

“But that is nothing, nothing,” I said. “You have a future to provide for, too, and you are not as strong as I am, if you have been more successful.”

She laughed, then blushed, then laughed again, and impulsively cried :

“It is, however, more than I need to buy a wedding-dress with, don't you think?” And as I looked up surprised, she flashed out : “Oh, it 's my secret ; but I am going to be married in a month, and—and then I won't need to count my pennies any more ; and, so I say, if you will stay here with me without a care until that day comes, you will make me very happy, and put me at the same time under a real obligation ; for I shall want a great many things done, as you can readily conceive.”

What did I say—what could I say, with her sweet blue eyes looking so truthfully into mine, but—“Oh, you darling girl!” while my heart filled with tears, which only escaped from overflowing my eyes, because I would not lessen her innocent joy by a hint of my own secret trouble.

“And who is the happy man?” I asked, at