

MY CHRISTMAS REVENGE.
(Continued.)
From the Atlantic for December.

The first lesson was accented by others, for several days following, but in which I learned that she had been married twice and three years; that she had always before her marriage had a gay and luxurious existence, perhaps because she had never known any other, her parents being fashionable business men she had passed through a great sorrow, been very sick when her babe was born, and now was just beginning to appreciate some of the realities of life. She confessed that it was when recovering from a sick bed, and among the most strange feelings that came with the birth of her babe, that she had awakened to the truth, and listened to the promptings, always before ignored, of her more practical nature. That it was through the advice of a kind friend who had been with her through her sickness that she had purchased a sewing-machine, the friend believing that it would be a good beginning in her efforts to do something useful.

At his my new pupil did not tell me in so many words, but it was the substance of what I gathered by degrees, and very much interested as usual; and one day, as she was leaving, casually remarked that her husband was so devoted, pleased at her progress in mastering the mystery. Then I heard what I had most before suspected, as with tears filling her eyes she said that she had no husband in one sense—she had separated from him—that it was her own fault—an old story in her anger and rage, but now bitterly repented, she indicated that there were others to blame, but did not excuse herself; and said that she had spent the night previous to the day on which she had taken her first lesson in great grief for learning that he was very soon to sail for Europe, and the thought that they would then be utterly and forever separated had nearly driven her to distraction.

I felt very sorry—very more so for my human being; her repentance was so sincere and her sorrow so hopeless. A dim suspicion had been creeping through my mind during this last relation, that I had heard a story something akin to this before; and as she was about leaving, she remained here that although she would be so well acquainted as teacher and pupil, I had never heard her name. Apologizing for her reticence, she handed me a card as she left the room. I will not say that I was very much surprised, for I had guessed the coincidence by intuition, when I read on the card I held in my hand, "Mrs. Grace Lee."
Yes, it was Harry Lee's wife who had been my pupil! Her great many strange feelings were at work within my breast during the two minutes. I had not seen Mr. Lee for some time, he had avoided the instruction-room—a source of conduct for which I had been thankful. I had heard nothing of his intention of going to Europe, and felt sure it must be a new project, very suddenly thought of. Any way, I had my action anything to do with it. I felt surely distressed over it, I had been thinking out the whole matter; and I might have been even more so had I not possessed a resource that I had not thought of—children— that of doing something.

Now the rest of this is going to be very brief. On my best, she had a desire to do something, in honor of the recently lost practical shape, and I saw my way by my revenge on Harry Lee, Dickens' Christmas stories were then in the height of their popularity; I had been assigned by her, and in their influence and that of the approaching holiday season perhaps my plans were clearer. I hope my imaginary blushes may be spared when I say that to accomplish I took occasion to throw myself into Mr. Lee's way (of course by apparent accident), and that within a week I had won him back to the instruction-room and the renewal of our friendly chats, though at such hours (late in the day) that there was no chance of his meeting his wife. That I never labored hard, or will say pupil that with a will, but nervous little in, to enable her rapidly to become not only proficient at the machine, but to sew so. Then that I progressed by making an appointment with Mrs. Lee, on some excuse to my convenience, at 4 o'clock on the afternoon before Christmas—Christmas Eve at a very early stage of the anniversary; and meanwhile gained a character for benevolence by telling my companions in teaching that they had better go home early and thus enjoy the gay sights and sounds presented by the streets on that festive season. And then that I crowed the whole by making another appointment with Mrs. Harry Lee for the same place, half an hour later, having in view the necessity of bringing him unsuspectingly upon his wife at the very moment when she should be sewing away at the top of her ability.

Once upon a time I kept an extraordinary bug that I had captured, under a glass tumbler, for days, to see the change by which it would become something else. It effected the change one night when I could not see it, and I was left very little wiser than before. And I know not much more about the meeting between Harry Lee and his wife, over the sewing machine, that evening before Christmas, as (confound it!) I felt myself obliged to leave them alone together, just at the interesting moment, and they had made it all up before I thought it proper to return.

However, I had my revenge. Mr. Lee (I will be understood and believed on this point) never flirted any more with his, however mildly—never so incore. He went to Europe, just a little later, and took his wife, leaving his little son with his notable New England mother, who was sure to take good care of him though she might not permit him to romp too hilariously. They were certain rings, one of which Harry Lee gave me with what I thought was rather a conscious look, and the other of which Grace Lee gave me with no shamefacedness and as a party kiss.

I saw them together, and at home again, in a pretty home over which, taught by some mistake in the past, she was sole mistress, apparently very happy, the next Christmas, and I think that Mrs. Lee, under some sort of idea that she owed the recovery of her husband to her sewing machine, looked upon that useful article as a species of good fairy, and her seat at it as a place of refuge, and always to be found sewing when things went at all crooked in the household.

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