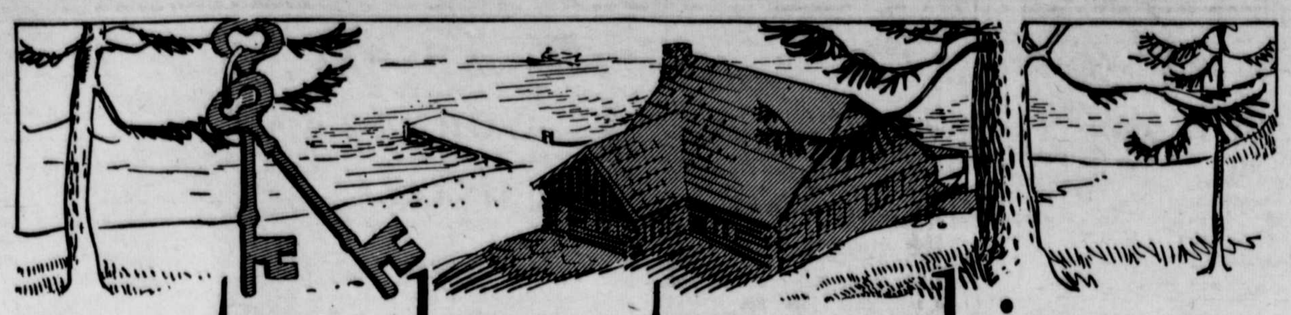

two keys to a cabin

BY LIDA LARRIMORE

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CHAPTER XII—Continued

—18—

"But since I took extra courses at High this year practically over Mother's dead body, I have to stick at them." Debby walked reluctantly toward the door. "She wanted me to go to college."

"Why didn't you want to go?" Gay asked. "If you dislike it here—"

Debby glanced away, a flush staining her olive cheeks. "I'm talking too much, I guess." She turned, came back to Gay, threw her arms around her. "I think you're lovely," she said in a rush of impulsive words. "I don't know quite how John managed it—you—but I'm glad he did. Don't you listen to anything anybody says, not that they'll say much but—"

"What do you mean, Debby?" Gay asked, puzzled.

But Debby did not explain. "I've got to go," she mumbled, not looking at Gay, and went running out of the room.

"You shouldn't have gone to extra trouble for me, Mrs. Houghton," Gay said, as John's mother came into the living-room with a tray.

"It's no extra trouble." Ann Houghton arranged dishes on the small table before the open fire in the living-room. "It's warmer here than in the dining-room."

John's mother smiled faintly. Her skin was dark like John's and Debby's. Her dark eyes, deeply set under straight dark brows, were as somber as John's were when he was troubled. She held her taller than average figure erect but rather, Gay thought, because some indomitable purpose, through a succession of years, had stiffened her spine, than because she realized or gave a thought to the decorative value of a fine carriage. Her hair was lovely, dark with only a sprinkling of gray. It waved back from her forehead and temples, softening the bony contours of her face. Properly dressed and with the stiffness relaxed she would have the distinction Uncle John had had. Gay wondered if she had ever had his warmth and humor, if she ever laughed aloud.

"The fire is pleasant." Gay poured coffee into a thin porcelain cup with a red sea-weed pattern. "I had no idea it could be so cold here in March."

"We're accustomed to the cold." Ann Houghton, seated in a wing-chair at the opposite side of the hearth, took a length of knitting from a bag hanging on the arm of the chair. She was never idle, Gay had observed in the two days she had spent in John's home. Her housekeeping was a ritual meticulously performed. In those moments, as now, when she was not engaged in some active task, her long hands with prominent knuckles and nails, nicely shaped but unmanicured, were busy with knitting or sewing. "It's healthy but not very comfortable, especially since you've just come from Florida."

"I don't mind at all," Gay said quickly. "Can't we go for a walk?"

"I'm afraid I can't spare the time," John's mother said in the cool deliberate tone which held Gay at an impassable distance. "But you go, if you like. Only you must wear Debby's moccasins." Her glance fell to Gay's sturdy but daintily fashioned oxfords. "It's so easy to get your toes frosted. I shouldn't want you to suffer from chilblains the rest of your life."

"You would probably enjoy a walk," John's mother said after an interval of silence during which the needles had clicked and Gay had determinedly finished her breakfast. "It's dull for you while Sarah and Debby are in school. If we had known you were coming, we might have arranged something entertaining, though everybody has been storm-bound during the past two days."

"It was inconsiderate of me to have brought a blizzard. Coming almost directly from Florida, I should have done better."

Ann Houghton's faint smile was her only acknowledgment of the pleasantry.

"I don't, ordinarily, encourage gaiety during the week," she went on. "This is Sarah's first year of teaching in the high school. She is naturally eager to make a favorable impression and she isn't very strong."

Sarah looked strong enough, Gay thought, though a little subdued and unhappy. No, not actively unhappy, resigned. A little gaiety, the thought continued, would do Sarah more good than her mother's persistent coddling. Still that was Sarah's concern—and her mother's.

"It's pleasant just to be here," Gay said. She pushed her chair back from the table, slipped her hand into the pocket that contained her cigarette case, reconsidered. "I've enjoyed my breakfast."

Ann Houghton folded the knitting into the bag, rose briskly from the wing-chair with, Gay thought, an appearance of relief. She took a tray from the window sill and began to clear the small table from which Gay had eaten her breakfast.

"Let me help you." Gay, too, rose, stood watching Ann Houghton's competent movements.

"No, thank you. I know just where everything goes." Ann Houghton's voice was gracious but chillingly reserved. "Amuse yourself if you can with our limited resources. I suppose that John will come tonight."

"He said he hoped to when he called last night."

Ann Houghton glanced at the window through which sunlight streamed in dazzlingly across a frosting of snow on the sill.

"I hope he won't attempt it unless the roads are clear." She turned to place the vase containing the ivy and geranium on the mantel above the fireplace.

Was she going to tell her that John wasn't strong? Gay wondered. As though anything, other than an emergency call would keep him from coming now that the storm was over.

"John is accustomed to icy roads, I suppose," she said, a faint note of exasperation in her voice. "He drives all winter."

Ann Houghton took up the tray. "It's foolish of me to worry," she said, "but when his work isn't involved, I don't like him to take unnecessary risks. Will you go for a walk now or wait until the sun is warmer? I do the upstairs work on Friday while Huldah is cleaning downstairs. It's tiresome for you to be exposed to all the household machinery but when there are only two of us to keep the wheels turning we must observe routine. I try to spare Sarah, and Debby hasn't a natural bent toward housework, I'm afraid."

"Let me help you," Gay urged, smiling, ashamed of the exasperation her voice had revealed. "I haven't a natural bent for housework, either, but I can learn."

Again Ann Houghton smiled faintly.

"You're far too decorative, my dear, to—"

"To be useful?"

"—to be expected to be useful," Ann Houghton finished smoothly. "Besides, it's cold upstairs. No, you stay here by the fire until it's warm enough for a walk. Have you an interesting book? There are magazines on the table."

"I'll amuse myself." The warmth and friendliness faded out of Gay's voice. She walked to a table against the wall and picked up a magazine.

John's mother went out of the room. Gay returned to the hearth, dropped into a chair, sat with the magazine unopened on her lap. Ann Houghton resented her, she thought. It was obvious, though no reference had been made to it, that she was opposed to John's marrying her. That was a little ironical. Mothers of eligible sons had courted her persistently since she was seventeen, that toothy dowager in England, the Swiss countess who was a patroness of the school she had attended, mothers in New York and Palm Beach and Southampton. She was relieved when her engagement to Todd had put an end to that form of pursuit.

It didn't matter, except just now, when she was here—except that she felt, or imagined she felt, a difference in John. The afternoon he had brought her here, at dinner, later in the evening, she had felt Ann Houghton's influence working a change in John. It was nothing she could define, a feeling that he was seeing her through her mother's eyes, weighing her words, her gestures, her reactions to the family life familiar to him by some scale of values which his mother supplied.

A feeling— She had imagined it, perhaps. But when he came tonight, would she feel the same tension and strain? There was no change in Ann Houghton's manner toward her. Would John—?

But this brooding was morbid. She needed to get out of the house. The sun was shining and the sky was clear and blue. She wanted to explore the town where John had lived as a child, a boy, when he had spent his summers during the period that he had been in college and medical school. She would ask for Debby's moccasins, since that seemed to be important. The magazine slid to the floor as she rose from the chair.

Climbing the stairs, she heard no sound on the upper floor, but as she walked along the hall, she caught a glimpse through the open door of John's room of Ann Houghton's brown skirt and dark red cardigan sweater. She paused in the hall outside the door, meaning to ask for Debby's moccasins and to tell Mrs. Houghton that she was going to take a walk.

The words, forming on her lips, were checked there. The position of Ann Houghton's figure held her motionless, silent. She stood with her back to the door, the palms of her hands pressed flat against the wall, looking at a long framed panel between the windows. Her shoulders sagged. Every line of her body, usually erect, drooped in some momentarily acknowledged defeat. As Gay watched, her head bent slowly forward until it touched the panel against the wall.

Gay drew back out of sight and called her name. The reply, when it came, was controlled, free from any hint of emotion. Ann Houghton's shoulders were erect. She turned from adjusting a fold of the crisp white curtain at the window to glance with an inquiring expression and a faint smile toward the door.

"If you can tell me where Debby's moccasins are," she said, her own voice controlled with effort, "I think I'll go out now."

"They're in her wardrobe, I think. I'll get them. Debby's wardrobe

John's mother smiled faintly.

always resembles the spot that the cyclone hit. You'll need heavy socks, too."

As John's mother passed her, walking out into the hall, Gay glanced back into the room. The panel, as she had remembered, framed photographs of John taken at various ages. She followed his mother's straight back and briskly tapping heels feeling a curious sense of pity mingled with resentment, exasperation, fear.

CHAPTER XIII

The clock on the mantel, flanked by Chinese vases and branching clumps of coral, struck the half hour. John's grandmother, Abigail Houghton, broke off an account of some early misdemeanor of John's and turned her bright quizzical glance toward the sofa where Gay and Debby sat beside the fire-place in which a cannel-coal fire in a polished grate burned with blue and orange flames.

"You children will take your death when you go out," she said, "bundled into all that wool and fur, hot as it is in here."

"Might as well come clean, Granny," Debby laughed. "You've got a date and you want us to go."

The spare little woman in black silk with lace at her wrists and throat, chuckled as though she found her granddaughter's remark extremely entertaining.

"The Reverend Henry Longfellow Blake and his wife are coming for supper," she said. "I must give Hannah a hand. She'll leave the sherry out of the pudding if I'm not there to see that it goes in."

"But should you put sherry in the minister's pudding?" Debby asked.

"It makes for a more sociable evening. I notice he always stops berating me for not going to church after he's had his dessert." She grasped the arms of her chair and rose to a standing position. A cane with a crooked gold handle fell to the floor. "You can't expect an old woman who hobbles around on a stick to go to church," she added as Debby put the cane in her hand.

"But you go to the movies, Granny."

"Which has not escaped the Reverend Henry's attention." Abigail Houghton's sherry-colored eyes twinkled in her russet face touched with color on the cheek-bones. She turned to Gay who came to her across the priceless Chinese oriental rug which covered the floor of the small parlor from wall to wall. "I'm glad you came to see me," she said. "Gabriella. That's a pretty name. A relief from our Deborahs and Abigails and Anns. French, isn't it?"

"French originally, I suppose. My grandmother was Gabriella Lyons. She arrived in New York by way of New Orleans. They call me Gay."

"And quite rightly so, too, I expect." Gay took the small veined hand John's grandmother extended, looked down into her friendly eyes beneath neat scallops of waved white hair. "You must come to see me when the minister isn't. I'll make a pudding for you."

"I'm afraid there won't be time this trip. I'm going into Portland with John tomorrow."

"Oh, Gay! Are you?" Debby wailed.

"You're making us a very short visit." Gay was conscious of the quizzical expression that narrowed the old lady's eyes.

"Yes," she said. "I'm sorry." She was sorry here, in this small warm house, cluttered with curios, but bright and cheerful. Looking down into Abigail Houghton's face, wrinkled softly like a russet apple which has lain too long in a basket, she thought she knew how she had looked as a girl. She'd had reddish hair, she thought, with those eyes and—

"What are you thinking, my dear?"

"I was thinking how you must have looked when you were a girl," Gay said, a little disconcerted, conscious that she had been staring. "Did you—Do you mind if I ask—Did you have freckles?"

The old lady laughed. "Hundreds of them. And red hair. I was very plain. It's been a cross all my life."

"Applesauce, Granny! You know you snatched Grandfather from one of the most famous beauties in the state of Maine."

"And a good thing for him that I did." Her eyes lifted across Gay's shoulder to the painting, which hung above the mantel, of a blue-eyed gentleman with curling brown hair and side-burns, wearing a brass-buttoned blue coat. "She had an unpleasant disposition." Her eyes returned to meet Gay's gently smiling glance. "John must bring you to see me often. When is the wedding to be?"

The question was unexpected. It had not been asked before. Neither John's mother or his sisters had referred to the subject of marriage. Strange that she felt an odd reluctance to make a reply—

"I don't know," she said evenly but with quickened breathing. "John — You know—"

"Yes, I know." The old lady's voice was impatient. "But there's a way around anything if you're smart enough to find it. I met my husband at a Fourth of July picnic and we were married the first of August. Neither of us ever regretted it. At least I know I didn't and if he did he was too much of a gentleman to tell me."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Forest Service Workers Get 'On-the-Job' Training

The United States Forest service is training employees through "experience clinics," "on-the-job" training, and "planned experience." Such training provides a short cut to information and experience. Workers on the service roll are listed under more than 30 different types of skilled labor and 17 professions. They are scattered over about one-thirteenth of the United States land area.

Skilled workers engaged in forestry operations include fire guards, packers, bull-dozer operators, powder men, road locators, radio operators, telephone linemen, and clerical workers. The professional classifications include such positions as administrators, foresters, engineers, range examiners, silviculturists, accountants, economists, ecologists, chemists, and airplane pilots.

Peter Keplinger, forest service training chief, reports that officers who spend some time in training employees, such as that given in fire-control schools, may expect the workers to accomplish more during the remainder of the year because of the short cuts and improved methods learned. He points out that many employees in some of the lower-pay positions take greater interest in their work when they understand its value to the public and its use in saving time for other service workers.

Sportlight

by GRANTLAND RICE

THE subject matter of "head lifting" in golf may not seem to be as dramatic as a pennant race or a heavyweight fight, but it is far more important to some 2,000,000 or 3,000,000 suffering human beings, not overlooking the stars.

You hear the cry, "Heads up," in baseball. But this cry is connected entirely with morale, not with any physical attitude. And a golf ball isn't flying waist high or shoulder high as a baseball flies.

Grantland Rice

"I didn't raise my head to be a golfer," should still be the game's theme song.

A certain well-respected instructor writes me that I have overplayed the importance of keeping the head still or down, or the chin back, through the swing.

"If you do this," he comments, "you immediately stiffen up. Just think of looking at the ball."

The fact remains, however, that if you notice the slow motion strokes of all star golfers you will find the head is still unlifted, the chin slightly back, well after the ball has been hit.

How can a duffer get by with something the star golfer can't afford to do?

Anchor to the Swing

"The head," as Long Jim Barnes told me years ago, "must be the anchor to the swing." Long Jim is right, as usual.

"The chin back" matter, advocated by Alex Morrison, even before the backswing started was first used by Jerry Travers, then by Walter Hagen, then by Bobby Jones. They merely wanted to be sure of this one detail in advance. Each tilted his chin back, to the right, just as the backswing started. And each kept it there until after the ball was well on its way.

"I've found out," Jerry Travers, winner of five national titles, told me once, "that on an average I move my head incorrectly about six times during a round and that means I've missed at least five shots."

To let the chin move only an inch or so towards the line of flight, ahead of time, means almost certain trouble.

"You lifted your head on that one."

How often has every golfer heard this somber tip from a playing companion? You know?

How can one break up this fault? In the first place, head lifting is usually the result of three advance faults—

1. Too much tension.
2. Muddled or befuddled or poor concentration.
3. Too fast a backswing and too fast a starting downswing.

Mind on the Ball

How can you keep your eye on the ball when your mind is on some bunker, pond, out-of-bounds, or other trouble on beyond? I've always believed that "keep your mind on the ball" was a far better slogan than "keep your eye on the ball." The eye travels with the working of the mind.

The main trouble with most golf swings on the average side is the mind working back of the swing.

This doesn't apply so much to those who came up as caddies to be stars, because these golfers have picked up an instinctive method. They were first imitators. Then the fundamentals became thoroughly set—except in big championships, where they also blow up, through tension and faulty concentration. One good example was Snead's opening 67 and his closing 81 in the recent National Open.

The average golfer has no such foundation to build on. He must use his meager resources to the limit—and one of these beyond any doubt is head action. And back of head action there must be mind action.

"How can I keep my head still?"

In the first place, the main idea is to think largely of the backswing. The main idea should be to eliminate anything beyond the ball itself. Never mind the ponds and the bunkers. The ball has to stop somewhere.

The next move is to be sure of a smooth, unhurried backswing. Don't be too anxious to hammer the cover off the ball. Golf balls have tough covers. Don't be too anxious to hurry the downswing. A slight pause at the top will help.

Try to forget all that poisonous terrain beyond the ball. Try to make yourself keep your head where it belongs until you think the ball has landed—somewhere. It can't land in much worse places than it usually locates for a habitat, awaiting the slash of the recovering niblick.

If the head remains as "anchor to the swing," the swing can't be far wrong. But it is an action that must be watched at every shot. It can't be taken for granted, for it won't work that way. You are fighting human nature.

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HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONS

Excellent pads for the stair-carpet can be made by covering a fairly thick pad of newspaper with hessian, felt or cloth.

* * *

Meat loaves will cook quicker and more evenly if baked in a tube cake pan.

* * *

Cooling Oven.—Sometimes an oven that always overheats can be cooled by putting open pans of water in it during baking. Water absorbs considerable heat and may reduce the oven temperature as much as 50 degrees.

* * *

Keeping Cool.—If your home is heated by warm air ducts, get the furnace man to install a proper fan in the basement which will drive the cool cellar air up into the house through the ducts.

* * *

Save left-over toast for use as bread crumbs. Run it once through the food chopper or roll it out with the rolling pin. Store in a covered glass jar.

* * *

Lime marks on bath tub, caused by hard water, can be removed by rubbing with peroxide of hydrogen.

* * *

For Summer Comfort. — Use awnings on all windows exposed directly to the sun for they reduce, by as much as one-third, the amount of heat entering. Awnings are far superior to blinds in this respect unless the latter are outside the windows.

* * *

If bread has gone stale, hold the loaf over steam from the kettle for a few moments, then place in a hot oven for 10 minutes. Dry on a wire tray.

* * *

Brass will need less cleaning if, after being polished in the usual way, it is rubbed with a cloth slightly moistened with furniture polish or cream.

States' Electoral Votes

The number of electoral votes a state has is determined by that state's population, the same as its representation in congress is apportioned. Each state has as many electoral votes as it has members in congress, that is, the number of members in the house of representatives plus its two senators.—Pathfinder.

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● It is a good habit to form, the habit of consulting the advertisements every time we make a purchase, though we have already decided just what we want and where we are going to buy it. It gives us the most priceless feeling in the world: the feeling of being adequately prepared.

● When we go into a store, prepared beforehand with knowledge of what is offered and at what price, we go as an expert buyer, filled with self-confidence. It is a pleasant feeling to have, the feeling of adequacy. Most of the unhappiness in the world can be traced to a lack of this feeling. Thus advertising shows another of its manifold facets—shows itself as an aid toward making all our business relationships more secure and pleasant.