SIR JOHN AND THE AMERICAN GIRL

LILIAN BELL

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Lilian Bell

Sir John and the American Girl

by

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"The Expatriates"
"The Love Affairs of an Old Maid" etc.

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TO

MY BROTHER

JAMES EDWARD BELL

FIRST LIEUTENANT 17TH INFANTRY

U. S. A., MANILA

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"NOW that we're engaged," she said, looking up at him with a smile in her eyes which he never had seen before, "let's begin at the beginning and go clear back to the time when we first saw each other."

"What's the good?" he said, contentedly. "We're engaged, and that's the end of it."

"No, that's the beginning of it."

They had driven to the citadel to see the sun set, and as they leaned on the parapet the whole of Cairo, with the Pyramids beyond, was spread before them like a panorama.

"What did you see when you first saw me?" she asked.

"I don't know. What did you see when you first saw me?"

"Well, I'll begin, just to encourage you. The *Augusta Victoria* had touched at Genoa, and we were pretty well tired of each other by

that time and anxious to see if somebody new and interesting and handsome wouldn't come on board."

"But nobody of that sort came!"

"Now wait a minute! Don't interrupt! And Mrs. Richards and I were on the upper deck, when we saw"—she hesitated and closed her eyes dreamily—"when we saw a tall, fair Englishman, very big, very broad, very much sunburned, in tweed shooting-jacket and knickerbockers and rough wool stockings and golf shoes, and he came clumping towards us—"

"Clumping?" he said.

"Yes; the nails in your shoes made you clump. As you came clumping towards us I saw that that white thing on your head was a Stanley helmet, and I saw that your eyes were near-sighted and light blue, except when you are excited, when they get black, and there was a little dent in your nose, which only showed when one looked straight at you, and didn't interfere with your profile, and that your mouth went up first on the right side when you laughed, and that your laugh when it did ring out was hearty and generous, and I knew that I liked you from the very first instant."

As she felt his hand close over hers, she opened her eyes and laughed.

"Did you notice all that of me at first?"

"All that and more," she said, "for I saw your servant following you with your gun-case and your polo things and your golf-sticks and your tennis-racket and The Bath-Tub; so I knew that you were English. Now tell me what you noticed first about me."

"Well, I am, as you say, near-sighted and I didn't notice you until I had sent my servant down to put my things away, and then, I think, I must have lighted a cigar. I generally do."

"Yes, you did," she said.

"Well, and then I saw you, and I thought you were the prettiest girl I ever had seen, and I wanted to know you, and that's all."

"Oh! But that isn't half enough," she cried. "Didn't you see anything at all about me? Anything specific, I mean?"

He stared at her as if trying to recollect. "Yes, I saw that you had a figure as straight and slim as a young tree, and that you stood very well, and that your hair was red."

"Reddish!" she entreated.

"No, red!" he insisted. "I like red hair; and that your eyes were every color."

"Hazel!" she cried, pleadingly.

"Every color!" he reiterated. "This is my story! And you had on a white sailor hat with a veil tied around it."

"A black veil," she said, complacently.

"And I saw that your mouth was impertinent and that your nose was saucy, and your eyes laughed, and I wanted to shake you or kiss you—I didn't know which—until I got close to you; and then I saw that your hair was blowing around your face, so that I had to put my hands in my pockets to keep from smoothing it back; and your neck above your collar was as white as milk, and there were two little curls at the back which mocked my cowardice at being afraid to walk up boldly and take you in my arms before everybody, and they scold me prettily even yet for never having dared to kiss them."

She laughed delightedly.

"And then?" she said, eagerly.

"Then your gown was so smart I thought you must be an American, and when the wind blew your skirt back and I saw your little slim feet in such saucy little pointed patent-leathers, *then* I knew you were!"

"How much prettier for you to recognize me by my feet than for me to classify you by your tub! But my gown wasn't smart!" she protested. "Just a cotton shirt-waist and black skirt."

"Not too much so," he hastened to say. "But there was—er—a—something in the cut of it—your air—I don't know how to tell you,

only you looked different to the English girls I've seen."

"Perhaps you mean that my gown hung evenly around the bottom and that my skirt and waist were congenial in the back!" she said, slyly.

"Congenial?"

"Yes. Were on speaking terms—met frankly, without attempting to dodge acquaintance. The waists and skirts of most Englishwomen *I* know are in vendetta."

"I believe after all that it was you, more than your frock, which made you smart in my eyes. You have such an aristocratic way of holding yourself. You ought to be a countess instead of my sister-in-law. It's hard to be a younger son."

"Tell me about your family. Will they like me? What will people call me?"

"You will be the Honorable Mrs. Archibald George Kenneth Cavendish, and I think you will like my family very much, and I *know* they will like you. My sister-in-law has the name of being a bit nasty, but she won't be likely to be with you, because you're both in the same box."

"The same box? How do you mean?" asked the girl, quickly.

"Neither of you is dowried. You bring no

fortune. That makes a difference, you know. Of course not with *me*. But, as I told you, we shall be poor. I have three thousand a year of my own."

"Dollars?"

"No, pounds. We can't do much on that, but we'll be asked to Scotland every August by Tessie, and now and then to their town house when you want a bit of London in the season; and for the rest we can have a little house in the country or travel, just as you like."

The girl stood with her elbows on the parapet looking out wistfully at the Sphinx. She supported her cheeks in her palms, and made no reply. The man filled his pipe and went on.

"If they take to you,—as I know they will,—you are so different to them,—and you will amuse them,—it's very likely that my brother will continue my allowance. He gives me another five hundred a year, but as he isn't obliged to, he could stop that whenever he liked."

"What are they decorating the city with all those little red flags and colored lights for?" she asked, suddenly.

"Because to-night the Khedive goes to the Mosque of Mohammed Ali to pray for his heart's desire. It's a great night for every Mohammedan, for they believe that every prayer is sure to be granted."

"Can Protestants go and pray too?" she asked.

"Certainly; would you like to come? A year ago, if I had been in Egypt, I would have come here and prayed for you; but now I have my heart's desire."

He took one of her hands in his and held it tightly.

"I'd like to come and pray that your family will *love* me. I don't want them to like me because I am queer and foreign and because I will amuse them! I want to feel at home in England."

"So you shall, darling. And they are sure to love you when they know you. It's only your little ways that are American. I love you for your nobility of character."

"And you put up with my 'ways'?"

"They fascinate me as completely as your frank speech and your lovely face," he said, gravely.

She moved her hand in his with a purr of content.

"How have you learned anything of my character in this short time?" she questioned.

"The first was that misunderstanding about going to the Coptic church. I was in love with your face then, but it is so contradictory I thought you might be capricious or careless,

and that you had either forgotten or ignored our appointment. I was waiting for you the whole morning on the terrace of Shepheard's, and you were waiting in your sitting-room."

"Why didn't you hunt me up? *I* wouldn't have waited three hours and then, without seeking any explanation, have picked up my things and moved to another hotel!"

"I was too much in love and too miserable over your indifference to have any mind left. I wanted to go away where I couldn't see you to be tempted further. And then, just as I was paying my bill, you came running out, to find your courier, with a note in your hand; and when you saw me with my receipted bill, you stopped and colored. Then your face paled a little, but you drew yourself up and held out the note to me without a word. Such a square thing to do! It made me see what a fool I had been. Most girls would have been too chagrined to write. They hate to feel thrown over."

"'Thrown over'!" cried the girl, laughing. "I never *thought* of such a thing. Mrs. Richards said it was indelicate to write and explain and ask if you had misunderstood me, but *I* thought it was only fair to allow you to put yourself right with me."

The Englishman looked at her curiously.

"Edith," he said, "are all American young women as haughty as you are?"

"Haughty? Why, *I* am not haughty."

"Yes, you are. I rather like it when you don't practise it against me. I would like a little submissiveness in a wife."

"It depends upon the way you manage me. Anything I do for you in love is not submission. I'd fetch and carry for you like a slave if you were ill or helpless, but, in my opinion, you are a little too lordly sometimes, and it makes me fret."

"Would an American husband suit you better, do you think?" he asked.

"No, dear! If I had wanted an American husband, I could have had three or four quite nice ones. The trouble is—"

"'The trouble is'?" he repeated, anxiously.

"That I fell in love with *you!* No; wait a minute! And I rather like your thinking that just because you are an Englishman you are a little better than any other man in the world."

"I don't believe I think that," he said, slowly.

"Yes, you do! Deep down in your soul you *do* believe it. The only thing is, I don't quite like your thinking that—"

"What?"

"That you're superior to all *women*, too!"

"Oh, my dear girl, I don't think that, I assure you!"

"Then why do you always enter a room before me, and why do you never offer to carry my jacket?"

"Bad manners, I suppose."

He hesitated a moment, and then, meeting the challenge in the girl's sparkling eyes, he added:

"Well, I own that I don't like to make a donkey of myself to pamper a woman!"

"You always take the easiest chair, and help yourself first at the table."

He released her hand and turned away. She thought she had offended him, but presently he faced her again, and, laying his hands on her two shoulders, he said:

"And those things worry you, don't they, little woman? Well, I'll try to change and do your way, if you will help me. I *must* make you happy, if I take you away from all your people into a land of strangers."

"What a darling you are, Archie dear! Now tell me, is there anything that I do that you would rather I wouldn't? Am I too free in my manner or my speech?"

"Not a bit. You're perfect!"

"You are sure you didn't mind this morning

when that little Arab ran beside me and said 'Have a donkey, lady?' and I said 'Thanks, I have one'?"

Cavendish laughed outright.

"No, a thousand times, no! I told it at luncheon to Sir John, and he laughed."

"Because I'd like to please you too, you know, dear. Take your hands down quick and don't turn around. Some people are coming up behind you!"

The sunsets in Cairo are something to close the eyes and dream about in old age.

The splendid sun, blazing in a many-colored radiance which shoots up into the brilliant copper sky, halts for a moment on the horizon, as if to gather all his luminous splendor about him, and flashes his lustre over the dull brown landscape, gilded into sudden beauty by his parting beams; and then with a glorious sigh, like the God of Fire sinking to his rest in a bed of flame, he dips behind the umber sand-hills and a few moments of tremulous opalescent twilight are all that intervene between day and night in the land of Egypt.

When the last of the translucent aftermath had faded from the sky, the two lovers in the citadel gave a sigh to remember that when they came back to the mosque that night they would have Edith's chaperon, the redoubtable Mrs.

Richards, with them. They spent most of their time trying to rid themselves of her incubus, but as she was a sensitive creature who sulked if she was neglected she generally made an unwelcome third in all their little diversions.

Cavendish had his Arab fetch two campstools from the hotel and these he placed near the entrance of the mosque. The crowd jostled them severely, but being an Englishman he found it convenient to remain where he had stationed himself. Mrs. Richards stood on the first stool and Miss Joyce back of her where Cavendish could touch her hand in the crowd and no one could see. Presently the young Khedive arrived followed by his suite and bodyguard of cavalry. The men all removed their shoes, and the couriers fastened large matting sandals to the women's shoes, lest a profane foot tread those sacred stones.

"The Heart's Desire!" whispered Edith as they all knelt. "I'm really going to pray, Archie. I have a horrible feeling that Sir John and Lady Chartersea don't want you to marry me."

"They wanted my brother to marry their sister, but they don't care whom a younger son marries."

"Then why has Lady Chartersea not spoken

to me about our engagement since you told her?"

"I don't know," he said, reddening.

The girl said no more, but knelt quietly on her mat of rushes. Suddenly he felt that she was trembling, and, glancing beyond her, he saw Lady Chartersea with her courier.

Lady Chartersea nodded to him, but made no effort to speak to Mrs. Richards or Miss Joyce.

"I am tired," the girl whispered in his ear. "Let us go before the dervishes begin."

"Did Lady Chartersea speak to you, Edith?" demanded Mrs. Richards, with a glance of condemnation for Cavendish.

"No," she answered, quietly.

"Englishwomen are so rude," said Mrs. Richards, severely. "But then," she added, as if amply avenged, "did you ever see such a bonnet?"

Cavendish tucked Edith's hand under his arm and hurried her on ahead. He was relieved to see that Edith had been oblivious to the slight. If ever she began to notice it seriously, he meant to have a talk with Lady Chartersea. When his mother and sisters quarrelled, or when Tessie nagged Mayhew, he told Edith he always cut for cover. Then he playfully asked her if she ever had "the vapors," and if the color of her hair denoted a quick temper.

These things were in the girl's mind as they drove home in the luminous darkness of the soft Egyptian night. If her lover had been of her own nation she would have poured out her heart to him in full expectation of receiving sympathy and redress. But fear of not coming up to an Englishman's ideal of what a woman should be kept her silent. So the hurt remained and rankled. She had spoken to Cavendish once, she reflected, proudly, and afterwards he had seen Lady Chartersea prove her accusation to be true. She would leave the issue in his hands and see how he would proceed.

What the man did was to give a sigh of relief that no explosion had occurred and to do nothing.

The next day Lady Chartersea wrote to the Dowager Countess of Mayhew, Cavendish's mother, and said:

"I congratulate you on your new daughter-in-law. She is very beautiful in the American style, and will outshine both your girls and my poor sister, I am sorry to say. But then she is very cheerful, and will be a charming companion for you. She quizzes everybody and wears very smart clothes, admires Gladstone, and calls the Queen 'Victoria.' All this amuses Sir John, who votes her sayings vastly clever. It is rather a pity that she brings no

fortune, for Archie needs it, poor boy. However, I know that you are not mercenary, or you never would have welcomed Tessie into the family as you did. Dear Tessie's connections are worth more than money, but the American has beauty, which we all hope you will consider an equivalent. She is prodigiously proud and sensitive, so do write her a sweet letter of welcome, as I am persuaded that she would never marry Archie if his family objected.

"Sir John is no better. He has not left his room for a fortnight. I have sent for my brother, but in the mean time we take all of Archie's time which we can beg from Miss Joyce. He is very good to us, and we depend upon him no end for the journey home in case Robert does not arrive in time. I have urged Robert to make all possible haste, as Archie would like to go by the way of Greece with the Americans instead of on a P. & O. with us to Venice, as he first planned, and I would never have the heart to separate him from his love even for a few days."

This letter put the dowager into a purple rage. A person who admired Gladstone, and who continually chaffed and called her Majesty "Victoria"! It was monstrous!

She read the letter carefully several times,

with the stiff violet satin bows on her cap quivering with suppressed excitement.

She said nothing to her daughters for two days, but on the third day an idea came to her, and she was swift to act upon it. She smiled grimly to think what an unpleasant affect Lady Chartersea had produced by her amiable letter, which was so evidently written by Archie's request to obtain fair sailing for his matrimonial bark.

She wrote a charming letter to Archie, sending him a check for twenty pounds, and dilating on the goodness of the Charterseas to her dear husband in his last illness, and saying that she had received such a sad letter from Lady Chartersea, worrying at being obliged to ask for so much of a young man's time for an invalid, and telling him reproachfully that Robert had been sent for to take Archie's place. "Is it possible," wrote the dowager, "that you are neglecting your father's old friends?"

Cavendish was touched in the most vulnerable spot of an Englishman's heart—loyalty. Full of remorse, he redoubled his attentions to Sir John, and as a result Edith Joyce and Mrs. Richards went alone to the bazaars and mosques, whither Cavendish had planned to accompany them.

Cavendish secretly chafed at the time the

Charterseas demanded of him, and on one bright day when the doctor had said the invalid might drive out, Cavendish hit upon the plan of asking all four of his friends to drive to Meenah House for luncheon, and then, while Sir John rested for the return drive, he promised the three ladies a camel-ride to the foot of the Pyramids.

Sir John accepted with such alacrity that his wife could not refuse. The doctor agreed to the plan, but when they were about to start, Sir John electrified his wife by asking Miss Joyce to drive with him in the victoria.

"But, my dear," said her ladyship, "Miss Joyce can never be comfortable on the little seat!"

"Certainly not," said Sir John. "I mean her to sit with me."

"And leave *me* to ride backwards?" cried his wife.

"Again, certainly not. You go in the other carriage with Mrs. Richards and Archie."

"But I need the air," protested Lady Chartersea.

"Then let down the windows!" roared Sir John. "In you go or you'll put me in a rage directly!"

The Englishwoman obediently scrambled in, much to Mrs. Richards's gratification.

"Suppose we let them go ahead and I'll order another carriage," said Cavendish, in a low tone.

"No, no! Not for the world. It would make Sir John angry no end. It wasn't so much the carriage as that I prefer my own husband's society," said Lady Chartersea, looking directly at Mrs. Richards.

As they drove out of Cairo and entered that magnificent avenue lined on either side with giant pepper-trees, which met overhead and produced a soothing shade from the glare of the Egyptian sun, the three in the closed carriage were forced to hear an occasional shout of laughter from Sir John, which spoke volumes in praise of Edith's powers of entertainment.

At that hour in the morning they met but few English. Only those from Meenah House, who were coming into Cairo for the day. But a straggling, majestic procession of grain-laden camels, who slowly turned their long necks and bent their sad-eyed gaze on the travellers, walked solemnly by in a long line, interspersed now and then with drab donkeys with jingling bells and switching tails, or a squad of Egyptian cavalry. Arabs, Egyptians, fellaheen from Sakkara, even an occasional Bisharin from up the Nile, vendors of turquoises and crude ostrich-feathers; merchants, beggars, and

fakirs of all sorts whose many-hued raiment made gay spots of color in the gently shaded avenues—all these and more filed by the two carriages, while over all was ever the mysterious influence of the Sphinx and the charm of the sacred river.

Sir John arrived at Meenah House in the best of spirits. The day was so warm that everybody was lunching on the veranda.

"Archie," cried Sir John, when he had swallowed his soup, "I congratulate you on this little woman of yours. You'll never have another dull day after you marry her!"

"I hope you haven't over-excited Sir John, Miss Joyce," said her ladyship, transferring the breast of the fowl from her own plate to that of her husband.

"Tell me," he said, ignoring his wife's remark, "are those people at the next table English or Americans, Miss Joyce?"

"That man with the nine women? English!"

"How do you know?"

Edith glanced inquiringly at Cavendish.

"Shall I tell? You are all English. You are sure you won't mind?"

"Go on! Go on!" urged Sir John. "Never mind them. *I* asked you."

"Well, they are English because no American would have such a family of daughters, and if

he did have them, he wouldn't travel with them all at once."

"Eh! what do you mean?" asked her ladyship. "I don't see anything to laugh at, Sir John."

"And they are middle class," pursued Edith, dimpling, "because when that Swedish countess passed them just now, the fringe of her shawl dragged the spoon from his cup and slopped tea on his duck trousers, and although he looked apoplectic, he didn't say one word. He literally stormed at a poor little Frenchwoman who knocked his *Times* down ten minutes ago."

Sir John insisted on following them in the victoria on their camel-ride, and of being photographed in their group. His wife, from the back of the tallest camel, regarded the American girl with secret complacency.

"Never mind, miss," she was saying to herself; "if I am not much mistaken you will receive a letter in the post to-night which will rob you of your high spirits."

She dug her heel into her camel's side to place him a little more in the foreground when they were photographed, but the majestic beast was unmoved. The only result was a British foot very much in evidence when the plate was developed, and that the American girl was

caught in the act of laughing heartily, thereby making so charming a picture that Sir John ordered a dozen for himself, when he saw the proofs, although his wife's face was a blur.

That night Lady Chartersea purposely remained close to the post-office window at Shepheard's, bargaining with the Egyptian whose booth of embroideries and carved brass was within hearing distance. She saw the American girl's eager face as her eyes scanned the superscription of her home letters, and she saw her color change at the sight of the thick, black-bordered one from England bearing the Mayhew coat of arms.

Lady Chartersea crumpled her brother's telegram from Alexandria, saying that he had arrived and would come by the morning train, and hurried back to Sir John, who was undoubtedly the worse for the excitement of the day. In great alarm she sent for the doctor and Cavendish.

Edith went into her own room and locked the door, when she read her home letters. She was always seized with an unaccountable dread for fear they contained unpleasant news. Her hands trembled as she opened the English letter, and her sensitive face reflected every shadow of her emotion as she read its cruel lines.

"I dare say you are pretty, my good girl," the letter ran, "but I and the girls have other plans for our dear Archibald, and we think it best that you should break the engagement, as very likely he is only taken by your face, because he could not possibly have learned your character in so short a time. I feel sure that you would not care to force yourself into a family where you would be unwelcome, and I trust to your delicacy not to show this letter to my son."

The love which had come to the girl's heart in such romantic surroundings she had never taken very seriously. It had touched her lively imagination and she had been flattered by the devotion of her distinguished English lover. But until she read her dismissal from his family before she had entered it, a realization of her own love for Cavendish had never came home to her.

All her emotions were touched at once. Love, pride, anger, a fierce resentment, a suspicion of the depth of Archie's love and fear of how much he would dare to brave his family's displeasure, and, above all, a frantic wish to hold his love in spite of everything. All his brave qualities stood out before her mind's eye. He was a man worth the loving.

A timid knock at the door gave her a moment's

calmness. It was Mrs. Richards, sniffing tearfully with homesickness after reading her letters.

"I wonder if you will *ever* be ready to start home," she said. "Egypt has no such fascination for me as it has for you. The Gordons have just decided to stay another month and go up the Nile, so their tickets on the *Khedivial* to-morrow are for sale. I *wish* you could persuade yourself to take them and go to Athens now."

A sudden thought struck the girl. If she took those tickets and left suddenly, she could prove Archie's devotion by determining whether he would disobey his mother's commands and go with her.

She sent the radiant Mrs. Richards to secure the tickets, and despatched a note to Archie by her Arab servant.

He was so long in coming that her trunks were packed before he presented himself in her sitting-room.

"Going to-morrow!" he cried in consternation when she told him. "Why, whatever shall I do without you!"

"There is another ticket still to be had," she said, biting her lip to keep back the tears.

"Oh, *I* couldn't go. Sir John is very bad to-night, and we haven't had a word from

Robert. I rather hoped he came on the Russian steamer which brought the post."

"*Why* need you be so devoted to a friend when *I* need you elsewhere?" she cried, suddenly.

"You don't understand, dear," he answered, gravely. "You *know* I long to go with you, and it is what we planned, and all that, but Lady Chartersea must *not* be left alone in Egypt when Sir John is liable to die at any moment. It would be cowardly and cruel to seek my own pleasure at the expense of life-long friends. My mother"—he hesitated and looked down—"my mother is not very well pleased with my behavior in Cairo, and wrote me to say so in her last letter. You will be generous and bear with me, won't you, darling?"

The girl's white, miserable face scanned his fearfully. He knew, then, of his mother's objection to her, and was endeavoring not to wound her further!

"Are all Englishmen as loyal to their mothers and their mother's friends as you are?" she asked, bitterly.

He only looked at her reproachfully for reply.

"Oh, Archie, my darling, I love you so!" she cried, suddenly flinging herself into his arms. He held her tenderly, stroking her hair, and endeavoring to soothe her. She

clung to him blindly, as if bidding him a last good-bye.

"Why, dear little woman, don't cry!" he said. "What time does your train go in the morning? I am going to Alexandria with you."

"Ten o'clock," she said, drawing away and recovering herself. "But won't you be afraid to leave Sir John?"

In his simplicity Cavendish suspected no irony, and when Edith perceived it her heart smote her. He only answered, decidedly:

"I shall risk it that far, whether I dare or not. It will only be a day. I am going to see you safely on board the ship. On the way we can make our plans and discuss the future. Your going so suddenly leaves several things unsaid."

She followed him to the door when he left her to return to Sir John, and she even stepped outside to watch his tall figure descend the corridor, and, as if feeling her longing gaze, he looked back and waved his hand to her.

As she turned to re-enter a crumpled telegram lying on the floor of the hall caught her eye. It read:

"*Chartersea, Shepheard's, Cairo*:

"Arrived safely. Shall be in Cairo to-morrow.

"ROBERT."

She sat down in a half-dazed condition to think it out. Could it be possible that Archie had dropped it, and knew all the time that Robert Gordon had come? Impossible! On the other hand, Lady Chartersea used this corridor, but if *she* dropped it, perhaps Archie did not know, and when he went back to tell them of her meditated departure, Sir John at least would enlighten Archie, and, after all, he would go with them to Athens. She distrusted Lady Chartersea, but Sir John was her friend.

She stayed restlessly in her sitting-room all the remainder of the evening, momentarily expecting Archie to return. It was after midnight when she finally gave up hope and went to bed.

But sleep never visited her straining eyes, and at four she dressed herself, roused the servants and Mrs. Richards, and despatched all their luggage to the station to catch the earlier train.

She left a note for Cavendish, enclosing the telegram.

"I will not see you again even to say goodbye, so do not follow me to Alexandria. Another meeting would only pain us both. You shall not misunderstand me. I received a letter from your mother asking me to release

you from our engagement. I did not know that you had told her. *I* would have braved her displeasure and endeavored to win her love if you had been equally courageous. But I will not temporize concerning so sacred a possession as love. I felt so sure that Lady Chartersea had dropped this telegram near my door, and not you, that until midnight I expected you to come back to explain. Sir John would have enlightened you. I think Sir John is my friend. You see, I am being very frank with you, dear, because it is the last—the very last—I shall ever say or write to you."

When Cavendish read the little note his rage against the Charterseas knew no bounds. He knew that he could overtake Edith at Alexandria, and he decided on the instant to go with her to Athens. He dared not trust himself to see Sir John. He knew that he could not contain himself, so he left, without informing them, intending to send back a wire from Alexandria.

In company with many returning tourists, all booked for the *Khedivial,* he caught the ten-o'clock train. Here he had ample time to reflect on Lady Chartersea's premature information to his mother concerning his engagement. Well, he thought, if his mother

was going to be nasty about it, he would marry Edith in Athens at the American minister's.

He had just come to this conclusion when the train stopped between stations and the guard came to the door of the carriage to say that a messenger had flagged the train. There was a serious wreck ahead and it would be several hours before it could be removed.

The excited and angry passengers poured out of the carriages. Most of them, being booked for the *Khedivial*, would thus lose the boat unless something radical could be done. But what? There was nothing but sand and palm-trees—not even a telegraph station. Edith's train was the last to reach Alexandria that day.

In a torrent of vain threats against the railway company, the train, after standing helplessly on the tracks for several hours, was taken back into Cairo, bearing half a hundred angry men and women who besieged the ticket-offices with frantic demands for bookings on the next ship.

In the mean time, after waiting as long as her captain dared, the *Khedivial* sailed from Alexandria, with most of her passengers in ignorance of the delayed train from Cairo.

When Cavendish reached Shepheard's he found this telegram from Edith:

"ALEXANDRIA.

"Have changed plans. Shall stay but one day in Athens EDITH."

His first disappointment soon changed to exultation. If she had not expected him to follow her, in spite of her letter, she would not have telegraphed!

Without stopping for anything, he dashed across the street to the booking-office, but found to his despair that owing to a typhoon in the Red Sea there was no probability of a ship for a week, and it might be ten days. He rushed from one agent to another, but they all agreed upon the vexatious delay.

With deliberation the certainty grew more and more in his mind that Edith would now be too far in advance of him for him to be able to trace her. She might even return to America. Perhaps he should *never* see her again. The longer he thought, the bitterer he grew against the Charterseas. He dressed himself carefully and, with his usually kind face grown white and stern, he presented himself before his friends, fully determined to have it out with them. He remembered with remorse that Edith had warned him of Lady Chartersea's opposition, and that he had ignored her hint. Now in her wounded pride she had taken herself away from them all.

Robert Gordon was there, but without hesitation he told all three of Edith's departure, and all that he had been able to gather as to the circumstances leading up to it.

Sir John listened in silence, his twitching fingers alone betraying his wrath. Then he seized the tell-tale telegram and shook it violently.

"So, madam!" he cried. "This is all your doing! You never told *me* about Robert's telegram! You took it upon yourself to inform the countess, knowing that it would kick up a devil of a row, and *she* wrote and broke that little American girl's heart! Gad, Archie, if you don't follow her and marry her, I'll do it myself! I'll commit bigamy, by you!"

Lady Chartersea was weeping, but her tears seemed only to aggravate her husband's rage.

"Why don't you speak and defend yourself, if you can?"

"I knew Lady Mayhew's plans for Archie. She—we both wanted him to marry sister. She has a fortune of five thousand pounds, and it would unite—"

"Oh, I *say!*" protested Robert Gordon. "Do spare Archie's feelings!"

"So that is your game!" cried Sir John, leaning forward with his hands on the arms of his chair. "Well, then, we'll buy a welcome

from the dowager! I'll dower Miss Joyce myself. Archie, my wedding-present to your little woman shall be five thousand pounds. Gad, I like her spirit in running *away* from a husband, instead of running after one! Mind you, it's five thousand pounds! We owe it to you to do *something!*"

Lady Chartersea's tears dried instantly.

"Oh, Sir John!" she cried. "Not *that!*"

"Be off with you, Archie, my boy," said Sir John, ignoring his wife. "Follow her by the first boat."

"And marry her before you get to England, old man," added Robert Gordon.

It was his only way to express his disapproval of his sister's action. Englishmen love fair play.

"There's no boat for a fortnight, and I haven't an idea where she will go when she leaves Athens," said Cavendish, looking down.

Sir John half rose from his chair, then sank back again and glowered at his wife.

"Robert," he said, at last, "go and book our passage on the first ship leaving this damned town. Archie, you go book yours. I'll go with you to hunt this girl. I know I've got to die. You are none of you deceiving me by your cheerfulness. My days, even me hours, are numbered. I think I'd like to die

righting a great wrong. It might atone for many a wasted hour and lost opportunity."

He bent his eyes upon the carpet at his feet. Lady Chartersea made a movement to come to him.

"Five thousand pounds dowry, madam!" he roared at her, so suddenly that she fell back in alarm.

There were twelve days during which no steamer left Cairo, and on the twelfth, when the Charterseas, Robert Gordon, and Cavendish set sail on the P. & O. *Rajah*, the only clew to Edith's whereabouts they had was a telegram from the American Minister at Athens, in response to one from Cavendish, saying that Miss Joyce had left Athens for Olympia. He was ignorant of her further plans.

The sea voyage benefited Sir John.

"It's of no use to get off at the Piræus," he declared; "she has had a week to do Olympia since she left Athens. There's only one thing to see at Olympia, and that's the Hermes. She has been to Athens before, and I remember she told me she did Thermopylæ and all the country round about. Now, it's me opinion that she went from Olympia back to Patras, and that she will take the Austrian Lloyd to Brindisi. At Brindisi I shall have no objection to disembarking to find a further clew."

"But our tickets are taken for Venice," objected his wife.

"I'll stop at Brindisi," roared Sir John, "if I have to buy the ship—or sink it!"

Cavendish was impressed by the force of Sir John's argument, and, furthermore, he wished to give the invalid his own way as much as possible. Sir John seemed sustained by the tenacity of his purpose to find the missing girl and reunite the lovers.

On the second day out from the Piræus, Robert Gordon joined Cavendish in his restless promenade of the *Rajah's* deck, and said Sir John wished to see him.

The two men found Sir John much excited.

"What do you think, Archie? What do you think, Robert? The captain has just been to see me, and he says with this wind we are gaining two hours a day. The Austrian Lloyd leaves Patras to-night, and, if this wind from directly aft continues, we'll overhaul her at Brindisi. Now *Edith is on that Austrian Lloyd!* Robert, you take these field-glasses and keep a sharp lookout! Go on, now, but mind you bring me word, as I shall be out of me head until we sight her!"

The wind remained dead aft, and before dark the P. & O. had gained four hours. In vain, however, did the strongest field-glasses

stare anxiously over the waters of the Ionian Sea when they skirted Cephalonia and came abreast of Corfu, for after that the ocean pathways of the two great liners converged towards Italy's shore.

On the afternoon of the next day, however, just as the sun went down, the lookout reported to the captian that a ship about the size and in the direction of the expected Austrian Lloyd could be discerned, but he must wait until her lights appeared to be sure.

In the mean time the *Rajah* continued to gain. She was now five hours ahead of her schedule. A dozen glasses were levelled on the stranger, when suddenly the lights of the Austrian Lloyd flashed out on the darkness and told the anxious pursuers that it was indeed she.

Sir John's enthusiastic reiterations that Edith was a passenger on her had so impressed the other members of his party that Cavendish stayed up all night watching the *Rajah* close on her prey, and fancying that he was thus guarding the unconscious slumbers of his love.

At sunrise Sir John was up and examining the liner, which lay side by side with the *Rajah* at the dock at Brindisi.

"By Jove! this is the most extraordinary thing," exclaimed Sir John. "Go call Archie!

The lazy dog! He deserves to lose the girl! Lying asleep at this hour when an old man like me can be up! I'm blest if I don't imagine I can see Edith on the upper deck."

"Archie took all his luggage in a cab and left a quarter of an hour ago," said Robert Gordon, without lowering his glasses.

"What's that?" roared Sir John. "Took his luggage! And does he think *we* are not going to land if the girl is there? Here, Simmons! Go have the luggage fetched up immediately, and inform her ladyship—"

"I do see her!" interrupted Robert. "You said she had red hair, didn't you? There is a commotion among the passengers, and—yes, there is old Archie! I see him distinctly. See, he is waving his handkerchief to us! Yes, yes, old boy!" shouted Robert and Sir John, as though they expected to be heard. "Wave yours, Sir John! Shall we go—".

He stopped suddenly and lowered his glass. Sir John was nowhere to be seen. Robert leaned over the gunwale and saw Simmons put Sir John carefully into a cab and follow him.

Sir John looked up and shouted to his brother-in-law: "Fetch my wife and the luggage, and come over, Robert! I'm going to have them married in Rome!"

The Pacifier of Pecos

The Pacifier of Pecos

PECOS CITY, after a day of terror, was preparing for a night of apprehension. The cowboys from Pecos River round-up had arrived that morning under the leadership of the Pacifier, whose other name, seldom used, was Clay Broadhead, and whenever this gentleman was in town the sound of a pistol made every man duck his head involuntarily. The proprietor of the hotel, just across the street from the Lone Wolf saloon, provided his chance patrons with bags of grain to stop stray bullets, and advised them with fatherly caution to sleep on the floor.

Pecos City, started as a "front-camp" during the construction of the Texas Pacific Railway in '80, contrived for five or six years to rock along without any of the elaborate municipal machinery deemed essential to the government and safety of urban communities in the

effete East. It had neither council, mayor, nor peace officer. An early experiment in government was discouraging.

In 1883 the Texas Pacific station agent was elected mayor. His name was Ewing, a little man with fierce whiskers and mild blue eyes. Two nights after the election a gang of boys from the "Hash Knife" outfit were in town, and fearing curtailment of some of their privileges, the election did not have their approval. Gleaming out of the darkness fifty yards away from the Lone Wolf saloon, the light of Mayor Ewing's office windows offered a most tempting target. What followed was very natural—in Pecos. The mayor was sitting at his table receiving train orders, when suddenly a bullet smashed the telegraph key beside his hand, and other balls whistled through the room, bearing him a message he had no trouble in reading. Rushing out into the darkness he spent the night in the brush, and towards morning boarded an east-bound freight train. Mayor Ewing had abdicated. The railway company soon obtained another agent, but it was some years before the town got another mayor.

Such was Pecos when the news of the depredations of a band of horse rustlers brought the Pacifier and his cowboys to town. It was known that the chief, Big Dan, had been

terrorizing the law-abiding citizens for several weeks, and with the advent of the Pacifier, Big Dan's hours were believed to be numbered.

The Pacifier was holding forth on his favorite theme to the frequenters of the Lone Wolf, at the same time keeping a sharp lookout for Big Dan. One of his listeners, the most recent tenderfoot, named Sanford, listened somewhat disdainfully to the Pacifier. Sanford did not believe in the Pacifier, nor did he share the general apprehensions. Conceit is a dangerous quality in a tenderfoot, and the Pacifier was sensitive. He directed his whole discourse at Sanford, whose smile irritated the Pacifier more and more. Yet he bided his time. He only watched.

"There's various ways of killin' a man," he remarked, negligently, "and on most of 'em good opinions vary. Some think it fair to give a man warnin' you intend to kill him on sight, an' then git right down to business as soon as you meet. But this ain't no equal chance for both. The man that sees his enemy first has the advantage, for the other is sure to be more or less rattled. Others consider it a square deal to stan' back to back with drawn pistols, to walk five paces apart, an' then swing an' shoot. But even this may be open to objections. While both may be equally brave an'

determined, one may be blamed nervous, like an excitable horse, while the other one may have bad eyesight. There's only one way, an' that is to study your man, let him know what you're going to do, an' then do it. Never disappoint your victim, an' never get soft at the last minute an' forgive him. Take my word—the man you are the easiest on, is the man who has got it in the heaviest for you and who'll do you dirt the quickest.

"Shoot your enemies as soon as you make 'em. Don't be afraid, an' don't be soft."

His heavy brow contracted into a fierce frown; his black eyes narrowed and glittered balefully; his surging blood reddened his bronzed cheeks.

The tenderfoot turned away to hide a smile, which fortunately the Pacifier did not see. He considered this all done for his benefit—to terrify an Eastern man. He did not know, as all the others knew, that the Pacifier was not dilating on a theory. The Pacifier was, on the contrary, a man of practice, especially in the matters of which he was now speaking. Indeed, he was probably the most expert taker of human life that ever heightened the prevailing dull colors of a frontier community.

And yet the Pacifier was in no sense an assassin. He was never known to kill a man

whom the community could not very well spare. While engaged as a ranchman in raising cattle, he found more agreeable occupation for the greater part of his time in thinking out the social needs that are apt to grow quite too luxuriantly for the general good in new Western settlements.

His work was not done as an officer of the law either. It was rather a self-imposed task, in which he performed, at least to his own satisfaction, the double functions of judge and executioner. And in the unwritten code governing his decisions all offences had a common penalty—death.

The Pacifier was born with a passion for fighting, and he indulged the passion until it became a mania. The louder the bullets whistled, the redder the gleaming blades grew, the more he loved it. Yet no knight of old that rode with King Arthur was ever a more chivalrous enemy. He hated a foul blow as much as many of his contemporaries loved "to get the drop"—which meant taking your opponent unawares and at hopeless disadvantage. In fact, in most cases he actually carried chivalry so far as to warn the doomed man, a week or two in advance, of the precise day and hour when he might expect to die. And as the Pacifier was known to be most scrupu-

lous in standing to his word, and as the victim knew there was no chance of a reprieve, this gave him plenty of time to settle up his affairs and to prepare to cross the last divide. Thus the estates of gentlemen who happened to incur the Pacifier's disapproval were usually left in excellent condition, and gave little trouble to the probate courts.

Of course the men receiving these warnings were under no obligations to await the Pacifier's pleasure. Some suddenly discovered that they had imperative business in other and more remote parts of the country. Others were so anxious to save him unnecessary trouble that they frequented trails he was known to travel, and lay sometimes for hours and days awaiting him, making themselves as comfortable as possible in the mean time behind some convenient bowlder or tall nopal, or in the shady recesses of a *mesquite* thicket. But they might as well have saved all this bother, for the result was the same. The Pacifier could always spare the time to journey even from New Mexico to Montana when it was necessary to the fulfilment of a promise to do so. And to those who were impatient and sought him out in advance, he was ever obliging and ready to meet them when and where and how they pleased. It was all the same to him. And to

avoid annoying legal complications, he was known more than once deliberately to give his opponent the first shot.

If the tenderfoot had believed all this he never would have conducted himself as he did, nor, indeed, would he have ventured to Pecos, for fear of incurring the Pacifier's wrath. But he was destined to learn that the Pacifier never bragged, for just as this point in the discourse was reached, Big Dan came in sight.

Big Dan would have turned back if he had seen the Pacifier first, but, finding himself discovered, he paused in front of the Lone Wolf with his hands on his hips and surveyed the group.

"How are you?" inquired the Pacifier.

Dan said that he had no cause to complain.

"Business pretty good?" inquired the Pacifier.

The rustler said it couldn't be better.

"If you ain't in too much of a hurry, better step inside and have something," suggested the Pacifier, cordially.

At this an avenue of approach to the bar was made so hastily that to the tenderfoot it partook of the nature of flight. Sanford was completely deceived by the wording of this interview, and threw a good-humored glance around to show that he was not to be taken in.

"I'm on, boys," he whispered, genially.

But not an eye roved from the figures of Big Dan and the Pacifier, who tossed off the drinks with their right hands on their six-shooters.

Big Dan then politely ordered another round, and the Pacifier acquiesced.

"S'pose we have a bite before we part," suggested the Pacifier.

Unable to plead any other engagement to dine, the rustler accepted, and both retired to the hotel across the street. As they sat down at table both agreed that their pistols felt heavy about their waists, and each drew his weapon from its holster and laid it on his knees.

While the hotel was noted for the best cooking on the trail, other gentlemen at dinner seemed oddly indifferent to its delicacies, and, nervously gulping down a few mouthfuls, slipped quietly out of the room, leaving loaded plates.

Presently the Pacifier dropped a fork on the floor—perhaps by accident—and bent as if to pick it up. An opening in the guard he could not resist, the rustler seized the pistol lying in his lap and raised it quickly, but the muzzle struck beneath the edge of the table—an instant's delay! It was, however, enough. The Pacifier had pitched sideways to the floor, and, firing beneath the table, converted a bad rustler into a good one.

This was more than Sanford could stand.

He had seen the whole thing from the doorway. As the Pacifier strolled past him, his eyes gleaming with the satisfaction of having terminated the career of the leading horse-thief of the country, Sanford spoke.

"It's a shame!" he blurted out.

The Pacifier stumbled and his pistol went off, shooting Sanford in the foot.

"It'll be some time before I see you again, Sonny," said the Pacifier, "so I'll apologize now. But you shouldn't have tripped me up. You really shouldn't, you know."

At the sight of his own blood Sanford fainted. That settled him forever in the estimation of Pecos. No one had an atom of sympathy for him. He was removed to a room up-stairs and forgotten by everybody except the landlord.

For three weeks the wounded man lay solitary, conscious that he was an outcast in the city of Pecos. It was a bitter reflection, but it gave him time for meditation, and it cured him mentally. Physically he was not improving, owing to consistent neglect.

One evening, however, when the group in front of the Lone Wolf was about as usual, a white-topped wagon, of the variety known as the "prairie schooner," made its appearance, slowly traversing the main street and not stopping until it reached this group. Then a wom-

an leaned forward, and, pushing her sun-bonnet back from her head, she said:

"Can any of you gentlemen tell me if there is anybody by the name of Sanford in town?"

Her voice was singularly melodious, her manner gentle, and her appearance tender and womanly. Her eyes were blue—of an appealing blue—and her gaze was sincere and innocent. Her brown hair was drawn back from a pure forehead and gathered in a wavy knot. Her skin was delicately browned in spite of the sun-bonnet, but it appeared pink-and-white to the bronzed men who hung spellbound upon her softly spoken words. Her mouth was tender, inclined to droop at the corners, but the lips were of a clear red and her teeth small and of a transparent whiteness. Her whole appearance, her thin nostrils, her slender hands and small waist, betokened a sensitive nature and a woman of delicate sensibilities.

No other type of woman could have descended upon Pecos so admirably constituted to obtain its unqualified admiration.

It was remarked afterwards that the Pacifier listened to her with dropped jaw. She repeated her question and asked others. Some one told her where Sanford was and volunteered to conduct her to him. The Pacifier followed the two so closely that he almost trod upon her.

He had never seen such a woman before. His thoughts were spinning through his brain like lightning, but his tongue was tied. He even followed them up-stairs to the door of Sanford's room, and was only recalled to his senses by the landlord saying, in a hoarse whisper:

"Boys, she's his wife! Get Pacifier away before she asks who shot him. *She* don't know her husband's a damned tenderfoot!"

At the sudden thought that he must become an object of horror to her as soon as she spoke to her husband, the Pacifier broke away from them and stumbled down the stairs, his Mexican spurs clanking and jingling on the uncarpeted wood.

He was as a man dazed. He walked back to the Lone Wolf and sat down without speaking to any one. Occasionally he passed his hand across his eyes as if their sight had suddenly become blurred.

It was not that Mrs. Sanford's appearance brought back to the Pacifier recollections of any sweet face in his past. He never had seen —never had imagined—any one like her, and she swept him off his feet as completely as if he had been bowled over by a blow.

Several approached and spoke to him as he sat there, but he answered no one. A few suggested that his conscience was working at

last, and that he regretted shooting Sanford, but those who knew him best shouted at the idea of the Pacifier regretting that much-needed lesson to so objectionable a tenderfoot.

There were those, however, who saw that some great force was at work in the man's mind, temporarily relaxing his vigilance, for the Pacifier, as he rode heedlessly along on his way to his own ranch, was that very night ambushed by three of Big Dan's friends and shot from his horse. Crippled too badly to resist, he lay as if dead.

Thinking their work well done, the three came out of their hiding, kicked and cursed him, and rode away. But the Pacifier, who had not lost consciousness, recognized them.

A few hours later a driver of a passing wagon found him, and hauled what he supposed was the Pacifier's corpse into Pecos, where he was placed in the hotel's best room and cared for by his friends in marked contrast to the manner in which Sanford had been treated.

For weeks the Pacifier hovered between life and death, in his delirium always imagining that he saw an angel in his room with the face of Mrs. Sanford.

Finally he began to mend and his reason returned. His huge strength had been severely tested, but not severely impaired, and when

he recovered he bade fair to be as good as new.

A few days after his delirium left him, there came a soft knock on his door, so unlike the boisterous manners of his friends that it sent a nervous thrill through the sick man's frame. He stammered an answer, and Mrs. Sanford entered, moving so noiselessly over the bare floor that the Pacifier shivered.

Without speaking, she sat down by his bedside and laid her soft hand on the sick man's wrist, counting his pulse-beats by a tiny watch. The Pacifier, scarcely breathing, stared eagerly at her gentle face, noting the shadow from the eye-lashes, the delicate pink of her ears, the dimple at the left of her mouth, and the rise and fall of her breathing. He was like an explorer having reached his goal, and imprinting its features upon his dying brain.

The watch shut with a snap that startled the man. His eager eyes embarrassed Mrs. Sanford, for a delicate color crept up to her cheek and mounted to her temples, and, in watching the beauty of it, an answering flush reddened the man's face.

But as if recollecting her mission, she bent over him, smoothing the thick black hair from his forehead, her touch sending electric shocks to the farthermost ends of the man's nerves,

and alarming him by their newness and violence as no fever and no gun-shot wound had ever done.

"You are much better, Mr. Broadhead," she said, looking at the tips of her fingers. "Your fever is broken for good, I hope. You have begun to perspire naturally."

Her voice, low and gentle, would have been sweet in any woman, having that peculiar mother quality of those who brood over a coming joy. But to the Pacifier it brought so tender a rush of feeling that hot tears sprang to his eyes and rolled off on his coarse pillow.

Mrs. Sanford wiped his eyes with her own pocket-handkerchief, a mere white wisp compared to the flaming device which was always knotted about the Pacifier's neck and went by that name. She tucked it under his hand as it lay outside the coverlet, and his big brown fist closed over it convulsively.

"I dreamed of you," he muttered. But she answered:

"No, the dream was a reality. You saw me. I was here."

"Takin' keer of me?"

"As much as I could. Your friends were very kind and always sat up at night with you. But I gave you your medicine. You wouldn't take it from any one else."

The Pacifier lay quiet for a moment. Then making a violent effort, he said:

"Did I talk?"

"Oh yes. You kept calling me an angel. You were very grateful for every little thing I did for you."

The Pacifier frowned. His scarred, repellent face became fierce when natural and unsoftened by feeling. Mrs. Sanford hesitated. She feared she had irritated him. But his next attempt awoke so powerful an emotion that beads of sweat broke out on his forehead and around his mouth.

"I mean—did I—did any one tell you that—that—I shot the ten—that I shot your—shot Sanford?"

The woman's face became deathly white and she started up. But seeing that the sick man had tried to raise himself also, she controlled herself and sank back in her chair with her hand over her heart, as if she had got a blow there.

The Pacifier's eyes searched her face with fierce apprehension, fearing, dreading her condemnation, and warding off dismissal from her tenderness.

"No," she murmured, at last. "I did not know that." She was looking down, nervously smoothing out a crease in her cotton gown.

Suddenly she raised her eyes, and the tears overflowed and dropped silently down her cheeks. She leaned forward and laid her hand on his.

"But I forgive you! Oh, I forgive you, as I hope to be forgiven! I would not, at this time, harbor an unforgiving thought or the smallest wish for vengeance. I want to keep my heart tender and my conscience clear. Even *thoughts* count with me now. No, no one told me. My husband said he interfered in a righteous quarrel and was shot accidentally. He never told your name."

"That was white of him," commented the Pacifier. "But he lied some. For your sake, I reckon. Who wouldn't? He sassed me, an' I winged him—just to teach him not to interfere. I was doing my duty—as I see it, an' according to my lights, an' no damned tenderfoot is welcome to put his nose before the muzzle of my gun without a bite off the end of it."

The woman hastily took away her hand at the fierceness of the face before her. But instantly its expression changed.

"Still, if I had knowed—if I had knowed that *you*—such a—well, just you and no other, was his pardner, I'd 'a' let him plug me full of holes before I'd put a bullet in him!"

The renunciation, the self-abnegation of this declaration, was as complete as if another man had offered up his life. The Pacifier himself felt as if he had doffed his sombrero for a halo, and even Mrs. Sanford dimly understood.

"Thank you," she said, gently. "I believe you."

The sick man regarded her earnestly.

"Is there anything you want?" he asked, presently. "Can I do anything to show you —that—that—I'm willing to ante up anything I've got to please you!" he ended, passionately.

"Yes, there *is* something I want," she said, her blue eyes growing dark. "I want to do some good here in Pecos! My husband is ordered to stay here for his delicate lungs, and I am going to stay with him until just before —until I am called home. The lawlessness and wickedness here appall me. If I could only get those men together to talk to them of God. How can I do that?"

"You want a revival!" exclaimed the Pacifier, eagerly, who remembered the word from his youth.

"Yes—that's it. A revival!" said the woman, earnestly. "Will you—can you—when you are well, I mean—"

The man lay back on his pillow with a smile and closed his eyes.

"I'll get you one! Don't worry a mite. Just give me time to get on my pins again, an' I'll get you a revival that'll knock the spots out of the dome of heaven. It'll be dead easy to get the boys for *you*, Mrs. Sanford. The other gospel sharks that have hit the town weren't exactly what you might call popular. But the boys all have a notion of religion, an' for *you*—well, just—give—me—time!"

A look of such joy swept over the woman's face that the Pacifier looked to see her float away on wings. But instead she gave him his medicine, and drew down the shade and told him to try to sleep while she sat by him.

The time of the Pacifier's convalescence was the most turbulent and miserable of all the troublous times he had lived through.

He was hopelessly, madly, idolatrously in love with the wife of another man, and his sin in the matter rent his soul in twain.

Those who do not know the frontiersman of those days must needs be told that ownership was their law and reverence for a pure woman their religion. A violation of either of these was death, and to the Pacifier the longing and desire which possessed him for forbidden property was as if he should detect in his heart a desire to become a horse-thief. It mortified, galled, maddened him. It tore open his wounds

afresh, and delayed his recovery until he almost came to the point of confiding his secret to some friend and begging Mrs. Sanford to keep away from him.

Such a thing as confiding his love to *her* and insulting *her* by a knowledge of his vile weakness no more occurred to him than to find a solution to his difficulty by firing on her as she bent to do him a service.

His one solace, however, was the revival he meant to procure for her the moment his fighting strength returned to him.

He was safe from his enemies, for the moment his three assailants discovered that their work had been incomplete, and that their victim was not dead, their firm faith in his power to live and avenge himself was so great that they wound up their affairs and fled the town.

This did not disturb the Pacifier. He never spoke to any one of his plans. He simply gave his whole mind to recovering his strength, and finally he felt that he was a well man once more.

By this time Sanford had recovered and was able to be about, although he limped a little. The Pacifier shunned him, but no one busied himself to discover reasons for the Pacifier's curious actions in any event, understanding that he held peculiar views on the subject of

his own property—a man's thoughts naturally coming under that head.

One Tuesday morning about ten o'clock he walked into the Lone Wolf saloon, laid two pistols on the end of the bar next the front door, and remarked to Red Dick, the bartender, that he intended to turn the saloon into a church for a couple of hours, and did not want any drinks sold or cards thrown during the service. Sanford, who was within, listened curiously. The broad, open doorway of the saloon was flush with the sidewalk of the principal thoroughfare of Pecos, before which every one moving about the town had to pass.

Taking his stand just within the doorway, pistol in hand, the Pacifier began to assemble his congregation. The first comer was Billy Jansen, the leading merchant of the town. As he was passing the door the Pacifier remarked:

"Good-mornin', Mr. Jansen; won't you please step inside? Religious services will be held here shortly, an' I reckon you'll be useful in the choir."

The Pacifier's only reply to Billy's protest of urgent business was a gesture with his pistol that made Billy think going to church would be the greatest pleasure he could have that morning.

The Pacifier never played favorites at any game, and so all passers were stopped—merchants, railway men, gamblers, thugs, cowboys, freighters—all were stopped and made to enter the saloon.

The least furtive movement to draw a gun or to approach the back door received the prompt attention from the alert evangelist that quickly restored order in the congregation.

When fifty or sixty men had been brought into this improvised fold, the Pacifier closed the door and faced about.

"Fellers," he said, "this meetin' bein' held on the Pecos, I reckon we'll open her by singin' 'Shall We Gather at the River?' Of course we're already gathered, but the song sort o' fits. No gammon now, fellers; everybody sing that knows her."

The result was discouraging. Few in the audience knew any hymn, much less this one. Only three or four managed to drawl hoarsely through two verses. However, the Pacifier was reasonable and made no difficulty; he knew he had raw material to deal with, and must observe the patience and simplicity of kindergarten methods.

The hymn finished—as far as anybody could sing it—the Pacifier said:

"Now, fellers, we'll pray; everybody down!"

Only a few knelt. Among the congregation were some who regarded the affair as sacrilegious, and others of the independent frontier type were unaccustomed to dictation. However, a slight narrowing of the cold black eyes, and a significant sweep of the six-shooter, brought every man of them to their knees, with heads bowed over faro layouts and on monte tables.

"O Lord!" began the Pacifier. "This yere's a mighty bad neck o' woods, an' I reckon You know it. Fellers don' think enough o' their souls to build a church, so we have to pray in a saloon, an' when a pa'son comes here they don' treat him half white. O Lord! make these fellers see that when they gits caught in the final round-up, an' drove over the last divide, they don' stan' no sort o' show to get to stay on the heavenly ranch 'nless they believe in You and behave. If they don' do it, now the way is pinted out, O Lord! make it Your pers'n'l business to see that they wear the devil's brand an' earmark an' never gits another drop o' good spring water. Of course I allow You knows I don' sport no wings myself, but I want to do what's right if You'll sort o' give me a shove in the proper way. An' one thing I want You to understand: Clay Broadhead's got a fast

horse an' is tol'able handy with his rope, an' he's goin' to run these fellers into Your corral even if he has to rope an' drag 'em there. Amen! Everybody git up."

While he prayed in the most reverent tone he could command, and while his attitude was one of simple supplication, the Pacifier never removed his keen eye from the congregation.

Suddenly he beckoned to Sanford.

"I reckon I've got 'em tamed down now so's a woman can handle 'em," he whispered. "Go call your wife and let her talk to 'em. I'll hold 'em here. You needn't worry that the congregation will break loose while you're gone."

"I don't think," began Sanford, with due caution, "that she'd exactly like to come into a saloon. Do you, when you come to think of it?"

A light broke over the Pacifier's face.

"Course not! Course not! A lady like her. You go sit down. I'll tend to things."

His congregation eyed him furtively, each seeking an opportunity to bolt, but the keen eye of the Pacifier discouraged them.

"Reckon we'll sing again," he remarked, "an' I want you boys to let her out a little more. Le's see what you all knows."

At length six or eight sheepishly owned to knowing "Old Hundred," and it was sung.

Then the sermon was in order.

"Fellers," he began, "my ole mother used to tell me that the only show to shake the devil off your trail was to believe everythin' the Bible says. What yer mother tells you 's bound to be right—dead right. So I think I'll take the sentiment o' this yere round-up on believin'! O' course as a square man I'm boun' to admit the Bible tells some pow'ful queer tales, onlike anythin' we 'uns strikes now days. Take that tale about a fish swallerin' a feller named Jonah; why, a fish 't could swaller a man 'ud have to be as big in the barrel as the Pecos River is wide, an' have an openin' in his face bigger 'n a chimbley. Nobody on the Pecos ever see such a fish. But I wish you fellers to distinctly understand it's a fact. I believe it. Does you? Every feller that believes a fish swallered Jonah hold up his right hand!"

It is sad to have to admit that only two or three hands were raised.

"Well, I'll be durned," the evangelist continued, "you *air* tough cases. That's what's the matter with you; you are shy on faith. You fellers has got to be saved, an' to be saved you got to believe, an' believe hard, an' I'm going to make you. Now hear *me*, an' mind you don' ferget it's Clay Broadhead talkin'

to you. I tells you that when that thar fish had don' swallerin' Jonah, he swum aroun' fer awhile lookin' to see if thar was a show to pick up any o' Jonah's family or fr'en's. Now what *I* tells you I reckon you're all bound to believe. Every feller that believes that Jonah was jes' only a sort o' snack fer the fish hold up his right hand, an' if any feller don' believe it this yer old gun o' mine will finish the argiment."

Further argument was unnecessary; all hands went up.

"Now, boys, that's the way! That's the way to be saved."

The evangelist paused here and looked questioningly at Sanford. Then having apparently answered his own mental question, he proceeded:

"It's a damned shame to have such mean-spirited, low-down, no-account citizens of Pecos that there ain't nothin' but a dance-hall or a saloon to preach and pray in. I ain't no sky-pilot, and I don' claim to be nothing but a sort o' snow-plough to clear the track for the sweetest woman God ever made to take a hand at you boys. I told Mrs. Sanford I'd corral you an' git you into a prayerful mood. But since I began this meetin' I've had it made plain to me that we can't ask Her into the Lone Wolf,

an' I've decided to build a church an' to git the money for it now. A thousand dollars will build a chapel, an' would be about as sporty a place as Pecos could stand. I'll ante up a hundred of that now, an' any feller that don' chip in accordin' to his means will sleep in Boot Hill with his spurs on this very night."

The Pacifier, with his keen eyes still searching his recalcitrant congregation, then pulled a roll of bills out of his pocket, counted off one hundred dollars, dropped the money into his hat, and asked Red Dick to pass the hat among the congregation for a subscription to build a church. The contribution was general and generous. Many who early in the meeting were full of rage over the restraint, and vowed to themselves to kill the Pacifier the first good chance they got, finished by thinking he meant all right and had taken about the only practicable means "to git the boys to 'tend meetin'." Besides, there was an almost pathetic eagerness among this rough band to come within sound of a woman's voice, and Mrs. Sanford's name acted like magic.

It took but a few weeks to build the little frame chapel, and ready money paid for it.

Mrs. Sanford watched over it from the laying of the foundation, with such a look of rapture in her blue eyes that the Pacifier suddenly

came to a decision which cost her gentle heart much apprehension. The Pacifier sold his ranch, disposed of his cattle, and "took the trail."

His friends thought it was revenge alone which prompted him. He left no word for Mrs. Sanford. It was "his way." But after he had left town, and her husband told her that he had gone to hunt down his three enemies, her heart ached for him.

The Pacifier gave no sign. He discovered No. 1 of his enemies in Cheyenne.

Cheyenne was a law-abiding community, and the Pacifier could not afford to take any chances of court complications that would interfere with the completion of his work. He therefore spent several days in covertly watching the habits of his adversary. From the knowledge thus gained he was able one morning suddenly to turn a street corner and confront No. 1. Without the least suspicion that the Pacifier was in the country, No. 1, knowing that his life hung by a thread, jerked his pistol and fired on the instant. As the Pacifier had shrewdly calculated, his enemy was so nervous that his shot flew wild. No. 1 did not get a second shot. At the inquest several witnesses of the affray swore that Broadhead did not even draw until after the other had fired.

Several weeks later No. 2 was found in Tombstone, Arizona, a town of the good old frontier sort that had little use for coroners and juries, so the fighting was fair. Half an hour after landing from the stage-coach, the Pacifier encountered his man in a gambling house. No. 2 remained in Tombstone—permanently. The Pacifier resumed his travels by the evening coach.

The hunt for No. 3 lasted two months. The Pacifier followed him relentlessly from place to place through half a dozen States and Territories until, early the next spring, he was located on a ranch near Spearfish, Dakota. They met at last one afternoon within the shadow of the Devil's Tower.

In the duel that ensued the Pacifier's horse was killed under him. This occasioned him no particular inconvenience, however, for he found that No. 3's horse, after being given a few hours' rest, was able to carry him into Deadwood, where he caught the Sidney stage.

This work of vengeance had taken the Pacifier about four months, and in the mean time he had heard nothing from Pecos. In spite, however, of having left the town as much in order to take himself away from the temptation as to accomplish his mission of death, the Pacifier now felt such an overwhelming longing to

see her once more that he started out for Pecos, although swearing each morning that he would go no farther than that night. He often thought and thought seriously upon subjects which little troubled his companions. He was not vexed by reproaches of conscience, for in his creed every death he had compassed was justified, and in his eyes he had never done any one wrong.

"I often wonder," he said to himself, as he jogged along on horseback over the open prairie, through the still forests, or under the silent stars, "I often wonder how this thing will end. Of course I know I can't go on this way forever. A man, no matter how quick he is on the trigger or with his knife, is bound to be winged some time, but I'd give a heap to know right now whether it'll be by pistol or knife, an' whose hand will hold the weapon that shoves me over the last divide."

But in summing up all his acquaintances, enemies and friends, before his mental vision, he could not find any whose quickness and accuracy equalled his own, or whose hand he had specific cause to dread.

He reached Pecos about noon of a soft spring day, when the ground was moist from recent rains and when the air had a buoyancy which tingled in the blood. His eagerness to see

Mrs. Sanford had increased his pace to a gallop, but when he reached the square containing the little frame chapel built to please her, he reigned his horse upon his haunches and stared with dropped jaw at the charred remains of the little church. Then without a word he pushed on to the Lone Wolf, churning himself more and more into a rage, until, when he dismounted before the door, foam was dropping from his mouth like that of a mad dog, and his eyes, from wind and dust and rage, glowed in their sockets like two red coals

Startled by his appearance, every one fell away from the bar, leaving only Red Dick, the bartender, to face him. There was no need for the Pacifier to ask a question. Red Dick began his narrative without any urging.

"It's a bad business," he said, simply. "Nobody knows who done it, but we think some of Big Dan's gang fired it to spite you. We done all we could to save it. Every man in town turned out an' handed buckets of water, but it got such a start of us that it went like tinder. The doctor says it wasn't that that killed her—"

The Pacifier stumbled forward and leaned his shaking arms upon the bar.

"Killed who?" he muttered, hoarsely.

"Killed Mrs. Sanford! She got up an' came out an' urged us on an' filled the water

buckets herself. We thought she might 'a' strained herself, but the doctor said she couldn't 'a' lived anyway, an' the shock only hurried it on. There was a baby, you know."

"A baby!" whispered the Pacifier.

Red Dick dropped his voice.

"Yes, a baby. It died, an' they buried 'em both together, just a week ago to-day. Sanford he went back East. She had worked so hard an' was so proud of her Sunday-school, an' the boys set such a store by her. The doctor says he couldn't 'a' saved her anyway, but it's my belief that it broke her heart when she lost her little church."

Without waiting for any more the Pacifier stumbled out of the saloon and made his way to the freshly made grave on Boot Hill, where slept the Madonna of his dreams.

They found him there that night, shot by his own hand, and the only word he left was a letter to the bank in El Paso, where he had deposited his money, ordering that it should all be used to build a stone church at Pecos

"IN MEMORY OF HER."

With Mamma Away

With Mamma Away

EING the oldest, I think I ought to run the house," I said, settling down to talk things over with Bess, as mamma's trunks retired down the street, majestically piled on the very top of the wagon.

"No, I want to; I'm so much neater than you are. You don't care if the beds have wrinkles in the sheets, and you never notice dust."

"But I love to market, and you know we always have good things to eat when I have charge. Do let me run it."

"You'll run it into the ground and break it off," put in Jamie. "No, I don't mean that, France. I'll never go back on a girl that gets up such spreads as you do. Bess, let France do it."

"I'll tell you what we'll do. I'll take the table and you take the rest of the house, Bess.

I admit that I hate to fuss with the draperies and bric-à-brac and things, and you don't like to know what we are going to have for dinner."

"All right; that just suits me."

"And now, whenever three or four people come in, in the evening, we'll serve an ice. How does that strike you?"

"It strikes me delightfully. What else shall we do?"

"Well, have company every Sunday to dinner, so as to fill in that yawning gap between two o'clock and four, which means an extra-good dinner, always with salad and ice-cream."

Jamie wriggled with delight as I unfolded these modest plans concerning the weeks when we would be at the head of the house—in the daytime, at least.

With the greatest difficulty mamma had provided two excellent servants, who promised to be contented in the small basement bedrooms, which were the servants' quarters, until the new house was finished.

No matter how devoted girls are to their mother, nor what a dear, sweet mother they have, as we have, it *is* fun to have her go away sometimes and leave them in charge. Our plans worked like a charm. Like Jack Spratt and his wife, together Bess and I made one good housekeeper.

I took Olga under my charge, and together we evolved some stately meals. Jamie revelled in the things he loved. I indulged papa's Southern taste for hot breads of all kinds, and they came to the table hot, too; so did I, by the way! But presiding behind the urn cooled me off, and cheered my soul besides. Papa praised us, and said he hadn't lived so well for years.

Every night we had Augusta bring in an ice in the sherbet glasses with my little souvenir after-dinner coffee-spoons, which I had been collecting, and it made conversation flow so much more easily. I meant that the spoons did, because we could always discuss them; but the ice did, too, for that matter. There is nothing like eating to loosen people's tongues and make them feel sociable.

We went up, one morning, in great glee, to tell Aunt Kate about our superior housekeeping. She listened attentively, and then said:

"How do the servants behave?"

"Beautifully. They seem perfectly willing to do everything we tell them. We let them have an afternoon a week and every other Sunday, and we are all getting along like angels."

"Don't tax them too much," said Aunt Kate, as we came away.

"Isn't that just like mamma?" said Bess; "she always considers the servants first."

"I think women pamper their servants and their horses," I said, decidedly. "If we ever own horses, I shall not spare them because it's too hot or too cold, and walk myself; nor shall I spoil these servants. When mamma comes home she'll see that we can get more work out of them than she can."

"Who is coming Sunday, France?"

"Mr. Standish and Mr. Ford-Burke."

"Gracious! How dared you have that Englishman, when the English are accustomed to such elegant table service?"

"Papa suggested it, and then he has entertained us *so* much, Bess, we ought to."

"Well, that is in your line, but *do* be careful, France. Don't have too many courses. You know we started out with only three."

"Tend to your dusting, angel, and all you'll have to do is to open your mouth to be fed."

I planned a dinner "utterly regardless," as Bess said, for I was anxious to make a good impression on Mr. Ford-Burke, and I couldn't think of a better way. "When in doubt, play trumps." I played them. I sent Bess and papa off to church. I didn't dare to go, for fear Olga would burn or break or destroy some of the marvels I had helped her cook and was

determined to see through to the bitter end. Mr. Ford-Burke was very particular and accustomed to the best of everything. Oh, have you ever entertained people who made you worry so for fear you couldn't suit them, that you just wanted to lie down and die beforehand?

I must say, as I surveyed the piles of plates in the pantry and the number of spoons and forks on the table, that an uncomfortable twinge disturbed my serenity, for it looked like a dinner-party. I hastily resolved never to do it again. But pretty? The table was a dream, if I do say it myself.

"Augusta, don't get the plates mixed, and remember that Olga has a list of the way the courses are to come on. Don't make a clatter washing the fish-forks for the salad course, and be sure you cool them. You brought them in red-hot the last time, so that *anybody* would know they had just been washed. I *do* wish we had just one more set. Be sure to hand things at the left, and don't laugh at papa's jokes, and don't forget your cap, whatever you do."

Augusta looked stolidly contemptuous, and I went up-stairs to rest for the fifteen minutes before it was time to dress. I was uneasy. My conscience was rampant. If I tucked it in on one side, it bobbed out on the other. Oh,

I *never* would have such a dinner again on Sunday. What would mamma say?

Presently Augusta appeared at the door. She had her hat on.

"I t'ink you have to get anoder girl. Olga she leave. She want her money."

"Leave! Not now, Augusta, not right now?" I said, wildly.

"Yes'm, we leave a-right now. Olga she want her money."

"Well, *you* won't go, Augusta! Please wait till after dinner."

"No; I go when Olga go. Olga she already gone. Our trunks go yesterday. Olga she want her money."

Mr. Ford-Burke!

"Augusta, if you and Olga will stay till after dinner, I'll give you an extra week's wages apiece."

"I t'ink you have to get anoder girl. Olga she already gone. I go when Olga go."

"I'll give you a sealskin. I'll give you a house and lot!" I wailed, hysterically.

A noise at the door made her think papa was coming, and she knew he would make her stay, so she turned and went. She actually ran. Oh, if I had had a gun!

I sat there perfectly paralyzed. It was too late to do a single, solitary, individual thing

but to put crape on the door and send word to Mr. Ford-Burke that I was dead.

Well, it served me right. That came of having a dinner-party on Sunday. Oh, but Mr. Ford-Burke! He was liable to come at any minute. And that elegant, dear, beautiful dinner!

I rushed down-stairs. Heavens! there was the door-bell. It made me sick. I sat down on the stairs a minute, and the blessed thought came to me that it might be Jamie. I crept to the door and peeked through the glass. Never was I so glad to see his little freckled nose and honest gray eyes in all my life. I dragged him in and told him all about it.

"What shall I do? Think quickly, Jamie, and tell me."

"Whee-oo! but you are up a tree, France. And your 'man,' as Olga calls him, coming."

"Don't mention that creature's name to me. I think Swedes are the hatefulest race on earth."

"Won't Bess yell! Oh, poor France! I'd wait on table, but I'd surely spill things. Why, what's the matter?"

"Jamie, *I'll* wait on it. Come on down and crack some ice and put it in that ice-tub while I dress. Oh, you blessed boy!"

I ran down and saw that everything was ready to serve. I got Augusta's new cap that

she had never worn—it was bought with an eye to Mr. Ford-Burke—and I rushed up to my room. In almost no time I had on a dark-blue skirt, a white silk shirt-waist, a long, tidy-looking apron, and the cap. Fortunately, fortunately, it was becoming.

The door-bell rang, and Jamie to the rescue. He came up-stairs three at a time.

"France! France!" he said, in the lurid whisper adopted by small brothers when young men are in the parlor. "Ford-Burke and Stan—good gracious! What have you got on?" He pranced around me, with wild demonstrations of approval. It must have sounded to those gentlemen as if we were moving furniture.

"Hush! stop! Tell me, Jamie, do I look nice?"

"You're out of sight," he chuckled.

"I wish I were," I said, rebelliously.

"Hurry up and go down. I'm going to hang over the banisters to see how they take it."

Thus encouraged I did go down, but, honestly, I was ridiculously frightened. I didn't know what Mr. Ford-Burke would do; you know Englishmen are so queer. My tongue almost refused to come unglued from the roof of my mouth and I had to swallow violently before I could begin. Then I dropped a courtesy and

told my story. I made it as amusing as I could, but I never felt less like it in my life. I could have wept with rage even then. Fortunately they were delighted. Mr. Ford-Burke behaved charmingly.

Then Bess and papa came. I wish you could have seen Bessie's eyes open. Good-breeding alone kept her mouth from following suit. She was simply stunned. We had heaps of fun out of the dinner. Bess presided in my place. The guests made an exception of their rule not to talk to the maid, and conversed freely with me, but I demurely refused to respond. Bess assured them that I was too well trained, and I proved to them what a thoroughbred I would have been had my lot fallen in that sphere of life.

But oh, what a council of war we held after they had gone! I wept on papa's shirt-front, and he submitted without a whimper, administering pats calculated to soothe when they didn't make me cough by their severity, for the sorrier papa is the harder he pats. But all their efforts failed to console me. I felt then that I never wanted to see Mr. Ford-Burke again. But I got over that.

Papa said, "Advertise." Bess said, "Answer advertisements." I said, "Let's do both."

We got out the morning papers. My eyes

were red and my cap askew, so Bess read them aloud.

"'Wanted. In small family'—um, that won't do. 'Wanted, wanted, situation as cook, as second girl—'"

"Well, read them," I said.

"But they all say 'no postals,' and you can't go yourself to all these places, miles and miles from here."

"Nó what?" roared papa.

"No postals," I said, wearily.

The snort of disgust that emanated from my father would have done credit to a war-horse. But I was used to it. I had helped mamma before.

Monday I went to an intelligence office, sent advertisements to all the papers, wrote nineteen postals, and then sat down to wait. I expected a small army to apply. No one came. Tuesday I again sought the intelligence office.

"Why haven't you sent me anybody?" I said.

"Well, you see, Olga Olesen and Augusta Lutgren are here looking for a place, and whenever I find one who is willing to go and look at your accommodations, Olga tells her that you have seven courses in your dinners and serve ice-cream every night at ten o'clock, besides three regular meals and lots of company."

My heart went clear down into the cellar of that intelligence office. Bess poked me. "Say something," she whispered; "where is your spirit? Speak out, I tell you."

Thus adjured, I found my voice.

"Tell the ladies," I said, with unappreciated sarcasm, "that will not occur again. We have had some company, but we will never have any more. We will never have more than two courses, and, if they don't like that, one will do. They can have three afternoons a week and the use of the piano from nine till twelve."

She looked at me with some suspicion, but I met her eye with so much meekness that she decided to let that pass.

"You have basement bedrooms, and the doctors tell girls that they are unhealthy."

"Then they can have the front alcove room over the parlor, and papa will sleep in the basement. They might feel safer that way, and papa is not at all particular, just so the ladies of his kitchen are happy."

"I'll send you somebody," she said, shortly, closing her book.

"Please do," I said, sweetly. "I'll be under such obligations to you."

Bess and I got home in some way—I don't remember how.

I utterly refused to board. I insisted upon no

one telling Aunt Kate, and I cooked. My hands went into the dish-water three times a day, and went into a cologne bath six times a day. Bess wailed, I was stoical, Jamie and papa overpoweringly sympathetic and indignant.

Day after day I talked to the "ladies" who "called" in response to my advertisement, which was becoming as well known as the Douglas three-dollar shoe. Day after day I escorted them to look at their rooms and then let them out at the basement door. I hired some twelve or thirteen. They never came back. I knew they wouldn't. Papa had vowed that the basement rooms had nothing to do with it; but as two weeks went by and no servants, he began to ruminate with great emphasis. Next he tried to hurry the men on the new house, and suggested putting the servants' rooms in the cupola.

One day I hired Ellen. Ellen was a green, slow-moving creature, who propelled herself by her shoulders, and Jamie said her face was the map of Ireland. Ellen didn't mind bedrooms. This was in the third week of my dish-washing.

Dear Ellen! I couldn't get anybody else. So Ellen had everything her own way.

She was a Catholic, and I had to let her attend mass before she would think of us; but she

would at least wash the dishes, and she had all the mass she wanted.

She was the funniest thing we ever had, and her expression outdid an illustrated newspaper. She took the most violent fancy to me, and bored Bess by telling her how she did "luv Miss France." She was always doing things I didn't tell her to do, and leaving her regular work untouched. She had seen the man clean the windows, yet one day I saw a bucket of soapsuds standing on the parlor carpet and Ellen clinging to the upper sash, washing the outside of the front windows at five o'clock in the afternoon. As she was nearly through, I simply sighed and let her finish.

In about ten minutes there came a timid ring at the front door. Of course—no Ellen. I didn't see her at the window either, so I went myself.

There stood my maid-of-all-work, with a corner of her apron in her mouth. She generally wore it there, by-the-way.

"Oh, Ellen," I said, pleasantly, "did you lock yourself out?"

"No'm. I fell out."

"Fell out?"

"Yes'm. Didn't you see me go?"

I bit my lip. If I laughed, I knew she would leave.

"Why, no, I didn't! Did it hurt you, Ellen?"

It was twelve feet to the ground.

"No'm, not *hurt* me, but it jar-red me some; and I *felt* so foolish."

A pause.

"I lit on me feet," she said as she picked up her bucket and propelled herself violently towards the stairs by those shoulders — "and burst me shoe," she added as she disappeared down into the darkness.

Ellen left that night. Her sister died or was born, or something — I don't remember what. Anyway, she left. I had foolishly paid her in full Saturday—a thing mamma never does, by-the-way. Wise mamma! Foolish, foolish France!

Aunt Kate had possessed herself in some fashion of the facts, and, thinking them too funny for anything, had written to mamma. Then began agonized letters from the dear heart, wondering what her helpless family would do, and brooding over our distress. This would never do; her trip would do her no good if she worried.

I made a frantic effort for a servant—you notice I have come down to one, and both the efforts and the franticness lasted two weeks. Bess wrote daily soothing letters to mamma and nobly let her dusting and draperies suffer while she helped me.

Suddenly a middle-aged woman appeared with a skin like papyrus. She wanted to come, She liked Bess and me. She didn't object to Jamie. She didn't mind the bedroom. She was in a hurry for a place. She had good references. Her eagerness was suspicious. But oh, she was such a nice, respectful, sensible talking person; my heart yearned over her.

"There is one thing that may be an objection to you. I have a dog. It will cost me two dollars a week to board him out. If you will let him come with me, I'll work for four and a half a week and do all your work."

"But we want two girls, and mamma will get another when she comes home, anyway. Besides, papa hates dogs, and never would even let us have one."

"He won't bark nor disturb any one; I'll never have him in sight. I've had trouble. That dog is the only thing on earth that I have to love or to love me. I'm thirty-nine and look seventy. I'll have no company and won't want even an afternoon out. When my work is done, I read."

"But I have a cat," I objected.

"He won't touch your cat. I'll see to it myself. I'll do everything you want and take all the responsibility off from you. I can cook

all the things you young ladies love, and can serve an elaborate dinner all myself."

How those pathetic words touched me!

"Papa would never notice the dog unless he fell over him," said Bess, dubiously.

"We might try you until he discovered it," I said, doubtfully.

"If he is not observing, he would never know it," said the woman, decidedly. "And I might manage to suit him so well that he wouldn't care."

"If you choose to come on the condition that if papa finds out about the dog and wants you to go, you will not consider it unjust, and if you will promise to give me at least a week's warning before leaving, you may come."

"I will. I'll not leave you alone, with your mother gone. I'd be ashamed to."

"What is your name, please?"

"Elaine Ormund."

"Dear me! Haven't you a middle name?"

"My middle name is Lucile."

Elaine Lucile Ormund. With that skin!

"Would you mind if we called you Anna? Be honest, now, and say so, if you would."

"Not in the least. I'll answer to the name of Anna. My names *are* fancy. But I've not always worked out. I've had trouble. Yes, my names are fancy for a cook."

"A little fancy," I admitted. "Come to-morrow."

An anxious letter from mamma made me say to Jamie, "Telegraph that I have hired a cook. It will ease her mind."

Jamie went with alacrity.

"Did you say 'and a dog'?" I asked him when he came back.

"No, but I can."

"Put it in, then; it's so funny."

I forgot to ask him how he sent it, and he neglected to say that he had sent two. Mamma received the telegrams in this way: "And a dog. Keep it dark from pa.—Jamie." In an hour she got another: "France has hired a cook. Make yourself easy.—Jamie." And by using her wits, she discovered the facts.

Anna came. She is a wonder. She appears to be just what she said. She can do even more than she said. She cleans to suit even Bessie, and cooks to suit even me. The little black cat still arches her back at the dog, but no collisions have occurred. Papa does not notice the hungry barks which appear to emanate from next door, nor the dragging of a chain under the library window. Neither does the glib conversation, which springs into mushroom growth at these critical moments, excite his suspicion. It will be Jamie who betrays us

eventually, as my dog stories, called forth to cover his rash references, already are giving out; so there is what might be called a canine undercurrent in our family life just now, which may swamp us sooner or later. Still, Anna keeps her part of the agreement bravely.

The neighbors are expecting to see the roof go off at any time, for we are all suspicious of such a wonder. Gingerly and by degrees I am inviting in a little company. Anna actually seems to rise to the occasion. But I am wary; still, the new house is almost finished, and, best of all, mamma will come home next week.

The Chattahoochee Woman's Club

The Chattahoochee Woman's Club

HATTAHOOCHEE was originally intended to be in Georgia, but the new-comers, having carelessly run the town more towards the south than northward, and its having been settled directly on the border, it came within the Florida State line, and its post-office was legally changed to Chattahoochee, Florida.

It was inhabited by settlers from many States, mostly, of course, Georgia and Florida, but there were three families from Texas, one from Chicago, and one from Bangor, Maine.

Perhaps it was this brisk Northern element, perhaps it was the trunk line which not only ran its road through Chattahoochee, but built a fine stone station, with electric lights and a ladies' room where smoking was not allowed; but for some reason the Chattahoochee Woman's Club applied for admission to the General

Federation of Women's Clubs and sent a delegate to the Denver Convention.

To say that the town was stirred up over the first meeting after the delegate's return is to state the case mildly. It was felt that they of the South, although so far removed from the seats of learning and admittedly so backward in woman's progress, were at last to be brought in touch with modern thought. They held themselves in a plastic and receptive mood. They were to be brought up to date at last.

Their spirit was always admirable. They sent their daughters to New Orleans to school and patronized light opera in Atlanta. Not a few could play Victor Herbert's "Serenade," and warbled the words while making tomato preserves or canning dewberries. But all their past progress was as nothing to the innovation of the next meeting. The President, Mrs. Fannie Callaway, had given out the general subject, "Browning and His Works," and although "aghast at her timerity," as her husband proudly put it, "the whole blooming club took the hurdle without a whinny or a whicker."

It was found that there was not a complete set of Browning in Chattahoochee, two members only possessing the Lovell's Library paper volume of his "Selected Poems." These

speedily lost their covers by much handling during the week in which the Baptist Publication Society of Atlanta was engaged in supplying their demands.

Mrs. Summers, the wife of the Washington correspondent on the *Indianapolis Sentinel,* was given for her subject "Sordello." *She* came to Chattahoochee for hay-fever.

Mrs. Carter had "Evelyn Hope"; the wife of the Methodist clergyman, Mrs. Spaulding, was given "Caliban upon Setebos"; and, with the report of the delegate, this would consume the allotted time. The Secretary, a Boston girl who was in Chattahoochee teaching school, assigned the subjects. The afternoon was under the auspices of the "Progress towards Modern Thought Department," which was only another way of stating that Chattahoochee wished to catch step with the North and to live up to its telephone service and electric light.

The Club movement in the South is obliged to contend with the peculiar conditions resulting from a fusion of the Old and New South, the Old South clinging to its traditions; the New roughly jostling them. Nearly all of the husbands of the club members loathed the whole proceeding, and Judge Maddox openly declared that if his wife ever got on the platform, even to read her paper, he would leave her.

When the Maddoxes lived in Atlanta the judge had been Chairman of the Committee governing the Atlanta Lyceum Course, and he it was who always refused to have women speakers or lecturers, no matter how famous. In fact, the more famous women were upon the platform of public life, the more infamous they became in the eyes of this Southern gentleman of the Old South.

Several other first families frankly repudiated the whole club idea as unwomanly and unsexing in its tendencies. Mrs. Carroll said she "would as soon be called a hyena as a club woman," and these sentiments prevented the club leaders from suggesting any innovations. Thus hampered by tradition, they had hitherto stuck to the novels of Mrs. Holmes and Mrs. Southworth, and their last annual meeting had been in the form of a symposium to discuss the relative merits of these two lady novelists.

Nevertheless, the Chattahoochee Woman's Club flourished, but its members had the uncomfortable feeling that while the study this year of modern novels was a daring step in the right direction, still their course of study lacked ballast, lacked tone. They read accounts of the progress of other clubs and grew more uncomfortable. They were afraid of being left in the lurch.

Therefore, when Mrs. Callaway fired her bomb and jumped from William Watson to Browning, they all suddenly walked with a freer step and became dignified in their own eyes.

On the afternoon of the second Monday in the month, there was an enthusiastic outpouring of ladies who fluttered in and out of Masonic Hall, with note-books and pencils. One man was present and sat on the front seat. He was the correspondent for the *Sentinel*, on a flying visit to his wife, and had flattered the Woman's Club by begging permission to write an account of it from its incipiency for his paper. To the delighted members it seemed that at last everything was conspiring to bring the Club into the front rank.

Mrs. Callaway took the chair and rapped for order. Miss Baxter read the report of the last meeting, and commented favorably upon Mrs. Tuggle's paper on William Watson, "a poet so pure in tone that an exhaustive study of his anniversary odes would not bring the blush of shame to the most delicate woman's cheek."

A little ripple of applause greeted this quotation from Mrs. Tuggle's paper.

The report was adopted, and then the President called upon Mrs. Carter for her paper on "Evelyn Hope." Mrs. Carter was perfectly

composed. She stepped upon the platform, bowed slowly to the President, who graciously returned her bow, then to the body expectant of the Club.

"Ladies and guests of the Chattahoochee Woman's Club," she began, "it is with great pleasure that I see before me our famous gentleman guest, who has so flatterin'ly begged permission to write us up."

At this juncture, in unwrapping her manuscript, written on tinted glazed paper, all the middle pages slipped out and fluttered to the floor at the feet of Mr. Summers, who sprang to recover them for her.

Not one whit disturbed by the misfortune, she clasped her hands and allowed him to scratch up from the bare floor the unruly pages which seemed to glue themselves down in order to discomfit him. In despair he handed her four or five that she might begin, but she waved him off.

"They aren't numbered, so won't you just run them over for me and arrange them?" she said.

He gave her one look, but the Southern lady, accustomed to such services from all men, never dreamed that she was asking too much, nor did any other member of the Club, except one or two. Mrs. Summers put her hand-

kerchief up to her face and shook so that the lady back of her pulled Mrs. Summer's cape farther over her shoulders.

Mrs. Callaway rose on the platform.

"As this will be a mattah of some little time, I will ask Mrs. Cartah to be seated at my right hand, and will call foh some of the unfinished business of the last meetin'. The schedule of study foh next year has been handed in by the Committee, and you have had two weeks in which to decide if it meets with yoh approval. Are there any objections? Ladies, please speak promptly."

Mrs. Tuggle was recognized by the Chair and said:

"Ladies of the Chattahoochee Woman's Club:—I wish to place myself on record as a progressive woman, *and yet* a defender of the home and the moral tone of our city. Thahfoe I deem it my duty to protest against the study of Rudyahd Kiplin', and suggest William Dean Howells instead."

A distinct flutter swept over the audience at this.

"I would ask," began Mrs. Summers, "to have Mrs. Tuggle state which of Kipling's works she would bar, or if she would bar all."

"I haven't had the pleasure," responded Mrs. Tuggle, politely—"I mean, the opportunity—of

readin' the wohks of Mr. Kiplin', but Mist Tuggle told me of one of his pieces, The Takin' of somethin' or other, it begins with L, but I can't pronounce it."

"'The Taking of Lungtungpen,'" murmured Miss Baxter.

"Thank you, Miss Baxtah. 'The Takin' of'—a town—which Mist Tuggle said he knew that the gentlemen of this city would not like to have their wives and innocent young dawtahs read. It speaks of takin' the city in thah—in thah *underclose!*"

"If that is true," said Mrs. Lord, "I file my protest with Miz Tuggle's. I wish to see the city of Chattahoochee, which unites the two great States of Jawja and Florida, to stand for purity in all things."

"Three protests bar an author," said the President. "Is thah another besides Miz Tuggle's and Miz Lawd's?"

A half-dozen hands were raised in the audience.

"The works of Rudyahd Kiplin' are barred," announced the President.

A motion was made and carried that his name be printed in the list, with a foot-note stating that his works had been discussed and barred for impurity, and that the Chattahoochee Woman's Club go on record as a cham-

pion of literature which the young girl might read.

Mrs. Lord moved that the works of Howells be substituted, and called for a rising vote. It was carried unanimously.

"I move that the works of John Oliver Hobbes be barred because she is a woman writin' under the name of a man, which is unbecomin' and impropah!" said Mrs. Culpepper.

A short silence ensued. Then some one suggested that their own Miss Murfree had done the same. A brisk discussion followed, ending in allowing the works of John Oliver Hobbes to remain rather than even seem to repudiate the action of one of their own Southern women.

Nathaniel Hawthorne and George Eliot were condemned, the first because of *The Scarlet Letter*, and George Eliot, both on account of *Adam Bede* and because of her own life. The works of E. P. Roe were added by request. They then passed a resolution to protest against Sarah Bernhardt playing in the States of Florida and Georgia, and ordered copies sent to both State legislatures.

By this time Mr. Summers had sorted Mrs. Carter's paper, and the ladies, with eyes sparkling with excitement, heard her discussion of "Evelyn Hope." She approved of it heartily,

all but the fact that Evelyn's lover, being confessed by the noble poet to be thrice her age of sixteen years, was much too old for her.

A burst of applause and much whispering and nodding of feathers and flowers followed this masterly summing-up of the whole poem.

Mrs. Summers was then called to the platform to read her paper on "Sordello." She was a little woman in a red shirt-waist and black skirt, and she wore glasses. She had no paper. She simply crossed her hands and began to speak.

"The most truthful summing-up of the poem of 'Sordello' that I ever heard was once delivered by the Browning lecturer of the Chicago University Extension course. He said that there were only two intelligible lines in the whole poem, the first and the last, and that each of these contained a lie!" With which astounding statement she bowed to Mrs. Callaway and went back to her seat.

The fact that her husband burst out laughing was very disquieting to the President. She had never read "Sordello," therefore the joke was lost on *her*, but a hasty glance at the audience convinced her that the other ladies were in the same predicament. She was a woman of resources. She smiled, suppressed that smile, rose, and tried to speak, but her

amusement prevented her. When she finally succeeded, she said:

"Miz Summahs, won't you quote those lines for the Club to refresh thah memories?"

She shook her head at Mrs. Summers as if to say she was a sad wag, and Mrs. Summers from her place in the audience rose and said:

"The first line is:

"'Who will may hear Sordello's story told;'

And the last is:

"'Who would has heard Sordello's story told.

They each contain a lie, because you can't understand it to save your life. I accuse Browning of wilful obscurity, and am free to say that certain of his poems I will not bother with!"

A few startled gasps came out here and there; then one woman laughed and clapped her hands. Another hesitatingly followed suit, and soon a wave of laughter and applause swept over the audience.

Miss Baxter sprang to her feet.

"I second what Mrs. Summers has said, and I quote as my reason this line from 'Rabbi Ben Ezra':

"'Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed beast?'"

Mr. Summers began to be disappointed at the laughter this sally evoked. He had come to see these women take themselves seriously.

Mrs. Spaulding, the Methodist clergyman's wife, came to the platform, trembling with emotion and excitement. She wondered if she, too, dared to be honest? She laid her roll of manuscript, fastened with a rubber band, on the President's desk and said:

"Ladies, I too shall dah to speak mah mind freely. I can't understand a word of 'Caliban upon Setebos.' I don't know who Caliban was, noh whethah Setebos was a writah whose theories he was considerin', or *what* it was! His theories of religion seem a little advanced, but, aftah all, I am not sure that any of us knows what she really does believe. I simply ask you all to go home and read the poem and tell *me* what it means!"

An explosion could not have caused a greater sensation. Fans rustled, cheeks grew pink, eyes sparkled, and in the midst of the whispering the delegate who had attended the Denver Convention rose and was greeted with the Chautauqua salute.

"I am not going to the platform; I am not even going to read my report. I will save it for the next time. Ladies, I will not interrupt the spirit of this meeting. To my surprise I

return from the most enlightened body of women in America to find my own little modest club abloom with enterprise and progress. You have done wonders in my absence. You are daring to speak the truth. You may not believe it, but you are doing just as good work here to-day as any session could boast at that great convention I have just attended. We have been old fogy in our methods. We have been backwoodsy, but we are breaking away from traditions and we are coming out into the light of day. I have heard very few of you quote what your husbands thought. That, too, is a step towards freedom! You have done well in combining womanliness with progress in declaring for the purity of the home, in barring certain poisonous writahs from our study course and substituting those who could be read aloud in the bosom of the family without a blush, from the baby in the cradle to the aged grandmother in the chimney corner. Your course I would define as masterly yet womanly, and I would suggest that as a club motto—'Masterly yet womanly!' It only remains for me to congratulate your progress towards modern thought and to take my seat."

A perfect storm of gentle, gloved applause shook the air as the delegate subsided. The excitement was intense. The Episcopal rector's

wife moved over to Mrs. Spaulding and whispered to her.

Then Mrs. Spaulding rose. Her voice trembled with feeling.

"We are in line at last, ladies! No one can deny it who has been here to-day. We have shaken off the shackles of tradition and have come out boldly into the light. May I ask the President to set aside the rules and close this meetin' with a pray-ah."

This suggestion met with such approval that bonnets nodded their assent before Mrs. Callaway put the question.

"I would suggest that we all rise and repeat the Lawd's Pray-ah in unison," she began, but, to everybody's surprise, little, timid Mrs. Peebles, the rector's wife, anxious to free her spirit also, rose and said:

"In the spirit of this afternoon's work, might I suggest, not the Lawd's Pray-ah, but somethin' a—a little moh *modern!* I ask Miz Spauldin' to make up one as she goes along."

Thus Mrs. Peebles broke away from the ritual, and the ladies of the Chattahoochee Woman's Club bowed their heads.

“Yessum”

"Yessum"

I

ON Saturday afternoon the "wash" of the Northern delegates to the Baptist Convention was being borne through the streets of Memphis on the heads of two portly, pendulous colored women. Owing to the size of the great, soft, white bundles they balanced so deftly, they walked on the extreme edges of the brick pavement, and even then, as they were out of step, their head-pieces swayed to and from each other with rhythmic regularity.

"What you gwine do, Sist' Richidy, if dem Northern ladies gibs you fits 'bout scorchin' dat skirt?"

"I ain't skeered 'bout what dem Northern ladies gwine say to me 'bout nothin', Sist' Golden," retorted the other. "Don' you know dey says dat colored folks is jis as good as white folks is, an' dat up Norf if a colored lady got a

silk dress she gits invited to de white folks' pahties jis like de quality?"

"Git out wid you, Sist' Richidy. I ain' no such softy as to b'lieve yo' fool talk."

"'Tain't no fool talk, Sist' Golden. Hit's de Gawd's own trufe. 'Cordin' to dat, de ladies gwine say nottin' to me 'bout dat scorched skirt, 'caze it would be lake deir sassin' one anurr. An' if dey *did* talk sassy to me," she added, emboldened by the other's evident admiration, "I'd jess up an' sass 'em back. 'Deed I would. If dey tink I'm as good as dey is, I jes gwine show 'em dat I *is*."

"For de lan's sake, Sist' Richidy, I never did see you so uppity befo'. But I reckon you wouldn't dare talk so if it was ole Mis' Beauchamp's ruffled petticoat you done burnt."

"Lawd, Sist' Golden, I reckon not!" cried the woman. "Mis' Beauchamp is de quality, one of de sho' nuff high-steppin' ladies. I don't reckon de time will ever come when we'll hyer *huh* a-claimin' dat niggers is her equals. She hol's dat haid up as high as she ever done when de Beauchamps owned de whole place. An' when she comes in town she lifts her dress an' picks her way lake she jis' 'spise to touch de dirt wid dem lill foots of hers. She got a look in her eyes, ole as she is, much as to say, 'You niggers, step roun' hyer. You may be as

good as de Northern ladies, but as for me, you has been my slaves, an' in my min' you is *still*.' To be sho', de Beauchamps never owned any of *us*, but I kin tell quality, fur's I see 'em, an' Mis' Beauchamp is quality. You *cain't* say no mo', Sist' Golden."

"'Deed you cain't, Sist' Richidy. I reckon 'caze de Beauchamps used to own Mandy's maw is one reason why she is so biggoty she won't hab nuthin' to do wid us. I 'clar to you, Sist' Richidy, hit do mek me mad to see what airs dat Mandy Tice do gib herself. Yonder she is now, standin' in de do'way, lookin' for Yessum. She watches dat chile lake she was a white lady an' him huh onliest son. Bress my soul, if I gits my chillen all togerr awn Saddy night to wash 'em for Sunday, I'm a-doin' well. I ain't got de time to traipse after 'em de way Mandy does."

They came to a neat little cottage set in a tidy yard filled with flowers of all descriptions. A balloon vine clambered over the door and windows, and shook its pale-green pods in the fragrant air. An ironing-board was visible through the front door, supported by a chair-back and the high foot-board of the bed on which lay an aged dying negress.

"Howdy, Sist' Tice," they called out to the woman in the door.

"Howdy, Sist' Richidy. Howdy, Sist' Golden. How you all to-day?"

"Tol'bul middlin', thank you, Sist' Tice. How's you' maw?"

"Maw is right po'ly to-day, thank you, Sist' Richidy. Her laigs has begun to swell."

"Del Law, I'se sorry to hear dat, Sist' Tice. Give her my best respects, if you please, ma'am, an' tell her I'll step in awn my way home and tell her howdy."

"Thank you, Sist' Richidy," said the woman, in a cooler tone, "but I don' reckon you kin see maw to-day. She ain't hardly well enough. She's restless and quivery."

"Umph! Well, you knows bes', Sist' Tice. Good-evenin'."

"Good-evenin', Sist' Richidy, Sist' Golden."

"De proud-faced, col'-hearted nigger," muttered Silvy Richidy as they passed on. "She needn' be so 'fraid I'll git to see de inside ob dat house ob hers. When huh maw dies, she'll be *'bleeged* to hab us to de funeral."

"Has dey foun' out what's de matter wid her?" asked Sist' Golden.

"De las' I heard, ole Mis' Beauchamp done sont her own doctor to see her. He prognosticated dat she won' live long. He say her complaint is kinder lake de serious ole final-come-an-git-us—only not so swif' as dat."

"You don' say. I 'clar to gracious, Sist' Richidy, how much you do know!"

"I knows one t'ing," answered Sist' Richidy, in a sudden burst of rage, "an' dat is dat I jes' *'spise* dat Mandy Tice. She is so mean an' avaricious she wuck day an' night, savin' up her money an' savin' it lake she was white. She's got de sin ob avariciousness, if anybody ever had. De Lawd knows what she's savin' huh money for—I don't. She don' buy no clo'es, she don' go to de picnics, she don' go to corn-roasts nor barbecues, nor even to de babtizin's for fear dey'll take up a collection. She don' allow herself no pleasure 'tall, she's so skeert she'll spend a nickel, an' when my second husband was hung, do you know dat woman wouldn't leab off half a day's ironin' to go to de hangin'?"

"Hit's lowerin', Sist' Richidy," responded Sister Golden. "Dat's what it is; hit's *lowerin'!* I wouldn't pay no 'tention to sich a unnatural 'ooman."

II

Still standing in the doorway of her cabin, where they had left her, and looking after their retreating forms with ill-disguised contempt—the contempt which all high-class negroes heap

upon the baser born—Mandy Tice raised her voice and called.

"Yessum! Oh-h, Yessum! Whar awn earth *is* dat chile?"

She waited a few moments, regardless of her cooling iron, then called again.

A little figure came flying down the street, panting artificially, as if he had been running since daybreak.

"You, Yessum, whah you been all dis time?"

The child screwed his knuckles into his eyes and opened his mouth in a sudden mighty roar. His mouth was cavernous.

"Quit yo' bellerin'!" commanded his mother, in disgust. "Do you want to scare yo' po' ole dyin' Granny into a fit? Do yo' want to send her into Glory all a-foamin' at de mouf an' writhin' up de golden streets lake a garter-snake?"

Yessum stopped instantly and darted dexterously under the ironing-board to the bedside of his grandmother, whom he loved devotedly. He looked at her familiar wrinkled face anxiously to see if any such hideous phenomenon were taking place. But the poor old creature was the same as he had left her. Her palsied hand shook as she lifted Yessum's little black paw to her lips.

"Whah you been, son?" she asked. "Yo' po' ole Granny mighty lonesome widout her lill feller a-runnin' in an' out de do'."

"I'se been wid Marse Rob Beauchamp, Granny. He done bought a razor an' was tryin' to shave hisseff."

Mandy returned to her ironing.

"I knew it," she said. "I knew dat chile was taggin' round after Marse Rob. It do look lake he done bewitched de chile. Cain't you keep away fom him one minute, specially when I sends you awn a errand an' tells you to hurry?"

"Let de chile alone, Mandy honey. He cain't he'p it. Hit's in de blood de way we all love de Beauchamps. Befo' you was bawn, I use to pray to de good Lawd to make my child a faithful servant of His, *an'* he'p it to *love de Beauchamps.* I reckon I done marked my chillen wid love for de Beauchamps. Tell Granny 'bout Marse Rob's razor, chile."

"Well'm, he tole me dat for two years—"

"De Lawd hab mussy awn my soul, Yessum, quit openin' yo' mouf so wide. You ought to hab mo' respeck fo' yo' mudder's feelin's. How you reckon hit mek me feel to see you open dat mouf, size ob a stove-lid? Fust t'ing you know, you'll spile de shape on it. Begin ovah now, an' see if you cain't wuk yo' mouf little an'

pretty de way Mis' Beauchamp does. Begin ovah now."

"Well'm, Marse Rob been goin' to de barber's for 'bout two years now, but he say hit ain't no use. A man mus' hab a razah ob his own. So he tuk me wid him when he buyed it, an' I went clean home to de gate wid him, an' dat's all."

"Bress his handsome face!" murmured Granny. "He jes like his paw—so big an' brave an' venturesome. When Marse Rob gwine to Nashville, son?"

"He say he gwine to-morrow, Granny," answered the boy.

"How long did you hang aroun' dat gate, waitin' for Marse Rob to come out agin?" asked Mandy.

"Not long, mammy, 'caze Mis' Beauchamp come out soon, an' she axed me was de cloze done, an' I telled her 'Yessum,' an' pulled off my hat lake you done telled me to, an' she say she glad ob it, 'caze she want dat black-an'-white muslin to wear at five o'clock."

Mandy glanced hurriedly at the clock, then reached Yessum with a swift slap.

"Why, Mandy!" said Granny.

"Dat no 'count chile!" cried Mandy, spreading a sheet on the floor and beginning to pile the dainty, ruffled things into it. "Foolin'

'roun' hyer half a hour wid Mis' Beauchamp wantin' her dress, an' he nuvver tole me. I got a mine to lick you, Yessum Tice! You de mos' vexatious chile I ever see."

Mandy seldom hurried unless she had to, but her motions just now made Yessum creep closer to Granny's bedside until his mother's anger cooled somewhat.

Mandy flew around, raised Granny's head, poured her medicine down so fast that the poor old woman choked and gasped, gave her pillow a shake, laid her down again, twitched the bedclothes into place, and, bidding Yessum stay around the house and tend to his Granny until she got back, Mandy stepped outside the door, swung the bundle to her head, balanced it, and began her stately march down the street towards the home of Mrs. Beauchamp.

Granny lay quiet a moment, then she opened her eyes and began to sniff.

"What dat I smells, honey? Smells lake woollen burnin'. See ef yo' mammy didn' leabe her holder awn de iron somewhere."

Yessum peered around, following his nose until he spied it.

"Yessum, she did. But I done took it off. Hit was mos' blazin'!"

"Po' Mandy," sighed Granny. "She does git so out ob patience ef t'ings don' go to suit

Mis' Beauchamp. You mus' try to 'member better, son."

"Yessum, I will, Granny. Say, Granny, ef I gits you de camphor bottle, you reckon you feel lake tellin' me 'bout how Colonel Beauchamp buyed my gran'paw?"

"Yes, git me de camphor an' I'll try."

The poor old creature sniffed at the camphor a moment, then began her story.

She fixed her faded eyes on the ceiling as if she saw again the great plantation, the swarms of negroes, the horses, carriages, and guests among whom her far-away youth had been passed. Alas, the trim figure she was in those days would never have been recognized in the pain-twisted form lying so small and helpless upon her snowy bed. Her toothless gums and loose mouth made her words indistinct at times, but Yessum was so familiar with the story that he understood it all.

"I was give to Mis' Beauchamp ever sence she was born," she began, "when she was Miss Irene Newsome, wid de meanes', pepperies' ole paw you ever hearn tell of. Her maw was daid, an' nobody could do nothin' wid him 'cept jes Miss Irene. He was powerful mean to his niggers, an' hit was a long time befo' he would let me an Alec git mah'ed. Not becaze he objected to de match, but jes 'caze

it was his way to say 'no' to everything fust an' den 'low hisseff to be coaxed 'roun' afterwards, so's we would be mo' thankful an' obligated to him. But my Alec was a peart young feller, an' he wouldn't stan' it to be imposed awn. He was a good an' faithful servant, an', 'ceptin' dat his eyes blazed out awn 'casions, you couldn't tell dat he felt t'ings mos' lake white folks. Old Marse Newsome ain't never had Alec whupped, an' Alec lived de whole ob his life a-fearin' dat de time would come when de lash would fall awn him for de fust time. 'Peared lake Marse Newsome sort of knowed somepin would happen ef he ever had Alec whupped, 'caze he never give de order, while mighty nigh every other nigger awn de place 'cept jes me an' Alec had a tas'e of de lash. Alec was powerful proud an' quivery, lake some fine horses we used to own. Hit looked to me lake dey too used to be watchin' an' fearin' de whip an' hopin' dat dere flashin' eye an' thin skin an' high-steppin' ways gwine buy their freedom from what we 'bleeged to give common horses. Miss Irene knowed how we bofe feel, an' she used to stan' between us an' her paw, when he'd git dem tantrums; 'caze she knowed somepin gwine break loose ef me or Alec got whupped.

"But one day hit come. It was Miss Irene

her own sweet seff what tole me. 'Po' Lizzie,' she say, throwin' her pretty white arm roun' my wais'. 'Po' Lizzie. Alec done been whupped.' An' wid dat she begin cryin' lake it was *her* Alec stidder mine. An' dare we stood, de black 'ooman an' de white lady, cryin' over de wrongs ob po' Alec, jis same lake he was white. Hit was dark den, an' while we was talkin' it over, dere come a handful of yearth th'owed up at de window, an' I run, 'caze I know dat was Alec's way of callin' me.

"He whisper to me to let him in. Miss Irene look over my shoulder an' whisper back, 'Come awn, po', good Alec. It's only me. It's only yo' unhappy Miss Irene. Let me speak to yo'!' Wid dat he climb up de piazza roof an' step in at de window. I never see sich a face. 'Peared lake I see him now as he stood befo' us two awn dat night. Hit look lake his heart done broke, an' yit mad! He was mad clean thoo. He tole us he gwine run away. I was so skeered when I hear him say dat befo' Miss Irene, but, to my s'prise, she say, 'I'se glad of it, Alec; I'll he'p you.' An' wid dat she gib him money an' tole him whah to go, an' dey discuss plans wid each other, tell Alec want to kneel at Miss Irene's feet, he so thankful to her for her sweet ways.

"So Alec run off. Ol' Marse Newsome was

rarin', pitchin' mad when he hear ob it. But he didn't seem to do nothin' 'bout it dat we could fine out.

"Marse Beauchamp, from de nex' plantation, was daid in love wid Miss Irene, an' jes at dis time she 'cided she'd mah'y him, an' dey was engaged. Ole Marse Newsome mighty pleased at de fine match his lill daughter gwine mek, 'caze he was de riches' an de bes'-lookin' young man, an' she de riches' an' de beautifulest young lady in de county.

"Dey was great times den 'bout de engagement. Sich pahties an' picnics an' doin's you never heard tell of. Dey don' *hab* sich things *any*where now-days lake *we* used to hab.

"Me an' Miss Irene used to talk a heap 'bout Alec, and wished we'd hyer from him, tell one day de niggers tell me dat word come dat dey done cotch Alec wid bloodhoun's, an' was bringin' him back to be sold at auction."

Granny's weak voice quivered and broke at the remembrance of her anguish of so many years ago. Yessum's little black face was sparkling and working in sympathy. He clutched Granny's hand tighter, and she went on:

"'Peared lake somepin give way inside me when I heard dat. I could 'a' killed Marse Newsome, to put dat indignity awn me an' my Alec.

I had good blood in me, an' it jis boil at de insult an' de grief an' de worryment of what Alec gwine do.

"Miss Irene's black eyes fairly blaze when I tole her. She never said one word. Jis th'owed her proud lill head back an' clinch her han's an' draw her breath a-hissin', lake she done stood all she gwine to. Den she say, 'Lizzie, go tell Markus to saddle Lolly Rook'—dat's de name ob her roan mare—'an' hab her out at de big gate jis as soon as it's dark. Tell him to hab Billy saddled an' waitin' for him a mile down de road, 'caze he mus' go wid me, an', Lizzie, tell him hit's as much as his life is worth if he lets anybody, even de other servants, know.' I baig her to tell me what she gwine do, but she won't. She knowed I'd be too skeered. Den she put awn a white dress an' a red rose in her hair, an' goes singin' down-stairs to 'muse her paw tell he git sleepy. She fix him in his mos' comf'table chair, an' give him a book an' a cigar. Den she say she sing an' play for him. She know mighty well dat all dat gwine put him to sleep, jis lake it done. Den she creep up-stairs an' put awn her habit, an' off she go. An' do you know, Beauregard Beauchamp Tice, dat lill miss of mine rode all de way to Marse Beauchamp's plantation, an' foun' him, an' mek all de 'rangements for his agent to mek out

he's from N'Orleans, an' buy my Alec at de auction nex' day. She never got home tell daybreak, wid me settin' up all night watchin' for her, an' skeered plumb sick wid anxiety. *Dat* what Miss Irene done!

"It all turned out jis lake she fixed. Dey was mah'ed soon after, an' ol' Marse Newsome never foun' out tell after de weddin', an' me an' Alec was togerr 'gin, dat Marse Beauchamp done bought in Alec to please Miss Irene. He never *did* fin' out 'bout dat venturesome ride ob hers.

"Den three years go by, wid us all so happy at bein' togerr, hit jis seem too good to las'. But I got to broodin' over bein' a slave, an' bein' *owned*. 'Peared lake de devil jis got wuckin' in me to spile my peace ob min'. I done hab spells ob dis befo', but it never come so near killin' me as when I brood over de fack dat my chile gwine be bawn a slave.

"Miss Irene's first chile done come, de paw of yo' Marse Rob Beauchamp. You ain't never seen him, 'caze he was killed endurin' de waw. We all was mighty proud ob de chile, an' sometimes I'd set an' watch him asleep in his lill cradle all hung wid lace an' blue silk, an' contras' his lot wid my po' lill baby what got to come into de worl' to be owned by dat lill white chile I was watchin'. I tells yo', Beauregard, *you* always been free, so you cain't understan';

but hit's de wust feelin' in de whole worl' to feel dat you's a *slave*. Miss Irene come awn me one day when I was feelin' dat way, an' she ax me de trouble, an' I jis ups an' *tole* her. She look awhile at me an' den at her lill pink, pretty baby sleepin' so sweet in his lill bade, an' she say, 'To-morrow dat chile will be a year ole, Lizzie. We mus' gib him a birthday.' Dat's all she said. But she went into de room where Marse Beauchamp was cleanin' his gun, an' she hol' de eend ob it while he polish de barrel. I walk by de do' an' seen 'em. Dey quit talkin' when dey see me, but de nex' day Miss Irene took de baby in her arms an' brought him up to me all a-smilin' an' a-laffin', an' she say, 'Gib Lizzie de paper, darlin'.' But de lill feller hol' awn tight an' begin' to chew de envellup, 'caze his lill toofs hurt him. 'No, lamb, give it to Lizzie,' she say. He won' do it, so she tek his lill hand in hers an' mek him hol' out de paper to me. 'Take hit, Lizzie,' she say, wid her big black eyes all a-brimmin' up wid tears. 'Hit is my boy's fust birthday. He meks you an' Alec free from dis day.'

"I tek dat precious paper in bofe my han's. Freedom for Alec an' me! We was free! *No*body owned us! We was free as you is dis day. Free as Miss Irene an' Marse Beauchamp. An' bress de good Gawd, my chile could be *bawn* free!

"I jis fell down awn de flo' an' kiss Miss Irene's lill foots. Den Alec an' Marse Beauchamp speak from de do'way, where dey been standin' an' watchin' to see what fool t'ing I gwine do. Alec's face was a-shinin' lake he'd done 'sperienced religion. 'Go liff her up, Alec,' Marse Beauchamp he say. An' Alec pick me up off de flo' where I was laffin' an' cryin' lake I was crazy. An' he hol' me tight, an' whisper in my year dat dis was de happies' moment of his life, 'cept de day when he mah'ed me. An' when we look aroun' an' 'pologize for bein' so foolish, we all laff 'loud to see Marse Beauchamp an' Miss Irene bein' foolish jis same as we is, wid de baby tryin' to stick he finger in he paw's eye!

"An' dat's de story ob huccome we all wuz free, long befo' de waw come to free all de slaves. *We* was free in slave times!

"We stay awn wid 'em jis de same, an' my other chillen all born free, wid yo' mammy Mandy, de baby, an' de las' ob de lot.

"De years roll awn, an' our chillen, Miss Irene's an' mine, grow up. Den come a new president what talk 'bout freein' all de slaves. Den come talk of waw. Den, Gawd hab mussy, de waw come, an' me an' Miss Irene see our husban's an' our chillen march away, an' some never come back. Marse Charles never come back.

Marse Gordon never come back. One by one her chillen die, tell she ain't got but one gran'son leff—yo' Marse Rob. An' for me, out ob all mine, I only got you an' Mandy.

"When waw come we never dream hit gwine tetch *us*, but de plantation lay in de way ob de army, an' dey burn de house, an' ransack an' destroy tell de Beauchamps ain't got much leff, 'ceptin' de silver what me an' Alec buried for 'em. All dat will go to Marse Rob Beauchamp, Miss Irene's younges' an' onlies' gran'-chile she got leff. De po' lill miss! She's leff all alone in de worl' wid jes dat one chile. But he is de livin' image of Marse Beauchamp, his gran'paw, an' he was de fines' an' de handsomes' man I ever see. Marse Rob got all de high spirit ob de Beauchamps. Hit ain't no wonder you tag round after him. Yo' maw mustn't scold you for it. Hit's in de blood, de way we all loves de Beauchamps."

Granny's weak voice failed many times during the recital. Yessum held the camphor where she could smell it. It seemed to revive her. But when she finished she lay so still, with her eyes closed and her breathing so faint, he could not see the quiver of the frill on her white nightgown.

"Granny, Granny," he whispered.

Suddenly the old woman opened her eyes.

"Did you call, Alec?" she said. "Who wants Lizzie? Tell Miss Irene I'se a-comin'."

She tried to raise herself. Yessum glanced around the empty room apprehensively.

"She's wanderin'," he said to himself.

"Yes, Miss Irene," she cried. "I'se jis comin' in wid de baby!"

She struggled to rise, then sank back among the pillows, which Mandy kept so white, and turned her face to the open window.

Yessum crept out softly that he might not disturb her and sat down on the doorstep to wait for his mother. When she came her first question was of Granny.

"She's been wanderin'," said Yessum.

But when they went in to her they found that she had wandered farther than they thought.

III

Young Rob Beauchamp postponed his visit to Nashville in order to be present at Granny's funeral. Mrs. Beauchamp herself—Granny's dear "Miss Irene"—came and helped Mandy arrange things, and put flowers on the casket and hung an imposing width of crape on the door, and Rob Beauchamp stood all during the service, his tall, straight figure

and handsome face seeming to fill the little cabin.

He even followed the hearse to the graveyard and waited until the last shovelful of earth had been placed above the faithful servant of his family, who had loved them for so many years, and whose dog-like devotion had descended to her grandson, the child whose eyes never left Mister Robert's face for one moment during the whole services.

A month went by, and Yessum was disconsolate at the absence of Mister Robert in Nashville, when one day Mandy came home, her face gray with terror and grief, to tell Yessum that Marse Rob, their idol, had killed a man in Nashville during a quarrel, and was in jail in that wicked city for murder.

Nashville had always embodied vice unspeakable to Mandy, being the only large city she knew of.

Yessum was beside himself when he heard it. He flung himself on the floor biting and tearing his shirt-sleeves and the flesh beneath, until Mandy seized him in her arms in terror. Then he broke away from her, and dashed out of the house like a little mad animal, begging any passer-by to read him out of the paper about Marse Rob.

He came home late, but greatly to Mandy's

relief, and flung himself supperless into bed, where he tossed restlessly. Mandy heard him muttering in his sleep, and once he wakened with a scream from dreaming of Marse Rob in jail.

The horror of it was ever present in his mind, for many was the hour he had spent near their own jail, picturing the solitude and shame and disgrace of its inmates.

No one knew how the terrible quarrel had happened. There were no witnesses. John Ford, the man he had killed, was a worthless and dangerous fellow, many years older than Robert Beauchamp, but unfortunately the only son of a wealthy brewer whose idol he was.

Young Ford claimed in his ante-mortem statement that Rob attacked him unprovoked. Rob swore he killed him in self-defence.

Scores of witnesses came from Memphis to testify to Robert Beauchamp's fine character and hitherto unblemished reputation. They were obliged to admit, however, that he was a Beauchamp and hot-tempered and wonderfully quick with a pistol. Circumstantial evidence was closing around the poor young fellow, and two things militated strongly against him. One was the bitter animosity of the Ford family, aided and abetted by their counsel, a man by

the name of Shackleford, whose daughter was the beauty of Nashville.

Miss Shackleford was a gentle, lovable girl, in no way like her father, who was poor and ambitious and rather unscrupulous.

The other was Rob's obstinate silence upon the cause of the quarrel. In vain his distracted grandmother pleaded. In vain his lawyers urged. Nothing could be got out of him. When they hinted that there might be a lady in the case, Rob even refused to say whether there was or not. All they could discover was that Robert Beauchamp shot and killed John Ford just about dusk on the evening of June 14th.

The Memphis papers were full of it. Yessum grew haggard and thin from his grief and anxiety, and Mandy's anxiety was divided between Yessum and Marse Rob. Yessum's was single-hearted and one-ideaed. He ate, drank, slept, walked, talked with but one thought in his mind. He bored everybody with his piteous request to have the Nashville news told him, and when one day in a burst of impatience a brakeman of the Nashville train pointed out a young mulatto to him as a Nashville boy, Yessum sprang upon him like a little tiger.

"Please, sir, mister," he said, "is you from Nashville?"

"Who says I'se from Nashville?"

"De brakesman what come down awn de train wid you."

The mulatto scowled.

"Well, an' if I is, what den?"

"Den maybe you kin tell me somepin 'bout my Marse Rob Beauchamp, what dey done put in jail—"

The mulatto clapped his hand over Yessum's mouth and hissed:

"Hush yo' big black mouf, you little debbil! How you know I know anything 'bout dat Rob Beauchamp?"

"*Marse* Rob Beauchamp, ef you please, sir. Hit ain't fitten for you to call him Rob, lake he was black or you was white."

"Well, *Mister* Beauchamp, den. How you know, I says?"

Now Yessum did not know, but the supernatural cunning of the negro, the astonishing acuteness which sometimes stands them in the stead of education or wisdom, put it into Yessum's head to close up one eye and say:

"Umph! I knows mo' 'bout you dan you t'ink."

The mulatto turned and surveyed the little black boy skipping along at his side. His shrewd face bore out his brave words.

"Does anybody else know, 'cept just you?"

"Nary one."

"Well, ef you promise cross yo' heart dat you never tell awn me, nor never tell who tole you, I'll tell you 'bout dat fight."

Yessum's heart almost turned over.

He crossed his heart.

"I promise," he said.

The mulatto led the way to an empty freight-car down the track, and for an hour he and Yessum sat with their heads close together, talking over the way Rob Beauchamp was led to kill John Ford.

When they had finished, they went through some boyish pantomime indicative of the utmost secrecy, and separated.

Yessum's little black face looked a year older. It was all too true. Hitherto he had not believed it. He had thought Marse Rob the victim of some horrible mistake. He had daily expected some one to turn up who would admit that he was the real murderer and clear Marse Rob. But here was a young fellow who had been the only witness to the whole affair. If he were found, they could prove beyond a doubt that Marse Rob killed him, and the last chance would be gone. Here in Yessum's possession was the very knife used. It had no name on it —the initials had been cut out—and the blood

on it had been carefully cleaned off. Still, it was the murderous knife.

The boy sometimes walked, sometimes ran like the wind. Sometimes he stood still and talked to himself, and sometimes burst into a fit of choking sobs. Any one would have been justified in thinking him crazy.

He composed himself when he reached home, and faced his mother calmly. He even ate a little supper to please her. Then he went to bed, but not to sleep.

He tossed to and fro restlessly all night, only sleeping in snatches. Occasionally he muttered: "De blood would be ole an' de knife rusty;" or "Wonder ef I'se strong 'nough."

Towards morning he rose and crept about softly, putting some clothes and a few corn pones together in a bundle. Then he opened the door cautiously, and, leaving his mother still sleeping, he fled down the road like some swift black shadow.

IV

It was the 18th of December. The trial of Robert Beauchamp was nearing its close. Public sympathy was divided. The Fords had strong supporters; the Beauchamps strong sympathizers and equally strong opponents.

It looked dark for the prisoner. His lawyers, particularly old Mr. Totten, hoped to get him off with imprisonment for a term of years. Imprisonment for life was possible, but not probable, and hanging he considered out of the question.

As long as the knife which Robert Beauchamp claimed was used on him, and gave him that ugly flesh wound, was missing; as long as the pistol with its one empty chamber, which he admitted to have used in the shooting, was admitted in evidence; and as long as no human eye saw the deed, to testify either way, it was simply a question of the judge's charge to the jury and the way they were prejudiced or influenced by the bearing of the prisoner. At present it appeared that Robert Beauchamp had deliberately murdered an unarmed man and skilfully wounded himself with his own knife.

It was an impressive moment just before the judge rose to deliver his charge. Mrs. Beauchamp's pale, noble face was transparent with anguish. She sat with her delicate hands clasped tightly together and her great, black eyes, which age had not entirely robbed of their brilliancy, fastened upon the judge's face, striving to read beforehand whether he would condemn her boy.

Robert Beauchamp's brown face was pale

and thin; his splendid color had gone, but the pride in his eye and the courage which had never deserted him, even when he saw the toils closing around him, gave the spectators a curious sense of his innocence and of the cruelty and tyranny of the law.

Every ear was strained to catch the first words of the judge as he slowly rose, when the door of the court was flung open and a little something, too short to be seen, elbowed and pushed its way between the standing crowds, past the lawyers, the jury, the prisoner and his grandmother, and, planting himself squarely before the judge, Yessum cried out:

"Jedge, I done come all de way from Memphis to tell you dat *I* killed Mister John Ford. Hyer am de ve'y knife wot I done jobbed into him. Hyer am de place whah his initials wuz, only I cut 'em out. Marse Rob Beauchamp never done it at all. *I* done it. *I* killed dat Mister John Ford wid dis hyer knife."

There was a moment's hush after the shrill voice of the boy had ceased. Under some circumstances people might have laughed. But the anguish in his voice when he cried out, "Marse Rob never done it!" the size of the boy, the utter futility of the lie he had told, the noble proportions of his sacrifice, struck home to every soul who heard him.

As no one answered him, Yessum was terrified by the silence.

"Ain't I in time?" he cried. "Is Marse Rob done hung?"

"No, Yessum, here I am!" said Robert Beauchamp, his face quivering with a feeling he had not shown during his whole trial.

Yessum sprang for him and clung to his hand, covering it with kisses.

Then he turned back to the judge.

"Why don't you cotch me, jedge, 'fore I git away? Whah is yo' handcuffs, Marse Rob? Put 'em awn me. Dat's where dey belong."

Mr. Totten, Rob Beauchamp's lawyer, rose as the judge sat down.

"What is your name, boy?" he said.

"Beauregard Beauchamp Tice," came the answer promptly. "Dey calls me 'Yessum' for short."

"Well, Beauregard, why did you kill Mister John Ford?" pursued the lawyer.

"'Cause I jis natchelly 'spise him. I done hated dat Mister Ford sense I was dat high. An' I made up my min' two years ago dat I gwine kill dat man some day ef I lived."

"Well, do you know, Beauregard, that in declaring yourself the murderer of John Ford, and in showing the knife wherewith you committed the deed, you are giving yourself into

the clutches of the law, and that you are liable to be hanged?"

The boy's face turned gray with terror, for he had all the negro's fear of death.

"Yes, sir, I knows dat. But you cain't hang me an' Marse Rob both, kin you?"

"No, we cannot hang you both," admitted Mr. Totten, sweeping the eager court-room with his eyes, and finding it breathless with attention. "However," he proceeded, "that cannot be the knife with which the deed was committed—"

"'Deed it is, sir," Yessum interrupted. "See de blood awn it, an' de rust. De blood is ol' an' brown. Ef it was fraish, hit would be *red*."

"I say it cannot," pursued Mr. Totten, "because the murder was committed with this pistol."

Every one leaned forward to watch the child's face when the force of this announcement struck him. He looked swiftly from the lawyer holding the pistol to Marse Rob.

"How you know?" he demanded.

"Mr. Robert Beauchamp admits it himself."

Yessum flung himself upon the court-room floor in a passion of tears. He lay there writhing and sobbing until his shrieks rose to an ear-piercing shrillness.

Mr. Totten stooped and raised him.

"Poor boy!" he said, kindly.

"Den I 'ain't saved Marse Rob! Dat black nigger tole me wrong!" he cried.

"What nigger told you?" demanded Mr. Totten, quickly.

Yessum speedily forgot his promises to the mulatto.

"A yaller boy what saw de fight an' gib me dis knife," sobbed Yessum.

Mr. Totten seized the knife, looked at it and handed it to Mr. Ford, the father of the dead man.

He looked at it carefully.

"That is my son's knife," he said. "I gave it to him myself. The initials have been cut out."

Mr. Totten talked hurriedly to Yessum for a few moments, while the spectators hardly breathed.

"Your Honor, I ask for an adjournment of the court and a subpœna to produce an important witness for the defence," he announced, triumphantly.

V

It was Christmas week in Nashville, but so absorbing was the interest in the trial that the approaching festivities were in a measure over-

shadowed by the anxiety of the people as to what this mysterious new witness would develop.

High and low, black and white were keen in their sympathies, because of the mixed elements involved.

Stately Madam Beauchamp, with her silver hair and flashing eyes, was the most absorbing topic of conversation at the hotel when it was known that in order to have the little black boy with her on that first night, after he had walked from Memphis to Nashville to save her grandson, she had given him her own room and her own bed, while she bandaged his poor bleeding feet, cut by the frozen roads and swollen with cold and pain. Although the hotel company would not have given a negro a room there, in order to preserve its white patronage, there was no one who denied that Madam Beauchamp was doing the right and proper thing to take matters into her own high-handed keeping, as became a Beauchamp.

Mandy came on the evening train, telegraphed for by Madam Beauchamp when Yessum admitted that she did not know where he was.

When she was ushered into the room where Yessum lay propped up on the pillows, with his eager black face like a large spot of ink against their whiteness, and Madam Beauchamp at his side holding his little black paw in one

of her wrinkled, jewelled hands—before Mandy even greeted any one beyond her first instinctive courtesy, she exclaimed:

"In yo' bade, Mis' Irene? Kin I bleeve my eyes? Ackchilly in ole Mis's bade! Oh, Lawd in heaven, I wonder ef my po' ole maw kin see dis!"

The next day was the 24th of December.

Early in the morning the popping of fire-crackers announced to Yessum's alert ears that the Christmas festivities had begun. If Marse Rob were acquitted, Madam Beauchamp had promised Yessum such a Christmas as he never had seen before.

"But if he is not acquitted," she continued, her face twitching, "not one of us will want to see the light of Christmas Day."

They were in the court-room early. Yessum was dressed and carried down to the carriage, which bore Madam Beauchamp and his mother. They all sat together, the black and white, bound together more closely within than without.

There was a stir of expectation when Mr. Totten appeared with the deputy sheriff and a mulatto of about twenty years of age, whom numbers in the court-room recognized as a loafer about town, a harmless, no-account sort of boy, with no particular vice about him except want of intellect and a consuming cowardice.

Mr. Ford, the father of the dead man, was the first witness called. Upon the stand he identified the knife produced by Mr. Totten as the one which his son habitually carried with him.

Then the mulatto was called.

He admitted that his name was Price Logan; that he lived in Nashville; that on the evening of June 14th, near dusk, he was in the vicinity of the Lebanon turnpike, near where it crosses Mill Creek, and, hearing voices approaching, one of which he recognized as Mr. John Ford's, he climbed a tree.

"Why did you climb that tree?" asked Mr. Totten. "Why did you try to hide?"

"'Caze I knowed Mr. John Ford's voice, an' he swore he was gwine to kill me for lamin' his fine hoss. So I jis quietly climb dat tree tell he git pas'. Dey come strollin' along wid dey fishin'-tackle. Dey voices sound pretty loud, but when dey git mos' under de tree I'se in I fin' out dey's quarrellin'. De fust t'ing I hyer was Mr. Ford, sayin', 'I bleeve you's in love wid her yo'seff.' I didn't hyer what Mr. Beauchamp say, 'caze his voice ain't so rough and loud as Mr. Ford's. Den Mr. Ford say, 'She wouldn't look at you, 'caze she's po', an' her paw boun' she shell mah'y rich.' Mr. Beauchamp speak out den, an' he say,

'Don't say such a t'ing 'bout dat lady.' An' Mr. Ford say, 'I says what I *please* 'bout dat gal.' Wid dat Mr. Beauchamp say, 'I reckon by dat yo' mean you's gwine mah'y her.' But Mr. Ford say, 'Not if I kin git her widout.' An' he bust out a-laffin! But he ain't laff much, tell Mr. Beauchamp hit him in de mouf. 'Tek dat!' he hiss between his teef, 'for darin' to even hint at sech a t'ing!'

"Wid dat, Mr. Ford begin to cuss an' swear, an' dey close an' fight, a-weavin' dis way an' dat, each a-tryin' to th'ow de odder. Mr. Ford de bigges' an' oldes' an' heavies', but Mr. Beauchamp de quickes' an' stronges'. Dey bofe breathe so loud I see dey's gittin' winded, an' I wonder how it gwine end, when I see Mr. Ford tryin' to git his knife. He let Mr. Beauchamp th'ow him to git his han's loose, an' when Mr. Beauchamp got him down an' he t'ink he beat him, Mr. Ford reach aroun' wid dat knife an' stab him in de breas' twice—only one hit his arm. Wid dat Mr. Beauchamp giv' a cry an' sorter loose his holt, an' let Mr. Ford git de 'vantage. In a minute dey bofe up, an' let loose each odder. Mr. Beauchamp say, 'You tryin' to kill me, John Ford?' An' Mr. Ford say, 'Dat's jis what I'se gwine do.' Wid dat he mek anodder lunge at him wid dat knife, an' den I heard a shot an' see Mr.

Ford fall. I so skeert wid dat I loose my holt an' fell three or fo' branches. I cotch myseff, though, an' dis time I see po' Mr. Beauchamp a-kneelin' by Mr. Ford's side wringin' his han's, wid de tears streamin' down his face an' a-callin' awn Gawd to witness dat he ain't never meant to kill him.

"When he t'ink he dade, Mr. Beauchamp stan' up an' look aroun' wildlike. Den he leave his fishin'-tackle an' de knife an' pick up his pistol an' start a-runnin' towards town.

"'Fore I could git down, I see he ain't dade.

"I was skeered nuff when I t'ink I was leff alone wid a dade man, but when he move a lill I was a heap wuss skeered to t'ink he ain't dade, when he done promuss to kill me fust chance he got. I set an' watch to see if he move agin, an' when I see him layin' so still I drap down as quiet an' swif' as I kin, an' grab up de knife layin' close by his han', so's he cain't kill me wid it, den I start, tight as I kin go, after Mr. Beauchamp. I run lake de debbil was after me, an' I ain't nebber quit goin' tell I git awn de train for Memphis, whah dat lill black boy foun' me, an' mek me tell what I knowed. I ain't tell him de trufe, dough, 'caze I'se too skeert. I tole him Mr. Beauchamp done kill him wid dat knife. I done been six months in Memphis, an' I never would 'a' come back

lessen I was brung. Dat's all I knows. You cain't hang me for dat, kin you, jedge?"

A stir of intense excitement swept over the court-room as Logan finished. Mr. Totten's face expressed supreme satisfaction. The jury, composed of Southern men, would all be moved to sympathize with the prisoner for showing fight at the light mention of a woman's name.

Mr. Shackleford, the chief attorney for the prosecution, arose with a contemptuous sneer upon his face.

"May it please the court, I should like to ask the witness the name of the young lady whom the prisoner was so gallant as to defend in this highly romantic and theatrical manner?"

"Hit was Miss Mattie May Shackleford, sir," answered Logan.

Shackleford—his own daughter!

The lawyer started as if he had been shot. His countenance turned purple. He glanced around at the sea of faces watching him, then dropped into his seat and flung his handkerchief over his face.

Mr. Totten had intended to say more—to make a speech perhaps, but the tense feeling of the spectators, the eager faces of the hitherto impassive jurors, warned him to let human nature take its course, without the aid of art.

"Is the evidence all in?" asked the judge. Both sides assented.

Then he rose to deliver his charge.

Never had he made so brilliant or so stirring an arraignment of facts. He related the evidence, he summed up the case, he instructed the jury to do their duty, in a tone which implied that if they did not acquit Robert Beauchamp they were not the body of Southern gentlemen they claimed to be.

The jury were out only ten minutes. When they marched back to their seats and the foreman arose to pronounce Robert Beauchamp acquitted of the grave charge of murder—a free man—a cheer arose in the court-room which not even the presence of the Fords and the judge could instantly quell.

They crowded around Madam Beauchamp and Robert and Mandy and Logan, laughing, crying, and congratulating. Poor little Yessum was almost forgotten in the new hero, Price Logan. But in the midst of it all Madam Beauchamp stooped and took his hand. With the other she held Robert's.

"Beauregard," she said, in her stately manner, "many years ago, my eldest son, who was shot at the battle of Fair Oaks, celebrated the first anniversary of his birthday by giving freedom to your grandmother. I never dreamed then

that the act could be returned in kind. But this day you have repaid me a thousand times by bringing pardon and freedom on Christmas Eve to my grandson. Beauregard, you have given me the noblest Christmas gift I ever have received in all my life."

Miss Scarborough's Point of View

Miss Scarborough's Point of View

I

F Miss Scarborough had been younger, she might have admitted that she was somewhat cynical.

"But as it is," she said to her dear friend, Agnes Coffyn, "there is but one class which announces its secret, and that is the great class of the Inexperienced. You may divide it into two subdivisions. The very young gentlemen from small towns who have come to New York with a sublime faith in their own capacity to build Rome in a day, and who feel that by their coming they fill a long-felt want in the metropolis. Their cynicism is founded on the failure of the dear public to agree with them. Then there are the buds, who, after having been judiciously reared, find during their first season that the Harvard men

said the same things to all the other buds, and that the Yale men were no better; and as for Princeton, the less said about their flirting propensities the better. Then they read *The Green Carnation,* and drop their Sunday-school class and take up Ethical Culture, and, lo! they are cynics. And they don't care who knows it."

Mrs. Coffyn laughed gently.

"You are so clever, Leslie," she murmured, admiringly.

"But they are not in fashion," pursued Miss Scarborough. "The fashionable emotions just now are faith in human nature and charity. If you hear scandal, deprecate it. If you hear a racy story on your neighbor, tell how good she was to you when the children had scarlet-fever. It is very effective and quite the thing."

"I wish I were clever," cooed Mrs. Coffyn. "It must be so lovely to think such amusing things out all by one's self, and then watch the effect on people."

Miss Scarborough laughed and colored a trifle. Mrs. Coffyn sometimes unconsciously insinuated the tip of her lance between the joints of Miss Scarborough's glittering armor.

"I shall try to repeat these things to Frank," pursued Mrs. Coffyn. "When he finds you have been here, he always says, 'What did she

have to say?' He says you are the most interesting girl he knows."

"Very nice of him, I'm sure. What fun we had here the other night. There were lines in my face the next day from laughing. I wish we might have the same people together again."

"I enjoyed myself, too, but Frank didn't. You see he was one of the odd men. He wanted to take you in, but the men were three deep around you all the evening. He was disappointed."

"Perhaps these two things were why I had such a good time," said Miss Scarborough, dryly.

"Now it would be something like, if you really meant that," said Mrs. Coffyn, sitting up in her chair and laying her jewelled hands together in her lap. "You might have as many good times as you chose if you would just pay a little attention to Frank and make him feel of some importance. *My* hands are tied. I can't devote myself to my own husband, with a dozen other men around, and he wouldn't want me to. Neither do I dare suggest inviting them here too often. He might think I wanted them for myself instead of for you."

"That would never do," said Miss Scarborough, looking down to conceal the twinkle in her eye.

She got up and walked to the window. They were in Mrs. Coffyn's tiny apartment in Fifty-fifth Street, on the eighth floor. The apartment-house opposite was only six stories high, so that in summer there was always a good view of the family washing on the lower roof. Miss Scarborough watched a maid hanging clothes on the lines with keen interest.

"How much one can learn of a family's private history by its washing!" she observed.

Mrs. Coffyn colored. It was a sensitive point with her, that she lived so modestly. Miss Scarborough lived in Seventy-second Street, in a house so smart that it bored her.

"Nonsense!" snapped Mrs. Coffyn. "How can you look at such a vulgar sight!"

"It's not at all vulgar. It is fascinating. They are young married people with their first baby."

"How do you know?"

"Because the baby linen is so fine, and there are the *lingerie* of a bride whose trousseau has not yet given out, and his pyjamas—"

"Leslie! you ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

Miss Scarborough forgot that Mrs. Coffyn's trousseau finery was one of those which was on the point of giving out, nor did she know

that she was a source of deep envy to her married friend.

"Of course," pursued Mrs. Coffyn, returning to the subject in hand with increasing animation, "I don't want to interfere with your affairs. Just be nice occasionally to Frank. When he looks bored, call him over and talk to him a moment."

"A sop to Cerberus," suggested Miss Scarborough.

"Er—yes, I suppose so. You need not bore yourself with Frank," Frank's wife went on, "but you are so clever, you could make five minutes count with him and make him feel happy all the evening."

"Frank never bores me," said Leslie, shortly. "There is more character in his little finger than in most of the men I know. I think modern men are horrid. Fascinating, but horrid. I sometimes wonder if we know any bachelors with fine, old-fashioned principles."

"Oh yes, Leslie. Don't you know Mr. Cramm?"

"But I meant one who wore good clothes."

"Oh! Well, I dare say not. You used to think John Trelawney had such principles, and I'm sure his clothes are perfect. He gets them in London."

Miss Scarborough colored hotly.

"I still make an exception of *him*," she said.

"I've often wondered why you didn't marry him," observed Mrs. Coffyn.

"He's too heavy!" cried Leslie, excitedly. "And too gentle and too good. He makes me feel so wicked by contrast. And he's so methodical and unromantic. I'm tired of his solidity and worth. I wish 'the man on horseback' would enter my life! I would be quite contented to worship him without return. I'd like to meet a King Arthur or a Knight of the Holy Grail!"

"A 'man on horseback'?" said Mrs. Coffyn, uncertainly. "Doesn't John Trelawney ride?"

Miss Scarborough laughed hysterically. "Yes, he rides—a dear little safe rocking-horse, which will never throw him, and which could never carry double in case John Trelawney could develop young Lochinvar instincts."

"Well, I'm sure I don't know—" murmured Mrs. Coffyn, stifling a yawn with the back of her hand.

Miss Scarborough brought herself back with an effort.

"We always enjoy ourselves here," she broke out. "Your apartment is so cosey. Our house is too large. One feels lost with a party of ten in those drawing-rooms. I am so deadly tired of opera and dinner-dances and the same

old things we go to every winter and bore ourselves to death going to. No, if we are to have any fun this winter it must be here."

"It lies in your hands," said Mrs. Coffyn, significantly.

"Then I have your permission really to flirt with Frank and get some amusement out of the situation?" said Miss Scarborough, rising to go. She watched her friend narrowly.

"My full and free permission," said Mrs. Coffyn, joyously.

"You are not afraid of the consequences on any of the three of us?"

"Not in the least. I have perfect confidence in dear old Frank, and I know he will be quite safe with you."

Miss Scarborough raised her eyebrows a little.

It was some hours later before she had time to think of it. Her callers bored her. When they left she sat down in the great drawing-room with an air of relief. It was the Scarborough "day," and it was of no use to go upstairs. More people would come presently. She detested "days."

Miss Scarborough looked at the world out of her wide-open eyes. Her past was rich with experience but bitter with memories of shattered ideals. She had longed to see and

know, and she had seen and known. The result was that she read more and lived less.

She adjusted herself to the experience of the morning. Mrs. Coffyn was beautiful. Miss Scarborough was clever.

"She wants him kept out of the way," thought Miss Scarborough, shrewdly. "I'm interesting, but not too fascinating. Therefore I shall be a safe companion for him. I am like a family horse, she thinks. Perfectly safe to carry all the children. They can pound me all they like, and I won't run away, and when they choose to have me stop, I stop. But I *have* heard of family horses cutting up queer didoes at the sound of a brass-band. However, I don't believe that Frank Coffyn is my brass-band. He is interesting enough, if I dared draw him out. I have a great mind to go into this thing. I have her sanction. Frank used to say nice things to me once in a while before he married. It would be amusing. But no. Honor among thieves, *I* say. I *like* Agnes. There is enough fire and brimstone in Frank and me to make things lively—a little too lively perhaps. I think when a horse hears himself recommended to anxious parents as safe, steady, and gentle as a kitten, when he himself knows that he shies at bicycles, that it is his equine duty to show the whites of his

eyes, to signify 'danger ahead,' even if it spoils a trade."

Miss Scarborough got up and looked at her quiet face in the mirror.

"I wonder if I ought to show the whites of my eyes to Agnes Coffyn?" she murmured.

She walked to the window and stood looking out. The street was gay with smart vehicles and brilliant with self-conscious and self-satisfied pedestrians. The Riverside Drive was exchanging courtesies with Seventy-second Street.

Leslie smiled as she watched them.

"Ah, here comes Frank Coffyn," she murmured presently. "What a superb presence he has! I wonder if it would do any harm if I were to have a little fun. I have been oppressively good for so long. Absurd, though, to think that my modest charms could pit themselves against Agnes's *beaux yeux* and win. Still, I think I'll just stand here and have a little fling with Destiny. I won't move an eyelid. If Frank looks up and sees me, I will take it for a sign. If he passes on, Agnes's little plan, which I am not to know, but which I shall know, will fail."

The lace curtains, a mere frost-work, fell between Leslie and the window. She did not push them aside, but stood motionless, with her eyes fixed upon Mr. Coffyn. He glanced

up as he came within range of the house, scanned the upper windows and then the lower. As he spied Leslie he hesitated, then turned and sprang up the steps. She listened for the far-off sound of the bell, and smiled half scornfully.

"Pretty good for a family horse," she murmured.

A moment later Frank Coffyn stood before her, a breezy, athletic fellow, who always seemed to bring in with him a portion of the outside atmosphere.

"This world is a sad place, Frank," observed Leslie, holding out her hand to him.

"Nonsense! You are not 'low in your mind' on such a day as this?"

"The weather has nothing to do with my opinion of the world. I feel as the little girl did who said to her mother, 'Mamma, I've been naughty. You don't love me, and God hateth me, and I gueth I'll go out in the back yard and eat bugth."

"Have you been naughty, Leslie?"

"I haven't done the deed. I have only planned it."

"Don't do it. Take my advice and leave it alone."

"But it would have been so much fun. We should have enjoyed it—at first."

"Oh, then there was to have been some one else! Lucky person to have been in your thoughts. Wish I knew him."

"Whom should it have been but yourself."

"Was it I? You needn't look nervous, Leslie. I wasn't going to say, 'Was it me.' Well, don't let me keep you back. Go ahead with your wickedness. I'll help you."

"Oh, I knew I could count on you. But I haven't decided yet. I am dallying with the tempter."

"That sounds deliciously wicked. Let me know when you make up your mind. That reminds me. Come down to-morrow night, won't you? Agnes has a new way of doing mushrooms, and we are going to have another chafing-dish supper. The fellows from the 'Bureau' are all coming, and they said be sure to have Miss Scarborough."

"The Bureau?" said Leslie, with a wrinkle.

"Seelye told me you called their bachelors' quarters the 'Anti-Matrimonial Bureau,' because they were so luxurious."

"So I did. I'd forgotten."

"By Jove! if I could say as clever things as you do, I'd not be forgetting them."

"It's only that you are too modest to think you say clever things. Other people are more appreciative of your efforts."

"Leslie, you are the nicest wo—girl I know."

"That lightning change just saved you. An unexpunged edition of this conversation might go to Agnes."

"Agnes is not a bit jealous. Why, she would like—that is—she wouldn't care how nice I was to you. I have perfect confidence in her, and she in me. Then we pay each other the compliment of not watching each other. A gentleman couldn't do less."

"You incline to agree with the Kentuckian who said his idea of a gentleman was one who set the bottle on the table and then looked the other way."

"I do, indeed. Well, will you come?"

"Yes, with pleasure. I was going to a dance, but I'll cut it and come to you. It will be so much cosier."

II

It is to be hoped that the Recording Angel is not narrow-minded, but is a Person of Experience, for it would not be fair to send a creature like Leslie Scarborough into this world, endowed with a generous faith in humanity and more than her share of conscience, yet to temper her with a brain which could not help penetrating shams and pretences, without mak-

ing allowances for her. She disbelieved in people against her will. She envied those who could skim lightly over the service of society, being amused by its cleverness, yet escaping the heartache which she always carried home with her at the remembrance of its falseness. Her quick wit resented the inanities of the conventional, but her conscience kept her from breaking over its set rules. She shocked her mother by telling her that she was too cowardly to be wicked and she didn't want to be good.

Of all the men comprising the "Bureau," she liked Seelye the least. He was shallow, but immensely quick at repartee. His mind was stored with epigrammatic bits of cleverness which he used in such a keen way as to be very amusing. His reputation for general all-around wickedness was enhanced and verified by his bearing of exquisite gentlemanliness, yet, as Leslie confided to his ardent admirer, Carstairs, when he was lauding Seelye's qualities as a chum, he did not come within her "electric circle," which was a way she had of classifying people.

"He is a most polished egoist," she said to Carstairs, whereat Carstairs roared and went straight to tell Seelye.

Carstairs' chief fault, in Miss Scarborough's

eyes, was that he was young. "Twenty-eight net," he told her when she asked him. Miss Scarborough had a way of making impertinent questions sound like the interest exhibited by one's dearest friend.

"Get over it as fast as you can, please. Youth is one thing I abhor. You are very nice now—quite the nicest boy of twenty-eight I ever saw. At forty you will be irresistible."

"What makes you have such hopes of me at forty?" asked Carstairs, meekly.

"Because I have confidence that the decadent period will wear away by that time, and that you will leave off thinking as you do now. Crudeness ill becomes a brain whose possibilities are as yours."

"By Jove! you serve red pepper and arnica at the same time, Miss Scarborough. But decadent thinking does not imply crudeness."

"You say that because you are young—hopelessly young. Decadence in an infant of your tender years would be the most amusing thing in the world if it did not strike me as so pitiful. It implies so much more than crudeness—a shallow nature and a superficial habit of thought."

Miss Scarborough smiled mischievously at Carstairs' discomfited face. A woman always knows when a man is so perilously near being

in love with her that she can say anything to him.

"What a chum you would make!" he sighed. "If you were a man, I'd go to lunch with you every day."

"You wouldn't like me a bit if I were a man. It's only because I am a woman that you let me say such things to you."

The library in the Coffyn apartment in Fifty-fifth Street seemed filled when the four bachelors and Miss Scarborough were there. There could be nothing formal in a room where somebody had to be stepped over if one moved. The new books, no matter how racy, were always seen first at the Coffyn's. If one had a clever opinion, one saved it to tell at the first gathering. Mrs. Coffyn and Miss Scarborough were the only women. Mrs. Coffyn allowed the men to smoke, and when the atmosphere grew too heavy she and Miss Scarborough went out and aired themselves, or else ordered everybody else to stop, and made the man next the windows open them.

This was the nearest to Bohemia that these two carefully reared and exclusively chaperoned young women ever had encountered, and they revelled in the mild dissipation with the abandon of children. They discussed the questions in *Tess* and *Trilby* and *The Manxman* as freely

as if they had all been girls together and felt deliciously wicked and emancipated because their mothers would have been shocked if they could have known it.

The touching wickedness of the American girl often consists in saying things which would be a shock to her mother, but of behaving, as a rule, as though she were chaperoned by the angel Gabriel.

It was three months since Miss Scarborough had taken Mr. Coffyn off his wife's hands, yet possibly no one, not even Miss Scarborough herself, knew what skill had been required to keep him sufficiently interested in her to give Mrs. Coffyn full swing, yet to prevent anything like a flirtation, for women who are the most unerring in their treatment of men often cannot describe their methods.

In the mean time she had kept a quiet eye on Mrs. Coffyn, and it was not long before she discovered that it was Seelye who was enacting the rôle of moth. If the other men saw it, one never would have known. Apparently they were blind and deaf and dumb. If they thought it was only a flirtation, their behavior was discreet. If they thought he really was in love with her, they were wise.

In spite of the simplicity and almost artlessness of Mrs. Coffyn's nature, as evidenced by

the way she showed her hand to the subtler Miss Scarborough, there was a certain dignity in her character which prevented familiar speech. As well as Leslie knew her, she felt that it would take a braver person than she to broach the subject of Mr. Seelye's interest in Mrs. Coffyn to that beautiful woman herself. Miss Scarborough ran in upon him whenever she went there. She swallowed the weakest excuses with a perfectly serious face. He sent game to Frank and flowers to Agnes with such pleasing impartiality that Leslie found even her good-breeding strained. It would have been such a relief to laugh openly.

In the mean time, whether because of the judicious way in which Miss Scarborough effaced outward traces, or whether virtue was its own reward, she and Mr. Seelye began to like each other. From natural suspicion of each other's cleverness and dread of each other's shafts of wit, they drifted through the intermediate stages of cool toleration and lukewarm liking to the central poise of anxious expectation when the needle of polarity might swing either way. Seelye was the first to pass from the admiration Miss Scarborough compelled to a warm regard.

But Miss Scarborough, while she could not help admiring him, and sometimes surprised

a look in his eyes which wrenched her heart with the intuitive knowledge of another's suffering, could not bring herself to respect him. She did not approve of any man who was not governed by principle. And while, in her desire for enjoyment a little out of the usual run of society, she was willing to pay for it by lending herself to the helping of a mild flirtation along, still when she looked out over the ocean or wakened in the middle of the night she abhorred the whole situation and hated herself quite genuinely for countenancing it. She got over this, however, when she put on a ball-gown. Miss Scarborough was *fin de siècle* without and early Christian within. Her friends only smiled misunderstandingly at what they termed her charming inconsistencies. The full effect of this unfortunate combination fell chiefly upon herself.

Her inner nature was like a combination of unmined metals. One could trace copper and gold and a little alloy. But the great emotion or heart experience which would separate the metals, releasing the gold and destroying the alloy, had not yet come to her.

Thus, while her admiration of Seelye's wit was so tangled up in her scorn of the way he drifted with the tide, there were times when she did not know what she really did think of him.

She never knew that any one felt this except herself. The owner of a stern moral sense, who has the wit not to preach at people, has no idea how permeating a Puritan influence is. It percolates through all looser-jointed natures with which it comes in contact, and acts like a spiritual tonic, stiffening up involuntarily the moral backbone of the weak. Miss Scarborough would have been intensely surprised if she had dreamed that her stand-point had any effect upon Carstairs' combination of agnosticism and decadence or upon Seelye's mental vision.

It was the night of the 31st of December, when the seven met in Mrs. Coffyn's apartment to watch the old year out and the new year in.

Drayton made the mistake of coming without his mandolin, and they bundled him out of the house in short order. They heard him below roaring for a cab to fetch it.

Frank Coffyn, the most genuinely musical of all, was doing delicious bits on his new banjaurine with Agnes at the piano. Carstairs sang—whenever the rest would let him. Blair handled the guitar with familiarity if not with skill. Seelye belonged to the silent audience of two.

"Seelye, I should think you and Miss Scarborough would be ashamed to mix with this ac-

complished company and not do a thing. Why don't you do something for your country?"

"We do more than anybody. We listen to you," answered Miss Scarborough from the cushion end of the divan.

She sat up long enough to make Carstairs leave off singing the Bowery songs in which he revelled, and insisted on "Land o' the Leal" until she got it. Seelye was hanging over Agnes.

"The Trilbiness of Miss Scarborough in always getting her own way," observed Blair, tuning his guitar to represent as much discord as possible.

"Blair has such pleasant ways of making night hideous," said Carstairs, dropping some hot ashes on Blair's unsuspicious hand.

"You ought to give us all keys, Agnes," said Miss Scarborough as Drayton rang the bell.

Presently Mrs. Coffyn said the chafing-dish was ready. They depended more on the readiness of the chafing-dish than the hour, and they all squeezed past the hat-rack in the tiny hall and filed out to the dining-room.

Mrs. Coffyn stationed herself behind the chafing-dish. The rest fought politely as to who should sit by Miss Scarborough. Even Seelye always joined in this pleasant sham, but

somehow others invariably distanced him, for he always was left to sit on Mrs. Coffyn's right. And nobody saw anything funny in even that.

"Ah," thought Miss Scarborough, "but we are a well-trained set." It was the alloy in her nature which made her seek an evening of this sort.

Carstairs, who really wanted to sit by Miss Scarborough, was forced to sit on the other side of the table. Evidently Blair and Drayton, having been so good to Seelye, had to take it out on somebody. Everybody went on playing while the mushrooms were cooking.

Leslie sat by Frank Coffyn. She saw him glance down to where Seelye and Agnes had their heads together, critically measuring out the sherry.

But he said nothing.

Drayton and he were trying to get into the same key with Blair, seeing that Blair never could get into theirs. But Drayton had to stop playing every once in a while to serve himself to more sandwiches.

"Drayton, you would play better if you didn't eat so much," said Carstairs, who wanted to sing. But the rest only grinned and kept on playing.

"I thought of getting a flute," said Carstairs. "I think we need a flute in this."

The rest all laid down their instruments.

"Go on and sing, Carstairs. We'd rather have you sing than that."

Everybody was delighted at Carstairs' discomfiture except Seelye and Agnes. They heard nothing.

"Oh, I wonder how long this thing will last?" said Miss Scarborough, in an aside to Drayton.

It chanced to fall on a moment of unexpected silence, and everybody heard it. Seelye glanced at her.

"I wonder," she repeated, recovering herself, "how long it will be before somebody does something rash? — how long it will be, let us say, before Carstairs falls in love with me?"

There was a moment of utter relief, and then a roar of delight and surprise from the other men.

"That was a close call," whispered Drayton, admiringly, "but you recovered yourself like a Talleyrand."

"I didn't mean it the way it sounded," returned Miss Scarborough, in a vexed tone. "I meant this set was too harmonious and this harmony too delightful to last. Nothing nice ever does last."

"You are rather cynical to-night."

"Never. Absurd as it may seem, my faith

is still buffeting with reality. I cannot give up the unequal contest."

"I propose a toast," said Seelye, rising.

"He's come out of his trance," whispered Drayton.

Miss Scarborough put her handkerchief to her face, but she felt furious with herself for having accidentally broken the ice. They must talk about it from now on. It was the beginning of the end. Her innocent remark had hastened the evil day she deprecated.

"Here's to the most gracious hostess, the loveliest woman, the sweetest friend, whose beauty of heart, mind, and face are equal and alike perfect."

"Name her," said Carstairs, wickedly.

Mrs. Coffyn colored furiously, and Seelye's voice shook as he answered—

"Who but one—Mrs. Coffyn."

When they had drunk the toast, Frank leaned towards Leslie Scarborough.

"Would you be jealous of that, if you were I?" he said, indicating his wife and Seelye.

"No more than she would be of you and me. We whisper more than is necessary. Really, I think Agnes is very sweet not to mind."

"But you never would flirt with me, Leslie."

"I like Agnes too much. You know a family horse with a conscience is a great institution."

"Wha-a-at?" asked Frank.

"Oh, nothing. You are so stupid. It's too exhausting to repeat it."

"My, but we are getting silent. Stir up the animals, can't you, Carstairs?"

"I propose a toast. 'Here's to the woman I adore—'" began Carstairs, who was not fluent.

"If you mean Miss Scarborough, we are all in on that," interrupted Drayton.

"Wait a minute. 'Here's to the woman I adore—the woman I adore—'"

"Oh, let it go at that," cried Blair.

"All right; here's to Miss Scarborough!"

"Leslie, synonym for Cleverness," supplemented Frank Coffyn.

"I hope you will observe that Frank's toast is to the head, mine to the heart, Miss Scarborough," said Carstairs, sentimentally.

Blair groaned and Drayton began to weep into his napkin.

"I hope I am sufficiently impressed by the double honor done me," observed Miss Scarborough, in a modest voice. "My head gratefully responds to Mr. Coffyn, but my heart still more gratefully responds to Mr. Carstairs, seeing that it is within fifteen minutes of the end of the old year, and a woman may be justified in expecting no more favors from Fortune at this late hour. Nevertheless, owing to the

fickleness of my—presently I shall be able to call him my *fiancé*, Mr. Carstairs, I think it is just as well that I have around me all these good friends who heard his declaration and who will bear me witness, if I ever need them, in a breach-of-promise case."

As she finished, a roar of applause greeted her modest effort, and Blair and Frank Coffyn struck up the "Wedding March."

They were having what to-morrow they would call "a royal good time."

"It lacks only three minutes of twelve," said Frank Coffyn, drawing out his watch. "Leslie, you must propose a toast to the New Year."

There was a moment of silence, during which a sudden solemnity broke through their idle frivolity and laid itself upon their hearts. Miss Scarborough's more susceptible, electric nature felt the tension in the atmosphere most of all. She looked from the serious faces of the men opposite to Mr. Seelye's, whose drawn brows indicated some mental strain that a certain wildness of his dark gaze intensified. It was a disquieting look that Leslie met. It made her pulses beat nervously. Agnes Coffyn's face was flushed unnaturally, and there was a hard, dry brightness in her eyes, as if she would meet the new year with a challenge.

Leslie suddenly felt that the masks of society were wellnigh slipped off, and as if she came nearer to seeing into the hearts of the people before her than she had ever come before. At such moments as these she always thought of one man—John Trelawney, who hovered always in the background of her thoughts and to whom belonged the gold of her nature. Her voice shook as she began to speak, and every drop of color fled from her face.

"Are the husks so delicious that we cannot give them up?" she said, scanning the eager faces raised to hers. "Are we such happy men and women that we will not turn aside from this to seek new paths? Do we so love the shams we are that we would not be different if we could?"

The tall clock interrupted her with its deep, sonorous chime. She counted the strokes out loud.

"Ten, eleven, twelve! Here's to the New Year. Let us live it from the heart instead of with the head, and see if, by ceasing to seek happiness, we may not find content."

"Here's to the New Year," echoed Seelye, "let us live it with a conscience."

Miss Scarborough was transfixed with surprise. Carstairs, whom she had expected to follow her, had failed her. Seelye, from whom

she had expected nothing, had stepped ahead of her. Again her mind wrenched back to John Trelawney.

"I have something to do, and, by the grace of God, I am going to do it," he went on.

Then it was that Seelye made his little speech which so mystified the men, and which the two women imagined they understood because they listened with their hearts.

"I don't believe in making New Year's resolutions. I've seen the folly of that. But there is a time for everything, and now is the time for this. You fellows know how I have been burning the candle at both ends. You know how I have worked hard all day and stayed up half the night. Now the time has come to stop. You may not think it, you who have seen only the frivolous side of me, but I say to you fearlessly I am a man of principle. It may be a trifle out of fashion, but it is true of me, and in that fact lies my salvation. There lies the secret of the resolve which makes me explain myself in this manner to my good friends, Mr. and Mrs. Coffyn. I have got something to do, something which is right and honorable—something which to leave undone is wrong and dishonorable. I mean to do it. I have an awful amount of perseverance. I don't want to appear mysterious, but I cannot tell you at present

what it is. I want to thank Mr. and Mrs. Coffyn for their hospitality, more gracious and free than any I ever have met with before. I want to say that I appreciate it more than I have words to express, and if, after this, you only see me once in a month or so, you will believe that it is much harder for me to stay away than you think. I shall have to explain myself to my other friends. I hope they will understand that I am exiling myself for a principle; that I am not happy, and that I mean, as Miss Scarborough said, to see if by leaving off the search for happiness I cannot find content."

He turned away from the table and walked to the window. Frank Coffyn cleared his throat and said:

"Pshaw, old man!"

No one made any response. He looked helplessly at his wife's downcast face. She had tears in her eyes which he did not see. He opened his mouth to say something lively or consoling, but only said, again:

"Pshaw, old man!"

"Let's go into the library," suggested Carstairs, with masculine brilliancy.

Mrs. Coffyn hastened to lead the way. Before Leslie could rise from her chair, Seelye stooped over her swiftly and caught both of her wrists.

"Do you respect me?" he said, fiercely. "You've never believed in me. I know that. Tell me, do you respect me?"

Miss Scarborough caught her breath. She never expected him to allude to it so plainly.

"Then you really were—it was not merely a—" she hesitated.

"Good God! Didn't you believe in that either? Believe *now*, then. And like me a little. I need your friendship. My hand is an honest one. Will you take it and let me be your friend?"

Miss Scarborough took it in both of hers. "The man on horseback!" The knight who could renounce his love for a woman—oh, thank God! — without there being another woman in the case!

"I never expected to live to see this day," she murmured. "You have done me an evil turn in bolstering up a faith in mankind which was already too strong for comfort. It gets too many rude shocks. And this *is* the nineteenth century, isn't it? Forgive my disbelief. I not only respect, but I honor you, and I'll be your friend — yes, proudly and gladly. You have earned the right to be called a friend. Let us follow the others into the library. You are really doing this from principle? How does it feel to wear good clothes and have

principles that would compel a woman's respect?"

Seelye grinned in a melancholy sort of way. In spite of her raillery, he saw the tears in her eyes.

"I am not a happy man, Miss Scarborough. You seem to have so much brightness to lend, I wish you would take me in hand."

"I am not a happy woman, Mr. Seelye, but I'll gladly take you in hand. It will be pleasant to moan in such company."

"So you never believed that I was in any danger?"

"To tell you the truth, I gave you no credit for depth of feeling, and less credit for principle. It is not fashionable to feel deeply. But, do you know, it is very strange that sometimes in real life one meets a character which would grace a tragedy. We have lived through a tragedy to-night."

She smiled, and in spirit she knelt at the feet of this widowed bachelor, while the image of John Trelawney receded into the dim background of her memory

With Feet of Clay

With Feet of Clay

A Sequel to "Miss Scarborough's Point of View."

I

AS it was a question of delicacy, Miss Scarborough felt that if they were going to discuss, even in the privacy of the boudoir, the extraordinary events of the 31st of December, Mrs. Coffyn must be the one to broach the subject.

Miss Scarborough had grave doubts whether Mrs. Coffyn would ever do this, inasmuch as all during the affair they never had mentioned it except during that first interview when, in an idle moment, they planned what had nearly brought shipwreck to them all. To be sure, since New Year's there had not been a single reunion at the Coffyns'.

Seelye's withdrawal and the tragic ending

to their fun and nonsense had taken all the spirit out of the affair.

Occasionally Drayton and Blair called there, but they spent most of the time avoiding one topic, and, if Seelye's name accidentally were mentioned, an awkward silence ensued.

Carstairs went regularly to see Miss Scarborough, but as he always found Seelye there, and as they religiously sat each other out and came away together, leaving Miss Scarborough on the verge of hysterics with amusement at Carstairs' tragic boyish airs, affairs could not be said to be flourishing with any of them.

"How silly you are!" she said to him one day when he found her alone. "You make me so nervous, sitting and glowering at poor Mr. Seelye, as if he were a hated r-r-rival." She rolled the r mischievously. "Why are you never normal any more? What has got into you, anyway?"

"Well, what's old Seelye doing here every time I come?" burst out Carstairs, wrathfully. "He isn't in love with you. He just comes in order to bother me."

Leslie broke out laughing. His brutal want of tact was only amusing.

"I forgive your incivility," she said, "because you are so nice and funny. I do love to be amused."

"You do nothing but make fun of me," said the young fellow. "I'd like to know how any man could ever make love to you."

"The right man would find it quite easy, I suppose. Like all very young men, you are too conceited to realize that I make it thorny on purpose to discourage you."

Miss Scarborough smiled at him so pleasantly as she made this biting remark that Carstairs blinked his eyes at her, as if he did not see distinctly.

"I'm not as young as you are by several years," he said at last.

"Oh yes, you are. I'm hundreds of years older than you. I am so old that I have lived past you. I have left you years behind me, and as I am still living at the same rate, you never could catch up with me."

"I could if you would help me, Leslie."

"Don't call me Leslie," cried Miss Scarborough, frowning. "You take advantage of our informality. Why won't you be reasonable?"

"That's just it. I can't be reasonable when I'm with you. You drive reason out of my head."

Miss Scarborough sat up very straight and looked at him. She never had believed him serious before. She was a girl over whom

men went to pieces so easily and recovered from such lapses so suddenly that she knew the danger of believing too much. But Carstairs' tone disconcerted her.

"I believe in my soul that the boy likes me in earnest," she said, slowly.

"You know I do," he said, quietly. "You are the only girl I know that shakes me up to such an extent that I loathe the thing I am."

Miss Scarborough sprang to her feet.

"Do I do that really and truly? Shake hands with me. I agree with you perfectly. *I* loathe the thing you are! Turn around; forget everything you believe and believe just the opposite; like all your dislikes and hate all your present loves, and then we will talk about it."

Carstairs colored.

"Do you mean that?" he said, huskily, holding the hand she held out to him in both of his.

"Yes, I do. I think that if you were just the opposite of all you are now you would be lovely."

She laughed a little helplessly. His intent, devouring gaze unsteadied her.

"I didn't mean to have that sound so funny," she said, apologetically.

Carstairs drew in a sharp breath triumphantly. Her little apology was the first break in

that composure of hers which he found so unnerving. He looked so manly and determined that Miss Scarborough viewed his possibilities in a feminine flash and allowed herself to drift a moment into the current of his will. It was one of those rare, potential moments when a woman lets herself think for the first time of this particular man as her husband. Carstairs still held her hand.

"If he could always be like this," she thought.

He seemed to divine her fleeting feeling.

"I am not afraid of Seelye now," he boasted, with premature confidence.

Miss Scarborough crimsoned and snatched away her hand.

"It's all over," she said. "I take everything back. You make me ill with your hopeless youth. That was the speech of a lad in knickerbockers."

"It wasn't that at all," cried Carstairs, angrily. "It was the mention of Seelye's name that upset you. Your whole expression changed."

"It's of no use," said Miss Scarborough, ignoring his outburst and spreading her hands out. "I let myself drift for one moment, but the shock was too rude. Go your ways and leave me to go mine. I can't stand your Ego. I've got one of my own. The reaction has set in."

"It was Seelye's name," persisted Carstairs, doggedly. "Your very look changed."

Miss Scarborough faced him vehemently.

"What if it did?" she cried. "I cannot help it. I never tried to wear a mask before you. You know I admire Mr. Seelye. You know I used to hate him—I used to tell you I did, when you praised him to me by the hour. If I know him better now, I am not ashamed to admit that I was wrong. 'Consistency is the bugbear of little minds.'"

"Then your mind must be over-size," said Carstairs, with an evil grin.

Miss Scarborough simply smiled. His anger never disturbed her. She could cope with that. It was only his conceit which sickened her, and made her long for unlimited open air—some vast wilderness in which to pray out loud her thankfulness that she wasn't married to him and forced to listen to it always. They stood looking at each other in the gathering twilight. Carstairs watched her hungrily, full of a blind fury at himself for having lost the one step—the only step he had ever made towards her favor. He hardly knew how he had done it. His perception was not keen, but he felt that it was capable of being made keen; that his blunted sensibilities had possibilities if he could win Leslie Scarborough

Her keenness stung him with the double pang of a punctured Ego and the sense of what he himself lacked. She supplemented him with such fatal accuracy that in spite of what he considered her cruelty to him it was the overpowering desire of his life, just at present, to have her love.

"I hate that man Seelye," he said at length.

"Don't say it," she said, quickly. "Mr. Seelye is one of the few men I know whom I find it possible to respect. He is a man of principle."

"I believe he is in love with you," said Carstairs, with swift retrospection.

"You said an hour ago that he wasn't, and you were right the first time. He is not."

"A man of principle!" burst out Carstairs. "How easily you women are gulled. I know of only one man worth while being the hero of women like you, who must worship somebody, but he is too big and fine even for *you*. You wouldn't like Trelawney if you knew him. He refused a deal to-day by which he could have cleaned up an even hundred per cent., because it was a bit shady, and I have every reason to believe that his business needs money badly. That's what *I* call fine! But Seelye! Seelye makes grand-stand plays. He is always theatrical, and you, as clever as you are, can't see it. Principle! Bah!"

"But I have proof of it," cried Leslie, eagerly. "You don't know. He broke off—ah, I forgot. I can't tell you. Besides, you would not believe. You believe in nothing."

"I believe in you," said Carstairs, unsteadily. "And until you utterly turn your back on me and cut me adrift I'm going to keep on caring for you."

II

It happened quite suddenly when Leslie had all but given up expecting it. Miss Scarborough came with her victoria to take Mrs. Coffyn to pay a call on an Englishwoman whom Leslie had known in London, and who was in America for the first time.

"I need moral support, Agnes, to undergo with Christian fortitude the insulting comparisons she will make. She is at the Waldorf, but its very luxury will be an irritation to her, and she will take it out on me. So come and help me to be a lady, for I shall feel like scalping her before we leave."

As they drove smartly along Fifth Avenue, partly concealed under their fluttering parasols, they met Seelye walking towards them. The faces of all three changed consciously in the brief moment of recognition. Then involun-

tarily Leslie and Agnes looked at each other, and reached for each other's hands down under the folds of their gowns.

"Ah—h," breathed Mrs. Coffyn, "isn't he magnificent!"

Leslie faced her with wistful eyes.

"I'm sorry I ever knew him," she said; "I never dreamed, outside of books, of the possibility of meeting any one for whom I have such an impersonal, spiritual adoration. I have made an idol of him."

"I know what you mean," said Mrs. Coffyn, quickly. "I feel that way about him myself. He is an ideal gentleman—a sort of King Arthur. I am afraid you have misunderstood me, Leslie," she went on, with a little catch in her breath. "I am thankful the other men seem to have noticed nothing, but you—well, you are a woman, and, besides, I talked rather plainly to you one morning. But there has been very little of what you may have thought. Of course I can't tell just how it may have looked to you, because I was on the inside, but if you think that very much was said—" she broke off helplessly.

"I think nothing," said Leslie, stolidly.

"Yes, but you do—you must have!" cried Mrs. Coffyn. "I have sometimes thought that you believed that I—cared for him. It may

have looked that way. But I didn't—I mean, I didn't as much as you think. It was only that he was so devoted and so considerate and sympathetic. He understands me. I know Frank loves me—I know it! But he has got over showing it in the little ways in which he used to do when we were first married. He used to be so sweet to me—you can't imagine when you see his indifference nowadays (which he doesn't mean; I'm sure of that) —how *dear* he used to be. He was full of the gentlest, tenderest little ways. And I miss them, Leslie! I miss them terribly. I'm still young. I'm only twenty-seven, and it is too soon to give up all love-making from my own husband. It makes me miss it more to be with a girl like you and see men in love with you, as men used to be with me, and looking at you as though they loved the very thought of you, and seeing every move you make whether they are looking at you or not, and hearing every word you speak even if they are talking to somebody else. It used to be that way with Frank and me. Then it fell away, as it so often does. I don't know why. Perhaps it was partly my fault. I gave up some little ways I once had with Frank, because he did not seem to care for them, and I grew tired of being unnoticed. It used to be that when he was reading, if I

put my hand on his hair, he would take my hand and kiss it—half unconsciously it seemed. Then he got so he only grunted when I did it. You needn't laugh, Leslie. The time will come when you will be thankful to have a caress received by your husband with a grunt. But even that recognition has ceased. I believe that nothing short of dropping a book on Frank's head would make him look up now. Oh, it's all wrong, I know, but when Mr. Seelye came and began to render me all the little trivial attentions of forestalling my wants and making me feel of some importance, I couldn't help being pleased. I should have been a stone if I had failed to respond. I didn't think he was going to care so much. Then when he found that there was danger in it for both—yes, Leslie, there was even danger to me—don't look so shocked—he took all the burden on his own shoulders and withdrew. He withdrew for a principle, Leslie! Think of that! You know you have always said that most men had principles about everything else in the world except about women. Now here is a hero who was no will-o'-the-wisp. He didn't wait to be lured away by another woman. He still cares for me, and it does not somehow strike me as strange in *him*, when I say that I believe he always will."

"I believe you are right, Agnes. I honestly do. Ah, we women understand men. We give them credit for honor and manliness in spite of what their fellow-men say. I never before knew of a man giving up a woman when there was not another woman in the case."

"Neither did I. That is why I have made such an idol of Mr. Seelye. I am not in love with him, and yet I can truthfully say that I adore him."

"So can I!" cried Leslie, facing her with humid eyes. "He is a man in a thousand."

"He goes nowhere, I believe," pursued Mrs. Coffyn. "He is never known to pay a social call. He is exiling himself for me."

Leslie was silent.

"I wish he liked you better, dear," Mrs. Coffyn went on. "You two never hit it off very well, did you? He used to tell me that he felt your mental condemnation in the very atmosphere. He said he never could get away from it. I never could see that you particularly disapproved of anything. You always joined in everything that was said and done. But he felt things peculiarly. He used to say to me, suddenly, 'Look at Miss Scarborough now,' and I would look, but I never saw anything. He used to say that at heart you were a Puritan."

Still Miss Scarborough said nothing.

"I never shall forget your exquisite tact through it all, Leslie, dear. It made me love you. I shall always love you, because I too felt that you were a moral support. I don't suppose I *could* have gone too far with you there. Mr. Seelye used to say that your abandonment was all assumed—that you really never let yourself go. And I grew to feel that in a way. You were a real help to me, dearest. I don't believe anything could ever come between us now."

"Oh yes, it could," said Leslie, laughing. "No woman's friendship could stand the test of a man's coming between them."

She shut her parasol as the carriage drew up before the Waldorf.

"Oh, but that is impossible in our case," protested Mrs. Coffyn, as she reached for her card-case.

Leslie wondered uneasily what Agnes would say if she knew.

III

Seelye, being even more of an egoist than most, was capable of misunderstanding a girl like Miss Scarborough exquisitely.

Her respect, which she withheld from him

until his sensitiveness forced him to make the most radical move of his life in order to compel it, she now, with the royal generosity of her nature, lavished upon him without stint or reason. He revelled in this fine distinction with the reacting joy of his previous discomfort, and lapped himself in the tropical warmth of her appreciation with all the satisfaction of the mentally thin-skinned who dread the cold judgment of the world.

But Miss Scarborough was entirely impersonal in her regard for Seelye—a thing which Seelye of all men was incapable of suspecting. What she felt for him would have been perfectly proper had Seelye been married to another woman, or had he been the apostle of a lost cause. It was hero-worship which she gave him, with no more personality in it than she would have bestowed upon a King Arthur.

For this reason she took more personal comfort out of Seelye's companionship than from that of any other man she knew. All the other men who were as devoted as he, either were in love with her or were going to be. This disturbed her of course, as she cared for none of them, either actually or potentially. There was but one—always in the background—who seemed to menace her as a possible husband. There were so many reasons why she should

not marry Trelawney, and yet he attracted her with such fatal magnetism, that she seized upon the hope of Carstairs or almost anybody else to protect herself from herself. But always at heart she knew that no man could hold her forever like Trelawney. He embodied to her all that was fine, all that was noble and distinguished in life. Although she seldom saw him, he controlled her through space with perfect ease. It was only that her restless spirit strained at its leash and would not yield, that kept her from admitting to herself that Trelawney, because he embodied the very opposite of all these men, with their frivolity and shallow wit and their evil habits of wasting time, would eventually be her master, chiefly because he already had become his own.

But with Seelye she was completely at ease. She felt sure that he expected nothing of her. It was so unusual for her to be able to feel so. It had all the piquant charm of a platonic friendship without any of the fatal possibilities—nay, certainties—of tragic dissolution. His love story was so recent, so hopeless, and so perfectly understood by her that he was safer for a companion than a freshly made widower, for the sacredness of his grief was tempered by a certain earthly piquancy which removed it from the danger of the solely spiritual and gave it a

temporal flavor which acted as mental ballast. The only uneasiness Miss Scarborough experienced was that she had disregarded her intuitions and had allowed herself to be convinced by reason. That, to a man, sounds absurd, but logic in the hands of a woman is a dangerous weapon. It goes off when least expected, and does no end of damage, and, like the investigations with fire-arms, does most harm to the investigator.

Leslie had begun by calling Seelye the supremest egoist she ever had known, and of withholding all faith in him. Now she had believed the evidence of her own senses, as her reason compelled her to do, and had swung clear to the other extreme. Once or twice before in her life she had committed a similar crime against her intuition and had come to grief therefrom. So at first she watched Seelye warily, wondering in what direction he would break out and show her that she again had been wrong. But as month after month passed, and he maintained the same chastened, dignified demeanor, her vigilance relaxed, and she prostrated herself before her idol with the abandonment of delight which only the hero-worshipper knows.

"Do you know," she said to him one afternoon early in October, "it is a great comfort to get back to you again. I really missed you

while I was away, and that one week you were with us at Newport did not count at all. It was all so trivial—so not-worth-while. You make the real things seem more near."

Seelye only looked at her and smiled. To tell the truth, he was still desperately afraid of her. He was afraid of her wit and afraid of her condemnation. He was clever enough to appreciate her, and her very subtlety allured him. He knew what an absurd idealist she was. He had seen her grief at the dislodgment of some of her lesser idols, and he wondered at, but was respectful of, its poignancy. He knew how high her ideals were, how impossible it was to attain them, and how evanescent her regard would be should she discover that she had been in any way duped.

He never had dared take advantage of any of the things she said to him, partly because he felt some natural shame at his own susceptibility, and because in a blind way he felt that, if she had begun to care for him in the way her words would under ordinary circumstances seem to imply, she never would have spoken them. Therefore he generally sat silent before her, only looking at her in the comprehending, appreciative way which develops unexpected powers of monologue in a woman who makes thought a habit.

"A girl can take real comfort with so few men," Leslie went on, plaintively. "Men are a peculiar race of beings. As a friend they never treat a woman quite as she likes to be treated. They make her a little too much of a 'good fellow,' and forget that, in spite of her comradeship, at heart she is much more of a woman than a comrade, and so they don't try to comprehend her. That is why men are only interesting when they are in love with one, and then, from a psychological stand-point, they are also failures, for they can't reason and diagnose and differentiate when they are in love. So men don't understand women even then. But you are different from both classes. You have a way of making me feel that you are trying to understand me. It is very flattering."

"I don't do it to flatter you," said Seelye, quietly. "It is only that you read me through and through, and you know the greatest desire I have is to comprehend you and to be of some use to you."

Seelye watched her narrowly to see the effect of his last words. He never had dared to say quite so much before, and she was so keen he was afraid she would fly at him with a complete discovery of his whole attitude. His mental poise was that of being constantly prepared to dodge her attack.

Miss Scarborough ignored the last few words, and passed her hand across her brow.

"No," she said, slowly, "no, you are wrong. I cannot read you. I try constantly, but it seems as if there were a veil just back of your eyes, between them and your brain, and I cannot make things match. Your words sound one way and your face disclaims them. You are a good deal of a puzzle to me."

Seelye glanced down and colored.

"You are the most wonderful woman I know," he said. "I wish I had you for my conscience."

"That also is different," said Leslie, dreamily. "Most men don't want a conscience."

"They would if they knew that in acquiring one they obtained you."

Leslie laughed.

"It is ideal," she declared. "Even as friends, you never forget to pay compliments. You must have Southern blood in your veins."

"No, not Southern — French. My mother was a Frenchwoman."

"Then, alas, that is not so genuine as the Southern. Southern compliments to women spring from the heart; French, from the head. But a Frenchman lays his hand upon his heart, and that misleads the unthinking."

"Don't say that, Miss Scarborough," cried Seelye, stung by that idle speech into showing

some feeling. "That sounds like what you used to think of me."

"Ah!" said Leslie, quickly, "forgive me." She held out her hand to him. He took it and kissed it with passionate gratitude, then drew back, shocked at his temerity.

Miss Scarborough smiled.

"I don't mind," she said, gently. "Pray don't be so afraid of what I am going to think of you. It hurts me—it always hurts me when people are afraid of me, but *you*, most of all. Sometimes you act as if you were afraid I was going to bite you. I'm not, I promise you."

They both laughed a little. It was growing dusk. There was an open fire of logs on the andirons, which lighted Seelye's face. Miss Scarborough was in the shadow.

"I am only afraid of you because I want your good opinion. I want it more than I want anything else in this world—except one thing."

Leslie drew in her breath in sudden fear. She hoped he was not going to talk of Mrs. Coffyn to her. She half rose to ring for the lights. It is generally the dusk which makes one want to confide. Seelye saw her little impetuous movement and hurried on.

"You are so sweet and so unselfish that you never understood me. A woman with more vanity than you have would have known me

better. Circumstances misrepresented me to you and made me seem more involved in a certain affair than I really was. Your romantic imagination did the rest. I never felt at all serious in the matter until the Puritan in you condemned me. I can't stand it to be condemned by a woman, especially by a clever woman. You never knew it, but it was you who made me respond to your toast that night. I hadn't meant to. I was only waiting for Fate to show me some way out of the tangle. I am nothing but the football of Fate. You have a way of commanding people, of forcing events. You control me. You control Carstairs—poor fool, who imagines himself in love with you. You control Frank Coffyn. He obeys a look from you, and although she does not recognize the force which controls her, you also control Mrs. Coffyn. It must be a source of never-ending satisfaction to a woman to realize her power over man—such power as you have. I knew then that some day I could tell you how I withdrew from another woman's influence in order to compel your respect. I meant then to win your love. But I never dared to speak of it until to-day. You have been so gentle and sweet to-day that I felt perhaps you knew how I loved you and that you would let me speak."

Seelye leaned forward, drawing his gloves

through the palm of his other hand, and trying to discern Miss Scarborough's face. She sat with her head against the back of a high carved teak-wood chair. Her hands, loosely clasped in her lap, had not moved since he began to speak. But her face, turned from him, was wet with the tears which rained down her cheeks and which she made no effort either to dry or to check.

Her first sensation was of falling through infinite space, dizzy and blinded. Then a great homesickness overcame her—the *heimweh* of the soul for which there is no cure.

Seelye was elated by her silence.

"I know I am not quite worthy of you," he went on, "but you have started me in the right way. If you are good enough to say that we can go together, *I* have no fear of the future. You have been so sweet as to say that you depend on me, that I seemed to bring the real things of life more near, and that is a sufficient satisfaction for me to know. If I can only be of service to you—"

Seelye was not generally so cold a wooer, but there was something about the stillness of the figure in the chair opposite which made him guarded.

"*Why* are you crying, dear?" he exclaimed. "What have I said to make you cry?"

"I am crying for joy, I think," she said, coldly. She sat up as he sprang towards her, and hurried on, "But hardly the joy you think. I am glad to get my balance again. I am glad to know that I am well punished for disregarding my intuitions. You were in love with Agnes!" she cried, suddenly. "How dare you deny it to me?"

"I don't deny it," declared Seelye, surprised that she would mention it, but laying it to the fact that she was jealous. If she cared enough to show jealousy, he was quite willing to affirm what he had just denied. "I was in love with her."

"And then?" questioned Miss Scarborough.

"Then I came under a more powerful influence, and fell in love with you."

Miss Scarborough began to laugh wildly, then she covered her face with her hands and burst into tears. Her golden idol stood revealed before her with feet of clay.

"In Heaven's name, why do you act so strangely?" cried Seelye. "What am I to think?"

"I wouldn't think at all if I were you," said Miss Scarborough, reappearing. "Leave that for me to do. I've thinking enough to do to keep me busy for a small eternity."

"What do you mean?" began Seelye, anx-

iously. "Have I misunderstood you? Are you so unlike other women that you are not pleased to have outgeneralled so beautiful a woman as Mrs. Coffyn?"

"Dear Carstairs!" murmured Miss Scarborough.

"What has Carstairs got to do with it?" demanded Seelye, his face darkening.

"I have misjudged the boy, that is all. I used to think he monopolized a certain quality. But he doesn't."

"I don't know what you mean," said Seelye, helplessly. "I once thought I read you like an open book, but somehow you seem so far away from me. Have you forgotten that I love you, and that we are going to be together always?"

He leaned towards her, but she shrank away from him.

"Oh, don't," she said. "It is all a mistake, and everything is over. All our beautiful friendship, which has been so satisfying, and which meant so much to me, is at an end. How could you do it?"

There was bitter reproach in her tones.

He laughed indulgently and slipped his arm around her waist. She faced him with blazing eyes.

"Pardon me, dear. I only meant to say that

the friendship will be superseded by something better. Don't you understand?"

Leslie was silent.

"You loved Agnes first and then you loved me," she said.

Seelye dared not reply. He did not know what she wanted him to say. She raised her eyes to his.

"Do you know that I am a hero-worshipper?" she asked, "and that what I imagined I liked in you was because you were a hero — unlike other men?"

"No, I didn't know that exactly," he said, cautiously.

"But you are just like other men. Other men love one girl until they meet one who attracts them more."

"But doesn't it flatter you to know that you are the successful one?" asked Seelye, smiling.

"Alas! I am anything but successful. Please go, Mr. Seelye, and think of all this as a hideous mistake, one in which I shall suffer quite as much as you, though in a different way."

It seemed as if Seelye could not be made to understand.

"But if you shall suffer, dear one, why send me away? Is it just to try me—to tease me a little and then bring me back?"

Leslie looked at him.

"No," she said, vehemently, "it is not that. If you must have the truth in words, I do not love you in the least, nor could I ever bring myself to love you.

Seelye turned white.

"I am sorry," he murmured. "I hoped—Good-bye, Miss Scarborough."

Leslie went up-stairs and wrote a letter to John Trelawney.

IV

After she had posted her letter with a haste which admitted of no reconsideration, she spent her evening restlessly and went to bed only to lie awake all night and wonder if the morning would never come, when she could go and see Agnes Coffyn. She felt a strange yearning for the soft, cooing ways which Agnes had, and a desire to right herself in Agnes's regard. Since her return from Newport she had purposely avoided Mrs. Coffyn. Not that she feared her reproaches, but because she knew that Mrs. Coffyn did not know how often Seelye visited her. Miss Scarborough thought it neither delicate to tell her nor quite honest to withhold it. So she had been obliged to avoid her.

A paragraph in the morning paper arrested her attention. John Trelawney had failed in

business. Failed honorably, it said. His bank had even offered him a new loan to carry him, but he had refused it. The color mounted burningly to Leslie Scarborough's cheeks and her hand trembled. She remembered what Carstairs had said of Trelawney's refusing that other offer, because it was shady. Here he had refused a clean offer because from his knowledge of the inside of his business it would be dishonorable to the bank. What a man he was! The tears rushed to her eyes as she thought of Seelye, and her heart turned forever towards John Trelawney. Her interview with Seelye had been the influence which had released the gold in her nature and had burned up the alloy. Her eyes flashed with delight when she realized that Trelawney would see from the date of her letter that she had accepted him before she knew of his failure.

It was with some eagerness that Leslie rang the bell of Mrs. Coffyn's apartment in Fifty-fifth Street, and inquired if she were at home. Usually Leslie, when she came early, was admitted to Agnes's room, but as the maid brought her word that Mrs. Coffyn was dressing, but would be in presently, and begged Miss Scarborough to wait, Leslie sighed with impatience to think how sadly their days of informality had departed.

In half an hour Agnes came dressed for the street. Leslie sprang towards her impetuously, but she met Mrs. Coffyn's outstretched hand half-way, and, surprised and hurt, she only took it in hers a moment and turned back to her chair.

"Are you going out?" she said, wondering at the formality of her costume. Agnes was generally invisible until twelve, unless her intimate callers would see her in a house-gown.

"Oh no," said Mrs. Coffyn. "I only dressed to see you."

"That was not necessary, Agnes. I am sorry I put you to so much trouble."

"I wished to do it, Miss Scarborough."

Leslie bit her lip.

"I came to tell you an important bit of news, Agnes, if you care to hear it," she said, hesitatingly.

"Is it that you are engaged?" cried Mrs. Coffyn, wrenched out of her coolness by her intensity of feeling.

"Yes," said Leslie, in astonishment; "how did you know?"

"Oh, pray don't imagine that I have been so blind as you think. I have known of Mr. Seelye's attentions to you ever since you stopped calling on me. You are such a sincere friend —so open, so honest!"

"Agnes," cried Leslie, clasping her hands, "please, *please* be careful what you say! You will be so sorry when you know."

"I shall never be sorry that I have lost a false friend — one who stole the only thing out of my life worth having. Probably you have discussed me many times. I dare say you thought I didn't know that he followed you to Newport. I know all about it. He was a hero, and you dragged him down."

Leslie stood up with a white face.

"Oh, I must go, Agnes. I had no idea you knew about Mr. Seelye. I did not come to speak of him to you. I came to tell you that I am going to marry John Trelawney."

Miss Scarborough took a step towards the door with her head held high and her lips quivering. She wanted to be alone where she could cry over the loss of the lovely woman she had thought Agnes Coffyn to be. Agnes's vulgarity cut Leslie like a knife. There is nothing like travelling together or being jealous to bring out the innate vulgarity of people's natures.

But Leslie was stopped by Agnes's hand on her arm. Leslie's white face shocked Mrs. Coffyn quite as much as her last announcement.

"John Trelawney? Oh, Leslie, dear, forgive me! Come back and let me tell you. Oh,

Leslie, I am so miserable!" She broke out crying. "I have been so unhappy. Don't lay what I said up against me. I love you, Leslie! I want you for a friend. Why didn't you tell me? I have grieved over this all summer. See how thin I am. I had to give up wearing *décolleté* gowns. I can't sleep without an opiate. And I thought it was Mr. Seelye all this time. Don't be shocked, Leslie, dear! I told you once that I didn't care for him, but I think I was wrong. For just as soon as I had told you, and I saw that you, who are so much cleverer than I, thought him a hero too, I began to care for him differently. You know I was alone all the time. None of you ever came to see me any more, and Mr. Seelye had stopped coming too. I was still thinking that he cared for me when I heard of his devotion to you, and it made me wild. I was so jealous of you. I hated you. Forgive me, Leslie! You are going to forgive me! I can see it in your dear eyes. But now that I know it was all a mistake and that he has not been making love to you—oh, what shall I do? I—I care for him more than ever!"

"Hush, hush, Agnes! You must not say it aloud. You don't mean it even now."

"Yes, I do!" declared Mrs. Coffyn. "It is the first time I have dared to speak it aloud. Have

you forgotten how grand he was when he spoke out that night? Have you forgotten how you used to say that outside of books you never knew a man to give up a woman for principle?"

"No, I have not forgotten," said Leslie.

"Oh, how fine he is! I couldn't have blamed you much if you had fallen in love with him, but I should have hated you."

She began to cry hysterically. Leslie never had seen her in such a condition.

The maid Gilbert appeared at the door.

"Shall I send for the doctor, Miss Scarborough? He said he was to be called if she got bad."

"Is she ill? Are you ill, Agnes? Answer me."

"Yes, I have been ill, but I am better. See, I have stopped. I will be quite calm. You may go, Gilbert. I'll send for you when I want you."

"I almost wish he had been in love with you, Leslie," she went on, when the maid had gone; "it would have made it easier to forget him. But it's because he is so noble that I can't get him out of my mind. He is so different from other men."

Miss Scarborough smiled.

"What would you say, Agnes, if I should tell you that he has been in love with me?"

Mrs. Coffyn dried her eyes and looked up.

"I should be glad—glad beyond words to express," she said, solemnly. "Was he? I know he was. I can see by your face."

They sat looking at each other for several minutes in silence. Agnes's face kept changing its expression as she rapidly reviewed the facts of the case and mentally readjusted herself.

They both tried to speak several times, then gave it up and simply sat looking at each other.

"When did he tell you?" said Agnes at length.

"Yesterday."

"When did you make up your mind to marry John Trelawney?"

"Last night."

They both laughed, then got up and kissed each other.

"Let's telephone to Frank that we will lunch with him at the Club," said Agnes.

"Yes, do! Frank is such a *dear!*" cried Leslie, recognizing Agnes's mental change of base.

Agnes went out to put on her wraps. She paused at the door and said:

"Of course you couldn't have loved him after knowing everything."

"Of course not," said Leslie.

She turned again and said:

"*Why* are you going to marry?"

Leslie faced her with sudden vehemence.

"Because, when anything goes wrong, or when anything goes right, when I am ill or well, or perplexed or worried, I always come *home* to John!"

The Junior Prize at St. Mary's

The Junior Prize at St. Mary's

"SO there is a new girl at this time of year," said one of the St. Mary girls, Helen Van Dorn, to the group around her. "I wonder what class she will enter?"

"I don't know about that," said Linda Cundiff; "but I heard that she was a Southern heiress and very beautiful."

"If she is Southern, she will be indolent and not particularly bright. And as to being an heiress and beautiful—all Southern girls are said to be that!" said a third speaker, Mary Hayward, a little contemptuously.

"Hush, Mary! You forget that Carrie is Southern, and we all know that she is anything but indolent," said Helen, smiling across at Carrie Tremaine. "I think Southerners are particularly clever, as a rule."

"Helen Van Dorn has a good word for every one. I wish I could be like her," said Mary,

a little wistfully. Helen gave the hand she held a grateful squeeze.

"But I would like to know why the new girl waited until nearly December to—"

"Hush, Mary! Here she comes!" said Carrie, warningly. And they saw Miss Keith, the principal of St. Mary's, approaching, followed by a young lady. Then Miss Keith said:

"Miss Van Dorn, I wish to present you to our new friend, Miss Erskine, and I will leave her to your care."

From the moment that Nannie Erskine felt the pressure of Helen's hand-clasp, and saw the friendly light in her blue eyes, she loved her with all the intensity of her warm Southern heart.

Helen introduced the other girls, and noticed with surprise that there was no trace of embarrassment at meeting so many in the clear, open, curious gaze of the new-comer.

Rumor had not erred as to her beauty. She was very small, but not too much so to be exquisitely graceful. Her hair was a sombre, dusky black, almost inclined to fluffiness, but was drawn down smoothly and showed plainly the contour of her regal little head. Her eyes were large, dark, soft, and heavily shaded.

Mary comprehended all this in one sweeping glance. "Well-shaped head," she thought.

"Looks as if she might have some sense." And she immediately entered into conversation with her, to draw her out. She talked easily and well, in answer to Mary's adroit questions, and therefore made a good impression upon that somewhat severe young woman.

"You are to be my room-mate, Miss Erskine," said Helen.

"Am I? I am glad of that," said Nannie, giving her quick smile and holding out her hand impulsively to Helen.

"So, girls, we will leave you, and I will take Miss Erskine to her room." Nannie turned to the group and said, lightly: "For a short time, then, good-bye. We shall be friends, I think?" She turned her head on one side, and made her last remark almost like a question.

"Yes, indeed," they answered, heartily. She smiled and nodded; then Helen led her away.

"She'll do!" said Mary Hayward, tersely. And the facts of having impressed Mary thus favorably, and of being given to Helen Van Dorn for a room-mate, were enough in themselves to win the regard of the whole school. But when to these were added the enthusiastic encomiums of the few who had met her, Nannie Erskine's position in St. Mary's was secure.

"It really is a little odd, my dear," said Helen to her a few days after, "that the girls should

all have taken to you so. You will not misunderstand me, I know. But St. Mary's has the name of being so exclusive and unapproachable to any new-comer as to be absolutely unpleasant. Every girl who enters has to go through a regular siege of being drawn out and examined by the other girls—a much more painful process than that of being examined by Miss Keith. You are the first exception."

"I am sincerely grateful to them," laughed Nannie. "Perhaps one reason was that I didn't expect to be anything but a friend to all of them. You know I have no sisters nor mother, and my four brothers and my father are all the society I have. I am so used to being petted by them that it never occurred to me that the girls might not like me. Do you know, I scarcely know any girls. I don't know how to treat them, or how I ought to appear to them. Not living in town, I had no opportunities."

"It is just as well," said Helen. "You will see enough of them here. We offer two hundred varieties for your inspection and study."

If Mary Hayward had any doubts as to where Nannie would be placed in consequence of entering in the middle of a term, she was not destined to remain long in ignorance. Helen met her with the intelligence that Miss Erskine was to enter the junior class, and had asked for

three weeks in which to catch up to where they were then.

"Why, what is she thinking of?" exclaimed Mary, incredulously. "All the studies? She can *never* do it! And to think of that little thing entering our class!"

"Well, wait and see if she doesn't do it," said Helen. The startling news was communicated to the other juniors.

"If she does it," said Linda, "I shall have more respect for her than for any other one thing she could do."

"If she does it she is more than likely to take the prize," said Carrie Tremaine, thoughtfully.

Helen Van Dorn and Mary Hayward looked up quickly, almost apprehensively.

"She will stand an excellent chance," said Mary, slowly.

Never was one girl so watched as was Nannie Erskine during those three weeks. She was wonderfully popular, and spent so much of her time with the other girls that they could not see how she managed to study at all. They suspected her of getting up after Miss Anderson had ordered the lights out, and "burning midnight oil"; or of rising at an unreasonable hour in the morning to study. But Helen, on being secretly questioned, denied both rumors.

"She can't do it, then," said Linda. Helen only smiled.

Nannie's admiration for Helen increased daily. Her fair, stately beauty, her winning manners and tender smiles were to Nannie's romantic fancy each emblematic of perfection.

"You remind me of Elaine, or Queen Guinevere," she said. But Helen's beauty was the least of her attractions. The whole school adored her for her gentleness and consideration.

After Nannie came, so quickly did she win their good opinion that the girls differed as to which was the best beloved. Nannie, accustomed to admiration and affection on all sides, took it as simply and naturally as a child, utterly unconscious that she was fast becoming Helen's rival. Helen saw it clearly, but no one was the wiser; for she kept the knowledge to herself, and encouraged Nannie's love and confidence more than ever.

The three weeks at length passed, and "the new girl" had accomplished her task, and at the end of the month took her examination with the rest. A buzz of genuine admiration arose from the generous-hearted girls, as Miss Keith announced that Helen Van Dorn, Mary Hayward, and Nannie Erskine had passed a well-nigh perfect examination.

Mary's face brightened as she heard it, and

she turned and nodded her congratulations to Nannie. And no one knew, from Helen's calm smile, that a tumult raged in her heart.

Nannie's eyes grew larger and darker with surprise and pleasure as she heard the report and the few quiet words of commendation from Miss Keith. She rushed up to her room, without seeking the other girls, and there Helen found her a few moments later in a storm of tears.

"My dear child!" she cried, in alarm.

"It is nothing," said Nannie, raising her head and dashing the tears aside. "I always cry when I'm happy."

"Did that make you happy?" asked Helen, curiously.

"Happy! It's the one thing I've desired and worked for with all my strength ever since I came!" cried Nannie, almost fiercely. "I should have died of shame if I had not succeeded."

"Why, you did not appear to work hard. We wondered how you did it," said Helen, surprised at her intensity.

"Do you think I would have let you see that I was striving for an end, and then run the risk of having you know I had failed at last?" cried Nannie, throwing back her small head proudly.

"But we all knew what you were doing," said Helen.

"Yes, I know. But I did not appear to be

working very hard, and if I had failed you would have said, 'Well, she didn't half try.' I could bear to be thought indolent, but not stupid!"

"Well, you are the oddest girl I ever met," said Helen, slowly.

"Not odd, when you come to think of it. But you don't know why I am so anxious for success. My brothers all did remarkably well at college, and they would be *so* ashamed of me if I did not succeed!" she said, passionately. "You do not know," she added, with a complete change of voice and manner, "how pleased the boys will be when they know what I have done." She laughed gleefully, and one would have thought to see her there, curled up on the foot of the bed, with traces of tears still on her cheeks, that she were some beautiful child, instead of a junior at St. Mary's.

"Have you your essay for to-morrow?" asked Helen, after a long pause.

"Gracious! I forgot all about it!" cried Nannie, aghast.

"Perhaps Miss Keith will excuse you, considering all your extra work," suggested Helen.

"I don't want her to," answered Nannie, slipping off the bed and preparing for action. "I'll have one ready."

"By to-morrow morning? Why, what's your subject?" asked Helen, incredulously.

"Yes, to your first; 'French Women of Letters,' to your second question," said Nannie, laughing.

Helen turned away abruptly. She would have given anything to be able to ask right there if Nannie intended to try for the medal at the close of the year, but she could not. For such was her faith in her friend's powers that she felt that Nannie had but to enter the lists and the prize was won; and she could not bear to know certainly that all her own hard work had been for naught. She opened her lips once, as if to speak, but closed them again, and began to pace the room nervously. She walked to the window, and pressed her hands against her aching eyes. The tears would not be kept back, and for a moment her anger rose against the innocent girl who had so unconsciously become her rival in everything. But she checked herself suddenly, and saw, with relief, that Nannie was studying, and had not noticed her perturbation. For, in her secret heart, Helen knew she did not deserve the adoration which the school lavished upon her for her generosity and sweetness of temper. She had won her reputation almost accidentally, by her wonderful self-control under trying circumstances; and it was now her chief aim to live up to the girls' opinion of her and to deserve her high

position in this regard, and especially that of Nannie.

A prize at St. Mary's had never been offered before, and this was an experiment. If it proved unsatisfactory, one would never be offered again.

At the close of the year Miss Keith would assemble the junior class and give out a subject —whether a different one to each or the same to all, no one knew—and they would then be given two hours in which to write an impromptu essay upon it, without leaving the room or consulting a reference. All these essays would then be submitted to a committee, and the one which was in all respects the best, most complete and correct, would entitle the writer to a gold medal. And it was the fact of its being the first medal from St. Mary's that made each girl strain every nerve towards the final issue. It had been beneficial so far in the impetus it had given to study in all directions. For no one knew the sort of subject likely to be given; hence knowledge on every subject was eagerly sought for and treasured up by the whole class.

There were three girls who were tolerably well matched, Mary Hayward, Linda Cundiff, and Helen Van Dorn. Each was secretly bent upon winning, and yet theirs was a very friendly rivalry. Helen went calmly on her way, her serene face giving no hint of the passionate

eagerness of her desire for the prize. Only Linda openly worked for it.

"I've read up everything I can think of, including Xenophon's *Memorabilia of Socrates*, and the *Epithalamion* of Spenser; and at the last probably Miss Keith will give me 'Gentle Spring' for a subject, or 'Beautiful Snow,'" said Linda, ruefully. The others laughed.

"If I am to get it, I'll get it—that's all," said Mary, doggedly. And, truth to tell, she had deviated but little from her usual course of "digging," as the girls called it.

"I suppose Nannie Erskine will try for it—won't she?" said Linda.

"Of course," answered Mary. "And I must say that I would almost as soon have her get it as to get it myself." Helen looked up in amazement, half expecting to see Mary's usual satirical expression on her face to belie her last words; but she was evidently very much in earnest.

"I thought you were anxious for the prize yourself," said Helen.

"I am. But if that beautiful little Nannie Erskine gets it, I'll be the first one to congratulate her." And Mary's plain face fairly glowed with generosity and feeling. "And you know, Helen Van Dorn, that secretly you wish her to win it as much as I. You are always in

the right. I sometimes am by accident," said Mary, a little wistfully.

"Well, I must say that you are a friend indeed," she said to Mary.

"What a revelation it would be to those girls to look into my heart just now!" thought Helen, as she hurriedly made some excuse to leave them. "Oh, if I could only know what my subject was to be!"

"I really believe," said Linda, as Helen disappeared, "that Helen Van Dorn has the most beautiful character I ever came in contact with. Do you see how every one loves her?"

"Yes," said Mary; "I divide my worship between Nannie and Helen."

Thus the weeks and months passed by, until Easter drew near. The work that year had been of the best, and even Miss Keith's keen eyes could detect no unpleasantness arising from the contest for the medal. She congratulated herself upon the venture.

But one evening she was alarmed by hearing a great outcry from the region of Helen Van Dorn's room, followed by frantic calls for "Miss Keith!" She hurried up the stairs, and was met by Mary and Carrie, both in tears.

"Young ladies!" exclaimed Miss Keith, "what is the meaning of this?"

"Oh, Miss Keith," cried Mary, "Nannie Erskine—"

"She's dead!" sobbed Carrie.

Miss Keith's heart almost stopped beating when she heard that. She found Nannie prostrate on the floor, with Helen and Linda bending over her, both crying. She pushed them aside and placed her hand on Nannie's heart. The girls waited breathlessly.

"My dear young ladies," said Miss Keith, almost vexed at being so frightened, "she has only fainted."

Mary Hayward began to sob hysterically, and Miss Keith sent all of them from the room but Helen.

"I thought she was dead," said Linda, while Helen stood up with a very white face and helped Miss Keith lift Nannie on to the bed.

"What was the trouble?" asked Miss Anderson, when the principal came out half an hour later.

"Miss Erskine had fainted and the girls were frightened."

"But surely that was not enough to alarm the house," said Miss Anderson. "Others have often fainted."

"This was Nannie Erskine," said Miss Keith, quietly.

"Ah, I see!" answered the other.

"You are overworking yourself, my dear," Miss Keith said to Nannie that evening when she came to see her again. "Miss Van Dorn, I think I will rob you of your room-mate to-night and put Miss Erskine in the little room next to mine."

"'The Petting Room,'" said Helen, smiling.

"You dropped this," she added, as Miss Keith rose to go, handing her a small Russia-leather book.

"Dear me! How careless! That is the Prize Book, with the subjects I have selected for your essays."

Nannie looked up and smiled faintly; but Helen's face flushed suddenly, and, although the book had left her hand, she made a half-step forward, as if to take it again.

The doctor told Miss Keith that all Nannie needed was quiet, and complete rest from study, as her nerves were unstrung from overwork. So Helen was bereft of her room-mate for several days.

Long after the lights were out at night, Helen tossed restlessly, thinking of that book. If she could only see it! Just one glimpse of it! The intensity of her desire kept her wide awake and so excited that she sometimes wildly wished she had never known of its existence.

Down-stairs in the "Petting Room," as the

girls called the little blue chamber where dear Miss Keith occasionally put one of her girls, little Nannie Erskine lay, nervously wakeful, starting at every slight noise, and thinking, thinking ceaselessly.

The door into Miss Keith's room stood ajar, and she could hear the regular breathing which told of sleep. The door into the hall was also partly open, and she could just see across the hall the white knob of the door belonging to Miss Keith's private study. Every night since she had been there she had lain and watched that white knob. The great clock struck two. She heard the night watchman make his rounds. She heard the faint echo of his retreating footsteps. Then again was silence.

But what was that? Nannie thought she heard some one creeping stealthily along the hall. Her first thought was of ghosts, but she dismissed that in favor of burglars. The sounds came nearer and nearer, until with her nervousness she could stand it no longer. She slipped out of bed, trembling with fear, and crept to the door. But she could see nothing. She could just discern that white knob, gleaming faintly. Then she heard a faint scratching, like that of a match. It seemed to be across the hall. She was on the point of giving a frantic scream for Miss Keith, when the match

suddenly flared, revealing a tall, slender white shape, and a hand raised to shelter the flame. The hand was small and white. "It is one of the girls," thought Nannie, with a little gasp of fear. Then the first sputtering of the match settled into a steady blaze. A face bent over it, evidently searching for something. With sickening horror Nannie recognized Helen. Nannie was riveted to the spot with dread of what was coming. She saw Helen turn the knob of the door and enter the room. A painful doubt came into her mind. All Miss Keith's private books and records were in her desk, and the Prize Book among them. Nannie would not believe it. Helen had left something, and had come to look for it. Dear Helen! She would not do such a thing! Hot tears rushed down Nannie's face as she stood there fighting back the thought.

But what was Helen doing? What if Miss Keith should awaken? But she bethought herself, Miss Keith was asleep.

"If I can creep into her room and open her door without waking her," thought Nannie, "I can see into the study."

Without thinking of her own suspicious position if her teacher should waken, Nannie, intent upon proving to herself Helen's innocence, accomplished the feat in utter silence. But oh,

the misery of that first glance! There stood Helen, in her long, white wrapper, holding a fresh match over the little red book. It was true, then! Her darling Helen was capable of this awful thing. She closed the door to shut out the hateful sight, and made her way back to bed. She heard Helen come out, pause and listen a moment, then glide stealthily up the long flight of stairs. Fainter and fainter came the rustle of trailing garments, then—silence.

In a storm of tears she buried her face in the pillows. "I would as soon thought of my mother in heaven committing such a crime as my beautiful Helen!" she thought at last. And then, exhausted by the violence of her weeping, she lay quiet, and only an occasional long-drawn, fluttering breath told of recent tears.

And through the rest of that interminable night one thought kept its place in her brain.

"What shall I do about it?"

In justice to the other girls, to say nothing of herself, she ought to prevent unfairness. But to betray Helen into the hands of even gentle Miss Keith Nannie felt would be a Judas-like act. She had been almost educated by her brothers, and she knew they would suffer torment rather than betray a class-mate. She might appeal to Helen, but that would be only to incur Helen's dislike, or perhaps cause her to

abandon the contest. She might ask Miss Keith to change the subjects. But that would either bring Nannie herself under suspicion or give a clew to the real offender, or, worse still, unfairly cause Helen to lose the prize at the very moment of winning it. It came into her mind to let things go on just as they would and trust to her own ability to win the medal, even with such odds against her. But that might fail, Helen would win, and Nannie be obliged to reproach herself with the thought that she had known of injustice yet had taken no steps to prevent it.

In the morning, when Miss Keith came in, Nannie's cheeks were burning with fever; and that was the beginning of her illness. For many days the anxious girls were obliged to content themselves with mere bulletins from the sick-room. "Nannie's fever is higher today;" or, "Nannie rested better last night." Mary spent half her time hovering near Nannie's door, waiting for news of her. Then she grew better. But it was no wonder, with all she had to think about, that her recovery was slow. She finally decided, however, that the best course would be to speak to Helen, as the issue would probably only concern herself, inasmuch as she alone would meet with unpleasantness.

When, at last, she was allowed to see the girls,

they found her looking like a little, shadowy ghost. Mary came in first, and her eyes filled with tears as she saw the thin little hand put out in eager welcome.

"Your Royal Highness," she cried, with feigned gayety, "make haste, and grant your humble subjects the boon of your daily presence among us once more!" And Nannie laughed and said she would.

Then she saw Helen and Linda together, and it seemed to Nannie that Helen would not meet her eyes.

It was a week after Nannie had resumed her room with Helen before she could bring herself to speak on the one subject of the prize. But after dinner, one evening, Nannie was seated in the big arm-chair that Miss Keith had sent to her room after her illness, and Helen was standing by the open window, for the day had been mild, looking out into the twilight.

"Helen, do you believe the 'Petting Room' is haunted?" asked Nannie, suddenly, from her obscurity.

"Of course not, dear. But don't talk about it. I can't bear to hear that room spoken of, since you were so ill there."

"Oh, dear!" thought Nannie, in dismay, "how can I say it, after all?" But after a long pause she went on, slowly:

"The reason I asked you was because the third night I slept there I saw a ghost." Helen started violently, then leaned against the window-pane to hide her trembling.

"It came down-stairs, all robed in white, and struck a match at the door of the study."

"Did you see its face?" asked Helen, with difficulty.

"Yes, I saw the face distinctly. It went in and sat down at Miss Keith's desk and took out the Prize Book—"

"For the love of Heaven, Nannie Erskine, don't add another word! As if I had not enough to carry in the knowledge of my own guilt, but you—you should have seen it!"

She sank down in a little heap just where she stood, crying piteously. Nannie went over and put her arms around her.

"Don't touch me!" cried Helen. "I am not fit to be seen in your company!"

"Hush, Helen! I love you, dear, and I will not turn against you. Remember, I have known it all along."

Helen sat up suddenly and looked into the beautiful, pitying face of her friend.

"You knew all this while you were ill, yet it did not affect you?"

"If you mean to ask me if I talked of it in my delirium, I will say 'No,' for I asked Miss

Keith what I said," returned Nannie, evasively.

"I did not mean that"—nevertheless she appeared relieved—"but was it this, then, that made you so ill? No one knows the reason."

"I don't know," said Nannie, simply.

"Oh, my dear, my dear!" sobbed Helen; "what have I done? If you had died—!" A strong shudder shook her. She seemed so utterly cast down that Nannie did not know what to say. This was not what she had expected.

Then Helen stood up wearily and, looking but very little like her usual stately self, said:

"If you would leave me to myself for a while," she murmured, brokenly. And Nannie only kissed her and took her books up to Mary Hayward's room.

Helen came for her in about an hour.

"I have begun to pack my things," she said, "and I shall leave to-morrow. I want to tell you now that I am going to tell Miss Keith."

"Oh, Helen—must you?" cried Nannie, well knowing what a struggle it must have been to make the proud girl willing so to humiliate herself.

"It is the only way," answered Helen. Then she said, sharply: "I wonder that you will speak to me, knowing what I have done. A month ago I would have scorned even *you* if

you had been guilty of one-half the dishonesty!"

"No, you wouldn't," said Nannie, reaching up to put her arm around Helen's neck. Then she went down to Miss Keith.

Nannie could not bear to look around the room and see Helen's things all laid out so carefully for packing. She wandered restlessly about, and finally started for Mary's room again, but was met by a servant with a message from Miss Keith. She went down and found her standing with her hand on Helen's bowed head, but smiling through her tears.

"My dear," she said to Nannie, "I wish to consult you. I am not in the least inclined to extenuate Miss Van Dorn's conduct, but, as the affair stands to-day, I think you both did right. I will leave the issue with you now, since you are a contestant also."

Helen raised her head. "I think the whole class ought to know," she said.

"There is no necessity for that," said Miss Keith.

"I think," said Nannie, gravely, "that Helen has been punished enough by her own conscience, and I suggest that you change all the subjects and let everything go on as usual. It was a great temptation, Miss Keith."

"Still you would not have done it," said Helen, quickly.

"You do not know that," answered Nannie, smiling a little.

"It is too light a sentence," said Helen. "The others ought to be told."

"No," said Nannie, firmly, "they ought not. What good would it do?"

Miss Keith nodded approvingly.

But they could not persuade Helen to adopt their view of the case, and it was on account of her utter and complete abasement that both were so inclined to leniency.

It was not until the day before the contest that Helen promised to try for the medal. Each girl was on the *qui vive*, and there was a breathless silence as they took their places and waited for Miss Keith to give out the subjects.

Then came two hours of the hardest work they had ever done. Then came a period of anxious waiting, with the whole school assembled to hear the result. Finally Miss Keith came out half laughing.

"It is very odd," she said. "There are three complete and perfect essays; but each member of the committee thinks differently from the other two." The girls laughed.

"It's Helen, Nannie, and Mary," they whispered.

"Silence, young ladies, if you please! The names of the three writers are Miss Erskine, Miss Hayward, and Miss Cundiff."

The girls all looked at Helen, but she was smiling brightly.

"Mine wasn't finished, girls," she whispered, and she reached for Nannie's hand and held it tightly.

But Miss Keith went on: "I called in Miss Anderson, by the consent of the committee, and she has awarded the medal to Miss Erskine."

A storm of enthusiastic applause from two hundred girls fairly shook the room, and increased in volume as Miss Keith placed the medal around Nannie's neck and bent down and kissed her.

"Nannie," whispered Helen, in answer to the reproachful glance of her friend, "I could not have been happy if I had done otherwise."

A Pigeon-Blood Ruby

A Pigeon-Blood Ruby

Time—Sunday evening. Frances Van Kirk seated with a photograph and a small jewel-box in lap.

SHE speaks: "I wonder if a woman ought to be in love with the man she marries! I am heretic enough to believe that she ought not. If I were in love I should not be able to summon my reason to array all the advantages I am to derive from my marriage—to stand them all up in a row to look at and admire and to assure myself that I shall do well to take them and their owner, and to leave entirely out of the question the fact that I care less than nothing for him.

"I am glad I don't love him. Love seems a little vulgar to me when I think of Mr. Finch. Besides, I should be ashamed of myself if I were in love with—him! I hope I still have my former good taste. My taste is not polluted even if I have decided to marry him. I have always

flattered myself that I knew nice men and that I brought out their good points.

"I wonder if Mr. Finch *has* any good points to bring out! Here he is. Not handsome—no. His best friend could not call him handsome. I don't like his mouth. Those thin lips look as if they could be cruel. He won't beat me. He will be sarcastic. That long nose will go up at the corners and look more pointed and ugly, and those lines at the side will deepen into furrows, and dear Mr. Finch won't be pretty to look at nor pretty to hear, I can assure you.

"If I were in love with him, his sarcasm could hurt me. As it is, I shall shrug my shoulders and turn my back on him until he cools down. I hate a man with a temper. I've enough for a whole family.

"No, he is not handsome. He is not good-tempered. *Has* he anything to recommend him to a woman? Yes—one. He is rich. Rich beyond the dreams of avarice, and he knows it and counts on it to buy him friends and—even a wife. I feel as if I were a bale of cotton or a carload of pig-iron when I think of it. He thinks his money will compensate for the lack of family and the lack of breeding and that it will even get him into heaven. Well, it will almost do that. I suppose heaven is the only

place where money will not buy an entrance into best circles.

"I wonder if he loves me. He says he does, but it makes me creepy to hear him talk about it. Love! What does a man who goes by the name of Finch and has such a colorless personality know about so beautiful a thing as love! I am sure I wish he wouldn't talk about it, or try to pump up any of the requisite emotion. I wish he were even more cold-blooded about it than he is.

"I am unable to soften the matter or to throw any glamour over it when I sit here and think about him and the life I must live if I marry him. All my sophistry takes wings and leaves me to face the cold, bare truth.

"I wonder if I shall be actively or passively unhappy? Shall I just miss in a general way all the beauty and holiness of the love I have lost, or will it take form and frame a face and speak to me with a voice that will wring tears from my heart?

"If a woman's heart is filled with love for a man, it makes it so tender that he has doubly the power to wound by a word or neglect. Mr. Finch could never hurt me. If he neglected me, I should be glad. If he attempted to coerce me, I should hate him. If he tried to make me love him, I should want to kill him.

"I don't know why I have suddenly come to feel things so poignantly to-night. I have been lending myself to this thing for months, and it did not hurt. I have felt so cold and apathetic that it gave me courage to go on. But the whole thing came to a crisis to-day, and now I must face it and look clear down the vista of the years to the bitter end. The question is—can I do it?

"Where are you, Mr. Finch? Come out from your hiding-place and let me look you in the eyes—my future lord and master—my—husband!

"Pah! What an ugly word husband is unless it means the right man!

"Here he is! A sleek-looking individual with his thin hair neatly plastered down as if it were glued there. I don't know why I hate the looks of his hair, which always suggests to my mind the idea of unpleasant things in bottles, unless it is that Joe's hair is so thick and unruly. I dare say he would be glad if he ever could get it to wear this meek and unctuous aspect. But Joe's—well, Joe's hair looks as if he played football! I never cared much for football myself, except as a fad. It is so dangerous it makes me feel faint to watch it. And I wouldn't let Joe play—that is, if I had anything to say about him, which, of course, I haven't. Still, it would be some satisfaction to know that if he

did play he could kill all the other fellows instead of letting them kill him. Mr. Finch couldn't kill anybody. Not that I am selecting a husband for his murderous capabilities, but it would be a satisfaction to know that if a footpad attacked him he could defend himself. I believe if I said 'Burglars' to Mr. Finch he would crawl under the table. But, then, Mr. Finch could hire an army to patrol the streets in front of his house—our house, I mean, for I shall be in it—and Joe is so poor that he would have to do his own patrolling. He will have to protect *his* wife with his own right arm, and work for her with his own strong hands. *We* won't have to do anything so plebeian—or so beautiful.

"There, what did I say? I was right. If I were in love I couldn't reason. The idea of *my* ever coming to the point of thinking work beautiful. When I hate to work—alone, I mean. It doesn't seem so hard when I think of working—or rather doing things for Joe. Whenever I see him, I want to do something for him. He is fighting against so many odds, and he is so big and brave about it, and never complains and never seems discouraged. And *he* is working alone, and with nothing in prospect to work for, except to win. Poor Joe. He never will have money. He can't keep it.

He never will be successful, but people will know him and talk about him even if he loses, because he is making such a brave fight.

"I am not brave. I like success and ease and luxury. Everything that I like and must have takes money—heaps of money—and nobody has so much as I shall need, except Mr. Finch.

"How Joe will despise me when he hears of it! I sha'n't see him. I shall avoid him until I have got so used to my luxury that I find I couldn't do without it. Then some day, quite unexpectedly, I shall meet him, and he will look at me—and by that time I shall not care.

"How will he look at me? Will it be a scornful or contemptuous look, such as most men would give, because I had the bad taste to prefer some one else? No, he never puts himself first. It will not be that. Will it be a look of aversion, as if he could not bear to see me? No, he cares too much for me for that. Why do I conjure up such impossibilities when I *know* just how he will lean forward and look into my eyes with all love and—yes, pity in his own—pity because he will know what I am suffering and what a price I have paid for my empty glory. How great will my liveries and my jewels and my gorgeousness seem beside that look which, if I meet it, will drag the soul out of me and

let Joe into my secret as plainly as if I had reached out my arms to him in a vain appeal!

"Oh, *why* do I think of such things? It is because it is Sunday. I hate Sundays! I hate the way the wind howls at those windows. I hate the falling of the leaves and the bare branches and the dying of all green things that go with summer and life. I always think of Joe on Sundays. I wonder why Sunday nights always bring to a woman thoughts of the man she loves and can't marry—won't marry, I mean —no, can't marry. It isn't that I won't marry Joe. I can't marry him. I *can't* bring myself to it. Sunday is the hardest day of the week to me. That is why I always plan to make it so full that I can't think. If Mr. Finch had kept his engagement to-night, I should have accepted him. He didn't know that or he would have come. He said he was too ill to come. I hate a man who is always falling ill. He sent this ring instead. It was not very refined of him, but then Mr. Finch's ways are not always those which 'mark the caste of Vere de Vere.' If I keep it, we are engaged. If I send it back —why—but I shall not send it back. That middle stone is a pigeon-blood ruby.

"Dear Joe! The only present he ever gave me was this penny—cut in half—that I wear. No, I forgot. I took it off long ago and hid it

where I could not find it easily. I wonder what I did with it. (Searches.) Here it is. When he went away I wanted to give it back to him, but he said, 'No. Keep it. If you ever change your mind and want me to come back, just send me your half and I'll know, and I'll come, if it's across the world.'

"How easy it would be to slip it in this envelope—so—and write Joe's name across the back of it—so—and put a stamp on it—so! I wonder if two cents would carry it? Yes, I think it would. A half-penny is very light—very light. How easy it would be to send it! How hard to live up to afterwards! But *would* it be so hard—if it were with Joe? Didn't Joe's face always light up the darkest days, and didn't Joe's presence cheer me when I was the most alone, if he but presented himself in the doorway and looked at me out of his kind eyes? Oh, but Joe glorified the plainness and grayness of life and made the very atmosphere luminous.

"I am weak and foolish to think of such things now that I have set my face steadfastly against them. With all the gilt and tinsel that Mr. Finch can put into my life, it is madness in me to look back at the shining pathway that Joe's honest love made for my feet.

"What a weak, pitiful thing I am, anyway! I have always held my head so high and never

stooped to coquette or trifle with men's love the way other girls do, counting it beneath me, and waiting till the one man came whom I meant to marry. I set my ideal and laid my ambitious plans and never swerved—and for what? To step down now to the highest bidder. Oh, who knows the private demon who dwells, side by side with one's good angel, in the heart of a woman like me! Does any one dream of the tumult in my heart when I carry such a proud front! Who can tell what is going on in the heart of any woman who is making up her mind to marry?

"I said to a man last week, in the sudden, fierce bitterness of my soul, '*Do* men and women ever marry from a belief that they are realizing the grand passion of their lives?' And something in my tone must have stirred him to a sudden, unlooked-for honesty, for he gave me a look as if he read my soul, and he said, '*Men* do—always!'

"My eyes dropped before his. I did not want him to see—although he is only a friend. He is one of those men whom women trust because he understands them.

"I turned away and thought what a blessed thing it is that men cannot read the hearts of the women they are going to marry. I sometimes complain because men are not constituted

to understand women better and because they blunder and are blind. But it is a heavenly thing that it is so, and I suppose God made it so with a purpose.

"I know so many women who carry an ache in their hearts, which their husbands never suspect; sometimes for a love they have lost; sometimes for one that never came. Sometimes, like mine, for one they dared not take.

"I am glad Mr. Finch cannot see into my heart to-night. But I am more glad that Joe cannot — Joe, because he would want me, and Mr. Finch, because he would not want me.

"Dear Joe! Why couldn't it have been you who gave me this ring, with this beautiful red stone in it, and why couldn't it have been *you* who was coming to-morrow for my answer? Dear Joe!

"I might as well face the fact. Mr. Finch bores me, repels me, sickens me. If he had the right to come in at that door and walk across this room and stoop over my chair, and I had to sit still and let him touch me and not scream or strike him for daring to lay his hand on me, I think I should *die!*

"And yet—outside the door, outside the house —people would say—oh, they would say all the things I want them to, and envy me and

copy my clothes and—Joe? Joe would say—nothing.

"What was that poem he read me once?

"'Alas when sighs are traders' lies
And heart's-ease eyes and violet eyes
Are merchandise!
O purchased lips that kiss with pain!
O cheeks, coin-spotted with smirch and stain!
O trafficked hearts that break in twain!
—And yet, what wonder at my sister's crime?
So hath Trade withered up Love's sinewy prime,
Men love not women as in olden time.
Now comes a suitor with sharp prying eye,
Says, "Here, you lady, if you'll sell I'll buy:
Come, heart for heart—a trade! What? Weeping? Why?"
Shame on such wooer's dapper mercery!
I would my lover, kneeling at my feet
In humble manliness should say, "Oh, sweet,
I know not if thy heart my heart will greet.
I ask not if thy love my love can meet.
Whate'er thy worshipful soft tongue shall say
I'll kiss thine answer, be it yea or nay.
I do but know I love thee, and I pray
To be thy knight until my dying day."
Woe him that cunning trades in hearts contrives!
If men wooed larger, larger were our lives,
And wooed they nobler, won they nobler wives.'

"Ah, Joe repeated that to me once because he said that was my attitude. I don't know why he said that. I don't know why he should have thought me capable of lofty sentiments like those unless I had been betrayed into ex-

pressing something of the uplifted state of mind I always rose to when I was with him.

"That was the trouble. It was so easy to rise to a higher plane when he was here that he thought me greater than I was. He appealed to the best in me always. My good angel came out of her own accord at his approach, and then poor, dear Joe went away thinking I was a saint. He never knew the demon of unrest and ambition and vanity which fought his influence step by step, until finally a devil dressed all in red came and flashed this red stone before my eyes, and I have put Joe and his great, kind love behind me forever.

"'If men wooed nobler, won they nobler wives,' he used to say.

"Yet I have proved that untrue. Surely he wooed me nobly and what did I do? I wouldn't rise to his plane. I wouldn't be as noble as he thought me. I laughed and hurt him, and he never reproached me. He always said I was better than I allowed people to see. He always believed in me and defended me even against my own actions and my own words, and loved me beyond any other love I ever have known. Oh, Joe!

"Hark! There are wheels. They are stopping here. (Runs and looks out.) It is after

nine o'clock. Who can it be? It is Mr. Finch. Oh, what shall I do?

"If only it had been Joe! I wonder if I dare? Well, why not? He would come if I sent for him. And if it *were* Joe! If only Joe were coming for *his* answer!"

(She places Mr. Finch's ring in its box, and seals the envelope containing Joe's half-penny.) She calls:

"Ellen, take that to Mr. Finch and say that I cannot see him. And—Ellen, would you mind mailing this letter for me to-night? It is very important. Yes, *to-night!*"

R

THE END

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