

"I was expecting you," she said, laughing, and making place in the hammock by her side, which I accepted with the most decorous alacrity.

"I am glad to hear you say so," I replied. "I hope the other young ladies will not think me bold in presuming upon such a slight acquaintance."

"Never fear," said she. "They, like myself, will think of it as the jolliest sort of a lark." I thought so, too.

"But where are your companions?" I inquired. "I haven't caught even a glimpse of them since I came."

"Oh," said she, "they have gone to Edenton on their wheels for the mail. They'll be back presently."

"And you are here all alone?" I asked, in some surprise.

"Oh, goodness, no; there's Mrs. Pingry—our chaperone—and yourself."

I glanced around, half expecting to see the old lady seated somewhere conveniently near, where she could keep a watchful eye on her charming protégée.

"Oh, you'll not see her," said my vis-a-vis. "We led her such a chase, up hill and down dale, this afternoon that she declares she is completely exhausted. I guess she took to her hammock just after tea."

"Doesn't your conscience hurt you?" I asked, reproachfully.

"Oh, dear, no; mine isn't of the New England type," she replied. "Besides, she needn't have gone along. Anyhow, it has taught the dear old soul a lesson."

"She is not very strict with you," I ventured.

"Not very. We're all so dignified in her presence that she has a world of confidence in us."

At that moment I caught the sound of laughing voices, and glancing down toward the lake I descried the bicycle lamps of the three other girls flitting along toward us. It was already rather dark, and as they approached the foremost cried out,

"Ho, Dolly—Dolly, here's a letter from Tylerton for you. I suppose he loves you as well as ever." Then, as she observed me, "I beg pardon, I did not know that Camp Chesuncook had a visitor."

My companion laughed merrily. "Come here, girls," she commanded, "and meet our benefactor of yesterday."

They came up slowly and hesitatingly, but under the witchery