

giving colour to the petition, was allowed; after which, as Dorinda was engaged in the back premises at that hour, and could listen while she drudged, the rest was easy. Calling up the lowest class, I would find fault with their reading, and after flying out at them in a simulated passion, would remit them again and again to the elements; so that for a fortnight or more, and, indeed, until the noise of the lads repeating the lesson annoyed Mrs. D——'s ears, the playground rang with a-b, ab; e-b, eb; c-a-t, cat; d-o-g, dog, and the like, with the alphabet and the rest of the horn-book. And all this so frequently repeated, that with this assistance, and the help of a spelling-book which I gave her, and which she studied before others awoke, my mistress at the end of two months could read tolerably, and was beginning to essay easy round-hand.

And Heaven knows how delicious were those lessons under the shabby ragged tree that shaded one half of the yard! I spoke to the yawning grubby-fingered boys, who slouched and straddled round me; but I knew to whose ears I applied myself; nor had pupil ever a more diligent master, or master an apter pupil. Once a week I had my fee of kisses, but rarely, very rarely, was permitted to cross the fence; a reserve on my Dorinda's part, that, while it augmented the esteem in which I held her, maintained my passion at a white heat. When, nevertheless, I remonstrated with her, and loverlike, complained of the rigour which in my heart I commended, she chid me for setting a low value on her; and when I persisted, "Go on," she said, drawing away from me with a wonderful air of offence. "Tell me at once, and in so many words, that you think me a low thing! That you really take me for the kitchen drudge I appear!"

Her tone was full of meaning, with a hint of mystery, but as I had never thought her aught else—and yet an angel—I was dumb,