

'Why doesn't the party who holds the paper close you out?' asked Lyman, in surprise.

'Close me out? Why, Brother Davis, one of my nearest neighbors, holds the mortgage. He wouldn't any more think of closing me out than he would of robbing a train.'

'I was just smiling,' said Lyman, 'to think how long my next door neighbor would let a mortgage on my house run after it was due.'

That evening neighbor Evans came in. After the usual introduction, talk about the crops and the health of the family, Evans remarked:

'We're going over to help clean out Brother Cox's corn to-morrow. Guess we can count on you, Cy.'

'Yes, me or one of the boys will be over.'

'What is the matter with Cox?' asked Lyman, when the neighbor was gone.

'He's been down with the rheumatism and is behind with his work. Ten or fifteen of us are going over to-morrow to plough his corn.'

'Why doesn't he hire it ploughed?'

'Isn't able.'

'But don't you need the time on your own crop?'

'Oh, yes, the wet weather has put us a little behind; but it isn't like as if we were sick. We'll come out all right.'

Lyman sat thinking for a long time. He remembered Clevenger, one of his neighbors. Clevenger was a good fellow, but he got on the wrong side of the market, and he had bankrupted him. 'Meant fifty thousand to me, but was a little hard on Clevenger,' he said to himself.

'There is Dawson, just watching every move I make, and a dozen others, all waiting like a pack of hungry wolves for my first slip.'

Another neighbor, Egerton, had been sick when the mortgage was foreclosed, and he and his family put out of their home. It was business, of course, but somehow Cy did not seem to think so much of business as of his neighbors.

There was always a merry time evenings, in fact there were few times during the day when there was not a laugh somewhere about the house. After supper they all gathered in the sitting-room, and read and chatted, and told stories. The girls were sweet, bright girls, and the boys intelligent fellows. Lyman thought of his own wife and daughters, proud, haughty society leaders. He met them sometimes once or twice a week. He usually ate alone. He always spent the evening alone unless he went to the club.

Sunday evening Cy asked Lyman if he would go with them to church. He was on the point of making a cynical reply. It was his habit to speak of religion as a worn out superstition. His thought was to tell his brother that he had long outgrown such trivial sentimentality; but a question in his own mind checked him.

'Have I?'

He had discovered to his surprise that his brother was a better informed man than he. There was no question of the times on which Cy had not read more and thought more. He found that his mind had been running in a little groove, while Cy had been growing more broader by wide reading and careful thinking. Why should he say he had outgrown what his brother still believed? Yes, he would go.

The little country church, the same he attended when a boy, was filled. It was as plain as ever, but there was something so worshipful in its very atmosphere. The old preacher took one of the old texts, and preached a simple, direct sermon. Eloquent only in earnestness.

Lyman studied the preacher and the congregation. He saw that the preacher believed every word, and so did the people. Their faith was not clouded nor complicated. They took that all for granted—it was part of their faith.

After the benediction there was a general hand-shaking, and everyone was talking. Everyone in reach or who passed shook hands with Cy and had some neighborly greeting. He seemed to be a friend to everybody. To some he replied seriously, to others laughingly; his warm heart shining in his face all the while.

As they went home, Lyman was very, very thoughtful.

'To work during the day; to rest at night; in love with one's family and one's neighbors; to believe God watches, and will guide and keep,' that was his brother's life. His—

'To watch everlastingly, lest some man rob him of that which he had taken from others. To—' well, that was all—the rest was incidental.

'Cy,' he said, as they neared home, 'I would give every cent I have if I could live like you.'

'Why don't you?' asked Cy.

'That is the miserable part of it. I can't, and I have lost so much of myself that I would not be happy if I did.'

Garde.

(Aldis Dunbar, in the 'Wellspring'.)

'You don't seem to care for it at all? Yet you seem to be getting on pretty well. What made you begin?'

Anna looked up, a whimsical expression on her quiet face.

'I'll tell you, Garde; I had to. Uncle Judge—you know how he is—decided my career without any reference to me. He wanted an artist in the family—and I was the only one left for his purpose. Mother and I are entirely dependent on him, and I do want so to please him—to say nothing of the comfort it would be to be able to earn my own living. You know, Garde?'

Her friend nodded.

'But I can't progress beyond a certain limit, no matter how hard I try,' went on Anna, ruefully. 'Ask Ma'amselle. I do just what she tells me, but then I stop, and have to wait until she starts me up again. It's really no use. I can't originate; yet Uncle Judge has made up his mind that I must be the next holder of the Floyd scholarship. Poor little mother knows, but she daren't protest aloud when he insists on her keeping up her French—or confess that she doesn't yearn for Paris any more than I do.'

'But why don't you speak up? Tell him that you've no love for drawing, and do care for—'

'That sounds well, Billy,' interrupted Garde, 'but neither of us would be one whit braver than Anna. We may think how easy it would be to walk right into Judge Floyd's office and tell him that the pursuit of art was a bore, the bondage of charcoal and bread balls unendurable, and burnt rubber a weariness to the flesh, but when we came to the point, we would run away. The minute he looked at us, our spines would weaken, and we'd feel as if we were waiting to be sentenced. That's about it, isn't it, Nan?'

'Are you never coming, Anna?' called out a fourth voice. With a quick movement, her eyes growing bright with pleasure, Anna just tossed her luncheon box onto the table, and her little blue-clad figure disappeared through the doorway leading to the 'oil' room.

'Now you'll get it!' said Garde, with mock

resignation. 'Poor Lil eats her luncheon in disconnected bites, sandwiched between suspended fifths and augmented triads. Hear 'em?' as the feeble tones of the little spinet, one of the treasured 'properties' of Mademoiselle Detienne's studio, wandered out on the air.

'Poor Lil!' repeated Billy Brent, indignantly. 'Poor Nan, you mean. What an imposition to keep her tied down to this sort of a thing,' waving her plump hand impartially toward the casts on the walls and the deserted easels grouped round the room. 'Lil's radiant at finding some one docile enough to sympathize with her pet dissipation, while Anna absorbs every hint she can get. Now I love music, but I'd never care about dissecting it and polishing its bare skeleton. And to dream of scorning the Floyd scholarship for the sake of fugues and chorales! Nan doesn't care if she never goes to Paris; while you and I, Garde, would work night and day for the chance.' Billy clutched at the air dramatically, as though she saw the longed-for honor just beyond her reach. Garde Eveleth shook her head.

'It's not for you, nor for me, Billy. Judge Floyd retains the right of naming the one to go. And I shouldn't wonder if he allowed it to remain vacant, this year, unless Anna can get some one to inject a "paint germ" into her system.'

'No use,' objected Billy. 'It would be conquered by the "music microbe." Poor Nan! "Some hae meat an' canna eat,"' she quoted. 'What are you drawing, Garde? That's my best pad of water-color paper, by the way.'

'These are to cheer her up, after luncheon hour. Don't poke round, Billy. You can have my sauce crayon, or some stumps, to even up. Take your sandwiches over to the other window.'

But Billy, having caught one glimpse, was not to be ordered off. She sat quite still, her dimples coming and going with delighted sympathy, as she watched Garde's slender brown hands cover sheet after sheet of the rough paper with quick, clever sketches, which she pinned, as fast as finished, over the stiff, cramped outline of Agrippa's head, that occupied the drawing board on Anna's easel.

In the first, Anna, a meek, absurd little figure in her long pinafore, was being led to the studio door by her uncle, a stern, towering authority in judicial robes. Next, she was shown in a state of terror before a full length cast of the Venus of Milo. Then, in an attitude of hopeless despair, trying in vain to draw an immense nose, that would not be included within the limits of her drawing board. In the background, like a gloomy shadow, was—a Frown.

'That's the lowest depth of woe,' remarked Garde, tearing off the third sheet and pinning it at the lower, left-hand corner of Anna's easel. 'Now for the ascending scale,' beginning a new composition with a sweep of the charcoal.

'Garde, you see here. Coming across the square, there by the fountain. Isn't that Judge Floyd?' Billy pressed her small nose firmly against the window pane.

Garde glanced hastily over her shoulders. 'Yes, no one else in this town has that severely stiff pair of shoulders, or such an uncompromising way of putting down his feet. He's always doing it, with one or the other of 'em. Never mind, Billy. Don't fret yourself about that arbitrary old despot. He wouldn't dream of coming up here. How is this?' holding up her fourth drawing, intended to show Anna's amazed, half fearful joy at the discovery of the spinet beneath a pile of old fishnet. Billy nodded approvingly.