word perplexedly.

She laughed musically up into the furrowed face.
"And it delights me. You stupid

papa—to want a fretful, puny baby al-ways under your wing in place of a wise young woman by your side! And,

you naughty papa, to let my eighteenth

pirthday almost dawn without a preath touching appropriate celebra-

"Celebrations?" He repeated the

out, and I propose to do that appro-

printely."
"Appropriately! Why, bless my soul, yes, of course! What shall we do,

"I should like a fete champetre." said Ollie grandly. "such a fete as the

o and from for generations to come.

shan't come of age but once in my

lifetime, you know, papa."

Her father looked overhead out of

the bay window into her garden and

upon the grassy terraces intervening between it and the cobblestone street.

The Matthews cottage, perched upon

its well kept terraces, was one of the show places of Mandeville, but its di-

show places of Mandeville, but its dimensions were by no means imposing. In land it was conspicuously cramped.

"A garden party, my love? I believe that is your idea done in English. Do you think our modest little yard"—

She interrupted him with a gay laugh. "Oh, no, papa! That would be absurd, ridiculously so. Over at Tom's house is where I mean to hold my late. We could give a lovely garden.

party among the grand old trees on Broxton lawn and such a delicious dance in the long, yellow parior."

"But the people?"
"The Westovers are expected back

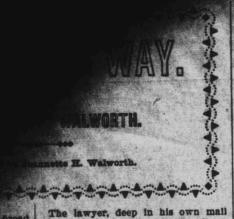
from Europe on Monday. I should es-pecially like them to see that one does not have to go abroad to know what to

do on occasion. Oh. I want it to be very grand indeed, papa! Miss Malvina Spillman will help me to make it just perfectly lovely. She can act chaperon too. I can make out quite a splendid

A strange hesitation seemed to bind her father's tongue. He, who was gen-erally eager in his readiness to gratify her slightest wish, stood mute and frowning in face of her very dearest

"You have a guardian's right to use

"You have a guardian's right to use the house, papa, haven't you?"
"Yes. Oh, yes, of course!"
"And I know Tom would be only too glad. I shall write for his permission."
Still that unfriendly silence. "My heart is quite set upon it, papa."



wee bit sophomoric, I must admit, but time will tone all that down."

She was conscious of a very abstract-

just so long as his hand had been ex-tended for the cup of coffee. He was once more poring over his morning's mail with knitted brows. Her maltese

cat, always discreetly observant of the progress of the meal, gently reminded her by a velvet pawed caress that he was waiting to be served. Her canary bird, swinging in its gilded cage in the

sunny bow window, shrilly monopolized the realm of sound.

Her father's absorption in letters which properly belonged to his office work was an infringement of her most cherished household regulation. She interfered despotically.

"Papa, you know I regard the break-fast hour as my exclusive property. You are breaking my rules."

The dark face opposite her was lift-ed. The light of a mighty love illumin-

ed its gloomy eyes. Lawyer Matthews pushed his letters from him in a beap

"You are right, my queen of hearts,

"Is there no way of silencing that

"Dick's yodeling? Certainly. I did not know it annoyed you." She left the table long enough to in-

sert a lump of sugar between the bars of the birdcage. Returning, she perch-ed on the arm of her father's chair, re-taining her precarious vantage ground

lines here. This will never, never do. But about Tom."

"What about Thomas?" Her caressing failed of soothing. He drew her hands down with almost a petulant

"What are you going to do with him when he leaves college and comes nome to live? You know we must

"There is no immediate call for agitating that point, my love. Thomas is to go abroad for two years after

"Of course, papa, as his guardian you may advise him to go, and I think

every boy ought to travel. But has Tom expressed any wishes of his own

"I have not broached it to him as yet. I anticipate no objections on his part. His father was a great traveler in his day. Indeed, I may say he was passionately fond of it."

"Then you have not consulted him The lawyer rose from the table with

his hands full of letters. A slight frown

contracted his forehead, bringing his bushy gray brows almost into con-

fact with each other. He loved this breakfast hour above all the hours of

the day. It was full of peace and pleasantness. It was pleasant to look across the table into his child's beauti-

ful, spirited face, a face which always brimmed over with intelligence and with love for him; it was pleasant to

look beyond her, out through the vine encircled bay window into the tangle of beauty and perfume which Ollie called her garden; it was pleasant to contemplate the fact that this dear

child had but to express a wish and he

was able to gratify it. Things had gone well with him the last four years.

Men said he was waxing rich as no

icaving college."
"Does he want to go?"
"I want him to go."

as you always are. I beg your pardon for my rude inattention. I am all yours.

matter, glanced up quickly, showing a dark, unsmiling face. "Who is straining at the leash, my "Oh, that was just a figure of speech!
I was talking about Tom. I've got an
absurdly grateful letter from him,
thanking me for his gloves. If I had
sent a shoestring, he would have waxed just as eloquent over it. Tom is a
rece bit scopements. I must admit hut clung with ravening ne silent sleeper in the his back.

d his steps and re-entered where his father lay. He the windows and moved tely toward the casket. The utcefulness, the majestic repose sleeper filled his soul with a

At that moment he remembered the eal ring which his father had always mpressed upon the war of his letters. It was on his finger when he died. He should like it for his very own. He drew the white drapertes from the broad chest to secure the ring. In the pallid clasped hands a single white cosmos flower had drooped to its death. The seal ring was not upon his father's hand. The flower had not been in his quiet clasp when they laid him in the casket.

Who would unravel the knot of this

Who would unravel the knot of this twofold mystery?

Having nearly arrived at the mature ge of 18. Miss Olivia Matthews conidered herself qualified to give her fa-her advice on all matters of impor-

Tom Broxton was a matter of impor nnce, one which came up with increas-ing frequency and growing importuni-ty as his term at college rounded to its

on the subject of what was or what was not best for Tom the small moni-tor assumed large airs of gravity and decorum which tempted one to smile into her dimpled face. Not that she would have countenanced such levity for an instant. She took herself in her for an instant. She took herself in her relation as semiguardian to the last of the Broxtons quite seriously. Ever since that dismal day on which they had laid the dear colonel to rest under the weeping willows of the Mandeville churchyard and brought Tom to stay temporarily at the Matthews cottage while "arrangements for his future" were perfecting she had come to look upon him as in some sense her personal charge.

charge.

That had been four years ago. The years have healing properties for the young which they lose in later years. A correspondence had been one of the inevitable consequences of Ollie's self elected guardianship and Tom's crav-ing for friendship. His 11 months of seniority, which

counted for little on the calendar, were entirely reversed in their social rela-tions. In their letters he figured as quite 11 years her junior. She never forgot his birthday. It was always remembered by a gift chosen with a view to a man's ever recurring demand for neckties, gloves or the like and always sent accompanied by a neat little homily on the approaching years of responsibility, prettily indited on her best society stationery.

Fresh from the perusal of an effusive letter of thanks for the latest donation of gloves and advice, Olivia sagely wrinkled her brows and looked across the breakfast table at her father.

"Just to think, papa, the dear boy is 18 years old! I suppose he will be putting on all the airs of a grown man when he gets back. I can hear the peating of restless wings in each letter more distinctly. That is as it should be. If I were a man, I know I should

be. If I were a man, I know I should strain at the leash violently long before the college doors closed upon me."

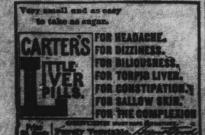
Her mataphors were somewhat mixed, but as she was preparing her father's second cup of coffee with just

so much sugar plus so much crean metaphor had to look out for itself.

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lawyer of Mandeville ever had before him. It was pleasant to prolong this

Presently he would go off to his office, and the sweet music of his dar-ling's voice would be swallowed up in the harsher tones of angry men chaf-fering for their rights. But just now Olivia was growing a trifle inquisito-rial, and it was that which sent him away from the table somewhat abrupt-

"No," he said, standing on the hearth rug; "I have not written to him yet. I don't want the pleasant anticipation of travel to get between him and the closing exercises of his college. I am somewhat apprehensive that Thomas may be lacking in energy."

"I don't know why you say that, papa. His reports from the very beginning have been just splendid. He stands first in all of his classes and"—

"Oh, as a student Thomas has made a

"Oh, as a student Thomas has made a fair record, but I should prefer more fire, more vim, more fervor of antici



pation for the future, in so young a He shows no signs of res That is a bad sign."

Olivia championed the absent with warmth and decision.

"I think you are altogether mistak-en, father, and inclined to underrate more restrained and formal. I see abundant evidence of ambition and of purpose. Tom is essentially well balanced. I have seen plentiful signs of restlessness." hard. You are horribly nervous of late. I shall have to take you in hand." She passed a caressing hand over the lawyer's troubled forehead. "There are at least a dozen new worry

"I hope I have molded him fittingly," said the lawyer, with pious self gratu-lation. "Yes, I think he may be called essentially well balanced."

"He is just what I fancy Colonel "He is just what I fancy Colonel Broxton was at his age," Ollie resumed, with unconscious point. "He is not one of those tiresome boys who bore you to distraction with wordy vaporings about what they are going to do and be, winding up by doing and being nothing. Moreover, the fact of his boing so rich would incline him to deliberation. The spur of necessity is not pricking him to select a career in wild haste. Tom is very rich indeed, is not he, papa?"

he, papa?"
Some of his letters slipped from the lawyer's grasp. He stooped to recover them. His sallow face was deeply flushed when he straightened himself almost defiantly. He did not look at

Olivia as he answered curtly:
"By no manner of means. That is one of the current local fallacies, a penses have been heavy, and some of his dear father's investments turned out very badly."

Ollie soared superior.
"I am rather glad to hear that. Rich young men are so apt to wax conceit-ed and worthless on the strength of their father's hoarding. They lose the incentive to personal endeavor.

Her father rewarded this flight with a somewhat acid smile.
"Your worldly wisdom becomes star-tling, my love. I think I shall have to

get you a new doll to dress."
"Doll, indeed?" She mimicked bis gravity. "Your capacity for insulting a helpless female becomes startling, my love. I think I shall have to get you a new pair of eyes the better to see, my dear." She came toward him, a riant, sparkling creature, and stood before m with crest uplifted. "Observe the

ngth of my gown, if you please, and the Psyche knot which tops my mature and classic head." Her father drew her to him almost roughly. "Olivia, you startle me in carnest. You are a young lady. The fact has burst upon me in a second. You are no longer my loving, trusting, unquestioning little darling. You will

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