

"You do know better than that; but it has just occurred to me. There is Mr. Smith, the rector, you know what a good, kind-hearted, pious man he is. Well, I have heard Papa say that when they were at college together, Mr. Smith was awfully wild and used to drink hard. One day, a young man, one of his companions, was drowned while half intoxicated by being upset out of a sail-boat in which he persisted in going across the river. This event produced a great effect on the minds of the collegians, especially on Mr. Smith and Papa; and that was how Mr. Smith came to take orders, for he had intended himself for the bar. But, good-by, cousin Alice; and if you have not yet sent Charles his letter of dismissal, I advise you not to do it."

"I have not sent it, but—"

"Then burn it," So saying, the charming and lovely Ellen Foster waived her adieu.

Alice Alton was the only daughter of Squire Alton, a wealthy and respectable farmer, of Cumberland County, Nova Scotia. He had come from England some twenty-five years before our story opens, and by the judicious expenditure of considerable capital, had bought and reclaimed one of the largest marsh farms there were in the neighbourhood of Amherst. He was a very excellent man, and had given his daughter the best education the provinces afforded.

Alice Alton, at the period when our tale begins, had just completed her eighteenth year. She was in every respect a very beautiful girl; the symmetry of her form well accorded with the loveliness of her face, which in its turn, was an index of the goodness of her soul. Her eyes were of the deepest blue; and her hair that beautiful mixture of auburn and brown, which gives it the appearance of having been sprinkled with diamond dust. Alice was as good as she was beautiful, and conscientious to the highest degree, thanks to the careful training of a religious mother, aided by the naturally good bent of the youthful Alice's mind.

Ellen Foster, the other young lady whom we have already introduced to our readers in the dialogue, was, in many respects, a contrast to her cousin Alice. She was equally beautiful; but her's was a beauty of another sort. Her hair and eyes were jet black; and her features, although beautiful, were cast in that mould which is the sure indication of a determined and courageous disposition. And Ellen Foster did not belie her looks. She was indeed resolute and daring. Mounted on her favourite horse she would perform feats of horsemanship which would astonish young ladies who had learned to ride at fashionable riding schools. An ordinary gate or fence was no obstruction to her when out on one of her rambling rides over the country, which she delighted to take four or five times a week, or even oftener.

Ellen Foster was just the kind of a woman to be universally admired. Her solid mental at-

tainments, and her sound practical sense, caused her to be respected as well. Her stately carriage, and gait, also, made her conspicuous; and in every respect she was far beyond the generality of women. She was just a year the senior of her cousin Alice Alton, and naturally they were very great friends. The difference in their characters not having a tendency to estrange them from each other; but rather the contrary Alice was of a mild and confiding nature; Ellen was self-possessed and resolute. Alice's strength of mind was of the passive kind; Ellen's was active. One was fitted to suffer patiently; the other to face danger boldly.

The father of Ellen Foster was a retired barrister, whose failing health obliged him to relinquish the severe and trying practice of his profession, and seek in the retirement of a country life, that health which he in vain sought for in a crowded city. He was quite wealthy, and had purchased a farm near to the residence of his brother-in-law, on which he had built a splendid mansion. His daughter, and her cousin were constantly together, and it was extremely gratifying to the parents of both to see them so much attached to each other,—both were noble girls, and each had many admirers. Indeed the man might be considered fortunate who obtained the hand of either; for they would both have ample dowries to enhance the value of their other attractions.

Charles Rivers of whom mention, has already been made to us, was a young man, who was about commencing life as an attorney in Amherst. He was very talented, generous and of a good disposition. He had inherited a considerable property from his father, and his own prospects of success in his profession were excellent. He had been engaged for a short time to Alice Alton at the time our story opens, and was considered in every respect a very suitable match. Though he might not fulfill the novelist's beau ideal of a handsome man, he was at least good looking,—imagine a young man with dark brown hair, and whiskers and moustache to match—blue eyes—features strongly marked and masculine—height 5 feet 8 inches,—and a frame tolerably stout, and well put together—and you have before you, the portrait of Charles Rivers. Take a good look at him gentle reader, for he will figure quite conspicuously in our tale before you see it close. Charles Rivers had been in Harvard University some two years before attending the law classes in that venerable Institution, and it is very much to be feared that what his betrothed had just heard in reference to his excesses, there, had some foundation in fact.

Charles Rivers was no saint, and never professed to be one. He had never been a Sunday School Teacher, nor collector for an Orphan Asylum, nor a visiting member of the church's charitable fund. He made no profession, and consequently, was not a hypocrite. He was not the good young man, whom religious mothers point-