

so entertaining I fear as Molly. Still we *have* resources, and we would try to make you happy."

Ruth and I exchanged glances indicative of pleasure, and without any reserve accepted the invitation.

This matter settled, Ruth and Madam began to talk again, and Ruth with much fervor was giving a description of our happy life out West. I drifted out of the conversation, first by wondering how it was everyone speaks of Mrs. Montford as Madam, and then why the name seemed so exactly to suit her. She was a handsome woman, though small and slight, and bore herself with great dignity. All the while that she was talking she busily netted, and her face, bearing, and industrious hands were indicative of energy, and a total absence of the dejected, dismal or vacant dreaminess which one would suppose the occupant of the Grange must bear. I believe I felt sorry for its absence. By my side was a curious old cabinet filled with curiosities. How quickly and gladly I absorbed myself in examining it!

It seemed natural enough that with the monotone of the voices talking, there soon mixed a gentle, dreamy tone, deeper in its monotone, but still too quiet to disturb my reflections—Ruth's voice telling of glorious sunsets, of trees, and ferns and flowers. Visions of Paradise, the monotone replied. A long time passed thus, and then a merry laugh from Ruth disturbed me.

"It is just like Claudine," she said, giving me a little shake, which, gentle though it was, brought unpleasant consequences upon me. My hair, which had been much disturbed by our wild walk, gave way to its inclination, which is always to come down, and "act ugly" at untimely moments. What becomes of the hairpins I do not know; but they bend up, I suppose, with the weight of the hair and thus become useless.

"O Ruth!" I cried in disgust, as it

fell round me, waving and curling in hopeless confusion. At this moment, to make matters worse, lights were brought into the room, and showed me Madam, Ruth, and—the Squire, her son!

"Miss Claudine, this is my son Martin," said Madam, in her gentle voice. The Squire bowed very stiffly, and turned away and left the room.

Madam laid her hand upon my head. "What beautiful hair!" she said under her breath. "Is it all your own?"

"Oh, yes!" said Ruth, giving it a hearty pull. "It is down to her knees when she stands up. She looks just like our mother did when her hair is down like this."

I hurried away then, through the hall and up the dark staircase to our room, hoping to find it again, but not feeling very sure about that matter. It seemed to me as I went that some one stood in an alcove of the stairs—I felt rather than saw—and a sudden terror possessed me. I fell down helpless; all the silly stories Ruth had retailed to me from Molly came into my head, and I nearly died of terror.

"Have you hurt yourself?" said a gentle voice. I lifted up my head then, and my terror suddenly subsided. The Squire sat down on the step beside me.

"This dark place has frightened you," he said, very gently. "You see that we have no gas, and the servants have been with us so many years that they are rather slow in fulfilling their duties. If you are not afraid to wait alone, I will send some one to guide you to your room."

"Ruth is never afraid," I said, as he rose to go.

"Which means that you do not like to be left alone," he said, gently, and just then a servant maid appeared, and Mr. Montford, with a slight bow to me, went down and gave her a few rapid directions. She came up to me then, and told me she would light me to my