

nose aquiline; very little hair about the face.

"What are you talking about, Sibyl?" said her mother.

"I am talking about James Darrent, the traveller."

"No doubt he is a very interesting person; but come, darling, and choose your dress for this evening. I want you to look your very best."

Sibyl assented. She did not wish to dazzle James Darrent, the traveller, but she wished him to look at her. If he looked, he might possibly talk to her. She might find out how a man felt who had lived a life of absolute freedom.

Miss Harcourt had helped to choose Sibyl's wardrobe; everything, therefore, was in excellent taste. When the young girl went into the old-fashioned drawing-room of Melbury Lodge her proud mother felt that she looked like a princess.

There were present, when they arrived, Sir Walter and Sidney Harcourt, Dr. and Mrs. Morton, Mr. Vernon, the clergyman, and his wife. The Darrents had not yet arrived.

Miss Harcourt was deep in conversation with Mr. Vernon, Mrs. White took a place beside Mrs. Morton on the sofa, and the doctor, having congratulated Sibyl on her new young ladyhood, stood leaning against the mantel-piece, in serene contemplation of the world in general and his position therein particularly.

Sibyl was left to her old companions, the elder ladies meantime watching them and her surreptitiously. Sibyl and Sir Walter Harcourt were to the little world of Melbury of as much interest as the principal persons in a drama. Much was expected of them.

"Yes, we had a good season up in the North," Miss Harcourt heard Sir Walter say, in a drawing tone, which was peculiar to him; "tolerably hard riding up there; double fences, and that kind of thing."

"How delightful!" said Sibyl. "I mean to follow next season, if I can get any one to take me."

"Won't I do?" put in Sidney.

"Do you ride?" she asked, with intentional sauciness.

"Pray, why not?" answered Sidney, exciting himself so far as to be mildly indignant.

"You would be afraid of breaking your bones."

"I shouldn't enjoy breaking them, of course; but there is no particular reason why I should."

"You might fall asleep, you know, just before a run. You might feel that it wasn't worth one's while to excite oneself about nothing, when your horse was making for a nasty fence—"

"I might do a great many things," the boy interrupted; "as a matter of fact, I shall not. I shall most probably be in England before next season. Oh, yes!" for Sibyl looked concerned, "it's quite true; and when my bones are bleaching under an Indian sun—Well! what is it now?" this was spoken with indignation, for Sibyl's attention had fled.

"Some one is coming," she said.

"It's only the Darrents," returned Sidney.

"Only the Darrents! thank you. They happen to be my greatest friends."

"Is your 'greatest' an invariable quantity, Sib?"

"I have a 'greatest,' at least. There are some people who never leave the dead level."

"The dead level's a comfortable part of the country."

"To you, of course. For my own part, I object to comfort."

"Now, Sibyl, do you really think any fellow would believe that of you? Why, of all the people that I ever met—"

He did not finish his sentence. Sibyl had darted forward to meet Mrs. Darrent, for whom, in common with most young people who knew her, she had an enthusiastic admiration.

"Where are you going to sit?" she

said. "There is room for two here," drawing her to an ottoman.

"But scarcely much time for confidences," said Sir Walter, coming forward to shake hands with Mrs. Darrent.

"They are announcing dinner, and I am to have the honor of taking you in, Miss White."

Sibyl took his arm, whispering to Mrs. Darrent—

"Is that really Uncle James?"

"Yes, Uncle James himself."

"And is he nice?"

"You must find out that for yourself," Mrs. Darrent answered, casting back a smile at Sibyl as she moved off on Dr. Morton's arm.

Sir Walter said, "You seem interested in Mr. James Darrent."

"Of course I am," answered Sibyl, with enthusiasm. "He has been everywhere—all over the world. He has lived for months in desert places, with no companions save his dog and gun. Think of that."

"A most uncomfortable thought."

"Uncomfortable to you."

Sir Walter piloted his companion to her seat, and when the general hubbub had subsided—

"Why to me in particular?" he asked.

She answered, with a pretty sententiousness, "To like solitude, one must have a number of mental resources."

"And I have none?"

"I did not say so."

"You implied it."

"Well, but," she said, lifting her laughing eyes to his face, "you know you are not interested in things."

The face was that of an English country gentleman, healthy, clear-skinned, a little heavy as to feature, and not yet trained into perfect indefiniteness of expression. It allowed one a glimpse of a nature half-developed, that the uninteresting life of middle-class prosperity might cramp into narrowness; that might also, by means of those crosses and losses which so strangely enrich us, become large, and generous, and great.

"Impossible to know what you mean by 'things,' Sibyl," he said; "I am interested in some things."

"Oh, yes; in your dogs and horses, and in races and balls, and a little, I dare say, in the elections and the foreign policy of the Government. But would you lie down for hours, watching a strange spider? Would you sit perfectly still till the rabbits and squirrels became accustomed to you, and ate out of your hand? Would you study, day and night, the habits of plants and birds and insects?"

"Of course I wouldn't. Every fellow has his own line; that isn't mine."

"But then, you can't expect to enjoy life in a desert."

"Since I'm not likely to be called upon to reside in one, it's immaterial, isn't it?" said Sir Walter, a little nettled;

"but," he added, possibly to punish her, "there's one thing, or person, if you like, in which I am interested just now."

The provoking girl was not in the least punished. She lifted to him a face full of radiant animation.

"A woman, I am sure," she said.

"Do please tell me about her."

"You are penetrating, Miss Sibyl," he said, but his remark fell unheeded.

Sibyl, at this stage of her career, would have answered to a clever Frenchman's description of one of his countrywomen. She was like a swallow. Her brain was perpetually giving birth to small wishes that, at the instant, passed into execution, and were then as instantaneously thrown aside or crossed by others.

Sir Walter's remark had awakened curiosity in her mind. Before it could, by any possibility, be gratified, her mind, swallow-like, was darting off in pursuit of another newly-awakened desire. The desire had reference to certain words of Miss Harcourt's, whose place in the conversation she wished to find.

"She lives quite alone," were the words. "So far as I can make out, she

has neither friends nor relatives."

"Poor thing! and so young!" murmured gentle Mrs. Vernon, who had spent the winter abroad, and had lost the run of things. "I will call upon her at once."

But Mrs. Morton, being an astute lady, and skilful in the more refined modes of flattery, said, looking at Miss Harcourt, "There must surely be some reason for our new neighbor's entire isolation."

"People don't drop out of the clouds nowadays," Dr. Morton filled in, following up his wife's hint.

"Did they ever do so, doctor?" asked John Darrent, quietly.

"Mr. Darrent is nothing if not critical," said Miss Harcourt, smiling; for the doctor, who was not a ready man, looked confused.

"But who is she?"

"Who is who?"

"The lady the doctor says was dropped from the clouds."

"I wish I knew."

"Why? Is she your object of interest?"

"She is the most beautiful woman I ever saw," Sir Walter spoke with real enthusiasm.

Sibyl gave utterance to a prolonged "Oh!" She felt as if life were becoming suddenly interesting.

But at this moment Miss Harcourt, pointedly addressing her nephew, drew him into the general conversation, which was now busy about parochial matters.

Dr. Morton gave a sketch of the churchwarden who might be elected if persons of leisure and ability would not come forward. It was so pungent and satirical that the ladies were obliged to laugh. Mr. Vernon corrected the sketch, by admitting that the obnoxious was at least active and in earnest. Mrs. White remarked, benevolently, that no one was without good points. Good points, Mrs. Morton said, were sometimes difficult to find. Her husband, the doctor, added, laughingly, that when found, the difficulty was to deal with them; whereupon Mrs. White, his neighbor, who always took things *au grand sérieux*, turned towards him, and asked him if he would prefer people without good points.

Before, however, this question could be answered satisfactorily, Harcourt gave the signal, and the ladies rose from the table.

(To be continued.)

RHUBARB PIE.—To four cups of rhubarb put two and one half of sugar, skin and cut fine the plant, add the sugar, mix, and fill the paste as other fruit pies.

LEMON PUDDING.—The grated rind of four lemons, juice of three, six eggs, one pound sugar, half-pound butter, one coffee-cup milk with half cup bread-crumbs soaked in it. Beat the butter and sugar well together at first. Then add the rest, leaving out the whites of four eggs for the meringue.

WATER-CRESSSES.—Watercresses are well-known purifiers of the blood, and thus are largely eaten in many families. But it is not generally known that unless scrupulously well washed they often contain amongst their leaves the germs of disease, which is inadvertently taken into the system.

POTATO SALAD.—Pare and slice some cold boiled potatoes. Peel and slice thin one onion. Mix on a salad dish, and pour over them the following dressing: Stir together one salt-spoon of salt, quarter salt-spoon of pepper, one tablespoonful of vinegar, and three of oil. Dress the salad with this mixture, and serve with chopped-parsley.

RICE APPLE SOUFFLE.—Boil two tablespoonfuls of rice in half a pint of milk; add when soft, the yolks of two eggs, and sugar to taste; make a wall with it around the sides of the dish. Stew some pared and cored apples until soft, fill the center of the dish with them, fill the apertures in the apples with candied sweetmeats or jelly; and cover the whole with the whites of the eggs beaten to a stiff froth and sprinkle thick with white powdered sugar. Brown in the oven and serve with cream.

FRIED SMELTS.—Carefully wipe two pounds of cleaned smelts with a dry cloth; dip them in milk, then roll them in finely powdered cracker

crumbs, next in an egg beaten with a salt-spoonful of salt and a quarter of a salt-spoonful of pepper, and then again in cracker crumbs; fry them in enough smoking fat to cover them until they are a golden brown; take them from the fat with a skimmer, lay them on a dish, with a napkin under them.

HAM OMELET.—Beat up three or four eggs with a heaped tablespoonful of ham or bacon, half lean and half fat, cut up to the size of very small dice; add pepper to taste, and salt if necessary. Put a piece of butter, the size of an egg, into a frying pan; as soon as it is melted pour in the omelet mixture, and, holding the handle of the pan, stir the omelet with the other by means of a spoon. The moment it begins to set cease stirring, but keep on shaking the pan for a minute or so; then with the spoon double up the omelet and keep on shaking the pan until the under sides of the omelet has become of a golden color. Turn it out on a hot dish and serve.

WORK.—The man who has nothing to do is the most miserable of the beings. No matter how much wealth a man possesses, he can neither be contented nor happy without occupation.

DON'T DWELL ON TROUBLES.—Those who have troubles are better off by not thinking of them, by always looking on the sunny side, and lighting up the souls and faces with good nature and cheerfulness.

LIVING WITH HONOR.—The shortest and surest way to live with honor in the world is to be in reality what you would appear to be; and if we observe we shall find that all human virtues increase and strengthen by the practice and experience of them.

CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT.

FLOWERS ON THE ALTAR.

Ye fairest of all earthly things
Who tranquilly appear
Your blossoms where angelic wings
Are folded up in fear.

Yours is a voice and balmy breath
That may not feel the blight of death;
A beauty, that must ever lie
Hid in the depths of memory.

Sweet daughters of a lowly race,
A lofty place ye fill;
But still ye keep your sylvan grace,
Your sweetest aspect still!

So we who in God's temple wait,
Must keep our low estate,
And bear the vessels of the Lord
In hands that tremble at his word.

In holy ground, the holiest seat
Your innocence was found;
In gratitude, these odors sweet
Diffusing all around.

So too may we, in trust and love,
Repose on Him who rules above,
And hourly breathe into the air
The incense of our ceaseless prayer.

Fair as the west when slowly faints
The lingering summer day,
Amid the solemn hymns of saints
Ye breathe your souls away.

E'en so, when Death's cold dews descend,
True Christian spirits meet their end,
And while the Church is praying night
Spread their light wing and gently die.

Ye customs dear of ages past!
And are your honors fled,
Like bud that in the wintry blast
Their vernal beauty shed?

Rude was the hand and dark the hour
That from the altar pluck'd the
flower—

Too surely ushering in the day
That took the altar's self away.

Primeval truth! forever fair
As when thy course began,
Thy frame unsullied will not bear
The blighting touch of man.

The simplest usage own'd by thee
Partakers of thy divinity;
And rend we but thy garment's hem,
We shake thy jewell'd diadem.

—Copied from "Voices from the Early Church."

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