The Home Reading Circle

THE GIRL OF THE WHITE BUTTERFLIES.

By KATE UPSON CLARK.

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PART I. It was a large, bare house—the only one on the sandy Pine Hill road. An sir of desolation surrounded it, which young Mrs. Collis Wood felt painfully, as she reined up her gentle pony in front of it. Gloomy evergreen forests covered the hill, and even the little opening around the house looked dark.

though the sun was shining. She knocked at the door, and a stout, middle-aged woman responded. Mrs. Wood introduced herself, and the woman gave her own name as "Mrs. Keasbey-Mrs. Thomas Keasbey"-

with an air of pride. "Perhaps you may know, Mrs. Keas-bey," Mrs. Wood proceeded, when they were seated in the plain little parlor, "that I have a class of girls which meet every Sunday afternoon in the schoolhouse just at the foot of the hill here. Some of us enjoy driving out the two miles from the village, and staying there an hour then, and we hope it is a good thing for this neighborhood. I have noticed when I have been driving past here that you have a very bright

pretty girl. Wouldn't she like to join In spite of the gratified expression which the easy compliment brought to Mrs. Keasbey's flabby, but not un-

comely face, a flush of displeasure ac-"It was our Dorilla you saw, probably," she said with a nervous little laugh, "but she's been to school a sight. Mr. Keasbey and I have traveled mostly during the last three or four years, and Dorilla has been in a convent down south-not that we're specially religious, for we ain't-but it was a good place for her and she liked took all the prizes there-and she reads most of the time now, She's most seventeen, and we think maybe she's gone to school enough.

sort o' odd, and we want to get her out of the way of it." "Then wouldn't this be a good thing for her?" urged the visitor. "There are several nice girls in this neighborhood who go there, and it would be pleasant for a stranger like your Doril-la to get acquainted with them."

-no," dissented Mrs. Keasbey "We may not stay here very long, I guess it ain't worth while."

There was a pause, Mrs. Wood felt as though she were expected to go, but she decided to make another attempt. "Perhaps Dorilla would really like to come," she suggested. "Won't you let me ask her?"

"I don't know where she is. She may be off in the woods somewhere, and I can't very well leave to hunt for her, for Mr. Keasbey is home now, and I've got work to do. I reckon she don't

At this moment the front door oponed, and Dorilla herself entered. Her attire, like her mother's, was soiled and tawdry, but beyond this there was little resemblance between them. Dorilla was tall and slender, and fair, Her black hair was as soft as slik, and hung in a long braid down her back. Her eyes were dark, and their expression was almost wild, but her rather large mouth and nose were wellshaped and firm, and her whole bear-ing was quiet and pleasing. It was served Dorilla Keasbey, when passing the lonely house on Pine hill.

said the girl smiling, as she stood in the doorway. She held out her round arm, from which the loose sleeve fell away at the elbow. Three palpitating white butter-

flies were ranged in a row upon the delicate, blue-veined flesh. A fourth was fluttering around the girl's head. "Don't!" cried the mother, with a half shriek, "Push 'em off, Rill! Put 'em out doors!'

"Why, asked the girl, pulling away, as her mother tried to push her. "They

the first time, and Mrs. Keasbey per- now." formed the necessary introductions, in a reluctant manner which the daugh- ly. ter could not fail to observe. She listhe sweet-faced visitor proposed, only so, you frighten me.' knowing the "other girls" were men-"I don't think I care much about

them," she said, with a warm gleam in her dark eyes, "but I know I should like you-and I think I will go, "You better ask your father first." her mother warned her.

"I think I can manage him." "And you may bring your butterflies with you," Mrs. Wood said, smil-

"I always carry one," said the girl, skin,and was of the general shape of tom of this grief? the common white butterfly.

"How strange!" murmured the gentle

"Yes," said the girl, "and I have al-ways chased white butterflies ever since I was born. I feed them and keep never "amount to anything." them in my room—and I suppose I tame them—and make them like me in that way. But I believe they would like me anyway-that there was something between us. Don't you think that that "Perhaps so," replied Mrs. Wood,



slowly. "At any rate it is a beautiful omen. It betokens a white soul."

"In me?" questioned the girl, half mockingly. Yes, you.

"Oh, you don't know!" she murmurd. bitterly. What did you say, Rill?" demanded

her mother, suspiciously. "Take care!" Mrs. Collins Wood felt uncomfortable and rose to depart, more interested in this strange girl than ever.

"Then you will come on Sunday?" she said. "No," muttered the woman thickly. "She can't go and she knows she

Dorilla said nothing till she handed the reins to Mr. Wood. Then the girl intimated that she might appear at the school house on Sunday afternoon after all, and only laughed at the rather shocked and doubtful expression which appeared on her visitor's face. drave away, with the vision in her

mind of Dorilla standing there in the sunlight, with delicate, white-winged hings settling down upon her. Beside that picture, the sordid shackly house, with its vulgar mistress and its sinister itmosphere, sank into significance. Sure enough, on the following Sun-

day, the girl appeared at the school ouse, and after the lesson was over and the others had left, she explained to Mrs. Wood that she had come without he knowledge of her parents, "but," she went on, "it didn't make any difference. A lot of my father's friends came from the city last night, and we had to get a big dinner for them this noon. Father does some of the cooking, and Mikey and the others help. Mother loesn't like to have me spoil my hands. She and her father care a great deal more about keeping them white than do-and while they were eating, I

just crept away. They think I am in the woods-for I go off there by myself a great deal. It's no matter, anyway." "Oh!" Foreathed Mrs. Wood, still somewhat dublous as to the propriety of receiving Dorilla into her class under the circumstances, and wondering why these strange parents should wish to keep the girl cooped up by herself on Pine Hill; but her delight in the class, her evident love for her young teacher and, as the Sundays went by, and still she came, her high ethical perceptions and her thurst for spiritual light, determined Mrs. Wood to let things go as Dorilla wished. She said one day to her: "It is just as I said, Dorilla— the omen is true—you have a white

and see it more quickly than any of the rest of us." Again the mocking, half distressed look came over the girl's face and her eyes filled.

"You don't understand," she repeated in a voice full of misery.

Mrs. Wood did not call again at the house at Pine Hill, but sometimes she drove past it, on the chance of catching a glimpse of Dorilla. One day she the building of the bank, Thomas Keasdrove past it, on the chance of catchhad seen a man who was undoubtedly Mr. Thomas Keasbey. He was a short, thick-set man, slovenly, yet flashy, like

his wife Occasionally Mrs. Wood managed to get Dorilla to spend an afternoon with her in the village. Then they had long, no wonder that Mr. Wood had ob- affectionate talks, in which each told the other of the chief events of her life, though Dorilla was rather provokingly reserved in her accounts. Mrs. Wood gathered, however, that she had been born on her grandfather's farm, a little way from New York city; that later the family had removed to the town, where they had lived above Mr. Keasbey's locksmith shop; that they had periods of prosperity, during which they had traveled abroad, dressed well and had everything. These had been succeeded by times of poverty. Dorilla spoke most lovingly of the sisters at the convent where she had been so long. "I like me and I like them—and they are the sweetest things in the world." had been sick, but I grew well and strong there," she said. "Oh, I loved At this point she saw Mrs. Wood for the convent so! If I were only there She burst into tears as she spoke, and sobbed long and passionate-

"Don't! Don't, Dorilla!" begged her tened with interest to the scheme which gentle hostess. "You shake so and sob "Oh, you don't know," wept the girl.

Don't know what? Aren't they kind "Oh, yes. My father is good to me and proud that I have had some edu-

cation. He somehow expects to become rich again, and then he will make a fine lady of me, he says."

As Mrs. Wood stroked the girl's silken head, she cast about in her mind for threads of recollection which might unravel the mystery of Dorilla's tears, She remembered seeing once a pleassoberly. She rolled up her loose sleeve, ant-looking young man sitting beside and showed just above her elbow, a Dorilla on the Pine Hill doorstep. She singular birthmark. It stood out had spoken often of a certain "Mikey." white, even against Dorilla's white Could there be a love affair at the bot-

A few questions revealed the fact that Dorilla did, indeed, cherish an affection for "Mikey," which was disapproved by her father, who said that 'Mikey" had no "nerve" and would

"But he is a gentleman through and through," Dorilla concluded, with dilating eyes and blazing cheeks, "and I shall never like anybody else half so much. I know his name isn't pretty-but neither is mine. Derilla! It is the softest, sickest name I ever heard of. My mother got it out of a novel. But must go." Dorilla had stolen away from home as usual.

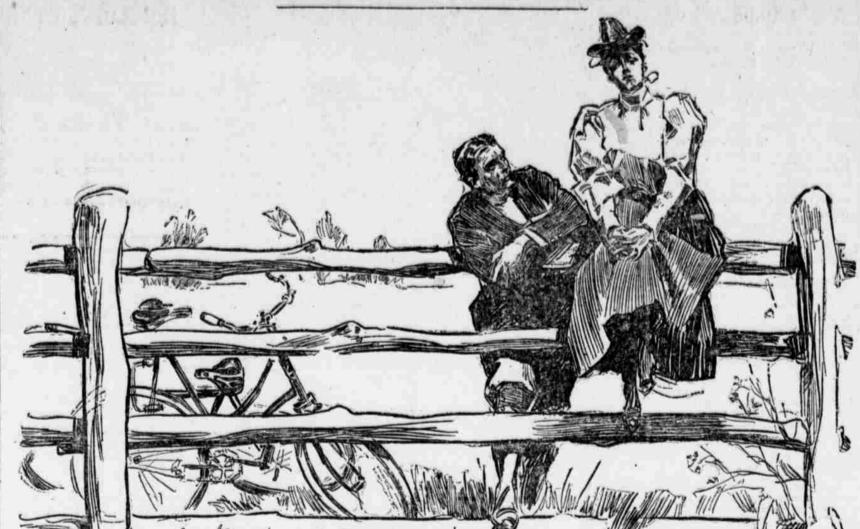
"I wish they would not keep you so closely," sighed Mrs. Wood. "Why do you suppose they won't let you have Dorilla's feelings toward her father any friends?"

The girl's eyes assumed their most unhappy and inscrutable look. "I-I don't understand myself," she stammered. "Maybe it is because we are so poor now-and my father wants

to wait until we can live better, before we have friends. Good-by."

The girl stooped her beautiful head to receive the kiss which her young teacher offered her. As she walked swiftly away in the direction of Pine lent a new force to moral convictions

"I wonder," speculated the happy the secret just revealed, which she fan-cled explained Dorilla's excitement, "I thoughts. The squalor and confusion wonder if I am doing right in asking of the shackly house on Pine hill an-



IS BICYCLING BAD FOR THE HEART?

wrong. At any rate, I will think about it a little longer before I make any One day, late in September, Thomas Dorilla to do a strange errand, strange event to her, who was accustomed to strange errands. She was expert with her pencil. He wished her to visit the rooms of the Woman's exchange in the village, buy a few articles there, and take such notice of the rooms that she

could make an accurate plan of them

'The Woman'e exchange rooms were situated on the second and top floor of had in her an element of the superwhat was called "the Bank block" in natural; but to Dorilla herself this elethe village. They were three or four in number, and were under the charge of a charitable organization of women, prominent among whom was Mrs. Collis Wood. Preserves, sweetmeats and needle-work were sold there, as in most such places. In one room there was a sort of an intelligence office-in another, a small public library. In the summer there was a good many city boarders in the vicinity, who patronized the exchange. It had been welli managed, and had more than paid for itself, besides aiding many poor women.

Directly underneath these rooms was

soul. You always know what is right the village bank, one of the richest and best-conducted country banks in the state. Mr. Collis Wood was the cashier. He was a young man, but he had grown up in the business and understood it thoroughly. He had married the daughter of the bank president. Altogether, he possessed a social and business standing second to none in the place.

bey had ascertained that a steel ceiling just above it was topped by a layer of cement, three feet in thickness. This cement was as hard as marble. Weeks might be required, with the limit of available hours per night, and with the only tools which could be used in such a case, to cut a hole through such a ceiling, large enough to admit the body of a man-yet such a hole Mr. Keasbey proposed to make. He had secured a complete plan of the bank. Now he must get the exact plan of the rooms above it. His daughter, with her refined face, quick eye and skillful hand, was just the one to do the work unsuspected-if he could only get her to undertake it.

PART II.

It was on a Saturday afternoon, that Dorilla's father asked her to make herself ready to go to the village. When she had her hat and gloves on, he briefly outlined her errand. "I am thinking of putting up a block

of buildings myself," he concluded, with a wink at his wife. "Then why don't you go to the people who built this, and ask them for

the plan?" she inquired, with the cloudy look in her eyes which always came when she was deeply moved. "I can't afford it, you little goose, he answered with a laugh. would charge me big money."

Dorilla turned; slowly walked over the hill to the village; did her errand, and gave the plan to her father, having finished it as soon as she was well concealed by the trees on her way home; but she felt vaguely uncomfortable over what she had done, and she went back into the woods after a little, and sat there on a rock thinking for a long

In her thought she lived over her life again. She remembered how fondly she had adored her father before she went to the convent. During the years there, she had seen little of him. She had usually spent her vacations with the sisters, wha had made a pet of her. Now and then she had staid with her father and mother at some hotel, The quality of these hotels had de-clined steadily during the last two years, and Thomas Kearbey had grown glomy and irritable. Still, when he had come to the convent to see her he had brought her beautiful presents, and at the hotels, he had been fond and proud of her, and she had still loved him.

This summer, however, during the ten or twelve weeks since the Keasbeys had moved into the Pine hill house, had undergone a change. He was still kind to her and to her mother, when he was himself; but he often drank deeply-especially when the five or six friends whom he called his "business partners" came out to spend the night with him. Dorilla could dimly recollect such scenes far back in her childhood, but she had not known them in recent years, and they shocked her. Her lessons in the school house had Hill, a white butterfly went dancing formed in the convent. They and the indirect influence of Mrs. Collis Woods, in those long, delightful talks which young wife, as she stood watching the Dorilla contrived to steal now and air figure of the girl, and thinking of then on a weekday, were insensibly her so much to come here—and all. noyed and chafed upon her more and maybe we'll have a little more."

It seems as though it couldn't be more. The atmosphere of tobacco. They did not sit long at the table

smoke and rum which filled it when the "friends" had been there nauseated and disgusted her. Her quick intuition led her to believe that her father's "busi-Keasbey, who was at home oftener ness" was not strictly legitimate. The now than during the summer, asked awful truth was only just beginning awful truth was only just beginning to dawn upon her, but all summer,

since she had come away from the convent in early June, she had felt that matters were not right. The drunken carousals, the oaths and allusions of crime-which her father always tried to stop in her presence-all the circumstances which surrounded her, disressed and mystified her. Mrs. Collis Wood often felt as though the girl ment seemer even stronger. She felt like two people. She could not realize that she was the same girl who had

chased the white butterflies in the convent garden, studier her lessons in the quiet school room, and built her fondest hopes on the winning of first medals. Now there was this awful secrecy -these coarse men coming to the house at night-always by night-the coning which she heard said-to make no

horrible nightmare. Dorilla wiped the dishes in the kitchen for her mother, saying little or nothing. Then they both sat down for a moment on the cool back steps. Presently Mrs. Keasbey spoke chidingly. "What was you whispering and talk-

"Yes, I know," interrupted Dorilla, impatiently. "I'm tired of hearing about it. I wish you would never mention Mikey to me again."

Mrs. Keasbey fumed and fretted on weakly, but the girl made no further Suddenly a great white moth came fluttering down out of the darkness and settled upon her ruffled hair, swaying his velvet wings back and forth. The mother started as she saw devil himself."

"Where did that come from, Dor-

"Where they always come from when I'm around," laughed the girl with a little note of triumph in her voice. Mrs. Keasbey got up and went into theh ouse. Sth hsafwlea tmhe thmah the house. She was half-afraid of Dorilla, when she was in this mood,

Two terrible weeks followed. The men remained at the house all the time sleeping by day and roaming abroad by night. Two or three times the girl questioned her mother, but Mrs. Keasbey either answered nothing at all, or in meaningless general terms. The housework, even when performed after that lady's easy methods, was a heavy burden, though the men attempted to help, and one of them, who was a baker by trade, rendered considerable assistance. They drank more than usual and Mr. Keasbey was taciturn and morose. Even Mikey was nervous and schoolhouse, nor any visit with her teacher during the week. She was in-wardly excited to the highest pitch.

It seemed as though she must go crazy. On a certain Friday night, the crisis came. For two weeks, every evening, Thomas Keasbey and his men, gathering singly, from different directions and at different hour, had effected, by means of skeleton keys and other simple tools, an entrace into the room which lay above the vault of the bank They had raised the carpet there, re moved some planks, and bored into the adamant cement below them. By cautous and persistent labor, they had now hewed out a jagged hole in it, large enough to admit them, one by one, into the bank below. The stee ceiling had been partially drilled through. Every night, the dust and fragments had been neatly swept into bags, the planks and carpet had been replaced, the doors and windows had been securely relocked, and the great burglary had been a little nearer its summation-and Thomas Keasbey had as yet no reason to fear that the slightest suspicion had fastened upon

their movements. That day the men slept long and oundly. It was after six when they assembled for their evening meal. The October night was warm and close, but they dared not have a curtain up nor a window open. Dorilla and her mother waited on them in silence. The men were nervous and thirsty, but Thomas Keasbey would not let them

"We want clear heads tonight, boys," "Dorilla, fill the glasses once out of this bottle. When we get back,

and Mrs. Keasbey and Dorilla, assisted from the first. Struck with a paralysis by Mikey, cleared up after them in a few minutes. Mikey was very gentle though she would never move again. that night. Even Mrs. Keasbey, who was always "short" with him, in spite of his solicitous efforts to please her, could not help softening a little when she saw how deft and kind he was, but when she marked the glances which

passed between him and Dorilla, her anger rose again. "It will take more than Thomas thinks to part those two," she mused. But in her soul she felt sure, after all, that the iron will of her husband would effect his purpose. It did not seem to her than anything could be stronger than he.

Mikey at last joined them in the parlor, into which the door stood open. Dorilla could hear that the talking which was going on there was excited, though it was subdued in tone.

Mrs. Keasbey declared that she was so tired she couldn't sit up a moment longer, and pottered off to her room upstairs. It was only 9 o'clock, but she recommended that Dorilla should stant injunctions to her to repeat noth- go to bed also. The girl obediently followed up the stairs and shut, the door acquaintances-these expectations of of her room behind her. She heard her wealth in the near future-and then- mother moving about on the other side there was Mikey, with his handsome of the partition. Then all was silent face, the love which he had declared there, but Dorilla herself made no for her and which she herself saw no preparations to retire for the night. Inharm in returning-and yet to which stead, she sat by the open window gazher father was so unalterably opposed. ing into the warm darkness, and lis-It was all so deeply confusing and be- tening to the rustling of the pines. wildering that it seemed to her like a After awhile she went out and sat on the stairway.

That Saturday night, five of the Thomas Keasbey had heard his wife and daughter depart for their rooms, and he supposed that by this time they there was a great supper to clear away, there was a great supper to clear away, were sound asleep. He was therefore Thomas Keasbey had heard his wife talking unreservedly with the men in the parlor. Dorilla could hear almost every word which was said there. She heard directions given for the use of the explosives by means of which the bank safe was to be blown open, and ing so withm Mikey for, Rilla? You what was to be done with the booty, when the job was completed and the smoke had cleared away. Then words fell from Mikey which made her blood

run cold. "The cashier sleeps there now, while all this money is there, as well as the watchman. We can manage the watchman well enough, but two of them won't be so easy-and the cashier is likely to be an ugly customer-that Wood. They say he fsn't afraid of the

"Mike, you're a --- fool!" Dorilla heard Thomas Keasbey rejoin flercely. "What's that bottle of chloroform for? pus 'usur inor ior it to usnous s,eleul, it's no use. Then there is that coil of rope, and you ought to have three or four good gags in your pockets, every one of you. Tie his hands and eyes as quick as you can-and don't ask again what you will do with any man who gets in our way." Dorilla heard allusions which showed

her plainly what use had been made of her drawings. The whole terrible plot stood revealed to her in all its ghast-She reproached herself for a fool that she had not understood it son, Prop.

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(To be Continued).

at's tail.

salling every week day from New York to OLD POINT COMFORT, VIR-GINIA BEACH AND RICHMOND, VA. The Cat's Fault. Father-Tommy, stop pulling that

I'm holding the tail, the cat's

A RIVER IN ARCADIA.

Beneath Arcadian skies of blue And romance haunted air.
The tangled mountain woodlands through,
'Twixt moss-grown banks where maiden hair

Uncurls its fronds of lacework rare, From rock to rock and pool to pool, Where light the shadows quiver, With depths all clear and waters cool From down the laughing river. Here, where it widens broad and deep,

When Arcady was new, The Indian drove with graceful sweep His frail built bark canoe; And, treading lightly to the brink Of some deep shaded pool, The stag, broad antiered, stooped to drink

he waters clear and cool; While played the sunbeams to and fro With many a glancing quiver, And now in haste, and now more slow Flowed on the shining river.

Slow loltering through the meadow: green,
As if to catch the gladness
Of sun-kissed grass and emerald sheen,
Reflected back in sadness;

Then leaping like a thing possessed, A demon struck with madness! From rock to rock a foaming swirl Of waters sweeping down, From bank to bank a secthing whirl,

A curling torrent brown; With many a rippling quiver, Again serene, 'neath shadows cool Flows on the peaceful river, —The Century.

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The Public drank too much. Dorilla could not get away on Sunday for the class at the Knows a Good Thing When It Sees It. . . .

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