

for some weeks to come, and Deborah would be happy and amused.

"Deborah may choose," she said. "Oh, thank you, thank you ever so much," she cried with some return of her childish enthusiasm. "I shall love it. May I begin to-morrow?"

Those Saturday afternoons became the one absorbing interest of her life. They opened out a new and delightful world to her. She was certainly the most patient model Miss Laing had ever secured. She never seemed tired or cramped. It was enough for her to be near the woman she so passionately admired, and to watch her every movement. Visitors came and went, and Deborah noted how each one seemed to accord the same meed of admiration. There was one man who sauntered in pretty frequently, and that was Mr. Dayrell, who was still unmarried, and still carried on a sort of perennial flirtation with Miss Laing, but for him Deborah entertained an unaccountable dislike. He took some trouble to make friends with her, often bringing her books and bonbons, which she was too polite to refuse, but received with grave distrust.

"I don't like him," she said one day when he had just left the studio. "I wish he would not give me things. I don't like him!"

Miss Laing looked up from her picture with a laugh.

"Why not, Deborah? He's very kind to you."

"He's not got a kind face, like Mr. David."

"Like who?"

"Oh, you can't have forgotten," said Deborah eagerly. "He came to the Hall and stayed, you know, and he gave me my doll, and you liked him very much."

"There! that will do for to-day. We'll stop and have our tea. You are so odd. I wonder if you mean Mr. Russell whom I met years ago. He got some appointment in India in the Civil Service directly afterwards."

"Then we shan't see him again, and he was so nice," said Deborah regretfully.

"You must not be so old-fashioned. Nobody calls a man by his Christian name with 'Mr.' before it. Can't you say Mr. Russell?"

"Yes, if you'd rather," said Deborah meekly.

"It's nothing to do with me. It's because it sounds so odd, and you may drop the 'miss' with me altogether. You can call me Monica."

The proposition seemed akin to irreverence; yet Deborah felt she must make the effort. It was clearly wrong to be "odd."

Before she could answer, however, another girl artist came into the studio and the conversation dropped.

Monica Laing was an orphan with small independent means, able therefore to follow out her natural bent and take up the profession of an artist. She and three or four other girls lived together in a flat and shared a common studio, so that it was not often that Deborah had the happiness which was hers to-day of having her friend to herself. The other girls who came and

went were profoundly uninteresting to the child. She was capable of a few strong attachments, and was blessed with the fidelity of a dog, but her friendships were slow in the making. She laid the foundation of another friendship in the course of the week, although it began in trouble and tears. For it chanced that in a certain paper on English literature Deborah felt for the first time that she had distinguished herself. It was written from notes on a lecture delivered by Professor Norwood, who lectured on English history and literature at the high school, and Deborah had been full of her subject, and had sent in her paper for criticism with the happy feeling that she had done well. What was her dismay, therefore, when it was returned to her to discover that there was scarcely a line of it unmarred by the red ink of correction! Notes were written in the margin, and the question marks, or notes of astonishment, seemed to poor Deborah like written smiles of derision. She gave one hasty glance through the paper, then afraid of a complete break-down, shoved it into her desk to consider at leisure when lessons were over. When school was over, therefore, and the rest of the class had gone to put on their things preparatory to leaving, Deborah, on pretext of searching for something in her desk, lingered behind and once more regarded the hateful paper. She folded her arms over it, and resting her head upon them burst into a perfect passion of tears. All the disappointments and mortifications of the previous weeks found vent in her sobs. The door of the class-room opened slowly and Deborah sprang to her feet, ashamed and dismayed. It was useless to try to hide her tears, neither could she in a moment control her sobs which came and went fitfully. And the disturber was none other than the professor himself who had come to look for something he had left behind him. He was a short-sighted, rather bald-headed man, of about thirty-five years of age, whose understanding of girls and their ways was being considerably enlightened by the girl-wife whom he had brought to his home during the Christmas holidays, but a girl in tears is proverbially difficult to handle. Yet he did not quite like to ignore Deborah in her distress.

"Is it Miss Menzies?" he said, poking forward his head a little awkwardly. "I have left a pencil here, a little gold pencil-case, and I don't want to lose it for—my wife gave it to me," with a passing smile.

In a moment Deborah was on her hands and knees on the floor seeking for it, grateful for the opportunity it gave her for recovering her self-possession. She found it presently and returned it to its owner. Seen in private life the professor did not seem half as alarming as when he stood before a room full of girls lecturing.

"Thank you," he said. "I should never have found it. I'm so short-sighted. Have you got into trouble over your lessons to-day, or is it an imposition?"

"No, no," said Deborah with a choke

in her voice. "It's my paper, and I thought I had done it better, and that perhaps I was not stupid after all, and you have covered it with red ink, and I don't think I shall ever be able to earn any money!"

The accumulated grievances of weeks found vent in that one outburst, and it was small blame to the professor that he received it with a little burst of laughter which he could not keep back.

"But this is a thing that can be remedied," he said. "Shall we just look through the paper together and see where you've run off the lines, or where the red ink has been unjustly introduced?"

It was a kind-hearted act, for that fair-haired wife of his was waiting all impatiently for him outside, but for a full half hour Mr. Norwood sat by Deborah's side, showing her where she had blundered or mistaken his meaning, gathering from her remarks the history of her early training, and discovering that most of her mistakes had arisen from the fact that she had had none of the ordinary text-books used by the teachers of the school. That she was clever, eager about her work, and thoughtful, was evident by the quick way in which she grasped his corrections. One of the mistresses looked in once or twice into the class room, but Mr. Norwood explained that he was keeping back Miss Menzies to talk over her paper, and the mistress had quietly seated herself and waited.

"There!" said Mr. Norwood, rising at last and stretching out his hand. "I hope now that you see more the plan on which I want you to work. I think you will get on, for you seem possessed of an endless capacity for taking pains," which, as Carlyle says, is the secret of cleverness."

Deborah blushed to the roots of her hair with pleasure.

"Is it really?" she said. "I'll take pains; I want to get on dreadfully."

"Well then, take my word for it, nobody who wants to 'get on dreadfully' fails," said Mr. Norwood kindly, as he shook hands.

Outside in the street Deborah saw a slight, fair-haired girl, with a very fresh-coloured complexion, waiting, who greeted the professor with rapture, intermingled with scolding. She did not look more than nineteen.

"Why, Johnnie," she heard her say, "I came, as we arranged, to walk back with you and you have kept me waiting hours! simply hours."

Deborah did not hear the answer, but she could not resist turning one look in the direction of the pair, and on the professor's face there was a smile as gentle as a woman's as he looked down on the pretty wife at his side, and she walked home wondering greatly that the professor who had filled her with such awe and dread should have such a young wife who was evidently not a bit afraid of him and who called him "Johnnie!"

The professor's augury came true. From that day forward Deborah began to get on.

(To be continued.)