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and then pausing also. "I see he has her for a partner now," she added, "and why not for me?"

"I'm afraid it won't be," said Mrs. Laurie, as she looked furtively at the young couple. "Annie don't seem as if it would ever be, Mrs. Soames. She don't seem to lean to me."

Young Mr. Neelin was in fact at the moment exerting himself to entertain Annie with certain agreeable commonplaces, the effectiveness of which he had already tested elsewhere. While he did so he stood gracefully at ease, leaning an elbow, and with the disengaged hand caressing his contemned moustache. But the girl almost unconsciously held herself away from him. Her strong round chin was slightly tilted, and she stared at the end of the room as if listening to some one else.

"No, she's taken another notion," said Mr. Laurie, resuming her knitting with a sigh. "She had just about learned to send telegrams, and now she wants to be a teacher. I can't make her out; she won't talk much, but she's always thinking."

"Well, no matter what people say about being proud and removed and such like, Mr. Laurie, I'll always stand up for Annie. She's a good girl, and I'll always say it."

By this time the first set had ended and a reel was in progress. The shyest of the boys and girls had come forward to take part in this popular country dance, in which the fun was always uproarious. Three couples, who had been in the first set, had retired to the comparative coolness and seclusion of the little parlor. These were Annie, Letitia Lent and Lizzie Soames, with their respective partners. The breezes shook the vines which covered the open window with their dark leaves. Annie had sunk into a rocking chair beside the window, and the young school-teacher, who sat beside her, took a photograph album from the table. Mr. Harnton placed himself beside Letitia on the little sofa in the corner. The shy maid had doubtless chosen this seat as a refuge to the unsuspecting gentleman. Mr. Neelin was describing a recent disastrous run-down to Miss Soames, who yielded him a divided attention. She was excessively interested in the progress of the drama between Letitia and her elderly beau.

"Laws, Mr. Harnton!" she suddenly exclaimed, "I didn't expect you would forsake me just as soon's we'd got through dancing."

"O, excuse me, excuse me, Miss Soames," the old man protested, half rising from his seat. "I quite forgot--and you see Mr. Neelin."

"O, yes, Mr. Neelin--it's all very well to get it off on Mr. Neelin. He just spoke to me because he thought I was being neglected. He soon as you saw Miss Lent setting there on the sofa you forgot all about me."

"Now Lizzie Soames, you just hold your tongue," giggled Letitia. "You mustn't mind Mr. Harnton; she will talk," she explained apologetically.

An animated discussion ensued in which Mr. Harnton became entangled much to his confusion. Miss Lent's pretended assistance really adding to his difficulties. To this distraction the young school-teacher paid little heed, save a perfunctory glance and smile at Annie smiling. Photographs, he always interested him; and he found

curious revelations in the physiognomies of the ladies and gentlemen, whose names, with other personal details, the girl mentioned as he turned them over. When he came to one of herself, taken a couple of years before, he dwelt on it for a longer period than he had given to any of the others.

"Do you like living in the country, Miss Laurie?" he asked, closing the album and transferring his glance to her face.

"I have always lived here," she replied. "I like the country in summer, but sometimes it is very dull." Her voice was soft and low, and her eyes, which at first met his, dropped quickly as if in embarrassment.

"I like it myself in summer," he said, "but I fear I should be unhappy if I were compelled to live always so far from town."

"Yes, that is hard," she admitted.

"Should you prefer the city for constant residence, Miss Laurie?"

"O, very much indeed."

"I suppose you feel lost here--shut out from opportunity?"

"Yes, one sees nothing of life. I grow restless often and wish to see everything that can be seen. Never to stop; always to go on and on."

"I fear the most privileged must stop short of that large latitude, Miss Laurie."

"Yes, I suppose so," she said.

He noticed that her eyes refused to meet his. They glanced nervously at the dancers in the outer room or at the sofa, which had suddenly become the centre of a laughing scuffle, in which Mr. Harnton was the only sufferer. She and Letitia frequently exchanged smiles as of perfect understanding. In this Dawson found cause for wonderment. The girl beside him, with her serious, though sweet and interesting face, seemed an unlikely companion for the flighty Letitia. He supposed it might be explained on some principle of contrasts, association of opposites, etc., yet the difference seemed one not of degree, but of kind.

There were other things that piqued his curiosity in this well-dressed country girl. He could not say whether she was keenly sensitive and self-conscious or serenely dull. He suspected the former, and after the fashion of analysts (who is not an analyst nowadays?) he longed to put his theory to the test.

The reel had ended, and the dancers now thronged into the parlor. In a few minutes a waltz began, but for some time no one responded to its invitation. Dawson was about to ask Miss Laurie if she would not favour him when young Neelin approached and led her away for the second time. Two other couples (Mr. Harnton had managed to secure Letitia) followed, and, assuring himself that there was no one left with whom he would care to waltz, Dawson went into the dining-room to look on.

He saw at a glance that the grocer's son was not a favorite of Terpsichore. His talent, which had not yet been revealed to the school-teacher, must certainly lie in some other direction. Those movements which should have been circular were with him triangular, and the flushed look in Miss Laurie's face, Dawson suspected, betokened impatience. In a short time, and while the other dancers were still footing it briskly, these two withdrew, and as they fell out almost beside him, he rose to give the young girl his chair. Neelin sat down also for a moment, and then, excusing himself,

went into the garden, where a sound of voices in laughter and talk was heard. As the waltz continued, and as Miss Laurie seemed by no means exhausted, though she still had a glow in her cheek, it occurred to Dawson that, so far as he and she were concerned, the fiddler was wasting his music.

"Perhaps you would not be too tired to give me the remainder of this dance, Miss Laurie," he said; "especially when I tell you I was about to ask you when Mr. Neelin anticipated me."

She stood up, silently assenting, and in a moment they were smoothly gliding to one of Strauss's brightest and most buoyant waltzes. Dawson was surprised that the old fiddler should play it so well, and he discovered with keen pleasure that his partner could do justice even to Strauss. His blood and the music seemed to quicken momentarily, and he felt the dancer's gratified passion thrilling him as they moved in perfect measure. His companion appeared to respond to this rapture and he stole a glance to see if her face expressed any emotion, but he could discern none. It was perfectly impassive; she was evidently not unhappy--she at least was not impatient now. He wished the fiddler might keep on indefinitely. The elastic, well-knit figure of the girl seemed capable of bearing her on forever. But he suddenly observed that they had the floor to themselves, and that certain young men and maidens were standing at the doors and windows staring with frank admiration. It was time to stop.

"I fear you are tired," he murmured. "A little," she replied. Then releasing her and offering his arm, he led her through the crowd into the little parlor.

"I cannot tell you how much pleasure you have given me," he said, as he dropped into a chair beside her. "I don't think I ever enjoyed a dance so much before."

She smiled, and taking a newspaper from the table, folded it and fanned herself.

"You enjoy dancing yourself?" he enquired ardently.

"Yes, Mr. Dawson, but I have danced very little."

"You dance perfectly, perfectly?"

"You may come, Mr. Harnton, if you are very good." It was Lizzie Soames. She and Letitia Lent were again in the room, and Mr. Harnton was with them.

"My, Mr. Dawson, what a lovely dancer you are!" she exclaimed. "Annie Laurie's the best dancer around these parts, and I will say you're a match for her. Here is Mr. Harnton wanting to come huckle-berrying with us to-morrow. I don't think we ought to take him. He'll eat more than he'll pick. Would you like to go, Mr. Dawson?"

"Huckle-berrying, Miss Soames. I'm sure I should like it of all things. Who are going?"

"Only three or four of us, Titia and Annie and me. And Mr. Neelin said he'd come, and now Mr. Harnton wants to come. Of course Miss Lent can't get on without him. He'll help her to pick."

"Lizzie Soames!" cried Miss Lent, with simulated indignation, while Mr. Harnton grinned foolishly.

"Miss Soames, I'm obliged to you for allowing me to join you. It will be very pleasant out under the blue sky--"

"Perhaps it'll rain," suggested Mr. Harnton prosaically.