

Cameron's, where they were most affectionately received by Mrs. Cameron and Gertrude. And now commenced a series of *toadyism* which was vastly amusing to their acquaintances, many of whom had witnessed Mrs. Cameron's manners at the party, and had since learned a part of the story. It was strange how soon Mrs. Cameron and Gertrude discovered how many fine qualities Fanny possessed. Even the "odious scarecrow of a father" was transformed into an "old old gentleman," and in speaking of him to one of her acquaintances, Mrs. Cameron said "he was a very generous, wealthy, but eccentric old man and was one of the first citizens in Frankfort." The good lady forgot that Uncle Joshua did not reside in Frankfort, but twelve miles from that city! Her word, however, was not questioned, for of course she would know all about the family of her son's intended wife.

Meantime the report of Frank's engagement was circulating freely, and the whole matter would undoubtedly have been arranged, marriage ceremony and all, had not Frank put an end to the matter, by utterly denying the story. Some young gentlemen were one morning congratulating him on his future prospects, and declaring their intention of going to Kentucky, if there were any more Fannys there, when Frank asked upon whose authority they were repeating a story for which there was no foundation.

"Why," answered one of them, "my sister heard it from your sister Gertrude."

"From Gertrude?" said Frank in amazement, "from Gertrude! Well, I cannot answer for what Gertrude says, but I assure you I am not engaged to Miss Middleton, and never have been."

This was in the morning, and that evening when Frank entered the sitting-room where his mother and sister were, they beset him to know why he had denied his engagement with Fanny.

"Because," said he, rather indignantly, "there is no engagement between us."

"Oh, Frank," said Gertrude, "you told us so."

"I never told you so," answered he, rather warmly. "I told you I had proposed, and I *did* propose, and was refused."

"But why didn't you tell us?" continued Gertrude.

"Because you didn't ask me," replied Frank. "You supposed of course none could refuse me, so jumped at conclusions and have got yourself into a fine spot."

There was no need of telling this, for Mrs. Cameron readily saw it and went off into a fit of hysterics, while Gertrude burst into tears.

"What a strange girl you are!" said Frank. "Once you cried because you thought I was engaged to Fanny, and now you cry because I am not." So saying he gave a low mocking whistle and left his mother and sister to console themselves as best they could.

We will not weary the reader by repeating the conversation between Gertrude and her mother. We will only say that Mrs. Cameron decided to go as soon as possible to Saratoga, "and when once there," said she, "I will use all my influence with Miss Middleton; nay, if necessary, I will even beg of her to marry Frank, for I know she likes him."

Gertrude was delighted with this idea. She

had forgotten how determined she once was not to visit Saratoga with Fanny Middleton. Next morning Mrs. Cameron proposed to her guests that as the weather was getting warm, they should start directly for the Springs. The visitors of course could make no objection, and as Mr. and Mrs. Stanton, who were to accompany them, also acquiesced in the plan, two days more found our friends at Saratoga, together with crowds more of the fashionable from the north, south, east and west.

On the first day of their arrival, Fanny noticed seated opposite her at the dinner-table, a dark-eyed, sprightly looking girl whose eyes so constantly met hers, that at last both blushed, and the stranger girl half smiled. By her side sat a gentleman, who Fanny concluded was the young lady's brother. Something in their appearance interested Fanny, and she could not help thinking that they were from the South. That evening as she was walking alone upon the piazza, she was suddenly joined by the unknown lady, who accosted her with, "Pardon me, but am I not speaking to Miss Middleton from Kentucky?"

Fanny was too much surprised to answer immediately, but soon recovering her self-possession, she answered, "You are, but I have not the pleasure of knowing you."

"I presume not," said the lady. "We have never met before, and yet I knew *you* instantly."

"Know me! how?" asked Fanny.

"From description," replied the lady. "You have been so accurately described to me by our mutual friend Miss Woodburn, of New Orleans, that I could not mistake you."

"Florence Woodburn! New Orleans!" exclaimed Fanny. "And are you from New Orleans, and do you know Florence, and have you seen Julia?"

To all these questions the stranger answered "Yes," continuing, "and now let me introduce myself. I am Lida Gibson, but I might as well be *John Smith* for any idea my name will convey. However, I am from New Orleans, and know Florence and your uncle William well. Just before I left the city, I made your sister's acquaintance. When she learned I was coming this way, she said I might possibly see you, and made me the bearer of many messages of love."

Fanny had never heard of Lida Gibson, but it was sufficient that she knew her uncle and Julia, so her hand was immediately offered, and the remainder of the evening the two young girls promenaded the piazza arm in arm, talking of their distant homes and absent friends.

"Where did you see Julia?" asked Fanny.

"Your uncle's house was not quite ready, consequently he and Julia were spending a few days at the residence of Dr. Lacey," answered Lida.

"Dr. Lacey!" said Fanny, in some surprise. "Julia at Dr. Lacey's?"

"Yes, why not?" said Lida, laughing merrily at Fanny's manner. "There is nothing improper about that, for Dr. Lacey's father was then absent, and his mother, for the time, staid with her son. I fancied it was not at all unpleasant either to Dr. Lacey or Julia, that they were thus thrown together, and I should not wonder if the Doctor should one day call you *sister*!"

Lida Gibson, whom our readers will recollect as having met at Mabel Mortimer's party in New