

With her multiplicity of social duties and her charitable work, her time was so taken up that I seldom saw her.

I don't know why, but I soon found myself wishing that she was a child again, that I might be "Mister Ruben" as of old. She never called me "Mister Ruben" any more. I felt myself drifting away from her, and when I occasionally saw her in society she was so surrounded by the younger men that I felt a return of that old feeling of being forgotten by the children who had once loved me. I fain would withdraw from society, but before the evening was over she would always come to me for a little while to say some pleasantries.

"Ruben," she would say, "it is so restful to talk with you. One does not have to be so precise." No, nor would one have to be to an inferior.

Was it a compliment she was paying me, or did she think of me as a person for whom she had no desire or care to please? I would leave the house long before the end of the reception, and quite resolve that I would accept no more invitations, but a something—I know not what—would ever cause me to break that resolution.

If I were conversing with a lady with any degree of interest, Helen would thereafter show in her manner more than in what she would say that she was not pleased with that particular lady. I could but silently note this in her, and wonder at it, for she seemed so free from dislike for any one.

Why should she care to whom I was agreeable? I was now but little to her, and with her widening circle of friends, was fast growing less.

She had been in society a year when a cousin of Anita came to visit America. He was very callow, this cousin, but, to compensate for manly bearing, he was an earl, which in the minds of too many condoned all else. The