

# VARIOUS

THE ATLANTIC  
MONTHLY, VOLUME 08,  
NO. 46, AUGUST, 1861

Various

**The Atlantic Monthly, Volume  
08, No. 46, August, 1861**

«Public Domain»

## **Various**

The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 08, No. 46, August, 1861 / Various —  
«Public Domain»,

## Содержание

TREES IN ASSEMBLAGES	5
MISS LUCINDA	16
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	32

# Various The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 08, No. 46, August, 1861 / A Magazine of Literature, Art, and Politics

## TREES IN ASSEMBLAGES

The subject of Trees cannot be exhausted by treating them as individuals or species, even with a full enumeration of their details. Some trees possess but little interest, except as they are grouped in assemblages of greater or less extent. A solitary Fir or Spruce, for example, when standing in an inclosure or by the roadside, is a stiff and disagreeable object; but a deep forest of Firs is not surpassed in grandeur by one of any other species. These trees must be assembled in extensive groups to affect us agreeably; while the Elm, the Oak, and other wide-spreading trees, are grand objects of sight, when standing alone, or in any other situation.

I will not detain the reader with a prolix account of the classification of trees in assemblages, but simply glance at a few points. The Romans used four different words to express these distinctions. When they spoke of a wood with reference to its timber, they used the word *silva*; *sal* [Transcriber's note: remainder of word illegible], was a collection of wild-wood in the mountains; *nemus*, a smaller collection, partaking of cultivation, and answering to our ideas of a grove; *lucus* was a wood, of any description, which was set apart for religious purposes, or dedicated to some Deity. In the English language we can make these distinctions intelligible only by the use of adjectives. A *forest* is generally understood to be a wild-wood of considerable extent, retaining all its natural features. A *grove* is a smaller assemblage of trees, not crowded together, but possessing very generally their full proportions, and divested of their undergrowth. Other inferior groups are designated as *copse* and *thicket*. The words *park*, *clump*, *arboretum*, and the like, are mere technical terms, that do not come into use in a general description of Nature.

Groves, fragments of forest, and inferior groups only are particularly interesting in landscape. An unbroken forest of wide extent makes but a dreary picture and an unattractive journey, on account of its gloomy uniformity. Hence the primitive state of the earth, before it was modified by human hands, must have been sadly wanting in those romantic features that render a scene the most attractive. Nature must be combined with Art, however simple and rude, and associated with human life, to become deeply affecting to the imagination. But it is not necessary that the artificial objects of a landscape should be of a grand historical description, to produce these agreeable effects: humble objects, indeed, are the most consonant with Nature's sublime aspects, because they manifest no seeming endeavor to rival them. In the deep solitary woods, the sight of a woodman's hut in a clearing, of a farmer's cottage, or of a mere sheepfold, immediately awakens a tender interest, and enlivens the scene with a tinge of romance.

The earth must have been originally covered with forest, like the American continent in the time of Columbus. This has in all cases disappeared, as population has increased; and groves, fragments of wild-wood, small groups, and single trees have taken its place. Great Britain, once renowned for its extensive woods, now exhibits only smaller assemblages, chiefly of an artificial character, which are more interesting to the landscape-gardener than to the lover of Nature's primitive charms. Parks, belts, arboretums, and clipped hedge-rows, however useful as contributing to pleasure, convenience, or science, are not the most interesting features of wood-scenery. But the customs of the English nobility, while they have artificialized all the fairest scenes in the country, and ruined them for the

eyes of the poet or the painter, have been the means of preserving some valuable forests, which under other circumstances would have been utterly destroyed. A deer-forest belonging to the Duke of Athol comprises four hundred thousand acres; the forest of Farquharson contains one hundred and thirty thousand acres; and several others of smaller extent are still preserved as deer-parks. Thus do the luxuries of the rich tend, in some instances, to preserve those natural objects of which they are in general the principal destroyers.

Immense forests still overspread a great part of Northern Russia, through which it has been asserted that a squirrel might traverse hundreds of miles, without touching the ground, by leaping from tree to tree. Since the general adoption of railroad travelling, however, great ravages have been made in these forests, and not many years will be required to reduce them to fragments. In the South of Europe a great part of the territory is barren of woods, and the climate has suffered from this cause, which has diminished the bulk of the streams and increased the severity of droughts. But Nature has established a partial remedy for the evil arising from the imprudent destruction of forests, in lofty and precipitous mountains, that serve not only to perpetuate moisture for the supply of rain to the neighboring countries, but contribute also to preserve the timber in their inaccessible ravines. Were it not for this safeguard of mountains, the South of Europe would ere this have become a desert, from the destruction of its forests, like Sahara, whose barrenness was anciently produced by the same cause.

Most of the territory of North America is still comparatively a wilderness; but in the United States the forests have been so extensively invaded, that they seldom exhibit any distinct outlines, and few of them possess the character of unique assemblages. They are but scattered fragments of the original forest, through which the settlers have made their irregular progress from east to west, diversifying it with roads, farms, and villages. The recent clearings are palisaded by tall trees, exhibiting a naked outline of skeleton timber, without any attractions. It is in the old States only that we see anything like a picturesque grouping of woods; and here, the absence of art and design, in the formation and relative disposition of these groups, gives them a peculiar interest to the lover of natural scenery. There is a charm, therefore, in New-England landscape, existing nowhere else in equal degree; but this is rapidly giving place to those artificial improvements that are destined to ruin the face of the country, which owes its present attractions to the spontaneous efforts of Nature, modified only by the unartistic operations of a simple agriculture.

Travelling in a forest, though delightful as an occasional recreation, is, when continued many hours in succession, unless one be engaged in scientific researches, very monotonous and wearisome. Even the productions of a forest are not so various as those of a tract in which all the different conditions of wildness and culture are intermingled. A view of an unbroken wilderness from an elevation is equally monotonous. Wood must be blended with other forms of landscape, with pasture and tillage, with roads, houses, and farms, to convey to the mind the most agreeable sensations. The monotony of unbroken forest-scenery is partially relieved in the autumn by the mixed variety of tints belonging to the different trees; but this does not wholly subdue the prevailing expression of dreariness and gloom.

Nothing can surpass the splendor of this autumnal pageantry, as beheld in the Green Mountains of Vermont and Western Massachusetts, in the early part of October. This region abounds in Sugar-Maples, which are very beautifully tinted, and in a sufficient variety of other trees to delight the eye with every specious hue. A remarkable appearance may always be observed in Maples. Some trees of this kind are entirely green, with the exception perhaps of a single bough, which is of a bright crimson or scarlet. Sometimes the lower half of the foliage will be green, while the upper part is entirely crimsoned, resembling a spire of flame rising out of a mass of verdure. In other cases this order is reversed, and the tree presents the appearance of a green spire rising out of flame. We see no end to the variety of these apparently capricious phenomena, which some have explained by supposing the colored branches to be affected with partial disease that hastens their maturity: but this can hardly

be admitted as the true explanation, as such appearances exist when no other symptoms of malady can be discovered.

So much has been said and written of late in regard to the tints of autumn leaves, that the writer of this cannot be expected to advance anything new concerning them. Let me remark, however, that these beautiful tintings are not due to the action of frost, which is, on the contrary, highly prejudicial to them, as we may observe on several different occasions. If, for example, a frost should occur in September of sufficient intensity to cut down the tender annuals of our gardens,—after this, when the tints begin to appear, the outer portion of the foliage that was touched by the frost will exhibit a sullied and rusty hue. The effects of these early frosts are seldom apparent while the leaves are green, except on close inspection; for a very intense frost is required to sear and roll up the leaves. Early autumnal frosts seldom do more than to injure their capacity to receive a fine tint when they become mature.

The next occasion that renders the injurious effects of frost apparent is later in the season, after the tints are very generally developed. Every severe frost that happens at this period impairs their lustre, as we may perceive on any day succeeding a frosty night, when the woods, which were previously in their gayest splendor, will be faded to a duller and more uniform shade,—as if the whole mass had been dipped into a brownish dye, leaving the peculiar tints of each species dimly conspicuous through this shading. The most brilliant and unsullied hues are displayed in a cool, but not frosty autumn, succeeding a moderate summer. Very warm weather in autumn hastens the coloring process, and renders the hues proportionally transient. I have known Maple woods, early in October, to be completely embrowned and stripped of their leaves by two days of summer heat. Cool days and nights, unattended with frost, are the favorable conditions for producing and preserving the beauty of autumnal wood-scenery.

The effects of heat and frost are not so apparent in Oak woods, which have a more coriaceous and persistent foliage than other deciduous trees: but Oaks do not attain the perfection of their beauty, until the Ash, the Maple, and the Tupelo—the glory of the first period of autumn—have shed a great portion of their leaves. The last-named trees are in their splendor during a period of about three weeks after the middle of September, varying with the character of the season.

Oaks are not generally tinted until October, and are brightest near the third week of this month, preserving their lustre, in great measure, until the hard frosts of November destroy the leaves. The colors of the different Oaks are neither so brilliant nor so variegated as those of Maples; but they are more enduring, and serve more than those of any other woods to give character to our autumnal landscapes.

It would be difficult to convey to the mind of a person who had never witnessed this brilliant, but solemn pageantry of the dying year, a clear idea of its magnificence. Nothing else in Nature will compare with it: for, though flowers are more beautiful than tinted leaves, no assemblage of flowers, or of flowering trees and shrubs, can produce such a deeply affecting scene of beauty as the autumn woods. If we would behold them in their greatest brilliancy and variety, we must journey during the first period of the Fall of the Leaf in those parts of the country where the Maple, the Ash, and the Tupelo are the prevailing timber. If we stand, at this time, on a moderate elevation affording a view of a wooded swamp rising into upland and melting imperceptibly into mountain landscape, we obtain a fair sight of the different assemblages of species, as distinguished by their tints. The Oaks will be marked, at this early period, chiefly by their unaltered verdure. In the lowland the scarlet and crimson hues of the Maple and the Tupelo predominate, mingled with a superb variety of colors from the shrubbery, whose splendor is always the greatest on the borders of ponds and water-courses, and frequently surpasses that of the trees. As the plain rises into the hill-side, the Ash-trees may be distinguished by their peculiar shades of salmon, mulberry, and purple, and the Hickories by their invariable yellows. The Elm, the Lime, and the Buttonwood are always blemished and rusty: they add no brilliancy to the spectacle, serving only to sober and relieve other parts of the scenery.

When the second period of the Fall of the Leaf has arrived, the woods that were first tinted have mostly become leafless. The grouping of different species is, therefore, very apparent at this time,—some assemblages presenting the denuded appearance of winter, some remaining still green, while the Oaks are the principal attraction, with an intermixture of a few other species, whose foliage has been protected and the development of their hues retarded by some peculiarity of situation. Green rows of Willows may also be seen by road-sides in damp places, and irregular groups of them near the water-courses. The foreign trees—seldom found in woods—are still unchanged, as we may observe wherever there is a row of European Elms, Weeping Willows, or a hedge-row of Privet.

One might suppose that a Pine wood must look particularly sombre in this grand spectacle of beauty; but it cannot be denied that in those regions where there is a considerable proportion of Pines the perfection of this scenery is witnessed. Something is needful to relieve the eye as it wanders over such a profusion of brilliant colors. Pine woods provide this relief, and cause the tinted forest groups to stand out in greater prominence. In many districts where Pines were the original growth, they still constitute the larger sylvan assemblages, while the deciduous trees stand in scattered groups on the edge of the forest, and the contiguous plain. The verdurous Pine wood forms a picturesque groundwork to set off the various groups in front of it; and the effect of a scarlet Oak or Tupelo rising like a spire of flame in the midst of verdure is far more striking than if it stood where it was unaffected by contrast.

The cause of the superior tinting of the American forest, compared with that of Europe, has never been satisfactorily explained, though it seems to be somewhat inexplicably connected with the brightness of the American climate. It is a subject that has not engaged the attention of scientific travellers, who seem to have regarded it as worthy only of the describer of scenery. It may, however, deserve more attention as a scientific fact than has been generally supposed,—particularly as one of the phenomena that perhaps distinguish the productions of the eastern from those of the western coasts of the two grand divisions of the earth. I have observed that the Smoke-tree, which is a Sumach from China, and the *Cydonia Japonica*, are as brightly colored in autumn as any of our indigenous shrubs; while the Silver-Maple, which, though indigenous in the Western States, probably originated on the western coast of America, shows none of the fine tinting so remarkable in the other American Maples. These facts have led me to conjecture that this superior tinting of the autumnal foliage may be peculiar to the eastern coasts both of the Old and the New Continent, in the northern hemisphere. May not this phenomenon bear some relation to the colder winters and the hotter summers of the eastern compared with the western coasts? I offer this suggestion as a query, not as a theory, and with the hope that it may induce travellers to make some particular observations in reference to it.

The indigenous trees of America, or rather of the Atlantic side of this continent, are remarkable not only for their superior autumnal hues, but also for the shorter period during which the foliage remains on the trees and retains its verdure. Our fruit-trees, which are all exotics, retain their foliage long after our forest-trees are leafless; and if we visit an arboretum in the latter part of October, we may select the American from the foreign species, by observing that the latter are still green, while the others are either entirely denuded, or in that colored array which immediately precedes the fall of the leaf. The exotics may likewise be distinguished in the spring by their precocity,—their leaves being out a week or ten days earlier than the leaves of our trees. Hence, if we take both the spring and autumn into the account, the foreign, or rather the European species, show a period of verdure of three or four weeks' greater duration than the American species. Many of the former, like the Weeping Willow, do not lose their verdure, nor shed their leaves, until the first wintry blasts of November freeze them upon their branches and roll them into a crisp.

In a natural forest there is a very small proportion of perfectly formed trees; and these occur only in such places as permit some individuals to stand isolated from the rest, and to spread out their branches to their full extent. When we walk in a forest, we observe several conditions which are favorable to this full expansion of their forms. On the borders of a pond or morass, or of an extensive

quarry, the trees extend their branches into the opening, but, as they are cramped on the opposite side, they are only half developed. But this expansion takes place on the side that is exposed to view: hence the incomparable beauty of a wood on the borders of a pond, or on the banks of a river, as viewed from the water; also of a wood on the outside of an islet in a lake or river.

Fissures or cavities sometimes occur in a large rock, allowing a solitary tree that has become rooted there to attain its full proportions. It is in such places, and on sudden eminences that rise above the forest-level, on a precipice, for example, that overlooks the surrounding wood, that the forest shows individual trees possessing the characters of standards, like those we see by the roadsides and in the open field. We must conclude, therefore, that a primitive forest must contain but a very small proportion of perfect trees: these are, for the most part, the occupants of land cleared by cultivation, and may be found also among the sparse growth of timber that has come up in pasture land, where the constant browsing of cattle prevents the formation of any dense assemblages.

In the opinion of Whately, grandeur is the prevailing character of a forest, and beauty that of a grove. This distinction may seem to be correct, when such collections of wood exhibit all their proper characters: but perfectly unique forms of wood are seldom found in this country, where almost all the timber is of spontaneous growth. We have genuine forests; but other forms of wood are of a mixed character, and we have rather fragments of forest than legitimate groves. In the South of Europe many of the woods are mere plantations, in which the trees were first set in rows, with straight avenues, or vistas, passing directly through them from different points. In an assemblage of this kind there can be nothing of that interesting variety observed in a natural forest, and which is manifestly wanting even in woods planted with direct reference to the attainment of these natural appearances. "It is curious to see," as Gilpin remarks, "with what richness of invention, if I may so speak, Nature mixes and intermixes her trees, and shapes them into such a wonderful variety of groups and beautiful forms. Art may admire and attempt to plant and to form combinations like hers; but whoever observes the wild combinations of a forest and compares them with the attempts of Art has little taste, if he do not acknowledge with astonishment the superiority of Nature's workmanship."

When a tract is covered with a dense growth of tall trees, especially of Pines, which have but little underbrush, the wood represents overhead a vast canopy of verdure supported by innumerable lofty pillars. No one could enter these dark solitudes without feeling a deep impression of sublimity, especially if it be an hour of general stillness of the winds. The voices of animals and of birds, particularly the hammering of the woodpecker, serve to magnify our perceptions of grandeur. A very slight sound, during a calm in one of these deep woods, like the ticking of a clock in a vast hall, has a distinctness almost startling, especially if there be but little undergrowth. These feeble sounds afford one a more vivid sense of the magnitude of the place than louder sounds, that differ less from those we hear in the open plain. The canopy of foliage overhead and the absence of undergrowth are favorable to those reverberations which are so perceptible in a Pine wood.

In a grove we experience different sensations. Here pleasantness and cheerfulness are combined, and the feeling of grandeur is excited only perhaps by the sight of some noble tree. In a grove the trees are generally well formed, many of them being nearly perfect in their proportions. Their shadows are cast separately upon the ground, which is green beneath them as in an orchard. If we look upon them from a near eminence, we observe a variety of outlines, and may identify the different species by their shape, while in the forest we see one unbroken mass of foliage. A wild-wood is frequently converted into a grove by clearing it of undergrowth and leaving the space a grassy lawn. It may then yield us shade, coolness, and other agreeable sensations of a cultivated wood, but the individual trees always retain their gaunt and imperfect shapes.

The greater part of the woodland of this country partakes of the characters of both forest and grove, exhibiting a pleasant admixture of each, combined with pasture and thicket. In Great Britain the woods are chiefly groves and parks: a wild-wood of spontaneous growth is now rare in that country, once renowned for the extent and beauty of its forests. Most of our American woods are

fragments of forest, particularly in the Western States, where they stand out prominently, and deform the landscape by presenting a perpendicular front of naked pillars, unrelieved by any foliage. They remind one of those houses, in the city, which have been cut asunder to widen a street, leaving the interior rooms and partition-walls exposed to view. These sections of wood are the grand picturesque deformity of a country lately cleared. In the older settlements, a recent growth of wood has in many instances come up outside of these palisades, serving in a measure to conceal their baldness.

The most lovely appearances in landscape are caused by the spontaneous growth of miscellaneous trees, some in dense assemblages and some in scattered groups, with here and there a few single trees standing in open space. Such is the scenery of considerable portions of the Atlantic States, both North and South. These varied assemblages of wood and shrubbery are the characteristic features of the landscape in the older villages of New England, and indeed of all the States that were established before the Revolution. But the New-England system of farming—so much abhorred by those who wish to bring agriculture to such a state of improvement as shall make it profitable exclusively to capitalists—has been more favorable to the sylvan beauty of the landscape than that of any other part of the continent. At the South, especially, where agriculture is carried on in large plantations, we see wide fields of tillage, and forest groups of corresponding size. But the small and independent farming of New England—as favorable to general happiness as it is to beautiful scenery—has produced a charming variety of wood, pasture, and tillage, so agreeably intermixed that one is never weary of looking upon it. The varied surface of the landscape, in the uneven parts which are not mountainous, has increased these advantages, producing an endless multitude of those limited views which may be termed picturesque.

In no other part of the country are the minor inequalities of surface so frequent as in New England: I allude to that sort of ruggedness which is unfavorable to any "mammoth" system of agriculture, and plainly evinces that Nature and Providence have designed this part of the country for free and independent labor. Here little meadows, of a few acres in extent, are common, encircled by green pasture hills or by wood. A rolling surface is more favorable to grandeur of scenery; but nothing is more beautiful than landscape formed by hills rising suddenly out of perfect levels. As it is not my present purpose to treat of landscape in general, I will simply remark that the barrenness of a great part of the soil of the Eastern States is favorable to picturesque scenery. This may seem a paradoxical assertion to those who can see no beauty except in universal fatness; but unvaried luxuriance is fatal to variety of scenes, though it undoubtedly encourages the development of individual growth. An agreeable intermixture of various sylvan assemblages is one of the effects of a barren soil, containing numerous fertile tracts. Not having in general sufficient strength to produce timber, it covers itself with diverse groups of vegetation, corresponding with the varieties of soil and surface. Thus, in a certain degree, we are obliged to confess that beauty springs out of Nature's deficiencies.

We live in a latitude and upon a soil, therefore, which are favorable to the harmonious grouping of vegetation. As we proceed southward, we witness a constant increase of the number of species gathered together in a single group. Nature is more addicted at the North to the habit of classifying her productions and of assembling them in uniform phalanxes. The painter, on this account, finds more to interest the eye and to employ his pencil in the picturesque regions of frost and snow; while the botanist finds more to exercise his observation in the crowded variety that marks the region of perpetual summer.

But while vegetation is more generally social in high latitudes, several families of Northern trees are entirely wanting in this quality. Seldom is a forest composed chiefly of Elms, Locusts, or Willows. Oaks and Birches are associated in forests, Elms in groves, and Willows in small groups following the courses of streams. Those Northern trees which are most eminently social, including the two just named, are the Beech, the Maple, the Hickory, the coniferous trees, and some others; and by the predominance of any one kind the character of the soil may be partially determined. There is no tree that grows so abundantly in miry land, both North and South upon this continent, as the

Red Maple. It occupies immense tracts of morass in the Middle States, and is the last tree which is found in swamps, according to Michaux, as the Birch is the last we meet in ascending mountains. The Sugar-Maple is confined mostly to the Northeastern parts of the continent. Poplars are not generally associated exclusively in forests; but at the point where the Ohio and the Mississippi mingle their waters are grand forests of Deltoid Poplars, that stamp upon the features of that region a very peculiar physiognomy.

The characteristics of different woods, composed chiefly of one family of trees, would make an interesting study; but it would be tiresome to enter minutely into their details. Some are distinguished by a superfluity, others by a deficiency of undergrowth. In general, Pine and Fir woods are of the latter description, differing in this respect from deciduous woods. These differences are most apparent in large assemblages of wood, which have a flora as well as a fauna of their own. The same shrubs and herbaceous plants, for example, are not common to Oak and to Pine woods. There is a difference also in the cleanness and beauty of their stems. The gnarled habit of the Oak is conspicuous even in the most crowded forest, and coniferous woods are apt to be disfigured by dead branches projecting from the bole. The Birch, the Poplar, and the Beech are remarkable for the straightness, evenness, and beauty of their shafts, when assembled in a dense wood.

Some of the most beautiful forests in high latitudes consist of White Canoe-Birches. We see them in Massachusetts only in occasional groups, but farther north, upon river-banks, they form woods of considerable extent and remarkable beauty; and with their tall shafts, and their smooth white bark, resembling pillars of marble, supporting a canopy of bright green foliage, on a light feathery spray, they constitute one of the picturesque attractions of a Northern tour. Nature seems to indicate the native habitat of this noble tree by causing its exterior to bear the whiteness of snow, and it would be difficult to estimate its importance to the aboriginal inhabitants of Northern latitudes. Yellow Birch woods are not inferior in their attractions: individual trees of this species are often distinguished among other forest timber by extending their feathery summits above the level of the other trees.

The small White Birch is never assembled in large forest groups. Like the Alder, it seems to be employed by Nature for the shading of her living pictures, and for producing those gradations which are the charm of spontaneous wood-scenery. In this part of the continent, a Pitch-Pine wood is commonly fringed with White Birches, and outside of these with a lower growth of Hazels, Cornels, and Vacciniums, uniting them imperceptibly with the herbage of the plain. The importance of this native embroidery is not sufficiently considered by those industrious plodders who are constantly destroying wayside shrubbery, as if it were the pest of the farm,—nor by those "improvers," on the other hand, who wage an eternal warfare against little spontaneous groups of wood, as if they thought everything outside of the forest an intruder, if it was planted by accident, and had not cost money before it was placed there. Give me an old farm, with its stone-walls draped with Poison-Ivy and Glycine, and verdurous with a mixed array of Viburnums, Hazels, and other wild shrubbery, harboring thousands of useful birds, and smiling over the abundant harvests which they surround, before the finest artistical landscape in the world!

Pines are remarkably social in their habit, and cover immense tracts in high latitudes, extending southward, on this continent, as far as the very boundary of the tropics, where they are found side by side with the Dwarf Palm of Florida. But in the region of the true Palms the Pine is wanting. It is worthy of remark, however, that in the fossil vegetation of the Eocene world these two vegetable tribes are found associated. This fact, it seems to me, should be attributed to the mixing of the mountain Pines with the Palms of the sea-level, during that revulsion of Nature by which they were hurled into the same chaotic heap. We are not obliged to infer from their contiguity in these geological remains, that the two species ever flourished together in the same region.

Pine woods possess attractions of a peculiar kind: all lovers of Nature are enraptured with them, and there is a grandeur about them which is felt at once, when we enter them. Their dark verdure, their deep shade, their lofty height, and their branches which are ever mysteriously murmuring, as they

are swayed by the wind, render them singularly solemn and sublime. This expression is increased by the hollow reverberating interior of the wood, caused by its clearness and freedom from underbrush. The ground beneath is covered by a matting of fallen leaves, making a smooth brown carpet, that renders a walk within its precincts as comfortable as in a garden. The foliage of the Pine is so hard and durable that in summer we always find the last autumn's crop lying upon the ground in a state of perfect soundness, and under it that of the preceding year only partially decayed. The foliage of two summers, therefore, lies upon the surface, checking the growth of humble vegetation, and permitting only certain species of plants to flourish with vigor.

Mushrooms of various forms and sizes spring out of these decayed leaves, often rivalling the flowers in elegance. *Monotropas*, uniting some of the habits of the *Fungi* with the botanical characters of the flowering plants, flourish side by side with the snowy *Cypripedium* and the singular Coral-Weed. The evergreen Dewberry, a delicate species of *Rubus*, trails its glossy leaves over the turfs, and mingles its beaded fruit with the scarlet berries of the *Mitchella*. The *Pyrola*, named by the Indians *Pipsissewa*, and regarded by them as a specific for consumption, suspends its pale purple flowers in beautiful umbels, as if to invite the feeble invalid to accept its proffered remedies. Variety, indeed, may be found in these deep shades; but it exists without that profusion which in more favored situations often benumbs our susceptibility to the charms of Nature.

The edging of a Pine wood depends on the character of the soil. The Pitch-Pine, that delights in sandy plains, is embroidered at the North by White Birches; and if a road be cut through a wood of this kind, these graceful trees immediately spring up in abundance by the wayside. If a pond occurs in the middle of a Pine wood, its margin is covered first with low bushes, such as the *Andromeda*, the *Myrica*, and the sweet-scented *Azalea*, then *Alders* and *Willows* rise between them and the forest. On the side of the pond that is bounded by high gravelly banks, the margin will be covered by *Poplars* and *Birches*. The White Pine, the most noble and the most beautiful tree of the whole coniferous tribe, predominates in the New-England forest; though some wide tracts are covered with the more homely Pitch-Pines, which are the trees that scent the atmosphere on damp still days with their delightful terebinthine odors. The woods in the vicinity of Concord, N.H., on the banks of the Merrimack, known by the poetic appellation of "The Dark Plains", are of this description. In still higher latitudes the dark, majestic *Firs* become the prevailing timber, and are regarded as typical of sub-arctic regions, where they are accompanied, as if to form a striking and cheerful contrast with their melancholy grandeur, by groups of graceful *Birches*, and lively, tremulous *Poplars*.

The Pine-Barrens of the Southern States are celebrated as healthful retreats for the inhabitants of seaport towns, whither they resort in summer for security from the prevailing fevers. They are of a mixed character, consisting of the Northern Pitch-Pine, the Broom-Pine, and the Cypress, intermixed with Red Maples, Sweet Gums, and other deciduous trees. The Pines, however, are the dominant growth: but here they do not grow so compactly as in colder regions, standing widely apart, with a frequent intervening growth of *Willows* and shrubbery. The sparseness of these woods may be in part attributed to the practice of tapping the trees for their turpentine, which has caused them for a century past to be gradually thinned by consequent decay. Their tall, gaunt forms and almost branchless trunks show that they obtained their principal growth in a dense wood.

The first time I entered one of these Pine-Barrens was some years since, in the month of June, when vegetation was in its prime, before the summer droughts had seared the green herbage, and when the flowering trees and shrubs were in all their glory. During my botanical rambles in the wood, I was struck with the multitude of beautiful flowers in its shady retreats,—seeming the more numerous to me, as I had previously confined my researches to Northern woods. The *Phlox* grew here in all its native grace and delicacy, where it had never known the fostering hand of Art. Crimson *Rhexias*, called by the inhabitants Deer-Weed, were distributed among the grassy knolls, like clusters of *Picotees*. Variegated *Passion-Flowers* were conspicuous on the bare white sand that checkered the ground, displaying their emblematic forms on their low repent vines, and reminding the

wanderer in these almost trackless solitudes of that Faith which was founded on humility and crowned with martyrdom. Here, too, the Spiderwort of our gardens, in a meeker form of beauty and with a paler radiance, luxuriated under the protection of the wood. Already I observed the predominance of luxuriant vines, indicating our nearness to the tropic, wreathed gayly over the tall and branchless trunks of the trees: some, like the Bignonia, in a full blaze of crimson; others, like the Climbing Fern, draping the trees in continual verdure.

These Pines constitute a great part of the timber of the flat country between the mountains and the coast, and render a journey through that region singularly monotonous and gloomy. In the low grounds, a considerable proportion of the wood consists of the Southern Cypress, a graceful and magnificent tree, whose appearance would be very lively and cheerful, were it not for the abundance of long trailing "moss" (*usnea*) that hangs, like funereal drapery, from its branches, and darkens the whole forest. This parasitic appendant wreathes the woods sometimes almost in darkness, especially in those immense tracts on the borders of the Mexican Gulf that consist entirely of Cypress. There it has been poetically styled the "Garlands of Death," as significant of the fevers that prevail wherever it is abundant.

It is remarkable that the two extremes of climate are distinguished by the predominance of evergreens in their vegetation. Thus, the acicular-leaved trees, consisting of Pines and their congeners, mark the cold-temperate and sub-arctic zones, in north latitude,—while Myrtles, Magnolias, and other broad-leaved evergreens, mark the equatorial and tropical regions. The deciduous trees belong properly to the temperate zones, and constitute, indeed, the most interesting of all arborescent vegetation.

With regard to the age of forests, it may be affirmed that there are some undoubtedly in existence which are coeval with the earliest history of nations; but no individual trees are of such antiquity. Like nations, the assemblage may be perpetual, while the members that compose it are constantly perishing, and leaving their places to be supplied by others of more recent origin. Probably the earth does not contain forests in which any tree exceeds a thousand years of age, though the oldest forest extant may be as ancient as the Chinese Empire; for the oldest trees are not found in dense assemblages, but are probably such as have grown singly in isolated situations. As soon as a tree in a forest begins to feel the infirmities of age, its place is usurped by some young and more vigorous neighbor, and it is gradually deprived of subsistence in this unequal contest. The tempests and tornadoes, it may be added, which occasionally sweep over a country, commonly make the oldest and tallest trees their victims; for events seem to follow the same course in a forest as in human society. The most vigorous growers at any period continue to flourish a certain length of time at the expense of others; but when they have risen above the common level, they become marks for destruction,—they fall before certain inimical forces that do not reach their more humble companions.

It was the opinion of Humboldt, that, if any tract of wooded country deserves to be considered a part of the great "primeval forest", it is "that boundless district which, in the torrid zone of South America, connects the river-basins of the Amazon and the Orinoco." This tract, unequalled in extent by any other forest in the world, occupies an area of more than a thousand miles square. In this vast chaos of teeming vegetation, trees of the largest dimensions are connected by an undergrowth of vines and shrubbery which is almost impenetrable. Immense rivers and their tributaries intersect the forest in all directions, and constitute the only avenues of commercial intercourse. This impervious thicket is like a huge wall, separating near neighbors, rendering them, as it were, inhabitants of distant regions, and obliging them to make long and circuitous river journeys before they can hold communication.

Here the leaves of the trees are always green, and flowers appear in constant succession; but the surface of the ground is without herbage, for the darkness of the wood is fatal to all humble vegetation. The small plants are mostly parasites, thousands inserting their roots into the bark of trees and garlanding them with beauty. Those that take root in the ground show but few leaves or flowers, until they have clambered upwards, through the underwood, into the light of heaven. Almost the only

relief afforded the sight, in this vast solitude, comes from the rivers and other collections of water, over whose expanse the eye revels with the delight we feel on emerging from the gloom of a cavern. Every object seems to be struggling to get outside of this chaotic growth, where it can obtain the genial influence of the sun: for near the surface of the ground are perpetual shade and hideous entanglement.

In this primeval forest we must not expect to realize any of our poetical ideas of the primitive residence of the first human family. Here are no Arcadian scenes of peace and rural felicity. On all sides we behold an undying competition for light and life, among both plants and animals. We are reminded here of life in a crowded city, where the excessive abundance of supplies for human wants imported from the surrounding country causes a still greater superfluity of population, and produces a struggle for a livelihood more severe than in a rural district of gravel and boulders. The oases of this great wilderness are those places in which there is an absence of the general fertility: barrenness in such circumstances is a relief,—because it allows both freedom and repose.

This wood is the nursery of all descriptions of monsters, living chiefly in trees. On their branches and in their tangled recesses, adorned with all sorts of foliage and flowers, creatures the most terrible and the most loathsome are seen crowding and crouching in close proximity to the most beautiful forms of living things. They fill the air with their discordant utterances, and allow no permanent silence or tranquillity. Hours of periodical stillness and repose, occurring mostly at noonday, and affecting one with a sensation of awful grandeur, by contrast with the preceding disturbances, are followed, especially in the night, by a tumultuous roar from the legions of contending animals.

"A universal hubbub wild  
Of stunning sounds and voices all confused,  
Borne through the hollow dark, assaults the ear  
With loudest vehemence."

Even the notes of insects are a deafening crash, like the rattling of machinery in a cotton-mill. Except in the hush of noonday, the notes of singing-birds are drowned amidst the howling of monkeys, the whining of sapajous, the roar of the jaguar, and the dismal hooting of thousands of wild animals that riot in these awful solitudes. The sight of the fairest flowers and the most beautiful insects and birds only renders one more keenly sensitive to the frightful discords that startle and the perils that surround him.

Similar contrasts are observed in the vegetation of this region, where the giant trees of the forest are chained in the embraces of vines that contend with them for existence and finally strangle them. Trees and other plants are crowded together so promiscuously, that Nature seems to be striving to collect into one space every possible variety of species. Trees of the most poisonous and deadly qualities grow side by side with the Bread-Fruit, the Cocoa-Nut, and the beneficent Cinchona. Here are the poison and its antidote,—the monster tree and its miniature epiphyte,—the plant that astonishes by its magnitude, and the one that delights us by its minuteness. Here, if anywhere on the face of the earth, may we form some conception of the state of our planet during the Eocene period, before the world had come under the dominion of the human race.

But if Nature in this region has manifested an exuberance of animal and vegetable life, thereby rendering her bounties almost unavailable to man, there are other parts in which she seems to have provided for his particular benefit. In these favored regions, we find the Banana, the Cocoa, and the Date Palm, and other special gifts of Providence to the inhabitants of the equator. Palms are generally found only in small groups and plantations, but there are certain species of this family which are associated in extensive woods, and constitute, in some respects, one of the most charming descriptions of forest-scenery. The Dwarf Palms of the sub-tropical regions are chiefly assembled in masses, of which the Palmetto of Florida and the Chaemerops of the South of Europe are conspicuous

examples. The true Palms are likewise sometimes associated in forests, though not generally of a social habit. In one of the most celebrated of these, at the mouth of the Orinoco, composed chiefly of the Mauritian Palms, the wild Guaranos have established a national existence. Like monkeys, they live almost wholly in trees, having their habitations supported either by wooden pillars or by a matting suspended from tree to tree. In the wet season, when the ground is inundated, the inhabitants travel about their village in canoes.

The beauty of a grove of Palms has been a favorite theme of travellers. Humboldt, who saw Nature with the eye of a painter and the feelings of a poet, amidst all the dry details of science, regards them as the most beautiful of vegetable productions. It has always seemed to me, however, that travellers in general have been led to exaggerate the charms of Nature in the tropics, by observing the remarkable beauty of a few individual objects. Their susceptibility to be affected by the scenes presented to their view is likewise exalted by the confinement of their voyage; they are enraptured with the novelty of everything about them, by the voluptuousness of the climate and the abundance of delicious fruits, and always afterwards recur to the scenes of their tropical visit with an excited imagination.

In countries near the equator, many plants which are herbs in our latitude assume arborescent forms. Such are the Tree-Grasses, which form impenetrable forests, equalling some of the Fir woods of the North in extent, if not in beauty and grandeur. In this part of the world we know the Ferns only as a low herbaceous tribe of plants, consisting of mere fronds rising out of the ground. We admire them for their beautifully compounded leaves, and their colors of red, orange, and russet that variegates our meadows in June, their garlands of verdure upon the rocky hills in winter, and the profusion of their frondage in the shady glens in summer. But in certain parts of the equatorial zone the Ferns put off the humble guise in which they appear at the North. They no longer associate with the lowly Violet, allowing themselves to be crowded by the Hellebore and overtopped by the Meadow Rue; but they rear their branches aloft and assume the dignity and stature of trees. Man, who looks down upon them in our own latitude, and tramples them under his feet, looks in that region far above his head, and beholds their magnificent fronds spread out like a great tent between him and the heavens.

Tree-Ferns, though confined principally to the equatorial zone, are unable to endure the heat of the plains. They occupy an elevation that affords them the continual temperature of spring, three thousand feet above the sea,—the region of the lowest stratum of clouds,—where they receive the benefit of their moisture before it descends to the earth in showers. Humboldt ranks them with the noblest forms of tropical vegetation,—less lofty than the Palms, but surpassing them in beauty of foliage. The arborescent Ferns and Grasses are true specimens of those plants, of simple organic structure, which are found in the fossil remains of the early geological periods, and are the only plants now extant which may be considered the representatives of that epoch, when the saurians and the mastodons held dominion over the earth, and before the Angel of Light had descended from heaven to make preparation for a higher race of beings.

\* \* \* \* \*

## MISS LUCINDA

But that Solomon is out of fashion I should quote him, here and now, to the effect that there is a time for all things; but Solomon is obsolete, and never, no, never, will I dare to quote a dead language, "for raisons I have," as the exiles of Erin say. Yet, in spite of Solomon and Horace, I may express my own less concise opinion, that even in hard times, and dull times, and war times, there is yet a little time to laugh, a brief hour to smile and love and pity, just as through this dreary easterly storm, bringing clouds and rain, sobbing against casement and door with the inarticulate wail of tempests, there comes now and then the soft shine of a sun behind it all, a fleeting glitter, an evanescent aspect of what has been.

But if I apologize for a story that is nowise tragic, nor fitted to "the fashion of these times," possibly somebody will say at its end that I should also have apologized for its subject, since it is as easy for an author to treat his readers to high themes as vulgar ones, and velvet can be thrown into a portrait as cheaply as calico; but of this apology I wash my hands. I believe nothing in place or circumstance makes romance. I have the same quick sympathy for Biddy's sorrows with Patrick that I have for the Empress of France and her august, but rather grim lord and master. I think words are often no harder to bear than "a blue bating," and I have a reverence for poor old maids as great as for the nine Muses. Commonplace people are only commonplace from character, and no position affects that. So forgive me once more, patient reader, if I offer to you no tragedy in high life, no sentimental history of fashion and wealth, but only a little story about a woman who could not be a heroine.

Miss Lucinda Jane Ann Manners was a lady of unknown age, who lived in a place I call Dalton, in a State of these Disuniting States, which I do not mention for good cause. I have already had so many unconscious personalities visited on my devoted head that but for lucidity I should never mention persons or places, inconvenient as it would be. However, Miss Lucinda did live, and lived by the aid of "means," which, in the vernacular, is money. Not a great deal, it is true,—five thousand dollars at lawful interest, and a little wooden house, do not imply many luxuries even to a single-woman; and it is also true that a little fine sewing taken in helped Miss Manners to provide herself with a few small indulgences otherwise beyond her reach. She had one or two idiosyncrasies, as they are politely called, that were her delight. Plenty of dish-towels were necessary to her peace of mind; without five pair of scissors she could not be happy; and Tricopherous was essential to her well-being; indeed, she often said she would rather give up coffee than Tricopherous, for her hair was black and wiry and curly, and caps she abhorred, so that of a winter's day her head presented the most irrelevant and volatile aspect, each particular hair taking a twist on its own responsibility, and improvising a wild halo about her unsaintly face, unless subdued into propriety by the aforesaid fluid.

I said Miss Lucinda's face was unsaintly,—I mean unlike ancient saints as depicted by contemporary artists: modern and private saints are after another fashion. I met one yesterday, whose green eyes, great nose, thick lips, and sallow wrinkles, under a bonnet of fifteen years' standing, further clothed upon by a scant merino cloak and cat-skin tippet, would have cut a sorry figure in the gallery of the Vatican or the Louvre, and put the tranquil Madonna of San Sisto into a state of stunning antithesis; but if Saint Agnes or Saint Catharine was half as good as my saint, I am glad of it!

No, there was nothing sublime and dolorous about Miss Manners; her face was round, cheery, and slightly puckered, with two little black eyes sparking and shining under dark brows, a nose she unblushingly called pug, and a big mouth with eminently white and regular teeth, which she said were such a comfort, for they never ached, and never would to the end of time. Add to this physiognomy a small and rather spare figure, dressed in the cleanest of calicoes, always made in one style, and rigidly scorning hoops,—without a symptom of a collar, in whose place (or it may be over which) she wore a white cambric handkerchief, knotted about her throat, and the two ends brought into subjection by means of a little angular-headed gold pin, her sole ornament, and a relic of her old father's days

of widowhood, when buttons were precarious tenures. So much for her aspect. Her character was even more quaint.

She was the daughter of a clergyman, one of the old school, the last whose breeches and knee-buckles adorned the profession, who never "outlived his usefulness," nor lost his godly simplicity. Parson Manners held rule over an obscure and quiet village in the wilds of Vermont, where hard-handed farmers wrestled with rocks and forests for their daily bread, and looked forward to heaven as a land of green pastures and still waters, where agriculture should be a pastime, and winter impossible. Heavy freshets from the mountains that swelled their rushing brooks into annual torrents, and snow-drifts that covered five-rail fences a foot above the posts and blocked up the turnpike-road for weeks, caused this congregation fully to appreciate Parson Manners's favorite hymns,—

"There is a land of pure delight,"

and

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand."

Indeed, one irreverent, but "pretty smart feller," who lived on the top of a hill known as Drift Hill, where certain adventurous farmers dwelt for the sake of its smooth sheep-pastures, was heard to say, after a mighty sermon by Parson Manners about the seven-times heated furnaces of judgment reserved for the wicked, that "Parson hadn't better try to skeer Drift-Hillers with a hot place; 't wouldn't more 'n jest warm 'em through down there, arter a real snappin' winter."

In this out-of-the-way nook was Lucinda Jane Ann born and bred. Her mother was like her in many things,—just such a cheery, round-faced little body, but with no more mind than found ample scope for itself in superintending the affairs of house and farm, and vigorously "seeing to" her husband and child. So, while Mrs. Manners baked, and washed, and ironed, and sewed, and knit, and set the sweetest example of quiet goodness and industry to all her flock, without knowing she *could* set an example, or be followed as one, the Parson amused himself, between sermons of powerful doctrine and parochial duties of a more human interest, with educating Lucinda, whose intellect was more like his own than her mother's. A strange training it was for a young girl,—mathematics, metaphysics, Latin, theology of the driest sort; and after an utter failure at Greek and Hebrew, though she had toiled patiently through seven books of the "Aeneid," Parson Manners mildly sniffed at the inferiority of the female mind, and betook himself to teaching her French, which she learned rapidly, and spoke with a pure American accent, perhaps as pleasing to a Parisian ear as the hiss of Piedmont or the gutturals of Switzerland. Moreover, the minister had been brought up, himself, in the most scrupulous refinement of manner; his mother was a widow, the last of an "old family," and her dainty, delicate observances were inbred, as it were, in her only son. This sort of elegance is perhaps the most delicate test of training and descent, and all these things Lucinda was taught from the grateful recollection of a son who never forgot his mother, through all the solitary labors and studies of a long life. So it came to pass, that, after her mother died, Lucinda grew more and more like her father, and, as she became a woman, these rare refinements separated her more and more from those about her, and made her necessarily solitary. As for marriage, the possibility of such a thing never crossed her mind; there was not a man in the parish who did not offend her sense of propriety and shock her taste, whenever she met one; and though her warm, kind heart made her a blessing to the poor and sick, her mother was yet bitterly regretted at quiltings and tea-drinkings, where she had been so "sociable-like."

It is rather unfortunate for such a position as Lucinda's, that, as Deacon Stowell one day remarked to her father, "Natur' will be Natur' as much on Drift Hill as down to Bosting"; and when she began to feel that "strong necessity of loving" that sooner or later assails every woman's heart, there was nothing for it to overflow on, when her father had taken his share. Now Lucinda loved

the Parson most devoutly. Ever since the time when she could just remember watching through the dusk his white stockings, as they glimmered across the road to evening-meeting, and looked like a supernatural pair of legs taking a walk on their own responsibility, twilight concealing the black breeches and coat from mortal view, Lucinda had regarded her father with a certain pleasing awe. His long abstractions, his profound knowledge, his grave, benign manners, and the thousand daily refinements of speech and act that seemed to put him far above the sphere of his pastorate,—all these things inspired as much reverence as affection; and when she wished with all her heart and soul she had a sister or a brother to tend and kiss and pet, it never once occurred to her that any of those tender familiarities could be expended on her father: she would as soon have thought of caressing any of the goodly angels whose stout legs, flowing curls, and impossible draperies sprawled among the pictures in the big Bible, and who excited her wonder as much by their garments as their turkey-wings and brandishing arms. So she betook herself to pets, and growing up to the old-maidhood of thirty-five before her father fell asleep, was by that time the centre of a little world of her own,—hens, chickens, squirrels, cats, dogs, lambs, and sundry transient guests of stranger kind; so that, when she left her old home, and removed to the little house in Dalton that had been left her by her mother's aunt, and had found her small property safely invested by means of an old friend of her father's, Miss Manners made one more journey to Vermont to bring in safety to their future dwelling a cat and three kittens, an old blind crow, a yellow dog of the true cur breed, and a rooster with three hens, "real creepers," as she often said, "none of your long-legged, screaming creatures."

Lucinda missed her father, and mourned him as constantly and faithfully as ever a daughter could; but her temperament was more cheerful and buoyant than his, and when once she was quietly settled in her little house, her garden and her pets gave her such full occupation that she sometimes blamed herself for not feeling more lonely and unhappy. A little longer life or a little more experience would have taught her better: power to be happy is the last thing to regret. Besides, it would have been hard to be cheerless in that sunny little house, with its queer old furniture of three-legged tables, high-backed chairs, and chintz curtains where red mandarins winked at blue pagodas on a deep-yellow ground, and birds of insane ornithology pecked at insects that never could have been hatched, or perched themselves on blossoms totally unknown to any mortal flora. Old engravings of Bartolozzi, from the stiff elegances of Angelica Kaufman and the mythologies of Reynolds, adorned the shelf; and the carpet in the parlor was of veritable English make, older than Lucinda herself, but as bright in its fading and as firm in its usefulness as she. Up-stairs the tiny chambers were decked with spotless white dimity, and rush-bottomed chairs stood in each window, with a strip of the same old carpet by either bedside; and in the kitchen the blue settle that had stood by the Vermont fireside now defended this lesser hearth from the draught of the door, and held under the seat thereof sundry ironing-sheets, the blanket belonging to them, and good store of ticking and worsted holders. A half-gone set of egg-shell china stood in the parlor-closet,—cups, and teapot, and sugar-bowl, rimmed with brown and gold in a square pattern, and a shield without blazon on the side; the quaint tea-caddy with its stopper stood over against the pury little cream-pot, and held up in its lumps of sparkling sugar the oddest sugar-tongs, also a family relic;—beside this, six small spoons, three large ones, and a little silver porringer comprised all the "plate" belonging to Miss Manners, so that no fear of burglars haunted her, and but for her pets she would have lived a life of profound and monotonous tranquillity. But this was a vast exception; in her life her pets were the great item now;—her cat had its own chair in the parlor and kitchen; her dog, a rug and a basket never to be meddled with by man or beast; her old crow, its special nest of flannel and cotton, where it feebly croaked as soon as Miss Lucinda began to spread the little table for her meals; and the three kittens had their own playthings and their own saucer as punctiliously as if they had been children. In fact, Miss Manners had a greater share of kindness for beasts than for mankind. A strange compound of learning and unworldliness, of queer simplicity, native penetration, and common sense, she had read enough books to despise human nature as it develops itself in history and theology, and she had not known enough people to

love it in its personal development. She had a general idea that all men were liars, and that she must be on her guard against their propensity to cheat and annoy a lonely and helpless woman; for, to tell the truth, in her good father's over-anxiety to defend her from the snares of evil men after his death, his teachings had given her opinion this bias, and he had forgotten to tell her how kindly and how true he had found many of his own parishioners, how few inclined to harm or pain him. So Miss Lucinda made her entrance into life at Dalton, distrustful, but not suspicious; and after a few attempts on the part of the women who were her neighbors to be friendly or intimate, they gave her up as impracticable: not because she was impolite or unkind: they did not themselves know why they failed, though she could have told them; for, old maid as she was, poor and plain and queer, she could not bring herself to associate familiarly with people who put their teaspoons into the sugar-bowl, helped themselves with their own knives and forks, gathered up bits of uneaten butter and returned them to the plate for next time, or replaced on the dish pieces of cake half eaten or cut with the knives they had just introduced into their mouths. Miss Lucinda's code of minor morals would have forbidden her to drink from the same cup with a queen, and have considered a pitchfork as suitable as a knife to eat with, nor would she have offered to a servant the least thing she had touched with her own lips or her own implements of eating; and she was too delicately bred to look on in comfort where such things were practised. Of course these women were not ladies; and though many of them had kind hearts and warm impulses of goodness, yet that did not make up to her for their social misdemeanors, and she drew herself more into her own little shell, and cared more for her garden and her chickens, her cats and her dog, than for all the humanity of Dalton put together.

Miss Manners held her flowers next dearest to her pets, and treated them accordingly. Her garden was the most brilliant bit of ground possible. It was big enough to hold one flourishing peach-tree, one Siberian crab, and a solitary egg-plum; while under these fruitful boughs bloomed moss-roses in profusion, of the dear old-fashioned kind, every deep pink bud with its clinging garment of green breathing out the richest odor; close by, the real white rose, which fashion has banished to country towns, unfolded its cups of pearl flushed with yellow sunrise to the heart; and by its side its damask sister waved long sprays of bloom and perfume. Tulips, dark-purple and cream-color, burning scarlet and deep-maroon, held their gay chalices up to catch the dew; hyacinths, blue, white, and pink, hung heavy bells beneath them; spiced carnations of rose and garnet crowded their bed in July and August, heart's-ease fringed the walks, May honeysuckles clambered over the board-fence, and monthly honeysuckles overgrew the porch at the back-door, making perpetual fragrance from their moth-like horns of crimson and ivory. Nothing inhabited those beds that was not sweet and fair and old-fashioned. Gray-lavender-bushes sent up purple spikes in the middle of the garden and were duly housed in winter, but these were the sole tender plants admitted, and they pleaded their own cause in the breath of the linen-press and the bureau-drawers that held Miss Lucinda's clothes. Beyond the flowers, utility blossomed in a row of bean-poles, a hedge of currant-bushes against the farther fence, carefully tended cauliflowers, and onions enough to tell of their use as sparing as their number; a few deep-red beets and golden carrots were all the vegetables beside: Miss Lucinda never ate potatoes or pork.

Her housekeeping, but for her pets, would have been the proper housewifery for a fairy. Out of her fruit she annually conserved miracles of flavor and transparence,—great plums like those in Aladdin's garden, of shining topaz,—peaches tinged with the odorous bitter of their pits, and clear as amber,—crimson crabs floating in their own ruby sirup, or transmuted into jelly crystal clear, yet breaking with a grain,—and jelly from the acid currants to garnish her dinner-table or refresh the fevered lips of a sick neighbor. It was a study to visit her tiny pantry, where all these "lucent sirops" stood in tempting array,—where spices, and sugar, and tea, in their small jars, flanked the sweetmeats, and a jar of glass showed its store of whitest honey, and another stood filled with crisp cakes. Here always a loaf or two of home-made bread lay rolled in a snowy cloth, and another was spread over a dish of butter; pies were not in favor here,—nor milk, save for the cats; salt fish Miss Manners

never could abide,—her savory taste allowed only a bit of rich old cheese, or thin scraps of hung beef, with her bread and butter; sauces and spices were few in her repertory, but she cooked as only a lady can cook, and might have asked Soyer himself to dinner. For, verily, after much meditation and experience, I have divined that it takes as much sense and refinement and talent to cook a dinner, wash and wipe a dish, make a bed as it should be made, and dust a room as it should be dusted, as goes to the writing of a novel or shining in high society.

But because Miss Lucinda Manners was reserved and "unsociable," as the neighbors pronounced her, I did not, therefore, mean to imply that she was inhuman. No neighbor of hers, local or Scriptural, fell ill, without an immediate offer of aid from her: she made the best gruel known to Dalton invalids, sent the ripest fruit and the sweetest flowers; and if she could not watch with the sick, because it interfered with her duties at home in an unpleasant and inconvenient way, she would sit with them hour after hour in the day-time, and wait on all their caprices with the patient tenderness of a mother. Children she always eyed with strange wistfulness, as if she longed to kiss them, but didn't know how; yet no child was ever invited across her threshold, for the yellow cur hated to be played with, and children always torment kittens.

So Miss Lucinda wore on happily toward the farther side of the middle Ages. One after another of her pets passed away and was replaced, the yellow cur barked his last currish signal, the cat died and her kittens came to various ends of time or casualty, the crow fell away to dust and was too old to stuff, and the garden bloomed and faded ten times over, before Miss Manners found herself to be forty-six years old, which she heroically acknowledged one fine day to the census-taker. But it was not this consciousness, nor its confession, that drew the dark brows so low over Miss Lucinda's eyes that day; it was quite another trouble, and one that wore heavily on her mind, as we shall proceed to explain. For Miss Manners, being, like all the rest of her sex, quite unable to do without some masculine help, had employed, for some seven years, an old man by the name of Israel Slater, to do her "chores," as the vernacular hath it. It is a mortifying thing, and one that strikes at the roots of Women's Rights terribly sharp blows, but I must even own it, that one might as well try to live without one's bread-and-butter as without the aid of the dominant sex. When I see women split wood, unload coal-carts, move wash-tubs, and roll barrels of flour and apples handily down cellar-ways or up into carts, then I shall believe in the sublime theories of the strong-minded sisters; but as long as I see before me my own forlorn little hands, and sit down on the top stair to recover breath, and try in vain to lift the water-pitcher at table, just so long I shall be glad and thankful that there are men in the world, and that half a dozen of them are my kindest and best friends. It was rather an affliction to Miss Lucinda to feel this innate dependence, and at first she resolved to employ only small boys, and never any one of them more than a week or two. She had an unshaped theory that an old maid was a match for a small boy, but that a man would cheat and domineer over her. Experience sadly put to flight these notions for a succession of boys in this cabinet-ministry for the first three years of her stay in Dalton would have driven her into a Presbyterian convent, had there been one at hand. Boy Number One caught the yellow cur out of bounds one day, and shaved his plummy tail to a bare stick, and Miss Lucinda fairly shed tears of grief and rage when Pink appeared at the door with the denuded appendage tucked between his little legs, and his funny yellow eyes casting sidelong looks of apprehension at his mistress. Boy Number One was despatched directly. Number Two did pretty well for a month, but his integrity and his appetite conflicted, and Miss Lucinda found him one moonlight night perched in her plum-tree devouring the half-ripe fruit. She shook him down with as little ceremony as if he had been an apple; and though he lay at Death's door for a week with resulting cholera-morbus, she relented not. So the experiment went on, till a list of casualties that numbered in it fatal accidents to three kittens, two hens and a rooster, and at last Pink himself, who was pent into a decline by repeated drenchings from the watering-pot, put an end to her forbearance, and she instituted in her viziership the old man who had now kept his office so long,—a queer, withered, slow, humorous old creature, who did "chores" for some six or seven other households, and got a

living by sundry "jobs" of wood-sawing, hoeing corn, and other like works of labor, if not of skill. Israel was a great comfort to Miss Lucinda: he was efficient counsel in the maladies of all her pets, had a sovereign cure for the gapes in chickens, and could stop a cat's fit with the greatest ease; he kept the tiny garden in perfect order, and was very honest, and Miss Manners favored him accordingly. She compounded liniment for his rheumatism, herb-sirup for his colds, presented him with a set of flannel shirts, and knit him a comforter; so that Israel expressed himself strongly in favor of "Miss Lucindy," and she said to herself he really was "quite good for a man."

But just now, in her forty-seventh year, Miss Lucinda had come to grief, and all on account of Israel and his attempts to please her. About six months before this census-taking era, the old man had stepped into Miss Manners's kitchen with an unusual radiance on his wrinkles and in his eyes, and began without his usual morning greeting,—

"I've got so'thin' for you naow, Miss Lucindy. You're a master-hand for pets, but I'll bet a red cent you ha'n't an idee what I've got for ye naow!"

"I'm sure I can't tell, Israel," said she; "you'll have to let me see it."

"Well," said he, lifting up his coat and looking carefully behind him as he sat down on the settle, lest a stray kitten or chicken should preoccupy the bench, "you see I was down to Orrin's abaout a week back, and he hed a litter o' pigs,—eleven on 'em. Well, he couldn't raise the hull on 'em,—'t a'n't good to raise more 'n nine,—an' so he said, ef I'd 'a' had a place o' my own, I could 'a' had one on 'em, but, as't was, he guessed he'd hev to send one to market for a roaster. I went daown to the barn to see 'em, an' there was one, the cutest little critter I ever sot eyes on, and I've seen more 'n four pigs in my day,—'t was a little black-spotted one, as spry as an ant, and the dreffullest knowin' look out of its eyes! I fellowshipped it right off, and I said, says I, 'Orrin, ef you'll let me hev that 'ere little spotted feller, I'll git a place for him, for I do take to him consarnedly.' So he said I could, and I fetched him hum, and Miss Slater and me we kinder fed him up for a few days back, till he got sorter wonted, and I'm a-goin' to fetch him to you."

"But, Israel, I haven't any place to put him in."

"Well, that a'n't nothin' to hender. I'll jest fetch out them old boards out of the wood-shed, and knock up a little sty right off, daown by the end o' the shed, and you ken keep your swill that I've hed before, and it'll come handy."

"But pigs are so dirty!"

"I don't know as they be; they ha'n't no great conveniences for washin' ginerally; but I never heerd as they was dirtier 'n other critters, where they run wild. An' beside, that a'n't goin' to hender, nuther; I calculate to make it one o' the chores to take keer of him; 't won't cost no more to you; and I ha'n't no great opportunities to do things for folks that 's allers a-doin' for me; so't you needn't be afeard, Miss Lucindy: I love to."

Miss Lucinda's heart got the better of her judgment. A nature that could feel so tenderly for its inferiors in the scale could not be deaf to the tiny voices of humanity, when they reached her solitude; and she thanked Israel for the pig so heartily that the old man's face brightened still more, and his voice softened from its cracked harshness, as he said, clicking up and down the latch of the back-door,—

"Well, I'm sure you're as welcome as you are obleeged, and I'll knock up that 'ere pen right off; he sha'n't pester ye any,—that's a fact."

Strange to say,—yet perhaps it might have been expected from her proclivities,—Miss Lucinda took an astonishing fancy to the pig. Very few people know how intelligent an animal a pig is; but when one is regarded merely as pork and hams, one's intellect is apt to fall into neglect: a moral sentiment which applies out of Pigdom. This creature would not have passed muster at a county fair; no Suffolk blood compacted and rounded him; he belonged to the "racers," and skipped about his pen with the alacrity of a large flea, wiggling his curly tail as expressively as a dog's, and "all but speakin'," as Israel said. He was always glad to see Miss Lucinda, and established a firm friendship with her dog Fun, a pretty, sentimental, German spaniel. Besides, he kept tolerably clean by dint of Israel's care,

and thrust his long nose between the rails of his pen for grass, or fruit, or carrot- and beet-tops, with a knowing look out of his deep-set eyes that was never to be resisted by the soft-hearted spinster. Indeed, Miss Lucinda enjoyed the possession of one pet who could not tyrannize over her. Pink's place was more than filled by Fun, who was so oppressively affectionate that he never could leave his mistress alone. If she lay down on her bed, he leaped up and unlatched the door, and stretched himself on the white counterpane beside her with a grunt of satisfaction; if she sat down to knit or sew, he laid his head and shoulders across her lap, or curled himself up on her knees; if she was cooking, he whined and coaxed round her till she hardly knew whether she fried or broiled her steak; and if she turned him out and buttoned the door, his cries were so pitiful she could never be resolute enough to keep him in exile five minutes,—for it was a prominent article in her creed, that animals have feelings that are easily wounded, and are of "like passions" with men, only incapable of expression.

Indeed, Miss Lucinda considered it the duty of human beings to atone to animals for the Lord's injustice in making them dumb and four-legged. She would have been rather startled at such an enunciation of her practice, but she was devoted to it as a practice: she would give her own chair to the cat and sit on the settle herself; get up at midnight, if a mew or a bark called her, though the thermometer was below zero; The tenderloin of her steak or the liver of her chicken was saved for a pining kitten or an ancient and toothless cat; and no disease or wound daunted her faithful nursing, or disgusted her devoted tenderness. It was rather hard on humanity, and rather reversive of Providence, that all this care and pains should be lavished on cats and dogs, while little morsels of flesh and blood, ragged, hungry, and immortal, wandered up and down the streets. Perhaps that they were immortal was their defence from Miss Lucinda; one might have hoped that her "other-worldliness" accepted that fact as enough to outweigh present pangs, if she had not openly declared, to Israel Slater's immense amusement and astonishment, that *she* believed creatures had souls,—little ones perhaps, but souls after all, and she did expect to see Pink again some time or other.

"Well, I hope he's got his tail feathered out ag'in," said Israel, dryly. "I do'no' but what hair'd grow as well as feathers in a sperctooal state, and I never see a pictur' of an angel but what hed consider'ble many feathers."

Miss Lucinda looked rather confounded. But humanity had one little revenge on her in the shape of her cat, a beautiful Maltese, with great yellow eyes, fur as soft as velvet, and silvery paws as lovely to look at as they were thistly to touch. Toby certainly pleaded hard for Miss Lucinda's theory of a soul; but his was no good one: some tricky and malign little spirit had lent him his share of intellect, and he used it to the entire subjugation of Miss Lucinda. When he was hungry, he was as well-mannered and as amiable as a good child,—he would coax, and purr, and lick her fingers with his pretty red tongue, like a "perfect love"; but when he had his fill, and needed no more, then came Miss Lucinda's time of torment. If she attempted to caress him, he bit and scratched like a young tiger, he sprang at her from the floor and fastened on her arm with real fury; if he cried at the window and was not directly let in, as soon as he had achieved entrance his first manoeuvre was to dash at her ankles and bite them, if he could, as punishment for her tardiness. This skirmishing was his favorite mode of attack; if he was turned out of the closet, or off the pillow up-stairs, he retreated under the bed and made frantic sallies at her feet, till the poor woman got actually nervous, and if he was in the room made a flying leap as far as she could to her bed, to escape those keen claws. Indeed, old Israel found her more than once sitting in the middle of the kitchen-floor with Toby crouched for a spring under the table, his poor mistress afraid to move, for fear of her unlucky ankles. And this literally cat-ridden woman was hazed about and ruled over by her feline tyrant to that extent that he occupied the easiest chair, the softest cushion, the middle of the bed, and the front of the fire, not only undisturbed, but caressed. This is a veritable history, beloved reader, and I offer it as a warning and an example: if you will be an old maid, or if you can't help it, take to petting children, or donkeys, or even a respectable cow, but beware of domestic tyranny in any shape but man's!

No wonder Miss Lucinda took kindly to the pig, who had a house of his own, and a servant, as it were, to the avoidance of all trouble on her part,—the pig who capered for joy when she or Fun approached, and had so much expression in his physiognomy that one almost expected to see him smile. Many a sympathizing conference Miss Lucinda held with Israel over the perfections of Piggy, as he leaned against the sty and looked over at his favorite after this last chore was accomplished.

"I say for 't," exclaimed the old man, one day, "I b'lieve that cre'tur' knows enough to be professor in a college. Why, he talks! he re'lly doos: a leetle through his nose, maybe, but no more 'n Dr. Colton allers does,—'n' I declare he appears to have ababout as much sense. I never see the equal of him. I thought he'd 'a larfed right out yesterday, when I gin him that mess o' corn: he got up onto his forelegs on the trough, an' he winked them knowin' eyes o' his'n, an' waggled his tail, an' then he set off an' capered round till he come bunt up ag'inst the boards. I tell *you*,—that sorter sobered him; he gin a growlin' grunt, an' shook his ears, an' looked sideways at me, and then he put to and eet up that corn as sober as a judge. I swan! he doos beat the Dutch!"

But there was one calculation forgotten both by Miss Lucinda and Israel: the pig would grow,—and in consequence, as I said before, Miss Lucinda came to grief; for when the census-taker tinkled her sharp little door-bell, it called her from a laborious occupation at the sty,—no more and no less than trying to nail up a board that Piggy had torn down in struggling to get out of his durance. He had grown so large that Miss Lucinda was afraid of him; his long legs and their vivacious motion added to the shrewd intelligence of his eyes, and his nose seemed as formidable to this poor little woman as the tusk of a rhinoceros: but what should she do with him? One might as well have proposed to her to kill and cut up Israel as to consign Piggy to the "fate of race." She could not turn him into the street to starve, for she loved him; and the old maid suffered from a constancy that might have made some good man happy, but only embarrassed her with the pig. She could not keep him forever,—that was evident; she knew enough to be aware that time would increase his disabilities as a pet, and he was an expensive one now,—for the corn-swallowing capacities of a pig, one of the "racer" breed, are almost incredible, and nothing about Miss Lucinda wanted for food even to fatness. Besides, he was getting too big for his pen, and so "cute" an animal could not be debarred from all out-door pleasures, and tantalized by the sight of a green and growing garden before his eyes continually, without making an effort to partake of its delights. So, when Miss Lucinda indued herself with her brown linen sack and sun-bonnet to go and weed her carrot-patch, she was arrested on the way by a loud grunting and scrambling in Piggy's quarter, and found to her distress that he had contrived to knock off the upper board from his pen. She had no hammer at hand; so she seized a large stone that lay near by and pounded at the board till the twice-tinkling bell recalled her to the house, and as soon as she had made confession to the census-taker she went back,—alas, too late! Piggy had redoubled his efforts, another board had yielded, and he was free! What a thing freedom is! how objectionable in practice, how splendid in theory! More people than Miss Lucinda have been put to their wits' end when "Hoggie" burst his bonds and became rampant instead of couchant. But he enjoyed it; he made the tour of the garden on a delightful canter, brandishing his tail with an air of defiance that daunted his mistress at once, and regarding her with his small bright eyes as if he would before long taste her and see if she was as crisp as she looked. She retreated forthwith to the shed and caught up a broom with which she courageously charged upon Piggy, and was routed entirely; for, being no way alarmed by her demonstration, the creature capered directly at her, knocked her down, knocked the broom out of her hand, and capered away again to the young carrot-patch.

"Oh, dear!" said Miss Manners, gathering herself up from the ground,—*"if there only was a man here!"*

Suddenly she betook herself to her heels,—for the animal looked at her, and stopped eating: that was enough to drive Miss Lucinda off the field. And now, quite desperate, she rushed through the house and out of the front-door, actually in search of a man! Just down the street she saw one. Had she been composed, she might have noticed the threadbare cleanliness of his dress, the odd cap

that crowned his iron-gray locks, and the peculiar manner of his walk; for our little old maid had stumbled upon no less a person than Monsieur Jean Leclerc, the dancing-master of Dalton. Not that this accomplishment was much in vogue in the embryo city; but still there were a few who liked to fit themselves for firemen's balls and sleighing-party frolics, and quite a large class of children were learning betimes such graces as children in New England receive more easily than their elders. Monsieur Leclerc had just enough scholars to keep his coat threadbare and restrict him to necessities; but he lived, and was independent. All this Miss Lucinda was ignorant of; she only saw a man, and, with the instinct of the sex in trouble or danger, she appealed to him at once.

"Oh, Sir! won't you step in and help me? My pig has got out, and I can't catch him, and he is ruining my garden!"

"Madame, I shall!" replied the Frenchman, bowing low, and assuming the first position.

So Monsieur Leclerc followed Miss Manners, and supplied himself with a mop that was hanging in the shed as his best weapon. Dire was the battle between the pig and the Frenchman. They skipped past each other and back again as if they were practising for a cotillon. Piggy had four legs, which gave him a certain advantage; but the Frenchman had most brain, and in the long run brain gets the better of legs. A weary dance they led each other, but after a while the pet was hemmed in a corner, and Miss Lucinda had run for a rope to tie him, when, just as she returned, the beast made a desperate charge, upset his opponent, and giving a leap in the wrong direction, to his manifest astonishment, landed in his own sty! Miss Lucinda's courage rose; she forgot her prostrate friend in need, and, running to the pen, caught up hammer and nail-box on her way, and, with unusual energy, nailed up the bars stronger than ever, and then bethought herself to thank the stranger. But there he lay quite still and pale.

"Dear me!" said Miss Manners, "I hope you haven't hurt yourself, Sir?"

"I have fear that I am hurt, Madame," said he, trying to smile. "I cannot to move but it pains me."

"Where is it? Is it your leg or your arm? Try and move one at a time," said Miss Lucinda, promptly.

The left leg was helpless, it could not answer to the effort, and the stranger lay back on the ground pale with the pain. Miss Lucinda took her lavender-bottle out of her pocket and softly bathed his head and face; then she took off her sack and folded it up under his head, and put the lavender beside him. She was good at an emergency, and she showed it.

"You must lie quite still," said she; "you must not try to move till I come back with help, or your leg will be hurt more."

With that she went away, and presently returned with two strong men and the long shutter of a shop-window. To this extempore litter she carefully moved the Frenchman, and then her neighbors lifted him and carried him into the parlor, where Miss Lucinda's chintz lounge was already spread with a tight-pinned sheet to receive the poor man, and while her helpers put him to bed she put on her bonnet and ran for the doctor.

Doctor Colton did his best for his patient, but pronounced it an impossibility to remove him till the bone should be joined firmly, as a thorough cure was all-essential to his professional prospects. And now, indeed, Miss Lucinda had her hands full. A nurse could not be afforded, but Monsieur Leclerc was added to the list of old Israel's "chores," and what other nursing he needed Miss Lucinda was glad to do; for her kind heart was full of self-reproaches to think it was her pig that had knocked down the poor man, and her mop-handle that had twisted itself across and under his leg, and aided, if not caused, its breakage. So Israel came in four or five times a day to do what he could, and Miss Lucinda played nurse at other times to the best of her ability. Such flavorful gruels and porridges as she concocted! such *tisanes* after her guest's instructions! such dainty soups, and sweetbreads, and cutlets, served with such neatness! After his experience of a second-rate boarding-house, Monsieur Leclerc thought himself in a gastronomic paradise. Moreover, these tiny meals were garnished with flowers, which his French taste for color and decoration appreciated: two or three stems of lilies-of-the-valley in their folded green leaves, cool and fragrant; a moss-rosebud and a spire of purple-

gray lavender bound together with ribbon-grass; or three carnations set in glittering myrtle-sprays, the last acquisition of the garden.

Miss Lucinda enjoyed nursing thoroughly, and a kindlier patient no woman ever had. Her bright needle flew faster than ever through the cold linen and flaccid cambric of the shirts and cravats she fashioned, while he told her, in his odd idioms, stories of his life in France, and the curious customs both of society and *cuisinerie*, with which last he showed a surprising acquaintance. Truth to tell, when Monsieur Leclerc said he had been a member of the Duc de Montmorenci's household, he withheld the other half of this truth,—that he had been his *valet-de-chambre*: but it was an hereditary service, and seemed to him as different a thing from common servitude as a peer's office in the bedchamber differs from a lackey's. Indeed, Monsieur Leclerc was a gentleman in his own way,—not of blood, but of breeding; and while he had faithfully served the "aristocrats," as his father had done before him, he did not limit that service to their prosperity, but in their greatest need descended to menial offices, and forgot that he could dance and ride and fence almost as well as his young master. But a bullet from a barricade put an end to his duty there, and he hated utterly the democratic rule that had overturned for him both past and future, so he escaped, and came to America, the grand resort of refugees, where he had labored, as he best knew how, for his own support, and kept to himself his disgust at the manners and customs of the barbarians. Now, for the first time, he was at home and happy. Miss Lucinda's delicate fashions suited him exactly; he adored her taste for the beautiful, which she was unconscious of; he enjoyed her cookery, and though he groaned within himself at the amount of debt he was incurring, yet he took courage from her kindness to believe she would not be a hard creditor, and, being naturally cheerful, put aside his anxieties and amused himself as well as her with his stories, his quavering songs, his recipes for *pot-au-feu*, *tisane*, and *pâtés*, at once economical and savory. Never had a leg of lamb or a piece of roast beef gone so far in her domestic experience, a chicken seemed almost to outlive its usefulness in its various forms of reappearance, and the salads he devised were as wonderful as the omelets he superintended, or the gay dances he played on his beloved violin, as soon as he could sit up enough to manage it. Moreover,—I should say *mostover*, if the word were admissible,—Monsieur Leclerc lifted a great weight before long from Miss Lucinda's mind. He began by subduing Fun to his proper place by a mild determination that completely won the dog's heart. "Women and spaniels," the world knows, "like kicking"; and though kicks were no part of the good man's Rarefaction of Fun, he certainly used a certain amount of coercion, and the dog's lawful owner admired the skill of the teacher and enjoyed the better manners of the pupil thoroughly; she could do twice as much sewing now, and never were her nights disturbed by a bark, for the dog crouched by his new friend's bed in the parlor and lay quiet there. Toby was next undertaken, and proved less amenable to discipline; he stood in some slight awe of the man who tried to teach him, but still continued to sally out at Miss Lucinda's feet, to spring at her caressing hand when he felt ill-humored, and to claw Fun's patient nose and his approaching paws when his misplaced sentimentality led him to caress the cat; but after a while a few well-timed slaps administered with vigor cured Toby of his worst tricks, though every blow made Miss Lucinda wince, and almost shook her good opinion of Monsieur Leclerc: for in these long weeks he had wrought out a good opinion of himself in her mind, much to her own surprise; she could not have believed a man could be so polite, so gentle, so patient, and above all so capable of ruling without tyranny. Miss Lucinda was puzzled.

One day, as Monsieur Leclerc was getting better, just able to go about on crutches, Israel came into the kitchen, and Miss Manners went out to see him. She left the door open, and along with the odor of a pot of raspberry-jam scalding over the fire, sending its steams of leaf- and insect-fragrance through the little house, there came in also the following conversation.

"Israel," said Miss Lucinda, in a hesitating and rather forlorn tone, "I have been thinking,—I don't know what to do with Piggy. He is quite too big for me to keep. I'm afraid of him, if he gets out; and he eats up the garden."

"Well, that *is* a consider'ble swaller for a pig, Miss Lucindy; but I b'lieve you're abaout right abaout keepin' on him. He *is* too big,—that's a fact; but he's so like a human cre'tur', I'd jest abaout as lieves slarter Orrin. I declare, I don't know no more 'n a taown-haouse goose what to do with him!"

"If I gave him away, I suppose he would be fatted and killed, of course?"

"I guess he'd be killed, likely; but as for fattenin' on him, I'd jest as soon undertake to fatten a salt codfish. He's one o' the racers, an' they're as holler as hogsheads: you can fill 'em up to their noses, ef you're a mind to spend your corn, and they'll caper it all off their bones in twenty-four haours. I b'lieve, ef they was tied neck an' heels an' stuffed, they'd wiggle thin betwixt feedin'-times. Why, Orrin, he raised nine on 'em, and every darned critter's as poor as Job's turkey, to-day: they a'n't no good. I'd as lieves ha' had nine chestnut rails,—an' a little lieveser, 'cause they don't eat nothin'."

"You don't know of any poor person who'd like to have a pig, do you?" said Miss Lucinda, wistfully.

"Well, the poorer they was, the quicker they'd eat him up, I guess,—ef they could eat such a razor-back."

"Oh, I don't like to think of his being eaten! I wish he could be got rid of some other way. Don't you think he might be killed in his sleep, Israel?"

This was a little too much for Israel. An irresistible flicker of laughter twitched his wrinkles and bubbled in his throat.

"I think it's likely 'twould wake him up," said he, demurely. "Killin's killin', and a cre'tur' can't sleep over it 's though 't was the stomach-ache. I guess he'd kick some, ef he *was* asleep,—and screech some, too!"

"Dear me!" said Miss Lucinda, horrified at the idea. "I wish he could be sent out to run in the woods. Are there any good woods near here, Israel?"

"I don't know but what he'd as lieves be slartered to once as to starve, an' be hunted down out in the lots. Besides, there a'n't nobody as I knows of would like a hog to be a-rootin' round amongst their turnips and young wheat."

"Well, what I shall do with him I don't know!" despairingly exclaimed Miss Lucinda. "He was such a dear little thing when you brought him, Israel! Do you remember how pink his pretty little nose was,—just like a rosebud,—and how bright his eyes looked, and his cunning legs? And now he's grown so big and fierce! But I can't help liking him, either."

"He's a cute critter, that's sartain; but he does too much rootin' to have a pink nose now, I expect;—there's consider'ble on't, so I guess it looks as well to have it gray. But I don't know no more 'n you do what to do abaout it."

"If I could only get rid of him without knowing what became of him!" exclaimed Miss Lucinda, squeezing her forefinger with great earnestness, and looking both puzzled and pained.

"If Mees Lucinda would pairmit?" said a voice behind her.

She turned round to see Monsieur Leclerc on his crutches, just in the parlor-door.

"I shall, Mees, myself dispose of Piggee, if it please. I can. I shall have no sound; he shall to go away like a silent snow, to trouble you no more, never!"

"Oh, Sir! if you could! But I don't see how!"

"If Mees was to see, it would not be to save her pain. I shall have him to go by *magique* to fiery land."

Fairy-land, probably! But Miss Lucinda did not perceive the *équivoque*.

"Nor yet shall I trouble Meester Israyel. I shall have the aid of myself and one good friend that I have; and some night when you rise of the morning, he shall not be there."

Miss Lucinda breathed a deep sigh of relief.

"I am greatly obliged,—I shall be, I mean," said she.

"Well, I'm glad enough to wash my hands on't," said Israel. "I shall hanker arter the critter some, but he's a-gettin' too big to be handy; 'n' it's one comfort abaout critters, you ken get rid on 'em

somehaow when they're more plague than profit. But folks has got to be let alone, excep' the Lord takes 'em; an' He don't allers see fit."

What added point and weight to these final remarks of old Israel was the well-known fact that he suffered at home from the most pecking and worrying of wives, and had been heard to say in some moment of unusual frankness that he "didn't see how't could be sinful to wish Miss Slater was in heaven, for she'd be lots better off, and other folks too!"

Miss Lucinda never knew what befell her pig one fine September night; she did not even guess that a visit paid to Monsieur by one of his pupils, a farmer's daughter just out of Dalton, had anything to do with this *enlèvement*; she was sound asleep in her bed up-stairs, when her guest shod his crutches with old gloves, and limped out to the garden-gate by dawn, where he and the farmer tolled the animal out of his sty and far down the street by tempting red apples, and then Farmer Steele took possession of him, and he was seen no more. No, the first thing Miss Lucinda knew of her riddance was when Israel put his head into the back-door that same morning, some four hours afterward, and said, with a significant nod,—

"He's gone!"

After all his other chores were done, Israel had a conference with Monsieur Leclerc, and the two sallied into the garden, and in an hour had dismantled the low dwelling, cleared away the wreck, levelled and smoothed its site, and Monsieur, having previously provided himself with an Isabella-grape-vine, planted it on this forsaken spot, and trained it carefully against the end of the shed: strange to say, though it was against all precedent to transplant a grape in September, it lived and flourished. Miss Lucinda's gratitude to Monsieur Leclerc was altogether disproportioned, as he thought, to his slight service. He could not understand fully her devotion to her pets, but he respected it, and aided it whenever he could, though he never surmised the motive that adorned Miss Lucinda's table with such delicate superabundance after the late departure, and laid bundles of lavender-flowers in his tiny portmanteau till the very leather seemed to gather fragrance.

Before long, Monsieur Leclerc was well enough to resume his classes, and return to his boarding-house; but the latter was filled, and only offered a prospect of vacancy in some three weeks after his application; so he returned home somewhat dejected, and as he sat by the little parlor-fire after tea, he said to his hostess, in a reluctant tone,—

"Mees Lucinda, you have been of the kindest to the poor alien. I have it in my mind to relieve you of this care very rapidly, but it is not in the Fates that I do. I have gone to my house of lodgings, and they cannot to give me a chamber as yet I have fear that I must yet rely me on your goodness for some time more, if you can to entertain me so much more of time?"

"Why, I shall like to, Sir," replied the kindly, simple-hearted old maid. "I'm sure you are not a mite of trouble, and I never can forget what you did for my pig."

A smile flitted across the Frenchman's thin, dark face, and he watched her glittering needles a few minutes in silence before he spoke again.

"But I have other things to say of the most unpleasant to me, Mees Lucinda. I have a great debt for the goodness and care you to me have lavished. To the angels of the good God we must submit to be debtors, but there are also of mortal obligations. I have lodged in your mansion for more of ten weeks, and to you I pay yet no silver, but it is that I have it not at present—I must ask of your goodness to wait."

The old maid's shining black eyes grew soft as she looked at him.

"Why!" said she, "I don't think you owe me much of anything, Mr. Leclerc. I never knew things last as they have since you came. I really think you brought a blessing. I wish you would please to think you don't owe me anything."

The Frenchman's great brown eyes shone with suspicious dew.

"I cannot to forget that I owe to you far more than any silver of man repays; but I should not think to forget that I also owe to you silver, or I should not be worthy of a man's name. No, Mees! I have two hands and legs. I will not let a woman most solitary spend for me her good self."

"Well," said Miss Lucinda, "if you will be uneasy till you pay me, I would rather have another kind of pay than money. I should like to know how to dance. I never did learn, when I was a girl, and I think it would be good exercise."

Miss Lucinda supported this pious fiction through with a simplicity that quite deceived the Frenchman. He did not think it so incongruous as it was. He had seen women of sixty, rouged, and jewelled, and furbelowed, foot it deftly in the halls of the Faubourg St. Germain in his earliest youth; and this cheery, healthy woman, with lingering blooms on either cheek, and uncapped head of curly black hair but slightly strewn with silver, seemed quite as fit a subject for the accomplishment. Besides, he was poor,—and this offered so easy a way of paying the debt he had so dreaded! Well said Solomon,—"The destruction of the poor is their poverty!" For whose moral sense, delicate sensitivenesses, generous longings, will not sometimes give way to the stringent need of food and clothing, the gall of indebtedness, and the sinking consciousness of an empty purse and threatening possibilities?

Monsieur Leclerc's face brightened.

"Ah! with what grand pleasure shall I teach you the dance!"

But it fell dark again as he proceeded,—

"Though not one, nor two, nor three, nor four quarters shall be of value sufficient to achieve my payment."

"Then, if that troubles you, why, I should like to take some French lessons in the evening, when you don't have classes. I learned French when I was quite a girl, but not to speak it very easily; and if I could get some practice and the right way to speak, I should be glad."

"And I shall give you the real *Parisien* tone, Mees Lucinda!" said he, proudly. "I shall be as if it were no more an exile when I repeat my tongue to you!"

And so it was settled. Why Miss Lucinda should learn French any more than dancing was not a question in Monsieur Leclerc's mind. It is true, that Chaldaic would, in all probability, be as useful to our friend as French; and the flying over poles and hanging by toes and fingers, so eloquently described by the Apostle of the Body in these "Atlantic" pages, would have been as well adapted to her style and capacity as dancing;—but his own language, and his own profession! what man would not have regarded these as indispensable to improvement, particularly when they paid his board?

During the latter three weeks of Monsieur Leclerc's stay with Miss Lucinda he made himself surprisingly useful. He listed the doors against approaching winter breezes,—he weeded in the garden,—trimmed, tied, trained, wherever either good office was needed,—mended china with an infallible cement, and rickety chairs with the skill of a cabinet-maker; and whatever hard or dirty work he did, he always presented himself at table in a state of scrupulous neatness: his long brown hands showed no trace of labor; his iron-gray hair was reduced to smoothest order; his coat speckless, if threadbare; and he ate like a gentleman, an accomplishment not always to be found in the "best society," as the phrase goes,—whether the best in fact ever lacks it is another thing. Miss Lucinda appreciated these traits,—they set her at ease; and a pleasanter home-life could scarce be painted than now enlivened the little wooden house. But three weeks pass away rapidly; and when the rusty portmanteau was gone from her spare chamber, and the well-worn boots from the kitchen-corner, and the hat from its nail, Miss Lucinda began to find herself wonderfully lonely. She missed the armfuls of wood in her wood-box, that she had to fill laboriously, two sticks at a time; she missed the other plate at her tiny round table, the other chair beside her fire; she missed that dark, thin, sensitive face, with its rare and sweet smile; she wanted her story-teller, her yarn-winder, her protector, back again. Good gracious! to think of an old lady of forty-seven entertaining such sentiments for a man!

Presently the dancing-lessons commenced. It was thought advisable that Miss Manners should enter a class, and, in the fervency of her good intentions, she did not demur. But gratitude and respect had to strangle with persistent hands the little serpents of the ridiculous in Monsieur Leclerc's soul, when he beheld his pupil's first appearance. What reason was it, O rose of seventeen, adorning thyself with cloudy films of lace and sparks of jewelry before the mirror that reflects youth and beauty, that made Miss Lucinda array herself in a brand-new dress of yellow muslin-de-laine strewed with round green spots, and displace her customary hand-kerchief for a huge tamboured collar, on this eventful occasion? Why, oh, why did she tie up the roots of her black hair with an unconcealable scarlet string? And most of all, why was her dress so short, her slipper-strings so big and broad, her thick slippers so shapeless by reason of the corns and bunions that pertained to the feet within? The "instantaneous rush of several guardian angels" that once stood dear old Hepzibah Pyncheon in good stead was wanting here,—or perhaps they stood by all-invisible, their calm eyes softened with love deeper than tears, at this spectacle so ludicrous to man, beholding in the grotesque dress and adornments only the budding of life's divinest blossom, and in the strange skips and hops of her first attempts at dancing only the buoyancy of those inner wings that goodness and generosity and pure self-devotion were shaping for a future strong and stately flight upward. However, men, women, and children do not see with angelic eyes, and the titterings of her fellow-pupils were irrepressible; one bouncing girl nearly choked herself with her hand-kerchief trying not to laugh, and two or three did not even try. Monsieur Leclerc could not blame them,—at first he could scarce control his own facial muscles; but a sense of remorse smote him, as he saw how unconscious and earnest the little woman was, and remembered how often those knotty hands and knobbed feet had waited on his need or his comfort. Presently he tapped on his violin for a few moments' respite, and approached Miss Lucinda as respectfully as if she had been a queen.

"You are ver' tired, Mees Lucinda?" said he.

"I am a little, Sir," said she, out of breath. "I am not used to dancing; it's quite an exertion."

"It is that truly. If you are too much tired, is it better to wait? I shall finish for you the lesson till I come to-night for a French conversation?"

"I guess I will go home," said the simple little lady. "I am some afraid of getting rheumatism; but use makes perfect, and I shall stay through next time, no doubt."

"So I believe," said Monsieur, with his best bow, as Miss Lucinda departed and went home, pondering all the way what special delicacy she should provide for tea.

"My dear young friends," said Monsieur Leclerc, pausing with the uplifted bow in his hand, before he recommenced his lesson, "I have observe that my new pupil does make you much to laugh. I am not so surprise, for you do not know all, and the good God does not robe all angels in one manner; but she have taken me to her mansion with a leg broken, and have nursed me like a saint of the blessed, nor with any pay of silver except that I teach her the dance and the French. They are pay for the meat and the drink, but she will have no more for her good patience and care. I like to teach you the dance, but she could teach you the saints' ways, which are better. I think you will no more to laugh."

"No! I guess we *won't!*" said the bouncing girl with great emphasis, and the color rose over more than one young face.

After that day Miss Lucinda received many a kind smile and hearty welcome, and never did anybody venture even a grimace at her expense. But it must be acknowledged that her dancing was at least peculiar. With a sanitary view of the matter, she meant to make it exercise, and fearful was the skipping that ensued. She chassed on tiptoe, and balanced with an indescribable hopping twirl, that made one think of a chickadee pursuing its quest of food on new-ploughed ground; and some late-awakened feminine instinct of dress, restrained, too, by due economy, indued her with the oddest decorations that woman ever devised. The French lessons went on more smoothly. If Monsieur Leclerc's Parisian ear was tortured by the barbarous accent of Vermont, at least he bore it with heroism, since there was nobody else to hear; and very pleasant, both to our little lady and her

master, were these long winter evenings, when they diligently waded through Racine, and even got as far as the golden periods of Chateaubriand. The pets fared badly for petting in these days; they were fed and waited on, but not with the old devotion; it began to dawn on Miss Lucinda's mind that something to talk to was preferable, as a companion, even to Fun, and that there might be a stranger sweetness in receiving care and protection than in giving it.

Spring came at last. Its softer skies were as blue over Dalton as in the wide fields without, and its footsteps as bloom-bringing in Miss Lucinda's garden as in mead or forest. Now Monsieur Leclerc came to her aid again at odd minutes, and set her flower-beds with mignonette borders, and her vegetable-garden with salad herbs of new and flourishing kinds. Yet not even the sweet season seemed to hurry the catastrophe that we hope, dearest reader, thy tender eyes have long seen impending. No, for this quaint alliance a quainter Cupid waited,—the chubby little fellow with a big head and a little arrow, who waits on youth and loveliness, was not wanted here. Lucinda's God of Love wore a lank, hard-featured, grizzly shape, no less than that of Israel Slater, who marched into the garden one fine June morning, earlier than usual, to find Monsieur in his blouse, hard at work weeding the cauliflower-bed.

"Good mornin', Sir! good mornin'!" said Israel, in answer to the Frenchman's greeting. "This is a real slick little garden-spot as ever I see, and a pooty house, and a real clever woman too. I'll be skwitched, ef it a'n't a fust-rate consarn, the hull on't. Be you ever a-goin' back to France, Mister?"

"No, my goot friend. I have nobody there. I stay here; I have friend here: but there,—*oh, non! je ne reviendrai pas! ah, jamais! jamais!*"

"Pa's dead, eh? or shamming? Well, I don't understand your lingo; but ef you're a-goin' to stay here, I don't see why you don't hitch hosses with Miss Lucindy."

Monsieur Leclerc looked up astonished.

"Horses, my friend? I have no horse!"

"Thunder 'n' dry trees! I didn't say you hed, did I? But that comes o' usin' what Parson Hyde calls figgurs, I s'pose. I wish't he'd use one kind o' figgurin' a leetle more; he'd pay me for that wood-sawin'. I didn't mean nothin' about hosses. I sot out fur to say, Why don't ye marry Miss Lucindy?"

"I?" gasped Monsieur,—"*I, the foreign, the poor? I could not to presume so!*"

"Well, I don't see 's it's sech drefful presumption. Ef you're poor, she's a woman, and real lonesome too; she ha'n't got nuther chick nor child belongin' to her, and you're the only man she ever took any kind of a notion to. I guess 't would be jest as much for her good as yourn."

"Hush, good Is-ray-el! it is good to stop there. She would not to marry after such years of goodness: she is a saint of the blessed."

"Well, I guess saints sometimes fellerships with sinners; I've heerd tell they did; and ef I was you, I'd make trial for 't. Nothin' ventur', nothin' have."

Whereupon Israel walked off, whistling.

Monsieur Leclerc's soul was perturbed within him by these suggestions; he pulled up two young cauliflowers and reset their places with pigweeds; he hoed the nicely sloped border of the bed flat to the path, and then flung the hoe across the walk, and went off to his daily occupation with a new idea in his head. Nor was it an unpleasant one. The idea of a transition from his squalid and pinching boarding-house to the delicate comfort of Miss Lucinda's *ménage*, the prospect of so kind and good a wife to care for his hitherto dreaded future,—all this was pleasant. I cannot honestly say he was in love with our friend; I must even confess that whatever element of that nature existed between the two was now all on Miss Lucinda's side, little as she knew it. Certain it is, that, when she appeared that day at the dancing-class in a new green calico flowered with purple, and bows on her slippers big enough for a bonnet, it occurred to Monsieur Leclerc, that, if they were married, she would take no more lessons! However, let us not blame him; he was a man, and a poor one; one must not expect too much from men, or from poverty; if they are tolerably good, let us canonize them even, it is so hard for the poor creatures! And to do Monsieur Leclerc justice, he had a very thorough respect and

admiration for Miss Lucinda. Years ago, in his stormy youth-time, there had been a pair of soft-fringed eyes that looked into his as none would ever look again,—and they murdered her, those mad wild beasts of Paris, in the chapel where she knelt at her pure prayers,—murdered her because she knelt beside an aristocrat, her best friend, the Duchess of Montmorenci, who had taken the pretty peasant from her own estate to bring her up for her maid. Jean Leclerc had lifted that pale shape from the pavement and buried it himself; what else he buried with it was invisible; but now he recalled the hour with a long, shuddering sigh, and, hiding his face in his hands, said softly, "The violet is dead, —there is no spring for her. I will have now an amaranth,—it is good for the tomb."

Whether Miss Lucinda's winter dress suggested this floral metaphor let us not inquire. Sacred be sentiment,—when there is even a shadow of reality about it!—when it becomes a profession, and confounds itself with millinery and shades of mourning, it is—"bosh," as the Turkeys say.

So that very evening Monsieur Leclerc arrayed himself in his best, to give another lesson to Miss Lucinda. But, somehow or other, the lesson was long in beginning; the little parlor looked so home-like and so pleasant, with its bright lamp and gay bunch of roses on the table, that it was irresistible temptation to lounge and linger. Miss Lucinda had the volume of Florian in her hands, and was wondering why he did not begin, when the book was drawn away, and a hand laid on both of hers.

"Lucinda!" he began, "I give you no lesson to-night. I have to ask. Dear Mees, will you to marry your poor slave?"

"Oh, dear!" said Miss Lucinda.

Don't laugh at her, Miss Tender-eyes! You will feel just so yourself some day, when Alexander Augustus says, "Will you be mine, loveliest of jour sex?" only you won't feel it half so strongly, for you are young, and love is Nature to youth, but it is a heavenly surprise to age.

Monsieur Leclerc said nothing. He had a heart after all, and it was touched now by the deep emotion that flushed Miss Lucinda's face, and made her tremble so violently,—but presently he spoke.

"Do not!" said he. "I am wrong. I presume. Forgive the stranger!"

"Oh, dear!" said poor Lucinda again,— "oh, you know it isn't that! but how can you like *me*?"

There, Mademoiselle! there's humility for you! *you* will never say that to Alexander Augustus!

Monsieur Leclerc soothed this frightened, happy, incredulous little woman into quiet before very long; and if he really began to feel a true affection for her from the moment he perceived her humble and entire devotion to him, who shall blame him? Not I. If we were all heroes, who would be *valet-de-chambre*

## **Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.**

Текст предоставлен ООО «ЛитРес».

Прочитайте эту книгу целиком, [купив полную легальную версию](#) на ЛитРес.

Безопасно оплатить книгу можно банковской картой Visa, MasterCard, Maestro, со счета мобильного телефона, с платежного терминала, в салоне МТС или Связной, через PayPal, WebMoney, Яндекс.Деньги, QIWI Кошелек, бонусными картами или другим удобным Вам способом.