

sculptor would pine to immortalize in marble. She wears a wide number seven, and her instep has not the Andalusian arch, under which water may flow. In point of fact, *Jemima* is flat-footed. In no way does the symmetry of her body correspond with that of her mind. Still, it would have been something to have had this lady rider come. If not the rose herself, she would at least for a little have lived near that peerless flower; but the gods have spoken, or Aunt *Samantha* has, which is much the same, and it may never be.

Supper is over, the men hurry out, on pleasure and pipes bent, not to return until ten o'clock brings back the first straggler with virtuous thoughts of bed.

Mrs. Hopkins and her niece sit wearily down amid the ruins of the feast, and brew themselves a fresh jorum of tea. A plate of hot, buttered toast is made, some ham is cooked, 'which,' says Mrs. Hopkins, 'a bit of briled ham is a tasty thing for tea, and, next to a pickled eyster, a relish I'm uncommon partial to, I do assure you.'

And both draw a long breath of great relief as they take their first sip of the cup that cheers.

'I'm that dead beat, Jim,' observes the lady of the house, 'that I don't know whether I'm a sittin' on my head or my heels, as true as you're born!'

At Mrs. Hopkins in a general way sits on neither, this observation is difficult to answer lucidly, so *Jemima Ann* takes a thoughtful bite out of her toast, with her head plaintively on one side, and answers nothing.

Mrs. Hopkins is a tall, thin, worried-looking woman, with more of her bony construction visible than is consistent with personal beauty, and with more knowledge of her internal mechanism than is in any way comfortable, either for herself or *Jemima Ann*.

Mrs. Hopkins is on terms of ghastly familiarity with her own liver, and lungs, and spine, and stomach, and takes very dismal views of these organs, and inflicts the dreadful diagnosis on her long-suffering niece.

'Aunt Hopkins,' says *Jemima Ann*, 'I'm most awful sorry you didn't take in that lady from Mr. Rogers. I should loved to a knowed her.'

'Ah! I dare say, so's you could spend your time gaddin' up to her room, and losin' your morals, and ruinin' your shoes. No, you don't. She'd worrit my very life out, not to speak of my legs and temper, in two days. And a child, too—a play-actin' child! What would we do with a child in this house, I want to know, among twenty-six

foundry hands, and not time in it to say 'Jack Robinson'—no, nor room neither?'

*Jemima Ann* opens her lips to admit the point of her knife, laden with crumb and gravy, and to remark that she doesn't want to say 'Jack Robinson'—when the door-bell sharply and loudly rings.

'There!' cries Mrs. Hopkins, exasperated. 'I knowed it! It's her and him! Dooze take the man, he sticks just like a burr! Show em up to the front room, Jim,' says her aunt, wrathfully, adjusting her back hair, 'and tell 'em I'll be there. But I ain't agoin' to stir neither,' adds Mrs. Hopkins to herself, resuming her toast, 'until I've staid my stomach.'

*Jemima Ann* springs up, breathless and radiant, and hastens to the door.

And so, like one of her cherished heroines, hastens, without knowing it, to her 'fate.' For with the opening of the street door on this eventful evening of her most uneventful life, there opens for poor, hard-worked *Jemima Ann* the one romance of her existence, never quite to close again till that life's end.

## CHAPTER II.

### IN WHICH WE MEET TWO PROFESSIONAL LADIES.

A gust of October wind, a dash of October rain, a black October sky, the smiling face of a stout little man, waiting on the threshold—these greet *Jemima Ann* as she opens the door. A carriage stands just outside, its twin lamps beaming redly in the blackness.

'Ah, Miss *Jemima*, good evening!' says this smiling apparition, 'although it is anything but a good evening. A most uncommon bad evening, I should say, instead. How are you, and how is Aunt Hopkins, now that the supper and the six and twenty are off her mind? And is she in? But of course she's in,' says Mr. Rogers, waiting for no answers. 'Who would be out that could be in such a night? Just tell her I'm here, *Jemima Ann*—come by appointment, you know; and there's a lady in the hack at the door, and a little girl. You go and tell Mrs. Hopkins, Jim, my dear, and I'll fetch the lady along to the parlour. One pair front, isn't it? Thanks! Don't mind me; I know the way.'

Evidently he does, and stands not on the order of his going.

'Run along, *Jemimy*,' he says, pleasantly, 'and call the aunty. I'll fetch the lady up stairs. Now, then, mademoiselle,' he calls going to the door of the carriage; 'it's all right, and if you'll be kind enough to step in