

"Yet I could never learn who she was. I think they were very strange people. She looked as if her name was Millicent, and I liked to fancy that she was very unhappy, though I must confess, she looked very far from it.

"One evening, however, I saw her crying at her window, with her face hidden in her hands. There were tears on her soft cheeks, and the thick, brown curls had fallen from the shining net of silk.

"I wrote a little note, and threw it across to her. It was a very bold step, but sympathy made me bold, as you shall see. The folded paper fell at her elbow.

"When she had read it she smiled sadly toward me, and with a quick, shame-faced glance, turned her face away.

"I knew that she thought she had done a very forward thing to read it, and I wanted to tell her that I loved her all the more for it: but suddenly, without a moment's warning, she turned white, and with a startled look of fear, closed the blinds. Then all was still. I hadn't heard anybody speak to her from within.

"And now comes the very strangest part of all. In the middle of the night, or towards morning rather, I woke up and thought I could hear muffled and cautious sounds, out of doors near by. Going to my window, I faintly distinguished in the gray dusk before dawn a waggon standing in front of the house next door. The possessions of the strange old man, whatever they were, were being hurriedly thrown into it. At last the waggon drove quietly off in the gloom, and the old man soon afterwards followed it down the street towards the harbor.

"I was alarmed for the lonely girl. I had not seen her at all. After a long interval, however, during which I suffered the most painful suspense, she too came out all alone upon the quiet street. The sun was just rising. She did not go in the same direction which her father had taken, but crossed the thick, dewy grass of the common, going towards Rampart Street. I could only see her back. The blue gown I followed with my eyes.

"She was all alone in the world it seemed to me, and as boys do, I wanted to be at her side in her day of sorrow. When she reached the further edge of the field, she stood still a few moments

in the faint early sunlight and looked back. It was to take a last look. I could see her blue gown against the red brick walls as she stood there all alone. A faint spot of blue, like a far-off violet growing amid red, fallen leaves. She looked as if she were crying. She was homeless, perhaps, and with no place to lay her beautiful head.

"The impulse was too strong to set aside, and I followed her as soon as I could. It was only a moment afterwards, and yet, to my amazement, I could find no trace of her anywhere. For an hour I wandered about the empty streets alone, but she was gone.

"By morning the fugitives had disappeared as completely as the phantoms that are supposed to walk by night.

"We could never learn why they had made so strange a departure. No one in the town had anything against them. The danger had come and had gone, and only they had seen it. It was very mysterious. Who was it drove them away? We saw no one.

"My child, for many years I have been waiting to see that little maiden again. She is in the wide world somewhere I know, and we shall meet each other even yet; and I have been looking forward to this so long, so very long!"

"And you have never loved anyone else?" Isabel asked, now brought completely under the spell, and with softened eyes, "just for her sake."

"For Millicent's sake, and for my own, too,—you see, Isabel, I love you yet."

"And—did—did I remind you of her?"

"Why, Isabel, you are she; have I not said. I have discovered you at last after all this time—no, you cannot deny that I have found you again. Tell me where you have been all these years."

"But I am only twenty." Percival Craig stroked Isabel's hand, and shook his head sorrowfully.

In spite of her cooler judgment, which repeatedly asserted itself, Isabel found herself constantly regarding his highly colored revelation as a sober reality, and answering accordingly. It was as easy, and at the same time as difficult, to regard seriously as a Canto from the