

“And I—I am fifty—”

The two sisters had been writing when this conversation started. They were busy on a new generation of the Spencer-Spicer genealogy, and if you have ever engaged on a task like that, you will know the correspondence it requires. But now for a time their pens were forgotten and they sat looking at each other over the gate-legged table which served as desk. They were still both remarkably good-looking, though marked with that delicacy of material and workmanship—reminiscent of old china—which seems to indicate the perfect type of spinsterhood. Here and there in their hair gleamed touches of silver, and their cheeks might have reminded you of tinted apples which had lightly been kissed with the frost.

And so they sat looking at each other, intently, almost breathlessly, each suddenly moved by the same question and each wishing that the other would speak.

For the second time it was Cordelia who broke the silence.

“Patty—!”

“Yes, dear?” breathed Patty, and left her lips slightly parted.

“I wonder if Josiah—is too old—to marry again! Of course,” she hurriedly added, “he is fifty-two—but it seems to me that one of the