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ous change in Mrs. Whitney's manner. She has a queer feeling now and then, that Mrs. Whitney may be making a study of her.

To-day, at the parsonage, she has fancied that "Max's mother"—this is the way Lois unconsciously thinks of her—has paused to listen when she spoke, and has treated her with some added respect and regard—that is the word—"regard," not the affection she bestows upon Saidee.

Lois mused of all these secret things as she was on home, the letter clasped in her hands within the muff. This letter will it be like the last one?

So, in sweet silence, she follows through the gate, and up the walk, and into the hall, and is going up-stairs to her room when Saidee gently puts both arms around her. Soft kisses are pressed against her cheek—Lois wonders to feel the warm face wet with tears, but Saidee gives her no time to speak.

"He has told me, darling. I have known it all along. Go read it—your letter—and God bless you forever and forever, dear cousin Lois!"

These last words fall softly, solemnly, like benediction, and Saidee hastily turns aside into the unlighted drawing-room.

Lois goes up the stairs, wondering, and with truly no promission of what awaits her, close at hand.

Late in the evening she steals from her room, and knocks softly at Saidee's door. Twice, thrice—no answer. Saidee has gone to bed.

But next morning, when Saidee comes down, she goes into the greenhouse where she knows Lois will be at her favorite morning task. There she is, at the warm south windows, with idle shears.

She turns with a sudden blush at the light. Saidee takes her hands and looks into the soft clear gray eyes in the old gray ray.

"There! there!" she says, "what a waste of blushes! Don't, dear. I know the first part of the story, you remember—my chief interest is in the unpublished half. How does the little girl answer him?"

"How?" The little echo has a surprised affection that tells Saidee all.

She lingers a moment to hear from Lois' happy lips the plans and the hopes of the life she knows so well—knew before she knew Lois.

"Lois," she says, "there is no girl in the world I would so gladly have him choose. I know of no one so fit to go with him into the wild life of a mining country and to help civilize and uplift the neglected humanity there. We all think, my dear, that you would be almost lost to your proper destiny, just doing the easy work of a Christian here—any who are left can do it."

She smiles once more down into the soft gray eyes. Then she goes up to her room. She sits down and muses concerning the "easy work of a Christian" which remains to her "who is left."

Thank God that she can think of it with love and longing! Thank God for the womanly heartache over the dreary lives of her struggling sisters! Thank God for the clear vision of usefulness which her cousin called yesterday as she suggested what those of wealth might do through Hannah's sons! She thinks with a glad brave impulse what her share may be in the new manly missions.

No, it is no unlighted future into which Saidee gazes. She feels that such a life as this now means hers to be is worth the living. She has held to the hope that she might find her happiness thus in this submission of trial and self abnegation, which she has long known must finally come in the course of God's providence.

Saidee's heart is so truly his child now that she can call her sorrow by this unrefusable name—"God's Providence." What a natural paganism of a strong and haughty-spirited soul bitterly names "Fate," this Christian girl cheerfully recognizes as the Father's wisdom for the child.

She bends her face low with tears. But the same moment she thanks the Father for the great blessing and the great recompense of work. Ere the sun has gone down she feels the blessing which is to comfort and strengthen, standing in the near future a pale moon in the afternoon sky—also faint now, but she knows it will grow and shine, and light up all the world in the sun it's down.

Thank God! she says; "thank God. I've never for one moment hated Lois—my love and

my blessing shall follow you to the last! And as for me—

"What will it matter by and by  
Whether my path below was bright,  
Whether it wound through dark or light,  
Under a star or golden sky,  
When I look back on it by-and-by?"  
(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## ALICE RAYNER'S NEW YEAR.

A Toronto Vignette.

BY FLORENCE FAIRFAX.

"We needn't expect any New Year Calls so there's no use in wasting coffee and visits is lying out, and a good thing too!" cakes. The old superstition about *la jour d'an* said the Finance Minister, otherwise known as Alice, alias Molly, or with the "younger girls, in moments of insubordination, as Mrs. Skinfint, Mother Cheese-parings, or other sobriquets indicative of school-girlishlike of economic science as applied to the practice of domestic cookery.

Local groans from short skirted members of the opposition greeted this proposition of the Finance Minister. Alice has made a proposition of compromise; she would provide the refreshments, some one might call, and it would look inhospitable not to do as everyone did on such an occasion.

"Alice expects her beau!" exclaimed sixteen-year-old Lucy, ungratefully deserting the leader of the opposition. "My rain-beau you mean, Lucy. Mr. Willet never walked home with me before he was so good as to give me the shelter of his umbrella last Friday in the thaw!" Alice replied good humoredly, and all parties having agreed to accept their sister's offer, the scheme was approved by their mamma, a mild and gentle lady, active in all home duties, but a sort of titular Governor-General over her daughters whose real functions consisted in registering the decrees of her Majesty. So after tea, which Alice has cheered by the addition of a dozen of crumpets, the girls, Marian, Alice, Evelyn and Lucy sallied forth on a shopping expedition to procure the dainties for the entertainment of possible visitors on the morrow. For it was New Year's Eve. An anniversary sad as with echoes of the requiem are the Do Profundis to most men and women who have passed thirty, is the festival of festivals to the young who have never known a heart ache, whose treasury of hope is in the cloud-land of the future!

Alice Rayner and George Willet were both employees of the wealthy firm of Downs and Phinsley, wholesale publishers, Front Street, Toronto, but with a difference. George was the nephew of the wealthy senior partner Mr. Hiram Downs. Alice was employed as what, in theatrical language, might be termed a "supernumary," sometimes a bookkeeper, sometimes a proof-reader, or filling the place of an absentee in taking account of stock, or running up an invoice. Her father Ephraim Rayner had died several years before in the service of the firm and Alice was glad to earn a few dollars a week to supplement the scanty home income to which all the girls contributed what they could.

Alice had a comfortable position in the firm. Mr. Downs was a little grumpy, especially at seasons when chronic gout and fine crusted old port wine insisted on their mutual incompatibility of temper; but his junior partner, Mr. Phinsley was a generous and kind-hearted man, although the oval-discounted a cro won't to credit him with an extra share of those powers of fascination, exercised for business purposes, with which the author of "Ten Thousand a Year," has endowed Mr. Ouley Gammon. Sweet was his smile to teachers who came to subscribe to the *Schoolroom Sketches*, an Educational journal owned by the firm; if a school trustee visited the premises he was shown over them by Mr. Phinsley, who would place his arm with affected playfulness round the great man's neck.

George Willett had charge of the book-room on the second flat, and Alice had a desk near his official sanctum. A friendly intercourse had grown up between them, not one that interfered with work in business hours, for both were sensible and conscientious workers, but the kind word at

the beginning or ending of the day's toil or at recess time and noon. Then from the silent bindery up stairs, where some sixty girls were employed at from \$2 to \$3.50 a week, rose a babel of chatter, then Lucy Rayner, who was employed at odd and end jobs in the bindery would descend thence with a teapot and two cups to which a third was sometimes added for the benefit of George Willett, at the request of that gentleman. But on one occasion when George and the two girls were partaking of that innocent refreshment, laughing as they talked in the sympathetic glee which is the freemasonry of youth, they were startled by the unwonted arrival of Mr. Downs, who, in no gentle tones, desired George to remember his engagement to take luncheon with him at the club. From this time George and Alice never seemed to have a moment's talk together without being surprised by a visit from Mr. Downs, whose keen black eyes were bent on the young lady with a scrutiny not a little embarrassing. But one day Christmas Mr. Phinsley had met a party of school trustees whom he was carrying to a ten cent feast of buns and coffee at a confectioner's. Mr. Downs was immersed in business details, and George thought he would like a chat for a few minutes with Miss Rayner. She was sitting at her desk, not attempting to work. She was very pale, and the tears fell thickly down her face. George could not help seeing it. "Dear Miss Rayner, may I not call you Alice?" he said, "I cannot help seeing your trouble, do let me share it. I feel in distress at seeing you cry, and perhaps after all it is about something that may not be so bad as you think it." She told him that she had just heard a report that Mr. Downs intended to dispense with her services as the existing state of business compelled a reduction of their staff. Her sister Lucy had been ill with a low fever so common when the January thaw comes in December. George comforted her with many kind words, and promised to use all his influence with his uncle to reverse the sentence he had given forth as to Alice's dismissal. "I find this work of running the *Schoolroom Sketches* too much for me and shall apply to my uncle for help, so cheer up, dear Miss Alice, better times will come with the New Year." Those were his last words as he bade her good bye at her mother's door, whither he had accompanied her that she might share the protection of his umbrella. Not much had passed between them, a walk against a head wind and beating rain is not favorable to free and unreserved conversation, but somehow Alice felt cheered by the consciousness that she was regarded with friendly interest, and returned with ready cheerfulness her sister's many jokes about Alice being escorted by no less a personage than the nephew of the head of the firm.

But when Alice was alone that evening the reaction came; the thought suggested by her sister in just became a source of bitter depression. How good he had been to her in her bitter troubles, how gentle and noble he seemed in every day's work; it would not be his fault if their scanty means were lessened by her dismissal from her employment; as for other thoughts, she set them aside as she looked at the mirror which reflected a petite figure, hazel eyes, a face with no pretensions and regularity of feature, but in its way winning and full of expression.

New Year's day came but brought no callers, and the coffee and cakes which had been prepared had been set aside for an early tea, when a loud ring was heard at the door, and presently Mr. Downs was ushered into the small and ill-warmed parlor. He asked to see Alice. When she came he told her in a not unkindly tone that his nephew George had spoken very earnestly to him of his need of an assistant in editing the *Schoolroom Sketches* and had suggested that Miss Rayner might with advantage be engaged to fulfil that duty. Mr. Downs had thought over the matter and had concluded to offer the position to Miss Rayner: the object of his present visit was to make the proposal to Alice and to show her a new office which he had chosen for the editorial work of the paper.

Alice joyfully assented and put on mantle and bonnet. As they walked Mr. Downs rallied Alice a little on the duty of gravity of demeanor in her new position. "I don't want to catch you two editors of *Sketches* laughing and talking together in time that ought to be devoted to duty," he said. Alice inwardly resolved never again to "giggle or make giggle" during office hours. They stopped at a small but elegantly built

white brick house, with Queen Anne windows and Mansard roof, the hall door of which Mr. Downs opened with a latch key. Opening off the hall was a small room arranged as an office, with the desks and all the paraphernalia of an editorial sanctum. All the furniture, even to the inkstands, pens and office knives, were quite new and of the best. "I shall leave nephew George to arrange about terms. When that is done you can see me in the dining-room. In spite of Dr. White this cold weather is a fair excuse to fill my glass again with some good port wine." He left the room. George entered. "Will you be my partner, Alice, not only in the editorial work, but for life and for all things? I have long watched your patient struggle with difficulties, your buoyant self help and cheerfulness, and I have said to myself with Tennyson's Knight: 'Now by God's grace is this the moment for me!'"

No reply was spoken or needed. Alice laid her hand in his and looked with one happy, earnest gaze her acceptance of happiness. Then a visit to the dining-room, where Mr. Downs sat with a wineglass full of port before him and one leg propped in a chair as a precautionary measure against gout. The surprise had been of the old gentleman's contriving; he had long watched Alice's business-like habits and most heartily approved of his nephew's choice. After being kissed by her new uncle and having received his blessing in the shape of a cheque for a hundred dollars, Alice yielded to George's permission to take one look over the house, from the comfortable kitchen as new and neat as a toy, to the drawing-room, where Alice could not resist sitting down for a moment at the handsome grand piano. She played a few bars of Keble's hymn for New Year's Day:

"If thou wouldst reap in love,  
First sow in holy fear;  
So like a winter's morn may prove  
To a bright and endless year.

## A Comfortable Pillow.

Here is a story of two girls. Their names were Annie and Nelly. While Annie was saying her prayers Nell trifled with a shadow-picture on the wall. Not satisfied with playing alone she would talk to Annie. "Now, Annie, watch!" "Annie, just see!" "Oh, Annie, do look!" she said, over and over again. Annie, who was not to be persuaded, finished her prayer and crept into bed, whither her thoughtless sister followed, as the light must be out in just a many minutes. Presently Nell took to "pouncing, punching, and "Oh; dear-ing." Then she lay quiet a while, only to begin again with renewed energy. "What's the matter?" asked Annie at length. "My pillow!" tossing, thumping, kicking. "It's fat as a board and hard as a stone; I can't think what ails it." "I can tell you what's the matter," said Annie; "there's no prayer in it." For a second or two Nell was still as a mouse, then she scrambled out on the floor, with a shiver, it's true, but she was determined never afterwards to try to sleep on a prayerless pillow. "That must have been what ailed it," she whispered, soon after getting into bed again. "It's all right now." "I think that is what ails a great many pillows," said mamma, who had been listening all the time to the story, although we did not hear her open the door and enter the nursery, "on which restless heads, both little and big, night terrors and turn; there are no prayers in them. Nelly's remedy was the best, the only one. Prayer made the pillow soft, and then she sank to rest as under a sheltering wing.

## Hasty Temper.

Fight hard against a hasty temper. Anger will come, but resist it stoutly. As a spark may set a house on fire. A fit of passion may give you cause to mourn all the days of your life.

He that does not know those things which are of use and necessity for him to know, is but an ignorant man, whatever he may know besides.

A cheerful temper is like a grain of musk, it imparts its fragrance to everything that comes in contact with it, yet it always remains the same.

The common ingredients of health and long life are—  
Great temperance, open air,  
Easy labour, little care.