

gaily, and kept her so lively and happy that George said he had never seen the mater so jolly, and that Miss Park was a regular brick. At first there was a little jealousy over the dogs, who deserted their mistress to fawn on Miss Park; but after a while the old lady ceased to mind about her pets, and clung more and more to her charming lady companion.

The house was greatly smartened up under Miss Park's supervision, she hung up clean curtains everywhere, cleaned up all the dusty, fly-blown mirrors, which Warner dared not mount a ladder to touch, and delighted the old lady's heart by polishing up the silver in a way it had never been treated before. The late Mr. Sherrington adorned his massive sideboard with costly gold and silver plate, and, as president of a rich city guild, he had some fine presentation pieces. A strong room, burglar-proof and fire-proof, for the valuables he possessed, had been built at one end of the dining-room, and the old lady gave dear Julia the key of it, telling her to look over the plate and give it a rub up. Minnie was delighted when she heard about it, and said to her mother:

"I have always thought it a shame to keep all that lovely silver buried away when other people could make such use of it. And where is all your jewelry? George was only saying the other night that father must have been crazy to buy those magnificent emeralds when you were really getting too old to go out anywhere and wear them."

"It was an investment, when all the shares in the market were rotten, and government securities below par," replied the old lady with asperity. "I quite understand what you mean in saying other people could make better use of my property, but you'll have to wait for your share till I'm dead and buried. In the meantime, dear Julia will help me to keep everything in excellent preservation."

Some days after this the old lady got influenza, then Susan caught it, and Mary was also stricken. Then it was that the sterling goodness of Miss Park's character came out in full force. She took the entire management of the house, did all the cooking, dusted, polished, and tidied, till the whole place shone like a new pin. Warner was told off for personal attendance on the invalids, and, by the time she fell a victim

herself, Susan had sufficiently recovered to replace her. Without Miss Park's exhilarating presence they would have been a sorry lot, for with light footsteps she would enter their rooms many times a day, bringing them the sunshine of her bright face and merry laugh.

It was so modest and retiring of her, too, to be always washing up in back kitchen when the doctor came. He wanted to send in a nurse, but Mrs. Sherrington emphatically refused to have one, saying that "dear Julia was cleverer than a dozen trained nurses, and the most devoted creature in the world."

Indeed so great became the general adoration of Julia during the influenza convalescence that Minnie and George grew quite uneasy lest the lady companion was gaining undue influence over Mrs. Sherrington. They resolved to go over and warn her as soon as all infections had vanished. But their visit was unexpectedly hastened, for the very next morning, just as George was going off to the city, a telegram summoned them to No. 15. Their hansom had hardly stopped before the door when Warner appeared on the threshold.

"We're all so dreadfully upset, ma'am; Miss Julia's gone! Just took herself off without a moment's warning, and the Missis is most terribly put about!"

Husband and wife exchanged looks of approval and entered the morning-room.

At the sight of her daughter the old lady burst into tears.

"Oh, Minnie, what do you think has happened to dear Julia? You and George must find her for me. She's left us without a word—without one kind word—and we're all so fond of her. What can it mean?"

"I think your 'dear Julia' is a rude, unprincipled girl to treat you so badly," began George, severely.

"No, no, don't b' me the dear girl don't say anything against her. It was a dull life here for such a bright young thing, and maybe some bad man has induced her to clope with him. I do wish I had not let her go out so much alone."

"Oh, fudge, mother. She wasn't at all that sort of girl," interposed Minnie. "But you are too agitated to tell me any particulars as to how or when she went,