

## The White Prince.

'I wis' I was quite growed up!' wistfully said the tiny girl who sat, perched in a special high chair, at the head of Dr. Clavering's breakfast-table.

'Just so!' absently rejoined the doctor, who sat at the other end of the table, with a fat, learned review propped up against the silver cover of the dish in front of him. In this way the man of science contrived to feed both mind and body, perhaps at the expense of the latter.

It was a long journey down the white table-cloth from the end where his granddaughter Dody industriously spooned away at her smoking-hot bread-and-milk to the other end, where the doctor shook his head as industriously over the review's reasoning; only occasionally remembering to pop something into his mouth. But long as the distance seemed, it was nothing to the journey of years that lay between the sole remaining members of the Clavering family. The doctor was so old and wrinkled in her round blue eyes, when Dody first came to live in the still London house, that she used to wonder, on Sunday evenings, if her grandfather had been acquainted with the patriarchs in the big Bible which was such a heavy weight on her small knees. That was before Dody could do more than spell out the few names familiar to her in the Book. The little woman was now turned five; she could croon her favorite hymns, and she could read quite easy words nearly as well as Mrs. Pink herself. Mrs. Pink was the doctor's housekeeper, a good, worthy soul, but a sore disappointment to the lonely little orphan.

'She seems like as if she was made of boards!' grieved Dody, when, in sudden gusts of affection, she tried to embrace the stiff old woman. But though not exactly made of boards, Mrs. Pink had rigid ideas of propriety. To have Miss Dody intermittently flying at her, and squeezing her cap, was what Mrs. Pink could not put up with, not if it was ever so. Besides, if her master had announced from the first set-out, when his forlorn little granddaughter was brought into his home, that Dody was to take her place opposite himself at all meals—'For, said he, 'I like a lady at the head of the table, Mrs. Pink; it gives an air of completeness!'—why, then, small though she was, Dody occupied the place, as it were, of the mistress of the house, and must 'behave as sich,' reasoned the worthy housekeeper. With regard to the doctor's decision, there had been some trouble with the small, frightened new-comer.

'I'se too little to sit all by myself on that chair!' was her weeping objection on being conducted to the head of the table.

'She isn't, so to say, wrong, sir,' said Mrs. Pink to the puzzled old gentleman. 'The pore little thing would be lost on that chair. And, besides, her little 'ead would scarce reach the table.'

'Couldn't you sit aside me in the chair, Mrs. Pink Do!' Dody plucked at the stiff skirt.

'Hush, deary!' The shocked housekeeper colored. 'We'll get you a high chair, missy, and all will be right.'

'Which it's a foolish thing of master,' she afterwards remarked, downstairs, 'to be settin' that baby at the head his table. But he's desperate obstinate in havin' his own way.'

True enough, the eccentric scholar had his way. Day after day, he and the 'lady of the house' sat opposite each other, in lonely state for Dody. The little maid was a chat-

terbox by nature. But it was difficult to keep up anything like conversation with a person who had but a sole remark, and that was the irritating one of 'Just so!'

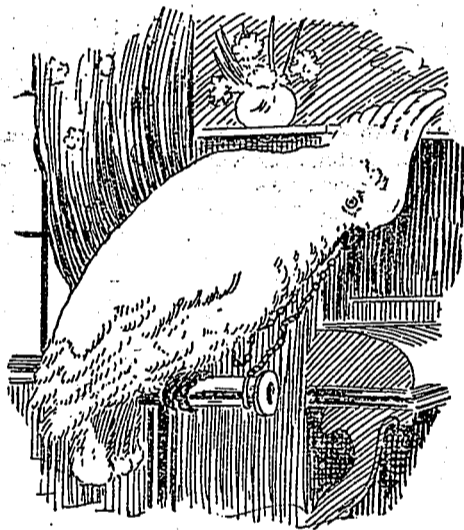
'Grandpapa!' Dody, having finished every crumb of the bread and milk, was staring hard at the butterfly painted on the bottom of her china bowl. Fortified by her breakfast, she determined to boldly lay siege again to the fortress of silence at the other end of the vista of white table-cloth. 'I do wis' I was growed up!'

'Growed up—grown up! Ah, just so!' The doctor, startled at Dody's unusual pertinacity, pushed up his spectacles to glare at her. 'Are you not satisfied with your condition of life, child? What is it you want to be, eh?'

What could portend such vague stirrings in the human atom facing him? speculated the man of science.

'I should like to grow up an aunt, grandpapa,' Dody promptly said. 'An aunt!' she repeated, raising her shrill sweet voice. Surely, grandpapa must be deader than usual this morning. 'Cos then, I could have a little boy of my very own, just-like the little boy opposite, to play wif all day. Oh, grandpapa, 'twould be so lovely to be an aunt!' Dody had slipped down from her high chair, and was close to the doctor's elbow, staring, with shining eyes, into his wrinkled, bewildered face.

'Dear, dear! Where's Mrs. Pink?' The



old man rose, and stretched his hand over to the bell; then he feebly contemplated the excited, flushed child. 'She is feverish—just so!' he muttered. 'Oh, Mrs. Pink, have the goodness—er—to remove Miss Dody to the nursery. She is unduly excited; she is going to be ill—er—take her away!'

'I'm not going to be ill!' indignantly cried Dody, as she wriggled out of Mrs. Pink's grasp. 'I want to go to the window and see my little boy! I shall! and when I'm growed up I'll have a little boy of my own to play wif!'

'Dear heart alive!' Mrs. Pink was scandalized at such a flare of temper from the usually docile Dody. The two old folk, master and servant, gazed in mute amaze at the quivering little figure in frilled white pinafore, and black-stockinged legs. Dody had retreated to the centre one of the three windows, and was standing, a living picture in a frame, the sunbeams making a glory of her fluffy fair hair. The child was solemnly curtesying with no little grace and waving her mite of a hand as she gazed out at some distant object.

'Tis the little boy opposite, sir!' Mrs. Pink explained, in an undertone. 'Miss Scrope's nevvv, sir. They bows to each

other constant, all day long in rainy weather.'

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In the house opposite that of the learned doctor, Eddy Scrope lived a life possibly more lonely even than Dody's. The street itself was allowed to be, in its dreary length and sameness, the quietest in all the Lendon West—dull and dignified. That might have been why Miss Scrope had grown dull and dignified also as the years made an elderly, stiff woman of the once cherry-cheeked, lissom girl. Most of us are made by our surroundings; it is only the few who are strong enough to color their own lives, and those of others. Sophy Scrope had lived for more than a quarter of a century in the silent London house, with no surprises to break up its stillness, until one day the foreign post brought a letter. It was an abrupt proposal from her youngest half-brother, in the Indian Civil Service, who was married to a wife Miss Scrope had never so much as seen, that she would board his six-year old son, now getting too old for India's climate.

To refuse was impossible. So Eddy arrived in due time, bringing live luggage with him in the shape of a cockatoo, given him by a young man on board ship. The White Prince was of high Australian lineage, a handsome specimen of the lemon-crested species, and in his fastidious habits quite lived up to his princely title.

It would be difficult to say which of the strangers received the warmest welcome, little Miss Scrope being one of those people of whom it can be said:—

'He prayeth best who loveth best  
All things, both great and small.'

Certainly the White Prince made himself at home much faster than the shy, small boy did.

'How do you do, do, do, do?' screamed his highness, in the friendliest manner, after he had settled himself on his perch, and partaken of his luncheon of maize.

'He is so chatty, he makes himself quite a companion!' purred the little lady, charmed with the prince's affable speeches; and the elderly servants downstairs told each other that 'Mistress had quite brisked up since the cockatoo and the nevvv had come from Indy!'

It was true enough. But though the patter of little feet and the White Prince's chatter transformed the silent house for Miss Scrope, it was strangely dull and grey to little Eddy after home and all the brilliance of Indian life. It was autumn weather, wet and gusty. The little boy had to be kept indoors until his constitution got acclimatized, and the poor child shrank into himself, pining and dwining. The White Prince also began to sulk on his perch. Though to a stranger a cockatoo's face is only white feathers and black eyes, to one who loves these birds there is plenty of expression in it. The prince, as the days grew murkier, became full of resentful wrath. His head seemed to grow quite small, so sleek and smooth were his feathers and crest, a sure sign of anger; for a cockatoo, when cheery and gay, ruffles up his feathers and appears to expand into double his size.

'Why, Eddy, Eddy!' shrieked Miss Scrope, one morning. 'The White Prince has got away!'

'So he has! He had bitten the chain right through, Aunt Sophy!' Eddy, who had been pressing his pale face against the window, watching a little girl in a white pinafore, dandling her doll in the house