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Clarissa's Treasures.

(Mrs. Harvey-Jellie in 'Light in the Home.')

'Can it possibly be? Yes, it surely is Lottie—my old friend and schoolfellow,' said the pretty mistress of Beaufort Park, as she offered her hand to the visitor announced as Miss Moorslake.

'I am staying near here with my aunt, and I thought it would bring back old times to see you; and I knew you would not be vexed,' she said.

'Lottie, how could you imagine such a thing! I am simply delighted! To see your dear calm face is refreshing, and to hear all about your doings will be splendid. Come here in this cosy corner'—and Clarissa Aldenè led her friend to a luxuriant settee

some one to help, and now I am here to cheer my widowed aunt. I hear you have children,' said Lottie.

'Oh, yes—three girls—so bonnie and pretty! You must see all my treasures. You remember my old wish at school to be rich and have "lots of treasures." It has come true indeed, and I seem to have everything I want.'

'I remember our castle-building in the air, but yours has proved to be something more substantial and real'—and Lottie looked at her old friend, and thought she detected a lack of something.

'I will take you through the conservatories, and then over part of my house, if it will not tire you,' said Mrs. Aldenè, gracefully leading the way. Lottie watched her; she

entered a room rather away from the other rooms, where three delicate-looking girls were sitting dressing dolls. At first they were shy, but a few kind remarks about their dolls from Lottie drew them on to speak, and books were brought out, and other toys exhibited.

'Mamma, may we come?' asked Cissy.

'No, my dear; the nursery is the place for little girls'—and called back by the nurse, the door closed, and Clarissa led on to the library, and then to other rooms, not knowing how gladly those dear children would have exchanged the grandeur of that house for any place where they might be free and happy.

'Now you must see my boudoir—and this is my husband's portrait.'

Lottie was charmed with all the exquisite things, but she felt sure she had seen Mr. Aldenè somewhere; there was an unmistakable something in that fine face.

'You shall see for yourself if you stay another hour'—and with a walk round the gardens the time soon passed. The servant had carried tea into the drawing-room, and they had just entered when the man whom Lottie remembered to have seen in a railway carriage once came in.

'An old schoolfellow of mine, Claude. You have heard me speak of Lottie Moorslake,' said Clarissa.

'I have seen her, too, I am sure. I won't easily forget her trite answer or remark to me,' said Mr. Aldenè, holding out his hand.

'I was sure I had seen you, though I little guessed who you were—how strange! Have you forgiven me?' Lottie asked.

It was soon explained to the wondering wife, and the facts were these. Claude Aldenè, travelling with two gentlemen, was discussing some people who were Christians, and Lottie Moorslake was sitting opposite in the railway carriage, and after strong expressions from the others, Claude, looking at the unknown lady passenger as if for approval, said, 'To be a Christian means humbug to me.' And she replied, 'To be a Christian means to walk a golden pathway to heaven to me'—and nothing more had been said, and she never thought of seeing the man again.

'Come, now, and discuss some more lively subject,' Clarissa said, smiling.

'I have thought several times of your decided answer. Are you of so lofty an opinion still?' he asked.

'Most certainly; how could I be otherwise?' said Lottie.

'I do not attempt an answer—'tis out of my line; but I am glad to meet my wife's schoolfellow.'

Lottie stayed longer than she had intended, and had quite a story to relate to her aunt in explaining her long absence.

'Well, now, this is strange,' said the widow. 'An old friend came to see me while you were out, and he was saying that Mr. Aldenè only needed a touch to make him a different man; he has seemed on the verge of a change lately.'

'I wish he may receive it, and poor dear Clarissa too,' said Lottie.

During the next three weeks the news was spread of Mrs. Aldenè's illness—severe bronchitis and pneumonia, and no hope was entertained. Prayer was offered by Lottie and her aunt, and occasionally they sent or call-



surrounded by heavy curtains, and facing a conservatory where flowers and ferns seemed rejoicing together.

'How long have you been married, Clarissa? I must call you by your familiar name.'

'Certainly; I am the same to you, however much my circumstances have altered. Yes, it is six years since I came here to this lovely house. I often wondered where you had gone to, but I never got time for correspondence.'

'I have had a busy, happy life, always

had always admired Clarissa in those days, sorry as she was to see how her heart was set on being rich.

'Delightful!' she said, as different blossoms were pointed out. 'How you must enjoy all this; only think of the many to whom one of these would be a wealth of beauty.'

'That sounds like Lottie of old; but I haven't time to think of others. If you had a large place like this, and children and company, you would find all your attention taken up. Now come to my nursery'—and they en-