

her, played about her dressing-room, or enjoyed a romp with her father. The interval, meanwhile, was at my own disposal, but, that day, I could not fix my attention on either book or pen; my thoughts were constantly recurring to the scene of the dinner and the difficulties beginning to loom up around my path, so far at least as the management of my pupil was concerned. At the expiration of the two hours, I proceeded to Mrs. Sherwin's dressing-room and found the lady, her husband and child together.

"How is this, Miss Dunmore?" querulously exclaimed the former, as I entered. "Fairy tells me that you allowed her rich pastry for dessert, though I have forbidden its ever being served upon the nursery table."

"I did not say that, mamma! I told you I had the pastry in spite of her."

"But surely you knew, Miss Dunmore," continued the mistress of the household with an aggrieved look, of course directed towards myself: "Surely you knew that it was an unsuitable dish for a child, especially as I had already warned you that Fairy was delicate."

"I did know it, madam, and used every effort short of physical force, to prevent her eating it."

"Good heavens! Miss Dunmore, where is the earthly use of a governess if she cannot control, in some slight degree, the pupils committed to her care?"

"I will cheerfully strive to do my best, Mrs. Sherwin, but I would first like to know the extent of authority you intend delegating to me? Am I to be allowed to reward or punish in any manner?"

Mrs. Sherwin opened her large blue eyes to their fullest extent, and after a momentary pause of astonishment, repeated as if involuntarily:

"Punished! No! Reward as much as you like, but my daughter is never to be punished, even menaced, by any other than her mother."

I slowly, but respectfully shook my head.

"What do you mean by that? Speak out, Miss Dunmore, I detest anything like innuendo."

"Perhaps, then, you would be kind enough to instruct me as to how Fairy is to be controlled? She is a lively, impulsive child, and somewhat wilful."

"Why, appeal to her reason, argue, discuss the point with her; and her own judgment, and natural sense of right, for she is a child of wonderful precocity, will settle the matter properly at once. Go now, Fairy, with Miss Dunmore. Go, like a darling child."

"No, I won't. She is a cross, old thing, and would have prevented me getting any pie at dinner if she could."

Here was an excellent occasion for Mrs. Sherwin to show me what could be done by appealing to her daughter's reason, but she did not enter on the experiment; and, after another injunction to Fairy, disregarded as the first had been, she told me that I might go up stairs, and that my pupil would soon follow me.

"I shall be in the school-room, Fairy, waiting for you," I said, as I turned away.

Very slowly and very thoughtfully I proceeded to the apartment in question, a cheerful, sunny chamber, adorned with handsome engravings, and fitted up with comfortable desks, large globes, and splendidly mounted maps. Sitting down in a softly cushioned easy-chair, I began to reflect on what had just passed. I felt anxious and alarmed, not so much at the wayward petulance of the daughter, as at the injustice—the wilful blindness of the mother. How was I ever to accomplish any good, unsupported, unaided, by the parents, and debarred from using any of the resources with which a just degree of authority would have furnished me?

And evidently much—indeed everything—was expected from me. Ah! already I was beginning to find that there were thorns lurking amid the roses at Elmsford.

CHAPTER V.

Is the afternoon my pupil and myself were both in the sitting-room, overlooking some splendid engravings, chiefly foreign views; I, profiting of the chance, to give her some vague, slight notions of geography, such as the occasion permitted of, when Mrs. Sherwin and Mr. Ellerslie, who had been strolling in the grounds together, entered. Somewhat confused by this sudden accession to my audience, I paused, when suddenly, my restless little charge, whose attention had begun to wander from the pictures to myself, exclaimed: putting her tiny finger on that part of my head from which I had so hastily severed the long, thick tress given to poor George at parting, and which, as yet, had grown only a few inches.

"Oh Miss Dunmore, I see you are as naughty as myself. Look, you have cut off a thick piece of your hair, just as I did some time ago, when mamma was so dreadfully angry with me. I did it for my doll, but you have no doll. What did you cut yours off for?"

The remembrance of the dreadful circumstances under which that lock of hair had been severed and given, brought a tide of painful crimson to my cheek, which token of emotion was most unpleasantly interpreted by Mrs. Sherwin, who remarked with a somewhat sarcastic smile:

"Oh, Fairy! Miss Dunmore cut off that tress probably for some one of whom she is far fonder than you are of your doll. Is it not so, Miss Dunmore?"

I could not mistake the peculiar significance of her tone, and pained—hurt by a supposition so far removed from the truth, yet unwilling, at the same time, to mention my brother's name, lest it should be followed by questions and remarks which would prove little short of absolute torture to me, I gravely rejoined:

"Yes, Mrs. Sherwin, it was indeed given to one very dear to me."

At that moment I encountered Mr. Ellerslie's eyes fixed in earnest, grave scrutiny on myself, and the look brought a more vivid tide of colour to my face. Shortly after, Fairy asked me to take a walk with her in the grounds, and I joyfully complied, glad to get away from the close observation of my companions.

A few weeks passed quietly over, I imparting as much instruction to my pupil as the latter would receive, which, I must say, was very limited in amount. On one point, however, I remained firm, and that was to converse with her almost exclusively in French or Italian. The result was that she made marked progress in both languages, which circumstance proved a source of great satisfaction to Mrs. Sherwin. My duties, however, were not growing lighter, for Fairy remained as wayward and her mother as unreasonable as at first.

One day that I had vainly petitioned and insisted on the former commencing her childish studies such as they were, she suddenly exclaimed, prompted by some passing caprice:

"If you will come into the sitting-room where I can look out on the lawn through the windows, I will study there. If you don't, I will run out into the sun without my hat."

Moved as much by this threat as by the hope of inducing her to apply herself, I consented, but when arrived there, she was as indolent and refractory as ever. In vain I argued, coaxed, entreated—her only reply was a request to accompany her to the garden to gather some flowers.

This I peremptorily declined, promising, however, to do so at a later time if she would say her lesson at once.

"No, I won't!" she angrily retorted, giving way to a sudden burst of childish passion, under the influence of which she flung her book on the floor. "No, I won't, and you shall not treat me the way you do, any longer. Mamma said the other day that you were not fit for a governess, and Croker said so too."

Though often wayward and wilful, it was the first time the little creature had ever spoken in such a manner, and I recoiled from her as pained and surprised as if she had struck me. Suddenly she was raised from behind in the strong grasp of her uncle, Ellerslie, who had entered the room unperceived, during our previous wordy discussion, and, who now bore her shrieking and struggling, to the lawn outside, on which he deposited her.

"What a woful specimen of mismanaged infancy!" he exclaimed, shutting the door and approaching me. "I fear, Miss Dunmore, that the situation I have been instrumental in procuring you, is not one for which you can afford me much gratitude."

"You are mistaken, Mr. Ellerslie! Comforts, luxuries of which I had never even dreamed, as well as a most liberal salary, have been mine since I entered Elmsford, and I could not expect to enjoy them without some drawback. I did not embark on my new career of governess, expecting to find it all sunshine and unclouded pleasure."

"You are gifted with rare patience, young lady," he thoughtfully rejoined. "I was standing at that door a long time, unseen and unsuspected, before I interfered, and I really knew not which to wonder at most, the child's wilfulness or your own rare untroubled patience. Surely it is a precious possession—more so than a rich inheritance."

"You forget," I said, smiling faintly, there may just possibly be some truth in Fairy's random accusations. I really am not fit for a governess, at least as the word is understood at the present day."

"And pray why not? You are a thorough English scholar."

"Yes, but I know nothing whatever of music or singing."

"Granted: but you speak and pronounce French and Italian with rare elegance and perfection, not to mention your being also tolerably conversant with the dead languages."

"But, I cannot teach drawing or dancing."

"Instead, you have a good practical knowledge of botany, geology and other sciences of which only a wretched smattering is imparted in so many of our first-class female academies."

"But, alas! I cannot do worsted, bead or wax-work—cannot braid a smoking cap—crochet a macassar—embroider a pair of slippers."

"Pshaw!" he impatiently interrupted. "Merely ingenious feminine ways of frittering away time. Remember, I do not disapprove of them, when looked on in the light of mere pastime—as such, they are graceful and harmless: but, when they become, as they often do, serious, engrossing pursuits, followed to the detriment of more important duties, they are worse than useless. Tell me, will wax or wool-work prepare a girl for the future important duties she will be called on to fulfil as mistress of a family, or member of society? Will acquaintance with knitting and braiding, or even drawing and dancing, store her mind with valuable knowledge, with religious or mental wealth which will enable her to some future period, to be companion, counsellor, friend, to a husband, or to those with whom she may come in contact? The influence of woman in society, constituted as it now is, might become all powerful for good, and yet, how lightly, almost criminally, is it often frittered away."

A short silence followed, for I felt that concurrence from me would scarcely appear disinterested, and he soon abruptly resumed:

"'Tis too bad, too bad, Miss Dunmore, that you, with your rare mental gifts, should have no higher field for them than teaching a spoiled child her Primer. 'Tis but poorly fulfilling the charge with which your dying father invested me, or proving the tender respect I cherish for the memory of your admirable mother, whom I knew well during the first years of her sojourn in Canada. I fear I must seek out something more suited to your capabilities."

"It will not be so easily found, Mr. Ellerslie. Flattering as is the view you so kindly take of my poor qualifications, I cannot ignore my own lamentable deficiencies in so many essential points; but, I must seek out poor little Fairy. She is so much accustomed to petting—she will feel doubly hurt by your late severity."

As I spoke, the door was thrown open and Mrs. Sherwin made her appearance. Her cheek was flushed—her manner excited—and I was not at all surprised when she apostrophized me with:

"Upon my word, Miss Dunmore, you are a most trustworthy as well as kind-hearted governess. You allow your charge, first to be cruelly abused, and afterwards think it beneath your dignity to follow, in order to soothe or console her. What are you doing down here? Why are you not up in the school-room with your pupil at this hour?"

"Because, Mrs. Sherwin, she insisted on coming down, and I had only the alternative of accompanying her, or seeing her run out, as she threatened to do, into the glare of the sun without her hat."

"All pretence! Up stairs is a little dull and you are tired of it. Allowing, however, the truth of your statement, why did you sit tamely by and see her expelled from her own mother's drawing-room?"

"Pray, Helena, do not seek to make Miss Dunmore responsible for my actions, however determinedly you may insist on her bearing the blame of all Fairy's misdeeds."

"You are harsh and cruel, Rupert! I am ashamed of you."

He smiled half-good humouredly, half contemptuously, as he rejoined: "And I am very much ashamed of my ill-bred, wilful little niece."

"Miss Dunmore, please go to Miss Helena at once!" sharply exclaimed Mrs. Sherwin, turning an angry glance on myself.

I hastily obeyed, and not possessing patience sufficient to wait till I should be out of hearing, she sneeringly said: "So, you too, Rupert, despite your pretended wisdom and philosophy, yield at once, like a school-boy, to the charms of a pretty face!"

"And you, Helen, like so many of your sex, hate and harass the unhappy owner of one. Better for Miss Dunmore, that she had bright red hair, coarse features, or a squint. Her path through life would be much pleasanter than it will probably be under existing circumstances."

I heard no more, but pained and mortified, hurried out on my mission. I found Fairy, already oblivious of her late grievances, dancing around her father, who was stretched in a graceful, half-reclining attitude at the foot of a tree. The instant she perceived me, she flung her arms round his neck, bidding me "go away instantly, for I was cross and ugly."

"Hush, Fairy!" laughed Mr. Sherwin, throwing his arm half around her as if to protect her from any attempt at rescue on my part. "Miss Dunmore may be cross, but she certainly is not ugly."

"Take care, papa. Did't mamma scold you well the other morning, for saying she was so pretty. Take care—I'll tell!"

"Not another word, child! You are really becoming what our French friends justly call an *enfant terrible*. Pray, Miss Dunmore, take her away at once. I am tired of her."

But, as Fairy still clung to him, and his arm still encircled her, I ventured on no more active interference than telling my wayward pupil that her mamma wished her to accompany me to the school-room, immediately.

"Pray, get up off the grass, Mr. Sherwin, and do not lie there, foolishly encouraging Fairy in her wilfulness," exclaimed Mrs. Sherwin, as she suddenly appeared in our midst.

"I tell you I won't leave papa now. Go away, Miss Dunmore, I won't go with you."

"'Tis really too bad to think you have acquired so little influence over the mind of your pupil, Miss Dunmore! 'Tis of no use standing there, so you had better go to the school-room at once. Fairy will soon join you."

Barely able to repress the indignant tears that rushed to my eyes, I silently obeyed. Ah! the thorns at Elmsford were growing sharper and longer every day. The roses could not hide them now.

I was sitting in my usual place in the school-room, when Mr. Sherwin entered and deposited the little rebel on the richly-carved desk in front of me.

"There, Miss Dunmore! I had to bribe her into coming by carrying her all the way on my shoulder, an effort, by the way, that has quite exhausted me. Now, little one, remember you promised me to be very good."

"Oh, indeed I will!" replied the now laughing child, "but I cannot study that horrid spelling!"

"I fear she will grow up a stupendous dunce!" said he, glancing enquiringly towards me.

"She has good natural abilities, but she gives them no chance whatever, I rejoined."

"What matter?" was his careless reply. "She will be too handsome to require any extraneous aid from talent or intellect. What does a creature with her splendid eyes and exquisitely cut features want with book-learning?"

"She will at least require to know reading and writing," I briefly, indeed abruptly, rejoined. "Is not your doctrine an unusual one, Mr. Sherwin?"

"A true one, nevertheless! Just look at yourself," and he lowered his voice and bent nearer to me, whilst his dark eyes looked steadfastly into mine: "Latin, Greek, Algebra, would be all well enough for some sharp-featured, blue-spectacled old governess, but with your matchless face and figure, they are simply absurd and aggravating."

"They serve at least to make me independent," I coldly retorted, rising at once to my feet, for both his looks and words inexpressibly annoyed me. "If one home, from any cause, becomes unsuitable or distasteful to me, I can leave it for another."

"Ah! I see what you would convey!" he languidly rejoined. "A menace—a threat to quit! Well, if ever you do so, I earnestly beg that you will not drag my name in any way into the row, for I have enough of storm mingled with my domestic sunshine, as it is!" and with his usual air of listless elegance he lounged from the room.

Striving to choke back my tears, to calm down my angry indignant feelings, I leaned my head on the desk, and recalled with a long yearning sigh the quiet seclusion of the home which I had at times thought so dreary. Preferable, indeed, were its bare dark rooms, and bleak neglected surroundings, with the honest independence they had conferred, to the gildings, luxuries and roses of Elmsford!

"Are you sorry, Miss Dunmore?" questioned my little companion, raising my head with her tiny hands. "Your eyes are red. I suppose you have been crying because I've been so naughty this morning. I'm sorry, and I am going to try to be good now. Give me my spelling and I will study it through, though I hate it so much."

Somewhat soothed by even this indication of childish sympathy, I took her on my lap and had the satisfaction of finding her, perhaps, for the first time since she had come under my charge, thoroughly attentive and docile.

To be continued.

It will interest naturalists to learn that the Zoological Gardens of Hamburg possess at this moment a litter of animals unique in the world. Some months ago, a Lithuanian lynx escaped from a travelling menagerie at Altona, and £20 reward was offered for its capture, but in vain. A few days ago, a sentinel at Kiel, observed a strange-looking animal leaving the mouth of a large gun on the ramparts, and shortly afterwards re-entering it with a duck in its jaws. Assistance having been procured, a net was spread over the muzzle of the gun, and the missing lynx was recaptured together with a domestic cat and a litter of three young ones. The offspring of this curious and hitherto quite unprecedented cross of breeds are now in the Jardin des Plantes of Hamburg, and have been visited by many naturalists. The directors of the Zoological Garden at Paris have offered 5,000*fr.* for the single specimen.

Foreign gossip says that one of the methods adopted to cure Carlotta of insanity is setting her to work at a sewing machine. A good many young women hereabouts might be brought to their senses by the same process.