

some advice, if Mary approved of it. This was the frame of mind in which she went out for her lessons of the afternoon.

Miles passed her in the hall with a cool nod.

"Esther looks anxious already, and I guess Mary is anxious enough to come round," he said. "I'll keep my distance for a while, and let them see I am not to be trifled with."

It never occurred to him that his sisters might have thoughts which did not circle around his imperial presence. Having shaved, and refreshed himself with a little whiskey, he went out to a hotel near by, where a knot of future constituents whiled away many of their afternoons when political work was slack.

Nellie Mulligan, as we have seen, had not spent a happy morning. She had gone back to the O'Connor apartment after Esther had left it, and she had found Rose asleep, while her father sat near her reading a sheet of newspaper, which had come as a cover with the provisions Esther had sent.

John O'Connor seemed peaceably disposed. He said that 'Rose was all right,' and that he'd see her through. He further advised Nellie to spend less time in dancing and to learn how to cook.

"When a man has a square meal," he remarked, "he doesn't want to drink. That Miss Galligan gave me the first square meal I've had in a week; if the old woman would attend to her business, I'd mind mine. She was just like you before she was married—dancing and trapesing about. You see what she's brought us to, and I hope you'll take warning."

Nellie was too greatly afraid of O'Connor to retort after her manner. She slammed the door and went down to her mother's rooms, avoiding that good lady, who had been complaining all the morning of Nellie's delinquencies. It must be confessed that Nellie, beautiful and graceful as she could be in halls of pleasure, was not a useful member of the domestic circle. She disdained to notice that there was a large washing in progress; that the clothes of several of her brothers might have been improved by a few judicious stitches, and that there were several other things she might have attended to with advantage. She would have been quick enough to observe these inaccuracies in the conduct of life if she had observed them in other people. Like Miles, she had no sense of duty to her neighbor; and, like him, she had a well-developed belief in her duty to herself. But a woman can never be as selfish as a man, and Nellie was not utterly wrapt up in herself; there was a loop-hole or two in her mental visor, through which she saw beyond.

Toward four o'clock in the afternoon the sun came out. Up to this time Nellie had divided her thoughts between a novel—"Wooded but Not Won; or, Irene's Boleful Triumph"—and the insult which she had been forced to endure from the Galligan girl. She paused in that thrilling chapter in which Lady Geraldine Mount-Joie bids the pale but soulful artist leave her and never again to enter her ancestral abode, because he is poor, though of a noble race.

"Esther Galligan's manner was just like that," Nellie reflected. "I never saw such impudence. I hate codfish aristocracy,—people that would if they could, but they can't, you know! Oh, I wish I had given her a piece of my mind! I'd like to know why I'm not good enough to marry Miley Galligan! He isn't a duke nor a baronet, nor yet a congressman. Mother says the Galligans were 'Far Downs,' any how!"

Here Nellie's eyes flashed as she remembered her draggled condition of the morning. To think that Esther had seen her, after a night of splendor, in such a condition of dishevelment! No doubt the Galligan girls and Miles had a good time about it; she could imagine Esther relating the episode when she reached home, and making Miles laugh in spite of himself.

She clenched her fist, dropped the novel, looked out of the window and saw the sloping sunlight reflected on the wet roofs of the houses. She went to the little glass that hung on the whitewashed wall, looked at her face for some time, and arrayed herself in her best garments, the chief of which was a hat adorned with a serpentine ostrich plume, and a long plush coat, which she had purchased on the instalment plan early in September, and which was not nearly paid for yet.

She tenderly put two jingling bracelets on one wrist, and went forth, deigning to say nothing to her mother's urgent questions. She felt sure that she would return a conqueror, having settled the question as to her marriage with Miles.

Nellie looked at herself in the shop windows with satisfaction. Her bracelets jingled in a delightfully distinguished way; she enjoyed the novelty of being free to walk through the streets at this unusual hour; she rehearsed the scene, in which she expected to take a principal part, as she went along. She would ask if the Misses Galligan were at home. They would be at home at that hour, of course; for she had heard that they—poor things!—were nearly always at home. She felt certain that Mary would be haughty, Esther sarcastic. Mary would say that she would die rather than let her brother marry a shop-girl. Then Nellie would answer, in her sweetest manner, that a sales-lady was as good as a school-teacher any day. Esther would suddenly cry out that she did not want a sister-in-law from The Anchor. Nellie would, after she had listened politely, remind Esther she was a lady and despised vulgarity. Esther would, of course, observe the cut of her coat and the curl of her feathers, and be impressed in spite of herself; she would compare her own plain appearance with the "style" of which Nellie was such an example. This would make her angry, but Nellie would maintain an air of sweet superiority.

When the sisters would have said all the unpleasant things they could think of, Nellie would again remind them that she was a lady. Then would come her great speech; she would simply say that poverty was no disgrace; she would speak of Miles' prospects, and tell them of the number of votes her friends could influence in his district—thereby showing her social standing. Finally, overawed by her dress and manner, they would ask her to be a sister to them. If they did not she would know the reason why!

By this time Nellie was in a complacent frame of mind. Her elegance of manner was exaggerated rather than subdued; by reflections in the plate glass windows she passed. When she reached the Galligans' home she was in a mood to see and to conquer.

The little servant saluted her respectfully, but nervously held the knob of the door, while Nellie asked if the Misses Galligan were at home.

"Oh, yes!" replied the girl. "They are always at home at this time."

"Pray, let me enter then," said Nellie, commandingly; "I find the stoop very damp and dirty. I am not accustomed to this sort of thing."

"What name, ma'am?" demanded the little servant, saying to herself that this was the most haughty book agent she had ever seen.

"No name," answered Nellie with a little giggle. "If things go all right they'll know my name as well as theirs soon enough. Just say 'a lady friend.'"

The servant carried the message as she was bidden to do, and in the interval Nellie walked softly around the room.

"Everything so old-fashioned!" she murmured, disdainfully. "What a carpet! I'll have a new one as sure as I'm alive. And such curtains!" (She deftly fingered one of them.) "Nottingham, at thirty cents a yard! Oh, my! And this is the way they live! I'll have a new velvet carpet and some portieres the first thing. No wonder poor Miley wants to put some style into the house!"

She surveyed herself in the long, gilt-edged mirror between the windows, smiled several times in a superior manner, touched up her eyebrows with a few drops of cologne, which she poured out of a little bottle, lifted the brown linen cover of the sofa, dropped it with an expression of ineffable contempt, and, hearing a slight rustle, took her place in a graceful position in front of a large photograph of Miles which stood on the piano. It was in this attitude that Mary, who had just come from school, found her.

"Oh, how you startled me!" Nellie exclaimed, jingling her bracelets. "I quite forget everything when I see a picture like that. It is so like Miles—I mean Mr. Galligan—of course—but I suppose he has told you?"

"Yes," replied Mary, in a low voice; "yes, he has told us. Will you not take a chair?"

(To be continued.)