

## THE SAUCEPAN.

"**I** THINK my mistress must be losing her head," said Fanny Cartwright, when, on returning from a day's holiday, she saw several articles of drawing-room furniture put in the kitchen, and was told that it was done by her mistress's order.

Fanny felt that they looked ridiculously out of place, and would be sadly in her way. Great was her dismay, therefore, when she heard that her mistress desired they should remain there till further orders should be given.

"Mary, what does it all mean?" asked Fanny, thinking some trick was being played upon her. "It's too bad, trifling with me so."

Upstairs she went to get the plates, and, to her horror, found the kitchen cloth on the dining-room table, and in the middle of the table, as if put there for ornament, a large saucepan, fantastically adorned with ribbons and coloured paper, and filled with flowers.

Half laughing and half crying, she took the plates downstairs, and asked Mary if this also was done by her mistress's desire.

"Yes, Fanny; and it's not to be touched till she gives leave."

"But she must be taken bad in the head. If I'd been at home I'd have sent for a doctor at once. Perhaps it's a fever or something."

The bell rang, and the two girls, Fanny the cook and Mary the housemaid, went upstairs to prayers. Their mistress read and prayed as usual, and wishing them good-night, took her candle and went to bed.

Fanny had no opportunity that night of asking whether she might remove the ornaments from the kitchen, and put back the saucepan in its proper place; but she determined to do so the next day. Mrs. Williams came into the dining-room early, while Fanny was cleaning the grate.

"If you please, ma'am," said Fanny, colouring very much, for she could hardly keep from laughing, "may I take that saucepan downstairs, and take off those ribbons and bits of paper?—for I shall want it for boiling the potatoes."

"Yes, you may take it down; but mind you bring it upstairs again after dinner, and put the flowers in it as before. You will not want it again to-day when dinner is over."

"No, ma'am; but —"

"But what? Don't you think it is very pretty? It certainly deserves a better cloth than that on which it stands."

"Don't you think you'd better send for the doctor, ma'am?" said Fanny—now really distressed, for she felt certain her mistress must be out of her mind.

"No, Fanny. Why so? I am perfectly well. But tell me, don't you think the saucepan deserves a better cloth to show it off?"

"It wouldn't want a cloth at all if it were hanging up where it ought to be," said Fanny; "and to my mind it looks a deal better in the kitchen than stuck here for ornament."

"But I value that saucepan very much, Fanny."

"Yes, ma'am, so do I—in its place."

Mrs. Williams continued. "I consider it more useful, and therefore more valuable, than the shells and ornaments which I have put in your kitchen."

"Yes, ma'am; we could do better without shells than saucepans, that's certain; but, begging your pardon, I don't see any reason for putting it on the dining-room table, and decking it out like that for everybody to laugh at."

Fanny began to laugh herself; she really could not help it. But the lady remained perfectly grave.

"Why should everybody laugh at it, Fanny?"

"Well, ma'am, try as you will, you'll never make folks believe that a saucepan's a flower-vase, however it may be trimmed up and filled with flowers."

"Perhaps if we sent for Fletcher to take off the handle," suggested the lady; but a smile would creep out at her lips and eyes as she said this.

"Sure, ma'am, you're joking all the time. What would be the use of a saucepan without a handle?"

"Not much use, certainly; but I was thinking, as I value it so much, how I may do it honour."

"Well, ma'am, if you'll allow me to speak, wouldn't the best honour be just to use it for boiling soups and potatoes, and then clean it well up, and put it in its place?"

"I quite agree with you, Fanny; but suppose the saucepan isn't contented with its place, and wants to be mistaken for a flower-vase?"

Something in her mistress's words, or the tone in which they were spoken, brought back to Fanny's recollection a thought which had been in her mind as she set off for her holiday the day before. She was dressed in a manner which she knew was unsuitable for her station; indeed, she was conscious of having wished "to pass for a lady."

Had she, then, looked as ridiculous as the trimmed-up saucepan?

Perhaps she had, for nothing looks well out of its place. No station in life is more honourable than that of a servant; but when a servant tries to pass for a lady, she loses her respectability because she loses her truth.

## EVIL FOR EVIL.

"**I**'LL pay her out, you see if I don't! trust me, she shall suffer for it!"

Such were the words that reached my ears as I entered the gate of a cottage garden.

The speaker, when she appeared, was plainly in an angry mood, as she held in one hand a long branch of a cucumber vine that was broken off, and in the other a fine large cucumber.

"What is the matter, Mrs. Grant?" I asked. "Have you had an accident?"

"No accident, sir, I am sorry to say," was her reply. "I wish it had been an accident. Done in malice and spite, sir. But it shall be a bad piece of work for somebody."

"What! do you think that this has been broken off on purpose?" said I, pointing to the cucumber.