Harriet Stowe

We and Our Neighbors: or, The Records of an Unfashionable Street

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Harriet Beecher Stowe
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CHAPTER I
THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STREET

"Who can have taken the Ferguses' house, sister?" said a brisk little old lady, peeping through the window blinds. "It's taken! Just come here and look! There's a cart at the door."

"You don't say so!" said Miss Dorcas, her elder sister, flying across the room to the window blinds, behind which Mrs. Betsey sat discreetly ensconced with her knitting work. "Where? Jack, get down, sir!" This last remark was addressed to a rough-coated Dandie Dinmont terrier, who had been winking in a half doze on a cushion at Miss Dorcas's feet. On the first suggestion that there was something to be looked at across the street, Jack had ticked briskly across the room, and now stood on his hind legs on an old embroidered chair, peering through the slats as industriously as if his opinion had been requested. "Get down, sir!" persisted Miss Dorcas. But Jack only winked contumaciously at Mrs. Betsey, whom he justly considered in the light of an ally, planted his toe nails more firmly in the embroidered chair-bottom, and stuck his nose further between the slats, while Mrs. Betsey took up for him, as he knew she would.

"Do let the dog alone, Dorcas! *He* wants to see as much as anybody."

"Now, Betsey, how am I ever to teach Jack not to jump on these chairs if you will always take his part? Besides, next we shall know, he'll be barking through the window blinds," said Miss Dorcas.

Mrs. Betsey replied to the expostulation by making a sudden diversion of subject. "Oh, look, look!" she called, "that must be *she*," as a face with radiant, dark eyes, framed in an aureole of bright golden hair, appeared in the doorway of the house across the street. "She's a pretty creature, anyway – much prettier than poor dear Mrs. Fergus."

"Henderson, you say the name is?" said Miss Dorcas.

"Yes. Simons, the provision man at the corner, told me that the house had been bought by a young editor, or something of that sort, named Henderson – somebody that writes for the papers. He married Van Arsdel's daughter."

"What, the Van Arsdels that failed last spring? One of our mushroom New York aristocracy – up to-day and down to-morrow!" commented Miss Dorcas, with an air of superiority. "Poor things!"

"A very imprudent marriage, I don't doubt," sighed Mrs. Betsey. "These upstart modern families never bring up their girls to do anything."

"She seems to be putting her hand to the plough, though," said Miss Dorcas. "See, she actually is lifting out that package herself! Upon my word, a very pretty creature. I think we must take her up."

"The Ferguses were nice," said Mrs. Betsey, "though he was only a newspaper man, and she was a nobody; but she really did quite answer the purpose for a neighbor – not, of course, one of our sort exactly, but a very respectable, lady-like little body."

"Well," said Miss Dorcas, reflectively, "I always said it doesn't do to carry exclusiveness too far. Poor dear Papa was quite a democrat. He often said that he had seen quite good manners and real refinement in people of the most ordinary origin."

"And, to be sure," said Mrs. Betsey, "if one is to be too particular, one doesn't get anybody to associate with. The fact is, the good old families we used to visit have either died off or moved off up into the new streets, and one does like to have *somebody* to speak to."

"Look there, Betsey, do you suppose that's Mr. Henderson that's coming down the street?" said Miss Dorcas.

"Dear me!" said Mrs. Betsey, in an anxious flutter. "Why, there are *two* of them – they are both taking hold to lift out that bureau – see there! Now *she's* put her head out of the chamber window there, and is speaking to them. What a pretty color her hair is!"

At this moment the horse on the other side of the street started prematurely, for some reason best known to himself, and the bureau came down with a thud; and Jack, who considered his opinion as now called for, barked frantically through the blinds.

Miss Dorcas seized his muzzle energetically and endeavored to hold his jaws together, but he still barked in a smothered and convulsive manner; whereat the good lady swept him, *vi et armis*, from his perch, and disciplined him vigorously, forcing him to retire to his cushion in a distant corner, where he still persistently barked.

"Oh, poor doggie!" sighed Mrs. Betsey. "Dorcas, how can you?"

"How can I?" said Miss Dorcas, in martial tones. "Betsey Ann Benthusen, this dog would grow up a perfect pest of this neighborhood if I left him to you. He *must* learn not to get up and bark through those blinds. It isn't so much matter now the windows are shut, but the *habit* is the thing. Who wants to have a dog firing a fusillade when your visitors come up the front steps – barking-enough-to-split-one's-head-open," added Miss Dorcas, turning upon the culprit, with a severe staccato designed to tell upon his conscience.

Jack bowed his head and rolled his great soft eyes at her through a silvery thicket of hair.

"You are a *very* naughty dog," she added, impressively.

Jack sat up on his haunches and waved his front paws in a deprecating manner to Miss Dorcas, and the good lady laughed and said, cheerily, "Well, well, Jacky, be a good dog now, and we'll be friends."

And Jacky wagged his tail in the most demonstrative manner, and frisked with triumphant assurance of restored favor. It was the usual end of disciplinary struggles with him. Miss Dorcas sat down to a bit of worsted work on which she had been busy when her attention was first called to the window.

Mrs. Betsey, however, with her nose close to the window blinds, continued to announce the state of things over the way in short jets of communication.

"There! the gentlemen are both gone in – and there! the cart has driven off. Now, they've shut the front door," etc.

After this came a pause of a few moments, in which both sisters worked in silence.

"I wonder, now, *which* of those two was the husband," said Mrs. Betsey at last, in a slow reflective tone, as if she had been maturely considering the subject.

In the mean time it had occurred to Miss Dorcas that this species of minute inquisition into the affairs of neighbors over the way was rather a compromising of her dignity, and she broke out suddenly from a high moral perch on her unconscious sister.

"Betsey," she said, with severe gravity, "I really suppose it's no concern of ours *what* goes on over at the other house. Poor dear Papa used to say if there was anything that was unworthy a true lady it was a disposition to gossip. Our neighbors' affairs are nothing to us. I think it is Mrs. Chapone who says, 'A well-regulated mind will repress curiosity.' Perhaps, Betsey, it would be well to go on with our daily reading."

Mrs. Betsey, as a younger sister, had been accustomed to these sudden pullings-up of the moral check-rein from Miss Dorcas, and received them as meekly as a well-bitted pony. She rose immediately, and, laying down her knitting work, turned to the book-case. It appears that the good souls were diversifying their leisure hours by reading for the fifth or sixth time that enlivening poem, Young's *Night Thoughts*. So, taking down a volume from the book-shelves and opening to a mark, Mrs. Betsey commenced a sonorous expostulation to Alonzo on the value of time. The good lady's manner

of rendering poetry was in a high-pitched falsetto, with inflections of a marvelous nature, rising in the earnest parts almost to a howl. In her youth she had been held to possess a talent for elocution, and had been much commended by the amateurs of her times as a reader of almost professional merit. The decay of her vocal organs had been so gradual and gentle that neither sister had perceived the change of quality in her voice, or the nervous tricks of manner which had grown upon her, till her rendering of poetry resembled a preternatural hoot. Miss Dorcas beat time with her needle and listened complacently to the mournful adjurations, while Jack, crouching himself with his nose on his forepaws, winked very hard and surveyed Miss Betsey with an uneasy excitement, giving from time to time low growls as her voice rose in emphatic places; and finally, as if even a dog's patience could stand it no longer, he chorused a startling point with a sharp yelp!

"There!" said Mrs. Betsey, throwing down the book. "What is the reason Jack *never* likes me to read poetry?"

Jack sprang forward as the book was thrown down, and running to Mrs. Betsey, jumped into her lap and endeavored to kiss her in a most tumultuous and excited manner, as an expression of his immense relief.

"There! there! Jacky, good fellow – down, down! Why, how odd it is! I can't think what excites him so in my reading," said Mrs. Betsey. "It must be something that he notices in my intonations," she added, innocently.

The two sisters we have been looking in upon are worthy of a word of introduction. There are in every growing city old houses that stand as breakwaters in the tide of modern improvement, and may be held as fortresses in which the past entrenches itself against the never-ceasing encroachments of the present. The house in which the conversation just recorded has taken place was one of these. It was a fragment of ancient primitive New York known as the old Vanderheyden house, only waiting the death of old Miss Dorcas Vanderheyden and her sister, Mrs. Betsey Benthusen, to be pulled down and made into city lots and squares.

Time was when the Vanderheyden house was the country seat of old Jacob Vanderheyden, a thriving Dutch merchant, who lived there with somewhat foreign ideas of style and stateliness.

Parks and gardens and waving trees had encircled it, but the city limits had gained upon it through three generations; squares and streets had been opened through its grounds, till now the house itself and the garden-patch in the rear was all that remained of the ancient domain. Innumerable schemes of land speculators had attacked the old place; offers had been insidiously made to the proprietors which would have put them in possession of dazzling wealth, but they gallantly maintained their position. It is true their income in ready money was but scanty, and their taxes had, year by year, grown higher as the value of the land increased. Modern New York, so to speak, foamed and chafed like a great red dragon before the old house, waiting to make a mouthful of it, but the ancient princesses within bravely held their own and refused to parley or capitulate.

Their life was wholly in the past, with a generation whose bones had long rested under respectable tombstones. Their grandfather on their mother's side had been a signer of the Declaration of Independence; their grandfather on the paternal side was a Dutch merchant of some standing in early New York, a friend and correspondent of Alexander Hamilton's and a co-worker with him in those financial schemes by which the treasury of the young republic of America was first placed on a solid basis. Old Jacob did good service in negotiating loans in Holland, and did not omit to avail himself of the golden opportunities which the handling of a nation's wealth presents. He grew rich and great in the land, and was implicitly revered in his own family as being one of the nurses and founders of the American Republic. In the ancient Dutch secretary which stood in the corner of the sitting-room where our old ladies spent their time were many letters from noted names of a century or so back – papers yellow with age, but whose contents were all alive with the foam and fresh turbulence of what was then the existing life of the period.

Mrs. Betsey Benthusen was a younger sister and a widow. She had been a beauty in her girlhood, and so much younger than her sister that Miss Dorcas felt all the pride and interest of a mother in her success, in her lovers, in her marriage; and when that marriage proved a miserable failure, uniting her to a man who wasted her fortune and neglected her person, and broke her heart, Miss Dorcas received her back to her strong arms and made a home and a refuge where the poor woman could gather up and piece together, in some broken fashion, the remains of her life as one mends a broken Sèvres china tea cup.

Miss Dorcas was by nature of a fiery, energetic temperament, intense and original – precisely the one to be a contemner of customs and proprieties; but a very severe and rigid education had imposed on her every yoke of the most ancient and straitest-laced decorum. She had been nurtured only in such savory treatises as Dr. Gregory's *Legacy to his Daughters*, Mrs. Chapone's *Letters*, Miss Hannah More's *Coelebs in Search of a Wife*, Watts *On the Mind*, and other good books by which our great grandmothers had their lives all laid out for them in exact squares and parallelograms, and were taught exactly what to think and do in all possible emergencies.

But, as often happens, the original nature of Miss Dorcas was apt to break out here and there, all the more vivaciously for repression, in a sort of natural geyser: and so, though rigidly proper in the main, she was apt to fall into delightful spasms of naturalness.

Notwithstanding all the remarks of Mrs. Chapone and Dr. Watts about gossip, she still had a hearty and innocent interest in the pretty young housekeeper that was building a nest opposite to her, and a little quite harmless curiosity in what was going on over the way.

A great deal of good sermonizing, by the by, is expended on gossip, which is denounced as one of the seven deadly sins of society; but, after all, gossip has its better side: if not a Christian grace, it certainly is one of those weeds which show a good warm soil.

The kindly heart, that really cares for everything human it meets, inclines toward gossip, in a good way. Just as a morning glory throws out tendrils, and climbs up and peeps cheerily into your window, so a kindly gossip can't help watching the opening and shutting of your blinds and the curling smoke from your chimney. And so, too, after all the high morality of Miss Dorcas, the energetic turning of her sister to the paths of propriety, and the passage from Young's *Night Thoughts*, with its ponderous solemnity, she was at heart kindly musing upon the possible fortunes of the pretty young creature across the street, and was as fresh and ready to take up the next bit of information about her house as a brisk hen is to discuss the latest bit of crumb thrown from a window.

Miss Dorcas had been brought up by her father in diligent study of the old approved English classics. The book-case of the sitting-room presented in gilded order old editions of the *Rambler*, the *Tattler*, and the *Spectator*, the poems of Pope, and Dryden, and Milton, and Shakespeare, and Miss Dorcas and her sister were well versed in them all. And in view of the whole of our modern literature, we must say that their studies might have been much worse directed.

Their father had unfortunately been born too early to enjoy Walter Scott. There is an age when a man cannot receive a new author or a new idea. Like a lilac bush which has made its terminal buds, he has grown all he can in this life, and there is no use in trying to force him into a new growth. Jacob Vanderheyden died considering Scott's novels as the flimsy trash of the modern school, while his daughters hid them under their pillows, and found them all the more delightful from the vague sensation of sinfulness which was connected with their admiration. Walter Scott was their most modern landmark; youth and bloom and heedlessness and impropriety were all delightfully mixed up with their reminiscences of him – and now, here they were still living in an age which has shelved Walter Scott among the classics, and reads Dickens and Thackeray and Anthony Trollope.

Miss Dorcas had been stranded, now and then, on one of these "trashy moderns" – had sat up all night surreptitiously reading *Nicholas Nickleby*, and had hidden the book from Mrs. Betsey lest her young mind should be carried away, until she discovered, by an accidental remark, that Mrs. Betsey had committed the same delightful impropriety while off on a visit to a distant relative. When the

discovery became mutual, from time to time other works of the same author crept into the house in cheap pamphlet editions, and the perusal of them was apologized for by Miss Dorcas to Mrs. Betsey, as being well enough, now and then, to see what people were reading in these trashy times. Ah, what is fame! Are not Dickens and Thackeray and Trollope on their inevitable way to the same dusty high shelf in the library, where they will be praised and not read by the forthcoming *jeunesse* of the future?

If the minds of the ancient sisters were a museum of by-gone ideas, and literature, and tastes, the old Vanderheyden house was no less a museum of by-gone furniture. The very smell of the house was ghostly with past suggestion. Every article of household gear in it had grown old together with all the rest, standing always in the same spot, subjected to the same minute daily dusting and the same semi-annual house-cleaning.

Carlyle has a dissertation on the "talent for annihilating rubbish." This was a talent that the respectable Miss Dorcas had none of. Carlyle thinks it a fine thing to have; but we think the lack of it may come from very respectable qualities. In Miss Dorcas it came from a vivid imagination of the possible future uses to which every decayed or broken household article might be put. The pitcher without nose or handle was fine china, and might yet be exactly the thing for something, and so it went carefully on some high perch of preservation, dismembered; the half of a broken pair of snuffers certainly looked too good to throw away – possibly it might be the exact thing needed to perfect some invention. Miss Dorcas vaguely remembered legends of inventors who had laid hold on such chance adaptations at the very critical point of their contrivances, and so the half snuffers waited years for their opportunity. The upper shelves of the closets in the Vanderheyden house were a perfect crowded mustering ground for the incurables and incapables of household belongings. One might fancy them a Hotel des Invalides of things wounded and fractured in the general battle of life. There were blades of knives without handles, and handles without blades; there were ancient tea-pots that leaked – but might be mended, and doubtless would be of some good in a future day; there were cracked plates and tea-cups; there were china dish-covers without dishes to match; a coffee-mill that wouldn't grind, and shears that wouldn't cut, and snuffers that wouldn't snuff – in short, every species of decayed utility.

Miss Dorcas had in the days of her youth been blest with a brother of an active, inventive turn of mind; the secret crypts and recesses of the closets bore marks of his unfinished projections. There were all the wheels and weights and other internal confusions of a clock, which he had pulled to pieces with a view of introducing an improvement into the machinery, which never was introduced; but the wheels and weights were treasured up with pious care, waiting for *somebody* to put them together again. All this array of litter was fated to come down from its secret recesses, its deep, dark closets, its high shelves and perches, on two solemn days of the year devoted to house-cleaning, when Miss Dorcas, like a good general, looked them over and reviewed them, expatiated on their probable capabilities, and resisted gallantly any suggestions of Black Dinah, the cook and maid of all work, or Mrs. Betsey, that some order ought to be taken to rid the house of them.

"Dear me, Dorcas," Mrs. Betsey would say, "what is the use of keeping such a clutter and litter of things that nothing can be done with and that never can be used?"

"Betsey Ann Benthusen," would be the reply, "you always were a careless little thing. You never understood any more about housekeeping than a canary bird – not a bit." In Miss Dorcas's view, Mrs. Betsey, with her snow white curls and her caps, was still a frivolous young creature, not fit to be trusted with a serious opinion on the nicer points of household management. "Now, who knows, Betsey, but some time we may meet some poor worthy young man who may be struggling along as an inventor and may like to have these wheels and weights! I'm sure brother Dick said they were wonderfully well made."

"Well, but, Dorcas, all those cracked cups and broken pitchers; I do think they are dreadful!"

"Now, Betsey, hush up! I've heard of a kind of new cement that they are manufacturing in London, that makes old china better than new; and when they get it over here I'm going to mend these all up. You wouldn't have me throw away *family* china, would you?"

The word "*family* china" was a settler, for both Mrs. Betsey and Miss Dorcas and old Dinah were united in one fundamental article of faith: that "the *Family*" was a solemn, venerable and awe-inspiring reality. What, or why, or how it was, no mortal could say.

Old Jacob Vanderheyden, the grandfather, had been in his day busy among famous and influential men, and had even been to Europe as a sort of attaché to the first American diplomatic corps. He had been also a thriving merchant, and got to himself houses, and lands, and gold and silver. Jacob Vanderheyden, the father, had inherited substance and kept up the good name of the family, and increased and strengthened its connections. But his son and heir, Dick Vanderheyden, Miss Dorcas's elder brother, had seemed to have no gifts but those of dispersing; and had muddled away the family fortune in all sorts of speculations and adventures as fast as his father and grandfather had made it. The sisters had been left with an income much abridged by the imprudence of the brother and the spendthrift dissipation of Mrs. Betsey's husband; they were forsaken by the retreating waves of rank and fashion; their house, instead of being a center of good society, was encompassed by those ordinary buildings devoted to purposes of trade whose presence is deemed incompatible with genteel residence. And yet, through it all, their confidence in the rank and position of their family continued unabated. The old house, with every bit of old queer furniture in it, the old window curtains, the old tea-cups and saucers, the old bedspreads and towels, all had a sacredness such as pertained to no modern things. Like the daughter of Zion in sacred song, Miss Dorcas "took pleasure in their dust and favored the stones thereof." The old blue willow-patterned china, with mandarins standing in impossible places, and bridges and pagodas growing up, as the world was made, out of nothing, was to Miss Dorcas consecrated porcelain – even its broken fragments were impregnated with the sacred flavor of ancient gentility.

Miss Dorcas's own private and personal closets, drawers, and baskets were squirrel's-nests of all sorts of memorials of the past. There were pieces of every gown she had ever worn, of all her sister's gowns, and of the mortal habiliments of many and many a one beside who had long passed beyond the need of earthly garments. Bits of wedding robes of brides who had long been turned to dust; fragments of tarnished gold lace from old court dresses; faded, crumpled, artificial flowers, once worn on the head of beauty; gauzes and tissues, old and wrinkled, that had once set off the triumphs of the gay – all mingled in her crypts and drawers and trunks, and each had its story. Each, held in her withered hand, brought back to memory the thread of some romance warm with the color and flavor of a life long passed away.

Then there were collections, saving and medicinal; for Miss Dorcas had in great force that divine instinct of womanhood that makes her perceptive of the healing power inherent in all things. Never an orange or an apple was pared on her premises when the peeling was not carefully garnered – dried on newspaper, and neatly stored away in paper bags for sick-room uses.

There were closets smelling of elderblow, catnip, feverfew, and dried rose leaves, which grew in a bit of old garden soil back of the house; a spot sorely retrenched and cut down from the ample proportions it used to have, as little by little had been sold off, but still retaining a few growing things, in which Miss Dorcas delighted. The lilacs that once were bushes there had grown gaunt and high, and looked in at the chamber windows with an antique and grandfatherly air, quite of a piece with everything else about the old Vanderheyden house.

The ancient sisters had few outlets into the society of modern New York. Now and then, a stray visit came from some elderly person who still remembered the Vanderheydens, and perhaps about once a year they went to the expense of a carriage to return the call, and rolled up into the new part of the town like shadows of the past. But generally their path of life led within the narrow limits of the house. Old Dinah, the sole black servant remaining, was the last remnant of a former retinue of negro servants held by old Jacob when New York was a slave State and a tribe of black retainers was one of the ostentations of wealth. All were gone now, and only Dinah remained, devoted to the relics of the old family, clinging with a cat-like attachment to the old place.

She was like many of her race, a jolly-hearted, pig-headed, giggling, faithful old creature, who said "Yes'm" to Miss Dorcas and took her own way about most matters; and Miss Dorcas, satisfied that her way was not on the whole a bad one in the ultimate results, winked at her free handling of orders, and consented to accept her, as we do Nature, for what could be got out of her.

"They are going to have mince-pie and broiled chicken for dinner over there," said Mrs. Betsey, when the two ladies were seated at their own dinner-table that day.

"How in the world did you know that?" asked Miss Dorcas.

"Well! Dinah met their girl in at the provision store and struck up an acquaintance, and went in to help her put up a bedstead, and so she stopped a while in the kitchen. The tall gentleman with black hair *is* the husband – I thought all the while he was," said Mrs. Betsey. "The other one is a Mr. Fellows, a great friend of theirs, Mary says – "

"Mary! – who is Mary?" said Miss Dorcas.

"Why, Mary McArthur, their girl – they only keep one, but she has a little daughter about eight years old to help. I wish we had a little girl, or something that one might train for a waiter to answer door-bells and do little things."

"Our door-bells don't call for much attention, and a little girl is nothing but a plague," interposed Miss Dorcas.

"Dinah has quite fallen in love with Mrs. Henderson," said Mrs. Betsey; "she says that she is the handsomest, pleasantest-spoken lady she's seen for a great while."

"We'll call upon her when they get well settled," said Miss Dorcas, definitively.

Miss Dorcas settled this with the air of a princess. She felt that such a meritorious little person as the one over the way ought to be encouraged by people of good old families.

Our readers will observe that Miss Dorcas listened without remonstrance and with some appearance of interest to the items about minced pie and broiled chicken; but high moral propriety, as we all know, is a very cold, windy height, and if a person is planted on it once or twice a day, it is as much as ought to be demanded of human weakness.

For the rest of the time one should be allowed, like Miss Dorcas, to repose upon one's laurels. And, after all, it is interesting, when life is moving in a very stagnant current, even to know what your neighbor has for dinner!

CHAPTER II
HOW WE BEGIN LIFE

(Letter from Eva Henderson to Isabelle Courtney.)

My Dear Belle: Well, here we are, Harry and I, all settled down to housekeeping quite like old folks. All is about done but the *last things*, – those little touches, and improvements, and alterations that go off into airy perspective. I believe it was Carlyle that talked about an "infinite shoe-black" whom all the world could not quite satisfy so but that there would always be a next thing in the distance. Well, perhaps it's going to be so in housekeeping, and I shall turn out an infinite housekeeper; for I find this little, low-studded, unfashionable home of ours, far off in a tabooed street, has kept all my energies brisk and busy for a month past, and still there are more worlds to conquer. Visions of certain brackets and lambrequins that are to adorn my spare chamber visit my pillow nightly, while Harry is placidly sleeping the sleep of the just. I have been unable to attain to them because I have been so busy with my parlor ivies and my Ward's case of ferns, and some perfectly seraphic hanging baskets, gorgeous with flowering nasturtiums that are now blooming in my windows. There is a dear little Quaker dove of a woman living in the next house to ours who is a perfect witch at gardening – a good kind of witch, you understand, one who could make a broomstick bud and blossom if she undertook it – and she has been my teacher and exemplar in these matters. Her parlor is a perfect bower, a drab dove's nest wreathed round with vines and all a-bloom with geraniums; and mine is coming on to look just like it. So you see all this has kept me ever so busy.

Then there are the family accounts to keep. You may think that isn't much for our little concern, but you would be amazed to find how much there is in it. You see, I have all my life concerned myself only with figures of speech and never gave a thought about figures of arithmetic or troubled my head as to where money came from, or went to; and when I married Harry I had a general idea that we were going to live with delightful economy. But it is astonishing how much all our simplicity costs, after all. My account-book is giving me a world of new ideas, and some pretty serious ones too.

Harry, you see, leaves every thing to me. He has to be off to his office by seven o'clock every morning, and I am head marshal of the commisariat department – committee of one on supplies, and all that – and it takes up a good deal of my time.

You would laugh, Belle, to see me with my matronly airs and graces going my daily walk to the provision-store at the corner, which is kept by a tall, black-browed lugubrious man, with rough hair and a stiff stubby beard, who surveys me with a severe gravity over the counter, as if he wasn't sure that my designs were quite honest.

"Mr. Quackenboss," I say, with my sweetest smile, "have you any nice butter?"

He looks out of the window, drums on the counter, and answers "Yes," in a tone of great reserve.

"I should like to look at some," I say, undiscouraged.

"It's down cellar," he replies, gloomily chewing a bit of chip and casting sinister glances at me.

"Well," I say, cheerfully, "shall I go down there and look at it?"

"How much do you want?" he asks, suspiciously.

"That depends on how well I like it," say I.

"I s'pose I *could* get up a cask," he says in a ruminating tone; and now he calls his partner, a cheerful, fat, roly-poly little cockney Englishman, who flings his h's round in the most generous and reckless style. His alert manner seems to say that he would get up forty casks a minute and throw them all at my feet, if it would give me any pleasure.

So the butter-cask is got up and opened, and my severe friend stands looking down on it and me as if he would say, "This also is vanity."

"I should like to taste it," I say, "if I had something to try it with."

He scoops up a portion on his dirty thumbnail and seems to hold it reflectively, as if a doubt was arising in his mind of the propriety of this mode of offering it to me.

And now my cockney friend interposes with a clean knife. I taste the butter and find it excellent, and give a generous order which delights his honest soul; and as he weighs it out he throws in, gratis, the information that his little woman has tried it, and he was sure I would like it, for she is the *tidiest* little woman and the *best* judge of butter; that they came from Yorkshire, where the pastures round were so sweet with a-many violets and cowslips – in fact, my little cockney friend strays off into a kind of pastoral that makes the little grocery store quite poetic.

I call my two grocers familiarly Tragedy and Comedy, and make Harry a good deal of fun by recounting my adventures with them. I have many speculations about Tragedy. He is a married man, as I learn, and I can't help wondering what Mrs. Quackenboss thinks of him. Does he ever shave – or does she kiss him in the rough – or has she given up kissing him at all? How did he act when he was in love? – if ever he was in love – and what *did* he say to the lady to induce her to marry him? How did he look when he did it? It really makes me shudder to think of such a mournful ghoul coming back to the domestic circle at night. I should think the little "Quacks" would all run and hide. But a truce to scandalizing my neighbor – he may be better than I am, after all!

I ought to tell you that some of my essays in provisioning my garrison might justly excite his contempt – they have been rather appalling to my good Mary McArthur. You know I had been used to seeing about a ten-pound sirloin of beef on Papa's table, and the first day I went into the shop I assumed an air of easy wisdom as if I had been a housekeeper all my life, and ordered just such a cut as I had seen Mamma get, with all sorts of vegetables to match, and walked home with composed dignity. When Mary saw it she threw up her hands and gave an exclamation of horror – "Miss Eva!" she said, "when will we get all this eaten up?" And verily that beef pursued us through the week most like a ghost. We had it hot, and we had it cold; we had it stewed and hashed, and made soup of it; we sliced it and we minced it, and I ate a great deal more than was good for me on purpose to "save it." Towards the close of the week Harry civilly suggested (he never finds fault with anything I do, but he merely *suggested*) whether it wouldn't be better to have a little variety in our table arrangements; and then I came out with the whole story, and we had a good laugh together about it. Since then I have come down to taking lessons of Mary, and I say to her, "How much of this, and that, had I better get?" and between us we make it go quite nicely.

Speaking of neighbors, my dear blessed Aunt Maria, whom I suppose you remember, has almost broken her heart about Papa's failing and my marrying Harry and, finally, our coming to live on an unfashionable street – which in her view is equal to falling out of heaven into some very suspicious region of limbo. She almost quarreled with us both because, having got married contrary to her will, we would also insist on going to housekeeping and having a whole house to ourselves on a back street instead of having one little, stuffy room on the back side of a fashionable boarding house. Well, I made all up with her at last. If you *will* have your own way, and persist in it, people *have to* make up with you. You thus get to be like the sun and moon which, though they often behave very inconveniently, you have to make the best of; and so Aunt Maria has concluded to make the best of Harry and me. It came about in this wise: I went and sat with her the last time she had a sick headache, and kissed her, and bathed her head, and told her I wanted to be a good girl and did really love her, though I couldn't always take her advice now I was a married woman; and so we made it up.

But the trouble is that now she wants to show me how to run this poor little unfashionable boat so as to make a good show with the rest of them, and I don't want to learn. It's easier to keep out of the regatta. My card-receiver is full of most desirable names of people who have come in their fashionable carriages and coupés, and they have "oh'd" and "ah'd" in my little parlors, and declared

they were "quite sweet," and "so odd," and "*so* different, you know;" but, for all that, I don't think I shall try to keep up all this gay circle of acquaintances. Carriage-hire costs money; and when paid for by the hour, one asks whether the acquaintances are worth it. But there are some real noble-hearted people that I mean to keep. The Van Astrachans, for instance. Mrs. Van Astrachan is a solid lump of goodness and motherliness, and that sweet Mrs. Harry Endicott is most lovable. You remember Harry Endicott, I suppose, and what a trump card he was thought to be among the girls, one time when you were visiting us, and afterwards all that scandal about him and that pretty little Mrs. John Seymour? She is dead now, I hear, and he has married this pretty Rose Ferguson, a friend of hers; and since his *wife* has taken him in hand, he has turned out to be a noble fellow. They live up on Madison avenue quite handsomely. They are among the "*real* folks" Mrs. Whitney tells about, and I think I must keep them. The Elmores I don't care much for. They are a frivolous, fast set, and what's the use? Sophie and her husband, my old friend Wat Sydney, I keep mainly because she won't give me up. She is one of the clinging sort, and is devoted to me. They have a perfect palace up by the park – it is quite a show-house, and is, I understand, to be furnished by Harter. So, you see, it's like a friendship between princess and peasant.

Now, I foresee future conflicts with Aunt Maria in all these possibilities. She is a nice woman, and bent on securing what she thinks my interest, but I can't help seeing that she is somewhat

"A shade that follows wealth and fame."

The success of my card-receiver delights her, and not to improve such opportunities would be, in her view, to bury one's talent in a napkin. Yet, after all, I differ. I can't help seeing that intimacies between people with a hundred thousand a year and people of our modest means will be full of perplexities.

And then I say, Why not try to find all the neighborliness I can on my own street? In a country village, one finds a deal in one's neighbors, simply because one must. They are there; they are all one has, and human nature is always interesting, if one takes it right side out. Next door is the gentle Quakeress I told you of. She is *nobody* in the gay world, but as full of sweetness and loving kindness as heart could desire. Then right across the way are two antiquated old ladies, very old, very precise, and very funny, who have come in state and called on me; bringing with them the most lovely, tyrannical little terrier, who behaved like a small-sized fiend and shocked them dreadfully. I spy worlds of interest in their company if once I can rub the stiffness out of our acquaintance, and then I hope to get the run of the delightfully queer old house.

Then there are our set – Jim Fellows, and Bolton, and my sister Alice, and the girls – in and out all the time. We sha'n't want for society. So if Aunt Maria puts me up for a career in the gay world I shall hang heavy on her hands.

I haven't much independence *myself*, but it is no longer *I*, it is *We*. Eva Van Arsdel alone was anybody's property; Mamma talked her one way, her sister Ida another way, and Aunt Maria a third; and among them all her own little way was hard to find. But now Harry and I have formed a firm and compact *We*, which is a fortress into which we retreat from all the world. I tell them all, *We* don't think so, and *We* don't do so. Isn't that nice? When will you come and see us?

Ever your loving
Eva.

CHAPTER III
THE FAMILY DICTATOR AT WORK

From the foregoing letter our readers may have conjectured that the natural self-appointed ruler of the fortunes of the Van Arsdel family was "Aunt Maria," or Mrs. Maria Wouvermans.

That is to say, this lady had always considered such to be her mission, and had acted upon this supposition up to the time that Mr. Van Arsdel's failure made shipwreck of the fortunes of the family.

Aunt Maria had, so to speak, reveled in the fortune and position of the Van Arsdels. She had dictated the expenditures of their princely income; she had projected parties and entertainments; she had supervised lists of guests to be invited; she had ordered dresses and carriages and equipages, and hired and dismissed servants at her sovereign will and pleasure. Nominally, to be sure, Mrs. Van Arsdel attended to all these matters; but really Aunt Maria was the power behind the throne. Mrs. Van Arsdel was a pretty, graceful, self-indulgent woman, who loved ease and hated trouble – a natural climbing plant who took kindly to any bean-pole in her neighborhood, and Aunt Maria was her bean-pole. Mrs. Van Arsdel's wealth, her station, her éclat, her blooming daughters, all climbed up, so to speak, on Aunt Maria, and hung their flowery clusters around her, to her praise and glory. Besides all this, there were very solid and appreciable advantages in the wealth and station of the Van Arsdel family as related to the worldly enjoyment of Mrs. Maria Wouvermans. Being a widow, connected with an old rich family, and with but a small fortune of her own and many necessities of society upon her, Mrs. Wouvermans had found her own means in several ways supplemented and carried out by the redundant means of her sister. Mrs. Wouvermans lived in a moderate house on Murray Hill, within comfortable proximity to the more showy palaces of the New York nobility. She had old furniture, old silver, camel's hair shawls and jewelry sufficient to content her heart, but her yearly income was far below her soul's desires, and necessitated more economy than she liked. While the Van Arsdels were in full tide of success she felt less the confinement of these limits. What need for her to keep a carriage when a carriage and horses were always at her command for the asking – and even without asking, as not infrequently came to be the case? Then, the Van Arsdel parties and hospitalities relieved her from all expensive obligations of society. She returned the civilities of her friends by invitations to her sister's parties and receptions; and it is an exceedingly convenient thing to have all the glory of hospitality and none of the trouble – to have convenient friends to entertain for you any person or persons with whom you may be desirous of keeping up amicable relations. On the whole, Mrs Wouvermans was probably sincere in the professions, to which Mr. Van Arsdel used to listen with a quiet amused smile, that "she really enjoyed Nelly's fortune more than if it were her own."

"Haven't a doubt of it," he used to say, with a twinkle of his eye which he never further explained.

Mr. Van Arsdel's failure had nearly broken Aunt Maria's heart. In fact, the dear lady took the matter more sorely than the good man himself.

Mr. Van Arsdel was, in a small dry way, something of a philosopher. He was a silent man for the most part, but had his own shrewd comments on the essential worth of men and things – particularly of men in the feminine gender. He had never checked his pretty wife in any of her aspirations, which he secretly valued at about their real value; he had never quarreled with Aunt Maria or interfered with her sway in his family within certain limits, because he had sense enough to see that she was the stronger of the two women, and that his wife could no more help yielding to her influence than a needle can help sticking to a magnet.

But the race of fashionable life, its outlays of health and strength, its expenditures for parties, and for dress and equipage, its rivalries, its gossip, its eager frivolities, were all matters of which he

took quiet note, and which caused him often to ponder the words of the wise man of old, "What profit hath a man of all his labor and the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath labored under the sun?"

To Mr. Van Arsdel's eye the only profit of his labor and travail seemed to be the making of his wife frivolous, filling her with useless worries, training his daughters to be idle and self-indulgent, and his sons to be careless and reckless of expenditure. So when at last the crash came, there was a certain sense of relief in finding himself once more an honest man at the bottom of the hill, and he quietly resolved in his inmost soul that he never would climb again. He had settled up his affairs with a manly exactness that won the respect of all his creditors, and they had put him into a salaried position which insured a competence, and with this he resolved to be contented; his wife returned to the economical habits and virtues of her early life; his sons developed an amount of manliness and energy which was more than enough to compensate for what they had lost in worldly prospects. He enjoyed his small, quiet house and his reduced establishment as he never had done a more brilliant one, for he felt that it was founded upon certainties and involved no risks. Mrs. Van Arsdel was a sweet-tempered, kindly woman, and his daughters had each and every one met the reverse in a way that showed the sterling quality which is often latent under gay and apparently thoughtless young womanhood.

Aunt Maria, however, settled it in her own mind, with the decision with which she usually settled her relatives' affairs, that this state of things would be only temporary.

"Of course," she said to her numerous acquaintances, "of course, Mr. Van Arsdel will go into business again – he is only waiting for a good opening – he'll be up again in a few years where he was before."

And to Mrs. Van Arsdel she said, "Nelly, you must keep him up – you mustn't hear of his sinking down and doing nothing" —*doing nothing* being his living contentedly on a comfortable salary and going without the "pomps and vanities." "Your husband, of course, will go into some operations to retrieve his fortunes, you know," she said. "What is he thinking of?"

"Well, really, Maria, I don't see as he has the least intention – he seems perfectly satisfied to live as we do."

"You must put him up to it, Nelly – depend upon it, he's in danger of sinking down and giving up; and he has splendid business talents. He should go to operating in stocks, you see. Why, men make fortunes in that way. Look at the Bubbleums, and the Flashes, they were all down two years ago, and now they're up higher than ever, and they did it all in stocks. Your husband would find plenty of men ready to go in with him and advance money to begin on. No man is more trusted. Why, Nelly, that man might die a millionaire as well as not, and you ought to put him up to it; it's a wife's business to keep her husband up."

"I *have* tried to, Maria; I have been just as cheerful as I knew how to be, and I've retrenched and economized everywhere, as all the girls do – they are wonderful, those girls! To see them take hold so cheerfully and help about household matters, you never would dream that they had not been brought up to it; and they are so prudent about their clothes – so careful and saving. And then the boys are getting on so well. Tom has gone into surveying with a will, and is going out with Smithson's party to the Rocky Mountains, and Hal has just got a good situation in Boston – "

"Oh, yes, that is all very well; but, Nelly, that isn't what I mean. You know that when men fail in business they are apt to get blue and discouraged and give up enterprise, and so gradually sink down and lose their faculties. That's the way old Mr. Snodgrass did when he failed."

"But I don't think, Maria, that there is the least danger of my husband's losing his mind – or sinking down, as you call it. I never saw him more cheerful and seem to take more comfort of his life. Mr. Van Arsdel never did care for style – except as he thought it pleased me – and I believe he really likes the way we live now better than the way we did before; he says he has less care."

"And you are willing to sink down and be a nobody, and have no carriage, and rub round in omnibuses, and have to go to little mean private country board instead of going to Newport, when you might just as well get back the position that you had. Why, it's downright stupidity, Nelly!"

"As to mean country board," pleaded Mrs. Van Arsdel, "I don't know what you mean, Maria. We kept our old homestead up there in Vermont, and it's a very respectable place to spend our summer in."

"Yes, and what chances have the girls up there – where nobody sees them but oxen? The girls ought to be considered. For their sakes you ought to put your husband up to do something. It's cruel to them, brought up with the expectations they have had, to have to give all up just as they are coming out. If there is any time that a mother *must* feel the want of money it is when she has daughters just beginning to go into society; and it is cruel towards young girls not to give them the means of dressing and doing a little as others do; and dress does cost so abominably, now-a-days; it's perfectly frightful – people cannot live creditably on what they used to."

"Yes, certainly, it is frightful to think of the requirements of society in these matters," said Mrs. Van Arsdel. "Now, when you and I were girls, Maria, you know we managed to appear well on a very little. We embroidered our own capes and collars, and wore white a good deal, and cleaned our own gloves, and cut and fitted our own dresses; but, then dress was not what it is now. Why, making a dress now is like rigging a man-of-war – it's so complicated – there are so many parts, and so much trimming."

"Oh, it's perfectly fearful," said Aunt Maria; "but, then, what is one to do? If one goes into society with people who have so much of all these things, why one must, at least, make some little approach to decent appearance. We must keep within sight of them. All I ask," she added, meekly, "is to be *decent*. I never expect to run into the extremes those Elmores do – the waste and the extravagance that there must be in that family! And there's Mrs. Wat Sydney coming out with the whole new set of her Paris dresses. I should like to know, for curiosity's sake, just what that woman has spent on her dresses!"

"Yes," said Mrs. Van Arsdel, warming with the subject, "you know she had all her wardrobe from Worth, and Worth's dresses come to something. Why, Polly told me that the lace alone on some of those dresses would be a fortune."

"And just to think that Eva might have married Wat Sydney," said Aunt Maria. "It does seem as if things in this world fell out on purpose to try us!"

"Well, I suppose they do, and we ought to try and improve by them," said Mrs. Van Arsdel, who had some weak, gentle ideas of a moral purpose in existence, to which even the losses and trials of lace and embroidery might be made subservient. "After all," she added, "I don't know but we ought to be contented with Eva's position. Eva always was a peculiar child. Under all her sweetness and softness she has quite a will of her own; and, indeed, Harry is a good fellow, and doing well in his line. He makes a very good income, for a beginning, and he is rising every day in the literary world, and I don't see but that they have as good an opportunity to make their way in society as the Sydneys with all their money."

"Sophie Sydney is perfectly devoted to Eva," said Aunt Maria.

"And well she may be," answered Mrs. Van Arsdel, "in fact, Eva made that match; she actually turned him over to her. You remember how she gave her that prize croquet-pin that Sydney gave her, and how she talked to Sydney, and set him to thinking of Sophie – oh, pshaw! Sydney never would have married that girl in the world if it had not been for Eva."

"Well," said Aunt Maria, "it's as well to cultivate that intimacy. It will be a grand summer visiting place at their house in Newport, and we want visiting places for the girls. I have put two or three anchors out to the windward, in that respect. I am going to have the Stephenson girls at my house this winter, and your girls must help show them New York, and cultivate them, and then there will be a nice visiting place for them at Judge Stephenson's next summer. You see the Judge lives within an easy drive of Newport, so that they can get over there, and see and be seen."

"I'm sure, Maria, it's good in you to be putting yourself out for my girls."

"Pshaw, Nelly, just as if your girls were not mine – they are all I have to live for. I can't stop any longer now, because I must catch the omnibus to go down to Eva's; I am going to spend the day with her."

"How nicely Eva gets along," said Mrs. Van Arsdel, with a little pardonable motherly pride; "that girl takes to housekeeping as if it came natural to her."

"Yes," said Aunt Maria; "you know I have had Eva a great deal under my own eye, first and last, and it shows that early training will tell." Aunt Maria picked up this crumb of self-glorification with an easy matter-of-fact air which was peculiarly aggravating to her sister.

In her own mind Mrs. Van Arsdel thought it a little too bad. "Maria always did take the credit of everything that turned out well in my family," she said to herself, "and blamed me for all that went wrong."

But she was too wary to murmur out loud, and bent her head to the yoke in silence.

"Eva needs a little showing and cautioning," said Aunt Maria; "that Mary of hers ought to be watched, and I shall tell her so – she mustn't leave everything to Mary."

"Oh, Mary lived years with me, and is the most devoted, faithful creature," said Mrs. Van Arsdel.

"Never mind – she needs watching. She's getting old now, and don't work as she used to, and if Eva don't look out she won't get half a woman's work out of her – these old servants always take liberties. I shall look into things there. Eva is my girl; I sha'n't let anyone get around her;" and Aunt Maria arose to go forth. But if anybody supposes that two women engaged in a morning talk are going to stop when one of them rises to go, he knows very little of the ways of womankind. When they have risen, drawn up their shawls, and got ready to start, then is the time to call a new subject, and accordingly Aunt Maria, as she was going out the door, turned round and said: "Oh! there now! I almost forgot what I came for: – What *are* you going to do about the girls' party dresses?"

"Well, we shall get a dressmaker in the house. If we can get Silkriggs, we shall try her."

"Now, Nelly, look here, I have found a real treasure – the nicest little dressmaker, just set up, and who works cheap. Maria Meade told me about her. She showed me a suit that she had had made there in imitation of a Paris dress, with ever so much trimming, cross-folds bound on both edges, and twenty or thirty bows, all cut on the bias and bound, and box-plaiting with double quilling on each side all round the bottom, and going up the front – graduated, you know. There was waist, and overskirt, and a little sacque, and, will you believe me, she only asked fifteen dollars for making it all."

"You don't say so!"

"It's a fact. Why, it must have been a good week's work to make that dress, even with her sewing machine. Maria told me of her as a great secret, because she really works so well that if folks knew it she would be swamped with work, and then go to raising her price – that's what they all do when they can get a chance – but I've been to her and engaged her for you."

"I'm sure, Maria, I don't know what we should do if you were not always looking out for us."

"I don't know – I'm getting to be an old woman," said Aunt Maria. "I'm not what I was. But I consider your family as my appointed field of labor – just as our rector said last Sunday, we must do the duty next us. But tell the girls not to talk about this dressmaker. We shall want all she can do, and make pretty much our own terms with her. It's nice and convenient for Eva that she lives somewhere down in those out-of-the-way regions where she has chosen to set up. Well, good morning;" and Aunt Maria opened the house-door and stood upon the top of the steps, when a second postscript struck her mind.

"There now!" said she, "I was meaning to tell you that it is getting to be reported everywhere that Alice and Jim Fellows are engaged."

"Oh, well, of course there's nothing in it," said Mrs. Van Arsdel. "I don't think Alice would think of him for a moment. She likes him as a friend, that's all."

"I don't know, Nelly; you can't be too much on your guard. Alice is a splendid girl, and might have almost anybody. Between you and me – now, Nelly, you must be sure not to mention it – but Mr. Delafield has been very much struck with her."

"Oh, Maria, how can you? Why, his wife hasn't been dead a year!"

"Oh, pshaw! these widowers don't always govern their eyes by the almanac," said Aunt Maria, with a laugh. "Of course, John Delafield will marry again. I always knew that; and Alice would be a splendid woman to be at the head of his establishment. At any rate, at the little company the other night at his sister's, Mrs. Singleton's, you know, he was perfectly devoted to her, and I thought Mrs. Singleton seemed to like it."

"It would certainly be a fine position, if Alice can fancy him," said Mrs. Van Arsdel. "Seems to me he is rather querulous and dyspeptic, isn't he?"

"Oh; well, yes; his health is delicate; he needs a wife to take care of him."

"He's so yellow!" ruminated Mrs. Van Arsdel, ingenuously. "I never could bear thin, yellow men."

"Oh, come, don't you begin, Nelly – it's bad enough to have girls with their fancies. What we ought to look at are the solid excellences. What a pity that the marrying age always comes when girls have the least sense! John Delafield is a solid man, and if he should take a fancy to Alice, it would be a great piece of good luck. Alice ought to be careful, and not have these reports around, about her and Jim Fellows; it just keeps off advantageous offers. I shall talk to Alice the first time I get a chance."

"Oh, pray don't, Maria – I don't think it would do any good. Alice is very set in her way, and it might put her up to make something of it more than there is."

"Oh, never fear me," said Aunt Maria, nodding her head; "I understand Alice, and know just what needs to be said. I sha'n't do her any harm, you may be sure," and Aunt Maria, espying her omnibus afar, ran briskly down the steps, thus concluding the conference.

Now it happened that adjoining the parlor where this conversation had taken place was a little writing-cabinet which Mr. Van Arsdel often used for the purposes of letter-writing. On this morning, when his wife supposed him out as usual at his office, he had retired there to attend to some correspondence. The entrance was concealed by drapery, and so he had been an unintentional and unsuspected but much amused listener to Aunt Maria's adjurations to his wife on his behalf.

All through his subsequent labors of the pen, he might have been observed to pause from time to time and laugh to himself. The idea of lying as a quiet dead weight on the wheels of the progress of his energetic relation was something vastly pleasing to the dry and secretive turn of his humor – and he rather liked it than otherwise.

"We shall see whether I am losing my faculties," he said to himself, as he gathered up his letters and departed.

CHAPTER IV
EVA HENDERSON TO HARRY'S MOTHER

My Dear Mother: Harry says I must do all the writing to you and keep you advised of all our affairs, because he is so driven with his editing and proofreading that letter-writing is often the most fatiguing thing he can do. It is like trying to run after one has become quite out of breath.

The fact is, dear mother, the demands of this New York newspaper life are terribly exhausting. It's a sort of red-hot atmosphere of hurry and competition. Magazines and newspapers jostle each other, and run races, neck and neck, and everybody connected with them is kept up to the very top of his speed, or he is thrown out of the course. You see, Bolton and Harry have between them the oversight of three papers – a monthly magazine for the grown folk, another for the children, and a weekly paper. Of course there are sub-editors, but they have the general responsibility, and so you see they are on the *qui vive* all the time to keep up; for there are other papers and magazines running against them, and the price of success seems to be eternal vigilance. What is exacted of an editor now-a-days seems to be a sort of general omniscience. He must keep the run of everything, – politics, science, religion, art, agriculture, general literature; the world is alive and moving everywhere, and he must know just what's going on and be able to have an opinion ready made and ready to go to press at any moment. He must tell to a T just what they are doing in Ashantee and Dahomey, and what they don't do and ought to do in New York. He must be wise and instructive about currency and taxes and tariffs, and able to guide Congress; and then he must take care of the Church, – know just what the Old Catholics are up to, the last new kink of the Ritualists, and the right and wrong of all the free fights in the different denominations. It really makes my little head spin just to hear what they are getting up articles about. Bolton and Harry are kept on the chase, looking up men whose specialties lie in these lines to write for them. They have now in tow a Jewish Rabbi, who is going to do something about the Talmud, or Targums, or something of that sort; and a returned missionary from the Gaboon River, who entertained Du Chaillu and can speak authentically about the gorilla; and a lively young doctor who is devoting his life to the study of the brain and nervous system. Then there are all sorts of writing men and women sending pecks and bushels of articles to be printed, and getting furious if they are not printed, though the greater part of them are such hopeless trash that you only need to read four lines to know that they are good for nothing; but they all expect them to be re-mailed with explanations and criticisms, and the ladies sometimes write letters of wrath to Harry that are perfectly fearful.

Altogether there is a good deal of an imbroglio, and you see with it all how he comes to be glad that I have a turn for letter-writing and can keep you informed of how we of the interior go on. My business in it all is to keep a quiet, peaceable, restful home, where he shall always have the enjoyment of seeing beautiful things and find everything going on nicely without having to think why, or how, or wherefore; and, besides this, to do every little odd and end for him that he is too tired or too busy to do; in short, I suppose some of the ambitious lady leaders of our time would call it playing second fiddle. Yes, that is it; but there must be second fiddles in an orchestra, and it's fortunate that I have precisely the talent for playing one, and my doctrine is that the second fiddle *well* played is quite as good as the first. What would the first be without it?

After all, in this great fuss about the men's sphere and the women's, isn't the women's ordinary work just as important and great in its way? For, you see, it's what the men with all their greatness can't do, for the life of them. I can go a good deal further in Harry's sphere than he can in mine. I can judge about the merits of a translation from the French, or criticise an article or story, a great deal better than he can settle the difference between the effect of tucking and inserting in a dress, or of cherry and solferino in curtains. Harry appreciates a room prettily got up as well as any man, but

how to get it up – all the shades of color and niceties of arrangement, the thousand little differences and agreements that go to it – he can't comprehend. So this man and woman question is just like the quarrel between the mountain and the squirrel in Emerson's poem, where "Bun" talks to the mountain:

"If I am not so big as you,
You're not so small as I,
And not half so spry.
If I cannot carry forests on my back,
Neither can you crack a nut."

I am quite satisfied that, first and last, I shall crack a good many nuts for Harry. Not that I am satisfied with a mere culinary or housekeeping excellence, or even an artistic and poetic skill in making home lovely; I do want a sense of something noble and sacred in life – something to satisfy a certain feeling of the heroic that always made me unhappy and disgusted with my aimless fashionable girl career. I always sympathized with Ida, and admired her because she had force enough to do something that she thought was going to make the world better. It is better to try and fail with such a purpose as hers than never to try at all; and in that point of view I sympathize with the whole woman movement, though I see no place for myself in it. But my religion, poor as it is, has always given this excitement to me: I never could see how one could profess to be a Christian at all and not live a heroic life – though I know I never have. When I hear in church of the "glorious company of the apostles," the "goodly fellowship of the prophets," the "noble army of martyrs," I have often such an uplift – and the tears come to my eyes, and then my life seems so poor and petty, so frittered away in trifles. Then the communion service of our church always impresses me as something so serious, so profound, that I have wondered how I dared go through with it; and it always made me melancholy and dissatisfied with myself. To offer one's soul and body and spirit to God a living sacrifice surely ought to mean something that should make one's life noble and heroic, yet somehow it didn't do so with mine.

It was one thing that drew me to Harry, that he seemed to me an earnest, religious man, and I told him when we were first engaged that he must be my guide; but he said no, we must go hand in hand, and guide each other, and together we would try to find the better way. Harry is very good to me in being willing to go with me to my church. I told him I was weak in religion at any rate, and all my associations with good and holy things were with my church, and I really felt afraid to trust myself without them. I have tried going to his sort of services with him, but these extemporaneous prayers don't often help me. I find myself weighing and considering in my own mind whether that is what I really do feel or ask; and if one is judging or deciding one can't be praying at the same time. Now and then I hear a good man who so wraps me up in his sympathies, and breathes such a spirit of prayer as carries me without effort, and that is lovely; but it is so rare a gift! In general I long for the dear old prayers of my church, where my poor little naughty heart has learned the way and can go on with full consent without stopping to think.

So Harry and I have settled on attending an Episcopal mission church in our part of the city. Its worshipers are mostly among the poor, and Harry thinks we might do good by going there. Our rector is a young Mr. St. John, a man as devoted as any of the primitive Christians. I never saw anybody go into work for others with more entire self-sacrifice. He has some property, and he supports himself and pays about half the expenses of the mission besides. All this excites Harry's respect, and he is willing to do himself and have me do all we can to help him. Both Alice and I, and my younger sisters, Angelique and Marie, have taken classes in his mission school, and the girls help every week in a sewing-school, and, so far as practical work is concerned, everything moves beautifully. But then, Mr. St. John is very high church and very stringent in his notions, and Harry, who is ultra-liberal, says he is good, but narrow; and so when they are together I am quite nervous about them. I want Mr. St. John to appear well to Harry, and I want Harry to please Mr. St. John. Harry is æsthetic and

likes the church services, and is ready to go as far as anybody could ask in the way of interesting and beautiful rites and ceremonies, and he likes antiquities and all that, and so to a certain extent they get on nicely; but come to the question of church authority, and Lloyd Garrison and all the radicals are not more untamable. He gets quite wild, and frightens me lest dear Mr. St. John should think him an infidel. And, in fact, Harry has such a sort of latitudinarian way of hearing what all sorts of people have to say, and admitting bits of truth here and there in it, as sometimes makes me rather uneasy. He talks with these Darwinians and scientific men who have an easy sort of matter-of-course way of assuming that the Bible is nothing but an old curiosity-shop of by-gone literature, and is so tolerant in hearing all they have to say, that I quite burn to testify and stand up for my faith – if I knew enough to do it; but I really feel afraid to ask Mr. St. John to help me, because he is so set and solemn, and confines himself to announcing that thus and so is the voice of the church; and you see that don't help me to keep up my end with people that don't care for the church.

But, Mother dear, isn't there some end to toleration; ought we Christians to sit by and hear all that is dearest and most sacred to us spoken of as a by-gone superstition, and smile assent on the ground that everybody must be free to express his opinions in good society? Now, for instance, there is this young Dr. Campbell, whom Harry is in treaty with for articles on the brain and nervous system – a nice, charming, agreeable fellow, and a perfect enthusiast in science, and has got so far that love or hatred or inspiration or heroism or religion is nothing in his view but what he calls "cerebration" – he is so lost and absorbed in cerebration and molecules, and all that sort of thing, that you feel all the time he is observing you to get facts about some of his theories as they do the poor mice and butterflies they experiment with.

The other day he was talking, in his taking-for-granted, rapid way, about the absurdity of believing in prayer, when I stopped him squarely, and told him that he ought not to talk in that way; that to destroy faith in prayer was taking away about all the comfort that poor, sorrowful, oppressed people had. I said it was just like going through a hospital and pulling all the pillows from under the sick people's heads because there might be a more perfect scientific invention by and by, and that I thought it was cruel and hard-hearted to do it. He looked really astonished, and asked me if I believed in prayer. I told him our Saviour had said, "Ask, and ye shall receive," and I believed it. He seemed quite astonished at my zeal, and said he didn't suppose any really cultivated people now-a-days believed those things. I told him I believed everything that Jesus Christ said, and thought he knew more than all the philosophers, and that he said we had a Father that loved us and cared for us, even to the hairs of our heads, and that I shouldn't have courage to live if I didn't believe that. Harry says I did right to speak up as I did. Dr. Campbell don't seem to be offended with me, for he comes here more than ever. He is an interesting fellow, full of life and enthusiasm in his profession, and I like to hear him talk.

But here I am, right in the debatable land between faith and no faith. On the part of a great many of the intelligent, good men whom Harry, for one reason or other, invites to our house, and wants me to be agreeable to, are all shades of opinion, of half faith, and no faith, and I don't wish to hush free conversation, or to be treated like a baby who will cry if they make too much noise; and then on the other hand is Mr. St. John – whom I regard with reverence on account of his holy, self-denying life – who stands so definitely entrenched within the limits of the church, and does not in his own mind ever admit a doubt of anything which the church has settled; and between them and Harry and all I don't know just what I ought to do.

I am sure, if there is a man in the world who means in all things to live the Christian life, it's Harry. There is no difference between him and Mr. St. John there. He is ready for any amount of self-sacrifice, and goes with Mr. St. John to the extent of his ability in his efforts to do good; and yet he really does not believe a great many things that Mr. St. John thinks are Christian doctrines. He says he believes only in the wheat, and not in the chaff, and that it is only the chaff that will be blown away in these modern discussions. With all this, I feel nervous and anxious, and sometimes wish I

could go right into some good, safe, dark church, and pull down all the blinds, and shut all the doors, and keep out all the bustle of modern thinking, and pray, and meditate, and have a lovely, quiet time.

Mr. St. John lends me from time to time some of his ritualistic books; and they are so refined and scholarly, and yet so devout, that Harry and I are quite charmed with their tone; but I can't help seeing that, as Harry says, they lead right back into the Romish church – and by a way that seems enticingly beautiful. Sometimes I think it would be quite delightful to have a spiritual director who would save you all the trouble of deciding, and take your case in hand, and tell you exactly what to do at every step. Mr. St. John, I know, would be just the person to assume such a position. He is a natural school-master, and likes to control people, and, although he is so very gentle, I always feel that he is very stringent, and that if I once allowed him ascendancy he would make no allowances. I can feel the "*main de fer*" through the perfect gentlemanly polish of his exterior; but you see I *know* Harry never would go completely under his influence, and I shrink from anything that would divide me from my husband, and so I don't make any move in that direction.

You see, I write to *you* all about these matters, for my mamma is a sweet, good little woman who never troubles her head with anything in this line, and my god-mother, Aunt Maria, is a dear worldly old soul, whose heart is grieved within her because I care so little for the pomps and vanities. She takes it to heart that Harry and I have definitely resolved to give up party-going, and all that useless round of calling and dressing and visiting that is called "going into society," and she sometimes complicates matters by trying her forces to get me into those old grooves I was so tired of running in. I never pretend to talk to her of the deeper wants or reasons of my life, for it would be ludicrously impossible to make her understand. She is a person over whose mind never came the shadow of a doubt that she was right in her views of life; and I am not the person to evangelize her.

Well now, dear Mother, imagine a further complication. Harry is very anxious that we should have an evening once a week to receive our friends – an informal, quiet, sociable, talking evening, on a sort of ideal plan of his, in which everybody is to be made easy and at home, and to spend just such a quiet, social hour as at one's own chimney-corner. But fancy my cares, with all the menagerie of our very miscellaneous acquaintances! I should be like the man in the puzzle that had to get the fox and geese and corn over in one boat without their eating each other. Fancy Jim Fellows and Mr. St. John! Dr. Campbell, with his molecules and cerebration, talking to my little Quaker dove, with her white wings and simple faith, or Aunt Maria and mamma conversing with a Jewish Rabbi! I believe our family have a vague impression that Jews are disreputable, however gentlemanly and learned; and I don't know but Mr. St. John would feel shocked at him. Nevertheless, our Rabbi is a very excellent German gentleman, and one of the most interesting talkers I have heard. Oh! then there are our rococo antiquities across the street, Miss Dorcas Vanderheyden and her sister. What shall I do with them all? Harry has such boundless confidence in my powers of doing the agreeable that he seems to think I can, out of this material, make a most piquant and original combination. I have an awful respect for the art *de tenir salon*, and don't wonder that among our artistic French neighbors it got to be a perfect science. But am I the woman born to do it in New York?

Well, there's no way to get through the world but to keep doing, and to attack every emergency with courage. I shall do my possible, and let you know of my success.

Your daughter,
Eva.

CHAPTER V
A TEMPEST IN A TEAPOT

The housekeeping establishment of Eva Henderson, *née* Van Arsdel, was in its way a model of taste, order, and comfort. There was that bright, attractive, cosy air about it that spoke of refined tastes and hospitable feelings – it was such a creation as only the genius of a thorough home-artist could originate. There are artists who work in clay and marble, there are artists in water-colors, and artists in oils, whose works are on exhibition through galleries and museums: but there are also, in thousands of obscure homes, domestic artists, who contrive out of the humblest material to produce in daily life the sense of the beautiful; to cast a veil over its prosaic details and give it something of the charm of a poem.

Eva was one of these, and everybody that entered her house felt her power at once in the atmosphere of grace and enjoyment which seemed to pervade her rooms.

But there was underneath all this an unseen, humble operator, without whom one step in the direction of poetry would have been impossible; one whose sudden withdrawal would have been like the entrance of a black frost into a flower-garden, leaving desolation and unsightliness around: and this strong pivot on which the order and beauty of all the fairy contrivances of the little mistress turned was no other than the Irish Mary McArthur, cook, chambermaid, laundress, and general operator and adviser of the whole.

Mary was a specimen of the best class of those women whom the old country sends to our shores. She belonged to the family of a respectable Irish farmer, and had been carefully trained in all household economies and sanctities. A school kept on the estate of their landlord had been the means of instructing her in the elements of a plain English education. She wrote a good hand, was versed in accounts, and had been instructed in all branches of needle-work with a care and particularity from which our American schools for girls might take a lesson. A strong sense of character pervaded her family life – a sense of the decorous, the becoming, the true and honest, such as often gives dignity to the cottage of the laboring man of the old world. But the golden stories of wealth to be gotten in America had induced her parents to allow Mary with her elder brother to try their fortunes on these unknown shores. Mary had been fortunate in falling into the Van Arsdel family; for Mrs. Van Arsdel, though without the energy or the patience which would have been necessary to control or train an inexperienced and unsteady subject, was, on the whole, appreciative of the sterling good qualities of Mary, and liberal and generous in her dealings with her.

In fact, the Van Arsdels were in all things a free, careless, good natured, merry set, and Mary reciprocated their kindliness to her with all the warmth of her Irish heart. Eva had been her particular pet and darling. She was a pretty, engaging child at the time she first came into the family. Mary had mended her clothes, tidied her room, studied her fancies and tastes, and petted her generally with a whole-souled devotion. "When you get a husband, Miss Eva," she would say, "I will come and live with *you*." But before that event had come to pass, Mary had given her whole heart to an idle, handsome, worthless fellow, whom she appeared to love in direct proportion to his good-for-nothingness. Two daughters were the offspring of this marriage, and then Mary became a widow, and had come with her youngest child under the shadow of "Miss Eva's" roof-tree.

Thus much to give back-ground to the scenery on which Aunt Maria entered, on the morning when she took the omnibus at Mrs. Van Arsdel's door.

Eva was gone out when the door-bell of the little house rang. Mary looking from the chamber window saw Mrs. Wouvermans standing at the door step. Now against this good lady Mary had always cherished a secret antagonism. Nothing so awakens the animosity of her class as the entrance of a third power into the family, between the regnant mistress and the servants; and Aunt Maria's intrusions and

dictations had more than once been discussed in the full parliament of Mrs. Van Arsdel's servants. Consequently the arrival of a police officer armed with a search warrant could not have been more disagreeable or alarming. In an instant Mary's mental eye ran over all her own demesne and premises – for when one woman is both chambermaid, cook and laundress, it may well be that each part of these different departments cannot be at all times in a state of absolute perfection. There was a cellar table that she had been intending this very morning to revise; there were various short-comings in pantry and closet which she had intended to set in order.

But the course of Mrs. Wouvermans was straight and unflinching as justice. A brisk interrogation to the awe-struck little maiden who opened the door showed her that Eva was out, and the field was all before her. So she marched into the parlor, and, laying aside her things, proceeded to review the situation. From the parlor to the little dining-room was the work of a moment; thence to the china closet, where she opened cupboards and drawers and took note of their contents; thence to the kitchen and kitchen pantry, where she looked into the flour barrel, the sugar barrel, the safe, the cake box, and took notes.

When Mary had finished her chamber work and came down to the kitchen, she found her ancient adversary emerging from the cellar with several leaves of cabbage in her hands which she had gathered off from the offending table. In her haste to make a salad for a sudden access of company, the day before, Mary had left these witnesses, and she saw that her sin had found her out.

"Good morning, Mary," said Mrs. Wouvermans, in the curt, dry tone that she used in speaking to servants, "I brought up these cabbage leaves to show you. Nothing is more dangerous, Mary, than to leave any refuse vegetables in a cellar; if girls are careless about such matters they get thrown down on the floor and rot and send up a poisonous exhalation that breeds fevers. I have known whole families poisoned by the neglect of girls in these little matters."

"Mrs. Wouvermans, I was intending this very morning to come down and attend to that matter, and all the other matters about the house," said Mary. "There has been company here this week, and I have had a deal to do."

"And Mary, you ought to be very careful never to leave the lid of your cake box up – it dries the cake. I am very particular about mine."

"And so am I, ma'am; and if my cake box was open it is because somebody has been to it since I shut it. It may be that Mrs. Henderson has taken something out."

"I noticed, Mary, a broom in the parlor closet not hung up; it ruins brooms to set them down in that way."

By this time the hot, combative blood of Ireland rose in Mary's cheek, and she turned and stood at bay.

"Mrs. Wouvermans, *you* are not my mistress, and this is not *your* house; and I am not going to answer to you, but to Mrs. Henderson, about my matters."

"Mary, don't you speak to me in that way," said Mrs. Wouvermans, drawing herself up.

"I *shall* speak in just that way to anybody who comes meddling with what they have no business with. If you was my mistress, I'd tell you to suit yourself to a better girl; and I shall ask Mrs. Henderson if I am to be overlooked in this way. No *lady* would ever do it," said Mary, with a hot emphasis on the word *lady*, and tears of wrath in her eyes.

"There's no use in being impertinent, Mary," said Mrs. Wouvermans, with stately superiority, as she turned and sailed up stairs, leaving Mary in a tempest of impotent anger.

Just about this time Eva returned from her walk with a basket full of cut flowers, and came singing into the kitchen and began arranging flower vases; not having looked into the parlor on her way, she did not detect the traces of Aunt Maria's presence.

"Well, Mary," she called, in her usual cheerful tone, "come and look at my flowers."

But Mary came not, although Eva perceived her with her back turned in the pantry.

"Why, Mary, what is the matter?" said Eva, following her there and seeing her crying. "Why, you dear soul, what has happened? Are you sick?"

"Your Aunt Maria has been here."

"Oh, the horrors, Mary. Poor Aunt Maria! you mustn't mind a word she says. Don't worry, now —*don't*– you know Aunt Maria is always saying things to us girls, but *we* don't mind it, and you mustn't; we know she *means* well, and we just let it pass for what it's worth."

"Yes; you are young ladies, and I am only a poor woman, and it comes hard on me. She's been round looking into every crack and corner, and picked up those old cabbage leaves, and talked to me about keeping a cellar that would give you all a fever – it's too bad. You know yesterday I hurried and cut up that cabbage to help make out the dinner when those gentlemen came in and we had only the cold mutton, and I was going to clear them away this very morning."

"I know it, Mary; and you do the impossible for us all twenty times a day, if you did drop cabbage leaves once; and Aunt Maria has no business to be poking about my house and prying into our management; but, you see, Mary, she's my aunt, and I can't quarrel with her. I'm sorry, but we must just bear it as well as we can – now promise not to mind it – for my sake."

"Well, for your sake, Miss Eva," said Mary, wiping her eyes.

"You know we all think you are a perfect jewel, Mary, and couldn't get along a minute without you. As to Aunt Maria, she's old, and set in her way, and the best way is not to mind her."

And Mary was consoled, and went on her way with courage, and with about as much charity for Mrs. Wouvermans as an average good Christian under equal provocation.

Eva went on singing and making up her vases, and carried them into the parlor, and was absorbed in managing their respective positions, when Aunt Maria came down from her tour in the chambers.

"Seems to me, Eva, that your hired girl's room is furnished up for a princess," she began, after the morning greetings had been exchanged.

"What, Mary's? Well, Mary has a great deal of neatness and taste, and always took particular pride in her room when she lived at mamma's, and so I have arranged hers with special care. Harry got her those pictures of the Madonna and infant Jesus, and I gave the *bénitier* for holy water, over her bed. We matted the floor nicely, and I made that toilet table, and draped her looking-glass out of an old muslin dress of mine. The pleasure Mary takes in it all makes it really worth while to gratify her."

"I never pet servants," said Mrs. Wouvermans, briefly. "Depend on it, Eva, when you've lived as long as I have, you'll find it isn't the way. It makes them presumptuous and exacting. Why, at first, when I blundered into Mary's room, I thought it must be yours – it had such an air."

"Well, as to the air, it's mostly due to Mary's perfect neatness and carefulness. I'm sorry to say you wouldn't always find my room as trimly arranged as hers, for I am a sad hand to throw things about when I am in a hurry. I love order, but I like somebody else to keep it."

"I'm afraid," said Aunt Maria, returning with persistence to her subject, "that you are beginning wrong with Mary, and you'll have trouble in the end. Now I saw she had white sugar in the kitchen sugar-bowl, and there was the tea caddy for her to go to. It's abominable to have servants feel that they must use such tea as we do."

"Oh, well, aunty, you know Mary has been in the family so long I don't feel as if she were a servant; she seems like a friend, and I treat her like one. I believe Mary really loves us."

"It don't do to mix sentiment and business," said Aunt Maria, with sententious emphasis. "I never do. I don't want my servants to love me – that is *not* what I have them for. I want them to *do my work*, and take their wages. They understand that there are to be no favors – everything is specifically set down in the bargain I make with them; their work is all marked out. I never talk with them, or encourage them to talk to me, and that is the way we get along."

"Dear me, Aunt Maria, that may be all very well for such an energetic, capable housekeeper as you are, who always know exactly how to manage, but such a poor little thing as I am can't set up in

that way. Now I think it's a great mercy and favor to have a trained girl that knows more about how to get on than I do, and that is fond of me. Why, I know rich people that would be only too glad to give Mary double what we give, just to have somebody to depend on."

"But, Eva, child, you're beginning wrong – you ought not to leave things to Mary as you do. You ought to attend to everything yourself. I always do."

"But you see, aunty, the case is very different with you and me. You are so very capable and smart, and know so exactly how everything ought to be done, you can make your own terms with everybody. And, now I think of it, how lucky that you came in! I want you to give me your judgment as to two pieces of linen that I've just had sent in. You know, Aunty, I am such a perfect ignoramus about these matters."

And Eva tripped up stairs, congratulating herself on turning the subject, and putting her aunt's busy advising faculties to some harmless and innocent use. So, when she came down with her two pieces of linen, Aunt Maria tested and pulled them this way and that, in the approved style of a domestic expert, and gave judgment at last with an authoritative air.

"*This* is the best, Eva – you see it has a round thread, and very little dressing."

"And *why* is the round thread the best, Aunty?"

"Oh, because it always is – everybody knows *that*, child; all good judges will tell you to buy the round threaded linen, that's perfectly well understood."

Eva did not pursue the inquiry farther, and we must all confess that Mrs. Wouverman's reply was about as satisfactory as those one gets to most philosophical inquiries as to why and wherefore. If our reader doubts that, let him listen to the course of modern arguments on some of the most profound problems; so far as can be seen, they consist of inflections of Aunt Maria's style of statement – as, "Oh, of course everybody knows *that*, now;" or, negatively, "Oh, nobody believes *that*, now-a-days." Surely, a mode of argument which very wise persons apply fearlessly to subjects like death, judgment and eternity, may answer for a piece of linen.

"Oh, by-the-by, Eva, I see you have cards there for Mrs. Wat Sydney's receptions this winter," said Aunt Maria, turning her attention to the card plate. "They are going to be very brilliant, I'm told. They say nothing like their new house is to be seen in this country."

"Yes," said Eva, "Sophie has been down here urging me to come up and see her rooms, and says they depend on me for their receptions, and I'm going up some day to lunch with her, in a quiet way; but Harry and I have about made up our minds that *we* sha'n't go to parties. You know, Aunty, we are going in for economy, and this sort of thing costs so much."

"But, bless your soul, child, what is money for?" said Aunt Maria, innocently. "If you have *any* thing you ought to improve your advantages of getting on in society. It's important to Harry in his profession to be seen and heard of, and to push his way among the notables, and, with due care and thought and economy, a person with your air and style, and your taste, can appear as well as anybody. I came down here, among other things, to look over your dresses, and see what can be done with them."

"Oh, thank you a thousand times, Aunty dear, but what do you think all my little wedding finery would do for me in an assemblage of Worth's spick-and-span new toilettes? In our own little social circles I am quite a leader of the mode, but I should look like an old last night's bouquet among all their fresh finery!"

"Well, now, Eva, child, you talk of economy and all that, and then go spending on knick-knacks and mere fancies what would enable you to make a very creditable figure in society."

"Really, Aunty, is it possible now, when I thought we were being *so* prudent?"

"Well, there's your wood fire, for instance; very cheerful, I admit, but it's a downright piece of extravagance. I know that the very richest and most elegant people, that have everything they can think of, have fallen back on the fancy of having open wood fires in their parlors, just for a sort of ornament to their rooms, but you don't really need it – your furnace keeps you warm enough."

"But, Aunty, it looks so bright and cheerful, and Harry is so fond of it! We only have it evenings, when he comes home tired, and he says the very sight of it rests him."

"There you go, now, Eva – with wood at fifteen dollars a cord! – going in for a mere luxury just because it pleases your fancy, and you can't go into society because it's so expensive. Eva, child, that's just like you. And there are twenty other little things that I see about here," said Aunt Maria, glancing round, "pretty enough, but each costs a little. There, for instance, those cut flowers in the vases cost something."

"But, Aunty, I got them of a poor little man just setting up a green-house, and Harry and I have made up our minds that it's our duty to patronize him. I'm going up to Sophie's to get her to take flowers for her parties of him."

"It's well enough to get Sophie to do it, but you oughtn't to afford it," said Aunt Maria; "nor need you buy a new matting and pictures for your servant's room."

"Oh, Aunty, mattings are so cheap; and those pictures didn't cost much, and they make Mary so happy!"

"Oh, she'd be happy enough any way. You ought to look out a little for yourself, child."

"Well, I do. Now, just look at the expense of going to parties. To begin with, it annihilates all your dresses, at one fell swoop. If I make up my mind, for instance, not to go to parties this winter, I have dresses enough and pretty enough for all my occasions. The minute I decide I must go, I have *nothing*, absolutely nothing, to wear. There must be an immediate outlay. A hundred dollars would be a small estimate for all the additions necessary to make me appear with credit. Even if I take my old dresses as the foundation, and use my unparalleled good taste, there are trimmings, and dressmaker's bills, and gloves, and slippers, and fifty things; and then a carriage for the evening, at five dollars a night, and all for what? What *does* anybody get at a great buzzing party, to pay for all this? Then Harry has to use all his time, and all his nerves, and all his strength on his work. He is driven hard all the time with writing, making up the paper, and overseeing at the office. And you know parties don't begin till near ten o'clock, and if he is out till twelve he doesn't rest well, nor I either – it's just so much taken out of our life – and we don't either of us enjoy it. Now, why should we put out our wood fire that we *do* enjoy, and scrimp in our flowers, and scrimp in our home comforts, and in our servant's comforts, just to get what we don't want after all?"

"Oh, well, I suppose you are like other new married folks, you want to play Darby and Joan in your chimney-corner," said Aunt Maria, "but, for all that, I think there are duties to society. One cannot go out of the world, you know; it don't do, Eva."

"I don't know about that," said Eva. "We are going to try it."'

"What! living without society?"

"Oh, as to that, we shall see our friends other ways. I can see Sophie a great deal better in a quiet morning-call than an evening reception; for the fact is, whoever else you see at a party you don't see your hostess – she hasn't a word for you. Then, I'm going to have an evening here."

"*You* an evening?"

"Yes; why not? See if I don't, and we'll have good times, too."

"Why, who do you propose to invite?"

"Oh, all our folks, and Bolton and Jim Fellows; then there are a good many interesting, intelligent men that write for the magazine, and besides, our acquaintances on this street."

"In this street? Why, there isn't a creature here," said Aunt Maria.

"Yes, there are those old ladies across the way."

"What! old Miss Dorcas Vanderheyden and that Mrs. Benthusen? Well, they belong to an ancient New York family, to be sure; but they are old as Methuselah."

"So much the better, Aunty. Old things, you know, are all the rage just now; and then there's my little Quaker neighbor."

"Why, how odd! They are nice enough, I suppose, and well enough to have for neighbors; but he's nothing but a watchmaker. He actually works for Tiffany!"

"Yes; but he is a very modest, intelligent young man, and very well informed on certain subjects. Harry says he has learned a great deal from him."

"Well, well, child, I suppose you must take your own way," said Aunt Maria.

"I suppose we must," said Eva, shaking her head with much gravity. "You see, Aunty, dear, a wife must accommodate herself to her husband, and if Harry thinks this is the best way, you know – and he does think so, very strongly – and isn't it lucky that I think just as he does? You wouldn't have me fall in with those strong-minded Bloomer women, would you, and sail the ship on my own account, independently of my husband?"

Now, the merest allusion to modern strong-mindedness in woman was to Aunt Maria like a red rag to a bull; it aroused all her combativeness.

"No; I am sure I wouldn't," she said, with emphasis. "If there's anything, Eva, where I see the use of all my instructions to you, it is the good sense with which you resist all such new-fangled, abominable notions about the rights and sphere of women. No; I've always said that the head of the woman is the man; and it's a wife's duty to live to please her husband. She may try to influence him – she ought to do that – but she never ought to do it *openly*. I never used to oppose Mr. Wouvermans. I was always careful to let him suppose he was having his own way; but I generally managed to get mine," and Aunt Maria plumed herself and nodded archly, as an aged priestess who is communicating to a young neophyte secrets of wisdom.

In her own private mind, Eva thought this the most terrible sort of hypocrisy; but her aunt was so settled and contented in all her own practical views, that there was not the least use in arguing the case. However, she couldn't help saying, innocently,

"But, Aunty, I should be afraid sometimes he would have found me out, and then he'd be angry."

"Oh, no; trust me for that," said Aunt Maria, complacently. "I never managed so bunglingly as that. Somehow or other, he didn't exactly know how, he found things coming round my way; but I never opposed him openly – I never got his back up. You see, Eva, these men, if they *do* get their backs up, are terrible, but *any* of them can be led by the nose – so I'm glad to find that you begin the right way. Now, there's your mother – I've been telling her this morning that it's her duty to make your father go back into business and retrieve his fortunes. He's got a good position, to be sure – a respectable salary; but there's no sort of reason why he shouldn't die worth his two or three millions as well as half the other men who fail, and are up again in two or three years. But Nellie wants force. She is no manager. If I were your father's wife, I should set him on his feet again pretty soon. Nellie is such a little dependent body. She was saying this morning how would she ever have got along with her family without me! But there are some things that even I can't do – nobody but a wife could, and Nelly isn't up to it."

"Poor, dear little mamma," said Eva. "But are you quite sure, Aunt Maria, that her ways are not better adapted to papa than any one's else could be? Papa is very positive, though so very quiet. He is devoted to mamma. Then, again, Aunty, there is a good deal of risk in going, into speculations and enterprises at papa's age. Of course, you know I don't know anything about business or that sort of thing; but it seems to me like a great sea where you are up on the wave to-day and down to-morrow. So if papa really *won't* go into these things, perhaps it's all for the best."

"But, Eva, it is so important now for the girls, poor things, just going into society – for you know they can't keep out of it, even if you do. It will affect all their chances of settlement in life – and that puts me in mind, Eva, something or other must be done about Alice and Jim Fellows. Everybody is saying if they're not engaged they ought to be."

"Oh, Aunty, how exasperating the world is! Can't a man and woman have a plain, honest friendship? Jim has shown himself a true friend to our family. He came to us just in all the confusion

of the failure, and helped us heart and hand in the manliest way – and we *all* like him. Alice likes him, and I don't wonder at it."

"Well, are they engaged?" said Aunt Maria, with an air of statistical accuracy.

"How should I know? I never thought of asking. I'm not a police detective, and I always think that if my friends have anything they want me to know, they'll tell me; and if they don't want me to know, why should I ask them?"

"But, Eva, one is responsible for one's relations. The fact is, such an intimacy stands right in the way of a girl's having good offers – it keeps other parties off. Now, I tell you, as a great secret, there is a very fine man, immensely rich, and every way desirable, who is evidently pleased with Alice."

"Dear me, Aunty! how you excite my curiosity. Pray who is it?" said Eva.

"Well, I'm not at liberty to tell you more particularly; but I *know* he's thinking about her; and this report about her and Jim would operate very prejudicially. Now shall I have a talk with Alice, or will you?"

"Oh, Aunty dear, don't, for pity's sake, say a word to Alice. Young girls are so sensitive about such things. If it *must* be talked of, let me talk with Alice."

"I really thought, if I had a good chance, I'd say something to the young man himself," said Aunt Maria, reflectively.

"Oh, good heavens! Aunty, don't *think* of it. You don't know Jim Fellows."

"Oh, you needn't be afraid of me," said Aunt Maria. "I am a great deal older and more experienced than you, and if I do do anything, you may rest assured it will be in the most discreet way. I've managed cases of this kind before you were born."

"But Jim is the most peculiar" —

"Oh, I know all about him. Do you suppose I've seen him in and out in the family all this time without understanding him perfectly?"

"But I don't really think that there is the least of anything serious between him and Alice."

"Very likely. He would not be at all the desirable match for Alice. He has very little property, and is rather a wild, rattling fellow; and I don't like newspaper men generally."

"Oh, Aunty, that's severe now. You forget Harry."

"Oh, well, your husband is an exception; but, as a general rule, I don't like 'em – unprincipled lot *I* believe," said Aunt Maria, with a decisive nod of her head. "At any rate, Alice can do better, and she ought to."

The ringing of the lunch bell interrupted the conversation, much to the relief of Eva, who discovered with real alarm the course her respected relative's thoughts were taking.

Of old she had learned that the only result of arguing a point with her was to make her more set in her own way, and she therefore bent all her forces of agreeableness to produce a diversion of mind to other topics. On the principle that doctors apply mustard to the feet, to divert the too abundant blood from the head, Eva started a brisk controversy with Aunt Maria on another topic, in hopes, by exhausting her energies there, to put this out of her mind. With what success her strategy was crowned, it will remain to be seen.

CHAPTER VI
THE SETTLING OF THE WATERS

It will not be doubted by those who know the ways of family dictators that Mrs. Maria Wouvermans left Eva's house after her day's visit in a state of the most balmy self-satisfaction, as one who has done a good day's work.

"Well, I've been up at Eva's," she said to her sister, as she looked in on returning, "and really it was well I went in. That Mary of hers is getting careless and negligent, just as all old servants do, and I just went over the whole house, and had a plain talk with Mary. She flew up about it, and was impertinent, of course; but I put her down, and I talked plainly to Eva about the way she's beginning with her servants. She's just like you, Nellie, slack and good-natured, and needs somebody to keep her up. I told her the way she is beginning – of petting Mary, and fussing up her room with carpet and pictures, and everything, just like any other – wouldn't work. Servants must be kept in their places."

Now, Mrs. Van Arsdel had a spirit of her own; and the off-hand, matter-of-fact manner in which her sister was accustomed to speak of her as no manager touched a vital point. What housekeeper likes to have her capacity to guide a house assailed? Is not that the spot where her glory dwells, if she has any? And it is all the more provoking when such charges are thrown out in perfect good nature, not as designed to offend, but thrown in *par parenthèse*, as something everybody would acknowledge, and too evident to require discussion. While proceeding in the main part of a discourse Mrs. Wouvermans was quite in the habit of these frank side disclosures of her opinion of her sister's management, and for the most part they were submitted to in acquiescent silence, rather than to provoke a controversy; but to be called "slack" to her face without protest or rejoinder was more than she could bear; so Mrs. Van Arsdel spoke up with spirit:

"Maria, you are always talking as if I don't know how to manage servants. All I know is that you are always changing, and I keep mine years and years."

"That's because you let them have their own way," said her sister. "You can keep servants if you don't follow them up, and insist on it that they shall do their duty. Let them run all over you and live like mistresses, and you can keep them. For my part, I like to change – new brooms always sweep clean."

"Well, it's a different thing, Maria – you with your small family, and mine with so many. I'd rather bear anything than change."

"Oh, well, yes; I suppose there's no help for it, Nellie. Of course I wasn't blaming you, so don't fire up about it. I know you can't make yourself over," said Aunt Maria. This was the tone with which she usually settled discussions with those who differed from her on modes and measures. After all, they could not be like her, so where was the use of talking?

Aunt Maria also had the advantage in all such encounters of a confessed reputation as an excellent manager. Her house was always elegant, always in order. She herself was gifted with a head for details that never failed to keep in mind the smallest item, and a wiry, compact constitution that never knew fatigue. She held the keys of everything in her house, and always turned every key at the right moment. She knew the precise weight, quantity, and quality of everything she had in possession, where it was and what it might be used for; and, as she said, could go to anything in her house without a candle in the darkest night. If her servants did not love, they feared her, and had such a sense of her ever vigilant inspection that they never even tried to evade her. For the least shadow of disobedience she was ready to send them away at a moment's warning, and then go to the intelligence office and enter her name for another, and come home, put on apron and gloves, and manfully and thoroughly sustain the department till they came.

Mrs. Wouvermans, therefore, was celebrated and lauded by all her acquaintances as a perfect housekeeper, and this added sanction and terror to her *pronunciamentos* when she walked the rounds as a police inspector in the houses of her relations.

It is rather amusing to a general looker-on in this odd world of ours to contrast the serene, cheerful good faith with which these constitutionally active individuals go about criticising, and suggesting, and directing right and left, with the dismay and confusion of mind they leave behind them wherever they operate.

They are often what the world calls well-meaning people, animated by a most benevolent spirit, and have no more intention of giving offense than a nettle has of stinging. A large, vigorous, well-growing nettle has no consciousness of the stings it leaves in the delicate hands that have been in contact with it; it has simply acted out its innocent and respectable nature as a nettle. But a nettle armed with the power of locomotion on an ambulatory tour, is something the results of which may be fearful to contemplate.

So, after the departure of Aunt Maria our little housekeeper, Eva, was left in a state of considerable nervousness and anxiety, feeling that she had been weighed in the balance of perfection and found wofully wanting. She was conscious, to begin with, that her characteristic virtues as a housekeeper, if she had any, were not entirely in the style of her good relative. She was not by nature statistical, nor given to accounts and figures. She was not sharp and keen in bargains; she was, she felt in her inmost, trembling soul, a poor little mollusk, without a bit of a shell, hiding in a cowardly way under a rock and ready at any time to be eaten up by big fishes. She had felt so happy in her unlimited trust in Mary, who knew more than she did about housekeeping – but she had been convicted by her aunt's cross-questions of having resigned the very signet ring and scepter of her house into her hands. Did she let Mary go all over the house? Did she put away the washing? Did Eva allow her to open her drawers? Didn't she count her towels and sheets every week, and also her tea-spoons, and keep every drawer and cupboard locked? She ought to. To all these inquiries Eva had no satisfactory response, and began to doubt within herself whether she had begun aright. With sensitive, conscientious people there is always a residuum of self-distrust after discussions of the nature we have indicated, however vigorously and skillfully they may have defended their courses at the time.

Eva went over and over in her own mind her self-justifications – she told herself that she and her aunt were essentially different people, incapable of understanding each other sympathetically or acting in each other's ways, and that the well-meant, positive dicta of her relative were to be let go for what they were worth, and no more.

Still she looked eagerly and anxiously for the return of her husband, that she might reinforce herself by talking it over with him. Hers was a nature so transparent that, before he had been five minutes in the house, he felt that something had gone wrong; but, the dinner-bell ringing, he retired at once to make his toilet, and did not open the subject till they were fairly seated at table.

"Well, come now, Puss – out with it! Why that anxious brow? What domestic catastrophe? Anything gone wrong with the ivies?"

"Oh, no; the ivies are all right, growing beautifully – it isn't that – "

"Well, then, what is it? It seems there is something."

"Oh, nothing, Harry; only Aunt Maria has been spending the day here."

Eva said this with such a perplexed and woful face that Harry leaned back in his chair and laughed.

"What a blessing it is to have relations," he said; "but I thought, Eva, that you had made up your mind not to care for anything Aunt Maria says?"

"Well, she has been all over the house, surveying and reviewing as if she owned us, and she has lectured Mary and got her into hysterics, and talked to me till I am almost bewildered – wondering at everything we mean to do, and wanting us to take her ways and not ours."

"My dearest child, why need you care? Take it as a rain-storm, when you've been caught out without your umbrella. That's all. Or why can't you simply and firmly tell her that she must not go over your house or direct your servants?"

"Well, you see, that would never do. She would feel so injured and abused. I've only just made up and brought things to going smoothly, and got her pacified about our marriage. There would be another fuss if I should talk that way. Aunt Maria always considered me her girl, and maintains that she is a sort of special guardian to me, and I think it very disagreeable to quarrel with your relations, and get on unpleasant terms with them."

"Well, *I* shall speak to her, Eva, pretty decidedly, if you don't."

"Oh, don't, don't, Harry! She'd never forgive you. No. Let me manage her. I have been managing her all day to keep the peace, to keep her satisfied and pleased; to *let* her advise me to her heart's content, about things where I can take advice. Aunt Maria is a capital judge of linens and cottons, and all sorts of household stuffs, and can tell to a certainty just how much of a thing you'd want, and the price you ought to pay, and the exact place to get it; and I have been contriving to get her opinion on a dozen points where I mean to take it; and I think she has left, on the whole, highly satisfied with her visit, though in the main I didn't give in to her a bit about our plans."

"Then why so tragic and tired-looking?"

"Oh, well, after all, when Aunt Maria talks, she says a great many things that have such a degree of sense in them that it worries me. Now, there's a good deal of sense in what she said about trusting too much to servants, and being too indulgent. I know mamma's girls used to get spoiled so that they would be perfect tyrants. And yet I cannot for the life of me like Aunt Maria's hard, ungracious way of living with servants, as if they were machines."

"Ah, well, Eva, it's always so. Hard, worldly people always have a good deal of what looks like practical sense on their side, and kindness and unselfishness certainly have their weak points; there's no doubt of that. The Sermon on the Mount is open to a great deal of good hard worldly criticism, and so is every attempt to live up to it practically; but, never mind. We all know that the generous way is the strong way, and the best way, in the long run."

"And then you know, Harry, I haven't the least talent for being hard and sharp," said Eva, "and so I may as well take the advantages of my sort of nature."

"Certainly you may; people never succeed out of their own line."

"Then there's another trouble. I'm afraid Aunt Maria is going to interfere with Alice, as she tried to do with me. She said that everybody was talking about her intimacy with Jim, and that if *I* didn't speak to Alice *she* must."

"Confound that woman," said Harry; "she's an unmitigated old fool! She's as bad as a runaway steam engine; somebody ought to seize and lock her up."

"Come, sir, keep a civil tongue about my relations," said Eva, laughing.

"Well, I must let off a little to you, just to lower steam to the limits of Christian moderation."

"Alice isn't as fond of Aunt Maria as I am, and has a high spirit of her own, and I'm afraid it will make a terrible scene if Aunt Maria attacks her, so I suppose I must talk to her myself; but what do you think of Jim, Harry? Is there anything in it, on his part?"

"How can I say? you know just as much as I do and no more, and you are a better judge of human nature than I am."

"Well, would you like it to have Alice take Jim – supposing there were anything."

"Why, yes, very well, if she wants him."

"But Jim is such a volatile creature – would you want to trust him?"

"He is constant in his affections, which is the main thing. I'm sure his conduct when your father failed showed that; and a sensible, dignified woman like Alice might make a man of him."

"It's odd," said Eva, "that Alice, who is so prudent, and has such a high sense of propriety, seems so very indulgent to Jim. None of his escapades seem to offend her."

"It's the doctrine of counterparts," said Harry; "the steady sensible nature admires the brilliancy and variety of the volatile one."

"For my part," said Eva, "I can't conceive of Jim's saying anything in serious earnest. The very idea of his being sentimental seems funny – and how can anybody be in love without being sentimental?"

"There are diversities of operation," said Harry. "Jim must make love in his own way, and it will probably be an original one."

"But, really now, do you know," persisted Eva, "I think Alice might be mated with a man of much higher class than Jim. He is amiable, and bright, and funny, and agreeable. Yet I don't deny but Alice might do better."

"So she might, but the perversity of fate is that the superior man isn't around and Jim *is*; and, ten to one, if the superior man were in the field, Alice would be perverse enough to choose Jim. And, after all, you must confess, give Jim Fellows a fortune of a million or two, a place in Newport, and another on the North River, and even you would call it a brilliant match, and think it a fortunate thing for Alice."

"Oh, dear me, Harry, that's the truth, to be sure. Am I so worldly?"

"No; but ideal heroes are not plentiful, and there are few gems that don't need rich setting. The first questions as to a man are, is he safe, has he no bad habits, is he kind and affectionate in his disposition and capable of constant affection? and, secondly, does the woman feel that sort of love that makes her prefer him even to men that are quite superior? Now, whether Alice feels in that way toward Jim is what remains to be seen. I'm sure I can't tell. Neither can I tell whether Jim has any serious intentions in regard to her. If they were only let alone, and not watched and interfered with, I've no doubt the thing would adjust itself in the natural course of things.

"But see here, I must be going to my club, and, now I think of it, I've brought some Paris letters from the girls for you, to pass the evening with."

"You have? Letters from Ida and Caroline? You naughty creature, why didn't you give them to me before?"

"Well, your grave face when I first came in put everything else out of my head; and then came on all this talk: but it's just as well, you'll have them to read while I'm gone."

"Don't stay late, Harry."

"No; you may be sure I've no temptation. I'd much rather be here with you watching our own back-log. But then I shall see several fellows about articles for the magazine, and get all the late news, and, in short, take an observation of our latitude and longitude; so, *au revoir*!"

CHAPTER VII
LETTERS AND AIR-CASTLES

After Harry went out, Eva arranged the fire, dropped the curtains over the window, drew up an easy chair into a warm corner under the gas-light, and began looking over the outside of her Parisian letters with that sort of luxurious enjoyment of delay with which one examines the post-marks and direction of letters that are valued as a great acquisition. There was one from her sister Ida and one from Harry's cousin Caroline. Ida's was opened first. It was dated from a boarding-house in the Rue de Clichy, giving a sort of journalised view of their studies, their medical instructors, their walks and duties in the hospital, all told with an evident and vigorous sense of enjoyment. Eva felt throughout what a strong, cheerful, self-sustained being her sister was, and how fit it was that a person so sufficient to herself, so equable, so healthfully balanced and poised in all her mental and physical conformation, should have undertaken the pioneer work of opening a new profession for women. "I never could do as she does, in the world," was her mental comment, "but I am thankful that she can." And then she cut the envelope of Caroline's letter.

To a certain extent there were the same details in it – Caroline was evidently associated in the same studies, the same plans, but there was missing in the letter the professional enthusiasm, the firmness, the self-poise, and calm clearness. There were more bursts of feeling on the pictures in the Louvre than on scientific discoveries; more sensibility to the various æsthetic wonders which Paris opens to an uninitiated guest than to the treasures of anatomy and surgery. With the letter were sent two or three poems, contributions to the Magazine – poems full of color and life, of a subdued fire, but with that undertone of sadness which is so common in all female poets. A portion of the letter may explain this:

> "You were right, my dear Eva, in saying, in our last interview, that it did not seem to you that I had the kind of character that was adapted to the profession I have chosen. I don't think I have. I am more certain of it from comparing myself from day to day with Ida, who certainly is born and made for it, if ever a woman was. My choice of it has been simply and only for the reason that I must choose something as a means of self-support, and more than that, as a refuge from morbid distresses of mind which made the still monotony of my New England country life intolerable to me. This course presented itself to me as something feasible. I thought it, too, a good and worthy career – one in which one might do one's share of good for the world. But, Eva, I can feel that there is one essential difference between Ida and myself: she is peculiarly self-sustained and sufficient to herself, and I am just the reverse. I am full of vague unrest; I am chased by seasons of high excitement, alternating with deadly languor. Ida has hard work to know what to do with me. You were right in supposing, as you intimate in your letter, that a certain common friend has something to do with this unrest, but you cannot, unless you know my whole history, know how much. There was a time when he and I were all the world to each other – when shall I ever forget that time! I was but seventeen; a young girl, so ignorant of life! I never had seen one like him; he was a whole new revelation to me; he woke up everything there was in me, never to go to sleep again; and then to think of having all this tide and current of feeling checked – frozen. My father overwhelmed him with accusations; every baseness was laid to his charge. I was woman enough to have stood for him against the world if he had come to me. I would have left all and gone to the ends of the earth with him if he had asked me, but he did not. There was only one farewell, self-accusing letter, and even that fell into my father's hands and never

came to me till after his death. For years I thought myself wantonly trifled with by a man of whose attentions I ought to be ashamed. I was indignant at myself for the love that might have been my glory, for it is my solemn belief that if we had been let alone he would have been saved all those wretched falls, those blind struggles that have marred a life whose purpose is yet so noble.

"When the fates brought us together again in New York, I saw at a glance that whatever may have been the proud, morbid conscientiousness that dictated his long silence, he loved me still; – a woman knows that by an unmistakable instinct. She can *feel* the reality through all disguises. I *know* that man loves me, and yet he does not now in word or deed make the least profession beyond the boundaries of friendship. He is my friend; with entire devotion he is willing to spend and be spent for me – but he will accept nothing from me. I, who would give my life to him willingly – I must do nothing for him!

"Well, it's no use writing. You see now that I am a very unworthy disciple of your sister. She is so calm and philosophical that I cannot tell her all this; but you, dear little Eva, you know the heart of woman, and you have a magic key which unlocks everybody's heart in confidence to you. I seem to see you, in fancy, with good Cousin Harry, sitting cosily in your chimney-corner; your ivies and nasturtiums growing round your sunny windows, and an everlasting summer in your pretty parlors, while the December winds whistle without. Such a life as you two lead, such a home as your home, is worth a thousand 'careers' that dazzle ambition. Send us more letters, journals, of all your pretty, lovely home life, and let me warm myself in the glow of your fireside.

Your Cousin,
Carry."

Eva finished this letter, and then folding it up sat with it in her lap, gazing into the fire, and pondering its contents. If the truth must be told, she was revolving in her young, busy brain a scheme for restoring Caroline to her lover, and setting them up comfortably at housekeeping on a contiguous street, where she had seen a house to let. In five minutes she had gone through the whole programme – seen the bride at the altar, engaged the house, bought the furniture, and had before her a vision of parlors, of snuggeries and cosy nooks, where Caroline was to preside, and where Bolton was to lounge at his ease, while she and Caroline compared housekeeping accounts. Happy young wives develop an aptitude for match-making as naturally as flowers spring in a meadow, and Eva was losing herself in this vision of Alnaschar, when a loud, imperative, sharp bark of a dog at the front door of the house called her back to life and the world.

Now there are as many varieties to dog-barks as to man-talks. There is the common bow-wow, which means nothing, only that it is a dog speaking; there is the tumultuous angry bark, which means attack; the conversational bark, which, of a moonlight night, means gossip; and the imperative staccato bark which means immediate business. The bark at the front door was of this kind: it was loud and sharp, and with a sort of indignant imperativeness about it, as of one accustomed to be attended to immediately.

Eva flew to the front door and opened it, and there sat Jack, the spoiled darling of Miss Dorcas Vanderheyden and her sister, over the way.

"Why, Jacky! where did you come from?" said Eva. Jacky sat up on his haunches and waved his forepaws in a vigorous manner, as was his way when he desired to be specially ingratiating.

Eva seized him in her arms and carried him into the parlor, thinking that as he had accidentally been shut out for the night she would domesticate him for a while, and return him to his owners on the morrow. So she placed him on the ottoman in the corner and attempted to caress him, but evidently

that was not the purpose he had in view. He sprang down, ran to the door and snuffed, and to the front windows and barked imperiously.

"Why, Jack, what do you want?"

He sprang into a chair and barked out at the Vanderheyden house.

Eva looked at the mantel clock – it wanted a few minutes of ten – without, it was a bright moonlight night.

"I'll run across with him, and see what it is," she said. She was young enough to enjoy something like an adventure. She opened the front door and Jack rushed out, and then stopped to see if she would follow; as she stood a moment he laid hold on the skirt of her dress, as if to pull her along.

"Well, Jacky, I'll go," said Eva. Thereat the creature bounded across the street and up the steps of the opposite house, where he stood waiting. She went up and rang the door-bell, which appeared to be what he wanted, as he sat down quite contented on the doorstep.

Nobody came. Eva looked up and down the street. "Jacky, we shall have to go back, they are all asleep," she said. But Jacky barked contradiction, sprang nearer to the door, and insisted on being let in.

"Well, if you say so, Jacky, I must ring again," she said, and with that she pulled the door-bell louder, and Jack barked with all his might, and the two succeeded after a few moments in causing a perceptible stir within.

Slowly the door unclosed, and a vision of Miss Dorcas in an old-fashioned broad-frilled night-cap peeped out. She was attired in a black water-proof cloak, donned hastily over her night gear.

"Oh, Jack, you naughty boy!" she exclaimed, stooping eagerly to the prodigal, who sprung tumultuously into her arms and began licking her face.

"I'm so much obliged to you, Mrs. Henderson," she said to Eva. "We went down in the omnibus this afternoon, and we suddenly missed him, the naughty fellow," she said, endeavoring to throw severity into her tones.

Eva related Jack's ruse.

"Did you ever!" said Miss Dorcas; "the creature knew that we slept in the back of the house, and he got you to ring our door-bell. Jacky, what a naughty fellow you are!"

Mrs. Betsey now appeared on the staircase in an equal state of dishabille:

"Oh dear, Mrs. Henderson, we are so shocked!"

"Dear me, never speak of it. I think it was a cunning trick of Jack. He knew you were gone to bed, and saw I was up and so got me to ring his door-bell for him. I don't doubt he rode up town in the omnibus. Well, good-night!"

And Eva closed the door and flew back to her own little nest just in time to let in Harry.

The first few moments after they were fairly by the fireside were devoted to a recital of the adventure, with dramatic representations of Jack and his mistresses.

"It's a capital move on Jack's part. It got me into the very interior of the fortress. Only think of seeing them in their night-caps! That is carrying all the out-works of ceremony at a move."

"To say nothing of their eternal gratitude," said Harry.

"Oh, that of course. They were ready to weep on my neck with joy that I had brought the dear little plague back to them, and I don't doubt are rejoicing over him at this moment. But, oh, Harry, you must hear the girls' Paris letters."

"Are they very long?" said Harry.

"Fie now, Harry; you ought to be interested in the girls."

"Why, of course I am," said Harry, pulling out his watch, "only – what time is it?"

"Only half-past ten – not a bit late," said Eva. As she began to read Ida's letter, Harry settled back in the embrace of a luxurious chair, with his feet stretched out towards the fire, and gradually the details of Paris life mingled pleasingly with a dream – a fact of which Eva was made aware as she asked him suddenly what he thought of Ida's views on a certain point.

"Now, Harry – you haven't been asleep?"

"Just a moment. The very least in the world," said Harry, looking anxiously alert and sitting up very straight.

Then Eva read Caroline's letter.

"Now, isn't it too bad?" she said, with eagerness, as she finished.

"Yes, it's one of those things that you and I can do nothing to help – it is αναγκη [Greek: anagkê]."

"What's ananke?"

"The name the old Greeks gave to that perverse Something that brought ruin and misery in spite of and out of the best human efforts."

"But I want to bring these two together."

"Be careful how you try, darling. Who knows what the results may be? It's a subject Bolton never speaks of, where he has his own purposes and conclusions; and it's the best thing for Caroline to be where she has as many allurements and distractions as she has in Paris, and such a wise, calm, strong friend as your sister.

"And now, dear, mayn't I go to bed?" he added, with pathos, "You've no idea, dear, how sleepy I am."

"Oh, certainly, you poor boy," said Eva, bustling about and putting up the chairs and books preparatory to leaving the parlor.

"You see," she said, going up stairs, "he was so imperious that I really had to go with him."

"He! Who?"

"Why, Jack, to be sure, he did all but speak," said Eva, brush in hand, and letting down her curls before the glass. "You see I was in a reverie over those letters when the barking roused me – I don't think you ever heard such a barking; and when I got him in, he wouldn't be contented – kept insisting on my going over with him – wasn't it strange?"

Harry, by this time composed for the night and half asleep, said it was.

In a few moments he was aroused by Eva's saying, suddenly,

"Harry, I really think I ought to bring them together. Now, couldn't I do something?"

"With Jack?" said Harry, drowsily.

"Jack! – oh, you sleepy-head! Well, never mind. Good night."

CHAPTER VIII
THE VANDERHEYDEN FORTRESS TAKEN

"Now, Harry, I'll tell you what I'm going to do this morning," said Eva, with the air of a little general, as she poured his morning coffee.

"And what are you going to do?" replied he, in the proper tone of inquiry.

"Well, I'm going to take the old fortress over the way by storm, this very morning. I'm going to rush through the breach that Jack has opened into the very interior and see what there is there. I'm perfectly dying to get the run of that funny old house; why, Harry, it's just like a novel, and I shouldn't wonder if I could get enough out of it for you to make an article of."

"Thank you, dear; you enter into the spirit of article-hunting like one to the manner born."

"That I do; I'm always keeping my eyes open when I go about New York for bits and hints that you can work up, and I'm sure you ought to do something with this old Vanderheyden house. I know there must be ghosts in it; I'm perfectly certain."

"But you wouldn't meet them in a morning call," said Harry, "that's contrary to all ghostly etiquette."

"Never mind, I'll get track of them. I'll become intimate with old Miss Dorcas and get her to relate her history, and if there is a ghost-chamber I'll be into it."

"Well, success to you," said Harry; "but to me it looks like a formidable undertaking. Those old ladies are so padded and wadded in buckram."

"Oh, pshaw! there's just what Jack has done for me, he has made a breach in the padding and buckram. Only think of my seeing them at midnight in their night-caps! And such funny night-caps! Why, it's an occasion long to be remembered, and I would be willing to wager anything they are talking it over at this minute; and, of course, you see, it's extremely proper and quite a part of the play that I should come in this morning to inquire after the wanderer, and to hope they didn't catch cold, and to talk over the matter generally. Now, I *like* that old Miss Dorcas; there seems to me to be an immense amount of character behind all her starch and stiffness, and I think she's quite worth knowing. She'll be an acquisition if one can only get at her."

"Well, as I said, success and prosperity go with you!" said Harry, as he rose and gathered his papers to go to his morning work.

"I'll go right out with you," said Eva, and she snatched from the hat-tree a shawl and a little morsel of white, fleecy worsted, which the initiated surname "a cloud," and tied it over her head. "I'm going right in upon them now," she said.

It was a brisk, frosty morning, and she went out with Harry and darted across from the door. He saw her in the distance, as he went down the street, laughing and kissing her hand to him on the door-step of the Vanderheyden house.

Just then the sound of the door-bell – unheard of in that hour in the morning – caused an excitement in the back breakfast-parlor, where Miss Dorcas and Mrs. Betsey were at a late breakfast, with old Dinah standing behind Miss Dorcas' chair to get her morning orders, giggling and disputing them inch by inch, as was her ordinary wont.

The old door-bell had a rustling, harsh, rusty sound, as if cross with a chronic rheumatism of disuse.

"Who under the sun!" said Miss Dorcas. "Jack, be still!"

But Jack wouldn't be still, but ran and snuffed at the door, and barked as if he smelt a legion of burglars.

Eva heard, within the house, the dining-room door open, and then Jack's barking came like a fire of artillery at the crack of the front door, where she was standing. It was slowly opened, and old

Dinah's giggling countenance appeared. "Laws bless your soul, Mis' Henderson," she said, flinging the door wide open, "is that you? Jack, be still, sir!"

But Eva had caught Jack up in her arms, and walked with him to the door of the breakfast room.

"Do pray excuse me," she said, "but I thought I'd just run over and see that you hadn't taken any cold."

The scene within was not uninviting. There was a cheerful wood fire burning on the hearth behind a pair of gigantic old-fashioned brass fire-irons. The little breakfast-table, with its bright old silver and India china, was drawn comfortably up in front. Miss Dorcas had her chair on one side, and Miss Betsey on the other, and between them there was a chair drawn up for Jack, where he had been sitting at the time the door-bell rang.

"We are ashamed of our late hours," said Miss Dorcas, when she had made Eva sit down in an old-fashioned claw-footed arm-chair in the warmest corner; "we don't usually breakfast so late, but, the fact is, Betsey was quite done up by the adventure last night."

"Perhaps," said Eva, "I had better have tried keeping Jack till morning."

"Oh no, indeed, Mrs. Henderson," said Mrs. Betsey, with energy; "I know it's silly, but I shouldn't have slept a wink all night if Jack hadn't come home. You know he sleeps with me," she added.

Eva did not know it before, but she said "Yes" all the same, and the good lady rushed on:

"Yes; Dorcas thinks it's rather silly, but I do let Jack sleep on the foot of my bed. I spread his blanket for him every night, and I always wash his feet and wipe them clean before he goes to bed, and when you brought him back you really ought to have seen him run right up stairs to where I keep his bowl and towel; and he stood there, just as sensible, waiting for me to come and wash him. I wish you could have seen how dirty he was! I can't think where ever that dog gets his paws so greasy."

"'Cause he will eat out o' swill-pails!" interposed Dinah, with a chuckle. "Greatest dog after swill-pails I ever see. That's what he's off after."

"Well, I don't know why. It's very bad of him when we always feed him and take such pains with him," said Mrs. Betsey, in accents of lamentation.

"Dogs is allers jest so," said Dinah; "they's arter nastiness and carron. You can't make a Christian out o' a dog, no matter what you do."

Old Dinah was the very impersonation of that coarse, hard literalness which forces actual unpalatable facts upon unwilling ears. There was no disputing that she spoke most melancholy truths, that even the most infatuated dog-lovers could not always shut their eyes to. But Mrs. Betsey chose wholly to ignore her facts and treat her communication as if it had no existence, so she turned her back to Dinah and went on.

"I don't know what makes Jack have these turns of running away. Sometimes I think it's our system of dieting him. Perhaps it may be because we don't allow him all the meat he wants; but then they say if you do give these pet dogs meat they become so gross that it is quite shocking."

Miss Dorcas rapped her snuff-box, sat back in her chair, and took snuff with an air of antique dignity that seemed to call heaven and earth to witness that she only tolerated such fooleries on account of her sister, and not at all in the way of personal approbation.

The nurture and admonition of Jack was the point where the two sisters had a chronic controversy, Miss Dorcas inclining to the side of strict discipline and vigorous repression.

In fact, Miss Dorcas soothed her violated notions of dignity and propriety by always speaking of Jack as "Betsey's dog" – he was one of the permitted toys and amusements of Betsey's more juvenile years; but she felt called upon to keep some limits of discipline to prevent Jack's paw from ruling too absolutely in the family councils.

"You see," said Mrs. Betsey, going on with her reminiscences of yesterday, "we had taken Jack down town with us because we wanted to get his photographs; we'd had him taken last week, and they were not ready till yesterday."

"Dear me, do show them to me," said Eva, entering cheerfully into the humor of the thing; and Mrs. Betsey trotted up stairs to get them.

"You see how very absurd we are," said Miss Dorcas; "but the fact is, Mrs. Henderson, Betsey has had her troubles, poor child, and I'm glad to have her have anything that can be any sort of a comfort to her."

Betsey came back with her photographs, which she exhibited with the most artless innocence.

"You see," said Miss Dorcas, "just how it is. If people set out to treat a dog as a child, they have to take the consequences. That dog rules this whole family, and of course he behaves like spoiled children generally. Here, now, this morning; Betsey and I both have bad colds because we were got out of bed last night with that creature."

Here Jack, seeming to understand that he was the subject-matter of some criticism, rose up suddenly on his haunches before Miss Dorcas and waved his paws in a supplicatory manner at her. Jack understood this to be his only strong point, and brought it out as a trump card on all occasions when he felt himself to be out of favor. Miss Dorcas laughed, as she generally did, and Jack seemed delighted, and sprang into her lap and offered to kiss her with the most brazen assurance.

"Oh, well, Mrs. Henderson, I suppose you see that we are two old fools about that dog," she said. "I don't know but I am almost as silly as Betsey is, but the fact is one must have *something*, and a dog is not so much risk as a boy, after all. Yes, Jack," she said, tapping his shaggy head patronizingly, "after all you're no more impudent than puppies in general."

"I never quarrel with anyone for loving dogs," said Eva. "For my part I think no family is complete without one. I tell Harry we must 'set up' our dog as soon as we get a little more settled. When *we* get one, we'll compare notes."

"Well," said Miss Dorcas, "I always comfort myself with thinking that dear Sir Walter, with all his genius, went as far in dog-petting as any of us. You remember Washington Irving's visit to Abbotsford?"

Eva did not remember it, and Miss Dorcas said she must get it for her at once; she ought to read it. And away she went to look it up in the book-case in the next room.

"The fact is," said Mrs. Betsey, mysteriously, "though Dorcas has so much strength of mind, she is to the full as silly about Jack as I am. When I was gone to Newburg, if you'll believe me, *she* let Jack sleep on her bed. Dinah knows it, doesn't she?"

Dinah confirmed this fact by a loud explosing, in which there was a singular mixture of snort and giggle; and to cover her paroxysm she seized violently on the remains of the breakfast and bore them out into the kitchen, and was heard giggling and gurgling in a rill of laughter all along the way.

Mrs. Betsey began gathering up and arranging the cups, and filling a lacquered bowl of Japanese fabric with hot water, she proceeded to wash the china and silver.

"What *lovely* china," said Eva, with the air of a connoisseur.

"Yes," said Mrs. Betsey, "this china has been in the family for three generations, and we never suffer a servant to touch it."

"Please let *me* help you," said Eva, taking up the napkin sociably, "I do so love old china."

And pretty soon one might have seen a gay morning party – Mrs. Betsey washing, Eva wiping, and Miss Dorcas the while reading scraps out of *Abbotsford* about Maida, and Finette, and Hamlet, and Camp, and Percy, and others of Walter Scott's four-footed friends. The ice of ceremony and stiffness was not only broken by this bit of morning domesticity, but floated gaily down-stream never to be formed again.

You may go further into the hearts of your neighbors by one-half hour of undressed rehearsal behind the scenes than a century of ceremonious posing before the foot-lights.

Real people, with anything like heart and tastes and emotions, do not *enjoy* being shut up behind barricades, and conversing with their neighbors only through loop-holes. If any warm-hearted

adventurer gets in at the back door of the heart, the stiffest and most formal are often the most thankful for the deliverance.

The advent of this pretty young creature, with her air of joy and gaiety, into the shadowed and mossy precincts of the old Vanderheyden house was an event to be dated from, as the era of a new life. She was to them a flower, a picture, a poem; and a thousand dear remembrances and new capabilities stirred in the withered old hearts to meet her.

Her sincere artlessness and naïf curiosity, her genuine interest in the old time-worn furniture, relics and belongings of the house gave them a new sense of possession. We seem to acquire our things over again when stimulated by the admiration of a new spectator.

"Dear me," said Eva, as she put down a tea-cup she was wiping, "what a pity I haven't some nice old china to begin on! but all my things are spick and span new; I don't think it's a bit interesting. I do love to see things that look as if they had a history."

"Ah! my dear child, you are making history fast enough," said Miss Dorcas, with that kind of half sigh with which people at eighty look down on the aspirants of twenty; "don't try to hurry things."

"But I think *old* things are so nice," said Eva. "They get so many associations. Things just out of Tiffany's or Collamore's haven't associations – there's no poetry in them. Now, everything in your house has its story. It's just like the old villas I used to see in Italy where the fountains were all mossy."

"We are mossy enough, dear knows," said Miss Dorcas, laughing, "Betsey and I."

"I'm so glad I've got acquainted with you," said Eva, looking up with clear, honest eyes into Miss Dorcas's face; "it's so lonesome not to know one's neighbors, and I'm an inexperienced beginner, you know. There are a thousand questions I might ask, where your experience could help me."

"Well, don't hesitate, dear Mrs. Henderson," said Mrs. Betsey; "do use us if you can. Dorcas is really quite a doctor, and if you should be ill any time, don't fail to let us know. *We* never have a doctor. Dorcas always knows just what to do. You ought to see her herb closet – there's a little of everything in it; and she is wonderful for strengthening-mixtures."

And so Eva was taken to see the herbal, and thence, by natural progression, through the chambers, where she admired the old furniture. Then cabinets were unlocked, old curiosities brought out, snatches and bits of history followed, and, in fact, lunch time came in the old Vanderheyden house before any of them perceived whither the tide of social enthusiasm had carried them. Eva stayed to lunch. Such a thing had not happened for years to the desolate old couple, and it really seemed as if the roses of youth and joy, the flowers of years past, all bloomed and breathed around her, and it was late in the day before she returned to her own home to look back on the Vanderheyden fortress as taken. Two stiff, ceremonious strangers had become two warm-hearted, admiring friends – a fortress locked and barred by constraint had become an open door of friendship. Was it not a good morning's work?

CHAPTER IX
JIM AND ALICE

The recent discussions of the marriage question, betokening unrest and dissatisfaction with the immutable claims of this institution, are founded, no doubt, on the various distresses and inconveniences of ill-assorted marriages.

In times when the human being was little developed, the elements of agreement and disagreement were simpler, and marriages were proportionately more tranquil. But modern civilized man has a thousand points of possible discord in an immutable near relation where there was one in the primitive ages.

The wail, and woe, and struggle to undo marriage bonds, in our day, comes from this dissonance of more developed and more widely varying natures, and it shows that a large proportion of marriages have been contracted without any advised and rational effort to ascertain whether there was a reasonable foundation for a close and life-long intimacy.

It would seem as if the arrangements and customs of modern society did everything that could be done to render such a previous knowledge impossible.

Good sense would say that if men and women are to single each other out, and bind themselves by a solemn oath, forsaking all others to cleave to each other as long as life should last, there ought to be, before taking vows of such gravity, the very best opportunity to become minutely acquainted with each other's dispositions, and habits, and modes of thought and action. It would seem to be the dictate of reason that a long and intimate friendship ought to be allowed, in which, without any bias or commitment, young people might have full opportunity to study each other's character and disposition, being under no obligation, expressed or implied, on account of such intimacy to commit themselves to the irrevocable union.

Such a kind of friendship is the instinctive desire of both the parties that make up society. Both young men and young women, as we observe, would greatly enjoy a more intimate and friendly intercourse, if the very fact of that initiatory acquaintance were not immediately seized upon by busy A, B, and C, and reported as an engagement. The flower that might possibly blossom into the rose of love is withered and blackened by the busy efforts of gossips to pick it open before the time.

Our young friend, Alice Van Arsdel, was what in modern estimation would be called just the "nicest kind of a girl." She had a warm heart, a high sense of justice and honor, she was devout in her religious profession, conscientious in the discharge of the duties of family life. Naturally, Alice was of a temperament which might have inclined her to worldly ambition. She had that keen sense of the advantages of wealth and station which even the most sensible person may have, and, had her father's prosperity continued, might have run the gay career of flirtation and conquest supposed to be proper to a rich young belle.

The failure of her father not only cut off all these prospects, but roused the deeper and better part of her nature to comfort and support her parents, and to assist in all ways in trimming the family vessel to the new navigation. Her self-esteem took a different form. Had she been enthroned in wealth and station, it would have taken pleasure in reigning; thrown from that position, it became her pride to adapt herself entirely to the proprieties of her different circumstances. Up to that hour, she had counted Jim Fellows simply as a tassel on her fan, or any other appendage to her glittering life. When the crash came, she expected no more of him than of a last summer's bird, and it was with somewhat of pleased surprise that, on the first public tidings of the news, she received from Jim an expensive hot-house bouquet of a kind that he had never thought of giving in prosperous days.

"The extravagant boy!" she said. Yet she said it with tears in her eyes, and she put the bouquet into water, and changed it every day while it lasted. The flowers and the friends of adversity have a value all their own.

Then Jim came, came daily, with downright unsentimental offers of help, and made so much fun and gaiety for them in the days of their breaking up as almost shocked Aunt Maria, who felt that a period of weeping and wailing would have been more appropriate. Jim became recognized in the family as a sort of factotum, always alert and ready to advise or to do, and generally knowing where every body or thing which was wanted in New York was to be found. But, as Alice was by no means the only daughter, as Marie and Angelique were each in their way as lively and desirable young candidates for admiration, it would have appeared that here was the best possible chance for a young man to have a friendship whose buds even the gossips would not pick open to find if there were love inside of them. As a young neophyte of the all-powerful press, Jim had the dispensation of many favors, in the form of tickets to operas, concerts, and other public entertainments, which were means of conferring enjoyment and variety, and dispensed impartially among the sisters. Eva's house, in all the history of its finding, inception, and construction, had been a ground for many a familiar meeting from whence had grown up a pleasant feeling of comradeship and intimacy.

The things that specialized this intimacy, as relating to Alice more than to the other sisters, were things as indefinite and indefinable as the shade mark between two tints of the rainbow; and yet there undoubtedly was a peculiar intimacy, and since the misfortunes of the family it had been of a graver kind than before, though neither of them cared to put it into words. Between a young man and a young woman of marriageable age a friendship of this kind, if let alone, generally comes to its bud and blossom in its own season; and there is something unutterably vexatious and revolting to every fibre of a girl's nature to have any well-meaning interference to force this denouement.

Alice enjoyed the unspoken devotion of Jim, which she perceived by that acute sort of divination of which women are possessed; she felt quietly sure that she had more influence over him, could do more with him, than any other woman; and this consciousness of power over a man is something most agreeable to girls of Alice's degree of self-esteem. She assumed to be a sort of mentor; she curbed the wild sallies of his wit, rebuking him if he travestied a hymn, or made a smart, funny application of a text of Scripture. But, as she generally laughed, the culprit was not really overborne by the censure. She had induced him to go with her to Mr. St. John's church, and even to take a class in the Sunday-school, where he presided with the unction of an apostle over a class of street "*gamins*," who certainly never found a more entertaining teacher.

Now, although Marie and Angelique were also teachers in the same school, it somehow always happened that Jim and Alice walked to the scene of their duties in company. It was one of those quiet, unobserved arrangements of particles which are the result of laws of chemical affinity. These street *tête-à-têtes* gave Alice admirable opportunity for those graceful admonitions which are so very effective on young gentlemen when coming from handsome, agreeable monitors. On a certain Sunday morning in our history, as Alice was on her way to the mission school with Jim, she had been enjoining upon him to moderate his extreme liveliness to suit the duties of the place and scene.

"It's all very well, Alice," he said to her, "so long as I don't have to be too much with that St. John. But I declare that fellow stirs me up awfully: he looks so meek and so fearfully pious that it's all I can do to keep from ripping out an oath, just to see him jump!"

"Jim, you bad fellow! How can you talk so?"

"Well, it's a serious fact now. Ministers oughtn't to *look* so pious! It's too much a temptation. Why, last Sunday, when he came trailing by so soft and meek and asked me what books we wanted, I perfectly longed to rip out an oath and say, 'Why in thunder can't you speak louder.' It's a temptation of the devil, I know; but you mustn't let St. John and me run too much together, or I shall blow out."

"Oh, Jim, you mustn't talk so. Why, you really shock me – you grieve me."

"Well, you see, I've given up swearing for ever so long, but some kinds of people do tempt me fearfully, and he's one of 'em, and then I think that he must think I'm a wolf in sheep's clothing. But then, you see, a wolf understands those cubs better than a sheep. You ought to hear how I put gospel into them. I make 'em come out on the responses like little Trojans. I've promised every boy who is 'sharp up' on his Collect next Sunday a new pop-gun."

"O Jim, you creature!" said Alice, laughing.

"By George, Alice, it's the best way. You don't know anything about these little heathen. You've got to take 'em where they live. They put up with the Collect for the sake of the pop-gun, you see."

"But, Jim, I really was in hopes that you would look on this thing seriously," said Alice, endeavoring to draw on a face of protest.

"Why, Alice, I am serious; didn't I go round to the highways and hedges, drumming up those little varmints? Not a soul of them would have put his head inside a Sunday-school room if it hadn't been for me. I tell you I ought to be encouraged now. I'm not appreciated."

"Oh Jim, you *have* done beautifully."

"I should think I had. I keep a long face while they are there, and don't swear at Mr. St. John, and sing like a church robin. So I think you ought to let me let out a little to you going home. That eases my mind; it's the confessional – Mr. St. John believes in that. I *didn't* swear, mind you. I only felt like it; maybe that'll wear off, by-and-by. So don't give me up, yet."

"Oh, I don't; and I'm perfectly sure, Jim, that you are the very person that can do good to these wild boys. Of course the free experience of life which young men have, enables them to know how to deal with such cases better than we girls can."

"Yes, you ought to hear me expound the commandments, and put it into them about stealing and lying. You see Jim knows a thing or two, and is up to their tricks. They don't come it round Jim, I tell you. Any boy that don't toe the crack gets it. I give 'em C sharp with the key up."

"O Jim, you certainly are original in your ways! But I dare say you're right," said Alice. "You know how to get on with them."

"Indeed I do. I tell you I know what's what for these boys, though I don't know, and don't care about, what the old coves did in the first two centuries, and all that. Don't you think, Alice, St. John is a little prosy on that chapter?"

"Mr. St. John is such a good man that I receive everything he says on subjects where he knows more than I do," said Alice, virtuously.

"Oh pshaw, Alice! If a fellow has to swallow every good man's hobby-horses, hoofs, tail and all, why he'll have a good deal to digest. I tell you St. John is too 'other-worldly,' as Charles Lamb used to say. He ought to get in love, and get married. I think, now, that if our little Angie would take him in hand she would bring him into mortal spheres, make a nice fellow of him."

"Oh, Mr. St. John never will marry," said Alice, solemnly; "he is devoted to the church. He has published a tract on holy virginity that is beautiful."

"Holy grandmother!" said Jim; "that's all bosh, Ally. Now you are too sensible a girl to talk that way. That's going to Rome on a high canter."

"I don't think so," said Alice, stoutly. "For my part, I think if a man, for the sake of devoting himself to the church, gives up family cares, I reverence him. I like to feel that my rector is something sacred to the altar. The very idea of a clergyman in any other than sacred relations is disagreeable to me."

"Go it, now! So long as I'm not the clergyman!"

"You sauce-box!"

"Well, now, mark my words. St. John is a man, after all, and not a Fra Angelico angel, with a long neck and a lily in his hand, and, I tell you, when Angie sits there at the head of her class, working and fussing over those girls, she looks confoundedly pretty, and if St. John finds it out I shall think the better of him, and I think he will.

"Pshaw, Jim, he never looks at her."

"Don't he? He does though. I've seen him go round and round, and look at her as if she was an electrical battery, or something that he was afraid might go off and kill him. But he *does* look at her. I tell you, Jim knows the signs of the sky."

With which edifying preparation of mind, Alice found herself at the door of the Sunday-school room, where the pair were graciously received by Mr. St. John.

CHAPTER X
MR. ST. JOHN

That good man, in the calm innocence of his heart, was ignorant of the temptations to which he exposed his tumultuous young disciple. He was serenely gratified with the sight of Jim's handsome face and alert, active figure, as he was enacting good shepherd over his unruly flock. Had he known the exact nature of the motives which he presented to lead them to walk in the ways of piety, he might have searched a good while in primitive records before finding a churchly precedent.

Arthur St. John was by nature a poet and idealist He was as pure as a chrysolite, as refined as a flower; and, being thus, had been, by the irony of fate, born on one of the bleakest hillsides of New Hampshire, where there was a literal famine of any esthetic food. His childhood had been fed on the dry husks of doctrinal catechism; he had sat wearily on hard high-backed seats and dangled his little legs hopelessly through sermons on the difference between justification and sanctification. His ultra-morbid conscientiousness had been wrought into agonized convulsions by stringent endeavors to carry him through certain prescribed formulæ of conviction of sin and conversion; efforts which, grating against natures of a certain delicate fiber, produce wounds and abrasions which no after-life can heal. To such a one the cool shades of the Episcopal Church, with its orderly ways, its poetic liturgy, its artistic ceremonies, were as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. No converts are so disposed to be ultra as converts by reaction; and persons of a poetic and imaginative temperament are peculiarly liable to these extremes.

Wearied with the intense and noisy clangor of modern thought, it was not strange if he should come to think free inquiry an evil, look longingly back on the ages of simple credulity, and believe that the dark ages of intellect were the bright ones of faith. Without really going over to the Romish Church, he proposed to walk that path, fine as the blade that Mahomet fabled as the Bridge of Paradise, in which he might secure all the powers and influences and advantages of that old system without its defects and corruptions.

So he had established his mission in one of the least hopeful neighborhoods of New York. The chapel was a marvel of beauty and taste at small expense, for St. John was in a certain way an ecclesiastical architect and artist. He could illuminate neatly, and had at command a good store of the beautiful forms of the past to choose from. He worked at diaphanous windows which had all the effect of painted glass, and emblazoned texts and legends, and painted in polychrome, till the little chapel dazzled the eyes of street vagabonds, who never before had been made welcome to so pretty a place in their lives. Then, when he impressed it on the minds of these poor people that this lovely, pretty little church was their Father's house, freely open to them every day, and that prayers and psalms might be heard there morning and evening, and the holy communion of Christ's love every Sunday, it is no marvel if many were drawn in and impressed. Beauty of form and attractiveness of color in the church arrangements of the rich may cease to be means of grace and become wantonness of luxury – but for the very poor they are an education, they are means of quickening the artistic sense, which is twin brother to the spiritual. The rich do not need these things, and the poor do.

St. John, like many men of seemingly gentle temperament, had the organizing talent of the schoolmaster. No one could be with him and not *feel* him; and the intense purpose with which he labored, in season and out of season, carried all before it. He marshaled his forces like an army; his eye was everywhere and on everyone. He trained his choir of singing boys for processional singing; he instructed his teachers, he superintended and catechised his school. In the life of incessant devotion to the church which he led, woman had no place except as an obedient instrument. He valued the young and fair who flocked to his standard, simply and only for what they could do in his work, and apparently had no worldly change with which to carry on commerce of society.

Yet it was true, as Jim said, that his eye had in some way or other been caught by Angelique; yet, at first, it was in the way of doubt and inquiry, rather than approval.

Angelique was gifted by nature with a certain air of piquant vivacity, which gave to her pretty person the effect of a French picture. In heart and character she was a perfect little self-denying saint, infinitely humble in her own opinion, devoted to doing good wherever her hand could find it, and ready at any time to work her pretty fingers to the bone in a good cause. But yet undeniably she had a certain style and air of fashion not a bit like "St. Jerome's love" or any of the mediæval saints. She could not help it. It was not her fault that everything about her had a sort of facility for sliding into trimly fanciful arrangement – that her little hats would sit so jauntily on her pretty head, that her foot and ankle had such a provoking neatness, and that her daintily gloved hands had a hundred little graceful movements in a moment. Then her hair had numberless mutinous little curly-wurlies, and flew of itself into the golden mists of modern fashion; and her almond-shaped hazel eyes had a trick of glancing like a bird's, and she looked always as if a smile might break out at any moment, even on solemn occasions; – all which were traits to inspire doubt in the mind of an earnest young clergyman, in whose study the pictures of holy women were always lean, long-favored, with eyes rolled up, and looking as if they never had heard of a French hat or a pair of gaiter-boots. He watched her the first Sunday that she sat at the head of her class, looking for all the world like a serious-minded canary bird, and wondered whether so evidently airy and worldly a little creature would adapt herself to the earnest work before her; but she did succeed in holding a set of unpromising street-girls in a sort of enchanted state while she chippered to them in various little persuasive intonations, made them say catechism after her, and then told them stories that were not in any prayer-book. After a little observation, he was convinced that she would "do." But the habit of watchfulness continued!

On this day, as Jim had suggested the subject, Alice somehow was moved to remark the frequent direction of Mr. St. John's eyes.

On this Sunday Angelique had had the misfortune to don for the first time a blue suit, with a blue velvet hat that gave a brilliant effect to her golden hair. In front of this hat, nodding with every motion of her head, was a blue and gold humming bird. She wore a cape of ermine, and her class seemed quite dazzled by her appearance. Now Mr. St. John had worked vigorously to get up his little chapel in blue and gold, gorgeous to behold; but a blue and gold teacher was something that there was no churchly precedent for – although if we look into the philosophy of the thing there may be the same sort of influence exercised over street barbarians by a prettily-dressed teacher as by a prettily-dressed church. But as Mr. St. John gazed at Angelique, and wondered whether it was quite the thing for her to look so striking, he saw a little incident that touched his heart. There was a poor, pinched, wan-visaged little girl, the smallest in the class, whose face was deformed by the scar of a fearful burn. She seemed to be in a trembling ecstacy at Angie's finery, and while she was busy with her lesson stealthily laid her thin little hand upon the ermine cape. Immediately she was sharply reproved by a coarse, strong, older sister, who had her in charge, and her hand rudely twitched back.

Angie turned with bright, astonished eyes, and seeing the little creature cowering with shame, beamed down on her a lovely smile, stooped and kissed her.

"You like it, dear?" she said frankly. "Sit up and rest your cheek on it, if you like," and Angie gathered her up to her side and went on telling of the Good Shepherd.

Arthur St. John took the whole meaning of the incident. It carried him back beyond the catacombs to something more authentic, even to Him who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me," and he felt a strange, new throb under his surplice.

The throb alarmed him to the degree that he did not look in that direction again through all the services, though he certainly did remark certain clear, bird-like tones in the chants with a singular feeling of nearness.

Just about this time, St. John, unconsciously to himself, was dealing with forces of which no previous experience of life had given him a conception. He passed out of his vestry and walked to his

solitary study in a kind of maze of vague reverie, in which golden hair and hazel eyes seemed strangely blent with moral enthusiasms. "What a lovely spirit!" he thought; and he felt as if he would far rather have followed her out of the door than to have come to the cold, solitary sanctities of his own room.

Mr. St. John's study was not the sanctum of a self-indulgent, petted clergyman, but rather that of one who took life in very serious earnest. His first experience of pastoral life having been among the poor, the sight of the disabilities, wants, and dangers, the actual terrible facts of human existence, had produced the effect on him that they often do on persons of extreme sensibility and conscientiousness. He could not think of retaining for himself an indulgence or a luxury while wants so terrible stared him in the face; and his study, consequently, was furnished in the ascetic rather than the esthetic style. Its only ornaments were devotional pictures of a severe mediæval type and the books of a well-assorted library. There was no carpet; there were no lounging chairs or sofas of ease. In place was a *prie dieu* of approved antique pattern, on which stood two wax candles and lay his prayer-book. A crucifix of beautiful Italian workmanship stood upon it, and it was scrupulously draped with the appropriate churchly color of the season.

As we have said, this room seemed strangely lonely as he entered it. He was tired with work which had begun early in the morning, with scarce an interval of repose, and a perversely shocking idea presented itself to his mind – how pleasant it would be to be met on returning from his labors by just such a smile as he had seen beaming down on the poor little girl.

When he found himself out, and discovered that this was where his thoughts were running to, he organized a manly resistance; and recited aloud, with unction and emphasis, Moore's exquisite version of St. Jerome's opinion of what the woman should be whom a true priest might love.

"Who is the maid my spirit seeks,
Through cold reproof and slander's blight?
Has *she* Love's roses on her cheeks?
Is *hers* an eye of this world's light?
No – wan and sunk with midnight prayer
Are the pale looks of her I love;
Or if at times a light be there,
Its beam is kindled from above.

I choose not her, my heart's elect,
From those who seek their Maker's shrine
In gems and garlands proudly deck'd
As if themselves were things divine.
No – Heaven but faintly warms the breast
That beats beneath a broider'd vail;
And she who comes in glitt'ring vest
To mourn her frailty, still is frail.

Not so the faded form I prize
And love, because its bloom is gone;
The glory in those sainted eyes
Is all the grace *her* brow puts on.
And ne'er was Beauty's dawn so bright,
So touching, as that form's decay
Which, like the altar's trembling light,
In holy luster wastes away."

"Certainly, not in the least like *her*," he thought, and he resolved to dismiss the little hat with the humming bird, the golden mist of hair, and the glancing eyes, into the limbo of vain thoughts.

Mr. St. John, like many another ardent and sincere young clergyman, had undertaken to be shepherd and bishop of souls, with more knowledge on every possible subject than the nature of the men and women he was to guide.

A fastidious taste, scholarly habits, and great sensitiveness, had kept him out of society during all his collegiate days. His life had been that of a devout recluse. He knew little of mankind, except the sick and decrepid old women, whom he freely visited, and who had for nothing the vision of his handsome face and the charm of his melodious voice amid the dirt and discomforts of their sordid poverty. But fashionable young women, the gay daughters of ease and luxury, were to him rather objects of suspicion and apprehension than of attraction. If they flocked to his church, and seemed eager to enlist in church work under his leadership, he was determined that there should be no sham in it. In sermon after sermon, he denounced in stringent terms the folly and guilt of the sentimental religion which makes playthings of the solemn rituals of the church, which wears the cross as a glittering bauble on the outside, and shrinks from every form of the real self-denial which it symbolizes.

Angelique, by nature the most conscientious of beings, had listened to this eloquence with awful self-condemnation. She felt herself a dreadfully sinful little girl, that she had lived so unprofitable a life hitherto, and she undertook her Sunday-school labors with an intense ardor. When she came to visit in the poor dwellings from whence her pupils were drawn, and to see how devoid their life was of everything which she had been taught to call comfort, she felt wicked and selfish for enjoying even the moderate luxuries allowed by her father's reduced position. The allowance that had been given her for her winter wardrobe seemed to be more than she had a right to keep for herself in face of the terrible destitutions she saw. Secretly she set herself to see how much she could save from it. She had the gift of a quick eye and of deft fingers; and so, after running through the fashionable shops of dresses and millinery to catch the ideal of the hour, she went to work for herself. A faded merino was ripped, dyed, and, by the aid of clever patterns and skillful hands, transformed into the stylish blue suit. The little blue velvet hat had been gathered from the trimmings of an old dress. The humming bird had been a necessary appendage, to cover the piecing of the velvet; and thus the outfit which had called up so many alarmed scruples in Mr. St. John's mind was as completely a work of self-denial and renunciation as if she had come out in the black robe of a Sister of Charity.

The balance saved was, in her own happy thought, devoted to a Christmas outfit for some of the poorest of her scholars, whose mothers struggled hard and sat up late washing and mending to make them decent to be seen in Sunday-school.

But how should Mr. St. John know this, which Angie had not even told to her own mother and sisters? To say the truth, she feared that perhaps she might be laughed at as Quixotic, or wanting in good sense, in going so much beyond the usual standard in thoughtfulness for others, and, at any rate, kept her own little counsel. Mr. St. John knew nothing about women in that class of society, their works and ways, where or how they got their dresses; but he had a general impression that fashionable women were in heathen darkness, and spent on dress fabulous amounts that might be given to the poor. He had certain floating views in his mind, when further advanced in his ministry, of instituting a holy sisterhood, who should wear gray cloaks, and spend all their money and time in deeds of charity.

On the present occasion, he could see only the very patent fact that Angelique's dress was stylish and becoming to an alarming degree; that, taken in connection with her bright cheeks, her golden hair, and glancing hazel eyes, she was to the full as worldly an object as a blue-bird, or an oriole, or any of those brilliant creatures with which it has pleased the Maker of all to distract our attention in our pilgrimage through this sinful and dying world.

Angie was so far from assuming to herself any merit in this sacrifice that her only thought was how little it would do. Had it been possible and proper, she would have willingly given her ermine

cape to the poor, wan little child, to whom the mere touch of it was such a strange, bewildering luxury; but she had within herself a spice of practical common sense which showed her that our most sacred impulses are not always to be literally obeyed.

Yet, while the little scarred cheek was resting on her ermine in such apparent bliss, there mingled in with the thread of her instructions to the children a determination next day to appraise cheap furs, and see if she could not bless the little one with a cape of her very own.

Angie's quiet common sense always stood her in good stead in moderating her enthusiasms, and even carried her at times to the length of differing with the rector, to whom she looked up as an angel guide. For example, when he had expatiated on the propriety and superior sanctity of coming fasting to the holy communion, sensible Angie had demurred.

"I must teach my class," she pleaded with herself, "and if I should go all that long way up to church without my breakfast, I should have such a sick-headache that I couldn't do anything properly for them. I'm always cross and stupid when that comes on."

Thus Angie concluded by her own little light, in her own separate way, that "to do good was better than sacrifice." Nevertheless, she supposed all this was because she was so low down in the moral scale, for did not Mr. St. John fast? – doubtless it gave him headache, but he was so good he went on just as well with a headache as without – and Angie felt how far she must rise to be like that.

"There now," said Jim Fellows, triumphantly, to Alice, as they were coming home, "didn't you see your angel of the churches looking in a certain direction this morning?"

Alice had, as a last resort, a fund of reserved dignity which she could draw upon whenever she was really and deeply in earnest.

"Jim," she said, without a smile, and in a grave tone, "I have confidence that you are a true friend to us all."

"Well, I hope so," said Jim, wonderingly.

"And you are too kind-hearted and considerate to wish to give real pain."

"Certainly I am."

"Well, then, promise me never to make remarks of that nature again, to me or anybody else, about Angie and Mr. St. John. It would be more distressing and annoying to *her* than anything you could do; and the dear child is now perfectly simple-hearted and unconstrained, and cheerful as a bird in her work. The least intimation of this kind might make her conscious and uncomfortable, and spoil it all. So promise me now."

Jim eyed his fair monitress with the kind of wicked twinkle a naughty boy gives to his mother, to ascertain if she is really in earnest, but Alice maintained a brow of "sweet, austere composure," and looked as if she expected to be obeyed.

"Well, I perfectly long for a hit at St. John," he said, "but if you say so, so it must be."

"You promise on your honor?" insisted Alice.

"Yes, I promise on my honor; so there!" said Jim. "I won't even wink an eyelid in that direction. I'll make a perfect stock and stone of myself. But," he added, "Jim can have his thoughts for all that."

Alice was not exactly satisfied with the position assumed by her disciple, she therefore proceeded to fortify him in grace by some farther observations, delivered in a very serious tone.

"For my part," she said, "I think nothing is in such bad taste, to say the least, as the foolish way in which some young people will allow themselves to talk and think about an unmarried young clergyman, while he is absorbed in duties so serious and has feelings so far above their comprehension. The very idea or suggestion of a flirtation between a clergyman and one of his flock is utterly repulsive and disagreeable."

Here Jim, with a meek gravity of face, simply interposed the question:

"What is flirtation?"

"You know, now, as well as I do," said Alice, with heightened color. "You needn't pretend you don't."

"Oh," said Jim. "Well, then, I suppose I do." And the two walked on in silence, for some way; Jim with an air of serious humility, as if in a deep study, and Alice with cheeks getting redder and redder with vexation.

"Now, Jim," she said at last, "you are very provoking."

"I'm sure I give in to everything you say," said Jim, in an injured tone.

"But you act just as if you were making fun all the time; and you know you are."

"Upon my word I don't know what you mean. I have assented to every word you said – given up to you hook and line – and now you're not pleased. I tell you it's rough on a fellow."

"Oh, come," said Alice, laughing at the absurdity of the quarrel; "there's no use in scolding you."

Jim laughed too, and felt triumphant; and just then they turned a corner and met Aunt Maria coming from church.

CHAPTER XI
AUNT MARIA CLEARS HER CONSCIENCE

When Mrs. Wouvermans met our young friends, she was just returning home after performing her morning devotions in one of the most time-honored churches in New York. She was as thorough and faithful in her notions of religion as of housekeeping. She adhered strictly to *her own* church, in which undeniably none but ancient and respectable families worshiped, and where she was perfectly sure that whatever of dress or deportment she saw was certain to be the correct thing.

It was a church of eminent propriety. It was large and lofty, with long-drawn aisles and excellent sleeping accommodations, where the worshipers were assisted to dream of heaven by every appliance of sweet music, and not rudely shaken in their slumbers by any obtrusiveness on the part of the rector.

In fact, everything about the services of this church was thoroughly toned down by good breeding. The responses of the worshipers were given in decorous whispers that scarcely disturbed the solemn stillness; for when a congregation of the best-fed and best-bred people of New York on their knees declare themselves "miserable sinners," it is a matter of delicacy to make as little disturbance about it as possible. A well-paid choir of the finest professional singers took the whole responsibility of praising God into their own hands, so that the respectable audience were relieved from any necessity of exertion in that department. As the most brilliant lights of the opera were from time to time engaged to render the more solemn parts of the service, flocks of sinners who otherwise would never have entered a church crowded to hear these "morning stars sing together;" let us hope, to their great edification. The sermons of the rector, delivered in the dim perspective, had a plaintive, far-off sound, as a voice of one "crying in the wilderness," and crying at a very great distance. This was in part owing to the fact that the church, having been built after an old English ecclesiastical model in days when English churches were used only for processional services, was entirely unadapted for any purposes of public speaking, so that a man's voice had about as good chance of effect in it as if he spoke anywhere in the thoroughfares of New York.

The rector, the Rev. Dr. Cushing, was a good, amiable man; middle-aged, adipose, discreet, devoted to "our excellent liturgy," and from his heart opposed to anything which made trouble.

From the remote distances whence his short Sunday cry was uttered, he appeared moved to send protests against two things: first, the tendency to philosophical speculation and the skeptical humanitarian theories of the age; and second, against Romanizing tendencies in the church. The young missionary, St. John, who got up to early services at conventual hours, and had prayers every morning and evening, and communion every Sunday and every Saint's day; who fasted on all the Ember Days, and called on other people to fast, and seemed literally to pray without ceasing; appeared to him a bristling impersonation of the Romanizing tendencies of the age, and one of those who troubled Israel. The fact that many of the young ladies of the old established church over which the good Doctor ministered were drawn to flock up to the services of this disturber gave to him a realizing sense of the danger to which the whole church was thereby exposed.

On this particular morning he had selected that well-worn text, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Jordan? May I not wash in them and be clean?"

Of course, like everybody who preaches on this text, he assumed that Jordan was the true faith as *he* preached it, and that the rivers of Damascus were any and every faith that diverged from his own.

These improper and profane rivers were various. There was, of course, modern skepticism with profuse allusions to Darwin; there were all sorts of modern humanitarian and social reforms; and there was in the bosom of the very church herself, he regretted to state, a disposition to go off after the Abana and Pharpar of Romish abominations. All these were to be avoided, and people were to walk in those quiet paths of godliness in which they had been brought up to walk, and, in short, do

pretty much as they had been doing, undisturbed by new notions, or movements, or ideas, whether out of the church or in.

And as he plaintively recited these exhortations, his voice coming in a solemn and spectral tone adown the far-off aisles, it seemed to give a dreamy and unreal effect even to the brisk modern controversies and disturbances which formed his theme. The gorgeous, many-colored lights streamed silently the while through the stained windows, turning the bald head of one ancient church-warden yellow, and of another green, and another purple, while the white feathers on Mrs. Demas's bonnet passed gradually through successive tints of the rainbow; and the audience dosed off at intervals, and awakened again to find the rector at another head, and talking about something else; and so on till the closing ascription to the Trinity, when everybody rose with a solemn sense that something or other was over. The greater part of the audience in the intervals of somnolency congratulated themselves that *they* were in no danger of running after new ideas, and thanked God that they never speculated about philosophy. As to turning out to daily morning and evening prayers, or fasting on any days whatsoever, or going into any extravagant excesses of devotion and self-sacrifice, they were only too happy to find that it was their duty to resist the very suggestion as tending directly to Romanism.

The true Jordan, they were happy to find, ran directly through their own particular church, and they had only to continue their stated Sunday naps on its borders as before.

Mrs. Wouvermans, however, was not of a dozing or dreamy nature. Her mind, such as it was, was always wide awake and cognizant of what she was about. She was not susceptible of a dreamy state: to use an idiomatic phrase, she was always up and dressed; everything in her mental vision was clear cut and exact. The sermon was intensified in its effect upon her by the state of the Van Arsdel pew, of which she was on this Sunday the only occupant. The fact was, that the ancient and respectable church in which she worshiped had just been through a contest, in which Mr. Simons, a young assistant rector, had been attempting to introduce some of the very practices hinted at in the discourse. This fervid young man, full of fire and enthusiasm, had incautiously been made associate rector for this church, at the time when Dr. Cushing had been sent to Europe to recover from a bronchial attack. He was young, earnest and eloquent, and possessed with the idea that all those burning words and phrases in the prayer-book, which had dropped like precious gems dyed with the heart's blood of saints and martyrs, ought to mean something more than they seemed to do for modern Christians. Without introducing any new ritual, he set himself to make vivid and imperative every doctrine and direction of the prayer-book, and to bring the drowsy company of pew-holders somewhere up within sight of the plane of the glorious company of apostles and the noble army of martyrs with whose blood it was sealed. He labored and preached, and strove and prayed, tugging at the drowsy old church, like Pegasus harnessed to a stone cart. He set up morning and evening prayers, had communion every Sunday, and annoyed old rich saints by suggesting that it was their duty to build mission chapels and carry on mission works, after the pattern of St. Paul and other irrelevant and excessive worthies, who in their time were accused of turning the world upside down. Of course there was resistance and conflict, and more life in the old church than it had known for years; but the conflict became at last so wearisome that, on Mr. Cushing's return from Europe, the young angel spread his wings and fled away to a more congenial parish in a neighboring city.

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