

save that she was the object of much tender petting, no reference was made to the preceding day's adventure. Gracie had made up her mind, however, to seek advice from her friend and teacher at Park House, and it was not long before she wrote to Miss Helen Estleigh, merely telling her that the return of Mrs. B's son prevented her presence from being so necessary at the Towers, and all things considered she felt it would only be right for her to try and do something for herself. at any rate, until time and postal arrangements would allow of her hearing from her father, a most remote possibility. The reply was characteristic. "Work, child, work; if we did not know that, though you have been well educated, it is utterly impossible for you to impart any part of that education to the pupils in your care, and our reputation would suffer in consequence, nothing would afford my dear sister and myself more pleasure than to offer you a home, but that is out of the question, and as you have sought our advice I will offer a suggestion. Why not join some institute where nursing sisters are so much in demand. In these days it is no disgrace for a lady to be hospital nurse and it is an opening for a vast field of usefulness. Think of the plan, my dear, seeking advice from a higher source and greater wisdom than can be offered by
Your sincerest friend and teacher,
HELEN ESTLEIGH."

The idea thus conveyed to Gracie was not at all disagreeable to her and she determined to make no hasty decision; such a step as leaving the Towers required all her mental powers to form a judgment that ought to be matured in every way. Nor was the protection of such a home and friend to be lightly cast aside. Strange as it may appear, her affection for Mrs. B, was a principal factor in her conclusion that it was well for them to be separated. Who the woman at the miserable house was, Gracie had formed her own opinion, and no doubt could be felt that

she was the cause of such an ebullition of rage, innocent as she might be, and then who was to know whether such another scene would take place at some future period, in fact how was she to protect herself without giving outsiders food for considerable gossip? Looking at the matter whichever way she would, one fact was clear—the Towers would be better without her, and the skeleton she had unwittingly disturbed, more likely to take itself off if she were once away. After convincing herself that each conflicting argument was either right or wrong, her purpose became clearly worked out in all its details in her mind, and before going to rest she penned the following letter to Mrs. B, which cost her many tears in the writing:—

My dear Mrs. B,—At the risk of giving deep offence to you, I am taking a course that must, I feel, appear like great ingratitude to one who has always been my kindest friend. Do not think hardly of me for doing what I feel is right; it was impossible for me to appeal to you for advice, so I had to seek it elsewhere. Your neverfailing generosity has allowed me to now have sufficient funds to pay my own way until I get something to do for myself. I cannot bear to think we shall never see each other again, but as things are now, I could not stay at the Towers. Forgive me the pain I must be causing you and do not try to find

Your miserable friend,
GRACIE SOMERSET.

Blank consternation was expressed in Mrs. B's face when instead of her young friend appearing as usual, the maid brought in this letter. She made no comment, however, until she and her son were alone. It is not necessary to repeat all that passed between them, each had expected some break to occur in the routine of the Towers, but this step of Gracie's was not anticipated, and could she have known how sincere was the sorrow and trouble poor Bertie was enduring, she might, perhaps, have looked more kindly on his suit. "You see, Bertie," said his mother,