

handiness and a man's skill. Mrs. Allen, busy with her invalid messes and forgetting herself, found food ready for her without thought of her own. The nurse ate with the same mechanical regularity that she did everything else. Holland and Sprague had more than one interview in pantry and kitchen, and found a good deal of fun in the new attitude of affairs. The doctor was the one channel of communication with the well, untainted outside world.

"How that woman does eat to be sure!" Holland said, ruefully. "She has ordered beefsteak and onions for to-day. How do you cook 'em?"

"I'll ask Mrs. Smith. It isn't in a book anywhere, I suppose?"

Poor Mrs. Allen! She had given up everything in her anxiety. They could not even take their beefsteak-and-onion problem to her. And though she knew well enough the tempest of conjecture and criticism and unkindly remark that George Holland's presence in the house would arouse, the nearer misery of these days shut it all out. As for him, he never thought of it. I suppose if he had, he would not have cared. He had lived too long outside of conventionalities.

In the long days when he was not house-keeping he wandered about the still rooms with a strange feeling of treading on sacred ground. Mrs. Allen had given him the freedom of the house with trembling lips. He smoked his cigars wherever he pleased; the feeling of sacredness did not hinder that sort of incense burning.

At sundown one night Dr. Sprague came.

Holland came in from the kitchen. He was in his shirt-sleeves, and there was a dash of flour in his moustache. He looked hot and cross.

"I've been baking biscuit," he said, "and saleratus is the devil."

"Why don't you use baking powder?"

"Because you were not here to send for it."

"I will bring it in the morning. I shall stay here to-night," gravely.

Holland looked at him.

"The turning point comes to-night for both of them," answering the unspoken question. "And the end is doubtful."

He came back to Holland after a while. All night the two men sat in the dimly-lighted porch. At intervals Sprague went to the sick-room. Holland did not leave his chair. The brief summer night went on. He heard the hours strike in the house; the great slow stars went on and down their short circuit. At dawn, after a longer stay than usual, the doctor came back.

"They are going to get well," he said, "but how I don't dare think. Next to the way I've struggled for those girls' lives I've fought for their complexions."

"Will you come up now?"

Holland started up. He was still in the house. Indeed, the inmates were by no means out of quarantine, though the nurse had gone back, and all sorts of disinfecting disturbances had been going on for some days.

He stood in the room. He knew that the two sisters were there, dressed, waiting for him, but he stood on the threshold without raising his eyes.

"How do you do, Mr. Holland?" It was Kitty's voice, tremulous and high-keyed with weakness. And still he did not look up.

"O, you may look at Leah," Kitty went on, querulously. "She won't shock you; but you may keep your eyes off me, if you please."

He crossed the room and took the two wasted hands that Leah held out to him.

"My dear," he said, "I vowed if this minute ever came, I should ask the question that I left unspoken the last time I saw you. Will you be my wife?"

Kitty sprang to her feet.

"Leah, you shan't! George Holland, she is only selling herself to you because we are so poor. You think because she's been so ill and has lost her beauty that she will say yes."

"Kitty!" Leah's voice sounded clear and stern. But Kitty's hysterical excitement was at too high flood to be checked by a word.

"You came into the house when no one else would come; you have kept us from starvation, I believe; and now you spoil it all by this. Leah shall not marry you."

She stumbled back into her chair with a sob.

"You know just how people will talk about us. It is the price we will have to pay for being kept alive. And you think it will force her to accept you."

Without one other word, George Holland dropped the hand he held, and went out of the room and out of the house. Dr. Sprague was not in his office. He shut himself into an inner room and waited. The doctor came after he had had an hour for reflection, and brought him a feebly-pencilled line over Leah's name:

"Do not go away till I have seen you again."

"So that little termagant has been giving you a piece of her mind. Dick Mason will have his hands full some day."

"Dick Mason?"

"Yes. If you hadn't been the blindest of infatuated owls, you would have seen that he has been jealous as a Turk all summer. That's an old affair."

"Dick Mason and Kitty!"

"Don't you see that Kitty's question cuts both ways? You had better let them understand that you did not play Providence first out of humanity, and then offer to marry one of them to save their feelings. You are a well-meaning young man, but you are an awful blunderer."

"Yes, thank you," reaching out vaguely for his hat. "I'll go up and make it right."

"No, you won't to-day. You've done quite enough for one day."

Mrs. George Holland finished her convalescence on board her husband's yacht. They had been at sea a month, and Leah had learned the secret of keeping her feet even in a half gale. Looking at her now with the sea-brown on forehead and cheek, unscarred if not so smooth and clear as of old, George Holland was thinking that she looked far younger than in the days when he had first known her. She looked up and caught his eyes fixed on her. She went over to his side; it was in the twilight, and the shadow of the sail.

"George," she said, "there is one question you have never asked me."

"I wonder what?"

"No matter. Look at me" creeping closer to his side—"I love you, dear."

They wintered in the Mediterranean. As the weeks passed Kitty—Kitty was with them—got back something of her lost bloom. She had perseveringly refused to see Dick Mason before she left home—poor Dick who had pleaded with all his eloquence. Even his little notes went back unopened. But toward Spring she spoke of him once, the first time, voluntarily.

It was not long after that that the yacht made a quick run to Cowes. "To meet a friend," Holland said.

And the friend was Dick Mason.

[THE END.]

### Growth of Children.

Growth varies in different children. Some increase in stature so rapidly that their clothes are outgrown long before they are worn threadbare, while others grow very slowly. A table prepared by a French savant gives the following data: During the first year after birth, the growth in stature is about seven and one-half inches; from two to three it is four or five inches; from three to four, an inch and a-half; from four to seven, about two and a-quarter inches, annually; from seven to eight, two and a-half inches; from eight to twelve, two inches, annually; from twelve to thirteen, one and eight-tenths; from thirteen to fourteen, two and a-quarter inches; from fifteen to sixteen, two inches; from sixteen to seventeen, nearly two inches; and after this, though growth continues until twenty-one and sometimes for years after, its rate rapidly diminishes. If mothers would measure their children regularly on their birthdays and preserve the record, they would thus accumulate valuable data for statisticians. Progressive increase of stature is a sign of good health, as increase in strides shows weakness of constitution or imperfect health.