

smiling lovingly upon her, "when I say I cannot part with my Alice yet. Nor can her brothers or sister spare her. Frank has just entered upon his college course at McGill, and the boy is at an age when he needs an older sister's sympathy and influence. Helen could not study a lesson nor practice a piece of music correctly without her sister's encouragement. And Charlie, eleven year-old Charlie, could not part yet awhile with the only mother he has known."

"Uncle, dear Uncle," said Alice, pleadingly, "do not say anything more. Fred is quite willing to wait the two years or longer, if you wish. I will never leave while you need me."

Mr. Stuart, who had been unwilling to wait a month, forced himself to agree cheerfully, lest Alice, in her self-sacrificing devotion, would promise never to leave her uncle while he lived.

The two years were not long in speeding by—Mr. Clement thought them but as so many months, when Mr. Stuart reminded him of his promise. To Alice they had passed like a dream, each day being a repetition of the preceding one—in pleasant duties and pleasures. The mornings were devoted to housekeeping, the afternoons to visits, charitable and social, until about five o'clock, when, accompanied by Helen or Charlie, she walked or drove toward town to meet her uncle and Frank. In the evening the home circle, with the addition of Fred, and occasionally other friends from the city, gathered for music, pleasant conversation or reading; sometimes varied in winter by a sleigh drive, a visit to the Victoria Rink, a lecture or concert,—in summer by a pleasant walk along the river bank. No wonder the time passed pleasantly, for contentment dwelt in every heart. Alice's trousseau was in the hands of the modistes in the city, her bridal dress, a rich, creamy white satin, purchased, when death again entered Lindenwold; not this time to lay the mistress of it low, but the faithful governess who had for ten years lovingly performed her duties there. This unexpected death, with the prospect of losing Alice, gave Mr. Clement a great deal of anxiety. He had hoped that Mrs.

Ellis, with the help of a few finishing lessons from masters in town, would complete Helen's education, as she had done that of her sister. Now, what was to be done with the child, for she was only fifteen? He had a prejudice against boarding-schools, thinking that girls make truer women, better fitted for the higher duties of life, when educated with home influences around them, instead of being thrown with companions of every variety of principles and training. He had no expectation of being able to replace Mrs. Ellis, who was not only an educated and accomplished woman, but a devoted Christian. Neither had he the desire to seek a successor to her, for he shrank from giving Helen into the charge of a stranger, who might mar the beautiful character that was developing. Besides he was an old man, and had his peculiarities, his individual views and notions, which Mrs. Ellis had always respected, and a stranger might not, and would perhaps teach her young charge to treat them with indifference, and thus break up the confidence and happiness of his home. Mr. Clement's dilemma pressed upon his spirits all the more that he could not speak of it to his young adviser in domestic matters. But Alice's quick eye soon detected the shade upon his pleasant face, and her affectionate heart divined its cause. After prayerful consideration as to her duty, she wrote a letter to her intended, and then informed her uncle that if Fred were willing she would postpone her marriage for a year, and that he must let her remain housekeeper for that time, as well as take the charge of Helen's education. At first, Mr. Clement was greatly relieved by the proposal, but when he thought of the disappointment to the two young people who had patiently waited for two years, he refused to accept it.

"No, my child, I cannot permit the sacrifice; life is short enough for any of us, but we know the old must die, and I have a strong desire now to see you settled."

"A year, Uncle, will not be long in passing away, and then Helen will be old enough to take my place. Now you must not refuse me. In following any other course than this, I could not feel I was doing right. I