

The old Squire, whose attention had not followed that of the remainder of the family, took up the conversation: 'You must be sure and see Hugh's herd of Herefords, Charles. Every one else round here who keeps thoroughbreds prefers Durhams; but Hugh never wants to be like anyone else, so he raises Herefords, and he has some beauties.'

'Well,' said Sister Harriet, looking around the table the instant Dick Wentworth laid down his fork. 'If you are all through, we'll go right into the other room and have prayers. You had better read a short chapter, pa, for it's about time they started.'

Not until half-past eight, however, did the conveyances that were to take the party to Brother John's appear.

'I didn't know what had happened, you were so late,' said Miss Harriet, coming briskly down the walk to the gate, with a shawl over her head. 'I thought some of the children must be sick. Perhaps Lucy's child had better wait, and go over with me by and by.'

'Oh! yes, indeed, I'd much rather wait. I don't care to go at all,' cried Lucy's child, relieved at a prospect of escape.

There were more gay young cousins who had gone home with Uncle John after the Thanksgiving dinner, and Lucette dreaded mingling with them. The more there was the more distraught she felt.

'Plenty of room, plenty of room. Three teams, you see,' said Uncle John.

'Come right up here beside me, Cousin Lucy,' called Mabel Coverly, who had already taken a seat.

Lucette persistently refused, thereby confirming Aunt Van Alnstyne in the opinion, that morning expressed, in a private conclave of the sisters upstairs in the bedding closet, that Lucy's child's disposition was soured.

'John's wife sent over for some sage for her stuffing,' said Aunt Harriet; 'and there's a little sweet marjoram in there with the sage,' continued she, pushing a small paper bag into Sister Van Alnstyne's hand.

The elegant Sister Van Alnstyne received the herbs with a hesitating, puzzled, deprecatory air, that elicited some witticisms from Mabel and Dick Wentworth; and, under cover of the laugh, Lucy's child escaped into the house.

'Tell John's wife I'll be over in time to help set the table,' cried Miss Harriet, after the last retreating vehicle. 'And tell her not to do anything about her gravies until I come.'

Lucy's child had retired within the sitting-room bay window, behind the cretonne curtains (copy-plate Miss Harriet called cretonne). The window was crowded with plants—in fact, had been thrown out solely to accommodate Miss Harriet's plants—and Lucette sat beneath a hanging-basket of oxalis, which occasionally dripped from Miss Harriet's hasty and rather too profuse morning watering. Mabel had left 'Daniel Deronda' amid the plants. 'Daniel Deronda' was at this time a new book, and Lucette had never found it in the public library. She had scarcely become interested before Squire Coverly and the Hon. Charles entered the sitting-room. Peeping between the thick, dark curtains, Lucy's child saw her grandfather approach 'the desk.'

'The desk' was a piece of cherry furniture, with a lid closed at an angle, above drawers with brass handles. Great was the Coverly veneration for 'the desk.' Even Miss Harriet regarded it with awe, as a kind of arcanum of the family temple, and, though she carried in her head a minute schedule of her father's assets, knew the exact amount of his government four-percents, the pecuniary standing of all endorers of notes-of-hand, and the boundaries of real-estate

mortgages, she derived her information rather from occasional inquiries and attentive presence during her father's business interviews than from any profane intermeddling with the contents of 'the desk.'

'I want you to just look over those papers of mine against Tyler,' said the old gentleman. 'Push & Plead took on an execution; but Tyler's son got a writ of replevin. There's other stock the old man is trying to cover up. I've got a copy of a bill of sale, dated the very day I brought suit.'

Having unlocked the desk, the Squire drew forth a second key, which unlocked two or three interior drawers. 'Here are my certificates of Boston & Albany stock. It's about time for another dividend of the New York Central. I got rid of my Michigan Southern quite fortunately. Didn't I, Charles? There's my Lake Superior Copper. Wish I had more of it. I tell you what 'tis, though, Charles: I ain't going to take much more mining or railway stock. When business is as good as it is now and is likely to be in this town, there ain't anything better than six-percent loans, with real estate first mortgages, no taxes, no insurance. There's my Aetna Life insurance stock certificate. There's my government four-percents. Quite a pile of them, ain't there, Charles? Here's my notes. There ain't a bad note in that package, Charles, and they all know I'm particular about the interest being paid promptly. Better for the holder and better for the giver. That's my principle.'

Lucette's attention became absorbed in her book, and when she again looked forth Uncle Charles had started out upon his walk around by Brother Hugh's and Grandfather Coverly was closing the desk. Presently the latter left the room, and from a distance, through the open doors of dining-room and Kitchen, Lucette heard the old gentleman's voice in shrill, quavering astonishment and reproof.

'Harri! Harri! what does this mean?'

Miss Harriet stepped briskly onto the scene.

'I should say so myself! Good wheat bread in the chickens' dish! That's some of your work, Clarinda Daly. No wonder your folks are always poor, throwing away wheat flour like that. Haxall, too, at nine dollars a barrel. We can't afford to keep our chickens on broken pieces.'

Whatever defense Clarinda might have made for her extravagance was lost, for Miss Harriet followed the Squire into the sitting-room, bringing with her a tin pan and a bag of cranberries, which she proceeded to empty by handfuls into the pan.

'Now, pa, I want to know what we are going to do about Lucy's child?'

'Lucy's child,' hidden behind the curtains, felt her heart quickened by fear. Miss Harriet's tones seemed to indicate that punishment was about to be meted out to her; perhaps for her awkwardness.

'Lucy's child? Why, she seems to be well enough,' replied the Squire.

'No one in the family said or did more against Lucy's marrying that shiftless Judd than I, but she would have him and it turned out just as I expected; but now here's the child, and she belongs to our family, and we ought to take an interest in her. Mabel says she's prepared to enter Welles-ton College and is anxious to go and fit for a teacher. Emmeline, Elizabeth and I were talking about it upstairs, this morning, when we were looking over the bedding, and we decided that if you were a-mind to send her to Welles-ton, and take the expense out of what would have been her mother's portion, it would be the best thing that could be done for her.'

'Harriet,' said the old gentleman, dra-

matically. 'Charles told me himself it cost a thousand a year to send Mabel through Welles-ton.'

'Oh, well, of course, Lucy's child wouldn't go in the style of Mabel or of Kitty and Flora Van Alnstyne. Mabel says there are plenty of girls fitting for teachers who go in a plain, respectable manner for three or four hundred a year, and after graduation they command salaries of from six to fifteen hundred. She might pay you back in time.'

Oh! Aunt Harriet! Lucy's child could have fallen upon her knees and kissed your feet for gratitude, but excess of surprise and joy held her silent.

'We should not only feel that we had done our duty toward the child,' continued Aunt Harriet; 'but we need have no fear of her making any one of whom the family would be ashamed. Teaching is always respectable.'

'Better not be a teacher,' replied the Squire, shaking his head. 'She might break down in health, Harriet, and then who would she fall back upon? If she wishes to be a teacher, though,' added the old gentleman, eagerly seizing a scheme that might bear the aspect of benevolence without the disadvantages of direct tangible draft upon the contents of the desk, 'let her take the school in the Long Hill district this winter, and board at Hugh's and do chores for her board. If she proved a good teacher and was studious, modest, persevering, and saved her wages, why, maybe I might help her some.'

'It would be well to find out whether she has the teaching faculty before spending much money on her, that's a fact,' replied prudent Miss Harriet; 'but there's no calculating on Hugh. Hugh is tight as the bark of a tree. If there's anyone, though, who ought to help, it's Hugh. He and Lucy always worked together, and worked against me. He was the only one who encouraged Lucy to marry Judd. He did it just out of spite, because all the rest of us disapproved of it.'

Miss Harriet went out with her cranberries; and Lucette, having laid aside her book, which had lost all interest, unperceived by her grandfather, slipped upstairs after her hat and saccue.

Grandfather Coverly's unwillingness to assume the expenses of her education depressed her less than Aunt Harriet's proposition had elated her. The simple fact that Aunt Harriet approved of her going to Welles-ton was full of encouragement. She felt determined that whatever might depend upon her own 'modesty, perseverance, and economy,' should not be lacking. She intended to go directly to see this strange Uncle Hugh, who, according to the family testimony, had held most affinity with her mother. Perhaps she herself should propose boarding with him and teaching the Long Hill school.

'I'm glad you're ready,' said Aunt Harriet, as Lucette came down with wraps on. 'John has sent his hired man back for us; and it's well he has, for these cranberries have got to be stewed for the dinner, and it's much as ever there'll be time for them to cool now.'

'I'm not going to Uncle John's, Aunt Harriet. Will you please direct me to Uncle Hugh's?'

Aunt Harriet gave her a sharp, suspicious glance. 'Were you where you overheard what your grandfather and I have been talking about?'

'Yes, I was, Aunt Harriet. I was in the bay window. I was so surprised and anxious in regard to what you were saying that I did not realize I ought not to hear until it was all said.'

Aunt Harriet was silent for a minute, when she severely remarked: 'If your grand-