

"Go and wear that old poplin!" cried Lettie, from the clouds of white billowy lace that was to adorn the green silk.

"You must be crazy!"

"I should think so," chimed Margaret, who was fitting a lace berth over the waist of delicate lilac satin. "Do you want Austin Bosworth to think us a family of paupers? It is to be a grand affair, and Clara expects all who honor it will try to pay her respect enough to dress respectably. It is Austin's first appearance after his European tour, and surely you do not want him to think mean of us?"

The tears came up, but Janet was brave, and no one saw them.

That night, when the two girls—the one in her dark beauty and wonderfully becoming array; the other all delicacy, her fair, pearl loveliness enhanced by the purple color of her splendid dress—came laughing into grandma's room,—a little shadow darkened her face, and she found it very hard to keep back the tears.

"'Fine feathers make fine birds,' but fine birds do not always sing the sweetest, Janie," said grandma, after they were gone. "I know who is the true one in this family. I know my little singing bird, Janie, and she is dearer than a dozen fine ladies; Austin and Clara will come to-morrow, and he will tell us about his travels in foreign lands, and you will be far happier than you would be up at the house to-night, with dancing and confusion."

"I suppose so, grandma," and Janet took her seat by the fire, and went on knitting, with a peaceful face.

The elder sisters came home with ruffled plumage, but in high spirits.

Austin Bosworth had returned, a handsome, polished gentleman, and had flirted desperately with Lettie.

"Why, Grandma, he almost proposed to her!" laughed Margaret, who was engaged to Judge Leonard's hopeful son, and therefore had no place for jealousy. "More than one in the company predicted that it really would be a match."

"Don't count your chickens before they are hatched," called Grandma from her pillow.—"Austin Bosworth is no fool, I can tell you that!"

"What an old crooker!"

They were entering their chamber across the hall, but grandma's ears were not dulled by old age, and she clearly heard them.

"Don't mind them, grandma," whispered Janet, who had waited to help them lay aside their finery.

"Mind them! Do you think I shali, Janet Leeds!"

Next day Austin Bosworth came. He was too familiar with the old house to stop for bellringing; he entered, crossing the hall, directly passed the parlor door, where Margaret and Lettie waited in their tasteful afternoon costumes, and walked straight on to Grandma Leed's room.

She was there with her work,—her placid face beaming beneath the white lace bordered cap.

A graceful, girlish figure half knelt before her, wreathing with deft fingers a bunch of evergreens into a frame for a mantle ornament, and her eyes were lifted smiling into the old lady's face.

He entered and closed the door before either saw him.

"Grandma Leed's!"

"Why, bless my heart, it is Austin. Come here, my boy!"

And the fine gentleman came and gave both hands to her in his delight.