

was not an extra good hand at small talk.

Maud looked at him. Was he going to ignore the appeal which had cost her such an outlay of nervous force? Well, there was no use in losing one's temper over Uncle Nathan. One might as well meet him on his own ground.

Maud did her best to rid her voice of resentment before she replied: 'I try to like anything I have to do. And if I don't succeed in liking it, why, I do it just the same. I suppose that's the way to get to liking things—to keep on doing them. I might even get to doting on washing, if I kept at it long enough.'

Then, because she felt somewhat embarrassed, and because she was tired standing bolt upright beside the tub, she poured a fresh supply of boiling water into the tub, and went to scrubbing again.

Uncle Nathan made no attempt to resume the conversation, but took off his hat and threw it on the table. Then he stretched out his long legs and fixed himself comfortably to watch the washing process.

But the girl at the tub was in no wise comfortable. It was worse than the hot day and the stifling steam combined to have Uncle Nathan sitting there like that. She felt like asking him if he had come to take lessons, and to remind him that in school they had the observers take a hand in the work. But, then, Uncle Nathan might not see the joke, and she really would not have him think her saucy. He was odd and crusty and sharp, but who wouldn't be, living alone for fifty years? He might have had the inestimable privilege of being mellowed by living with her and her mother, thought Maud, with an inward chuckle at Uncle Nathan's probable estimate of such a privilege.

'Rogers said that they sent you down to that ungraded class in the Abraham Lincoln district this spring, and that you kept the terrors absolutely quiet for a month. Is that so?' Uncle Nathan burst out, suddenly.

Maud laughed. 'Well, not absolutely quiet. I let them speak occasionally; to recite, you know.'

'Rogers said they had five substitutes there in two weeks, and they all left in disgust,' proceeded Uncle Nathan; 'and there wasn't another substitute to try on 'em, so they had to send up for a normal girl. Rogers said he had sent Alma Richardson, and the young scamps picked her up first thing and pitched her through the keyhole.'

'O Uncle Nathan!' protested Maud. 'Alma stands highest in the class. She's a splendid scholar, but she did hate to scold the children, that was all. She said if she had it to do over again, she would do very differently. That was rather a peculiar class. She might never strike another like it.'

'Yes, that Abraham Lincoln ungraded has always been a very peculiar class,' remarked Uncle Nathan, dryly. 'Rogers said they sent the Peters girl down next, and that the teachers all went running in to see if she had given her pupils a dose of poison, they were so quiet. And Devoll telephoned right up to the normal to tell Rogers that the Boers had surrendered at last.'

'Why, it was nothing,' murmured Maud. 'I kept them hard at work, that was all.'

They didn't have time to cut up. It was really very simple.'

'That position is open,' observed Uncle Nathan, in his most businesslike tone. 'They've put the ungraded teacher into the seventh, and Devoll has asked for you. Do you want it?'

It was not exactly what she had hoped for. Maud had to admit that to herself, but only to herself. She raised a resolute face and looked at her uncle.

'I will take it, Uncle Nathan, and be glad to get it,' she said, pleasantly; 'and I thank you for helping me.'

Uncle Nathan rose and snatched his hat. 'I didn't help you,' he said, gruffly; 'not a bit. You helped yourself when you got the chance. I'm glad you had sense enough to see your chance. It isn't everybody that has. You have the regular old Peters' grit, and I'm proud of you, if you are a woman. If you'd had my money to depend on, you wouldn't have amounted to an old shoe-string.'

With which most agreeable parting shaft Uncle Nathan rushed out of the door. But he thrust his head back to say, 'You know the ungraded teacher has a hundred a year more than the regular teachers.' Then the door banged, and Uncle Nathan was gone.

For a minute Maud stood looking at the door, scarcely realizing what had come to her. Then she shook her arms and ran upstairs as fast as she could.

'O mother, mother,' she called, 'I have the school. Uncle Nathan just gave it to me. And we can live here, just the same, and we'll have Nora back to take care of you, and we'll not need to worry about money any more—not even Uncle Nathan's.'

She Loved the Author.

A young lady, some years since, received a book as a present. She took it up several times and tried to read it, but it seemed dull. So it was laid aside. A year or two later she was introduced to a gentleman whom she met frequently after that. The two became excellent friends, and at length their friendship ripened into love. About that time, too, she discovered that he was the author of the book which she had tried to read and had found somewhat dull. She sought the book again; now every page held golden thoughts for her. It was no longer dull. The writer was her friend. Love was now her interpreter. She wondered how she could ever have considered the book uninteresting. The Bible seems dull to you—or at least you cannot find the interest in it that some people find in its pages. Perhaps if you knew Christ better it would be different. If you only remembered that he—your dearest and best Friend—is the Author of the book, its words would have new meanings for you.—Rev. J. R. Miller.

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The Imperial Chrysanthemum Party.

(Kara G. Smart, in 'Union Signal.')

Chief among the many new and varied experiences I have had in this Sunrise Land is that of the Imperial Garden Party, given by the Emperor of Japan, in the grounds of the Akasaka Palace, on November 12th.

Through the kindness of the United States Minister I was favored with an invitation to this important social function, which is always the event of the season.

An hour's ride in our jinrikishas brought us to the Eastern Gate of the palace grounds. We alighted, and after walking a few steps we came to two large white tents on each side of the driveway, just outside of the gate. Under a large awning in front of these tents were groups of officials and courtiers awaiting the arrival of the guests.

As we drew near, two of the courtiers came towards us, greeted us, took our cards, and passed us on through the gate, where we immediately found ourselves in a veritable fairy land.

With no one to act as a guide, we naturally followed the leading of a wide gravel walk which wound in and out and through the most bewitching scenery. Following it we found, stationed at intervals, the imperial guards in full uniform. As each guest passed a guard, he or she was greeted with the military salute. We walked on, and there burst upon our vision tiny lakes on whose placid bosoms the swans were quietly sailing; hills and dales clad in green, fringed with scarlet maple; a narrow and sinuous river was bridged at short distances by the most gracefully arched structures, and here and there we caught glimpses and heard the splashing of the pretty waterfalls, while beautiful hedges of bamboo and a shrub with waxy green leaves and bright red berries were to be found everywhere.

We climbed the hills and wandered down the valleys, often stopping to enjoy in wonder and admiration our beautiful surroundings. At last we came to the foot of the highest hill of all. Then began a long climb up the wooden steps set in the gravel walk, which led to the summit. We reached the top to find that the upper part of the hill had, seemingly, been cut off and levelled down to form an immense courtyard, surrounded on all sides with a high bamboo fence.

At the opening of the courtyard we were welcomed by a group of officials, and passed in to find ourselves in the midst of a most charming scene. On all sides were the immense bamboo booths under which were to be seen the dainty blossoms. Such a display of chrysanthemum flowers and plants we had never before seen and do not expect to see again. There they stood, like sentient beings, clad in white silk, and in handsome, brocade satin—yellow, pink, red, purple and scarlet in color. There were rows and rows of them, each with its fancy name—'White Mountain Sunset View,' 'Field of Gold' and 'Chinese Brocadex.' Some of the larger plants had an extraordinarily large number of blossoms. One had 752 blossoms: Tachino-wo, a white variety, 465; and the most noted of all, Akagi, had this year the enormous number of 1,272 chrysanthemum flowers on a single thick stem. None of these