

tender, passages at some remote epoch. At any rate, they were very good friends; and Mr. Wensby always dined at the rectory once a year, when his toils in the little village school room were over. The day came; the inspection was duly performed; and at the end of the day Mr. Wensby sat down at the rector's hospitable table.

"And what do you think of our new mistress?" asked the rector, as he began to carve the joint.

"A very superior person—very superior person indeed," returned the Inspector.

Miss Jordan's chin was lifted a little higher in the air as this answer was given; but the gesture went unnoticed.

"Ah! Glad you think so. We consider her quite an acquisition," said Mr. Dowthwaite.

"Yes; there seemed an improvement in all directions," continued Mr. Wensby; "but especially in the needlework. Under the former mistress the needlework was very clumsy; now it is admirable."

Miss Jordan smiled incredulously.

"I assure you I have received very neat specimens of buttonholing," said the Inspector. "The department cannot fail to be pleased with them. I can show you them after dinner, if you like."

"I should very much like to see them," said Miss Jordan, dryly.

After dinner, accordingly, the specimens were produced, and very neatly executed they were.

"I don't believe our girls ever did that work," said Miss Jordan, solemnly, as she bent over the buttonholes.

"But I saw them?" ejaculated Mr. Wensby.

"Saw the stuff in their hands, I dare say," returned the lady. "What do gentlemen know about things of that sort?" she added, contemptuously.

"I have always to report as to the quality of the needlework," said the Inspector, stiffly, and with a slight blush. "But if you assure me, from your own knowledge of the children, that they could not have done this work themselves it will be my duty to institute further inquiry."

"I am certain of it," said Miss Jordan.

That evening Mr. Wensby compared notes with his host, and the rector confessed that he was surprised secretly, he was startled to find what a large number of "attendants" had been made, even by the most irregular of the village children.

"We have a board meeting to-morrow," said Mr. Dowthwaite.

"Then ask Miss Grayling to attend it," said Mr. Wensby. "And ask her whether the children actually did the needlework themselves. If she says they did, I will fix a day—perhaps one over in about three weeks—to see them do some more specimens; and Miss Jordan can be present. If there is a marked discrepancy between the two sets of work—why, of course, I must report accordingly; and you can consider the matter at the next board meeting."

All this made the rector feel very uncomfortable. But there was no help for it, and the next day he sent a verbal message to the schoolmistress, requesting her to step over to the rectory, where the School Board was then sitting.

"Miss Grayling," said the rector, not without embarrassment, "I believe that her Majesty's Inspector will be able to report very favorably of the condition of the school." Miss Grayling bowed politely. "There is one point, however, on which I should like to ask you one or two questions. These pieces of sewing, now—and he produced them from a drawer as he spoke—"seem to me very neat, very creditable; but are you sure that the children whose names are attached to them did them themselves, maided?"

"Quite sure," said Miss Grayling tranquilly.

"And the attendances—they seem much larger than they used to be. Are you sure you have kept the register accurately?"

"Perfectly sure," said Miss Grayling, looking the clergyman full in the face.

One or two members of the board moved uneasily in their seats, and Mr. Sowerbutts seemed to be on the point of protesting audibly against these aspersions on Miss Grayling's good faith. The rector felt very uncomfortable.

"Very good, Miss Grayling," he said: "I am glad to hear you say so. And I think we needn't detain you any longer."

The schoolmistress slowly rose, bowed in her usual dignified manner, and withdrew.

Before long it got abroad in Little Puddington that Miss Grayling was in disgrace, or at least in a condition of suspended favor. Various reasons were given for this, the most popular theory being that the new mistress had been caught stealing the school pence. The matter was discussed in the alehouses, at the doors of the cottages, in the churchyard after service. Through it all

Miss Grayling went on her way, serene as usual, preserving exactly the same manner to every one as if the voice of scandal had never mentioned her name.

A little before 6 o'clock one evening the Rev. Augustus Cope knocked at the door of the pretty cottage in which Miss Grayling lived. For some months—ever since he had first seen her, in fact—the susceptible curate had been under the spell of the young lady's sweet brown eyes. He had struggled with himself long and manfully. He was not in a position to marry and Miss Grayling was not a suitable match for him. He knew all that very well. He did not like to think of what his aunts, Miss Cope and Miss Georgina Cope, would say on being presented with a village schoolmistress for a niece. But, then, he had not looked on the face of any other woman who could be called a lady—save Miss Jordan's—for nearly eight months. He was in love; he could not help it; and now this unpleasant matter added at once to his love and to his embarrassment. Even now he did not know his own mind. His ostensible object was to exchange one of the harmless novels, with which he now kept Miss Grayling well supplied, for another of the same type.

"Miss Grayling," began the curate, as he seated himself in the little parlor, "this can not be true!"

"What is not true?"

"These shameful accusations, these aspersions—"

"Of course not, and I did not think that you, Mr. Cope, would pay any attention to them," said the schoolmistress, with quiet dignity.

"Oh, no! not for worlds!" exclaimed the curate; "I believe in you as I would in a saint! Dear Miss Grayling—Laura—I may call you Laura?—I find it difficult to say how I feel for you—and how much I long to shield you from the calumnies and troubles of the world in the shelter of an honest man's love."

As he spoke, the curate took Miss Grayling's white and well-formed fingers between his own.

"I offer you my heart and all I have," he continued, his eyes searching her downcast face. "Alas! that it is so little! I know well we cannot marry on my present stipend, but I have youth and strength on my side. Sooner or later I must get a living, and then—and then—Oh, Laura! say that you love me!"

"Mr. Cope, I feel honored and flattered more than I can say, and my heart tells me it is not indifferent to you, but—"

She paused, and the tones of the church clock striking fell on her ear.

"Mr. Cope!" she exclaimed, withdrawing her fingers as she spoke, "you are more than generous, but I cannot trust myself to give you an answer now. I must not be rash, or unjust to you. Leave me now—leave me, I beg you. I will write to you to-morrow."

Somewhat surprised at this sudden dismissal, the agitated curate took his hat and stick and departed.

Next day he received a daintily-scented note from Miss Grayling, in which she said that, much as she honored him and highly as she valued his friendship, she could see that it was not for his interest to marry a dowdless girl, and she therefore declined his proposal. Her decision, she added, was quite "irrevocable." There was but one "irrevocable," and somehow this circumstance did something toward mitigating the grief with which Mr. Cope received his letter of dismissal.

The testing examination, which was to confirm or overthrow Miss Grayling's reputation, was fixed for a Friday afternoon. The School Board meeting happened to fall on the following day, Saturday.

At 3 o'clock on Friday Mr. Wensby arrived, and Mr. Dowthwaite and Miss Jordan went with him to the schoolhouse. The children were all there, with clean pinafores and shining faces, but Miss Grayling was absent. Miss Jordan's face wore a peculiar smile as one of the older girls informed the rector that Miss Grayling had not been at home for three days.

Miss Jordan soon set the children to work, and in five minutes the Inspector was convinced by the clearest evidence that not one of the schoolgirls could make even a decent buttonhole, much less one like those contained in the specimens.

"You had better get rid of your superior young person as soon as you can," he said to Mr. Dowthwaite, as they went back to the rectory.

Next morning, however, when the School Board met they found a letter awaiting them from Miss Grayling, in which she said that in consequence of the undeserved aspersions which had been thrown upon her management of the school she felt that the course most consistent with her dignity was to resign the

post which she had had the honor of holding.

The rector was indignant, and moved that Miss Grayling's resignation be not accepted, but that in consequence of the revelations that had been made she be summarily dismissed. Mr. Sowerbutts was not present, but the other members of the board, who had but a very limited idea of the heinousness of Miss Grayling's offense, murmured at the severity of the sentence, and at last the rector was persuaded to let the resignation be accepted.

The following day was Sunday. It was the curate's turn to preach, the rector's to read prayers. The choir and the school children were in their places, and Miss Jordan scanned the congregation with an approving glance from the rectory pew.

"Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us," began the rector.

At that moment an unwonted rustle was heard at the door, a subdued murmur ran through the assembled worshippers, and the rector, lifting his eyes, beheld the ex-schoolmistress moving up the aisle on the arm of Mr. Sowerbutts! There could be no doubt of what had happened. The curate received a shock such as he had never before experienced. Miss Jordan forgot herself in her amazement, and stared at the bride as if she had been a ghost. Mr. Sowerbutts tramped stolidly on till he reached his own pew, and then, having duly installed his wife therein, began to say the responses in a louder tone than usual.

The bride, in a dainty Parisian bonnet, looked very pretty. Her triumph was complete. Miss Sowerbutts retired to a cottage which she owned in the outskirts of Groby, and the schoolmistress reigned over the Mount Farm and its owner with gentle but firm sway.

When Mr. Wensby came to Little Puddington for the next annual inspection he was proceeding to the schoolhouse in state, bearing Miss Jordan on his arm and escorted by the rector, when the party met a pony carriage, in which was seated a pretty and beautifully-dressed woman. The lady bowed graciously to Mr. Wensby, and he, not remembering the circumstances under which he had last seen that attractive smile, returned the salute. Mrs. Sowerbutts glared at Miss Jordan and smiled maliciously. Miss Jordan dropped her hand from her companion's arm, and the rector, stepping forward, whispered something in his friend's ear.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the Inspector; "that woman! I hadn't an idea how she was, I assure you. Thought I knew the face—that was all."

But Miss Jordan had suddenly become deaf, and on the subject of the senior churchwarden's wife she continued to be deaf for the remainder of her days.

The Womanly Woman.

In these days when so many women are assuming portions of masculine dress, and with it possibly a degree of masculine mannerism, it is well to keep before the eye some of the standards of womanliness.

It does not follow that a woman is necessarily or offensively strong-minded, to borrow an unmeaning phrase, because she has assumed masculine fashions in dress as far as practicable; but, rather, that she has reached the conclusion that that is the most convenient and becoming dress to her, or that it happens to be a whim in her own especial coterie to dress that way. Yet if the contrary were true, the fact of the strong-minded peculiarity would not at all affect her womanliness, since the point has been yielded that women really do have minds and may use them. But the truth is that we cannot quite disassociate a woman from her dress, and she loses, perhaps, a little effect of tenderness, loses a little rendering of deference, by means of it, if it is of the manly order.

The first element of our idea of womanliness, is of course, external, and is derived from gentleness of bearing, from movements not so soft as to be subtle, not so slow as to be indolent; yet there may even be swift and brisk motion, with this idea in action retained, provided there be nothing rude or hasty, and the personality be sufficient to buoy up the slow movements better becoming a large woman, and a slight woman losing nothing by these more rapid. This, however—that which first arrests the eye—is a merely superficial thing, and is like the expression of the face, where a bold and defiant cast of countenance repels and seems unfeminine, and a sweet and kindly one tells an attractive story of the inner nature.

It is in this inner nature as it expresses itself outwardly, after all, that this quality lies which we are in the habit of calling womanliness. It is in the gracious exterior of kindness, the sweet and delicate courtesy that would put all about one at ease; the

shrinking from evil even in the hearing of it, to say nothing of refusal to speak evil; the ready sympathy that is sorry with your sorrow and glad with your joy, that knows how to give comfort and cheer and put the bright side forward to oppose despondency, the opening of arms to the child strange or familiar; it is, on occasion, the smoother speech than any flow of words, the speech of silence; it is the sunny smile, the musical voice, the obtrusive sacrifice, the capacity for reverence; and, when all the rest is said, it is, the garb and garment put on with just the right touch, the sufficient regard for appearance, the choice of well-blended colors, the due attention to laces and ribbons and perfumes and flowers, and those things which are the distinctive tridles of femininity.

To every distinct quality belongs its own kingdom. The woman who can stride round her farm and keep her workmen in proper subjection, who can drive her yoke of oxen afield, red and blowzed and muscular, has her own rule and empery; but it is not of the sort of which we are speaking. There was not, perhaps, much womanliness about such individuals as Elizabeth of England, or Catherine of Russia, or Christina of Sweden; for their lovers put together could not give them a charm they did not possess—the charm of Mary Stuart, of Josephine; for the possession of lovers by no means proves the possession of this charm. Yet where one accomplishes her ends by mastery of purpose and manner, many women accomplish theirs by using the iron hand, it may be, but always in the velvet glove; their will is no less strong because it is not made evident in season and out of season although, in fact, the gracefully yielding of that will now and then is a strengthening of all the bonds by which empire is held.

The masculine woman is strong only with other women and with womanish men. The womanly woman conquers every one. With men her power is in the inverse ratio of her approach to many things resembling themselves; the woman, not the man in her, attracts; and, singularly enough, her power is greater with most women also from this heightening of her feminine side. This, however, is a very insignificant matter beside the circumstance that a woman is fulfilling her destiny, and living the life appointed her, and developing herself on the lines of nature, by keeping in view the greater use she can be, and the greater joy and comfort she can give, through the exercise of those traits which seem to have been set apart for her characterization. And if it is the intention of nature that the qualities of the sexes shall so differentiate, it is not the part of wisdom for her to contravene such intention and make of herself that conglomerate and hybrid thing, a masculine woman. The old story of the vine and the oak does not come into this question. In the womanly woman the growth is as strong and integral and self-supporting as it is in the manly man. She is as distinct an entity, and she is more in unison with eternal purposes and the creative power, the more utterly and thoroughly she is womanly.

A Dream of Fair Children.

The little Kings and Queens of old,
The baby Princes fair,
Drift like a pageant through my dreams,
As down a palace stair.
They lift their wise or wistful eyes
Then melt away in air.
A child above a misal bend,
Beside his mother's knee
Fair Alfred, always great and good—
And just behind I see
The six boy Kings of Dunsin's time
Pass swiftly—three and three.
And Arthur, child of fate; and she
Of Normandy the flower;
And Joan of Arc, the mystic child,
And the Princes in the Tower;
And sweet Jane Gray, the martyred maid
Who reigned her little hour.

And set along the vale of France,
And through the Saxon land,
The children of the holy cross
Flow past in chanting band;
The shade of doom on their brow,
The cross in their hand.
O, little children of the past,
Your tender smiles and tears,
Your royal right, your cruel wrongs,
Your childish hopes and fears,
Still each on heart to love and pain
Through all the dust of years.

A Disobedient Patient.

Irate Patron—"You advertise to cure consumption, don't you?"
Dr. Quack—"Yes, sir. I never fail when my instructions are followed."
"My son took your medicine for a year and died an hour after the last dose."
"My instructions were not followed. I told him to take it two years."