

But to this proposal I at once put a decided negative. To look at his picture—which all the world may soon see—is one thing, to pry into the secrets of his photographic album, another. I wonder if Mrs. Wauchope is equally obliging in exhibiting my photographic album to the Misses Pryce! I shall look it up religiously in future, lest she should be as anxious to amuse them at my expense as she is to amuse me at Mr. Baxter's.

"I'm just going in to dust his looking-glass," Mrs. Wauchope announces, and suits the action to the word by disappearing into the inner room.

And I look about me, utterly refusing to let the idea of Aunt Rosa enter my head. A shaft of the early March sunshine streams in through the skylights, lighting up a dusty canvas here, a gilded frame there, bringing into greater prominence some bit of smiling landscape or some cobwebbed "property," and shining full upon the dead cat. "Lia in the little glass at my elbow. My eye rests on the withered "button-hole" meditatively at first, pitying the poor flower, which certainly no "useless water-springs" have "mocked into living." But all at once a spirit of mischief enters into me—a brilliant idea which is worthy of Olive Deane herself! Yet ought I to do it? Nobody will ever know—Mrs. Wauchope will never suspect, nor can the "subtle spider, which from overhead looks like a spy on human guilt and error," tell the secret, and within these four walls there are no living creatures but the spiders and myself. What living human could turn informer, if I were to take the withered camellia out of the glass and put the fresh sweet dewy bunch of violets I am wearing into it instead?

If I do it at all, I must do it now, while Mrs. Wauchope's back is turned. Again my conscience whispers "Do not do it!" and again I turn a deaf ear to its voice. How he will puzzle over the changing! If he asks Mary Anne, she will be able to tell him nothing, she being at this moment in the market buying vegetables for "the parlors," and Mrs. Wauchope, even if she suspects me, would not dare to tell him that she had allowed me to pry into his rooms. Time and the opportunity are too much for me—in another instant I have transferred the violets from my dress to the glass, and am holding the dead camellia hidden in the palm of my hand.

"I suppose you've seen all you want to see, Miss Allie?" unsuspecting Mrs. Wauchope says, coming back with her black-silk apron full of the empty cigar boxes. "And how any one can live in such a den," she adds, her cursory glance taking in the artistic litter which certainly abounds in the place, with as much disgust as if it were her own ash heap, "passes my comprehension! And the smell of tobacco-smoke would suffocate you, sometimes—I'm often afraid Miss Pryce will get a whiff of it in the parlors! If you'll close the door, Miss Allie, I'd be obliged to you—you see my hands are full."

The moment I have closed the door my mind misgives me. But it is too late. The deed done cannot be undone; and, with the camellia in my hand, I descend the stairs leisurely, laughing to myself, as I look round the passages which must be so familiar to him, at Mrs. Wauchope's Machiavelian method of extinguishing all curiosity in Mr. Baxter's mind with regard to her drawing-room lodger.

"I wonder where he got this!" I say to myself, as I bring the dead exotic to light in the privacy of my own room, a minute later. "Perhaps somebody gave it to him. Perhaps he values it, dead as it is, more than tons of the sweetest and freshest violets! If that is the case, how he will bless the thief who stole it! How he will maltreat my poor little violets! Yet I fancy he bought this flower—there is half a yard of wire round it. And, if he cared very much for it, he would scarcely have left it to die for lack of water in a dusty vase."

Nevertheless I shut it up in a bon bon box, and lock it into my wardrobe, feeling vaguely conscious of a possibility of having to produce it at some future time. I have stolen it, that is certain; and should it chance to be discovered, I might be called upon to restore the pilloined property, even though it be only a dead camellia. I feel rather guilty as I turn the key in my wardrobe. What would Mr. Baxter say if he could have seen me putting up his discarded "button-hole" in a pasteboard box? Would he not think with reason that I valued the flower because he had worn it for one evening in his coat—I, who never beheld him in my life? And what would Aunt Rosa say? I do not dare to dwell on Aunt Rosa's sentiments. The mildest thing she could say of me would be that I had taken leave of my senses. I shall not tell her, or anyone else, what I have done—not even Olive Deane. Great a madcap as Olive is, I doubt whether she would present a bouquet to a man who was a stranger to her. Thinking of it in this light, my cheeks grow hot suddenly, and I hope the violets will be dead before he sees them—violets wither very soon out of water—these will be black and dead to-morrow, if they spend the night in that dry dusty glass.

As I put on my fur cap to go to my singing-class, I wonder vaguely if he is as handsome as Mrs. Wauchope describes him, and if he cares as little for young ladies as he tells her he does; and then I button on the jacket of thick grey tweed which matches my dress, and, sallying out into the cold March morning-air, straightway forget that there is such a person in existence as Mrs. Wauchope's "attica."

"Wasn't it stupid of me? I quite forgot to ask Fred if he knew anything of 'G. B.,' Olive says, as we issue out of Madame Cronhelm's house with half a dozen other girls, all carrying portfolios of music. 'They are all talking so much of the wedding that it puts everything else out of my head.'

"His name is Baxter—Gerard Baxter. Mrs. Wauchope told me so this morning," I answer, the recollection of my morning's misdemeanor flashing into my mind for the first time since I left the house. "He is a landscape-painter, and his people are Scotch; he has nobody belonging to him but an old grandmother, Mrs. Wauchope thinks, who lives in Edinburgh. And he's as proud as Lucifer and as poor as a church-mouse."

(To be Continued.)

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To the Electors of Ward 4.

GENTLEMEN,—Having received from the Electors of your Ward a large and influential requisition, numerous signed, inviting me to offer myself as a candidate for Alderman at the coming Civic Election. I will say in reply that I accept your kind invitation, and if elected, will, to the best of my ability, strive to especially promote the interest of Ward Four, and likewise the City of Halifax at large. Respectfully soliciting your support on the 24th of April, 1886.

I remain, Gentlemen,
Yours respectfully,
J. E. TRISH.

To the Electors of Ward 1.

GENTLEMEN,—Having accepted a very influential and numerous signed requisition from the electors of the ward, requesting me to be your candidate for Alderman at the ensuing election on April 28th, if you see fit to place me in that responsible position by your vote and influence, I shall do my utmost to further the interests of the city generally, never forgetting the requirements of Ward One, in which I am now, and have been, for many years a resident property owner.

I remain, gentlemen,
Yours sincerely,
T. E. COOKE.

Halifax, March 20th, 1886.

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