

## What Belonged to Jean.

(By Ruth Cady, in 'Forward'.)

As the packing of her trunk went on the little wrinkle of discontent deepened in Jean's forehead. The summer dresses were last year's, not a new one among them, and she was tired of them.

'Dear me, I wish I could have fresh new things, every season, like some of the other girls. If I ever get what belongs to me—'

The impatient sentence broke there, but her thoughts ran on in the way Jean's thoughts had a fashion of running. How delightful it would be to have all the things she wanted and live the life that suited her, if only Aunt Jean would ever learn that she was old enough to understand and decide for herself! Her imagination ran riot among beautiful plans, that might be car-

you must shape your life accordingly, as for Jean, she is too young to understand such matters, and it is best that she should be told nothing about her father's affairs. It is enough for her to be provided with what she needs while she is at school, and I'll attend to that." You see there must be something, and at nineteen I think I am old enough to be told what belongs to me, and to have a voice in expending my own money. It's like Aunt Jean's old-fashioned notions to treat me still as a child, and dole out a miserable little allowance that keeps me pinching, and scrimping to make ends meet.'

Yet, it was really less the smallness of the allowance than a feeling of injury at not receiving more, that troubled Jean. She did not even make the most of what she had, because she was always hoping

she had ventured upon more careless expenditure, and her purse was accordingly empty. And Aunt Jean had not even come to the closing exercises, but wrote instead that she had been called to a distant state by the illness of a friend.

'Mail!' called a voice at the door, and a letter fluttered in and fell on the carpet. Jean caught it up, and her packing came to an abrupt pause, while with nervously eager fingers she tore open the envelope.

Half an hour later her cousin Leslie found her flushed and indignant.

'Packing your trunk to go to your aunt's, Jean?'

'No, I'm not,' answered Jean defiantly. 'She has just written me to go there, and that she will be home in a week or two, but I haven't a penny to go with. She answered my request for more money, by saying that "it was not convenient nor expedient to exceed the allowance which was sent me at the beginning of the quarter." I presume I didn't make my application in the meekest possible form—I didn't feel meek—but it wouldn't have made any difference, anyway.'

'But, what will you do?' asked Leslie, with troubled voice. 'You can't stay here.'

'I don't want to. I'll sell Sylvia this queer old ruby ring she has always been so crazy to have, but I'll not find it convenient nor expedient to spend the money in travelling to Aunt Jean's lonely old house.'

'Oh, Jean, don't do that; your aunt will not like it. Didn't you tell me she gave you that ring, and said it had been a long time in the family?'

'I can buy it back again when I get my money,' answered Jean, her color deepening at the question. 'I'll make Sylvia promise to let me have it when I'm ready.'

'Don't do it,' urged Leslie again. 'I can lend you some money, Jean. Here, take this—only go to your aunt's; I'm sure you ought.'

'Take your precious gold piece that I know you're hoarding to buy a gift for your mother! No, indeed!' Jean drew back from the offered coin. 'You are a darling, Leslie, but I prefer my own way. If Aunt Jean doesn't like it, let her save me the necessity of doing such things! You haven't the least idea how exasperating it has been all these years, because you know just what you have—'

'Or just what I haven't,' amended Leslie, with a flitting smile. 'Why don't you ever ask your brother about all this?'

'Tom? Well, I haven't seen much of him all these school years, you know, and besides, I was sure he'd feel bound by Aunt Jean's wishes not to say anything. I did hint once or twice, but he told me nothing. I couldn't tell him what I knew without reminding him of the letter he did not mean to show me, and I knew that would annoy him. He hasn't had a very easy time of it, himself, poor Tom! He has worked hard.'

But Leslie's suggestion lingered with her, and when she was alone, that evening, she yielded to a sudden impulse and frankly wrote to her brother the story of her perplexities. The answer came very promptly—a thick letter—inclosing money for her need, but it swept away forever a host of bright visions.

'I can't imagine how you ever built up



JEAN DREW BACK FROM THE OFFERED COIN.

ried out if she were in possession of what belonged to her. To do her justice it must be admitted that they were not selfish plans, and they delighted her girl friends as well as herself.

'Only you do not know what does belong to you,' urged her cousin Leslie sometimes. 'You are not really sure that your Aunt Jean is holding any property of yours.'

'There must be something,' Jean declared positively. 'Everybody says Aunt Jean has money, and my father was her brother—half-brother, I mean—so it isn't likely that everything was left to her. Besides, why should she have taken charge of us at all, or said the things she did! I remember very well what she wrote in a letter to Tom, though I was only a little girl. He showed me the letter by mistake, so I didn't have a chance to read much of it, but she said: "You know what your inheritance is, and

that next season might bring more. But year after year Aunt Jean had sent only the same amount, and a touch of bitterness ran through all the girl's pleasures. The two or three weeks with a schoolmate in the country would have been pleasant enough if she had not felt that she might just as well have been enjoying the seaside or the mountains. And that one little excursion down the river, which cost so much planning!

'Girls, if I had what belongs to me, I'd take you all to Florida!' she said, in a burst of mingled generosity and vexation.

'Oh, Jean, if your ship would only come in!' chorused the girls.

But it did not come, and now school days were over, and she was in worse straits than usual. She had been so sure that with her graduation from school, Aunt Jean must be satisfactorily heard from, that