

of persons or places. How *much* he knew — this boy of hers! She was proud of him? Oh yes; indeed she was.

And yet — and yet — he was growing away from her.

What was this stone wall about which he talked so glibly?

It felt to her like a veritable wall — yes, and of stone, reaching up and up to the very sky; aye, even beyond! Who could assure her that the intellectual wall now being reared might not put ages between them in the life to come?

She had read a poem once — somewhere — about two lives that clasped hands together across a tiny stream scarcely more than a thread; the two had walked and whispered together. But the stream had widened and widened, and the hands had dropped apart, and the whisperings together ceased; by and by they could only *shout* to each other; and at last even the shoutings were lost in the roar of ocean, and the divided lives went their separate ways.

The poem had saddened her when she read it; it came back to haunt her this summer morning, and it seemed to her that she could lean forward and distinctly hear the roar of that separating ocean. The little stream had begun; what was to hinder it from growing and growing until it divided her life from her boy's? And yet, she would not have it otherwise; would not, at least, have that boy's rapid mental strides interfered with. Oh no indeed! Yet the tears fell over the thoughts of his onward march. While she sat in her little sewing-chair, she went rapidly over her own past. How did it happen that her boy was already ahead of her? Oh easily enough; the same story has been often lived, and often told: her early life had been one of toil and poverty; three months at third-rate country schools in winter, and the eldest daughter of a large family struggling to live: such had been her story. She had done well, better than many; she had been judged "a smart girl."

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