

rest?" reflected Sylvia while the weak chatter went on and on.

Two or three times Sylvia made a futile effort to stem the ceaseless tide of vain-glorious talk. How was one to tell this self-satisfied little being that the girls could not fellowship her unless she reformed?

Sylvia observed, half-absently, a small colored boy with a little hand-cart in the middle of the street. He was apparently carrying home a weekly washing, and had perched his sister, a mite of happy humanity, upon the bundle in the cart. Dashing around the corner came an automobile, which the boy, his back turned for the moment, did not see.

Sylvia and other women screamed. Blamid Foyle dashed into the street, thrust the dazed boy and the cart out of the way, and was knocked down by the automobile.

In scarcely more than a breathing-space it had all happened. The frightened, crying children picked themselves up unharmed; a crowd collected, as if out of space, as crowds will do; and Blamid was taken up unconscious.

Sylvia went with her in the ambulance that carried her home. Her aunt was a collapsing woman; and Sylvia sent word to her own home, and stayed with Blamid.

The doctors were grave over a fracture of the thigh-bone. She would be lamed for life.

'Don't—don't cry! I'm so glad I saved the children!' she said, looking wistfully into Sylvia's face. The operation was over, and she had come to herself weak and white but peaceful. 'It didn't cost too much to save them; don't you think it did! I'm small anyway. I've heard the girls say so. But perhaps small things go when great things come; some philosopher says that. I know that if you girls do think I'm ignorant and uncultivated—O, yes, you do! I—I've had hard things in my life—more than you know. Sometimes people—proud people—try too hard not to show that, and—make mistakes. Mamma was—a very poor girl when she married papa, and she wouldn't let herself be put down by papa's mother; she just determined to be like—like what grandmamma was, and more—more exclusive. It was pretty hard sometimes, but we never—never let ourselves drop out and do things like poor people. By myself—well, I think I might have cared only for children and to live simply. But I've done as I was brought up.'

'Then you were brought up to be brave!' interrupted Sylvia, for the doctor had said the patient must not talk. 'May I bring the girls to see you? And I know they'll—they'll wish you to do us the honor of joining the club.'

Sylvia's voice shook with feeling.

The old, disagreeable, aggressive look came around the girl's mouth.

'I—I don't know about the club. I don't care to form intimacies—' she began. Then suddenly she looked into Sylvia's tear-wet face, and her own changed, softening wonderfully. 'Ask the girls to come,' she said gently. 'But—I don't want their feelings to be hurt; tell them I sha'n't mind the crutches at all.'

From her full heart Sylvia poured out the story upon the Upper Ten Club.

For a while not a girl spoke. Then Sarah Endicott was heard to murmur,

'Human nature is very complex!'

'Mine doesn't seem to be so,' said Sylvia shortly. 'I was simply a coward! It didn't even occur to me to do anything, while she risked her life. And the fine impulse wasn't all; she is so strong and brave now. I don't believe there is one of us, not one, who would bear being crippled as she is bearing it.'

'I think we'd better vote to admit her without conditions,' said the president dryly; 'and maybe we'd better not have "Noblesse oblige" for the club motto, after all. How would it do to have "To understand is to forgive"?''

'Thumbs.'

'Sorry, my lad, but you won't suit!'

Philip Dalton, with an air of reluctance, left the desk of the venerable merchant to make way for the next of a number of applicants, all of whom were eager for the coveted position.

'Won't suit!' he echoed, as, in passing out through the general office, he was confronted by a large mirror. 'A bit of farce, too,' he muttered, as he recollected one clause of the

advertisement: 'Applicants must be of respectable appearance.'

The bump of self-esteem was by no means undeveloped in Phil Dalton, and he drew himself up to his full height as he chuckled: "'Respectable appearance," eh?' at the same time taking in a full survey of his dignified form, which, from the carefully parted hair to the highly polished footwear, proclaimed him every inch a gentleman.

'My appearance is not at fault, certainly. What's the trouble, then?' Mr. McKinnon complimented my fine penmanship, so that I passed muster in that line.'

Just then he heard the words, 'You'll suit!' and gave a quick glance in the direction of the private office. 'Humph! Old Mac's evidently easily pleased, after all. That chap looks about as green as they grow—there's country stamped all over him. He'd be better employed, seems to me, in a cabbage-patch than as invoice clerk here'; and with a sullen expression and dejected air he walked out of the office.

Philip Dalton had set his heart upon the situation in question, and his disappointment did not in any way mellow his temper. In fact, his good humor diminished to such a degree that his friends scarcely recognized him as he strolled homeward, so curt were his replies to their greetings.

He was half-way home when Doctor Seymour's buggy drew up, and a cheerful voice said: 'That you, Phil? Jump in, my lad! I'm just bound in your direction.' Phil reluctantly accepted the offer, then regretted it when he perceived that the doctor was making a careful diagnosis of his mental state.

'Phil, my boy, what's up? You've evidently been in Dumpsland to-day.'

Phil tried in vain to bluff the question, but, noticing the doctor's face wore an expression of the kindest interest and sympathy, he told his trouble. Then he looked the doctor full in the face:

'See here, Doc., do you see anything wrong with me that would prejudice that old fellow against me? I want the truth, mind—point-blank.'

'And won't be offended to hear it?' asked the doctor, earnestly.

'Not a bit! He's a sort of old woman with lots of whims, I fancy.'

Doctor Seymour paid no attention to the last utterance of his companion, but said, abstractedly, as if to himself: 'Thumbs.'

'Thumbs?' repeated Phil in a bewildered tone.

'Yes, thumbs. See here,' and the doctor took Phil's right hand as an illustration of the little sermon he was about to deliver.

'Do you think, Phil, that Mr. McKinnon, or any other man of common sense, would prefer to employ a young man who is addicted to the cigarette habit? All the polished manner and good clothes in the world would not make up for lack of moral force. See that thumb? It's positively brown! The left is not quite so bad, but bad enough. That's what nicotine does, my dear fellow, and if you don't stop the habit, it will stop you. I know what I am talking about. You know that a watch that is not properly cared for wears out before one that is treated well. No man, if he has a grain of sense, wants a clerk whose brains are clouded with cigarette smoking. Only last week I was called to see a young fellow about your age, who was a victim to the habit, in the last stages. I could do nothing for him—he died from the poison. That's what you are coming to. It's plain speaking, but I am in duty bound to tell you.'

'What!' gasped Philip. 'Is that the brilliant future you predict for me?'

'It certainly is, if you keep on at this rate, young man. Better make a right-about turn now, before it is too late.'

Doctor Seymour's concern was so great for his young friend that he drove fully a mile further than necessary in order for time to administer this ample dose of advice, and to secure Phil's promise to make a start in the right direction.

It was a very different Philip Dalton who entered Mr. McKinnon's office a year later, and expressed a wish to see that gentleman. He was soon ushered into his presence.

'It seems to me I recollect your face,' said Mr. McKinnon, rising.

'You certainly should do so,' replied Philip, pleasantly; 'you gave me a start in life.'

'Gave you a start in life?'

'Yes, sir, when you sent me about my business a year ago.'

'How's that? I have no recollection.'

'Don't you remember? I'm the first young fellow you refused when you were receiving applications for an invoice clerk.'

'Well, to be sure! But I fail to see why you are indebted to me, since I didn't employ you.'

'If you had employed me,' remonstrated Philip, 'I might not be here now. I would probably have kept along in the same old way, and succumbed to bad habits. Tell me, sir, did my thumbs prejudice you against me?'

'Why?' asked the merchant in a tone of agreeable surprise.

Then Philip related the whole story of his disappointment, his chat with the doctor, and his resolution.—'Christian Guardian.'

The Failure.

'Beth Haven going to stay with you over the tournament!' Eva Parry exclaimed. 'I didn't know that you and Beth Haven were such friends.'

'Which merely goes to prove,' Annette retorted, gaily, 'that you haven't seen Beth Haven's brother, who is coming also. Six feet one, my dear—and such eyes! I met him at the game last fall. They are to stay three days, and if I can't accomplish something in three days—'

There was no need of finishing the sentence. Anybody who knew Annette knew exactly how it would end. It was rarely indeed that Annette failed to 'accomplish things' where boys were concerned.

Beth and her brother arrived that afternoon. Annette met them at the station, a very picture of a girl. Beth, the most generous little creature in the world, admitted it freely. She walked silently beside Annette and Tom, who were chatting gaily. When they had reached the house, however, and Annette was leading them to their rooms, Beth asked for Annette's mother.

'Oh, she's busy somewhere around,' Annette answered, carelessly. Perhaps if Annette had seen the surprise in Tom Haven's eyes it might—since she was quick—have told her something; but she did not. As soon as her guests came down, she took them out on the lake, and it was not until supper-time that they met Mrs. Keith. Annette performed the introduction carelessly.

'Oh, here's mother!' she said. 'Here are Beth and Mr. Haven, mother'—and not another word did she address to her mother during the meal.

After supper, when they were on the piazza, Mrs. Keith came to the door a moment. Tom sprang up to offer her a seat. She glanced wistfully at Annette, who did not turn her head, and with hurried thanks the mother slipped away, and was seen no more that night.

The two days following passed in the same way. Once Beth, finding that Mrs. Keith was in the kitchen most of the time, begged to help; but Mrs. Keith refused with such demerol that Beth retreated at once. It was terrible to the girl, whose own mother was her children's closest comrade. Her only comfort in the situation was that Tom was evidently seeing things, too.

When, the uncomfortable three days over, Beth and Tom left, Annette knew, notwithstanding the courteous thanks and farewells, that she had, for some unaccountable reason, failed to 'accomplish something' with Tom Haven.

'It must have been that prig of a Beth!' she said, angrily. And the pity of it was that she really thought so.—'Youth's Companion.'

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