

'The Fund.'

(By Pansy, in 'C. E. World'.)

'And so, daughter—' the Rev. Joseph Frasier paused, waited a moment, cleared his throat, and began again. 'You see how it is, dear; father is more sorry than he can put into words. I thought, up to the last hour, almost, that I could manage it, but the unexpected illness and death of poor old Aunt Sally took every penny that was laid aside towards it. I couldn't let her die in the county house when she was the oldest member of our church, and a faithful friend to your grandmother. Even then, if it had not been for poor Uncle Edward's trouble, and inability to pay back that hundred dollars

right, father; it will truly, and I don't mean to cry one speck.'

A large tear rolled down and splashed upon the father's hand as she spoke, and the girl hid her face suddenly upon his shoulder and let others follow it.

The father passed his large, worn hand tenderly over her brown head, and murmured brokenly in curious contrast with the cheerful words: 'There spoke my good, brave girl! Your mother said that I could trust you to understand and be cheery about it, and I knew that I could. But that doesn't alter the fact that it is a bitter disappointment. I tried hard to have it otherwise.'

The brown head came up presently, and Alethea Frasier sought hurriedly for her

dertone of hope that something might 'happen' to change the condition of things; but nothing had happened, and now the fact was recognized.

There are some girls who will not be able to appreciate the bitterness of Alethea Frasier's disappointment. Going to school is so much a matter of course to them that the idea of its being a special privilege, involving care and expense, and very often indeed sacrifice on the part of others, does not even occur to them. Alethea's life had not been lived along that plane. She fully, and at times almost too keenly, appreciated the sacrifices made for her. Since she had been old enough to have a voice in such matters, she had known that not a new dress or hat or even a pair of shoes had been bought for her without some quiet sacrifice on the part of mother or father or both. The only daughter of a country pastor, with two little brothers and 'the baby' to think about, and their share of the poor of the church to look after—the girl had certainly been trained in the school of economy.

Occasionally she wondered why the minister's share of the church poor should be so disproportionately large, why, for instance, there had been no home but theirs open to Aunt Sally, the oldest member, and no pocketbook but theirs to meet the funeral expenses when Aunt Sally's room in the place of 'many mansions' was finally ready for her; especially when she remembered that some of the deacons lived in large houses, and had substantial bank-accounts; but she never, even for a moment, thought that they might have let poor Aunt Sally close her life in the poorhouse. She would have been the first to have spurned indignantly such a suggestion. Nevertheless, it was probably Aunt Sally's comfortable home for three months, and Aunt Sally's doctor's bill and coffin and grave that had brought to naught her cherished plans.

They had been cherished for a long time. It was now nearly three years since the Rev. Joseph Frasier had made the astounding announcement at the breakfast-table one morning: 'Next year, mother, or by year after next certainly, we must send Allie to Grantly for at least one year; two, if we can.'

Alethea remembered just how she had set down her glass of milk because her hand trembled, and had felt the waves of color roll into her face at the mere suggestion. She would not, it seemed to her, have been for the moment more amazed had her father said, 'We must manage next year to send Allie to heaven.' Indeed, Grantly was only second to heaven in her thoughts. The girls, her friends, the deacon's daughters and Dr. Anderson's daughter, went to Grantly, but not Alethea Frasier; why, it took several hundred dollars to spend a year at Grantly! What could her father be thinking of?

Nevertheless, he had thought much about it, and after that first announcement he talked much about it; they talked together, and planned and calculated and saved and sacrificed, and added slowly, very slowly, to 'the fund.' Not the first year, nor yet the second, had it been found to be large enough to justify the expenditure; but they had all been so confident that the next year would bring it to pass that they had begun, the mother and daughter, to plan just what dresses she would need, and to say that a new waterproof would be a necessity, for of course Allie could not wear her mother's when she went to Grantly.

Then had come poor Aunt Sally's utter collapse, so that she could not sit any more in her one easy chair, and patch and darn and mend for those who brought her her



YES, THERE WERE HER GUESTS!

we loaned him, it might have been managed; but as it is—' The girl at the window turned and came toward him. She had a winsome face and bright brown eyes that just then glistened with some unshed tears. Even though the man had not called her 'daughter' an observer would have been certain of the relationship. She had the same firm chin and resolute mouth.

'But as it is I can't go to school this fall; that is what you are trying to tell me, father, and I have known it for several weeks. Don't be worried papa, dear; I know you tried as hard as ever you could, and I understand all about it, of course. One year more won't matter so very much, and I shall study at home and try to keep up. It will be all

handkerchief, and laughed through her tears.

'That was just a little April shower, father, out of season. I'm dreadfully ashamed of it, though, in the face of all those nice things you said about me. I'm going to deserve them; see if I don't.'

Perhaps both were secretly glad to be interrupted at that moment. Alethea meant to be brave, but the disappointment was sore. She had known it, as she said, for several weeks, or at least almost known it. An inward conviction that her father could not raise the money needed to send her away for that coveted year at school had been steadily growing, but this was the first time that it had been put into distinct language. Always heretofore there had been that un-