

bright-haired girl could be distinguished by the light of the moon.

In a few days Mr. Middleton folded to his bosom his Sunshine, now more precious than ever, because as he said, "He'd lain awake a heap o' nights, worrin' about her. The dogs had howled, the death watches had ticked in the wall, and everything had carried on t'other side up, ever since she'd been gone. But look, Nancy," continued he to his wife, "she's fatten' up right smart. Her journey has done her a heap of good, and I'm glad I let her go."

The blacks crowded round, delighted to welcome their young mistress, who had a kind word and some little gift for each. Particularly were Aunt Katy and Judy pleased with the present of a tasty lace cap, whose value was increased from the fact that they were bought in New York city. In these simple creatures' estimation, New York and Frankfort were the largest places in the world? "I s'pose," said Aunt Katy, "that this New York is nigh three times as large as Frankfort?"

"Three times as large!" repeated Fanny, "Why yes, Katy, forty times as large."

From that time Aunt Katy looked upon Fanny as one not long for this world! "Tain't in natur," said she, "that she should stay long. Allus was peart like and forrud, and now has been ridin' in the railroad all over the airth, and hain't got lost nuther, besides a sailin' along in the steam engine over the salt water."

It was marvellous how much Fanny had seen, and when she told the wonder-stricken negroes of Niagara, their amazement knew no bounds. Our friend Bobaway did not fail to ease himself by a round of somersets, his manner of expressing surprise or pleasure. At the same time he whispered to Luce, that "He's mistaken if Miss Fanny wan't telling 'em a stretch this time," for which declaration, Luce rewarded him with a box on the ear, saying, "Is you no better manners than to 'cuse white folks of lying? Miss Fanny never'd got as well as she is, if she'd picked up a mess of lies to tell us."

Fanny's health was much improved, and for a day or two she bounded about the house and grounds as lightly as she had done in childhood. Mr. Middleton noticed the change, and was delighted. "I b'lieve she's forgettin' that paltry Doctor," said he, but he was wrong.

The third day after her return she was relating to her parents an account of her journey, when Ike entered the room. He had been sent to the post office, and now came up to Fanny, saying, "ere, I done got this air," handing her a letter, which she saw was from her sister. Taking it, she said, "A letter from Julia. It is a long time since I have heard from her." Then breaking the seal she read it.

Gradually there stole over her face a look of despair,—but she finished the letter, and then passing it to her father, said, "Read it; it concerns us all," and then she went to her own room, leaving her father to read and swear over it at his leisure. That he did so no one will doubt when they learn its contents.

The first page was filled with assurances of love; the second congratulated Fanny upon her engagement with Frank, but chided her for suffering Lida Gibson to be the bearer of the news. "Why

did you not write to me yourself?" said she; "that is the way I should do, and to prove my words, you will see how confiding I am." Then followed the intelligence that Dr. Lacey had offered his heart and hand, and had been accepted. You will not wonder at it," she wrote, "for I have always loved him. I was greatly surprised, when he told me he always preferred me to you, but was prevented from telling me so by my silly engagement with Mr. Wilmot and my supposed affection for him." The letter ended by saying that Dr. Lacey would accompany her home some time in October, when their marriage would probably take place. There was also a P.S. in which Julia wrote, "Do, Fan, use your influence with the old man, and make him fix up the infernal old castle. I'd as soon be married in the horse barn as there."

This was the letter which affected Fanny so, and called all of Uncle Joshua's biggest oaths into use. Mrs. Middleton tried to calm him, and reminded him of his promise not to swear. "I know I promised not to swear, and for better than two months I hain't swore," said he, "but I can't help it now. I know'd 'twould be so when I let Tempest go to Orleans. But he'll run himself into a hornet's nest."

"Why, then, do you rave so?" asked Mrs. Middleton.

"Because, when I let Tempest go, I'd no idea Sunshine cared for him. If I had, I'd have slung a halter round Tempest's neck and tied her up in the hoss barn she likes so well!"

"Then you intend to give your consent?" said Mrs. Middleton.

"Consent! Who's asked my consent?" replied he, "and 'tain't likely they will nuther; if I should refuse, Tempest wouldn't mind clamberin' out of the chimbley to run away, and the Doctor has showed himself jest as mean. No;—he may have her, for all of Josh. But, what's that about this Cameron. I hope 'tis so, but I'm mighty feared it ain't. Sunshine can't love two at a time."

While Mr. Middleton was expending his fury, Fanny was in her room, struggling to subdue the bitter feelings in her heart. Until now she had not been aware how much she loved Dr. Lacey. True, she had said it was impossible she could ever marry him; and she had believed she was trying to forget him; but ever in her heart she had cherished a half-formed belief that all would yet be well, and when she refused the noble, generous heart, which Frank Cameron laid at her feet, it was with a vague hope that Dr. Lacey would yet be hers. But now every hope was gone. 'Twas fearful,—the tide of sorrow which swept over the young girl, but amid the passion a still, small voice, whispering of one who loves with more than earthly love, who never proves faithless,—never fails. Fanny listened to the Spirit's pleadings, and resolved that henceforth she would seek to place her affections, where "there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."

The week following the receipt of Julia's letter Mr. Middleton had business in Frankfort. Fanny accompanied him; the morning after her arrival she and Mr. Stanton were walking upon the balcony at Mrs. Crane's when they were joined by Ashton, who had just returned from New Orleans.