

Spicers—I think it was Captain Abner Spicer—had children until he was sixty—although by a younger wife, of course.”

They looked it up and in so doing they came across an Ezra Babcock, father-in-law of the Third Josiah Spencer, who had had a son proudly born to him in his sixty-fourth year.

They gazed at each other then, those two maiden sisters, like two conspirators in their precious innocence.

“If we could find Josiah a young wife—” said the elder at last.

“Oh, Cordelia!” breathed Patty, “if, indeed, we only could!”

Which was really how it started.

As I think you will realize, it would be a story in itself to describe the progress of that gentle intrigue—the consultations, the gradual eliminations, the search, the abandonment of the search—(which came immediately after learning of two elderly gentlemen with young wives—but no children!)—the almost immediate resumption of the quest because of Josiah’s failing health—and finally then the reward of patience, the pious nudge one Sunday morning in church, the whispered “Look, Cordelia, that strange girl with the Pearsons—no, the one with the red cheeks—yes, that one!”—the exchange of significant glances, the introduction, the invitation