

time seemed to pass rapidly, and before the expiration of the year it was the old life, with its drudgery and necessity for economy, that appeared to them like a dream. It might have been noticed that Isabel and Delia laughed less frequently in these latter days; nor did their handsome furniture afford them any renewals of their intense satisfaction. The truth was their eyes had grown accustomed to fine and costly things. They had also begun to grasp the truths that in this world values are relative, and emotions transitory. In spite of their happy surroundings, and the many attentions that they received from friends new and old, it must be said of these two favored girls that they frequently looked and felt discontented.

'I don't know what is the matter with me, Delia,' said Isabel one evening when they returned home from a social entertainment. 'It seems to me that the zest has all gone out of things.'

'That is just the way I feel, only I didn't like to acknowledge it,' said Isabel. 'It was all I could do to keep from yawning this evening. I suppose it is our own fault, and we ought to be different when people are so kind to us.'

'How we used to enjoy the few parties we went to when we were working!' said Delia, with a little sigh.

'That seems an age ago,' returned Isabel. 'But I have a notion that we had a better time then than we have now,' she went on thoughtfully. 'I really enjoyed teaching, though I didn't always know it then. I used to think that it couldn't be true that poor people might be as happy as the rich; but I know now that it may be true.'

Isabel's voice gathered a little tremulousness as she went on, and when she finished, a delicate cambric handkerchief was passed up to her eyes.

'Why, Isabel Dixley!' exclaimed Delia, half reprovingly, 'I hope you're not crying about it! What would papa think if he knew? But I dare say I'm as bad as you,' she added inconsistently.

Mr. Dixley knew a little more than his daughters supposed. Still he could not understand the change that had gradually come over them.

'Do you want anything, my dears?' he often asked. 'Don't hesitate to name anything that you think would give you pleasure.'

But the girls always replied that their allowances were sufficient, and that they wanted nothing.

At last the father began to suspect that his daughters were suffering from some serious disappointment, and one day, in no little perplexity of mind, he wrote to their Aunt Helen, asking her to come and pay his family a visit.

Miss Helen Page had been a second mother to the Dixley girls, about ten years ago, when their own mother had died. For seven years she had made her home with the Dixleys; but for the last three years she had resided with another branch of the family that was located in the far West. She was very fond of Isabel and Delia, and she set out for Coldenham immediately after receiving her brother-in-law's letter.

'I wonder what can be the matter with the dear children,' thought Aunt Helen very frequently to herself, as she journeyed eastward by rail.

Miss Page was a quiet little lady with an intellectual face, silvery hair, and a sweet mouth on which a kindly smile seemed always ready to break forth. She did not begin to question her nieces immediately as to their discontentment. There are types of sympathetic people who rarely need to ask questions, and Aunt Helen was one to whom confidences flowed naturally, like a

stream. Before many days she knew a good deal about the late trouble that had grown out of the Dixley's accession to wealth.

In the course of a fortnight, when the three were enjoying a quiet evening at home, Delia broke out half-jokingly, yet with a little note of self-reproach:

'Aunt Helen, sister and I have a secret. We're not as happy as we used to be. It seems that we have lost our capacity to enjoy things.'

A smile lightened Aunt Helen's face pleasantly as she looked at the girls, who occupied a sofa near her. 'Under the circumstances, I'm rather glad that you feel as you do, my dears,' she said quietly.

'Why, Aunt Helen!' exclaimed the astonished sisters in concert.

'But I mean what I say,' said Miss Page, seriously. 'I was very much afraid that so much money, coming to you so suddenly, would spoil you. Now I know that it has not.'

'But, isn't it wicked to feel dissatisfied the way we do?' put in Isabel, with a puzzled expression on her face. 'Here, we have everything that girls could want, and papa ready to give us more money whenever we ask it, and people all so good to us. Yet, half the time I feel as though I had lost something.'

'You have lost something, children,' said Aunt Helen, in her sweetly serious way. 'You have lost the satisfaction, once so familiar to you, that comes from earnest and successful effort. You have often been trying to live on a diet of dust, and it hasn't agreed with you. You know the passage, "Dust shall be the serpent's meat."'

The girls opened their eyes wide in their amazement. Yes, they had lately met this text in a course of bible reading but they had not dreamed of the significance given to it by Aunt Helen. They continued to look at her for a fuller explanation.

'I mean, my dear girls, that if the things that you have been trying to get enjoyment from had filled your lives, and satisfied your longings, I should have cause to be sorry; because the fact of your satisfaction would indicate that your natures were lacking in the higher spiritual qualities. Now, please don't understand me as condemning innocent pleasures and recreations. These things are all right in their places and seasons. Wealth is a blessing to be enjoyed. Handsome furniture and fine clothes should be appreciated and valued.'

'We valued them too much at first,' said Isabel. 'I see now where we were wrong. When we gave up our situations as breadwinners, we took up nothing elevating instead. And I am afraid, too, that we forgot our duties to people less fortunate than ourselves. Sure enough we have been trying to live on "serpent's meat."'

'Yes, Isabel,' said Miss Page, 'quite unconsciously you have been living selfish lives. But, happily, it is not too late to begin again. Appreciate your wealth, your present social standing, and all your pleasant surroundings, my dears; but at the same time don't forget that you are God's stewards. "Give, and it shall be given unto you."'

Isabel and Delia had been generous to the few personal friends of their own who were needy; but they realized now that more than this was required of them. The next day they might have been seen taking their way through some of the narrow streets of Coldenham. They returned home with radiant faces; for they had found several opportunities for alleviating suffering and giving happiness.

'I have an idea,' said Isabel, as they talked over the experiences of the day, 'You know our principal in the public school used to

say that I was a "born teacher." Now, if papa is willing, I'm going to take that hard class in the mission Sunday-school—that class that nobody wants—and see if I can't develop some good in those rough boys.'

A Bed of Four-O'Clocks.

(New York 'Observer'.)

It was a quiet street in a western college town. Along its walks were tall maples, and from the dooryards came a perfume that told of the pretty flower gardens hidden near the wide porches. Kate sat in the gloom of the room where she had been sewing all day. Her aunt, fashionably dressed, and with her hat on for a walk to the club meeting, was talking complainingly:

'What in the world could you be thinking about to plant those old-fashioned flowers there in the front yard? There is not a lady in the neighborhood that would allow such a peculiar lot of flowers as you have put out to grow in her yard.'

'But they are pretty, and I like them.'

'Why, of course, they have a kind of beauty for those who do not know what beauty is, and who are not very particular. Why couldn't you put out something more fashionable?'

'I'm not fashionable, and I guess I do not care very much for such things. Anyhow, these flowers are planted now, and will be up in a few days, and I like them—please let me have them.'

'Of course, you can have them, but I am ashamed to have my friends see what poor taste we have.'

So the beds of flowers came up, and there were all sorts of old-fashioned kinds—four o'clocks, hollyhocks that would the next year have blooms, poppies and other favorites of the country places, and not at all what the people of the city expected. Kate rather enjoyed the criticisms she heard on the selection of her blossoms, and did not at all resent them. She tended the beds carefully, and soon they were alive with the odd blossoms, and were one of the attractions of the city, for the country people who drove into town. Many a time did big farm waggons stop and the people in them look pleased at the picture. It was very satisfactory to the quiet girl in the shade of the vine-covered porch.

It was a college town, and many young men were there for their education. They came from all parts of the state, and met all kinds of company. Some of it was good and some of it—too much of it—was bad. Ralph Maden was unfortunately meeting the bad kind. He came from a little town up among the hills where the cows and horses were allowed to pasture in the streets, and where such a thing as an opera or even a theatrical performance was unknown. It was but a little thing for him to start towards this kind of entertainment, and it was not long before he found that he was spending more than the allowance his parents were saving up for him so laboriously. One afternoon, in the latter days of the term, when the hot school rooms were so uninviting, he was asked by his chum this question:

'Ralph, are you going to be an old fogy?'

'Why, I don't know what you mean—of course not.'

'Then get your coat and come with me.'

'But I don't know where you are going.'

'It makes no difference—come on.'

Together they sauntered down the street. 'Say, Jim, I must know where you are going,' said Ralph.

'Oh, come on, it will be all right.'

'But I must know.'

Well, baby, I will tell you—we are getting