

composure, during her aunt's nightly recreation of card-playing.

As the clock struck nine, Mrs. Pyke, the housekeeper, entered, dressed in black broché, which was curiously patterned with violet flowers in accordance with an ancient fashion; also she wore a black lace cap upon her head, and a long gold watch chain about her neck.

The maid, Dunham, had already set forth the card-table, and Mr. Pyke, pausing in the doorway to make a curtsy, glided decorously into her place, and gathered the cards into slightly palsied hands, veiled by black mittens.

Pyke had entered her ninetieth year, but it had not yet occurred to her that she was too old to fulfil her duties.

She was a strangely silent person, and her length of service did not inspire her to abate one iota of her perpetual awestruck deference to her employer, though nothing could have exceeded Miss Marney's graciousness to her oldest dependent.

The rubber had been played in silence; Jeanne scarcely daring to breathe. She noted with wonder and delight the magnificence of her grand-aunt's appearance, and the stateliness of her bearing. She had indeed never seen any one like her: every time Miss Marney tossed her head, and this was a favourite gesture oft repeated, Jeanne thrilled responsively. She practised the movement afterwards before her looking-glass in private, and was disgusted at her own inability to produce double chins in rapid succession.

The scene interested her deeply: the card-table, lighted with green-shaded candles, struck her with pleasant dismay.

Her nonconformist uncle at Coed-Ithel called cards the devil's books; and she had never seen this class of literature before.

She felt almost as guilty as though she were being called upon to assist at a witch's orgy, instead of an old lady's innocent rubber, as she watched the housekeeper's shrivelled black figure, and dim spectacled eyes, peering at the cards held in her mittened hands. She observed with interest the small sour