Surprised for Scholars.

A great little man kept an alphabet shop,
And out from his counter, hippity hop,
He danced until he was ready to drop,
Singing and shouting (pray don't stop),
"Come in, little scholars,
With bright silver dollars,
Or if you've not any
Then one with a penny.
I have bumble bees
And marrowfat Peas,
Some Chinese Q's
And Japanese Js,
X rays of X,
And lots of Zs."

And there's—wonderful news—the Ts.
This is the place to buy your knowledge,
At cheaper rates than any college!"
Then he'd draw a long breath and spin—on a top.
Thus ends little man in an alphabet shop.

Mrs. M. Pratt, in January St. Nicholas.

Just Awful.

Awful is the word,
Every awful minute!
For 'tis an awful world,
With awful people in it;
And some are awful tall;
Some are awful large,
And some are awful small;
Some are awful good,
And some are awful bad;
And some are awful lean;
Some are awful fat.
Some girls are awful sour,
And some are awful sweet;
Some have awful philosophy,
And some have awful feet;
Some are awful silent,
And some talk awful loud;
Some are awful modest,
And some are awful proud;
Some chaps are awful silly,
And some are awful wise;
Some wear an awful moustache,
And some heave awful sighs,
Because their awful hearts
Are awful often bruised,
Thro' Cupid's awful darts
Their awful cores have found.

And so 'tis awful, awful,
Awful is the word,
From every awful mouth
Some awful things are heard;
Some folks are awful nice,
Some girls are awful pretty;
Some men are awful wise,
Some women awful witty.

In the awful morning,
From awful sleep we wake,
With the awful warning
That 'tis awful late;
And through the awful day,
We hear the awful clatter
Of awful, awful, awful—
That's what's the awful matter

A BARITONE'S DEVOTION;

OR, A TALE OF SUNNY ITALY.

The fisherman stood on the quiet and loney beach, watching them, and medi- stately stroking one of his huge, projecting ears.

"Well, well," he remarked, shrugging his shoulders, "some of us be born to happi- nges and some to sorrow, there's no helping that. But all of us ought to be born to a fair chance of living somehow. So says the young signor, but I doubt me if, for all his hot words, and his seeming scorn as much of a Socialist as any of us, he'd care to act it out in his life. Eh, eh! we be all of us ready enough to talk about others, but to live for them—that's another matter."

And, with a grim chuckle, Finestano pulled out a number of *La Campana* from his pocket, and stretching himself on the pebbles, began to spell out more lessons in Socialism.

The sun was low in the heavens when the lovers returned from their row, Carlo had to hasten home to his mother, and later in the evening he once more appeared at Casa Bella. Apart from Francesca all this rest- less apprehension had returned.

Captain Britton was asleep in the dining- room. Francesca was in the dusky drawing- room, seated at the piano, where two candles under rose-colored shades made a little oasis of light. She was trying over for favorite of all Carlo's songs, "Dio Possente," but broke off with a little cry of surprise and delight as he came toward her.

"I shall think that my ring is a fairy ring," she cried, "and bring me all I wish for. I was just longing to hear you sing this."

[illegible] had not felt in a singing humor, [illegible] words drove everything else from [illegible], and he sang perhaps all the better [illegible] real care and anxiety which were [illegible] ing him; certainly he sang as she [illegible] er before heard him sing.

"Like a fairy," she said at the close, brushing away the tears from her eyes; "Nature meant you for a singer; you were Valentino then, and no one else."

Carlo did not speak; she looked up at him quickly, and again saw that look of care which he had borne back with him from Naples.

"My darling," she said, making room for him on the ottoman beside her, "you are keeping something from me; you are unhappy, Carlo *mio*, and yet you will not let me know."

"Yes," he said, sadly, "I must let you know; that is what I came back for. You remember Nita?"

"Your sister? Yes—oh, yes! What of her? Has she written?"

"No; but to-day in Naples, as I walked down the Strada S. Trinita, I saw that she was to sing the week after next at the Mercadante."

Francesca looked startled. All in a minute it flashed upon her that the perfect peace of their betrothal was disturbed, and that it could never return.

She knew enough of Nita's story to be aware how painful it would be for both Signora Donati and Carlo to have her as the prima donna of a Neapolitan theatre; one she certainly was, if report of her voice was good in the news.

"She may be sorry, and come to see you," she suggested. "Oh, surely she would come back to Villa Bruno when she is so near to it as Naples?"

But Carlo was not hopeful. She listened to all his doubts and fears with tender womanly sympathy. She was no spoiled child, caring only for the pleasure of her betrothal; perhaps, indeed, notwithstand- ing the rudled peace, she had never been so happy as she was that evening when Carlo told her his troubles, and then, with his arm round her, whispered sweet words about the comfort of telling her.

Francesca quite agreed with Enrico that it would be better to say nothing as yet to the Signora Donati; and even in her sur- [illegible] there was keen pleasure in feeling that she had a right to share her lover's cares.

The next day was Sunday, and Carlo, as usual, drove in to the English Church with the Brittons. But after the service he left them, pleading an engagement, and went off to see if Merlino's company had arrived.

The Palazzo Forti was in a gloomy side street; he entered the courtyard, and found his way up a very dirty stair-case to the third floor, where he rang and enquired whether Madame Merlino had arrived. An answer in the affirmative from a bright-eyed little servant made his heart leap into his throat. He had not expected it. He had walked to the old Palazzo in the firm con- viction that his sister would not yet have reached Naples, and to be told that she was actually close to him took away his breath. He hesitated a moment.

"Is she within? can I see her?" he in- quired.

The servant seemed a little doubtful, but said she would ask; and, taking Carlo's card, she disappeared, leaving him in the door-way. In all his life he never felt so uncomfortable. He had never known Anita well; her convent education had made her practically a stranger to him, and now years had passed since their last meeting, and between them was the shadow of her wrong-doing. Then, too, he was not even sure whether he should see her alone; her husband might be there; and Carlo, being Italian, and hot-tempered, was not quite sure how the sight of Merlino might affect him. He breathed quickly as the servant returned.

"Would the signor step this way for a minute?"

Setting his teeth, he followed the maid down a passage, and was ushered into a good-sized but comfortless-looking room. He was surprised and relieved to find within it neither his sister nor Merlino, but a young Englishman of about eight-and- twenty, with fair hair and mustache, arched eyebrows, and keen light blue eyes, in which there was no mistaking the sparkle of genuine wit; but the face was a restless one, and the expression of careless good humor was sometimes slightly tinged with bitterness. He bowed, then glanced again at the visitor with undisguised curosity.

"You are Madame Merlino's brother, I think?"

Carlo assented.

"I should have known you anywhere, the likeness is so strong."

"Shall I speak English, if you prefer it, sir," said Carlo, noticing that the stranger's Italian was far from fluent.

"Do you? that will be a great relief, then. The patience of you foreigners amazes me. How you can learn our bar- barous tongue I can't conceive. For me, I only learned enough of yours to satisfy my singing-master."

"May I ask whom I am speaking to?" said Carlo.

"I am Sardoni—that, at least, is my pro- fessional name—*primo tenore* of the happy band of pilgrims who patrol this wicked world under Merlino's care. When they brought me your card just now I thought I might ask to see you, although Madame Merlino is out, for, to tell the truth, signor, it is quite time that Madame Merlino's friends and relations did something to save her. You must pardon me the liberty I am taking, but, indeed, it is little use mincing matters in an affair of this kind."

Carlo took a long look at the speaker. He was evidently an English gentleman—a man fearless with frills enough, but yet, he instinctively felt, a man to be trusted.

"My sister is out, you say," he began, with a troubled look.

"She went out driving this morning, said Sardoni, promptly, "with her usual cavalier, Comerio, our first baritone. But I know Comerio well, and he will not long be content to be a mere hanger-on. Every day Madame Merlino gets more under that [illegible]

But here he broke hastily off, for Carlo sprung forward with a gesture so threaten- ing that any one but an Englishman would have recoiled a pace.

"Be silent!" he thundered; "how dare you couple my sister's name with the name of that brute?"

His dark eyes were all ablaze with anger, Sardoni was silent; not because he doubted the truth of his own words, but because he was obliged to pause and admire.

"I see you are the brother whom Madame Merlino needs," he said, quietly; "and it is in order that those two names may not with just cause be coupled together all the world over that I speak to you plainly."

The glow of color had faded from Carlo's face, and had left him unusually pale. He turned away with a groan as Sardoni ended. Vaguely as he had dreaded his sister's arrival, he had never dreamed that it would be so bad as this.

"Her husband?" he said at length.

"Merlino is a brute, but many degrees better than Comerio. 'Tis a sort of lion and unicorn business, with your sister for crown. But you spoke as though you knew Comerio?"

"I only know what report has to say of him," replied Carlo. "He was singing here five years ago; his wife and children, I believe, still live here."

"Report says nothing of him that is not strictly true."

"But how is it, then, that Merlino is so blind to his own interests as to keep him in his troupe?"

"I can't say, unless it is that tyrants believe in their own superiority. And then, too, Comerio is such a wily devil, he always manages to keep in Merlino's good books. There has never been the least apparent reason for getting rid of him; and, besides, Merlino is not so overburdened with wealth that he can afford to cancel an engagement. Italian opera is not such a paying concern as people think."

"I must try to see my sister," said Carlo, with a sigh, "or write to her."

"Then if you see her allow me to sug- gest that you do not call on her here, where ten to one you will fall foul of her husband; and if you write, do so now and intrust the letter to me, for Merlino watches her cor- respondence with lynx eyes, and does not scruple to open every letter."

Carlo uttered an impatient exclamation of disgust. Every sentence which the Englishman let fall seemed to reveal to him a fresh glimpse of the intolerable life which poor Nita was leading. He accepted the pen and ink which his companion offered him, however, and, drawing a chair to the table, began with deepening color to write.

Sardoni glanced at him from time to time. He had taken up a newspaper, and made as though he were reading it, but in reality his mind was full of his Italian visitor. Carlo's face was almost as easy to read as a book, and Sardoni could not help feeling sorry for him. He had just witnessed one of the most painful sights imaginable, that of a perfectly unsullied nature being brought for the first time into near connection with a net-work of evil. There was something, too, in the implicit trust which Donati had reposed in him which appealed to him strongly. What a wretched position to be in! Powerless to help his own sister with- out treating to the help, and believing in the honesty, of a stranger and a foreigner! Carlo in the meantime had finished his letter, and, folding it up, handed it un- sealed to Sardoni.

The Englishman put it in his pocket- book, remarking, as he did so. "For a perfect stranger you trust me with a good deal, Signor Donati."

Carlo looked troubled as it flashed across him how unsuspiciously he had believed the stranger's words. It had never occurred to him that Sardoni could possibly have any reason for misleading him. He looked at him searchingly.

"But then you are an Englishman," he said, in a tone of relief.

Sardoni laughed. "That is a compli- ment to my nation which I shall not readily forget. But look here"—an expression of great bitterness stole over his face—"there are many of my own countrymen who would snap their fingers at my word of honor."

Carlo again looked him through and through, and, as he looked, the blue eyes seemed to grow less hard, to appeal against that harsh opinion which had been just mentioned.

"Oh, as for that," said Carlo, with the expressive gestures of a Neapolitan, "that is just nothing at all to me. I trust you, signor."

Sardoni smiled and grasped his hand.

"I'll not betray your confidence," he said.

And with that the two men parted.

Carlo went down the dirty stone stairs, looking pale and harassed. Sardoni, with a flushed face, returned to his newspaper, but still did not take in one word.

"He trusted me," he thought to himself "he really did trust me. Oh, God! if I could only change natures with a fellow like that!" Then as some painful recollection brought hot tears to his eyes, he sprung up, and flinging aside his newspaper strode across to the piano and began to play a waltz. "You are a fool, Jack! a fool! a fool! Why should that Italian make you think of it? A more countrified innocent!"

And with that he played on recklessly, doing his best to forget Donati's eyes.

CHAPTER VI.

THE STORM BREAKS.

"God be praised, that to believing souls
Gives light in darkness, comfort in despair."
—*King Henry VI., Part II.*

How to break the news to his mother? this was Carlo's sole thought as he walked home on that Sunday afternoon. For an Italian he was an unusually good walker, having fallen a good deal into English habits through his close friendship with the Brittons; and perhaps it was to the free country life which he had always lived, and to his daily rides to and from Naples, that he owed his brilliant coloring and his healthy mind and body.

It tortured him to think that the story which had been a shock to him would be tenfold worse to his mother. It had been, as Sardoni observed, his first near connec- tion with evil, but to his mother it would be the first introduction to evil at all. He had not lived the life of a Neapolitan student without coming across many Comerios; but his mother, in her peaceful country life, her tranquil invalid existence, knew nothing of wickedness. His mind was so taken up with the difficulty of telling her that he had no leisure to think of the yet greater difficulty—how to help Anita.

He could not bear to be the one to bring her these sad tidings; he half thought of asking Father Cristoforo to go to her; then, ashamed of shrinking from a painful task, he forced himself to pass the old man's house, and climbed the hill, turning over in his mind a dozen different ways of approach- ing the subject, and feeling satisfied with none of them.

There was something very beautiful in the devotion of this mother and son; per- haps only Francesca and Clare knew how entirely Carlo had given his life to the work his father had left him, or how wonderfully it had helped to mold his character. To a woman it is second nature to devote herself to an invalid, nor does it involve any very serious break in her life; but to a man, obliged to go on with his daily work at the same time, the strain of attendance in a sick-room is infinitely greater. If he can live this life for years, it gives him an es- tablished habit of always ruling his life by the needs of another, and not by his own desires.

There were two gates to the grounds of Villa Bruno. The one nearest to Naples was that which led into the stable yard, and Carlo, from force of custom, went in this way, although he was on foot. He was surprised to see a hired carriage in the yard; he wondered if possibly Frau Ritter had driven out to call on his mother, and, paused on his way to the house to ask a servant who was the visitor.

"Oh, signor," said the girl, flushing up, "they say it is Madame Merlino!"

With an exclamation which was almost a cry, he rushed on toward the house. His mother had had no preparation whatever—the shock might be fatal to her. And yet, he had looked well that Nita should at once hurry home in this way! Surely that in itself gave the lie to Sardoni's assertion! And then it flashed across him that Nita would regard him in the light of the elder brother in the story of the prodigal son, and he prayed that he might be his direct opposite.

Flinging open the front door, he hurried on, pausing for an instant outside the *salotto*. There was a sound of voices; he hastily en- tered, glanced quickly toward his mother's couch, then toward his sister, who had risen at sight of him with a look of trepidation and timidity that he longed to pleasure her, as one longs to still the fears of a terrified child.

"Why, Nita!" he exclaimed, kissing her repeatedly, "I have been trying to find you at Naples, but you were before me after all."

Something in the tone of his "*Ben venuto*," and in the many untranslatable Italian phrases with which he greeted her, brought the tears to Anita's eyes.

She watched intently while Carlo bent down to kiss his mother.

"You are cold, *madre mia*," he exclaimed. "You are faint and overtired."

"Ah, it is my fault!" cried Nita, vehe- mently. "It is I who have tired her and broken her heart!"

He saw that there would be no quieting her just then, and took the law into his own hands.

"You must rest a little," he said; "you, too, are tired; and then, after dinner, mother will be fit to talk again. See, I will show you a room—the place is a little altered."

With some difficulty he enticed her away, but no sooner were they alone than her tears again broke forth.

"Oh, Carlo, I am afraid! have been too much for her," she exclaimed; "and yet—and yet—I wanted so to come."

"Yes, yes, I am so glad you came; only we must be careful," said poor Carlo, dis- tracted at the thought that she was keeping him from his mother, and much alarmed as he recollected how white and weary the in- valid had looked: "There, you will lie down and rest till dinner time, will you not?"

"But I ought to go back," sobbed Nita. "Not yet," he said; "you must dine first. And now promise me to rest. There, I will not stay longer; I am a little anxious—she is not strong, you know."

He tore himself away, and returned as fast as possible to the *salotto*. His mother's face was hidden; he could hear her low, gasping sobs.

"*Madre mia*!" he cried, and there was anguish in his voice, "oh, do not give way! She has come back to us, *carina*. All will be well if only you will take care of your- self."

"I must tell you——" she sobbed.

"Not now," he said—"not now, mother. Indeed you must be quiet, or——"

"I must speak," she said; "it is killing me! I must speak now, that you may promise me to save her."

"From her husband?" he asked, anxiou to find how much she knew.

"No, no; from one she loves. Don't look like that, Carlo—her husband was so stern and cruel, and she was afraid of him, and—the man was kind."

"Kind!" ejaculated Carlo, with scorn indescribable.

"He always tried to shield her from her husband, and then, when they were leaving America, she was in debt and he lent her money, and——"

"Enough, darling, enough," he said, with tenderness which contrasted strangely with his last ejaculation. "She came and told you all, and now we can help her. If you love me, try to rest."

But it was too late. The shock and the agitation had brought on one of the signora's worst attacks. Carlo hastily summoned a servant, and the whole household came streaming together in a miserable confusion of helplessness. But the maids only glanced at their mistress' face and went away; they would have left their own relations rather than have stayed in a room where the Death Angel already hovered.

It was then, in his terrible, lonely watch, that Carlo thanked Heaven that Francesca was English. The doctor had already been sent for, but he left his mother for a mo- ment and hurried toward the group of weeping women gathered round Anita.

"We have sent for Father Cristoforo, signor," said one, hoping for a word of com- mendation for her forethought.

But Carlo took no notice, nor did his stern face soften.

"One of you go instantly," he said, "and fetch Miss Britton."

Francesca knew little of sickness, nor had she ever seen death, but she had none of the Italian shrinking from a dying bed; in fact, every thought of herself was swallowed up in the one longing to be able to help Carlo. Cutting short the servant's tearful description of the signora's state, she rushed out, not even pausing for a hat, and never stopped running till she reached the Villa Bruno. Then she pushed past the little group who would have detained her, knocked at the door of the *salotto*, and softly entered the room where, only a day or two before, they had spent such a happy evening.

For a moment she stood amazed, able to think of nothing but the havoc wrought in so short a time. Her lover knelt beside the couch; he looked ten years older than when they had parted that morning. The signora, whose head rested on his arm, was haggard, ghastly, utterly changed, while the inde- scribable look of approaching death upon her face seemed reflected in the young face which bent over her.

"Darling, is there anything I can do?" said Francesca, when she had wiped the damp brow and reverently kissed the dying woman.

"Nothing," he replied, "except to stay here. You do not mind?" He looked up at her with questioning eyes, which yet were sure of their answer.

"Oh, no!" she said. "I am so thankful you sent for me."

A long sigh escaped him; he tried to stifle it, lest it should disturb his mother, who lay with closed eyes. And after that the room was perfectly quiet, so quiet that Francesca could hear the ticking of her watch; while the canary in the window, pecking the bars of his cage with his little pink beak, seemed to make a noise so loud that she wondered whether it would dis- turb the signora.

At last there was a change in the wan face; the eyes opened, and the signora looked up at Francesca with a smile.

Perhaps the beautiful face of the girl made her think of her own daughter, for the smile changed to a look of anguish as she turned her eyes to her son.

"Don't forsake Nita—promise me—save her—try to save her."

The words were gasped out with an agony of tone indescribable. But yet it was not till Carlo's answer was given that Francesca's eyes brimmed over with tears.

"I promise, *madre mia*—I promise."

His face was like the face of a Saviour, strong, pure and sweet; his voice was firm and clear. No one could have helped trusting him.

A look of rest—even of hopefulness stole over his mother's face. She lay still for a few minutes, then turned again to Francesca with a most beautiful smile.

"He has never given me one moment's sorrow all his life," she said.

The words, which would be sweet to re- member in after years, which might bring in time to the lips of the son a reflection of the mother's smile as she uttered them, were, just then, more than he could endure. His fortitude gave way; he had little to reproach himself with, yet it grieved him now to remember that at times it had been a hard struggle to leave Naples and return to the quiet of Villa Bruno, and that sometimes he had perhaps lingered a little longer than he should have done at Casa Bella. Now his days of service were over; she would no longer need his help.

With a cry which tore Francesca's heart he bent down, clasping the dying form yet closer as he sobbed out a passionate appeal:

"Mother, mother, do not leave me!"

But the signora was past hearing, past speaking—only she felt his close embrace, and, feebly raising her left hand, passed it behind his head with that gentle pressure—half caress, half support—which every woman knows how to bestow on a baby. And thus they stayed till the door opened, and the old priest and a little acolyte entered, barely in time to administer the last sacraments. Then Carlo regained his composure, stung into calmness by a sort of bitter resentment that an outsider must usurp those last sacred moments, and that he, heretic and alien, had no part or lot in the ceremony, and would be expected to leave the room. But Father Cristoforo, who was a son first and a churchman after- ward, read his thoughts at once.

"Stay, my son," he said, with so kind and fatherly a look that Carlo's bitter thoughts were banished, and he kept on still supporting his mother.

Francesca knelt too, on the other side of the couch, but she could neither pray nor feel; she watched the scene like one in a dream. The sunshine streamed in through the window, lighting up the white, un- conscious face of the signora and the grief- stricken face of her son, the rich vestments and tonsured head of the priest, the curious, roving eyes of the acolyte with his little silver-toned bell. But Francesca was still numb from the excessive pain of watching her lover's agony. Now he was peaceful once more; his thoughts were raised above the pain of the parting, but her thoughts would not follow. The monotonous voice of Father Christoforo, as he intoned the service, seemed only to increase her dull stupor. It was not till the canary in the window broke out into a sudden burst of song some yards beyond the sweet voice now and join in the familiar words, "*Gloria in excelsis Deo. Et in terra pax hominibus.*" And then, as once more the service became unintelligible to her, she bent her head, and prayed on with fast flowing tears, "God! I thank Thee that she is spared the pain—that it is only left for us."

When she looked up once more all was over. Father Cristoforo, with a few kind words, went quietly away; from without there was a sound of bitter weeping; but Carlo knelt on with bowed head and peaceful heart, and the signora's face was stamped with that calm majesty of death which Francesca had never before seen, and the canary in the window still sun his song of praise.

CHAPTER VII.

"NO ONE BUT YOU."

"You like to behold and even to touch the Cross (ah, alas! when the command comes to you to bear it!"—*Fenelon.*

Francesca had lived many years in Italy, and had more than once witnessed the passionate demonstrations of sorrow in a bereaved household; nevertheless, it was something of a shock to her to leave the quiet room of death and to go to Anita, whom she found surrounded by the weeping servants. They evidently took a melancholy pleasure in watching her violent paroxysms of grief.

To the English girl such a state of things seemed dreadful; she did as she would have been done by, and indicted the noisy mourners to go away, thinking that poor Anita would find whatever comfort there was for her in silence and solitude. She could not understand that total absence of the consciousness of others which, to a northern nature, is so utterly foreign; and she would have left Anita, with a few tender words and a long, close embrace, had not the poor girl clung to her like a child, with such wild sobs and tears, such loud, unre- strained crying, that Francesca began to understand that she must be comforted much as Sibyl needed comforting after some dire disaster.

At length, words began to frame them- selves amid the sobs, a constant repetition of the one bitter regret which overpowered everything else: "I have killed her! I have killed her! It is all my doing!"

"You could not tell—you could not know," said Francesca, feeling it hard indeed to find words to meet so terrible a grief, and weeping, too, for sympathy. "She has been so much weaker of late—unable to bear any shock—but how could you know! And oh, Nita, she must have been so glad that you came!"

"No, no," sobbed Nita. "I might have stayed away, and then she would have for- gotten."

"Never, for she loved you," said Fran- cesca. "Her last words almost were of you. Oh, if you could have heard how she begged Carlo not to leave you!"

But at this Nita only wept the more.

"Carlo will hate me," she cried. "Oh, let me go! let me go! Tell them to put in the horses. I can't stay here any longer."

"He does not hate you; he loves you," said Francesca, warmly. "He promised the signora that he would always take care of you."

Something in her tone quieted Nita. She lay musing over the words, wondering if, indeed, her brother knew all and would yet help her, trembling with fear at the thought of meeting him, and trembling still more when she thought of going back to Naples to face temptations too strong for her.

Francesca watched her tenderly, aware that some conflict was going on in her mind, though wholly ignorant of her story, and far too young and innocent to dream of the meaning which lay in the dying words of the signora. Nita was in trouble, and no more need be said; and Carlo had pro- mised to help her. Francesca did not curiously wonder what the difficulty might be, nor did she for one moment doubt Carlo's power of saving her. She accepted every- thing with the quiet confidence of a child who is vaguely conscious that there is trouble in the house, but is quite certain that its elders will soon make it all right.

Looking at Nita, she saw how strong a likeness existed between the brother and sister; and even if she had not felt drawn toward her before by her loneliness and her grief, this would have appealed to her. The fine profile and the warm, bright color- ing were exactly alike, but the mouth was disappointing, and had the same weakness which had slightly spoiled the expression of Signora Donati; while the eyes, though large and beautiful, were lacking in soul, and might almost have been the eyes of a doll, so little did they vary. But yet, as Nita lay there in her grief and self-reproach, trying to make up her mind between two evils, wondering which fear was the least intolerable, there was something about her