

Glances of surprise and pleasure were cast from one to another among the Brethren of Hiram Lodge. No one spoke, however, but all eyes were turned upon the Master, Mr. Turner. For a moment he seemed reflecting; then taking a slip of paper from the Secretary, he wrote:

"Mrs. Turner—Do not allow Eva to retire until I return home; tell her I am going to bring a strange gentleman who wishes to see her."

And, calling the Junior Deacon, Mr. Turner gave him the note, saying, in a low voice: "Take this note to Mrs. Turner immediately."

"Why, Eva," said Mrs. Turner, when she had read the message, "you are going to have company. A strange gentleman is at the lodge-room who wishes to see you."

"Who can it be?"

Eva looked perplexed and thoughtful. Suddenly her cheeks flushed, her eyes lighted, and clapping her little hands, she sprang to her feet, and exclaimed:

"Oh, it must be papa! No one else would wish to see me; no one in the world," and before Mrs. Turner comprehended the child's interpretation, she had passed the threshold and was flitting through the moonlight toward the Lodge Room. The Tyler looked amazed when Eva burst into the ante-room, her cheeks burning, her eyes flashing with joy and excitement.

"Do not stop me; I am going in!" she exclaimed. But the inner door was fastened, and the impatient Eva nearly cried with vexation.

"Wait a moment," said the Tyler, who, having heard nothing of what had transpired within, was at a loss to account for the strange conduct of the child; "wait a moment, and I will send your request to Mr. Turner. He will come out and see you."

"I shall not wait! I do not want to see Mr. Turner. I want to see my papa."

"The child is crazy, that is evident," said the perplexed Tyler to himself; but calling out the Deacon, he bade him say that Eva was there and had determined to get into the lodge room.

The Deacon, went to the East, and delivered his message in a low tone, and a moment afterward moved "that the craft be called from labor to refreshment."

"Now," said Mr. Turner, "tell the Tyler to let her come in."

And Eva did come, or rather bounded, into the hall, more beautiful in her excitement than ever before. She advanced to the centre of the room and stood beside the altar; half poised upon the tiny foot, she scanned rapidly the faces of all. Her eager eyes soon detected the strangers, who were seated behind each other, and for a moment she seemed irresolute, then darting forward with a glad cry, she threw her arms about the neck of Mr. Durant, crying:

"Oh, papa! my dear papa! you have come home at last! You were not burned in the ship!"

We will not attempt to paint the scene further, but will leave our readers to imagine the joy of the fond father, and also leave them to decide whether the tears that wet the cheeks of the Brethren of Hiram Lodge were caused by sympathy with the happiness of their little charge, or grief that they should lose one whom they all loved.