

to a great... I had... the occasion... about hesita... that string... you yes... long and... apping her... ing I want... rooch that... birthday... certain, or... nd walked... very ill... and I shall... to punish... want it for... and grand... om before... which was... upon the... ndma?" I... after her... we had the... these are... king them... u may be... id, "what... ming?"... n a visit... r, evading... me back I... ndmamma... had never... ld remem... e bureau... eters for a... na, did you... en mamma... your mo... "I only... Harrie."... courage to... en troub... a will ever... r soft gray... o read my... your papa... said, "but... best thing... oo old to... be respon... aid, inter... self on her... old, and... do every... am a wo... on her lap... "My dar... a little... will often... ge. Why... way." But... d a choking... her charge... d naughty... s, I think... y one else... y, papa, who... understood... that papa... was very un... nd I think... ea was over... together for... called me to... knee," said... o tell you... some days... en so busy... me to come... hid my face... continued... Miss Ray... kind to you... d, and I am... She is going... ou must call... a good mo... will try to... is very dear... darling?"

said my father, lifting up my tearful face.
"No, papa, I am not jealous, only perhaps I won't like her; grandmamma says she is good and pretty, but I don't always think people nice because other people say so, and I don't want anybody to make me happy but you and grandmamma. It is so pleasant here, and it will never be as nice again, for she will always want to talk to you in the evenings, and I shan't even have grandmamma."
"You will have us all, Ethel," said my father, smiling. "Grandmamma will often come to stay with us, and your mamma will want your company all day while I am at the office. It would be dreadful lonely for her if you were not here, and as for me, why, Ethel, you cannot be so silly as to think that I will love you less because I have found some one else to love. Come, you must not look so serious, you will always be your fathers darling, if you are good," and he added, by way of caution, and kissing me once more, he set me down.
Dear, kind papa! he was very patient with me, but I was a spoiled child, and very exacting. Besides, I had a vague idea that stepmothers were a class of women in whom the motherly instinct was altogether wanting, who were only actuated by selfish motives, and a desire to tyrannize over their step-children. I remembered how, when I was a very little child, and would not obey my nurse, she used to say, "Never mind! some day you will have a stepmother, and she will teach you to obey," and although grandmamma had tried to remove the impression from my mind, she had never succeeded. I went to bed that night determined with all my little might to oppose my father's marriage, and cherishing my future prejudice until it gained strength. I awoke in the morning feeling decidedly antagonistic to Miss Raymond. It was a long time since I had been at school, and my father was thinking about getting a governess for me, but in the meantime I had too much leisure, as grandmamma often had cause to remark. After breakfast I sat at the dining-room window, playing idly with the climbing roses that sought to enter, wantonly destroying their beautiful buds, and scattering their delicate petals to the wind; then suddenly I caught sight of a figure upon the road. It was Mary Lee, who, finding herself too early for school, was sitting upon a fallen log reading over her lessons. I ran upstairs, and a moment after I stood behind Mary, and without speaking dropped my blue beads into her lap.
"O, Ethel!" she exclaimed, jumping up. "I don't want them, indeed I don't. I never"—then catching sight of my face, she said in an altered tone, "Take them back, dear." She had never called me dear before, and I was a little softened towards her, but I pulled my dress out of her hand, and turning my face away ran home as fast as I could.
It was Friday, and my brother Harry was coming home to stay with us till Monday morning, for his school was two miles off. I lingered near the gate, anxious to be the first to communicate the news to him, but I found that he had already been at papa's office and had learned it all.
"It is too bad! upon my word," was his first comment. "I don't see what business papa has to think of marrying at his age, you and I are so nearly grown up; why, I am going into his office in about three years, and you will be old enough then to keep house if grandmamma wants to go away. Lily Martyn is only fourteen, and her father says she is a splendid housekeeper."
"She is coming home the end of September," I said, following my own thoughts.
"Yes, I know; I am to be here to meet her. Papa is going to write to the doctor and ask him to let me come home for a week. I don't care though; I'd rather stay at school. 'Mrs. Lennox, I suppose we shall call her.'"
"Papa says I am to call her 'mother,'" I replied with a sigh, for gentle as my father was I never thought of disobeying him.
"Well, you may of course, for you are a girl," said Harry; "but I shan't, she isn't old enough to be my mother, and if she were as old as Methuselah I shouldn't do it."

I was almost afraid to hear Harry express himself in that way, yet I thought it was nice to be so independent. Grandmamma called us just then, and in the evening Harry went out to play with some boys. The next day he invited some friends to the house, and on Sunday papa was at home all day, so we had but few opportunities for further discussing the subject which was uppermost in our minds.
On Monday papa left home, for he was to be married on Wednesday. It was a very busy week for grandmamma, and a great many people came to work and to put the house in order; but I did not take much interest in what was going on, though I kept close beside grandmamma, anticipating her wants, and trying to be very kind to her. Now that she was going away, I began to realize how very good she had always been to me, and to wish that she would take me to live with her in her own little cottage.
"I know I shall not be happy here when she comes," I said. "It will all be so different."
"Yes it will be very different," said my grandmother thoughtfully; "but I think, Ethel, if you are not happy the fault will be your own. I have known Lillian Raymond since she was a little girl, and have always thought her very amiable; I am sure that no unprejudiced person could help liking her. If you are a good girl and try to do your duty by your stepmother, I think your home will be happier than it has ever been; but you must remember that she is not the only person who has a duty to perform; you are quite as responsible in your own way."
I did not quite understand my grandmother's words, much less did I realize their importance; but I was awed by the solemnity of her manner and I said no more.
A week from the following Thursday, Harry came home, and the same evening my father arrived with his bride. Grandmamma had promised to remain for a few days; and everything was in order; the house had never looked so nice since I could remember, and we children had on our best clothes. A stranger might have envied the lady who was coming as mistress to such a beautiful place, but alas! how deceitful are appearances. Harry and I had quite made up our minds to dislike our stepmother, although she had never done us any harm, and was even anxious to shew us kindness. As she stood before us in her beautiful travelling dress, looking so sweet and graceful, we only recognized her as an intruder.
To be continued.

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