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THE MISER'S GIFT.

BY MISS C. W. BARBER.

"Thousand evil things there are, that hate to look on happiness."

There was a gentle tap at Squire Ringgold's gold's office door.

"Come in," he said, without rising from between the arms of an ancient chair, which he had drawn up before the table, or once raising his eyes from a ponderous law book, whose pages he was carefully searching.

The visitor either did not hear the invitation to enter, or else hesitated about excepting it. It was several minutes before the door opened.

"Come in, I say," cried the Squire, elevating his eyes and voice at the same time.

A slight noise outside the door was heard; a hand was upon the knob, and a girlish form soon afterwards entered. In her hand she carried a sealed letter.

"Ha! Julia, is that you?" said the Squire, with something like wonder in his tones. "Why couldn't you come in without making all that fuss? You kept me wondering for full five minutes who was on the outside."

"I was not quite sure, father, that I should find you alone and unengaged."

"Unengaged, child? When did you ever hear of my being idle? But what do you want? Why do you care whether I am busy or unoccupied? Has your mother sent you after the flower seeds I promised to bring home with me to dinner?"

"No, father," said the girl, and her delicate cheek glowed like the crimson heat of a summer rose, "I came on a very different errand—one which made it imperatively necessary for me to find you alone. I have a letter here, directed to you."

"A letter!" said the old man, with a puzzled look, at the same time taking it from her hand—"a letter! Pray, who is it from, and where did you get it? You are not my clerk."

"I know it," said the girl—"this missive did not come through the post office. It was given me by the writer, who requested me to give it into your hands."