

baby and another to do the house work, a boy to do the chores, and if we keep more than one cow, a cheese factory to prevent the milk from spoiling. It is safe to say that ten farmers' wives to-day cannot do as much work as would one fifty years ago. As a farming people we are played out. If the New Hampshire farmer, who wants a wife to help him get a living, instead of one to hang ribbons on and pour patent medicines into, he would just go down to your city and find a good, strong, vigorous, industrious and frugal Irish or German girl, he would find his farm would pay better than it does now, and his children would be likely to be worth ten times as much as farmers as will be any of the next generation of pure-bred Yankees."

The Family Circle.

"Home, Sweet Home."

Nettie's Fortune.

"Finished at last," said Nettie Rives, as she threw open the door of her mother's room and stood on the threshold for inspection. "How does it look?" and she shook out the folds of the dress she had been trimming and making over.

"Very well indeed," said Mrs. Rives. "I am sure no one would think it had done service before."

Nettie gave a little sigh. "Oh dear, it must be very nice to be rich, to be saved all this bother."

"Yes, but with the bother you would have to resign the pleasure there is in making an old thing look as good as new."

"It is a pleasure," said Nettie, looking down on her work with pardonable pride; "but I would willingly give it up to be set free from thinking so much of rags. They talk of riches being a temptation and a snare, but I am sure I should not be half so worldly minded if we were not so poor."

Mrs. Rives smiled. "I dare say all poor people think the same; we are all apt to fancy it would be easier to be good in any other position than our own."

"But, indeed, if I could get a new dress whenever I pleased," Nettie persisted, "I should not think of it night and day, as I do now, when I have to turn and twist everything to make a decent appearance. If I could go and buy a hat I would not be tempted to study my neighbors' in church to see how to trim my own."

How much longer she might have gone on it would be difficult to say, but just then her father came out of his study and interrupted her.

"Are you going out, Nettie? I wish you would call at the post-office. I am very busy, and this is the day for Tom's letter."

Nettie was glad of an errand; it was a beautiful afternoon in the early spring; and she was soon on her way, little dreaming of the surprise that was in store for her.

The Rev. Charles Rives was a clergyman in a small country town, doing his work faithfully, and trying to live upon a salary of one thousand dollars. Nettie was his only daughter; her mother had died in giving her birth, but Mr. Rives had married again, and his second wife had borne him three sons, the eldest of whom was now studying medicine in Philadelphia. To provide food and clothing for a family of six persons and to live in the style expected of him with such very limited and to live in the style expected of him with such very limited and to live in the style expected of him with such very limited means at command, was a problem in itself; but when to all this was added the necessity to starve neither the minds nor the tastes of any one of the six, (a necessity which Mr. Rives and his wife felt more and more strongly as their children grew up around them), the solution of the problem became a task from which any one might shrink. Year by year it had been accomplished, it is true, but not without the exercise of the most rigid economy, and although Nettie was by no means discontented, there were times when she longed for a different life, and felt it hard to be obliged to count every cent so carefully.

Arrived at the post-office, two letters were handed to her, one the expected missive from her brother, the other a large yellow envelope addressed in a bold business hand, "Miss Annette C. Rives."

Who could have sent it? The handwriting was strange, and the post-mark, "New York," added to the mystery, as she had no correspondent there. Curiosity conquered, and stepping back within the door she broke the seal.

"Madam: By the will of my late client, Joseph Thompson, Esq., of this city, you have fallen heir to the sum of fifty thousand dollars."

What did it mean? Had she taken leave of her senses? Could the letter be for her? Yes, there was the address, repeated again. But who was Joseph Thompson, and how was she his heir?

Crushing the paper back into the envelope she sped home, and, regardless of the rule not to disturb her father when he was writing, she burst in upon him, exclaiming:

"Papa, papa! do read this and tell me if I am in my sober senses." The good minister looked up from his sermon with a serious smile: "I must say it is an open question, Nettie." But when he had glanced at the letter his excitement almost equalled her own. Fifty thousand dollars! Could it be possible?

She watched him eagerly as he read.

"Is it true? Do tell me, for I feel as if the world were turned upside down."

He drew her closer to his side, and said, gravely, "read this, my child," and Nettie read on another page the copy of the will.

"I give and bequeath to Annette Caroline Rives, (daughter of Reverend Charles Rives and Annette his wife,) in grateful and affectionate remembrance of her mother, the sum of fifty thousand dollars."

Still she did not understand.

"Who was he, papa? I am sure I never heard of him."

"No. Long years ago he knew and loved your mother—loved her so well that he would have made her his wife. He was one of the few men whom such a disappointment en-

nobles. I had lost sight of him for many years, but you see he had never forgotten."

"Nettie's bright eyes filled with tears; but she was young and pensive regrets for the man she had never seen would have to bide their time. The glad excitement of the present soon resumed its sway."

"Where is Mamma?" she exclaimed, starting up; "I must go and tell her. Oh! it does seem too good to be true."

Mr. Rives went with her, and it need hardly be said his half-written sermon was left unfinished. The Saturday evening was given up to very happy castle-building, for Nettie was full of plans for spending her money for the benefit of the whole family.

"We can have a sewing-machine now, mamma, and that bookcase for the study I have been coveting so long. And oh,"—her eyes fairly dancing—"Tom can go to Paris to finish his studies."

"Softly, softly, my child," said her father; "how long will your money last at this rate?"

"Fifty thousand dollars? It sounds as if it would last for ever."

"But, Nettie, the fifty thousand you must not touch. You must content yourself with spending the interest. If you once begin upon the principal it will all be gone in no time."

"And how much will the interest be?"

"That depends upon the manner in which it is invested. Probably between three and four thousand dollars."

"Well, whatever else we do, Tom must go to Europe. You know it has been his one great wish and it is to do him good all his life long. Mamma, why don't you speak? I am sure you agree with me."

"It is only too good of you to think of it, dear; but I am not sure it would be just right. It would make a great hole in your year's income, and Tom is not your own brother."

"Is he not?" asked Nettie, in fierce indignation; "You have never asked me to remember that before; he is my brother in heart and soul, and you must not deny me this."

"Nothing could please me so well, darling," said Mr. Rives, fondly, "the only thing is that we must not let our little heiress sacrifice herself entirely."

"No fear of that; there will still be enough left for kid gloves and buttoned boots; and if you are going to begin to preach selfishness to your own child—" Nettie dropped her hands in her lap in mock despair.

"I will try not to do that," said Mr. Rives, and so the matter was settled. Monday's mail took a letter to Tom, telling him the glorious news, and in a few days there came a very manly, grateful answer.

"A thousand thanks to dear Nettie for giving me such an opportunity. I will not oppress her with protestations of gratitude, but in the years to come I hope I may prove to her how deeply I feel it."

And then came a sentence that made Nettie's cheeks glow as she read it:

"I rushed over to John's office to tell him, and he was as much delighted as I am. He says it will be of inestimable benefit to me; that he will never cease to regret that he was unable to visit the medical schools of the old world before he began to practice. Dear old fellow! it is a shame that he had not such a good fairy of a sister, for he always did make more of his opportunities than any one I know."

John Henderson, so spoken of, was Tom's bosom friend. Though several years his senior, there had grown up between them at school one of those attachments as rare as it is beautiful; the elder boy influencing the younger for all that is good and true, and receiving in return an almost romantic devotion. Whatever his friend did seemed to Tom the thing best worthy to be done, and from the hour in which John Henderson declared his intention of becoming a physician, Tom's choice of a profession was made. John, however, had graduated with honor, and had begun to practice as his uncle's assistant in Philadelphia before Tom was ready to enter the medical school; but he proved an invaluable friend to the young student, inspiring him with much of his own enthusiasm, and assisting him in various ways.

John's parents were near neighbors of Mr. Rives, and twice a year he paid them a visit. At such times he was always a frequent guest at the parsonage, and those were bright days for Nettie—the days whose expectation and whose memory gladdened all the rest of the year.

There had been no regular love-making between them, no declaration, and no engagement, but in her inmost heart Nettie felt that John Henderson cared for no one as he cared for her. She trusted him perfectly, was happy in the present, and content to wait.

Ah! if she could only have done as much for him! That was her thought as she read Tom's letter.

Time passed on, and with the beginning of June Nettie came into possession of the first installment of her year's income, which was found to amount to four thousand dollars. Very wisely it had been decided to leave the principal where Mr. Thompson had invested it, and to employ his lawyer to look after it.

"For what do we know about money matters?" Nettie had said. "We who never had more than we could carry in our pocket-books before!" Mr. Rives had put a decided negative upon her proposal that her money should go into the common purse. No, indeed, he had answered, "you shall be our Lady Bountiful, if you like; no one shall deny you that pleasure; but I will not consent to anything which might tempt us to feel ourselves defrauded when the day shall come that may give you other claims and other interests."

Certainly the acquisition of wealth never brought to anyone more innocent happiness. It was so pleasant to order magazines and reviews for her father, to lay on his table some long desired book to give the younger boys new fishing lines, bats and balls, to send for a carriage and take the whole family for a drive; in a word to indulge in all the little harmless gratifications which poverty had so long repressed.

To Nettie her fortune seemed an unmitigated blessing; she was yet to find the thorns in her wreath of roses.

At length in the early summer came a telegram from Tom to tell his proud and happy father that he stood first in the graduating class, and soon followed himself to be petted and made much of by Mrs. Rives and Nettie. He was to leave for Paris in September, and one day in the midst of the busy preparations for his year's absence, John Henderson suddenly made his appearance.

"I did not promise it," he said "for I was not certain that I could get away, but I always meant to run up and say goodbye to Tom if possible."

"But what was the matter with him?" Nettie asked herself at the close of the day when he had been in and out of the house as usual; the day that once would have been full of sunshine, now left a vague feeling of dissatisfaction she could not have put into words. He was kind and cordial, full of interest in Tom's plans, unchanged to every one except herself. To her he was not what he had been before. There was nothing she could find fault with, either in tone or manner, and yet she felt that something had come between them—a veil, a barrier, she knew not what; and her heart ached with a sickening sense of loss and want.

A few days of bewildered pain and doubt, and then the revelation came to her. It happened in this way. The afternoon was oppressively hot, and she had gone to her own room to lie down for an hour. The window was open but the blinds were closed and after a little she was roused from a light nap by the sound of voices in the garden below. The two young men were sitting there in the shade.

"He married a rich wife," said John, "that was the beginning of his prosperity."

"Lucky fellow," replied Tom.

"Do you think so?" asked his companion gravely. "To me there is something immeasurably contemptible in a man marrying a woman for her money."

"Yes; but why be so uncharitable as to imagine that money was the attraction?"

"Because to most men it is such a powerful one that there is always the suspicion of its being the chief. At any rate I should be sorry to lay myself open to the imputation, or to bring its shadow over the woman I loved."

"You don't mean to say that if you loved a woman you would not marry her simply because she were rich and you were poor?"

"I do."

"Well, I never was in love," said Tom, "so perhaps I don't know, but it does seem to me if I loved a woman well enough to want her for my wife, I should not care whether she was a queen on her throne or a beggar in the street, I would not let riches or poverty or anything else on earth come between us."

Brave, true words they seemed to Nettie; but alas! they had not come from John. She buried her face in the pillow; she was too miserable for tears. This, then was to be the result of the fortune she had welcomed as so great a blessing. It was to shut out from her the far greater good of the love that might have been hers. From her inmost heart she wished that she had never heard of Mr. Thompson or his legacy, that she could go back to the days of her poverty, when she had been truly happy as she could never hope to be again. The sense of her own powerlessness came over her very bitterly. She knew that Tom was right, that John Henderson was wrong; and if she were a man— But alas! she was only a woman; she could not speak; there was nothing for her but silent suffering, and the future seemed to her just then a dreary, hopeless blank. Mechanically she took up a book that lay beside her. The first words that met her eyes were these:

*"She asked for patience, and a deeper love
For those with whom her lot was henceforth cast,
And that in acts of mercy she might lose
The sense of her own sorrow."*

Then tears came to her relief. Yes, this was left to her if nothing more. If her wealth had proved no blessing to herself, at least she might make it a blessing for others; and she took heart, trying to be thankful that there was much left to live for. But at twenty-two it is not easy to reconcile oneself to the prospect of a life devoid of any personal happiness, and the struggle for resignation was sharp and cruel. Very bravely it was carried on, and so successfully that none of those nearest and dearest to her suspected her trouble; but in after years Nettie often looked back to that week with a shudder, as one remembers some horrible nightmare. Her escape from it, if due to her own brave truthfulness, was certainly unpremeditated, and, as she believed, providential.

Sitting in the parlor hemming the last of Tom's handkerchiefs, she was listening rather than joining in the conversation between him and his friend.

"When you go back to Philadelphia, John—" said Tom.

"I am not going back," John answered, interrupting him abruptly.

"Not going back?"

"No; I have made up my mind to go out west and set up for myself. I am tired of being merely Dr. Stone's assistant, admitted upon sufferance to his patients when he is unable to go himself."

Nettie dropped her work and looked at the speaker in blank amazement; the petulant words and tone were so unlike John Henderson.

"What in the world has come over you to put such a notion into your head?" asked Tom in his usual straightforward manner.

"I don't know; perhaps it is your going away that has unsettled me, old fellow," he said, turning to Tom and laying his hand on his arm. "At any rate, a restless spirit has taken possession of me. 'Men were made to roam,' and I am no exception to the rule."

What sudden inspiration was given to Tom—that he started up and walked out of the room, shutting the door behind him? In the silence that fell upon the two whom he had left, Nettie almost heard her own heart beat. It flashed upon her in a moment that it was for her sake John was going away, and she knew her hour had come.

She crossed the room and stood beside him. "John," she said, "if you are to make this change, will you not go with Tom first? You can if you will, and I should be so glad—"

The hot blood crimsoned his face. "Nettie, how good you are. I will not pretend that I do not understand you. But it is impossible. I could not lay myself under such a burden of obligation."

She looked bravely into his eyes, and her voice did not falter. "Will you go with me, John?"

Of the two he was the most embarrassed. He fairly quivered as he answered her, in a voice choked with emotion:

"Do not—do not tempt me beyond what I am able to bear."

For one instant she hesitated, but she had gone too far to draw back now.

"Be honest with me," she said, entreatingly: "let there be truth between us, if nothing more." I have dared to say this to you because I believed you loved me. If I am wrong—"