

Long before Kate was able to walk, Daddy Will had constituted himself her keeper, if he might not be in all respects her nurse. Whenever she went out of her mother's care she was certainly to be seen cradled in his capacious arms, where she seemed to be a mere speck of white and pink resting against the black outlines of his broad chest. He would walk thus with her to and fro for hour after hour, conversing with her for months before she could lisp a word, and taking for satisfactory reply the understanding gaze of her great round unwinking eyes. And the companionship of the pair continued without interruption, changing only in its character as the babe developed into girlhood and womanhood, to each of which stages the old man adjusted himself with instinctive nicety.

Mrs. Dater had wisely encouraged Daddy Will's devotion to her daughter, and for a double reason: she had the highest respect for his simple but acute wisdom, for his unbending probity, and for his staunch family attachment and allegiance; and she knew that Kate's budding frame and intelligence would be strengthened by just such training and exercise as the vigorous old soldier would insure to both. And Mrs. Dater's sagacity was not at fault, as was shown on at least one occasion, the incidents of which seem worth reciting.

When Kate was eight years old she was very lovely in person and disposition; but withal, as a child in perfect health is apt to be, as active and mischievous as a monkey. She was naturally loving and docile; but one day, in a moment of vexation or disappointment caused by some direction of her mother's which she did not relish, she rushed out of the room in a gust of passion, looking like a little fury. In an instant, however, she was arrested conscious-stricken by the sight of Daddy Will standing before her, and looking very grave and sorrowful. He had been an unobserved spectator of her ebullition, and when she was stopped in her headlong course by his accusing face, she was filled with remorse. She felt that Daddy Will did not approve of her, did not even pity or excuse her; and as the two stood for a brief instant in dead silence, she seemed, in her pretty self-abasement—her head bowed and her arms hanging listlessly at her side—