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The roses in the our garden were faded and the leaves of autumn were piled upon the ground, ere he came to his home again, and I had an opportunity of presenting him with the package which many months before had been committed to my care. His face was very pale, and his voice trembled as he asked me—'Where is she now?'

'In Italy,' I answered, adding that 'her husband was said to be very wealthy.'

Bowing mechanically, he walked away, and a year and a half went by ere I him again. Then he came among us our minister. The old, white-haired pastor, who for so long had told us of the Good Shepherd and the better land, was sleeping at last in the quiet graveyard, and the people had chosen young Walter Beaumont to fill his place. He was a splendid-looking man—tall, erect, and finely formed, with a most winning manner, and a face which betokened intellect of the highest order. We were proud of him, all of us—proud of our clergyman, who, on the third Sabbath in June, was to be ordained in the old brick church, before whose altar he had years ago been baptized, a smiling infant.

On the Thursday afternoon preceding the ordination, a large travelling carriage, covered with dust and laden with trunks, passed slowly through our village, attracting much attention. Seated within it was a portly, gray-haired man, resting his chin upon a gold-headed cane, and looking curiously out at the people in the street, who stared as curiously at him. Directly opposite him, and languidly reclining upon the soft cushions, was a white, proud-faced lady, who evidently felt no interest in what was passing around her, for her eyes were cast down, and her thought seemed busy elsewhere. I was sitting at my chamber window, gazing out upon them, and just as they drew near the gate, the lady raised her eyes—the soft, brown eyes, which once had won the love of Walter Beaumont, and in which there was now an unmistakeable look of anguish, as if the long eyelashes, drooping so wearily upon the colourless cheek, were constantly forcing back the hidden tears. And this was Cora Douglass, come back to us again from her travels in a foreign land. She knew me in a moment, and in her face there was much of the olden look as, bending forward, she smiled a greeting, and waved toward me her white, jewelled hand, on which the diamonds flashed brightly in the sunlight.

The next morning we met, but not in the presence of the old man, her husband. Down in the leafy woods, about a quarter of a mile from Mrs. Beaumont's cottage, was a

running brook and a mossy bank, overshadowed by the sycamore and elm. This, in the days gone by, had been our favourite resort. Here had we built our play-house, washed our bits of broken china in the rippling stream—here had we watched the little fishes as they darted in and out of the deeper eddies—here had we conned our daily tasks—here had she listened to a tale of love, the memory of which seemed but a mocking dream, and here, as I faintly hoped, I found her. With a half-joyful, half-moaning cry, she threw her arms around my neck, and I could feel her tears dropping upon my face as she whispered, 'Oh, Lottie, Lottie, we have met again by the dear old brook.'

For a few moments she sobbed as if her heart would break, then suddenly drying her tears, she assumed a calm, cold, dignified manner, such as I had never seen in Cora Blanchard. Very composedly she questioned me of what I had done during her absence, telling me, too, of her travels, of the people she had seen and the places she had visited, but never a word said she of him she called her husband. From the bank where we sat, the village grave-yard was discernible, with its marble gleaming through the trees, and at last, as her eye wandered in that direction, she said, 'Have any of our villagers died? Mother's letters were never very definite.'

'Yes,' I answered, 'Our minister, Mr. Sumner, died two months ago.'

'Who takes his place?' she asked; and as if a suspicion of the truth were flashing upon her, her eyes turned toward me with an eager, startled glance.

'Walter Beaumont. He is to be ordained next Sabbath, and you are just in time,' I replied, regretting my words the next instant for never saw I so fearful a look of anguish as that which swept over her face, and was succeeded by a cold, hard, defiant expression, scarcely less painful to witness.

She would have questioned me of him I think, had not an approaching footstep caught our ear, sending a crimson flush to Cora's hitherto marble cheek, and producing on me a most unpleasant sensation, for I knew that the gray-haired man now within a few paces of us, was he who called that young creature his wife. Golden was the chain by which he had bound her, and every link was set with diamonds and costly stones, but it had rusted and eaten to her very heart's core, for the most precious gem of all was missing from that chain—love for her husband, who, fortunately for his own peace of mind, was too conceited to dream how little she cared for him. He was not handsome, and still many would have called