

BLACK AND SILVER.

"Of all the days in the week," sang Trissa Dundas, dolefully, "the one that I like least is Monday. What possesses mamma to fix upon it for mending-day I cannot imagine."

"It's got to be done, missio," said Peggy, the old servant, as she put on the table the second instalment of small garments and children's hose that required taping and repairing. "With such a lot of little 'uns-to make and mend for, your ma would never get through it all single-handed. You can't, for sure, grudge helping her!"

"I'll stick all my darning needles into you if you dare hint at such a thing, you malevolent old Peg!" cried Trissa, menacing her with them. I'd do mamma's share as well as my own if I could; but I must have the privilege of grumbling a little sometimes. It is such a glorious morning! My three cousins have just sailed by with their baskets. They are off to Hurley Wood to pick the first primroses, I know, and I am tied down to my work-box for the next three hours. Why do those dreadful children wear their things out so fast?"

"Eh, well you'll not be dull," said Peggy, who had stopped to wipe a spot off one of the windows; "for here comes Miss Sarah and her donkey-chay, and she'll tell you all the news of the parish. Bless her! she have got a wonderful memory, to mind" (recollect) "it as well as she do, and put so much on to it besides."

"Don't be disrespectful!" admonished Trissa, with a twinkle in her own eye. "Aunt Sarah's a dear old soul. I don't know what we should do without her!"

Trissa spoke truly, for unlike spinster aunts in general, Miss--or as she preferred to be called, Mrs.--Lovett was always cheerful and good-humored, and very fond of her relatives.

Not that she acted the part of a beneficent old fairy to them. She was rich, a rejected lover having bequeathed to her a handsome sum of money amassed in India; whereas both her sisters were in straightened circumstances, the one having married an attorney in a country town, where litigious people were too few to enable him to obtain a good practice, while the other had been early left a widow with three daughters to educate and provide for out of a small annuity.

Mrs. Gilham, the widow, thought that aunt Sarah might relieve her of Anna, or Jean, or Clara; while Trissa's mother would have been thankful for a little assistance in paying the school bills of her boys; and on two or three occasions Miss Lovett had been almost incited to help both; but she had a great objection to putting herself out of the way. She loved her own comfort more and more as she grew old and more corpulent; and though she had occasional fits of generosity, she spent the larger part of her income on herself, living peacefully in a cottage ornee at just sufficient distance from the town and her relations, to admit of her visiting them, or being visited, according to her humor.

"Dear, dear, dear me!" she weezed. Miss Sarah Lovett was not a disciple of Banting. "I do believe these stairs get narrower and steeper every time I come to see you!" here she kissed Mrs. Dundas, who had come down from the nursery to greet her, "what makes you look so pale and careworn? As I was just saying to sister Susan, it is so wrong to take life hard, and look upon the worst side of things! I make a point of never doing it myself."

"You haven't any troubles, aunt Sarah," said Trissa, coming to her mother's side, and putting up her face to be kissed.

"Bless you, bless you, my love! though you are a naughty child to tell untruths! If you knew how my servants worry me, and what shocking bad meat Ribs, the butcher, sends me! But do let me sit down. I think my heart must be affected, or else I have been doing too much lately."

"Have you heard the news?" asked Trissa. "Do you know that the Lavingtons are going to live at Monksholme again?"

Aunt Sarah forgot her ailments and sat upright. "Heard the news! Have I not? Lady Laura is here; she called on me yesterday. Mr. Walter has arrived in England, and she means to welcome him with all sorts of rejoicings—a dinner and a ball. I am to be one of the guests at the first, and she tells me all the young people in the neighborhood are to figure at the dance. I suppose I must have a new velvet dress; shall it be purple or prune? Of course you and Mr. Dundas are invited, eh, Marianne? What shall you wear?"

"My old black silk, I have nothing else," replied Mrs. Dundas, quietly. "My dear, you would look ladylike in a sack," responded aunt Sarah, with enthusiasm. "At the same time you could have anything of mine if it fitted you."

"But as none of your dresses will fit me I must be content with my own, and try whether a little lace will not make it presentable."

Miss Lovett smiled benevolently. "Nothing looks nicer than black silk and good lace, nor more becoming to your graceful little figure, for you are still graceful, Marianna. And how about Trissa? Her cousins are going to wear pink tartans."

"With their red—I mean auburn hair!" exclaimed her more tasteful niece. "Oh, no, aunt Sarah! Persuade them to white instead."

"But your aunt has bought the material. I happen to know this because she wanted to borrow a sovereign of me, and was rather put out when I could only spare twelve-and-sixpence. You see I run no bills, and with so many burglars about it's dangerous to keep much cash in the house. By the way, Marianna, Tapeley's muslins are very cheap if you should want one for Trissa."

Mrs. Dundas glanced sorrowfully at her daughter, who let a tear drop on the pinafore she was mending.

"Trissa will have to stay at home. She knows that I cannot ask her

father to buy her a ball-dress just as he has been at the expence of arting Archie to Mr. Sanby, the architect."

"Dear, dear me, what a thousand pities! Poor child, I wish one or other of my dresses would do for her."

In the midst of her mortification Trissa laughed.

"I am very glad they will not, aunt Sarah."

"Are you?" and Miss Lovett glanced complacently at her plump self in the chimney-glass. "It's fortunate that you are such a contented little soul, for as Clara Gilham was saying this morning, you are such a mite, with your dark skin and black eyes, that you would be certain to be overlooked in a crowded ball-room."

"But I should have gone to see, not to be seen," responded Trissa, who was accustomed to hear herself disparaged. "What a pretty sight it will be: Archie, who went to Monksholme yesterday with some plans Mr. Sanby had to send to Lady Laura, says there are men from London at work already, putting up chandeliers in the ball-room, and draping it with crimson and gold, the Lavington-colors."

"And everyone will be there but you!" ejaculated aunt Sarah. "Dear me, it is hard upon the child; Marianna. I suppose you could manage the slippers and gloves if she had the frock—because—"

Trissa clasped her hands together and listened breathlessly.

"Because in one of those chests of Indian goods poor Luke's excoctors sent me after his death, I remember that there is a quantity of China crape. Twice I have intended to have it made up for myself, but something has happened to prevent it. Now, I shouldn't mind lending it to Trissa."

"Lending it, Sarah!" echoed Mrs. Dundas. "If it were made up for her you could not use it."

"True; I forgot that. Well, then, I'll give it to you, Trissa darling. Kiss me for it, and—and you need not mention it to your aunt and cousins. They might be a little jealous—I am afraid they have a tendency that way—and we ought not to stir up evil passions."

When aunt Sarah had gone, Trissa executed a little dance of delight, and Mrs. Dundas was almost equally pleased.

The brave little elder daughter of her's had been called upon to make so many sacrifices that her mother's heart had ached for her when Mr. Dundas bluntly said he could not afford ball dresses, and she blessed her sister for coming to their aid.

It was no use attempting to secure the services of a dressmaker; the only really good one in the town was overwhelmed with work, and Mrs. Gilham had been obliged to entrust the pink tartans to a tyro.

So Trissa and her mother invested in a "Young Ladies Journal," and spent the afternoon in cutting and fitting linings, and deciding which style they would copy, when the China crape arrived.

By arrangement with Miss Lovett, who chose to invest her gift with a great deal of secrecy, the parcel was to be fetched in the evening by Peggy, who came in with it just as the little ones had gone to bed, and Trissa and her mother were free to examine and plan, and perhaps commence running the breadths of the skirt.

"Oh! stop and see my beautiful gown, Peggy!" cried the delighted recipient of the parcel, as it was handed to her. "It is sure to be lovely. China crape always is, and falls in such deliciously soft folds. But what is this?" for a smaller parcel fell out of the larger one.

"A crimson scarf as Miss Sarah have loaned you to wear over your shoulders." "How good of her! Lend me your scissors, mamma, to cut the string. Now behold!"

Off fell the last wrappings of paper, and Trissa retreated from the table with a shriek, for the crape—of excellent texture—was in color a hideous grass-green!

Everyone sympathized with Trissa in her disappointment, and Peggy did the kindest thing she could when she bundled up the roll of material and whisked it out of sight.

"Is it quite impossible for you to wear the stuff?" asked Archie who was present.

His sister burst into an angry laugh.

"Would you like to see me with my brown skin and black hair figuring at Monksholme in a gown that would make me the butt of all beholders?"

"Well," said the lad, philosophically, "if there's no help for it, what's the use of fretting?"

But Trissa's tears only fell faster till her mother said anxiously:

"My love you will make yourself ill, and then what shall I do?" "Let me cry a little more," sobbed the girl, "and then I will wipe my eyes and forget my trouble. Dear mother, it is a shame to worry you," and Mrs. Dundas was fondly kissed, "but I am dreadfully disappointed, it's no use denying it!"

Mrs. Dundas was very tender with Trissa after this, and so was Archie; he was apt to tease his sister himself, but he did not like to see her look sad, and though he inveighed against the folly of girls dressing themselves up in a jig about a room till they get hot and tired, he paid a good many visits to Peggy in the kitchen to rail—or so his mother fancied—against the stupidity and selfishness of aunt Sarah.

But after being closeted with the old servant for a long time one evening he burst into the parlor with a loud hurrah.

"Three cheers for old Peg! She's a brick!—she's a woman of genius! She's dyed the crape, and it's grass-green no longer!"

But alas! it was black, and Trissa, whose hopes had been raised for a moment, glanced ruefully at the long length of sombre material the old servant was proudly displaying.

"It's very good—very kind of you, Peggy," she faltered, "but Archie's mamma—I could not go in *that*, could I?"

"Couldn't she dance as well in a black frock as a white one, eh, ma?" queried Archie.