

heels, splashes of beer-stain, and, in one spot, by a row of figures in charcoal, which had evidently been the ledger of the banker in some long-past game of poker.

When the evident tendency of the walls to small-pox had been thus artfully concealed, there was the photograph of my father and mother, taken especially for me, to be hung up just at the right height and exactly in the centre above the painted chimney-piece. I call it painted, though there remained only a few patches of the original colour, and I call it a chimney-piece although there was no chimney, my room being heated by the pipe of the hall-stove.

Besides this, I had to spend incalculable energy in smoothing out the wrinkles and tacking together the edges of the holes in my two-ply carpet. It wasn't much of a carpet but it seemed to me quite a fine thing to have a carpet over the whole floor, for at home I had only had a narrow strip by the bed and washing-stand.

Finally, I devoted two or three afternoons to hunting through all the furniture-broking establishments on Queen and York Sts. for an easy chair. When I had secured this all-important article, and had got it actually removed to my room, I felt that I was now indeed settled down, and that I could allow myself a little time to look about me. I was especially curious about a neat red-brick house just across the road, for when I first came to my house I had been struck with the cheerful brightness of its windows, with their pots of geraniums and mignonette, and, besides, I remembered that, on the morning when I rushed down to close the bargain for my arm-chair, I had seen a very kind-looking old gentleman and lady come out of the door together, whose mutual tenderness and affection warmed my heart towards them, reminding me vividly of my father and mother, from whom I seemed to have parted ages ago.

By interrogating the grocer at the corner I learned that this aged couple were named Mr. and Mrs. Erle, and that they had a daughter who had gone away a long time ago, before he had moved into the neighbourhood, and had come back just lately, he didn't know from where exactly, but he thought from Europe. When I saw the young lady, my interest in her parents assumed a very secondary importance, and I gradually came to regard the red-brick house solely as her dwelling-place. How pleasant it was, on the mornings when I had no lectures at the college, to see her starting off cheerfully to do the shopping for the house; or in the afternoon, to watch her walk slowly down the street with her mother leaning on her arm, seeming to combine in her protecting affection for the old lady all the strength of youth, with the tender considerateness of age. In a short time I learned to know her tall figure and her gliding wave-like walk wherever I met her, and I took pains to meet her whenever and wherever I could. I remember telling some dreadful lies to one of the lecturers in an attempt to get him to change the hour of one of his classes, which fell just at the time when Miss Erle usually went out in the afternoon. The lecturer, however, was obdurate, and so I had to give in and rest content with seeing her on the remaining days of the week, for the idea of a freshman skipping a lecture never so much as entered my head.

What a picture she made at the window as she watered the plants in the morning! To steal out of bed at eight in the morning to enjoy this picture became a part of my morning's programme, and there always seemed a great relish in the ham and eggs or mutton-chops,—the staple articles of food with my landlady—when I had succeeded in obtaining this glimpse.

I was perfectly happy in thus worshipping my goddess from

afar, for the idea that I should ever make her acquaintance and actually speak to her, though it did sometimes occur to me, seemed so bold that it almost made me tremble. I felt that if such an occasion were to arise, I should yield to an irresistible impulse to throw myself at her feet or to do something else equally unconventional. Still it caused me a vague uneasiness to see her sometimes escorted home by a young man, perhaps two or three years older than myself, with whom she seemed to be on very easy terms of familiarity. What business had the fellow to be so attentive any way? I would ask myself sometimes, and I would feel like going out and kicking him then and there; or again I would exclaim involuntarily, "What a handsome couple they make, to be sure!" and then I would curse myself for my absurd jealousy, and reflect that, since I did not so much as dream of any hope for myself, I ought to be glad that the young man was so gentlemanly, and I would endeavour to take a sort of proprietary pride in Miss Erle's good taste. Still, it made me feel a little lonely, as if something were gradually slipping away from me, which I had prized greatly and which I could make no effort to retain.

During the winter months I never saw Miss Erle on the street, and but seldom at the window. I think she must have been very ill, for I used frequently to see the doctor's carriage at the door, and on the few occasions when she appeared at the window she looked very pale and weak. "That fellow" (I always thought of Miss Erle's friend as that fellow) used to come pretty often to see her, and stay a long time, while I would torment myself by picturing Miss Erle lying on a sofa, listening to him as he read her a novel, or perhaps, and I would almost grind my teeth, perhaps some of her favourite poetry; while I, poor, lonely devil, dared not even enquire how she was.

One day I resolved to go and ask after her health at all costs, and actually got as far as the steps, but then I thought perhaps her kind old mother would come to the door, and give me such a glance of courteous astonishment as I dare not face, and so I stole back to my room in ignorance. One thing I did, however, I went to a florist's and ordered him to send up a bouquet of roses, giving him the number of the house. How I banged the door when he told me that he was just sending another order to the same place!

I can still remember well my feelings when, one fine morning early in April, Miss Erle came out for the first time. She merely took a short walk up and down in the sunshine, and seemed very tired when she went in, but still I felt as if spring had indeed come.

All that month, of course, I stayed at home reading hard, and used to sit nearly the whole day with my arm-chair drawn up to the window and my book in my lap. What a delightful break it made in the dull monotony to watch Miss Erle in her daily walk and how I rejoiced to notice it become a little longer every day, and to see the colour come gradually back to her cheeks, and her step grow firmer and more elastic. Then, too, what charming taste was displayed in the gradual process by which she first left off her boa, then substituted the neatest little gray spring jacket for her heavy winter ulster, and finally, on the very day I left for home, the Queen's birthday, she appeared in the most bewitching summer costume of white cashmere, looking as rosy and well as the first day I had seen her. But, oh heavens, was that fellow to be always turning up? I would have been so glad to carry away her image in all its loveliness, without anything to remind me that she must one day pass out of my life, and that I had never so much as entered hers.

HENRI.

(To be continued.)