"They are sweet children. I am how much easier it was to be nice with them to morrow, for they are coming again then."

Aunt Lois looked up in a little sur-

prise.

"To-morrow? That is quick work. Excuse me, dear; I don't want to be captious or interfering, but do you think it is quite prudent to indulge your fancy for strangers quite so freely? After all, we know nothing about these children."

"I know a good deal, Aunt Lois," I interrupted eagerly; "and, indeed, you need not be afraid. You will not be. I am sure, when you see them. I paused a moment, and then, thinking I might just as well make the plunge and have it over, I added, half coaxingly, half defiantly, "And, Aunt Lois, I want something more than that. I want to have them to stay here with me till their brother comes home from India next month, I can't tell you what a pleasure it would be to me, and I have so few pleasures now, and I am often so very lonely. You have so often said you wished I could cheer up. Well, I think I should if you would let me have Maudio and Gny to take care of.

I think I fairly took Aunt Lois' breath away for the first moment. She had lived in one groove for a great many years, and though she had not grown fossilized as some people do who live that sort of life, she did not much like sudden changes in the household, and I suppose there had never been any children in this house for quite a number of years. Then, of course, elderly people like to know something about the visitors they ask to share their hospitality, and they do not go by instinct and take violent likes or dislikes as we younger folks do. It must have seemed an extraordinary innovation to Aunt Lois, and a bit of great folly too. I only wonder now that she took my proposal as quietly as she did.

She looked at me for some few seconds without speaking, and then she said in doubtful tones-

" I-I should like to know a little more about these young folks first. I want to make your life as happy as possible; but you know, my dear-or perhaps you do not know -that very serious troubles and difficulties often arise through acts that are very kindly meant at the outset. I really hardly know what to make of it. You have taken me very much dy surprise."
"I suppose I have, Aunt Lois," I

answered, trying not to feel vexed that I did not carry my point at once, trying to look at the matter from her standpoint, and not to expect her to be enthusiastic all in a moment. "But I am sure, if you only knew them, you would think them as sweet as I

"I do not doubt it, dear," was the kind reply. "The children them-selves may be everything that is charming. But one wants to know a little about their people and antecedents. You are too young, perhaps, to know exactly how I feel about it; but-

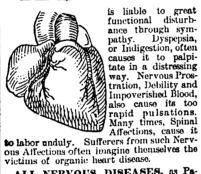
I think I know, Aunt Lois; and I dare say you are quite right, and wiser than I." It was wonderful

sure you would like them. How-ever, you will be able to make friends first effort had been made. "But suppose you do this, aunty, if you do not mind the trouble. Go and see Mr. Marshall" (Mr. Marshall was the rector of St. Benedict's, and a great favorite with Aunt Lois), "and ask him what he thinks. He went to see Mrs. Douglas constantly when she was ill, and he takes an interest in the children still. He would know more about them than anybody else. And if you were to ask him, and then go to Mrs. Marks and see her and them too, I don't think you would feel afraid any more. I am not at all afraid of the result of any inquiries."

We both smiled then, and Aunt Lois said that was a capital plan, and she would go first thing the next morning, before Mr. Marshall should have started on his parish rounds. I was completely satisfied, and was able to see now that Aunt Lois did care about my happiness and welfare; for she never made one single personal objection to my plan, and yet very many elderly maiden ladies would have set themselves against it might and main, just from the dislike to any innovation on old established ways.

(To be Continued.)

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