantwood Inn.

I am delighted to hear that you have had enough seaside, and are considering our neighborhood for the rest of the summer. There are several spacious estates to be had within a few miles of the John Grier, and it will be a nice change for Jervis to come home only at week-ends. After a pleasantly occupied absence, you will each have some new ideas to add to the common stock.

I can't add any further philosophy just now on the subject of married life, having to refresh my memory on the Monroe Doctrine and one or two other political topics.

I am looking eagerly forward to August and three months with you.

As ever,

SALLIE.

Friday.

*Dear Enemy:*

It's very forgiving of me to invite you to dinner after that volcanic explosion of last week. However, please come. You remember our philanthropic friend, Mr. Hallock, who sent us the peanuts and goldfish and other indigestible trifles? He will be with us to-night, so this is your chance to turn the stream of his benevolence into more hygienic channels.

We dine at seven.

As ever,

SALLIE McBRIDE.

*Dear Enemy:*

You should have lived in the days when each man inhabited a separate cave on a separate mountain.

S. McBRIDE.

Friday, 6:30.

*Dear Judy:*

Gordon is here, and a reformed man so far as his attitude toward my asylum goes. He has discovered the world-old truth that the way to a mother's heart is through praise of her children, and he had nothing but praise for all 107 of mine. Even in the case of Loretta Higgins he found something pleasant to say; he thinks it nice that she is n't cross-eyed.

He went shopping with me in the village this afternoon, and was very helpful about picking out hair-ribbons for a couple of dozen little girls. He begged to choose Sadie Kate's himself, and after many hesitations he hit upon orange satin for one braid and emerald-green for the other.

While we were immersed in this business I became aware of a neighboring customer, ostensibly engaged with hooks and eyes, but straining every ear to listen to our nonsense.

She was so dressed up in a picture-hat, a spotted veil, a feather boa, and a *nouveau art* parasol that I never dreamed she was any acquaintance of mine till I happened to catch her eye with a familiar malicious gleam in it. She bowed stiffly, and disapprovingly;

and I nodded back. Mrs. Maggie McGurk in her company clothes!

Mrs. McGurk



That is a pleasanter expression than she really has. Her smile is due to a slip of the pen.

Poor Mrs. McGurk can't understand any possible intellectual interest in a man. She suspects me of wanting to marry every single one that I meet. At first she thought I wanted to snatch away her doctor; but now, after seeing me with Gordon, she considers me a bigamous monster who wants them both.

Good-by; some guests approach.

11:30 P.M.

I have just been giving a dinner for Gordon, with Betsy and Mrs. Livermore and Mr. Witherspoon as guests. I graciously included the doctor, but he curtly declined on the ground that he was n't in a social mood. Our Sandy does not let politeness interfere with truth!

There is no doubt about it, Gordon is the most presentable man that ever breathed. He is so good-looking and easy and gracious and witty, and his manners are so impeccable — Oh, he would make a wonderfully decorative husband! But after all, I suppose you do live with a husband; you don't just show him off at dinners and teas.

He was exceptionally nice to-night. Betsy and Mrs. Livermore both fell in love with him — and I just a trifle. He entertained us with a speech in his best public manner, apropos of Java's welfare. We have been having a dreadful time finding a sleeping-place for that monkey, and Gordon proved with incontestable logic that, since he was presented to us by Jimmie, and Jimmie is Percy's friend, he should sleep with Percy. Gordon is a natural talker, and an audience affects him like champagne. He can argue with as much emotional earnestness on the subject of a monkey as on the greatest hero that ever bled for his country.

I felt tears coming to my eyes when he described Java's loneliness as he watched out the night in our

furnace cellar, and pictured his brothers at play in the far-off tropical jungle.

A man who can talk like that has a future before him. I have n't a doubt but that I shall be voting for him for President in another twenty years.

We all had a beautiful time, and entirely forgot — for a space of three hours — that 107 orphans slumbered about us. Much as I love the little dears, it is pleasant to get away from them once in a while.

My guests left at ten, and it must be midnight by now. (This is the eighth day, and my clock has stopped again; Jane forgets to wind it as regularly as Friday comes around.) However, I know it's late; and as a woman, it's my duty to try for beauty sleep, especially with an eligible young suitor at hand.

I'll finish to-morrow. Good night.

#### Saturday.

Gordon spent this morning playing with my asylum and planning some intelligent presents to be sent later. He thinks that three neatly painted totem-poles would add to the attractiveness of our Indian camps. He is also going to make us a present of three dozen pink rompers for the babies. Pink is a color that is very popular with the superintendent of this asylum, who is deadly tired of blue! Our generous friend is likewise amusing himself with the idea of a couple of donkeys and saddles and a little red cart. Isn't it

nice that Gordon's father provided for him so amply, and that he is such a charitably inclined young man? He is at present lunching with Percy at the hotel, and, I trust, imbibing fresh ideas in the field of philanthropy.

Perhaps you think I have n't enjoyed this interruption to the monotony of institution life! You can say all you please, my dear Mrs. Pendleton, about how well I am managing your asylum, but, just the same, it is n't natural for me to be so stationary. I very frequently need a change. That is why Gordon, with his bubbling optimism and boyish spirits, is so exhilarating, especially as a contrast to too much doctor.

#### Sunday morning.

I must tell you the end of Gordon's visit. His intention had been to leave at four, but in an evil moment I begged him to stay over till 9:30, and yesterday afternoon he and Singapore and I took a long 'cross-country walk, far out of sight of the towers of this asylum, and stopped at a pretty little roadside inn, where we had a satisfying supper of ham and eggs and cabbage. Sing stuffed so disgracefully that he has been languid ever since.

The walk and all was fun, and a very grateful change from this monotonous life I lead. It would have kept me pleasant and contented for weeks if something most unpleasant had n't happened later. We had

a beautiful, sunny, care-free afternoon, and I'm sorry to have had it spoiled. We came back very unromantically in the trolley-car, and reached the J. G. H. before nine, just in good time for him to run on to the station and catch his train. So I did n't ask him to come in, but politely wished him a pleasant journey at the porte-cochère.

A car was standing at the side of the drive, in the shadow of the house; I recognized it, and thought the doctor was inside with Mr. Witherspoon. (They frequently spend their evenings together in the laboratory.) Well, Gordon, at the moment of parting, was seized with an unfortunate impulse to ask me to abandon the management of this asylum, and take over the management of a private house instead.

Did you ever know anything like the man? He had had the whole afternoon and miles of empty meadow in which to discuss the question, but instead he must choose our door-mat!

I don't know just what I did say: I tried to turn it off lightly and hurry him to his train. But he refused to be turned off lightly. He braced himself against a post and insisted upon arguing it out. I knew that he was missing his train, and that every window in this institution was open. A man never has the slightest thought of possible overhearers; it is always the woman who thinks of convention.

Being in a nervous twitter to get rid of him, I suppose I was pretty abrupt and tactless. He began

to get angry, and then by some unlucky chance his eye fell on that car. He recognized it, too, and, being in a savage mood, he began making fun of the doctor. "Old Goggle-eyes" he called him, and "Scatchy," and oh, the awfulest lot of unmannerly, silly things!

I was assuring him with convincing earnestness that I did n't care a rap about the doctor, that I thought he was just as funny and impossible as he could be, when suddenly the doctor rose out of his car and walked up to us.

I could have evaporated from the earth very comfortably at that moment!

Sandy was quite clearly angry, as well he might be, after the things he'd heard, but he was entirely cold and collected. Gordon was hot, and bursting with imaginary wrongs. I was aghast at this perfectly foolish and unnecessary muddle that had suddenly arisen out of nothing. Sandy apologized to me with unimpeachable politeness for inadvertently overhearing, and then turned to Gordon and stiffly invited him to get into his car and ride to the station.

I begged him not to go. I did n't wish to be the cause of any silly quarrel between them. But without paying the slightest attention to me, they climbed into the car, and whirled away, leaving me placidly standing on the door-mat.

I came in and went to bed, and lay awake for hours, expecting to hear—I don't know what kind of explosion. It is now eleven o'clock, and the doctor

has n't appeared. I don't know how on earth I shall meet him when he does. I fancy I shall hide in the clothes-closet.

Did you ever know anything as unnecessary and stupid as this whole situation? I suppose now I've quarreled with Gordon,— and I positively don't know over what,— and of course my relations with the doctor are going to be terribly awkward. I said horrid things about him,— you know the silly way I talk,— things I did n't mean in the least.

I wish it were yesterday at this time. I would make Gordon go at four.

SALLIE.

Sunday afternoon.

*Dear Dr. MacRae:*

That was a horrid, stupid, silly business last night. But by this time you must know me well enough to realize that I never mean the foolish things I say. My tongue has no slightest connection with my brain; it just runs along by itself. I must seem to you very ungrateful for all the help you have given me in this unaccustomed work and for the patience you have (occasionally) shown.

I do appreciate the fact that I could never have run this asylum by myself without your responsible presence in the background; and though once in a while, as you yourself must acknowledge, you have been pretty impatient and bad tempered and difficult, still I have never held it up against you, and I really did n't mean any of the ill-mannered things I said last night. Please forgive me for being rude. I should hate very much to lose your friendship. And we are friends, are we not? I like to think so.

S. McB.

*Dear Judy:*

I am sure I have n't an idea whether or not the doctor and I have made up our differences. I sent him a polite note of apology, which he received in abysmal silence. He did n't come near us until this afternoon, and he has n't by the blink of an eyelash referred to our unfortunate contretemps. We talked exclusively about an ichthyol salve that will remove eczema from a baby's scalp; then, Sadie Kate being present, the conversation turned to cats. It seems that the doctor's Maltese cat has four kittens, and Sadie Kate will not be silenced until she has seen them. Before I knew what was happening I found myself making an engagement to take her to see those miserable kittens at four o'clock to-morrow afternoon.

Whereupon the doctor, with an indifferently polite bow, took himself off. And that apparently is the end.

Your Sunday note arrives, and I am delighted to hear that you have taken the house. It will be beautiful having you for a neighbor for so long. Our improvements ought to march along, with you and the president at our elbow. But it does seem as though you ought to get out here before August 7. Are you sure that city air is good for you just now? I have never known so devoted a wife.

My respects to the president.

S. McB.

July 22.

*Dear Judy:*

Please listen to this!

At four o'clock I took Sadie Kate to the doctor's house to look at those cats. But Freddy Howland just twenty minutes before had fallen down-stairs, so the doctor was at the Howland house occupying himself with Freddy's collar-bone. He had left word for us to sit down and wait, that he would be back shortly.

Mrs. McGurk ushered us into the library; and then, not to leave us alone, came in herself on a pretense of polishing the brass. I don't know what she thought we'd do! Run off with the pelican perhaps.

I settled down to an article about the Chinese situation in the *Century*, and Sadie Kate roamed about at large examining everything she found, like a curious little mongoose.

She commenced with his stuffed flamingo and wanted to know what made it so tall and what made it so red. Did it always eat frogs, and had it hurt its other foot? She ticks off questions with the steady persistency of an eight-day clock.

I buried myself in my article and left Mrs. McGurk to deal with Sadie. Finally, after she had worked half-way around the room, she came to a portrait of



a little girl occupying a leather frame in the center of the doctor's writing desk — a child with a queer elf-like beauty, resembling very strangely our little Allegra. This photograph might have been a portrait of Allegra grown five years older. I had noticed the picture the night we took supper with the doctor, and had meant to ask which of his little patients she was. Happily I did n't!

"Who's that?" said Sadie Kate, pouncing upon it.

"It's the docthor's little gurrl."

"Where is she?"

"Shure, she's far away wit' her gran'ma."

"Where'd he get her?"

"His wife give her to him."

I emerged from my book with electric suddenness.

"His wife!" I cried.

The next instant I was furious with myself for having spoken, but I was so completely taken off my guard. Mrs. McGurk straightened up and became volubly conversational at once.

"And did n't he never tell you about his wife? She went insane six years ago. It got so it were n't safe to keep her in the house, and he had to put her away. It near killed him. I never seen a lady more beautiful than her. I guess he did n't so much as smile for a year. It's funny he never told you nothing, and you such a friend!"

"Naturally it's not a subject he cares to talk about,"

said I dryly, and I asked her what kind of brass polish she used.

Sadie Kate and I went out to the garage and hunted up the kittens ourselves; and we mercifully got away before the doctor came back.

But will you tell me what this means? Did n't Jervis know he was married? It's the queerest thing I ever heard. I do think, as the McGurk suggests, that Sandy might casually have dropped the information that he had a wife in an insane asylum.

But of course it must be a terrible tragedy and I suppose he can't bring himself to talk about it. I see now why he's so morbid over the question of heredity — I dare say he fears for the little girl. When I think of all the jokes I've made on the subject, I'm aghast at how I must have hurt him, and angry with myself and angry with him.

I feel as though I never wanted to see the man again. Mercy! did you ever know such a muddle as we are getting ourselves into?

Yours,

SALLIE.

P.S. Tom McCoomb has pushed Mamie Prout into the box of mortar that the masons use. She's parboiled. I've sent for the doctor.

July 24.

*My dear Madam:*

I have a shocking scandal to report about the superintendent of the John Grier Home. Don't let it get into the newspapers, please. I can picture the spicy details of the investigation prior to her removal by the "Cruelty."

I was sitting in the sunshine by my open window this morning reading a sweet book on the Froebel theory of child culture—never lose your temper, always speak kindly to the little ones. Though they may appear bad, they are not so in reality. It is either that they are not feeling well or have nothing interesting to do. Never punish; simply deflect their attention. I was entertaining a very loving, uplifted attitude toward all this young life about me when my attention was attracted by a group of little boys beneath the window.

"Aw — John — don't hurt it!"

"Let it go!"

"Kill it quick!"

And above their remonstrances rose the agonized squealing of some animal in pain. I dropped Froebel

and, running downstairs, burst upon them from the side door. They saw me coming, and scattered right and left, revealing Johnnie Cobden engaged in torturing a mouse. I will spare you the grisly details. I called to one of the boys to come and drown the creature quick! John I seized by the collar; and dragged him squirming and kicking in at the kitchen door. He is a big, hulking boy of thirteen, and he fought like a little tiger, holding on to posts and door-jambs as we passed. Ordinarily I doubt if I could have handled him, but that one sixteenth Irish that I possess was all on top, and I was fighting mad. We burst into the kitchen, and I hastily looked about for a means of chastisement. The pancake-turner was the first utensil that met my eyes. I seized it and beat that child with all my strength, until I had reduced him to a cowering, whimpering mendicant for mercy, instead of the fighting little bully he had been four minutes before.

And then who should suddenly burst into the midst of this explosion but Dr. MacRae! His face was blank with astonishment. He strode over and took the pancake-turner out of my hand and set the boy on his feet. Johnnie got behind him and clung! I was so angry that I really could n't talk; it was all I could do not to cry.

"Come, we will take him up to the office," was all the doctor said. And we marched out, Johnnie keeping as far from me as possible and limping conspic-

uously. We left him in the outer office, and went into my library and shut the door.

"What in the world has the child done?" he asked.

At that I simply laid my head down on the table and began to cry! I was utterly exhausted both emotionally and physically; it had taken all the strength I possessed to make the pancake-turner effective.

I sobbed out all the bloody details, and he told me not to think about it; the mouse was dead now. Then he got me some water to drink, and told me to keep on crying till I was tired; it would do me good. I am not sure that he did n't pat me on the head! Anyway, it was his best professional manner. I have watched him administer the same treatment a dozen times to hysterical orphans. And this was the first time in a week that we had spoken beyond the formality of "good morning"!

Well, as soon as I had got to the stage where I could sit up and laugh, intermittently dabbing my eyes with a wad of handkerchief, we began a review of Johnnie's case. The boy has a morbid heredity, and may be slightly defective, says Sandy. We must deal with the fact as we would with any other disease. Even normal boys are often cruel; a child's moral sense is undeveloped at thirteen.

Then he suggested that I bathe my eyes with hot water and resume my dignity. Which I did. And we had Johnnie in. He stood—by preference—through the entire interview. The doctor talked to

him, oh, so sensibly and kindly and humanely! John put up the plea that the mouse was a pest and ought to be killed. The doctor replied that the welfare of the human race demanded the sacrifice of many animals for its own good, not for revenge, but that the sacrifice must be carried out with the least possible hurt to the animal. He explained about the mouse's nervous system, and how the poor little creature had no means of defense. It was a cowardly thing to hurt it wantonly. He told John to try to develop imagination enough to look at things from the other person's point of view, even if the other person was only a mouse. Then he went to the bookcase and took down my copy of Burns, and told the boy what a great poet he was, and how all Scotchmen loved his memory.

"And this is what he wrote about a mouse," said Sandy, turning to the "Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie," which he read and explained to the lad as only a Scotchman could.

Johnnie departed penitent, and Sandy redirected his professional attention to me. He said I was tired and in need of a change. Why not go to the Adirondacks for a week? He and Betsy and Mr. Witherspoon would make themselves into a committee to run the asylum.

You know, that's exactly what I was longing to do! I need a shifting of ideas and some pine-scented air. My family opened the camp last week, and think I'm awful not to join them. They *won't* understand that