

conversion was the direct work of the Holy Spirit in answer to the wrestling, agonizing prayers of my dear mother.

"Some of the 'fruit of the Spirit' (Gal. v. 22,) were at once mine. 'Love, joy, peace,' filled my heart.

"I remember that I sat down at once and wrote mother that I had 'found Jesus.'

"He subsequently completed his preparation for College at Phillips' Academy, Andover, Mass. There, as wherever he went after his conversion, God blessed his faithfulness to the conversion of souls in the Institution, and in neighbouring villages in which, with other students, he established meetings.

"He entered Williams College in 1854. Without neglecting his studies, as his instructors testify, he labored earnestly and successfully for the conversion of his classmates. Among them was Henry Hopkins, the President's son, now chaplain in the army, with whom he attended meetings in Pownal, where together they went forth, weeping, 'bearing precious seed,' and they returned, 'bringing their sheaves with them.' The little company of seven or eight Christians was increased to a prosperous church. In the spring of 1855, he went, in behalf of the American Sunday-school Union, among the Alleghany Mountains, and planted several Sunday-schools during his vacation which in some instances proved to be the nucleus of churches.

"He received the degree of A. B., along with an appointment for Commencement, in 1858, and in 1861 the degree of A. M.

"The desire and intention to be a missionary had been cherished by the young disciple; but God otherwise ordered his useful life. In the year 1858, he became a student in Union Theological Seminary, New York, and in that great city, continued with unflagging zeal his home missionary work among the destitute."

WANTED, A HOME.

Those were the words which attracted my attention when I took up the *Times* one morning, about a year ago:

"WANTED, A HOME.—A young lady, alone in the world, desires to enter as a boarder. Liberal terms offered."

There was a touch of pathos in the wording of this want that appealed to me, and I became nervously impatient for my husband to come home, in order that I might try to win his permission to write and offer the advertiser a home with us. We were young married people, blessed with an increasing family and a small settled income, and, as we had a large house and large expenses, it seemed to me that this would be the very thing to meet our wants.

Our house was situated on the landward side of a cliff that reared itself on the beautiful western coast, and the situation possessed many advantages. We were only a mile from a fashionable watering-place. The views from our windows were not surpassed for beauty and wild grandeur on the coast-side, or for sweet, smiling, peaceful prettiness on the inland quarter. And the interior was well arranged and gracefully furnished. The only disadvantage, indeed, that the house possessed, was the great one to us, of being a high-rented one, and of demanding rather a large establishment. However, if this young lady who wanted a home would come and pay us liberally, neither the high rent nor the large establishment would be drawbacks any more.

Now, for ourselves. We were, as I have said, young people, and our friends were wont to aver that we were very attractive young people. My husband was a junior partner in a good, old-established banking-house, and I was more or less well known to the public as a painter of scenes in domestic life, that always commanded good places in the exhibitions, and good prices. Notwithstanding this latter fact, we wanted more than we had, for I had not been able to work very much of late, and my three babies took up a goodly portion of the time that I ought to have expended on my bread-winning art.

As soon as my husband came home that night I showed him the advertisement and propounded my plan to him.

"It would be a nice addition to our little party, if she's a nice girl," I argued, and he refused to admit that that was a reason for having her.

"We are very happy as we are, Flo," he said. "Our little party is too perfect in my eyes for me to wish to see it increased."

"But, Edgar, house-keeping on what we have is such hard work," I pleaded; and, if she would come to us and pay us liberally what matter whether she is nice or not? We could endure her."

"If you take that tone, Flo, what's the worth of anything but so much money as 'twill bring? I may conclude that you've made up your mind to try the experiment," he said, laughing.

"Not without your permission—but it would be such a help to us, Ted!" I said, eagerly.

And then, with a little more ado, we went into a committee of ways and means, and finally rose up with the determination to try how fortune would favour us with respect to this young lady, alone in the world, who wanted a home.

I wrote to the address she had given and stated our terms as concisely as I could. I also mentioned our respective professions, thinking with a justifiable pride in my own, that any cultivated girl could but be glad to be admitted as one of the family of an artist.

By return of post I got a letter acceding to my terms, and asking if she could come to us early in the following week.

"She doesn't say a word about references," I said, dubiously, as I handed the letter to my husband. "What a pretty name she has—Isabelle Cleveland!"

"The pretty name mayn't be her own," Edgar said laughing. "Well, little woman, you must gang your own gait; all I advise is that you don't let the account between you run on too long, or you may find yourself in the wrong box."

"She writes the hand of a frank, open nature," I said, reconsidering the epistle under discussion.

"Yes, it's good, bold writing," Edgar said, looking at it—"rather like a man's. However, deciphering character by means of calligraphy is all bosh; one of the cleverest, most original women I ever met with in my life wrote the most conventional, stiff, commonplace hand. We won't prejudge Miss Cleveland, though."

"And I may write and say she may come next week?" I interrogated.

"Yes, dear, if you're anxious to rush into your troubles so soon," he said laughing.

"Oh, Edgar, I won't foresee 'trouble' in the matter at all!" I remonstrated; "she is going to pay us so liberally that my load of housekeeping care will be lifted off my shoulders at once, and, additionally, being a young lady, she may turn out a most delightful companion for me. I won't foresee trouble."

"And I hope you won't have any, dear," he said, lightly; and then he went off to business, and I went over my house to see about making it put on its fairest aspect in the eyes of our new inmate.

My house was a very pretty one, and I was fond of it, as women are fond of the homes in which they are happy, and which they have arranged in a great measure according to their own taste. It always gave people blessed with the "artist's eye" the impression of being well-furnished, though an upholsterer would have deemed it wanting in much that the upholsterer's mind deems strictly essential. For instance, the carpets and curtains, the chairs and couches, were no longer new and bright and fresh. But the colours of all had been chosen judiciously, and, as now their first bloom was brushed off, there was a harmony of tint about them all that often made me find other people's furniture gaudy and glaring.

My drawing-room was my special pride. It was a long lofty room, with a fireplace at either end, and two large bay-windows in the side. It was papered with a delicate gray-and-gold paper, and the windows were draped with some soft-textured green material. There were a number of incongruous arm-chairs and easy lounges about, some covered with rose and gold-coloured satin, some worked in wool and some modestly clothed in brown holland. And these all stood out in clear relief on a dark polished floor, for economy and taste had combined to make us adopt the foreign custom of dispensing with a carpet. There were several quaint and beautiful cabinets, filled with old china and glass, and one that we called "the children's cabinet," in which were displayed the silver goblets, and ivory-bound books and other pretty things that had been given to our babies. And the walls were hung with fine rare old Venetian mirrors, a few good photographs and engravings, and several good specimens of Oriental and old French china plates and dishes, that were fastened up in a peculiar way with fine wire, making spots of "colour" on the delicately-tinted paper that were delicious to my eyes. Additionally, there were large and admirable copies of the Venus de Medici, the Venus of Milo, the Apollo Belvedere, the Clytie, the Ariadne (Dampiers) and other masterpieces of ancient and modern art, disposed about the room on pedestals. And there was one magnificent bronze—the pride of my heart—standing on a handsome marble pedestal in a corner that was sacred to herself—"The Abandoned Ariadne," a marvel of Barbidiene's—that glorified the room to my mind.

Scattered about, in a profusion that I had too correct an eye to suffer to degenerate into muddle, were Chelva china figures of a good period, old German and Italian glass jugs, and vases, and goblets; an Indian casket, in ebony, wonderfully carved; little tables of various shapes; ivory ornaments, leather fans, crosses on brackets in white and coloured marble, from which were suspended silver crucifixes and rosaries, and flowers—flowers everywhere!

In pots on the piano and the cabinets, on the big old china plates, on the polished floor, in baskets suspended from wire over the square opening that was made by the taking down of the double doors, in slender glasses—wherever, in fact, I could find a resting-place for them, my love of flowers induced me to put them. My room, as will be gathered from this description of it, was very pretty and very artistic, and it must be owned that I was justified in anticipating that it would strike the young lady who wanted a home very favourably.

What pains I took with the bedroom that was to be assigned to Miss Cleveland! It was a splendidly-proportioned room, with matchless views from both its windows, and it was furnished comfortably as well as elegantly. With my own hands I removed every particle of dust that had been left on the furniture by my less observant housemaid. Carefully and thoughtfully I dressed the two vases with flowers—one for the centre-table, and the other for the mantel-piece. Hopefully I arranged the minutiae of the dressing-table, so that the girl who wanted a home

might feel that her comfort was studied in the one she had chosen.

The day appointed for her arrival came, and I could not settle to my usual work at all, so impatient was I to see her. A dozen times I placed myself before my easel, and feebly essayed a few strokes with my brush. A dozen times I gathered my babies about me and strove to amuse them, and failed; for my heart was not in my task that day, and children are so quick to discover that fact. I dispensed with luncheon altogether, in order that my cook might devote all her energies to the elegant little dinner I had ordered for 7 that night. And, as may be supposed, my unusual excitement, idleness and abstinence made me feel very tired, low-spirited and nervous before Miss Cleveland had arrived.

She came at last, about 2 o'clock in the afternoon.

"A horrible time for any one to choose," I thought, discontentedly, as news of her advent was brought to me; and then before I had time to do more than feel that I was a trifle less well-dressed, a little less composed, a shade less well-prepared in body and mind for her than I would like to have been.

I confess to having been staggered out of these feelings most abruptly when she came into the room. In place of the fragile, shrinking, rather sorrowful-looking girl whom I had pictured to myself as wanting a home, I saw a fine, splendidly-arrayed woman, a year or two my senior. I rose to meet her with a gasp, and she advanced to meet me with a sweeping courtesy that made me feel very much at a disadvantage, although I was planted quite securely on my own domestic heights.

"I hope that we shall get on well together, and soon become very good friends, Mrs. Forrester," she began at once, and I felt I ought to have said that, and that she was robbing me of my prerogative of giving the initiative.

"You seem to have a very nice place here," she added, graciously, and then she threw off her hat and cloak, and I saw her as she was—one of the prettiest women I ever saw in my life.

Pretty in such a thoroughly comfortable way, if I may be allowed the expression. Plump and comely, this young lady who "wanted a home" had assuredly never wanted anything in her life without having it immediately. A fair embodiment of success and satisfaction—and yet, for all that, a woman with "a story," I was certain—a woman who was not quite what she seemed on the surface. A yellow-haired woman, with brown eyes and a perfectly clear, rosy complexion, with something not anxious, but interrogatory, in the brown eyes, though, and with something that was not quite suspicion, but that might possibly develop into it, in rapid glance and turn of the head. As I looked at her I became feverishly anxious to have my husband's judgment upon her; and when he came home he gave it to me without reservation.

"Well, Flo, I don't want to dishearten you—poor little hard-working woman—but before you have done with her you'll regret the hour that made you acquainted with Miss Cleveland, I fancy; there's something crooked. Has she offered any solution of the mystery of her loneliness?"

"No," I said, hesitatingly.

"It strikes me that she has come down here with some other object than the avowed one," he said, meditatively; "however, if you're satisfied, little woman, I ought to be, I suppose; so we'll make up our minds not to meet trouble half-way."

Trouble came fast enough; there was no need to go half-way to meet it. It commenced in this way. I have described my incongruously artistic drawing-room, and my pride in it. Well, Miss Cleveland elected not to "find it quite what she expected when she agreed to my terms; she must beg that I would put a carpet down; that slippery, cold floor made her shudder."

I apologized, pleaded, protested, argued, and finally effected a compromise. She would be contented with a Persian rug or two; but they "must be good." So I expended a small fortune in three, and hoped that her demands had come to an end. Not at all! She had "been fastidiously and delicately brought up," she said, "and naked images (thus she designated my beloved copies from the antique) made her shiver." With all an artist's fervour, I became counsel for the defence of their purity and excellence of purpose in design. But Miss Cleveland added blushes to her previous shiverings and shudders, and I had to give in. My statues were removed to my husband's study and my own bedroom, and I hoped that Miss Cleveland's scruples would *requiescant in pace*.

For a few days this seemed to be a well-founded assumption, and my bruised spirits recovered themselves sufficiently for me to tell my husband that I forgave the overthrow of my lares and penates, in consideration of the sensible relief from the addition to my household purse of what she paid me. He laughed and shook his head, and bade me "wait and see before I went over unreservedly to the enemy."

How can people bring themselves to speak lightly of what they term "minor miseries?" Those that I was called upon to endure would come into that category, I suppose; but what excruciating wretchedness they have caused me! I grew nervous and irritable, unfit for my work as a mother, wife and artist. But I endured on hopefully, and tried to make my husband believe that I found compensation for the ills I endured in Miss Cleveland's society.

About a week after the copies of the antiques had been condemned to beat a retreat I went down to the drawing-room one morning, and

found Miss Cleveland sniffing the air with a deeply-aggravated expression in her fine brown eyes.

"Is anything amiss?" I asked tremblingly, and, without hesitation, she told me that there "was something very much amiss. She had serious doubts about the plants."

"The plants?" I exclaimed, looking round anxiously at my healthy green friends. "They are doing beautifully; my plants always flourish."

"Ah, but they flourish at the expense of the human beings who live with them. I'm sure," she said, with some vehemence, "I have read in some medical work that they actually rob us of the oxygen we ought to take in when they thrive; and when they don't thrive your own common-sense will tell you how bad it must be to live in a room with decomposed vegetable matter. Besides, they harbour dust and insects."

After a brief argument I gave up the contest. I consented to sacrifice the loveliest ornaments my room could boast of, and when I had done it, Miss Cleveland triumphantly substituted some abominations made in wax.

"I think you are a goose to put up with it, Flo," Edgar said to me.

And for answer I reminded him that we had three small children, and that Miss Cleveland paid us at the rate of four hundred a year. Or at least she was to pay us at this rate according to our agreement, and I had no fear of her falling short of it. She had a fine, lavish way of spending her money on anything that struck her taste, that confirmed me in my belief that she was a very rich woman, although no coin of the realm had passed between us yet.

A thrill of suspicion would pass through my mind at night sometimes as I was lying broad awake. But, in the garish light of day, she looked so very frank, and fresh, and fair, and above-board generally, that I could not doubt her.

"We shall get the money all down in a big lump at the end of the quarter, probably."

"I hope we shall," he said, dubiously. "Meanwhile, dear, we must pay for the Persian rugs; she has 'exquisite taste,' no doubt, as you're always saying she has, but I wish it wasn't quite such an extravagant one."

Time went on, and Isabelle Cleveland had become very much one of us. Under her auspices my house had assumed an appearance of luxury and splendour which it had certainly been lacking in before. But the art aroma had fled from it. It was strictly conventional now in all its arrangements—strictly proper and comfortable, and conventional. But it had lost its look of individuality, and the process by which it had lost this had plagued us very deeply in debt.

At length I gathered up my courage, and spoke to her on the dreaded subject of payment. I well remember the morning on which I burst the bonds of silence. It was a summer morning, and at breakfast she had suggested a number of expensive alterations in the garden and conservatory, which, if carried out under existing circumstances, would, I felt, half ruin us. Under the influence of this terrible conviction I spoke.

"Belle," I said (we had grown so intimate and fond of one another that we had fallen into the womanly weakness of Christian-naming one another—"Belle," I really can't have any more beds cut in that lawn."

"Yet you pretend to be so fond of flowers!" she said, in some surprise; and I felt some embarrassment in explaining to her that I was "fond of many things that I felt I could not afford."

"Do you really mean that?" she said, looking at me dubiously, in some distress.

"Indeed I do," I said, dejectedly. "Ted and I have had a hard fight of it, I assure you; our expenses are heavy, and our ready money is short."

She looked wistfully away out of the window for a while, and then she turned to me and asked in an altered tone, if a "little ready money would be of any service to me now?"

"If you could let me have just the quarter," I said, with a spasm; "it would be very nice, very convenient, very helpful to me, indeed!" I blurted out at last, and I almost stifled with horror when she answered:

"Mrs. Forrester, I can't—I can't!"

"Not just yet, is that it?" I asked, in the weak hope that she was only sorry to be obliged to defer payment for a day or two.

"Not at all," she said, miserably. "I have been trying to make up my mind to tell you this, and I have put it off, thinking you were rich people, and it didn't matter."

I think she saw the shiver that passed over me as I reflected on the consequences that her imposture would bring upon us. A hideous array of unpaid bills stared me in the face—of unpaid bills that were to have been paid with that money which she had agreed to give us and which would never be paid now. In the bitterness of my spirit I let my head droop down into my hands and sobbed a weary, tired woman's sob of hopeless helplessness.

"Look here," she said at last, in a quick tone, that made me glance up, "I will tell you my story, and you shall judge for yourself which is the most wronged and the most to be pitied of us two. If I have run you into expenses that you can ill afford (and I see that I have done that now), I can help you out of them; but the wrong that has been done to me no one can right. Listen."

"Miss Cleveland, I am in no mood to listen to a tale that you well know how to tell to suit your own purpose," I said, bitterly. "I have