

Oakenbury was one of those rare towns where Sunday is still kept in the old-fashioned way. When Becky woke up in the morning, the early sunshine filled her little bedroom, and as she opened her window wide, the rustle of the chestnut leaves came in with a sweet, soothing sound. Everything spoke of peace; birds sang joyously, and when the bells began to chime, she remembered the childish days when she had walked to church, holding her mother's hand. Memories of a Christian home, of love, and faith and patience with the infirmities of others, came back to her in the first hours of the holy day. She was left alone in the world, and yet not alone, because there is no solitude for those who hear the voice of the Comforter, and take His words into the innermost heart.

The peaceful day passed without bringing Carry. Monday and Tuesday came and went; and on Wednesday Becky put on her simple evening dress without interruption. She wore some rich scarlet anemones in her soft cream-colored gown, and Mrs. Saunderson, when she welcomed her, thought that she had never looked so pretty before. Someone else thought so, too; Carry, who had arrived first, reluctantly acknowledged Becky's beauty, and sent a keen glance in the direction of Edmund Warrenne.

It was a small, friendly dinner; Edmund sat next to Becky and told her that he had something to show her by and by.

"Mrs. Saunderson asked me to bring it with me," he said. "It is a relic of bygone days; a bracelet which belonged to Henrietta Maria."

"The queen of Charles the First," Becky answered.

"Yes, she gave it to the wife of an ancestor of mine. And my uncle, Sir Luke, presented it to my mother in a fit of generosity, so it has come into my possession. It is the only historical souvenir that I can boast of."

"I hope there is a story attached to it," Becky said.

"There is; but I know little more than the outlines of the tale. My ancestor Edward de Warrenne, fell in love with a lady of Henrietta's household, and the queen favored his suit. But the course of true love proved rough indeed; De Warrenne went abroad just before the great tragedy was enacted at Whitehall, and his poor lady-love, left lamenting at home, received the bracelet as the last gift of her mistress. Years went by, before the parted couple met again; the bloom of youth was gone, but the love was of the kind that never fades; and when Charles the Second was proclaimed king, De Warrenne returned to England to marry his faithful betrothed. Tradition says that she wore the queen's bracelet on her bridal day. Since then it has been worn by one Lady de Warrenne after another, and they have been true spouses, every one."

Dinner came to an end; the ladies retired to the drawing-room, and the men soon joined them. Then Mrs. Saunderson, ever a tactful hostess, gathered a little group into a corner, and called upon Edmund to produce the bracelet.

Long afterwards Becky could recall every detail of that evening; she could remember the glass doors opening upon the verandah, the sweet scent of the plants in great majolica jars, the soft glow of the lingering daylight. The girls had drawn close to Edmund, and Carry was the first to take the bracelet from his hand. She stepped out on the verandah to see it better, and Becky and another lady followed her.

"Turquoises, pearls, and garnets, thickly set in a band of chased yellow gold—one can hardly believe that it belongs to the Stuart days," Carry said. "And yet it has an ancient look when one examines it. I like to think of the white arms it has clasped, and of the hearts that have throbbed near it! There—I can imagine myself a dame of olden time."

In an instant she had clasped the bracelet, and held out a white arm to show the effect. Becky thought that she looked very well at that moment. A hanging basket, overflowing with light foliage, swung just above her head,