

MRS. STANTON sat upon the porch in the shade of the morning-glory vines. She was sewing; and now and then she raised her eyes to look out into the garden, which showed so plainly the need of attention she had no time to give.

For many years she had been planning that the following season should see it as she wished, with annuals in orderly, well-dug beds, with strings for the climbers, and with all the weeds pulled up from the hard, unturned, unwatered soil that did not discourage them. Yet summer after summer found the same conditions. There was a short period of beauty when the bloom of lilacs hid all defects; but that having faded away, nothing remained save rose bushes full of blighted flowers and dead wood, the stunted sweet peas which had sowed themselves, and the persistent four-o'clocks and larkspur.

Sometimes she wondered if there might not have been a way to arrange her work more advantageously, giving herself opportunity for that care of the flowers which would have been so keen a pleasure. An hour a day would have accomplished much. But if by any chance there was a rare interval of leisure, it found her too tired for exertion. She had never been strong enough for the life of the farm. The responsibilities it put upon her were too heavy. Nor were they even lightened, rendered easier by any sense of sympathy and companionship. She was too much occupied to keep up friendly and intimate relations among the wives of the neighboring farmers.

Long since she had ceased expecting understanding or affection from her husband. And there had been no time to take real satisfaction from her two children—who were, moreover, absent at school for the greater part of each day. So, after a period of heartsick inward rebellion, she had brought herself to ask nothing of the present beyond the strength to finish her work, and that peace in the family which her husband's humors seldom allowed to remain unbroken.

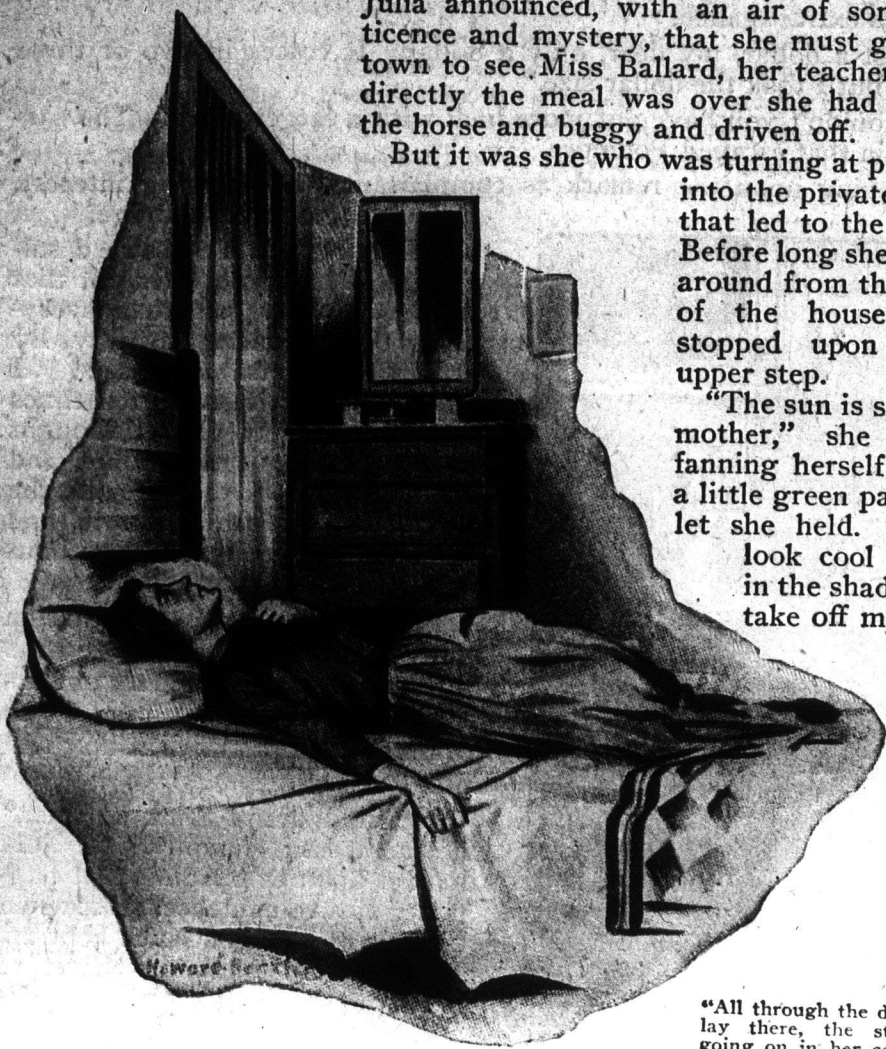
But since hope of some sort was needful to give her courage for her tasks, she had allowed herself to look forward to the future, to the time when Julia should have finished her education and when she would be at home for more than a few hurried hours out of the twenty-four.

The anticipation was one which held so much happiness that she made it the solace of her loneliness, dwelling continually upon the thought of how she and her daughter would sew together and talk together and perhaps even go off together upon little merry-makings—just the two of them.

On the evening before, Julia's schooling had reached its end in the great occasion of the graduation exercises, for which the whole country-side had come forth. Yet fulfillment of her mother's wish had been destined to a little further postponement. For at breakfast Julia announced, with an air of some reticence and mystery, that she must go into town to see Miss Ballard, her teacher; and directly the meal was over she had taken the horse and buggy and driven off.

But it was she who was turning at present into the private road that led to the barn. Before long she came around from the side of the house and stopped upon the upper step.

"The sun is so hot, mother," she said, fanning herself with a little green pamphlet she held. "You look cool there in the shade. I'll take off my hat



"All through the day she lay there, the struggle going on in her soul."

The Honors of Defeat

By Gwendoline Overton

Illustrations by Howard Heath

and be back in a moment to help you."

She went into the house, but presently returned, and taking a piece of sewing from the always overflowing basket, fell to folding down a hem.

The first of the happy hours had begun.

Mrs. Stanton could hardly keep her eyes upon her own work, so often did she look over at the bright face bent above the piece of blue checked cotton which was in process of becoming an apron. Their conversation turned at once upon that culminating event of many months and years—the ceremonies of the previous night.

"You were so pretty," Mrs. Stanton said, with a tremor of fond pride in her voice. "You were the prettiest girl there."

Julia's red lips tried not to smile with undue satisfaction. "It was the dress you made me," she sought to be modest. But pleasure in the compliment inspired her to give one in return. "Mrs. Adams told me that I looked exactly as you did when you came here after you were first married."

It was a comparison which, in point of fact, had not suited her in the least at the time; for it had seemed to hold a chilling forecast that in another score of years she might be the thin colorless woman her mother was now, with meager features and faded eyes. Something the same view of it affected Mrs. Stanton, making her shake her head sadly. "It is hard to believe to-day," she said.

"Never mind," the girl said warmly. "You are a dear, good mother, and I love you. It is because you have had too much work and too little play."

And all at once she decided to take advantage of this auspicious opportunity—coming earlier and more aptly than she had dared hope—to introduce the subject upon which the whole purpose of her mind was set.

Yet she went about it indirectly, bending her head closer above the sewing, that her eyes might not meet her mother's.

"Mother," she began in a low tone, "what do you suppose? It seems too ridiculous to tell you—when I'm so young, but," her face flushed a charming pink and her lashes dropped shyly, "but Will Adams thinks he wants to marry me."

A hand of ice was laid upon the mother's heart, stilling its beating. Through all the years she had resolutely kept her thoughts from dwelling upon that inevitable day when the girl would marry and go altogether from her life, leaving her desolate, more lonely than before. She had always said to herself that there would be at least a little time during which they could have each other undisturbed. And what must follow thereafter she would wait to bear when it should be laid upon her. But that it should be at once—and in the first moments of her realized dream—

She heard her own voice asking, "Do you care for him, dear?"

In the interest of the minute the girl forgot her sewing and let it drop unheeded into her lap. "Yes, I do care for him," she came out earnestly. "I care for him a good deal. But, mother, I don't want to marry him."

Mrs. Stanton drew a sharp breath. Then she put another question. "Why do you not?" she said.

The answer was given promptly, impetuously. "Because—because when I am thirty-seven I don't want to be like you!"

It was an unintentional cruelty, inflicted in thoughtless sincerity. The thrust, however, was so true, the stab so [Continued on Page 13]

