

with gratitude. Sneck was more than surprised. He had expected to find in Porter's daughter a young girl of perhaps twelve years, and there was, instead, quite a full grown young woman of eighteen at least, with a mature face and a figure almost completely developed. She walked straight up to the astonished guardian, and took both his hands.

"So you are my father's friend," she said with a naive look, "I have heard all about it. Oh how can we repay you." (She evidently included her mother). "I am the only one who can do so now. Poor father, it's a wonder he never came to see me. I shouldn't have scolded him because it really wasn't his fault you know. It was a failing, and don't you think Mr.—Mr.—"

"Sneck—Sneck. William Sneck," interposed that person.

"Mr. Sneck, don't you think he went straight to Heaven?"

"Oh, yes, my child," said the prophet, in a very certain tone.

"Then he's all right—and much better off, you know—" and so they talked on for ever so long about everything. The paragon gave her the little brooch which he had bought the night before, and received the very best of thanks.

When they parted they were the thickest of friends; for who could help liking Marjorie Porter, and

who could help liking the new Mr. Sneck? Why nobody, living or dead, except his Satanic Majesty himself. Their admiration was mutual. William Sneck never imagined that so beautiful a young girl lived—a perfect star whose happy light would brighten his darkest hours—and Marjorie Porter never dreamed that there existed such a kind, noble, good old man as the emancipated Mr. Sneck.

And in conclusion, let us look upon what is now a commonplace picture. The last rays of gray twilight are stealing in through the western windows, and at the far end of the room, seated in an old-fashioned high-backed chair before a cheerful grate fire, is a very old man with a kind though wrinkled face. On a low stool at his feet, sits a young girl, the curves of her graceful figure and her sweet face standing out in smart relief against the bright background. She is reading aloud to her gray companion, who listens with rapt attention and in perfect happiness.

It is the emancipated Mr. Sneck and his adopted daughter in their new home. Two of the happiest people on earth, I think. Hanging above the mantelpiece, lightly touched with the glow of the fire beneath, is Gisgongi's "Nativity"—the silent spectator of its glorious work.

