

a white railing in front, and scrupulously clean snowy curtains at the windows of the room which fronted the street. There was no need of a knocker, bell, or pass key, at the humble door. We raised the latch, passed through a narrow entry, and tapped at an inner door.

"Come in," said a low voice, and we entered. Let me pause at the door before greeting Aunt Richie, and describe this her home, where her mind, almost her life, were truly reflected; its lingering of early ambition, its crushed hopes, its striving after higher and better things, were represented. Directly opposite the door was a magnificent bedstead with bright coloured chintz curtains draped round its carved posts. A simple quilt of white and blue cotton covered it, and a spotless sheet and pillow cases, gave it an almost luxurious look. By it stood a neat bureau, over which hung a painting of exquisite fruit, melons rich and red, pears and grapes in tempting profusion; upon the bureau were ranged the little prayer book, bible, and other devotional works, a small French clock, and two or three ornamented articles; a humble washstand occupied the corner between the two windows. The closet door was opened, and there might be seen a strange *mélange*, the relics of better, or rather I would say, richer days, mingled with the more simple utensils of her present life. Two or three plated vegetable dishes—plated venison flagon—silver candlesticks, two delf cups and plates, black tea pot, white mugs, tin pans, and all the *et ceteras* of a humble housekeeping. In the chimney was a small air tight stove, arranged with a place for a tea kettle, and a small oven which served Aunt Richie for all her cooking purposes, and a nice delicate taste of her own had Aunt Richie, and everything she cooked was good and savoury. On the floor was what is well known as a rag carpet, neat, with not a particle of dust upon it. Two or three wooden chairs, and one comfortable Boston rocking chair, completed the furniture of the apartment.

No not quite, for Aunt Richie herself was almost a fixture, and was certainly the most remarkable article in it; bedstead, bureau, plated blazers and all were forgotten as one looked at her, seated as she invariably was, in the very centre of the room. She was very small, and though she had light grey eyes (which no heroine ever had before) she reminded me of what Scott's Fenella must have been when she grew old, provided she ever did so unfashionable a thing. Her delicate figure was lithe and erect, and showed to full advantage in the simply fashioned, but oriental coloured robe, the gift of some kind friend. Her features were regular, the nose quite straight, the lips small

and arched, the complexion clear and soft, the cheeks still smooth and with a faint colour, but the forehead, though broad and high, was ploughed with deep wrinkles. What the original colour of her hair had been no one knew, for ever since everybody's recollection, she had worn a false band of light flaxen hair simply parted on her forehead, and which would have looked very well had it not been surmounted with a Madras handkerchief of many hues, twisted into a turban in the peculiar way which forms that rare production in nature, a perfect cone, the apex of which reached nearly a foot above her forehead, giving a sort of mock dignity to the diminutive little figure. She always had on a pair of enormous glasses, which, when at work, were over her eyes, but at other times were pushed up just above the brow.

A bright cheerful voice had Aunt Richie, and a merry laugh that rang out clear like a string of bells on a wintry day; and a joyous heart greeting she always gave to those who went in occasionally to cheer her solitude. As Frank and I entered the room, she looked quickly up, at first with a vacant glance, as though the mind had been busy with quite a different world and scene, and could not immediately be recalled; but when Franky bounded up to her, and throwing his dimpled arms around her withered neck, said:

"Oh! Aunt Richie, how do you do? I am so glad to see you!" the bright joyous smile came to her lips, lighting up the whole face. She patted the little fellow on the head, and then, rising with a sort of gentle dignity, offered me her chair, and thanked me for remembering to come and see her.

"I did not know Franky was with you," she said, (his mother was her darling foster child,) "or I should have sent for him; I am so glad you have brought him to me. How is his mother? the blessed girl! why did she not come too?"

"She is not well; she has been indeed quite ill."

"Maria ill, and I not know it; but dear thing, she is not long for this world," and the tear filled her eye.

But she could not long be saddened, and it was not many minutes before she was in the full tide of amusing anecdote and playful conversation; there was a vein of keen sarcasm in her, and a quickness of perception that was really wonderful; her language was peculiar, it was very evident that her education in early life had been entirely neglected; but she had mingled a great deal in the world, had at one time or another mixed on familiar terms with all the various classes, now floating life away among the rich and fashionable, now left desolate to struggle for bare existence.