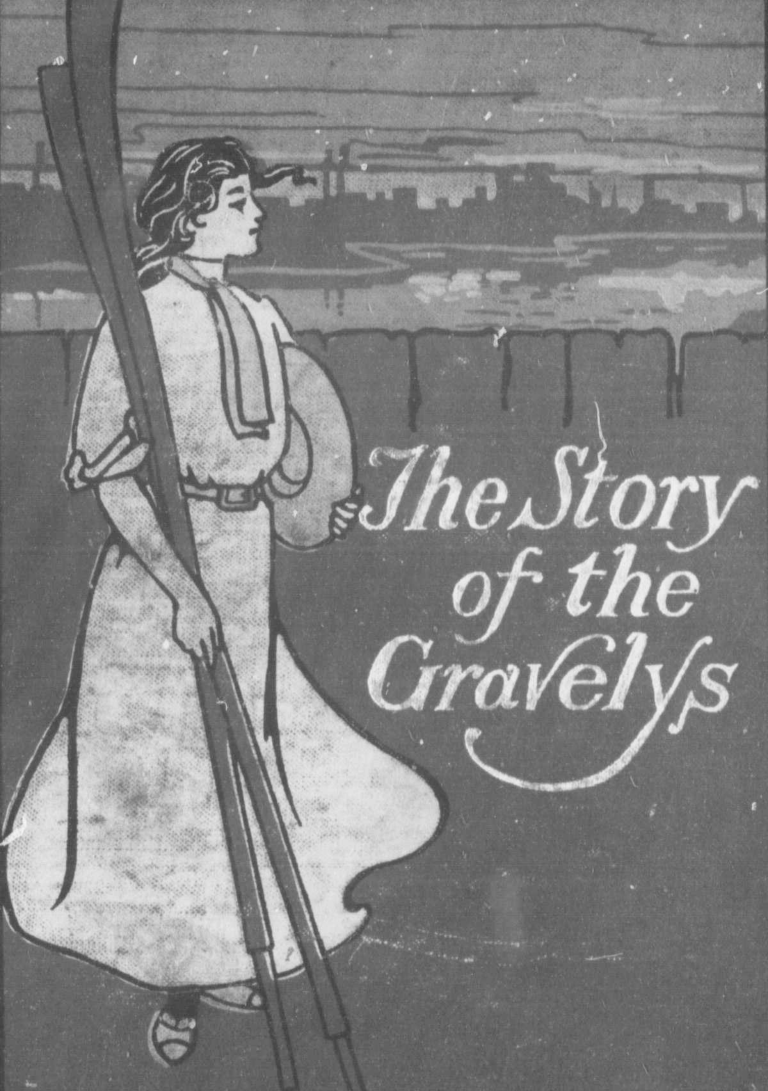

·Marshall·Saunders·

THE STORY OF THE GRAVELYS

"BENT THEIR HEADS OVER THE PAPER"

(*See page 40*)

THE STORY OF THE GRAVELYS

A Tale for Girls

By

Marshall Saunders

Author of
"Beautiful Joe," "Beautiful Joe's Paradise,"
"'Tilda Jane," etc.

"A child's needless tear is a blood-blot upon this earth."
—CARDINAL MANNING.

Illustrated

Toronto
William Briggs
1904

CANADIANA

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35581
25-3-1925

Published September, 1903

Colonial Press
Electrotyped and Printed by C. H. Simonds & Co.
Boston, Mass., U. S. A.

TO

MY DEAR SISTER

Grace,

MY FAITHFUL HELPER IN LITERARY WORK,

THIS STORY IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

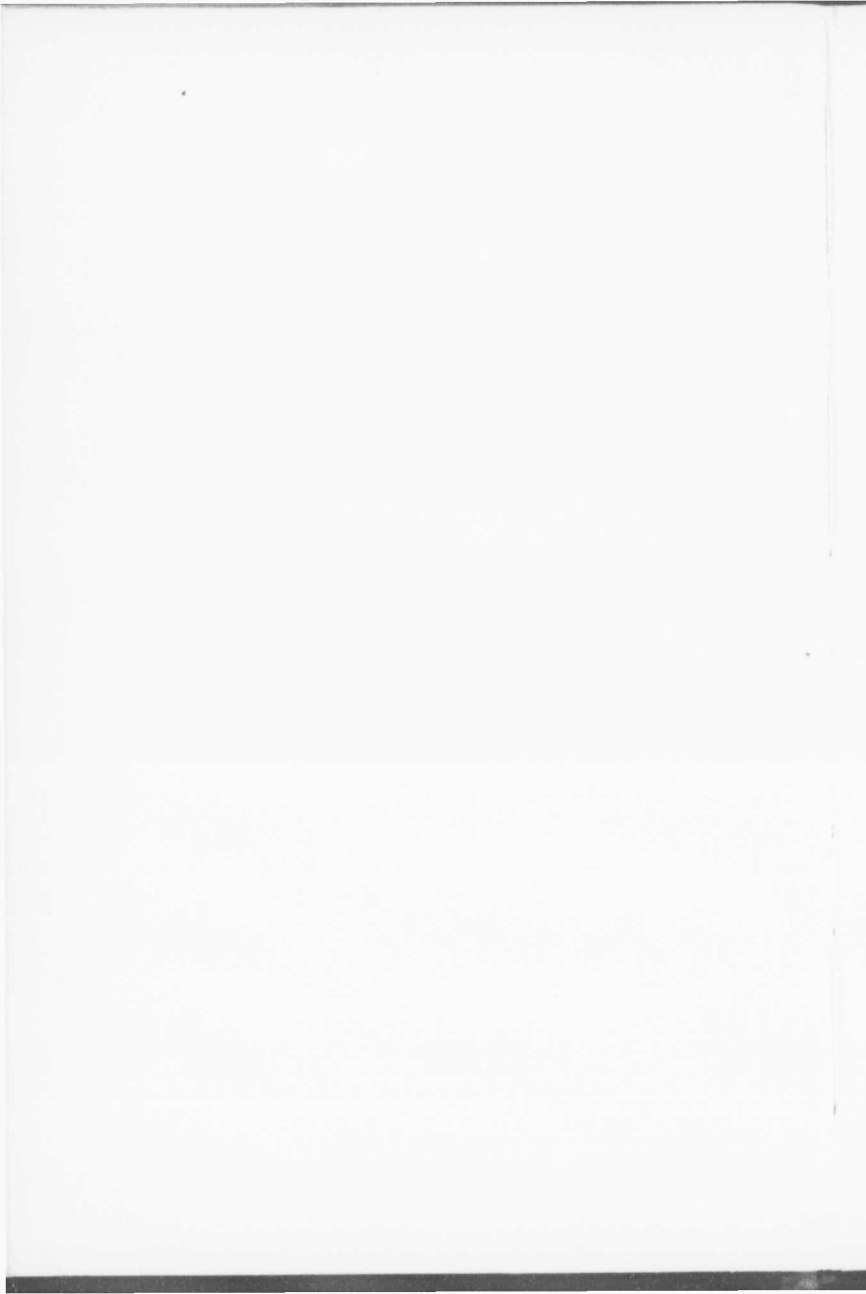
BY HER APPRECIATIVE SISTER,

MARSHALL SAUNDERS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

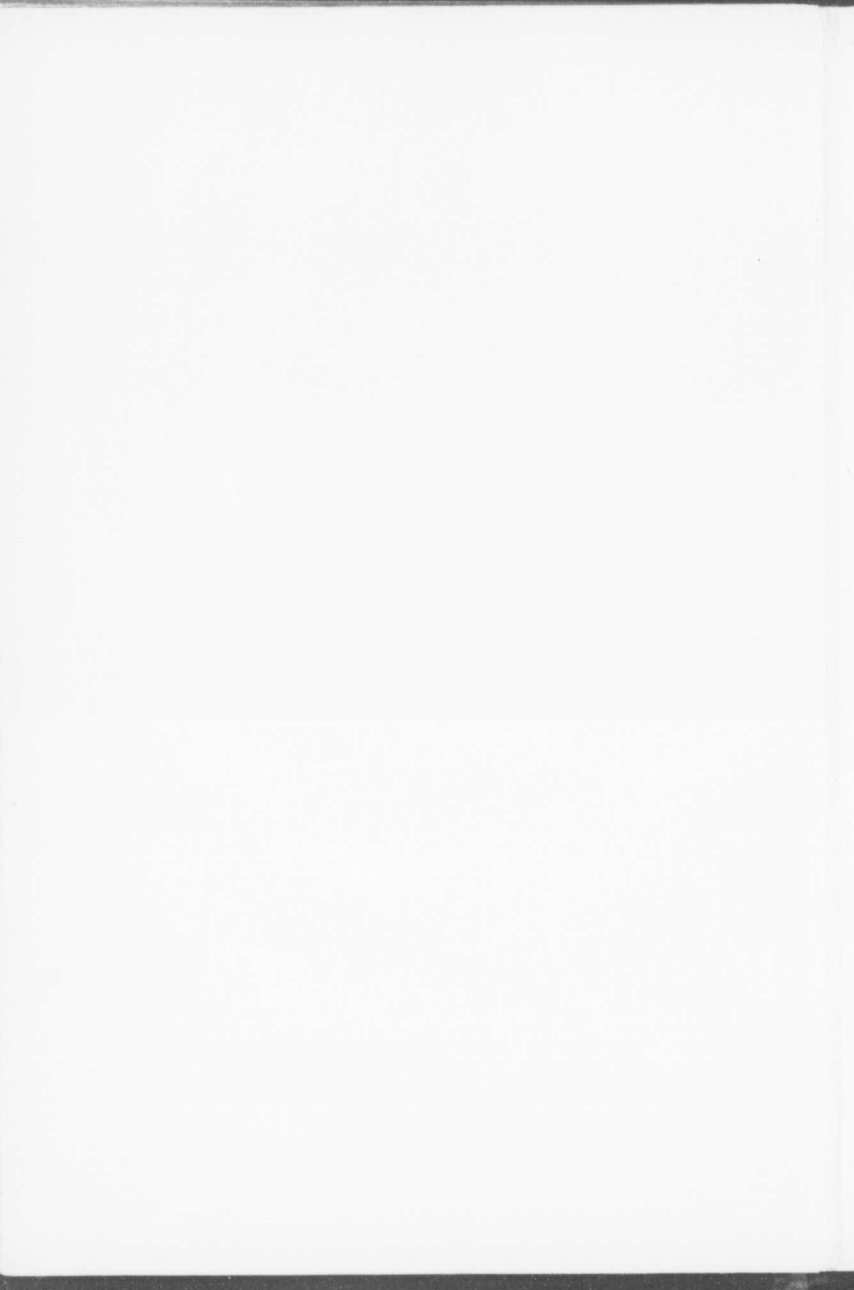
Certain chapters of this story first appeared in the *Youth's Companion.* The author wishes to acknowledge the courtesy of the editors in permitting her to republish them in the present volume.

Messrs. L. C. Page and Company wish also to acknowledge the courtesy of the editors in granting them permission to use the original illustrations.



CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Quarrel	11
II.	Grandma's Watchword	23
III.	A Sudden Countermarch	34
IV.	A Lifted Burden	43
V.	The Training of a Boy	54
VI.	Bonny's Ordeal	68
VII.	Berty Imparts Information	76
VIII.	The Heart of the Mayor	88
IX.	The Mayor's Dilemma	99
X.	A Groundless Suspicion	113
XI.	A Proposed Supper-Party	130
XII.	A Disturbed Hostess	139
XIII.	An Anxious Mind	150
XIV.	The Opening of the Park	162
XV.	Up the River	175
XVI.	Berty's Tramp	188
XVII.	Tom's Intervention	195
XVIII.	Tramp Philosophy	204
XIX.	At the Board of Water-Works	217
XX.	Selina's Wedding	229
XXI.	To Strike or Not to Strike	244
XXII.	Discouraged	257
XXIII.	Grandma's Request	262
XXIV.	Down the River	270
XXV.	Last Words	277



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

"BENT THEIR HEADS OVER THE PAPER" (*see page 40*) *Frontispiece*

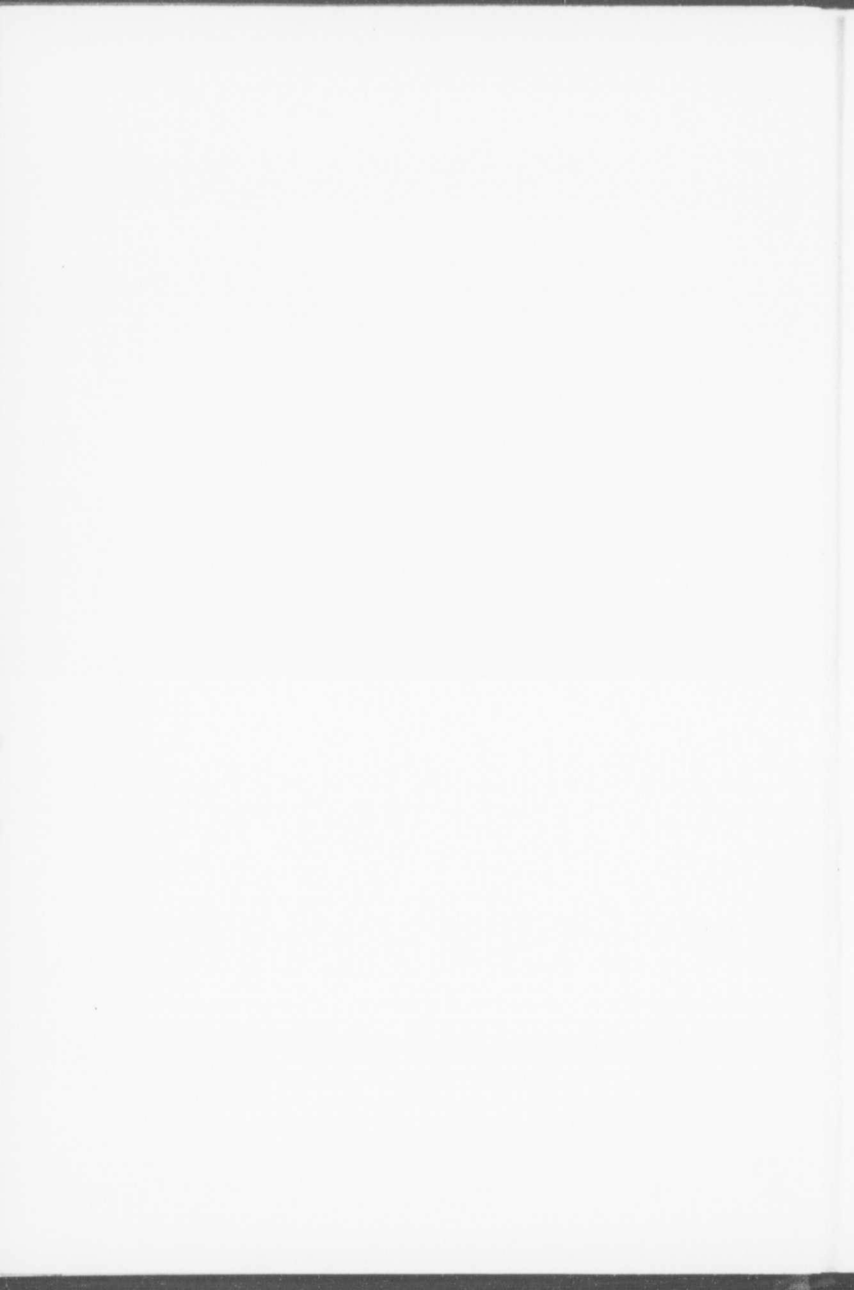
"LEANING OVER THE STAIR RAILING" 33

"'WHY DON'T SOME OF YOU GOOD PEOPLE TRY TO REFORM ME?'" 54

"'YOU HAVE TOO MUCH HEART'" 92

"'YOU'RE DYING TO TEASE ME'" 177

"'A RIVER STREET DELEGATION,' SAID TOM" . . 235



THE
STORY OF THE GRAVELYS

CHAPTER I.

THE QUARREL

"I WON'T live on my brother-in-law," said the slight, dark girl.

"Yes, you will," said the fair-haired beauty, her sister, who was standing over her in a somewhat theatrical attitude.

"I will not," said Berty again. "You think because you have just been married you are going to run the family. I tell you, I will not do it. I will not live with you."

"I don't want to run the family, but I am a year and a half older than you, and I know what is for your good better than you do."

"You do not — you butterfly!"

"Alberta Mary Francesca Gravely — you ought to be ashamed of yourself," said the beauty, in concentrated wrath.

"I'm not ashamed of myself," replied her sister, scornfully. "I'm ashamed of you. You're just as extravagant as you can be. You spend every cent of your husband's income, and now you want to saddle him with a big boy, a girl, and an — "

"An old lady," said Margaretta.

"Grandma isn't old. She's only sixty-five."

"Sixty-five is old."

"It is not."

"Well, now, can you call her young?" said Margaretta. "Can you say she is a girl?"

"Yes," replied Berty, obstinately, "I can call her a girl, or a duck, or anything I like, and I can call you a goose."

"A goose!" repeated Mrs. Stanisfield, chokingly; "oh, this is too much. I wish my husband were here."

"I wish he were," said Berty, wickedly, "so he could be sorry he mar— "

"Children," said a sudden voice, "what are you quarrelling about?"

Both girls turned their flushed faces toward the doorway. A little shrewd old lady stood there.

This was Grandma, one of their bones of contention, and this particular bone in deep amusement wanted to laugh, but knew better than to do so.

"Won't you sit down, Margaretta?" she said, calmly coming into the room and taking a chair near Berty, who was lounging provokingly on the foot of the bed.

It was Grandma's bed, and they were in Grandma's room. She had brought them up — her two dear orphan granddaughters, together with their brother Boniface.

"What are you quarrelling about?" repeated the little old lady, taking a silk stocking from her pocket, and beginning to knit in a leisurely way.

"We're quarrelling about keeping the family together," said Margaretta, vehemently, "and I find that family honour is nothing but a rag in Berty's estimation."

"Well, I'd rather have it a nice clean rag put out of sight," said Berty, sharply, "than a great, big, red flag shaken in everybody's face."

"Sit down, Margaretta," said Grandma, soothingly.

"Oh, I am too angry to sit down," said Margaretta, shaking herself slightly. "I got your note

saying you had lost your money. I came to sympathize and was met with insults. It's dreadful!"

"Sit down, dear," said Grandma, gently, pushing a rocking-chair toward her.

Margaretta took the chair, and, wiping her white forehead with a morsel of lace and muslin, glared angrily at her sister.

"Roger says," she went on, excitedly, "that you are all —"

"All!" groaned Berty.

"All," repeated Margaretta, furiously, "or one or two, whichever you like, to come and live with us. He insists."

"No, *you* insist," interrupted Berty. "He has too much sense."

Margaretta gave a low cry. "Isn't this ingratitude abominable — I hear of your misfortune, I come flying to your relief —"

"Dear child," said Grandma, "I knew you'd come."

"But what do you make of Berty, Grandma? Do say something cutting. You could if you tried. The trouble is, you don't try."

Grandma tried not to laugh. She, too, had a tiny handkerchief that she pressed against her face, but the merriment would break through.

"You laugh," said Margaretta, in awe, "and you have just lost every cent you own!"

Grandma recovered herself. "Thank fortune, I never chained my affections to a house and furniture and a bank-account."

"Roger says you are the bravest woman he ever saw," murmured Margaretta.

"Did he say that?" replied Grandma, with twinkling eyes.

"Yes, yes, dear Grandma," said Margaretta, fondly, "and he told me to offer you all a home with us."

The little old lady smiled again, and this time there was a dimple in her cheek. "What a dear grandson-in-law! What a good man!"

"He is just perfection," said Margaretta, enthusiastically, "but, Grandma, darling, tell me your plans! I am just dying to know, and Berty has been so provoking."

"Berty is the mainstay of the family now," said Grandma, good-naturedly; "don't abuse her."

"The mainstay!" repeated Margaretta, with a bewildered air; "oh, yes, I see. You mean that the little annuity left her by our great-aunt, your sister, is all that you have to depend on."

"Just those few hundred dollars," said Grandma, tranquilly, "and a little more."

"That is why she is so toploftical," said Margaretta. "However, it is well that she was named for great-aunt Alberta — but, Grandma, dear, don't knit."

"Why not?"

"It is so prosaic, after all you have gone through," said Margaretta. "When I think of your trials, it makes me sick."

"My trials are nothing to what Job had," remarked her grandmother. "I read of his tribulations and they make mine seem very insignificant."

"Poor Grandma, you have had about as many as Job."

"What have I had?" asked the old lady, softly.

Margaretta made a gesture of despair. "Your mother died at your birth."

"The Lord took her," said the old lady, gently, "and when I needed a mother he sent me a good stepmother."

"Your father perished in a burning hotel," said the girl, in a low voice.

"And went to heaven in a chariot of fire," replied Grandma, firmly.

"You married and were happy with your husband."

"Yes, bless the Lord!"

"But your daughter, our mother, kissed you good-bye one day to go on a pleasure excursion with her husband, and never came back — oh, it breaks my heart to think of that day — my father and mother lost, both at once!" and, dropping miserably on her knees, Margaretta hid her face in her grandmother's lap.

The old lady's lip trembled, but she said, steadily, "The Lord giveth — He also taketh away."

"And now," said Margaretta, falteringly, "you are not old, but you have come to an age when you are beginning to think about getting old, and you have lost everything — everything."

"All save the greatest thing in the world," said Grandma, patting the bowed head.

"You always had that," exclaimed Margaretta, lifting her tear-stained face. "Everybody has loved you since you were born — how could any one help it?"

"If everybody loves me, why is it?" inquired Grandma, guilelessly, as she again took up her knitting.

Margaretta wrinkled her fair brows. "I don't

know — I guess it is because you don't talk much, and you seem to like every one, and you don't contradict. You're exceedingly canny, Grandma."

"Canny, child?"

"Yes, canny. I don't know what the Scottish people mean by it, but I mean clever, and shrewd, and smart, and quiet, and you keep out of scrapes. Now, when I'm with that provoking creature there," and she looked disdainfully at Berty, "I feel as if I were a fifty-cornered sort of person. *You* make me feel as if I were round, and smooth, and easy to get on with."

Grandma picked up a dropped stitch and said nothing.

"If you'd talk more, I'd like it better," said Margaretta, dolefully, "but I dare say I should not get on so well with you."

"Women do talk too much," said Grandma, shortly; "we thresh everything out with our tongues."

"Grandma, dear, what are you going to do?" asked Margaretta, coaxingly. "Do tell me."

"Keep the family together," said Grandma, serenely.

"The old cry," exclaimed Margaretta. "I've

heard that ever since I was born. What makes you say it so much?"

"Shall I tell you?"

"Yes, yes — it is a regular watchword with you."

"When my father found himself trapped in that burning building," said Grandma, knitting a little more rapidly than before, "he looked down from his window into the street and saw a man that he knew. 'Jefferson,' he called out, 'will you take a message to my wife?'

"'I'll take fifty, sir,' answered the man, in an agony.

"My father was quite calm. 'Then, Jefferson,' he went on, 'tell my wife that I said "God bless her," with my last breath, and that I want her to keep the family together. Mind, Jefferson, she is to keep the family together.'

"'I'll tell her,' said the man, and, groaning and dazed with the heat, he turned away. Now, that wife was my stepmother, but she did as her husband bade her. She kept the family together, in sickness and in health, in adversity and in prosperity."

Margaretta was crying nervously.

"If you will compose yourself, I will go on," said Grandma.

Margaretta dried her tears.

"Those four dying, living words were branded on my memory, and your mother was taught to lisp them with her earliest breath, though she was an only child. When she left me that sunny spring day to go on her long, last journey, she may have had a presentiment — I do not know — but I do know that as she pressed her blooming face to mine, she glanced at her three children playing on the grass, and whispered, lovingly, 'Keep the family together.'"

"And you did it," cried Margaretta, flinging up her head, "you did it nobly. You have been father, mother, grandfather and grandmother to us. You are a darling." And seizing the little, nimble hands busy with the stocking, she kissed them fervently.

Grandma smiled at her, picked up her work, and went on, briskly: "Keep the family together, and you keep the clan together. Keep the clan together, and you keep the nation together. Foster national love and national pride, and you increase the brotherhood of man."

"Then the family is the rock on which the nation is built," said Margaretta, her beautiful face a flood of colour.

"Certainly."

"Then I am a helping stone in the building of

a nation," continued Margaretta. "I, only a young woman in a small city of this great Union?"

"You are a wife," said Grandma, composedly, "a young and inexperienced one, but still the head of a family."

Margaretta shivered. "What a responsibility — what kind of a wife am I?"

Grandma maintained a discreet silence.

"Berty says I am extravagant," exclaimed Margaretta, with a gesture toward the bed.

Again her grandmother said nothing.

"Am I, Grandma, darling, am I?" asked the young woman, in a wheedling voice.

Grandma's lips trembled, and her dimple displayed itself again.

"I am," cried Margaretta, springing up and clasping her hands despairingly. "I spend all Roger gives me. We have no fortune back of us, only his excellent income from the iron works. If that were to fail, we should be ruined. I am a careless, poorly-turned stone in the foundation of this mighty nation. I must shape and strengthen myself, and, Grandma, dear, let me begin by helping you and Berty and Bonny. You will have to give up this house — oh, my darling Grandma, how can you — this handsome house that grand-

father built for you? What will you do without your velvet carpets, and lace curtains, and palms and roses? Oh, you will come to me! I shall save enough to keep you, and I shall lose my reason if you don't."

CHAPTER II.

GRANDMA'S WATCHWORD

"SEE here," said Grandma, feeling in her pocket. "Look at these telegrams."

Margaretta hastily ran her eye over them. "I don't understand."

"Let me explain," said Grandma, softly. "Brother John sends regrets for loss — will guarantee so many hundreds a year. Brother Henry sympathizes deeply to the extent of a tenth of his income. Sister Mary and Sister Lucy will come to see me as soon as possible. Substantial financial aid to be reckoned on."

"Oh, Grandma! Grandma!" said the girl, still only half-enlightened. "What do they mean?"

Grandma smiled complacently. "You notice that not one of them offers me a home, though, Heaven knows, their homes are as wide as their hearts. They are not rich, not one is exceedingly rich, yet they all offer me a good part of their respective

incomes. That is the outcome of 'Keep the family together.'"

"Oh! oh! oh!" exclaimed Margaretta. "They know how you love us. They want you to keep up a home for us. They will support you."

"Exactly," said Grandma.

"And will you take all that money?"

"No, child, not all; some of it, though. I have helped them. I will do it again, if I can."

"Isn't that lovely!" cried Margaretta. "It is almost worth while being unfortunate to call out such goodness as that. Now, Grandma, dear, let us talk seriously. You will have to give up this house."

"It is given up. My lawyer was here this morning."

"Roger is coming this evening to see you — will you sell all the furniture?"

"I shall have to."

"Oh, dear! Well, you won't need it with us."

"We cannot go to you, Margaretta," said Grandma, quietly.

"Oh, why not?"

"It would be too great a burden on Roger."

"Only three persons, Grandma."

"Roger is a young man. He has lately started

housekeeping and family life. Let him work out his plans along his own lines. It will be better not to join households unless necessary."

"He just loves you, Grandma."

"And I reciprocate, but I think it better not to amalgamate my quicksilver Berty with another stronger metal just now."

"Where is she?" asked Margaretta, turning her head.

"She slipped out some time ago."

"Roger gets on well with her, Grandma."

"I know he does. By stronger metal, I meant you. Being the elder, you have rather absorbed Berty. She will develop more quickly alone."

"Do you want to board?"

"There are two kinds of life in America," said Grandma, "boarding-house life and home-life. Boarding-house life vulgarizes, home life ennobles. As long as God gives me breath, I'll keep house, if I have only three rooms to do it in."

"But, Grandma, dear, you will have so little to keep house on. Wouldn't it be better to go to some first-class boarding-house with just a few nice people?"

"Who might be my dearest foes," said Grandma,

tranquilly. "I've rubbed shoulders with such people in hotels before now."

"Grandma, you haven't any enemies."

"Anybody that is worth anything has enemies."

"Well," said Margaretta, with a sigh, "what are you going to do? You can't afford to keep house in such style as this. You won't want to go into a poor neighbourhood."

"Give me a house and I'll make the neighbourhood," said Grandma, decidedly.

"You have already decided on one?" said her granddaughter, suspiciously.

Grandma smiled. "Not altogether decided."

"I don't like your tone," exclaimed Margaretta. "You have something dreadful to tell me."

"Berty was out this morning and found a large, old-fashioned house with big open fireplaces. From it we would have a fine view of the river."

"Tell me where it is," said Margaretta, brokenly.

"It is where the first people of the town used to live when I was a girl."

"It isn't down by the fish-market — oh, don't tell me that!"

"Just a block away from it, dear."

Mrs. Roger Stanisfield gave a subdued shriek. "This is Berty's doing."

Her grandmother laid down her knitting. "Margaretta, imagine Berty in a fashionable boarding-house — in two rooms, for we could not afford to take more. Imagine the boarding-house keeper when Berty would come in trailing a lame dog or sick cat? The Lord has given me grace to put up with these things, and even to sympathize and admire, but I have had a large house and several servants."

"But some boarding-house people are agreeable," moaned Margaretta.

"Agreeable! — they are martyrs, but I am not going to help martyrize them."

"I quarrel with Berty," murmured Margaretta, "but I always make up with her. She is my own dear sister."

"Keep the family together," said Grandma, shrewdly, "and in order to keep it together let it sometimes drift apart."

"Grandma, you speak in riddles."

"Margaretta, you are too direct. I want Berty to stand alone for awhile. She has as much character as you."

"She has more," sighed Margaretta. "She won't mind a word I say — she looks just like you,

Grandma, dear. You like her better than you do me."

"Perhaps I do," said the old lady, calmly. "Perhaps she needs it."

"And you are going to let her drag you down to that awful neighbourhood."

"It isn't awful — a dose of River Street will be a fitting antidote to a somewhat enervating existence here on Grand Avenue."

"You want to make a philanthropist or a city missionary of my poor sister."

"She might do worse," said Grandma, coolly.

"But she won't be one," said Margaretta, desperately. "She is too self-centred. She is taken with the large house and the good view. She will be disgusted with the dirty people."

"We shall see," said Grandma, calmly.

"You will only take the house for a short time, of course."

"I shall probably stay there until eternity claims me."

"Grandma!"

"One little old woman in this big republic will not encourage home faithlessness," said Grandma, firmly.

"Dearest of grandmothers, what do you mean?"

"How the old homes must suffer," said Grandma, musingly. "Families are being reared within their walls, then suddenly the mother takes a caprice — we must move."

"But all houses are not equally convenient."

"Make them so," said the little lady, emphatically. "Have some affection for your roof-tree, your hearthstone. Have one home, not a dozen. Let your children pin their memories to one place."

Margaretta fell into silence, and sat for a long time watching in fascination the quick, active fingers manipulating the silk stocking.

"You are a wonderful woman," she said, at last.

"Do you really think so?"

"Oh, yes, yes," said Margaretta, enthusiastically. "You let people find out things for themselves. Now I don't believe in your heart of hearts you want to go to River Street."

For the first time a shade of sadness came over the face of the older woman. "Set not your affections on earthly things," she said, "and yet I love my home — However, it is all right, Margaretta. If the Lord sends me to River Street, I can go. If He tells me to love River Street, I shall make a point of doing so. If I feel that River Street

discipline is not necessary for me at my time of life, I shall console myself with the thought that it is necessary for Berty."

"Once," said Margaretta, keenly, "there was a young girl who teased her grandmother to take her to Paris in the dead of winter. The grandmother didn't want to go, but she went, and when the girl found herself shut up below on a plunging steamer that was trying to weather a cyclonic gale, she said, 'Grandma, I'll never overpersuade you again.'"

"And did she keep her promise?" asked Grandma, meaningly.

Margaretta sprang to her feet, laughing nervously. "Dearest," she said, "go to River Street, take your house. I'll help you to the best of my ability. I see in advance what you are doing it for. Not only Berty, but the whole family will be benefited. You think we have been too prosperous, too self-satisfied — now, don't you?"

Grandma smiled mischievously. "Well, child, since you ask me, I must say that since your marriage I don't see in you much passion for the good of others. Roger spoils you," she added, apologetically.

"I will be better," said the beautiful girl, "and, Grandma, why haven't you talked more to me —

preached more. I don't remember any sermons, except 'Keep the family together.'"

"It was all there, only the time hadn't come for you to see it. You know how it is in this new invention of wireless telegraphy — a receiver must be tuned to the same pitch as that of the transmitter, or a message cannot pass between."

A brilliant expression burst like a flood of sunlight over the girl's face. "I'm tuned," she said, gaily. "I'm getting older and have more sense. I can take the message, and even pass it on. Good-bye, best of Grandmas. I'm going to make my peace with Berty."

"Keep the family together," said Grandma, demurely.

"Berty, Berty, where are you?" cried Margaretta, whisking her draperies out into the hall and downstairs. "I am such a sinner. I was abominably sharp with you."

"Hush," said Berty, suddenly.

She had come into the hall below and was standing holding something in her hand.

"What is it?" asked Margaretta. "Oh!" and she gave a little scream, "a mouse!"

"He is dead," said Berty, quickly, "nothing

matters to him now. Poor little thing, how he suffered. He was caught in a cruel trap."

Margaretta gazed scrutinizingly at her. "You have a good heart, Berty. I'm sorry I quarrelled with you."

"I forgot all about it," said Berty, simply, "but I don't like to quarrel with you, Margaretta. It usually gives me a bad feeling inside me."

"You want to go to River Street?" said Margaretta, abruptly.

"Oh, yes, we shall be so near the river. I am going to keep my boat and canoe. The launch will have to go."

Margaretta suppressed a smile. "How about the neighbourhood?"

"Don't like it, but we shall keep to ourselves."

"And keep the family together," said Margaretta.

"Yes," said Berty, soberly. "Trust Grandma to do that. I wish you and Roger could live with us."

"Bless your heart," said Margaretta, affectionately throwing an arm around her.

"But you'll come to see us often?" said Berty, anxiously.

"Every day; and, Berty, I prophesy peace and

"LEANING OVER THE STAIR RAILING"

prosperity to you and Grandma — and now good-bye, I'm going home to save."

"To save?"

"Yes, to save money — to keep my family together," and holding her head well in the air, Margaretta tripped through the long, cool hall out into the sunlight.

"Thank God they have made up their quarrel," said Grandma, who was leaning over the stair railing. "Nothing conquers a united family! And now will Margaretta have the strength of mind to keep to her new resolution?"

CHAPTER III.

A SUDDEN COUNTERMARCH

ROGER STANISFIELD was plodding wearily along the avenue. He was not aware what an exquisite summer evening it was. He carried his own troubled atmosphere with him.

Slowly going up the broad flight of steps leading to his house, he drew out his latch-key. As he unlocked the door, a bevy of girls came trooping through the hall — some of his wife's friends. His face cleared as he took off his hat and stood aside for them to pass.

For a minute the air was gay with merry parting, then the girls were gone, and he went slowly up to his room.

"Mrs. Stanisfield is in the dining-room, sir," said a servant, addressing him a few minutes later, as he stood in the hall with an air of great abstraction. "Dinner has just been served."

"Oh, Roger," said his wife, as he entered the

room where she sat at the table, "I didn't know you'd come! You told me not to wait for you. I shall be glad when you take up your old habit of coming home in the middle of the afternoon."

"I am very busy now," he muttered, as he took his place.

"Does your head ache?" inquired Margaretta, when several courses had been passed through in silence on his part.

"Yes, it is splitting."

Young Mrs. Stanisfield bent her fair head over her plate, and discreetly made only an occasional remark until the pudding was removed, and the table-maid had withdrawn from the room. Then she surreptitiously examined her husband's face.

He was thoughtfully surveying the fruit on the table.

"Margaretta," he said, boyishly, "I don't care much for puddings and pastry."

"Neither do I," she said, demurely.

"I was wondering," he said, hesitatingly, "whether we couldn't do without puddings for awhile and just have nuts and raisins, or fruit — What are you laughing at?"

"At your new rôle of housekeeper. You usually don't seem to know what is on the table."

"I have a good appetite."

"Yes, but you don't criticize. You just eat what is set before you. I am sure it has escaped your masculine observation that for several weeks past we have had only one dish in the pastry course."

"Well, what of it?"

"Why, we always used to have two or three — pudding, pie, and jelly or creams. Now we never have pudding and pie at the same time."

"What is that for?" he asked.

"Oh, for something," she said, quietly. "Now tell me what has gone wrong with you."

"Nothing has gone wrong with me," he said, irritably.

"With your business then."

He did not reply, and, rising, she said, "This sitting at table is tiresome when one eats nothing. Let us go to the drawing-room and have coffee."

"I don't want coffee," he said, sauntering after her.

"Neither do I," she replied. "Shall we go out in the garden? It was delightfully cool there before dinner."

"What a crowd of women you had here," he said, a little peevishly, as he followed her.

"Hadn't I?" and she smiled. "They had all

been at a garden-party at the Everests, and as I wasn't there they came to find out the reason."

"You don't mean to say you missed a social function?" said her husband, sarcastically.

"Yes, dear boy, I did, and I have before, and I am going to again."

Mr. Stanisfield laughed shortly. "You sound like your sister Berty."

"Well, I should love to be like her. She is a dear little sister."

"But not as dear as her sister."

"Thank you," said Margaretta, prettily, turning and curtseying to him, as he followed her along the garden paths. "Now, here we are among the roses. Just drag out those two chairs from the arbour, or will you get into the hammock?"

"I'll take the hammock," he said, wearily. "I feel as if I were falling to pieces."

"Let me arrange some cushions under your head so — this cool breeze will soon drive the business fog from your brain."

"No, it won't — the fog is too heavy."

"What kind of a fog is it?" asked Margaretta, cautiously.

Her husband sat up in the hammock, and stared at her with feverish eyes. "Margaretta, I think

we had better give up this house and take a smaller one."

"I knew it," said Margaretta, triumphantly. "I knew you were worried about your affairs!"

"Then you won't feel so surprised," he said, "when I tell you that we can't stand this pace. We've had some heavy losses down at the iron works lately — mind you don't say anything about it."

"Indeed I won't," she replied, proudly.

"Father and I finished going over the books to-day with Mackintosh. We've got to put on the brakes. I — I hate to tell you," and he averted his face. "You are so young."

Margaretta did not reply to him, and, eager to see her face, he presently turned his own.

The sun had set, but she was radiant in a kind of afterglow.

"Margaretta, you don't understand," he faltered. "It will be a tremendous struggle for you to give up luxuries to which you have been accustomed, but we've either got to come down to bare poles here, or move to a smaller house."

"What a misfortune!" she said.

His face fell.

"For you to have a headache about this matter,"

she went on, gleefully. "I don't call it a small one, for it isn't, but if you knew everything!"

"I know enough to make me feel like a cheat," he blurted, wriggling about in the hammock. "I took you from a good home. I never wanted you to feel an anxiety, and now the first thing I've got to put you down to rigid economy. You see, father and I have to spend a certain amount on the business, or we'd be out of it in the war of competition, and we've both decided that expenses must be curtailed in our homes rather than in the iron works."

"That shows you are good business men," said Margaretta, promptly. "You are as good business men as husbands."

"Margaretta," said her husband, "you puzzle me. I expected a scene, and upon my word you look happy over it — but you don't realize it, poor child!"

Margaretta smiled silently at him for a few seconds, then she said, roguishly, "I am going to give you a little surprise. You didn't see me snatch this sheet of paper from my new cabinet when we left the house?"

"No, I did not."

"Oh, what a nice little paper! What a precious

little paper!" said Margaretta, gaily, clasping it. "Can you see what is written on it, Roger? No, you can't very well in this light."

"Yes, I can," said the young man, with a weary, amused smile. "Give it to me."

She drew her seat closer to the hammock, and both bent their heads over the paper.

"Animus saved by Mrs. Roger Stanisfield during the month of July," read Roger, stumblingly — "to be poured on my head, I suppose."

"No, no, not animus — amounts."

"Oh, I see, you want to comfort me by showing what an economist you are. I dare say you have saved five whole dollars through the month. What is the first item? Saved on new dress, one hundred dollars. Good gracious — how much did the dress cost?"

"I didn't get it," she replied, with immense satisfaction. "I needed one, or thought I did, and Madame Bouvard, that French dressmaker from New York, who came here last year, said she would make me one for one hundred dollars. Now some time ago, just after dear Grandma lost her money, she gave me a great shock."

"Grandma did?" asked her husband, in surprise.

"No, she didn't, she made me give it to myself.

That is Grandma's way, you know. She doesn't preach. Well, after this electric shock I was horrified to find out that I was a frivolous, extravagant person. I began to think hard, then I got this little piece of paper — and, oh, Roger, won't you get me a regular business book, and make red lines down the sides, and show me how to keep proper accounts?"

"I will, but what about the dress?"

"I had ordered it, but I went to Madame Bouvard. I said, frankly, 'I can't pay as much as a hundred dollars for a gown.'

"'You shall have it for eighty,' she said.

"I said, 'Please let me off altogether. I want to save a little on my outfit this summer, but I promise to come to you the first time I want a gown.'

"As soon as I said it I bit my lip. 'Oh, Madame Bouvard,' I said, 'you are the most satisfactory dressmaker I have ever had, but I don't know whether I can afford to come to you again.'

"She is just a plain little woman, but when she saw how badly I felt, her face lighted up like an angel's. 'Madame,' she said, 'do not take your custom from me. You have been the best lady I have worked for in Riverport. Why, my girls say

when your fair head passes the glass door of the workroom that it casts a ray of sunshine in upon them' — just think of that, Roger, — a ray of sunshine. I was quite pleased."

CHAPTER IV.

A LIFTED BURDEN

HE laid a hand on the fair head, then hastily bent over the paper.

"I was pleased, Roger, because I didn't know that dressmakers or their sewing-girls ever cared for the people they work for; and what do you think she went on to say? — 'Madame, don't go to a second-class establishment. I know you like first-class things. Come to me when you want a gown, and it shall be given to you at cost price, with just a trifle to satisfy you for my work' — wasn't that sweet in her, Roger? I just caught her hand and squeezed it, and then she laid a finger on her lips — 'Not a word of this to any one, madame.' I sent her a basket of flowers the next day."

"You are a good child," said her husband, huskily.

"Now go on to the next item," said Margaretta, jubilantly.

"'Butter, twenty dollars' — what in the name of common sense does that mean?"

"Queer, isn't it?" laughed Margaretta. "I'll go back to the beginning and explain. You know, Roger, I am not such a terribly strong person, and I do love to lie in bed in the morning. It is so delicious when you know you ought to get up, to roll yourself in the soft clothes and have another nap! You remember that I had got into a great way of having my breakfast in bed. Well, madam in bed meant carelessness in the kitchen. We have honest servants, Roger, but they are heedless. After my shock from Grandma about economy, I said, 'I will reform. I will watch the cents, and the cents will watch the dollars.'

"Now, to catch the first stray cent, it was necessary to get up early. I just hated to do it, but I made myself. I sprang out of bed in the morning, had my cold plunge, and was down before you, and it was far more interesting to have company for breakfast than to have no one, wasn't it?"

"Well, rather."

"You good boy. You never complained. Well, cook was immensely surprised to have a call from me before breakfast. One morning I found her making pastry, and putting the most delicious-look-

ing yellow butter in it. 'Why, that's our table butter,' I said, 'isn't it, that comes from Cloverdale, and costs a ridiculous amount?'

"She said it was.

"'Why don't you use cooking-butter, Jane?' I asked; 'it's just as good, isn't it?'

"'Well, ma'am, there's nothing impure about it,' she said, 'but I know you like everything of the best, so I put this in.'

"'Jane,' I said, 'never do it again. I'm going to economize, and I want you to help me. If you can't, I must send you away and get some one else.'

"She laughed — you know what a fat, good-natured creature she is — and seemed to think it a kind of joke that I should want to economize.

"'Jane,' I said, 'I'm in earnest.'

"Then she sobered down. 'Truth, and I'll help you, ma'am, if you really want me to. There's lots of ways I can save for you, but I thought you didn't care. You always seem so open-handed.'

"'Well, Jane,' I said, 'I don't want to be mean, and I don't want adulterated food, but my husband and I are young, and we want to save something for old age. Now you'll help us, won't you?'

"'Honour bright, I will, ma'am,' she said, and I believed her. I can't stay in the kitchen and watch

her, but she watches herself, and just read that list of groceries and see what else she has saved."

"How have you found out the exact list of your economies?" asked Roger, curiously.

"By comparing my bills of this month with those of the month before. For instance, sugar was so many dollars in June; in July it is so many dollars less. Of course, we must take into account that we have been entertaining less. Have you noticed it?"

"Yes, but I thought it only a passing whim."

"Some whims don't pass, they stay," said Margaretta, shaking her head. "Go on, Roger."

"One hundred and fifty dollars saved in not entertaining Miss Gregory — pray who is Miss Gregory?"

"That society belle from Newport who has been staying with the Darley-Jameses."

"How does she come into your expenditures?"

"She doesn't come in," said Margaretta, with satisfaction. "I haven't done a thing for her beyond being polite and talking to her whenever I get a chance, and, oh, yes — I did give her a drive."

"Well, but — "

"Let me explain. If I hadn't been taken with a fit of economy, I would, in the natural order of

things, have made a dinner for Miss Gregory. I would have had a picnic, and perhaps a big evening party. Think what it would have cost — you remember Mrs. Handfell?"

Her husband made a face.

"You never liked her, and I did wrong to have her here so much. Well, Roger, do you know I spent a large sum of money in entertaining that woman? I am ashamed to tell you how much. I had her here, morning, noon, and night. I took her up the river — you remember the decorated boats and the delightful music. It was charming, but we could not afford it, and when I went to New York she met me on Fifth Avenue, and said, 'Oh, how do you do — so glad to see you. Be sure to call while you are here. My day is Friday.' Then she swept away. That was a society woman who had graciously allowed me to amuse her during her summer trip to Maine. I was so hurt about it that I never told you."

"What an empty head," said Roger, picking up the list.

"It taught me a lesson," continued his wife. "Now go on — do read the other things."

His eyes had run down to the total. "Whew,

Margaretta! — you don't mean to say you have saved all this in a month?"

"Yes, I do."

"I haven't felt any tightening in your household arrangements. Why, at what a rate were we living?"

"At a careless rate," said Margaretta, seriously, "a careless, slipshod rate. I bought everything I wanted. Flowers, in spite of our greenhouse, fruit and vegetables out of season, in spite of our garden, but now I look in the shop windows and say with a person I was reading about the other day, 'Why, how many things there are I can do without,' — and with all my economy I have yet managed to squeeze out something for Grandma. I just made her take it."

Roger's face flushed. "Margaretta, if you will keep this thing going, we won't have to give up this house."

"I'll keep it going," said Margaretta, solemnly, "you shall not leave this house. It would be a blow to your honest pride."

The young man was deeply moved, and, lifting his face to the pale, rising young moon, he murmured, "Thank God for a good wife." Then he

turned to her. "I wish some other men starting out in life had such a helper as you."

"Oh, wish them a better one," said Margaretta, humbly; "but I know what you mean, Roger. A man cannot succeed unless his wife helps him."

"Sometimes it makes me furious," said Roger, warmly. "I see fellows down-town, young fellows, too, working early and late, straining every nerve to keep up the extravagance of some thoughtless young wife. Why don't the women think? Men hate to complain."

Margaretta hung her head. Then she lifted it, and said, apologetically, "Perhaps they haven't had wise grandmothers."

Roger smiled. "Upon my word, a man in choosing a wife ought to look first at the girl's grandmother."

> "'My grandma lives on yonder little green,
> Fine old lady as ever was seen.'"

chanted a gay voice.

"Bonny," exclaimed Margaretta, flying out of her seat.

They were a remarkable pair as they came up the gravel walk together — the tall lad and the tall girl, both light-haired, both blue of eyes, and

pink, and white, and smooth as to complexion like a pair of babies.

The elder man stared at them admiringly. Bonny was the baby of the orphan family that the sterling old grandmother had brought up. Strange that the grandson of such a woman had so little character, and Roger sighed slightly. Bonny was a mere boy, thoughtless, fond of fun, and too much of a favourite with the gay lads about the town. However, he might develop, and Roger's face brightened.

"Oh, you dear Bonny," said Margaretta, pressing his arm, "it was so good in you to remember your promise to come and tell me about your afternoon on the river. You had a pleasant time, of course."

"Glorious," said the lad. "The water was like glass, and we had a regular fleet of canoes. I say, Margaretta, I like that chap from Boston. Do something for him, won't you?"

"Certainly, Bonny, what do you want me to do?"

"Make him some kind of a water-party."

Margaretta became troubled. "How many people do you want to invite?"

"Oh, about sixty."

"Don't you think if we had three or four of your chosen friends he would enjoy it just as much?"

"No, I don't; what do you think, Roger?"

"I don't know about him. I hate crowds myself."

"I like them," said Bonny. "Come, Margaretta, decide."

"Oh, my dear, spoiled boy," said the girl, in perplexity, "I would give a party to all Riverport if it would please you, but I am trying dreadfully hard to economize. Those large things cost so much."

Bonny opened wide his big blue eyes. "You are not getting mean, Margaretta?"

"No, no, my heart feels more generous than ever, but I see that this eternal entertaining on a big scale doesn't amount to much. Once in awhile a huge affair is nice, but to keep it up week after week is a waste of time and energy, and you don't make real friends."

"All right," said Bonny, good-naturedly. "I'll take him for a swim. That won't cost anything."

"Now, Bonny," said Margaretta, in an injured voice, "don't misunderstand me. We'll have a little excursion on the river, if you like, with half a dozen of your friends, and I'll give you a good big party this summer — you would rather have it later on, wouldn't you, when there are more girls visiting here?"

"Yes, indeed, let us wait for the girls," said Bonny.

"And in the meantime," continued Margaretta, "bring the Boston boy here as often as you like, to drop in to meals. I shall be delighted to see him, and so will you, Roger, won't you?"

"Don't know what you're talking about," said the young man, who had gone off into a reverie, "but it's all right if you say so."

Bonny laughed at him, then, jumping up, said, "I must be going."

"Where's the dog, Margaretta?" asked Roger. "I'll walk home with the boy."

"But your headache," said his wife."

"Is all gone — that prescription cured it," said the young man, with a meaning glance at the sheet of note-paper clasped in his wife's hand.

She smiled and waved it at him. "Wives' cold cash salve for the cure of husbands' headaches."

"What kind of a salve is that?" asked Bonny, curiously.

"Wait till you have a house of your own, Bonny," said his sister, caressingly, "and I will tell you."

Then, as the man and the boy walked slowly away, she slipped into the hammock and turned her face up to the lovely evening sky.

"Little moon, I call you to witness I have begun a countermarch. I'm never more going to spend all the money I get, even if I have to earn some of it with my own hands!"

CHAPTER V.

THE TRAINING OF A BOY

Roger, sitting in his office at the iron works, from time to time raised his grave face to look at Bonny, who was fidgeting restlessly about the room.

Next to his wife, Roger loved his young brother-in-law, — the fair-haired, genial lad, everybody's favourite, no one's enemy but his own.

He wondered why the boy had come to him. Probably he was in some scrape and wanted help.

Presently the boy flung himself round upon him. " Roger — why don't some of you good people try to reform me? "

Roger leaned back in his chair and stared at the disturbed young face.

" Come, now, don't say that you don't think I need reformation," said the boy, mockingly.

" I guess we all need that," replied his brother-in-law, soberly, " but you come of pretty good stock, Bonny."

"'WHY DON'T SOME OF YOU GOOD PEOPLE TRY TO REFORM ME?'"

"The stock's all right. That's why I'm afraid of breaking loose and disgracing it."

"What have you been doing?" asked Roger, kindly.

"I haven't been doing anything," said the boy, sullenly. "It's what I may do that I'm afraid of."

Roger said nothing. He was just casting about in his mind for a suitable reply, when the boy went on. "If you've been brought up just like a parson, and had all kinds of sentiments and good thoughts lived at you, and then don't rise to the goodness you're bursting with, it's bound to rebel and give you a bad time."

The man, having got a clue to the boy's mental trouble, hastened to say, "You act all right. I shouldn't say you were unhappy."

"Act!" repeated the boy. "Act, acting, actors, actresses, — that's what we all are. Now I'd like to have a good time. I don't think I'm far out of the way; but there's Grandma — she just makes me rage. Such goings on!"

"What has your grandmother been doing?"

"She hasn't done much, and she hasn't said a word, but, hang it! there's more in what Grandma doesn't say than there is in what other women do say."

"You're right there, my boy."

"Now, what did she want to go give me a latch-key for?" asked the boy, in an aggrieved tone, "just after I'd started coming in a little later than usual? Why don't she say, 'My dear boy, you are on the road to ruin. Staying out late is the first step. May I not beg of you to do better, my dear young grandson? Otherwise you will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.'"

"This is what she didn't say?" asked Roger, gravely.

"This is what she didn't say," repeated the boy, crossly, "but this is what she felt. I know her! The latch-key was a bit of tomfoolery. An extra lump of sugar in my coffee is more tomfoolery."

"Do you want her to preach to you?"

"No," snarled the handsome lad. "I don't want her to preach, and I don't want you to preach, and I don't want my sisters to preach, but I want some one to do something for me."

"State your case in a more businesslike way," said the elder man, gravely. "I don't understand."

"You know I'm in the National Bank," said Bonny, shortly.

"Certainly I know that."

"Grandma put me there a year ago. I don't

object to the bank, if I've got to work. It's as easy as anything I could get, and I hate study."

Roger nodded.

"Being in the bank, I'd like to rise," Bonny went on, irritably, "but somehow or other there seems a little prejudice in the air against me. Has any one said anything to you?"

"Not a word."

The boy drew a long breath. "Perhaps it's partly imagination. They're very down on fun in our bank. Now when hours are over, and I come out, there's a whole gang of nice fellows ready to do anything that's going. Sometimes we play billiards. On fine days we're always on the river. There's no harm in that, is there?"

"Not that I see," observed Roger, cautiously.

"Then, when evening comes, and we want to sit down somewhere, we have a quiet little game of cards. There's no harm in that, is there?"

"Do you play for money?"

"Sometimes — well, perhaps nearly always, but there's no harm in that, is there?"

"Let me hear the rest of your story."

"Sometimes I'm late getting home. We get interested, but that's nothing. I'm almost a man. Five hours' sleep is enough for me."

A long pause followed, broken finally by Roger, who said, calmly, "You have given an account of your time. What is wrong with it?"

"It's all wrong," blurted the boy, "and you know it."

"I haven't said so."

"But you feel it. You're just like Grandma — bother it! Don't I know she thinks I ought to spend my evenings at home, reading about banking, so as to work myself up to a president's chair?"

"Don't you get any time for reading through the day?"

"How can I?" said the boy, eloquently, "when I was almost brought up out-of-doors, and as soon as the bank closes every square inch of flesh of me is squealing to get on the river. Now what do you think I ought to do?"

"It's a puzzling case," said Roger, with a slow shake of his head. "According to your own account, you are leading a blameless life. Yet, according to the same account, you are not happy in it, though no one is finding fault with you."

"No one finding fault!" said the boy, sulkily. "Why, the very stones in the street stare at me and say, 'Animal! Animal! you don't care for

anything but fun. You'd skip the bank every day if you dared.' "

"Why don't you?"

Bonny gave himself a resounding thwack on the chest. "Because," he said, "Grandma has planted something here that won't be downed. Something that won't let me have a good time when I know she isn't pleased with me. Sometimes I get so mad that I think I will run away, but that wouldn't do any good, for she'd run with me. She'd haunt my dreams — I don't know what I'm going to do!"

Roger, carefully concealing all signs of compassion, gazed steadily at the distressed face. "Do you want to break away from your set?" he asked, at last.

"No, I don't. They're good fellows."

"Well, what are you going to do about that bad feeling inside of you?"

"I don't know," said Bonny, bitterly. "I know Grandma thinks I'm going to be like Walt Everest, big and fat and jolly, and everybody's chum, who can sing a song, and dance a jig, and never does any business, and never will amount to anything."

"Did she ever say so?"

"No," growled the boy, "but don't I tell you I know what Grandma's thinking about?"

"How does your sister Berty take you?" asked Roger.

"Just like Grandma," blazed the boy, in sudden wrath, "never says a word but a pleasant one, catches me in a corner and kisses me — kisses me! — just think of it!"

Roger thought deeply for a few minutes, while Bonny took up his miserable ramble about the room.

"Look here, boy," he said, finally. "You do as I tell you for a week. Begin from this minute. Read that magazine, then go home with me to dinner. After dinner come back here and help me. I'm working on some accounts for a time. That will be an excuse to the boys for not playing cards."

Bonny's face was clearing. "A good excuse, too," he muttered. "If I said I was going with Grandma or the girls, they'd laugh at me."

"You tell them you are working on my books, and I am paying you. That will shut their mouths, and you'll not object to the extra money."

"I guess I won't. I'm hard pushed all the time."

"Don't you save anything from your salary for Grandma?" asked Roger, keenly.

"How can I?" said the boy, indignantly. "She

has brought me up to be clean. It takes nearly everything I get to pay my laundry bill — I dare say you think I'm a brute to be so selfish."

"I'll send you home every night at ten, and mind you go to bed," said Roger, calmly. "Five hours' sleep is not enough for a boy of eighteen. Get up in the morning and go to the bank. As soon as it closes in the afternoon I'll have business in Cloverdale that will take you on a drive there."

"You're a daisy, Roger," said Bonny, in a low voice.

Roger cast down his eyes. That flushed, disturbed face reminded him of his own beautiful Margaretta. Pray Heaven, he would never see such trouble and dissatisfaction in her blue eyes.

Bonny had already thrown himself into a deep leather-covered armchair, and was apparently absorbed in the magazine. Presently he looked up. "Roger, don't you tell the girls what I've been saying."

"No, I won't."

"Nor Grandma."

"No, nor Grandma."

But Grandma knew. There was no hoodwinking that dear, shrewd old lady, and when next she met Roger, which was the following morning, as he

was on his way to his office, and she was on her way to call on his wife, her deep-set eyes glistened strangely, and instead of saying " Good morning, dear grandson-in-law," as she usually did, she said " Good morning, dear son." She considered him as much one of the family as her three beloved orphan grandchildren.

Yes, Grandma knew, and Grandma approved of what he was doing for her poor, wilful, troubled Bonny.

Every evening for five evenings the lad came to the iron works, and steadfastly set his young face to the sober, unexciting examination of dull rows of figures, stretching indefinitely across white pages.

On the fifth night something went wrong with him. In the first place, he was late in coming. In the second place, his nerves seemed to be stretched to their utmost tension.

" What's up with you? " asked Roger, when, after a few minutes' work Bonny pushed aside the big books, and said, " I'm going home."

" I'm tired," said Bonny. " I hate this book-keeping."

" All right," said his brother-in-law, composedly. " I'm tired myself. Let's have a game of chess."

" I hate chess," said Bonny, sulkily.

"I wonder whether it's too early for supper?" asked Roger, good-humouredly getting up and going to a closet.

He looked over his shoulder at Bonny as he spoke. Every night at half-past nine he was in the habit of producing cakes, candy, syrup, fruit, and nuts for the boy's supper. It was not very long since he had been a boy himself, and he remembered his chronic craving for sweet things.

"You're always stuffing me," replied Bonny, disagreeably. "You think you'll make me good-natured."

"What the matter with you, Bonny?" asked Roger, closing the door and returning to his seat.

"I don't know what's the matter with me," snarled Bonny, miserably, rolling his head about on his folded arms resting on the table. "I hate everything and everybody. I could kill you, Roger."

"All right — there's a pair of Indian clubs over there in the corner," said his brother-in-law, cheerfully.

"I thought I'd be an angel after a few nights' association with you," continued the lad, "and you make me feel worse than ever."

"Looks as if I were a bad sort of a fellow, doesn't it?" remarked Roger, philosophically.

"You're not bad," snapped Bonny. "You're a tremendous good sort. I'm the brute. Roger, why don't you preach to me?"

For some time Roger stared at him in silence; then he said, "Seems to me you can preach better to yourself. If I were going to set up for a preacher I'd only hold forth to the impenitent."

"The fellows are going to a dance at Hickey's to-night," said Bonny, suddenly pounding on the table with his fist, "and I'm not in it, and then at midnight they're going to see the circus arrive, and I'm not in that."

"At Hickey's — where is that?"

"Up the road; don't you know?"

"Oh, yes; rather gay people, aren't they?"

"Well, they're not in Margaretta's set; but then she is mighty particular."

"Would you take her there if she cared to go?"

"No, I wouldn't — well, go on, Roger."

"Go on where?" asked the elder man, in slight bewilderment.

"To embrace your opportunity — administer a rebuke — cuff a sinner," sneered Bonny.

Roger grinned at him.

"My dear boy," began Bonny, in an exasperated tone, "let me exhort, admonish, and counsel you

never to go to any place, or visit any resort, or indulge in any society where you could not take your venerable grandmother and your beloved sisters."

"Not bad for a beginner," said Roger, patronizingly.

"I'm going," said the boy, abruptly jumping up. "I feel as if I should fly in fifty pieces if I stayed here any longer — till I see you again, Roger."

He was already on the threshold, but Roger sauntered after him. "Hold on a bit — four days ago you came to me in something of a pickle."

"You bet your iron works I did," replied Bonny.

"I helped you out of it."

"I guess you did."

"For four evenings you have come here and helped me, and I am going to pay you well for it."

"Glory on your head, you are," said Bonny, wildly.

"In these four days," continued Roger, "you have been early at the bank — you have done your work faithfully there. You have not shirked."

"Not a hair's breadth, and mighty tired I am of it. I'm sick of reformation. I'm going to be just as bad as I can be. Hurrah for Hickey's," and he was just about darting off, when Roger caught him by the arm.

"Listen to me for a minute. I ask you to give me one day more. Stay here with me to-night. Do your work as usual. Go home to bed. Fill in to-morrow properly, then in the evening, at this time, if you want to go back to your old silly tricks, go. I wash my hands of you."

Bonny turned his face longingly toward the city, thought deeply for a few minutes, then retraced his steps. "I'll be good to-night," he said, threateningly, "but just you wait till to-morrow night comes."

"You've got a conscience," said Roger, sternly; "if you choose to choke it and play the fool, no one is strong enough to hold you — pass me that ledger, will you?"

"Oh, shut up," blurted Bonny, under his breath. However, he sat down quietly enough, and did his work until the clock struck ten.

Then he stifled a yawn, jumped up, and said, "I'm going now."

"Mind, seven-thirty to-morrow evening," said Roger, stiffly.

"All right; seven-thirty for once more, and only once," said Bonny, with glistening eyes, "for once more and only once! I'm tired of your stuffy old office, and strait-laced ways."

"Good night," said Roger, kindly, "and don't be a fool."

Bonny ran like a fox down the long lane leading to the city. "He's making for his burrow," said Roger, with a weary smile. "He's a scamp, but you can trust him if he once gives his word. I wish I were a better sort of a man," and with mingled reverence and humility he lifted his gaze to the stars. "If that boy is going to be saved, something has got to be done mighty quick!"

CHAPTER VI.

BONNY'S ORDEAL

"WHAT'S the matter, Roger?" asked his wife, when he went home.

"Nothing," said the young man, wearily, but he went to bed early, and, rising early the next morning, strode off to the iron works without taking his breakfast.

How he loved the handsome lad, his wife's double. What could he do, what could he say? Until now he had considered the boy inferior in character to his two sisters. But, as he had often assured himself, the stock was good, and the strength and energy latent in Bonny were now looming to the fore. He was emerging from boyhood into manhood, and his childish, happy-go-lucky disposition of youth was warring with the growing forces of more mature age.

The morning wore on, and his gloominess increased, until his father shortly told him that he didn't look well, and he had better go home.

"I'm all right," Roger was saying, almost harshly, when there was a ring at his telephone. The National Bank wanted to speak to him.

"Hello," said Roger.

"Can you come up to the bank?" asked some one, in a jerky voice. "Have had a robbery — young Gravely hurt."

Roger dashed from his seat, seized his hat, and with a hurried word to his father, rushed outside.

A delivery-cart was standing before the door. He did not stop to see whose it was, but seizing the reins, urged the horse toward the centre of the city.

There was a crowd around the bank, but the cordon of police let him through. Inside was a group of bank officials, reporters, and detectives.

The president's face was flushed and angry. "Yes we have had a loss," he said to Roger. "Oh, young Gravely — his grandmother came for him."

Roger elbowed his way out and took a cab to River Street.

Here it was quiet. The noise of the bank robbery had not reached this neighbourhood. He ran up-stairs three steps at a time to Bonny's large room in the top of the house, and softly pushed open the door.

Bonny was in bed. Grandma, Berty, a woman of

the neighbourhood, and a doctor were bending over him.

Roger could see that the boy's face was pale and bandaged.

"Bonny," he said, involuntarily.

The boy heard him and opened his eyes.

"All right, Roger," he murmured, feebly. "I stood by the fort, but I — guess — you'll — have — to — excuse — me — to-night," and his voice trailed off into unconsciousness.

The doctor looked impatiently over his shoulder, and Roger crept out into the hall.

Grandma sent Berty after him. "Oh, Roger," she whispered, "we had such a fright."

"What is it — how was it?" asked Roger, eagerly.

"Why, the circus-parade was passing the bank. Every clerk but Bonny left his desk to go look at it. They don't seem to know why he stayed. When the parade passed, and the clerks went back, he was lying on the floor with his face and head cut."

"I know why he stayed," muttered Roger. "He was trying to do his duty. Thank God, he was not killed. Is he much hurt?"

"Some bad flesh wounds. The doctor says he

must be kept quiet, but he doesn't think his brain is injured. Oh, Roger, we are so thankful his life was spared."

"Probably the thieves didn't try to kill him. If I can do nothing, I'll go find out something about the affair. I must telephone Margaretta. She will be upset if she hears from strangers."

"Yes, go," said Berty, "and ask her to come to us."

Late that evening, the doctor, to quiet his feverish patient, permitted him to have five minutes' conversation with his brother-in-law.

Roger seized the hand lying on the coverlet, and pressed it silently.

"Did they catch the thieves?" asked Bonny, huskily.

"One of them, my boy — how do you think the detectives made sure of him?"

"Don't know."

"He was hanging around the circus-crowd, trying to mix up with it — he had some of your yellow hairs on his coat-sleeve."

Bonny smiled faintly.

"The police expect him to turn State's evidence," continued Roger.

"How much did the bank lose?"

"Fifteen thousand dollars."

"But they'll get it back, Roger?"

"Yes, if they catch the other fellow, and they're sure to do it. Bonny, you're not to talk. Just tell me if this is straight — I want it for the papers. You stood at your desk, all the others ran to the street door. Then —"

"Then," said Bonny, "I was mad. I wanted to look at the circus, but I had promised you not to shirk. But I just gritted my teeth as I stood there. I was staring after the others when I heard a little noise in the president's room. I turned round, and saw a man peeping out. I had no revolver, and I didn't know where Danvers kept his, and like an idiot I never thought to scream. I just grabbed for Buckley's camera. You know he is a photographic fiend."

"Yes," smiled Roger, and he thought of what the captured thief had asked one of the policemen guarding him: "How's that gritty little demon that tried to snap us?"

"I was just pressing the button," went on Bonny, "when the man leaped like a cat, and, first thing I knew, he was smashing me over the head with that camera. There was such a row in the street that the others didn't hear it."

"Five minutes are up," said the doctor, coming into the room.

"One minute, Roger," said the boy, feebly. "I had a second before I got whacked, and in that second I thought, 'Here's a specimen of the leisure class toward which I am drifting. I'll stay with the workers,' so, Roger, we'll not call off that contract of ours to-night."

"All right," said Roger, beaming on him, and backing toward the door. "It's to stand — for how long?"

"For ever!" said the boy, with sudden force, just as the doctor gently pushed him back on his pillow, and, putting a teaspoonful of medicine to his lips, said, "Now, young sir, you take this."

Roger, with a smiling face, sought Grandma and Berty on the veranda at the back of the house. "He'll be all right in a day or two."

"Yes, it is the shock that has upset him more than the wounds," said Berty. "The burglars only wanted to silence him."

"Grandma, do you know the bank is going to discharge every man-Jack but Bonny?" said Roger.

Grandma's eyes sparkled, then she became thoughtful.

"What, all those old fellows?" exclaimed Berty.

"Bonny won't stay," said Grandma, quietly. "He would feel like a prig."

"I am going to take him in the iron works with me," said Roger. "I won't be denied. He will make a first-class business man."

"Under your tuition," said Grandma, with a proud look at him.

"Hush," said Berty, "the newsboys are calling an extra."

They all listened. "Extry edeetion *Evening Noose* — cap-tchure of the second burrgg-lar of the great bank robbery."

"Good," cried Berty, "they've caught the second man. Roger, dear, go get us a paper."

The young man ran nimbly down-stairs.

"How he loves Bonny!" said Berty. "What a good brother-in-law!"

Grandma said nothing, but her inscrutable gaze went away down the river.

"And, Grandma," went on Berty, "let me tell you what Bonny whispered to me before I left the room. He said, 'I've sometimes got mad with Grandma for always harping on keeping the family together, but I see now that if you keep your own family together, you keep your business family together.'"

Grandma did not reply. Her gaze was still down the river, but the girl, watching her lips, saw them softly form the words, "Thank God!"

Bonny's ordeal was past, and it had better fitted him for other and perhaps more severe ordeals in his life to come.

CHAPTER VII.

BERTY IMPARTS INFORMATION

Mrs. Stanisfield was making her way to her roof-garden.

"If any callers come," she said to her parlour-maid, "bring them up here."

Presently there was an exclamation, "What cheer!"

Margaretta looked around. Her irrepressible sister Berty stood in the French window, her dark head thrust forward inquiringly.

"Come out, dear," said Mrs. Stanisfield, "I am alone."

"I want to have a talk," said Berty, coming forward, "and have you anything to eat? I am hungry as a guinea-pig."

"There is a freezer of ice-cream over there behind those azaleas — the cake is in a covered dish."

Berty dipped out a saucerful of ice-cream, cut herself a good-sized piece of cake, and then took a

low seat near her sister, who was examining her curiously.

"Berty," said Margaretta, suddenly, "you have something to tell me."

Berty laughed. "How queer things are. Two months ago we had plenty of money. Then Grandma lost everything. We had to go and live in that old gone-to-seed mansion on River Street — you know what a dirty street it is?"

"Yes, I know — I wish I didn't."

"I'm not sorry we went. I've had such experiences. I thought I wouldn't tell you, Margaretta, till all was over. You might worry."

"What have you been doing?" asked Margaretta, anxiously.

"You remember how the neighbours thought we were missionaries when we first moved to the street?"

"Yes, I do."

"And when I spoke sharply to a slow workman, an impudent boy called out that the missionary was mad?"

"Yes, I recall it — what neighbours!"

"I shall never forget that first evening," said Berty, musingly. "Grandma and I were sitting by the fire — so tired after the moving — when a dozen

of those half-washed women came edging in with Bibles and hymn-books under their arms."

"It was detestable," said Margaretta, with a shrug of her shoulders, "but does it not worry you to repeat all this?"

"No, dearest, I am working up to something. You remember the women informed us in a mousie way that they had come to have a prayer-meeting, and I cuttingly told them that we weren't ready for callers. Dear Grandma tried to smooth it over by saying that while we had a great respect for religious workers, we did not belong to them, but her salve didn't cover the wound my tongue had made."

"What do you mean?" asked Margaretta.

"Here begins the part that is new to you," said Berty, jubilantly. "To snub one's neighbours is a dangerous thing. Every tin can and every decrepit vegetable in our yard next morning eloquently proclaimed this truth."

"You don't mean to say they had dared —"

"Had dared and done — and our yard had just been so nicely cleaned. Well, I was pretty mad, but I said nothing. Next morning there was more rubbish — I went into the street. There was no policeman in sight, so I went to the city hall. Under-

neath is a place, you know, where policemen lounge till they have to go on their beats."

"No, I don't know. I never was in the city hall in my life. You didn't go alone, Berty?"

"Yes, I did — why shouldn't I? I'm a free-born American citizen. Our grandfather was one of the leading men of this city. His taxes helped to build that hall. I've a right there, if I want to go."

"But without a chaperon, and you are so young, and — and — "

"Beautiful."

"I was going to say pretty," remarked Margaretta, severely.

"Beautiful is stronger," said Berty, calmly. "What a lovely view you have from this roof-garden, Margaretta. How it must tranquillize you to gaze at those trees and flower-beds when anything worries you."

"Do go on, Berty — what did you do at the city hall?"

"A big policeman asked what I wanted. I thought of one of dear grandfather's sayings, 'Never deal with subordinates if you can get at principals,' so I said, 'I want to see your head man.'"

"That's an African tribe expression, I think," murmured Margaretta.

"Evidently, for he grinned and said, 'Oh, the chief,' and he opened the door of a private office.

"Another big man sat like a mountain behind a table. He didn't get up when I went in — just looked at me.

"'Are you over the police of this city?' I asked.

"'I am,' he said.

"'Well,' I said, 'I've come to apply to you for protection. My neighbours throw tin cans in my back yard every night, and I don't like it.'

"He grinned from ear to ear, and asked me where I lived.

"'On River Street,' I said.

"He gave a whistle and stared at me. I didn't have on anything remarkable — only a black cloth walking-skirt with a round hat, and that plain-looking white shirt-waist you gave me with the pretty handwork."

"Which cost forty dollars," said Margaretta, under her breath.

"Well, that man stared at me," went on Berty, "and then what do you think he said in an easy tone of voice — 'And what have you been doing to your neighbours, my dear?'

"Margaretta, I was furious. 'Get up out of your seat,' I said, in a choking voice. 'Take that cap off your head, and remember that you are in the presence of a lady. My grandfather was the late Judge Travers of this city, my brother-in-law is Mr. Roger Stanisfield, of the Stanisfield Iron Works, and my great-uncle is governor of the State. I'll have you put out of office if you say "my dear" to me again.'"

Margaretta held her breath. Berty's face was flaming at the reminiscence, and her ice-cream was slipping to the floor. "What did he say?" she gasped.

"I wish you could have seen him, Margaretta. He looked like a bumptious old turkey gobbler, knocked all of a heap by a small-sized chicken.

"'I beg your pardon,' he said, scuttling out of his seat, 'I'm sure, Miss, I didn't dream who you were.'

"'It isn't your business to dream,' I said, still furious. 'When a woman comes to you with a complaint, treat her civilly. You're nothing but the paid servant of the city. You don't own the citizens of Riverport!'

"That finished him. 'I'm going now,' I said. 'I don't want to sit down. See that you attend to

that matter without delay,' and I stalked out, and he followed me with his mouth open, and if I didn't know what had happened, I'd say he was standing at that door yet gazing up the street after me."

"What did happen?" asked Margaretta, eagerly.

"I got my back yard cleaned," said Berty, drily. "Grandma says two policemen came hurrying up the street before I got home. They went into some of the houses, then women came out, and boys swarmed over our fence, and in an hour there wasn't the ghost of a tin can left."

"Think of it," said Margaretta, "what wretched things for you to be exposed to — what degradation!"

"It isn't any worse for me than for other women and girls," said Berty, doggedly, "and I'm going to find out why River Street isn't treated as well as Grand Avenue."

"But River Street people are poor, Berty."

"Suppose they are poor, aren't they the children of the city?"

"But, Berty — workmen and that sort of people can't have fine houses, and horses and carriages."

"Not for horses and carriages, not for fine houses am I pleading, but for equal rights in comfort and decency. Would you take your cold dip every morn-

ing if you had to cross a frozen yard in winter, and a filthy yard in summer for every drop of water you use?"

Margaretta shuddered.

"Would you have your house kept clean if it were so dark that you couldn't see the dirty corners?"

"No, I wouldn't," said Margaretta, decidedly, "but who owns those dreadful places?"

"You do," said Berty, shortly.

"I do!" said Margaretta, aghast.

"Yes — some of them. Roger holds property down there in your name. All the rich people in the city like to invest in River Street tenements. They're always packed."

"I won't have it," said Margaretta. "Roger shall sell out."

"Don't sell — improve your property, and get some of the stain off your soul. Women should ask their husbands where they invest their money. Good old Mrs. Darlway, the temperance worker, owns a building with a saloon in it."

"Oh, misery!" exclaimed Margaretta, "she doesn't know it, of course."

"No — tell her."

"How have you found all this out, Berty?"

"I've talked to the women."

"What — the women of the tin can episode?"

"Oh, they're all over that now — they understand Grandma and me — and what a lot of things they've told me. Haven't you always thought that policemen were noble, kind creatures, like soldiers?"

"Yes," said Margaretta, innocently, "aren't they?"

"They're the most miserable of miserable sinners."

"Oh, Berty, surely not all!"

"Well, I'll be generous and leave out half a dozen if it will please you. The others all take bribes."

"Bribes!"

"Yes, bribes. Did you ever see a lean policeman, Margaretta?"

"I don't know."

"I never did — they're all fat as butter, like the sinners in the Psalms. Now, no one need ever tell me that the police are honest, till I see them all get lean with chasing after evil. Now they just stand round corners like green bay-trees, and take bribes."

Margaretta was silent for a long time, pondering over this new department of thought opened up to

her. Then she said, "Why don't you get the women to leave this hateful neighbourhood?"

"How can they?" said her sister, mournfully, "their husbands work on the wharves. But I mustn't make you too gloomy. Let me tell you about the heart of the Mayor."

"You were dreadfully sad just after you went to River Street," said Margaretta; "was this the trouble?"

"Yes," said Berty, lowering her voice, "the woes of the poor were sinking into my heart."

"Poor child — but take your ice-cream. It is melting and slipping down your gown, and the dog has eaten your cake."

"Has he?" said Berty, indifferently. "Well, dog, take the ice-cream, too. I want to talk—I came out of our house one morning, Margaretta; there were three pitiful little children on the door-step. 'Children, do get out of this,' I said. 'We may have callers, and you look like imps.'"

"Have you had any more callers?" asked Margaretta, eagerly.

"Yes, the Everests, and Brown-Gardners, and Mrs. Darley-James."

"Mrs. Darley-James!"

"Yes, Mrs. Darley-James, that fastidious dame.

I've read that when you get poor, your friends forsake you, but ours have overwhelmed us with attentions."

"Grandma is an exceptional woman," said Margaretta, proudly.

"And do you know every one of those women noticed the children. Mrs. Darley-James nearly fainted. I had to go to the door with her, as we have no well-trained maid, but only that stupid woman of the neighbourhood. 'Why, the children all look ill,' Mrs. Darley-James said.

"'A good many of them are,' I replied. 'Two died in that yellow house last night.'

"She said, 'Oh, horrible!' and got into her carriage. Well, to come back to this day that I stood on the door-step talking to the children. They looked up at me, the dear little impudent things, and said, 'We ain't goin' to move one step, missus, 'cause you gets the sun longer on your side of the street than we does.'

"What they said wasn't remarkable, but I choked all up. To think of those pale-faced babies manœuvring to sit where they could catch the sun as he peeped shyly at them over the roofs of the tall houses. I felt as if I should like to have the demon

of selfishness by the throat and shake him till I choked him. Then I flew to the city hall — "

" The city hall again? " murmured Margaretta.

" Yes — what is the city hall but a place of refuge for the children of the city? I asked to see the Mayor. A young man in the other office said he was busy.

" ' Then I'll wait,' I said, and I sat down.

" He kept me sitting there for a solid hour. You can imagine that I was pretty well annoyed. At the end of that time three fat, prosperous-looking men walked from the inner sanctum, and I was invited to go in."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HEART OF THE MAYOR

"INSIDE was a smaller, but still prosperous-looking man sitting like a roly-poly behind a desk, and blinking amiably at me with his small eyes."

Margaretta smiled, and asked, "Young or old?"

"Oh, dear, I don't know — couldn't tell his age any more than I could tell the age of a plum-pudding. His face was fat and red, and he had so little hair that it might be either gray or sandy. I'd give him any age between fifteen and fifty."

"Well, now, I don't suppose he would be fifteen."

"He acts like it sometimes," said Berty, warmly. "Years have not taught him grace and experience, as they have Grandma."

"What is his name?"

"Jimson — Peter Jimson."

"Let me see," murmured Margaretta, "there is a Mrs. Jimson and there are two Misses Jimson who

are dying to get into our set. I heard the Everests laughing about them."

"Same ones, probably — well, he knew enough to stand up when I went in. I said 'Good morning,' and he looked so amiable that I thought he would give me not only what I wanted, but the whole city besides.

"When we had both sat down, I said, 'I will not take up your time, sir. I have merely come to ask you to give the children of the East End a park to play in.'

"He lowered his eyes, and began to play with a paper-knife. Then he looked up, and said, 'May I ask your name?'

"'My name is Miss Gravely,' I told him, 'and I am Mrs. Travers's granddaughter.'

"'Oh, indeed,' he replied, 'and why are you interested in the children of the East End?'

"'Because I live there — on River Street. We have lost our money.'"

"He looked surprised at the first part of my sentence. I think he knew about the last of it. Then he said, 'Have the children asked for a park?'

"'No, sir,' I said, 'they haven't.'

"'Then why give it to them?' he inquired, mildly.

"'Does a good father always wait to have his

children demand a necessity before he offers it?' I replied.

"He smiled, and began to play with the paper-knife again.

"'The children have nowhere to go, sir,' I went on. 'The mothers drive them from the dirty houses, the sailors drive them from the wharves, the truck-men drive them from the streets.'

"'A park might be a good thing,' he said, cautiously, 'but there is no money in the treasury.'

"I felt myself growing hot. 'No money in the treasury, sir, and you can put up a magnificent building like this? Some of this money has been taken from the children.'

"He said the city had its dignity to maintain.

"'But there is charity, sir, as well as dignity.'

"He smiled sweetly — his whole attitude was one of indulgent sympathy for a youthful crank, and I began to get more and more stirred up.

"'Sir,' I said, 'I think you must be a stepfather.'

"'Sometimes step-parents display more wisdom than real parents,' he said, benevolently.

"I thought of the good stepmother Grandma had when a girl. He was right this time, and I was wrong, but this didn't make me more comfortable

in my mind. 'There is no need of new pavements on Broadway, sir,' I blurted out.

"'We must make the business part of the city attractive,' he said, 'or strangers won't come here.'

"'Strangers must come,' I said, bitterly, 'the children can die.'

"'There is no place for a park on River Street,' he went on. 'Property is held there at a high figure. No one would sell.'

"'There is Milligan's Wharf, sir,' I replied. 'It is said to be haunted, and no sailors will go there. You could make a lovely fenced-in park.'

"'But there is no money,' he said, blandly.

"Something came over me. I wasn't angry on my own account. I have plenty of fresh air, for I am boating half the time, but dead children's faces swam before me, and I felt like Isaiah and Jeremiah rolled in one.

"'Who made you, unkind man?' I said, pointing a finger at him.

"He wouldn't tell me, so I told him, 'God made you, and me, and the little children on River Street. Do you dare to say that you stand higher in His sight than they do?'

"He said no, he wouldn't, but he was in office to save the city's money, and he was going to do it.

" 'Let the city deny itself for the children. You know there are things it could do without. If you don't, the blood of the children will be on your head.'

"He twisted his shoulders, and said, 'See here, young lady, I've been all through this labour and capital business. Labour is unthrifty and brainless. You're young and extreme, and don't understand. I've done good turns to many a man, and never had a word of thanks.'

" 'Tell me what you like about grown people,' I said, wildly, 'I'll believe anything, but don't say a word against the children.'

"He twisted his shoulders again, and slyly looked at his watch.

"I got up. 'Sir,' I said, 'River Street is choked with dust in summer, and buried in mud and snow in winter. The people have neither decency nor comfort in their houses. The citizens put you over the city, and you are neglecting some of them.'

"He just beamed at me, he was so glad I was going. 'Young lady,' he said, 'you have too much heart. I once had, but for years I've been trying to educate it out of myself. I've nearly succeeded.'

" 'There must be a little left,' I said, 'just a little bit. I'll make it my business to find it. Good

"'YOU HAVE TOO MUCH HEART'"

morning,' and with this threat I left him and ran, ran for River Street."

"Good for you," said Margaretta.

"I swept along like a whirlwind. I gathered up the children and took them down on Milligan's Wharf.

"'Children,' I said, 'do you know who the Mayor is?'

"They said he was the big man down in the city hall.

"'And how did he get there?'

"'They votes him in, and they votes him out,' a bootblack said.

"'Who votes?' I asked.

"'All the men in the city.'

"'Do your fathers vote?'

"'Course — ain't they Riverporters?'

"'Then,' I said, 'you belong to the city, and you own a little bit of the Mayor, and I have just been asking him to give you a park to play in, but he won't.'

"The children didn't seem to care, so I became demagoguish. 'Boys and girls,' I said, 'the children of the North End have a park, the children of the South End have a park, the children of the West End have a park, but the children of the East End

aren't good enough to have a park! What do you think ought to be done to the Mayor?'

"A little girl giggled, and said, 'Duck him in the river,' and a boy said, 'Tar and feather him.'

"'No,' I said, 'that would not be right, but, come now, children, don't you want a park — a nice wide place with trees, and benches, and swings, and a big heap of sand to play in?'

"'Oh, glorymaroo!' said a little girl, 'it would be just like a Sunday-school picnic.'

"'Yes, just like a picnic every day, and now, children, you can have this park if you will do as I tell you; will you?'

"'Yes, yes,' they all shouted, for they had begun to get excited. 'Now listen,' I went on, and I indicated two of the most ragged little creatures present, 'go to the city hall, take each other's hands, and when you see the Mayor coming, go up to him politely, and say, "Please, Mr. Mayor, will you give the children of the East End a park to play in?"'

"They ran off like foxes before I could say another word, then they rushed back. 'We don't know that gen'l'man.'

"Here was a dilemma, but a newsboy, with eyes like gimlets, got me out of it. 'See here,' he said,

'I can't wiggle in 'count of business, but I'll give signals. You, here, Biddy Malone, when you see me hop on one leg, and kick a stone, you'll know the Mayor's coming, see?'

"The girls nodded and ran off, and he ran after them.

"I mustn't forget to say I told them to go ask their mothers, but, bless you, the street is so narrow that the women all knew what I was doing, and approved, I could tell by their grins.

"'Now I want a boy for the Mayor's house,' I said.

"A shock-headed urchin volunteered, and I detailed him to sit on the Mayor's steps till that gentleman betook himself home for luncheon, and then to rise and say, 'Please, Mr. Mayor, give the children of the East End a park to play in.'

"Well, I sent out about ten couples and six singles. They were to station themselves at intervals along the unhappy man's route, and by this time the little monkeys had all got so much in the spirit of it, that I had hard work to keep the whole crowd from going."

Margaretta leaned back in her chair and laughed quietly. "Well, if you're not developing."

"Put any creature in a tight place," said Berty, indignantly, "and see how it will squirm."

"How did the Mayor take this persecution?"

"Like an angel, for the first few days. Then I began to increase the number of my scouts. They met him on his own sidewalk, on the corner as he waited for the car, on the steps of his club, till at last he began to dodge them.

"Then they got their blood up. You can't elude the children of the streets. I told them not to beg or whine, just to say their little formula, then vanish.

"At the end of a week he began to have a hunted look. Then he began to peer around street corners, then he took to a *coupé*, and then he sprained his ankle."

"What did the children do?"

"Politely waited for him to get well, but he sent me a note, saying he would do all he could to get them their park, and with his influence that meant, of course, that they should have it."

"How lovely — weren't you glad?"

"I danced for joy — but this puzzled me. I hadn't expected to get at his heart so soon. Who had helped me? Grandma said it was the Lord."

"Aided by Mrs. Jimson, I suspect," added Margaretta, shrewdly. "This explains a mystery. Some

time ago, I heard Roger and Tom Everest down in the library nearly killing themselves laughing. When I asked Roger what it was about, he said only a Jimson joke. Then he said, 'Can't you keep Berty out of the city hall?'

"I said, 'What do you mean?' but he wouldn't tell me any more. I believe that Mr. Jimson's men friends teased him, and his mother and sisters brought pressure to bear upon him."

"They called yesterday," said Berty, demurely.

"Well, well, and did they mention your park?"

"They were full of it. I went down to the wharf with them. I am there half the time. You must come, Margaretta, and see the work going on."

"Where did the Mayor get the money?"

"Squeezed it out of something. He said his councillors approved. He won't see me, though — carries on all the business by correspondence."

Margaretta looked anxious, but Berty was unheeding, and went on, eloquently. "Isn't it queer how Grandma's teaching is in our very bones? I didn't know I had it in me to keep even our own family together, but I have. I'd fight like a wolf for you and Bonny, Margaretta, and now I'm getting so I'll fight like a wolf for our bigger human family."

Margaretta's anxiety passed away, and she smiled

indulgently. "Very well, sister. It's noble to fight for the right, but don't get to be that thing that men hate so. What is it they call that sort of person — oh, yes, a new woman."

Berty raised both hands. "I'll be a new woman, or an old woman, or a wild woman, or a tame woman, or any kind of a woman, except a lazy woman!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE MAYOR'S DILEMMA

BERTY was rowing down the river in her pink boat with its bands of white.

She was all pink and white, boat, cushions, oars, dress, and complexion — except her hair and eyes, which formed a striking and almost startling blue-black contrast.

However, Berty was nothing if not original, and just now in the late afternoon, when all the other boats and canoes were speeding homeward, she was hurrying down the river.

She gave a gay greeting to her friends and acquaintances, and to many of the fishermen and river-hands with whom she had become acquainted since she came to live on River Street.

She scarcely knew why she was turning her back on her home at this, the time of her evening meal, unless it was that she was so full of life and strength that she simply could not go into the house.

Grandma would not care. Grandma was too philosophical to worry. She would take her knitting to the veranda and sit tranquilly awaiting the return of her granddaughter. If she got hungry, she would take her supper.

> "Grandma is a darling,
> Grandma is a dear,"

chanted Berty, then she stopped. "But I must not be selfish. I will just row round Bobbetty's Island and then go home."

Bobbetty's Island was a haunted island about the size of an extensive building lot. Poor old man Bobbetty had lived here alone for so many years that he had become crazy at last, and had hanged himself to one of the spruce-trees.

Picnic-parties rarely landed here — the island was too small, and the young people did not like its reputation. They always went farther down to some of the larger islands.

So this little thickly wooded piece of land stood alone and solitary, dropped like a bit of driftwood in the middle of the river.

Berty was not afraid of the ghost. She was rowing gaily round the spruces singing softly to her-

self, when she saw something that made her mouth close abruptly.

An annoyed-looking man sat on a big flat rock close to the water's edge. He stared at her without speaking, and Berty stared at him. This was no ghost. Poor old Bobbetty had not appeared in the flesh. This was a very living and very irritated man, judging from his countenance.

Berty smiled softly to herself, then, without a word, she drew near the islet, took her hands from the oars, and, pulling her note-book from her pocket, coolly scribbled a few lines on a slip of paper:

"DEAR SIR: — If you have lost your boat, which I judge from appearances you have done, I am willing to give you a lift back to the city.

"Yours truly,

"BERTY GRAVELY."

Having finished her note, she drew in an oar, put the paper flat on the blade, stuck a pin through it to make it firm, then extended it to the waiting and watching man.

Without a word on his part, he got up from his rock seat, and, stretching out a hand, took the slip of paper. Then reseating himself with a slight

smile, he produced his own note-book, tore a leaf from it, and took a stylographic pen from his pocket.

"DEAR MADAM: — I have indeed lost my boat. I accept your offer with gratitude.

"Yours truly,

"PETER JIMSON."

The oar was still resting on the rocks. He pinned his answer to it, saw Berty draw it in, read it, and then she brought her boat round for him.

Still without speaking he stepped in, somewhat clumsily, seated himself, and mopped his perspiring face.

They were not moving, and he looked up. Berty had dropped the oars, and had calmly seated herself on the stern cushions. She had no intention of rowing with a man in the boat.

The Mayor set to work, while Berty lounged on her seat and studied the shell-like tints of the sky. Suddenly she heard a slight sound, and brought her gaze down to the river.

The Mayor was laughing — trying not to do so, but slowly and gradually giving way, and shaking all over like a bowl of jelly.

She would not ask him what amused him, and presently he said, "Excuse me."

"Why?" asked Berty, with preternatural gravity.

"Well, well," he stuttered, "I don't know, but I guess it isn't good manners for one person to laugh when the other isn't."

"Laugh on," said Berty, benevolently, "the whole river is before you."

The Mayor did laugh on, and rowed at the same time, until at last he was obliged to take his hands from the oars, and get out his handkerchief to wipe his eyes.

Berty's face was hidden from him. She had picked up a huge illustrated paper from the bottom of the boat, and her whole head was concealed by it. But the paper was shaking, and he had an idea that she, too, was laughing.

His suspicion was correct, for presently the paper dropped, and he saw that his companion was in a convulsion of girlish laughter.

"Oh! oh! oh!" she cried, taking away the handkerchief that she had been stuffing in her mouth, "it is too funny. You hate the sight of me, and write notes to avoid me, and then go lose your boat on a desert island, and have to be rescued by me. Oh! it is too delicious!"

The Mayor thought he could laugh, but his laughter was nothing to this ecstasy of youthful enjoyment, and his harsh, thick tones gradually died away, while he listened delightedly to this rippling outflow from pretty lips.

"It is comical," he said, after a time, when she had somewhat calmed down. "I guess I ought to apologize to you. I have treated you mean. But you got a corner on me."

"A corner in street urchins," said Berty, gaspingly; "well, I'm obliged to you for getting the park, but I must say I wish you would give the work some of your personal superintendence."

"I've been down," he said, unguardedly.

"When?" asked Berty, promptly.

"At night," he said, with some confusion. "I slip down after I know you've gone to bed."

"How do you think the workmen are getting on?" she asked, anxiously.

"Fairly well — what do you want that high fence for?"

"For games — wall games. I wish we could have baths at the end of the wharf — public baths. The boys can go down to the river, but the women and children have no chance. Poor souls, they suffer.

You would not like to be cut off from your daily bath, would you, sir?"

"Well, no," replied the Mayor, cautiously, "I don't suppose I would."

"The city ought to build baths," said Berty, warmly.

"There's private charity," said the Mayor.

"Private charity, my dear sir! You don't know those River Street people. They have as much pride as you have. What the city does for them is all right — what private citizens do for them publicly, and with all sorts of ridiculous restrictions, angers them."

The Mayor looked longingly over his shoulder toward the city.

"Oh, pardon me," said Berty, hurriedly. "I shouldn't talk business to you in my own boat when you can't escape me. Pray tell me of your adventures this afternoon. Was your boat stolen?"

"Stolen, no — it was my own carelessness. You know I'm driven to death with business, and if I take a friend out with me he's got an axe to grind for some one, so I steal off alone whenever I can. Nobody goes to that island, and it's a fine place to read or snooze, but to-day I neglected to secure my boat, and away it went."

"And nobody came by?"

"Lots of people, I suppose, but I was asleep until just before you came."

"Isn't the river delicious?" said Berty, dreamily.

"I like it well enough," said Mr. Jimson, letting unappreciative eyes wander over the blue water and the smiling landscape beyond. "It's a great place to plan your business."

"Business, business, business," murmured the girl, "it seems sacrilege to mention that word here."

"If it weren't for business of various kinds, there wouldn't be any Riverport," said the man, with a backward nod of his head.

"Poor old Riverport!" said Berty; "poor, sordid, material old Riverport!"

The Mayor braced his feet harder and stared at her. Then he said, "If it weren't for business, most of us would go under."

"Yes, but we needn't be holding it up all the time, and bowing down to it, and worshipping, and prostrating our souls before it, till we haven't any spirit or beauty left."

The Mayor stared at her again. Then he said, "You don't seem as silly as most girls."

This to Berty was a challenge. Her eyes sparkled wickedly, and from that instant till they reached the

city she poured out a babble of girlish nonsense that completely bewildered the plain man before her.

"Will you let me off at the city wharf?" he asked, at last, when she had paused to take breath.

"Certainly," said Berty, "after you row me home."

"Oh, excuse me," he said, confusedly. "I am so little in ladies' society that I don't know how to act."

"We've got a tiny wharf at the end of our back yard," said Berty. "You'll know it because all the wharves round are black and dingy, but ours is painted pink and white. There it is — look ahead and you'll see."

The Mayor looked, and soon the little boat was gliding toward the gay flight of steps.

"Now will you tie her up and come in through the house?" asked Berty, politely.

The Mayor did as he was requested, and, stepping ashore, curiously followed his guide up through the tidy back yard to the big old-fashioned house that seemed to peer with its small eyes of windows far out over the river.

On the ground floor were a kitchen and pantry and several good-sized rooms that had been used for

servants' quarters in the first, palmy days of the old mansion.

"A pity this neighbourhood was given up to poor people," said the Mayor, as he tramped up a narrow, dark stairway behind his guide.

"A blessing that they have something so lovely as this river view," said Berty, quickly. "I can't tell you how we appreciate it after our limited outlook from Grand Avenue. Here is our dining-room," and she threw open the door of a large room at the back of the house.

Mr. Jimson stepped in somewhat awkwardly. The room was plainly furnished, but the small windows were open, and also a glass door leading to a veranda, where a table was prepared for the evening meal. He could see a white cloth, and numerous dishes covered and uncovered.

"Grandma," said Berty, "here is Mr. Jimson — you remember hearing me speak of him."

Mr. Jimson, filled with curiosity, turned to the composed little old lady who came in from the veranda and shook hands with him. This was Madam Travers. He had been familiar with her face for years, but she never before had spoken to him.

"Will you stay and have a cup of tea with my

granddaughter and me?" she asked him, when he looked uncomfortably toward the door.

His gaze went again to the table. A rising breeze had just brushed aside the napkin covering a pitcher.

"Is that a jug of buttermilk I see?" he asked, wistfully.

"It is," said the old lady, kindly.

"Then I'll stay," he said, and he dropped his hat on a chair.

Grandma and Berty both smiled, and he smiled himself, and, lookingly longingly toward the table, said, "I can't get it at home, and in the restaurants it is poor stuff."

"And do you like curds and cream?" asked Grandma, leading the way to the table.

"Yes, ma'am!" he said, vigorously.

"And sage cheese, and corn-cake, and crullers?"

"Why, you take me back to my grandfather's farm in the country," he replied, squeezing himself into the seat indicated.

"My granddaughter and I are very fond of simple dishes," said Grandma. "Now I'll ask a blessing on this food, and then, Berty, you must give Mr. Jimson some buttermilk. I see he is very thirsty."

Mr. Jimson was an exceedingly happy man. He had pumpkin pie, and cold ham, and chicken, in

addition to the other dishes he liked, and to wind up with, a cup of hot tea.

"This is first-class tea," he said, abruptly.

"It came from China," said Grandma, "a present from a Chinese official to my late husband. I will show you some of the stalks with the leaves on them."

"Well, you look pretty cozy here," said the Mayor, after he had finished his meal, and sat gazing out on the river. "I wish I could stay, but I've got a meeting."

"Come some other time," said Grandma, graciously.

"I'd like to," he said, abruptly. "I rarely go out, unless it's to a big dinner which I hate, and sometimes you get tired of your own house — though I've got a good mother and sisters," he added, hastily.

"I have no doubt of that," said Grandma. "They were kind enough to call on us."

"You have a good granddaughter," he said, with a curious expression, as he looked down into the back yard where Berty had gone to feed some white pigeons, "but," he added, "she is a puzzler sometimes. I expect she hates me."

"She does not hate any one," said Grandma,

softly. "She is young and overzealous at times, and will heartily scold the latest one to incur her displeasure, but she has a loving heart."

"It's fine to be young," said the Mayor, with a sigh; "good-night, madam. I've enjoyed my visit."

"Come again some other time," said Grandma, with quaint, old-fashioned courtesy, "we shall always be glad to see you."

"I will, madam," said the Mayor, and he gripped her hand till it ached. Then he took his hat, and trotted nimbly away.

"Has he gone?" asked Berty, coming into the room a few minutes later.

"Yes," said Grandma.

The girl's eyes were dancing. She was longing to make fun of him, but her grandmother, she knew, was inexorable. No one should ever ridicule in her presence the guest who had broken her bread and eaten her salt.

Yet Berty must say something. "Grandma," she remarked, softly, "it isn't safe to cut any one, is it?"

"To cut any one?" repeated the old lady.

"To cut the acquaintance of any one. For instance — you hate a person, you stop speaking to

that person. You get into a scrape, that person is the only one who can help you out."

Grandma said nothing.

"Surely," said Berty, persuasively, "in the course of your long life, you must have often noticed it is not only mean, but it is bad policy to break abruptly with any one without just cause?"

"Yes," said Grandma, quietly, "I have."

"Any further remarks to make?" inquired Berty, after a long pause.

Grandma's dimple slowly crept into view.

Berty laughed, kissed her, and ran off to bed, saying, as she did so, "I wonder whether your new admirer will ever call again?"

Grandma tranquilly rolled up her knitting and followed her.

CHAPTER X.

A GROUNDLESS SUSPICION

GRANDMA was on the veranda, knitting, knitting, always knitting.

"What a bird's perch this is," said some one suddenly, behind her.

She turned round. Grandson Roger was trying to squeeze his tall frame between the equally tall frame of an old-fashioned rocking-chair and the veranda railing.

"How you must miss your big veranda on Grand Avenue," he said, coming to sit beside her.

"I don't," said Grandma, tranquilly. "It's wonderful how one gets used to things. Berty and I used to enjoy our roomy veranda, but we have adapted ourselves to this one, and never feel like complaining."

"It's a wonderful thing — that power of adaptation," said the young man, soberly, "and I have a

theory that the primitive in us likes to return to small quarters and simplicity. For instance, I am never so happy as when I leave my large house and go to live in my hunting-camp."

Grandma smiled, and took up her knitting again.

Roger, who had comfortably settled himself in the corner beside her, frowned slightly. "Grandma, the girls tell me that you are selling these stockings you knit."

"Yes, why not?" she asked, quietly.

"But there is no need of it."

"They bring a good price. You cannot buy home-knit silk stockings everywhere."

"But it is drudgery for you."

"I enjoy it."

"Very well, if you enjoy it. But you won't persist if it tires you?"

"No, Roger."

"Who buys the stockings?" he asked, curiously.

"I sell them among my friends. Mrs. Darley-James buys the most of them."

His face grew red. "You supply stockings to her?"

"Why should I not?"

"I don't know why, but it makes me 'mad,' as Berty says."

"Didn't you supply her husband with that new iron railing for his garden?"

"Yes, ma'am, I did, and it's a good one."

"Well, if you sell the husband a garden railing, why shouldn't I sell the wife a pair of stockings?"

"I don't know," he said, with a laugh. "I suppose it's the nonsensical notion about one kind of labour being degrading, and another ennobling. We're all simpletons, anyway — we human beings. Where is Berty this evening?"

"Listen," said Grandma, putting up a hand.

Down in the back yard was a sound of hammering.

Roger leaned over the railing. "What under the sun is she doing?"

"Puttering over those pigeons — making new boxes for them."

"Who is with her? I see a man's back."

"The Mayor."

"Jimson?" — and Roger fell back in his seat with a disturbed air.

"The same," said Grandma, calmly.

Roger wrinkled his forehead. "That reminds me — I came to see you partly about that. It seems Berty and the Mayor go about a good deal together."

"How do you know?" asked Grandma, shrewdly.

"Oh, I know, people notice them."

"Some one has been complaining to you," said Grandma. "Who was it?"

Roger smiled. "Well, to tell the truth, Tom Everest was grumbling. You know he has been just like a brother to Berty and Margaretta."

"Yes, I know," said Grandma, tranquilly. "I just wanted to find out whether there was any public gossip about Berty's friendship for the Mayor. Friendly inquiry on the part of an old playmate is another matter."

"I cannot imagine Berty giving any one any occasion for gossip," said Roger, proudly.

"Nor I — well, go on, what did Tom say?"

"He said, 'What does this mean, Stanisfield? Berty is for ever on the river with the Mayor, he is for ever dangling about her house, and that park she is getting in shape for the children. If I were you I'd put a word in Mrs. Travers's ear. Don't speak to Berty.'"

"Poor Tom!" said Grandma.

"He's jealous, I suppose," said Roger. "Still, if he talks, some one else may talk. What does it mean that Jimson comes here so much? You don't suppose he has taken a fancy to Berty?"

Grandma smiled. "Yes, I do, a strong and uncommon fancy. He is perfectly fascinated by her."

Roger's jaw fell, and he smote with his fist on the arm of the rocking-chair. "Get rid of him, Grandma. Don't have him round."

"Why not — he's an honourable man."

"But not for Berty — you don't know, Grandma. He's all right morally, but he's vulgar — none of our set go with him."

"I don't find him unbearably vulgar. He seems a kind-hearted man, but I am unintentionally deceiving you. He is over forty years old, Roger."

"Well, men of forty, and men of fifty, fancy girls of half their age."

"Fancy them, yes, but he has no intention of falling in love with Berty. He is simply charmed with her as a companion."

"It's a dangerous companionship," grumbled Roger.

"Not so — they quarrel horribly," and Grandma laughed enjoyably over some reminiscences.

"Quarrel, do they?"

"Yes, Roger — my theory is that that man is too hard worked. Fagged out when he leaves his office, he is beset by petitioners for this thing and that thing. At home I fancy he has little peace, for his mother and sisters are ambitious socially, and urge him to attend various functions for which he

has no heart. Unexpectedly he has found a place of refuge here, and a congenial playfellow in Berty. I think he really has to put a restraint upon himself to keep from coming oftener."

"This is Jimson in a new light," said Roger, listening attentively.

"In River Street," continued Grandma, "he is free. No one comes to find him here. He has plenty of excitement and amusement if Berty is about. If she is out, he sits and talks to me by the hour."

"To you—" said Roger. "I should not think he would have anything in common with a lady like you."

"Ah, Roger, there is beauty in every human soul," said the little old lady, eloquently. "The trouble is we are all too much taken up with externals. There is something pathetic to me about this man. Hard-working, ambitious, longing for congenial companionship, not knowing just where to get it, he keeps on at his daily treadmill. He has got to be a kind of machine, and he has tried to stifle the spirit within him. Berty, with her youth and freshness, has, in some way or other, the knack of putting her finger on some sensitive nerve that responds

easily to her touch. He is becoming quite interested in what she is interested in."

Roger was staring at her in great amusement. "You talk well, Grandma, and at unusual length for you, but a man convinced against his will, you know — "

The old lady smiled sweetly at him, smiled with the patience of one who is willing to wait a long time in order to be understood. Then knitting steadily without looking at her work, she gazed far out over the beautiful river.

It was very wide just here, and, now that evening was falling, they could barely distinguish the fields and white farmhouses on the other side. The stars were coming out one by one — those "beautiful seeds sown in the field of the sky." Roger could see the old lady's lips moving. She was probably repeating some favourite passages of Scripture. What a good woman she was. What a help to him, and what a valuable supplement to his own mother, who was a woman of another type.

His eyes grew moist, and for a long time he sat gazing with her at the darkening yet increasingly beautiful sky and river.

The hammering went on below, until Berty's voice suddenly rang out. "We'll have to stop, Mr.

Jimson. It's getting too dark to see where to put the nails."

"I'll come help you to-morrow evening," replied the Mayor, in his thick, good-natured voice.

"No, thank you. I won't trouble you. I'll get a carpenter. You've been too good already."

"I like to do it. You've no idea how much I enjoy puttering round a house," replied Mr. Jimson. "I never get a chance at home."

"Why — aren't there things to do about your house?"

"Yes; but if I get at a thing I'm sure to be interrupted, and then my mother doesn't like to see me carpentering."

"You ought to have a house of your own," said Berty, decidedly. "It is the duty of every man to marry and bring up a family and to keep it together. That helps the Union, but if you have no family you can't keep it together, and you are an unworthy son of this great republic."

"That's a fact," replied the Mayor. "I guess we'll have a little talk about it. I'll just sit down here on this bench a minute to rest. I'm quite blown."

Berty made no response, or, if she did, it was

in such a low tone that the occupants of the veranda could not hear, and presently the Mayor went on.

"Yes, I've often thought of getting married. A man ought to, before he gets too old. How old would you take me to be?"

"About fifty," came promptly, in Berty's clear voice.

Her companion was evidently annoyed, for it was some time before he spoke, and then he said, briefly, "Fifty!"

"Well," said Berty, kindly, "I said *about* fifty. I dare say you're not much more than forty."

"I suppose forty seems like dead old age to you?" queried the Mayor, curiously.

"Oh, yes — it seems far off like the other side of the river," replied the girl.

"Well, I'm forty-five," said the Mayor.

"Forty-five," repeated Berty, musingly, "just think of it! You seem quite young in your ways."

"Young — I dare say I feel as young as you," he replied. "I wish you were a bit older."

"Why?" asked Berty, innocently.

"Oh, well, I don't know why," he replied, with sudden sheepishness.

Roger glanced at Grandma. It was not like her to play eavesdropper.

But dear Grandma was not hearing a word of what was being said below. Her knitting had fallen from her hand, her head had dropped forward, her cheeks were gently puffing in and out. She was quietly and unmistakably asleep.

Roger smiled, and kept on listening. He had no scruples on his own account, and he wanted his question answered. Why was the Mayor dangling about Berty?

Mr. Jimson was still on the subject of matrimony. The quiet evening, the, as he supposed, secluded spot, Berty's amiability, all tended to excite confidence in him.

In response to something he had said, Berty was remarking, with gentle severity, "I should think you would talk this matter over with your mother rather than with me."

"Well," Mr. Jimson said, thoughtfully, "it's queer how you can tell things to strangers, easier than to your mother."

"*I* couldn't," said Berty, promptly. "If I were thinking of getting married, I'd ask Grandma to advise me. She's had *so* much experience. She chose Roger of all Margaretta's admirers."

"Did she, now?" said the Mayor, in admiration. "That was a first-class choice." Then he asked,

insinuatingly, "And have you ever consulted her for yourself?"

"Of course not — not yet. It's too soon."

"I suppose it is," said Mr. Jimson, in a disappointed voice, "and, as I said before, I wish you were ten years older."

"You don't mean to say that you would think of me for yourself?" asked Berty, in a sudden, joyful voice.

"Yes, I would," he replied, boldly.

"Oh, thank you, thank you," said the girl, gaily; "that's my first proposal, or, rather, I suppose it isn't a *bona fide* proposal. It's just a hint. Still it counts. I've really got out into life. Margaretta has always kept me down where gentlemen were concerned. Older sisters have to, you know. I'll be just dreadfully interested in you after this. Do let me pick you out a wife."

"Well, I don't know about that," said the Mayor, guardedly.

"Just tell me what you want," continued Berty. "I know lots of girls, but I suppose you will want a woman. I know some of them, too — must she be light or dark?"

Mr. Jimson looked at Berty. "Black hair."

"Very well — black hair to start with. Not tall, but short, I suppose."

"Why short?" asked the Mayor, suspiciously.

"Well, you're *not* dreadfully tall for a man, you know."

The Mayor seemed to be sulking for some time. Then he said, "I like a good-sized woman."

"Tall and black-haired," said Berty, in a business-like way. "Now, do you want a quiet woman, or a lively woman — a social woman, or a home body?"

"None of your rattlers for me," said the man, hastily. "I want a quiet tongue, good manners, and no wasteful habits."

"Do you want to entertain much?"

"Oh, law, no!" said her companion, wearily. "Upon my word, I think a deaf and dumb wife would suit me best. Then she couldn't go to parties and drag me with her — Look here, there's a woman I've seen sometimes when I go to church with my mother, that I've often thought was a nice-looking kind of person. You'd be sure to know her, for one of her brothers is a great friend of your brother-in-law."

"Who is she?" asked Berty, eagerly.

Her companion seemed to have some hesitation

about mentioning the name. At last he said, "Mother says her first name is Selina."

"Not Selina Everest — don't tell me that," said Berty, quickly.

"Yes, that's her name."

Berty groaned. "And is she the only woman you have in your mind?"

"She's the only one I can think of now as cutting any kind of a figure before me."

"Selina Everest!" groaned Berty again. "Why don't you say the Queen of England and be done with it? She's the most exclusive of our ridiculously exclusive set. She is an aristocrat to her finger-tips. She wouldn't look at you — that is, I don't think — she probably wouldn't — "

"How old is she?" asked the Mayor, breaking in upon her.

"Let me see — Tom, her brother, is six years older than I am, Walter is twenty-seven, Jim is thirty, Maude is older than he is, and Augustus is older than that. Oh, Miss Everest must be nearly forty."

"Then she'll jump at a chance to marry," said the Mayor, coolly. "Has she a good temper?"

"Yes," said Berty, feebly, "but — "

"But what? Does she snap sometimes?"

"No, no, she is always ladylike, but I am just sure she wouldn't marry you."

"Why are you so sure," asked the Mayor, sharply.

"Because — because — "

"Am I a red Indian or a cowboy?" asked Mr. Jimson, indignantly.

"No, but — "

"Is she a strong girl?"

"No, she is often in bed—I don't really think—"

"Airs, probably," said her companion. "Has been brought up soft. I'd break her of that."

"She wouldn't marry you," said Berty, desperately.

"Don't be too sure of that," and Mr. Jimson's voice sounded angry to the man on the veranda above.

"I tell you she wouldn't. I've heard her just rave against people who don't do things just as she does. If you ate with your knife, she'd think you were dust beneath her feet."

The Mayor was silent.

"Why, if you wore carpet slippers in the parlour, or a dressing-gown, or went about the house in your shirt-sleeves, she'd have a fit."

"And who does all these things?" asked the Mayor, sneeringly.

"You do!" replied Berty, stung into impertinence. "They say you received a delegation of clergymen in your slippers and dressing-gown."

"That's a lie," he said, promptly, "got up by enemies."

"Well, you don't talk elegantly," said Berty, wildly. "Miss Everest couldn't stand that."

"Who says I ain't elegant?" asked the Mayor, fiercely.

"I do," replied his companion. "You say 'dry' for thirsty, and 'I ain't' for I am not, and 'git' for get, and — and lots of other things, and you don't move gracefully. Miss Everest likes tall, thin men. I once heard her say so."

"Is it my fault that I'm short?" roared the Mayor. "I didn't make myself."

Roger, convulsed with amusement on the veranda above, saw with regret that Grandma was waking up.

"Quarrelling again!" she murmured, moving her head about restlessly. "Send him home, Berty. Mr. Jimson, don't mind her."

Roger had missed something, for Berty was now giving the Mayor a terrible scolding. "I think you are a horrid, deceitful man. You come here with your mind all made up about a certain woman.

You pretend to like me, then draw me out about the one you like. I'll never speak to you again."

Roger hung entranced over the railing. The back gate had just slammed on Mr. Jimson, and Berty was pouring out a flood of eloquent endearment on the pigeons.

Roger ran down the stairs with a broad smile on his face. There was no danger of sentimental nonsense between these two people.

"Hello, Berty," he said, "want some help with your pidgie widgies?"

"No, Roger," she replied, disconsolately, "I can't get the boxes up to-night. Still, you might help me cover them some more. I'm dreadfully afraid of rats getting at them. There are legions of them down here."

"You've had some one here, haven't you?" said Roger, hypocritically.

"Yes, that miserable Mayor, but he's so disagreeable that I sha'n't let him help me finish. I'm never going to speak to him again. He's too mean to live."

"I'll come and help you," said Roger, bending over the pigeons to conceal his face. "Where are these boxes going in the meantime?"

"Up on top of those barrels. Aren't those fan-

tails sweet? Oh, you lubbie dubbies, Berty loves you better than the hateful old Mayor."

Roger laughed outright, helped his young sister-in-law at the same time, and wondered whether the breach between her and her new friend would be final.

CHAPTER XI.

A PROPOSED SUPPER-PARTY

Two mornings later, Roger had come down to River Street with a basket of green stuff for Grandma.

One result of his wife's new economy was that he had turned errand-boy. He grumbled a little about it, but Margaretta was inexorable.

"You want me to save," she said. "I'm going to do it. You can just as well run down to River Street before you go to your office, as for me to give a boy ten cents for doing it."

"Ten cents is a paltry sum."

"Yes, but ten tens are not paltry, and if you save ten cents twenty times you have two dollars. Now trot along!" and Roger always trotted, smiling as he went.

On this particular morning, Grandma, after gratefully receiving the basket, stood turning over the crisp, green lettuce, the parsley, beets, and lovely

flowers with her slender fingers, when Berty appeared fresh and rosy.

"Oh, Roger, dear," she cried, flying to her writing-desk when she saw him, "wait a moment and take a note to the city hall, will you?"

"Yes, Miss Lobbyist," said her brother-in-law, good-naturedly.

"Why, this is to the Mayor," he said, in pretended surprise, when she handed him her note.

"Yes, why not?" asked Berty, opening her eyes wide.

"I thought you had done with him."

"Oh, that quarrel," said Berty, carelessly, "that was two whole days ago. I've had two bouquets, and a bag of some new kind of feed for the pigeons from him since then. I'm doing him a favour now. There's some one coming here to supper to-night that he'd like to meet."

"Who is it?" asked Roger, curiously.

"Selina Everest."

"I shouldn't think he'd be her style," said the young man, guilelessly.

"He isn't," sighed Berty, "but he likes her, and I'm bound to give them a chance to meet. I hope she won't snub him."

"She is too much of a lady to do that," said Roger.

"You're right," replied Berty, but she sighed again.

Roger's eyes sparkled. "Grandma," he said, abruptly turning to her, "it is some time since Margaretta and I have had a meal in your house. Can't you invite us, too? We both like Selina."

"Certainly, come by all means," said the little old lady.

Berty looked doubtful and did not second the invitation.

"What time is supper?" asked Roger.

Grandma looked at Berty. "I let her have her own way about the meals. Breakfast is at eight, dinner at twelve — the universal hour on this street — high tea at six, supper is a movable feast — what time to-night, granddaughter?"

"Ten," said Berty, promptly, "but we'll sit on the veranda first and talk. Some one must keep at the piano all the time, playing dreamy music."

"All right," said Roger, promptly, "we'll be here."

Berty followed him to the street door. "You'll be nice to the Mayor."

"Nice! — I guess so."

"But don't be too nice — don't make fun of him."

"Berty!" he said, reproachfully.

"Oh, you wouldn't make fun of him openly," she said, with sudden wrath, "but I know that look in your eyes," and with a decided tap on the back she sent him out the front door.

Roger, chuckling with delight as he made his way to the iron works, ran into Tom Everest.

"What are you laughing at?" asked Tom, with his own eyes shining.

"Can't tell," said Roger.

"I'll bet it was some joke about Berty," remarked Tom.

"Oh, Berty! Berty!" exclaimed his friend, "all the world is thinking Berty, and dreaming Berty, and seeing Berty. You're a crank, Everest."

"It was Berty," said Tom, decidedly. "Come, now, out with it."

"She's going to have a party to-night," said Roger, exploding with laughter; "your sister Selina and the Mayor, my wife and I."

"I'm going too," said Tom, firmly.

Roger caught him by the shoulder. "Man, if I find you there to-night, I'll shoot you."

"I'm going," said Tom, and he backed into his insurance office, leaving Roger wildly waving his market-basket at him from the street.

A few hours later, Roger looked up at his wife as he sat at the lunch-table, and said, "Don't you want to go to Grandma's this evening?"

"Yes, dear, if you do," she replied, holding out his cup of bouillon for him.

At luncheon they were obliged to wait on themselves, and Roger vowed that he liked it.

"All right, dear," he said, as he carefully took the hot bouillon from her, "we'll go."

"After dinner, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Any one else going?" asked Margaretta.

"She expects some others — Selina Everest for one."

"That's nice," said Margaretta, emphatically.

"And the Mayor," added Roger.

"Oh!" and Margaretta drew a long breath. "I have never met him."

"Don't you want to?"

"Oh, yes," she said, lingeringly.

"Very well. I'll come home a bit early."

Margaretta, brimming over with satisfaction, gazed affectionately at him. "Roger, you look ten years younger than you did four weeks ago."

"I've got the burden of foreboding off my shoul-

ders," he said, giving them a slight shake as he spoke.

"A burden that will never be placed there again, I hope."

Roger smiled, and, looking at her happy face, said, earnestly, "Margaretta, every day of my life I thank God for the good fortune that made you my partner for life."

While Roger was talking to his wife, Berty was having a somewhat excited interview with the Mayor.

"Just grabbed ten minutes from lunch-hour," he said, "to run up and thank you for your invitation for to-night — now what shall I wear? Dress suit?"

Berty looked him over. No young girl going to her first ball ever waited a reply with more anxiety than he did.

"Let me see," she said, thoughtfully. "We shall be sitting out-of-doors. I think I would not wear evening dress. Have you got a nice dark suit?"

"Yes, just got one from the tailor."

"Good — put that on."

"And what kind of a tie?" he asked, feverishly.

"Oh, I don't know — white, I think. That is cool and nice for summer."

"Can't I wear red?" he asked, anxiously.

"Well, yes, a certain shade, but you'd have to be very particular. Why do you wish red?"

"I — I — a woman once told me I looked well in red," he said, sheepishly.

Berty surveyed him as an indulgent mother might survey a child.

"Very well, wear red. It is a great thing to have something on that you feel at ease in. But, as I say, you must be very particular about the shade. I'll run up-stairs and get a piece of silk, and do you try to match it," and she darted away.

Mr. Jimson occupied the time while she was gone in walking about the room, nervously mopping his face, and staring out the window at the carriage waiting for him.

"Here it is," exclaimed Berty, running back, "the precise shade. Now *do* be particular."

"You're real good," he replied, gratefully, and, pocketing the scrap, he was hurrying away, when he turned back. "What time shall I come? Can't I get here before the others?"

"Yes, do," replied Berty, "come about half-past seven."

"All right — thank you," and he rushed away.

Berty followed him to the front door. "Mr. Jim-

son," she called, when his hand was on the door-knob.

"Hello!" and he turned back.

"You won't be offended with me if I say something?" she replied, hesitatingly.

"Not a bit of it."

"Well, if I were you, I wouldn't talk too much to-night. Dignified reserve impresses women."

"All right," he said, good-naturedly. "I'm safe enough, if I don't get rattled. Then I'm apt to make a fool of myself and gabble. Sometimes in making a speech I can't wind up, even if I see people looking mad enough to kill me."

"Don't do that!" exclaimed Berty. "Oh, don't be long-winded. Just sit and watch Miss Everest."

"All right," said the Mayor, "till this evening!" and he ran down the steps.

"Oh, dear," murmured Berty, as she went upstairs, "I'm dreadfully in doubt about this party. I wish Margaretta and Roger weren't coming. The Mayor has been working himself into a state over Miss Everest. If he doesn't please her he'll blame me. Oh, dear!"

"What's the matter, granddaughter?" asked a cheery voice.

"I'm in trouble, Grandma. The Mayor likes

Miss Everest. That's why I'm asking him here to meet her, but I'm afraid things won't go right."

"Poor little matchmaker," said Grandma, soothingly.

"Did I do right, Grandma? I would have consulted you before, but I didn't like to give his secret away."

"You did what a kind heart would prompt you to do. Don't worry — I will help you with your party."

"Will you? — oh, that is lovely. Everything will go right!" and she threw both arms round her grandmother's neck.

CHAPTER XII.

A DISTURBED HOSTESS

Unfortunately for Berty, a woman across the street chose the hour of seven o'clock to have a fit of hysterics. Nothing would satisfy her perturbed relatives but a visit from "Madam," as Grandma was known to the street.

Half-past seven came, and no Mayor. Selina Everest, tall, pale, and lilylike, in white and green, arrived soon after, then came Margaretta and Roger, and then, to Berty's dismay, appeared Tom Everest, dropping in as if he expected to find her alone.

Berty said nothing, but her face grew pinker. Then she swept them all out to the semi-darkness of the veranda. The Mayor should not step into that brightly lighted room and find them all there.

Wedged comfortably on the veranda, and talking over mutual friends, Margaretta, Selina, and Tom were having a charming time. Roger, seated by the

glass door, was restless, and kept moving in and out the dining-room.

Berty was like a bird, perching here and there, and running at intervals to the front windows, ostensibly to watch for her grandmother, in reality to seize upon the Mayor at the earliest moment of his arrival.

Margaretta and Selina were in a corner of the veranda. Tom was nearest the dining-room, and presently there was a whisper in his ear. "Jimson has arrived — hot — mad — explanatory — detained — Berty condoling."

Not a muscle of Tom's face moved, and Roger, turning on his heel, departed.

Presently he came back. "Berty frantic — Jimson has got on wrong kind of necktie. She has corralled him behind piano."

Poor Berty — she had indeed driven the unhappy late-comer behind the upright piano in the parlour. "Oh, Mr. Jimson, how could you? That necktie is a bright green!"

"Gr — green!" stuttered the discomfited man. "Why, I matched your sample."

"You're colour blind!" exclaimed the girl, in despair. "Oh, what shall we do — but your suit is lovely," she added, as she saw the wilting effect of her words upon him. "Come, quick, before any

one sees," and she hurried him out into the hall. "Here, go in that corner while I get one of my shirt-waist ties."

Mr. Jimson, hot and perspiring, tried to obliterate himself against the wall until she came back.

"Here is a pale blue tie," said Berty. "Now stand before the glass in that hat-rack, — give me that green thing. Selina Everest would have a fit if she saw it."

The Mayor hastily tore off the bit of brilliant grass-green silk, and, seizing Berty's blue satin, endeavoured to fasten it round his creaking collar.

Roger peeped out through the dining-room door and went back to Tom, and in a convulsion of wicked delight reported. "He's titivating in the hall — has got on one of Berty's ties. Just creep out to see him."

Tom could not resist, and seeing that Margaretta and his sister were deep in the mysteries of coming fashions in dress, he tiptoed into the dining-room.

Berty and the Mayor out in the hall were too much engaged with each other to heed the peeping eyes at the crack of the dining-room door.

Mr. Jimson was in a rage, and was sputtering unintelligible words. Berty, too, was getting excited. "If you say a naughty word," she threatened,

"I'll take that tie away from you, and you'll have to go home!"

The Mayor, wrathfully beating one foot up and down on the oilcloth, was trying to make the tie tie itself.

"Hang it!" he said, at last, throwing it down, "the thing won't go at all. It was made for some woman's neck. Give me that green thing."

"You sha'n't have it," Berty flared up. "You will spoil yourself. Here, let me have the blue one. I'll fasten it for you, if you'll never tell any one I did it."

Tom and Roger nearly exploded into unseemly merriment. The sight of the unfortunate Jimson's face, the mingled patience and wrath of Berty, made them clap their hands over their mouths.

"There!" cried Berty, at last, "it's tied. You men have no patience. Look round now. Come softly into the dining-room and drink some lemonade before I introduce you — no, stay here, I'll bring it to you. Smooth your hair on the left side."

The unfortunate man, breathing heavily, stood like a statue, while Tom and Roger tumbled over each other out to the veranda.

"What are you two laughing at?" asked Margaretta, suspiciously.

"At that black cloud there," said Tom, pointing to the sky. "See it dragging itself over the stars. I say, Stanisfield, doesn't that cloud strike you as being of a comical shape?"

"Very," exclaimed Roger, with sudden laughter, "very comical. Trails out just like a four-in-hand necktie."

"Very like it," echoed Tom; then they both laughed again.

In the midst of their merriment, a quiet, patient voice was heard saying, "Margaretta, let me introduce Mr. Jimson to you, — and Miss Everest, Mr. Jimson."

Tom and Roger huddled aside like two naughty boys, and Berty, with the Mayor behind her, stepped to the other end of the veranda.

Margaretta stretched out a slim, pretty hand. Miss Everest did likewise, and the Mayor, breathing hard and fast, turned to the two men. "I don't need an introduction to you."

"No," they both said, shaking hands with a sudden and overwhelming solemnity.

They all sat down, and an uninterrupted and uninteresting chatter began. Every one but the Mayor was good-naturedly trying to make Berty's party a success, and every one was unconsciously defeating

this object by engaging in trifling and stupid small talk.

"We're not having a bit of a good time," said Berty, at last, desperately. "Let's go into the house."

They all smiled, and followed her into the parlour. Here at least the Mayor would be able to look at Miss Everest. Out on the veranda he could not see her at all.

Quite unconscious of the others, he stared uninterruptedly at her. She was apparently oblivious of him, and was again talking fashions to Margaretta.

But Tom and Roger — Berty glared wrathfully at them. They were examining one of Grandma's books of engravings taken from Italian paintings, and if it had been the latest number of some comic paper they would not have had more fun over it.

"Here is a framed one," she said, taking a picture from the mantel, "by Sandro Botticelli." Then, as she got close to them, she said, threateningly, "If you two don't stop giggling, I'll shame you before everybody!"

They tried to be good, they honestly did. They did not want to tease the kind little sister, but something had come over the two men — they were just like two bad schoolboys. If Mr. Jimson had been

aware of their mirth, they would have ceased, but just now he was so utterly unconscious — so wrapped up in the contemplation of Miss Everest, that they went on enjoying their secret pleasure with the luxury of good men who seldom indulge in a joke at the expense of others, but who rival the most thoughtless and frivolous when once they set out to amuse themselves.

Yes, Mr. Jimson was staring and silent, but after a time his silence ceased, and he began to talk. To talk for no apparent reason, and on no apparent subject.

Margaretta and Selina, who had been paying very little attention to him, courteously paused to listen, and he went on. Went on, till Berty began to twitch in dismay, and to wink — at first slyly and secretly, then openly and undisguisedly at him.

It was of no use. He had got "rattled," as he had predicted, and was bound to have his say out. He made her a slight sign with his head to assure her that he understood her signals, and would if he could pay attention to them, but he was too far gone.

Berty was in despair. Tom and Roger, to keep themselves from downright shouting, were also talk-

ing very fast and very glibly about nothing in particular.

Berty, in utter dismay, turned her head to her three groups of guests — Selina and Margaretta gently and wonderingly polite, the Mayor seated by a small table flooding the air with garrulity, and Tom and Roger in the shade of the big piano lamp, expounding all sorts of nonsensical theories and fancies.

Tom just now was on language. "Yes, my dear fellow," he was saying, rapidly and with outstretched arm, "language is a wonderful thing. I may say that to see a young child grappling with the problem is an awe-inspiring and remarkable sight. Sometimes when it fills the air with its incoherent longings and strivings after oral utterance, after the sounds which custom has made the representation of ideas, the soul of the beholder is struck dumb with admiration, and even I may say terror. If such is the power of the infant brain, what will be the grasp of the adult?"

At this instant Grandma entered the room. She took in the situation at a glance, and her presence afforded instant relief. The flood of "Jimsonese," as Roger and Tom styled the Mayor's eloquence, instantly ceased, the two bad boys shut their mouths.

Grandma shook hands with all her guests, then quietly sat down.

"I hope you are not very tired," said Margaretta, gently. "How is your patient?"

"Better — she only wanted a little comfort."

"What made her have hysterics?" asked Berty, eagerly, and with a desire to make much of the latest addition to their circle.

Grandma smiled. "She is a very nervous woman, and has been up nights a great deal with a sick baby. She lay down about two hours ago to take a nap. The house has a great many mice in it, and one got in her hair. It was entangled for a few seconds, and she was terrified. It would be very much more afraid of her than she would be of it."

Tom and Roger laughed uproariously, so uproariously and joyfully that Grandma's black eyes went to them, rested on them, and did not leave them.

But they did not care. They had not enjoyed themselves so much for years, and they were going to continue doing so, although their punishment was bound to come. Presently, when the conversation between Grandma, Margaretta, Selina, and Berty became really interrupted by their giggling, the old lady left her seat and came over to them.

"Have you been acting like this all the evening?" she asked, severely.

Tom looked at Roger, and Roger looked at Tom.

"And teasing poor Berty?"

Again they looked at each other.

"When I was a girl," said Grandma, musingly, "I remember getting into those gales of laughter. How I revelled in that intoxication of the spirit! I would even scream with delight, and if I were alone with my girl companions would sometimes roll on the ground in ecstasy. You are pretty old for such pranks, but I see you are ready for one. You ought to be alone for a time. Follow me," and she left the room.

She took them down-stairs. "Where are we going?" asked Roger, humbly, and nudging Tom.

"Out with the pigeons," she said. "There is no room in my house for guests who make fun of each other."

"But the supper?" said Roger, anxiously.

"It would grieve Berty's hospitable heart for you to miss that," said Grandma, "so when you have quite finished your laughing, come up-stairs again, and we will all have a nice time together."

Tom gave Roger a thwack, then, as he found himself in a latticed porch, and contemplated by a

number of mild-faced, inquiring pigeons, he dropped on a box and began to snicker again.

"What set you off?" asked the old lady, curiously.

They both began to tell her of poor Berty's trials with the Mayor.

Grandma laughed too. "There is something funny about that friendship," she said, "but there is no harm, but rather good in it, and I shall not put a stop to it. Do you know that man would make a good husband for your sister, Tom Everest?"

Tom at this became so silly, and began to pound Roger on the back in such an idiotic manner, that Grandma gently closed the door and stole away.

Going up the steps, she could hear them laughing — now in Homeric fashion. There were no women about to be startled by their noise.

CHAPTER XIII.

AN ANXIOUS MIND

"How did I act?" asked the Mayor, humbly. It was eight o'clock the next morning, and he was standing before Berty as she took her breakfast alone, Grandma having gone across the street to visit her hysterical patient.

Berty thoughtfully drank some coffee.

"I'd take a cup, too, if you'd offer it to me," he said, still more humbly, and sitting down opposite her. "Somehow or other I hadn't much appetite this morning, and only took a bite of breakfast."

Berty, still in silence, poured him out a cup of strong coffee, and put in it a liberal supply of cream. Then, pushing the sugar-bowl toward him, she again devoted herself to her own breakfast.

"You're ashamed of me," said the Mayor, lifting lumps of sugar into his cup with a downcast air. "I gabbled."

"Yes, you gabbled," said Berty, quietly.

"But I'm going to make an impression," said the Mayor, slapping the table with one hand. "I'm going to make that woman look at me, and size me up, if she doesn't do anything more."

"She sized you up last night," said Berty, mournfully.

"Did she say anything about me?" asked Mr. Jimson, eagerly.

"Not a word — but she looked unutterable things."

"Do you think I'd better call on her?" he asked, desperately.

"Oh, gracious, no!" cried Berty, "you'd spoil everything. Leave matters to me in future."

"I thought I might explain," he said, with a crestfallen air.

"What would you explain?" asked Berty, cuttingly.

"I'd tell her — well, I'd just remark casually after we'd spoken about the weather that she might have noticed that there was something queer, or that I was a little out in some of my remarks — "

"Well," said Berty, severely, "what then?"

"I'd just inform her, in a passing way, that I'd always been a steady man, and that if she would kindly overlook the past — "

"Oh! oh!" ejaculated Berty, "you wouldn't hint to a lady that she might have thought you were under the influence of some stimulant?"

"N-n-no, not exactly," blundered the Mayor, "but I might quote a little poetry about the intoxication of her presence — I cut a fine piece out of the paper the other day. Perhaps I might read it to her."

Berty put her arm down on the table and laughed. "Well, if you're not the oddest man. You are just lovely and original."

The Mayor looked at her doubtfully, and drank his coffee. Then he got up. "I don't want you to think I'm not in earnest about this business. I never give up anything I've set my mind on, and I like that woman, and I want her to be Mrs. Peter Jimson."

Berty shivered. "Oh, dear, dear! how badly you will feel if she makes up her mind to be Mrs. Somebody Else — but I'll help you all I can. You have a great ally in me."

"I'm obliged to you," said the Mayor, gruffly.

"I was ashamed of those other two men last evening," said Berty, getting up and walking out toward the hall with him. "I wanted to shake them."

"I didn't take much stock in their actions," said the Mayor, indifferently. "They just felt funny, and would have carried on whether I had been there or not."

"How forgiving in you — how noble," said Berty, warmly.

"Nothing noble about it — I know men, and haven't any curiosity about them. It's you women that bother the life out of me. I don't know how to take you."

"It's only a little past eight," said Berty, suddenly. "Can't you come down to the wharf with me? You don't need to go to town yet."

"Yes, I suppose so," said the Mayor, reluctantly.

Berty caught up her sailor hat, and tripped beside him down to the street, talking on any subject that came uppermost.

The Mayor, however, returned to his first love. "Now, if there was something I could do to astonish her," he said. "If her house got on fire, and I could rescue her, or if she fell out of a boat into the river, and I could pull her in."

"She's pretty tall," said Berty, turning and surveying the rather short man by her side. "I doubt if you could pull her in."

"If I got a good grip I could," he said, confidently.

"The worst of it is, those heroic things don't happen once in an age," said Berty, in a matter-of-fact voice, "and, anyway, a woman would rather you would please her in a thousand little ways than in one big one."

"What do you call little ways?" asked the Mayor.

"Oh, being nice."

"And what is niceness?" he went on, in an unsatisfied voice.

"Niceness? — well, it is hard to tell. Pick up her gloves if she drops them, never cross her, always kiss her good-bye in the morning, and tell her she's the sweetest woman in the world when you come home in the evening."

"Well, now," said the Mayor, in an aggrieved voice, "as if I'm likely to have the chance. You won't even let me call on her."

"No, don't you go near her," said Berty, "not for awhile. Not till I sound her about you."

"How do you think I stand now with her?" asked Mr. Jimson, with a downcast air.

"Well, to tell the truth," said Berty, frankly, "I think it's this way. She wasn't inclined to pay much attention to you at first, not any more than

if you were a table or a chair. When you began to talk she observed you, and I think she was saying to herself, 'What kind of a man is this?' Then when Grandma drove Tom and Roger out of the room, I think she wanted to laugh."

"Then she must have been a little interested," said the man, breathlessly.

"No," said Berty, gravely, "when a woman laughs at a man, it's all up with him."

"Then you think I might as well give up?" said the Mayor, bitterly.

"Not at all," said his sympathizer, kindly. "There may fall to you some lucky chance to reinstate yourself."

"Now what could it be?" asked Mr. Jimson, eagerly. "What should I be looking out for?"

"Look out for everything," said Berty, oracularly. "She will forget about the other night."

"I thought you told me the other day that women never forget."

"Neither they do," said Berty, promptly, "never, never."

"According to all I can make out," said the Mayor, with a chagrined air, "you women have all the airs and graces of a combine, and none of its understandabilities. Your way of doing business

don't suit me. When I spot a bargain I jump on it. I close the affair before another fellow has a chance. That's how I've made what little money I have."

"You mustn't make love the way you do business," said Berty, shaking her head. "Oh, no, no."

"Well, now, isn't it business to want a good wife?"

"Yes," said Berty, promptly, "and I admire your up-to-date spirit. There's been a lot of nonsense talked about roses, and cottages, and heavenly eyes, and delicious noses and chins. I believe in being practical. You want this kind of a wife — look for her. Don't fall in love with some silly thing, and then get tired of her in a week."

"What kind of a husband would you like?" asked the Mayor, curiously.

"Well," said Berty, drawing in a long breath of the crisp morning air. "I want a tall, slight man, with brown curly hair and gray eyes."

"That'll be a hard combination to find," said her companion, grimly.

"Yes, but I shall think all the more of him when I find him, and he must be clever, very clever — ahead of all the men in his State, whichever State it happens to be — and he must have a perfect temper, because I have a very faulty one, and he

must be of a noble disposition, and looked up to by every one he knows."

"I never met that kind of a man," said the Mayor, drily.

"Nor I," said Berty, "but there must be such a man in the world."

"How about Tom Everest?" asked Mr. Jimson. "I saw him looking at you last night."

"Tom Everest!" exclaimed Berty, indignantly. "An insurance agent!"

The Mayor snickered enjoyably, then fell behind a step, for they had just reached the entrance of Milligan's Wharf.

Berty was talking to some little girls who, even at this early hour, were hanging about the gate of the new park.

"Of course you may come in," she said, producing a key from her pocket. "The workmen have about finished — there are a few loose boards about, but I will take care that they don't fall on you."

With squeals of delight, the little girls dashed ahead, then stood staring about them.

Milligan's Wharf had indeed been transformed. A high fence surrounded it on every side, one end had been smoothed and levelled for games, the other was grassy and planted with trees.

"Those elms will be kept trimmed," said Berty, "except in midsummer. I am determined that these River Street children shall have enough sunlight for once — just look at those little girls."

The Mayor smiled broadly. Like discoverers who have fallen on some rich store of treasure, the little girls had espied a huge heap of sand, and had precipitated themselves upon it.

"Isn't it queer how crazy children get over sand?" said Berty. Then she stepped into a small gate-house. "Here, children, are pails and shovels. Now have a good time."

The little shovels were plied vigorously, but they were not quick enough for the children, and presently abandoning them, they rolled in delight over the soft sandy mass.

"There is no doubt that our park will be a success," said Berty, with a smile.

"By the way," asked the Mayor, shrewdly, "who is to look after these children? If you turn all the hoodlums of the neighbourhood in, there will be scrapping."

"I was thinking of that," said Berty, wrinkling her brows. "We ought to have some man of woman here. But we have no money to pay any one."

"I suppose you wouldn't take such a position," said the Mayor.

"I!" exclaimed Berty, "why, I'd love it."

"You wouldn't need to stay all the time," said Mr. Jimson. "You could get a woman to help you."

"All the women about here are pretty busy."

"You'd pay her, of course. There'd have to be a salary — not a heavy one — but I could fix up something with the city council. They've built the park. They're bound to provide for it."

"I should love to earn some money," said Berty, eagerly, "but, Mr. Jimson, perhaps people would talk and say I had just had the park made to create a position for myself."

"Suppose they did — what would you care?"

"Why, I'd care because I didn't."

"And no one would think you had. Don't worry about that. Now I must get back to town."

"Mind you're to make the first speech to-morrow at the opening of this place," said Berty.

"Yes, I remember."

"And," she went on, hesitatingly, "don't you think you'd better commit your speech to paper? Then you'd know when to stop."

"No, I wouldn't," he said, hopelessly. "Some-

thing would prompt me to make a few oral remarks after I'd laid down the paper."

"I should like you to make a good speech, because Miss Everest will be here."

"Will she? Then I must try to fix myself. How shall I do it?"

"I might have a pile of boards arranged at the back of the park," said Berty, "and as soon as you laid down the paper, I'd give a signal to a boy to topple them over. In the crash you could sit down."

"No, I wouldn't," he said, drearily. "I'd wait till the fuss was over, then I'd go on."

"And that wouldn't be a good plan, either," said Berty, "because some one might get hurt. I'll tell you what I'll do. You give me a sheet of paper just the size of that on which you write your speech. Mind, now, and write it. Don't commit it. And don't look at this last sheet till you stand on the platform and your speech is finished."

"What will be on it?" asked Mr. Jimson, eagerly.

"The most awful hobgoblin you ever saw. I used to draw beauties at school. When you see this hobgoblin you won't be able to think of anything

else. Just fix your eyes on his terrible eyes, and you will sit down in the most natural way possible."

"Maybe I will," he said, with a sigh, "but I doubt it — you're a good girl, anyway."

"Oh, no, I'm not, Mr. Mayor, begging your pardon. I'm only trying to be one."

"Well, I've got to go," said her companion, reluctantly. "I wish I could skip that stived-up office and go out on the river with you."

"I wish you could," said Berty, frankly. "But I've got work to do, too. I want every clergyman in the town to be present to-morrow. Have your speech short, will you, for it will probably be a hot day."

"All right," said the Mayor. "Good-bye," and he trotted away.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE OPENING OF THE PARK

THE next afternoon had come, and was nearly gone. There had been a crowd of people at the opening of the Milligan Wharf Park. Ragged children, sailors, day-labourers, and poor women of the neighbourhood had stood shoulder to shoulder with some of the first citizens of the town — citizens who in the whole course of their lives had never been on this street before.

The well-dressed spectators had looked about them with interest. This fad of Mrs. Travers's young granddaughter had excited much attention. She had carried her scheme through, and many curious glances had been sent in the direction of the suddenly shy, smiling girl, trying to hide behind the stately little grandmother, who sat looking as if the opening of parks for poor children were a daily occurrence in her life.

There had been room for some of the audience

in the long, low shed erected for a playroom for the children on rainy days; however, many persons had been obliged to sit on benches placed in the hot sunlight, therefore the opening exercises had been arranged to be exceedingly short.

The Mayor, unfortunately, had transgressed, as he had prophesied he would do. However, in his speech he had, to Berty's delight, carefully abstained from mentioning the part she had taken in procuring the park for the children of River Street. But succeeding speakers had so eulogized the self-sacrificing and public-spirited girl, that finally she had slipped away into one of the summer-houses, where, now that all was over, she was talking with her grandmother.

They had the park to themselves as far as grown persons were concerned. The rich and well-to-do people had filed away. The poor men and women of the neighbourhood had gone to their homes for their early evening meal.

"They say every rose has a thorn," exclaimed Berty. "Where is the thorn in this?" and she waved her hand about the huge playground where scores of children were disporting themselves.

"It is here," said Grandma. "Don't lose heart when you see it."

"Do you see it?" asked Berty, pointedly.

"Yes, dear."

"And what is it?"

"That there must be some one here every minute of the time to see that the big children do not impose on the little ones. There's a big hulking boy slapping a little one now. I'll go settle him," and Grandma nimbly walked away.

"That is no thorn," said Berty, when she came back. "Mr. Jimson has arranged for it. He has just told me that the city council voted me last evening five hundred dollars as park supervisor."

"My dear!" said Grandma, in surprise.

"Isn't it lovely?" murmured Berty, with flushed cheeks. "Now I can pay all the household expenses. With my annuity we shall be quite prosperous."

"The city appreciates what you are doing," said Grandma, softly, "and the Mayor has been a good friend to you."

"Hasn't he?" said Berty. "I must not scold him for that awful speech."

"The opening was good," said Grandma, mildly.

"Yes, but the middle and the ending," replied Berty, with a groan.

"Oh, how I suffered — not for myself. I could endure to hear him speak for a year. But I do so

want him to make a good impression on others. His tongue is just like a spool of silk. It unwinds and unwinds and unwinds, and never breaks off. Talk about women's tongues!"

"He is new to public speaking. He will get over it."

"And I made him such a thrilling hobgoblin," continued Berty, in an aggrieved voice. "Why, I had nightmare last night just in dreaming about it."

"A hobgoblin?" said Grandma, questioningly.

"Yes — to stop him. It was on the last page of his manuscript. You remember when he came to the end of his paper, he just stopped a minute, smiled a sickly smile, and went on. Why, that hobgoblin didn't frighten him a bit. It inspired him. What was he talking about? What do people talk about when they ramble on and on? I can never remember."

"Berty," said Mrs. Travers, shrewdly, "you are tired and excited. You would better come home. There is Mrs. Provis looking in the gate. She will keep an eye on the children."

"Oh, Mrs. Provis," said Berty, hurrying to the gate, "won't you come in and sit awhile till I go

home and get something to eat? I'll come back presently and lock up."

"Yes, miss," said the woman, readily. "That's a little thing to do for you. I guess this street takes store of what you've done for our young ones."

"They're my young ones, too," said Berty, proudly. "I live on the street — we're all neighbours. Now I'll go. I won't be long. Your eldest girl can get the supper ready for your husband, can't she?"

"That she can, miss."

Berty walked away with her grandmother, and the woman, gazing after her, said, "Bless your black head. I'd like to hear any one say anything agin you in River Street."

In an hour Berty was back again, part of her supper in her pocket.

Contentedly eating her bread and butter, she sat on a bench watching the children, most of whom absolutely refused to go home, while others ran merely for a few mouthfuls of something to eat.

This intoxication of play in a roomy place was a new experience to them, and Berty, with an intensely thankful face, watched them until a heavy footstep made her turn her head.

The Mayor stood before her, two red spots on

his cheeks, and a strange light in his eye. "I've just been to your house," he said, "and your grandmother sent me here."

"Did she?" said Berty; then she added, promptly, "What has happened?"

Mr. Jimson heaved a deep, contented sigh, and seated himself beside her. "I'm a happy man, Miss Berty."

"What are you happy about?" she asked, briskly. "It isn't — it isn't Miss Everest?"

"Yes, it is Miss Everest," said Mr. Jimson. "Something took place this afternoon."

"Oh, what? — why don't you tell me? You're terribly slow."

"I'm as fast as I can be. I'm not a flash of lightning."

"No, indeed."

"Well, I've met Miss Everest — she's talked with me!"

"She has!" cried Berty, joyfully.

"Yes, she has. You know, after the affair this afternoon some of the people went to town. Miss Everest was shopping."

"She always does her shopping in the morning," interrupted Berty. "All the smart set do."

"Well, I guess she found herself down-town,"

said Mr. Jimson, good-naturedly, "and couldn't get by the shops. Anyway, she was coming out of that fol-de-rol place where you women buy dolls and ribbons."

"Oh, you mean Smilax & Wiley's."

"Yes, that's the place. She came out of the door, and, turning her head to speak to some one passing her, she almost ran into me. I stopped short, you may be sure, and I know you'll be mad with me when I tell you that I forgot to take my hat off."

"Perhaps I won't," said Berty, guardedly. "It depends on what follows."

"I just stood rooted to the spot, and staring with all my might. She grew kind of pink and bowed. I said, 'Miss Everest,' then I stopped. I guess she was sorry for my dumbness, for she said, in a kind of confused way, 'What a stupid place this is. I've been all over it trying to match some silk, and I can't find a scrap.' And still I never said a word. For the life of me I couldn't think of anything. Then she said, 'That was a very good speech of yours this afternoon.'"

"Now surely you said something in response to that," interjected Berty, "such a gracious thing for her to say."

"Never a word," replied the Mayor, seriously,

"and, seeing that I couldn't or wouldn't speak, she went away. After she left, words came to me, and I babbled on to myself, till the people began to look at me as if they thought I'd gone crazy, then I moved on."

"Well," said Berty, with badly suppressed scorn, "this is a great tale. Where have you distinguished yourself, pray?"

"Wait a bit," said Mr. Jimson, soberly. "I haven't finished. Before I left the spot I cast my eyes to the pavement. What did I see but the bit of silk she had dropped there."

"Well," observed Berty, in a mystified way, when he paused.

"I thought of what you said," continued the Mayor. "I called up your hint about small things. I picked up the bit of silk."

"And, for goodness' sake, what did you do with it?" queried Berty, in distress. "Some fantastic thing, I'll be bound."

"I took it away to my office," Mr. Jimson went on, solemnly, and with the air of keeping back some item of information that when communicated would cover him with glory. "I've got an office-boy as sharp as a needle. I gave him the piece of silk. I said, 'You hold on to that as if it were a fifty-dollar

greenback. You take the seven-thirty train for Boston. You match that silk, and get back here as quick as you can.' "

"Oh! oh!" cried Berty, "how much did you send for?"

"For a pound," said the Mayor, tragically. "She said she had a peóny to work, and they're pretty big flowers."

"Péony, not pe-ó-ny," said Berty, peevishly. Then she thought awhile, and the Mayor, losing his deeply satisfied air, sat regarding her in bewilderment.

At last she delivered her opinion sibyl-like. "I don't know whether you've done a good thing or not. Only time can tell. But I think you have."

"I've done just what you told me," said the astonished man. "You said to look out for little things."

"Yes, but the question is, have you the right yet to look out for little things," said Berty, with some dissatisfaction in her tone. "When grandma was married she forgot her wedding-bouquet, and her newly made husband had a special train leave here to take it to Bangor, but he had the right."

"Look here," said the Mayor, and the red spots on his cheeks deepened, "you're criticizing too

much. I guess you'd better not interfere between Miss Everest and me."

"You'll want me to give her that silk when it comes," said Berty, defiantly.

"I did — that's just what I came to speak to you about, but now I'll give it to her myself."

"She may not like it."

"She can like it, or lump it," said Mr. Jimson, inelegantly; "when that parcel comes, I am going to take it to her."

"Suppose the boy can't match the silk?"

"He's got to," said Mr. Jimson, obstinately.

"But perhaps he can't; then how will she ever know you sent for it, if I don't tell her. You would like me to in that case, wouldn't you?"

"I'm no violet," said Mr. Jimson, disagreeably. "I want to get in with Miss Everest, and how can I if I blush unseen?"

"I'll tell her of your blushes," said Berty, generously. "Come, now, let us be friends again. From my standpoint, I think you have done nobly and magnificently."

"But you were just blaming me."

"That was from Miss Everest's standpoint."

"I'm blessed if I know how to take you," mut-

tered the confused man. "One minute you're yourself, and the next you're another woman."

"That's feminine reversibility," said Berty, graciously. "You don't understand us yet. That is the punishment our Creator inflicts upon you, for not having studied us more. A pity I hadn't known you five years ago — come, it's time to lock up here. Oh, Mr. Mayor, can't we have electric lights for this playground?"

With an effort he called back his wandering thoughts which were on the way to Boston with his office-boy, and looked round the darkening park. "What do you want lights for?"

"Why, these children play till all hours. It's mean to keep them here till dark, then turn them on the streets. A few lights would make the place as light as day."

The Mayor stared about him in silence.

"I've just been thinking about the electric light people," continued Berty. "They're a big, rich company, aren't they?"

"So, so."

"Well, would it be wrong for me to go to them and ask to have a few lights put in?"

"Wrong, no — "

"But would they do it?"

"Well, I guess if you went to them with your mind made up that they ought to, they would do it quick enough."

"I'll go," said Berty, with satisfaction. "Thank you so much. I'll say you advised me."

The Mayor sighed, but said nothing.

"Come, children," called Berty, in her clear voice, "it's time to go home. Gates open at eight-thirty to-morrow morning."

She huddled them out into the street like a flock of unwilling sheep, then walked home beside her suddenly silent companion.

"Selina Everest sat beside Grandma to-day," said Berty, recurring to what she knew was now his favourite topic of conversation.

"I saw her there," said her companion, eagerly. "Do you suppose your grandmother — "

"Yes, she did," and Berty finished his sentence for him. "Trust Grandma to slip a good word in Miss Everest's ear about you. I saw her blush, so perhaps she is beginning to care."

"Perhaps your grandmother had better take her the silk," said the Mayor, generously.

"No, I think I'll attend to that myself," said Berty, "but come in and see Grandma," and she paused; "we'll have a nice talk about the Everests."

"By the way," she said, ushering him out to the veranda, and lingering for a minute before she went to find her grandmother, "I want to thank you again for getting me that salary for looking after the playground. I'm just delighted — but I think I'll have to get a helper, for Grandma doesn't want me to stay there all the time."

"That's square — just what I recommended," said Mr. Jimson. "Get any one you like, and give him or her ten or twelve dollars a month to assist you."

"But suppose he or she does half my work?"

"That don't count. Skilled labour, you know, takes the cake."

"But if any one does half my work, they must have half my pay."

"Nonsense," said the Mayor, abruptly.

"I sha'n't grind the face of any poor person," said Berty, doggedly.

"All right — have it your own way, but if you won't mind me, consult your grandmother before you pledge yourself."

CHAPTER XV

UP THE RIVER

Berty and her grandmother were having a quiet little picnic together. They had gone away up the river to Cloverdale, and, landing among the green meadows, had followed a path leading to a small hill crowned by a grove of elm-trees.

Here Berty had established her grandmother on a rug with cushions, magazines, and a new book, and the ever-present knitting.

Thinking that the little old lady wished to have a nap, Berty left her, and, accompanied by a mongrel dog who had come from River Street with them, roamed somewhat disconsolately along the river bank.

This proceeding on her part just suited the occupant of a second boat, who, unknown to Berty, had watched her pink and white one all the way from the city.

With strong, steady strokes he pulled near the

bank where the girl stood knee-deep in the high meadow-grass, then, with a hypocritical start, pretended to recognize her for the first time, just as he was rowing by.

"How de do, Berty — what are you doing here?"

"Grandma and I are having a picnic," she said, in a lugubrious voice.

"A picnic," he repeated, incredulously, "you mean a funeral."

"I mean what I say," she replied, crossly.

"Might a fellow land?" he asked, his eyes dancing mischievously.

"A fellow can land, or move on, or swim, or fly, for aught I care," she responded, ungraciously.

He jumped up, sprang out of his boat, and fastened it to the same stake where Berty's was moored.

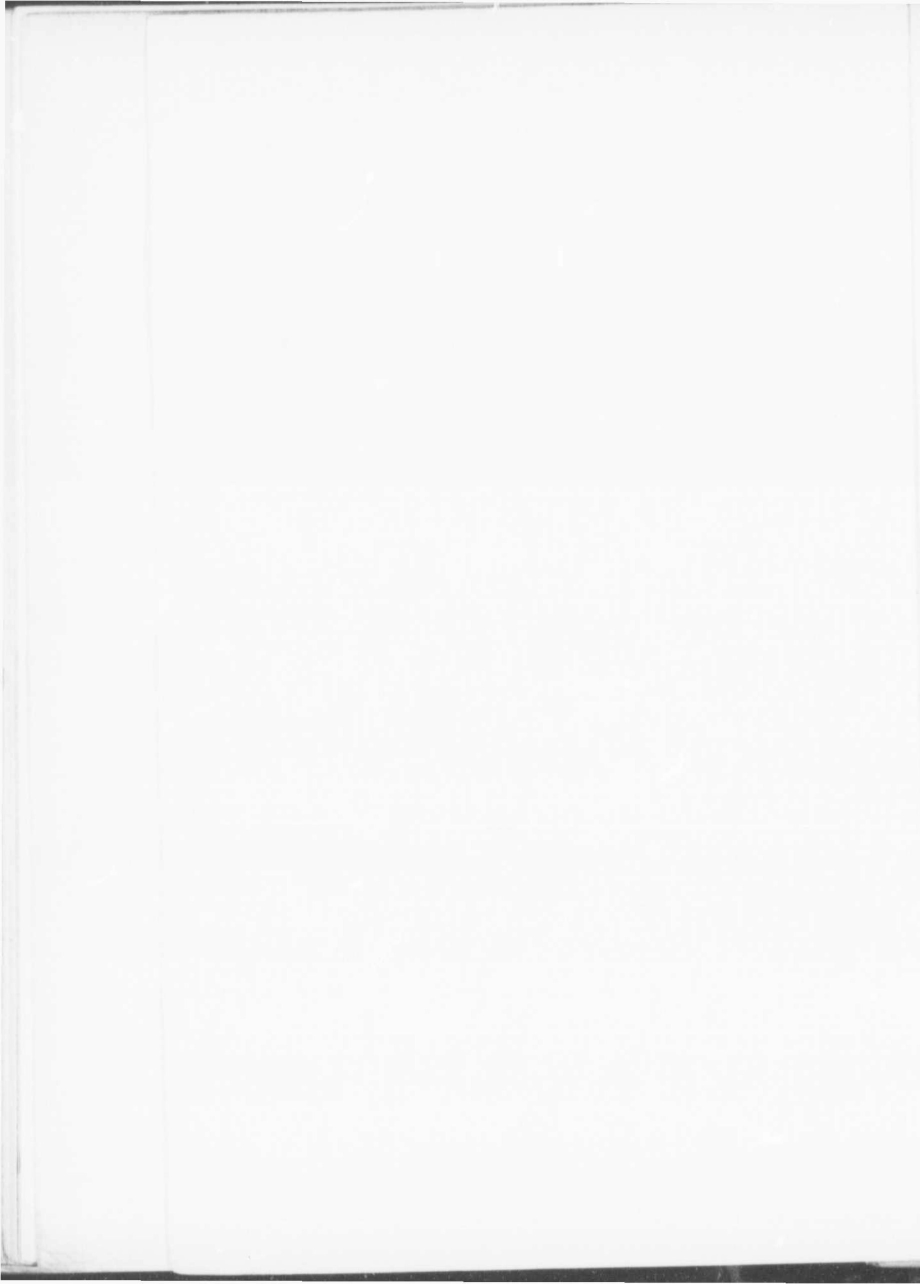
"You've been looking cross-eyed at the sun," he said, taking off his hat and fanning himself.

"Take care that you don't do the same thing," said Berty.

He looked at her sharply. She was cross, pure and simple, and with a satisfied smile he went on, "Might a fellow sit down on this grass? It looks uncommonly comfortable."

"Oh, yes," said Berty, seating herself near him. "One might as well sit as stand."

"'YOU'RE DYING TO TEASE ME'"



"This is pleasant," said Tom, happily, leaning on one elbow with his hat over his eyes, and gazing dreamily at the river."

"It is the prettiest river in the world," remarked Berty, decidedly.

"Come now — how many rivers have you seen?" inquired Tom.

"Lots of them."

"And you have never been out of your native State."

"I have been to Boston, and New York, and New Orleans. How strange that you should forget it," replied Berty, wrathfully.

"What's made you mad, Berty?" inquired Tom, with a brotherly air.

"You know," she said, sulkily, "you're dying to tease me."

"Poor little girl," murmured Tom, under his breath. Then he said, aloud, "Peter Jimson is in our house morning, noon, and night now."

"Don't I know it!" exclaimed Berty, indignantly, "and you are encouraging him, and you can't bear him."

"Come now, Berty," said Tom, protestingly. "'Can't bear' is a strong expression. I never thought much about him till he began sending busi-

ness my way. I tell you that makes a lot of difference. It isn't in human nature to look critically at a man who gives you a helping hand in the struggle for existence. Unless he's a monster, which Jimson isn't."

"And he has helped you?" asked Berty, curiously.

"Lots — he has a big influence in the city. Don't you know about it?"

"About his influence?"

"No — about his favouring me."

"He tells me nothing now," and her tone was bitter.

"You've been a good friend to him, Berty. He is never tired of singing your praises."

"To whom does he sing? To Selina?"

"I don't know. I'm not with them much."

"Then he sings them to you?"

"Yes, just as soon as I pitch him the tune."

"I should think you'd know enough of me," said Berty, peevishly. "I'm sure you're one of the earliest objects I remember seeing in life."

"Come now, Berty," he replied, good-naturedly, "you needn't be flinging my age up to me. I'm only six years older than you, anyway."

"Well, that is an age."

"How did you and Jimson fall out?" asked Tom, curiously. "I'd give considerable to know."

"You'll never know, now that I see you want to," replied Berty, vigorously.

Tom meditatively chewed a piece of meadow-grass, then said, easily, "I spoke in the language of exaggeration. We all do it. Of course, I guess that you had a quarrel. Jimson was dancing about you morning, noon, and night, till he took a fancy to Selina. Then you were jealous."

"It wasn't that at all," said Berty, unguardedly. "I wouldn't be so silly. He broke his word about a package of silk."

"Oh," replied Tom, coolly, "that was the silk Selina was so delighted to get. He sent a boy to Boston for it."

"Yes, and the arrangement, the very last arrangement, was for me to present it when it came. Several days went by, and I thought it queer I didn't hear from him. Then I met him in the street. 'Couldn't the boy match the silk?' I asked.

"'Oh, yes,' he said, 'he brought it fast enough.'

"'And where is it?' I asked.

"'Miss Everest has it.'

"'Miss Everest?' I said. 'How did she get it?'

"'Well,' he said, 'when it came, I just couldn't

resist. I caught it from the boy. I took a carriage to her house — she was just at breakfast, but she came out, and I gave it to her.'

"'And what did she say?' I asked. Now this is where I blame him, Tom. Just think, after all my kindness to him, and coaching him as to the ways of women, he just said, coolly, 'I can't tell you.'

"'Can't tell me?' I repeated. 'You've got to. I'm more interested in this affair than you are.'

"'I — I can't,' he stammered. 'I've seen Miss Everest several times since, and she says you're only a child — not to tell everything to you.'

"'Only a child!' I said. 'Very well!' and I stalked away. He sent me a bouquet of carnations and maidenhair that evening, but of course flowers had no effect on me."

"Selina is jealous of you," said Tom, promptly.

"I'm not jealous of her," returned Berty, sweetly. "I wish her every happiness, but I do think the Mayor might have been more open."

"If he's got to dance after Selina, his work's cut out," said Tom.

"Do you think she will marry him?" asked Berty, eagerly.

"Marry him — of course she will. I never saw

her so pleased over anything as she was over that silk affair. Jimson is a good-hearted fellow, Berty."

"Good-hearted, yes, but he doesn't keep his promises. He hasn't got those pigeon-boxes up yet."

"What pigeon-boxes."

"He promised to have some nailed on the shed for me. The boxes are all made, but not put up."

"I'll do it," said Tom, generously. "I'll come to-morrow."

"To-morrow will be Sunday."

"Monday, then. Monday afternoon as soon as the office closes."

"Very well," said Berty, with a sigh, "but you'll probably forget. My friends don't seem to be standing by me lately."

"Your friends — why, you are the heroine of the city — confound it, what is that dog doing?"

Berty's mongrel friend, taking advantage of Tom's absorbing interest in his companion, had lain down on the grass behind him and had chewed a piece out of his coat.

"Look at it — the rascal," exclaimed Tom, twisting round his blue serge garment — "a clean bite. What kind of a dog is this? Get out, you brute."

"Don't scold him," said Berty, holding out a

hand to the culprit. "He doesn't know any better. He is young and cutting teeth."

"Well, I wish he'd cut them on some other man — look at that coat. It's ruined."

"Can't you get it mended?"

"Who would do it for me?"

"Send it to your tailor."

"It's too shabby — I just keep it for boating."

"Ask your mother or Selina."

"They're too busy with fancy work. Selina is working peonies all over the place. She's got to use up that pound of silk."

"I don't know what you'll do, then," observed Berty, in an uninterested way, "unless," with sudden vivacity, "you give me the coat for a poor person."

"Not I — I can't afford that. I'll tell you, Berty, I ought to get a wife."

"Why, so you should," said the young girl, kindly. "It's time you were getting settled. Have you any one in mind?"

"I know the kind of a girl I want," said Tom, evasively. "I do wish you'd help me pick her out."

Berty shook her head with sudden wariness. "I forgot, I'm not going to meddle with match-mak-

ing any more. You're sure to get a snub from the person you're trying hardest to benefit."

"I promise you that the girl I choose will never snub you," said Tom, solemnly.

"There was Selina," replied Berty, bitterly, "I just loved her, and thought her beautiful and stately like a picture, and far above Mr. Jimson, and now she says I'm a child — a child!"

"It's too bad," said Tom, sympathetically, "but Selina was always a little bit wrapped up in herself."

"I had even got as far as the engagement-ring," continued Berty. "I thought a red stone — a garnet or a ruby — would be less common than the diamond that everybody has."

"Would you prefer a red stone for yourself?" asked Tom, artlessly.

"Yes, I should think I would."

"Well, you see Selina wants to choose for herself. You women like to manage your own affairs."

"But Mr. Jimson is just as bad. He's as stubborn as a mule when I want to advise him."

"I guess we all like to run our own concerns," said Tom, good-humouredly, "but to come back to my girl, Berty, I do wish you would help me. You understand women so much better than I do."

"Didn't I just tell you that I wouldn't meddle with matrimonial affairs again — not for any one. Not even if dear Grandma were to ask me."

"Well, now, we all have a great respect for Grandma," said Tom, warmly, "but I scarcely think she is likely to think of giving you another grandfather."

"Oh, you wretch!" said Berty, irritably. "I don't mean for herself. I mean for Bonny, or you, or some of her young friends."

"Well, as your decision is irrevocable, I suppose I mustn't tease," observed Tom, slowly getting up and looking out over the river, "but I would really like you to help me. Perhaps Margaretta will. Good-bye, Berty."

"Grandma and I are going to have a cup of tea presently," said Berty, staring out over the meadows without looking at him. "We've brought a kettle and some eatables. If you would like to stay, I know Grandma would be glad to have you."

"Thank you, but I don't think I'd better accept Grandma's kind invitation. My mind is full of this important business of choosing a wife, and I want to find some one who will give me good advice. Margaretta will just about be going to dinner by the time I get back to the city. I'll change my duds,

and get over just about the minute that the third course goes in."

"What kind of a girl do you want?" said Berty, staring up at him.

"A tall girl, much taller than you, or even Margaretta. Tall and flaxen-haired like a doll."

"And blue eyes, I suppose," said Berty, sarcastically.

"Oh, yes, blue as the sky, and tapering fingers — white fingers, not brown from boating and out-of-door life."

"You want a hothouse plant," said Berty, disdainfully.

"You've put my very idea in words," said Tom, in an ecstasy, as he again sat down on the grass near her. "I'd admire to wait on one of those half-sick creatures. It seems to me if I could wrap her in a white shawl in the morning, and come back at night and find her in the same place, I'd be perfectly happy. Now these healthy, athletic creatures with strong opinions scurry all over the place. You never know where to find them."

"Suppose you advertise."

"I dare say I'll have to. I don't know any one of just the type I want here in Riverport, but I thought perhaps you might know one. It doesn't

matter if she lives outside. I wouldn't mind going a little way."

"There's Matty DeLong," replied Berty. "She has neuralgia terribly, but then her hair isn't light."

"I don't want a neuralgic victim. It's just a kind of general debility girl I want."

"What about the doctor's bills?"

"I'll pay them," said Tom, enthusiastically. "Give me domestic peace even at the expense of bills."

"I expect I'd be a terrible termagant if I married," observed Berty, thoughtfully.

Her companion made no reply to this assertion.

"If I asked a man for money, and he wouldn't give it to me, I think I'd want to pound him to a jelly," continued Berty, warmly.

"I expect he'd let you," observed Tom, meekly, "but you're not thinking of marriage for yourself, are you, Berty?"

"No," she said, snappishly, "only when the subject is so much discussed, I can't help having ideas put into my head."

"I suppose you'd like a Boston man, wouldn't you?" inquired Tom, demurely.

"I don't know. Anybody that was a stranger and celebrated would do."

"You're like me in one respect. You want a brand-new article, not something you've been used to seeing since infancy."

"I should like a President," said Berty, wistfully, "but when men come to the presidential chair they're all too old for me."

"But it must be ennobling for you to have such an ambitious spirit," observed Tom.

"It does make me feel nice — Hark! isn't that Grandma calling?"

"Yes," replied Tom. "Let us go see what she wants."

"Berty, Berty," the distant voice was saying, "isn't it time to put the kettle on? We must get home before dark."

"Yes, Grandma, dear," called Berty. "Tom Everest is here. He will help me find some sticks. You please sit still and rest — come, Tom, and speak to her first," and smiling and playing with the dancing mongrel pup, Berty ran up the slope.

CHAPTER XVI.

BERTY'S TRAMP

Berty was away out on the lonely road leading from the iron works to the city.

Grandma had not been well all day, and Berty had gone to ask Bonny to spend the night in the River Street house. Since the boy's admission into Roger's office he had virtually lived in Roger's house.

Not that he loved Margaretta and Roger more than he loved his grandmother and Berty, but the Grand Avenue style of living was more in accord with his aristocratic tastes than the plain ways of the house in River Street. So the boy really had two homes.

Berty, who had been in the house with her grandmother all through the morning, had enjoyed the long walk out to the iron works, and was now enjoying the long walk home.

It was a perfect afternoon. "How I love the

late summer," murmured the girl, and she gazed admiringly about her at the ripening grain fields, the heavily foliaged trees, the tufts of goldenrod flowering beside the dusty road.

Away off there in the distance was a moving cloud of dust coming from the city. Nearer at hand, it resolved itself into a man who was shuffling along in a lazy way, and kicking up very much more dust than there was any necessity of doing.

Berty stared at him. She knew most of the citizens of Riverport by sight, and whether she knew them by sight or not, she could tell by their general appearance whether they belonged to the place.

This man was a stranger — a seedy, poor-looking man with a brown face, and he was observing her as intently as she was observing him.

Arrived opposite her, he stopped. "Lady," he said, in a whining voice, "please give a poor sick man some money to buy medicine."

"What's the matter with you?" she asked, promptly.

"An awful internal trouble, lady," he said, laying his hand on his side. "Intermittent pains come on every evening at this time."

"You don't look ill," replied Berty, suspiciously. "Your face is as bronzed as a sailor's."

"The doctors prescribed outdoor air, lady," he went on, whiningly.

"I haven't any money for you."

The man, from his station in the road, looked back toward the city, then forward in the direction of the iron works. There was not a soul in sight, and as quick as a flash an angry sentence sprang to the girl's lips, "Let me by."

"But, lady, I want some money," he said, persistently, and he stood in her way.

She surveyed him contemptuously. "You want to make me give you some, but I tell you you couldn't do it."

"Couldn't I, lady?" he replied, half-sneeringly, half-admiringly.

"No," said Berty, promptly, "because, in the first place, I'd be so mad that you couldn't get it from me. You're only a little man, and I guess a gymnasium-trained girl like myself could knock you about considerably. Then look here," and, stepping back, she suddenly flashed something long and sharp and steely from her head. "Do you see that hat-pin? It would sting you like a wasp," and she stabbed the air with it.

The man snickered. "You've plenty of sand, but I guess I could get your purse if I tried."

"Oh, how angry you make me," returned the girl, with a fiery glance. "Now I can understand how one can let oneself be killed for an idea. You might possibly overcome me, you might get my purse, but you couldn't kill the mad in me if you chopped me in a thousand little pieces."

"Lady," said the man, teasingly, "I guess you'd give in before then, though I've no doubt but what your temper would carry you considerable far."

"And suppose you got my purse," said Berty, haughtily, "what good would it do you? Wouldn't I scream? I've got a voice like a steam-whistle; and the iron works close in five minutes, and this road will be alive with good honest workmen. They'd hunt you down like a rabbit."

For the first time a shade of uneasiness passed over his face. But he speedily became cool. "Good evening, lady, excuse me for frightening you," and, pulling at his battered hat, he started to pass on.

"Stop!" said Berty, commandingly, "who are you, and why did you come to Riverport?"

He lazily propped himself against a tree by the roadside. "It was in my line of march."

"Are you a tramp?"

"Well, yes, I suppose I am."

"Where were you born?"

"In New Hampshire."

"You weren't born a tramp?"

"Great Harry!" muttered the man, taking off his hat and pushing back from his forehead the dark hair sprinkled with gray, "it seems a hundred years since I was born. My father was a well-to-do farmer, young lady, if you want to know, and he gave me a good education."

"A good education," repeated Berty, "and now you have sunk so low as to stop women and beg for money."

"Just that low," he said, indifferently, "and from a greater height than you think."

"What was the height?" asked Berty, eagerly.

"I was once a physician in Boston," he returned, with a miserable remnant of pride.

"You a physician!" exclaimed Berty, "and now a tramp!"

"A tramp pure and simple."

"What made you give up your profession?"

"Well, I was born lazy, and then I drank, and I drink, and I always shall drink."

"A drunkard!" murmured Berty, pityingly. "Poor fellow!"

The man looked at her curiously.

"How old are you?" she asked, suddenly.

"Forty-five."

"Have you tried to reform?"

"Formerly — not now."

"Oh, how queer people are," said the girl, musingly. "How little I can understand you. How little you can understand me. Now if I could only get inside your mind, and know what you are thinking about."

"I'm thinking about my supper, lady," he said, flippantly; then, as she looked carefully at him, he went on, carelessly, "Once I was young like you. Now I don't go in for sentiment. I feed and sleep. That's all I care about."

"And do you do no work?"

"Not a stroke."

"And you have no money?"

"Not a cent."

"But how do you live?"

"Off good people like you," he said, wheedlingly. "You're going to give me a hot supper, I guess."

"Follow me," said Berty, suddenly setting off toward the city, and the man sauntered after her.

When they reached River Street, she opened the gate leading into the yard and beckoned to him.

"I can't take you in the house," she said, in a

low voice, as he followed her. "My grandmother is ill, and then our house is very clean."

"And I am very unclean," he said, jocularly surveying himself, "though I'm by no means as bad as an ash-heap tramp."

"But I'll put you into the shed," continued Berty. "There are only a few guinea-pigs there. They are quiet little things, and won't hurt you."

"I hope you won't give me husks for supper," murmured the tramp.

Berty eyed him severely. His condition to her was too serious for jesting, and she by no means approved of his attempts at humour.

"I'll bring you out something to eat," she said, "and if you want to stay all night, I'll drag you out a mattress."

"I accept your offer with thankfulness, lady," he replied.

CHAPTER XVII.

TOM'S INTERVENTION

ABOUT eight o'clock that evening Tom Everest ran in to bring Berty some rare wild flowers that he had found in an excursion to the country.

"How is your grandmother?" he asked. "I hear she is ill."

"Better," whispered Berty. "Bonny is with her, but I've got another trouble."

"What is it?" inquired Tom, tenderly.

They were standing in the front hall, and he bent his head low to hear what she said.

"There's a tramp out in the wood-shed," she went on, "and I don't know what to do with him."

"I'll go put him out," said Tom, promptly starting toward the back hall.

"No, no, I don't want him put out. Come back, Tom. I want you to help me do something for him. Just think, he was once a doctor. He cured

other people, and couldn't cure himself. He drinks like a fish."

"Well, I'll find a place for him to disport himself other than this," said Tom, decidedly. "He isn't going to spend the night in your back yard."

"Oh, Tom, don't be foolish. He is as quiet as a lamb. He hasn't been drinking to-day."

"I tell you, Berty, he's got to come out. If you make a fuss, I'll call Bonny down."

"Why, Tom Everest, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. Your face is as red as a beet. What about the Golden Rule?"

"I beg your pardon, Berty," said Tom, trying to look calm, "but I know more about tramps than you do. This fellow may be a thief."

"Tom — suppose you were the thief, and the thief were you? Would you like him to talk about you that way?"

"Yes, I'd enjoy it. Come, Berty, lead the way."

"What do you want to do with him?" asked the girl, curiously.

"Put him in the street."

"Well, suppose he is a thief. He may rob your neighbour's house."

"My neighbour can look out for himself."

"You don't mean that," said Berty, quickly.

"Please do find this man a good place for the night. Keep him out of harm."

"But, Berty, it won't do any good. I know those fellows. They are thoroughly demoralized. You might just as well let this one go."

"Go where?" asked the girl, quickly.

"To his appointed place."

The two young people stood staring at each other for a few minutes, then Berty said, seriously, "Tom Everest, you are a moral, upright man."

Tom modestly cast his eyes to the oilcloth on the floor.

"How many other young men are there like you in the republic?" pursued Berty.

"I don't know," he said, demurely.

"How many tramps are there?"

"I don't know that — thousands and thousands, I guess."

"Well, suppose every honest young man took a poor, miserable tramp under his protection. Suppose he looked out for him, fed him, clothed him, and kept him from being a prey on society?"

"I should say that would be a most undesirable plan for the young men," said Tom, dryly. "I'd be afraid they'd get demoralized themselves, and all turn tramps. It's easier to loaf than to work."

"Tom," said Berty, firmly, "this is my tramp. I found him, I brought him home, I have a duty toward him. I can't protect all the tramps in the Union, but I can prevent this one from going on and being a worry to society. Why, he might meet some timid girl to-morrow and frighten her to death."

"Oho! he tried to scare you, did he?" asked Tom, keenly.

"He asked me for money," repeated Berty, "but of course I didn't let him have it."

"Tell me all about it."

When she finished, Tom laughed softly. "So this is the gentleman you want me to befriend?"

"Do you feel revengeful toward him?" asked Berty.

"I'd like to horsewhip him."

"That's the way I felt at first. Then I said to myself, 'Berty Gravely, you've got to get every revengeful feeling out of your head before you can benefit that man. What's the use of being angry with him? You only stultify yourself. Try to find out how you can do him good.'"

"Oh, Berty," interposed Tom, with a gesture of despair, "don't talk mawkish, sickly sentimentality

to me. Don't throw honey water over tin cans, and expect them to blossom like the rose."

"They will blossom, they can blossom," said Berty, persistently, "and even if they won't blossom, take your old tin cans, clean them, and set them on end. Don't kick them in the gutter."

"What do you want me to do?" asked Tom, helplessly. "I see you have some plan in your mind."

This was Berty's chance, and for a few minutes she so staggered him by her eloquence that he sank on the staircase, and, feebly propping his head on his hand, stared uninterruptedly at her.

"I've been thinking hard," she said, in low, dramatic tones, "very, very hard for two hours, as I sat by Grandma's bed. What can we do for wrecks of humanity? Shall we pet them, coddle them, spoil them, as you speak of doing? Not at all. We've got to do something, but we mustn't be foolish. This tramp is like some wet, soggy piece of wood floating down our river. It doesn't know, feel, nor care. You mustn't give it a push and send it further down the stream, but pull it ashore, and — and —"

"And dry it, and make a fire and burn it," said Tom, briskly. "I don't like your simile, Berty."

"It was unfortunate," said the girl. "I will start again. I approve of societies and churches and clubs — I think they do splendid work, and if, in addition to what they do, every one of us would just reach out a helping hand to one solitary person in the world, how different things would be. We would have a paradise here below. It's wicked, Tom, to say, 'That is a worthless person, let him go — you can do nothing for him.' Now I've got a plan for this tramp, and I want you to help me."

"I know you have, and I wouldn't mind hearing it, but I don't think I'll help you, Berty. I don't favour the gentry of the road."

"This is my plan," said Berty, unheedingly; "but first let me say that I will make a concession to you. You may take the tramp with you, put him in a comfortable room for the night, see that he has a good bed, and a good breakfast in the morning."

"Oh, thank you, thank you," murmured the young man. "You are so very kind."

"Don't give him any money," continued Berty, seriously, "and if you can keep him locked up without hurting his feelings, I wish you would — but don't blight his self-respect."

"His what?" asked Tom, mildly.

"His self-respect — even an animal must be protected in that way. Don't you know that a dog gets well a great deal quicker, if you keep up his good opinion of himself?"

"Does he?" murmured Tom. "I — I don't know. I fear I have sometimes helped to lessen a dog's good opinion of himself."

"And, furthermore," pursued Berty, "I want that tramp to stay in Riverport. He's going to be my tramp, Tom, and yours, too, if you will be good."

"Oh, I will be good, Berty, extra good to deserve a partnership like that."

"And you and I will look out for him. Now I've been wondering what employment we can find for him, for of course you know it isn't good for any man to live in idleness."

"Just so, Berty."

"Well, we must be very cautious about what work we find for him, for he hasn't worked for years."

"Something light and genteel, Berty."

"Light, but not so very genteel. He isn't proud. He's only unaccustomed to work. He talked quite frankly about himself."

"Oh — did he?"

"Yes, and do you know what I have decided?"

"No, I'm sure I don't."

"Well, I have just found the very thing for him, and I dare say, if you have any money laid aside, you may want to invest in it. First of all, I want you to hire Bobbetty's Island."

"Bobbetty's Island — out in the river — old man Bobbetty's?"

"The same, Tom."

"Ghost thrown in?"

"I want you to hire it," said Berty, severely, "and get some of your friends to make up a party, and go down there and put up a big, comfortable camp for our tramp to live in."

"Why the island, Berty?" inquired Tom, in a suppressed voice. "Why not set him up in Grand Avenue. There's a first-class family mansion to let there, three doors from us."

"Tom Everest, will you stop your fooling. Our tramp is to live on the island because if he were in the town he would spend half his time in drinking-places."

"But won't the river be suggestive, Berty? It would to me, and I'm not a drinking man."

"No, of course not — he will have his work to do, and twice a week I want you to row over your-

self, or get some one to go and bring him to town, for he would go crazy if he were left there alone all the time."

"I wonder you don't get a companion for him."

"I'm going to try. He has a wife, a nice woman in New Hampshire, who left him on account of his drinking habits. He says she will come back to him if he gets a good situation and promises to reform."

"Has he promised?" asked Tom, acutely.

"He said he would think about it. I rather liked him for the hesitation, for of course he is completely out of the way of continuous application to anything."

"And what business, may I ask, are you going to establish him in? You seemed to be hinting at something."

"I am going to start a cat farm, and put him in charge," replied Berty, with the air of one making a great revelation.

"A cat farm," echoed Tom, weakly, then, entirely collapsing, he rolled over on his side on the staircase and burst into silent and convulsive laughter.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TRAMP PHILOSOPHY

"WHAT are you two giggling about?" asked a sudden voice, and Berty, looking up from the hall, and Tom, from the staircase, saw Bonny standing on the steps above them.

"Meow, meow," murmured Tom, in a scarcely audible voice.

"What's up with him, Berty?" asked Bonny, good-naturedly.

"I think his head must be growing weak," said the girl. "Everything lately seems to amuse him. If you hold up a finger, he goes into fits of laughter."

"Poor Tom," said Bonny, "and once he was a joy to his friends — I say, old man, uncurl yourself and tell us the joke."

"Go 'way, Berty," ejaculated Tom, partly straightening himself, "go 'way. You hate to see

me laugh. Just like all girls. They haven't any more sense of humour than sticks."

"Bonny," said Berty, turning to her brother, "how is Grandma?"

"Asleep, and resting quietly."

"I'll go sit beside her," said the girl; then, turning to her visitor, "Tom Everest, are you going to do that commission for me, or are you not? I've stood a good deal from you to-night. Just one word more, and I take it from you and give it to Bonny."

"I'm ready and willing if it's anything good," said the light-haired boy.

"Sha'n't have it, Bonny," said Tom, staggering to his feet. "That jewel is mine. I'll love and cherish him, Berty, until to-morrow afternoon, then I'll report to you."

"Good night, then," said Berty, "and don't make a noise, or you'll wake Grandma."

"Come on, Bonny, let's interview Berty's treasure," exclaimed Tom, seizing his hat.

"What is it?" inquired Bonny, curiously, following him through the hall.

"A black pearl. Didn't she tell you?"

"No, I haven't been here long. We were busy at the works."

Without speaking, Tom led the way down the back staircase, through the lower hall, and out to the woodshed at the back of the house.

"Listen to it," he said to Bonny, with his hand on the door-knob.

"Who is snoring in there?" said the boy, quickly.

"One of your sister's bits of driftwood. I've got to haul this one into port."

"I wish Berty would look out for number one, and let number two, and three, and four, and five, take care of themselves," said the lad, irritably. Then he suddenly recollected himself. "I suppose I am a brute, but I do hate dirty people. Berty is an angel compared with me."

"Hello," said Tom, opening the door and scratching a match to light the candle in a lantern hanging near him.

There was no response. Tom held the lantern and pushed the sleeping man with his foot.

"Here, you — wake up."

The man rolled over, blinking at them in the light. "Hello, comrade, what you want?"

"Get up," said Tom, commandingly.

"What for?" asked the sleeper, yawningly.

"To get out of this. I'll find you another sleeping-place."

"Oh, come, comrade," said the man, remonstratingly, "this is cruelty to animals. I was having the sleep of my life — like drugged sleep — takes me back to my boyhood. Move on, and let me begin again. Your diamonds are safe to-night. I've had a first-class supper, and I'm having a first-class sleep. I wouldn't get up to finger the jewels of the Emperor of Russia."

"Get up," said Tom, inexorably.

"Let him stay," said Bonny. "I'm going to be here all night. If he gets dangerous, I'll take the poker."

"Oh, you're going to stay all night," remarked Tom. "Very good, then. I'll come early in the morning and get him out of this."

"Talking about me, gentlemen?" asked the man, sleepily.

Tom and Bonny stared at him.

"I haven't done anything bad yet," said the tramp, meekly, "unless I may have corrupted a few of those guinea-pigs by using bad language. They're the most inquisitive creatures I ever saw. Stuck their noses in my food, and most took it away from me."

"Who are you?" asked Bonny, abruptly.

"A poor, broken-down sailor, sir," whined the

man. "Turned out of his vessel the first day in port, because he had a little weakness of the heart."

"I heard you were a doctor," interposed Tom.

"So I was this afternoon, sir. That nice young lady said I looked like a sailor, so I thought I'd be one to please her."

"You're a first-class liar, anyway," said Tom.

The man rolled over on his back and sleepily blinked at him. "That I am, sir. If you'd hear the different stories I tell to charitable ladies, you'd fall down in a fit. They're too funny for words."

Bonny was staring at him with wide-open eyes. He had never spoken to a tramp before in his life. If he saw one on the right side of the street, he immediately crossed to the left.

"I say," he began, with a fastidious curl of his lip, "it must be mighty queer not to know in the morning where you are going to lay your head at night. Queer, and mighty uncomfortable."

"So it is, young man, till you get used to it," responded the tramp, amiably.

Bonny's countenance expressed the utmost disdain, and suddenly the tramp raised himself on an elbow. "Can you think of me, my fine lad, young and clean and as good-looking as you are?"

"No, I can't," said Bonny, frankly.

"Fussy about my tailor," continued the man. "Good heavens, just think of it — I, bothering about the cut of my coat. But I was, and I did, and I've come down to be a trailer over the roads."

"How can persons take a jump like that?" said the boy, musingly.

"It isn't a jump," pursued the tramp, lazily, "it's a slide. You move a few inches each day. I'm something of a philosopher, and I often look back on my career. I've lots of time to think, as you may imagine. Now, gentlemen, you wouldn't imagine where my slide into trampdom began."

"You didn't start from the gutter, anyway," remarked Bonny, "for you talk like a gentleman."

"You're right, young man. I can talk the slang of the road. I've been broken to it, but I won't waste it on you, for you wouldn't understand it — well, my first push downward was given me by my mother."

"Your mother?" echoed Bonny, in disgust.

"Yes, young sir — one of the best women that ever lived. She held me out to the devil, when she allowed me to kick the cat because it had made me fall."

"Nonsense," said Bonny, sharply.

"Not nonsense, but sound sense, sir. That was

the beginning of the lack of self-restraint. Did I want her best cap to tear to ribbons? I got it."

"Oh, get out," interposed Tom, crossly. "You needn't tell us that all spoiled children go to the bad."

"Good London, no," said the man, with a laugh. "Look at our millionaires. Could you find on the face of the earth a more absolute autocrat, a more heartless, up-to-date, determined-to-have-his-own-way, let-the-rest-of-you-go-to-the-dogs kind of a man, than the average American millionaire?"

The two young men eyed each other, and Bonny murmured, "You are an extremist."

"It began away back," continued the tramp, now thoroughly roused from his sleepy condition. "When our forefathers came from England, they brought that ugly, I'm-going-to-have-my-own-way spirit with them. Talk about the severity of England precipitating the Revolution. If they hadn't made a revolution for us, we'd made one to order. Did you ever read about the levelling spirit of those days? I tell you this American nation is queer — it's harder for a real, true blue son of the soil to keep straight, than it is for the son of any other nation under the heaven. We lack self-restraint.

We'll go to the bad if we want to, and none shall hinder us."

The tramp paused for a minute in his semi-lazy, semi-animated discourse, and Tom, feeling that some remark was expected from him, said feebly, "You're quite a moralizer."

The tramp did not hear him. "I tell you," he said, extending a dirty hand, "we're the biggest, grandest, foolishest people on earth. We're the nation of the future. We'll govern the earth, and at the same time fail in governing ourselves. Look at the lynchings we have. The United States has the highest murder rate of any civilized country in the world. The average American will be a decent, moral, pay-his-bills sort of man, and yet he'll have more tolerance for personal violence than a Turk has."

"You're a queer man," said Bonny, musingly.

"We've got to have more law and order," pursued the tramp. "The mothers have got to make their little ones eat their mush, or porridge, as they say over the line in Canada — not fling it out the window to the dogs. I tell you that's where it begins, just where every good and bad thing begins — in the cradle. The average mother has too much respect for the squallings of her Young America.

Let her spank him once in awhile, and keep him out of sight of the eagle."

"Do you suppose," said Bonny, solemnly, "that if you had been well spanked you would not be lying here?"

"Suppose," repeated the tramp, leaning back, "I don't suppose anything about it. I know it. If my mother and father had made me mind them, and kept me in nights, and trained me into decent, self-respecting manhood, I'd be standing beside you to-night, young sirs, beside you — beyond you — for I guess from your bearing you are only young men of average ability, and I tell you I was a power, when I'd study and let the drink alone."

"You must have had a strange mother," remarked Bonny.

The tramp suddenly raised himself again, and his sunburnt face grew redder. "For the love of Heaven," he said, extending one ragged arm, "don't say a word against her. The thought of her is the only thing that moves me. She loved me, and, unclean, characterless wretch that I am, she would love me yet if she were still alive."

The man's head sank on his arm, but not quickly enough. Tom and Bonny had both seen glistening in his eyes, not the one jewel they were jestingly

in search of, but two priceless jewels that were not pearls, but diamonds.

"Come on, Bonny," said Tom, roughly, as he drew him from the shed.

"Tom," remarked Bonny, softly, as they went slowly up-stairs, "Berty wants you to do something for that fellow, doesn't she?"

"Yes."

"Do you think it is of any use?"

"No."

"Are you going to try?"

"Yes."

Bonny made no further remarks until some time later, when they were standing on the front door-step, then he asked, thoughtfully, "What does Berty want you to do, Tom?"

"Start a cat-farm."

"A cat-farm! What kind of cats?"

"Gutter cats, back yard cats, disreputable cats, I should guess from the character of the superintendent she has chosen," replied Tom, gruffly.

"The superintendent being the tramp," said Bonny, slyly.

"There's no one else in question," responded Tom.

"I think you are wrong about the nature of the

beasts," continued Bonny. "I believe Berty means pet cats — Angoras, and so on."

"What sort are they?"

"Do you mean to say you haven't noticed them? It's the latest cry among the women — 'Give me a long-haired cat!' Mrs. Darley-James has a beauty — snow-white with blue eyes."

"All nonsense — these society women don't know what to do to kill time."

"They're not all society women that have them. Old Mrs. McCarthy has a pair of dandies — and I find that the women who take up cat-culture are more kind to back yard tabbies."

"Maybe you're right, Bonny. I don't call round on these women as you do."

"Well," said Bonny, apologetically, "I don't see any harm in putting on your best coat and hat, and doing a woman who has invited you to her house the compliment of calling on her day."

"Oh, dressing up," said Tom, "is such a nuisance."

"You can't call on many that you'd be bothered with calling on without it. Sydney Gray tried calling on Margaretta on her day in a bicycle suit. He had ridden fifty miles, and was hot and dusty and perspiring. He had the impudence to go into Mar-

garetta's spick and span rooms and ask for a cup of tea. She was so sweet to him that he came away hugging himself — but he never got asked there again, and every once in awhile he says to some one, 'Queer, isn't it, that Mrs. Stanisfield gives me the go-by. I don't know what I've done to offend her.' "

"Suppose we come back to Berty," observed Tom. "If all the women here have cats, what does she want to start a farm for?"

"The women aren't all supplied. The demand is increasing, and many would buy here that wouldn't send away for one. Berty is more shrewd than you think. These cats sell for five and six dollars apiece at the least, and some are as high as twenty. I shouldn't a bit wonder if it would turn out to be a good business speculation."

"Well, then, you just meet some of the fellows in my office to-morrow evening and arrange for a house and lot for this man who is to boss the cats," said Tom, dryly.

"All right, I'll come — maybe Roger will, too."

"Good night," said Tom, "I'm off."

"Good night," returned Bonny, laconically, and, standing with his hands thrust in his pockets, he

was looking down the street, when Tom suddenly turned back.

"I say, Bonny, your grandmother must have a good history of the Revolution."

"She has two or three."

"Ask her to lend me one, will you? I half forget what I learned in school."

"Yes, sir; I'll bring it to-morrow."

Tom really went this time, and as he quickly disappeared from sight, Bonny, from his station on the door-step, kept muttering to himself, "Slipping through life, slipping through life. How easy to get on that greased path!"

"What are you saying to yourself?" asked a brisk voice.

Bonny, turning sharply, found Berty beside him.

"Nothing much — only that I was hungry. Let's see what's in the pantry."

"Bonny, if I show you where there is a pie, the most beautiful pumpkin pie you ever saw, will you help me with my tramp?"

"I'll do it for half a pie," said Bonny, generously. "Come on, you young monkey."

CHAPTER XIX.

AT THE BOARD OF WATER-WORKS

"THERE she comes," murmured one of the clerks, in the board of water-works offices.

"Who?" murmured the other clerk.

"The beggar-girl," responded the first one.

The chairman of the board heard them, and looked fearfully over his shoulder.

Roger, Tom, and Bonny knew that Berty's frequent visits to the city hall had gained for her a nickname, occasioned by the character of her visits. She was always urging the claims of the poor, hence she was classed with them. They carefully shielded from her the knowledge of this nickname, and supposed she knew nothing of it.

However, she did know. Some whisper of the "beggar-girl" had reached her ears, and was a matter of chagrin to her.

The chairman of the board of water-works knew all about her. He knew that if the clerks had seen

her passing along the glass corridor outside his office she was probably coming to him; she probably wanted something.

One clerk was his nephew, the other his second cousin, so he was on terms of familiarity with them, and at the present moment was in the outer office discussing with them the chances that a certain bill had of passing the city council.

The door of his own inner office stood open, but of what use to take refuge there? If the beggar-girl really wished to see a man on business, she always waited for him.

He looked despairingly about him. A high, old-fashioned desk stood near. Under it was a foot-stool. As a knock came at the door, he ungracefully folded his long, lank limbs, quickly sat down on the foot-stool, and said, in a low voice, "I've gone to Portland for a week!" Then he fearfully awaited results.

Berty, followed by her friend, the mongrel pup, walked into the room and asked if Mr. Morehall were in.

"No," said the second cousin, gravely, "he has been called to Portland on important business — will be gone a week."

The girl's face clouded; she stood leaning against

the railing that separated the room into two parts, and, as she did so, her weight pushed open the gate that the second cousin had just hastily swung together.

The pup ran in, and being of quick wits and an inquiring disposition, wondered what that man was doing curled up in a corner, instead of being on his feet like the other two.

He began to sniff round him. Perhaps there was something peculiar about him. No — he seemed to be like other men, a trifle anxious and red-faced, perhaps, but still normal. He gave a playful bark, as if to say, " I dare you to come out."

Berty heard him, and turned swiftly. " Mugwump, if you worry another rat, I'll never give you a walk again."

The two young men were in a quandary. Whether to go to the assistance of their chief, or whether to affect indifference, was vexing their clerical souls. Berty, more quick-witted than the pup, was prompt to notice their peculiar expressions.

" Please don't let him worry a rat," she said, beseechingly, " it makes him so cruel. Rats have a dreadfully hard time! Oh, please call him off. He's got it in his mouth. I hear him."

The chairman, in his perplexity, had thrown him

a glove from his pocket, and Mugwump was mouthing and chewing it deliciously.

"He'll kill it," exclaimed Berty. "Oh! let me in," and before the confused clerks could prevent her, she had pushed open the gate and had followed the dog.

Her face was a study. Low down on the floor sat the deceiving chairman, with Mugwump prancing before him.

"Mr. Morehall!" she exclaimed; then she stopped.

The chairman, with a flaming face, unfolded his long limbs, crawled out of his retreat, stumbled over the dog, partly fell, recovered himself, and finally got to his feet. After throwing an indignant glance at the two clerks, who were in a pitiable state of restrained merriment, he concentrated his attention on Berty. She blushed, too, as she divined what had been the case.

"You were trying to hide from me," she said, after a long pause.

He could not deny it, though he stammered something about it being a warm day, and the lower part of the desk being a cool retreat.

"Now you are telling me a story," said Berty, sternly, "you, the chairman of the board of waterworks — a city official, afraid of me!"

He said nothing, and she went on, wistfully, "Am I, then, so terrible? Do you men all hate the beggar-girl?"

Her three hearers immediately fell into a state of shamefacedness.

"What have I done?" she continued, sadly, "what have I done to be so disliked?"

No one answered her, and she went on. "When I lived on Grand Avenue and thought only of amusing myself, everybody liked me. Why is it that every one hates me since I went to River Street and am trying to make myself useful?"

To Mr. Morehall's dismay, her lip was quivering, and big tears began to roll down her cheeks.

"Come in here," he said, leading the way to his own room.

Berty sat down in an armchair and quietly continued to cry, while Mr. Morehall eyed her with distress and increasing anxiety.

"Have a glass of water, do," said the tall man, seizing a pitcher near him, "and don't feel bad. Upon my word, I didn't know what I was doing."

"It — it isn't you only," gasped Berty. "It is everybody. Please excuse me, but I am tired and worried this morning. I've had some sick friends on our street — that's what I came to see you about.

The autumn is starting in so dry that we are almost choked with dust. River Street hasn't been watered for a week."

"Hasn't it?" said Mr. Morehall, slowly.

"Grand Avenue was always watered," continued Berty, as she rested her head against the back of the chair, "even soaked. I never thought about dust in summer. Why is River Street neglected?"

"River Street citizens don't pay such heavy taxes," suggested Mr. Morehall.

"But they pay all they can, sir."

"Poor people are shiftless," said the official, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"That's what everybody says," exclaimed Berty, despairingly. "All well-to-do people that I talk to dismiss the poorer classes in that way. But poor people aren't all shiftless."

"Not all, perhaps," said Mr. Morehall, amiably, and with inward rejoicing that Berty was wiping away her tears.

"And there must be poor people," continued Berty. "We can't all be rich. It's impossible. Who would work for the prosperous, if all were independent?"

"What I meant," replied Mr. Morehall, "was

that poverty is very often the result of a lack of personal exertion on the part of the poor."

"Yes, sir, but I am not just now advocating the cause of the helpless. It is rather the claims of the respectable poor. I know heaps of people on River Street who have only a pittance to live on. Their parents had only the same. They are not dissipated. They work hard and pay what they can to the city. My argument is that these poorer children of the city should be especially well looked after, just as in a family the delicate or afflicted child is the most petted."

"Now you are aiming at the ideal," said Mr. Morehall, with an uneasy smile.

"No, sir, not the ideal, but the practical. Some one was telling me what the city has to spend for prisons, hospitals, and our asylums. Why, it would pay us a thousandfold better to take care of these people before they get to be a burden on us."

"They are so abominably ungrateful," muttered Mr. Morehall.

"And so would I be," exclaimed Berty, "if I were always having charity flung in my face. Let the city give the poor their rights. They ask no more. It's no disgrace to be born poor. But if I am a working girl in River Street I must lodge in a

worm-eaten, rat-haunted tenement-house. I must rise from an unwholesome bed, and put on badly made, uncomfortable clothing. I must eat a scanty breakfast, and go to toil in a stuffy, unventilated room. I must come home at night to my dusty, unwatered street, and then I must, before I go to sleep, kneel down and thank God that I live in a Christian country — why, it's enough to make one a pagan just to think of it! I don't see why the poor don't organize. They are meeker than I would be. It makes me wild to see River Street neglected. If any street is left unwatered, it ought to be Grand Avenue rather than River Street, for the rich have gardens and can go to the country, while the poor must live on the street in summer."

"Now you are oppressing the rich," said Mr. Morehall, promptly.

"Heaven forbid," said the girl, wearily. "Equal rights for all — "

"The poor have a good friend in you," he said, with reluctant admiration.

"Will you have our street watered, sir?" asked Berty, rising.

"I'll try to. I'll have to ask for an appropriation. We'll want another cart and horse, and an extra man."

"That means delay," said Berty, despairingly, "and in the meantime the dust blows about in clouds. It enters the windows and settles on the tables and chairs. It chokes the lungs of consumptives struggling for breath, and little babies gasping for air. Then the mothers put the windows down, and they breathe over and over again the polluted air. And this is stifling autumn weather — come spend a day in River Street, sir."

"Miss Gravely," said the man, with a certain frank bluntness and good-will, "excuse my plain speaking, but you enthuse too much. Those poor people aren't made of the same stuff that you are. They don't suffer to the extent that you do under the same conditions."

Berty was about to leave the room, but she turned round on him with flashing eyes. "Do you mean to say that God has created two sets of creatures — one set with fine nerves and sensitive bodies, the other callous and unsensitive to comfort or discomfort?"

"That's about the measure of it."

"And where would you draw the line?" she asked, with assumed calmness.

Mr. Morehall did not know Berty well. His family, though one of the highest respectability, moved in another circle. If he had had the pleasure

of an intimate acquaintance with the energetic young person before him, he would have known that her compressed lips, her half-closed eyes, and her tense forehead betokened an overwhelming and suppressed anger.

Therefore, unaware of the drawn sword suspended over his head, he went on, unsuspiciously. "To tell the truth, I think there's a lot in heredity. Now there are some families you never find scrabbling round for something to eat. I never heard of a poor Gravely, or a Travers, or a Stanisfield, or a Morehall. It's in the blood to get on. No one can down you."

He paused consequentially, and Berty, biting her lip, waited for him to go on. However, happening to look at the clock, he stopped short. This talk was interesting, but he would like to get back to business.

"Mr. Morehall," said Berty, in a still voice, "do you know that there are a legion of poor Traverses up in the northern part of the State, that Grandma used to send boxes to every month?"

"No," he said, in surprise, "I never heard that."

"And old Mr. Stanisfield took two of his own cousins out of the poorhouse three years ago, and supports them?"

"You astonish me," murmured the confused man.

"And, moreover," continued Berty, with a new gleam in her eye, "since you have been frank with me, I may be frank with you, and say that two of the people for whom I want River Street made sweet and wholesome are old Abner Morehall and his wife, from Cloverdale."

"Abner Morehall!" exclaimed the man, incredulously.

"Yes, Abner Morehall, your own uncle."

"But — I didn't know — why didn't he tell? — " stammered Mr. Morehall, confusedly.

"Yes — why do you suppose he didn't tell you?" said Berty. "That's the blood — the better blood than that of paupers. He was ashamed to have you know of his misfortune."

"He thought I wouldn't help him," burst out her companion, and, with shame and chagrin in his eyes, he sat down at the table and put his hand to his head. "It's those confounded notes," he said, at last. "I often told him he ought never to put his name to paper."

"It was his generosity and kindness — his implicit faith in his fellow men," continued Berty, warmly; "and now, Mr. Morehall, can you say

that 'blood,' or shrewdness, or anything else, will always keep misfortune from a certain family? Who is to assure you that your great-great-grandchildren will not be living on River Street?"

No one could assure the disturbed man that this contingency might not arise, and, lifting his head, he gazed at Berty as if she were some bird of ill-omen.

"You will come to see your relatives, I suppose?" she murmured.

He made an assenting gesture with his hand.

"They are two dear old people. They give tone to the street — and you will send a watering-cart this afternoon?"

He made another assenting gesture. He did not care to talk, and Berty slipped quietly from his office.

CHAPTER XX.

SELINA'S WEDDING

SELINA EVEREST and the Mayor were married.

On one of the loveliest of autumn mornings, the somewhat mature bride had been united in the holy bonds of matrimony to the somewhat mature bridegroom, and now, in the old family mansion of the Everests, they were receiving the congratulations of their numerous friends. Selina had had a church wedding. That she insisted on, greatly to the distress and confusion of her modest husband. He had walked up the aisle of the church as if to his hanging. One minute he went from red to purple, from purple to violent perspiration, the next he became as if wrapped in an ice-cold sheet, and not until then could he recover himself.

But now it was all over. This congratulatory business was nothing compared to the agonizing experience of being in a crowded church, the shrink-

ing target for hundreds of criticizing, shining, awful eyes.

Yes, he was in an ecstasy to think the ordeal was over. Selina never would have made him go through it, if she had had the faintest conception of what his sufferings would be.

She had enjoyed it. All women enjoy that sort of thing. They are not awkward. How can they be, with their sweeping veils and trailing robes? He had felt like a fence-post, a rail — anything stiff, and ugly, and uncomfortable, and in his heart of hearts he wondered that all those well-dressed men and women had not burst into shouts of laughter at him.

Well, it was over — over, thank fortune. He never had been so glad to escape from anything in his life, as he had been to get out of the church and away from the crowd of people. That alone made him blissfully happy, and then, in addition, he had Selina.

He looked at her, and mechanically stretched out a hand to an advancing guest. Selina was his now. He not only was out of that church and never would have to go into it again for such a purpose as he had gone this morning, but Selina Everest was Mrs. Peter Jimson.

He smiled an alarming smile at her, a smile so extraordinarily comprehensive, that she hurriedly asked under her breath if he were ill.

"No," he said, and, in so saying, clasped the hand of the advancing friend with such vigour, that the unhappy man retreated swiftly with his unspoken congratulations on his lips.

"I'm not ill," he muttered. "I'm only a little flustered, Selina."

"Here's Mrs. Short," she said, hastily, "be nice to her. She's a particular friend of mine."

"A fine day, ma'am," murmured the Mayor; "yes, the crops seem good — ought to have rain, though."

Over by a French window opening on the lawn, Berty and Tom were watching the people and making comments.

"Always get mixed up about a bride and groom," volunteered Tom. "Always want to congratulate her, and hope that he'll be happy. It's the other way, isn't it?"

"I suppose so," murmured Berty. "Oh, isn't it a dream to think that they're both happy?"

"Makes one feel like getting married oneself," said Tom.

"Yes, doesn't it? A wedding unsettles me. All the rest of the day I wish I were a bride."

"Do you?" exclaimed Tom, eagerly.

"Yes, and then the next day I think what a goose I am. Being married means slavery to some man. You don't have your own way at all."

"Men never being slaves to their wives," remarked Tom.

"Men are by nature lordly, overbearing, proud-spirited, self-willed, tyrannical, and provoking," said Berty, sweepingly.

But Tom's thoughts had been diverted. "Say, Berty, where do those Tomkins girls get money to dress that way? They're visions in those shining green things."

"They spend too much of their father's money on dress," replied Berty, severely. "Those satins came from Paris. They are an exquisite new shade of green. I forget what you call it."

"I guess old Tomkins is the slave there," said Tom; then, to avoid controversy, he went on, hastily, "You look stunning in that white gown."

"I thought perhaps Selina would want me for a bridesmaid," said Berty, plaintively, "but she didn't."

"Too young and foolish," said Tom, promptly; "but, I say, Berty, where did you get the gown?"

"Margaretta gave it to me. I was going to wear muslin, but she said I shouldn't."

"What is it anyway?" said Tom, putting out a cautious finger to touch the soft folds.

"It's silk, and if you knew how uncomfortable I am in it, you would pity me."

"Uncomfortable! You look as cool as a cucumber."

"I'm not. I wish I had on a serge skirt and a shirt-waist."

"Let me get you something to eat," he said, consolingly. "That going to church and standing about here are tiresome."

"Yes, do," said Berty. "I hadn't any breakfast, I was in such a hurry to get ready."

"Here are sandwiches and coffee to start with," he said, presently coming back.

"Thank you — I am so glad Selina didn't have a sit-down luncheon. This is much nicer."

"Isn't it! You see, she didn't want speeches. On an occasion like this, the Mayor would be so apt to get wound up that he would keep us here till midnight."

Berty laughed. "And they would have lost their train."

"There isn't going to be any train," said Tom, mysteriously.

"Aren't they going to New York?"

"No."

"To Canada?"

"No."

"To Europe?"

"No — Jimson says he isn't going to frizzle and fry in big cities in this lovely weather, unless Selina absolutely commands, and she doesn't command, so he's going to row her up the river to the Cloverdale Inn."

Berty put down her cup and saucer and began to laugh.

"Where are those sandwiches?" asked Tom, trying to peer round the cup.

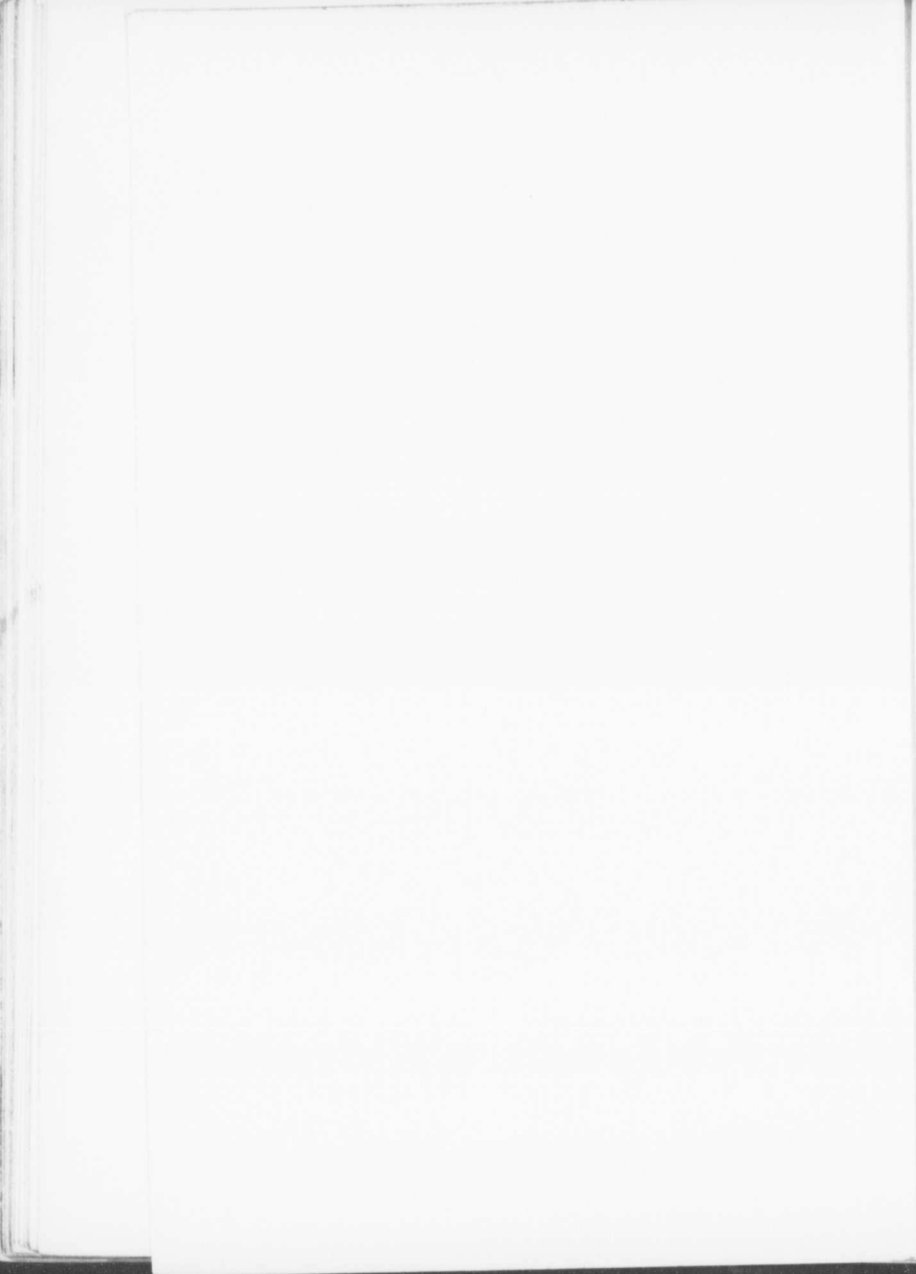
"Gone," said Berty, meekly.

He brought her a new supply, then came cake, jellies, sweets, and fruit in rapid succession.

Berty, standing partly behind a curtain by the open window, kept her admirer so busy that at last he partly rebelled.

"Look here, Berty," he remarked, firmly, "I don't want to be suspicious, but it's utterly im-

"'A RIVER STREET DELEGATION,' SAID TOM"



possible for a girl of your weight and education to dispose of so much provender at a single standing. You're up to some tricks with it. Have you got some River Street rats with you?"

"Yes," she said, smilingly. "Hush, don't tell," and, slightly pulling aside the curtain, she showed him four little heads in a clump of syringa bushes outside.

"Newsboy Jim, and Johnny-Boy, and the two girls, Biddy Malone and Glorymaroo, as we call her, from her favourite exclamation," continued Berty; "they wanted to see something of the Mayor's marriage, and I let them come. I've been handing out 'ruffreshments' to them. Don't scold them, Tom."

"Come right in, youngsters," said the young man, heartily. "I'm sure Mr. Jimson is your Mayor as well as ours."

Without the slightest hesitation, the four grinning children stepped in, and, marshalled by Tom, trotted across the long room to the alcove where Selina and the Mayor stood.

"A River Street delegation," said Tom, presenting them, "come to offer congratulations to the chief executive officer of the city."

Selina shook hands with them. The Mayor

smiled broadly, patted their heads, and the other guests, who had been bidden, without an exception kindly surveyed the unbidden, yet welcome ones.

The introduction over, Tom examined them from head to foot. The little rats were in their Sunday clothes. Their heads were sleek and wet from recent washing. There was a strong smell of cheap soap about them.

"This way, gentlemen and ladies," he said, and he led them back to a sofa near Berty. "Sit down there in a row. Here are some foot-stools for you.

"Waiter," and he hailed a passing black-coated man, "bring the best you have to these children, and, children, you eat as you never ate before."

Berty stood silently watching him. "Tom Everest," she remarked, slowly, "I have two words to say to you."

"I'd rather have one," he muttered.

"Hush," she said, severely, "and listen. The two words are, 'Thank you.'"

"You're welcome," returned Tom, "or, as the French say, 'There is nothing of what —' Hello, Bonny, what's the joke?"

Bonny, in a gentlemanly convulsion of laughter, was turning his face toward the wall in their direction.

The lad stopped, and while Berty and Tom stood silently admiring his almost beautiful face, which was just now as rosy as a girl's, he grew composed.

"I call you to witness, friends," he said, slightly upraising one hand, "that I never in my life before have laughed at dear Grandma."

"You've been cross with her," said Berty.

"Cross, yes, once or twice, but Grandma isn't a person to laugh at, is she?"

"Well, not exactly," said Berty. "I never saw anything funny about Grandma."

"Well, she nearly finished me just now," said Bonny. "I was standing near Selina, when gradually there came a break in the hand-shaking. The guests' thoughts began to run luncheon-ward. Grandma was close to the bridal pair, and suddenly Selina turned and said, impulsively, 'Mrs. Travers, you have had a great deal of experience. I want you to give me a motto to start out with on my wedding-day. Something that will be valuable to me, and will make me think of you whenever I repeat it.' The joke of it was that Grandma didn't want to give her a motto. She didn't seem to have anything handy, but Selina insisted. At last Grandma said, in a shot-gun way, 'Don't nag!' then she moved off.

"Selina stared at the Mayor, and the Mayor stared over her shoulder at me. She didn't see anything funny in it. We did. At last she said, meekly, 'Peter, do you think I am inclined to nag?'

"He just rushed out a sentence at her — 'Upon my life I don't!'

"'Do you, Bonny?' she asked, turning suddenly round on me.

"'No, Selina, I don't,' I told her, but I couldn't help laughing.

"Jimson grinned from ear to ear, and I started off, leaving Selina asking him what he was so amused about."

Tom began to chuckle, but Berty said, "Well — I don't see anything to laugh at."

"She doesn't see anything to laugh at," repeated Bonny, idiotically, then he drew Tom out on the lawn where she could hear their bursts of laughter.

Presently the Mayor came strolling over to the low chair where Berty sat watching her little River Street friends.

"Is it all right for me to leave Selina for a few minutes?" he asked, in an anxious voice. "I can't ask her, for she is talking to some one. I never was married before, and don't know how to act."

"Oh, yes," said Berty, carelessly. "It's an exploded fancy that a man must always stay close to his wife in general society. At home you should be tied to your wife's apron-strings, but in society she takes it off."

"You don't wear aprons in your set," said the Mayor, quickly. "I've found that out. You leave them to the maids."

"I don't like aprons," said Berty. "If I want to protect my dress, I tuck a towel under my belt."

"You've odd ways, and I feel queer in your set," pursued the Mayor, in a meditative voice. "Maybe I'll get used to you, but I don't know. Now I used to think that the upper crust of this city would be mighty formal, but you don't even say, 'Yes, ma'am,' and 'No, ma'am,' to each other. You're as off-hand as street urchins, and downright saucy sometimes I'd say."

"We're not as formal as our grandparents were," said Berty, musingly — "there's everything in environment. We're nothing but a lot of monkeys, anyway — see those children how nicely they are eating. If they were on River Street, they would drop those knives and forks, and have those chicken bones in their fingers in a jiffy."

"Do you ever feel inclined to eat with your fin-

gers?" asked Mr. Jimson, in a low voice, and looking fearfully about him."

"Often, and I do," said Berty, promptly. "Always at picnics."

"My father hated fuss and feathers," remarked Mr. Jimson. "He always went round the house with his hat on, and in his shirt-sleeves."

"The men on River Street do that," replied Berty. "I can see some reason for the shirt-sleeves, but not for the hat."

"Mr. Jimson," said Walter Everest, suddenly coming up to him. "It's time to go. Selina's upstairs changing her gown, the two suit-cases are in the hall."

Ten minutes later, Mr. and Mrs. Everest, with their children and their friends, stood on the front steps calling parting good wishes after Selina and the Mayor.

There were many speculations as to their destination, the greater part of the guests imagining a far-away trip, as Berty had done.

"You're all wrong," observed Tom. "My boat is at Mrs. Travers's wharf for them to go to Cloverdale, and it's cram jam full of flowers with bows of white ribbon on each oar."

Roger Stanisfield burst out laughing. "You're

sold, Tom, my boy, do you suppose the Mayor would trust a joker like you? He has my boat."

Bonny was in an ecstasy. "Get out, you two old fellows," he exclaimed, slapping his brother-in-law on the shoulder. "Mr. Jimson is going to row his beloved up the river in my boat."

"No, he isn't," said Walter Everest. "He's got mine."

"I believe he's fooled us all," said Tom, ruefully. "Did you have any flowers in your boat, Stanisfield?"

"Margaretta put a little bit of rice in," said Roger, "just a handful, where no one would see it but themselves."

"Did you trim your boat, Bonny?" asked Roger.

"Yes," said the boy, "with old shoes. I had a dandy pair chained to the seat, so they couldn't be detached, unless Jimson had a hatchet along."

"Whose boat has he got, for the land's sake?" inquired Walter Everest. "He's asked us all, and we've all pledged secrecy and good conduct, and we've all broken our word and decorated."

"He's got nobody's boat, my friends," said old Mr. Everest, who was shaking with silent laughter. "Don't you know Peter Jimson better than to im-

agine that he would exert himself by rowing up the river this warm day?"

"Well, what are his means of locomotion?" asked Tom.

"My one-hoss shay, my son. It was waiting round the corner of the road for him."

"I say," ejaculated Tom, "let's make up a party to call on them to-morrow. We can take the flowers and other trifles."

"Hurrah," said Bonny. "I'll go ask Margaretta to get up a lunch."

"Will you go to-morrow, Berty?" asked Tom, seeking her out, and speaking in a low voice.

"Where?"

He explained to her.

"Yes, if you will tell me why you laughed so much at what Grandma said to Selina."

Tom looked puzzled. "It's mighty hard to explain, for there isn't anything hidden in it. It just sounded kind of apt."

"You men think women talk too much."

"Some women," replied Tom, guardedly.

"You want them to do as the old philosopher said, 'Speak honey and look sunny,' and, 'The woman that maketh a good pudding in silence is better than one that maketh a tart reply.'"

"That's it exactly," said Tom, with a beaming face. "Now will you go to-morrow?"

"Probably," said Berty, with an oracular frown. "If I am not teased too much."

"May I come in this evening and see how you feel about it?"

"How long do you plan to stay?"

"Five minutes."

"Then you may come," she said, graciously.

CHAPTER XXI.

TO STRIKE OR NOT TO STRIKE

When the picnic party reached Cloverdale the day after the wedding, the Jimsons were not there.

Where Mr. Jimson concealed his bride and himself during his brief honeymoon no one ever knew, for he would not tell, and she could not, being bound to secrecy.

No one, that is, no one except Mr. and Mrs. Everest, and old Mrs. Jimson. To them Selina and the Mayor confided the news that they had been in a quiet New Hampshire village, where they could enjoy delightful drives among hills resplendent in autumn dress, and have no society forced on them but that of their hostess — a farmer's widow.

As a result of this reposeful life, Mr. Jimson came home looking ten years younger, and Roger Stanisfield, meeting him in the street, told him so.

"I've had a quiet time for once in my life," said Mr. Jimson. "I ought to have got married long

ago. I have some one to look after me, and me only now. How is your wife?"

"Well, thank you."

"And Tom and Berty and Bonny — gracious! I feel as if I had been away a year instead of three weeks."

A shade passed over Roger's face. "All well but Grandma and Berty."

"What's the matter with Grandma?"

"I don't know. I am afraid she is breaking up."

The Mayor looked serious, then he asked, abruptly, "And Berty?"

"Oh, River Street — it's on her brain and conscience, and it is wearing her body down."

"She's doing what the rest of us ought to do," said Mr. Jimson, shortly, "but, bless me — you can't make over a city in a day; and we're no worse than others."

"I suppose the city council is pretty bad."

Mr. Jimson shrugged his shoulders.

"Lots of boodle — I say, some of those aldermen ought to be dumped in the river."

"You ought to get Berty out of city politics," said Mr. Jimson, energetically. "That is no girl's work."

"She's going to get out, Margaretta thinks,"

said Roger, turning round and slowly walking down the main street of the city beside him. "But we've got to let her work out the problem for herself. You see, she's no missionary. She is not actuated by the passion of a life-work. She has come to live in a new neighbourhood, and is mad with the people that they don't try to better themselves, and that the city doesn't enable them to do it."

"She'll probably marry Tom Everest, and settle down to housekeeping."

"That will be the upshot of it. I'd be doubtful about it, though, if the River Street people had given her a hand in her schemes of reform."

"She's just an ordinary girl," said the Mayor, briskly. "She's no angel to let the River Streeters walk all over her."

"No, she's no angel," returned Roger, with a smile, "but she's a pretty good sort of a girl."

"That she is," replied Mr. Jimson, heartily. "Now tell me to a dot just what she has been doing since I went away. She seemed all right then."

Roger looked amused, then became grave. "Just after you left, she got worked up on the subject of child labour. It seems the law is broken here in Riverport."

"How does our State law read?" inquired Mr. Jimson. "Upon my word, I don't know."

"The statutes of Maine provide that no female under eighteen years of age, no male under sixteen, and no woman shall be employed in any manufactory or mechanical establishment more than ten hours each day. We also have a compulsory education law which prohibits children under fifteen years of either sex working, unless they can produce certificates that during the year they have attended school during its sessions."

"Well?" said Mr. Jimson.

"Berty found that some old-clothes man here had a night-class of children who came and sewed for him, and did not attend school. She burst into our house one evening when Margaretta was having a party, and before we knew where we were she had swept us all down to River Street. It was a pitiful enough spectacle. A dozen sleepy youngsters sitting on backless benches toiling at shirt-making, round a table lighted by candles. If a child nodded, the old man tapped her with a long stick. Some of us broke up that den, but Berty was furious at the attitude of the parents."

"I'll bet they were mad to have their children's

earnings cut off," observed Mr. Jimson. "Poor people are so avaricious."

"They were, and Berty was in a dancing rage. She got up a paper called *The Cry of the Children.* You can imagine what her editorials would be. Then she had the children of River Street walk in a procession through the city. Nobody laughed at her, everybody was sympathetic but apathetic. Now she is in a smouldering temper. Her paper is discontinued, and I don't know what she is going to do."

"This is mighty interesting," said Mr. Jimson, "but there's Jones, the lumber merchant from Greenport. I've got to speak to him — excuse me," and he crossed the street.

Roger continued on his way to the iron works, and two minutes later encountered Berty herself coming out of a fancy-work store.

"Good morning," he said, planting himself directly before her.

"Good morning," she returned, composedly.

"What have you been buying?" he asked, looking curiously at the parcel in her hand.

"Embroidery."

"For some other person, I suppose."

"No, for myself."

"Why, I never saw you with a needle in your hand in my life."

"You will now," she said, calmly.

"How's the park getting on, Berty?"

"Famously; we have electric lights, and the children can stay till all hours."

"Is your helper satisfactory?"

"She is magnificent — a host in herself. She can shake a bad boy on one side of the park, and slap another at the other side, at the same time. I think I'll resign my curatorship in favour of her. She only gets half my pay now."

"Why resign, Berty?"

"Well, I may have other things to do," she said, evasively.

"You're going to get married."

"Not that I know of," she said, calmly.

"Good-bye," replied Roger; "come oftener to see us, and be sure to bring your embroidery."

Berty gazed after him with a peculiar smile, as he swung quickly away, then she made her way to River Street.

At one of the many corners where lanes led down to wharves, a group of men stood talking with their hands in their pockets.

Berty stopped abruptly. Through the women in

the street she knew what the chief topic of conversation among the wharf labourers just now happened to be.

"Are you talking of your projected strike," she asked, shortly.

Not one of them spoke, but she knew by their assenting looks that they were.

"It's a lovely time for a strike," she said, dryly; "winter just coming on, and your wives and children needing extra supplies."

The men surveyed her indulgently. Not one of them would discuss their proposed course of action with her, but not one resented her knowledge of it, or interference with them.

"You men don't suffer," she said, and as she spoke she pulled up the collar of her jacket, and took a few steps down the lane to avoid the chilly wind. "See, here you stand without overcoats, and some of you with nothing but woollen shirts on. It's the women and children that feel the cold."

One of the men thoughtfully turned a piece of tobacco in his mouth, and said, "That's true."

"What do you strike for, anyway?" she asked.

One of the stevedores who trundled the drums of codfish along the wharves for West Indian ship-

ment, said, amiably, "A strike is usually for higher wages and shorter hours, miss."

"Oh, I have no patience with you," exclaimed Berty, bursting into sudden wrath. "You are so unreasonable. You bear all things, suffer like martyrs, then all at once you flare up and do some idiotic thing that turns the sympathy of the public against you. Now in this case, you ought to have the public with you. I know your wages are small, your hours too long, but you are not taking the right way to improve your condition. Because the Greenport wharf labourers have struck, you think you must do the same. A strike among you will mean lawlessness and violence, and you strikers will blink at this same lawlessness and violence because you say it is in a good cause. Then we, the long-suffering public, hate you for your illegality. There's the strong arm of the law held equally over employers and employed. Why don't you appeal to that? If you are right, that arm will strike your oppressors. You can keep in the background."

"There's a machine back of that arm," said a red-haired man, gloomily, "and, anyway, there ain't a law standing to cover our case."

"Then make one," said Berty, irritably. "You men all have votes, haven't you?"

"Yes, miss," said a man in a blue shirt, "all except this lad. He's just out from Ireland. He's only been ashore two weeks."

"That's the way to settle things," said Berty, warmly. "I've found out that votes are the only things that make anybody afraid of you — you all know how I came to this street. I found living conditions unbearable. In my feeble way I have tried to rectify them. Nobody cares anything for me. The only good I have accomplished is to get a park for the children."

"And that was a great thing," said the man in the blue shirt, "and I guess we all think of it when we look at you."

"I just wanted common necessities," said Berty, eloquently, "air, light, water, and space — wanted them for myself and my neighbours on the street. I have badgered the city council till I have got to be a joke and a reproach. Nobody cares anything about you down here, because you haven't any influence. I've found out that if I could say to the city council, 'Gentlemen, I have five hundred votes to control,' they would listen to me fast enough."

The men smiled, and one said, kindly, "I'm sure,

miss, you'd get our votes in a bunch, if we could give them."

"I don't want them," said Berty, quickly. "It isn't a woman's business to go into reforming city politics. It's the men's place. You men fight for your homes if a foreign enemy menaces us. Why don't you organize, and fight against the city council? Drive it out, and put in a good one. Those few men aren't there to make the laws. They are to administer them. You are the people. Make what laws you please. If they are not workable, make new ones. I'm disgusted with those aldermen. The very idea of their arrogating to themselves so much authority. You would think they were emperors."

The men smiled again. From him in the blue shirt came the emphatic remark, "We couldn't turn out the present lot, miss. They're too strong for us."

"Oh, you could," replied Berty, impatiently. "I've been going over our voting-list, and I find that the city of Riverport consists of 'poor people,' as we call them, to the extent of two-thirds of the population. You poor men have the votes. Now don't tell me you can't get what you want."

"But there's party politics, miss," suggested a quiet man in the background.

"Shame on you, Malone," and Berty pointed a finger at him, "shame on you, to put party politics before family politics. Vote for the man who will do the best for your wife and children. If you haven't got such a man, organize and put one in. Let him give you equal privileges with the rich — or, rather, not equal privileges — I am no socialist. I believe that some men have more brains than others, and are entitled by virtue of their brains to more enjoyments and more power, but I mean that the city owes to every citizen, however poor, a comfortable house and a decently kept street."

"That's sound, miss," said Malone, slipping still further forward, "but we'd never get it from the city."

"Put in some of your number as aldermen. Why shouldn't you in democratic America, when even in conservative England there can exist a city council made up of men who work by the day — masons, painters, bricklayers, and so on. Do that, and you will have a chance to carry out all sorts of municipal reforms. I think it is disgraceful that this ward is represented by that oiled and perfumed old gen-

tleman Demarley, who never comes to this street unless he wants a vote."

Malone stared intently at Berty, while a man beside him murmured something about the board of aldermen having promised certain reforms.

"Don't speak to me of reforms from those men that we have now," returned Berty, with flashing eyes. "When I came to River Street, I used to blame the policemen that they didn't enforce the law. Now I see that each policeman is a chained dog for some alderman. He can only go the length of his chain. A strapping great creature in uniform comes along to your house, Mr. Malone, and says, in a lordly way, 'Mrs. Malone, you are obstructing the sidewalk with those boxes; you must remove them.'

"'And you are obstructing my peace of mind,' she says, 'with that old drug-store over there open all hours, and with our young lads slipping in and out the back door, when they ought to be in bed. Haven't you eyes or a nose for anything but boxes?'

"And the policeman says, meekly, 'I see nothing, I hear nothing; there must be something wrong with your own eyes and hearing, Mrs. Malone. It's getting old you are.' Then he moves on to look

for more boxes and small boys. That's the length of his chain."

They were silent, and Berty, with increasing heat and irritation, went on. "This city is entirely corrupt. I say it again and again, and you know it better than I do — but I am going to stop talking about it. I had a lovely scheme for setting up a shop to sell pure milk to try to keep the breath of life in your babies a little longer, and I was going to get out plans for model dwellings, but I am going to stop short right here, and mind my own business."

The men stood looking sheepishly at her, and at themselves, and, while they stood, Tom Everest, in a short walking-coat, and with his hat on the back of his head, came hurrying down the street.

He put his hat on straight when he saw Berty, and stopped to glance at her. He had got into the way of dodging down to River Street if he had any business that brought him in the neighbourhood, or if he could spare an hour from his office.

CHAPTER XXII.

DISCOURAGED

WHEN Berty's eyes rested on Tom, he came forward hat in hand.

"Is there anything I can do for you?" he inquired, calmly, but with inward anxiety as he noticed her flushed face.

"No, thank you," she said, wearily, "I was just talking to some of my friends here."

Tom nodded to the men in a civil manner, then said, "Are you going home?"

"Yes, presently," she returned. "I will just finish what I was saying. I was telling these men, Mr. Everest, that when I came to River Street, and saw how many things needed to be done in order to make the place comfortable, my brain was on fire. I wished to do everything to enable my neighbours to have decent homes and a pure atmosphere in which to bring up their children. But now I have got discouraged with them. They don't

second me. All the rich people say that poor people are shiftless and ungrateful, and I am beginning to think they are right. Here are these men standing before us. They are just as sensible as you are, or as any man in the city, but again and again they will vote for aldermen who care no more for their interests than they do for the interests of the sparrows flying about the city. They can pick up a living the best way they can. The city council has not one bit of care of its children, except the rich ones, and I say to these men here that there is no use for me or anybody to try to help them. They have got to help themselves."

Tom looked concerned, but made no endeavour to reply, and Berty went on:

"It is all very fine to talk of helping the poor, and uplifting the poor. It just makes them more pauper-like for you to settle down among them, and bear all the burden of lifting them up. They have got to help you, and because they won't help me, I am going to leave River Street just as soon as I get money enough. I'm disgusted with these people."

Tom, to Berty's surprise, gave no expression of relief — and yet how many times he had begged her to turn her back on this neighbourhood.

The wharf-men sank into a state of greater sheepishness than before. One of them, who carried a whip under his arm, shifted it, and, reaching forward, pushed Malone with it.

Other of the men were nudging him, and at last he remarked, regretfully, "I'm sorry to hear you say that you want to quit the street, miss. I hope you'll change your mind."

"Well, now, do you think it is a nice thing for me to be constantly running about interviewing aldermen who hate the sight of me, on the subject of the rights of great strong men like you and these others? Come, now, is it work for a girl?"

"Well, no, miss, it isn't," said Malone, uneasily.

"Then why don't you do it yourselves? The ideal thing is to trust people, to believe that your neighbour loves you as well as he does himself, but he doesn't. He pretends he does, but you've got to watch him to make a pretence a reality. For the good of your alderman neighbour make him love you. You don't want plush sofas and lace window curtains. Bah, I'm getting so I don't care a fig for the 'rags' of life — but you want well-made furniture, and a clean pane of glass to look out at God's sky."

"That's so," muttered Malone.

"Then for goodness' sake get to work. Municipal reform can start right here on River Street as well as on Grand Avenue. I have all sorts of lovely papers telling just how model municipal government should be, and is conducted. It's a living, acting plan in several cities, but I sha'n't tell any of you one thing about it, unless you come and ask me. I'm tired of cramming information down your throats. Go on and strike, and do anything foolish you can. Let your wives freeze, and your poor children cry for food this winter. In the spring there will be a fine lot of funerals."

"Oh, I say, Berty," remarked Tom, in an undertone.

Her eyes were full of tears, but she went plunging on. "And I'll tell you one thing that may be published to the city any day. I was not told not to tell it. Mr. Jimson wrote me a letter while he was away, and I think he is going to resign the mayoralty. He won't tell why, of course, but I know it is because the city council is so corrupt. Now if you men had stood by him, and put in a decent set of councillors, he might have stayed in. I haven't said a word of this before, because I felt so badly about it."

The men scarcely heard her last sentences. The

"River Streeters," as they were called, took to a man an extraordinary interest in civic affairs, and they fell to discussing this bit of news among themselves.

"Come home, Berty," said Tom.

"Yes, I will," she said, meekly. "I've said all I want to. Just steady me over that crossing. I've got dust in my eyes."

Poor Berty — she was crying, and good, honest Tom choked back a sudden sympathetic lump in his throat.

"Don't worry, little girl," he said, huskily. "You've done a lot of good already, and we're all proud of you."

"I have done nothing," said Berty, passionately, "nothing but get the park for the children. I just love the children on this street. I want their fathers to do something for them. It's awful, Tom, to bring up boys and girls in such an atmosphere. What will their parents say when they stand before the judgment seat — I can't stand it, Tom — the lost souls of the little ones just haunt me."

"There, there," murmured Tom, consolingly, "we're most home. Try to think of something else, Berty — you'll live to do lots of work for the children yet."

CHAPTER XXIII.

GRANDMA'S REQUEST

For three weeks the weather had been chilly and disagreeable. "The winter will set in early," the oldest inhabitants were prophesying, when suddenly the full glory of the Indian summer burst upon the city.

Berty was delighted. "Dear Grandma will get better now," she kept saying, hopefully. "This is what she wants — just a little warm sunshine before the winter comes."

Grandma's health had for some time been a cause of anxiety to her many friends. All through the autumn she had been ailing, and strangely quiet, even for her. And she had complained of feeling cold, a thing she had never done before in her life. Nothing seemed to warm her, not even the blazing fires that Berty kept in some of the many open fire-places with which the old house was well supplied.

To-day there was a change. When the warm,

lovely sunshine came streaming into her room, Grandma had got out of bed. She had come down-stairs, and, very quietly, but with a gentle smile that sent Berty into an ecstasy of delight, she had visited every room in the house.

The guinea-pigs and pigeons in the wood-shed, the two women working in the kitchen, had been made glad by a call from her, and now she was resting on a sofa in the parlour.

"I feel twenty years younger to see you going about!" exclaimed Berty, delightedly, as she tucked a blanket round her.

"Twenty years!" murmured Grandma.

"Of course that's exaggeration," explained Berty, apologetically. "I know that you know I'm not twenty yet. I just wanted you to understand how glad I feel."

"Go out on the veranda," said Grandma, "and breathe the fresh air. You have been in the house too much with me lately."

Berty's upper lip was covered with a dew of perspiration. She was hot all the time, partly from excitement and anxiety about Grandma, and partly from her incessant activity in waiting on her in the heated atmosphere of the house.

Berty reluctantly made her way to the veranda,

where she promptly dislodged from a rocking-chair the mongrel pup, who, after long hesitation, had finally chosen to take up his abode with her.

The pup, however, crawled up beside her after she sat down, and she gently swayed to and fro in the rocking-chair, absently stroking his head and gazing out at the stripped grain-fields across the river.

> "The ripened sheaves are garnered in,
> Garnered in, garnered in,"

she was singing softly to herself, when some one remarked in an undertone, "Well, how goes it?"

"Oh," she said, looking up, "it is you, is it, the omnipresent Tom?"

"Yes, I just slipped up for a minute to see how Grandma is. Won't this sunshine set her up?"

"You saw her as you came through the room?"

"Yes, but she was asleep, so I did not speak. How is she?"

"Better, much better, and I am so glad."

"So am I," responded Tom, heartily; "it makes us all feel bad to have her ill, but, I say, Berty, you must not take it so to heart. You're looking thin."

"I can't help worrying about Grandma, Tom."

"How long since you've been out?"

"Two weeks."

"That's too long for one of your active disposition to stay in the house. Come, take your dog and walk back to town with me. See, he is all ready to come."

Mugwump, indeed, was fawning round Tom in a servile manner.

"He's liked me ever since he had a taste of my coat," observed the young man.

"If you won't take a walk with me, let me row you over to Bobbetty's Island this afternoon," pursued Tom.

Berty shook her head, but said, eagerly, "Do tell me how Mafferty is getting on."

"Finely — he says that's a first-class shanty we put up for him — the stove is a beauty, and, Berty, another consignment of cats has arrived."

"Oh, Tom, what are they like?"

The young man launched into a description of the new arrivals. "There are four white kittens — one pair yellow eyes, three pairs blue, for which you should charge twenty dollars to intending purchasers; three black Persian kings, worth thirty dollars, and a few assorted kittens from five dollars up."

Berty listened in rapt attention. When he had

finished, she said, "You've been tremendously good about my tramp, Tom."

"I like partnerships," he said, modestly; "in fact, I —"

"That reminds me," interrupted Berty, unceremoniously; "has he had another letter from his wife?"

"Yes, she is coming in ten days."

The girl clasped her dog so energetically round the neck that he squealed in protest. "Isn't it just lovely, that we have been able to do something for that man? Oh, do you suppose he will be happy there with his wife and the cats?"

"No, certainly not," said Tom, coolly. "He's going to have his bursts, of course."

"And what are we to do?" asked Berty, sorrowfully.

"Forgive him, and row him back to the island," said Tom, hopefully. "It's as much our business to look after him as anybody's."

Berty turned in her chair, and stared at him long and intently. "Tom Everest, you are changing."

"Pray Heaven, I am," he said earnestly, and something in the bright, steady gaze bent on her made her eyes fill with tears.

"I have learned a lot from you," he continued, in a low voice. "When I heard you talking to those men the other day, it stirred my heart. It seemed pitiful Berty, that a girl like you, who might think only of amusing herself, should be so touched by her neighbours' woes that she should give up her own peace of mind in order to try to help them. Then I heard that though you could not move the men, the women of the street were much put out at the thought of your leaving, and so exasperated with the men, that they told them they had got to do something to help their families. I said to myself, 'I've only been giving Berty a half assistance up to this. She shall have my whole assistance now.'"

Berty's face was glowing. "Tom," she said, gently, "if we live, we shall see great reforms on River Street."

"I hope so," he replied, heartily.

"We shall see," and she upraised one slim brown hand, "perhaps, oh, perhaps and possibly, but still, I trust, truly, we shall see this our city one of the best governed in America."

"Oh, I hope so," returned Tom, with a kind of groan.

"Don't doubt it," continued the girl. "Who

lives will see. I tell you, Tom, the women are desperate. The River Street houses are growing older and older. What woman can endure seeing her children die, and know that they are poisoned out of existence? I tell you, Tom, the men have got to do something or emigrate."

"They'll not emigrate," said Tom, shortly, "and upon my word," and he looked round about him, "I don't know but what I'd be willing to live on River Street myself, to help reform it."

Berty was silent for a long time, then she said, in a low voice, "You will not regret that speech, Tom Everest."

"All right, little girl," he replied, cheerfully, and jumping up from his low seat. "Now I must get back to work. Come, Mugwump, I guess your missis will let you have a walk, even if she won't go herself."

The lawless dog, without glancing at Berty for permission, bounded to his side and licked his hand.

"You haven't very good manners, dog," said Tom, lightly, "but I guess your mistress likes you."

"I always did like the bad ones best," said Berty,

wistfully. " It seems as if they had more need of friends — good-bye, Tom."

" Good-bye, little girl," he returned, throwing her a kiss from the tips of his fingers. " Maybe I'll run up this afternoon."

CHAPTER XXIV.

DOWN THE RIVER

Tom did not get up in the afternoon. However, he came in the evening, and the next morning, and the next.

Margaretta and Roger, Bonny, Selina, and Mr. Jimson also came. Grandma was decidedly better, and in their joy they came even oftener than they had in their sorrow at her illness.

Berty could hardly contain herself for very lightness and extravagance of spirit. It had seemed to her that she could not endure the mere thought of a further and long-continued illness on the part of her beloved grandmother. To think of that other contingency — her possible death — sent her into fits of shuddering and despondency in which it seemed as if she, too, would die if her grandmother did.

Now all was changed. Day by day the exquisite

sunshine continued, the air was balmy, there was a yellow haze about the sun. It seemed to Berty that she was living in an enchanted world. Grandma was going about the house with a firm step — a bright eye. She had gone over all her trunks and closets. She had sorted letters, tidied her boxes of clothes, and arranged all her belongings with a neatness and expedition that seemed to betoken the energy of returned youthfulness.

She was also knitting again. Nothing had pleased Berty as much as this. Tears of delight fell on the silk stocking as she handed it to Grandma the first time she asked her for it.

"Dear Grandma," said Berty, on this afternoon, abruptly dropping on a footstool beside her, and putting her head on her knee, "dear Grandma."

Mrs. Travers, still steadily knitting, glanced at her as if to say, "Why this sudden access of affection?"

"It doesn't mean anything in particular," said Berty, pressing still closer, "only that you are so dear."

Grandma smiled, and went on with her work.

"You are just toeing that stocking off," said Berty.

"Yes, dear," replied her grandmother. "This is

the last of the six pairs for Mrs. Darley-James. You will remember, Berty, they are all for her."

"Why should I remember?" asked the girl, anxiously. "You always remember for yourself."

"True," said Mrs. Travers, composedly, and, getting up, she went to her writing-desk. Taking out a roll of exquisitely made stockings, she wrapped them in a piece of paper, and with a firm hand wrote, "Mrs. Darley-James, from her old friend, Margaret Travers."

Having directed the parcel, she left her desk and went to the veranda.

Berty followed her. Grandma was looking strangely up and down the river — strangely and restlessly. At last she said, "It's a glorious afternoon. I should like to go out in a boat."

"But, Grandma," said Berty, uneasily, "do you feel able for it?"

Her grandmother looked at her, and the brightness of her face silenced the girl's scruples.

"I will take you in my boat, dear," she said, gently, "if you wish to go."

"I should like to have Margaretta come," said Mrs. Travers.

"Very well, we will send for her."

"And Roger," said Grandma.

"Roger is at an important business meeting this afternoon, I happen to know," said Berty, hesitatingly.

"He would leave it for me," said Grandma.

"Do you wish me to ask him?" inquired Berty, in some anxiety.

"Yes," said Grandma, softly.

Berty got up and was about to leave the veranda, when Mrs. Travers went on. "Will you send for Bonny, too?"

"Oh, Grandma, don't you feel well?" asked Berty, in increasing anxiety.

"Just at present I do, dear," and her voice was so clear, her manner so calm, that Berty was reassured until her next remark.

"Berty, where is Tom this afternoon?"

"Oh, Grandma, he was going to Bangor on business. He is just about getting to the station now."

"Will you send for him, too?"

"Send for him?" faltered Berty. "Oh, Grandma, you are ill. You must be ill."

"Do I look ill?"

"Oh, no, no," said Berty, in despair. "You don't look ill, your face is like an angel's, but you frighten me."

“My child,” said Grandma, “I never felt better in my life; but despatch your messengers.”

Berty left the room. She had a strange sensation as if walking on air. “Bring your boat, Roger,” she wrote, “your family boat. Mine isn't large enough.”

Her messengers were faithful, and in an hour Margaretta, Bonny, Roger, and Tom were hastening to the house.”

Berty met them in the hall. “No, Grandma isn't ill,” she said, with a half-sob. “Don't stare at her, and don't frighten her. She just took a fancy to go out boating, and to have you all with her.”

“But it is so unlike Grandma to interfere or to disarrange plans,” murmured Margaretta; “there is something wrong.” However, she said nothing aloud, and went quietly into the parlour with the others and spoke to Grandma, who looked at them all with a strange brightness in her eyes, but said little.

Tom could not get the fright from his manner. Old Mrs. Travers would not interrupt a railway journey for a trifle. They might say what they liked.

In somewhat breathless and foreboding silence

they got into Roger's big boat moored at the landing, and he and Tom took the oars.

Once out upon the bosom of the calmly flowing river, their faces brightened. Sky and water were resplendent, and they were softly enveloped in the golden haze of approaching sunset.

Here where the river was broadest the shores seemed dim in the yellow light. With the dying glory of the sun behind them, they went down the stream in the direction of Grandma's pointing hand.

How well she looked, propped up on her cushions in the stern. Her eyes were shining with a new light, her very skin seemed transparent and luminous. Was it possible that, instead of failing and entering upon a weary old age, this new-found energy betokened a renewed lease of life? Their faces brightened still further. Tom at last lost the fright from his eyes, and Berty's vanished colour began to come fitfully back.

As they sat enfolding her in loving glances, Grandma occasionally spoke in low, short sentences, mostly relating to the river.

"I was born by it — it has been a friend to me. Children, you will all live by the river."

Upon arriving opposite Bobbetty's Island, Grandma smiled. Berty's tramp, Mafferty, in a de-

cent suit of clothes, stood on a rock, surrounded by a number of handsome, dignified cats, who sat or stood beside him like so many dogs. As they passed he waved them a respectful greeting with one of Tom's discarded hats.

"You will not give him up," said Grandma to Tom. "You will not become discouraged."

"I will not," he said, solemnly.

CHAPTER XXV.

LAST WORDS

"THE sun has gone down," said Margaretta, suddenly.

It had indeed. The huge golden ball had just dropped behind the hills on the western side of the river.

Grandma half-raised herself on her cushions, a restrained eagerness took possession of her, as if she were disappointed that she had not obtained one more glimpse of the king of day, then she sank back and smiled into the unwavering eyes of her youngest granddaughter. The eyes of the others might occasionally wander. Berty's gaze had not left her face since they came upon the river.

"You wished to see the sun again," said Berty. "I should have warned you that it was about to disappear."

"I wished to say good-bye to it," said Grandma, "a last good-bye."

"To say good-bye," repeated Berty, in a stunned voice, "a last good-bye," and with a heart-broken gesture she put her hand to her head, as if wondering if she had heard aright.

Margaretta was trembling. Since the withdrawal of the sun, the yellow, lovely glow had faded. There was a gray shadow on everything, even on their own bright faces — on all except Grandma's. That radiance about her was not a reflection of any light in this world; it was unearthly; and she fearfully touched Roger with a finger.

She knew now why they had been brought out upon the river, and, endeavouring once, twice, and finally a third time, she managed to utter, in a quivering voice, "Grandma, shall we take you home?"

"No, Margaretta," replied Grandma, clearly, and she pointed down the river. "Take me toward the sea. I shall soon be sent for."

They all understood her now. Their scarcely suppressed forebodings rushed back and enveloped them in a dark, unhappy cloud.

Grandma was repeating in a low voice, "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself, for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

Margaretta, leaning over, drew a flask from Roger's pocket. Then, slipping past the motionless Berty, she knelt before her grandmother.

"Dearest, I brought a stimulant with me. Will you have some?"

"But I have no need of it," said Grandma, opening wide her strangely beautiful eyes.

It seemed to Margaretta that she could not endure their bliss, their radiance. She turned her head quietly away, and, with a rain of tears falling down her face, sat looking out over the river.

Presently controlling herself, she again turned to her grandmother. Perhaps there was something she could do for her. Her hands might be cold. They were, and Margaretta, taking them in her own, chafed them gently.

Grandma smiled quietly. "Always thoughtful — my dear, you will be a mother to Bonny."

"I will," said the weeping girl.

"Do not be unhappy," said Grandma, pleadingly. "I am so happy to go. My earthly house is in order. I long for my heavenly one."

"But — but, Grandma, you have been happy with us," stammered Margaretta.

"Happy, so happy — always remember that. My only trouble a separated family. One half in

heaven, the other on earth. One day to be reunited. You will cherish each other after I am gone — you precious ones on earth — Roger?"

The young man nodded, and bent his head low over the oars.

"And Tom," said Grandma, with exquisite sweetness, "my third grandson, you will take care of Berty?" Tom tried to speak, failed, tried again, but Grandma knew the significance of his hoarse, inarticulate murmur. Then he averted his gaze from the heart-breaking sight of Berty at her grandmother's feet. The despairing girl had clasped them to her breast. Grandma was more to her than any of them. How could he comfort her for such a loss?

"Come, come," said Grandma, cheerily, "our parting is but for a little. See, my child, my spirit is growing brighter and brighter. It has outgrown this poor old worn-out body. Berty, lift your head, and look your grandmother once more in the eyes."

After some delay, Berty, in mute, anguished silence did as she was bid.

"Some day," said Grandma, firmly, "your own sturdy limbs will fail you. You will fly from them as from a discarded burden, and come to rejoin your

mother and grandmother in the sky. Let me hear you speak. Will you be brave?"

Still in dumb, tearless sorrow, the girl shook her head.

"Is this the child I have brought up?" asked Grandma, with some faintness. "Have I been unsuccessful? Where is your strength in the hour of trial?"

Berty clasped her hands to her side. "Grandma," she said, slowly, and as if each word were wrung from her. "I will be brave, I will not forget what you have told me."

"Keep your own family together, and keep the welfare of the children of the city next your heart," said Grandma, with new strength, "so you will be blessed in your own soul."

"I promise," said Berty, with quivering lips.

"Give my love to Selina and her husband," Grandma went on, after a short pause. "They are happy together, and they know their duty. They have no need of words from me. And now, Bonny, my own and last grandchild — the baby of the family."

The boy stretched out his hands. He was younger than the others, and he made no attempt to restrain his sobs.

" Such a dear baby he was," murmured Grandma, patting his downcast head. " Such a lovely, beautiful baby."

Margaretta made an effort to control herself, and resolutely wiped away the tears pouring down her face. " Grandma," she uttered, brokenly, " would you like us to sing to you? "

Grandma slightly turned her head. She seemed to be listening to something beyond them. Then she said, slowly, " My dears, I never fancied going out of this world to the sound of earthly music. There are strange and exquisite harmonies from another world floating in my ears. Hark, children — I hear it now plainly. I am nearing the sea."

" Grandma, darling," said Margaretta, in distress, " we are many miles from the sea."

" It is the sea," murmured the dying woman, and a triumphant smile broke over her face, " the sea of glass near the great white throne — and there is a new sound now. Ah, children! " and, raising herself on her cushions, a very flame of unearthly and exquisite anticipation swept over her face, " the new sound is from the harps of gold of them that stand beside the sea. They have gotten the victory, and they sing praises! "

She sank back — with one joyful exclamation the breath left her body.

Who could mourn for a death like that? Who would dare to grieve over the little worn-out body?

Margaretta reverently stooped over, kissed the face so soon to grow cold, then, lightly draping a white wrap about it, she sat down and held out one hand to Berty, the other to her brother.

Tom and Roger turned the boat's head toward the city. Their hearts were full of grief, and yet, looking at the calm sky, the peaceful river, they knew that time would pass, their grief would grow chastened, in all probability there stretched before each occupant of that boat a useful and happy life.

Grandma had not lived in vain. She had kept her family together, and while her children's children lived, and their children, her memory would not be suffered to grow cold, neither would her good deeds be forgotten.

THE END.