

"Ah, Aunt Cynthia," she went on, "you don't know how you make me envy you."

"Envy me, Pauline?"

"Oh, yes, you have settled matters so absolutely. You have no misgivings, no distrusts. You are so magnificently secure."

"I don't understand," politely faltered Mrs. Poughkeepsie. She looked inquiringly at Courtlandt.

"It is metaphysics," Courtlandt at once said. "They are a branch of study in which Pauline has made great progress." His face remained so completely placid and controlled that he might have been giving the number of a residence or recording the last quotation in stocks.

Sallie had become absorbed in staring here and there, just as her mother had been a brief while ago; Mrs. Poughkeepsie was at a little distance from her niece; Courtlandt stood close at Pauline's side, so that the latter could ask him, in an undertone full of curt, covert imperiousness:

"Did you come here to say and do rude things?"

"I never say nor do rude things if I can help it," he answered, with a leaden stolidity in his own undertone.

"Why did they come?" continued Pauline, lowering her voice still more.

"You invited them, I believe. That is, at least, my impression."

"I mentioned the affair. I never imagined they would wish to come."

"You see that you were mistaken. If I had been you I wouldn't have given them the awful opportunity."

"What awful opportunity?" queried Pauline, furtively bristling.

"Of coming," said Courtlandt.

"My dear Pauline," here broke in Mrs. Poughkeepsie, "shall you not present anybody to us?"

"Anyone whom you please to meet, Aunt," responded Pauline.

"But, my dear, we please to meet *anyone*. We have no preferences. How can we have?"

"This is torment," thought poor Pauline. She glanced toward Courtlandt, but she might as well have appealed to one of her chairs. "What shall I do?" her thoughts sped fleetly on. "This woman and this girl would shock and repel whoever I should bring to them. It would be like introducing the North Pole to the South.

But her face revealed no sign of her perplexity. She quietly put her hand within Courtlandt's arm. "Come, Court," she said, with a very creditable counterfeit of gay sociality, let us find a few devotees for Aunt Cynthia and Sallie."

"We shall find a good many," said Courtlandt, as they moved away.

"Have no fear of that."

"I am by no means sure that we shall find *any*," protested Pauline, both with dismay and antagonism.

"Pshaw," retorted Courtlandt. "Mention the name. It will work like magic."

"The name? What name?"

"Poughkeepsie. Do you suppose these haphazard Bohemians wouldn't like to better themselves if they could?"

Pauline took her hand from his arm, though he made a slight muscular movement of detestation.

"They are not haphazard Bohemians," she said. "You know, too, that they are not. They are mostly people of intellect, of culture, of high and large views. I don't know what you mean by saying that they would 'like to better themselves.' Where have they ever heard of Aunt Cynthia? Her name would be simply a dead letter to them."

Courtlandt gave a low laugh, that was almost gruff, and was certainly harsh. "Where have they ever heard of Aunt Cynthia?" he repeated. "Why, she never dines out that the society column of half-a-dozen newspapers does not record it, and her name would be very far from a dead letter. It would be a decidedly living letter."

"But you don't understand," insisted Pauline, exasperatedly. "These people have no aims to know the so-called higher classes."

"Excuse me," said Courtlandt, with superb calm. "Everybody has aims to know the so-called higher classes—if he or she possibly can. Especially 'she,'" he added in his colourless monotone.

Just then Pauline found herself confronted by Miss Upton. The moon-like face of this diminutive lady wore a flushed eagerness as she began to speak.

"Oh, Mrs. Varick," she said, "I've a great, *great* favour to ask of you! I want you to introduce me to your aunt, Mrs. Poughkeepsie."

"With pleasure," answered Pauline, feeling as if the request had been a sort of jeer. "You know my aunt by sight, then, Miss Upton."

"Oh, yes, I've known her for some time by sight, Mrs. Varick. Miss Cragge pointed her out to me one night at Wallack's. She had a box, with her daughter and several other people. One of them was an English lord—or so Miss Cragge said. . . . But excuse my mentioning my friend's name, as you don't like her."

"Who told you that I did not like Miss Cragge?" asked Pauline, with abrupt crispness.

"Oh, nobody, nobody," hurried Miss Upton. "But you haven't invited her here to-night—you left her out, you know. That was all. And I thought. . . ."

"Are you a friend of Miss Cragge's?" asked Pauline.

"Oh, yes. . . . that is, I know her quite well. She writes dramatic criticisms, you know, and she has seen me in amateur theatricals. She's been kind enough to tell me that she *doesn't* think I have a tragic soul in a comic body." Here Miss Upton gave a formidably resonant laugh. "But I'm convinced that I have, and so I've never gone on the stage. But if I could get a few of the *very* aristocratic people, Mrs. Varick

—like yourself, and your aunt, Mrs. Poughkeepsie—to hear me give a private reading or two, from "Romeo and Juliet" or "The Hunchback" or "Parthenia," why, I should be prepared to receive a *new opinion*, don't you understand, with regard to my abilities. There is nothing like being endorsed at the start by people who belong to the real upper circles of society."

"Of course there isn't," said Courtlandt, speaking too low for Miss Upton to catch his words, and almost in the ear of Pauline. "Introduce me," he went swiftly on. "I will save you the bore of further introductions. You will soon see how they will all flock about the great nabob, though she may be ignorant of aesthetics, philosophy, Emerson, Herbert Spencer, Carlyle, and anybody you please."

Pauline turned and looked at him. There was the shadow of a sparkle in the familiar brown eyes—the eyes that she never regarded closely without being reminded of her girlhood, even of her childhood as well.

(To be Continued.)

THE SCRAP BOOK.

PLATFORM WOMEN.

How will the world be the better for the public-speaking women of our own day is the question before us, for of course the bettering of society at large is universally acknowledged to be the object of all public speaking and teaching on whatever subject. That immediate good results may be traced to women's work in this direction, among educated men and women, as well as among men and women the very lowest of the low and most corrupt of the corrupt, no reasonable person can doubt. A woman's powers of persuasion are great, her personal attractiveness, be she young or old, is often greater still; she possesses as a rule, a larger share of energy and perseverance than men, she has an unmistakable gift of speech, she can be eloquent and heart-stirring in her appeals to the imagination of her hearers, even addresses to their sense and reason are not wanting. If she be not always as logical as she is heart-stirring, logic is not what is mainly wanted in speakers, though it may be granted that some very few women (and only some few men!) have strictly logical minds.

I would admit all this fully and heartily, and yet I must also declare that there are serious intellectual drawbacks (apart from any others) to women as public orators. We commonly allow ourselves (and this I regard as part of our physical constitution, and dependent upon it), when we feel strongly on any subject, to become mentally warped in that direction. We are no longer able to see it in its true bearings as it stands in relation to other things, it fills our whole horizon (justly it may be, and even necessarily), and therefore we see no reason why it should not fill the horizon of everyone else, to the exclusion and almost to the extinction of matters which are in themselves perhaps equally important, and which may be to other people of greater significance than what we have in hand. When, therefore, we force our particular subject, as likewise our own special view of it, on the minds of others (it may be, less educated minds than our own, and therefore in our power as regards the immediate impression to be produced upon them), we do certainly achieve our object, we oblige our hearers to take our view of the matter, but if it be a warped or one-sided view, how do we thereby contribute to the improvement of the world? All teaching is of course open to this objection, since a man may be narrow-minded and warped as well as a woman, but I believe that we women have this one-sided tendency to such a marked degree that we are usually unable to control it. Education only increases our unfitness as public teachers and speakers, since with education our power of using influence fairly or unfairly also increases.

Further, not only is the calm judicial quality usually absent from our natures, but common fairness under argument or opposition of any kind is apt to desert us. We are ready to measure ourselves with men, and yet we require of them that they shall treat us with the courtesy and consideration which used to be accorded to old-fashioned, weak-minded women, and we lose our self-possession, if not exactly our temper, because we have deliberately put ourselves outside the pale by our own act and by the declaration of our ability to stand alone.

Here it becomes desirable to notice, though for a moment only in passing, the physical disqualifications of women for any sustained or prolonged public effort. Our conditions of being are against us, and let those who have made such efforts say whether they have not paid either in the quality of their work, or in the health of their bodies, and through these, in their tempers, ay, and in their intellects too, for the strain which they have put upon themselves in order to sustain their parts. This, however, is hardly a part of our subject, and is only a digression, because it applies to actresses, to public singers and readers, to medical women, women artists and others, of whom we are not speaking, because the following of their professions implies no *personal* display whatever, and may be consistent with the utmost actual privacy.

The mental and moral condition which the modern platform woman herself exhibits is the surest proof of the mischief which public speaking is working by her agency on the community at large—the gradual hardening of the countenance and of the external manner and address, indicating too surely the real repression going on within of much that is lovable and admirable in woman. No repose, outwardly or mentally, is to be found in her society, she produces a strong impression of unnaturalness, and of living in antagonism with the world around her; an unfortunate frame of mind which has to be fostered, since her position is not yet, thank heaven, by any means an assured one, and must be struggled for and pursued under protest from a large section of both sexes. Who does not know the shudder with which a sensitive, highly wrought, fastidious man or woman speaks of