

subjects presenting themselves, with a view to the selection of a suitable topic, chose under the head of moral improvement. On a Monday morning she resolved to begin the work that day as soon as she reached home from school. The title selected was "True Nobility." Having a few minutes to spare at noon, she got out the paper and wrote down the head, with some pretty flourishes beneath it. It was an unpropitious day for the beginning, being washing-day, and the house in the consequent disorder attendant thereon. The washerwoman's child, never at the best a rugged child, was to-day suffering from the excessive heat, and its little body was broken out with blotches, and its little voice piped forth in pitiful protest. The washerwoman herself was more or less influenced by the suffering of her child, and the effect of the heat upon her own body. She was a little woman with a thin face, from which had apparently been wrung every hopeful expectation, as though it had passed through a great moral wringer, and had come out in a condition most complimentary to the thoroughness of the process. It was a waiting face, with the shadow of a cross resting constantly upon it.

The crying of the child was a decided annoyance, especially to one striving to get her mind into an even frame for thought. To Miss Woodby the sounds were most irritating. She said to her mother,—

"What on earth is the matter with that imp to-day?"

Her mother, having her own hands full, vouchsafed no explanation.

"I declare," she ejaculated a moment later, "if I had a brat like that I would choke it."

And she hurried away to school to get out of the sound of the noise, leaving her mother to attend to the dinner dishes.

In the afternoon she brought out her paper, found a cool place at the window for her desk, and began:—

"TRUE NOBILITY.

"There is the nobility of blood and the nobility of life. The former is but an accident of birth; the latter is the result of development. The former is but for the few; the latter is for the many. True nobility is a life nobly lived. It comes neither from birth nor from circumstances. It springs alone from the heart. Money cannot purchase it; education cannot bring it; talent will not produce it. It is a treasure which every man may possess, and yet its price is above rubies."

At this juncture Miss Woodby was ob-

liged to take a long pause to rearrange her thoughts, and while thus engaged her little brother appeared at the door. Miss Woodby looked up impatiently.

"Don't come in here," she commanded.

"But I want my hat."

"Well, get it and leave at once!"

"You needn't be so cross," he said.

"If you don't leave at once I'll make you," she declared.

He got his hat with all the speed possible, but on leaving had the satisfaction of screaming out, "Mean thing!" and slamming the door with all his might. It was fully fifteen minutes before Miss Woodby was sufficiently composed to renew her work. Then she wrote:—

"It is a jewel, whose lustre grows brighter with every day of its use. It is a possession that time cannot wear; that misfortune cannot diminish; that no combination of circumstances can rob us of. The hardest battle is the fight against self. The grandest victory is the triumph over self. There can be no true education where self-denial is not accomplished. Self deadens—"

Just here Miss Woodby's mother came to the room, to tell her to put away her clothes that had just been ironed.

"I can't bother about that now," said Miss Woodby.

"But they are in my way."

"Gracious! how can I write or do anything if I've got to be jumping up every minute?" demanded the young authoress, in a tone of very proper resentment.

Mrs. Woodby withdrew her tired body, and went back to her work with a sigh.

"I don't see what makes me act so contrary," murmured Miss Woodby to herself. "She could have put away those things herself, if she cared to be any way accommodating." Then she bent her mind again to the task of composition. Before she could get in order to commit matter to the page, tea was announced. After tea her mother asked her to clear the table and wash the dishes, but she had to think, and could not do this. She inquired, with considerable reason, if she was expected to do everything on earth, and get an essay ready too? She went out and sat under a tree until the table was cleared, and then she brought out her manuscript, and continued:

"...to lens the better instincts, and makes him who yields thereto a torture to himself, and a burden to those about him. True nobility is to care for others, to give up self, to lose your own will in the will of those