

JULIA'S MISTAKE.

THREE merry girls entered the cars at the terminus of a city road. They were bright-eyed intelligent, and full of fun.

"O, I do hope," said Anne Wing, arranging her skirts and books comfortably, "We shan't have a single passenger from here to Dorr street. I just want to talk and laugh and net exactly as I please without the presence of a critical fourth."

"Unless it shall happen to be a very nice young man," laughingly, added Julia Baker.

"Anything but that," said the first speaker with grimace, adjusting veil and curls, however. "I'm brimful of mischief and in such a case I know I should do something awful."

"I do hope we shall be alone, though," said Mamie Walters, the youngest of the three, as she placed her books on the cushion at her side. "It's such fun to have the car all to one's self, or selves."

"I'm afraid the fun must go by the board then," exclaimed Anne, "for I see the fussiest, plainest, homeliest old woman coming right straight this way. O. misery! she will spoil everything."

"And look at that antiquated hand-bag—a century old, at least," cried Julia. "Did you ever see such a relic of Noah's ark? And how ridiculously she is dressed! I'm not sure but we can have our fun after all."

Meantime, bowed down by some infirmity, dusty with a day's ride and really antiquated in garb and manner, the old woman drew nearer and nearer to the car. When she had gained it, her face brightened visibly at the sight of the fresh young girls and in the kindness of her heart she nodded as much as to say, "My dears, you are all strangers to me, but I am very glad to see you."

They did not, however, return the nod; but one by one they smiled, looked in each other's faces and, at last, tittered audibly. The poor old woman seemed shocked at this incivility and drew herself as far from their vicinity as possible, while she turned her keen eyes that almost disproved her years, so large and black they were, from their faces to objects outside.

Julia, possessed with the spirit of fun, took up one of her school-books and, with a twinkle aside at Anne, began to read in a low tone: "She was the scrawniest, wierdest-looking object, with a wart on the bridge of her nose and a crinkle crinkle bonnet of an uncertain age, like its owner. All she needed was a broom stick and a black cat to make a veritable witch." Here the mirth of the thoughtless girls became so audible that the reader was forced to put some restraint upon her fun-lovin' proclivities and lay the book aside.

"Here's Dorr street," said Anne. "Julia I never thought to tell you. Uncle Alf brought us two Spitz dogs yesterday, white as wool and as cunning as they can be. Come home with me and see them. It won't take five minutes more, and perhaps I'll give you one."

"But mamma expects company and—"

"O, bother! I tell you it won't take five minutes longer. Come, there's a darling."

And the old lady sat looking after them, as the girls tripped away in high spirits, a sad expression on her care-worn face.

"Julia," she murmured. "I thought I knew the face. I hope it was only thoughtlessness," she added, and her lips trembled. "But, perhaps, I looked far too much from Julia's child and young folks can't be expected to enter into the feelings of the aged. But it is hard to be so disappointed," and she shook her head dejectedly.

Meantime, Julia had seen and admired the dogs, and the girls were about parting, "Come over to the house soon," said Julia to Anne, as they stood on the steps.

"I want to introduce you to one of the grandest old ladies—my mother's aunt! I have never seen her myself, but I know I shall love her, for she saved mamma's life at the risk of her own. Mamma has often told me about it—how, that she was in the third story of a burning house, and when the strongest men drew back, this aunt, then an invalid, ran through the flames with wet blankets and dragged her out of a horrible doom. She was fearfully burned and was sick for years afterwards from the effects of