

framed one of the sweetest pictures I ever remember to have seen. I went over immediately and drawing her in, said:

"You are very welcome, dear; I don't think I know your name."

"Thank you," and then she smiled in such a way that for a moment I thought my little room was converted into an Eden,—*"my name is Rosemond; Doctor Grantly calls me Rose."*

"And I shall call you Rose, too," as I placed a chair for her beside me, "for I don't know another name that would suit you so well.—And, John, I am so glad you came for I was just lamenting that I should be obliged to go away without seeing my new cousin."

"So I heard," remarked John in his easy way, "and I got Ralph to drive us down, for I wanted you to see Rose."

Rose smiled again, and her pretty soft hand that lay in mine seemed to quiver slightly as he pronounced her name.

Before they left me, I had made up my mind that Doctor Grantly loved his wife; who, though young was by no means childish. It was her timid, shrinking manner, that must have given aunt Mattie an impression of extreme youthfulness. She seemed wonderfully sensitive, and feeling that a family investigation was being entered into, no doubt it confounded her,—yes, I had been sure from the first that John Grantly had found some more sterling coin than even gold and silver in his young wife.

As for Rose, I could not form an opinion so readily, concerning the state of her heart towards her husband. Yet, why had she married him? I asked myself that question, again and again.

Two months had rolled on, and I glanced back just as I had often done at the long array preceeding them. I was thinking more of them, perhaps, than the present. As I stepped ashore, at our pretty little town, and found Stella and Tom both appropriating a hand that I had only a moment before fancied my own individual property. As we hurried through the crowd, gathered to look at the steamer, I stopped suddenly, for just before me I saw John's wife laughing and chatting in a very easy don't-care style with Jack Stratton, the one man above all others, in whom I had no confidence. She met my eyes as I stopped, but turned her own away again in an indifferent manner.

"She only saw me once, and that in the evening," I said apologetically to myself; but Stella pulled my hand expressively saying:

"Don't stop, Jessie, I'll tell you why another time."

After we had checked our pace, she resumed indignantly:

"We thought her such a child at first, but even aunt Mattie has succumbed to a mistake for once. Why she's the greatest flirt imaginable! She never blossomed out all at once, not to have had a scientific training before John married her. I tell you, Jessie, there's not a Grantly or McKay in the country that don't feel

scandalized, and it really seems as if that is what she intends. And poor John has gone off to the States again, I saw him on his way to the steamer, though I never for a moment dreamed that he was leaving that minx on our hands. 'Tis the only mean thing I ever knew John Grantly guilty of."

"John gone!" I echoed in amazement.

"Yes: and if ever I read a face correctly, his told that he would be glad to be on the battle field once more."

"But did he not try to check such imprudent behaviour?" I asked in a bewildered way.

"How can we tell? At first he used to look surprised at her manner, then he grew restless and anxious and at last moody; but he never mentioned her to one of us, save with respectful kindness. She scatters money around like dirt, and the whims she indulges in, makes me laugh in spite of myself. But Nettie Fisher says she is as quiet as a lamb, except when some of her husband's friends are near. Though why she should try or wish to affront us, I can't see." I felt suddenly, that I had got the key to the secret, whatever it was, but it was a rusty one and wouldn't turn at once. I was convinced that the poor girl had received a shock of some kind. Those shy, reticent people, have often a deep vein of opposition running through their nature, and when anything comes in contact with their acute sensibilities, to arouse it, can be firm enough.

As a first step, I resolved to go and see John's wife, so when evening came, without mentioning my purpose to any one, I went up to Mr. Fisher's, where she boarded. The door of the room to which I had been directed was ajar, and I pushed it open noiselessly. It was early twilight, yet I could see its one occupant easily, and never did I see a human countenance that so entranced my whole being with sympathy. Dejection is too weak a word to express her appearance. An utter weariness of life—a resolute repudiation of its purposes, so far as self was concerned, seemed to have taken possession of mind and body. She started up like a young fury as my step broke the spell of her morbid imaginings. The dejection had vanished the weariness was chased away by a quick surge of emotions. She neither spoke nor moved, but stood like a hunted creature at bay.

I never felt my own powerlessness so thoroughly, as at that moment; it was like preparing for a contest blindfolded. Still, I knew that a duty must be performed by some one, towards the young isolated creature thus thrown among us,—John having deserted his position, some one must step in; I was trying to take the step, even though there was no track. Looking into the defiant eyes, I advanced, and said gently:

"Are you not going to give me a welcome, Rose?"

The blood rushed up to her face, and she almost gasped for breath. It might have been my tone that touched her—it might have been