

taken up its abode with her. Hair, abundant and silky, of no vague straw-colour, kindly but erroneously called golden, but of the true reddish-tinged metal, crowned her in shining plenty. Her face was small, and of the creamy whiteness that so often goes with golden hair, her nose, childlike still, and indeterminate in shape, ruthlessly labelled (with reason) by its owner as of the genus "snub," and her mouth large and full-lipped. What the whole face would be like in another couple of years was still a matter for doubt, and perhaps her stepmother, who almost always took the straightforward and sensible view, was straightforward and sensible here when she said that "she was afraid that Eleanor was growing up very plain." The use of the word "afraid" only was deviation from her general straightforwardness, for she regarded good looks as a definite snare of the devil. It was, therefore, fortunate that she was not herself cursed in this regard. But by one of those amiable little inconsistencies which redeem certain human natures from the tragic picture that they would otherwise present, and lift them to the more sunlit levels of comedy, she often saw with satisfaction that her own daughter Alice, who had just now helped her elder half-sister to pull out stops, was growing up very pretty. But when Alice had a sweet expression, which clearly was a counter-claim against the possible author of her good looks.

Eleanor studied the laughing and singing of the valleys with care and contempt down to the very end of the scale passages, which she dutifully played on the pedals, continuing in honest dumb-show through a sudden failure of wind on the part of the organ and the mournful hooting of half-fed pipes as Tommie Lake, the defrauded cricketer at the bellows, invigorated its lungs again with rapid staccato strokes. Then, in mixture of kindness for his probable fatigue and of desire for the hidden treasure in the Parish Magazine, she gave him pause, and went on with the second act of the entrancing play. She did not quite understand it all. It was clear, however, that Aubrey was making an unsuitable marriage, and his friends did not like it. But if a woman was engaged to a man, and was going to marry him next day, why on earth should she not come round and see him in the evening? And it was nice of her to give him all the letters that other people had written to her. Again, why did Mrs. Costelyon matter to anybody? Perhaps, however, she was tremendously attractive, and Mrs. Tanqueray wanted to know her very much. Anyhow, there seemed to be some