

It was a long journey for Estelle, from Valeville to New York, through scenery where the bloom of summer was in its sweet prime, with birds whirring in the thickets, and aldars fringing the stagnant pools, and a subtle sense of repose haunting the cool recesses of the woods that opened on every hand, and led the imagination enchanted through labyrinths of dewy solitude. Mr. Denen took care that the hours should not drag for Estelle. He had a legend or romance for every way station; he knew the names and habits of birds that sang within call; of the flowering shrubs blooming beside the path; he made his fellow passengers the subject of amusing conjectures, of droll guesses at their circumstances and errands, of their dispositions and aims; he quoted poetry and talked novels, and discovered who were Estelle's favorite heroes; and when the crystal day dissolved at nightfall into a shower, and great flashes of lightning swathed the heavens, revealing in the instant's illumination gloomy ravines, over which they seemed to hang suspended, shuddering caverns of darkness, whose brink they skirted, he made her forget the present, and see, instead of this wrath of the storm scudding by, pictures of happy firesides yet to be evolved from the chaos of the future, pictures of gardens where lovers loitered and children played.

"And here we are at New York," he said, rising.

"Already? Why, I thought it was a great way."

Grandpa Derringer was waiting to welcome them. "All Derringer," he declared, holding her at arms-length; "but I dare swear the Kew will crop out."

"And why shouldn't it?" she said saucily.

So life in New York began for Estelle—a very different life from that other phase at Valeville. Here she had fine clothes to wear, and no one to say, "Why do you so?" no one to quarrel with; no one to taunt her with beggary, to twit her for being a washed-out blonde, of whom her grand relations were ashamed. Yet, for all that, after the first novelty had vanished she had her feeble regrets sometimes. She would have given a good deal for a nice round quarrel to ripple the dead calm. The days were fearfully alike, sun pictures of one another, with not enough perspec-

tive to give them charm. She began to wonder if everything had happened to her that was going to happen. Mrs. Wheat was always engrossed in sorting linen, overseeing the cooking, or making marvellous jellies. Grandpa Derringer was gardening, or reading piles of stupid newspapers about the war in Europe, the rise in breadstuffs, the price of gold, or else he was playing chess with Mr. Denen. As for herself she might play on the rusty piano, or read the novels of the last centuries, or assist Mrs. Wheat; walk in in the garden and pick the purple plums, make calls, or spend her pocket money abroad; but after that there was nothing for her but to listen to grandpa and Mr. Denen upon disputed law questions, the last political imbroglio, or the councils of popes and kings.

Having safely landed her upon her native heath, so to speak, Mr. Denen seemed to have forgotten her existence. He came and went without regarding her; he never referred to her opinion—such delicate flattery to a young lady; if she spoke, he replied without pursuing the conversation. This conduct had the effect of piquing Estelle; he had given promise of such pleasant companionship; it was like the fairy gold turning into withered leaves. She used to watch him furtively, longing painfully for a little attention, just because he withheld it; prizing it beyond its worth perhaps because it was so rare. She heard him speak of the gay world which he frequented, of nights at the opera, of tragedy and comedy, and she felt like a bird pining for freedom, and beating its wings against the prison bars.

"Let us go to the opera, too, Grandpa Derringer," she entreated one day.

"Not I. Operas are played out for me—insipid. You can go, though; I'll ask Denen to take you."

"Oh, no, no! I will not go if you don't."

If he should ask her himself, that would be different. Strange that the things we long for most should be the last to happen.

"Then stay at home sauce-box," said Grandpa Derringer. But Estelle did not mean to stay at home. She stole out next day and bought her ticket, and when night fell, and her grandpa was entertaining some gentlemen in the library, she disguised