

Leslie Eliza

# Pencil Sketches: or, Outlines of Character and Manners



Eliza Leslie

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## Pencil Sketches; or, Outlines of Character and Manners

### MRS. WASHINGTON POTTS

"The course of *parties* never does run smooth." – Shakspeare.

Bromley Cheston, an officer in the United States navy, had just returned from a three years' cruise in the Mediterranean. His ship came into New York; and after he had spent a week with a sister that was married in Boston, he could not resist his inclination to pay a visit to his maternal aunt, who had resided since her widowhood at one of the small towns on the banks of the Delaware.

The husband of Mrs. Marsden had not lived long enough to make his fortune, and it was his last injunction that she should retire with her daughter to the country, or at least to a country town. He feared that if she remained in Philadelphia she would have too many temptations to exercise her taste for unnecessary expense: and that, in consequence, the very moderate income, which was all he was able to leave her, would soon be found insufficient to supply her with comforts.

We will not venture to say that duty to his aunt Marsden was the young lieutenant's only incentive to this visit: as she had a beautiful daughter about eighteen, for whom, since her earliest childhood, Bromley Cheston had felt something a little more vivid than the usual degree of regard that boys think sufficient for their cousins. His family had formerly lived in Philadelphia, and till he went into the navy Bromley and Albina were in habits of daily intercourse. Afterwards, on returning from sea, he always, as soon as he set his foot on American ground, began to devise means of seeing his pretty cousin, however short the time and however great the distance. And it was in meditation on Albina's beauty and sprightliness that he had often "while sailing on the midnight deep," beguiled the long hours of the watch, and thus rendered more tolerable that dreariest part of a seaman's duty.

On arriving at the village, Lieutenant Cheston immediately established his quarters at the hotel, fearing that to become an inmate of his aunt's house might cause her some inconvenience. Though he had performed the whole journey in a steamboat, he could not refrain from changing his waistcoat, brushing his coat sleeves, brushing his hat, brushing his hair, and altering the tie of his cravat. Though he had "never told his love," it cannot be said that concealment had "preyed on his damask cheek;" the only change in that damask having been effected by the sun and wind of the ocean.

Mrs. Marsden lived in a small modest-looking white house, with a green door and green venetian shutters. In early summer the porch was canopied and perfumed with honeysuckle, and the windows with roses. In front was a flower-garden, redolent of sweetness and beauty; behind was a well-stored *potager*, and a flourishing little orchard. The windows were amply shaded by the light and graceful foliage of some beautiful locust trees.

"What a lovely spot!" exclaimed Cheston – and innocence – modesty – candour – contentment – peace – simple pleasures – intellectual enjoyments – and various other delightful ideas chased each other rapidly through his mind.

When he knocked at the door, it was opened by a black girl named Drusa, who had been brought up in the family, and whose delight on seeing him was so great that she could scarcely find it in her heart to tell him that "the ladies were both out, or at least partly out." Cheston, however, more than suspected that they were wholly at home, for he saw his aunt peeping over the bannisters, and had a glimpse of his cousin flitting into the back parlour; and besides, the whole domicile was evidently in some great commotion, strongly resembling that horror of all men, a house-cleaning. The carpets

had been removed, and the hall was filled with the parlour-chairs: half of them being turned bottom upwards on the others, with looking-glasses and pictures leaning against them; and he knew that, on such occasions, the ladies of a family in middle life are never among the missing.

"Go and give Lieutenant Cheston's compliments to your ladies," said he, "and let them know that he is waiting to see them."

Mrs. Marsden now ran down stairs in a wrapper and morning cap, and gave her nephew a very cordial reception. "Our house is just now in such confusion," said she, "that I have no place to invite you to sit down in, except the back porch." – And there they accordingly took their seats.

"Do not suppose," continued Mrs. Marsden, "that we are cleaning house: but we are going to have a party to-night, and therefore you are most fortunate in your arrival, for I think I can promise you a very pleasant evening. We have sent invitations to all the most genteel families within seven miles, and I can assure you there was a great deal of trouble in getting the notes conveyed. We have also asked a number of strangers from the city, who happen to be boarding in the village; we called on them for that purpose. If all that are invited were to come, we should have a complete squeeze; but unluckily we have received an unusual number of regrets, and some have as yet returned no answers at all. However, we are sure of Mrs. Washington Potts."

"I see," said Cheston, "you are having your parlours papered." – "Yes," replied Mrs. Marsden, "we could not possibly have a party with that old-fashioned paper on the walls, and we sent to the city a week ago for a man to come and bring with him some of the newest patterns, but he never made his appearance till last night after we had entirely given him up, and after we had had the rooms put in complete order in other respects. But he says, as the parlours are very small, he can easily put on the new paper before evening, so we thought it better to take up the carpets, and take down the curtains, and undo all that we did yesterday, rather than the walls should look old-fashioned. I *did* intend having them painted, which would of course be much better, only that there was no time to get *that* done before the party; so we must defer the painting now for three or four years, till this new paper has grown old."

"But where is Albina?" asked Cheston.

"The truth is," answered Mrs. Marsden, "she is very busy making cakes; as in this place we can buy none that are fit for a party. Luckily Albina is very clever at all such things, having been a pupil of Mrs. Goodfellow. But there is certainly a great deal of trouble in getting up a party in the country."

Just then the black girl, Drusa, made her appearance, and said to Mrs. Marsden, "I've been for that there bean you call wanilla, and Mr. Brown says he never heard of such a thing."

"A man that keeps so large a store has no right to be so ignorant," remarked Mrs. Marsden. "Then, Drusa, we must flavour the ice-cream with lemon."

"There a'n't no more lemons to be had," said the girl, "and we've just barely enough for the lemonade."

"Then some of the lemons must be taken for the ice-cream," replied Mrs. Marsden, "and we must make out the lemonade with cream of tartar."

"I forgot to tell you," said Drusa, "that Mrs. Jones says she can't spare no more cream, upon no account."

"How vexatious!" exclaimed Mrs. Marsden. "I wish we had two cows of our own – one is not sufficient when we are about giving a party. Drusa, we must make out the ice-cream by thickening some milk with eggs."

"Eggs are scarce," replied the girl, "Miss Albinar uses up so many for the cakes."

"She must spare some eggs from the cakes," said Mrs. Marsden, "and make out the cakes by adding a little pearl-ash. Go directly and tell her so."

Cheston, though by no means *au fait* to the mysteries of confectionary, could not help smiling at all this making out – "Really," said his aunt, "these things are very annoying. And as this party is

given to Mrs. Washington Potts, it is extremely desirable that nothing should fail. There is no such thing now as having company, unless we can receive and entertain them in a certain style."

"I perfectly remember," said Cheston, "the last party at which I was present in your house. I was then a midshipman, and it was just before I sailed on my first cruise in the Pacific. I spent a delightful evening."

"Yes, I recollect that night," replied Mrs. Marsden. "In those days it was not necessary for us to support a certain style, and parties were then very simple things, except among people of the first rank. It was thought sufficient to have two or three baskets of substantial cakes at tea, some almonds, raisins, apples, and oranges, handed round afterwards, with wine and cordial, and then a large-sized pound-cake at the last. The company assembled at seven o'clock, and generally walked; for the ladies' dresses were only plain white muslin. We invited but as many as could be accommodated with seats. The young people played at forfeits, and sung English and Scotch songs, and at the close of the evening danced to the piano. How Mrs. Washington Potts would be shocked if she was to find herself at one of those obsolete parties!"

"The calf-jelly won't be clear," said the black girl, again making her appearance. "Aunt Katy has strained it five times over through the flannen-bag."

"Go then and tell her to strain it five-and-twenty times," said Mrs. Marsden angrily – "It must and shall be clear. Nothing is more vulgar than clouded jelly; Mrs. Washington Potts will not touch it unless it is transparent as amber."

"What, Nong tong paw again!" said Cheston. "Now do tell me who is Mrs. Washington Potts?"

"Is it possible you have not heard of her?" exclaimed Mrs. Marsden.

"Indeed I have not," replied Cheston. "You forget that for several years I have been cruising on classic ground, and I can assure you that the name of Mrs. Washington Potts has not yet reached the shores of the Mediterranean."

"She is wife to a gentleman that has made a fortune in New Orleans," pursued Mrs. Marsden. "They came last winter to live in Philadelphia, having first visited London and Paris. During the warm weather they took lodgings in this village, and we have become quite intimate. So we have concluded to give them a party, previous to their return to Philadelphia, which is to take place immediately. She is a charming woman, though she certainly makes strange mistakes in talking. You have no idea how sociable she is, at least since she returned our call; which, to be sure, was not till the end of a week; and Albina and I had sat up in full dress to receive her for no less than five days: that is, from twelve o'clock till three. At last she came, and it would have surprised you to see how affably she behaved to us."

"Not at all," said Cheston, "I should not have expected that she would have treated you rudely."

"She really," continued Mrs. Marsden, "grew quite intimate before her visit was over, and took our hands at parting. And as she went out through the garden, she stopped to admire Albina's moss-roses: so we could do no less than give her all that were blown. From that day she has always sent to us when she wants flowers."

"No doubt of it," said Cheston.

"You cannot imagine," pursued Mrs. Marsden, "on what a familiar footing we are. She has a high opinion of Albina's taste, and often gets her to make up caps and do other little things for her. When any of her children are sick, she never sends anywhere else for currant jelly or preserves. Albina makes gingerbread for them every Saturday. During the holidays she frequently sent her three boys to spend the day with us. There is the very place in the railing where Randolph broke out a stick to whip Jefferson with, because Jefferson had thrown in his face a hot baked apple which the mischievous little rogue had stolen out of Katy's oven."

In the mean time Albina had taken off the brown holland bib apron which she had worn all day in the kitchen, and telling the cook to watch carefully the plum-cake that was baking, she hastened to her room by a back staircase, and proceeded to take the pins out of her hair; for where is the young

lady that on any emergency whatever, would appear before a young gentleman with her hair pinned up? Though, just now, the opening out of her curls was a considerable inconvenience to Albina, as she had bestowed much time and pains on putting them up for the evening.

Finally she came down in "prime array;" and Cheston, who had left her a school-girl, found her now grown to womanhood, and more beautiful than ever. Still he could not forbear reproving her for treating him so much as a stranger, and not coming to him at once in her morning-dress.

"Mrs. Washington Potts," said Albina, "is of opinion that a young lady should never be seen in dishabille by a gentleman."

Cheston now found it very difficult to hear the name of Mrs. Potts with patience. – "Albina," thought he, "is bewitched as well as her mother."

He spoke of his cruise in the Mediterranean; and Albina told him that she had seen a beautiful view of the bay of Naples in a souvenir belonging to Mrs. Washington Potts.

"I have brought with me some sketches of Mediterranean scenery," pursued Cheston. "You know I draw a little. I promise myself great pleasure in showing and explaining them to you."

"Oh! do send them this afternoon," exclaimed Albina. "They will be the very things for the centre-table. I dare say the Montagues will recognise some of the places they have seen in Italy, for they have travelled all over the south of Europe."

"And who are the Montagues?" inquired Cheston.

"They are a very elegant English family," answered Mrs. Marsden, "cousins in some way to several noblemen."

"Perhaps so," said Cheston.

"Albina met with them at the lodgings of Mrs. Washington Potts," pursued Mrs. Marsden, "where they have been staying a week for the benefit of country air; and so she enclosed her card, and sent them invitations to her party. They have as yet returned no answer; but that is no proof they will not come, for perhaps it may be the newest fashion in England not to answer notes."

"You know the English are a very peculiar people," remarked Albina.

"And what other lions have you provided?" said Cheston.

"Oh! no others except a poet," replied Albina. "Have you never heard of Bewley Garvin Gandy?"

"Never!" answered Cheston. "Is that all one man?"

"Nonsense," replied Albina; "you know that poets generally have three names. B. G. G. was formerly Mr. Gandy's signature when he wrote only for the newspapers, but now since he has come out in the magazines, and annuals, and published his great poem of the World of Sorrow, he gives his name at full length. He has tried law, physic, and divinity, and has resigned all for the Muses. He is a great favourite of Mrs. Washington Potts."

"And now, Albina," said Cheston, "as I know you can have but little leisure to-day, I will only detain you while you indulge me with 'Auld lang syne' – I see the piano has been moved out into the porch."

"Yes," said Mrs. Marsden, "on account of the parlour papering."

"Oh! Bromley Cheston," exclaimed Albina, "do not ask me to play any of those antediluvian Scotch songs. Mrs. Washington Potts cannot tolerate anything but Italian."

Cheston, who had no taste for Italian, immediately took his hat, and apologizing for the length of his stay, was going away with the thought that Albina had much deteriorated in growing up.

"We shall see you this evening without the ceremony of a further invitation?" said Albina.

"Of course," replied Cheston.

"I quite long to introduce you to Mrs. Washington Potts," said Mrs. Marsden.

"What simpletons these women are!" thought Cheston, as he hastily turned to depart.

"The big plum-cake's burnt to a coal," said Drusa, putting her head out of the kitchen door.

Both the ladies were off in an instant to the scene of disaster. And Cheston returned to his hotel, thinking of Mrs. Potts (whom he had made up his mind to dislike), of the old adage that "evil communication corrupts good manners," and of the almost irresistible contagion of folly and vanity. "I am disappointed in Albina," said he; "in future I will regard her only as my mother's niece, and more than a cousin she shall never be to me."

Albina having assisted Mrs. Marsden in lamenting over the burnt cake, took off her silk frock, again pinned up her hair, and joined assiduously in preparing another plum-cake to replace the first one. A fatality seemed to attend nearly all the confections, as is often the case when particular importance is attached to their success. The jelly obstinately refused to clarify, and the blanc-mange was equally unwilling to congeal. The maccaroons having run in baking, had neither shape nor feature, the kisses declined rising, and the sponge-cake contradicted its name. Some of the things succeeded, but most were complete failures: probably because (as old Katy insisted) "there was a spell upon them." In a city these disasters could easily have been remedied (even at the eleventh hour) by sending to a confectioner's shop, but in the country there is no alternative. Some of these mischances might perhaps have been attributed to the volunteered assistance of a mantua-maker that had been sent for from the city to make new dresses for the occasion, and who on this busy day, being "one of the best creatures in the world," had declared her willingness to turn her hand to anything.

It was late in the afternoon before the papering was over, and then great indeed was the bustle in clearing away the litter, cleaning the floors, putting down the carpets, and replacing the furniture. In the midst of the confusion, and while the ladies were earnestly engaged in fixing the ornaments, Drusa came in to say that Dixon, the waiter that had been hired for the evening, had just arrived, and falling to work immediately he had poured all the blanc-mange down the sink, mistaking it for bonnyclabber.<sup>1</sup> This intelligence was almost too much to bear, and Mrs. Marsden could scarcely speak for vexation.

"Drusa," said Albina, "you are a raven that has done nothing all day but croak of disaster. Away, and show your face no more, let what will happen."

Drusa departed, but in a few minutes she again put in her head at the parlour door and said, "Ma'am, may I jist speak one time more?"

"What now?" exclaimed Mrs. Marsden.

"Oh! there's nothing else spiled or flung down the sink, jist now," said Drusa, "but something's at hand a heap worse than all. Missus's old Aunt Quimby has jist landed from the boat, and is coming up the road with baggage enough to last all summer."

"Aunt Quimby!" exclaimed Albina; "this indeed caps the climax!"

"Was there ever anything more provoking!" said Mrs. Marsden. "When I lived in town she annoyed me sufficiently by coming every week to spend a day with me, and now she does not spend days but *weeks*. I would go to Alabama to get rid of her."

"And then," said Albina, "she would come and spend *months* with us. However, to do her justice, she is a very respectable woman."

"All bores are respectable people," replied Mrs. Marsden; "if they were otherwise, it would not be in their power to bore us, for we could cut them and cast them off at once. How very unlucky! What will Mrs. Washington Potts think of her – and the Montagues too, if they *should* come? Still we must not affront her, as you know she is rich."

"What can her riches signify to us?" said Albina; "she has a married daughter."

"True," replied Mrs. Marsden, "but you know riches should always command a certain degree of respect, and there are such things as legacies."

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<sup>1</sup> Thick sour milk.

"After all, according to the common saying, 'tis an ill wind that blows no good;' the parlours having been freshly papered, we can easily persuade Aunt Quimby that they are too damp for her to sit in, and so we can make her stay up stairs all the evening."

At this moment the old lady's voice was heard at the door, discharging the porter who had brought her baggage on his wheelbarrow; and the next minute she was in the front parlour. Mrs. Marsden and Albina were properly astonished, and, properly delighted at seeing her; but each, after a pause of recollection, suddenly seized the old lady by the arms and conveyed her into the entry, exclaiming, "Oh! Aunt Quimby! Aunt Quimby! this is no place for you."

"What's the meaning of all this?" cried Mrs. Quimby; "why won't you let me stay in the parlour?"

"You'll get your death," answered Mrs. Marsden, "you'll get the rheumatism. Both parlours have been newly papered to-day, and the walls are quite wet."

"That's a bad thing," said Mrs. Quimby, "a very bad thing. I wish you had put off your papering till next spring. Who'd have thought of your doing it this day of all days?"

"Oh! Aunt Quimby," said Albina, "why did you not let us know that you were coming?"

"Why, I wanted to give you an agreeable surprise," replied the old lady. "But tell me why the rooms are so decked out, with flowers hanging about the looking-glasses and lamps, and why the candles are dressed with cut paper, or something that looks like it?"

"We are going to have a party to-night," said Albina.

"A party! I'm glad of it. Then I'm come just in the nick of time."

"I thought you had long since given up parties," said Mrs. Marsden, turning pale.

"No, indeed – why should I – I always go when I am asked – to be sure I can't make much figure at parties now, being in my seventy-fifth year. But Mrs. Howks and Mrs. Himes, and several others of my old friends, always invite me to their daughters' parties, along with Mary; and I like to sit there and look about me, and see people's new ways. Mary had a party herself last winter, and it went off very well, only that both the children came out that night with the measles; and one of the lamps leaked, and the oil ran all over the side-board and streamed down on the carpet; and, it being the first time we ever had ice-cream in the house, Peter, the stupid black boy, not only brought saucers to eat it in, but cups and saucers both."

The old lady was now hurried up stairs, and she showed much dissatisfaction on being told that as the damp parlours would certainly give her her death, there was no alternative but for her to remain all the evening in the chamber allotted to her. This chamber (the best furnished in the house) was also to be 'the ladies' room,' and Albina somewhat consoled Mrs. Quimby by telling her that as the ladies would come up there to take off their hoods and arrange their hair, she would have an opportunity of seeing them all before they went down stairs. And Mrs. Marsden promised to give orders that a portion of all the refreshments should be carried up to her, and that Miss Matson, the mantua-maker, should sit with her a great part of the evening.

It was now time for Albina and her mother to commence dressing, but Mrs. Marsden went down stairs again with 'more last words' to the servants, and Albina to make some change in the arrangement of the centre-table.

She was in a loose gown, her curls were pinned up, and to keep them close and safe, she had tied over her head an old gauze handkerchief. While bending over the centre-table, and marking with rose-leaves some of the most beautiful of Mrs. Hemans' poems, and opening two or three souvenirs at their finest plates, a knock was suddenly heard at the door, which proved to be the baker with the second plum-cake, it having been consigned to *his* oven. Albina desired him to bring it to her, and putting it on the silver waiter, she determined to divide it herself into slices, being afraid to trust that business to any one else, lest it should be awkwardly cut, or broken to pieces; it being quite warm.

The baker went out, leaving the front door open, and Albina, intent on her task of cutting the cake, did not look up till she heard the sound of footsteps in the parlour; and then what was her dismay on perceiving Mr. and Mrs. Montague and their daughter.

Albina's first impulse was to run away, but she saw that it was now too late; and, pale with confusion and vexation, she tried to summon sufficient self-command to enable her to pass off this *contre-tems* with something like address.

It was not yet dusk, the sun being scarcely down, and of all the persons invited to the party, it was natural to suppose that the English family would have come the latest.

Mr. Montague was a long-bodied short-legged man, with round gray eyes, that looked as if they had been put on the outside of his face, the sockets having no apparent concavity: a sort of eye that is rarely seen in an American. He had a long nose and a large heavy mouth with projecting under-teeth, and altogether an unusual quantity of face; which face was bordered round with whiskers, that began at his eyes and met under his chin, and resembled in texture the coarse wiry fur of a black bear. He kept his hat under his arm, and his whole dress seemed as if modelled from one of the caricature prints of a London dandy.

Mrs. Montague (evidently some years older than her husband) was a gigantic woman, with features that looked as if seen through a magnifying glass. She wore heavy piles of yellowish curls, and a crimson velvet toque. Her daughter was a tall hard-faced girl of seventeen, meant for a child by her parents, but not meaning herself as such. She was dressed in a white muslin frock and trowsers, and had a mass of black hair curling on her neck and shoulders.

They all fixed their large eyes directly upon Albina, and it was no wonder that she quailed beneath their glance, or rather their stare, particularly when Mrs. Montague surveyed her through her eye-glass. Mr. Montague spoke first. "Your note did not specify the hour – Miss – Miss Martin," said he, "and as you Americans are early people, we thought we were complying with the simplicity of republican manners by coming before dark. We suppose that in general you adhere to the primitive maxim of 'early to bed and early to rise.' I forget the remainder of the rhyme, but *you* know it undoubtedly."

Albina at that moment wished for the presence of Bromley Cheston. She saw from the significant looks that passed between the Montagues, that the unseasonable earliness of this visit did not arise from their ignorance of the customs of American society, but from premeditated impertinence. And she regretted still more having invited them, when Mr. Montague with impudent familiarity walked up to the cake (which she had nicely cut into slices without altering its form) and took one of them out. – "Miss Martin," said he, "your cake looks so inviting that I cannot refrain from helping myself to a piece. Mrs. Montague, give me leave to present one to you. Miss Montague, will you try a slice?"

They sat down on the sofa, each with a piece of cake, and Albina saw that they could scarcely refrain from laughing openly, not only at her dishabille, but at her disconcerted countenance.

Just at this moment, Drusa appeared at the door, and called out, "Miss Albinar, the presarved squinches are all working. Missus found 'em so when she opened the jar." Albina could bear no more, but hastily darting out of the room, she ran up stairs almost crying with vexation.

Old Mrs. Quimby was loud in her invectives against Mr. Montague for spoiling the symmetry of the cake, and helping himself and his family so unceremoniously. "You may rely upon it," said she, "a man that will do such a thing in a strange house is no gentleman."

"On the contrary," observed Mrs. Marsden, "I have no doubt that in England these free and easy proceedings are high ton. Albina, have not you read some such things in Vivian Grey?"

"I do not believe," said Mrs. Quimby, "that if this Englishman was in his own country, he would dare to go and take other people's cake without leave or license. But he thinks any sort of behaviour good enough for the Yankees, as they call us."

"I care not for the cake," said Albina, "although the pieces must now be put into baskets; I only think of the Montagues walking in without knocking, and catching me in complete dishabille: after I had kept poor Bromley Cheston waiting half an hour this morning rather than he should see me in my pink gingham gown and with my hair in pins."

"As sure as sixpence," remarked Mrs. Quimby, "this last shame has come upon you as a punishment for your pride to your own cousin."

Mrs. Marsden having gone into the adjoining room to dress, Albina remained in this, and placed herself before the glass for the same purpose. "Heigho!" said she, "how pale and jaded I look! What a fatiguing day I have had! I have been on my feet since five o'clock this morning, and I feel now more fit to go to bed than to add to my weariness by the task of dressing, and then playing the agreeable for four or five hours. I begin to think that parties (at least such parties as are now in vogue) should only be given by persons who have large houses, large purses, conveniences of every description, and servants enough to do all that is necessary."

"Albina is talking quite sensibly," said Aunt Quimby to Mrs. Marsden, who came in to see if her daughter required her assistance in dressing.

"Pho!" said Mrs. Marsden, "think of the eclat of giving a party to Mrs. Washington Potts, and of having the Montagues among the guests! We shall find the advantage of it when we visit the city again."

"Albina," said Aunt Quimby, "now we are about dressing, just quit for a few moments and help me on with my long stays and my new black silk gown, and let me have the glass awhile; I am going to wear my lace cap with the white satin riband. This dark calico gown and plain muslin cap won't do at all to sit here in, before all the ladies that are coming up."

"Oh! no matter," replied Albina, who was unwilling to relinquish the glass or to occupy any of her time by assisting her aunt in dressing (which was always a troublesome and tedious business with the old lady); and her mother had now gone down to be ready for the reception of the company, and to pay her compliments to the Montagues. "Oh! no matter," said Albina, "your present dress looks perfectly well; and the ladies will be too much engaged with themselves and their own dresses, to remark anything else. No one will observe whether your gown is calico or silk, and whether your cap is muslin or lace. Elderly ladies are always privileged to wear what is most convenient to them."

Albina put on the new dress that the mantua-maker had made for her. When she tried it on the preceding evening Miss Matson declared that "it fitted like wax." She now found that it was scarcely possible to get it on at all, and that one side of the forebody was larger than the other. Miss Matson was called up, and by dint of the pulling, stretching, and smoothing well known to mantua-makers, and still more by means of her pertinacious assurances that the dress had no fault whatever, Albina was obliged to acknowledge that she *could* wear it, and the redundancy of the large side was pinned down and pinned over. In sticking in her comb she broke it in half, and it was long before she could arrange her hair to her satisfaction without it. Before she had completed her toilette, several of the ladies arrived and came into the room; and Albina was obliged to snatch up her paraphernalia, and make her escape into the next apartment.

At last she was dressed – she went down stairs. The company arrived fast, and the party began.

Bromley Cheston had come early to assist in doing the honours, and as he led Albina to a seat, he saw that, in spite of her smiles, she looked weary and out of spirits; and he pitied her. "After all," thought he, "there is much that is interesting about Albina Marsden."

The party was *very* select, consisting of the élite of the village and its neighbourhood; but still, as is often the case, those whose presence was most desirable had sent excuses, and those who were not wanted had taken care to come. And Miss Boreham (a young lady who, having nothing else to recommend her, had been invited solely on account of the usual elegance of her attire, and whose dress was expected to add prodigiously to the effect of the rooms), came most unaccountably in an old faded frock of last year's fashion, with her hair quite plain, and tucked behind her ears with two

side-combs. Could she have had a suspicion of the reason for which she was generally invited, and have therefore perversely determined on a reaction?

The Montagues sat together in a corner, putting up their eye-glasses at every one that entered the room, and criticising the company in loud whispers to each other; poor Mrs. Marsden endeavouring to catch opportunities of paying her court to them.

About nine o'clock, appeared an immense cap of blond lace, gauze riband, and flowers; and under the cap was Mrs. Washington Potts, a little, thin, trifling-looking woman with a whitish freckled face, small sharp features, and flaxen hair. She leaned on the arm of Mr. Washington Potts, who was nothing in company or anywhere else; and she led by the hand a little boy in a suit of scarlet, braided and frogged with blue: a pale rat-looking child, whose name she pronounced Laughy-yet, meaning La Fayette; and who being the youngest scion of the house of Potts, always went to parties with his mother, because he would not stay at home.

Bromley Cheston, on being introduced to Mrs. Washington Potts, was surprised at the insignificance of her figure and face. He had imagined her tall in stature, large in feature, loud in voice, and in short the very counterpart to Mrs. Montague. He found her, however, as he had supposed, replete with vanity, pride, ignorance, and folly: to which she added a sickening affectation of sweetness and amiability, and a flimsy pretension to extraordinary powers of conversation, founded on a confused assemblage of incorrect and superficial ideas, which she mistook for a general knowledge of everything in the world.

Mrs. Potts was delighted with the handsome face and figure, and the very genteel appearance of the young lieutenant, and she bestowed upon him a large portion of her talk.

"I hear, sir," said she, "you have been in the Mediterranean Sea. A sweet pretty place, is it not?"

"Its shores," replied Cheston, "are certainly very beautiful."

"Yes, I should admire its chalky cliffs vastly," resumed Mrs. Potts; "they are quite poetical, you know. Pray, sir, which do you prefer, Byron or Bonaparte? I dote upon Byron; and considering what sweet verses he wrote, 'tis a pity he was a corsair, and a vampyre pirate, and all such horrid things. As for Bonaparte, I never could endure him after I found that he had cut off poor old King George's head. Now, when we talk of great men, my husband is altogether for Washington. I laugh, and tell Mr. Potts it's because he and Washington are namesakes. How do you like La Fayette?" – (pronouncing the name à la canaille).

"The man, or the name?" inquired Cheston.

"Oh! both to be sure. You see we have called our youngest blossom after him. Come here, La Fayette, stand forward, my dear; hold up your head, and make a bow to the gentleman."

"I won't," screamed La Fayette. "I'll never make a bow when you tell me."

"Something of the spirit of his ancestors," said Mrs. Potts, affectedly smiling to Cheston, and patting the urchin on the head.

"His ancestors!" thought Cheston. "Who could they possibly have been?"

"Perhaps the dear fellow may be a little, a very little spoiled," pursued Mrs. Potts. "But to make a comparison in the marine line (quite in your way, you know), it is as natural for a mother's heart to turn to her youngest darling, as it is for the needle to point out the longitude. Now we talk of longitude, have you read Cooper's last novel, by the author of the Spy? It's a sweet book – Cooper is one of my pets. I saw him in dear, delightful Paris. Are you musical, Mr. Cheston? – But of course you are. Our whole aristocracy is musical now. How do you like Paganini? You must have heard him in Europe. It's a very expensive thing to hear Paganini. – Poor man! he is quite ghastly with his own playing. Well, as you have been in the Mediterranean, which do you prefer, the Greeks or the Poles?"

"The Poles, decidedly," answered Cheston, "from what I have heard of *them*, and seen of the Greeks."

"Well, for my part," resumed Mrs. Potts, "I confess I like the Greeks, as I have always been rather classical. They are so Grecian. Think of their beautiful statues and paintings by Rubens and Reynolds. Are you fond of paintings? At my house in the city, I can show you some very fine ones."

"By what artists?" asked Cheston.

"Oh! by my daughter Harriet. She did them at drawing-school with theorems. They are beautiful flower-pieces, all framed and hung up; they are almost worthy of Sir Benjamin West."<sup>2</sup>

In this manner Mrs. Potts ran on till the entrance of tea, and Cheston took that opportunity of escaping from her; while she imagined him deeply imbued with admiration of her fluency, vivacity, and variety of information. But in reality, he was thinking of the strange depravity of taste that is sometimes found even in intelligent minds; for in no other way could he account for Albina's predilection for Mrs. Washington Potts. "And yet," thought he, "is a young and inexperienced girl more blameable for her blindness in friendship (or what she imagines to be friendship), than an acute, sensible, talented man for his blindness in love? The master-spirits of the earth have almost proverbially married women of weak intellect, and almost as proverbially the children of such marriages resemble the mother rather than the father. A just punishment for choosing so absurdly. Albina, I must know you better."

The party went on, much as parties generally do where there are four or five guests that are supposed to rank all the others. The patricians evidently despised the plebeians, and the plebeians were offended at being despised; for in no American assemblage is any real inferiority of rank ever felt or acknowledged. There was a general dullness, and a general restraint. Little was done, and little was said. La Fayette wandered about in everybody's way; having been kept wide awake all the evening by two cups of strong coffee, which his mother allowed him to take because he would have them.

There was always a group round the centre-table, listlessly turning over the souvenirs, albums, &c., and picking at the flowers; and La Fayette ate plum-cake over Cheston's beautiful drawings.

Albina played an Italian song extremely well, but the Montagues exchanged glances at her music; and Mrs. Potts, to follow suit, hid her face behind her fan and simpered; though in truth she did not in reality know Italian from French, or a semibreve from a semiquaver. All this was a great annoyance to Cheston. At Albina's request, he led Miss Montague to the piano. She ran her fingers over the instrument as if to try it; gave a shudder, and declared it most shockingly out of tune, and then rose in horror from the music stool. This much surprised Mrs. Marsden, as a musician had been brought from the city only the day before for the express purpose of tuning this very instrument.

"No," whispered Miss Montague, as she resumed her seat beside her mother, "I will not condescend to play before people who are incapable of understanding my style."

At this juncture (to the great consternation of Mrs. Marsden and her daughter) who should make her appearance but Aunt Quimby in the calico gown which Albina now regretted having persuaded her to keep on. The old lady was wrapped in a small shawl and two large ones, and her head was secured from cold by a black silk handkerchief tied over her cap and under her chin. She smiled and nodded all round to the company, and said – "How do you do, good people; I hope you are all enjoying yourselves. I thought I *must* come down and have a peep at you. For after I had seen all the ladies take off their hoods, and had my tea, I found it pretty dull work sitting up stairs with the mantua-maker, who had no more manners than to fall asleep while I was talking."

Mrs. Marsden, much discomfited, led Aunt Quimby to a chair between two matrons who were among "the unavoidably invited," and whose pretensions to refinement were not very palpable. But the old lady had no idea of remaining stationary all the evening between Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Jackson. She wisely thought "she could see more of the party," if she frequently changed her place,

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<sup>2</sup> The author takes this occasion to remark, that the illustrious artist to whom so many of his countrymen erroneously give the title of Sir Benjamin West, never in reality had the compliment of knighthood conferred on him. He lived and died *Mr.* West, as is well known to all who have any acquaintance with pictures and painters.

and being of what is called a sociable disposition, she never hesitated to talk to any one that was near her, however high or however low.

"Dear mother," said Albina in an under-voice, "what can be the reason that every one, in tasting the ice-cream, immediately sets it aside as if it was not fit to eat? I am sure there is everything in it that ought to be."

"And something more than ought to be," replied Mrs. Marsden, after trying a spoonful – "the salt that was laid round the freezer has got into the cream (I suppose by Dixon's carelessness), and it is *not* fit to eat."

"And now," said Albina, starting, "I will show you a far worse mortification than the failure of the ice-cream. Only look – there sits Aunt Quimby between Mr. Montague and Mrs. Washington Potts."

"How in the world did she get there?" exclaimed Mrs. Marsden. "I dare say she walked up, and asked them to make room for her between them. There is nothing now to be done but to pass her off as well as we can, and to make the best of her. I will manage to get as near as possible, that I may hear what she is talking about, and take an opportunity of persuading her away."

As Mrs. Marsden approached within hearing distance, Mr. Montague was leaning across Aunt Quimby, and giving Mrs. Potts an account of something that had been said or done during a splendid entertainment at Devonshire House. – "Just at that moment," said he, "I was lounging into the room with Lady Augusta Fitzhenry on my arm (unquestionably the finest woman in England), and Mrs. Montague was a few steps in advance, leaning on my friend the Marquis of Elvington."

"Pray, sir," said Mrs. Quimby, "as you are from England, do you know anything of Betsey Dempsey's husband?"

"I have not the honour of being acquainted with that person," replied Mr. Montague, after a withering stare.

"Well, that's strange," pursued Aunt Quimby, "considering that he has been living in London at least eighteen years – or perhaps it is only seventeen. And yet I think it must be near eighteen, if not quite. Maybe seventeen and a half. Well it's best to be on the safe side, so I'll say seventeen. Betsey Dempsey's mother was an old school-mate of mine. Her father kept the Black Horse tavern. She was the only acquaintance I ever had that married an Englishman. He was a grocer, and in very good business; but he never liked America, and was always finding fault with it, and so he went home, and was to send for Betsey. But he never sent for her at all; and for a very good reason; which was that he had another wife in England, as most of them have – no disparagement to you, sir."

Mrs. Marsden now came up, and informed Mrs. Potts in a whisper, that the good old lady beside her, was a distant relation or rather connexion of *Mr.* Marsden's, and that, though a little primitive in appearance and manner, she had considerable property in bank-stock. To Mrs. Marsden's proposal that she should exchange her seat for a very pleasant one in the other room next to her old friend, Mrs. Willis, Aunt Quimby replied nothing but "Thank you, I'm doing very well here."

Mrs. and Miss Montague, apparently heeding no one else, had talked nearly the whole evening to each other, but loudly enough to be heard by all around them. The young lady, though dressed as a child, talked like a woman, and she and her mother were now engaged in an argument whether the flirtation of the Duke of Risingham with Lady Georgiana Melbury would end seriously or not.

"To my certain knowledge," said Miss Montague, "his Grace has never yet declared himself to Lady Georgiana, or to any one else."

"I'll lay you two to one," said Mrs. Montague, "that he is married to her before we return to England."

"No," replied the daughter, "like all others of his sex he delights in keeping the ladies in suspense."

"What you say, miss, is very true," said Aunt Quimby, leaning in her turn across Mr. Montague, "and, considering how young you are, you talk very sensibly. Men certainly have a way of keeping

women in suspense, and an unwillingness to answer questions, even when we ask them. There's my son-in-law, Billy Fairfowl, that I live with. He married my daughter Mary, eleven years ago the 23d of last April. He's as good a man as ever breathed, and an excellent provider too. He always goes to market himself; and sometimes I can't help blaming him a little for his extravagance. But his greatest fault is his being so unsatisfactory. As far back as last March, as I was sitting at my knitting in the little front parlour with the door open (for it was quite warm weather for the time of the year), Billy Fairfowl came home, carrying in his hand a good sized shad; and I called out to him to ask what he gave for it, for it was the very beginning of the shad season; but he made not a word of answer; he just passed on, and left the shad in the kitchen, and then went to his store. At dinner we had the fish, and a very nice one it was; and I asked him again how much he gave for it, but he still avoided answering, and began to talk of something else; so I thought I'd let it rest awhile. A week or two after, I again asked him; so then he actually said he had forgotten all about it. And to this day I don't know the price of that shad."

The Montagues looked at each other – almost laughed aloud, and drew back their chairs as far from Aunt Quimby as possible. So also did Mrs. Potts. Mrs. Marsden came up in an agony of vexation, and reminded her aunt in a low voice of the risk of renewing her rheumatism by staying so long between the damp, newly-papered walls. The old lady answered aloud – "Oh! you need not fear, I am well wrapped up on purpose. And indeed, considering that the parlours were only papered to-day, I think the walls have dried wonderfully (putting her hand on the paper) – I am sure nobody could find out the damp if they were not told."

"What!" exclaimed the Montagues; "only papered to-day – (starting up and testifying all that prudent fear of taking cold, so characteristic of the English). How barbarous to inveigle us into such a place!"

"I thought I felt strangely chilly all the evening," said Mrs. Potts, whose fan had scarcely been at rest five minutes.

The Montagues proposed going away immediately, and Mrs. Potts declared she was *most* apprehensive for poor little La Fayette. Mrs. Marsden, who could not endure the idea of their departing till all the refreshments had been handed round (the best being yet to come), took great pains to persuade them that there was no real cause of alarm, as she had had large fires all the afternoon. They held a whispered consultation, in which they agreed to stay for the oysters and chicken salad, and Mrs. Marsden went out to send them their shawls, with one for La Fayette.

By this time the secret of the newly-papered walls had spread round both rooms; the conversation now turned entirely on colds and rheumatisms; there was much shivering and considerable coughing, and the demand for shawls increased. However, nobody actually went home in consequence.

"Papa," said Miss Montague, "let us all take French leave as soon as the oysters and chicken salad have gone round."

Albina now came up to Aunt Quimby (gladly perceiving that the old lady looked tired), and proposed that she should return to her chamber, assuring her that the waiters should be punctually sent up to her – "I do not feel quite ready to go yet," replied Mrs. Quimby. "I am very well here. But you need not mind *me*. Go back to your company, and talk a little to those three poor girls in the yellow frocks that nobody has spoken to yet, except Bromley Cheston. When I am ready to go I shall take French leave, as these English people call it."

But Aunt Quimby's idea of French leave was very different from the usual acceptance of the term; for having always heard that the French were a very polite people, she concluded that their manner of taking leave must be particularly respectful and ceremonious. Therefore, having paid her parting compliments to Mrs. Potts and the Montagues, she walked all round the room, curtsying to every body and shaking hands, and telling them she had come to take French leave. To put an end to this ridiculous scene, Bromley Cheston (who had been on assiduous duty all the evening) now

came forward, and, taking the old lady's arm in his, offered to escort her up stairs. Aunt Quimby was much flattered by this unexpected civility from the finest-looking young man in the room, and she smilingly departed with him, complimenting him on his politeness, and assuring him that he was a real gentleman; trying also to make out the degree of relationship that existed between them.

"So much for Buckingham!" said Cheston, as he ran down stairs after depositing the old lady at the door of her room. "Fools of all ranks and of all ages are to me equally intolerable. I never can marry into such a family."

The party went on.

"In the name of heaven, Mrs. Potts," said Mrs. Montague, "what induces you to patronize these people?"

"Why they are the only tolerable persons in the neighbourhood," answered Mrs. Potts, "and very kind and obliging in their way. I really think Albina a very sweet girl, very sweet indeed: and Mrs. Marsden is rather amiable too, quite amiable. And they are so grateful for any little notice I take of them, that it is really quite affecting. Poor things! how much trouble they have given themselves in getting up this party. They look as if they had had a hard day's work; and I have no doubt they will be obliged, in consequence, to pinch them for months to come; for I can assure you their means are very small – very small indeed. As to this intolerable old aunt, I never saw her before; and as there is something rather genteel about Mrs. Marsden and her daughter – rather so at least about Albina – I did not suppose they had any such relations belonging to them. I think, in future I must confine myself entirely to the aristocracy."

"We deliberated to the last moment," said Mrs. Montague, "whether we should come. But as Mr. Montague is going to write his tour when we return to England, he thinks it expedient to make some sacrifices, for the sake of seeing the varieties of American society."

"Oh! these people are not in society!" exclaimed Mrs. Potts eagerly. "I can assure you these Marsdens have not the slightest pretensions to society. Oh! no – I beg you not to suppose that Mrs. Marsden and her daughter are at all in society!"

This conversation was overheard by Bromley Cheston, and it gave him more pain than he was willing to acknowledge, even to himself.

At length all the refreshments had gone their rounds, and the Montagues had taken real French leave; but Mrs. Washington Potts preferred a conspicuous departure, and therefore made her adieux with a view of producing great effect. This was the signal for the company to break up, and Mrs. Marsden gladly smiled them out; while Albina could have said with Gray's Prophetess —

"Now my weary lips I close,  
Leave me, leave me to repose."

But, according to Mrs. Marsden, the worst of all was the poet, the professedly eccentric Bewley Garvin Gandy, author of the *World of Sorrow*, *Elegy on a Broken Heart*, *Lines on a Suppressed Sigh*, *Sonnet to a Hidden Tear*, *Stanzas to Faded Hopes*, &c. &c., and who was just now engaged in a tale called "The Bewildered," and an *Ode to the Waning Moon*, which set him to wandering about the country, and "kept him out o'nights." The poet, not being a man of this world, did not make his appearance at the party till the moment of the bustle occasioned by the exit of Mrs. Washington Potts. He then darted suddenly into the room, and looked wild.

We will not insinuate that he bore any resemblance to Sandy Clark. He certainly wore no chapeau, and his coat was not in the least à la militaire, for it was a dusky brown frock. His collar was open, in the fashion attributed to Byron, and much affected by scribblers who are incapable of imitating the noble bard in anything but his follies. His hair looked as if he had just been tearing it, and his eyes seemed "in a fine frenzy rolling." He was on his return from one of his moonlight

rambles on the banks of the river, and his pantaloons and coat-skirt showed evident marks of having been deep among the cat-tails and splatter-docks that grew in the mud on its margin.

Being a man that took no note of time, he wandered into Mrs. Marsden's house between eleven and twelve o'clock, and remained an hour after the company had gone; reclining at full length on a sofa, and discussing Barry Cornwall and Percy Bysshe Shelley, L. E. L. and Mrs. Cornwall Baron Wilson. After which he gradually became classical, and poured into the sleepy ears of Mrs. Marsden and Albina a parallel between Tibullus and Propertius, a dissertation on Alcæus, and another on Menander.

Bromley Cheston, who had been escorting home two sets of young ladies that lived "far as the poles asunder," passed Mrs. Marsden's house on returning to his hotel, and seeing the lights still gleaming, he went in to see what was the matter, and kindly relieved his aunt and cousin by reminding the poet of the lateness of the hour, and "fairly carrying him off."

Aunt Quimby had long since been asleep. But before Mrs. Marsden and Albina could forget themselves in "tired nature's sweet restorer," they lay awake for an hour, discussing the fatigues and vexations of the day, and the mortifications of the evening. "After all," said Albina, "this party has cost us five times as much as it is worth, both in trouble and expense, and I really cannot tell what pleasure we have derived from it."

"No one expects pleasure at their own party," replied Mrs. Marsden. "But you may depend on it, this little compliment to Mrs. Washington Potts will prove highly advantageous to us hereafter. And then it is *something* to be the only family in the neighbourhood that could presume to do such a thing."

Next morning, Bromley Cheston received a letter which required his immediate presence in New York on business of importance. When he went to take leave of his aunt and cousin, he found them busily engaged in clearing away and putting in order; a task which is nearly equal to that of making the preparations for a party. They looked pale and spiritless, and Mrs. Washington Potts had just sent her three boys to spend the day with them.

When Cheston took Albina's hand at parting, he felt it tremble, and her eyes looked as if they were filling with tears. "After all," thought he, "she is a charming girl, and has both sense and sensibility."

"I am very nervous to-day," said Albina, "the party has been too much for me; and I have in prospect for to-morrow the pain of taking leave of Mrs. Washington Potts, who returns with all her family to Philadelphia."

"Strange infatuation!" thought Cheston, as he dropped Albina's hand, and made his parting bow. "I must see more of this girl, before I can resolve to trust my happiness to her keeping; I cannot share her heart with Mrs. Washington Potts. When I return from New York, I will talk to her seriously about that ridiculous woman, and I will also remonstrate with her mother on the folly of straining every nerve in the pursuit of what she calls a certain style."

In the afternoon, Mrs. Potts did Albina the honour to send for her to assist in the preparations for to-morrow's removal to town; and in the evening, the three boys were all taken home sick, in consequence of having laid violent hands on the fragments of the feast: which fragments they had continued during the day to devour almost without intermission. Also Randolph had thrown Jefferson down stairs, and raised two green bumps on his forehead, and Jefferson had pinched La Fayette's fingers in the door till the blood came; not to mention various minor squabbles and hurts.

At parting, Mrs. Potts went so far as to kiss Albina, and made her promise to let her know immediately, whenever she or her mother came to the city.

In about two weeks, Aunt Quimby finished her visitation: and the day after her departure, Mrs. Marsden and Albina went to town to make their purchases for the season, and also with a view towards a party, which they knew Mrs. Potts had in contemplation. This time they did not, as usual, stay with their relations, but they took lodgings at a fashionable boarding-house, where they could receive their "great woman," *comme il faut*.

On the morning after their arrival, Mrs. Marsden and her daughter, in their most costly dresses, went to visit Mrs. Potts, that she might be apprised of their arrival; and they found her in a spacious house, expensively and ostentatiously furnished.

After they had waited till even *their* patience was nearly exhausted, Mrs. Potts came down stairs to them, but there was evidently a great abatement in her affability. She seemed uneasy, looked frequently towards the door, got up several times and went to the window, and appeared fidgety when the bell rung. At last there came in two very flaunting ladies, whom Mrs. Potts received as if she considered them people of consequence. They were not introduced to the Marsdens, who, after the entrance of these new visitors, sat awhile in the pitiable situation of ciphers, and then took their leave. "Strange," said Mrs. Marsden, "that she did not say a word of her party."

Three days after their visit, Mrs. Washington Potts left cards for Mrs. and Miss Marsden, without inquiring if they were at home. And they heard from report that her party was fixed for the week after next, and that it was expected to be very splendid, as it was to introduce her daughter, who had just quitted boarding-school. The Marsdens had seen this young lady, who had spent the August holidays with her parents. She was as silly as her mother, and as dull as her father, in the eyes of all who were not blindly determined to think her otherwise, or who did not consider it particularly expedient to uphold every one of the name of Potts.

At length they heard that the invitations were going out for Mrs. Potts's party, and that though very large, it was not to be general; which meant that only one or two of the members were to be selected from each family with whom Mrs. Potts thought proper to acknowledge an acquaintance. From this moment Mrs. Marsden, who at the best of times had never really been treated with much respect by Mrs. Potts, gave up all hope of an invitation for herself; but she counted certainly on one for Albina, and every ring at the door was expected to bring it. There were many rings, but no invitation; and poor Albina and her mother took turns in watching at the window.

At last Bogle<sup>3</sup> was seen to come up the steps with a handful of notes; and Albina, regardless of all rule, ran to the front-door herself. They were cards for a party, but not Mrs. Potts's, and were intended for two other ladies that lodged in the house.

Every time that Albina went out and came home, she inquired anxiously of all the servants if no note had been left for her. Still there was none. And her mother still insisted that the note *must* have come, but had been mislaid afterwards, or that Bogle had lost it in the street.

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday passed over, and still no invitation. Mrs. Marsden talked much of the carelessness of servants, and had no doubt of the habitual negligence of Messrs. Bogle, Shepherd, and other "fashionable party-men." Albina was almost sick with "hope deferred." At last, when she came home on Monday morning from Second street, her mother met her at the door with a delighted face, and showed her the long-desired note, which had just been brought by Mrs. Potts's own man. The party was to take place in two days: and so great was now Albina's happiness, that she scarcely felt the fatigue of searching the shops for articles of attire that were very elegant, and yet not *too* expensive; and shopping with a limited purse is certainly no trifling exercise both of mind and body; so also is the task of going round among fashionable mantua-makers, in the hope of coaxing one of them to undertake a dress at a short notice.

Next morning, Mrs. Potts sent for Albina immediately after breakfast, and told her that as she knew her to be very clever at all sorts of things, she wanted her to stay that day and assist in the preparations for the next. Mrs. Potts, like many other people who live in showy houses and dress extravagantly, was very economical in servants. She gave such low wages, that none would come to her who could get places anywhere else, and she kept them on such limited allowance that none would stay with her who were worth having.

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<sup>3</sup> A celebrated coloured waiter in Philadelphia.

Fools are seldom consistent in their expenditure. They generally (to use a homely expression) strain at gnats and swallow camels.

About noon, Albina having occasion to consult Mrs. Potts concerning something that was to be done, found her in the front parlour with Mrs. and Miss Montague. After Albina had left the room, Mrs. Montague said to Mrs. Potts – "Is not that the girl who lives with her mother at the place on the river, I forget what you call it – I mean the niece of the aunt?"

"That is Albina Marsden," replied Mrs. Potts.

"Yes," pursued Mrs. Montague, "the people that made so great an exertion to give you a sort of party, and honoured Mr. and Miss Montague and myself with invitations."

"She's not to be here to-morrow night, I hope!" exclaimed Miss Montague.

"Really," replied Mrs. Potts, "I could do no less than ask her. The poor thing did her very best to be civil to us all last summer."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Montague, "in the country one is willing sometimes to take up with such company as we should be very sorry to acknowledge in town. You assured me that your party to-morrow night would be extremely *recherché*. And as it is so early in the season you know that it is necessary to be more particular now than at the close of the campaign, when every one is tired of parties, and unwilling to get new evening dresses lest they should be out of fashion before they are wanted again. Excuse me, I speak only from what I have heard of American customs."

"I am always particular about my parties," said Mrs. Potts.

"A word in your ear," continued Mrs. Montague. "Is it not impolitic, or rather are you not afraid to bring forward so beautiful a girl as this Miss Martin on the very night of your own daughter's *debut*?"

Mrs. Potts looked alarmed for a moment, and then recovering herself said – "I have no fear of Miss Harriet Angelina Potts being thrown in the shade by a little country girl like this. Albina Marsden is pretty enough, to be sure – at least, rather pretty – but then there is a certain style – a certain air which she of course – in short, a certain style –"

"As to what you call a certain style," said Mrs. Montague, "I do not know exactly what you mean. If it signifies the air and manner of a lady, this Miss Martin has as much of it as any other American girl. To me they are all nearly alike. I cannot distinguish those minute shades of difference that you all make such a point of. In my unpractised eyes the daughters of your mechanics and shopkeepers look as well and behave as well as the daughters of your lawyers and doctors, for I find your nobility is chiefly made up of these two professions, with the addition of a few merchants; and you call every one a merchant that does not sell his commodities by the single yard or the single quart."

"Mamma," whispered Miss Montague, "if that girl is to be here, I don't wish to come. I can't endure her."

"Take my advice," continued Mrs. Montague to Mrs. Potts, "and put off this Miss Martin. If she was not so strikingly handsome, she might pass unnoticed in the crowd. But her beauty will attract general observation, and you will be obliged to tell exactly who she is, where you picked her up, and to give or to hear an account of her family and all her connexions; and from the specimen we have had in the old aunt, I doubt if they will bear a very minute scrutiny. So if she *is* invited, endeavour to uninvite her."

"I am sure I would willingly do that," replied Mrs. Potts, "but I can really think of no excuse."

"Oh! send her a note to-morrow," answered Mrs. Montague, carelessly, and rising to depart, "anything or nothing, so that you only signify to her that she is not to come."

All day Mrs. Potts was revolving in her mind the most feasible means of preventing Albina from appearing at her party; and her conscience smote her when she saw the unsuspecting girl so indefatigable in assisting with the preparations. Before Albina went home, Mrs. Potts had come to the conclusion to follow Mrs. Montague's advice, but she shrunk from the task of telling her so in person. She determined to send her next morning a concise note, politely requesting her not to come;

and she intended afterwards to call on her and apologize, on the plea of her party being by no means general, but still so large that every inch of room was an object of importance; also that the selection consisted entirely of persons well known to each other and accustomed to meet in company, and that there was every reason to fear that her gentle and modest friend Albina would have been unable to enjoy herself among so many strangers, &c., &c. Those excuses, she knew, were very flimsy, but she trusted to Albina's good nature, and she thought she could smooth off all by inviting both her and her mother to a sociable tea.

Next morning, Mrs. Potts, who was on no occasion very ready with her pen, considering that she professed to be *au fait* to everything, employed near an hour in manufacturing the following note to Albina.

"Mrs. Washington Potts' compliments to Miss Marsden, and she regrets being under the necessity of dispensing with Miss M.'s company, to join the social circle at her mansion-house this evening. Mrs. W. P. will explain hereafter, hoping Mrs. and Miss M. are both well. Mr. W. P. requests his respects to both ladies, as well as Miss Potts, and their favourite little La Fayette desires his best love."

This billet arrived while Albina had gone to her mantua-maker, to have her new dress fitted on for the last time. Her mother opened the note and read it; a liberty which no parent should take with the correspondence of a grown-up daughter. Mrs. Marsden was shocked at its contents, and at a loss to guess the motive of so strange an interdiction. At first her only emotion was resentment against Mrs. Potts. Then she thought of the disappointment and mortification of poor Albina, whom she pictured to herself passing a forlorn evening at home, perhaps crying in her own room. Next, she recollected the elegant new dress in which Albina would have looked so beautifully, and which would now be useless.

"Oh!" soliloquized Mrs. Marsden, "what a pity this unaccountable note was not dropped and lost in the street. But then, of course some one would have found and read it, and that would have been worse than all. How could Mrs. Potts be guilty of such abominable rudeness, as to desire poor Albina not to come, after she had been invited? But great people think they may do anything. I wish the note had fallen into the fire before it came to my hands; then Albina would have known nothing of it; she would have gone to the party, looking more charmingly than ever she did in her life; and she would be seen there, and admired, and make new acquaintances, and Mrs. Potts could do no otherwise than behave to her politely in her own house. Nobody would know of this vile billet (which perhaps after all is only a joke), and Mrs. Potts would suppose, that of course Albina had not received it; besides, I have no doubt that Mrs. Potts will send for her to-morrow, and make a satisfactory explanation. But then, to-night; if Albina could but get there to-night. What harm can possible arrive from my not showing her the note till to-morrow? Why should the dear girl be deprived of all the pleasure she anticipated this evening? And even if she expected no enjoyment whatever, still how great will be the advantage of having her seen at Mrs. Washington Potts's select party; it will at once get her on in the world. Of course Mrs. Potts will conclude that the note had miscarried, and will treat her as if it had never been sent. I am really most strongly tempted to suppress it, and let Albina go."

The more Mrs. Marsden thought of this project, the less objectionable it appeared to her. When she saw Albina come home, delighted with her new dress, which fitted her exactly, and when she heard her impatiently wishing that evening was come, this weak and ill-judging mother could not resolve (as she afterwards said) to dash all her pleasant anticipations to the ground, and demolish her castles in the air. "My daughter shall be happy to-night," thought she, "whatever may be the event of to-morrow." She hastily concealed the note, and kept her resolution of not mentioning it to Albina.

Evening came, and Albina's beautiful hair was arranged and decorated by a fashionable French barber. She was dressed, and she looked charmingly.

Albina knew that Mrs. Potts had sent an invitation to the United States Hotel for Lieutenant Cheston, who was daily expected, but had not yet returned from New York, and she regretted much

that she could not go to the party under his escort. She knew no one else of the company, and she had no alternative but to send for a carriage, and proceeded thither by herself, after her mother had despatched repeated messages to the hotel to know if Mr. Cheston had yet arrived, for he was certainly expected back that evening.

As Albina drove to the house, she felt all the terrors of diffidence coming upon her, and already repented that she had ventured on this enterprise alone. On arriving, she did not go into the ladies' room, but gave her hood and cloak at once to a servant, and tremulously requested another attendant to inform Mr. Potts that a lady wished to see him. Mr. Potts accordingly came out into the hall, and looked surprised at finding Albina there, for he had heard his wife and daughter talking of the note of interdiction. But concluding, as he often did, that it was in vain for him to try to comprehend the proceedings of women, he thought it best to say nothing.

On Albina requesting him to accompany her on her entrance, he gave her his arm in silence, and with a very perplexed face escorted her into the principal room. As he led her up to his wife, his countenance gradually changed from perplexity to something like fright. Albina paid her compliments to Mrs. Potts, who received her with evident amazement, and without replying. Mrs. Montague, who sat next to the lady of the mansion, opened still wider her immense eyes, and then, "to make assurance doubly sure," applied her opera-glass. Miss Montague first stared and then laughed.

Albina, much disconcerted, turned to look for a seat, Mr. Potts having withdrawn his arm. As she retired to the only vacant chair, she heard a half whisper running along the line of ladies, and though she could not distinguish the words so as to make any connected sense of them, she felt that they alluded to her.

"Can I believe my eyes?" said Mrs. Potts.

"The assurance of American girls is astonishing," said Mrs. Montague.

"She was forbidden to come," said Miss Montague to a young lady beside her. "Mrs. Potts herself forbade her to come."

"She was actually prohibited," resumed Mrs. Montague, leaning over to Mrs. Jones.

"I sent her myself a note of prohibition," said Mrs. Potts, leaning over to Mrs. Smith. "I had serious objections to having her here."

"I never saw such downright impudence," pursued Mrs. Montague. "This I suppose is one of the consequences of the liberty, and freedom and independence that you Americans are always talking about. I must tell Mr. Montague, for really this is too good to lose."

And beckoning her husband to come to her – "My dear," said she, "put down in your memorandum-book, that when American married ladies invite young ladies to parties, they on second thoughts forbid them to come, and that the said American young ladies boldly persist in coming in spite of the forbiddance."

And she then related to him the whole affair, at full length, and with numerous embellishments, looking all the time at poor Albina.

The story was soon circulated round the room in whispers and murmurs, and no one had candour or kindness to suggest the possibility of Miss Marsden's having never received the note.

Albina soon perceived herself to be an object of remark and animadversion, and she was sadly at a loss to divine the cause. The two ladies that were nearest to her, rose up and left their seats, while two others edged their chairs farther off. She knew no one, she was introduced to no one, but she saw that every one was looking at her as she sat by herself, alone, conspicuous, and abashed. Tea was waiting for a lady that came always last, and the whole company seemed to have leisure to gaze on poor Albina, and to whisper about her.

Her situation now became intolerable. She felt that there was nothing left for her but to go home. Unluckily she had ordered the carriage at eleven o'clock. At last she resolved on making a great effort, and on plea of a violent headache (a plea which by this time was literally true) to ask Mrs. Potts if she would allow a servant to bring a coach for her.

After several attempts, she rose for this purpose; but she saw at the same moment that all eyes were turned upon her. She tremblingly, and with downcast looks, advanced till she got into the middle of the room, and then all her courage deserted her at once, when she heard some one say, "I wonder what she is going to do next."

She stopped suddenly, and stood motionless, and she saw Miss Potts giggle, and heard her say to a school-girl near her, "I suppose she is going to speak a speech." She turned very pale, and felt as if she could gladly sink into the floor, when suddenly some one took her hand, and the voice of Bromley Cheston said to her, "Albina – Miss Marsden – I will conduct you wherever you wish to go" – and then, lowering his tone, he asked her, "Why this agitation – what has happened to distress you?"

Cheston had just arrived from New York, having been detained on the way by an accident that happened to one of the boats, and finding that Mrs. Marsden was in town, and had that day sent several messages for him, he repaired immediately to her lodgings. He had intended declining the invitation of Mrs. Potts, but when he found that Albina had gone thither, he hastily changed his dress and went to the party. When he entered, what was his amazement to see her standing alone in the centre of the room, and the company whispering and gazing at her.

Albina, on hearing the voice of a friend, the voice of Bromley Cheston, was completely overcome, and she covered her face and burst into tears. "Albina," said Cheston, "I will not now ask an explanation; I see that, whatever may have happened, you had best go home."

"Oh! most gladly, most thankfully," she exclaimed, in a voice almost inarticulate with sobs.

Cheston drew her arm within his, and bowing to Mrs. Potts, he led Albina out of the apartment, and conducted her to the staircase, whence she went to the ladies' room to compose herself a little, and prepare for her departure.

Cheston then sent one servant for a carriage, and another to tell Mr. Potts that he desired to speak with him in the hall. Potts came out with a pale, frightened face, and said – "Indeed, sir – indeed, I had nothing to do with it; ask the women. It was all them entirely. It was the women that laughed at Miss Albina, and whispered about her."

"For what?" demanded the lieutenant. "I insist on knowing for what cause."

"Why, sir," replied Potts, "she came here to my wife's party, after Mrs. Potts had sent a note desiring her to stay away; which was certainly an odd thing for a young lady to do."

"There is some mistake," exclaimed Cheston; "I'll stake my life that she never saw the note. And now, for what reason did Mrs. Potts write such a note? How did she dare –"

"Oh!" replied Potts, stammering and hesitating, "women will have their notions; men are not half so particular about their company. Somehow, after Mrs. Potts had invited Miss Albina, she thought, on farther consideration, that poor Miss Albina was not quite genteel enough for her party. You know all the women now make a great point of being genteel. But, indeed, sir (observing the storm that was gathering on Cheston's brow), indeed, sir — *I* was not in the least to blame. It was altogether the fault of my wife."

The indignation of the lieutenant was so highly excited, that nothing could have checked it but the recollection that Potts was in his own house. At this moment, Albina came down stairs, and Cheston took her hand and said to her: "Albina, did you receive a note from Mrs. Potts interdicting your presence at the party?" – "Oh! no, indeed!" exclaimed Albina, amazed at the question. "Surely she did not send me such a note." – "Yes she did, though," said Potts, quickly. – "Is it, then, necessary for me to say," said Albina, indignantly, "that, under those circumstances, nothing could have induced me to enter this house, now or ever! I saw or heard nothing of this note. And is this the reason that I have been treated so rudely – so cruelly –"

Upon this, Mr. Potts made his escape, and Cheston, having put Albina into the carriage, desired the coachman to wait a few moments. He then returned to the drawing-room and approached Mrs. Potts, who was standing with half the company collected round her, and explaining with great

volubility the whole history of Albina Marsden. On the appearance of Cheston, she stopped short, and all her auditors looked foolish.

The young officer advanced into the centre of the circle, and, first addressing Mrs. Potts, he said to her – "In justice to Miss Marsden, I have returned, madam, to inform you that your note of interdiction, with which you have so kindly made all the company acquainted, was till this moment unknown to that young lady. But, even had she come wilfully, and in the full knowledge of your prohibition, no circumstances whatever could justify the rudeness with which I find she has been treated. I have now only to say that, if any gentleman presumes, either here or hereafter, to cast a reflection on the conduct of Miss Albina Marsden, in this or in any other instance, he must answer to me for the consequences. And if I find that any lady has invidiously misrepresented this occurrence, I shall insist on an atonement from her husband, her brother, or her admirer."

He then bowed and departed, and the company looked still more foolish.

"This lesson," thought Cheston, "will have the salutary effect of curing Albina of her predominant follies. She is a lovely girl, after all, and when withdrawn from the influence of her mother, will make a charming woman and an excellent wife."

Before the carriage stopped at the residence of Mrs. Marsden, Cheston had made Albina an offer of his heart and hand, and the offer was not refused.

Mrs. Marsden was scarcely surprised at the earliness of Albina's return from the party, for she had a secret misgiving that all was not right, that the suppression of the note would not eventuate well, and she bitterly regretted having done it. When her daughter related to her the story of the evening, Mrs. Marsden was overwhelmed with compunction; and, though Cheston was present, she could not refrain from acknowledging at once her culpability, for it certainly deserved no softer name. Cheston and Albina were shocked at this disclosure; but, in compassion to Mrs. Marsden, they forbore to add to her distress by a single comment. Cheston shortly after took his leave, saying to Albina as he departed, "I hope you are done for ever with Mrs. Washington Potts."

Next morning, Cheston seriously but kindly expostulated with Albina and her mother on the folly and absurdity of sacrificing their comfort, their time, their money, and, indeed, their self-respect, to the paltry distinction of being capriciously noticed by a few vain, silly, heartless people, inferior to themselves in everything but in wealth and in a slight tincture of soi-disant fashion; and who, after all, only took them on or threw them off as it suited their own convenience.

"What you say is very true, Bromley," replied Mrs. Marsden. "I begin to view these things in their proper light, and as Albina remarks, we ought to profit by this last lesson. To tell the exact truth, I have heard since I came to town that Mrs. Washington Potts is, after all, by no means in the first circle, and it is whispered that she and her husband are both of very low origin."

"No matter for her circle or her origin," said Cheston, "in our country the only acknowledged distinction should be that which is denoted by superiority of mind and manners."

Next day Lieutenant Cheston escorted Mrs. Marsden and Albina back to their own home – and a week afterwards he was sent unexpectedly on a cruise in the West Indies.

He returned in the spring, and found Mrs. Marsden more rational than he had ever known her, and Albina highly improved by a judicious course of reading which he had marked out for her, and still more by her intimacy with a truly genteel, highly talented, and very amiable family from the eastward, who had recently bought a house in the village, and in whose society she often wondered at the infatuation which had led her to fancy such a woman as Mrs. Washington Potts, with whom, of course, she never had any farther communication.

A recent and very large bequest to Bromley Cheston from a distant relation, made it no longer necessary that the young lieutenant should wait for promotion before he married Albina; and accordingly their union took place immediately on his return.

Before the Montagues left Philadelphia to prosecute their journey to the south, there arrived an acquaintance of theirs from England, who injudiciously "told the secrets of his prison-house," and

made known in whispers "not loud but deep," that Mr. Dudley Montague, of Normancourt Park, Hants, (alias Mr. John Wilkins, of Lamb's Conduit Street, Clerkenwell), had long been well-known in London as a reporter for a newspaper; that he had recently married a widow, the *ci-devant* governess of a Somers Town Boarding-school, who had drawn her ideas of fashionable life from the columns of the Morning Post, and who famished her pupils so much to her own profit that she had been able to retire on a sort of fortune. With the assistance of this fund, she and her daughter (the young lady was in reality the offspring of her mother's first marriage) had accompanied Mr. Wilkins across the Atlantic: all three assuming the lordly name of Montague, as one well calculated to strike the republicans with proper awe. The truth was, that for a suitable consideration proffered by a tory publisher, the *soi-disant* Mr. Montague had undertaken to add another octavo to the numerous volumes of gross misrepresentation and real ignorance that profess to contain an impartial account of the United States of America.

## MR. SMITH

Those of my readers who recollect the story of Mrs. Washington Potts, may not be sorry to learn that in less than two years after the marriage of Bromley Cheston and Albina, Mrs. Marsden was united to a southern planter of great wealth and respectability, with whom she had become acquainted during a summer excursion to Newport. Mrs. Selbourne (that being her new name) was now, as her letters denoted, completely in her element, presiding over a large establishment, mistress of twelve house-servants, and almost continually engaged in doing the honours of a spacious mansion to a round of company, or in complying with similar invitations from the leading people of a populous neighbourhood, or in reciprocating visits with the most fashionable inhabitants of the nearest city. Her only regret was that Mrs. Washington Potts could not "be there to see." But then as a set-off, Mrs. Selbourne rejoiced in the happy reflection, that a distance of several hundred miles placed a great gulf between herself and Aunt Quimby, from whose Vandal incursions she now felt a delightful sense of security. She was not, however, like most of her compatriots, a warm advocate for the universal diffusion of railroads; neither did she assent very cordially to the common remarks about this great invention, annihilating both time and space, and bringing "the north and the south, and the east and the west" into the same neighbourhood.

Bromley Cheston, having succeeded to a handsome inheritance by the demise of an opulent relative, in addition to his house in Philadelphia, purchased as a summer residence that of his mother-in-law on the banks of the Delaware, greatly enlarging and improving it, and adding to its little domain some meadow and woodland; also a beautiful piece of ground which he converted into a green lawn sloping down towards the river, and bounded on one side by a shady road that led to a convenient landing-place.

The happiness of Albina and her husband (who in the regular course of promotion became Captain Cheston) was much increased by the society of Bromley's sister Myrtilla, a beautiful, sprightly, and intelligent girl, whom they invited to live with them after the death of her maternal grandmother, an eastern lady, with whom she had resided since the loss of her parents, and who had left her a little fortune of thirty thousand dollars.

Their winters were passed in Philadelphia, where Albina found herself quite at home in a circle far superior to that of Mrs. Washington Potts, who was one of the first to visit Mrs. Cheston on her marriage. This visit was of course received with civility, but returned by merely leaving a card at the door. No notice whatever was taken of Mrs. Potts's second call; neither was she ever invited to the house.

When Cheston was not at sea, little was wanting to complete the perfect felicity of the family. It is true they were not entirely exempt from the occasional annoyances and petty vexations, inseparable from even the happiest state of human life; but these were only transient shadows, that, on passing away, generally served as topics of amusement, and caused them to wonder how trifles, diverting in the recollection, could have really so troubled them at the time of occurrence. Such, for instance, were the frequent visitations of Mrs. Quimby, who told them (after they had enlarged their villa, and bought a carriage and a tilbury), "Really, good people, now that things are all so genteel, and pleasant, and full-handed, I think I shall be apt to favour you with my company the greatest part of every summer. There's no danger of Billy Fairfowl and Mary being jealous. They always let me go and come just as I please; and if I was to stay away ten years, I do not believe they'd be the least affronted."

As the old lady had intimated, her visits, instead of being "few and far between," were many and close together. It is said you may get used to anything, and therefore the Chestons *did not* sell off their property and fly the country on account of Aunt Quimby. Luckily she never brought with her any of the Fairfowl family, her son-in-law having sufficient tact to avoid on principle all visiting intercourse with people who were beyond his sphere: for, though certain of being kindly treated by

the Chestons themselves, he apprehended that he and his would probably be looked down upon by persons whom they might chance to meet there. Mrs. Quimby, for her part, was totally obtuse to all sense of these distinctions.

One Monday evening, on his return from town, Captain Cheston brought his wife and sister invitations to a projected picnic party, among the managers of which were two of his intimate friends. The company was to consist chiefly of ladies and gentlemen from the city. Their design was to assemble on the following Thursday, at some pleasant retreat on the banks of the Delaware, and to recreate themselves with an unceremonious *fête champêtre*. "I invited them," continued the captain, "to make use of my grounds for the purpose. We can find an excellent place for them in the woods by the river side. Delham and Lonsgrave will be here to-morrow, to reconnoitre the capabilities of the place."

The ladies were delighted with the prospect of the picnic party; more especially on finding that most of the company were known to them.

"It will be charming," said Albina, "to have them near us, and to be able to supply them with many conveniences from our own house. You may be assured, dear Bromley, that I shall liberally do my part towards contributing to the picnicking. You know that our culinary preparations never go wrong now that I have more experience, good servants, and above all plenty to do with."

"How fortunate," said Myrtila Cheston, "that Mrs. Quimby left us this morning. This last visit has been so long that I think she will scarcely favour us with another in less than two or three weeks. I hope she will not hear that the picnic is to be on our place."

"There is no danger," replied Cheston; "Aunt Quimby cannot possibly know any of the persons concerned in it. And besides, I met her to-day in the street, and she told me that she was going to set out on Wednesday for Baltimore, to visit Billy Fairfowl's sister, Mrs. Bagnell: 'Also,' said she, 'it will take me from this time to that to pack my things, as I never before went so far from home, and I dare say, I shall stay in Baltimore all the rest of the fall; I don't believe when the Bagnells once have me with them, they'll let me come away much this side of winter.'"

"I sincerely hope they will not!" exclaimed Albina; "I am so glad that Nancy Fairfowl has married a Baltimorean. I trust they will make their house so pleasant to Aunt Quimby, that she will transfer her favour from us to them. You know she often tells us that Nancy and herself are as like as two peas, both in looks and ways; and from her account, Johnny Bagnell must be a third pea, exactly resembling both of them."

"And yet," observed Cheston, "people whose minds are of the same calibre, do not always assimilate as well as might be supposed. When *too* nearly alike, and too close to each other, they frequently rub together so as to grate exceedingly."

We will pass over the intervening days by saying, that the preparations for the picnic party were duly and successfully made: the arrangement of the ground being undertaken by Captain Cheston, and Lieutenants Delham and Lonsgrave, and completed with the taste, neatness, and judicious arrangement, which always distinguishes such things when done by officers, whether of army or navy.

The appointed Thursday arrived. It was a lovely day, early in September: the air being of that delightful and exhilarating temperature, that converts the mere sense of existence into pleasure. The heats of summer were over, and the sky had assumed its mildest tint of blue. All was calm and cool, and lovely, and the country seemed sleeping in luxurious repose. The grass, refreshed by the August rains, looked green as that of the "emerald isle;" and the forest trees had not yet begun to wear the brilliant colours of autumn, excepting here and there a maple whose foliage was already crimsoned. The orchards were loaded with fruit, glowing in ripeness; and the buckwheat fields, white with blossoms, perfumed the air with their honeyed fragrance. The rich flowers of the season were in full bloom. Birds of beautiful plumage still lingered in the woods, and were warbling their farewell notes previous to their return to a more southern latitude. The morning sunbeams danced and glittered

on the blue waters of the broad and brimming Delaware, as the mirrored surface reflected its green and fertile banks with their flowery meadows, embowering groves, and modestly elegant villas.

The ground allotted to the party was an open space in the woodlands, which ran along an elevated ridge, looking directly down on the noble river that from its far-off source in the Catskill mountains, first dividing Pennsylvania from New York and then from New Jersey, carries its tributary stream the distance of three hundred miles, till it widens into the dim and lonely bay whose last waves are blended with the dark-rolling Atlantic. Old trees of irregular and fantastic forms, leaning far over the water, grew on the extreme edge of this bank; and from its steep and crumbling side protruded their wildly twisted roots, fringed with long fibres that had been washed bare by the tide which daily overflowed the broad strip of gray sand, that margined the river. Part of an old fence, that had been broken down and carried away by the incursions of a spring freshet, still remained, at intervals, along the verge of the bank; and his ladies had prevailed on Captain Cheston not to repair it, as in its ruinous state it looked far more picturesque than if new and in good order. In clearing this part of the forest many of the largest and finest trees had been left standing, and beneath their shade seats were now dispersed for the company. In another part of the opening, a long table had been set under a sort of marquée, constructed of colours brought from the Navy Yard, and gracefully suspended to the wide-spreading branches of some noble oaks: the stars and stripes of the most brilliant flag in the world, blending in picturesque elegance with the green and clustering foliage. At a little distance, under a group of trees, whose original forms were hidden beneath impervious masses of the forest grape-vine, was placed a side-table for the reception of the provisions, as they were unpacked from the baskets; and a clear shady brook which wandered near, rippling over a bed of pebbles on its way down to the river, afforded an unlimited supply of "water clear as diamond spark," and made an excellent refrigerator for the wine bottles.

Most of the company were to go up in the early boat: purposing to return in the evening by the railroad. Others, who preferred making their own time, were to come in carriages. As soon as the bell of the steamboat gave notice of her approach, Captain Cheston, with his wife and sister, accompanied by Lieutenants Delham and Lonsgrave, went down to the landing-place to receive the first division of the picnic party, which was chiefly of young people, all with smiling countenances, and looking as if they anticipated a very pleasant little fête. The Chestons were prepared to say with Seged of Ethiopia, "This day shall be a day of happiness" – but as the last of the gay procession stepped from the landing-board, Aunt Quimby brought up the rear.

"Oh! Bromley," said Mrs. Cheston, in a low voice, to her husband, "there is our most *mal-à-propos* of aunts – I thought she was a hundred miles off. This is really too bad – what shall we do with her? On this day, too, of all days – "

"We can do nothing, but endeavour, as usual, to make the best of her," replied the captain; "but where did she pick up that common-looking man, whom she seems to be hauling along with her?"

Mrs. Quimby now came up, and after the first greeting, Albina and Myrtilla endeavoured to withdraw from her the attention of the rest of the company, whom they conducted for the present to the house; but she seized upon the captain, to whom she introduced her companion by the appellation of Mr. Smith. The stranger looked embarrassed, and seemed as if he could scarcely presume to take the offered hand of Captain Cheston, and muttered something about trespassing on hospitality, but Aunt Quimby interrupted him with – "Oh! nonsense, now, Mr. Smith – where's the use of being so shame-faced, and making apologies for what can't be helped? I dare say my nephew and niece wonder quite as much at seeing *me* here, supposing that I'm safe and sound at Nancy Bagnell's, in Baltimore. But are you sure my baggage is all on the barrow? Just step back, and see if the big blue bandbox is safe, and the little yellow one; I should not wonder if the porter tosses them off, or crushes in the lids. All men seem to have a spite at bandboxes."

Mr. Smith meekly obeyed: and Aunt Quimby, taking the arm of Cheston, walked with him towards the house.

"Tell me who this gentleman is," said Captain Cheston. "He cannot belong to any of the Smiths of 'Market, Arch, Race, and Vine, Chestnut, Walnut, Spruce, and Pine.'"

"No," replied Mrs. Quimby, "nor to the Smiths of the cross-streets neither – nor to those up in the Northern Liberties, nor them down in Southwark. If you mean that he is not a Philadelphia man, you've hit the nail on the head – but that's no reason there shouldn't be Smiths enough all over the world. However, the short and the long of it is this – I was to have started for Baltimore yesterday morning, bright and early, with Mr. and Mrs. Neverwait – but the shoemaker had not sent home my over-shoes, and the dyer had not finished my gray Canton crape shawl, that he was doing a cinnamon brown, and the milliner disappointed me in new-lining my bonnet; so I could not possibly go, you know, and the Neverwaits went without me. Well, the things *were* brought home last night, which was like coming a day after the fair. But as I was all packed up, I was bent upon going, somehow or other, this morning. So I made Billy Fairfowl take me down to the wharf, bag and baggage, to see if he could find anybody he knew to take charge of me to Baltimore. And there, as good luck would have it, we met with Mr. Smith, who has been several times in Billy's store, and bought domestics of him, and got acquainted with him; so that Billy, finding this poor Mr. Smith was a stranger, and a man that took no airs, and that did not set up for great things, got very sociable with him, and even invited him to tea. Now, when we met him on the wharf, Mr. Smith was quite a windfall for us, and he agreed to escort me to Baltimore, as of course he must, when he was asked. So, then, Billy being in a hurry to go to market for breakfast (before all the pick of the butter was gone), just bade me good-bye, and left me on the wharf, seeing what good hands I was in. Now, poor Mr. Smith being a stranger, and, of course, not so well used to steamboats as our own people, took me into the wrong one; for the New York and Baltimore boats were laying side by side, and seemed both mixed together, so that it was hard telling which was which, the crowd hiding everything from us. And after we got on board, I was so busy talking, and he a listening, and looking at the people, that we never found out our mistake till we were half-way up the river, instead of being half-way down it. And then I heard the ladies all round talking of a nic or a pic (or both I believe they called it), that they said was to be held on Captain Cheston's grounds. So, then, I pricked up my ears, and found that it was even so; and I told them that Captain Cheston was a near relation of mine, for his wife was own daughter to Mrs. Marsden that was, whose first husband was my sister Nelly's own son; and all about your marrying Albina, and what a handsome place you have, and how Mr. Smith and I had got into the wrong boat, and were getting carried off, being taken up the river instead of down."

"And what did the company say to all this?" inquired Cheston.

"Why, I don't exactly remember, but they must have said something; for I know those that were nearest stopped their own talk when I began. And, after awhile, I went across to the other side of the boat, where Mr. Smith was leaning over the railing, and looking at the foam flying from the wheels, (as if it was something new), and I pulled his sleeve, and told him we were quite in luck to-day, for we should be at a party without intending it. And he made a sort of humming and hawing about intruding himself (as he called it) without an invitation. But I told him to leave all that to me – I'd engage to pass him through. And he talked something of betaking himself to the nearest hotel after we landed, and waiting for the next boat down the river. However, I would not listen to that; and I made him understand that any how there could be no Baltimore to-day, as it was quite too late to get there now by any contrivance at all; and that we could go down with the other company this evening by the railroad, and take a fresh start to-morrow morning. Still he seemed to hold back; and I told him that as to our going to the party, all things had turned up as if it *was* to be, and I should think it a sin to fling such good luck aside, when it was just ready to drop into our mouths, and that he might never have another chance of being in such genteel company as long as he lived. This last hint seemed to do the business, for he gave a sort of a pleased smile, and made no more objection. And then I put him in mind that the people that owned the ground were my own niece and nephew, who were always crazy to see me, and have me with them; and I could answer for it they'd be just as glad

to see any of my acquaintance – and as to the eatables, I was sure *his* being there would not make a cent's worth of difference, for I was certain there'd be plenty, and oceans of plenty, and I told him only to go and look at the baskets of victuals that were going up in the boat; besides all that, I knew the Chestons would provide well, for they were never backward with anything."

She now stopped to take breath, and Cheston inquired if her son-in-law knew nothing more of Mr. Smith than from merely seeing him in his store.

"Oh! yes; did not I tell you we had him to tea? You need not mention it to anybody – but (if the truth must be told) Mr. Smith is an Englishman. The poor man can't help that, you know: and I'm sure I should never have guessed it, for he neither looks English nor talks English. He is not a bit like that impudent Mr. Montague, who took slices out of Albina's big plum-cake hours before the company came, at that great party she gave for Mrs. Washington Potts."

"Pshaw!" said Cheston.

"Yes, you may well pshaw at it. But after all, for my own part, I must say I enjoyed myself very much that evening. I had a great deal of pleasant talk. I was sorry, afterwards, that I did not stay down stairs to the last, to see if all the company took French leave like me. If they did, it must have been quite a pretty sight to see them go. By the bye (now I talk of French leave) did you hear that the Washington Potts have broke all to pieces and gone off to France to live upon the money that he made over to his wife to keep it from his creditors?"

"But, Mr. Smith – " resumed Cheston.

"Why, Bromley, what makes you so fidgety? Billy Fairfowl (though I say it that shouldn't say it) is not the man to ask people to tea unless he is sure they are pretty decent sort of folks. So he went first to the British Consul, and inquired about Mr. Smith, and described his look and dress just as he would a runaway 'prentice. And the Consul knew exactly who he meant, and told him he would answer for Mr. Smith's being a man of good character, and perfectly honest and respectable. And that, you know, is quite as much as need be said of anybody. So, then, we had him to tea, quite in a plain way; but he seemed very easily satisfied, and though there were huckleberries, and cucumbers, and dough-nuts, he did not eat a thing but bread and butter, and not much of that, and took no sugar in his tea, and only drank two cups. And Billy talked to him the whole evening about our factories, and our coal and iron: and he listened quite attentively, and seemed to understand very well, though he did not say much; and he kept awake all the time, which was very clever of him, and more than Billy is used to. He seems like a good-hearted man, for he saved little Jane from pulling the tea-waiter down upon her head, as she was coming out from under the table; and he ran and picked up Johnny, when he fell over the rockers of the big chair, and wiped the blood off his nose with his own clean handkerchief. I dare say he's a good soul; but he is very humble-minded, and seems so afraid of saying wrong that he hardly says anything. Here he comes, trudging along beside the porter; and I see he has got all the baggage safe, even the brown paper parcel and the calico bag. That's his own trunk, under all the rest."

Mr. Smith now came up, and inquired of Captain Cheston for the nearest inn, that he might remain there till a boat passed down for Philadelphia. "Why, Mr. Smith," interrupted Aunt Quimby, "where's the sense of being so backward? We ought to be thankful for our good luck in getting here on the very day of the picnic, even though we *did* come by mistake. And now you *are* here, it's all nonsense for you to run away, and go and mope by yourself at a country tavern. I suppose you are afraid you're not welcome; but I'll answer for you as well as myself."

Civility to the stranger required that Captain Cheston should second Mrs. Quimby; and he did so in terms so polite that Mr. Smith was induced, with much diffidence, to remain.

"Poor man!" said Aunt Quimby, in a low voice, to the captain, "between ourselves, it's plain enough that he is not much used to being among great people, and he's afraid of feeling like a fish out of water. He must have a very poor opinion of himself, for even at Billy Fairfowl's he did not

seem quite at home; though we all tried to encourage him, and I told him myself, as soon as we sat down to the tea-table, to make just as free as if he was in his own house."

Arrived at the mansion of the Chestons, Mrs. Quimby at first objected to changing her dress, which was a very rusty black silk, with a bonnet to match; declaring that she was sure nothing was expected of people who were on their travels, and that she saw no use in taking the trouble to unpack her baggage. She was, however, overruled by the representations of Albina, who offered to both unpack and re-pack for her. Accordingly she equipped herself in what she called her second-best suit. The gown was a thick rustling silk, of a very reddish brown, with a new inside kerchief of blue-tinted book muslin that had never been washed. Over her shoulders she pinned her Canton-crape shawl, whose brown tinge was entirely at variance with the shade of her gown. On her head was a stiff hard cap, trimmed with satin ribbon, of a still different brown colour, the ends of the bows sticking out horizontally, and scolloped into numerous points. She would not wear her best bonnet, lest it should be injured; and fortunately her worst was so small that she found, if she put it on, it would crush her second-best cap. She carried in one hand a stiff-starched handkerchief of imitation-cambric, which she considered too good to unfold; and with the other she held over her head a faded green parasol.

Thus equipped, the old lady set out with Captain and Mrs. Cheston for the scene of the picnic; the rest of the party being a little in advance of them. They saw Mr. Smith strolling about the lawn, and Mrs. Quimby called to him to come and give his arm to her niece, saying, "There, Albina, take him under your wing, and try to make him sociable, while I walk on with your husband. Bromley, how well you look in your navy-regimentals. I declare I'm more and more in luck. It is not everybody that can have an officer always ready and willing to 'squire them" – And the old lady (like many young ladies) unconsciously put on a different face and a different walk, while escorted by a gentleman in uniform.

"Bromley," continued Aunt Quimby, "I heard some of the picnic ladies in the boat saying that those which are to ride up are to bring a lion with them. This made me open my eyes, and put me all in quiver; so I could not help speaking out, and saying – I should make a real right down objection to his being let loose among the company, even if he was ever so tame. Then they laughed, and one of them said that a lion meant a great man; and asked me if I had never heard the term before. I answered that may be I had, but it must have slipped my memory; and that I thought it a great shame to speak of Christian people as if they were wild beasts."

"And who is this great man?" inquired Cheston.

"Oh! he's a foreigner from beyond sea, and he is coming with some of the ladies in their own carriage – Baron Somebody" —

"Baron Von Klingenberg," said Cheston, "I have heard of him."

"That's the very name. It seems he is just come from Germany, and has taken rooms at one of the tip-top hotels, where he has a table all to himself. I wonder how any man can bear to eat his victuals sitting up all alone, with not a soul to speak a word with. I think I should die if I had no body to talk to. Well – they said that this Baron is a person of very high *tone*, which I suppose means that he has a very loud voice – and from what I could gather, it's fashionable for the young ladies to fall in love with him, and they think it an honour to get a bow from him in Chesnut street, and they take him all about with them. And they say he has in his own country a castle that stands on banks of rind, which seems a strange foundation. Dear me – now we've got to the picnic place – how gay and pretty everything looks, and what heaps of victuals there must be in all those baskets, and oceans of drinkables in all those bottles and demijohns. Mercy on me – I pity the dish-washers – when will they get through all the dirty plates! And I declare! how beautiful the flags look! fixed up over the table just like bed-curtains – I am glad you have plenty of chairs here, besides the benches. – And only see! – if here a'n't cakes and lemonade coming round."

The old lady took her seat under one of the large trees, and entered unhesitatingly into whatever conversation was within her hearing; frequently calling away the Chestons to ask them questions or address to them remarks. The company generally divided into groups; some sat, some walked, some

talked; and some, retreating farther into the woods, amused themselves and each other with singing, or playing forfeits. There was, as is usual in Philadelphia assemblages, a very large proportion of handsome young ladies; and all were dressed in that consistent, tasteful, and decorous manner which distinguishes the fair damsels of the city of Penn.

In a short time Mrs. Quimby missed her protégée, and looking round for him she exclaimed – "Oh! if there is not Mr. Smith sitting on a rail, just back of me, all the time. Do come down off the fence, Mr. Smith. You'll find a much pleasanter seat on this low stump behind me, than to stay perched up there. Myrtilia Cheston, my dear, come here – I want to speak to you."

Miss Cheston had the amiability to approach promptly and cheerfully: though called away from an animated conversation with two officers of the navy, two of the army, and three young lawyers, who had all formed a semicircle round four of the most attractive belles: herself being the cynosure.

"Myrtilia," said Aunt Quimby, in rather a low voice, "do take some account of this poor forlorn man that's sitting behind me. He's so very backward, and thinks himself such a mere nobody, that I dare say he feels bad enough at being here without an invitation, and all among strangers too – though I've told him over and over that he need not have the least fear of being welcome. There now – there's a good girl – go and spirit him up a little. You know you are at home here on your brother's own ground."

"I scarcely know how to talk to an Englishman," replied Myrtilia, in a very low voice.

"Why, can't you ask him, if he ever in his life saw so wide a river, and if he ever in his life saw such big trees, and if he don't think our sun a great deal brighter than his, and if he ever smelt buckwheat before?"

Myrtilia turned towards Mr. Smith (and perceiving from his ill-suppressed smile that he had heard Mrs. Quimby's instructions) like Olivia in the play, she humoured the jest by literally following them, making a curtsy to the gentleman, and saying, "Mr. Smith, did you ever in your life see so wide a river? did you ever in your life see such big trees? don't you think our sun a great deal brighter than yours? and did you ever smell buckwheat before?"

"I have not had that happiness," replied Mr. Smith with a simpering laugh, as he rose from the old stump, and, forgetting that it was not a chair, tried to hand it to Myrtilia. She bowed in acknowledgment, placed herself on the seat – and for awhile endeavoured to entertain Mr. Smith, as he stood leaning (not picturesquely) against a portion of the broken fence.

In the mean time Mrs. Quimby continued to call on the attention of those around her. To some the old lady was a source of amusement, to others of disgust and annoyance. By this time they all understood who she was, and how she happened to be there. Fixing her eyes on a very dignified and fashionable looking young lady, whom she had heard addressed as Miss Lybrand, and (who with several others) was sitting nearly opposite, "Pray, Miss," said Aunt Quimby, "was your grandfather's name Moses?"

"It was," replied the young lady.

"Oh! then you must be a granddaughter of old Moses Lybrand, who kept a livery stable up in Race street; and his son Aaron always used to drive the best carriage, after the old man was past doing it himself. Is your father's name Aaron?"

"No, madam," said Miss Lybrand – looking very red – "My father's name is Richard."

"Richard – he must have been one of the second wife's children. Oh! I remember seeing him about when he was a little boy. He had a curly head, and on week days generally wore a gray jacket and corduroy trowsers; but he had a nice bottle-green suit for Sunday. Yes, yes – they went to our church, and sat up in the gallery. And he was your father, was he? Then Aaron must have been your own uncle. He was a very careful driver for a young man. He learnt of his father. I remember just after we were first married, Mr. Quimby hiring Moses Lybrand's best carriage to take me and my bridesmaids and groomsmen on a trip to Germantown. It was a yellow coachee with red curtains, and held us all very well with close packing. In those days people like us took their wedding rides

to Germantown and Frankford and Darby, and ordered a dinner at a tavern with custards and whips, and came home in the evening. And the high-flyers, when *they* got married, went as far as Chester or Dunks's Ferry. They did not then start off from the church door and scour the roads all the way to Niagara just because they were brides and grooms; as if that was any reason for flying their homes directly. But pray what has become of your uncle Aaron?"

"I do not know," said the young lady, looking much displeased; "I never heard of him."

"But did not you tell me your grandfather's name was Moses?"

"There may have been other Moses Lybrands."

"Was not he a short pockmarked man, that walked a little lame, with something of a cast in his right eye: or, I won't be positive, may be it was in the left?"

"I am very sure papa's father was no such looking person," replied Miss Lybrand, "but I never saw him – he died before I was born – "

"Poor old man," resumed Mrs. Quimby, "if I remember right, Moses became childish many years before his death."

Miss Lybrand then rose hastily, and proposed to her immediate companions a walk farther into the woods; and Myrtilla, leaving the vicinity of Mr. Smith, came forward and joined them: her friends making a private signal to her not to invite the aforesaid gentleman to accompany them.

Aunt Quimby saw them depart, and looking round said – "Why, Mr. Smith – have the girls given you the slip? But to be sure, they meant you to follow them!"

Mr. Smith signified that he had not courage to do so without an invitation, and that he feared he had already been tiring Miss Cheston.

"Pho, pho," said Mrs. Quimby, "you are quite too humble. Pluck up a little spirit, and run after the girls."

"I believe," replied he, "I cannot take such a liberty."

"Then I'll call Captain Cheston to introduce you to some more gentlemen. Here – Bromley – "

"No – no," said Mr. Smith, stopping her apprehensively; "I would rather not intrude any farther upon his kindness."

"I declare you are the shame-facedest man I ever saw in my life. Well, then, you can walk about, and look at the trees and bushes. There's a fine large buttonwood, and there's a sassafras; or you can go to the edge of the bank and look at the river and watch how the tide goes down and leaves the splatter-docks standing in the mud. See how thick they are at low water – I wonder if you couldn't count them. And may be you'll see a wood-shallop pass along, or may be a coal-barge. And who knows but a sturgeon may jump out of the water, and turn head over heels and back again – it's quite a handsome sight!"

Good Mr. Smith did as he was bidden, and walked about and looked at things, and probably counted the splatter-docks, and perhaps saw a fish jump.

"It's all bashfulness – nothing in the world but bashfulness," pursued Mrs. Quimby; "that's the only reason Mr. Smith don't talk."

"For my part," said a very elegant looking girl, "I am perfectly willing to impute the taciturnity of Mr. Smith (and that of all other silent people) to modesty. But yet I must say, that as far as I have had opportunities of observing, most men above the age of twenty have sufficient courage to talk, if they know what to say. When the head is well furnished with ideas, the tongue cannot habitually refrain from giving them utterance."

"That's a very good observation," said Mrs. Quimby, "and suits *me* exactly. But as to Mr. Smith, I do believe it's all bashfulness with him. Between ourselves (though the British consul warrants him respectable) I doubt whether he was ever in such genteel society before; and may be he thinks it his duty to listen and not to talk, poor man. But then he ought to know, that in our country he need not be afraid of nobody: and that here all people are equal, and one is as good as another."

"Not exactly," said the young lady, "we have in America, as in Europe, numerous gradations of mind, manners, and character. Politically we are equal, as far as regards the rights of citizens and the protection of the laws; and also we have no privileged orders. But individually it is difficult for the refined and the vulgar, the learned and the ignorant, the virtuous and the vicious to associate familiarly and indiscriminately, even in a republic."

The old lady looked mystified for a few moments, and then proceeded – "As you say, people's different. We can't be hail fellow well met, with Tom, Dick, and Harry – but for my part I think myself as good as anybody!"

No one contradicted this opinion, and just then a gentleman came up and said to the young lady – "Miss Atwood, allow me to present you with a sprig of the last wild roses of the season. I found a few still lingering on a bush in a shady lane just above."

"I bid their blossoms in my bonnet wave,"

said Miss Atwood – inserting them amid one of the riband bows.

"Atwood – Atwood," said Aunt Quimby, "I know the name very well. Is not your father Charles Atwood, who used to keep a large wholesale store in Front street?"

"I have the happiness of being that gentleman's daughter," replied the young lady.

"And you live up Chestnut now, don't you – among the fashionables?"

"My father's house *is* up Chestnut street."

"Your mother was a Ross, wasn't she?"

"Her maiden name *was* Ross."

"I thought so," proceeded Mrs. Quimby; "I remember your father very well. He was the son of Tommy Atwood, who kept an ironmonger's shop down Second street by the New Market. Your grandfather was a very obliging man, rather fat. I have often been in his store, when we lived down that way. I remember once of buying a waffle-iron of him, and when I tried it and found it did not make a pretty pattern on the waffles, I took it back to him to change it: but having no other pattern, he returned me the money as soon as I asked him. And another time, he had the kitchen tongs mended for me without charging a cent, when I put him in mind that I had bought them there; which was certainly very genteel of him. And no wonder he made a fortune; as all people do that are obliging to their customers, and properly thankful to them. Your grandfather had a brother, Jemmy Atwood, who kept a china shop up Third street. He was your great-uncle, and he married Sally Dickison, whose father, old Adam Dickison, was in the shoemaking line, and died rich. I have heard Mr. Quimby tell all about them. He knew all the family quite well, and he once had a sort of notion of Sally Dickison himself, before he got acquainted with me. Old Adam Dickison was a very good man, but he and his wife were rather too fond of family names. He called one of his daughters Sarah, after his mother, and another Sarah, after his wife; for he said 'there couldn't be too many Sally Dickisons.' But they found afterwards they could not get along without tacking Ann to one of the Sarahs, and Jane to the other. Then they had a little girl whom they called Debby, after some aunt Deborah. But little Debby died, and next they had a boy; yet rather than the name should be lost, they christened him Debbius. I wish I could remember whether Debbius was called after the little Debby or the big one. Sometimes I think it was one and sometimes t'other – I dare say Miss Atwood, you can tell, as you belong to the family?"

"I am glad that I can set this question at rest," replied Miss Atwood, smiling heroically; "I have heard the circumstance mentioned when my father has spoken of his great-uncle Jemmy, the chinaman, and of the shoemaker's family into which uncle Jemmy married, and in which were the two Sallys. Debbius was called equally after his sister and his aunt."

Then turning to the very handsome and *distingué*-looking young gentleman who had brought her the flowers, and who had seemed much amused at the foregoing dialogue, Miss Atwood took his hand, and said to Aunt Quimby: "Let me present to you a grandson of that very Debbius, Mr.

Edward Symmington, my sort of cousin; and son of Mr. Symmington, the lawyer, who chanced to marry Debbius's daughter."

Young Symmington laughed, and, after telling Miss Atwood that she did everything with a good grace, he proposed that they should join some of their friends who were amusing themselves further up in the woods. Miss Atwood took his arm, and, bowing to Mrs. Quimby, they departed.

"That's a very pleasant young lady," said she; "I am glad I've got acquainted with her. She's very much like her grandfather, the ironmonger; her nose is the very image of old Benny's."

Fearing that *their* turn might come next, all the young people now dispersed from the vicinity of Aunt Quimby, who, accosting a housewifely lady that had volunteered to superintend the arrangements of the table, proposed going with her to see the baskets unpacked.

The remainder of the morning passed pleasantly away; and about noon, Myrtilia Cheston and her companions, returning from their ramble, gave notice that the carriages from town were approaching. Shortly after, there appeared at the entrance of the wood, several vehicles filled with ladies and gentlemen, who had preferred this mode of conveyance to coming up in the early boat. Most of the company went to meet them, being curious to see exactly who alighted.

When the last carriage drew up, there was a buzz all round: "There is the Baron! there is the Baron Von Klingenberg; as usual, with Mrs. Blake Bentley and her daughters!"

After the new arrivals had been conducted by the Chestons to the house, and adjusted their dresses, they were shown into what was considered the drawing-room part of the woods, and accommodated with seats. But it was very evident that Mrs. Blake Bentley's party were desirous of keeping chiefly to themselves, talking very loudly to each other, and seemingly resolved to attract the attention of every one round.

"Bromley," said Mrs. Quimby, having called Captain Cheston to her, "is that a baron?"

"That is the Baron Von Klingenberg."

"Well, between ourselves, he's about as ugly a man as ever I laid my eyes on. At least, he looks so at that distance; a clumsy fellow, with high shoulders and a round back, and his face all over hair, and as bandy as he can be, besides; and he's not a bit young, neither."

"Barons never seem to me young," said Miss Turretville, a young lady of the romantic school, "but Counts always do."

"I declare even Mr. Smith is better looking," pursued Aunt Quimby, fixing her eyes on the baron; "don't you think so, Miss?"

"I think nothing about him," replied the fair Turretville.

"Mr. Smith," said Myrtilia, "perhaps is not actually ugly, and, if properly dressed, might look tolerably; but he is too meek and too weak. I wasted much time in trying to entertain him, as I sat under the tree; but he only looked down and simpered, and scarcely ventured a word in reply. One thing is certain, I shall take no further account of him."

"Now, Myrtilia, it's a shame, to set your face against the poor man in this way. I dare say he is very good."

"That is always said of stupid people."

"No doubt it would brighten him wonderfully, if you were to dance with him when the ball begins."

"Dance!" said Myrtilia, "dance with *him*. Do you suppose he knows either a step or a figure? No, no! I shall take care never to exhibit myself as Mr. Smith's partner, and I beg of you, Aunt Quimby, on no account to hint such a thing to him. Besides, I am already engaged three sets deep," and she ran away, on seeing that Mr. Smith was approaching.

"Well, Mr. Smith," said the old lady, "have you been looking at the shows of the place? And now the greatest show of all has arrived – the Baron of Clinkanbeg. Have you seen him?"

"I believe I have," replied Mr. Smith.

"You wander about like a lost sheep, Mr. Smith," said Aunt Quimby, protectingly, "and look as if you had not a word to throw at a dog; so sit down and talk to *me*. There's a dead log for you. And now you shan't stir another step till dinner-time." Mr. Smith seated himself on the dead log, and Mrs. Quimby proceeded: "I wish, though, we could find places a little nearer to the baron and his ladies, and hear them talk. Till to-day, I never heard a nobleman speak in my life, having had no chance. But, after all, I dare say they have voices much like other people. Did you ever happen to hear any of them talk, when you lived in England?"

"Once or twice, I believe," said Mr. Smith.

"Of course – excuse me, Mr. Smith – but, of course, they didn't speak to *you*?"

"If I recollect rightly, they chanced to have occasion to do so."

"On business, I suppose. Do noblemen go to shops themselves and buy their own things? Mr. Smith, just please to tell me what line you are in."

Mr. Smith looked very red, and cast down his eyes. "I am in the tin line," said he, after a pause.

"The tin line! Well, never mind; though, to be sure, I did not expect you were a tinner. Perhaps you do a little also in the japan way?"

"No," replied Mr. Smith, magnanimously, "I deal in nothing but tin, plain tin!"

"Well, if you think of opening a shop in Philadelphia, I am pretty sure Billy Fairfowl will give you his custom; and I'll try to get Mrs. Pattypan and Mrs. Kettleworth to buy all their tins of you."

Mr. Smith bowed his head in thankfulness.

"One thing I'm sure of," continued Aunt Quimby, "you'll never be the least above your business. And, I dare say, after you get used to our American ways, and a little more acquainted with our people, you'll be able to take courage and hold up your head, and look about quite pert."

Poor Mr. Smith covered his face with his hands and shook his head, as if repelling the possibility of his ever looking pert.

The Baron Von Klingenberg and his party were all on chairs, and formed an impervious group. Mrs. Blake Bentley sat on one side of him, her eldest daughter on the other, the second and third Miss Bentleys directly in front, and the fourth, a young lady of eighteen, who affected infantine simplicity and passed for a child, seated herself innocently on the grass at the baron's feet. Mrs. Bentley was what some call a fine-looking woman, being rather on a large scale, with fierce black eyes, a somewhat acquiline nose, a set of very white teeth (from the last new dentist), very red cheeks, and a profusion of dark ringlets. Her dress, and that of her daughters, was always of the most costly description, their whole costume being made and arranged in an ultra fashionable manner. Around the Bentley party was a circle of listeners, and admirers, and enviers; and behind that circle was another and another. Into the outworks of the last, Aunt Quimby pushed her way, leading, or rather pulling, the helpless Mr. Smith along with her.

The Baron Von Klingenberg (to do him justice) spoke our language with great facility, his foreign accent being so slight that many thought they could not perceive it at all. Looking over the heads of the ladies immediately around him, he levelled his opera-glass at all who were within his view, occasionally inquiring about them of Mrs. Blake Bentley, who also could not see without her glass. She told him the names of those whom she considered the most fashionable, adding, confidentially, a disparaging remark upon each. Of a large proportion of the company, she affected, however, to know nothing, replying to the baron's questions with: "Oh! I really cannot tell you. They are people whom one does not know – very respectable, no doubt; but not the sort of persons one meets in society. You must be aware that on these occasions the company is always more or less mixed, for which reason I generally bring my own party along with me."

"This assemblage," said the baron, "somewhat reminds me of the annual *fêtes* I give to my serfs in the park that surrounds my castle, at the cataract of the Rhine."

Miss Turretville had just come up, leaning on the arm of Myrtilla Cheston. "Let us try to get nearer to the baron," said she; "he is talking about castles. Oh! I am so glad that I have been introduced

to him. I met him the other evening at Mrs. De Mingle's select party, and he took my fan out of my hand and fanned himself with it. There is certainly an elegant ease about European gentlemen that our Americans can never acquire."

"Where is the ease and elegance of Mr. Smith?" thought Myrtilia, as she looked over at that forlorn individual shrinking behind Aunt Quimby.

"As I was saying," pursued the baron, lolling back in his chair and applying to his nose Mrs. Bentley's magnificent essence-bottle, "when I give these *fêtes* to my serfs, I regale them with Westphalia hams from my own hunting-grounds, and with hock from my own vineyards."

"Dear me! ham and hock!" ejaculated Mrs. Quimby.

"Baron," said Miss Turretville, "I suppose you have visited the Hartz mountains?"

"My castle stands on one of them."

"Charming! Then you have seen the Brocken?"

"It is directly in front of my ramparts."

"How delightful! Do you never imagine that on a stormy night you hear the witches riding through the air, to hold their revels on the Brocken? Are there still brigands in the Black Forest?"

"Troops of them. The Black Forest is just back of my own woods. The robbers were once so audacious as to attack my castle, and we had a bloody fight. But we at length succeeded in taking all that were left alive."

"What a pity! Was their captain anything like Charles de Moor?"

"Just such a man."

"Baron," observed Myrtilia, a little mischievously, "the situation of your castle must be *unique*; in the midst of the Hartz mountains, at the falls of the Rhine, with the Brocken in front, and the Black Forest behind."

"You doat on the place, don't you?" asked Miss Turretville. "Do you live there always?"

"No; only in the hunting season. I am equally at home in all the capitals of the continent. I might, perhaps, be chiefly at my native place, Vienna, only my friend, the emperor, is never happy but when I am with him; and his devotion to me is rather overwhelming. The truth is, one gets surfeited with courts, and kings, and princes; so I thought it would be quite refreshing to take a trip to America, having great curiosity to see what sort of a place it is. I recollect, at the last court ball, the emperor was teasing me to waltz with his cousin, the Archduchess of Hesse Hoblingen, who, he feared, would be offended if I neglected her. But her serene highness dances as if she had a cannon-ball chained to each foot, and so I got off by flatly telling my friend the emperor that if women chose to go to balls in velvet and ermine, and with coronets on their heads, they might get princes or some such people to dance with them; as for my part, it was rather excruciating to whirl about with persons in heavy royal robes!"

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Miss Turretville, "did you venture to talk so to an emperor? Of course before next day you were loaded with chains and immured in a dungeon; from which I suppose you escaped by a subterranean passage."

"Not at all; my old crony the emperor knows his man; so he only laughed and slapped me on the shoulder, and I took his arm, and we sauntered off together to the other end of the grand saloon. I think I was in my hussar uniform; I recollect that evening I broke my quizzing glass, and had to borrow the Princess of Saxe Blinkenberg's."

"Was it very elegant – set round with diamonds?" asked Miss Matilda Bentley, putting up to her face a hand on which glittered a valuable brilliant.

"Quite likely it was, but I never look at diamonds; one gets so tired of them. I have not worn any of mine these seven years; I often joke with my friend Prince Esterhazy about his diamond coat, that he *will* persist in wearing on great occasions. Its glitter really incommodes my eyes when he happens to be near me, as he generally is. Whenever he moves you may track him by the gems that drop from it, and you may hear him far off by their continual tinkling as they fall."

"Only listen to that, Mr. Smith," said Aunt Quimby aside to her protégée, "I do not believe there is such a man in the world as that Hester Hazy with his diamond coat, that he's telling all this rigmarole about. It sounds like one of Mother Bunch's tales."

"I rather think there is such a man," said Mr. Smith.

"Nonsense, Mr. Smith, why you're a greater goose than I supposed!"

Mr. Smith assented by a meek bow.

Dinner was now announced. The gentlemen conducted the ladies, and Aunt Quimby led Mr. Smith; but she could not prevail on him to take a seat beside her, near the head of the table, and directly opposite to the Baron and his party. He humbly insisted on finding a place for himself very low down, and seemed glad to get into the neighbourhood of Captain Cheston, who presided at the foot.

The Blake Bentley party all levelled their glasses at Aunt Quimby; but the old lady stood fire amazingly well, being busily engaged in preparing her silk gown against the chance of injury from any possible accident, tucking a napkin into her belt, pinning a pocket handkerchief across the body of her dress, turning up her cuffs, and tying back the strings of her cap to save the ribbon from grease-spots.

The dinner was profuse, excellent, and handsomely arranged: and for a while most of the company were too earnestly occupied in satisfying their appetites to engage much in conversation. Aunt Quimby sent a waiter to Captain Cheston to desire him to take care of poor Mr. Smith: which message the waiter thought it unnecessary to deliver.

Mrs. Blake Bentley and her daughter Matilda sat one on each side of the Baron, and showed rather more assiduity in helping him than is customary from ladies to gentlemen. Also their solicitude in anticipating his wants was a work of super-erogation, for the Baron could evidently take excellent care of himself, and was unremitting in his applications to every one round him for everything within their reach, and loud and incessant in his calls to the waiters for clean plates and clean glasses.

When the dessert was set on, and the flow of soul was succeeding to the feast which, whether of reason or not, had been duly honoured, Mrs. Quimby found leisure to look round, and resume her colloquy.

"I believe, madam, your name is Bentley," said she to the lofty looking personage directly opposite.

"I am Mrs. Blake Bentley," was the reply, with an imperious stare that was intended to frown down all further attempts at conversation. But Aunt Quimby did not comprehend repulsion, and had never been silenced in her life – so she proceeded —

"I remember your husband very well. He was a son of old Benny Bentley up Second street, that used to keep the sign of the Adam and Eve, but afterwards changed it to the Liberty Tree. His wife was a Blake – that was the way your husband came by his name. Her father was an upholsterer, and she worked at the trade before she was married. She made two bolsters and three pillows for me at different times; though I'm not quite sure it was not two pillows and three bolsters. He had a brother, Billy Blake, that was a painter: so he must have been your husband's uncle."

"Excuse me," said Mrs. Blake Bentley, "I don't understand what you are talking about. But I'm very sure there were never any artist people in the family."

"Oh! Billy Blake was a painter and glazier both," resumed Mrs. Quimby; "I remember him as well as if he was my own brother. We always sent for him to mend our broken windows. I can see him now – coming with his glass box and his putty. Poor fellow, he was employed to put a new coat of paint on Christ Church steeple, which we thought would be a good job for him: but the scaffold gave way and he fell down and broke his leg. We lived right opposite, and saw him tumble. It's a mercy he wasn't killed right out. He was carried home on a hand-barrow. I remember the afternoon as well as if it were yesterday. We had a pot-pie for dinner that day; and I happened to have on a new calico gown, a green ground with a yellow sprig in it. I have some of the pieces now in patch-work."

Mrs. Blake Bentley gave Mrs. Quimby a look of unqualified disdain, and then turning to the baron, whispered him to say something that might stop the mouth of that abominable old woman. And by way of beginning she observed aloud, "Baron, what very fine plums these are!"

"Yes," said the baron, helping himself to them profusely, "and apropos to plums – one day when I happened to be dining with the king of Prussia, there were some very fine peaches at table (we were sitting, you know, trifling, over the dessert), and the king said to me, 'Klingenberg, my dear fellow, let's try which of us can first break that large looking-glass by shooting a peach-stone at it.'"

"Dear me! what a king!" interrupted Mrs. Quimby, "and now I look at you again, sir (there, just now, with your head turned to the light), there's something in your face that puts me in mind of Jacob Stimbel, our Dutch young man that used to live with us and help to do the work. Mr. Quimby bought him at the wharf out of a redemptioner ship. He was to serve us three years: but before his time was up he ran away (as they often do) and went to Lancaster, and set up his old trade of a carpenter, and married a bricklayer's daughter, and got rich and built houses, and had three or four sons – I think I heard that one of them turned out a pretty bad fellow. I can see Jake Stimbel now, carrying the market-basket after me, or scrubbing the pavement. Whenever I look at you I think of him; may be he was some relation of yours, as you both came from Germany?"

"A relation of mine, madam!" said the Baron.

"There now – there's Jake Stimbel to the life. He had just that way of stretching up his eyes and drawing down his mouth when he did not know what to say, which was usually the case after he stayed on errands."

The baron contracted his brows, and bit in his lips.

"Fix your face as you will," continued Mrs. Quimby, "you are as like him as you can look. I am sure I ought to remember Jacob Stimbel, for I had all the trouble of teaching him to do his work, besides learning him to talk American; and as soon as he had learnt, he cleared himself off, as I told you, and ran away from us."

The baron now turned to Matilda Bentley, and endeavoured to engage her attention by an earnest conversation in an under tone; and Mrs. Bentley looked daggers at Aunt Quimby, who said in a low voice to a lady that sat next to her, "What a pity Mrs. Bentley has such a violent way with her eyes. She'd be a handsome woman if it was not for that."

Then resuming her former tone, the impenetrable old lady continued, "Some of these Dutch people that came over German redemptioners, and were sold out of ships, have made great fortunes." And then turning to a lady who sat on the other side, she proceeded to enumerate various wealthy and respectable German families whose grandfathers and grandmothers had been sold out of ships. Bromley Cheston, perceiving that several of the company were wincing under this infliction, proposed a song from one of the young officers whom he knew to be an accomplished vocalist. This song was succeeded by several others, and during the singing the Blake Bentley party gradually slipped away from the table.

After dinner the company withdrew and dispersed themselves among the trees, while the servants, &c., were dining. Mrs. Cheston vainly did her utmost to prevail on Aunt Quimby to go to the house and take a *siesta*. "What for?" said Mrs. Quimby, "why should I go to sleep when I ain't a bit sleepy. I never was wider awake in my life. No, no – these parties don't come every day; and I'll make the most of this now I have had the good luck to be at it. But, bless me! now I think of it, I have not laid eyes on Mr. Smith these two hours – I hope he is not lost. When did he leave the table? Who saw him go? He's not used to being in the woods, poor man!"

The sound of the tambourine now denoted the approach of the musicians, and the company adjourned to the dancing ground, which was a wide opening in the woods shaded all round with fine trees, under which benches had been placed. For the orchestra a little wooden gallery had been erected about eight feet from the ground, running round the trunk and amid the spreading boughs of an immense hickory.

The dancers had just taken their places for the first set, when they were startled by the shrieks of a woman, which seemed to ascend from the river-beach below. The gentlemen and many of the ladies ran to the edge of the bank to ascertain the cause, and Aunt Quimby, looking down among the first, exclaimed, "Oh! mercy! if there isn't Mr. Smith a collaring the baron, and Miss Matilda a screaming for dear life!"

"The baron collaring Mr. Smith, you mean," said Myrtila, approaching the bank.

"No, no – I mean as I say. Why who'd think it was in Mr. Smith to do such a thing! Oh! see, only look how he shakes him. And now he gives him a kick, only think of doing all that to a baron! but I dare say he deserves it. He looks more like Jake Stimbel than ever."

Captain Cheston sprung down the bank (most of the other gentlemen running after him), and immediately reaching the scene of action rescued the foreigner, who seemed too frightened to oppose any effectual resistance to his assailant.

"Mr. Smith," said Captain Cheston, "what is the meaning of this outrage, – and in the presence of a lady, too!"

"The lady must excuse me," replied Mr. Smith, "for it is in her behalf I have thus forgotten myself so far as to chastise on the spot a contemptible villain. Let us convey Miss Bentley up the bank, for she seems greatly agitated, and I will then explain to the gentlemen the extraordinary scene they have just witnessed."

"Only hear Mr. Smith, how he's talking out!" exclaimed Aunt Quimby. "And there's the baron-fellow putting up his coat collar and sneaking off round the corner of the bank. I'm so glad he's turned out a scamp!"

Having reached the top of the bank, Matilda Bentley, who had nearly fainted, was laid on a bench and consigned to the care of her mother and sisters. A flood of tears came to her relief, and while she was indulging in them, Mrs. Bentley joined the group who were assembled round Mr. Smith and listening to his narrative.

Mr. Smith explained that he knew this *soi-disant* Baron Von Klingenberg to be an impostor and a swindler. That he had, some years since, under another name, made his appearance in Paris, as an American gentleman of German origin, and large fortune; but soon gambled away all his money. That he afterwards, under different appellations, visited the principal cities of the continent, but always left behind the reputation of a swindler. That he had seen him last in London, in the capacity of valet to the real Baron Von Klingenberg, who, intending a visit to the United States, had hired him as being a native of America, and familiar with the country and its customs. But an unforeseen circumstance having induced that gentleman to relinquish this transatlantic voyage, his American valet robbed him of a large sum of money and some valuable jewels, stole also the letters of introduction which had been obtained by the real Baron, and with them had evidently been enabled to pass himself for his master. To this explanation, Mr. Smith added that while wandering among the trees on the edge of the bank, he had seen the impostor on the beach below, endeavouring to persuade Miss Bentley to an elopement with him; proposing that they should repair immediately to a place in the neighbourhood, where the railroad cars stopped on their way to New York, and from thence proceed to that city, adding, – "You know there is no overtaking a railroad car, so all pursuit of us will be in vain; besides, when once married all will be safe, as you are of age and mistress of your own fortune." "Finding," continued Mr. Smith, "that he was likely to succeed in persuading Miss Bentley to accompany him, I could no longer restrain my indignation, which prompted me to rush down the bank and adopt summary measures in rescuing the young lady from the hands of so infamous a scoundrel, whom nothing but my unwillingness to disturb the company prevented me from exposing as soon as I saw him."

"Don't believe him," screamed Mrs. Blake Bentley; "Mr. Smith indeed! Who is to take *his* word? Who knows what Mr. Smith is?"

"I do," said a voice from the crowd; and there stepped forward a gentlemen, who had arrived in a chaise with a friend about half an hour before. "I had the pleasure of knowing him intimately in England, when I was minister to the court of St. James's."

"May be you bought your tins at his shop," said Aunt Quimby.

The ex-ambassador in a low voice exchanged a few words with Mr. Smith; and then taking his hand, presented him as the Earl of Huntingford, adding, "The only tin he deals in is that produced by his extensive mines in Cornwall."

The whole company were amazed into a silence of some moments: after which there was a general buzz of favourable remark; Captain Cheston shook hands with him, and all the gentlemen pressed forward to be more particularly introduced to Lord Huntingford.

"Dear me!" said Aunt Quimby; "to think that I should have been so sociable with a lord – and a real one too – and to think how he drank tea at Billy Fairfowl's in the back parlour, and ate bread and butter just like any other man – and how he saved Jane, and picked up Johnny – I suppose I must not speak to you now, Mr. Smith, for I don't know how to begin calling you my lord. And you don't seem like the same man, now that you can look and talk like other people: and (excuse my saying so) even your dress looks genteeler."

"Call me still Mr. Smith, if you choose," replied Lord Huntingford; and, turning to Captain Cheston, he continued – "Under that name I have had opportunities of obtaining much knowledge of your *unique* and interesting country: – knowledge that will be useful to me all the remainder of my life, and that I could not so well have acquired in my real character."

He then explained, that being tired of travelling in Europe, and having an earnest desire to see America thoroughly, and more particularly to become acquainted with the state of society among the middle classes (always the truest samples of national character), he had, on taking his passage in one of the Liverpool packets, given his name as Smith, and put on the appearance of a man in very common life, resolving to preserve his incognito as long as he could. His object being to observe and to listen, and fearing that if he talked much he might inadvertently betray himself, he endeavoured to acquire a habit of taciturnity. As is frequently the case, he rather overdid his assumed character: and was much amused at perceiving himself rated somewhat below mediocrity, and regarded as poor Mr. Smith.

"But where is that Baron fellow?" said Mrs. Quimby; "I dare say he has sneaked off and taken the railroad himself, while we were all busy about Lord Smith."

"He has – he has!" sobbed Miss Bentley; who in spite of her grief and mortification, had joined the group that surrounded the English nobleman; "and he has run away with my beautiful diamond ring."

"Did he steal it from your finger?" asked Aunt Quimby, eagerly; "because if he did, you can send a constable after him."

"I shall do no such thing," replied Matilda, tartly; then turning to her mother she added, "It was when we first went to walk by the river side. He took my hand and kissed it, and proposed exchanging rings – and so I let him have it – and he said he did not happen to have any ring of his own about him, but he would give me a magnificent one that had been presented to him by some emperor or king."

"Now I think of it," exclaimed Mrs. Bentley, "he never gave me back my gold essence-bottle with the emerald stopper."

"Now I remember," said Miss Turretville, "he did not return me the beautiful fan he took out of my hand the other evening at Mrs. De Mingle's. And I doubt also if he restored her diamond opera glass to the Princess of Saxe Blinkinberg."

"The Princess of Saxe Fiddlestick!" exclaimed Aunt Quimby; "do you suppose he ever really had anything to do with such people? Between ourselves, I thought it was all fudge the whole time he was trying to make us believe he was hand and glove with women that had crowns on their heads, and men with diamond coats, and kings that shot peach stones. The more he talked, the more he looked

like Jacob Stimbel – I'm not apt to forget people, so it would be strange if I did not remember our Jake; and I never saw a greater likeness."

"Well, for my part," said Miss Turretville, candidly, "I really *did* think he had serfs, and a castle with ramparts, and I did believe in the banditti, and the captain just like Charles De Moor. And I grieved, as I often do, that here, in America, we had no such things."

"Pity we should!" remarked Aunt Quimby.

To be brief: the Bentleys, after what had passed, thought it best to order their carriage and return to the city: and on their ride home there was much recrimination between the lady and her eldest daughter; Matilda declaring, that she would never have thought of encouraging the addresses of such an ugly fellow as the baron, had not her mother first put it into her head. And as to the projected elopement, she felt very certain of being forgiven for that as soon as she came out a baroness.

After the departure of the Bentleys, and when the excitement, caused by the events immediately preceding it, had somewhat subsided, it was proposed that the dancing should be resumed, and Lord Huntingford opened the ball with Mrs. Cheston, and proved that he could dance, and talk, and look extremely well. As soon as she was disengaged, he solicited Myrtilla's hand for the next set, and she smilingly assented to his request. Before they began, Aunt Quimby took an opportunity of saying to her: "Well, Myrtilla; after all you are going to exhibit yourself, as you call it, with Mr. Smith."

"Oh! Aunt Quimby, you must not remember anything that was said about him while he was incog – "

"Yes, and now he's out of cog it's thought quite an honour to get a word or a look from him. Well – well – whether as poor simple Mr. Smith, or a great lord that owns whole tin mines, he'll always find *me* exactly the same; now I've got over the first flurry of his being found out."

"I have no doubt of that, Aunt Quimby," replied Myrtilla, giving her hand to Lord Huntingford, who just then came up to lead her to the dance.

The afternoon passed rapidly away, with infinite enjoyment to the whole company; all of whom seemed to feel relieved by the absence of the Blake Bentley party. Aunt Quimby was very assiduous in volunteering to introduce ladies to Lord Smith, as she called him, and chaperoned him more than ever.

The Chestons, perfectly aware that if Mrs. Quimby returned to Philadelphia, and proceeded to Baltimore under the escort of Mr. Smith, she would publish all along the road that he was a lord, and perhaps convert into annoyance the amusement he seemed to find in her entire want of tact, persuaded her to defer the Baltimore journey and pass a few days with them; promising to provide her with an escort there, in the person of an old gentleman of their neighbourhood, who was going to the south early next week; and whom they knew to be one of the mildest men in the world, and never incommoded by anything.

When the fête was over, Lord Huntingford returned to the city with his friend, the ex-minister. At parting, he warmly expressed his delight at having had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with Captain Cheston and his ladies; and Aunt Quimby exclaimed, "It's all owing to me – if it had not been for me you might never have known them; I always had the character of bringing good luck to people: so it's no wonder I'm so welcome everywhere."

On Captain Cheston's next visit to Philadelphia, he gathered that the fictitious Baron Von Klingenberg was really the reprobate son of Jacob Stimbel of Lancaster, and had been recognised as such by a gentleman from that place. That he had many years before gone to seek his fortune in Europe, with the wreck of some property left him by his father; where (as Lord Huntingford had stated) he had last been seen in London in the capacity of a valet to a German nobleman; and that now he had departed for the west, with the design, as was supposed, of gambling his way to New Orleans. Nothing could exceed the delight of Aunt Quimby on finding her impression of him so well corroborated.

The old lady went to Baltimore, and found herself so happy with her dear crony Mrs. Bagnell, that she concluded to take up her permanent residence with her on the same terms on which she lived at her son-in-law Billy Fairfowl's, whose large family of children had, to say the truth, latterly caused her some inconvenience by their number and their noise; particularly as one of the girls was growing up so like her grandmother, as to out-talk her. Aunt Quimby's removal from Philadelphia to Baltimore was, of course, a sensible relief to the Chestons.

Lord Huntingford (relinquishing the name and character of Mr. Smith) devoted two years to making the tour of the United States, including a visit to Canada; justly believing that he could not in less time accomplish his object of becoming *well* acquainted with the country and the people. On his return through the Atlantic cities, he met with Captain Cheston at Norfolk, where he had just brought in his ship from a cruise in the Pacific. Both gentlemen were glad to renew their acquaintance; and they travelled together to Philadelphia, where they found Mrs. Cheston and Myrtilla waiting to meet the captain.

Lord Huntingford became a constant visitor at the house of the Chestons. He found Myrtilla improved in beauty, and as he thought in everything else, and he felt that in all his travels through Europe and America, he had met with no woman so well calculated to insure his happiness in married life. The sister of Captain Cheston was too good a republican to marry a foreigner and a nobleman, merely on account of his rank and title: but Lord Huntingford, as a man of sense, feeling, and unblemished morality, was one of the best specimens of his class, and after an intimate acquaintance of two months, she consented to become his countess. They were married a few days before their departure for England, where Captain and Mrs. Cheston promised to make them a visit the ensuing spring.

Emily Atwood and Mr. Symmington were bridesmaid and groomsman, and were themselves united the following month. Miss Turretville made a very advantageous match, and has settled down into a rational woman and a first-rate housewife. The Miss Bentleys are all single yet; but their mother is married to an Italian singer, who is dissipating her property as fast as he can, and treating her ill all the time.

While in Philadelphia, Lord Huntingford did not forget to visit occasionally his early acquaintance, Mr. William Fairfowl (who always received him as if he was still Mr. Smith), and on leaving the city he presented an elegant little souvenir to Mrs. Fairfowl, and one to each of her daughters.

At Lord Huntingford's desire, Mrs. Quimby was invited from Baltimore to be present at his wedding (though the company was small and select), and she did honour to the occasion by wearing an entirely new gown and cap, telling the cost of them to every person in the room, but declaring she did not grudge it in the least; and assuming to herself the entire credit of the match, which she averred never would have taken place if she had not happened to come up the river, instead of going down.

The events connected with the picnic day, had certainly one singular effect on Aunt Quimby, who from that time protested that she always thought of a nobleman whenever she heard the name of Smith.

Could all our readers give in their experience of the numerous Smiths they must have known and heard of, would not many be found who, though bearing that trite appellation, were noblemen of nature's own making?

## UNCLE PHILIP

"Out spake that ancient mariner." – Coleridge.

We will not be particular in designating the exact site of the flourishing village of Corinth; neither would we advise any of our readers to take the trouble of seeking it on the map. It is sufficient to tell them that they may consider it located on one of the banks of the Hudson, somewhere above the city of New York, and somewhere below that of Albany; and that, more than twenty years ago, the Clavering family occupied one of the best houses at its southern extremity.

Mrs. Clavering was the widow of a storekeeper, who had always, by courtesy, been called a merchant, according to a prevailing custom in the provincial towns of America. Her husband had left her in affluent circumstances, and to each of her five children he had bequeathed a sufficient portion to furnish, when they came of age, an outfit for the girls and a beginning for the boys. Added to this, they had considerable expectations from an uncle of their mother's, a retired sea-captain, and a confirmed old bachelor, who had long been in the practice of paying the family an annual visit on returning from his India voyages. He had become so much attached to the children, that when he quitted the sea (which was soon after the death of Mr. Clavering) he had, at the request of his niece, removed to Corinth, and taken up his residence in her family.

Though so far from his beloved element, the ocean, Captain Kentledge managed to pass his time very contentedly, taking occasional trips down the river to New York (particularly when a new ship was to be launched), and performing, every summer, an excursion to the eastward: keeping closely along the coast, and visiting in turn every maritime town and village from Newport to Portland; never omitting to diverge off to Nantucket, which was his native place, and from whence, when a boy, he had taken his first voyage in a whale ship.

Uncle Philip (for so Captain Kentledge was familiarly called by Mrs. Clavering and her children) was a square-built man, with a broad weather-beaten face, and features the reverse of classical. His head was entirely bald, with the exception of two rough side-locks, and a long thin gray tress of hair, gathered into a queue, and secured with black ribbon. Uncle Philip was very tenacious of his queue.

Like most seamen when on shore, he was singularly neat in his dress. He wore, all the year round, a huge blue coat, immense blue trowsers, and a white waistcoat of ample dimensions, the whole suit being decorated with gold buttons; for, as he observed, he had, in the course of his life, worn enough of brass buttons to be heartily tired of them: gilt ones he hated, because they were shams; and gold he could very well afford, and therefore it was his pleasure to have them. His cravat was a large black silk handkerchief, tied in front, with a spreading bow and long ends. His shirt frill was particularly conspicuous and amazingly broad, and it was fastened with a large oval-shaped brooch, containing under its glass a handsome hair-coloured device of Hope leaning on an anchor. He never wore boots, but always white stockings and well-blackened long-quartered shoes. His hat had both a wide crown and a wide brim. Every part of his dress was good in quality and large in quantity, denoting that he was above economizing in the material.

Though "every inch a sailor," it must not be supposed that Captain Kentledge was in the constant habit of interlarding his conversation with sea-terms; a practice which, if it ever actually prevailed to the extent that has been represented in fictitious delineations of "the sons of the wild and warring wave," has long since been discontinued in real life, by all nautical men who have any pretensions to the title of gentlemen. A sea-captain, whose only phraseology was that of the fore-castle, and who could talk of nothing without reference to the technical terms of his profession, would now be considered as obsolete a character "as the Lieutenant Bowlings and Commodore Trunnions of the last century."

Next to the children of his niece, the object most beloved by Uncle Philip was an enormous Newfoundland dog, the companion of his last voyages, and his constant attendant on land and on water, in doors and out of doors. In the faces of Neptune and his master there was an obvious resemblance, which a physiognomist would have deduced from the similarity of their characters; and it was remarked by one of the wags of the village that the two animals walked exactly alike, and held out their paws to strangers precisely in the same manner.

Mrs. Clavering, as is generally the case with mothers of the present day, when they consider themselves very genteel, intended one of her sons for the profession of physic, and the other for that of law. But in the mean time, Uncle Philip had so deeply imbued Sam, the eldest, with a predilection for the sea, that the boy's sole ambition was to unite himself to that hardy race, "whose march is o'er the mountain-waves, whose home is on the deep." And Dick, whom his mother designed for a lawyer, intended himself for a carpenter: his genius pointing decidedly to hand-work rather than to head-work. It was Uncle Philip's opinion that boys should never be controlled in the choice of a profession. Yet he found it difficult to convince Mrs. Clavering that there was little chance of one of her sons filling a professor's chair at a medical college, or of the other arriving at the rank of chief justice; but that as the laws of nature and the decrees of fate were not to be reversed, Dick would very probably build the ships that Sam would navigate.

About three months before the period at which our story commences, Uncle Philip had set out on his usual summer excursion, and had taken with him not only Neptune, but Sam also, leaving Dick very much engaged in making a new kitchen-table with a drawer at each end. After the travellers had gone as far as the State of Maine, and were supposed to be on their return, Mrs. Clavering was surprised to receive a letter from Uncle Philip, dated "Off Cape Cod, lat. 42, lon. 60, wind N.N.E." The following were the words of this epistle: —

"Dear Niece Kitty Clavering: I take this opportunity of informing you, by a fishing-boat that is just going into the harbour, that being on Long Wharf, Boston, yesterday at 7 A. M., and finding there the schooner Winthrop about to sail for Cuba, and the schooner being commanded by a son of my old ship-mate, Ben Binnacle, and thinking it quite time that Sam should begin to see the world (as he was fifteen the first of last April), and that so good an opportunity should not be lost, I concluded to let him have a taste of the sea by giving him a run down to the West Indies. Sam was naturally very glad, and so was Neptune; and Sam being under my care, I, of course, felt in duty bound to go along with him. The schooner Winthrop is as fine a sea-boat as ever swam, and young Ben Binnacle is as clever a fellow as his father. We are very well off for hands, the crew being young Ben's brother and three of his cousins (all from Marblehead, and all part owners), besides Sam and myself, and Neptune, and black Bob, the cabin-boy. So you have nothing to fear. And even if we should have a long passage, there is no danger of our starving, for most of the cargo is pork and onions, and the rest is turkeys, potatoes, flour, butter, and cheese.

"You may calculate on finding Sam greatly improved by the voyage. Going to sea will cure him of all his awkward tricks, as you call them, and give him an opportunity of showing what he really is. He went out of Boston harbour perched on the end of the foresail boom, and was at the mainmast head before we had cleared the light-house. To-morrow I shall teach him to take an observation. Young Ben Binnacle has an excellent quadrant that was his father's. We shall be back in a few weeks, and bring you pine-apples and parrots. Shall write from Havana, if I have time.

*"Till then, yours,  
"Philip Kentledge.*

"P. S. Neptune is very happy at finding himself at sea again. Give our love to Dick and the girls.

"N. B. We took care to have our trunk brought on board before we got under way. Though we have a stiff breeze, Sam is not yet sea-sick, having set his face against it.

"2d P. S. Don't take advantage of my absence to put the girls in corsets, as you did when I was away last summer.

"2d N. B. Remember to send old Tom Tarpaulin his weekly allowance of tobacco all the time I am gone. You know I promised, when I first found him at Corinth, to keep him in tobacco as long as he lived; and if you forget to furnish it punctually, the poor fellow will be obliged to take his own money to buy it with."

This elopement, as Mrs. Clavering called it, caused at first great consternation in the family, but she soon consoled herself with the idea that 'twas well it was no worse, for if Uncle Philip had found a vessel going to China, commanded by an old ship-mate, or a ship-mate's son, he would scarcely have hesitated to have acted as he had done in this instance. The two younger girls grieved that in all probability Sam had gone without gingerbread, which, they had heard, was a preventive to sea-sickness; but Fanny, the elder, remarked that it was more probable he had his pockets full, as, from Uncle Philip's account, he continued perfectly well. "Whatever Uncle Philip may say," observed Fanny, very judiciously, "Sam must, of course, have known that gingerbread is a more certain remedy for sea-sickness than merely setting one's face against it." Dick's chief regret was, that not knowing beforehand of their trip to the West Indies, he had lost the opportunity of sending by them for some mahogany.

In about four weeks, the Clavering family was set at ease by a letter from Sam himself, dated Havana. It detailed at full length the delights of the voyage, and the various qualifications of black Bob, the cabin-boy, and it was finished by two postscripts from Uncle Philip; one celebrating the rapid progress of Sam in nautical knowledge, and another stating that they should return in the schooner Winthrop.

They did return – Uncle Philip bringing with him, among other West India productions, a barrel of pine-apples for Mrs. Clavering, and three parrots, one for each of his young nieces; to all of whom he observed the strictest impartiality in distributing his favours. Also, a large box for Dick, filled with numerous specimens of tropical woods.

It was evening when they arrived at Corinth, and they walked up directly from the steamboat wharf to Mrs. Clavering's house; leaving their baggage to follow in a cart. Intending to give the family a pleasant surprise, they stole cautiously in at the gate, and walked on the grass to avoid making a noise with their shoes on the gravel. As usual at this hour, a light shone through the Venetian shutters of the parlour-windows. But our voyagers listened in vain for the well-known sounds of noisy mirth excited by the enjoyment of various little games and plays in which it was usual for the children to pass the interval between tea and bed-time; a laudable custom, instituted by Uncle Philip soon after he became one of the family.

"I hope all may be right," whispered the old captain, as he ascended the steps of the front porch, "I don't hear the least sound."

They sat down the three parrot-cages, which they had carried themselves from the wharf, and then went up to the windows and reconnoitered through the shutters. They saw the whole family seated round the table, busily employed with books and writing materials, and all perfectly silent. Uncle Philip now hastily threw open the front door, and, followed by Sam, made his appearance in the parlour, exclaiming —

"Why, what is all this? Not hearing any noise as we came along, we concluded there must be sickness, or death in the house."

"We are not dead yet," said Dick, starting up, "though we are learning French."

In an instant the books were abandoned, the table nearly overset in getting from behind it, and the whole group hung round the voyagers, delighted at their return, and overwhelming them with questions and caresses. In a moment there came prancing into the room the dog Neptune, who had remained behind to guard the baggage-cart, which had now arrived at the front gate. The faithful animal was literally received with open arms by all the children, and when he had nearly demolished little Anne by the roughness of his gambols, she only exclaimed – "Oh! never mind – never mind. I am so glad to have Neptune back again, that I don't care, if he *does* tear my new pink frock all to tatters."

Mrs. Clavering made a faint attempt at reproaching Uncle Philip for thus stealing a march and carrying off her son, but the old captain turned it all into a subject of merriment, and pointed out to her Sam's ruddy looks and improved height; and his good fortune in having a brown skin, which, on being exposed to the air and sun of the ocean, only deepened its manly tint, instead of being disfigured by freckles. On Mrs. Clavering remarking that her poor boy had learnt the true balancing gait of a sailor, the uncle and nephew exchanged glances of congratulation; and Sam, in the course of the evening, took frequent occasions to get up and walk across the room, by way of displaying this new accomplishment.

As Mrs. Clavering understood that her uncle and son had not yet had their supper, she quitted the room "on hospitable thoughts intent," while the children were listening with breathless interest to a minute detail of the voyage; Sam leaning over the back of his uncle's great chair, into which Fanny had squeezed herself beside the old gentleman, who held Jane on one knee and Anne on the other; and Dick making a seat of the dog Neptune, who lay at his master's feet.

"Who are those people talking in the porch?" asked little Anne, interrupting her uncle to listen to the strange sounds that issued from without.

"Oh! they are the parrots," said Sam, laughing, "I wonder they should have been forgotten so long."

"Parrots!" exclaimed all the children at once, and in a moment every one of the young people were out in the porch, and the cages were carried into the parlour. The parrots were duly admired, and made to go through all their phrases, of which (being very smart parrots) they had learnt an infinite variety, and Uncle Philip told the girls to draw lots for the first choice of these new pets. Dick supplying for that purpose little sticks of unequal lengths. After this the box of tropical woods was opened, and Dick's happiness became too great for utterance.

Supper was now brought in, and placed by Mrs. Clavering's order on a little table in the corner, it not being worth while, as she said, to remove the books and writing apparatus from the centre-table, as the lessons must be shortly resumed.

"What lessons are these," said Uncle Philip, "on which you seem so intent? Before I went away there was no lesson-learning of evenings. Have Mr. Fulmer and Miss Hickman adopted a new plan? I think, children, I have heard you say that your lessons were very short, and that you always learned them in school, which was one reason, why I approved of Mr. Fulmer for the boys, and Miss Hickman for the girls. I never could bear the idea of poor children being forced to spend their play-time in learning lessons. The school hours are long enough in all conscience."

"Oh – we don't go to Miss Hickman now," exclaimed the girls: – "And I don't go any longer to Mr. Fulmer," cried Dick, with something like a sigh.

"And where do you go, then?" inquired Uncle Philip.

"We go to Monsieur and Madame Franchimeau's French Study," replied Dick. "He teaches the boys, and she the girls – and our lessons are so long that it takes us the whole evening to learn them, and write our exercises. We are kept in school from eight in the morning till three in the afternoon. And then at four we go back again, and stay till dusk, trying to read and talk French with Monsieur and Madame Ravigote, the father and mother of Madame Franchimeau."

"What's all this?" said Uncle Philip, laying down his knife and fork.

Mrs. Clavering, after silencing Dick with a significant look, proceeded to explain —

"Why, uncle," said she, "you must know that immediately after you left us, there came to Corinth a very elegant French family, and their purpose was to establish an Institute, or Study, as they now call it, in which, according to the last new system of education, everything is to be learnt in French. Mrs. Apesley, Mrs. Nedging, Mrs. Pinxton, Mrs. Slimbridge and myself, with others of the leading ladies of Corinth, had long wished for such an opportunity of having our children properly instructed, and we all determined to avail ourselves of it. We called immediately on the French ladies, who are very superior women, and we resolved at once to bring them into fashion by showing them every possible attention. We understood, also, that before Monsieur Franchimeau and his family came to Corinth, they had been on the other side of the river, and had visited Tusculum with a view of locating themselves in that village. But these polished and talented strangers were not in the least appreciated by the Tusculans, who are certainly a coarse and vulgar people; and therefore it became the duty of us Corinthians to prove to them our superiority in gentility and refinement."

"I thought as much," said Uncle Philip; "I knew it would come out this way. So the Corinthians are learning French out of spite to the Tusculans. And I suppose, when these Monsieurs and Madames have done making fools of the people of this village, they will move higher up the river, and monkeyfy all before them between this and Albany. For, of course, the Hyde Parkers will learn French to spite the New Paltzers, and the Hudsonians to spite the Athenians, and the Kinderhookers to spite the —"

"Now, uncle, do hush," said Mrs. Clavering, interrupting him; "how can you make a jest of a thing from which we expect to derive so much benefit?"

"I am not jesting at all," replied Uncle Philip; "I fear it is a thing too serious to laugh at. But why do you say *we*? I hope, Kitty Clavering, *you* are not making a fool of yourself, and turning school-girl again?"

"I certainly do take lessons in French," replied Mrs. Clavering. "Mrs. Apesley, Mrs. Nedging, Mrs. Pinxton, Mrs. Slimbridge and myself, have formed a class for that purpose."

"Mrs. Apesley has eleven children," said Uncle Philip.

"Yes," replied Mrs. Clavering, "but the youngest is more than two years old. And Mrs. Nedging has only three."

"True," observed the uncle; "one of them is an idiot boy that can neither hear, speak, nor use any of his limbs; the others are a couple of twin babies, that were only two months old when I went away."

"But they are remarkably good babies," answered Mrs. Clavering, "and can bear very well to have their mother out of their sight."

"And Mrs. Pinxton," said Uncle Philip, "has, ever since the death of her husband, presided over a large hotel, which, if properly attended to, ought to furnish her with employment for eighteen hours out of the twenty-four."

"Oh! but she has an excellent barkeeper," replied Mrs. Clavering, "and she has lately got a cook from New York, to whom she gives thirty dollars a month, and she has promoted her head-chambermaid to the rank of housekeeper. Mrs. Pinxton herself is no longer to be seen going through the house as she formerly did. You would not suppose that there was any mistress belonging to the establishment."

"So much the worse," said Uncle Philip, "both for the mistress and the establishment. Well, and let me ask, if Mrs. Slimbridge's husband has recovered his health during my absence?"

"Oh! no, he is worse than ever," replied Mrs. Clavering.

"And still," resumed Uncle Philip, "with an invalid husband, who requires her constant care and attention, Mrs. Slimbridge can find it in her heart to neglect him, and waste her time in taking lessons that she may learn to read French (though I am told their books are all about nothing), and to talk French, though I cannot for my life see who she is to talk to."

"There is no telling what advantage she may not derive from it in future life," remarked Mrs. Clavering.

"I can tell her one thing," said Uncle Philip, "when poor Slimbridge dies, her French will never help her to a second husband. No man ever married a woman because she had learnt French."

"Indeed, uncle," replied Mrs. Clavering, "your prejudices against everything foreign are so strong, that it is in vain for me to oppose them. To-night, at least, I shall not say another word on the subject."

"Well, well, Kitty," said Uncle Philip, shaking her kindly by the hand, "we'll talk no more about it to-night, and perhaps, as you say, I ought to have more patience with foreigners, seeing that, as no man can choose his own birth-place, it is not to be expected that everybody can be born in America. And those that are not, are certainly objects of pity rather than of blame."

"Very right, uncle," exclaimed Sam; "I am sure I pity all that are not Americans of the United States, particularly since I have been among the West Indian Spaniards."

"Now, Kitty Clavering," said Uncle Philip, triumphantly, "you perceive the advantages of seeing the world: who says that Sam has not profited by his voyage?"

The family separated for the night; and next morning Sam laughed at Dick for repeating his French verbs in his sleep. "No wonder," replied Dick, "if you knew how many verbs I have to learn every day, and how much difficulty I have in getting them by heart, when I am all the time thinking of other things, you would not be surprised at my dreaming of them; as people are apt to do of whatever is their greatest affliction."

At breakfast, the conversation of the preceding evening was renewed, by Mrs. Clavering observing with much complacency,

"Monsieur Franchimeau will be very happy to find that I have a new scholar for him."

"Indeed!" said Uncle Philip; "and who else have you been pressing into the service?"

"My son Sam, certainly," replied Mrs. Clavering. "I promised him to Mr. Franchimeau, and he of course has been expecting to have him immediately on his return from the West Indies. Undoubtedly, Sam must be allowed the same advantages as his brother and sisters. Not to give him an equal opportunity of learning French would be unjust in the extreme."

"Dear mother," replied Sam, "I am quite willing to put up with that much injustice."

"Right, my boy," exclaimed Uncle Philip; "and when you have learnt everything else, it will then be quite time enough to begin French."

"You misunderstand entirely," said Mrs. Clavering. "The children *are* learning everything else. But Mr. Franchimeau goes upon the new system, and teaches the whole in French and out of French books. His pupils, and those of Madame Franchimeau, learn history, geography, astronomy, botany, chemistry, mathematics, logic, criticism, composition, geology, mineralogy, conchology, and phrenology."

"Mercy on their poor heads," exclaimed Uncle Philip, interrupting her: "They'll every one grow up idiots. All the sense they have will be crushed out of them, by this unnatural business of overloading their minds with five times as much as they can bear. And the whole of this is to be learned in a foreign tongue too. Well, what next? Are they also taught Latin and Greek in French? And now I speak of those two languages – that have caused so many aching heads and aching hearts to poor boys that never had the least occasion to turn them to any account – suppose that all the lectures at the Medical Colleges were delivered in Latin or Greek. How much, do you think, would the students profit by them? Pretty doctors we should have, if they learnt their business in that way. No, no; the branches you have mentioned are all hard enough in themselves, particularly that last ology about the bumps on people's heads. To get a thorough knowledge of any one of these arts or sciences, or whatever you call them, is work enough for a man's lifetime; and now the whole of them together are to be forced upon the weak understandings of poor innocent children, and in a foreign language, to boot. Shame on you – shame on you, Kitty Clavering!"

"Uncle Philip," said Mrs. Clavering, smiling at his vehemence, for on such occasions she had always found it more prudent to smile than to frown, "you may say what you will now, but I foresee

that you will finally become a convert to my views of this subject. I intend to make French the general language of the family, and in a short time you will soon catch it yourself. Why, though I cannot say much for his proficiency in his lessons, even *Richar*<sup>4</sup> has picked up without intending it, a number of French phrases, that he pronounces quite well when I make him go over them with me."

"*Richar!*" cried Uncle Philip, "and pray who is he? Who is *Richar*?"

"That's me, uncle," said Dick.

"So you have Frenchified Dick's name, have you!" said the old gentleman, "but I'm determined you shall not Frenchify Sam's."

"No," observed Sam, "I'll not be Frenchified."

"And pray, young ladies," resumed the uncle, "Fanny, Jenny, and Anny, have you too been put into French?"

"Yes, uncle," replied Jane, "we are now Fanchette, Jeanette, and Annette."

"So much the worse," said Uncle Philip. "Listen to me, when I tell you, that all this Frenchifying will come to no good; and I foresee that you may be sorry for it when it is too late. Of what use will it be to any of you? I have often heard that all French books worth reading are immediately done into English. And I never met with a French person worth knowing that had not learned to talk English."

"Now, uncle," said Mrs. Clavering, "you are going quite too far. If our knowledge of French should not come into use while in our own country, who knows but some time or other we may all go to France."

"I for one," replied Uncle Philip, "*I* know that you will not; at least, you shall never go to France with my consent. No American woman goes to France, without coming home the worse for it in some way or other. There were the two Miss Facebys, who came up here last spring, fresh from a six months' foolery in Paris. I can see them now, ambling along in their short petticoats, with their hands clasped on their belt buckles, their mouths half open like idiots, and their eyes turned upwards like dying calves."

Here Uncle Philip set the whole family to laughing, by starting from his chair and imitating the walk and manner of the Miss Facebys.

"There," said he, resuming his seat, "I know that's exactly like them. Then did not they pretend to have nearly forgotten their own language, affecting to speak English imperfectly. And what was the end of them? One ran away with a dancing-master's mate, and the other got privately married to a fiddler."

"But you must allow," said Mrs. Clavering, "that the Miss Facebys improved greatly in manner by their visit to France."

"I know not what you call *manner*" replied Uncle Philip, "but I'm sure in *manners* they did not. Manner and manners, I find, are very different things. And I was told by a gentleman, who had lived many years in France, that the Miss Facebys looked and behaved like French chambermaids, but not like French ladies. For my part, I am no judge of French women; but this I know, that American girls had better be like themselves, and not copy any foreign women whatever. And let them take care not to unfit themselves for American husbands. If they do, they'll lose more than they'll gain."

"Well, Uncle Philip," said Mrs. Clavering, "I see it will take time to make a convert of you."

"Don't depend on that," replied the old gentleman. "I, that for sixty years have stood out against all foreigners, particularly the French, am not likely to be taken in by them now."

"We shall see," resumed Mrs. Clavering. "But are you really serious in prohibiting Sam from becoming a pupil of Mr. Franchimeau?"

"Serious, to be sure I am," replied Uncle Philip. "Of what use can it be to him, if he follows the sea, as of course he will?"

"Of great use," answered Mrs. Clavering, "if he should be in the French trade."

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<sup>4</sup> The French pronunciation of Richard.

"I look forward to his being in the India trade," said Uncle Philip, proudly.

"But suppose, uncle," said Fanny, "he should happen to have French sailors on board his ship?"

"French sailors! French!" exclaimed Uncle Philip; "for what purpose should he ship a Frenchman as a sailor? Why, I was once all over a French frigate that came into New York, and she was a pretty thing enough to look at outside. But when you got on board and went between decks, I never saw so dirty a ship. However, I won't go too far – I won't say that all French frigates are like this one, or all French sailors like those. Besides, this was many years ago, and, perhaps, they've improved since."

"No doubt of it," said Mrs. Clavering.

"Well," pursued Uncle Philip, "I only tell you what I saw."

"But, not knowing their language, you must have misunderstood a great deal that you saw," observed Mrs. Clavering.

"The first-lieutenant spoke English," said Uncle Philip, "and he showed me the ship; and, to do him justice, he was a very clever fellow, for all he was a Frenchman. There must certainly be *some* good ones among them. Yes, yes – I have not a word to say against that first-lieutenant. But I wish you had seen the men that we found between decks. Some were tinkling on a sort of guitars, and some were tooting on a kind of flutes, and some were scraping on wretched fiddles. Some had little paint-boxes, and were drawing watch-papers, with loves and doves on them; some were sipping lemonade, and some were eating sugar-candy; and one (whom I suspected to have been originally a barber), was combing and curling a lapdog. It was really sickening to see sailors making such fools of themselves. By the bye, I did not see a tolerable dog about the ship. There was no fine Newfoundlander like my gallant Neptune (come here, old fellow), but there were half a dozen short-legged, long-bodied, red-eyed, tangle-haired wretches, meant for poodles, but not even half so good. And some of the men were petting huge cats, and some were feeding little birds in cages."

"Well," said Mrs. Clavering, "I see no harm in all this – only an evidence that the general refinement of the French nation pervades all ranks of society. Is it not better to eat sugar-candy than to chew tobacco, and to sip lemonade than to drink grog?"

"And then," continued Uncle Philip, "to hear the names by which the fellows were calling each other, for their tongues were all going the whole time as fast as they could chatter. There were Lindor and Isidore, and Adolphe and Emile. I don't believe there was a Jack or a Tom in the whole ship. I was so diverted with their names, that I made the first-lieutenant repeat them to me, and I wrote them down in my pocket-book. A very gentlemanly man was that first-lieutenant. But as to the sailors – why, there was one fellow sprawling on a gun (I suppose I should say reclining), and talking to himself about his amiable Pauline, which, I suppose, is the French for Poll. When we went into the gun-room, there was the gunner sitting on a chest, and reading some love-verses of his own writing, addressed to his belle Celestine, which, doubtless, is the French for Sall. Think of a sailor pretending to have a belle for his sweetheart! The first-lieutenant told me that the gunner was the best poet in the ship. I must say, I think very well of that first-lieutenant. There were half a dozen boys crowding round the gunner (or forming a group, as, I suppose, you would call it), and looking up to his face with admiration; and one great fool was kneeling behind him, and holding over his head a wreath of some sort of green leaves, waiting to crown him when he had done reading his verses."

"Well," observed Mrs. Clavering, "I have no doubt the whole scene had a very pretty effect."

"Pshaw," said Uncle Philip. "When I came on deck again, there was the boatswain's mate, who was also the ship's dancing-master (for a Frenchman can turn his hand to anything, provided it's foolery), and he was giving a lesson to two dozen dirty fellows with bare feet and red woollen caps, and taking them by their huge tarry hands, and bidding them *chassez* here, and *balancez* there, and *promenade* here, and *pirouette* there. I was too angry to laugh, when I saw sailors making such baboons of themselves."

"Now," remarked Mrs. Clavering, "it is an established fact, that without some knowledge of dancing, no one can move well, or have a graceful air and carriage. Why, then, should not sailors be allowed an opportunity of cultivating the graces as well as other people? Why should they be debarred from everything that savours of refinement?"

"I am glad," said Uncle Philip, laughing, "that it never fell to my lot to go to sea with a crew of refined sailors. I think, I should have tried hard to whack their refinement out of them. Why the French first-lieutenant (who was certainly a very clever fellow), told me that, during the cruise, five or six seamen had nearly died of their sensibility, as he called it; having jumped overboard, because they could not bear the separation from their sweethearts."

"Poor fellows," said Fanny, "and were they drowned?"

"I asked that," replied Uncle Philip, "hoping that they were; but, unluckily for the service, they were all provided with sworn friends, who jumped heroically into the sea, and fished the lubbers out. And, no doubt, the whole scene had a very pretty effect."

"How can you make a jest of such things?" said Mrs. Clavering, reproachfully.

"Why, I am only repeating your own words," answered the old gentleman. "But, to speak seriously, this shows that French ships ought always to be furnished with Newfoundland dogs to send in after the lovers, and spare their friends the trouble of getting a wet jacket for them: – Come here, old Nep. Up, my fine fellow, up," patting the dog's head, while the enormous animal rested his fore-paws on his master's shoulders.

Mrs. Clavering now reminded the children that it was considerably past their hour for going to school, but with one accord they petitioned for a holiday, as it was the first day of Uncle Philip's and Sam's return.

"You know the penalty," said Mrs. Clavering; "you know that if you stay away from school, you will be put down to the bottom of the class."

The children all declared their willingness to submit to this punishment rather than go to school that day.

"Now, Kitty Clavering," said Uncle Philip, "you see plainly that their hearts are not in the French: and that it is all forced work with them. So I shall be regularly displeased, if you send the children to school to-day. They shall go with me to the cabin, and we will all spend the morning there."

The cabin was a small wooden edifice planned by Uncle Philip, and erected by his own hands with the assistance of Sam and Dick. It stood on the verge of the river, where the bank took the form of a little cape or headland, which Uncle Philip called Point Lookout. On an eminence immediately above, was the house of Mrs. Clavering, from the front garden of which a green slope, planted with fruit-trees, descended gradually to the water's edge.

The building (into which you went down by a flight of wooden steps inserted in the face of the hill), was as much as possible like the cabin of a ship. The ceiling was low, with a skylight near the centre, and the floor was not exactly level, there being a very visible slant to one side. At the back of this cabin was an imitation of transoms, above which was a row of small windows of four panes each, and when these windows were open, they were fastened up by brass hooks to the beams that supported the roof. In the middle of the room was a flag-staff, which went up through the centre of a table, and perforated the ceiling like the mizen-mast of a ship, and rose to a great height above the roof. From the top of this staff an American ensign, on Sundays and holidays, displayed its stars and stripes to the breeze. There was a range of lockers all round the room, containing in their recesses an infinite variety of marine curiosities that Uncle Philip had collected during his voyages, and also some very amusing specimens of Chinese patience and ingenuity. The walls were hung with charts, and ornamented with four coloured drawings that Captain Kentledge showed as the likenesses of four favourite ships, all of which he, had at different times commanded. These drawings were made by a young man that had sailed with him as mate; and to unpractised eyes all the four ships looked exactly alike; but Uncle Philip always took care to explain that the Columbia was sharpest at the bows, and

the American roundest at the stern; that the United States had the tallest masts, and the Union the longest yards.

An important appendage to the furniture of this singular room was a hanging-shelf, containing Captain Kentledge's library; and the books were the six octavo volumes of Cook's Voyages, and also the voyages of Scoresby, Ross and Parry, the Arabian Nights, Dibdin's Songs, Robinson Crusoe, and Cooper's Pilot, Red Rover, and Water Witch.

This cabin was the stronghold of Uncle Philip, and the place where, with Sam and Neptune, he spent all his happiest hours. For here he could smoke his segars in peace, and chew his tobacco without being obliged to watch an opportunity of slipping it privately into his mouth. But as Mrs. Clavering had particularly desired that he would not initiate Sam into the use of "the Indian weed," he had promised to refrain from instructing him in this branch of a sailor's education; and being "an honourable man," Uncle Philip had faithfully kept his word.

Dick (acknowledging that during his uncle's absence he had used the cabin as a workshop, and that it was now ankle-deep in chips and shavings), ran on before with a broom to sweep the litter into a corner. The whole group proceeded thither from the breakfast table, Uncle Philip wishing he had three hands that he might give one to each of the little girls; but as that was not the case, they drew lots to decide which should be contented to hold by the skirt of his coat, and the lot fell upon Fanny; the old gentleman leading Jane and Anne, while Sam and Neptune brought up the rear.

Arrived at the cabin, Uncle Philip placed himself in his arm-chair; the girls sat round him sewing for their dolls; Sam took his slate and drew upon it all the different parts of the schooner Winthrop, of which (from his brother's description) Dick commenced making a miniature model in wood; and Neptune mounted one of the transoms and looked out of the window.

Things were going on very pleasantly, and Uncle Philip was in the midst of narrating the particulars of a violent storm they had encountered in the gulf of Florida, when Dick, casting his eyes towards the glass door, exclaimed, "the French are coming, the French are coming!"

Uncle Philip testified much dissatisfaction at the intrusion of these unwelcome visitors, and Dick again fell to work with the broom. In a few minutes Mrs. Clavering entered the cabin, bringing with her Monsieur and Madame Franchimeau, and the *vieux* papa, and *vieille* mama,<sup>5</sup> Monsieur and Madame Ravigote.

Mr. Franchimeau was a clumsy, ill-made man, fierce-eyed, black-whiskered, and looking as if he might sit for the picture of "Abellino the Great Bandit." Madame Franchimeau was a large woman, with large features, and a figure that was very bad in dishabille, and very good in full dress. Her father and mother were remnants of the *ancien régime*, but the costume of the *vieux* papa was not at all in the style of Blissett's Frenchman. His clothes were like those of other people, and instead of a powdered toupee and pigeon-wing side-curls, with a black silk bag behind, he wore a reddish scratch-wig that almost came down to his eyebrows. Why do very old men, when they wear wigs, generally prefer red ones? Madame Ravigote was a little withered, witch-like woman, with a skin resembling brown leather, which was set off by four scanty flaxen ringlets.

Soon after breakfast, Mrs. Clavering had sent a message to "the French Study," implying the arrival of Captain Kentledge, and the consequent holiday of the children; and the Gauls had concluded it expedient to dismiss their school at twelve o'clock, and hasten to pay their compliments to the rich old uncle, of whom they had heard much since their residence at Corinth.

When they were presented to Captain Kentledge, he was not at all prepossessed in favor of their appearance, and would have been much inclined to receive them coldly; but as he was now called upon to appear in the character of their host, he remembered the courtesy due to them as his guests, and he managed to do the honors of his cabin in a very commendable manner, considering

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<sup>5</sup> The old papa, and the old mamma.

that he said to himself, "for my own sake, I cannot be otherwise than civil to them; but I despise them, notwithstanding."

There was much chattering that amounted to nothing; and much admiration of the cabin, by which, instead of pleasing Uncle Philip, they only incurred his farther contempt, by admiring always in the wrong place, and evincing an ignorance of ships that he thought unpardonable in people that had crossed the Atlantic. On Sam being introduced to them, there were many overstrained compliments on his beauty, and what they called his *air distingué*. Monsieur Franchimeau thought that *le jeune Sammi*<sup>6</sup> greatly resembled Mr. Irvine Voshintone, whom he had seen in Paris; but Monsieur Ravigote thought him more like the portrait of Sir Valter Scotch. Madame Franchimeau likened him to the head of the Apollo Belvidere, and Madame Ravigote to the Duke of Berry. But all agreed that he had a general resemblance to La Fayette, with a slight touch of Dr. Franklin. However these various similitudes might be intended as compliments, they afforded no gratification to Uncle Philip, whose secret opinion was, that if Sam looked like anybody, it was undoubtedly Paul Jones. And during this examination, Sam was not a little disconcerted at being seized by the shoulders and twirled round, and taken sometimes by the forehead and sometimes by the chin, that his face might be brought into the best light for discovering all its affinities.

There was then an attempt at general conversation, the chief part of which was borne by the ladies, or rather by Madame Franchimeau, who thought in her duty to atone for the dogged taciturnity of her husband. Monsieur Franchimeau, unlike the generality of his countrymen, neither smiled, bowed, nor complimented. Having a great contempt for the manners of the *vieille cour*<sup>7</sup> and particularly for those of his father-in-law; he piqued himself on his *brusquerie*,<sup>8</sup> and his almost total disregard of *les bienséances*,<sup>9</sup> and set up *un esprit fort*:<sup>10</sup> but he took care to talk as little as possible, lest his claims to that character should be suspected.

Uncle Philip, though he scorned to acknowledge it, was not in reality destitute of all comprehension of the French language, having picked up some little acquaintance with it from having, in the course of his wanderings, been at places where nothing else was spoken; and though determined on being displeased, he was amused, in spite of himself, at some of the tirades of Madame Franchimeau. Understanding that Monsieur Philippe (as much to his annoyance she called him) had just returned from the West Indies, she began to talk of Cape François, and the insurrection of the blacks, in which, she said, she had lost her first husband, Monsieur Mascaron. "By this terrible blow," said she, "I was *parfaitement abimé*,<sup>11</sup> and I refused all consolation till it was my felicity to inspire Monsieur Franchimeau with sentiments the most profound. But my heart will for ever preserve a tender recollection of my well-beloved Alphonse. Ah! my Alphonse – his manners were adorable. However, my regards are great for *mon ami*<sup>12</sup> Monsieur Franchimeau. It is true, he is *un pen brusque – c'est son caractère*.<sup>13</sup> But his heart is of a goodness that is really inconceivable. He performs the most charming actions, and with a generosity that is heroic. Ah! *mon ami* – you hear me speak of you – but permit me the sad consolation of shedding yet a few tears for my respectable Alphonse."

Madame Franchimeau then entered into an animated detail of the death of her first husband, who was killed before her eyes by the negroes; and she dwelt upon every horrid particular, till she had worked herself into a passion of tears. Just then, Fanny Clavering (who had for that purpose

<sup>6</sup> The young Sammy.

<sup>7</sup> Old Court.

<sup>8</sup> Bluntness, roughness.

<sup>9</sup> Customs of polite society.

<sup>10</sup> A person of strong mind, superior mind.

<sup>11</sup> Perfectly destroyed, plunged into an abyss of despair.

<sup>12</sup> My friend, my dear.

<sup>13</sup> A little blunt – a little rough. It is his character.

been sent up to the house by her mother) arrived with a servant carrying a waiter of pine-apples, sugar and Madeira.

Madame Franchimeau stopped in the midst of her tears, and exclaimed – "Ah! *des ananas – mon ami (to her husband) – maman – papa – voyez – voyez – des ananas.*"<sup>14</sup> Ah! my poorest Alphonse, great was his love for these – what you call them – apple de pine. He was just paring his apple de pine, when the detestable negroes rushed in and overset the table. Ah! *quel scène – une véritable tragédie!*<sup>15</sup> Pardonnez, Madame Colavering, I prefer a slice from the largest part of the fruit. – Ah! my amiable Alphonse – his blood flew all over my robe, which was of spotted Japan muslin. I wore that day a long sash of a broad ribbon of the colour of Aurore, fringed at both of its ends. When I was running away, he grasped it so hard that it came untied, and I left it in his hand. – May I beg the favour of some more sugar? —*Mon ami*, you always prefer the pine-apple bathed in Champagne."

"Yes," replied Franchimeau, "it does me no good, unless each slice is soaked in some wine of fine quality." But Mrs. Clavering acknowledging that she had no Champagne in the house, Franchimeau gruffly replied, that "he supposed Madeira might do."

Madame then continued her story and her pine-apple. "Ah! *mon bien-aimé Alphonse,*"<sup>16</sup> said she, "he had fourteen wounds – I will take another slice, if you please, Madame Colavering. There – there – a little more sugar. *Bien obligé!*"<sup>17</sup> – a little more still. *Maman, vous ne mangez pas de bon appetit. Ah! je comprends – vous voulez de la crème avec votre anana.*"<sup>18</sup> – Madame Colavering, will you do mamma the favour to have some cream brought for her? and I shall not refuse some for myself. Ah! *mon Alphonse* – the object of my first grand passion! He exhibited in dying some contortions that were hideous —*absolument effroyable!*<sup>19</sup> – they are always present before my eyes – Madame Colavering, I would prefer those two under slices; they are the best penetrated with the sugar, and also well steeped in the *jus.*"<sup>20</sup>

The cream was procured, and the two Madames did it ample justice. Presently the youngest of the French ladies opened her eyes very wide, and exclaimed to her father, "*Mon cher papa, vous n'avez pas déjà fini?*"<sup>21</sup> "My good friend, Madame Colavering, you know, of course, that my papa cannot eat much fruit, unless it is accompanied by some *biscuit* – for instance, the cake you call sponge."

"I was not aware of that," replied Mrs. Clavering.

"*Est-il possible?*"<sup>22</sup> exclaimed the whole French family, looking at each other.

Mrs. Clavering then recollecting that there was some sponge-cake in the house, sent one of the children for it, and when it was brought, their French visitors all ate heartily of it; and she heard the *vieille maman*<sup>23</sup> saying to the *vieux papa*,<sup>24</sup> "*Eh, mon ami, ce petit collation vient fort à-propos, comme notre déjeuner était seulement un mauvais saladé.*"<sup>25</sup>

The collation over, Mrs. Clavering, by way of giving her guests an opportunity of saying something that would please Uncle Philip, patted old Neptune on the head, and asked them if they had ever seen a finer dog?

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<sup>14</sup> "Ah! pine-apples – my dear – (to her husband) – mamma – papa – see – see – pine-apples!"

<sup>15</sup> Ah! what a scene – a real tragedy!

<sup>16</sup> My beloved Alphonse.

<sup>17</sup> Much obliged to you.

<sup>18</sup> Mamma, you do not eat with a good appetite. Ah! I understand – you wish for some cream with your pine-apple.

<sup>19</sup> Absolutely frightful.

<sup>20</sup> Juice.

<sup>21</sup> My dear papa, you have not finished already?

<sup>22</sup> Is it possible?

<sup>23</sup> Old mamma.

<sup>24</sup> Old papa.

<sup>25</sup> Eh! my dear, this little collation comes very seasonably, as our breakfast was nothing but a bad salad.

"I will show you a finer," replied Madame Franchimeau; "see, I have brought with me my interesting *Bijou*" – and she called in an ugly little pug that had been scrambling about the cabin door ever since their arrival, and whose only qualification was that of painfully sitting up on his hind legs, and shaking his fore-paws in the fashion that is called begging. His mistress, with much importunity, prevailed on him to perform this elegant feat, and she then rewarded him with a saucer-full of cream, sugar, and sponge-cake. He was waspish and snappish, and snarled at Jane Clavering when she attempted to play with him; upon which Neptune, with one blow of his huge forefoot, brought the pug to the ground, and then stood motionless, looking up in Uncle Philip's face, with his paw on the neck of the sprawling animal, who kicked and yelped most piteously. This interference of the old Newfoundlander gave great offence to the French family, who all exclaimed, "*Quelle horreur! Quelle abomination! En effet c'est trop!*"<sup>26</sup>

Uncle Philip could not help laughing; but Sam called off Neptune from *Bijou*, and set the fallen pug on his legs again, for which compassionate act he was complimented by the French ladies on his *bonté de cœur*,<sup>27</sup> and honoured at parting, with the title of *le doux Sammi*.<sup>28</sup>

"I'll never return this visit," said Uncle Philip, after the French guests had taken their leave.

"Oh! but you *must*," replied Mrs. Clavering; "it was intended expressly for you – you *must* return it, in common civility."

"But," persisted Uncle Philip, "I wish them to understand that I don't intend to treat them with common civility. A pack of selfish, ridiculous, impudent fools. No, no. I am not so prejudiced as to believe that all French people are as bad as these – many of them, no doubt, if we could only find where they are, may be quite as clever as the first lieutenant of that frigate; but, to their shame be it spoken, the best of them seldom visit America, and our country is overrun with ignorant, vulgar impostors, who, unable to get their bread at home, come here full of lies and pretensions, and to them and their quackery must our children be intrusted, in the hope of acquiring a smattering of French jabber, and at the risk of losing everything else."

"Don't you think Uncle Philip always talks best when he's in a passion?" observed Dick to Sam.

After Mrs. Clavering had returned to the house, Dick informed his uncle that, a few days before, she had made a dinner for the whole French family; and Captain Kentledge congratulated himself and Sam on their not arriving sooner from their voyage. Dick had privately told his brother that the behaviour of the guests, on this occasion, had not given much satisfaction. Mrs. Clavering, it seems, had hired, to dress the dinner, a mulatto woman that professed great knowledge of French cookery, having lived at one of the best hotels in New York. But Monsieur Franchimeau had sneered at all the French dishes as soon as he tasted them, and pretended not to know their names, or for what they were intended; Monsieur Ravigote had shrugged and sighed, and the ladies had declined touching them at all, dining entirely on what (as Dick expressed it) they called roast beef de mutton and natural potatoes.<sup>29</sup>

It was not only his regard for the children that made Mrs. Clavering's French mania a source of great annoyance to Uncle Philip, but he soon found that much of the domestic comfort of the family was destroyed by this unaccountable freak, as he considered it. Mrs. Clavering was not young enough to be a very apt scholar, and so much of her time was occupied by learning her very long lessons, and writing her very long exercises, that her household duties were neglected in consequence. As in a provincial town it is difficult to obtain servants who can go on well without considerable attention from the mistress, the house was not kept in as nice order as formerly; the meals were at irregular hours, and no longer well prepared; the children's comfort was forgotten, their pleasures were not

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<sup>26</sup> What horror! What abomination! It is really too much!

<sup>27</sup> Goodness of heart.

<sup>28</sup> The mild Sammy – the gentle Sammy.

<sup>29</sup> The vulgar French think that the English term for all sorts of roasted meat is *rosbif* – thus *rosbif de mouton* – *rosbif de porc*. Potatoes plainly boiled, with the skins on, are called, in France, *pommes de terre au naturel*.

thought of, and the little girls grieved that no sweetmeats were to be made that season; their mother telling them that she had now no time to attend to such things. The children's story-books were taken from them, because they were now to read nothing but *Telemaque*; they were stopped short in the midst of their talk, and told to *parlez Français*.<sup>30</sup> Even the parrots heard so much of it that, in a short time, they prated nothing but French.

Uncle Philip had put his positive veto on Sam's going to French school, and he insisted that little Anne had become pale and thin since she had been a pupil of the Franchimeaus. Mrs. Clavering, to pacify him, consented to withdraw the child from school; but only on condition that she was every day to receive a lesson at home, from old Mr. Ravigote.

Anne Clavering was but five years old. As yet, no taste for French "had dawned upon her soul," and very little for English; her mind being constantly occupied with her doll, and other playthings. Monsieur Ravigote, with all the excitability of his nation, was, in the main, a very good-natured man, and was really anxious for the improvement of his pupil. But all was in vain. Little Anne never knew her lessons, and had as yet acquired no other French phrase than "*Oui, Monsieur*."<sup>31</sup>

Every morning, Mr. Ravigote came with a face dressed in smiles, and earnest hope that his pupil was going that day to give him what he called "one grand satisfaction;" but the result was always the same.

One morning, as Uncle Philip sat reading the newspaper, and holding little Anne on his knee while she dressed her doll, Mr. Ravigote came in, bowing and smiling as usual, and after saluting Captain Kentledge, he said to the little child: "Well, my dear little friend, *ma gentille Annette*,<sup>32</sup> I see by the look of your countenance that I shall have one grand satisfaction with you this day. Application is painted on your visage, and docility also. Is there not, *ma chère*?"<sup>33</sup>

"*Oui, Monsieur*," replied the little Anne.

"*J'en suis ravi*."<sup>34</sup> Now, *ma chère, commençons – commençons tout de suite*."<sup>35</sup>

Little Anne slowly descended from her uncle's knee, carefully put away her doll and folded up her doll's clothes, and then made a tedious search for her book.

"*Eh! bien, commençons*," said Mr. Ravigote, "you move without any rapidity."

"*Oui, Monsieur*," responded little Anne, who, after she had taken her seat in a low chair beside Mr. Ravigote, was a long time getting into a comfortable position, and at last settled herself to her satisfaction by crossing her feet, leaning back as far as she could go, and hooking one finger in her coral necklace, that she might pull at it all the time.

"*Eh! bien, ma chère*; we will first have the lessons without the book," said Mr. Ravigote, commencing with the vocabulary. "Tell me the names of all the months of the year – for instance, January."

"*Janvier*," answered the pupil, promptly.

"Ah! very well, very well, indeed, *ma chère* – for once, you know the first word of your lesson. Ah! to-day I have, indeed, great hope of you. Come, now, February?"

"*Fevrier*," said little Anne.

"Excellent! excellent! you know the second word too – and now, then, March?"

"Marsh."

"Ah! no, no – but I am old; perhaps I did not rightly hear. Repeat, *ma chère enfant*,<sup>36</sup> repeat."

"Marsh," cried little Anne in a very loud voice.

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<sup>30</sup> Speak French.

<sup>31</sup> Yes, sir.

<sup>32</sup> My pretty Annette.

<sup>33</sup> My dear.

<sup>34</sup> I am delighted at it.

<sup>35</sup> Now, my dear, let us begin – let us begin immediately.

<sup>36</sup> My dear child.

"Ah! you are wrong; but I will pardon you – you have said two words right. *Mars, ma chère*, *Mars* is the French for March the month. Come now, April."

"Aprile."

"Aprile! there is no such word as *Aprile* —*Avril*. And now tell me, what is May?"

"*Mai*."

"Excellent! excellent! capital! *magnifique!* you said that word *parfaitement bien*.<sup>37</sup> Now let us proceed – June."

"Juney."

"Ah! no, no —*Juin, ma chère, Juin*– but I will excuse you. Now, tell me July."

Little Anne could make no answer.

"Ah! I fear – I begin to fear you. Are you not growing bad?"

"*Oui, Monsieur*," said little Anne.

"Come then; I will tell you this once —*Juillet* is the French for July. Now, tell me what is August?"

"Augoost!"

"Augoost! Augoost! there is no such a word. Why, you are very bad, indeed —*Août, Août, Août*."

The manner in which Mr. Ravigote vociferated this rather uncouth word, roused Uncle Philip from his newspaper and his rocking-chair, and mistaking it for a howl of pain, he started up and exclaimed, "Hallo!" Mr. Ravigote turned round in amazement, and Uncle Philip continued, "Hey, what's the matter? Has anything hurt you? I thought I heard a howl."

"Dear uncle," said little Anne, "Mr. Ravigote is not howling; he is only saying August in French."

Uncle Philip bit his lip and resumed his paper. Mr. Ravigote proceeded, "September?" and his pupil repeated in a breath, as if she was afraid to stop an instant lest she should forget —

"Septembre, Octobre, Novembre, Décembre."

"Ah! very well; very well, indeed," exclaimed Mr. Ravigote; "you have said these four words *comme il faut*,<sup>38</sup> but it must be confessed they are not much difficult."

He then proceeded with the remainder of her vocabulary lesson; but in vain – not another word did she say that had the least affinity to the right one. "Ah!" said he, "*je suis au desespoir*,"<sup>39</sup> I much expected of you this day, but you have overtumbled all my hopes. *Je suis abimé*."<sup>40</sup>

"*Oui, Monsieur*," said little Anne.

"You are one *mauvais sujet*,"<sup>41</sup> pursued the teacher, beginning to lose his patience; "punishment is all that you merit. *Mais allons, essayons encore*."<sup>42</sup>

Just at that moment the string of little Anne's beads (at which she had been pulling during the whole lesson) broke suddenly in two, and the beads began to shower down, a few into her lap, but most of them on the floor.

"*Oh! quel dommage!*"<sup>43</sup> exclaimed Mr. Ravigote; "*Mais n'importe, laissez-les*,"<sup>44</sup> and continue your lesson."

But poor Mr. Ravigote found it impossible to make the little girl pay the slightest attention to him while her beads were scattered on the floor; and his only alternative was to stoop down and

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<sup>37</sup> Perfectly well.

<sup>38</sup> Properly.

<sup>39</sup> I am in despair.

<sup>40</sup> "I am thrown in an abyss of grief," is perhaps nearest the meaning of this very French expression.

<sup>41</sup> Bad person – bad child.

<sup>42</sup> But come, let us try again.

<sup>43</sup> Oh! what a pity!

<sup>44</sup> But no matter – let them alone.

help her to pick them up. Uncle Philip raised his eyes from the paper, and said, "Never mind the beads, my dear; finish the lesson, and I will buy you a new coral necklace to-morrow, and a much prettier one than that."

Little Anne instantly rose from the floor, and whisking into her chair, prepared to resume her lesson with alacrity.

"*Eh! bien,*" said the teacher, "now we will start off again, and read the inside of a book. Come, here is the fable of the fox and the grapes. These are the fables that we read during the *ancien régime*; there are none so good now."

Mr. Ravigote then proceeded to read with her, translating as he went on, and making her repeat after him – "A fox of Normandy, (some say of Gascony,) &c., &c. Now, my dear, you must try this day and make a copy of the nasal sounds as you hear them from me. It is in these sounds that you are always the very worst. The nasal sounds are the soul and the life of French speaking."

The teacher bent over the book, and little Anne followed his pronunciation more closely than she had ever done before: he exclaiming at every sentence, "Very well – very well, indeed, my dear. To-day you have the nasal sounds, *comme une ange*."<sup>45</sup>

But on turning round to pat her head, he perceived that *gentille Annette* was holding her nose between her thumb and finger, and that it was in this way only she had managed to give him satisfaction with the nasal sounds. He started back aghast, exclaiming —

"*Ah! quelle friponnerie! la petite coquine! Voici un grand acte de fourberie et de méchanceté!*"<sup>46</sup> So young and so depraved – ah! I fear, I much fear, she will grow up a rogue-a cheat – perhaps a thief. *Je suis glacé d'horreur! Je tremble! Je frissonne!*"<sup>47</sup>

"I'll tell you what," said Uncle Philip, laying down his newspaper, "you need neither tremble nor frisson, nor get yourself into any horror about it. The child's only a girl of five years old, and I've no notion that the little tricks, that all children are apt to play at times, are proofs of natural wickedness, or signs that they will grow up bad men and women. But to cut the matter short, the girl is too little to learn French. She is not old enough either to understand it, or to remember it, and you see it's impossible for her to give her mind to it. So from this time, I say, she shall learn no more French till she is grown up, and desires it herself. (*Little Anne gave a skip half way to the ceiling.*) You shall be paid for her quarter all the same, and I'll pay you myself on the spot. So you need never come again."

Mr. Ravigote was now from head to foot all one smile; and bowing with his hands on his heart, he, at Uncle Philip's desire, mentioned the sum due for a quarter's attempt at instruction. Uncle Philip immediately took the money out of his pocket-book, saying, "There, – there is a dollar over; but you may keep it yourself: I want no change. I suppose my niece, Kitty Clavering, will not be pleased at my sending you off; but she will have to get over it, for I'll see that child tormented no longer."

Mr. Ravigote thought in his own mind, that the torment had been much greater to him than to the child; but he was so full of gratitude, that he magnanimously offered to take the blame on himself, and represent to Mrs. Clavering that it was his own proposal to give up Mademoiselle Annette, as her organ of French was not yet developed.

"No, no," said Uncle Philip, "I am always fair and above-board. I want nobody to shift the blame from my shoulders to their own. Whatever I do, I'll stand by manfully. I only hope that you'll never again attempt to teach French to babies."

Mr. Ravigote took leave with many thanks, and on turning to bid his adieu to the little girl, he found that she had already vanished from the parlour, and was riding about the green on the back of old Neptune.

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<sup>45</sup> Like an angel.

<sup>46</sup> Ah! what roguery – the little jade! What an instance of imposture and wickedness!

<sup>47</sup> I am frozen with horror! – I tremble! – I shiver!

When Uncle Philip told Mrs. Clavering of his dismissal of Mr. Ravigote, she was so deeply vexed, that she thought it most prudent to say nothing, lest she should be induced to say too much.

A few days after this event, Madame Franchimeau sent an invitation, written in French, for Mrs. Clavering, and "Monsieur Philippe" to pass the evening at her house, and partake of a *petit souper*,<sup>48</sup> bringing with them *le doux Sammi*, and *la belle Fanchette*.<sup>49</sup> This supper was to celebrate the birthday of her niece, Mademoiselle Robertine, who had just arrived from New York, and was to spend a few weeks at Corinth.

Uncle Philip had never yet been prevailed on to enter the French house, as he called it; and on this occasion he stoutly declared off, saying that he had no desire to see any more of their foolery, and that he hated the thoughts of a French supper. "My friend, Tom Logbook," said he, "who commands the packet Louis Quatorze, and understands French, told me of a supper to which he was invited the first time he was at Havre, and of the dishes he was expected to eat, and I shall take care never to put myself in the way of such ridiculous trash. Why, he told me there was wooden-leg soup, and bagpipes of mutton, and rabbits in spectacles, and pullets in silk stockings, and potatoes in shirts.<sup>50</sup> Answer me now, are such things fit for Christians to eat?"

For a long time Mrs. Clavering tried in vain to prevail on Uncle Philip to accept of the invitation. At last Dick suggested a new persuasive. "Mother," said he, "I have no doubt Uncle Philip would go to the French supper, if you will let us all have a holiday from school for a week."

"That's a good thought, Dick," exclaimed the old gentleman. "Yes, I think I would. Well, on these terms I will go, and eat trash. I suppose I shall live through it. But remember now, this is the first and last and only time I will ever enter a French house."

After tea, the party set out for Monsieur Franchimeau's, and were ushered into the front parlour, which was fitted up in a manner that exhibited a strange *mélange* of slovenliness and pretension. There was neither carpet nor matting, and the floor was by no means in the nicest order; but there were three very large looking-glasses, the plates being all more or less cracked, and the frames sadly tarnished. The chairs were of two different sorts, and of very ungenteel appearance; but there was a kind of Grecian sofa, or lounge, with a gilt frame much defaced, and a red damask cover much soiled; and, in the centre of the room, stood a *fauteuil*<sup>51</sup> covered with blue moreen, the hair poking out in tufts through the slits. The windows were decorated with showy curtains of coarse pink muslin and marvellously coarse white muslin; the drapery suspended from two gilt arrows, one of which had lost its point, and the other had parted with its feather. The hearth was filled with rubbish, such as old pens, curl-papers, and bits of rag; but the mantel-piece was adorned with vases of artificial flowers under glass bells, and two elegant chocolate cups of French china.

The walls were hung with a dozen bad lithographic prints, tastefully suspended by bows of gauze ribbon. Among these specimens of the worst style of the modern French school, was a Cupid and Psyche, with a background that was the most prominent part of the picture, every leaf of every tree on the distant mountains being distinctly defined and smoothly finished. The clouds seemed unwilling to stay behind the hills, but had come so boldly forward and looked so like masses of stone, that there was much apparent danger of their falling on the heads of the lovers and crushing them to atoms. Psyche was an immensely tall, narrow woman, of a certain age, and remarkably strong features; and Cupid was a slender young man, of nineteen or twenty, about seven feet high, with long tresses descending to his waist.

Another print represented a huge muscular woman, with large coarse features distorted into the stare and grin of a maniac, an enormous lyre in her hand, a cloud of hair flying in one direction,

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<sup>48</sup> A little supper.

<sup>49</sup> The gentle Sammy and the lovely Fanchette.

<sup>50</sup> *Soupe à la jambe de bois – musettes de mouton – lapins en lorgnettes – poulardes en bas de soie – pommes de terre en chemise.* See Ude, &c.

<sup>51</sup> Easy chair.

and a volume of drapery exhibiting its streaky folds in another; while she is running to the edge of a precipice, as if pursued by a mad bull, and plunging forward with one foot in the air, and her arms extended above her head. This was Sappho on the rock of Leucate. These two prints Mr. Franchimeau (who professed connoisseurship, and always talked when pictures were the subject – that is, French pictures) pointed out to his visitors as magnificent emanations of the Fine Arts. "The coarse arts, rather," murmured Uncle Philip.

The guests were received with much suavity by the French ladies and the *vieux papa*; and Capt. Kentledge was introduced by Madame Franchimeau to three little black-haired girls, with surprisingly yellow faces, who were designated by the mother as "*mon aimable Lulu, ma mignonne Mimi, and ma petite ange Gogo*."<sup>52</sup> Uncle Philip wondered what were the real names of these children.

After this, Madame Franchimeau left the room for a moment, and returned, leading in a very pretty young girl, whom she introduced as her *très chère niece, Mademoiselle Robertine*,<sup>53</sup> orphan daughter of a brother of her respectable Alphonse.

Robertine had a neat French figure, a handsome French face, and a profusion of hair arranged precisely in the newest style of the wax figures that decorate the windows of the most fashionable *coiffeurs*.<sup>54</sup> She was dressed in a thin white muslin, with a short black silk apron, embroidered at the corners with flowers in colours. Mr. Franchimeau resigned to her his chair beside Uncle Philip, to whom (while her aunt and the Ravigotes were chattering and shrugging to Mrs. Clavering) she addressed herself with considerable fluency and in good English. People who have known but little of the world, and of the best tone of society, are apt, on being introduced to new acquaintances, to talk to them at once of their profession, or in reference to it; and Robertine questioned Uncle Philip about his ships and his voyages, and took occasion to tell him that she had always admired the character of a sailor, and still more that of a captain; that she thought the brown tinge given by the sea air a great improvement to a fine manly countenance; that fair-complexioned people were her utter aversion, and that a gentleman was never in his best looks till he had attained the age of forty, or, indeed, of forty-five.

"Then I am long past the age of good looks," said Uncle Philip, "for I was sixty-two the sixth of last June."

"Is it possible!" exclaimed Robertine. "I had no idea that Captain Kentledge could have been more than forty-three or forty-four at the utmost. But gentlemen who have good health and amiable dispositions, never seem to grow old. I have known some who were absolutely charming even at seventy."

"Pshaw!" said Uncle Philip, half aside.

Robertine, who had been tutored by her aunt Franchimeau, ran on with a tirade of compliments and innuendos, so glaring as to defeat their own purpose. Sam, who sat opposite, and was a shrewd lad, saw in a moment her design, and could not forbear at times casting significant looks towards his uncle. The old captain perfectly comprehended the meaning of those looks, and perceived that Mademoiselle Robertine was spreading her net for him. Determining not to be caught, he received all her smiles with a contracted brow; replied only in monosyllables; and, as she proceeded, shut his teeth firmly together, closed his lips tightly, pressed his clenched hands against the sides of his chair, and sat bolt upright; resolved on answering her no more.

About nine o'clock, the door of the back parlour was thrown open by the little mulatto girl, and Madame Franchimeau was seen seated at the head of the supper-table. Mr. Franchimeau led in Mrs. Clavering; Mr. Ravigote took Fanny; Madame Ravigote gave her hand to Sam, and Robertine, of

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<sup>52</sup> My lovely Lulu, my darling Mimi, and my little angel Gogo.

<sup>53</sup> Her beloved niece, Miss Robertine.

<sup>54</sup> Hair-dressers.

course, fell to the lot of Uncle Philip, who touched with a very ill grace the fingers that she smilingly extended to him.

In the centre of the supper-table was a salad decorated with roses, and surrounded by four candles. The chief dish contained *blanquettes* of veal; and the other viands were a *fricandeau* of calves' ears; a *purée* of pigs' tails; a *ragout* of sheep's feet, and another of chickens' pinions interspersed with claws; there was a dish of turnips with mustard, another of cabbage with cheese, a bread omelet, a plate of poached eggs, a plate of sugar-plums, and a dish of hashed fish, which Madame Franchimeau called a *farce*.

As soon as they were seated, Robertine took a rose from the salad, and with a look of considerable sentiment, presented it to Uncle Philip, who received it with a silent frown, and took an opportunity of dropping it on the floor, when Sam slyly set his foot on it and crushed it flat. The young lady then mixed a glass of *eau sucré*<sup>55</sup> for the old gentleman, saying very sweet things all the time; but the beverage was as little to his taste as the Hebe that prepared it.

The French children were all at table, and the youngest girl looking somewhat unwell, and leaving her food on her plate, caused Mrs. Clavering to make a remark on her want of appetite.

"*N'importe*,"<sup>56</sup> said Madame Franchimeau; "she is not affamished; she did eat very hearty at her tea; she had shesnoot for her tea."

"Chestnuts!" exclaimed Mrs. Clavering.

"Oh, yes; we have them at times. *N'importe*, my little Gogo; cease your supper, you will have the better appetite for your breakfast. You shall have an apple for your breakfast – a large, big apple. Monsieur Philippe, permit me to help you to some of this fish; you will find it a most excellent *farce*:<sup>57</sup> I have preserved it from corruption by a process of vinegar and salt, and some charcoal. Madame Colavering, I will show you that mode of restoring fish when it begins to putrefy: a great chemist taught it to my assassinated Alphonse."

Uncle Philip pushed away his plate with unequivocal signs of disgust, and moved back his chair, determined not to taste another mouthful while he stayed in the house. Suspicious of everything, he even declined Robertine's solicitations to take a glass of *liqueur* which she poured out for him, and which she assured him was genuine *parfait amour*.<sup>58</sup> During supper, she had talked to him, in a low voice, of the great superiority of the American nation when compared with the French; and regretted the frivolity and *inconsequence* of the French character; but assured him that when French ladies had the honour of marrying American gentlemen, they always lost that inconsequence, and acquired much depth and force.

After supper, Mr. Franchimeau, who, notwithstanding his taciturnity and *brusquerie*, was what Uncle Philip called a Jack of all trades, sat down to an old out-of-tune piano, that stood in one of the recesses of the back parlour, and played an insipid air of "Paul at the Tomb of Virginia," singing with a hoarse stentorian voice half-a-dozen namby-pamby stanzas, lengthening out or contracting some of the words, and mispronouncing others to suit the measure and the rhyme. This song, however, seemed to produce great effect on the French part of his audience, who sighed, started, and exclaimed – "*Ah! quels sont touchans, ces sentimens sublimes!*"<sup>59</sup>

"*Ma chère amie*," continued Madame Franchimeau, pressing the hand of Mrs. Clavering, "*permettez que je pleure un peu le triste destin de l'innocence et de la vertu – infortuné Paul – malheureuse Virginie;*"<sup>60</sup> and she really seemed to shed tears.

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<sup>55</sup> Sugar and water.

<sup>56</sup> No matter.

<sup>57</sup> Farce, in French cookery, signifies chopped meat, fish, poultry, well seasoned and mixed with other ingredients.

<sup>58</sup> Perfect love.

<sup>59</sup> Ah! how touching are these sublime sentiments!

<sup>60</sup> My dear friend, permit me to weep a little for the sad fate of innocence and virtue – unfortunate Paul – hapless Virginia.

Uncle Philip could no longer restrain himself, but he started from his chair and paced the room in evident discomposure at the folly and affectation that surrounded him; his contempt for all men that played on pianos being much heightened by the absurd appearance of the huge black-whiskered, shock-headed Monsieur Franchimeau, with his long frock-coat hanging down all over the music-stool. Robertine declined playing, alleging that she had none of her own music with her; and she privately told Uncle Philip that she had lost all relish for French songs, and that she was very desirous of learning some of the national airs of America – for instance, the Tars of Columbia. But still Uncle Philip's heart was iron-bound, and he deigned no other reply than, "I don't believe they'll suit you."

A dance was then proposed by Madame Ravigote, and Robertine, "nothing daunted," challenged Uncle Philip to lead off with her; but, completely out of patience, he turned on his heel, and walked away without vouchsafing an answer. Robertine then applied to Sam, but with no better success, for as yet he had not learned that accomplishment, and she was finally obliged to dance with old Mr. Ravigote, while Madame Franchimeau took out her mother; Fanny danced with the lovely Lulu, and Mimi and Gogo with each other; Mr. Franchimeau playing cotillions for them.

Uncle Philip thought in his own mind that the dancing was the best part of the evening's entertainment, and old Madame Ravigote was certainly the best of the dancers; though none of the family were deficient in a talent which seems indigenous to the whole French nation.

The cotillions were succeeded by cream of tartar lemonade, and a plate of sugar-plums enfolded in French mottoes, from which Robertine selected the most amatory, and presented them to Uncle Philip, who regularly made a point of giving them all back to her in silence, determined not to retain a single one, lest she might suppose he acknowledged the application.

The old gentleman was very tired of the visit, and glad enough when Mrs. Clavering proposed departing. And all the way home his infatuated niece talked to him in raptures of the elegance of French people, and the vast difference between them and the Americans.

"There is, indeed, a difference," said Uncle Philip, too much fatigued to argue the point that night.

Next morning, after they had adjourned to the cabin, Sam addressed the old gentleman with, "Well, Uncle Philip, I wish you joy of the conquest you made last evening of the pretty French girl, Miss Robertine."

"A conquest of *her*," replied Uncle Philip, indignantly; "the report of my dollars has made the conquest. I am not yet old enough to be taken in by such barefaced manœuvring. No, no; I am not yet in my dotage; and I heartily despise a young girl that is willing to sell herself to a man old enough to be her father."

"I am glad you do," observed Sam; "I have often heard my mother say that such matches never fail to turn out badly, and to make both husband and wife miserable. We all think she talks very sensibly on this subject."

"No doubt," said Uncle Philip.

"I really wonder," pursued Sam, "that a Frenchwoman should venture to make love to *you*."

"Love!" exclaimed Uncle Philip; "I tell you, there's no love in the case. I am not such a fool as to believe that a pretty young girl could fall in love with an old fellow like *me*. No, no; all she wants is, that I should die as soon as possible and leave her a rich widow: but she will find her mistake; she shall see that all her sweet looks and sweet speeches will have no effect on me but to make me hate her. She might as well attempt to soften marble by dropping honey on it."

"You'll be not only marble, but granite, also, won't you, Uncle Philip?" said Sam.

"That I will, my boy," said the old gentleman; "and now let's talk of something else."

After this, no persuasion could induce Uncle Philip to repeat his visit to the Franchimeaus; and when any of that family came to Mrs. Clavering's he always left the room in a few minutes, particularly if they were accompanied by Robertine. In short, he now almost lived in his cabin, laying strict injunctions on Mrs. Clavering not to bring thither any of the French.

One morning, while he was busy there with Sam, Dick, and Neptune, the boys, happening to look out, saw Robertine listlessly rambling on the bank of the river, and entirely alone. There was every appearance of a shower coming up. "I suppose," said Dick, "Miss Robertine intends going to our house; and if she does not make haste, she will be caught in the rain. There, now, she is looking up at the clouds. See, see – she is coming this way as fast as she can."

"Confound her impudence!" said Uncle Philip; "is she going to ferret me out of my cabin? Sam, shut that door."

"Shall I place the great chest against it?" said Sam.

"Pho – no," replied the old gentleman. "With all her assurance, she'll scarcely venture to break in by force. I would not for a thousand dollars that she should get a footing here."

Presently a knock was heard at the door.

"There she is," said Dick.

"Let us take no notice," said Sam.

"After all," said Uncle Philip, "she's a woman; and a woman must not be exposed to the rain, when a man can give her a shelter. We must let her in; nothing else can be done with her."

Upon this, Sam opened the door; and Robertine, with many apologies for her intrusion, expressed her fear of being caught in the rain, and begged permission to wait there till the shower was over.

"I was quite lost in a reverie," said she, "as I wandered on the shore of the river. Retired walks are now best suited to my feelings. When the heart has received a deep impression, nothing is more delicious than to sigh in secret."

## **Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.**

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