FORREST HOUSE.

BY MARY J. HOLMES.

"We have written to mother to know if she can receive us," Mrs. Morton said, "and shall go as soon as we get her answer. I am afraid we shall crowd and worry her too much, for the house is small, and she and father are old and poor, and may not want us at all."

"Never mind, Mollie," Theo said, "don't kill the bear until you see it;" then, turning to Beatrice, he added, not complainingly but laughingly, "Mollie has a great way of borrowing trouble, while I wait till it comes."

"It's my poor health; my nerves; I can't help it," the invalid said, with a quiver in her voice and about her lips.

"Of course you can't, Mollie," and again the broad, warm hand was placed upon Mollie's head by way of re-assurance.

Theo went with Bee to her carriage, and handed her in, and told her to come again, and said he would call on her, and was not one whit more demonstrative when alone with her than he was up in that back room with his nervous wife looking on. But Bee did not quite believe he was perfectly happy. How could he be with Mollie.

And yet she was very sorry for Mollie, who, she was sure, was a much better woman than herself, and the next day, which was very fine, she drove again to No.——Eighth street, and invited the sick woman to ride.

"The coupe is close, and I brought an extra shawl to keep you nice and warm," she said, as she threw over Mrs. Morton's shoulders her second-best India shawl, which covered up the black delaine, trimmed with half-worn silk, which Mollie wore.

It was her best, Bee knew, for little Trix had said, exultingly, "Ma's got on her bestest down to-day.

"Yes, my best, and almost my all," Mrs. Morton said, "but I have money for a new one; some English ladies gave it to me, and told me to get a black silk. I've never had one in my life; would you mind going with me somewhere and helping me pick it out; you are a so much better judge of silk than I am?"

Bee flinched a little inwardly as she looked at the dowdy woman, in her queer, old-fashioned bonnet and thought of the fashionable ladies, her friends, who were sure to be shopping at this hour, and who always spied her out and pounced upon her. But she shut her teeth together hard, bade the coachman drive to Arnold's, resolved to beard the elegant man at the silk counter, who was always so obsequious to Miss Belknap, the heiress and belle. Everybody was out that day, and Bee met at least half a dozen friends before she reached the silk counter, where she found her man, bland, attentive and eager to serve her.

"Black silk," she said, and he showed her at once samples varying in price from eight to ten dollars a yard.

"Oh, dear, no! something cheaper, much cheaper," Mrs. Morton gasped; and then the clerk knew that the faded, countried-looking woman whom he had not at all considered as belonging to Miss Belknap was the real customer, and his face changed its expression at once as he put back his high-priced silks with an injured air, and said: "you will find what you want farther down. We have nothing cheap here."

"I think you have," Beatrice said to him. "Show me something at four dollars a yard."

"Certainly," and again the clerk was all smiles and attention, and began to exhibit his goods, while Mrs. Morton whispered nervously, "But, Miss Belknap, you don't understand. I've only forty dollars; I cannot afford it."

"I can," Beatrice replied. "I have more money than I can spend. Let me give you the dress. I'll take it as a great favor, and you can use the forty dollars for something else."

There were tears in Mrs. Morton's eyes, and her face was very white, as she said:

"No, no; that's too much from you, a stranger. Theo would not like it."

"I'll make it right with Theo. I'm not a stranger to him," Bee answered, and so the silk was bought, and velvet to trim it with, and then they moved to another part of the store for something for the children, and met a whole regiment of ladies, Mrs. Geo. Stuckup with Mrs. Sniffe, who were delighted to see Bee, but looked askance at her companion, wondering if it was some poor relation of whom they had never heard, and commiserating Bee, who must feel so mortified.

She was not mortified one whit now, though she had been at the start, but she despised herself thoroughly for it and was very attentive to her companion, and when Mrs. Sniffe, who was frightfully envious of her, and never failed to sting her if she could do it, asked her in an aside, with a roll of her eyes: "Who is that frump of a woman, and how came she fastened to you?" she answered readily, "it is Mrs. Theodore Morton, wife of a returned missionary, whose name you must have seen if you ever read the papers. He is very highly esteemed by the board as a Christian and a gentleman. Some connection of Gov. Morton, of Massachusetts, I believe."

"Oh, yes, and you are doing missionary work in your own way, I see. It's quite like you," Mrs. Sniffe said, as she passed on to the laces and left Bee and Mrs. Morton to themselves.

"That woman made fun of me and called me a frump," Mrs. Morton falteringly said, with a quivering lip, but fire in her eye, as she looked after the retreating bundle of velvet, and silk, and ostrich feathers.

"Never mind. You don't care for her. They say she used to work in the factory at Lowell, and married a man old enough to be her father, but he had a million, And died, and left it to her, and now she is Mrs. Sniffe, and leads a certain class of simpletons," Bee replied, and so Mrs. Morton was reconciled to Mrs. Sniffe's snub, and more than reconciled to her husband's first love when she saw how kind and generous she was, spending her money so freely, and doing it all as if it were a great favor to herself rather than an act of charity to the poor woman, who returned to her boarding-house laden with more dry goods for herself and children than she had seen during the entire period of her married life.

It was two days before Beatrice went again to her family on Eighth street, and then she found Mrs. Morton alone, and very much depressed, on account of a letter that morning received from her father.

And she gave Beatrice the letter to read. I will give it to my readers. It was as follows:

"MY BELOVED DAUGHTER:—Many thanks be to God for having brought you safely to America, and given us to believe that we shall see your face again, and that of the little ones, our grandchildren. I cannot tell you how glad we are, your mother and myself, and Aunt Nancy, too, though I think she dreads the litter and the grease-spots the children are sure to make, her life has been so quiet, you know. For myself, I long to see the bairns and hear their young voices. It will make me young again, though the years are bearing me down now so fast. Sixty-eight is nigh on to three score and ten, our allotted time.

"And now about your coming here for the summer. Of course you are welcome as the blossoms of May, but I should be keeping back something if I did not tell you just the situation of things in the old parsonage. Your mother is down with nervous prostration, and has been for months, and as she is very weak I occupy a separate room from hers. Your Aunt Nancy has another, and that only leaves your own old room for you and Theodore and the three children. Of course, I don't count that place over the woodshed, where we can have a bed for a girl or a boy. You cannot have three children in your room even when your husband is away, it is so small, and Nancy would as soon have a woodchuck in with her as a child; so at first it was a question how to dispose of you. But Providence provided, as he always does. Your mother and I made it a subject of prayer, asking in our blind way that God would incline Nancy to change rooms, or to have a little cot set up in hers, and feeling confident he would hear the prayer of faith. He did hear and answer, but in His own way, which was not ours. He did not soften your Aunt Nancy, but He sent your cousin Julia to us to say that she would gladly take one of the little girls for a while. You know she is rich and has no children, and it will be a nice home for the child, and Nancy says, 'Let her have the one that will be likely to fill our house the fullest and make the most to do,' whatever that may mean.

"And now, having stated the case as it is, we shall be glad to see you any day, only on Nancy's account you may as well let us know, as everything will have to be scoured with soap and sand. I hear her now at the kitchen table, which somebody has spilt a drop of milk on.

"Your mother joins me in love, and prays for you.

"Affectionately your father,

"CYRUS BROWN.

"What a nice letter, and what a good old man he must be," Beatrice said, as she finished reading.

"Yes," Mrs. Morton answered, hesitatingly; "it is nice, and he is good, and mother, too; but the idea of losing one of the children is dreadful to me. There is always some thorn in my rose. I thought so much of going back to the old house under the apple trees, and having my little ones with me; and now you see what he says,—one must go to Cousin Julia Hayden."

In Mrs. Morton's roses there would always be thorns, fancied or real, but Bee did not tell her so; she merely asked: "Who is Mrs. Hayden? Is she fond of children? Will she be kind to them?"

"She is my cousin on mother's side," Mrs. Morton said. "She is the greatest woman of Bronson, and the richest, and lives in the grandest house. She never had any children of her own, and I do not think her very fond of them. She would be kind in a certain way, but very exacting. She does not understand them. She used to teach school, and was very strict, indeed. She could not make allowances for the difference between herself and little folks. She is Aunt Nancy's own niece."

"And who is Aunt Nancy?" Bee asked, and Mrs. Morton replied, "Mother's old maid sister, Nancy Phillips, who has always lived with us. She is the neatest, most particular person you ever saw; and because she is strong and willing, and mother is feeble, she has run the house so long that she thinks it is her own, and orders father as if he were a dog. But she has many excellent traits, and they could not live without her. She was always kind to me, and I'd rather trust my children with her than with Cousin Julia Hayden. It is very hard, and makes me so nervous.

"Yes, I can fancy it all," Bee said; and then, recurring to the letter, she added: "You are to give up the one which will fill the house the fullest and make the most noise. Now, which is that?"

Instantly the eyes of both went over to the window, where Trixey was combing and brushing Bunchie's hair, pulling and snarling it awfully, and talking all the time as fast as her tongue could fly. Yes, there was no mistake. Little Trix would fill the house the fullest and make the greatest to do, and Mrs. Hayden would never understand her, or make allowance for her busy, active ways; and Beatrice wanted her for herself, and said at last to Mrs. Morton: "Will you let me have Trixey for as long a time as Mrs. Hayden would keep her? I know I can make her happy if you can trust her with me."

Mrs. Morton was sure of that. During the few days she had known Miss Belknap she had received from her too many kindnesses to think of her as other than a friend, and one to be trusted. At first she had looked a little suspiciously upon the elegant woman who had been Theo's first choice, and who was so unlike herself, and she had more than once thought, "How could he have chosen me after knowing her?" She did not say "love me," for she had been morally sure that when she became Theodore Morton's wife there was not much love on his side at least. She had loved him for years, and been picked out for his wife since she was a little girl. His father and grandfather had been clergymen, and he had been her father's pupil when the Rev. Mr. Brown taught a small school for boys, by way of eking out his salary. Theo had said then he meant to be a missionary, and she had said she meant to be one, too, and wise ones predicted that they might go together. But the young man wandered very far away from quiet Bronson, and its staid, old fashioned people, and went to Europe, and fell in with Bee Belknap, and forgot the plain, angular Mary Brown, in the home under the apple-trees, who had mended his clothes, and studied Latin and Greek, and talked enthusiastically of a missionary's life as the happiest and best a man could choose. He had never quite believed it possible that a bright, gay creature like Bee, with hundreds of thousands at her command, would go with him to those islands in the far-off Pacific, but he nevertheless asked her the question, and her answer, given tearfully and sadly, and rather as a refusal of the Feejees than of himself, scattered the sweetest dream of his life, and with a new-made grave in his heart he went back to Bronson on a matter of business he had with Mr. Brown. That he should take a wife with him seemed a necessity, and as Mary was ready, and more than willing, and he cared little now who it was, so that she was good and true and pure, he married her with no love in his heart for her, only a great respect, and a registered vow that she should receive from him everything but love, and if it were possible, should never feel the absence of that. And she had not, for he had kept his vow religiously, and only when he gave the name to Trixey had she experienced a little prick of jealousy, and felt curious with regard to the original Beatrice. If he did not choose to tell her of the lady she would not ask, and so knew nothing till she met her in New York, and was dazzled and bewildered, and troubled, and a very little annoyed at first, and finally won by the sparkling, brilliant woman who had done so much for her, and who now stood offering to take Trixey off her hands and save her from Mrs. Hayden. She knew she could trust her, and that Trix would be safe with her, but she shrank from parting with the helpful, motherly child, who did so much for her and the baby, and she hesitated in her answer, and said at last she would see what Theodore would say.

Theodore approved the plan heartily, if Trixey must go somewhere to be out of sick grandmother's and Aunt Nancy's way. But now there arose trouble in an unexpected quarter. Trixey herself demurred. She loved the pretty lady, and was interested to hear about the dolls and dresses, and the cats and kittens, and pretty little tea-set and table, and wash-tub, and flat-iron, which should all be hers in that new home in Ohio. The wash-tub, and flat-iron, and tea set made her waver a little, till she glanced at Bunchie, when, with quivering lips, he said:

"What good to have ever so many sings, and Bunchie not with me to see me use the flat-iron and wash-tub, and sit at the other end of the table when I makes the tea?"

This was the ground she took. Bunchie would not be there to share her happiness, and she did not swerve from it until her father appealed to her sense of right, and told her the real reason why she should go. Grandpa's house was very small, and he was poor. Grandma was sick and Aunt Nancy could not have so many children round.

"But I could help her lots. I'd rock baby brudder to seep, and wipe the dishes ever so many times, and be so good and still as Bunchie," pleaded the little girl; but she was persuaded at last to go because it was right, and God would love her if she did, and take care of Bunchie and baby brother, and in the summer she should come and see them in the old home; and so it was quite settled that Trixey was to go with Beatrice, who felt more and more the wisdom of the decision when that very afternoon she met Mrs. Hayden herself in Mrs. Morton's room, and had an opportunity of judging what manner of person she was, and what Trixey's chance for happiness would have been with her.

She was a tall, large, finely-formed woman, with great black eyes, bushy eyebrows, and a growth of hair about her wide mouth, which gave her a more masculine appearance even than did her figure and size. She spoke loudly and decidedly, as one used to her own way, as well as to dictate the way of others. Her dress was very rich and showy, but not New Yorkey a bit, Bee decided after a rapid survey of the lady, who scrutinized her as closely, and decided that she was New Yorkey, and wondered who her dressmaker was. To faded, plain Mrs. Morton she was very patronizing and frank, and told her that what she wanted was fresh air, and cold baths, and oatmeal to bring her up again, while her mother, who had been sick so long, needed effort and energy. She could get up if she only thought so. Nervous prostration was not a disease; it was a fancy, which, if indulged in, would end in one's being bedridden.

"I've made it a rule to guard against nervousness in every form, and what is the result? I have never been sick a day in my life, and have no idea how it feels to have the headache, or the toothache, or the backache, or, in fact, any ache, and that is the way it should be."

She looked the woman never to have an ache or pain, or if she had, to strangle it at once, and Beatrice shrank from her involuntarily as from an Amazon, while poor, sick Mrs. Morton colored scarlet, and roused in defence of her own ailments, which Mrs. Hayden seemed to think she could help.

"Just because you've never been sick Julia," she said, "you cannot understand it in others, but you go out as a missionary once, and have four children in six years, and be as poor as poor can be, and you might know something of aches and pains, and have some weaknesses which cold baths and oatmeal could not cure."

"I would not go out as a missionary, and I would not have the four children in six years; so you see it is not a supposable case," Mrs. Hayden retorted, and then Bee hated her, and was doubly glad that little Trix was not to fall into her hands.

Mrs. Hayden herself was not sorry. She had made the offer from a sense of duty, for she was high up in everything of that kind, and performed her duties rigidly, from dieting her husband, a weak, feeble man, on oatmeal and pearl barley, to telling her neighbors their faults, and how they could amend them. She did not like children, and if had cost her something to make up her mind to have one in her house; but she had made the offer, and meant to stand by it if it should be accepted. Finding it convenient just then to visit New York, she had called upon her poor relation to learn the result of her offer, and when told what it was, she expressed no regret, but asked many questions about Miss Belknap, who seemed to her to be crazy to think of taking Trixey. Suddenly there flashed upon her the recollection of a rumor heard years ago, and, in her usual brusque way, she asked:

"Is she the girl to whom Theo was once engaged, and who jilted him?"

"They never were engaged, but he liked her," Mrs. Morton answered faintly, while a throb of neuralgic pain shot through her head, and a bright red spot burned on her cheeks.

She was far more a lady, in her brown alpaca dressing-gown, than was this blunt woman in her velvet and silk; and so Beatrice thought when she came in immediately after her identity with Theo's first love had been proved. Mrs. Hayden never acknowledged any person her superior, but she saw at a glance that Miss Belknap was somebody, and an important somebody, too, and thought to stamp herself as somebody, by talking of her house and grounds, and servants, and the watering-place she frequented, and the people she had met. She was now stopping on Madison avenue with Mrs. Sniffe, who was Mr. Hayden's cousin; probably Miss Belknap knew Mrs. Sniffe, or at least had heard of her. She attended Dr. Adams' church, and was quite a leader there.

"Do you know her?" she asked squarely; and Bee replied:

"Yes, I have some acquaintance with Mrs. Sniffe. I meet her occasionally at parties."

Something in the tone made Mrs. Hayden look suspiciously at Beatrice, as she wondered whether it was Mrs. Sniffe who was only to be met at general parties, or Miss Belknap herself, while Mrs. Morton felt emboldened to say—

"Mrs. Sniffe,—that's the woman we met at Arnold's who called me a frump. Maybe she forgets that she once worked in the factory at Lowell."

She had fired her heavy gun, and felt better for it, inasmuch as she had hit the enemy, who reddened, as she replied:

"I believe she was there for a short time, but honest labor does not hurt a person in this country."

Then she talked of Mrs. Sniffe's grandeur and style, until Bee was tired of it and arose to go, promising to call next day and decide when to take Trixey. Mrs. Hayden followed her into the hall, and, begging her pardon, asked her who made the dress she was wearing.

"Mademoiselle Verwest made it and sent it to me. Her address is No.——, Rue St. Honore, Paris," Bee replied.

And, somewhat discomfited, Mrs. Hayden bowed her thanks, and returned to her cousin, whom she badgered about her weak nerves, and want of energy, until the poor woman burst into an uncontrollable fit of weeping, and cried herself sick.

Beatrice found her in bed next day, and as the little room seemed so close and full of children, she carried Trixey away with her to her friend's house, and for a day or two devoted herself wholly to the child, who was kept in such a state of surprise and bewilderment that she did not once cry for the mother down on Eighth street. Beatrice bought her a doll nearly as large as herself, and bought her a kitchen, with wash-tub and stove, and a China teaset and table, and beautiful dresses for herself, and then whisked her off to the train before she had time to recover from the excitement of so many wonderful things. Mr. Morton was at the depot, but Trixey did not see him. It was thought better that she should not, so he looked his farewell from a distance, but said good-bye to Beatrice, and held her hand closely pressed in his own as he said:

"God bless you, Bee, for all you have done for us. We never can forget it. Good by. You will, of course, write to Mollie as soon as you get home."

"Yes, certainly," Beatrice said, hating herself because the name Mollie as spoken by Theo grated on her nerves, and seemed in some way a wrong to herself.

Beatrice knew such feelings were foolish, and as often as they rose within her, she took Trix in her lap and kissed her, and talked to her of the mother they were leaving so far behind, and whose eyes looked at her through the child's, save that Trixey's were larger and more weird in their expression.

It was late in the afternoon when they reached Rothsay, and were driven to Elm Park. Bee had telegraphed to Aunt Rachel that she was coming with a little girl, so everything was in readiness for them, and Trixey was made much of, and talked to and looked at, until she began to nod in her chair, and was taken up to bed.

That evening Everard came up to Elm Park with Rosamond. They had just heard of Bee's return, and hastened at once to see her. Everard was looking about the same as when Beatrice saw him last, except that he was perhaps a little thinner. He was working pretty hard, he said, and earning some money, but his dress did not indicate anything like reckless expenditure upon himself, and Beatrice felt sure that Josephine was drawing heavily upon him.

He was now quite at home at the Forrest House, and was there nearly every evening, and Beatrice felt something like a throb of fear when she saw his eyes resting upon Rosamond, as if loth to leave the fresh young face, which had grown so bright and attractive during the last few months. She was growing very pretty, and her figure looked graceful and womanly when at last she arose to go, and stood while Everard folded her shawl around her, drawing it close up about her neck so as to shield her throat, which was a little sore. Something in that shawl adjustment and the length of time it took, sent another thrill through Bee's nerves, and the moment they were gone she went to her room, where Trixey lay sleeping, and bending over the child, wondered if in all lives things got as terribly mixed as they were in her's and Everard.'s

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN THE SUMMER.

Trixey did not thrive well in her new home, though evrything which human ingenuity could devise was done to make her happy and contented. But in spite of everything, Trixey could not overcome her home-sickness. Many times a day she disappeared from sight and was gone a long time, and when she came back there was a mysterious redness about her eyes, which she said, by way of explanation, were "kind of sore, she dessed. Maybe she had got some dust in 'em."

This went on for weeks, until at last, in a fit of remorse, lest she had been guilty of a lie, the conscientious child burst out:

"'Taint dust, 'taint sore that makes 'em red; it's wantin' to see papa, and mamma, and Bunchie, and baby brudder. Was it a lie, and is I a naughty dirl to make breve it was dust?"

Then Bee felt that it would be wrong to keep her any longer, and wrote to Mrs. Morton to that effect.

Mrs. Morton and Bunchie were still in Bronson, but Theo was supplying a vacant pulpit in Boston, and only saw his wife once in two or three weeks. There was room in the parsonage now for homesick Trixey, for the sickly baby had died suddenly with cholera infantum, and the same letter which carried the news to Beatrice asked that Trixey might be sent to Vermont.

"Send her by express," Mrs. Morton wrote, "or will you bring her yourself? We shall be so glad to see you, though we cannot offer you a bed here, we are so full, but there is a good country hotel near us, and Cousin Julia Hayden, whom you met in New York, wishes me to say that she will be very glad to entertain you at her own house. I hope you will come, for though our acquaintance is so recent, you seem to be like a friend of years, and I feel that the sight of you may do me good, now that my heart is so sore with the loss of my baby."

"I'll go," Bee said, as she finished reading the letter, deciding all the more readily on account of a little incident which had occured the night before, and which filled her with alarm for both Everard and Rosamond.

They had a walk together to Elm Park, and sat with her for an hour or more on the piazza, where the full moon was shining brightly. This time there had been no shawl to adjust, for the early June night was warm and balmy, but there was a slight dampness in the air, and Everard's solicitude lest Rosamond should take cold or contract a sore throat was noticeable in the extreme. Two or three times he pulled the cloud of Berlin wool about her neck, and asked if she were quite comfortable, and once he let his hand rest on her shoulder for some minutes, while he sat looking at her with an expression on his face which Josephine might have resented had she seen it. And Bee with her strong sense of right and wrong resented it for her, or rather for Rosamond, whom she would not see sacrificed without a protest. So when they arose to go home, she led Everard away from Rossie, and when sure she could not be heard, said to him, earnestly:

"Pardon me, Everard, but you are altogether too solicitous about Rosamond's health. Let her take care of herself. She is capable of doing it, and remember, there are bounds you must not pass, or suffer her to approach. It would be very cruel to her."

"Yes, I know," he answered, coloring deeply as he spoke. "You need not fear for Rossie. She is my sister, nothing more; and even if I were disposed to make her something else, do you suppose I can ever forget the past?"

He spoke bitterly, and showed plainly how gladly he would free himself if possible from the bond which held him, and which was growing daily more and more hateful to him.

As far as she could see them in the moonlight Beatrice watched Everard and Rossie as they walked slowly down the avenue which led to the street, and when they were out of sight she said to herself: "He ought to acknowledge his marriage, and he must, even if he does not take his wife, which might be the better thing to do. There must be good in her—something to build upon, if under the right influence, with somebody to encourage and stimulate her to do her best. I wish I knew her—wish I dared face her in her own home, and judge what kind of a person she is."

This was Bee's thought the night before she read Mrs. Morton's letter inviting her to Bronson, and when she read it the thought resolved itself into a fixed purpose, the first step of which was to take Trixey to her mother. Poor little Trixey, who turned so white, but did not at first shed a tear, when told of her baby brother's death. Half an hour later, however, Beatrice found her in the garden, with her face in the grass, sobbing as if her heart would break for the dead brother, of whom she said to Bee, "I wouldn't feel so bad to have him with Jesus, only I shaked him once hard, when he was so cross and heavy, and I was so tired, and he wouldn't go to sleep. I'se so sorry. Will God let me go to Heaven some day and see him, and tell him I'ee sorry?"

As well as she could, Beatrice comforted and reassured the weeping child, whose conscientiousness and sweet faith and trust in God were leading her into ways she had only known in theory, but which were beginning to be very pleasant to her feet, as she learned each day some new lesson from the trusting child.

It was near the latter part of June, the season of roses and pinks, and water lilies in New England, when she at last took Trixey to the old brown house under the shadow of the apple trees, where the mountain air was filled with perfume from the flowers blossoming on the borders by the door, and where Bunchie played in the soft summer sunshine under the snowball tree by the well. It was such a plain, but pleasant old house, with the rafters overhead showing in the kitchen, and the great box-like beams in the corners of the room,—for the old house claimed to have seen a hundred years, and to have heard the guns of the Revolution. But it was very cheerful and homelike, and neat as soap and sand and Aunt Nancy's hands could make it. Aunt Nancy was the first to welcome Miss Belknap, looking a little askance at her style and manners, and wondering how they could ever entertain so fine a lady even for a few hours. Mrs. Morton was sick with a headache, and Mrs. Brown was still down with nervous prostration, having stoutly resisted all Mrs. Julia Hayden's advice about making an effort, and hints which sometimes amounted to assertions that she could get up if she liked, and would diet on oatmeal and barley. In her last letter to Mrs. Morton, Beatrice had declined Mrs. Hayden's offer, and said she should feel more independent at the hotel for the short time she should remain in Bronson, but within half an hour after her arrival at the parsonage, Mrs. Hayden was there also, in her handsome carriage, drawn by her shining black horses, and driven by a shining black coachman, in gloves and brass buttons, and she insisted so hard upon Beatrice stopping with her, that the latter finally accepted the invitation, but said she would remain for the day where she was and see if she could not be of some comfort and help to Mrs. Morton, who seemed better from the moment she came and laid her soft hands on her head.

"Nothing can help her or her mother, either, unless they make an effort," Mrs. Hayden said, with a toss of her head, and a flash of her black eyes. "Spleeny and notional both of them as they can be; call it nervous, if you like; what's nervousness but fidgets? I was never nervous; but if I'd give up every time the weather changes, or I felt a little weak, I might have prostration, too. There's Harry, my husband, would have died long ago if I had not kept him up just by my own energy and will. I make him sleep with the windows open, and he takes a cold bath every morning at six o'clock, and eats oatmeal for his breakfast, with a cup of hot water instead of coffee or tea."

"And does he thrive on that diet? Is he well and strong?" Bee asked, and Mrs. Hayden replied:

"Well and strong? No; he could not be that in the nature of things, he comes from a sickly stock; but he keeps about, which is better than lying in bed and moping all the time."

How strong and full of life Mrs. Hayden was, and so unsympathetic that Beatrice did not wonder Mrs. Morton shivered and shrank away even from the touch of her large, powerful hands.

"I am sometimes wicked enough to wish she might be sick herself, or at least nervous, so as to know how it feels," Mrs. Morton said, after her cousin had gone. "She thinks I can do as she does, and the thing is impossible. My health is destroyed, and I sometimes fear I shall never be well again."

She had failed since Beatrice saw her, and her eyes looked so large and glossy as she lay upon the pillow, and her cough was so constant and irritating, that to talk of effort and oatmeal to her seemed preposterous and cruel. What she needed was rest and nursing, and care, and change of thought and occupation, and these she could not have in their fullest extent at the parsonage, with poverty and a sick mother, and bustling, irritable Aunt Nancy to act as counter influences. She must be taken entirely away, and amused; and nursed, and petted, and Beatrice began to see the first step of that vague plan formed in Rothsay, and which she meant to carry out.

For a day or two she stayed in Bronson, sleeping and eating in Mrs. Hayden's grand house, and feeling all her sympathies enlisted for shrivelled-up Mr. Hayden, who in the morning came shivering to the table from his cold bath, and swallowed his oatmeal and hot water dutifully, but with an expression on his thin, sallow face which showed how his stomach rebelled against it, and craved the juicy steak and fragrant coffee with which his blooming wife regaled herself, because she was strong and could bear it. Once Bee ventured to suggest that steak and beef-tea might be a more nutritious diet even for a dyspeptic than oatmeal and barley, varied with dry toast and baked apples; but Mrs. Hayden knew. She had read up on stomachs, and nerves, and digestion, and knew every symptom of dyspepsia, and its cause, and what it needed, and how a person ought to feel; and her husband submitted quietly, and said, "Julia was right," and grew thinner, and paler, and weaker every day with cold baths and starvation; but he kept the respect of his wife because he tried to be well, and that was a great thing to do, for in his estimation she was a wonderful woman, and represented the wisdom of the world.

On the third day Beatrice left Bronson, to look, she said, for some quiet, pleasant nook, where she could spend a few weeks during the hot weather. She found such a place in Holburton, whither she came one warm July afternoon, when the town was at its best. It was not an unheard-of thing for city people to pass a few weeks in Holburton during the hot weather, and no one was surprised when Miss Belknap registered her name on the hotel books, and said she was looking for some quiet and reasonable boarding-house for an invalid with two children. Several were recommended to her, and with the list in her hand she started out to reconnoitre.

Mrs. Roxie Fleming was the fourth name on her paper, but she went there first, and was pleased with the place at once, because it looked so cool and inviting under the wealth of hop vines which covered one side of it.

The day was warm, and Mrs. Fleming, in her clean purple calico gown, sat sewing on the doorsteps, while a woman with a deep pasteboard bonnet on her head, concealing her face from view, was sweeping the grass in the back yard. But she turned as she heard the gate open, and seeing Beatrice came forward until she saw her mother; then she withdrew, leaving Mrs. Fleming to confer with the stranger.

She had rooms to let, she said; did the lady wish them for herself? and she looked curiously at Beatrice, who was so different from the boarders who usually came to her, for her rooms were low and scantily furnished, and not at all like the apartments city people desired.

Miss Belknap wanted board for herself and a friend with two children; two sleeping-rooms and a parlor would do nicely for them all, and she was willing to pay whatever it was worth.

Mrs Fleming readily guessed that money was no consideration with the lady, and, as it was of much importance to her, she decided to ask the highest possible price at first, and then fall if necessary. After a moment, during which she seemed to be thinking, she said:

"I don't know but I can accommodate you with three rooms, though I do not often rent an extra parlor, and if I do so now my daughter Josephine must give up the room she occupies when she is here."

"Then she is not at home?" Beatrice said, feeling that she must know that fact before she engaged board, where the only attraction was Josephine, who, she found, had only gone for a week or so to Oak Bluffs, with a party of friends, and was expected daily.

The price named for the three rooms, though high for Holburton, did not seem unreasonable to Beatrice, and the bargain was closed with the understanding that Beatrice was to take immediate possession.

"It will be a change for Mrs. Morton; a relief to Aunt Nancy; a possible benefit to Everard, and an amusement to me," Beatrice thought, as she hurried back to Bronson, where she found the Rev. Theodore himself, handsomer, more elegant in appearance, because better dressed, than when she saw him last, and very glad to see her, as an old friend who was kind to his wife and children.

To the Holburton plan he listened approvingly. It would do Mollie good, he said, for two sick people in one house were quite too many for the comfort of either. But Mollie demurred; she could not sleep in new places unless everything were right, and she presumed there were swarms of crickets and tree-toads, and possibly bull-frogs, there among the mountains, to make the night hideous.

It would be impossible to portray the scorn and disgust which blazed in the black eyes of Mrs. Julia Hayden, who was present when Mollie uttered her protest against Holburton.

"Crickets, and tree toads and bull-frogs, indeed! She'd like to see the bull-frog which could keep her awake, even if it sat on her pillow and croaked in her ear; it was all nonsense such fidgets. Just use your will and a little common sense, and you will sleep through everything."

This was Mrs. Hayden's theory, which made Mollie cry and Beatrice angry, and Theodore laugh. He had to stand between them all, and keep them from quarrelling, and he did it admirably, and smoothed everything so nicely, and made the trip to Holburton seem so desirable, that Mollie began to want to go, especially as he assured her he could well afford it, as the church in Boston paid him liberally, and had just given him a hundred dollars to do with as he liked. Beatrice had intended to meet the expenses herself, but could not press the matter without hurting more than she did good. It was just possible that Mrs. Hayden might follow them with her husband, if good rooms and board could be found for her, for she had taken a great liking to Miss Belknap, who stood even higher in her estimation than Mrs. Sniffe, and whose acquaintance she readily saw would do her more real good in a social point of view. So it was finally arranged that Mollie and the children should go to Holburton for the summer, and word to that effect was forwarded to Mrs. Fleming, with instructions to have the rooms in readiness by the middle of July.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

A MODEL DETECTIVE.

We had been two days at work on the case, and had not even found a starting point. In fact, when we met to compare notes on the second evening, it was discovered that the sum total of our knowledge was precisely what it was before.

The difficulty was, it was such a commonplace crime. It is when criminals do something unusual that their detection becomes comparatively easy. There is something then to work upon. The experienced detective is at once able to limit the field of his enquiry, "Who," he asks himself, "was able to contrive a plan like this?" And often the very ingenuity exercised to conceal the authorship of crime most clearly points the way to its discovery. But when it is a thing any one of thousands might have done, it is easy to see how greatly the difficulty of laying your hand upon the real perpetrator is increased.

That is just what made the case in hand so hard to unravel. Mr. Dame was a rich, retired merchant, in the habit of carrying a liberal supply of money about him, and given to wearing expensive jewelry. He occupied an elegant suit of bachelor apartments, where he was found murdered in his bedroom one morning.

The manner of the crime was as little mysterious as its motive. The victim's skull had been beaten in with some blunt instrument, and his money, jewels and watch had been taken.

Any brutal ruffian might have done such a deed. There was no particular clew to follow; and even Orville Thoms, confessedly the shrewdest man on the force, whose scent on the trail of a criminal seldom proved at fault, was obliged to acknowledge he didn't see his way.

Mr. Thoms had won his spurs a year before, as an amateur, in ferreting out a formidable gang of forgers, around whom he succeeded in weaving a web of circumstances that left not a loophole for escape; and when the whole band, after their conviction, wagged their tongues against him, denouncing him as their ringleader, who had betrayed them for a price, there was a general smile of derision; and, as a mark of the public confidence in Mr. Thoms, he was given a place on the detective force, of which he was a member at the time of Mr. Dame's murder.

The Mayor offered a large reward for the apprehension and conviction of the murderer. Mr. Thoms noticeably pricked up his ears at this. He was not the man to let such an amount of money slip through his fingers.

"He'll get it!" more than one of us whispered.

And sure enough, on the third morning, when we met again for consultation, Mr. Thoms sauntered in, with a smirk of satisfaction on his face, and took a seat at the table.

The rest of us had nothing new to tell, whereat Mr. Thoms smiled contemptuously.

"I have a report to make," he remarked, quietly.

"Proceed, sir," said the chief, eyeing him rather sharply.

"At an early hour this morning," Mr. Thoms continued, "I noticed a shabbily dressed man entering a pawnbroker's office. His manner was lurking and suspicious. I followed him in, making a pretext of wishing to pawn a ring I had taken from my finger. Whilst higgling with one of the clerks, I kept a keen eye on the man I had followed, who was offering a handsome gold watch to another clerk.

"'Let me see it,' I said, turning up my lapel and displaying my official badge; and placing myself between the customer and the door. I took the watch from the counter and examined it. Inside the case was the maker's name and the number. No doubt was possible. It was the murdered man's watch, of which I had a full description.

"The man gave no satisfactory account of himself, or his possession of the stolen property, and, of course, I arrested him at once. The case is a very simple one. The murder, it is conceded, was committed in the perpetration of a robbery. Part of the property taken is found in the possession of the prisoner, a circumstance which he fails to explain. What proof could be stronger?"

"Bravo!" we exclaimed. "The reward is yours, Mr. Thoms. It's a fortune you might afford to retire on, and give the rest of us a chance."

Mr. Thoms beamed benignantly, and the meeting broke up.

I was on the point of leaving with the others, when the chief touched my arm and desired me to remain for a few minutes.

Our brief conference was strictly confidential, and it would not be proper to reveal it here. At the end of it I hurried out. My way and Mr. Thoms' lay along the same street; but he had so much the start that I was barely in time to see him enter his own door.

Bright and early next morning I was met by our chief at the principal railway depot, whither I had cautiously followed a gentleman in an iron-gray wig and blue goggles, whom I lost no time in pointing out to the chief.

The latter approached, and touched the gentleman's shoulder.

"A word with you, if you please, sir," said the chief.

"I'm in a great hurry," returned the other; "the train is about starting, and I really cannot afford to miss it."

"Do not force me, Thoms," the chief whispered, "to strip you of your disguise here. Your plan was cunningly laid, but, unluckily for you, it has not succeeded. It was a shrewd device of yours to feign intoxication right before last, and take an exposed seat in the park. From a concealed spot I saw a thief approach and pick your pocket of a watch, as you designed should be done. As he hurried away you rose and followed stealthily, whilst I, unobserved, kept in sight of you both. We all three sauntered up and down till morning came, and the shops began to open. I saw you and your man enter a pawnbroker's place, and there is no doubt that it was Mr. Dame's watch which was offered to be pledged, and quite as little that it is the same which I saw taken from your pocket by the thief whom you would now bring to the gallows with the double purpose of screening yourself and securing the proffered reward. The object of your present journey, doubtless, is to convey to a place of safety the rest of your ill-gotten gains."

The new prisoner was taken to a private room and searched, and on his person were found a number of articles readily identified as having belonged to Mr. Dame.

And so, after all, it was our model detective who was tried and hanged, and not the wretched pickpocket who had been purposely enticed into stealing the tell-tale watch, that he might suffer for another crime of which he was not guilty, and enable the real culprit to escape and pocket the reward.

THE MONROE DOCTRINE.

M. De Lesseps Interviewed on the Subject.

(Paris Correspondent New York Tribune.)

To-day I had the pleasure of an interview with M. de Lesseps at the Suez Canal office. Admiral Rouciere de la Noury, Prince Aristarchi Bey, who had dined three days before with the Emperor of Germany, and Abel de Lesseps, from Egypt, came in when I was there. They were all agog about the Panama Canal, which it appears Prince Bismarck finds time to think and talk a good deal about. Lesseps is the most cordially polite Frenchman I am acquainted with. All he says or does comes straight from the fountain-head. There is no tergiversation, hesitancy, weakness or concealment about him. His black eye expresses the motive power locked up in a whole mine of coal. I sought for a line, a trait, a wrinkle, which would prove him the kinsman of the Empress Eugenie, but did not find it. Sir William Napier's description of Marshall Soult's vigorous physiognomy often occurred to me in the course of the interview. Whilst M. de Lesseps was explaining to me the engineering aspect of the great work of his old age an idea presented itself to my mind. How the constructor of the Suez Canal is just the Hercules to clear the Augean stables in which the military strength of France perished. We conversed some time about the Monroe Doctrine, which M. de Lesseps deems the sole obstacle of importance to his scheme of an interoceanic water-way. What is serious in it, he says, is that the Americans do not really understand it. Mr. Monroe himself explained it to M. de Lesseps when he was a young diplomat. It meant that Europe should not interfere to impose a monarchical government on any