

sheds—they might have been wood-sheds for that matter—and she had made a giant bouquet of wonderfully proper-looking wax flowers; but she did not know a verb from a noun, and though she wrote a lady-like hand, could not spell a word of two syllables, and I do not think she knew whether she lived on a continent or on an island.

The day for Miss St. John's departure had arrived, and we were all prepared for a grand *denouement*, for we knew that Mrs. Melverton would be doubly angry for not being apprised of it before. There were not more than a dozen of us in the school-room, it being a very wet morning. I was sitting with my spelling-book in my hand, looking out of the window at some clothes that were flapping disconsolately back and forth on the lines in the clothes-yard, when Miss Melverton opened the door, and said, "Mamma, dear, the omnibus is——"

The concluding part of Miss Melverton's remark is forever lost to the world, for as she spoke a horn

"Did sing both loud and clear,"

like the braying ass in "John Gilpin"; and even at the same instant, Miss St. John rushed wildly past her, dressed in her bonnet and duster, both of which were soaking wet, as well as everything else she had on; and ran through the school-room, and out into the clothes-yard, and grasping frantically at the aforesaid clothes on the lines, she tore them off and rolled them into a lump, and retraced her steps through the school-room, back into the hall. Here she was met by a man in a shining mackintosh, to whom she said, as she ran upstairs,

"It is up here! Come up here."

Mrs. Melverton's look of blank amazement was changed to one of fearful anger as she arose and walked out of the room, shutting the door very gently after her, which we considered a bad omen, and which did not hinder us from hearing Miss St. John's voice calling to the man to wait "one moment—only one moment." Her voice, though particularly soft when she spoke in a natural tone, always put me in mind of the screeching of some kind of wild

bird when she raised it. There was a great deal of running up and down stairs, and banging of doors, and loud chattering in treble voices now going on; and in the midst of it all another lusty blast from the horn floated on the breeze—or it would have, if there had been any breeze for it to float on. The next moment we heard the man tramping down stairs and out of the front door; and, as Miss Melverton afterwards told us, followed by Miss St. John, screeching and gesticulating like a wild thing, with her bonnet hanging down between her shoulders, and her dress flapping about her feet. All this happened so suddenly and in such an incredibly short space of time, that we had not had time to give way to any feeling but astonishment; but when we found that Miss St. John had really gone—started on a long journey in such a plight, and gone without so much as saying good-bye to one in the house—not even Mrs. Melverton's stormy countenance could keep us from roaring and laughing. She had stolen off down town after breakfast, and made preparations for her departure, thus avoiding the disagreeable task of telling Mrs. Melverton she was going.

The maples on the lawn flamed out gloriously as the season advanced, and we sometimes got into disgrace for climbing up on the lawn fence to gather the leaves before they had commenced to fall.

It was this fall that I first remember being struck by the gorgeous beauty of the autumn woods. Flora and I had long planned a nice little beech-nutting excursion, to take place when the nuts were ripe; and set out accordingly with our little baskets one Saturday afternoon about the middle of October. We did not get many nuts, as they had not yet fallen, and we could not reach to the branches; but we pulled them down with sticks, which was a great bother. We were in such ecstasies with the brilliant world about us that we scarcely thought of the nuts at all. The whole wood was aglow with scarlet and purple and gold. It was a world of leaves, leaves, leaves—bright, beautiful, and many-colored. Every way