

be, but very well Emily could guess that the quota to each one of the Junior class would be large. Up to this time mother had made her dresses, and so accustomed had the girls come to the sight of her patient face bending over the sewing machine as to think little of the burden it must be to her. Now Emily had made up her mind that her dress must be made by a regular dress-maker.

'I'm getting too old for home-made doings. And for such a grand affair as that is going to be.'

A day or two later she was called on by a friend.

'I came to ask if you and your mother would go with me to the funeral of Mrs. Mayne,' she said.

'We didn't know her at all,' said Emily.

'Nor I,' said her friend, 'but my mother did. She's the mother of those Mayne boys, one in the graduating class and the other in ours. They haven't been here very long, and mother thinks there may not be many at the funeral.'

Emily, with her mother assented, and soon found themselves entering the house of mourning. In the darkened room in which lay the mother of the household were three boys whose hearts seemed breaking as they bent over the coffin for the long, sad farewell. Emily stood near an open window and in a pause in the services could hear low-voiced words of some who were talking on the porch outside.

'No, they'll never know it, those boys, and of course it's better they shouldn't, now.'

'But you can't expect much in the way of thoughtfulness of boys.'

'Well, I don't know. Seems to me even boys ought to have a little consideration for their mother. It's more than I can account for, that they should have seen their mother slaving for them day in and day out. She was ambitious for them, and would have worked her very heart out, rather than that they should ever go without anything that other boys had.'

'That's about what she's done—'

'Yes. They've never noticed how she's grown thinner and paler. If there had been anybody to have picked her up and seen to it that she stopped working her life away she might have stayed with them for years yet—just in the time of their lives when they need a mother most.'

'If it had been girls 'twould have been different—'

The talk came to an end as the coffin was borne from the room. As three boys from whose home the light and comfort had gone out slowly followed it, Emily glanced at her mother who had been given a seat in another part of the room.

It might have been the sad influences of the occasion which had given an added seriousness to her face, but what she saw there fixed Emily's gaze. As her mother leaned back in the large chair there was a look of weariness on the patient face and in the folded hands which her daughter had never before noticed. With eyes sharpened by suggestions contained in what she had just heard she keenly scanned her mother's face. Surely she was looking feebler—older. Wrinkles were deepening and gray hairs multiplying on the temples.

'If it had been girls.' A hot wave arose to Emily's face as she recalled the words. Were girls really more considerate of their mothers than boys?

In the few hours following the young girl did more thinking than ever before in her life.

'There's a meeting of the committee after

study hours. We have to decide on everything, and appoint committees to order things.'

So Emily was told one day soon after the funeral. Her heart sank as she heard the words.

'Now—I must do it. But, how can I? It will be the hardest thing I ever did in my life.'

And, seated in one of the smaller class rooms with the other members of the committee of arrangements for the party to be given to the graduating class, she more and more keenly felt the hardness of what she had set herself to do. During a good deal of preliminary talk she was silent. Plans were discussed, and with the discussion the impetus towards extravagant outlay seemed to increase.

'O dear!' Emily communed with her perturbed self. 'What can I do against all the others? I might just as well let matters take their course—'

But mother's face arose before her and she braced herself to her resolution.

'I can put it that things have arisen to stand in the way of my taking part in their undertaking. Or—that—other things which I wish to do forbid my spending the money. But—nonsense. Haven't I enough resolution to speak right out the straight, honest truth, and no beating around it?'

There was a little choking in her throat as, appealed to for her opinion on some important point, she felt that her time had come.

'I ought to tell you,' she began, 'that I do not see my way clear to join with you in all this. I think it all delightful, and I should enjoy it more than I can tell. I don't want you to think I mean any criticism, but—of course it's all right for the rest of you, but it wouldn't be right for me, because I cannot afford to spend so much money.'

Her voice had begun with a falter, but grew firm as she closed. There was a little hush, during which Emily was divided between relief in having said what it was so hard to say and speculation as to how her friends might take it.

'I feel exactly as you do about it, Emily,' at length one of her friends said, winning a glance of gratitude from Emily.

'Well, I'm willing to say I do too,' said another. 'I've felt it all along, but I hadn't the bravery to say so.'

'My father says,' began another, 'that it is all wrong for the pupils of a school to get up things that may be burdensome to some of their number. He says that while some can do it as well as not, there must always be those to whom it comes hard. He says it's out of all character with the free institutions of our country to—well, I can't say it as he did, but you know what I mean.'

'I'm ready to say,' spoke up one with energy, 'that plenty of the class will be glad and thankful to give it up. They've felt just that way about it, only no one has had the courage to say it before.'

'But must it all be given up? Can't we have something on a more moderate scale?'

'I move that we invite the graduating class to meet with us in the school assembly hall. We to furnish the music ourselves. To have good but modest refreshments.'

The proposition was discussed and finally enthusiastically adopted. There were a few discontented murmurs, but it was easy to see that a load had been lifted from the majority.

'Now, Nett,' Emily carried the news to her sister, 'you're not to say one word to a single soul in the house about this.'

'Not to mother?'

'Not to mother. I am going to give her to understand that our plans have been changed, that we are going to take things more moderately than was at first thought of—just to ease her dear heart of most of the burden; but oh, Nett, Nett, I have such a wonderful scheme in my head, it's not to be whispered into the ears of silence—only to father and Aunt Margaret and any one we have to let in to help along. Now, remember—whenever mother offers me any money to pay those school entertainment bills I take it without a word.'

'But I thought—' began Janet.

'Never mind what you thought. Just listen and keep mum.'

So Emily told her plan and from that time the two carried on a gentle conspiracy against mother. When she incidentally spoke of herself needing nothing in the way of new clothing that summer, she having decided that it was best to defer her journey, it was quietly acquiesced in and made a reason for putting her present wardrobe in the best possible order, and to this the girls settled with energy as soon as the school year came to a close. And as the hot days wore on there came a time when a trunk was brought from the attic down to mother's room. As Emily bent over it, giving orders to Janet, who was opening and shutting mother's drawers and closet, mother put her hand on her shoulders and gave her a little shake.

'Sit down,' she said, half laughing, half soberly, 'sit down, Janet, and explain to me, both of you, all that has been going on just a little beyond my knowledge. I haven't seen very much, but something has been in the air.' The girls exchanged glances.

'Mother dear, what do you mean? What has been in the air?'

'Things which have puzzled me. You are keeping something from me, dears. I have quite understood, and it has hurt me just a little, I must confess. Emily is all eagerness about getting money, for bills she says, but I have always before known what bills. You have had mail matter of which I knew nothing. You spend hours and hours in your rooms doing things I don't know of.'

'O mother, mother—' Janet laughed, but the tears were in Emily's eyes. 'Nett, go and bring the lace ties and the ruffles and fixings that we have spent such hours and hours about. It is time, anyway, that they were going into the till of that trunk.'

Janet brought a pile of dainty dress accessories, made over with infinite painstaking from things belonging to the three.

'And you might as well bring that box that came this morning. That's another thing we've hidden from you, mother. And here are the letters—one or two from Aunt Margaret and several from others. One of them has your ticket, mother, for you are to begin your journey the day after tomorrow. No, you needn't protest. We have watched all the corners and we know there isn't a single thing for which you would wish any delay. We've got your black silk fixed with a new lilac front. You are to take my new skirt—handy that we are both of a size. Your new bonnet will come home to-night, and here is your suit—what a time I did have that day taking your measurement—you making such a fuss as drove me into all sorts of subterfuges to get out of telling you what I was about. Isn't it a beauty, mother dear, and just the color you like—that cool-looking dark gray.'

Mother sat down with a face so full of