

ing Archie by the hand, he led the way, passing the spot on which the small boy had pursued his unsuccessful sport. Archie stopped short at sight of the overturned pail.

'Oh, Hugh! Your minnows!' Archie glanced up in terror, as he saw the mischievous chief.

'Never mind,' said Hugh gently. He had had his lesson and would never forget it.

Better Than Learning.

(Dorothy Hilton, in London 'S. S. Times'.)

I have no intentions of troubling the reader with my own personality. At eighteen I was consumed with a passion for learning, and such items as eyes, mouth, or nose, beautiful or otherwise, though I scarcely expect the statement to be believed, troubled me not at all. My promised land was college, but, ere I had finished my course at a select boarding-school, family misfortunes made my desire as unattainable as was Canaan for Moses. It became necessary that I should support myself, and as a means to this end the principal permitted me to assist with the younger pupils. The weary round was not at all to my taste, and Miss Gaveston, with great kindness, used her influence to secure me something more congenial.

'Evelyn, my dear,' she said one day, coming into the bare schoolroom where I was correcting exercises, 'I think I have the very thing for you. I know Mrs. Millard slightly, and she has asked me to recommend her a governess for her one little girl. I find that you would have a much greater amount of leisure than is usual in such situations; and as there is a splendid library at Miller House, which I am sure you would be allowed to use, I should be very glad to know that you were able to continue the studies so dear to your heart.'

Miss Gaveston had always shown an almost maternal interest in my welfare, and I felt I could safely leave my future in her hands. And so it came about that I was engaged as governess to little Theresa Millard.

It was natural enough, I suppose, that even a blue-stocking should feel some qualms at her first embarkation upon an unknown world. It was with a sinking heart I bade farewell to my kind friends in the 'select establishment,' which had been a good home to me. But the thought of that magnificent library, ill-appreciated by its owner, as Miss Gaveston had more than hinted, buoyed up my spirits.

Of the journey down to Silvington, and the long drive to Millard House I have very little recollection, for I had Miss Gaveston's parting gift, a Greek book, with me. It was quite dark when I was aroused from the deep reverie into which I had fallen by the stopping of the carriage. The house seemed an imposing place as I ascended the steps into a spacious and brilliantly-lighted hall. A maid relieved me of my wraps and saying that Mrs. Millard had requested me to go to her room on my arrival, conducted me to a prettily-furnished and tastefully-crowded boudoir.

Mrs. Millard was a widow, but there was nothing to suggest the fact in the elegantly gowned lady, who rose languidly to receive me. Though at that time I was not given to noticing dress, the details of her costume remain clearly photographed upon my memory. Her gown of some rich blue stuff, with folds of soft, creamy lace served as an excellent contrast to her pale, fluffy yellow hair, and the pink and whiteness of an

artificially-beautified complexion. Her voice was soft and caressing as she spoke of the cold and discomfort of my journey. A maid bringing in a dainty tea-equipage was requested by Mrs. Willard to send Miss Theresa to her. I was most anxious to see my pupil, for I had taken an instinctive dislike to Mrs. Willard, who I could see, even in the short ten minutes of our acquaintance, was an entirely selfish woman, and it was with a sigh of relief that I saw that the slim, shy child who now entered was in no way like her mother. Tessy, as she told me she liked to be called, was tall for her eleven years, and gave the impression of feeling uncomfortably overgrown. Her dark eyes which redeemed an otherwise plain little face held a curiously haunting expression which at that time I was quite unable to fathom.

'Theresa, Miss Fitzgerald,' said Mrs. Millard, softly, as she sipped her tea, 'is a perfect little ignoramus. I am afraid you will be horribly shocked, and visit her shortcomings upon poor little me, but, indeed, I assure you I was unaware of her utter lack of education until quite recently. Her manners, too, are dreadful. Imagine me with a gauche daughter to take about!' with a gay little shrug and an expressive grimace. I was very sorry for Tessy, whose dark face grew red as she fidgetted uncomfortably on a high chair in an effort to make her long, black legs as inconspicuous as possible. It was quite evident that Mrs. Millard's chief concern as to her daughter's education was that she might not disgrace her when produced in the little world of society for which she lived and moved and had her being. She rattled on gaily, as if quite unconscious of the child's presence, and it was a relief to me, and I am sure to Theresa, when the lady, after giving me an outline of my duties, dismissed us together.

The following morning I devoted to ascertaining what my pupil already knew. Mrs. Millard had spoken feelingly of Theresa's utter lack of education, but I was quite unprepared for the terrible depths of ignorance revealed. It was a most trying ordeal, for it was painful to see the half-frightened, wholly ashamed look growing in the child's dark eyes and, at length, closing the book, I said cheerfully, 'We will ask no more questions then, Tessy, but begin from the very beginning, and you must work hard to make up for lost time.'

'Oh, thank you, Miss Fitzgerald,' she said, gratefully; 'I know I am ignorant, and the little that I do know seems to go out of my head when any one questions me. But I really will work my very best.'

And I believe the poor little mortal did, but her best proved to be a very poor affair.

'My head must be like a sieve, Miss Fitzgerald,' she said sadly one day, shedding a few bitter tears over her multiplication tables. 'Everything just runs out as quickly as I learn it. Yesterday I knew this quite well, and now it is all gone!'

Though I found my pupil's stupidity very trying at times, she was a dear lovable little soul, and I saw none of that gaucherie of manner to which Mrs. Willard had referred, but then I noticed that, on the few rare occasions on which we were summoned to her mother's presence, Theresa invariably appeared at the greatest disadvantage. The library, however, made my life at that time a bed of roses. I had the afternoons entirely at my own disposal as Theresa walked out with her nurse. With a smile of indulgent pity for what she considered my curious taste, Mrs. Millard had given me permission to use the library, and from that time I revelled in a world of books.

One cold, dull day some months later. I

was curled up in one of the comfortable library chairs, and had been for some time oblivious of everything but the fascinating story of Ulysses and his wanderings. When at length I became dimly conscious again it was to find that some one was addressing me. I looked up as the fact penetrated my absorption. Tessy stood in the doorway, and then I remembered that the rain had prevented her taking her usual walk.

'What is it, dear?' I asked, encouragingly, for she hesitated, and I was anxious to get back to my book.

'I hate to interrupt you,' she began, nervously, 'but can you—I mean, will you—cut out a shirt?' and she brought forward a bundle of flannel which she had been concealing behind her back. I laughed. It seemed so ludicrous to be aroused from Homer to anything so prosaic as a flannel shirt.

'What do you want it for?' I asked.

The child flushed rosy red. 'It is for little Tom Hewitt,' she stammered. 'I go to see his sister Janie every Thursday, and he is in such dreadful rags. Nurse promised to cut it out for me, but she has gone to see her mother to-day, and I do want to have it finished for Thursday.'

Though my will was good to help her she might as well have asked me to build her a man-o'-war, but the child looked so terribly disappointed when I explained my inability to assist her that, laying down my book with an inward sigh, I said, 'Well, we will go to the schoolroom and see what can be done.'

Her gratitude was quite out of proportion to my power of aiding her, but already I felt repaid for my small self-denial. Putting on a confidence I certainly did not feel, I spread out the material, filling up the remaining space upon the table with a litter of pins and scissors in what I believed to be the most approved fashion. I had a vague notion of cutting out the garment on the principle of the Roman toga, but Theresa expostulated firmly.

'Have you a pattern of any sort?' I asked at last, putting down the scissors in despair.

'No,' she said, jumping down from the back of a chair from which she had been critically regarding my operations; 'but I know it goes something like this,' tracing an imaginary line on the flannel.

'You try; I am sure you know far more about it than I do,' I said humbly, resigning the scissors into her hand.

'Well, I'll risk it then,' she said, making a bold slash. 'Tommy will not be particular about the cut as long as it is warm.'

I had grown rather interested in the garment now that I had once torn myself from my beloved books, and I stayed to watch her.

'You are doing it beautifully, Tessy!' I said. 'What a clever little girl you are!' She flushed with pleasure.

'I do believe, Miss Fitzgerald. I could learn all these sort of things quite easily, but I cannot get along with books. I cannot see the use of them myself.'

'Not see the use of books,' I gasped, and burst into a high-flown panegyric on what was so dear to me but doubtless unintelligible to Tessy.

'Yes, learning no doubt is a great thing,' she said reflectively, trimming the edges of Tommy's shirt, 'but to me it seems very selfish.'

'Selfish?' I cried, in horrified accents. The adjective was so totally unexpected.

'Yes, selfish,' she repeated, calmly; 'look at those books there, Miss Fitzgerald,' waving her hand towards a row of battered schoolbooks, 'and they are just a few com-