

"Oh! yes, Mrs. Laurie, I had a letter yesterday; don't you remember I told you that Dorothy sent her love to you?"

"Ah, to be sure, I had forgotten. You miss your sister, I have no doubt; and no wonder, for she is a sweet girl, and you are very like her. I could almost imagine the past nine years to be a dream, and that you were Dorothy sitting there. You were a wee baby when Dorothy was at Bonny Dale," continued the old lady, laying down her knitting and swaying back and forth in her usual way; and Judith's heart beat fast at the allusion to Dorothy's visit to Bonny Dale; she hoped Mrs. Laurie's reminiscences would reveal something concerning her sister's acquaintance with Standfield that would either confirm her doubts or disperse them altogether. Anything would be better than this agonizing uncertainty.

(To be Continued.)

## Sybil's Economy.

**D**RIFTING—drifting away into the quiet land of dreams—half uncertain whether he was awake or asleep, with a pleasant semi-consciousness, the while, of the clear fire glimmering on the wall, and the grey kitten purring a drowsy monody on the hearth-rug, Grant Raymond had a very narrow escape from a sound nap, when his wife came in, with fluttering dress, and light, elastic footfall.

"Grant!"

"Well, Sybil!" He was wide awake in a moment, and ready to take an oath that he hadn't the least idea of going to sleep.

"What is it, little busybody?" he asked, lazily stretching out his hand to play with the blue ribbon at her watch as she came toward him.

"Can you spare me five dollars to-night?"

"Of course I can—what is it for?" he said leisurely opening his purse and tossing a bit of crumpled paper to his wife.

"The grocer's bill—he will be here early to-morrow morning—thank you—dear!"

Mrs. Raymond sat down on a little velvet cricket, close to the sofa, when she had deposited the money in her brown leather purse, so that the firelight played gently on her delicate, oval face with its shadowy masses of dark hair, and large, violet-grey eyes.

"Well, Pussy, what are you thinking about?" questioned her husband, after a few moments of unbroken silence. Mrs. Raymond looked up smilingly.

"To tell you the truth, Grant, I was wishing that instead of coming to you for everything I want I had a regular allowance of my own!"

"A regular allowance of your own?" Really that is very complimentary to my generosity!"

"I knew you would laugh at me, Grant—yet I do wish it very much indeed."

"And pray why? Don't I give you everything you ask for?"

"I know you do, my love; yet I should somehow feel richer, more independent, if I had my own resources—if you would allow me just such an amount every month."

"How much would satisfy you, my little miser?"

"Well, I think I could get along with fifty dollars a month."

"Do you happen to know that I have handed over to you just one-third more than the sum you specify during the past four weeks? It strikes me you would not be much of a gainer; peculiarly speaking, by this new system of finances."

"But I believe I should, Grant, for it should teach me to calculate and economize, and to—"

"And, in short, you want to try the experiment."

"That's just it," said Sybil Raymond, coaxingly.

"My dear, this is all nonsense. Believe me, I understand the care of money better than you."

"Then you are not going to indulge me?"

There was such a plaintive accent in Mrs. Raymond's voice that her husband checked himself in the midst of a tremendous yawn, to look full into the grieved little face.

"My child," he said laughingly, "I have never yet refused you anything you chose to ask; and it isn't likely I shall begin to assert my independence at this late hour. Take your fifty dollars a month—take what you please; but I'm a considerably mistaken man if you don't come to me teasing for 'just a little more money' before the four weeks have expired."

"Now, you shall see!" said the delighted little wife. "What shall I render in payment of your docility, Mr. Prophet?"

"A kiss—and now be off about your business, and let me finish my nap!"

How often, during the next twelve months, Grant Raymond rallied his wife within an inch of the "crying degree" about her financial schemes—how often he alluded, mischievously, to the probably exhausted state of her purse, and his entire willingness to hand over any amount of money the moment she would confess herself to be wrong, and him to be right, until she was nearly tempted to abandon her cause in despair. But she persevered so bravely that after a while Grant declared that he believed his little wife could get along with a smaller sum than he had previously had any idea of!

"But I know you are denying yourself scores of feminine fol-de-rols—say the word, and we'll call it seventy-five dollars a month instead of fifty!"

"No, indeed," quoth Sybil, decisively. "Didn't I tell you that fifty should be enough. And so it is!"

Nearly five years had passed away. It was a stormy night in March, the clouds flying before a strong gale, and the air chill and raw with occasional gusts of snow. Mrs. Raymond sat in her cheerful parlor, stitching away at a little muslin apron for her sleeping baby, and singing some half-forgotten melody to herself as she worked.

"I wonder what makes Grant so late," she murmured, as a stronger blast than usual shook the windows and roared down the chimney. "I hope it isn't any difficulty in his business matters. He has looked very grave lately."

The words had scarcely passed through her mind, when the door opened, and Mr. Raymond entered. He did not speak to his wife, as usual.

"Grant! are you ill, dearest? What is the matter?"

He made no reply. She arose and came to his side, reiterating her inquiries.

"Ask me no questions, Sybil," he said, at length, in a tone so strangely altered that she started at its sound. "You will learn evil tidings soon enough."

"Tell me, my husband—are not my joys yours—your sorrows mine? Surely, we have not ceased to be one?"