THE LITTLE OLD SECRETARY

(Continued.)

[illegible] the unexpected revelation caused her to be taking in a new thought. The [illegible] had often entertained her, they had brought with them many [illegible] but this was the first time she understood that in many minds it created contempt, and the realization of this fact aroused in her heart a feeling of indignation [illegible] for her mother. That "golden wing" seemed powerless to protect her, and by the time Rose had exhausted all the passionate arguments she could think of to persuade her mother to allow her to [illegible] young mistress to alter her decoration, Kathleen had recovered her usual quiet sweetness, and was even able to smile as she said:

"Never mind, Rose, it is not worth your while about the matter after all, you know the silver brocade is a very handsome dress, though not fashionable, nor yet quite suitable to my age. If I get invited, I will come in to my room, I will [illegible] and see what I can do to improve it."

The young Rose still gloomy looked Kathleen over to make her angry by reminding her how [illegible] because that man was a Lord[illegible], and [illegible] the lady would not take a new laughed ways of fashion.

"It was of no use," Rose could not, she mother would not listen to reason. At length Kathleen, who knew the girl's impulsive, affectionate nature well, determined to save her alone, thinking she would get over her anger better if left to herself. So she quitted the room, saying gently as she passed out:

"Well, dear Rose, I am going upstairs now, and I will put the silver brocade off upon your bed. I am sure, for the love you bear our family, you will do your best to help me, as you can help better than any one."

Kathleen ran up quickly to her own apartment, and taking out the dress and the lace, carried them at once into Rose's chamber. The plain lavender silk looked more stiff and quaint than ever after the flounces and furbelows to which of late her eyes had become accustomed, and in spite of her bravery poor Kathleen could not help a slight sigh escaping her as she saw it down. She would not, however, suffer the discontented feeling to dwell in her mind, but throw it off with a little angry exclamation to herself:

"How can I be so foolish. I am worse than Rose. She is disappointed out of her affection for me, my vocation is simple vanity."

She skipped away cheerfully, and crossing the passage found her way to Dora's nursery. She was always a welcome visitor there. It had been owing to her daily pleasures since her arrival at Stonecastle, in fact, how cheerily Nurse instructed the poor little feet and frock, girl, Dora's sweet first sight had opened into a strong friendship, and Kathleen was fine now to communicate quite easily with the interesting child. Rose too had made herself very acceptable in the nursery by her willing help, and Nurse's sympathies were strongly enlisted for Kathleen and her maid, as those of the servants hall seemed to be against them.

Kathleen spent a happy half hour watching Dora's beaming eyes drinking in a beautiful lesson in the subject of Creation. A mere gentle child from the village always came to assist at these lessons.

First God up in heaven—always named with a hand raised upward and a profound inclination—all alone—but quite happy—wanting nothing. Then matter formed into a body. Dora's little companion lay stiff upon the ground, while Nurse represented the limbs being fashioned and the body prepared. Then God breathing into the body the breath of life—and the action was performed with so much reverence that Kathleen seemed herself to be taking in a new thought. The child, earthborn from the ground, bright and intelligent, then opened its eyes with inexpressible delight. But, among her little hand, she met the word, "How?" "No one could say—no mortal think. God is very—very strong—God can do everything."

Just as the lesson closed, Kathleen heard Rose rush along the passage, swing the door of her room to, with a bang, and lock it.

"She has not got over her vexation yet," thought Kathleen to herself. "Poor dear! I must try to make her see how wrong it is to worry herself up into such fits of excitement."

Kathleen made several attempts during the day to get at Rose, but all in vain. She remained resolutely locked up, and would not even answer when spoken to. Kathleen began to think she would have to wear her plain muslin frock, and to get invited without Rose's assistance at all.

It was just about twenty minutes before dinner. Rose appeared, all traces of irritation had left her face, and she looked more than usually demure, as she asked:

"Would Miss Kathleen come up directly to get dressed?"

Kathleen, delighted to see her maid's restored serenity, rose immediately in answer to her summons.

The first thing which met her eyes as she entered the room was the most agreeable dress she thought she had ever seen. Folds of the softest white India muslin, with tiny borders of fine embroidery in silver and green, made a flounce skirt over the brocade. Long pinaping sleeves, which were the fashion of the day, depended from the puff, short sleeves of the antique bodice. There was something so child-like and yet so graceful in the rose thus prepared for her first dinner party, that Kathleen turned to Rose in the most genuine delight, exclaiming:

"Oh! my dear Rose, I never saw anything half so beautiful in my whole life. But how have you managed?"

Rose was in ecstasy.

"You must not ask me any questions please, because I promised not to tell. It was made a present to me by a kind friend, to do as I liked with, on the one condition of never telling who gave it. Isn't it lovely, Miss Kathleen?"

Kathleen felt a twinge of misgiving at Rose's promise not to tell. But there was not a cloud on the girl's radiant face. She had not been outside the house. Kathleen was sure of that; she felt equally sure that she could not have obtained it within the walls. Had her cousin possessed anything so unlike, they would certainly have shown it to her. Kathleen concluded, therefore, that Rose had brought it with her from Ireland. It had probably been a present to her from a soldier uncle, who had lately returned to Ireland after a ten years sojourn in India. And now the faithful girl had devoted it to her young mistress, simply out of pure affection. Kathleen threw her arms round Rose's neck, and thanked her with cordial gratitude.

The dress suited Kathleen exactly, and she could not but feel the natural satisfaction of being attired like those around her, while a bright flush of pleasure came over her as the mirror gave back the childlike face and figure looking so unusually pretty.

"Rose," she exclaimed, "if my father could but see me! he would be delighted to see his Kathleen looking so nice."

"You shall be dressed for his honor to see, the first evening after we get home," said Rose, her fingers busily occupied in wreathing the thick coil of Kathleen's auburn hair like a coronet round the small, shapely head.

Then came the last touch, the putting on a silver chain, which had made part of the brocade relief, and Rose's triumph was complete. And with no ornament, but her pearl brooch, Kathleen went down to join the [illegible] group of ladies in the drawing-room.

She looked quite the child amongst them, but it might have been the young queen of a royal house.

She saw her uncle start and rub his spectacles, and as she drew near heard him exclaim: "I could have sworn it was my own sister Maggie." Then drawing her down to his arm chair to have a good look at her, he said: "You must wear that dress and your hair like that every evening. I can't like any other half so well."

Kathleen coloured, and she laughed heartily as she whispered into her uncle's ear:

"There is no fear of my wearing any other more dear to all at all, for I have nothing else to wear."

And thoroughly happy, pleased with everything and everybody, Kathleen went in to her first dinner party. Report says that, in spite of shortcomings footmen, Rose got an opportunity to peep through the door to enjoy the triumph of her beloved young lady's faultless toilette, and that she was heard to ejaculate: "She looks like a princess!"

Poor Rose! the little dreamed how dearly she would pay for the triumph of that evening!

CHAPTER V.

The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength and skill,
A perfect woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort and command;
And yet a spirit still and bright
With something of an angel light.

When the gentlemen came up from dinner, Dora's introduction took place. She had a small slate for communication with those who could not talk with their fingers. Upon this she had written in her own handwriting, which was exceedingly free and well-formed for one so young: "I am very glad to see you at Stonecastle, and those who come with you."

She made her little bow very gracefully, and Lord Melton, who had been prepared by Eleanor, and who was aware, therefore, of Mr. Fitzgerald's dislike to bear her pitied, took her up on his knee, and had quite a long conversation with her on the slate.

Lord Melton's two companions were a young Frenchman, Monsieur Olivier, who seemed devoted to his personal services, and Mr. Everard, his private secretary.

Dora had been told that Mr. Olivier was a Frenchman, and she scanned him with the greatest curiosity, and with a slight touch of compassion in the expression of her eyes, as though she thought that to be a stranger in a strange country was rather a case for pity. She watched him carefully as he wrote a few complimentary words upon her slate, quietly rubbing out a mistake he had made in spelling, and putting it right, without the least indication of contempt.

Then Mr. Everard's turn came, and Kathleen saw that one of Dora's strong antipathies was rising. She hardly deigned to shake hands with him, took his measure with a glance of undisguised scorn, and looking at his fingers which unlikely were ink-marked, she turned her back upon him and walked across the room to Kathleen with the most disdainful curl of her little lip, spelling quietly on her fingers, "Little R. with the inky fingers was dirty, and she did not like him."

Kathleen resolved she would try her utmost to make Dora understand that her violent dislikes were wrong, and she would not therefore laugh or give any other sign of

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