# QUEENIE HETHERTON.

By Mrs. Mary J Holmes, author of "Tempest and Sunshine," "Ethelyn's Mistake," "Forrest House," etc.

## CHAPTER IV.

THE INVESTIGATION.

"Well, this is a jolly place for the kind of girl I fancy Miss Reinette to be," Phil said, as he strolled through the grounds, putting aside with his cane the weeds, and shrubs, and creeping vines, which choked not only the flower-beds, but even the walks themselves.

Everywhere were marks of ruin and decay, and the house seemed worse than all the rest, it was so damp and gloomy, with doors off their hinges, floors half rotted away, and the glass gone from most of the lower windows.

"Seems like some old haunted castle, and I kind of feel my flesh creep, don't you?" Phil said to his companion, as they went through room after room below, and then ascended the broad staircase to the floor above.

"Suppose we first take the room intended for Miss Reinette?" Mr. Beresford suggested, and they bent their steps at once toward the large chamber with the bay window overlooking the town and the country for miles and miles away.

As they stepped across the threshold both men involuntarily took off the hats they had worn during their investigation. Perhaps neither of them was conscious of the act, or that it was a tribute of respect to the unknown Reinette, who was in the thoughts of both as they stood in the great silent, gloomy room, from which the light was excluded by the heavy shutters which had withstood the ravages of time. This had evidently been the guest chamber during the life of Mrs. Hetherton, and the furniture was of solid mahogany and of the most massive kind, while the faded hangings around the high-post bed were of the heaviest silken damask. But the atmosphere was close and stifling, and Mr. Beresford drew back a step or two while Phil pressed on until he ran against the sharp corner of the bureau and uttered a little cry of pain.

"For Heaven's sake come out of this,' Mr. Beresford exclaimed. "Let's give the whole thing up, and let Mr. Hetherton fix his own old rookery. We can never make it decent."

"Just hold on a minute," said Phil, making his way to a window. "Wait till I let in a little air and light. "There," he continued, as he opened window after window and pushed back the heavy shutters, one of which dropped from the hinges to the ground. "There, that is better, and does not smell so like an old cheese cupboard, and look, Beresford, just see what a magnificent view. Ten villages, as I live, and most as many ponds, and the river, and the hills, with old Wachusetts in the distance."

It was indeed a lovely landscape spread out before them, and Phil, who had an artist's eye for the beautiful, enjoyed it to the full, and declared it as fine as anything he had seen in Switzerland, where he went once with his father just before he entered college. Mr. Beresford was, however, too much absorbed in the duties devolving upon him to care for views, and Phil himself soon came back to the room and examined it minutely, from the carpet, molding on the floor, to the rotten hangings on the bed, which he began at last to pull down, thereby raising a cloud of dust from which Mr. Beresford beat a hasty retreat.

"I tell you what," he said, "it's of no kind of use. I shall wash my hands of the entire job, and let Miss Reinette arrange her own room."

"Nonsense! you won't do any such thing," said Phil. "It's not so very terrible, though I must confess it's a sweet-looking boudoir for a French lady to come to, but it can be fixed easy enough. I'll help. I can see the end from the beginning. First, we'll have two or three strong women. I know where they are. I'll get 'em. Then we'll pitch every identical old dud out of the window and make a good bonfire—that falls naturally to the boys. Then we, or rather, the women, will go at the room hammer and tongs, with soap, and sand, and water, and burnt feathers, if necessary. Then we'll get a glazier and have new window-lights put in, and a painter with paint-pot and brush, and a paperer to cover the walls with—let me see, what shade will suit her complexion, I wonder. Is she skim-milky, with tow hair, like the Fergusons generally, or is she dark, like the Hethertons, do you suppose?"

"I'm sure I don't know or care whether she is like a Dutch doll or black as a nigger. I only wish she would stay in France, where she belongs," growled Mr. Beresford, very sweaty, and a good deal soiled with the dust from the bed-curtains which Phil had shaken so vigorously.

"Take it cool," returned Phil. "You'll be head and ears in love, and go down on your knees to her in less than a month."

"She'll be the first woman I ever went on my knees to," said Mr. Beresford, while Phil rejoined with a saucy curl of the lips:

"Not even my fair cousin Anna?"

"Anna be hanged," retorted Mr. Beresford who knew that Anna Ferguson would walk miles for the chance of a smile from him.

"Upon my word you are very complimentary to my relations," said Phil, "but no matter, it's too hot to fight you now, so let's finish this room. Reinette is light, of course; there never was a Ferguson yet who had not a complexion like a cheese, so we will have the paper a soft creamy tint, of some intricate pattern, which she can study at her leisure mornings when she is awake and does not want to get up. That settles the paper, and now for the furniture—something light—oak, of course, and real oak, no sham for the queen. Musquito net—coarse, white lace trimmed with blue, for blondes and blue always go together. So, we'll loop the muslin window curtains back with blue, and have some blue and white what do you call 'em, Beresford—those square things the girls are always making for backs of chairs, and bureaus, and cushing; you know what I mean?"

"No, I don't. I'm not a fool to know all the paraphernalia of a girl's bed-chamber," growled Mr. Beresford, while Phil replied, with imperturbable good nature:

"Neither am I a fool because I can no more enter a room without knowing every article and color in it, and whether they harmonize or not, than you can help hearing of a projected law suit without wondering if you shall have a hand in it. *Chacun a son gout*, my good fellow. You see I am beginning to air my French, as I dare say this little French queen speaks atrocious English. Do you understand French, Beresford?"

"Scarcely a word, and I am glad I do not. English is good enough for me," said Mr. Beresford, thinking to himself, however, that he would privately get out his grammar and French Reader, and brush up his knowledge of the language, for if the foreigner, in whom he was beginning to feel a great deal of interest, really could not speak English readily, it would never do to give so much advantage to handsome, winning Phil, who startled him with the exclamation:

"I've got it! Tidies!—that's what I mean. Blue and white tidies on the bureau, with little fancy scent-bottles standing round—new-mown hay, jockey club, and eau-de-cologne, the very best that Mrs. Maria Ferina Regina can make; and soap! By Jove! she shall have the very last cake of the box I got in Vienna nine years ago; I keep it in the drawer with my shirts, and collars, and things, for perfumery, you know; but I've got to give it up now. Not but Miss Reinette will bring out a cart-load, but I wish her to know that we Americans have foreign soap sometimes, as well as she. Then, there's powder; I must get sister Ethel to give me some of Pinaud's."

"Powder! What do you mean?" Mr. Beresford asked, in unfeigned surprise; and Philip replied:

"Now, Beresford, are you putting on, or what? Is it possible you have lived to be forty years old——"

"Only thirty-five," interrupted Mr. Beresford, and Phil continued:

"Well, thirty-five, then. Have you lived to be thirty-five, and don't know that every grand lady has a little powder-pot and puff-ball on her dressing bureau, just to touch her skin and make it feel better when she's moist. Some of it costs as high as three dollars a package—that's the kind Reinette must have. You ought to have some, too. It would improve that spot of the dust of the Hethertons which has settled under your nose. There—don't rub it with your hands; you make it worse than ever. We must hunt round for some water to wash your face before we go back to town. But let's furnish this room with matting, which we quite forgot, and a willow chair in the bay-window, and a work-table, with some poetry and one of Ouida's novels on it, and another chair close by, with the cat and kittens. That will make the picture complete, and if she is not satisfied then she's hard to suit. I'll make this room my special charge; you needn't bother about it at all. I was going right down to the Vineyard, but shall wait to greet my cousin. And now, come on, and let's investigate the rest of the old hut while there is daylight to do it in."

Mr. Beresford was not at all loth to leave the close room which smelled so musty and damp, but which really seemed in a better state of preservation than other parts of the house. Everything had gone to decay, and but for Phil he would have been utterly discouraged and abandoned all attempts to restore the place to anything like a habitable condition. Phil was all enthusiasm, all hopefulness, and knew exactly what ought to be done, and in his zeal offered to see to nearly everything, provided his friend did not limit him as to means. This Mr. Beresford promised not to do. Money should be forthcoming even if a hundred workmen were employed, as Phil seemed to think there must be, the time was so short, and they would like to have things decent at least for Miss Reinette, of whom they talked and speculated as they rode back to town. Was she pretty, they wondered, and the decision was, that as all young girls have a certain amount of pretty ness, she probably was not an exception; yes, she was pretty, unquestionably, and Frenchy, and spoiled, and a blonde, Phil said, for no one with a drop of Ferguson blood in their veins was ever anything but that, and the young man spoke impatiently, for he was thinking of his own lilies and roses, and fair hair which he affected to hate.

"Of course she is *petite*," Mr. Beresford said, but Phil did not agree with him.

He was himself six feet; his mother was tall; his cousin Anna was tall. All the Ferguson's were tall, and the young men bet a soft hat on the subject of Reinette's height. They were getting very much interested in the young lady, nor was their interest at all diminished when, as they reached the village, they called at the post-office and found a letter from her, which, though sent by the same steamer with her father's, had not reached Merrivale until that evening. The handwriting was very small, but very plain and pretty; the letter was very short and ran as follows:

"HOTEL MEURICE, PARIS, June—.

"MR. ARTHUR BERESFORD.—Dear Sir: I have just discovered that papa has written to you and told you among other things to have a little saddle pony in readiness for me. Now I will not have a pony. I detest a little horse as much as I do a little woman, and I must have a great tall horse, who will carry me grandly and high. The biggest and grandest you can find. Truly,

"REINETTE HETHERTON."

It almost seemed to the young men that they held the unknown Reinette by the hand, so near did this letter bring her to them, and such insight into her character did it give them.

"She has a mind of her own and means to exercise it," said Mr. Beresford, while Phil, intent upon the soft hat, said:

"You will lose your bet, old fellow. Nobody but an Amazon would insist upon a great tall horse. It is just as I told you. She is five feet eleven at least. I want a nice hat, and if you don't object, I'll pick it out myself and send you the bill."

"I was just thinking of doing the same by you, for only a wee little creature would want a tall horse to carry her grandly and high," said Mr. Beresford, still studying the gilt-edged sheet of note-paper where there lingered a faint, delicate perfume which miles of travel by land and sea had not quite destroyed.

"*Ah bien, nous verrons*," said Phil; then, bidding good-night to his friend, he walked away, humming softly an old French song, of which Mr. Beresford caught the words, "*Ma petite reine.*"

"Confound the boy," he said to himself. "He'd better up in French than I am, and that will never do."

Arrived at his rooms, Arthur Beresford's first act after putting Reinette's letter carefully away, was to hunt his long-neglected Ollendorf over which he pondered for two hours or more, with only this result, that his head was full of all sorts of useless and nonsensical phrases, and that even in his dreams he kept repeating over and over again. "*Avez vous mon chapeau? Oui, monsieur, je l'ai.*"

## CHAPTER V.

PHIL INTERVIEWS HIS GRANDMOTHER.

After leaving Mr. Beresford Phil concluded, before going home, to call on his grandmother and ask if she had ever heard of a granddaughter in France. The house of Grandma Ferguson, as she was now universally called, was the same low, old-fashioned brown building under the poplar trees where she had sold gingerbread and beer in the days when Paul Rossiter and Fred Hetherton came wooing her two daughters Mary and Margaret. In her youth Grandma Ferguson had been a tall slender, well-formed girl, with a face which always won a second glance from every one who saw it. In fact, it was her pretty face which attracted honest John Ferguson when he was looking for some one to be a mother to his little girl. Margaret Martin was her real name, but everybody called her Peggy, and everybody liked her, she was so thoroughly kind-hearted and good-natured, and ready to sacrifice herself in every and any cause. But her family was terribly against her, and *getting on* was an uphill business with her. Her father was coarse and low, and a drunkard, and her brothers were coarser and lower than he, and the most notorious fighters in town, while her mother was a shiftless, gossipy, jealous woman, who would rather receive charity at any time than work, and who always grumbled at the charity when given. But against Peggy's reputation not a whisper had ever been breathed. She was loud-talking, boisterous and ignorant, and a Martin, but perfectly honest, straightforward, and trusty, and from the day John Ferguson, the thrifty stone-mason, took her to his home to look after his house and child her fortune was made, for in less than six months she became his wife. As Mrs. John Ferguson she was somewhat different from Peggy Martin, and tried, not without success to lower her voice and soften her manners; but her frightful grammar remained unchanged, and her slang was noted for its originality and force. But she was a good mother, and wife, and neighbor, and after her father and mother died, and her fighting brothers emigrated to California, she shook the Martin dust from her skirts and mounted several rounds higher on the ladder of respectability. But she did not get into society until some years after the Rossiters were established in the great house on the Knoll. Her faithful John was under the sod, and the beer sign gone from the window of the low brown house where she lived in comfort and ease, with a colored servant Axie, who was very serviceable to her indulgent mistress, making her bread, and pies, and caps, and frequently correcting her grammar, for Axie knew more of books than Mrs. Peggy.

To Mrs. Rossiter Grandma Ferguson was a care and sometimes a trouble; to the young ladies, Ethel and Grace, she was an annoyance and a mortification, both from her manners, her grammar, and her showy style of dress, while to Phil, who did not care in the least how she talked or how she dressed, she was a source of fun and amusement, and he frequently spent hours in her neat, quiet sitting-room, or out on the shaded back porch where he found her on the evening of his return from Hetherton Place. With increasing years Grandma Ferguson had lost the slight, willowy figure of her girlhood, and had reached a size when she refused to be weighed. So saucy Phil set her down at two hundred and fifty and laughed at her sylph-like form, which he said he could not encircle with both his long arms. All delicacy of feature and complexion had departed, and with her round red face and three chins she might well have passed for some fat old English or German dowager, especially when attired in her royal purple moire antique, which she always called her "morey," with the long, heavy gold chain she wore on state occasions, and her best lace cap with mountains of pink bows upon it. Mrs. Ferguson was fond of dress, and as purple and pink were her favorite colors, she sometimes presented rather a grotesque appearance. But on the night when Phil sought her, she had laid aside all superfluities and her silvery hair shone smooth and glossy in the soft moonlight, while her plain calico wrapper looked cool and comfortable and partially concealed her rotund form.

"For the massy's sake," she said, as Phil's tall figure bent under the doorway and came swiftly to her side, "what brung you here so late, and why hain't you come afore? I was round to your Aunt Lyddy Ann's this afternoon, and she told me you was to home, so I made a strawberry short-cake for tea, hopin' you'd happen in. 'Twas lickin good, I tell you. There's a piece on't cold in the buttry now if you want it."

Phil declined the short-cake and sitting down by his grandmother told her of Mr. Hetherton's letter and asked if she had ever heard of a daughter.

Mrs. Ferguson was a good deal startled and surprised, or, as she expressed it afterward to Reinette herself, "she was that beat that a feller might have knocked her down with a straw." That there was somewhere in the world a child of her beautiful young daughter who died so far away, was a great shock to her, and, for an instant, she stared blankly at Phil as if not quite comprehending him. Then, as he added, "He has a daughter twenty years old," she began:

"Fred Hetherton coming back after so many years, and bringin' a darter with him! My Maggie's girl! That's very strange, and makes me think of what your gran'ther said afore he died. Seems if he had second sight of somethin', which ain't to be wondered at when you remember that he was born with a vail over his face, and could allus tell things. He said that, in some way, Maggie would come back to me, and she is comin'; but it's queer I never hearn of a baby when Maggie died. Still, it's like that sneak of a Fred Hetherton to keep it from us. We wasn't good enough to know there was a child. But, thank the Lord, there's as much Ferguson in her as Hetherton, and he can't help that. I never could abide him, even when he came skulkin' after Maggie, and whistlin' for her to come out. At fust I was afraid he didn't mean fair with her, and I told him if he harmed a hair of her head I'd shoot him as I would a dog. There's fight, you know, in the Martins!"

And the old lady's eyes blazed with all the fire of her two scape-grace brothers, once the prize-fighters of the country.

"What were the particulars of the marriage and her death! I've heard, of course, but did not pay much attention, as I knew nothing of Reinette," said Phil; and Mrs. Ferguson replied:

"Twas a runaway match, for old Mr. Hetherton rode such a high hoss that Fred was most afraid of his life, and so they run away—the more fools they—and he took her to Europe, and that's the last I ever seen of her, or hearn of her either, as you may say. It's true she writ sometimes, but her letters was short, and not satisfyin' at all—seemed as if she was afraid to tell us she was lonesome for us at home, or wanted to see us. She had a new blue silk gown, and cassimere shawl, and string of pearls, and a waitin'-maid, and she said a good deal about them, but nothin' of Fred, after a spell, whether he was kind or not. He never writ, nor took no more notice of us than if we was dogs, till there came a letter from him sayin' she had died suddenly at Rome, and was buried in the Protestant grave-yard. He was in Switzerland then, I believe, skylarkin' round, for he was always a great rambler, and we didn't know jestly where to direct letters; but your mother writ and writ to the old place in Paris, and never got an answer, and at last she gin it up. When old man Hetherton died, Fred had to write about business, but never a word to us."

"It's very singular he did not tell you about the little girl," suggested Phil; and Mrs. Ferguson replied:

"No, 'tain't. He wouldn't have let us know if there had been a hundred babies. He'd be more likely to keep hist, for fear we'd lay some claim to her, and we as good as he any day, if we wasn't quite so rich. Why, there never was a likelier gal than your mother, even when she closed shoes for a livin'; and there ain't a grander lady now in the land than she is."

"I don't know about the grand," said Phil, "but I know there is not a better woman in the world than my mother, or a handsomer either when she's dressed in her velvet and laces and diamonds. I wish you could see her once."

"I wish to gracious I could," returned Mrs. Ferguson. "Why don't she never put on her best clothes here and let us see 'em once, and not allus wear them plain black silks, and browns, and grays?"

"Merrivale is hardly the place for velvets and diamonds," said Phil. There is seldom any occasion for them, and mother does not think it good taste to make a display."

"No, I s'pose not," grandma replied; "but mabby Rennet will take me with you to Washington, or Saratoga, or the sea-side, and then I can see it all. And they needn't be ashamed of me, nuther. There's my purple morey, and upon a pinch I can have another new silk. Rennet will find her granny has clothes!"

Phil did not usually wince at anything his grandmother said, but now a cold sweat broke out all over him as he thought of her at the sea side arrayed in her purple morey, which made her look fatter and coarser than ever, with the bright pink ribbons or blue feather in her cap. What would Reinette say to such a figure, and what would Reinette think of her anyway? He was accustomed to her; he knew all the good there was in her; but Reinette, with her French ideas was different, and he found himself seeing with Reinette's eyes and hearing with Reinette's ears, and blushing with shame for the good old lady, who went on talking about her new granddaughter, whom she sometimes called Rennet, and sometimes Runnet, but never by her right name.

At last Phil could bear it no longer, and said:

"Grandma, isn't it just as easy to say Reinette as Rennet? Do you know what a rennet is?"

"No, what is it?" she asked, and he replied:

"It is what farmers put in milk to make cheese curd."

"Bless the boy!" and Mrs. Ferguson laughed till the tears run down her fat cheeks. "Bless the boy, that's runnet; as if I didn't know runnet—I, that lived with a farmer three summers, and made cheese every day."

"No matter; it is spelled rennet, and I do not believe my cousin would care to be called that. We want to please, her, you know," said Phil, and his grandmother replied:

"To be sure we do, and we must make quite a time when she fust lands here. Your mother and the gals will come home of course."

"Perhaps so. I shall write them about it," said Phil, and his grandmother continued: "We must get up a percession to meet her, in your father's carriage, and a hired hack, and our best clothes, I'll see Lyddy Ann to-morrow about fixin' me somethin' to wear. Now I think on't, Lyddy Ann talks of sellin' out her business—so she told me this afternoon. Did you know it?"

"I knew some one had written her on the subject, but not that she had decided to sell," was Phil's reply, and his grandmother said:

"She hain't, exactly; but Anny's puttin' her up to it, thinkin' she'll be thought more on if her mother is not a dressmaker, and that sign is out of the winder. Silly critter! She gets that from the Rices, and they was nothin' extra—I knew 'em root and branch. I tell you I'm as much thought of as if I hadn't sold gingerbread and beer; but Anny says I'm only noticed on account of the Rossiters—that folks dassent slight Miss Rossiter's mother, and mabby that's so; but so long as I'm treated well, I don't care who boosts me."

How dreadful her conversation was to Phil, who wondered if she had always talked in this way, and if nothing could be done to tone her down a little before Reinette came. Nothing he finally decided, and then proceeded to tell her what changes Mr. Beresford contemplated making at Hetherton Place, and what Mr. Hetherton had written of his daughter's tastes with reference to cats, and asked if she could help him there.

"That's the Martin blood in her," said Mrs. Ferguson: "We are despust fond of cats, but I can't let her have old Blue, who has lived with me this ten years, but there's Speckle, with three as lovely Malta kittens as ever you see. They torment me most to death killin' chickens and tearing up the flower-beds. Reanet can have them and welcome."

It was *Rennet* again, and Phil let it pass, feeling that to change an old lady like his grandmother was as impossible as to change the order of the seasons, and hoping his cousin would have sense enough to overlook the grammar, and the slang, and prize her for the genuine good there was in her. As it was now getting very late Phil at last said good-night and walked toward home, thinking constantly of Reinette, wondering how he should like her, and wondering more how she would like him.

## CHAPTER VI.

GETTING READY FOR REINETTE.

Within two days it was known all over Merrivale that Frederick Hetherton was coming home, and was to bring with him a daughter of whose existence no one in town had ever heard, and within three days thirty workmen were busy at Hetherton Place trying to restore the house and grounds to something like their former appearance. Nominally Mr. Beresford was the superintendent, but Phil was really the head, the one who thought of everything and saw to everything, and to whom every one finally went for advice. He had written to his mother and sisters telling them of the expected arrival, and asking if they would not come home for a few days to receive Reinette, who would naturally feel more at her ease with them than with the Fergusons.

To this letter his sister Ethel replied, expressing her astonishment that there should be a cousin of whom she had never heard, and saying they should be very glad to be in Merrivale to receive her, but that her mother was suffering from a sudden and acute attack of muscular rheumatism, and required the constant care both of herself and her sister Grace, so it would be impossible for them to leave her.

"Mother is very anxious to have father here, because she thinks he can lift her better than any one else," Ethel wrote in conclusion, "but she says perhaps he ought to stay and welcome Miss Hetherton; he must do as he thinks best."

This letter Phil showed to his father, of course, and as Col. Rossiter was not particularly interested, either in Frederick Hetherton or his daughter, and as it was very obnoxious to have Grandma Ferguson coming to him every day as she did to discuss the percession which ought to go up to meet the strangers, he started at once for the sea side, and as Mr. Beresford was confined to the house with a severe influenza and sore throat Phil was left to stem the tide alone. But he was equal to the emergency and enjoyed it immensely. Every day was spent at Hetherton Place, except on occasions when he made journeys to Springfield or Worcester in quest of articles which could not be found in Merrivale.

It was astonishing to Mr. Beresford, to whom daily reports were made, how much Phil knew about the furnishing of a house. Nothing was forgotten from a box of starch and pepper up to blankets, and spreads, and easy-chairs. Phil seemed to be everywhere at the same time, and by his own enthusiasm spurred on the men to do double the work they would otherwise have done. He superintended everything in the grounds, in the garden, and in the house, where he frequently worked with his own hands. He put the paper and the border for Reinette's bed-chamber, put down the matting himself, looped the muslin curtains with knots of blue ribbon, and from his own room at the Knoll brought a few choice pictures to hang upon the walls. He asked no advice of any one, and was deaf to all the hints his Cousin Anna gave him with regard to what she thought was proper in the furnishing of a house. But when toward the last she insisted upon going to Hetherton Place, he consented and took her there himself in his light open buggy.

Anna was never happier than when seen by the villagers in company with Phil, or with any of the Rossiters, of whose relationship to herself she was very proud, parading it always before strangers when she thought there was any likelihood of its working good to herself. Like her grandmother she thought a great deal of dress, and on this occasion she was very dashingly arrayed with streamers on her hat nearly a yard long, her dress tied back so tight that she could scarcely walk, her fan swinging from her side, a black lace scarf which came almost to her feet, and a white silk parasol which her mother had bought in Boston at an enormous price. Anna was very much in love with her parasol, and very angry with Phil for telling her it was more suitable for the city than for the country. She liked city things, she said, and if the Merrivale people were so far behind the times as not to tolerate a white silk parasol she meant to educate them. So she flaunted her parasol on all occasions and held it airily over her head as she rode to Hetherton Place with Phil, and was very soft, and gentle, and talkative, and told him of a schoolmate of hers who had just been married, and made a splendid match, only some might object to it, as the parties were own cousins, not half, but own! For her part she saw nothing out of the way if they were suited. Did Phil thing it wrong for cousins to marry each other?

Yes, Phil thought it decidedly wicked, and he urged his pony into a pace which drowned the rest of Miss Anna's remarks on the subject of cousins marrying.

Arrived at Hetherton Place, the young lady, who thought it smart to be a critic, and fancied that criticism was simply finding fault, criticised things generally with an unsparing tongue. Everything was so simple and plain, especially in Reinette's room. Of course it was pleasant, and neat, and cool, and airy, but why did he get matting for the floor, and that light, cheap looking furniture. There was a lovely pattern of Brussels carpeting at Enfair's for a dollar fifty a yard, and a high black walnut bedstead and dressing bureau at Trumbull's; and why didn't he get a wardrobe with a looking-glass door, so Reinette could see the bottom of her dresses. Then she inspected the pictures, and asked where he got those dark-looking photographs, and that woman in the clouds with her eyes rolled up, and so many children around her. She never did like that, any way, it was such an unnatural position for a woman to have her portrait taken. Why didn't Phil get those lovely pictures, "Wide Awake," and "Fast Asleep?" They would brighten up the room so much!

Phil bit his lips, but maintained a very grave face while he explained to the young lady that what she called photographs were very fine steel engravings, which he found in Frankfort, one a landscape, after Claude Lorraine, and the other a moonlight scene on the Rhine, near Bingen, with the Mouse Tower and Ehrenfels in sight, while the woman with her eyes rolled up was an oil copy of Murillo's great picture, the gem of the Louvre.

Anna Ferguson had been to boarding-school two or three quarters, and had botanies, and physiologies, and algebras laid away on the book shelf at home; but for all that she was a very ignorant young lady, and guiltless of any knowledge of the Louvre, or Murillo and Claude Lorraine. But she liked to appear learned, and had a way of pretending to know many things which she did not know; and now she hastened to cover her mistake by pretending to examine the pictures more closely, and saying, "Oh, yes, I see; lovely, aren't they? and so well done! Why, Mr. Beresford, you here?" and she turned suddenly toward the door, which Arthur Beresford was just entering.

He was much better, and had ridden over to Hetherton Place with a friend who was going a few miles farther, and, hearing voices up-stairs, had come at once to Reinette's room, where he found Phil and Anna.

Just then a workman called Phil away, and Mr. Beresford was left alone with Anna, who was even better pleased to be with him than with her cousin, and who assumed her prettiest, most coquettish manners in order to attract the great lawyer, whose cup she at once followed, praising the arrangement of the room generally, and finally calling his attention to the pictures, one of which she said was drawn by Mr. Lorraine, and the other by—she could not quite remember whom, but,— the oil painting was the portrait of Murillo, whose hands and hair she thought so lovely. That came from Loo, in France, but the engravings, were from somewhere in Kentucky—Frankfort, she believed.

Mr. Beresford was disgusted, as he always was with Anna, but did not try to enlighten her, and, as Paul joined them, they went over the rest of the house together. Only the upper and lower halls, the dining-room, the library, Mr. Hetherton's and Reinette's bed-chambers, the kitchen and servants' room had been renovated, and these were all in comfortable living order, with new matting on the floors, fresh paint and whitewash every where, and furniture enough to make it seem homelike and cozy. But it was in the grounds that the most wonderful change had been wrought, and Beresford could scarcely credit the evidence of his eyes when he saw what had been done. Weeds and obnoxious plants dug up by the roots; gravel walks cleaned and raked; quantities of fresh green sod where the grass had been almost dead; masses of potted flowers here and there upon the lawn and in the flower-garden; while the conservatory, which opened from the dining room, was partly filled with rare exoties which Phil had ordered from Springfield.

In its palmy days Hetherton had been one of the finest places in the country, and, with some of its beauty restored, it looked very pleasant and inviting that summer afternoon; and Anna felt a pang of envy for her more fortunate cousin, for whom all these preparations were made, and of whom Phil talked so much. Anna was beginning to be jealous of Reinette, and, as she rode home with Phil, she asked him if he supposed he would make as much fuss for her if she were coming to Merrivale.

"Why, yes," he answered her, "under the same circumstances I should, of course."

"Yes that's just the point," she retorted, "Under the same circumstances, which means if I were rich like her, and belonged to the Hethertons. I tell you what, Phil, 'Money makes the mare go,' and though this girl is not one whit better than I am, whose mother is a dressmaker and whose father keeps a one-horse grocery, you and that stuck-up Beresford whom I hate because he is stuck-up, would run your legs off for her, when you or at least he would hardly notice me. You have to because you are my cousin, but if you were not you would be justas bad as Beresford. Wouldn't you, now?"

Phil did not care to argue with his cousin, whose jealous nature he understood perfectly, so he merely laughed at her fancies and tried to divert her mind by asking her where she thought he could find a blue silk spread to lay on the foot of the bed in Reinette's chamber.

Anna did not know, but promised to make it her business to inquire, and also to see that some pots of ives were sent to Hetherton Place before the guests arrived.

The ruse had succeeded, and Miss Anna, who felt that she was deferred to, was in a much better frame of mind when she was at last set down at her mother's door. She found her grandmother in the sitting-room, and at once recounted to her all she had seen at Hetherton Place, and how she was to send over some ivies and hunt up a blue silk quilt for Reinette's bed.

"A blue silk bed-quilt this swelterin' weather? What under the sun does she want of that?" grandma asked, and Anna explained that Cousin Ethel had a pink silk quilt because her room was pink, and Cousin Grace had blue because her room was blue. It was a fashion, that was all.

"Fiddlesticks on the fashion!" her grandmother replied. "Better save the money for something else. If Rennet must have an extra comforter, there's that patch-work quilt, herrin' bone pattern, which her mother pieced when she was ten years old. It took the prize at the cattle show, and I've kep' it over sense as a sort of memoir. If Rennet is any kind of a girl she'll think a sight on't because it was her mother's work. I shall send it over with the cat and kittens."

"Cat and kittens! What do you mean?" Anna asked, in unfeigned surprise, and her grandmother explained that Rennet's father had written she was very fond of cats, and Phil wanted some for her, and she was going to give her Speckle and the Maltas.

Anna, who was above such weaknesses as a love for cats, sniffed contemptuously, and thought her cousin must be a very silly, childish person; "but then, grandma," she added, "you may as well call her by her right name, which isn't Rennet, but Reinette, with the accent on the last syllable."

"Oh, yes, I forgot," said grandma. "Phil told me not to call her Rennet, but what's the difference? I mean to do my duty by her, and show Fred Hetherton that I know what is what. We must all go up in percession to meet 'em, and then go with 'em to the house, and your mother is goin' to fix me a new cap in case we stay to tea, and if it ain't too hot I shall wear my *morey* and if it is, I guess I'll wear that pinkish sprigged muslin with my *lammy* shawl, and you, Anny, must wear your best clothes, for we don't want 'em to think we are *back-woodsy*."

There was no danger of Anna's wearing anything but her best clothes, and for the next three days she busied herself with thinking what was most becoming to her, deciding at last upon white muslin and blue sash, with her long lace scarf fastened with a blush-rose, her white chip hat faced with blue and turned up on one side, with a cream-colored feather drooping down the back. This, she thought, would be altogether *au fait*, and sure to impress Reinette with the fact that she was somebody.

Anna was getting quite interested in her new cousin, with whom she meant to stand well; and though she said to the contrary, she was really glad that Ethel and Grace Rossiter were both absent, thus leaving her to represent alone the young-lady-hood of the family.

Such was the state of affairs on the morning when the paper announced that the Russia had reached New York the previous afternoon—a piece of news which, though expected, threw Mr. Beresford, and Phil, and the Fergusons into a state of great excitement.

Fortunately, however, everything at Hetherton Place was in readiness for the strangers. The rooms were all in perfect order; a responsible and respectable woman, in the person of Mrs. Jerry Tubbs, had been found for housekeeper, and with her daughter Sarah installed in the kitchen. Two beautiful horses, with a carriage to match, and a man to take care of them, were standing in the stable, awaiting the approval of Miss Reinette; while in another stall a milk-white steed, tall and large, was pawing and champing, as if impatient for the coming of the mistress he was to carry so grandly and high. Chained in his kennel to keep him from running away to the home he had not yet forgotten, was a noble Newfoundland dog, which Phil had bought at a great price in West Merrivale, and whose name was King. Could Phil have had his way, he would have brought a litter of puppies, too, for the young lady; but Mr. Beresford interfered, insisting that one dog like King was enough to satisfy any reasonable woman. If Miss Hetherton wanted puppies, let her get them herself. So Phil gave them up, but brought over Speckle and the three Maltas, and these were tolerably well domesticated, and had taken very kindly to the stuffed easy-chair which stood in Reinette's window. The blue silk quilt had been found in Worcester, and Grandma Ferguson had sent over the "herrin'-bone" which Margaret pieced when ten years old, and which had taken the prize at the "Cattle Show." This Mrs. Jerry Tubbs had promised faithfully to put on *Rennet's* bed, and to call the young lady's attention to it as her mother's handiwork.

And so all things were ready, and Grandma Ferguson's sprigged muslin, and *lammy* shawl, and new lace cap were laid out upon the bed when Phil came with the news that the ship had arrived, and that, in all probability, they should soon get a telegram from Mr. Hetherton himself.

This was early in the morning, and as the hours crept on, Mr. Beresford and Phil hovered about the telegraph office, until at last the message came flashing along the wires, and the operator wrote it down, and, with a white, scared face, and a look of horror in his eyes, read the following:

"NEW YORK, July —, 18—.

"*To Mr. Arthur Beresford*:

"Papa is dead. He died just before the ship touched the shore, and I am all alone with Pierre. But everybody is so kind, and everything has been done, and we take the ten o'clock train for Merrivale. Pierre and I and poor dead papa. Please meet us at the station, and don't take papa to his old home. I could not bear to have him there dead. I should see him always, and hate the place forever; so bury him at once. Pierre says that will be better. I trust everything to you.

"REINETTE HETHERTON."

## CHAPTER VII.

ON THE SEA.

The Russia was steaming slowly up the harbor to her moorings on the Jersey side of the Hudson, and her upper deck was crowded with passengers, familiar forms among the crowd waiting for them on shore, and others to whom everything was strange, looking eagerly from side to side at the world so new to them. Standing apart from the rest, with her hands locked tightly together, her head thrown back, and a long blue veil twisted around her sailor hat, stood a young girl with a figure so slight that at first you might have mistaken her for a child of fourteen, but when she turned more fully toward you, you would have seen that she was a girl of twenty summers or more, whose face you would look at once, and twice, and then come back to study it again and wonder what there was in it to fascinate and charm you so. Beautiful in the strict sense of the word it was not, for if you dissected the features one by one there was much to find fault with. The forehead was low, the nose was short and inclined to an upward turn, as was the upper lip, and the complexion was dark, while the cheeks had lost something of their roundness during the passage, which, though made in summer, had not been altogether smooth and free from storm.

During the first three days Reinette had been very sick, and Pierre, her father's attendant, had carried her on deck and wrapped her in blankets and furs, and watched over and cared for her as if she had been a queen. Then, when the rain came dashing down and the great green waves broke over the lower deck, and she refused to return to the close cabin and said she liked to watch the ocean in a fury, because it made her think of herself in some of her moods, he staid by her and covered her with his own rubber cloak and held an umbrella over her head until the wind took it from him, and turning it wrong side out, carried it far out to sea, where it rode like a feather on the waves, while Reinette laughed merrily to see it dance up and down until it was lost to sight. Others than Pierre were interested in and kind to the little French girl, whose father had kept his berth from the time he came on board at Liverpool.

It was whispered about that he was a millionaire, and that Reinette was his only child and heiress of his vast fortune; and as such things go for a great deal on shipboard as well as elsewhere, this of itself was sufficient to interest the passengers in Reinette, who, as soon as she was able, danced about the ship like the merry, light hearted creature she was, now jabbering with Pierre in his native tongue, and sometimes holding fierce altercations with him, now watching the sailors at their work, and not unfrequently joining her own clear, bird-like voice in the songs they sung, and again amusing some fretful, restless child, whose tired mother blessed her for the respite, and thought her the sweetest type of girlhood she had ever seen. Everybody liked her, and after a little, everybody called her beautiful, she was so bright and sparkling, with the rich warm color in her cheeks, her pretty little mouth always breaking out in frequent exclamations of surprise or rippling bursts of laughter, her long eyelashes and heavy brows, her black, wavy hair, which in some lights had in it a tinge of golden brown, as if it had been often kissed by the warm suns of Southern France, and, more than all, her large dark, brilliant eyes, which flashed upon you so suddenly and so swiftly as almost to blind and bewilder you with their brightness. Taken as a whole, Reinette Hetherton was a girl, who, once seen, could never be forgotten; she was so sunny, and sweet, and wilful, and piquant, and charming every way; and the passengers on the Russia, who were mostly middle-aged people, petted, and admired, and sympathized with her, too, when, with the trace of tears in her beautiful eyes, she came from her father's bedside and reported him no better.

For months his health had been failing, and he had hoped the sea voyage would restore him somewhat; but he was growing steadily worse, though as yet there was no shadow of fear in Reinette's heart; she was only sad and sorry for him, and stayed with him whenever he would let her. Generally, however, he would send her away after a few passionate hugs and kisses, and inquiries as to how he was feeling. She must get all the sea air she could, he said, for he wanted her to be bright and fresh when he presented her to his friends in America.

"Not that I have many friends there," he said, smiling a little bitterly. "It has been so many years, and so much has happened, since I left home, that I doubt if any remember or care for me; but they will forgive me, perhaps, for the sake of you, my daughter," and he stroked fondly the long silken curls which Reinette wore bound at the back of her head, and looked lovingly into the eyes meeting his so tenderly.

Then he sent her away, and turning in his narrow berth, thought again, as he had thought many times, of all the sin and evil-doing he had heaped up against himself and others since the day he last saw his native land. Many and terribly bitter were the thoughts crowding his brain and filling him with remorse, as he lay there day after day, and knew that with each turn of the noisy screw he was nearing the home where there was not a friend to welcome him.

"But once there," he said to himself, "once back in the old place, I'll begin life anew. I'll make friends even of my enemies for the sake of my darling; oh, Queenie, my angel, there is so much I would undo for you—for you—to whom the greatest wrong of all has been done, and so uncon