

Family Circle.

SWEET SIMPLICITY.

[CONCLUDED.]

"Lovely!" he replied after me, with an accent of surprise. Then he passed his hand quickly over his mouth, and his eyes gleamed. "Yes, 'lovely' is the word for it," he added, with great energy. "Well, and what else have you been to see? Of course you've seen the Turners?"

"Oh, no!" I replied, much astonished by this unexpected leap from the frivolities of sight-seeing to the serious occupation of parochial visiting. "No, I have not been to see them."

"Not yet, I suppose; but you must not leave London without seeing them. That would never do indeed. You would enjoy seeing them, would you not?"

"Yes, I think so," I said dubiously. "My brother takes a great interest in them."

"Does he? Then in that case he will be sure to take you to see them. I quite envy you—you have a great pleasure in store."

"Have you seen them?" I ventured to enquire.

"Yes, I should think so; and I give you my word, though I don't go in much for that kind of thing, you know, I have never been more pleased in my life."

"Really!" I said, inwardly apologising to him, for I had felt that he, with his handsome face and faultless attire, would have been about the very last young man to visit ailing and infirm old ladies. Evidently I had been premature in my judgment.

"But of course no one can see them just now," he continued. "You must have patience for some few weeks longer."

"I felt overjoyed at having some knowledge of a subject broached in a London drawing-room, so I hastened to reply—

"Except my brother—he sees them every day."

"Every day?" he repeated, opening his eyes wide, and looking at me with intense astonishment. "You surprise me! Are you sure? Every day?"

"Yes, every day," I returned confidently—at least, since I have been in London he has gone there every day."

"Dear me! I had no idea Mr. Harte was such an artist! But how does he manage to see them? No one is admitted just at present."

"No one except my brother," I returned proudly. "He is never refused."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the young man, in tones of amazement. "I had no idea of such a thing—no idea whatever; and every day, you say? Are you sure you don't mistake?"

"Evidently he had been refused admittance. I thought; and his feelings were hurt to hear of Robert's better success."

"Oh, I am quite sure," I replied; "and I ought to know, because they hardly talk about anything else at my brother's—they are always the chief topic at luncheon, and very often at dinner too!"

"The incredulity on my companion's face grew more marked each moment."

"But with his numerous duties how can he afford the time to go each day?" he asked.

"He makes the time," I said emphatically, "even if he has to give up something else. I do believe he thinks it the most important thing he does."

"Just then I became aware that my sister-in-law was looking at me with a most pleased expression on her face. Surely I was distinguishing myself at last, and, not indulging in 'graceful badinage' was at least not disgracing her by sitting in silence! She evidently could not imagine where I found such a fund of chatter for this young officer."

"Then you should coax him to take you with him," the young man said. "I suppose he could easily get you in to see them, if he has the privilege of visiting them every day?"

"I don't know about that," I returned dubiously. "Even Mrs. Harte has not been admitted for a long time."

"And is she an admirer of them also?"

"Yes—quite as much as Robert, I think."

"Well, you astonish me—not by telling me your brother admires them; any one must do that. They are simply charming. Perhaps just at first you may not like them. I must confess to you I did not like them at first—no, not in the least—and I could not understand why they were so much admired. But now!"

"My brother really loves them," I said, thinking of the Bible and its pink enclosure.

"Of course he told you of their removal?" he asked.

"Yes, I heard him say something about it. The house they are in does not suit them."

"And not only that," he interrupted warmly—"it was quite time something was done; they could not, in common fairness to the nation, be permitted to remain any longer at Marlborough House. Of course you know from your brother that Kensington will be their new home—a far more suitable place than Marlborough House, you will allow. They are the nation's pride and glory."

"I felt myself growing tall with importance to think that if the 'nation's pride and glory' should be on such intimate terms with my brother, it was with a feeling of pardonable pride that I spoke next."

"Are they really? You should see the beautiful Bible Miss Elizabeth presented to my brother only to-day." I withheld all mention of the cheque, not feeling particularly proud of that.

"Miss Elizabeth!" repeated the young man, in tones of amazement. "Miss Elizabeth who?"

"Why, Miss Elizabeth Turner, of course!" I answered. "Who else?"

"An expression of incredulity, changing swiftly to comprehension, crossed his face."

"Turner!" he shouted. "Miss Elizabeth Turner!"—and then he threw himself back on the sofa and, with both his hands to his head, actually roared with laughter.

"Of course you see the joke, girls, though I did not—not for long after. He had been speaking of the famous Turner collection of paintings then in process of removal from Marlborough House to the new art-gallery in the South Kensington Museum. I, in my ignorance, knew of no other Turners than the ancient and ailing Miss Elizabeth and her sister, residing in Gordon Square."

"You can imagine my feelings. There I sat with quivering lips and crimson cheeks, all eyes upon me—every one in the room started into silence by the loud hearty peals of laughter from the gentleman at my side, who was still lying in his corner of the sofa, in speechless ecstasies. I, quite unconscious of the dreadful breach of etiquette I had committed, did not dare to meet my sister-in-law's eyes."

"To do the young man justice, he recovered as quickly as he could from his fit of laughter, and apologised profusely for his fault, his stupid blunder, his mistake; he had perfectly misunderstood me. The mistake he had made was one so droll that he really could not help laughing at his own idioy, and so on and so on."

"But his protestations did not help me in the least. Where he met with wretched smiles from the ladies present as he made his apologies for starting the decorum of the room by such unseemly mirth, there was nothing but shrugging of shoulders and raising of eyebrows for me. My sister-in-law smiled coldly at his explanations, and almost directly afterwards rose to take her leave, followed by poor blushing me. When we were outside, my brother's wife demanded to know what on earth was this latest atrocity I had committed. Like the prisoners we read of in Californian tales, I was tried, condemned, and executed before even my case had been heard."

"He was excessively rude to laugh like that," Annie said severely. "He might have spared you that mortification, I think."

"And the young curate," I asked—"what part did he take?"

"Oh, ask your father!" mother replied, with a laugh.

"I was the young curate, my dears," my father supplemented, when thus appealed to. "The part he took in the matter, in the first place, was to fall in love with the pretty blushing girl who bore her discomfiture so bravely, and went so prettily through her adieux on leaving the drawing-room where she had suffered a martyrdom of ridicule. She even spared a pretty smile for the atrocious young fop who had been the cause of her suffering."

"Well—and in the second place?" I demanded, as he paused.

"In the second place, the young curate, in vulgar parlance, 'made up to' Miss Harte, and had the honour of being so graciously received by Mr. Harte that he was frequently permitted to constitute himself an escort for her on her sight-seeing expeditions. Amongst other places he took the pretty young lady to the South Kensington Museum, where, standing before one of those very Turners, he offered her the devotion of his life and heart—with what results you know. And so you see, in time, she too came to admire the Turners very greatly, and confess that in truth they constitute our 'nation's pride and glory!'"

BETTY.

Prizes for May.

New, rare and scarce plants and seeds, which bid fair to be leading varieties for next year, some of which have not yet been introduced into Canada.

1. A few cuttings of the Crossman Potato.—Claimed to be a better cropper and a better keeper than the early varieties in general cultivation; oblong and smooth; flesh colored, and of excellent quality.

2. A few cuttings of the Munro Potato.—Claimed to be the most prolific potato; some claiming that from 1,000 to 1,200 bushels can be raised on an acre.

3. Three plants of the Autocrat Tomato.—Claimed to be the king of novelties; the best keeper and best shipper; does not crack, not liable to rot; red, keeps its color when canned; delicious quality, smooth and even in size, and is claimed to be the best in flavor and the most productive.

4. A few seeds of the Sibley Squash.—Claimed to be the best shipper known; skin, pale green and very thin, hard and flinty; flesh solid, thick and of a brilliant orange color; fine in grain, rich and delicate in flavor; very highly commended.

Either one of the above choice prizes will be sent to any one of our old subscribers that sends us one new paid subscriber.

It is our opinion that these will be found of great value to our country.

Minnie May's Dep't.

MY DEAR NIECES:—Now that the slavery of the farmer's wife has been somewhat lessened by all the milk being sent to the cheese factory, why not turn your attention to making a little money for yourselves? Various are the methods by which a farmer's wife and daughters can earn a few dollars per week. And it is always acceptable, for girls in the country have often to do without small articles of dress or comfort for lack of means. The taste for flowers is yearly on the increase, and every farm-house can have a garden. A small patch of ground can be prepared for you by the plow; have it well manured with cow manure, and you can do all the rest. It is healthful, and feminine work. A garden rake with a long handle, so you need not stoop; a long-handled hoe, a trowel, and a chisel on a long handle are all the implements required. Some staples, such as lilacs, syringa, wygella, Japan quince and others may be procured from a nurseryman, and will be coming into flower next year. Lilacs always sell readily; they are eagerly sought after by city people, being almost the first flower of spring. Their dainty form and sweet fragrance keep them first favorites. Then comes the large family of bulbs which live in the ground all winter, and require little attention beyond keeping the soil rich and free from weeds. Hyacinths, lily of the valley, tulips, iris, and hundreds of the lily tribe, are always beautiful and saleable. Small bunches of lily of the valley, with their own green leaves, will bring a good price. The only trouble is their scarcity. They never come to market in sufficient quantities. A grievous mistake is the putting up of hyacinths or tulips into bunches and tying them with a piece of string. They never look so well as when displayed singly. Bring them to market in small tin cans, in water, and the purchaser will make his own selection; and the full beauty of the blossoms will be displayed. Always bring some foliage with each kind of blossom—even tulips and hyacinths. It gives me the heartache to see large bunches of lovely blossoms massed close together, wilting in the sun, propped up in the end of a market wagon, or lying on the top of a basket of dirty potatoes. The innumerable family of bedding-out plants comes next; and I may only mention a few of the hundreds most easy of cultivation. Geraniums come first, and stand alone for color of blossom, beauty of foliage and freedom from insect pests. Pansies are always lovely in their numerous tints, from dark purple to pale yellow. And their bright little faces look well amongst any flowers. Verbenas and petunias, sweet peas, phlox-drummondii, stocks, asters, wall-flowers and marigolds will keep you busy for this summer. Then you can select others to extend your varieties for next year. Do not make your bouquets too large. Put some pretty green leaves with each bunch, and bring to market as fresh as possible. The foliage of the lemon geranium, oak-leaf, and the small nutmeg are all pretty and fragrant. A small quantity of asparagus leaves looks pretty.

Now, my dear girls, I have made my letter almost too long, for once, but the subject interests me, and I only hope some of you will try and act upon these few hints.

MINNIE MAY.