

"Why, of course, Laura, he might get drunk once in a while, or smoke in the school room, or swear at us occasionally, so as to give a spice to ordinary school conversation."

"Ray, behave!"

"To be sure he might, or we might chance to get a Kalmuck Tartar or a Chinaman!"

"Ray Rattle!"

"I'm just suggesting the possibilities of the future. Fancy our stately Laura reciting 'Hiawatha' or 'Thanatopsis' in Kalmuck or Chinese."

"Fancy Ray Rattle being sensible for five minutes!" Laura was getting seriously angry, as shown by the way she snapped her silk when it knotted.

"That's beyond my imagination, elastic as it is!" replied Ray.

"Try it, Ray, till we see how you would look," suggested Cora.

"All right, but I'll have to confine my remarks to Mrs. Lawrence. How do you like our new minister, Mrs. Lawrence?"

"I think we shall like him very much; he seems so earnest—"

Ting-a-ling-a-ling!

"There goes that door bell!" interrupted Rose, hurrying to the window. "And if it isn't the very man, himself! Oh, mother, whatever shall we do with him? The carpet is up in the parlor; Hannah broke a pane of glass in the drawing-room window, the wind comes in there like fury, and father's asleep in the library, and won't want to be disturbed and—"

"And the amount of the whole matter is—he'll just have to go home and come back another day!" interpolated Cora.

"What nonsense, girls! Rose, go and rouse your papa, then tell Hannah that we shall have another guest to tea!" So saying, Mrs. Lawrence went to meet her guest at the door.

Rose did as she was bidden, and presently returned to her friends. As she entered the room she found Ray hastily rolling up her stocking. "Why, Ray!" she exclaimed. "What now? you surely are not going before tea? Hannah has it nearly ready."

"Pray don't place any obstacles in my way, (as Cora shoves her hassock in front of her). I'm fleeing from temptation in the shape of the minister. I feel that if I stay, I shall disgrace myself, and disgust 'his reverence' past recovery. So to preserve what little reputation I have, I run. Good-bye."

Cora ran to the window to watch her off. "Oh, girls!" cried she, "If there isn't Old Mortality coming up the street, and I don't believe she sees him. There, they've run full tilt against each other."

At this Rose and Laura rushed to the window just in time to see him raise his hat, and turn to keep step up the leaf-strewn street.

"Well, if that isn't out of the frying pan into the fire with a vengeance! Won't he have a treat? She is just in the humor to say anything."

Laura has not forgotten Ray's remarks to her, as she says,—"I think it is disgraceful the way she does go on. It might be excusable in a girl of eight, but at eighteen, one ought to have a little regard for appearances."

"Nonsense, Laura! No one ever pays any serious attention to what Ray says—she is only a child. No one ever thinks of her as a grown up young lady."

"And then she has no respect for anyone. Why,

the other day she actually told Judge Handsell that his new mastiff was the ugliest looking creature she ever saw."

"Of course! What else could she say when he asked her? And the Judge laughed heartily and liked her all the better for it, although it wasn't complimentary to his taste. He told us all about it and said that the element of truthfulness was more fully developed in that girl than in anyone else of his acquaintance," said Rose.

Apparently Laura paid no attention to Rose's explanation, but went on to say, "And the other evening at Mrs. McDougall's she deliberately snubbed Harold Hume when he tried to be agreeable, and then carried on with that young Howard, the draper's clerk, till he doubtless thinks he is the equal of any of the young men in our set."

"Why should she not snub Harold Hume? I'd snub him too with all my heart if he attempted to be familiar. And I think it was splendid—just splendid of her to be kind to Mr. Howard. If he is poor he has a reputation that will bear inspection, and that is more than can be said of Hume." Cora spoke hotly, and Laura felt quite a pride in her coolness, as she replied,—"Well, I really do not see enough of the clerk, except in the way of trade, to know what he is, but I do know that Harold dresses exquisitely, dances divinely, drives the most beautiful turnout, and presents the most expensive flowers in the city, and as long as I enjoy the drives and the flowers, I'll not criticize the reputation."

Cora's eyes flashed and her lips parted to speak, when the tea-bell sounded, much to the relief of Rose, who had been an unwilling listener to this dispute between her friends.

Nestling among the hills down which runs many a silvery stream, that threads its way to the lake, stands the quiet little town of L—. The broad streets are shaded by trees which cast their shadows far and wide, and give the place that quaint old-world appearance that becomes it so well. Partly on this account, and partly because of the quietness of trade, it has been christened, "Sleepy Hollow."

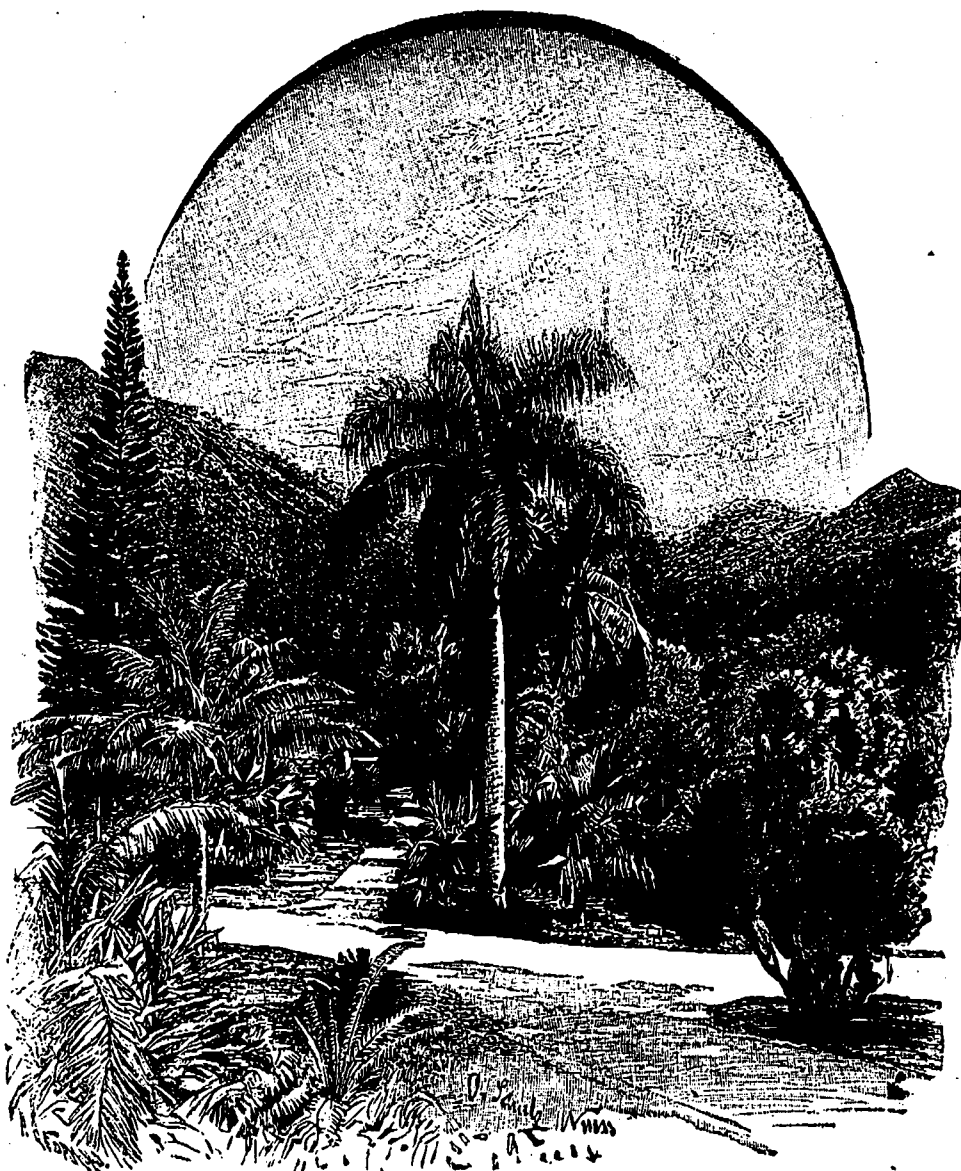
Its High School on Chestnut Street and the College by the lake, have given the place the reputation for learning that it lacks for trade. Its people are inclined to regard slightly the denizens of the neighboring burgh of S—, which owes its prosperity to its shipping and commercial schemes.

Our girls belong to very different families. Laura is the only daughter of Banker Morton, who has lately purchased the old Hickson mansion, and lives in state there.

Her father, when not engaged at the bank, spends most of his time at his club, and about all he really knows of his daughter is that her milliner's, dress-maker's and school-bills are remarkably large. Indeed, judging by the said bills, she ought to be the best dressed and the most highly educated girl in town. Certainly she is the most expensively dressed, but at school she is surpassed by many of humbler circumstances, but of course her father knows nothing of this.

Her mother, a leader of fashion. Ah! what does that comprehend? A woman whose whole end and aim is to live well, to dress well, *i. e.*, better than her neighbors, and to be a shining light in society. Her sole ambition for her daughter is that she may create a good impression in society and then marry well. So between her father's business and her mother's pleasure her moral nature has been wholly neglected. Is it any wonder, then, that she should express such views as we heard when speaking to Cora?

Rose is also an only child—her father the most successful lawyer of the town, and her mother a lady in the truest sense of the word, have both done all in their power to shield Rose from the thorns of life. Better for her had she been allowed to fight her own little battles that she might have gained strength for the great battles that lie before her. Many a rose as tenderly guarded as she, deprived of father and mother, has come to grief through her ignorance of the world.



PLANTATION, INDIA.