

the Beyond. Cultivation of the heart and of faculty through active use is, we know, the way to acquire the true wealth that cannot be taken from us."

There was a little silence, during which Edna used her brush.

"You have increased your capital of ability, Hal," resumed his sister. "You can execute quicker. You have confirmed yourself in habits of punctuality, and of turning readily from one duty to another. Through exercise you have by a sure law strengthened every faculty you have exerted."

"I never should have reckoned it in just that way perhaps; but I certainly have learned the business pretty thoroughly," spoke Hal, at the lengthened period.

"And you have been cultivating a habit of generosity in labor; of doing, freely and largely, whatever the moment demanded, whether it were required of you individually or not. This has really been of more value to you than the Hathertons. They have gained in temporal labor done for them; you have gained in spiritual wealth of generous habit, enlarging your whole nature. The action and reaction of this law of active use is perfectly beautiful. I wish I could put it before you just as I see it!" said Edna, looking into his listening eyes; and the spirit that shone through the speaker's delicate features gave so radiant an expression that Hal, said mentally, that which for sound reason he could not say, verbally,—*"I think you are perfectly beautiful!"* And he made petition for a direction for "active use" on the spot, in any capacity that might be designated, from feeding sugar to little Paul Julian, who at that moment set up a low, sweet carol, to finishing her work or executing a commission down town.

"If you will kindle the fire on the hearth I'll put up my work, and we will have it bright for Alice," said his sister; and she went to the window and gazed for a moment down the broad, tree-lined street that, despite the many vehicles and pedestrians looked gloomy enough in the chill gray of November.

Hal opened a door that led where the choice supply of fuel was kept. Big black Beppo thrust his nose in with a low whine of joy, and, as his master gathered up an armful of sticks, proceeded to extend every invitation to a frolic which canine nature is capable of.

The little wood fire was one of the few luxuries the trio allowed themselves. It was indulged in only at the hour of reunion,

when the day's severest toil was over. It brightened the room which, gloomy in itself, was yet the only available one for social purposes, and the cheery flame gave ruddy light as well as warmth, sometimes almost producing an illusion of gas-light, and pleasanter far. Beppo's first ebullition had sufficiently subsided to allow him to sit in dignified posture and apparent criticism while stick after stick was added at discretion, as the ruddy tongues of flame ventured to rise from the light kindlings below. With bright, steady eye and intelligent ear, expressing intense satisfaction, he watched till the most artistic arrangement possible had been completed, and the flames crackled their approval of the neatly swept hearth, and then, leaping simultaneously as Hal arose, the game he had waited for began.

The early twilight came on, making the bright cheerfulness more apparent, and the game continued until interrupted by Alice's entrance. Edna appeared at the same moment with a pot of steaming cocoa, as one of the crowning temptations to the delicately-laid table, inviting with its pure linen and shining silver—mementos of the dear old home that lived ever in the sunny country of heart remembrance.

"Not every lady has a knight in these days!" spoke Alice, as Hal sprang to take her wrappings. "I'm glad you're early home to-night." And little Paul struck into the same key the sweet tones suggested, and gave very heart melody of song; and the flame sent out a shower of bright little sparks, and started up into new brilliancy, while Beppo wagged his tail, and gave sundry very moderate leaps, which were only "make believes" to attract attention.

Alice, who was the taller of the two, dropped a kiss on Edna's forehead as she passed her to put some books on the shelf.

"It is dreary out to-night, and, oh, so good to come into such a sweet, bright home!" she said. "I believe I have the very best brother and sister in the world; don't you, little Paul?" and she raised her face to the cage with a low chirrup on her lips, which the bird answered in prolonged, repeated notes of corresponding tone and inviting tenderness.

Hal had unfolded the evening paper, and was in the midst of the "foreign news" column, when the tea things had been restored to order, and Alice had just interrupted him by a comment, when a tap at the door announced Neighbor Litchfield, who limped and had a cough, and kept the little variety shop around the corner. No