Warner Susan

Nobody

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Warner S.

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Содержание

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CHAPTER I
WHO IS SHE?

"Tom, who was that girl you were so taken with last night?"

"Wasn't particularly taken last night with anybody."

Which practical falsehood the gentleman escaped from by a mentalreservation, saying to himself that it was not *last night* that he was"taken."

"I mean the girl you had so much to do with. Come, Tom!"

"I hadn't much to do with her. I had to be civil to somebody. She wasthe easiest."

"Who is she, Tom?"

"Her name is Lothrop."

"O you tedious boy! I know what her name is, for I was introduced toher, and Mrs. Wishart spoke so I could not help but understand her; butI mean something else, and you know I do. Who is she? And where doesshe come from?"

"She is a cousin of Mrs. Wishart; and she comes from the countrysomewhere."

"One can see *that*."

"How can you?" the brother asked rather fiercely.

"You see it as well as I do," the sister returned coolly. "Her dressshows it."

"I didn't notice anything about her dress."

"You are a man."

"Well, you women dress for the men. If you only knew a thing or two, you would dress differently."

"That will do! You would not take me anywhere, if I dressed like Miss

Lothrop."

"I'll tell you what," said the young man, stopping short in his walk upand down the floor; – "she can afford to do without your advantages!"

"Mamma!" appealed the sister now to a third member of the party, – "doyou hear? Tom has lost his head."

The lady addressed sat busy with newspapers, at a table a littlewithdrawn from the fire; a lady in fresh middle age, and comely to lookat. The daughter, not comely, but sensible-looking, sat in the glow ofthe fireshine, doing nothing. Both were extremely well dressed, if"well" means in the fashion and in rich stuffs, and with no sparing ofmoney or care. The elder woman looked up from her studies now for amoment, with the remark, that she did not care about Tom's head, if hewould keep his heart.

"But that is just precisely what he will not do, mamma. Tom can't keepanything, his heart least of all. And this girl mamma, I tell you he isin danger. Tom, how many times have you been to see her?"

"I don't go to see *her;* I go to see Mrs. Wishart."

"Oh! – and you see Miss Lothrop by accident! Well, how many times, Tom?

Three – four – five."

"Don't be ridiculous!" the brother struck in. "Of course a fellow goeswhere he can amuse himself and have the best time; and Mrs. Wishartkeeps a pleasant house."

"Especially lately. Well, Tom, take care! it won't do. I warn you."

"What won't do?" – angrily.

"This girl; not for *our* family. Not for you, Tom. She hasn'tanything, – and she isn't anybody; and it will not do for you to marryin that way. If your fortune was ready made to your hand, or if youwere established in your profession and at the top of it, – why, perhapsyou might be justified in pleasing yourself; but as it is, *don't*,Tom! Be a good boy, and *don't!*"

"My dear, he will not," said the elder lady here. "Tom is wiser thanyou give him credit for."

"I don't give any man credit for being wise, mamma, when a pretty faceis in question. And this girl has a pretty face; she is very pretty.But she has no style; she' is as poor as a mouse; she knows nothing ofthe world; and to crown all, Tom, she's one of the religioussort. – Think of that! One of the real religious sort, you know. Thinkhow that would fit."

"What sort are you?" asked her brother.

"Not that sort, Tom, and you aren't either."

"How do you know she is?"

"Very easy," said the girl coolly. "She told me herself."

"She told you!"

"Yes."

"How?"

"O, simply enough. I was confessing that Sunday is such a fearfullylong day to me, and I did not know what to do with it; and she lookedat me as if I were a poor heathen – which I suppose she thought me – andsaid, 'But there is always the Bible!' Fancy! – 'always the Bible.' So Iknew in a moment where to place her."

"I don't think religion hurts a woman," said the young man.

"But you do not want her to have too much of it – " the mother remarked, without looking up from her paper.

"I don't know what you mean by too much, mother. I'd as lief she found

Sunday short as long. By her own showing, Julia has the worst of it."

"Mamma! speak to him," urged the girl.

"No need, my dear, I think. Tom isn't a fool."

"Any man is, when he is in love, mamma."

Tom came and stood by the mantelpiece, confronting them. He was aremarkably handsome young man; tall, well formed, very well dressed, hair and moustaches carefully trimmed, and features of regular thoughmanly beauty, with an expression of genial kindness and courtesy.

"I am not in love," he said, half laughing. "But I will tell you, – Inever saw a nicer girl than Lois Lothrop. And I think all that you sayabout her being poor, and all that, is just – bosh."

The newspapers went down.

"My dear boy, Julia is right. I should be very sorry to see you hurtyour career and injure your chances by choosing a girl who would giveyou no sort of help. And you would regret it yourself, when it was toolate. You would be certain to regret it. You could not help but regretit."

"I am not going to do it. But why should I regret it?"

"You know why, as well as I do. Such a girl would not be a good wifefor you. She would be a millstone round your neck."

Perhaps Mr. Tom thought she would be a pleasant millstone in thosecircumstances; but he only remarked that he believed the lady inquestion would be a good wife for whoever could get her.

"Well, not for you. You can have anybody you want to, Tom; and you mayjust as well have money and family as well as beauty. It is a very badthing for a girl not to have family. That deprives her husband of agreat advantage; and besides, saddles upon him often most undesirableburdens in the shape of brothers and sisters, and nephews perhaps. Whatis this girl's family, do you know?"

"Respectable," said Tom, "or she would not be a cousin of Mrs. Wishart.

And that makes her a cousin of Edward's wife."

"My dear, everybody has cousins; and people are not responsible forthem. She is a poor relation, whom Mrs. Wishart has here for thepurpose of befriending her; she'll marry her off if she can; and youwould do as well as another. Indeed you would do splendidly; but theadvantage would be all on their side; and that is what I do not wishfor you."

Tom was silent. His sister remarked that Mrs. Wishart really was not amatch-maker.

"No more than everybody is; it is no harm; of course she would like tosee this little girl well married. Is she educated? Accomplished?"

"Tom can tell," said the daughter. "I never saw her do anything. Whatcan she do, Tom?"

"*Do?*" said Tom, flaring up. "What do you mean?"

"Can she play?"

"No, and I am glad she can't. If ever there was a bore, it is theperformances of you young ladies on the piano. It's just to show whatyou can do. Who cares, except the music master?"

"Does she sing?"

"I don't know!"

"Can she speak French?"

"French!" cried Tom. "Who wants her to speak French? We talk English inthis country."

"But, my dear boy, we often have to use French or some other language, there are so many foreigners that one meets in society. And a lady*must* know French at least. Does she know anything?"

"I don't know," said Tom. "I have no doubt she does. I haven't triedher. How much, do you suppose, do girls in general know? girls withever so much money and family? And who cares how much they know? Onedoes not seek a lady's society for the purpose of being instructed."

"One might, and get no harm," said the sister softly; but Tom flung outof the room. "Mamma, it is serious."

"Do you think so?" asked the elder lady, now thrusting aside all herpapers.

"I am sure of it. And if we do not do something – we shall all be sorryfor it."

"What is this girl, Julia? Is she pretty?"

Julia hesitated. "Yes," she said. "I suppose the men would call her so."

"You don't?"

"Well, yes, mamma; she is pretty, handsome, in a way; though she hasnot the least bit of style; not the least bit! She is rather peculiar; and I suppose with the men that is one of her attractions."

"Peculiar how?" said the mother, looking anxious.

"I cannot tell; it is indefinable. And yet it is very marked. Just thatwant of style makes her peculiar."

"Awkward?"

"No."

"Not awkward. How then? Shy?"

"No."

"How then, Julia? What is she like?"

"It is hard to tell in words what people are like. She is plainlydressed, but not badly; Mrs. Wishart would see to that; so it isn'texactly her dress that makes her want of style. She has a very goodfigure; uncommonly good. Then she has most beautiful hair, mamma; afull head of bright brown hair, that would be auburn if it were a shadeor two darker; and it is somewhat wavy and curly, and heaps itselfaround her head in a way that is like a picture. She don't dress it inthe fashion; I don't believe there is a hairpin in it, and I am surethere isn't a cushion, or anything; only this bright brown hair puffingand waving and curling itself together in some inexplicable way, thatwould be very pretty if it were not so altogether out of the way thateverybody else wears. Then there *is* a sweet, pretty face under it; but you can see at the first look that she was never born or brought upin New York or any other city, and knows just nothing about the world."

"Dangerous!" said the mother, knitting her brows.

"Yes; for just that sort of thing is taking to the men; and they don'tlook any further. And Tom above all. I tell you, he is smitten, mamma.And he goes to Mrs. Wishart's with a regularity which is appalling."

"Tom takes things hard, too," said the mother.

"Foolish boy!" was the sister's comment.

"What can be done?"

"I'll tell you, mamma. I've been thinking. Your health will never standthe March winds in New York. You must go somewhere."

"Where?"

"Florida, for instance?"

"I should like it very well."

"It would be better anyhow than to let Tom get hopelessly entangled."

"Anything would be better than that."

"And prevention is better than cure. You can't apply a cure, besides.When a man like Tom, or any man, once gets a thing of this sort in hishead, it is hopeless. He'll go through thick and thin, and take time torepent afterwards. Men are so stupid!"

"Women sometimes."

"Not I, mamma; if you mean me. I hope for the credit of yourdiscernment you don't."

"Lent will begin soon," observed the elder lady presently.

"Lent will not make any difference with Tom," returned the daughter.

"And little parties are more dangerous than big ones."

"What shall I do about the party we were going to give? I should beobliged to ask Mrs. Wishart."

"I'll tell you, mamma," Julia said after a little thinking. "Let it bea luncheon party; and get Tom to go down into the country that day. Andthen go off to Florida, both of you."

CHAPTER II
AT BREAKFAST

"How do you like New York, Lois? You have been here long enough tojudge of us now?"

"Have I?"

Mrs. Wishart and her guest being at breakfast, this question and answergo over the table. It is not exactly in New York, however. That is, itis within the city bounds, but not yet among the city buildings. Somelittle distance out of town, with green fields about it, and trees, andlawn sloping down to the river bank, and a view of the Jersey shore onthe other side. The breakfast room windows look out over this view, upon which the winter sun is shining; and green fields stand inbeautiful illumination, with patches of snow lying here and there. Snowis not on the lawn, however. Mrs. Wishart's is a handsome old house, not according to the latest fashion, either in itself or its fittingup; both are of a simpler style than anybody of any pretension wouldchoose now-a-days; but Mrs. Wishart has no need to make any pretension; her standing and her title to it are too well known. Moreover, thereare certain quain't witnesses to it all over, wherever you look. Nonebut one of such secured position would have such an old carpet on herfloor; and few but those of like antecedents could show such rare oldsilver on the board. The shawl that wraps the lady is Indian, and notworn for show; there are portraits on the walls that go back to arespectable English ancestry; there is precious old furniture about, that money could not buy; old and quain't and rich, and yet notstriking the eye; and the lady is served in the most observant style byone of those ancient house servants whose dignity is inseparablyconnected with the dignity of the house and springs from it. No newcomer to wealth and place can be served so. The whole air of everythingin the room is easy, refined, leisurely, assured, and comfortable. Thecoffee is capital; and the meal, simple enough, is very delicate in itsarrangement.

Only the two ladies are at the table; one behind the coffee urn, andthe other near her. The mistress of the house has a sensible, agreeableface, and well-bred manner; the other lady is the one who has been sojealously discussed and described in another family. As Miss Juliadescribed her, there she sits, in a morning dress which lends herfigure no attraction whatever. And – her figure can do without it. Asthe question is asked her about New York, her eye goes over to theglittering western shore.

"I like this a great deal better than the city," she added to herformer words.

"O, of course, the brick and stone!" answered her hostess. "I did notmean *that*. I mean, how do you like *us?*"

"Mrs. Wishart, I like *you* very much," said the girl with a certainsweet spirit.

"Thank you! but I did not mean that either. Do you like no one but me?"

"I do not know anybody else."

"You have seen plenty of people."

"I do not know them, though. Not a bit. One thing I do not like. Peopletalk so on the surface of things."

"Do you want them to go deep in an evening party?"

"It is not only in evening parties. If you want me to say what I think,Mrs. Wishart. It is the same always, if people come for morning calls,or if we go to them, or if we see them in the evening; people talkabout nothing; nothing they care about."

"Nothing *you* care about."

"They do not seem to care about it either."

"Why do you suppose they talk it then?" Mrs. Wishart asked, amused.

"It seems to be a form they must go through," Lois said, laughing alittle. "Perhaps they enjoy it, but they do not seem as if they did.And they laugh so incessantly, – some of them, – at what has no fun init. That seems to be a form too; but laughing for form's sake seems tome hard work."

"My dear, do you want people to be always serious?"

"How do you mean, 'serious'?"

"Do you want them to be always going 'deep' into things?"

"N-o, perhaps not; but I would like them to be always in earnest."

"My dear! What a fearful state of society you would bring about!

Imagine for a moment that everybody was always in earnest!"

"Why not? I mean, not always *sober;* did you think I meant that? Imean, whether they laugh or talk, doing it heartily, and feeling andthinking as they speak. Or rather, speaking and laughing only as theyfeel."

"My dear, do you know what would become of society?"

"No. What?"

"I go to see Mrs. Brinkerhoff, for instance. I have something on mymind, and I do not feel like discussing any light matter, so I sitsilent. Mrs. Brinkerhoff has a fearfully hard piece of work to keep theconversation going; and when I have departed she votes me a great bore, and hopes I will never come again. When she returns my visit, theconditions are reversed; I vote *her* a bore; and we conclude it iseasier to do without each other's company."

"But do you never find people a bore as it is?"

Mrs. Wishart laughed. "Do you?"

"Sometimes. At least I should if I lived among them. *Now*, all is new, and I am curious."

"I can tell you one thing, Lois; nobody votes you a bore."

"But I never talk as they do."

"Never mind. There are exceptions to all rules. But, my dear, even youmust not be always so desperately in earnest. By the way! That handsomeyoung Mr. Caruthers – does he make himself a bore too? You have seen agood deal of him."

"No," said Lois with some deliberation. "He is pleasant, what I haveseen of him."

"And, as I remarked, that is a good deal. Isn't he a handsome fellow? Ithink Tom Caruthers is a good fellow, too. And he is likely to be asuccessful fellow. He is starting well in life, and he has connectionsthat will help him on. It is a good family; and they have money enough."

"How do you mean, 'a good family'?"

"Why, you know what that phrase expresses, don't you?"

"I am not sure that I do, in your sense. You do not mean religious?"

"No," said Mrs. Wishart, smiling; "not necessarily. Religion hasnothing to do with it. I mean – we mean – It is astonishing how hard itis to put some things! I mean, a family that has had a good socialstanding for generations. Of course such a family is connected withother good families, and it is consequently strong, and has advantagesfor all belonging to it."

"I mean," said Lois slowly, "a family that has served God forgenerations. Such a family has connections too, and advantages."

"Why, my dear," said Mrs. Wishart, opening her eyes a little at thegirl, "the two things are not inconsistent, I hope."

"I hope not."

"Wealth and position are good things at any rate, are they not?"

"So far as they go, I suppose so," said Lois. "O yes, they are pleasantthings; and good things, if they are used right."

"They are whether or no. Come! I can't have you holding any extravagantideas, Lois. They don't do in the world. They make one peculiar, and itis not good taste to be peculiar."

"You know, I am not in the world," Lois answered quietly.

"Not when you are at home, I grant you; but here, in my house, you are; and when you have a house of your own, it is likely you will be. Nomore coffee, my dear? Then let us go to the order of the day. What isthis, Williams?"

"For Miss Lot'rop," the obsequious servant replied with a bow, – "debo-quet." But he presented to his mistress a little note on his salver, and then handed to Lois a magnificent bunch of hothouse flowers. Mrs.Wishart's eyes followed the bouquet, and she even rose up to examine it.

"That is beautiful, my dear. What camellias! And what geraniums! Thatis the Black Prince, one of those, I am certain; yes, I am sure it is; and that is one of the new rare varieties. That has not come from anyflorist's greenhouse. Never. And that rose-coloured geranium is LadySutherland. Who sent the flowers, Williams?"

"Here is his card, Mrs. Wishart," said Lois. "Mr. Caruthers."

"Tom Caruthers!" echoed Mrs. Wishart. "He has cut them in his mother'sgreenhouse, the sinner!"

"Why?" said Lois. "Would that be not right?"

"It would be right, *if*– . Here's a note from Tom's mother, Lois – butnot about the flowers. It is to ask us to a luncheon party. Shall wego?"

"You know, dear Mrs. Wishart, I go just where you choose to take me,"said the girl, on whose cheeks an exquisite rose tint rivalled the LadySutherland geranium blossoms. Mrs. Wishart noticed it, and eyed thegirl as she was engrossed with her flowers, examining, smelling, andsmiling at them. It was pleasure that raised that delicious bloom inher cheeks, she decided; was it anything more than pleasure? What afair creature! thought her hostess; and yet, fair as she is, whatpossible chance for her in a good family? A young man may be taken withbeauty, but not his relations; and they would object to a girl who isnobody and has nothing. Well, there is a chance for her, and she shallhave the chance.

"Lois, what will you wear to this luncheon party?"

"You know all my dresses, Mrs. Wishart. I suppose my black silk wouldbe right."

"No, it would not be right at all. You are too young to wear black silkto a luncheon party. And your white dress is not the thing either."

"I have nothing else that would do. You must let me be old, in a blacksilk."

"I will not let you be anything of the kind. I will get you a dress."

"No, Mrs. Wishart; I cannot pay for it."

"I will pay for it."

"I cannot let you do that. You have done enough for me already. Mrs.Wishart, it is no matter. People will just think I cannot affordanything better, and that is the very truth."

"No, Lois; they will think you do not know any better."

"That is the truth too," said Lois, laughing.

"No it isn't; and if it is, I do not choose they should think so. Ishall dress you for this once, my dear; and I shall not ruin myselfeither."

Mrs. Wishart had her way; and so it came to pass that Lois went to theluncheon party in a dress of bright green silk; and how lovely shelooked in it is impossible to describe. The colour, which would havebeen ruinous to another person, simply set off her delicate complexionand bright brown hair in the most charming manner; while at the sametime the green was not so brilliant as to make an obvious patch ofcolour wherever its wearer might be. Mrs. Wishart was a great enemy ofstartling effects, in any kind; and the hue was deep and rich anddecided, without being flashy.

"You never looked so well in anything," was Mrs. Wishart's comment. "Ihave hit just the right thing. My dear, I would put one of those whitecamellias in your hair – that will relieve the eye."

"From what?" Lois asked, laughing.

"Never mind; you do as I tell you."

CHAPTER III
A LUNCHEON PARTY

Luncheon parties were not then precisely what they are now; nevertheless the entertainment was extremely handsome. Lois and herfriend had first a long drive from their home in the country to a housein one of the older parts of the city. Old the house also was; but itwas after a roomy and luxurious fashion, if somewhat antiquated; andthe air of ancient respectability, even of ancient distinction, wasstamped upon it, as upon the family that inhabited it. Mrs. Wishart andLois were received with warm cordiality by Miss Caruthers; but theformer did not fail to observe a shadow that crossed Mrs. Caruthers'face when Lois was presented to her. Lois did not see it, and would nothave known how to interpret it if she had seen it. She is safe, thoughtMrs. Wishart, as she noticed the calm unembarrassed air with which Loissat down to talk with the younger of her hostesses.

"You are making a long stay with Mrs. Wishart," was the unpromisingopening remark.

"Mrs. Wishart keeps me."

"Do you often come to visit her?"

"I was never here before."

"Then this is your first acquain'tance with New York?"

"Yes."

"How does it strike you? One loves to get at new impressions of whatone has known all one's life. Nothing strikes us here, I suppose. Dotell me what strikes you."

"I might say, everything."

"How delightful! Nothing strikes me. I have seen it all five hundredtimes. Nothing is new."

"But people are new," said Lois. "I mean they are different from oneanother. There is continual variety there."

"To me there seems continual sameness!" said the other, with a halfshutting up of her eyes, as of one dazed with monotony. "They are allalike. I know beforehand exactly what every one will say to me, and howevery one will behave."

"That is not how it is at home," returned Lois. "It is different there."

"People are *not* all alike?"

"No indeed. Perfectly unlike, and individual."

"How agreeable! So that is one of the things that strike you here? thecontrast?"

"No," said Lois, laughing; "*I* find here the same variety that I findat home. People are not alike to me."

"But different, I suppose, from the varieties you are accustomed to athome?"

Lois admitted that.

"Well, now tell me how. I have never travelled in New England; I havetravelled everywhere else. Tell me, won't you, how those whom you seehere differ from the people you see at home."

"In the same sort of way that a sea-gull differs from a land sparrow,"

Lois answered demurely.

"I don't understand. Are we like the sparrows, or like the gulls?"

"I do not know that. I mean merely that the different sorts are fittedto different spheres and ways of life."

Miss Caruthers looked a little curiously at the girl. "I know *this* sphere," she said. "I want you to tell me yours."

"It is free space instead of narrow streets, and clear air instead ofsmoke. And the people all have something to do, and are doing it."

"And you think *we* are doing nothing?" asked Miss Caruthers, laughing.

"Perhaps I am mistaken. It seems to me so."

"O, you are mistaken. We work hard. And yet, since I went to school, Inever had anything that I *must* do, in my life."

"That can be only because you did not know what it was."

"I had nothing that I must do."

"But nobody is put in this world without some thing to do," said Lois."Do you think a good watchmaker would carefully make and finish a verycostly pin or wheel, and put it in the works of his watch to donothing?"

Miss Caruthers stared now at the girl. Had this soft, innocent-lookingmaiden absolutely dared to read a lesson to her? – "You are religious!"she remarked dryly.

Lois neither affirmed nor denied it. Her eye roved over the gatheringthrong; the rustle of silks, the shimmer of lustrous satin, the fallsof lace, the drapery of one or two magnificent camels'-hair shawls, thecarefully dressed heads, the carefully gloved hands; for the ladies didnot keep on their bonnets then; and the soft murmur of voices, which, however, did not remain soft. It waxed and grew, rising and falling, until the room was filled with a breaking sea of sound. Miss Caruthershad been called off to attend to other guests, and then came to conductLois herself to the dining-room.

The party was large, the table was long; and it was a mass of glitterand glisten with plate and glass. A superb old-fashioned épergne in themiddle, great dishes of flowers sending their perfumed breath throughthe room, and bearing their delicate exotic witness to the luxury thatreigned in the house. And not they alone. Before each guest's plate asemicircular wreath of flowers stood, seemingly upon the tablecloth; but Lois made the discovery that the stems were safe in water increscent-shaped glass dishes, like little troughs, which the flowerscompletely covered up and hid. Her own special wreath was ofheliotropes. Miss Caruthers had placed her next herself.

There were no gentlemen present, nor expected, Lois observed. It wassimply a company of ladies, met apparently for the purpose of eating; for that business went on for some time with a degree of satisfaction, and a supply of means to afford satisfaction, which Lois had never seenequalled. From one delicate and delicious thing to another she wasrequired to go, until she came to a stop; but that was the case, sheobserved, with no one else of the party.

"You do not drink wine?" asked Miss Caruthers civilly.

"No, thank you."

"Have you scruples?" said the young lady, with a half smile.

Lois assented.

"Why? what's the harm?"

"We all have scruples at Shampuashuh."

"About drinking wine?"

"Or cider, or beer, or anything of the sort."

"Do tell me why."

"It does so much mischief."

"Among low people," said Miss Caruthers, opening her eyes; "but notamong respectable people."

"We are willing to hinder mischief anywhere," said Lois with a smile ofsome fun.

"But what good does *your* not drinking it do? That will not hinderthem."

"It does hinder them, though," said Lois; "for we will not have liquorshops. And so, we have no crime in the town. We could leave our doorsunlocked, with perfect safety, if it were not for the people that comewandering through from the next towns, where liquor is sold. We have nocrime, and no poverty; or next to none."

"Bless me! what an agreeable state of things! But that need not hinderyour taking a glass of champagne *here?* Everybody here has no scruple, and there are liquor shops at every corner; there is no use in settingan example."

But Lois declined the wine.

"A cup of coffee then?"

Lois accepted the coffee.

"I think you know my brother?" observed Miss Caruthers then, making herobservations as she spoke.

"Mr. Caruthers? yes; I believe he is your brother."

"I have heard him speak of you. He has seen you at Mrs. Wishart's, Ithink."

"At Mrs. Wishart's – yes."

Lois spoke naturally, yet Miss Caruthers fancied she could discern acertain check to the flow of her words.

"You could not be in a better place for seeing what New York is like, for everybody goes to Mrs. Wishart's; that is, everybody who isanybody."

This did not seem to Lois to require any answer. Her eye went over thelong tableful; went from face to face. Everybody was talking, nearlyeverybody was smiling. Why not? If enjoyment would make them smile, where could more means of enjoyment be heaped up, than at this feast?Yet Lois could not help thinking that the tokens of realpleasure-taking were not unequivocal. *She* was having a very goodtime; full of amusement; to the others it was an old story. Of whatuse, then?

Miss Caruthers had been engaged in a lively battle of words with someof her young companions; and now her attention came back to Lois, whosemeditative, amused expression struck her.

"I am sure," she said, "you are philosophizing! Let me have the resultsof your observations, do! What do your eyes see, that mine perhaps donot?"

"I cannot tell," said Lois. "Yours ought to know it all."

"But you know, we do not see what we have always seen."

"Then I have an advantage," said Lois pleasantly. "My eyes seesomething very pretty."

"But you were criticizing something. – O you unlucky boy!"

This exclamation, and the change of tone with it, seemed to be calledforth by the entrance of a new comer, even Tom Caruthers himself. Tomwas not in company trim exactly, but with his gloves in his hand andhis overcoat evidently just pulled off. He was surveying the companywith a contented expression; then came forward and began a series ofgreetings round the table; not hurrying them, but pausing here andthere for a little talk.

"Tom!" cried his mother, "is that you?"

"To command. Yes, Mrs. Badger, I am just off the cars. I did not knowwhat I should find here."

"How did you get back so soon, Tom?"

"Had nothing to keep me longer, ma'am. Miss Farrel, I have the honourto remind you of a *phillipoena*."

There was a shout of laughter. It bewildered Lois, who could notunderstand what they were laughing about, and could as little keep herattention from following Tom's progress round the table. Miss Caruthersobserved this, and was annoyed.

"Careless boy!" she said. "I don't believe he has done the half of whathe had to do, Tom, what brought you home?"

Tom was by this time approaching them.

"Is the question to be understood in a physical or moral sense?" saidhe.

"As you understand it!" said his sister.

Tom disregarded the question, and paid his respects to Miss Lothrop.Julia's jealous eyes saw more than the ordinary gay civility in hisface and manner.

"Tom," she cried, "have you done everything? I don't believe you have."

"Have, though," said Tom. And he offered to Lois a basket of bon-bons.

"Did you see the carpenter?"

"Saw him and gave him his orders."

"Were the dogs well?"

"I wish you had seen them bid me good morning!"

"Did you look at the mare's foot?"

"Yes."

"What is the matter with it?"

"Nothing – a nail – Miss Lothrop, you have no wine."

"Nothing! and a nail!" cried Miss Julia as Lois covered her glass withher hand and forbade the wine. "As if a nail were not enough to ruin ahorse! O you careless boy! Miss Lothrop is more of a philosopher thanyou are. She drinks no wine."

Tom passed on, speaking to other ladies. Lois had scarcely spoken atall; but Miss Caruthers thought she could discern a little stir in thesoft colour of the cheeks and a little additional life in the gravesoft eyes; and she wished Tom heartily at a distance.

At a distance, however, he was no more that day. He made himselfgracefully busy indeed with the rest of his mother's guests; but afterthey quitted the table, he contrived to be at Lois's side, and asked ifshe would not like to see the greenhouse? It was a welcome proposition, and while nobody at the moment paid any attention to the two youngpeople, they passed out by a glass door at the other end of thedining-room into the conservatory, while the stream of guests went theother way. Then Lois was plunged in a wilderness of green leafage andbrilliant bloom, warm atmosphere and mixed perfume; her first breathwas an involuntary exclamation of delight and relief.

"Ah! you like this better than the other room, don't you?" said Tom.

Lois did not answer; however, she went with such an absorbed expressionfrom one plant to another, that Tom must needs conclude she liked thisbetter than the other company too.

"I never saw such a beautiful greenhouse," she said at last, "nor solarge a one."

"*This* is not much," replied Tom. "Most of our plants are in thecountry – where I have come from to-day; this is just a city affair.Shampuashuh don't cultivate exotics, then?"

"O no! Nor anything much, except the needful."

"That sounds rather – tiresome," said Tom.

"O, it is not tiresome. One does not get tired of the needful, youknow."

"Don't you! *I* do," said Tom. "Awfully. But what do you do forpleasure then, up there in Shampuashuh?"

"Pleasure? O, we have it – I have it – But we do not spend much time inthe search of it. O how beautiful! what is that?"

"It's got some long name – Metrosideros, I believe. What *do* you do forpleasure up there then, Miss Lothrop?"

"Dig clams."

"Clams!" cried Tom.

"Yes. Long clams. It's great fun. But I find pleasure all over."

"How come you to be such a philosopher?"

"That is not philosophy."

"What is it? I can tell you, there isn't a girl in New York that wouldsay what you have just said."

Lois thought the faces around the lunch table had quite harmonized withthis statement. She forgot them again in a most luxuriant trailingPelargonium covered with large white blossoms of great elegance.

"But it is philosophy that makes you not drink wine? Or don't you likeit?"

"O no," said Lois, "it is not philosophy; it is humanity."

"How? I think it is humanity to share in people's social pleasures."

"If they were harmless."

"This is harmless!"

Lois shook her head. "To you, maybe."

"And to you. Then why shouldn't we take it?"

"For the sake of others, to whom it is not harmless."

"They must look out for themselves."

"Yes, and we must help them."

"We *can't* help them. If a man hasn't strength enough to stand, youcannot hold him up."

"O yes," said Lois gently, "you can and you must. That is not much todo! When on one side it is life, and on the other side it is only aminute's taste of something sweet, it is very little, I think, to giveup one for the other."

"That is because you are so good," said Tom. "I am not so good."

At this instant a voice was heard within, and sounds of the servantsremoving the lunch dishes.

"I never heard anybody in my life talk as you do," Tom went on.

Lois thought she had talked enough, and would say no more. Tom saw shewould not, and gave her glance after glance of admiration, which beganto grow into veneration. What a pure creature was this! what a gentlesimplicity, and yet what a quiet dignity! what absolutely naturalsweetness, with no airs whatever! and what a fresh beauty.

"I think it must be easier to be good where you live," Tom addedpresently, and sincerely.

"Why?" said Lois.

"I assure you it ain't easy for a fellow here."

"What do you mean by 'good,' Mr. Caruthers? not drinking wine?" said

Lois, somewhat amused.

"I mean, to be like you," said he softly. "You are better than all therest of us here."

"I hope not. Mr. Caruthers, we must go back to Mrs. Wishart, orcertainly *she* will not think me good."

So they went back, through the empty lunch room.

"I thought you would be here to-day," said Tom. "I was not going tomiss the pleasure; so I took a frightfully early train, and despatchedbusiness faster than it had ever been despatched before, at our house.I surprised the people, almost as much as I surprised my mother andJulia. You ought always to wear a white camellia in your hair!"

Lois smiled to herself. If he knew what things she had to do at her ownhome, and how such an adornment would be in place! Was it easier to begood there? she queried. It was easier to be pleased here. The guestswere mostly gone.

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Wishart on the drive home, "how have youenjoyed yourself?"

Lois looked grave. "I am afraid it turns my head," she answered.

"That shows your head is *not* turned. It must carry a good deal ofballast too, somewhere."

"It does," said Lois. "And I don't like to have my head turned."

"Tom," said Miss Julia, as Mrs. Wishart's carriage drove off and Tomcame back to the drawing-room, "you mustn't turn that little girl'shead."

"I can't," said Tom.

"You are trying."

"I am doing nothing of the sort."

"Then what *are* you doing? You are paying her a great deal ofattention. She is not accustomed to our ways; she will not understandit. I do not think it is fair to her."

"I don't mean anything that is not fair to her. She is worth attentionten times as much as all the rest of the girls that were here to-day."

"But, Tom, she would not take it as coolly. She knows only countryways. She might think attentions mean more than they do."

"I don't care," said Tom.

"My dear boy," said his mother now, "it will not do, not to care. Itwould not be honourable to raise hopes you do not mean to fulfil; andto take such a girl for your wife, would be simply ruinous."

"Where will you find such another girl?" cried Tom, flaring up.

"But she has nothing, and she is nobody."

"She is her own sweet self," said Tom.

"But not an advantageous wife for you, my dear. Society does not knowher, and she does not know society. Your career would be a much morehumble one with her by your side. And money you want, too. You need it,to get on properly; as I wish to see you get on, and as you wish ityour self. My dear boy, do not throw your chances away!"

"It's my belief, that is just what you are trying to make me do!" saidthe young man; and he went off in something of a huff.

"Mamma, we must do something. And soon," remarked Miss Julia. "Men aresuch fools! He rushed through with everything and came home to-day justto see that girl. A pretty face absolutely bewitches them." *N. B.*Miss Julia herself did not possess that bewitching power.

"I will go to Florida," said Mrs. Caruthers, sighing.

CHAPTER IV
ANOTHER LUNCHEON PARTY

A journey can be decided upon in a minute, but not so soon enteredupon. Mrs. Caruthers needed a week to make ready; and during that weekher son and heir found opportunity to make several visits at Mrs.Wishart's. A certain marriage connection between the families gave himsomewhat the familiar right of a cousin; he could go when he pleased; and Mrs. Wishart liked him, and used no means to keep him away. TomCaruthers was a model of manly beauty; gentle and agreeable in hismanners; and of an evidently affectionate and kindly disposition. Whyshould not the young people like each other? she thought; and thingswere in fair train. Upon this came the departure for Florida. Tom spokehis regrets unreservedly out; he could not help himself, his mother'shealth required her to go to the South for the month of March, and shemust necessarily have his escort. Lois said little. Mrs. Wishartfeared, or hoped, she felt the more. A little absence is no harm, thelady thought; *may* be no harm. But now Lois began to speak ofreturning to Shampuashuh; and that indeed might make the separation toolong for profit. She thought too that Lois was a little more thoughtfuland a trifle more quiet than she had been before this journey wastalked of.

One day, it was a cold, blustering day in March, Mrs. Wishart and herguest had gone down into the lower part of the city to do someparticular shopping; Mrs. Wishart having promised Lois that they wouldtake lunch and rest at a particular fashionable restaurant. Such anexpedition had a great charm for the little country girl, to whomeverything was new, and to whose healthy mental senses the ways andmanners of the business world, with all the accessories thereof, wereas interesting as the gayer regions and the lighter life of fashion.Mrs. Wishart had occasion to go to a banker's in Wall Street; she hadbusiness at the Post Office; she had something to do which took her toseveral furrier's shops; she visited a particular magazine of varietiesin Maiden Lane, where things, she told Lois, were about half the pricethey bore up town. She spent near an hour at the Tract House in NassauStreet. There was no question of taking the carriage into theseregions; an omnibus had brought them to Wall Street, and from therethey went about on their own feet, walking and standing alternately, till both ladies were well tired. Mrs. Wishart breathed out a sigh ofrelief as she took her seat in the omnibus which was to carry them uptown again.

"Tired out, Lois, are you? I am."

"I am not. I have been too much amused."

"It's delightful to take you anywhere! You reverse the old fairy-talecatastrophe, and a little handful of ashes turns to fruit for you, orto gold. Well, I will make some silver turn to fruit presently. I wantmy lunch, and I know you do. I should like to have you with me always,Lois. I get some of the good of your fairy fruit and gold when you arealong with me. Tell me, child, do you do that sort of thing at home?"

"What sort?" said Lois, laughing.

"Turning nothings into gold."

"I don't know," said Lois. "I believe I do pick up a good deal of thatsort of gold as I go along. But at home our life has a great deal ofsameness about it, you know. *Here* everything is wonderful."

"Wonderful!" repeated Mrs. Wishart. "To you it is wonderful. And to meit is the dullest old story, the whole of it. I feel as dusty now, mentally, as I am outwardly. But we'll have some luncheon, Lois, andthat will be refreshing, I hope."

Hopes were to be much disappointed. Getting out of the omnibus near thelocality of the desired restaurant, the whole street was found inconfusion. There had been a fire, it seemed, that morning, in a houseadjoining or very near, and loungers and firemen and an engine and hosetook up all the

way. No restaurant to be reached there that morning.Greatly dismayed, Mrs. Wishart put herself and Lois in one of thestreet cars to go on up town.

"I am famishing!" she declared. "And now I do not know where to go.Everybody has had lunch at home by this time, or there are half-a-dozenhouses I could go to."

"Are there no other restaurants but that one?"

"Plenty; but I could not eat in comfort unless I know things are clean.

I know that place, and the others I don't know. Ha, Mr. Dillwyn!" —

This exclamation was called forth by the sight of a gentleman who justat that moment was entering the car. Apparently he was an oldacquain'tance, for the recognition was eager on both sides. The newcomer took a seat on the other side of Mrs. Wishart.

"Where do you come from," said he, "that I find you here?"

"From the depths of business – Wall Street – and all over; and now thedepths of despair, that we cannot get lunch. I am going home starving."

"What does that mean?"

"Just a *contretemps*. I promised my young friend here I would give hera good lunch at the best restaurant I knew; and to-day of all days, andjust as we come tired out to get some refreshment, there's a fire andfiremen and all the street in a hubbub. Nothing for it but to go homefasting."

"No," said he, "there is a better thing. You will do me the honour andgive me the pleasure of lunching with me. I am living at the'Imperial,' – and here we are!"

He signalled the car to stop, even as he spoke, and rose to help theladies out. Mrs. Wishart had no time to think about it, and on thesudden impulse yielded. They left the car, and a few steps brought themto the immense beautiful building called the Imperial Hotel. Mr.Dillwyn took them in as one at home, conducted them to the greatdining-room; proposed to them to go first to a dressing-room, but thisMrs. Wishart declined. So they took places at a small table, nearenough to one of the great clear windows for Lois to look down into theAvenue and see all that was going on there. But first the place whereshe was occupied her. With a kind of wondering delight her eye wentdown the lines of the immense room, reviewed its loftiness, itsadornments, its light and airiness and beauty; its perfection ofluxurious furnishing and outfitting. Few people were in it just at thishour, and the few were too far off to trouble at all the sense ofprivacy. Lois was tired, she was hungry; this sudden escape from dinand motion and dust, to refreshment and stillness and a softatmosphere, was like the changes in an Arabian Nights' enchantment. Andthe place was splendid enough and dainty enough to fit into one ofthose stories too. Lois sat back in her chair, quietly but intenselyenjoying. It never occurred to her that she herself might be a worthyobject of contemplation.

Yet a fairer might have been sought for, all New York through. She wasnot vulgarly gazing; she had not the aspect of one strange to theplace; quiet, grave, withdrawn into herself, she wore an air of mostsweet reserve and unconscious dignity. Features more beautiful might befound, no doubt, and in numbers; it was not the mere lines, nor themere colours of her face, which made it so remarkable, but rather themental character. The beautiful poise of a spirit at rest withinitself; the simplicity of unconsciousness; the freshness of a mind towhich nothing has grown stale or old, and which sees nothing in itsconventional shell; along with the sweetness that comes of habitualdwelling in sweetness. Both her companions occasionally looked at her;Lois did not know it; she did not think herself of sufficientimportance to be looked at.

And then came the luncheon. Such a luncheon! and served with a delicacywhich became it. Chocolate which was a rich froth; rolls which werepuff balls of perfection; salad, and fruit. Anything yet moresubstantial Mrs. Wishart declined. Also she declined wine.

"I should not dare, before Lois," she said.

Therewith came their entertainer's eyes round to Lois again.

"Is she allowed to keep your conscience, Mrs. Wishart?"

"Poor child! I don't charge her with that. But you know, Mr. Dillwyn,in presence of angels one would walk a little carefully!"

"That almost sounds as if the angels would be uncomfortablecompanions," said Lois.

"Not quite *sans gêne*" – the gentleman added, Then Lois's eyes met hisfull.

"I do not know what that is," she said.

"Only a couple of French words."

"I do not know French," said Lois simply.

He had not seen before what beautiful eyes they were; soft and grave, and true with the clearness of the blue ether. He thought he would likeanother such look into their transparent depths. So he asked,

"But what is it about the wine?"

"O, we are water-drinkers up about my home," Lois answered, looking, however, at her chocolate cup from which she was refreshing herself.

"That is what the English call us as a nation, I am sure mostinappropriately. Some of us know good wine when we see it; and most ofthe rest have an intimate acquain'tance with wine or some thing elsethat is *not* good. Perhaps Miss Lothrop has formed her opinion, andpractice, upon knowledge of this latter kind?"

Lois did not say; she thought her opinions, or practice, could havevery little interest for this fine gentleman.

"Lois is unfashionable enough to form her own opinions," Mrs. Wishartremarked.

"But not inconsistent enough to build them on nothing, I hope?"

"I could tell you what they are built on," said Lois, brought out bythis challenge; "but I do not know that you would see from that howwell founded they are."

"I should be very grateful for such an indulgence."

"In this particular case we are speaking of, they are built on twofoundation stones – both out of the same quarry," said Lois, her colourrising a little, while she smiled too. "One is this – 'Whatsoever yewould that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' And theother – 'I will neither eat meat, nor drink wine, nor *anything*, bywhich my brother stumbleth, or is offended, or made weak.'"

Lois did not look up as she spoke, and Mrs. Wishart smiled withamusement. Their host's face expressed an undoubted astonishment. Heregarded the gentle and yet bold speaker with steady attention for aminute or two, noting the modesty, and the gentleness, and thefearlessness with which she spoke. Noting her great beauty too.

"Precious stones!" said he lightly, when she had done speaking. "I donot know whether they are broad enough for such a superstructure as youwould build on them." And then he turned to Mrs. Wishart again, andthey left the subject and plunged into a variety of other subjectswhere Lois scarce could follow them.

What did they not talk of! Mr. Dillwyn, it appeared, had latelyreturned from abroad, where Mrs. Wishart had also formerly lived forsome time; and now they went over a multitude of things and peoplefamiliar to both of them, but of which Lois did not even know thenames. She listened, however, eagerly; and gleaned, as an eagerlistener generally may, a good deal. Places, until now unheard of, tooka certain form and aspect in Lois's imagination; people were discerned, also in imagination, as being of different types and wonderfullydifferent habits and manners of life from any Lois knew at home, or hadeven seen in New York. She heard pictures talked of, and wondered whatsort of a world that art world might be, in which Mr. Dillwyn was somuch at home. Lois had never seen any pictures in her life which weremuch to her. And the talk about countries sounded strange. She knewwhere Germany was on the map, and could give its boundaries no doubtaccurately; but all this gossip about the Rhineland and its vineyardsand the vintages there and in France, sounded fascinatingly novel. Andshe knew where Italy was on the map; but Italy's skies, and soft air, and mementos of past times of history and art, were unknown; and shelistened with ever-quickening attention. The result of the

whole atlast was a mortifying sense that she knew nothing. These people, herfriend and this other, lived in a world of mental impressions andmentally stored-up knowledge, which seemed to make their lifeunendingly broader and richer than her own. Especially the gentleman.Lois observed that it was constantly he who had something new to tellMrs. Wishart, and that in all the ground they went over, he was more athome than she. Indeed, Lois got the impression that Mr. Dillwyn knewthe world and everything in it better than anybody she had ever seen.Mr. Caruthers was extremely *au fait* in many things; Lois had thethought, not the word; but Mr. Dillwyn was an older man and had seenmuch more. He was terrifically wise in it all, she thought; and bydegrees she got a kind of awe of him. A little of Mrs. Wishart too. Howmuch her friend knew, how at home she was in this big world! what aplain little piece of ignorance was she herself beside her. Well, thought Lois – every one to his place! My place is Shampuashuh. Isuppose I am fitted for that.

"Miss Lothrop," said their entertainer here, "will you allow me to giveyou some grapes?"

"Grapes in March!" said Lois, smiling, as a beautiful white bunch waslaid before her. "People who live in New York can have everything, itseems, that they want."

"Provided they can pay for it," Mrs. Wishart put in.

"How is it in your part of the world?" said Mr. Dillwyn. "You cannothave what you want?"

"Depends upon what order you keep your wishes in," said Lois. "You canhave strawberries in June – and grapes in September."

"What order do you keep your wishes in?" was the next question.

"I think it best to have as few as possible."

"But that would reduce life to a mere framework of life, – if one had nowishes!"

"One can find something else to fill it up," said Lois.

"Pray what would you substitute? For with wishes I connect theaccomplishment of wishes."

"Are they always connected?"

"Not always; but generally, the one are the means to the other."

"I believe I do not find it so."

"Then, pardon me, what would you substitute, Miss Lothrop, to fill upyour life, and not have it a bare existence?"

"There is always work – " said Lois shyly; "and there are the pleasuresthat come without being wished for. I mean, without being particularlysought and expected."

"Does much come that way?" asked their entertainer, with an incredulousmile of mockery.

"O, a great deal!" cried Lois; and then she checked herself.

"This is a very interesting investigation, Mrs. Wishart," said thegentleman. "Do you think I may presume upon Miss Lothrop's good nature, and carry it further?"

"Miss Lothrop's good nature is a commodity I never knew yet to fail."

"Then I will go on, for I am curious to know, with an honest desire toenlarge my circle of knowledge. Will you tell me, Miss Lothrop, whatare the pleasures in your mind when you speak of their coming unsought?"

Lois tried to draw back. "I do not believe you would understand them,"she said a little shyly.

"I trust you do my understanding less than justice!"

"No," said Lois, blushing, "for your enjoyments are in another line."

"Please indulge me, and tell me the line of yours."

He is laughing at me, thought Lois. And her next thought was, Whatmatter! So, after an instant's hesitation, she answered simply.

"To anybody who has travelled over the world, Shampuashuh is a smallplace; and to anybody who knows all you have been talking about, whatwe know at Shampuashuh would seem very little. But every morning it isa pleasure to me to wake and see the sun rise; and the fields, and theriver, and the Sound, are a constant delight to me at all times of day, and in all sorts of weather. A walk or a ride is always a greatpleasure, and different every time. Then I take constant pleasure in mywork."

"Mrs. Wishart," said the gentleman, "this is a revelation to me. Wouldit be indiscreet, if I were to ask Miss Lothrop what she can possiblymean under the use of the term '*work*'?"

I think Mrs. Wishart considered that it *would* be rather indiscreet, and wished Lois would be a little reticent about her home affairs.Lois, however, had no such feeling.

"I mean work," she said. "I can have no objection that anybody shouldknow what our life is at home. We have a little farm, very small; itjust keeps a few cows and sheep. In the house we are three sisters; andwe have an old grandmother to take care of, and to keep the house, andmanage the farm."

"But surely you cannot do that last?" said the gentleman.

"We do not manage the cows and sheep," said Lois, smiling; "men's handsdo that; but we make the butter, and we spin the wool, and we cultivateour garden. *That* we do ourselves entirely; and we have a good gardentoo. And that is one of the things," added Lois, smiling, "in which Itake unending pleasure."

"What can you do in a garden?"

"All there is to do, except ploughing. We get a neighbour to do that."

"And the digging?"

"I can dig," said Lois, laughing.

"But do not?"

"Certainly I do."

"And sow seeds, and dress beds?"

"Certainly. And enjoy every moment of it. I do it early, before the sungets hot. And then, there is all the rest; gathering the fruit, andpulling the vegetables, and the care of them when we have got them; andI take great pleasure in it all. The summer mornings and springmornings in the garden are delightful, and all the work of a garden isdelightful, I think."

"You will except the digging?"

"You are laughing at me," said Lois quietly. "No, I do not except thedigging. I like it particularly. Hoeing and raking I do not like halfso well."

"I am not laughing," said Mr. Dillwyn, "or certainly not at you. If atanybody, it is myself. I am filled with admiration."

"There is no room for that either," said Lois. "We just have it to do, and we do it; that is all."

"Miss Lothrop, I never have *had* to do anything in my life, since Ileft college."

Lois thought privately her own thoughts, but did not give themexpression; she had talked a great deal more than she meant to do.Perhaps Mrs. Wishart too thought there had been enough of it, for shebegan to make preparations for departure.

"Mrs. Wishart," said Mr. Dillwyn, "I have to thank you for the greatestpleasure I have enjoyed since I landed."

"Unsought and unwished-for, too, according to Miss Lothrop's theory.Certainly we have to thank you, Philip, for we were in a distressedcondition when you found us. Come and see me. And," she added *sottovoce* as he was leading her out, and Lois had stepped on before them,"I consider that all the information that has been given you isstrictly in confidence."

"Quite delicious confidence!"

"Yes, but not for all ears," added Mrs. Wishart somewhat anxiously.

"I am glad you think me worthy. I will not abuse the trust."

"I did not say I thought you worthy," said the lady, laughing; "I wasnot consulted. Young eyes see the world in the fresh colours ofmorning, and think daisies grow everywhere."

They had reached the street. Mr. Dillwyn accompanied the ladies a partof their way, and then took leave of them.

CHAPTER V
IN COUNCIL

Sauntering back to his hotel, Mr. Dillwyn's thoughts were a good dealengaged with the impressions of the last hour. It was odd, too; he hadseen all varieties and descriptions of feminine fascination, or hethought he had; some of them in very high places, and with all theadventitious charms which wealth and place and breeding can add tothose of nature's giving. Yet here was something new. A novelty asfresh as one of the daisies Mrs. Wishart had spoken of. He had seendaisies too before, he thought; and was not particularly fond of thatstyle. No; this was something other than a daisy.

Sauntering along and not heeding his surroundings, he was suddenlyhailed by a joyful voice, and an arm was thrust within his own.

"Philip! where did you come from? and when did you come?"

"Only the other day – from Egypt – was coming to see you, but have beenbothered with custom-house business. How do you all do, Tom?"

"What are you bringing over? curiosities? or precious things?"

"Might be both. How do you do, old boy?"

"Very much put out, just at present, by a notion of my mother's; shewill go to Florida to escape March winds."

"Florida! Well, Florida is a good place, when March is stalking abroadlike this. What are you put out for? I don't comprehend."

"Yes, but you see, the month will be half over before she gets ready tobe off; and what's the use? April will be here directly; she might justas well wait here for April."

"You cannot pick oranges off the trees here in April. You forget that."

"Don't want to pick 'em anywhere. But come along, and see them at home.

They'll be awfully glad to see you."

It was not far, and talking of nothings the two strolled that way.There was much rejoicing over Philip's return, and much curiosityexpressed as to where he had been and what he had been doing for a longtime past. Finally, Mrs. Caruthers proposed that he should go on toFlorida with them.

"Yes, do!" cried Tom. "You go, and I'll stay."

"My dear Tom!" said his mother, "I could not possibly do without you."

"Take Julia. I'll look after the house, and Dillwyn will look afteryour baggage."

"And who will look after you, you silly boy?" said his sister. "You'rethe worst charge of all."

"What is the matter?" Philip asked now.

"Women's notions," said Tom. "Women are always full of notions! Theycan spy game at hawk's distance; only they make a mistake sometimes, which the hawk don't, I reckon; and think they see something when thereis nothing."

"We know what we see this time," said his sister. "Philip, he'sdreadfully caught."

"Not the first time?" said Dillwyn humorously. "No danger, is there?"

"There is real danger," said Miss Julia. "He is caught with animpossible country girl."

"Caught *by* her? Fie, Tom! aren't you wiser?"

"That's not fair!" cried Tom hotly. "She catches nobody, nor tries it,in the way you mean. I am not caught, either; that's more; but youshouldn't speak in that way."

"Who is the lady? It is very plain Tom isn't caught. But where is she?"

"She is a little country girl come to see the world for the first time.Of course she makes great eyes; and the eyes are pretty; and Tomcouldn't stand it." Miss Julia spoke laughing, yet serious.

"I should not think a little country girl would be dangerous to Tom."

"No, would you? It's vexatious, to have one's confidence in one'sbrother so shaken."

"What's the matter with her?" broke out Tom here. "I am not caught, asyou call it, neither by her nor with her; but if you want to discussher, I say, what's the matter with her?"

"Nothing, Tom!" said his mother soothingly; "there is nothing whateverthe matter with her; and I have no doubt she is a nice girl. But shehas no education."

"Hang education!" said Tom. "Anybody can pick that up. She can talk, Ican tell you, better than anybody of all those you had round your tablethe other day. She's an uncommon good talker."

"You are, you mean," said his sister; "and she listens and makes bigeyes. Of course nothing can be more delightful. But, Tom, she knowsnothing at all; not so much as how to dress herself."

"Wasn't she well enough dressed the other day?"

"Somebody arranged that for her."

"Well, somebody could do it again. You girls think so much of*dressing*. It isn't the first thing about a woman, after all."

"You men think enough about it, though. What would tempt you to go outwith me if I wasn't *assez bien mise?* Or what would take any man downBroadway with his wife if she hadn't a hoop on?"

"Doesn't the lady in question wear a hoop?" inquired Philip.

"No, she don't."

"Singular want of taste!"

"Well, you don't like them; but, after all, it's the fashion, and onecan't help oneself. And, as I said, you may not like them, but youwouldn't walk with me if I hadn't one."

"Then, to sum up – the deficiencies of this lady, as I understand, are, – education and a hoop? Is that all?"

"By no means!" cried Mrs. Caruthers. "She is nobody, Philip. She comesfrom a family in the country – very respectable people, I have no doubt, but, – well, she is nobody. No connections, no habit of the world. Andno money. They are quite poor people."

"That *is* serious," said Dillwyn. "Tom is in such straitenedcircumstances himself. I was thinking, he might be able to provide thehoop; but if she has no money, it is critical."

"You may laugh!" said Miss Julia. "That is all the comfort one getsfrom a man. But he does not laugh when it comes to be his own case, andmatters have gone too far to be mended, and he is feeling theconsequences of his rashness."

"You speak as if I were in danger! But I do not see how it should cometo be 'my own case,' as I never even saw the lady. Who is she? andwhere is she? and how comes she – so dangerous – to be visiting you?"

All spoke now at once, and Philip heard a confused medley of "Mrs.Wishart" – "Miss Lothrop" – "staying with her" – "poor cousin" – "kind toher of course."

Mr. Dillwyn's countenance changed.

"Mrs. Wishart!" he echoed. "Mrs. Wishart is irreproachable."

"Certainly, but that does not put a penny in Miss Lothrop's pocket, norgive her position, nor knowledge of the world."

"What do you mean by knowledge of the world?" Mr. Dillwyn inquired withslow words.

"Why! you know. Just the sort of thing that makes the differencebetween the raw and the manufactured article," Miss Julia answered, laughing. She was comfortably conscious of being thoroughly"manufactured" herself. No crude ignorances or deficienciesthere. – "The sort of thing that makes a person at home and *au fait* everywhere, and in all companies, and shuts out awkwardnesses andinelegancies.

"*Does* it shut them out?"

"Why, of course! How can you ask? What else will shut them out? Allthat makes the difference between a woman of the world and a milkmaid."

"This little girl, I understand, then, is awkward and inelegant?"

"She is nothing of the kind!" Tom burst out. "Ridiculous!" But Dillwynwaited for Miss Julia's answer.

"I cannot call her just *awkward*," said Mrs. Caruthers.

"N-o," said Julia, "perhaps not. She has been living with Mrs. Wishart, you know, and has got accustomed to a certain set of things. She doesnot strike you unpleasantly in society, seated at a lunch table, forinstance; but of course all beyond the lunch table is like London to aLaplander."

Tom flung himself out of the room.

"And that is what you are going to Florida for?" pursued Dillwyn.

"You have guessed it! Yes, indeed. Do you know, there seems to benothing else to do. Tom is in actual danger. I know he goes very oftento Mrs. Wishart's; and you know Tom is impressible; and before we knowit he might do something he would be sorry for. The only thing is toget him away."

"I think I will go to Mrs. Wishart's too," said Philip. "Do you thinkthere would be danger?"

"I don't know!" said Miss Julia, arching her brows. "I never cancomprehend why the men take such furies of fancies for this girl or forthat. To me they do not seem so different. I believe this girl takesjust because she is not like the rest of what one sees every day."

"That might be a recommendation. Did it never strike you, Miss Julia, that there is a certain degree of sameness in our world? Not in nature, for there the variety is simply endless; but in our ways of living.Here the effort seems to be to fall in with one general pattern. Housesand dresses; and entertainments, and even the routine of conversation.Generally speaking, it is all one thing."

"Well," said Miss Julia, with spirit, "when anything is once recognizedas the right thing, of course everybody wants to conform to it."

"I have not recognized it as the right thing."

"What?"

"This uniformity."

"What would you have?"

"I think I would like to see, for a change, freedom and individuality.Why should a woman with sharp features dress her hair in a manner thatsets off their sharpness, because her neighbour with a classic head candraw it severely about her in close bands and coils, and so only thebetter show its nobility of contour? Why may not a beautiful head ofhair be dressed flowingly, because the fashion favours the people whohave no hair at all? Why may not a plain dress set off a fine figure, because the mode is to leave no unbroken line or sweeping draperyanywhere? And I might go on endlessly."

"I can't tell, I am sure," said Miss Julia; "but if one lives in theworld, it won't do to defy the world. And that you know as well as I."

"What would happen, I wonder?"

"The world would quietly drop you. Unless you are a person ofimportance enough to set a new fashion."

"Is there not some unworthy bondage about that?"

"You can't help it, Philip Dillwyn, if there is. We have got to take itas it is; and make the best of it."

"And this new Fate of Tom's – this new Fancy rather, – as I understand, she is quite out of the world?"

"Quite. Lives in a village in New England somewhere, and grows onions."

"For market?" said Philip, with a somewhat startled face.

"No, no!" said Julia, laughing – "how could you think I meant that? No;I don't know anything about the onions; but she has lived among farmersand sailors all her life, and that is all she knows. And it isperfectly ridiculous, but Tom is so smitten with her that all we can dois to get him away. Fancy, Tom!"

"He has got to come back," said Philip, rising. "You had better getsomebody to take the girl away."

"Perhaps you will do that?" said Miss Julia, laughing.
"I'll think of it," said Dillwyn as he took leave.

CHAPTER VI
HAPPINESS

Philip kept his promise. Thinking, however, he soon found, did notamount to much till he had seen more; and he went a few days after toMrs. Wishart's house.

It was afternoon. The sun was streaming in from the west, filling thesitting-room with its splendour; and in the radiance of it Lois wassitting with some work. She was as unadorned as when Philip had seenher the other day in the street; her gown was of some plain stuff, plainly made; she was a very unfashionable-looking person. But the goodfigure that Mr. Dillwyn liked to see was there; the fair outlines, simple and graceful, light and girlish; and the exquisite hair caughtthe light, and showed its varying, warm, bright tints. It was massed upsomehow, without the least artificiality, in order, and yet lying looseand wavy; a beautiful combination which only a few heads can attain to.

There was nobody else in the room; and as Lois rose to meet thevisitor, he was not flattered to see that she did not recognize him.Then the next minute a flash of light came into her face.

"I have had the pleasure," said Dillwyn. "I was afraid you were goingto ignore the fact."

"You gave us lunch the other day," said Lois, smiling. "Yes, Iremember. I shall always remember."

"You got home comfortably?"

"O yes, after we were so fortified. Mrs. Wishart was quite exhausted, before lunch, I mean."

"This is a pleasant situation," said Philip, going a step nearer thewindow.

"Yes, very! I enjoy those rocks very much."

"You have no rocks at home?"

"No rocks," said Lois; "plenty of *rock*, or stone; but it comes up outof the ground just enough to make trouble, not to give pleasure. Thecountry is all level."

"And you enjoy the variety?"

"O, not because it is variety. But I have been nowhere and have seennothing in my life."

"So the world is a great unopened book to you?" said Philip, with asmile regarding her.

"It will always be that, I think," Lois replied, shaking her head.

"Why should it?"

"I live at Shampuashuh."

"What then? Here you are in New York."

"Yes, wonderfully. But I am going home again."

"Not soon?"

"Very soon. It will be time to begin to make garden in a few days."

"Can the garden not be made without you?"

"Not very well; for nobody knows, except me, just where things wereplanted last year."

"And is that important?"

"Very important." Lois smiled at his simplicity. "Because many thingsmust be changed. They must not be planted where they were last year."

"Why not?"

"They would not do so well. They have all to shift about, likePuss-in-the-corner; and it is puzzling. The peas must go where the cornor the potatoes went; and the corn must find another place, and so on."

"And you are the only one who keeps a map of the garden in your head?"

"Not in my head," said Lois, smiling. "I keep it in my drawer."

"Ah! That is being more systematic than I gave you credit for."

"But you cannot do anything with a garden if you have not system."

"Nor with anything else! But where did *you* learn that?"

"In the garden, I suppose," said Lois simply.

She talked frankly and quietly. Mr. Dillwyn could see by her manner, hethought, that she would be glad if Mrs. Wishart would come in and takehim off her hands; but there was no awkwardness or ungracefulness orunreadiness. In fact, it was the grace of the girl that struck him, nother want of it. Then she was so very lovely. A quiet little figure, inher very plain dress; but the features were exceedingly fair, the clearskin was as pure as a pearl, the head with its crown of soft brighthair might have belonged to one of the Graces. More than all, was thevery rare expression and air of the face. That Philip could not read;he could not decide what gave the girl her special beauty. Something inthe mind or soul of her, he was sure; and he longed to get at it andfind out what it was.

She is not commonplace, he said to himself, while he was talkingsomething else to her; – but it is more than being not commonplace. Sheis very pure; but I have seen other pure faces. It is not that she is aMadonna; this is no creature

"… too bright and good For human nature's daily food."

But what "daily food" for human nature she would be! She is a loftycreature; yet she is a half-timid country girl; and I suppose she doesnot know much beyond her garden. Yes, probably Mrs. Caruthers wasright; she would not do for Tom. Tom is not a quarter good enough forher! She is a little country girl, and she does not know much; andyet – happy will be the man to whom she will give a free kiss of thosewise, sweet lips!

With these somewhat contradictory thoughts running through his mind,Mr. Dillwyn set himself seriously to entertain Lois. As she had nevertravelled, he told her of things he had seen – and things he had knownwithout seeing – in his own many journeyings about the world. PresentlyLois dropped her work out of her hands, forgot it, and turned upon Mr.Dillwyn a pair of eager, intelligent eyes, which it was a pleasure totalk to. He became absorbed in his turn, and equally; ministering tothe attention and curiosity and power of imagination he had aroused.What listeners her eyes were! and how quick to receive and keen to passjudgement was the intelligence behind them. It surprised him; however, its responses were mainly given through the eyes. In vain he tried toget a fair share of words from her too; sought to draw her out. Loiswas not afraid to speak; and yet, for sheer modesty and simpleness, that supposed her words incapable of giving pleasure and would notspeak them as a matter of conventionality, she said very few. At lastPhilip made a determined effort to draw her out.

"I have told you now about my home," he said. "What is yours like?" Andhis manner said, I am going to stop, and you are going to begin.

"There is nothing striking about it, I think," said Lois.

"Perhaps you think so, just because it is familiar to you."

"No, it is because there is really not much to tell about it. There arejust level farm fields; and the river, and the Sound."

"The river?"

"The Connecticut."

"O, *that* is where you are, is it? And are you near the river?"

"Not very near. About as near the river on one side as we are to the
Sound on the other; either of them is a mile and more away."

"You wish they were nearer?"

"No," said Lois; "I don't think I do; there is always the pleasure ofgoing to them."

"Then you should wish them further. A mile is a short drive."

"O, we do not drive much. We walk to the shore often, and sometimes tothe river."

"You like the large water so much the best?"

"I think I like it best," said Lois, laughing a little; "but we go forclams."

"Can you get them yourself?"

"Certainly! It is great fun. While you go to drive in the Park, we goto dig clams. And I think we have the best of it too, for a stand-by."

"Do tell me about the clams."

"Do you like them?"

"I suppose I do. I do not know them. What are they? the usual littlesoup fish?"

"I don't know about soup fish. O no! not those; they are *not* the sortMrs. Wishart has sometimes. These are long; ours in the Sound, I mean; longish and blackish; and do not taste like the clams you have here."

"Better, I hope?"

"A great deal better. There is nothing much pleasanter than a dish oflong clams that you have dug yourself. At least we think so."

"Because you have got them yourself!"

"No; but I suppose that helps."

"So you get them by digging?"

"Yes. It is funny work. The clams are at the edge of the water, wherethe rushes grow, in the mud. We go for them when the tide is out. Then,in the blue mud you see quantities of small holes as big as a leadpencil would make; those are the clam holes."

"And what then?"

"Then we dig for them; dig with a hoe; and you must dig very fast, orthe clam will get away from you. Then, if you get pretty near him hespits at you."

"I suppose that is a harmless remonstrance."

"It may come in your face."

Mr. Dillwyn laughed a little, looking at this fair creature, who wastalking to him, and finding it hard to imagine her among the rushesracing with a long clam.

"It is wet ground I suppose, where you find the clams?"

"O yes. One must take off shoes and stockings and go barefoot. But themud is warm, and it is pleasant enough."

"The clams must be good, to reward the trouble?"

"We think it is as pleasant to get them as to eat them."

"I believe you remarked, this sport is your substitute for our Central
Park?"

"Yes, it is a sort of a substitute."

"And, in the comparison, you think you are the gainers?"

"You cannot compare the two things," said Lois; "only that both areways of seeking pleasure."

"So you say; and I wanted your comparative estimate of the two ways."

"Central Park is new to me, you know," said Lois; "and I am very fondof riding, —*driving*, Mrs. Wishart says I ought to call it; the sceneis like fairyland to me. But I do not think it is better fun, really, than going after clams. And the people do not seem to enjoy it aquarter as much."

"The people whom you see driving?"

"Yes. They do not look as if they were taking much pleasure. Most ofthem."

"Pray why should they go, if they do not find pleasure in it?"

Lois looked at her questioner.

"You can tell, better than I, Mr. Dillwyn. For the same reasons, Isuppose, that they do other things."

"Pardon me, – what things do you mean?"

"I mean, *all* the things they do for pleasure, or that are supposed tobe for pleasure. Parties – luncheon parties, and dinners, and – " Loishesitated.

"*Supposed* to be for pleasure!" Philip echoed the words. "Excuseme – but what makes you think they do not gain their end?"

"People do not look really happy," said Lois. "They do not seem to meas if they really enjoyed what they were doing."

"You are a nice observer!"

"Am I?"

"Pray, at – I forget the name – your home in the country, are the peoplemore happily constituted?"

"Not that I know of. Not more happily constituted; but I think theylive more natural lives."

"Instance!" said Philip, looking curious.

"Well," said Lois, laughing and colouring, "I do not think they dothings unless they want to. They do not ask people unless they want tosee them; and when they *do* make a party, everybody has a good time.It is not brilliant, or splendid, or wonderful, like parties here; butyet I think it is more really what it is meant to be."

"And here you think things are not what they are meant to be?"

"Perhaps I am mistaken," said Lois modestly. "I have seen so little."

"You are not mistaken in your general view. It would be a mistake tothink there are no exceptions."

"O, I do not think that."

"But it is matter of astonishment to me, how you have so soon acquiredsuch keen discernment. Is it that you do not enjoy these occasionsyourself?"

"O, I enjoy them intensely," said Lois, smiling. "Sometimes I think Iam the only one of the company that does; but *I* enjoy them."

"By the power of what secret talisman?"

"I don't know; – being happy, I suppose," said Lois shyly.

"You are speaking seriously; and therefore you are touching thegreatest question of human life. Can you say of yourself that you aretruly *happy?*"

Lois met his eyes in a little wonderment at this questioning, andanswered a plain "yes."

"But, to be *happy*, with me, means, to be independent ofcircumstances. I do not call him *happy*, whose happiness is gone ifthe east wind blow, or a party miscarry, or a bank break; even thoughit were the bank in which his property is involved."

"Nor do I," said Lois gravely.

"And – pray forgive me for asking! – but, are you happy in this exclusivesense?"

"I have no property in a bank," said Lois, smiling again; "I have notbeen tried that way; but I suppose it may do as well to have noproperty anywhere. Yes, Mr. Dillwyn."

"But that is equal to having the philosopher's stone!" cried Dillwyn.

"What is the philosopher's stone?"

"The wise men of old time made themselves very busy in the search forsome substance, or composition, which would turn other substances togold. Looking upon gold as the source and sum of all felicity, theyspent endless pains and countless time upon the search for thistransmuting substance. They thought, if they could get gold enough, they would be happy. Sometimes some one of them fancied he was justupon the point of making the immortal discovery; but there he alwaysbroke down."

"They were looking in the wrong place," said Lois thoughtfully.

"Is there a *right* place to look then?"

Lois smiled. It was a smile that struck Philip very much, for its calmand confident sweetness; yes, more than that; for its gladness. She wasnot in haste to answer; apparently she felt some difficulty.

"I do not think gold ever made anybody happy," she said at length.

"That is what moralists tell us. But, after all, Miss Lothrop, money isthe means to everything else in this world."

"Not to happiness, is it?"

"Well, what is, then? They say – and perhaps you will say – thatfriendships and affections can do more; but I assure you, where thereare not the means to stave off grinding toil or crushing poverty, affections wither; or if they do not quite wither, they bear no goldenfruit of happiness. On the contrary, they offer vulnerable spots to thestings of pain."

"Money can do a great deal," said Lois.

"What can do more?"

Lois lifted up her eyes and looked at her questioner inquiringly. Didhe know no better than that?

"With money, one can do everything," he went on, though struck by herexpression.

"Yes," said Lois; "and yet – all that never satisfied anybody."

"Satisfied!" cried Philip. "Satisfied is a very large word. Who issatisfied?"

Lois glanced up again, mutely.

"If I dared venture to say so – you look, Miss Lothrop, you absolutelylook, as if *you* were; and yet it is impossible."

"Why is it impossible?"

"Because it is what all the generations of men have been trying for, ever since the world began; and none of them ever found it."

"Not if they looked for it in their money bags," said Lois. "It wasnever found there."

"Was it ever found anywhere?"

"Why, yes!"

"Pray tell me where, that I may have it too!"

The girl's cheeks flushed; and what was very odd to Philip, her eyes,he was sure, had grown moist; but the lids fell over them, and he couldnot see as well as he wished. What a lovely face it was, he thought, inthis its mood of stirred gravity!

"Do you ever read the Bible, Mr. Dillwyn?"

The question occasioned him a kind of revulsion. The Bible! was *that* to be brought upon his head? A confused notion of organ-song, thesolemnity of a still house, a white surplice, and words in measuredcadence, came over him. Nothing in that connection had ever given himthe idea of being satisfied. But Lois's question —

"The Bible?" he repeated. "May I ask, why you ask?"

"I thought you did not know something that is in it."

"Very possibly. It is the business of clergymen, isn't it, to tell uswhat is in it? That is what they are paid for. Of what are youthinking?"

"I was thinking of a person in it, mentioned in it, I mean, – who saidjust what you said a minute ago."

"What was that? And who was that?"

"It was a poor woman who once held a long talk with the Lord Jesus ashe was resting beside a well. She had come to draw water, and Jesusasked her for some; and then he told her that whoever drank of thatwater would thirst again – as she knew; but whoever should drink of thewater that *he* would give, should never thirst. I was telling you ofthat water, Mr. Dillwyn. And the woman answered just what youanswered – 'Give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hitherto draw.'"

"Did she get it?"

"I think she did."

"You mean, something that satisfied her, and would satisfy me?"

"It satisfies every one who drinks of it," said Lois.

"But you know, I do not in the least understand you."

The girl rose up and fetched a Bible which lay upon a distant table.Philip looked at the book as she brought it near; no volume of Mrs.Wishart's, he was sure. Lois had had her own Bible with her in thedrawing-room. She must be one of the devout kind. He was sorry. Hebelieved they were a narrow and prejudiced sort of people, given tolaying down the law and erecting barricades across

other people'spaths. He was sorry this fair girl was one of them. But she was alovely specimen. Could she unlearn these ways, perhaps? But now, whatwas she going to bring forth to him out of the Bible? He watched thefingers that turned the leaves; pretty fingers enough, and delicate, but not very white. Gardening probably was not conducive to theblanching of a lady's hand. It was a pity. She found her place so soonthat he had little time to think his regrets.

"You allowed that nobody is satisfied, Mr. Dillwyn," said Lois then.

"See if you understand this."

"'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hathno money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk withoutmoney, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which isnot bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearkendiligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your souldelight itself in fatness.'"

Lois closed her book.

"Who says that?" Philip inquired.

"God himself, by his messenger."

"And to whom?"

"I think, just now, the words come to you, Mr. Dillwyn." Lois said thiswith a manner and look of such simplicity, that Philip was not evenreminded of the class of monitors he had in his mind assigned her with.It was absolute simple matter of fact; she meant business.

"May I look at it?" he said.

She found the page again, and he considered it. Then as he gave itback, remarked,

"This does not tell me yet *what* this satisfying food is?"

"No, that you can know only by experience."

"How is the experience to be obtained?"

Again Lois found the words in her book and showed them to him."'Whosoever drinketh of the water *that I shall give him*' – and again, above, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith tothee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and *he wouldhave given thee* living water.' Christ gives it, and he must be askedfor it."

"And then – ?" said Philip.

"Then you would be *satisfied*."

"You think it?"

"I know it."

"It takes a great deal to satisfy a man!"

"Not more than it does for a woman."

"And you are satisfied?" he asked searchingly.

But Lois smiled as she gave her answer; and it was an odd and veryinconsistent thing that Philip should be disposed to quarrel with herfor that smile. I think he wished she were *not* satisfied. It was veryabsurd, but he did not reason about it; he only felt annoyed.

"Well, Miss Lothrop," he said as he rose, "I shall never forget thisconversation. I am very glad no one came in to interrupt it."

Lois had no phrases of society ready, and replied nothing.

CHAPTER VII
THE WORTH OF THINGS

Mr. Dillwyn walked away from Mrs. Wishart's in a discontented mood, which was not usual with him. He felt almost annoyed with something; yet did not quite know what, and he did not stop to analyze thefeeling. He walked away, wondering at himself for being so discomposed, and pondering with sufficient distinctness one or two questions whichstood out from the discomposure.

He was a man who had gone through all the usual routine of educationand experience common to those who belong to the upper class ofsociety, and can boast of a good name and family. He had lived hiscollege life; he had travelled; he knew the principal cities of his owncountry, and many in other lands, with sufficient familiarity. Speakinggenerally, he had seen everything, and knew everybody. He had ceased tobe surprised at anything, or to expect much from the world beyond whathis own efforts and talents could procure him. His connections andassociations had been always with good society and with the old andestablished portions of it; but he had come into possession of hisproperty not so very long ago, and the pleasure of that was not yetworn off. He was a man who thought himself happy, and certainlypossessed a very high place in the esteem of those who knew him; beingeducated, travelled, clever, and of noble character, and withal rich.It was the oddest thing for Philip to walk as he walked now, musingly, with measured steps, and eyes bent on the ground. There was a moststrange sense of uneasiness upon him.

The image of Lois busied him constantly. It was such a lovely image.But he had seen hundreds of handsomer women, he told himself. Had he?Yes, he thought so. Yet not one, not one of them all, had made as muchimpression upon him. It was inconvenient; and why was it inconvenient?Something about her bewitched him. Yes, he had seen handsomer women; but more or less they were all of a certain pattern; not alike infeature, or name, or place, or style, yet nevertheless all belonging tothe general sisterhood of what is called the world. And this girl wasdifferent. How different? She was uneducated, but *that* could not givea charm; though Philip thereby reflected that there was a certain charmin variety, and this made variety. She was unaccustomed to the greatworld and its ways; there could be no charm in that, for he liked theutmost elegance of the best breeding. Here he fetched himself up again.Lois was not in the least ill-bred. Nothing of the kind. She wasutterly and truly refined, in every look and word and movement showingthat she was so. Yet she had no "manner," as Mrs. Caruthers would haveexpressed it. No, she had not. She had no trained and inevitable way ofspeaking and looking; her way was her own, and sprang naturally fromthe truth of her thought or feeling at the moment. Therefore it couldnever be counted upon, and gave one the constant pleasure of surprises.Yes, Philip concluded that this was one point of interest about her.She had not learned how to hide herself, and the manner of herrevelations was a continual refreshing variety, inasmuch as what shehad to reveal was only fair and delicate and true. But what made thegirl so provokingly happy? so secure in her contentment? Mr. Dillwynthought himself a happy man; content with himself and with life; yetlife had reached something too like a dead level, and himself, he wasconscious, led a purposeless sort of existence. What purpose indeed wasthere to live for? But this little girl – Philip recalled the bright, soft, clear expression of eye with which she had looked at him; thevery sweet curves of happy consciousness about her lips; the confidentbearing with which she had spoken, as one who had found a treasurewhich, as she said, satisfied her. But it cannot! said Philip tohimself. It is that she is pure and sweet, and takes happiness like ababy, sucking in what seems to her the pure milk of existence. It istrue, the remembered expression of Lois's features did not quite agreewith this explanation; pure and sweet, no doubt, but also grave andhigh, and sometimes evidencing a keen intellectual perception andwisdom. Not just like a baby; and he found he could not dismiss thematter so. What made her, then, so happy? Philip could not rememberever seeing a grown person who

seemed so happy; whose happiness seemedto rest on such a steady foundation. Can she be in love? thoughtDillwyn; and the idea gave him a most unreasonable thrill ofdispleasure. For a moment only; then his reason told him that the lookin Lois's face was not like that. It was not the brilliance of ecstasy;it was the sunshine of deep and fixed content. Why in the world shouldMr. Dillwyn wish that Lois were not so content? so beyond what he oranybody could give her? And having got to this point, Mr. Dillwynpulled himself up again. What business was it of his, the particularspring of happiness she had found to drink of? and if it quenched herthirst, as she said it did, why should he be anything but glad of it?Why, even if Lois were happy in some new-found human treasure, shouldit move him, Philip Dillwyn, with discomfort? Was it possible that hetoo could be following in those steps of Tom Caruthers, from whichTom's mother was at such pains to divert her son? Philip began to seewhere he stood. Could it be? – and what if?

He studied the question now with a clear view of its bearings. He hadgot out of a fog. Lois was all he had thought of her. Would she do fora wife for him? Uneducated – inexperienced – not in accord with thehabits of the world – accustomed to very different habits andsociety – with no family to give weight to her name and honour to hischoice, – all that Philip pondered; and, on the other side, theloveliness, the freshness, the intellect, the character, and therefinement, which were undoubted. He pondered and pondered. A girl whowas nobody, and whom society would look upon as an intruder; a girl whohad had no advantages of education – how she could express herself sowell and so intelligently Philip could not conceive, but the fact wasthere; Lois had had no education beyond the most simple training of aschool in the country; – would it do? He turned it all over and over, and shook his head. It would be too daring an experiment; it would notbe wise; it would not do; he must give it up, all thought of such athing; and well that he had come to handle the question so early, aselse he might – he – might have got so entangled that he could not savehimself. Poor Tom! But Philip had no mother to interpose to save *him;* and his sister was not at hand. He went thinking about all this thewhole way back to his hotel; thinking, and shaking his head at it. No, this kind of thing was for a boy to do, not for a man who knew theworld. And yet, the image of Lois worried him.

I believe, he said to himself, I had better not see the little witchagain.

Meanwhile he was not going to have much opportunity. Mrs. Wishart camehome a little while after Philip had gone. Lois was stitching by thelast fading light.

"Do stop, my dear! you will put your eyes out. Stop, and let us havetea. Has anybody been here?"

"Mr. Dillwyn came. He went away hardly a quarter of an hour ago."

"Mr. Dillwyn! Sorry I missed him. But he will come again. I met Tom

Caruthers; he is mourning about this going with his mother to Florida."

"What are they going for?" asked Lois.

"To escape the March winds, he says."

"Who? Mr. Caruthers? He does not look delicate."

Mrs. Wishart laughed. "Not very! And his mother don't either, does she?But, my dear, people are weak in different spots; it isn't always intheir lungs."

"Are there no March winds in Florida?"

"Not where they are going. It is all sunshine and oranges – and orangeblossoms. But Tom is not delighted with the prospect. What do you thinkof that young man?"

"He is a very handsome man."

"Is he not? But I did not mean that. Of course you have eyes. I want toknow whether you have judgment."

"I have not seen much of Mr. Caruthers to judge by."

"No. Take what you have seen and make the most of it."

"I don't think I have judgment," said Lois. "About people, I mean, andmen especially. I am not accustomed to New York people, besides."

"Are they different from Shampuashuh people?"

"O, very."

"How?"

"Miss Caruthers asked me the same thing," said Lois, smiling. "Isuppose at bottom all people are alike; indeed, I know they are. But inthe country I think they show out more."

"Less disguise about them?"

"I think so."

"My dear, are we such a set of masqueraders in your eyes?"

"No," said Lois; "I did not mean that."

"What do you think of Philip Dillwyn? Comare him with young Caruthers."

"I cannot," said Lois. "Mr. Dillwyn strikes me as a man who knowseverything there is in all the world."

"And Tom, you think, does not?"

"Not so much," said, Lois hesitating; "at least he does not impress meso."

"You are more impressed with Mr. Dillwyn?"

"In what way?" said Lois simply. "I am impressed with the sense of myown ignorance. I should be oppressed by it, if it was my fault."

"Now you speak like a sensible girl, as you are. Lois, men do not careabout women knowing much."

"Sensible men must."

"They are precisely the ones who do not. It is odd enough, but it is afact. But go on; which of these two do you like best?"

"I have seen most of Mr. Caruthers, you know. But, Mrs. Wishart, sensible men *must* like sense in other people."

"Yes, my dear; they do; unless when they want to marry the people; andthen their choice very often lights upon a fool. I have seen it overand over and over again; the clever one of a family is passed by, and asilly sister is the one chosen."

"Why?"

"A pink and white skin, or a pair of black eyebrows, or perhaps somesoft blue eyes."

"But people cannot live upon a pair of black eyebrows," said Lois.

"They find that out afterwards."

"Mr. Dillwyn talks as if he liked sense," said Lois. "I mean, he talksabout sensible things."

"Do you mean that Tom don't, my dear?"

A slight colour rose on the cheek Mrs. Wishart was looking at; and Loissaid somewhat hastily that she was not comparing.

"I shall try to find out what Tom talks to you about, when he comesback from Florida. I shall scold him if he indulges in nonsense."

"It will be neither sense nor nonsense. I shall be gone long beforethen."

"Gone whither?"

"Home – to Shampuashuh. I have been wanting to speak to you about it,

Mrs. Wishart. I must go in a very few days."

"Nonsense! I shall not let you. I cannot get along without you. Theydon't want you at home, Lois."

"The garden does. And the dairy work will be more now in a week or two; there will be more milk to take care of, and Madge will want help."

"Dairy work! Lois, you must not do dairy work. You will spoil yourhands."

Lois laughed. "Somebody's hands must do it. But Madge takes care of thedairy. My hands see to the garden."

"Is it necessary?"

"Why, yes, certainly, if we would have butter or vegetables; and youwould not counsel us to do without them. The two make half the livingof the family."

"And you really cannot afford a servant?"

"No, nor want one," said Lois. "There are three of us, and so we getalong nicely."

"Apropos; – My dear, I am sorry that it is so, but must is must. What Iwanted to say to you is, that it is not necessary to tell all this toother people."

Lois looked up, surprised. "I have told no one but you, Mrs. Wishart. Oyes! I did speak to Mr. Dillwyn about it, I believe."

"Yes. Well, there is no occasion, my dear. It is just as well not."

"Is it *better* not? What is the harm? Everybody at Shampuashuh knowsit."

"Nobody knows it here; and there is no reason why they should. I meantto tell you this before."

"I think I have told nobody but Mr. Dillwyn."

"He is safe. I only speak for the future, my dear."

"I don't understand yet," said Lois, half laughing. "Mrs. Wishart, weare not ashamed of it."

"Certainly not, my dear; you have no occasion."

"Then why *should* we be ashamed of it?" Lois persisted.

"My dear, there is nothing to be ashamed of. Do not think I mean that.

Only, people here would not understand it."

"How could they _mis_understand it?"

"You do not know the world, Lois. People have peculiar ways of lookingat things; and they put their own interpretation on things; and ofcourse they often make great blunders. And so it is just as well tokeep your own private affairs to yourself, and not give them theopportunity of blundering."

Lois was silent a little while.

"You mean," she said then, – "you think, that some of these people Ihave been seeing here, would think less of me, if they knew how we doat home?"

"They might, my dear. People are just stupid enough for that."

"Then it seems to me I ought to let them know," Lois said, halflaughing again. "I do not like to be taken for what I am not; and I donot want to have anybody's good opinion on false grounds." Her colourrose a bit at the same time.

"My dear, it is nobody's business. And anybody that once knew you wouldjudge you for yourself, and not upon any adventitious circumstances.They cannot, in my opinion, think of you too highly."

"I think it is better they should know at once that I am a poor girl,"said Lois. However, she reflected privately that it did not matter, asshe was going away so soon. And she remembered also that Mr. Dillwynhad not seemed to think any the less of her for what she had told him.Did Tom Caruthers know?

"But, Lois, my dear, about your going – There is no garden work to bedone yet. It is March."

"It will soon be April. And the ground must be got ready, and potatoesmust go in, and peas."

"Surely somebody else can stick in potatoes and peas."

"They would not know where to put them."

"Does it matter where?"

"To be sure it does!" said Lois, amused. "They must not go where theywere last year."

"Why not?"

"I don't know! It seems that every plant wants a particular sort offood, and gets it, if it can; and so, the place where it grows is moreor less impoverished, and would have less to give it another year. Buta different sort of plant requiring a different sort of food, would beall right in that place."

"Food?" said Mrs. Wishart. "Do you mean manure? you can have that putin."

"No, I do not mean that. I mean something the plant gets from the soilitself."

"I do not understand! Well, my dear, write them word where the peasmust go."

Lois laughed again.

"I hardly know myself, till I have studied the map," she said. "I mean, the map of the garden. It is a more difficult matter than you canguess, to arrange all the new order every spring; all has to bechanged; and upon where the peas go depends, perhaps, where thecabbages go, and the corn, and the tomatoes, and everything else. It isa matter for study."

"Can't somebody else do it for you?" Mrs. Wishart asked compassionately.

"There is no one else. We have just our three selves; and all that isdone we do; and the garden is under my management."

"Well, my dear, you are wonderful women; that is all I have to say.But, Lois, you must pay me a visit by and by in the summer time; I musthave that; I shall go to the Isles of Shoals for a while, and I amgoing to have you there."

"If I can be spared from home, dear Mrs. Wishart, it would bedelightful!"

CHAPTER VIII
MRS. ARMADALE

It was a few days later, but March yet, and a keen wind blowing fromthe sea. A raw day out of doors; so much the more comfortable seemedthe good fire, and swept-up hearth, and gentle warmth filling thefarmhouse kitchen. The farmhouse was not very large, neither byconsequence was the kitchen; however, it was more than ordinarilypleasant to look at, because it was not a servants' room; and so wasfurnished not only for the work, but also for the habitation of thefamily, who made it in winter almost exclusively their abiding-place.The floor was covered with a thick, gay rag carpet; a settee sofalooked inviting with its bright chintz hangings; rocking chairs, wellcushioned, were in number and variety; and a basket of work here, and apretty lamp there, spoke of ease and quiet occupation. One person onlysat there, in the best easy-chair, at the hearth corner; beside her alittle table with a large book upon it and a roll of knitting. She wasnot reading nor working just now; waiting, perhaps, or thinking, withhands folded in her lap. By the look of the hands they had done many ajob of hard work in their day; by the look of the face and air of theperson, one could see that the hard work was over. The hands were bony, thin, enlarged at the joints, so as age and long rough usage make them, but quiet hands now; and the face was steady and calm, with no haste orrestlessness upon it any more, if ever there had been, but a very sweetand gracious repose. It was a hard-featured countenance; it had neverbeen handsome; only the beauty of sense and character it had, and thedignity of a well-lived life. Something more too; some thing of a morenoble calm than even the fairest retrospect can give; a more restfulrepose than comes of mere cessation from labour; a deeper content thanhas its ground in the actual present. She was a most reverent person,to look at. Just now she was waiting for something, and listening; forher ear caught the sound of a door, and then the tread of swift feetcoming down the stair, and then Lois entered upon the scene; evidentlyfresh from her journey. She had been to her room to lay by herwrappings and change her dress; she was in a dark stuff gown now, withan enveloping white apron. She came up and kissed once more the facewhich had watched her entrance.

"You've been gone a good while, Lois!"

"Yes, grandma. Too long, did you think?"

"I don' know, child. That depends on what you stayed for."

"Does it? Grandma, I don't know what I stayed for. I suppose because itwas pleasant."

"Pleasanter than here?"

"Grandma, I haven't been home long enough to know. It all looks andfeels so strange to me as you cannot think!"

"What looks strange?"

"Everything! The house, and the place, and the furniture – I have beenliving in such a different world till my eyes have grown unaccustomed.You can't think how odd it is."

"What sort of a world have you been living in, Lois? Your lettersdidn't tell." The old lady spoke with a certain serious doubtfulness, looking at the girl by her side.

"Didn't they?" Lois returned. "I suppose I did not give you theimpression because I had it not myself. I had got accustomed to that, you see; and I did not realize how strange it was. I just took it as ifI had always lived in it."

"*What?*"

"O grandma, I can never tell you so that you can understand! It waslike living in the Arabian Nights."

"I don't believe in no Arabian Nights."

"And yet they were there, you see. Houses so beautiful, and filled withsuch beautiful things; and you know, grandmother, I like things to bepretty; – and then, the ease, I suppose. Mrs. Wishart's servants goabout almost like fairies; they are hardly seen or heard, but the workis done. And you never have to think about it; you go out, and comehome to find dinner ready, and capital dinners too; and you sit readingor talking, and do not know how time goes till it is tea-time, and thenthere comes the tea; and so it is in-doors and out of doors. All thatis quite pleasant."

"And you are sorry to be home again?"

"No, indeed, I am glad. I enjoyed all I have been telling you about, but I think I enjoyed it quite long enough. It is time for me to behere. Is the frost well out of the ground yet?"

"Mr. Bince has been ploughin'."

"Has he? I'm glad. Then I'll put in some peas to-morrow. O yes! I amglad to be home, grandma." Her hand nestled in one of those worn, bonyones affectionately.

"Could you live just right there, Lois?"

"I tried, grandma."

"Did all that help you?"

"I don't know that it hindered. It might not be good for always; but Iwas there only for a little while, and I just took the pleasure of it."

"Seems to me, you was there a pretty long spell to be called 'a littlewhile.' Ain't it a dangerous kind o' pleasure, Lois? Didn't you neverget tempted?"

"Tempted to what, grandma?"

"I don' know! To want to live easy."

"Would that be wrong?" said Lois, putting her soft cheek alongside thewithered one, so that her wavy hair brushed it caressingly. Perhaps itwas unconscious bribery. But Mrs. Armadale was never bribed.

"It wouldn't be right, Lois, if it made you want to get out o' yourduties."

"I think it didn't, grandma. I'm all ready for them. And your dinner isthe first thing. Madge and Charity – you say they are gone to New Haven?"

"Charity's tooth tormented her so, and Madge wanted to get a bonnet; and they thought they'd make one job of it. They didn't know you wascomin' to-day, and they thought they'd just hit it to go before youcome. They won't be back early, nother."

"What have they left for your dinner?" said Lois, going to rummage.

"Grandma, here's nothing at all!"

"An egg'll do, dear. They didn't calkilate for you."

"An egg will do for me," said Lois, laughing; "but there's only a crustof bread."

"Madge calkilated to make tea biscuits after she come home."

"Then I'll do that now."

Lois stripped up the sleeves from her shapely arms, and presently wasvery busy at the great kitchen table, with the board before her coveredwith white cakes, and the cutter and rolling pin still at workproducing more. Then the fire was made up, and the tin baker set infront of the blaze, charged with a panful for baking. Lois strippeddown her sleeves and set the table, cut ham and fried it, fried eggs, and soon sat opposite Mrs. Armadale pouring her out a cup of tea.

"This is cosy!" she exclaimed. "It is nice to have you all alone forthe first, grandma. What's the news?"

"Ain't no news, child. Mrs. Saddler's been to New London for a week."

"And I have come home. Is that all?"

"I don't make no count o' news, child. 'One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever.'"

"But one likes to hear of the things that change, grandma."

"Do 'ee? I like to hear of the things that remain."

"But grandma! the earth itself changes; at least it is as different indifferent places as anything can be."

"Some's cold, and some's hot," observed the old lady.

"It is much more than that. The trees are different, and the fruits aredifferent; and the animals; and the country is different, and thebuildings, and the people's dresses."

"The men and women is the same," said the old lady contentedly.

"But no, not even that, grandma. They are as different as they can be, and still be men and women."

"'As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.' Bethe New York folks so queer, then, Lois?"

"O no, not the New York people; though they are different too; quitedifferent from Shampuashuh – "

"How?"

Lois did not want to say. Her grandmother, she thought, could notunderstand her; and if she could understand, she thought she would beperhaps hurt. She turned the conversation. Then came the clearing awaythe remains of dinner; washing the dishes; baking the rest of thetea-cakes; cleansing and putting away the baker; preparing flour fornext day's bread-making; making her own bed and putting her room inorder; doing work in the dairy which Madge was not at home to take careof; brushing up the kitchen, putting on the kettle, setting the tablefor tea. Altogether Lois had a busy two or three hours, before shecould put on her afternoon dress and come and sit down by hergrandmother.

"It is a change!" she said, smiling. "Such a different life from what Ihave been living. You can't think, grandma, what a contrast betweenthis afternoon and last Friday."

"What was then?"

"I was sitting in Mrs. Wishart's drawing-room, doing nothing but playwork, and a gentleman talking to me."

"Why was he talking to *you?* Warn't Mrs. Wishart there?"

"No; she was out."

"What did he talk to you for?"

"I was the only one there was," said Lois. But looking back, she couldnot avoid the thought that Mr. Dillwyn's long stay and conversation hadnot been solely a taking up with what he could get.

"He could have gone away," said Mrs. Armadale, echoing her thought.

"I do not think he wanted to go away. I think he liked to talk to me."

It was very odd too, she thought.

"And did you like to talk to him?"

"Yes. You know I hare not much to talk about; but somehow he seemed tofind out what there was."

"Had *he* much to talk about?"

"I think there is no end to that," said Lois. "He has been all over theworld and seen everything; and he is a man of sense, to care for thethings that are worth while; and he is educated; and it is veryentertaining to hear him talk."

"Who is he? A young man?"

"Yes, he is young. O, he is an old friend of Mrs. Wishart."

"Did you like him best of all the people you saw?"

"O no, not by any means. I hardly know him, in fact; not so well asothers."

"Who are the others?"

"What others, grandmother?"

"The other people that you like better."

Lois named several ladies, among them Mrs. Wishart, her hostess.

"There's no men's names among them," remarked Mrs. Armadale. "Didn'tyou see none, savin' that one?"

"Plenty!" said Lois, smiling.

"An' nary one that you liked?"

"Why, yes, grandmother; several; but of course – "

"What of course?"

"I was going to say, of course I did not have much to do with them; butthere was one I had a good deal to do with."

"Who was he?"

"He was a young Mr. Caruthers. O, I did not have much to do with *him;* only he was there pretty often, and talked to me. He was pleasant."

"Was he a real godly man?"

"No, grandmother. He is not a Christian at all, I think."

"And yet he pleased you, Lois?"

"I did not say so, grandmother."

"I heerd it in the tone of your voice."

"Did you? Yes, he was pleasant. I liked him pretty well. People thatyou would call godly people never came there at all. I suppose theremust be some in New York; but I did not see any."

There was silence a while.

"Eliza Wishart must keep poor company, if there ain't one godly oneamong 'em," Mrs. Armadale began again. But Lois was silent.

"What do they talk about?"

"Everything in the world, except that. People and things, and what thisone says and what that one did, and this party and that party. I can'ttell you, grandma. There seemed no end of talk; and yet it did notamount to much when all was done. I am not speaking of a few, gentlemenlike Mr. Dillwyn, and a few more."

"But he ain't a Christian?"

"No."

"Nor t'other one? the one you liked."

"No."

"I'm glad you've come away, Lois."

"Yes, grandma, and so am I; but why?"

"You know why. A Christian woman maunt have nothin' to do with men thatain't Christian."

"Nothing to do! Why, we must, grandma. We cannot help seeing people andtalking to them."

"The snares is laid that way," said Mrs. Armadale.

"What are we to do, then, grandmother?"

"Lois Lothrop," said the old lady, suddenly sitting upright, "what'sthe Lord's will?"

"About – what?"

"About drawin' in a yoke with one that don't go your way?"

"He says, don't do it."

"Then mind you don't."

"But, grandma, there is no talk of any such thing in this case," saidLois, half laughing, yet a little annoyed. "Nobody was thinking of sucha thing."

"You don' know what they was thinkin' of."

"I know what they *could not* have thought of. I am different fromthem; I am not of their world; and I am not educated, and I am poor.There is no danger, grandmother."

"Lois, child, you never know where danger is comin'. It's safe to haveyour armour on, and keep out o' temptation. Tell me you'll never letyourself like a man that ain't Christian!"

"But I might not be able to help liking him."

"Then promise me you'll never marry no sich a one."

"Grandma, I'm not thinking of marrying."

"Lois, what is the Lord's will about it?"

"I know, grandma," Lois answered rather soberly.

"And you know why. 'Thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, norhis daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thyson from following me, that they may serve other gods.' I've seen it,Lois, over and over agin. I've been a woman – or a man – witched away anddragged down, till if they hadn't lost all the godliness they ever had,it warn't because they didn't seem so. And the children grew up to bescapegraces.'"

"Don't it sometimes work the other way?"

"Not often, if a Christian man or woman has married wrong with theireyes open. Cos it proves, Lois, *that* proves, that the ungodly one ofthe two has the most power; and what he has he's like to keep. Lois, Imayn't be here allays to look after you; promise me that you'll do theLord's will."

"I hope I will, grandma," Lois answered soberly.

"Read them words in Corinthians again."

Lois got the Bible and obeyed, "'Be ye not unequally yoked togetherwith unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness withunrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and whatconcord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believethwith an infidel?'"

"Lois, ain't them words plain?"

"Very plain, grandma."

"Will ye mind 'em?"

"Yes, grandma; by his grace."

"Ay, ye may want it," said the old lady; "but it's safe to trust theLord. An' I'd rather have you suffer heartbreak follerin' the Lord, than goin' t'other way. Now you may read to me, Lois. We'll have itbefore they come home."

"Who has read to you while I have been gone?"

"O, one and another. Madge mostly; but Madge don't care, and so shedon' know how to read."

Mrs. Armadale's sight was not good; and it was the custom for one ofthe girls, Lois generally, to read her a verse or two morning andevening. Generally it was a small portion, talked over if they hadtime, and if not, then thought over by the old lady all the remainderof the day or evening, as the case might be. For she was like the manof whom it is written – "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and inhis law doth he meditate day and night."

"What shall I read, grandma?"

"You can't go wrong."

The epistle to the Corinthians lay open before Lois, and she read thewords following those which had just been called for.

"'And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are thetemple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, andwalk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith theLord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and willbe a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith theLord Almighty.'"

If anybody had been there to see, the two women made the loveliestpicture at this moment. The one of them old, weather-worn, plain-featured, sitting with the quiet calm of the end of a work dayand listening; the other young, blooming, fresh, lovely, with a wealthof youthful charms about her, bending a little over the big book on herlap; on both faces a reverent sweet gravity which was most gracious.Lois read and stopped, without looking up.

"I think small of all the world, alongside o' that promise, Lois."

"And so do I, grandmother."

"But, you see, the Lord's sons and daughters has got to be separatefrom other folks."

"In some ways."

"Of course they've got to live among folks, but they've got to beseparate for all; and keep their garments."

"I do not believe it is easy in a place like New York," said Lois.

"Seems to me I was getting all mixed up."

"'Tain't easy nowheres, child. Only, where the way is very smooth, folks slides quicker."

"How can one be 'separate' always, grandma, in the midst of otherpeople?"

"Take care that you keep nearest to God. Walk with him; and you'll bepretty sure to be separate from the most o' folks."

There was no more said. Lois presently closed the book and laid itaway, and the two sat in silence awhile. I will not affirm that Loisdid not feel something of a stricture round her, since she had giventhat promise so clearly. Truly the promise altered nothing, it onlymade things somewhat more tangible; and there floated now and then pastLois's mental vision an image of a handsome head, crowned with gracefullocks of luxuriant light brown hair, and a face of winningpleasantness, and eyes that looked eagerly into her eyes. It came upnow before her, this vision, with a certain sense of something lost.Not that she had ever reckoned that image as a thing won; as belonging,or ever possibly to belong, to herself; for Lois never had such athought for a moment. All the same came now the vision before her withthe commentary, – 'You never can have it. That acquain'tance, and thatfriendship, and that intercourse, is a thing of the past; and whateverfor another it might have led to, it could lead to nothing for you.' Itwas not a defined thought; rather a floating semi-consciousness; andLois presently rose up and went from thought to action.

CHAPTER IX
THE FAMILY

The spring day was fading into the dusk of evening, when feet andvoices heard outside announced that the travellers were returning. Andin they came, bringing a breeze of business and a number of tied-upparcels with them into the quiet house.

"The table ready! how good! and the fire. O, it's Lois! Lois ishere!" – and then there were warm embraces, and then the old grandmotherwas kissed. There were two girls, one tall, the other very tall.

"I'm tired to death!" said the former of these. "Charity would do noend of work; you know she is a steam-engine, and she had the steam upto-day, I can tell you. There's no saying how good supper will be; forour lunch wasn't much, and not good at that; and there's something goodhere, I can tell by my nose. Did you take care of the milk, Lois? youcouldn't know where to set it."

"There is no bread, Lois. I suppose you found out?" the other sistersaid.

"O, she's made biscuits!" said Madge. "Aren't you a brick, though,

Lois! I was expecting we'd have everything to do; and it's all done.

Ain't that what you call comfortable? Is the tea made? I'll be ready in a minute."

But that was easier said than done.

"Lois! what sort of hats are they wearing in New York?"

"Lois, are mantillas fashionable? The woman in New Haven, the milliner, said everybody was going to wear them. She wanted to make me get one."

"We can make a mantilla as well as she can," Lois answered.

"If we had the pattern! But is everybody wearing them in New York?"

"I think it must be early for mantillas."

"O, lined and wadded, of course. But is every body wearing them?"

"I do not know. I do not recollect."

"Not recollect!" cried the tall sister. "What are your eyes good for?

What *do* people wear?"

"I wore my coat and cape. I do not know very well about other people.

People wear different things."

"O, but that they do not, Lois!" the other sister exclaimed. "There isalways one thing that is the fashion; and that is the thing one wantsto know about. Last year it was visites. Now what is it this year? Andwhat are the hats like?"

"They are smaller."

"There! And that woman in New Haven said they were going to be largestill. Who is one to trust!"

"You may trust me," said Lois. "I am sure of so much. Moreover, thereis my new straw bonnet which Mrs. Wishart gave me; you can see by that."

This was very satisfactory; and talk ran on in the same line for sometime.

"And Lois, have you seen a great many people? At Mrs. Wishart's, Imean."

"Yes, plenty; at her house and at other houses."

"Was it great fun?" Madge asked.

"Sometimes. But indeed, yes; it was great fun generally, to see thedifferent ways of people, and the beautiful houses, and furniture, andpictures, and everything."

"*Everything!* Was everything beautiful?"

"No, not beautiful; but everything in most of the houses where I wentwas handsome; often it was magnificent."

"I suppose it seemed so to you," said Charity.

"Tell us, Lois!" urged the other sister.

"What do you think of solid silver dishes to hold the vegetables on thetable, and solid silver pudding dishes, and gold teaspoons, in the mostdelicate little painted cups?"

"I should say it was ridiculous," said the elder sister. "What's theuse o' havin' your vegetables in silver dishes?"

"What's the use of having them in dishes at all?" laughed Lois. "Theymight be served in big cabbage leaves; or in baskets."

"That's nonsense," said Charity. "Of course they must be in dishes ofsome sort; but vegetables don't taste any better out o' silver."

"The dinner does not taste any better," said Lois, "but it *looks* adeal better, I can tell you. You have just no idea, girls, howbeautiful a dinner table can be. The glass is beautiful; delicate, thin, clear glass, cut with elegant flowers and vines running over it.And the table linen is a pleasure to see, just the damask; it is sowhite, and so fine, and so smooth, and woven in such lovely designs.Mrs. Wishart is very fond of her table linen, and has it in beautifulpatterns. Then silver is always handsome. Then sometimes there is amost superb centre-piece to the table; a magnificent tall thing ofsilver – I don't know what to call it; not a vase, and not a dish; buthigh, and with different bowls or shells filled with flowers and fruit.Why the mere ice-creams sometimes were in all sorts of pretty flowerand fruit forms."

"Ice-cream!" cried Madge.

"And I say, what's the use of all that?" said Charity, who had not beenbaptized in character.

"The use is, its looking so very pretty," Lois answered.

"And so, I suppose you would like to have *your* vegetables in silverdishes? I should like to know why things are any better for lookingpretty, when all's done?"

"They are not better, I suppose," said Madge.

"I don't know *why,* but I think they must be," said Lois, innocent ofthe personal application which the other two were making. For Madge wasa very handsome girl, while Charity was hard-favoured, like hergrandmother. "It does one good to see pretty things."

"That's no better than pride," said Charity. "Things that ain't prettyare just as useful, and more useful. That's all pride, silver dishes, and flowers, and stuff. It just makes people stuck-up. Don't they thinkthemselves, all those grand folks, don't they think themselves a hitchor two higher than Shampuashuh folks?"

"Perhaps," said Lois; "but I do not know, so I cannot say."

"O Lois," cried Madge, "are the people very nice?"

"Some of them."

"You haven't lost your heart, have you?"

"Only part of it."

"Part of it! O, to whom, Lois? Who is it?"

"Mrs. Wishart's black horses."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Charity. "Haven't Shampuashuh folks got horses?

Don't tell me!"

"But, Lois!" pursued Madge, "who was the nicest person you saw?"

"Madge, I don't know. A good many seemed to be nice."

"Well, who was the handsomest? and who was the cleverest? and who wasthe kindest to you? I don't mean Mrs. Wishart. Now answer."

"The handsomest, and the cleverest, and the kindest to me?" Loisrepeated slowly. "Well, let me see. The handsomest was a Mr. Caruthers."

"Who's he?"

"Mr. Caruthers."

"*What* is he, then?"

"He is a gentleman, very much thought of; rich, and knows everybody; that's about all I can tell."

"Was he the cleverest, too, that you saw?"

"No, I think not."

"Who was that?"

"Another gentleman; a Mr. Dillwyn."

"Dillun!" Madge repeated.

"That is the pronunciation of the name. It is spelt D, i, l, l, w, y,n, – Dilwin; but it is called Dillun."

"And who was kindest to you? Go on, Lois."

"O, everybody was kind to me," Lois said evasively. "Kind enough. I didnot need kindness."

"Whom did you like best, then?"

"Of those two? They are both men of the world, and nothing to me; butof the two, I think I like the first best."

"Caruthers. I shall remember," said Madge.

"That is foolish talk, children," remarked Mrs. Armadale.

"Yes, but grandma, you know children are bound to be foolishsometimes," returned Madge.

"And then the rod of correction must drive it far from them," said theold lady. "That's the common way; but it ain't the easiest way. Loissaid true; these people are nothing and can be nothing to her. Iwouldn't make believe anything about it, if I was you."

The conversation changed to other things. And soon took a fresh springat the entrance of another of the family, an aunt of the girls; wholived in the neighbourhood, and came in to hear the news from New Havenas well as from New York. And then it knew no stop. While the table wasclearing, and while Charity and Madge were doing up the dishes, andwhen they all sat down round the fire afterwards, there went on aceaseless, restless, unending flow of questions, answers, and comments; going over, I am bound to say, all the ground already travelled duringsupper. Mrs. Armadale sometimes sighed to herself; but this, if theothers heard it, could not check them.

Mrs. Marx was a lively, clever, kind, good-natured woman; with plentyof administrative ability, like so many New England women, full ofresources; quick with her head and her hands, and not slow with hertongue; an uneducated woman, and yet one who had made such good use oflife-schooling, that for all practical purposes she had twice the witof many who have gone through all the drill of the best institutions. Akeen eye, a prompt judgment, and a fearless speech, all belonged toMrs. Marx; universally esteemed and looked up to and welcomed by allher associates. She was not handsome; she was even strikingly deficientin the lines of beauty; and refinement was not one of hercharacteristics, other than the refinement which comes of kindness andunselfishness. Mrs. Marx would be delicately careful of another'sfeelings, when there was real need; she could show an exceeding greattenderness and tact then; while in ordinary life her voice was ratherloud, her movements were free and angular, and her expressions veryunconstrained. Nobody ever saw Mrs. Marx anything but neat, whatevershe possibly might be doing; in other respects her costume was oftenextremely unconventional; but she could dress herself nicely and lookquite as becomes a lady. Independent was Mrs. Marx, above all and ineverything.

"I guess she's come back all safe!" was her comment, made to Mrs.Armadale, at the conclusion of the long talk. Mrs. Armadale made noanswer.

"It's sort o' risky, to let a young thing like that go off by herselfamong all those highflyers. It's like sendin' a pigeon to sail aboutwith the hawks."

"Why, aunt Anne," said Lois at this, "whom can you possibly mean by thehawks?"

"The sort o' birds that eat up pigeons."

"I saw nobody that wanted to eat me up, I assure you."

"There's the difference between you and a real pigeon. The pigeon knowsthe hawk when she sees it; you don't."

"Do you think the hawks all live in cities?"

"No, I don't," said Mrs. Marx. "They go swoopin' about in the countrynow and then. I shouldn't a bit wonder to see one come sailin' over ourheads one of these fine days. But now, you see, grandma has got youunder her wing again." Mrs. Marx was Mrs. Armadale's half-daughteronly, and sometimes in company of others called her as hergrandchildren did. "How does home look to you, Lois, now you're back init?"

"Very much as it used to look," Lois answered, smiling.

"The taste ain't somehow taken out o' things? Ha' you got your oldappetite for common doin's?"

"I shall try to-morrow. I am going out into the garden to get some peasin."

"Mine is in."

"Not long, aunt Anne? the frost hasn't been long out of the ground."

"Put 'em in to-day, Lois. And your garden has the sun on it; so Ishouldn't wonder if you beat me after all. Well, I must go along andlook arter my old man. He just let me run away now 'cause I told him Iwas kind o' crazy about the fashions; and he said 'twas a femininеweakness and he pitied me. So I come. Mrs. Dashiell has been a week toNew London; but la! New London bonnets is no account."

"You don't get much light from Lois," remarked Charity.

"No. Did ye learn anything, Lois, while you was away?"

"I think so, aunt Anne."

"What, then? Let's hear. Learnin' ain't good for much, without you giveit out."

Lois, however, seemed not inclined to be generous with her stores ofnew knowledge.

"I guess she's learned Shampuashuh ain't much of a place," the eldersister remarked further.

"She's been spellin' her lesson backwards, then. Shampuashuh's afirst-rate place."

"But we've no grand people here. We don't eat off silver dishes, nordrink out o' gold spoons; and our horses can go without littlelookin'-glasses over their heads," Charity proceeded.

"Do you think there's any use in all that, Lois?" said her aunt.

"I don't know, aunt Anne," Lois answered with a little hesitation.

"Then I'm sorry for ye, girl, if you are left to think such nonsense.Ain't our victuals as good here, as what comes out o' those silverdishes?"

"Not always."

"Are New York folks better cooks than we be?"

"They have servants that know how to do things."

"Servants! Don't tell me o' no servants' doin's! What can they makethat I can't make better?"

"Can you make a soufflé, aunt Anne?"

"What's that?"

"Or biscuit glacé?"

"*Biskwee glassy?*" repeated the indignant Shampuashuh lady. "What doyou mean, Lois? Speak English, if I am to understand you."

"These things have no English names."

"Are they any the better for that?"

"No; and nothing could make them better. They are as good as it ispossible for anything to be; and there are a hundred other thingsequally good, that we know nothing about here."

"I'd have watched and found out how they were done," said the elderwoman, eyeing Lois with a mingled expression of incredulity andcuriosity and desire, which it was comical to see. Only nobody thereperceived the comicality. They sympathized too deeply in the feeling.

"I would have watched," said Lois; "but I could not go down into thekitchen for it."

"Why not?"

"Nobody goes into the kitchen, except to give orders."

"Nobody goes into the kitchen!" cried Mrs. Marx, sinking down againinto a chair. She had risen to go.

"I mean, except the servants."

"It's the shiftlessest thing I ever heard o' New York. And do you think*that's* a nice way o' livin', Lois?"

"I am afraid I do, aunt Anne. It is pleasant to have plenty of time forother things."

"What other things?"

"Reading."

"Reading! La, child! I can read more books in a year than is good forme, and do all my own work, too. I like play, as well as other folks; but I like to know my work's done first. Then I can play."

"Well, there the servants do the work."

"And you like that? That ain't a nat'ral way o' livin', Lois; and Ibelieve it leaves folks too much time to get into mischief. When folkshasn't business enough of their own to attend to, they're free to puttheir fingers in other folks' business. And they get sot up, besides.My word for it, it ain't healthy for mind nor body. And you needn'tthink I'm doin' what I complain of, for your business is my business.Good-bye, girls. I'll buy a cook-book the next time I go to New London, and learn how to make suflles. Lois shan't hold that whip over me."

CHAPTER X
LOIS'S GARDEN

Lois went at her gardening the next morning, as good as her word. Itwas the last of March, and an anticipation of April, according to thefashion the months have of sending promissory notes in advance of them; and this year the spring was early. The sun was up, but not much more, when Lois, with her spade and rake and garden line, opened the littledoor in the garden fence and shut it after her. Then she was alone withthe spring. The garden was quite a roomy place, and pretty, a littlelater in the season; for some old and large apple and cherry treesshadowed parts of it, and broke up the stiff, bare regularity of anordinary square bit of ground laid out in lesser squares. Suchregularity was impossible here. In one place, two or three great appletrees in a group formed a canopy over a wide circuit of turf. The hoeand the spade must stand back respectfully; there was nothing to bedone. One corner was quite given up to the occupancy of an old cherrytree, and its spread of grassy ground beneath and about it was againconsiderable. Still other trees stood here and there; and the stems ofnone of them were approached by cultivation. In the spaces between,Lois stretched her line and drew her furrows, and her rows of peas andpatches of corn had even so room enough.

Grass was hardly green yet, and tree branches were bare, and theupturned earth was implanted. There was nothing here yet but the Springwith Lois. It is wonderful what a way Spring has of revealing herself, even while she is hid behind the brown and grey wrappings she hasborrowed from Winter. Her face is hardly seen; her form is notdiscernible; but there is a breath and a smile and a kiss, that arelike nothing her brothers and sisters have to give. Of them all,Spring's smile brings most of hope and expectation with it. And thereis a perfume Spring wears, which is the rarest, and most untraceable, and most unmistakeable, of all. The breath and the perfume, and thesmile and the kiss, greeted Lois as she went into the old garden. Sheknew them well of old time, and welcomed them now. She even stood stilla bit to take in the rare beauty and joy of them. And yet, the appletrees were bare, and the cherry trees; the turf was dead and withered; the brown ploughed-up soil had no relief of green growths. Only Springwas there with Lois, and yet that seemed enough; Spring andassociations. How many hours of pleasant labour in that enclosed bit ofground there had been; how many lapfuls and basketfuls of fruits therich reward of the labour; how Lois had enjoyed both! And now, here wasspring again, and the implanted garden. Lois wanted no more.

She took her stand under one of the bare old apple trees, and surveyedher ground, like a young general. She had it all mapped out, and knewjust where things were last year. The patch of potatoes was in thatcorner, and a fine yield they had been. Corn had been here; yes, andhere she would run her lines of early peas. Lois went to work. It wasnot very easy work, as you would know if you had ever tried to reduceground that has been merely ploughed and harrowed, to the smoothevenness necessary for making shallow drills. Lois plied spade and rakewith an earnest good-will, and thorough knowledge of her business. Donot imagine an untidy long skirt sweeping the soft soil andtransferring large portions of it to the gardener's ankles; Lois wasdressed for her work in a short stuff frock and leggins; and looked asnice when she came out as when she went in, albeit not in any costumeever seen in Fifth Avenue or Central Park. But what do I say? If shelooked "nice" when she went out to her garden, she looked superb whenshe came in, or when she had been an hour or so delving. Her hat fallenback a little; her rich masses of hair just a little loosened, enoughto show their luxuriance; the colour flushed into her cheeks with theexercise, and her eyes all alive with spirit and zeal – ah, the fairones in Fifth or any other avenue would give a great deal to look so; but that sort of thing goes with the short frock and leggins, and willnot be conjured up by a mantua-maker. Lois had after a while a strip ofher garden ground nicely levelled and raked smooth; and then her linewas stretched

over it, and her drills drawn, and the peas were plantedand were covered; and a little stick at each end marked how far theplanted rows extended.

Lois gathered up her tools then, to go in, but instead of going in shesat down on one of the wooden seats that were fixed under the greatapple trees. She was tired and satisfied; and in that mood of mind andbody one is easily tempted to musing. Aimlessly, carelessly, thoughtsroved and carried her she knew not whither. She began to drawcontrasts. Her home life, the sweets of which she was just tasting, setoff her life at Mrs. Wishart's with its strange difference of flavour; hardly the brown earth of her garden was more different from thebrilliant – coloured Smyrna carpets upon which her feet had moved insome people's houses. Life there and life here, – how diverse from oneanother! Could both be life? Suddenly it occurred to Lois that hergarden fence shut in a very small world, and a world in which there wasno room for many things that had seemed to her delightful and desirablein these weeks that were just passed. Life must be narrow within theseborders. She had had several times in New York a sort of perception ofthis, and here it grew defined. Knowledge, education, the intercourseof polished society, the smooth ease and refinement of well-orderedhouseholds, and the habits of affluence, and the gratification ofcultivated tastes; more yet, the *having* cultivated tastes; thegratification of them seemed to Lois a less matter. A large horizon, awide experience of men and things; was it not better, did it not makelife richer, did it not elevate the human creature to something of morepower and worth, than a very narrow and confined sphere, with itsconsequent narrow and confined way of looking at things? Lois was justtired enough to let all these thoughts pass over her, like gentle wavesof an incoming tide, and they were emphazised here and there by avision of a brown curly head, and a kindly, handsome, human facelooking into hers. It was a vision that came and went, floated in anddisappeared among the waves of thought that rose and fell. Was it notbetter to sit and talk even with Mr. Dillwyn, than to dig and plantpeas? Was not the Lois who did *that*, a quite superior creature to theLois who did *this?* Any common, coarse man could plant peas, and do itas well as she; was this to be her work, this and the like, for therest of her life? Just the labour for material existence, instead ofthe refining and forming and up-building of the nobler, inner nature, the elevation of existence itself? My little garden ground! thoughtLois; is this indeed all? And what would Mr. Caruthers think, if hecould see me now? Think he had been cheated, and that I am not what hethought I was. It is no matter what he thinks; I shall never see himagain; it will not be best that I should ever pay Mrs. Wishart a visitagain, even if she should ask me; not in New York. I suppose the Islesof Shoals would be safe enough. There would be nobody there. Well – Ilike gardening. And it is great fun to gather the peas when they arelarge enough; and it is fun to pick strawberries; and it is fun to doeverything, generally. I like it all. But if I could, if I had achance, which I cannot have, I would like, and enjoy, the other sort ofthing too. I could be a good deal more than I am, *if* I had theopportunity.

Lois was getting rested by this time, and she gathered up her toolsagain, with the thought that breakfast would taste good. I suppose awhiff of the fumes of coffee preparing in the house was borne out toher upon the air, and suggested the idea. And as she went in shecheerfully reflected that their plain house was full of comfort, if notof beauty; and that she and her sisters were doing what was given themto do, and therefore what they were meant to do; and then came thethought, so sweet to the servant who loves his Master, that it is all *for* the Master; and that if he is pleased, all is gained, the utmost, that life can do or desire. And Lois went in, trilling low a sweetMethodist hymn, to an air both plaintive and joyous, which somehow – asmany of the old Methodist tunes do – expressed the plaintiveness and thejoyousness together with a kind of triumphant effect.

"O tell me no more of this world's vain store!
The time for such trifles with me now is o'er."

Lois had a voice exceedingly sweet and rich; an uncommon contralto; andwhen she sang one of these hymns, it came with its fall power. Mrs.Armadale heard her, and murmured a "Praise the Lord!" And Charity, getting the breakfast, heard her; and made a different comment.

"Were you meaning, now, what you were singing when you came in?" sheasked at breakfast.

"What I was singing?" Lois repeated in astonishment.

"Yes, what you were singing. You sang it loud enough and plain enough;ha' you forgotten? Did you mean it?"

"One should always mean what one sings," said Lois gravely.

"So I think; and I want to know, did you mean that? 'The time for suchtrifles' – is it over with you, sure enough?"

"What trifles?"

"You know best. What did you mean? It begins about 'this world's vainstore;' ha' you done with the world?"

"Not exactly."

"Then I wouldn't say so."

"But I didn't say so," Lois returned, laughing now. "The hymn means, that 'this world's vain store' is not my treasure; and it isn't. 'Thetime for such trifles with me now is o'er.' I have found somethingbetter. As Paul says, 'When I became a man, I put away childishthings.' So, since I have learned to know something else, the world'sstore has lost its great value for me."

"Thank the Lord!" said Mrs. Armadale.

"You needn't say that, neither, grandma," Charity retorted. "I don'tbelieve it one bit, all such talk. It ain't nature, nor reasonable.Folks say that just when somethin's gone the wrong way, and they wantto comfort themselves with makin' believe they don't care about it.Wait till the chance comes, and see if they don't care! That's what Isay."

"I wish you wouldn't say it, then, Charity," remarked the oldgrandmother.

"Everybody has a right to his views," returned Miss Charity. "That'swhat I always say."

"You must leave her her views, grandma," said Lois pleasantly. "Shewill have to change them, some day."

"What will make me change them?"

"Coming to know the truth."

"You think nobody but you knows the truth. Now, Lois, I'll ask you.Ain't you sorry to be back and out of 'this world's vain store' – out ofall the magnificence, and back in your garden work again?"

"No."

"You enjoy digging in the dirt and wearin' that outlandish rig you puton for the garden?"

"I enjoy digging in the dirt very much. The dress I admire no more thanyou do."

"And you've got everythin' you want in the world?"

"Charity, Charity, that ain't fair," Madge put in. "Nobody has that; you haven't, and I haven't; why should Lois?"

"'Cos she says she's found 'a city where true joys abound;' now let'shear if she has."

"Quite true," said Lois, smiling.

"And you've got all you want?"

"No, I would like a good many things I haven't got, if it's the Lord'spleasure to give them."

"Suppose it ain't?"

"Then I do not want them," said Lois, looking up with so clear andbright a face that her carping sister was for the moment silenced. AndI suppose Charity watched; but she never could find reason to thinkthat Lois had not spoken the truth. Lois was the life of the house.Madge was a handsome and quiet girl; could follow but rarely led in theconversation. Charity talked, but was hardly enlivening to the spiritsof the company. Mrs. Armadale was in ordinary a silent woman; couldtalk indeed, and well, and much; however, these occasions were mostlywhen she had one auditor, and was in thorough

sympathy with that one.Amidst these different elements of the household life Lois played thepart of the flux in a furnace; she was the happy accommodating mediumthrough which all the others came into best play and found their fullrelations to one another. Lois's brightness and spirit were neverdulled; her sympathies were never wearied; her intelligence was neverat fault. And her work was never neglected. Nobody had ever to remindLois that it was time for her to attend to this or that thing which itwas her charge to do. Instead of which, she was very often ready tohelp somebody else not quite so "forehanded." The garden took on fastits dressed and ordered look; the strawberries were uncovered; and theraspberries tied up, and the currant bushes trimmed; and pea-sticks andbean-poles bristled here and there promisingly. And then the greengrowths for which Lois had worked began to reward her labour. Radisheswere on the tea-table, and lettuce made the dinner "another thing;" androws of springing beets and carrots looked like plenty in the future.Potatoes were up, and rare-ripes were planted, and cabbages; and cornbegan to appear. One thing after another, till Lois got the garden allplanted; and then she was just as busy keeping it clean. For weeds, weall know, do thrive as unaccountably in the natural as in the spiritualworld. It cost Lois hard work to keep them under; but she did it.Nothing would have tempted her to bear the reproach of them among hervegetables and fruits. And so the latter had a good chance, and throve.There was not much time or much space for flowers; yet Lois had a few.Red poppies found growing room between the currant bushes; here andthere at a corner a dahlia got leave to stand and rear its statelyhead. Rose-bushes were set wherever a rose-bush could be; and therewere some balsams, and pinks, and balm, and larkspur, and marigolds.Not many; however, they served to refresh Lois's soul when she went topick vegetables for dinner, and they furnished nosegays for the tablein the hall, or in the sitting-room, when the hot weather drove thefamily out of the kitchen.

Before that came June and strawberries. Lois picked the fruit always.She had been a good while one very warm afternoon bending down amongthe strawberry beds, and had brought in a great bowl full of fruit. Sheand Madge came together to their room to wash hands and get in orderfor tea.

"I have worked over all that butter," said Madge, "and skimmed a lot ofmilk. I must churn again to-morrow. There is no end to work!"

"No end to it," Lois assented. "Did you see my strawberries?"

"No."

"They are splendid. Those Black Princes are doing finely too. If wehave rain they will be superb."

"How many did you get to-day?"

"Two quarts, and more."

"And cherries to preserve to-morrow. Lois, I get tired once in a while!"

"O, so do I; but I always get rested again."

"I don't mean that. I mean it is *all* work, work; day in and day out, and from one year's end to another. There is no let up to it. I gettired of that."

"What would you have?"

"I'd like a little play."

"Yes, but in a certain sense I think it is all play."

"In a nonsensical sense," said Madge. "How can work be play?"

"That's according to how you look at it," Lois returned cheerfully. "Ifyou take it as I think you can take it, it is much better than play."

"I wish you'd make me understand you," said Madge discontentedly. "Ifthere is any meaning to your words, that is."

Lois hesitated.

"I like work anyhow better than play," she said. "But then, if you lookat it in a certain way, it becomes much better than play. Don't youknow, Madge, I take it all, everything, as given me by the Lord todo; – to do for him; – and I do it so; and that makes every bit of it allpleasant."

"But you can't!" said Madge pettishly. She was not a pettish person, only just now something in her sister's words had the effect ofirritation.

"Can't what?"

"Do everything for the Lord. Making butter, for instance; or cherrysweetmeats. Ridiculous! And nonsense."

"I don't mean it for nonsense. It is the way I do my garden work and mysewing."

"What *do* you mean, Lois? The garden work is for our eating, and thesewing is for your own back, or grandma's. I understand religion, but Idon't understand cant."

"Madge, it's not cant; it's the plain truth."

"Only that it is impossible."

"No. You do not understand religion, or you would know how it is. Allthese things are things given us to do; we must make the clothes andpreserve the cherries, and I must weed strawberries, and then pickstrawberries, and all the rest. God has given me these things to do, and I do them for him."

"You do them for yourself, or for grandma, and for the rest of us."

"Yes, but first for Him. Yes, Madge, I do. I do every bit of all thesethings in the way that I think will please and honour him best – as faras I know how."

"Making your dresses!"

"Certainly. Making my dresses so that I may look, as near as I can, asa servant of Christ in my place ought to look. And taking things inthat way, Madge, you can't think how pleasant they are; nor how allsorts of little worries fall off. I wish you knew, Madge! If I am hotand tired in a strawberry bed, and the thought comes, whose servant Iam, and that he has made the sun shine and put me to work in it, – thenit's all right in a minute, and I don't mind any longer."

Madge looked at her, with eyes that were half scornful, half admiring.

"There is just one thing that does tempt me," Lois went on, her eyegoing forth to the world outside the window, or to a world more distantand in tangible, that she looked at without seeing, – "I *do* sometimeswish I had time to read and learn."

"Learn!" Madge echoed. "What?"

"Loads of things. I never thought about it much, till I went to NewYork last winter; then, seeing people and talking to people that weredifferent, made me feel how ignorant I was, and what a pleasant thingit would be to have knowledge – education – yes, and accomplishments. Ihave the temptation to wish for that sometimes; but I know it is atemptation; for if I was intended to have all those things, the waywould have been opened, and it is not, and never was. Just a breath oflonging comes over me now and then for that; not for play, but to makemore of myself; and then I remember that I am exactly where the Lordwants me to be, and *as* he chooses for me, and then I am quite contentagain."

"You never said so before," the other sister answered, nowsympathizingly.

"No," said Lois, smiling; "why should I? Only just now I thought Iwould confess."

"Lois, I have wished for that very thing!"

"Well, maybe it is good to have the wish. If ever a chance comes, weshall know we are meant to use it; and we won't be slow!"

CHAPTER XI
SUMMER MOVEMENTS

All things in the world, so far as the dwellers in Shampuashuh knew, went their usual course in peace for the next few months. Lois gatheredher strawberries, and Madge made her currant jelly. Peas ripened, andgreen corn was on the board, and potatoes blossomed, and young beetswere pulled, and peaches began to come. It was a calm, gentle life thelittle family lived; every day exceedingly like the day before, and yetevery day with something new in it. Small pieces of novelty, no doubt;a dish of tomatoes, or the first yellow raspberries, or a new patternfor a dress, or a new receipt for cake. Or they walked down to theshore and dug clams, some fine afternoon; or Mrs. Dashiell lent them anew book; or Mr. Dashiell preached an extraordinary sermon. It was avery slight ebb and flow of the tide of time; however, it served tokeep everything from stagnation. Then suddenly, at the end of July, came Mrs. Wishart's summons to Lois to join her on her way to the Islesof Shoals. "I shall go in about a week," the letter ran; "and I wantyou to meet me at the Shampuashuh station; for I shall go that way toBoston. I cannot stop, but I will have your place taken and all readyfor you. You must come, Lois, for I cannot do without you; and whenother people need you, you know, you never hesitate. Do not hesitatenow."

There was a good deal of hesitation, however, on one part and another, before the question was settled.

"Lois has just got home," said Charity. "I don't see what she should begoing again for. I should like to know if Mrs. Wishart thinks she ain'twanted at home!"

"People don't think about it," said Madge; "only what they wantthemselves. But it is a fine chance for Lois."

"Why don't she ask you?" said Charity.

"She thought Madge would enjoy a visit to her in New York more," said

Lois. "So she said to me."

"And so I would," cried Madge. "I don't care for a parcel of littleislands out at sea. But that would just suit Lois. What sort of a place*is* the Isles of Shoals anyhow?"

"Just that," said Lois; "so far as I know. A parcel of little islands, out in the sea."

"Where at?" said Charity.

"I don't know exactly."

"Get the map and look."

"They are too small to be down on the map."

"What is Eliza Wishart wantin' to go there for?" asked Mrs. Armadale.

"O, she goes somewhere every year, grandma; to one place and another; and I suppose she likes novelty."

"That's a poor way to live," said the old lady. "But I suppose, bein'such a place, it'll be sort o' lonesome, and she wants you for company.May be she goes for her health."

"I think quite a good many people go there, grandma."

"There can't, if they're little islands out at sea. Most folks wouldn'tlike that. Do you want to go, Lois?"

"I would like it, very much. I just want to see what they are like, grandmother. I never did see the sea yet."

"You saw it yesterday, when we went for clams," said Charity scornfully.

"That? O no. That's not the sea, Charity."

"Well, it's mighty near it."

It seemed to be agreed at last that Lois should accept her cousin'sinvitation; and she made her preparations. She made them with greatdelight. Pleasant as the home-life was, it was quite favourable to thegrowth of an appetite for change and variety; and the appetite in Loiswas healthy and strong. The sea and the islands, and, on the otherhand, an intermission of gardening and fruit-picking; Shampuashuhpeople lost sight of for a time, and new, new, strange forms ofhumanity and ways of human life; the prospect was happy. And a happygirl was Lois, when one evening in the early part of August she joinedMrs. Wishart in the night train to Boston. That lady met her at thedoor of the drawing-room car, and led her to the little compartmentwhere they were screened off from the rest of the world.

"I am so glad to have you!" was her salutation. "Dear me, how well youlook, child! What have you been doing to yourself?"

"Getting brown in the sun, picking berries."

"You are not brown a bit. You are as fair as – whatever shall I compareyou to? Roses are common."

"Nothing better than roses, though," said Lois.

"Well, a rose you must be; but of the freshest and sweetest. We don'thave such roses in New York. Fact, we do not. I never see anything sofresh there. I wonder why?"

"People don't live out-of-doors picking berries," suggested Lois.

"What has berry-picking to do with it? My dear, it is a pity we shallhave none of your old admirers at the Isles of Shoals; but I cannotpromise you one. You see, it is off the track. The Caruthers are goingto Saratoga; they stayed in town after the mother and son got back fromFlorida. The Bentons are gone to Europe. Mr. Dillwyn, by the way, washe one of your admirers, Lois?"

"Certainly not," said Lois, laughing. "But I have a pleasantremembrance of him, he gave us such a good lunch one day. I am veryglad I am not going to see anybody I ever saw before. Where *are* theIsles of Shoals? and what are they, that you should go to see them?"

"I'm not going to see them – there's nothing to see, unless you like seaand rocks. I am going for the air, and because I must go somewhere, andI am tired of everywhere else. O, they're out in the Atlantic – sea allround them – queer, barren places. I am so glad I've got you, Lois! Idon't know a soul that's to be there – can't guess what we shall find; but I've got you, and I can get along."

"Do people go there just for health?"

"O, a few, perhaps; but the thing is what I am after – novelty; they arehardly the fashion yet."

"That is the very oddest reason for doing or not doing things!" saidLois. "Because it's the fashion! As if that made it pleasant, oruseful."

"It does!" said Mrs. Wishart. "Of course it does. Pleasant, yes, anduseful too. My dear, you don't want to be out of the fashion?"

"Why not, if the fashion does not agree with me?"

"O my dear, you will learn. Not to agree with the fashion, is to be outwith the world."

"With one part of it," said Lois merrily.

"Just the part that is of importance. Never mind, you will learn. Lois,I am so sleepy, I can not keep up any longer. I must curl down and takea nap. I just kept myself awake till we reached Shampuashuh. You hadbetter do as I do. My dear, I am very sorry, but I can't help it."

So Mrs. Wishart settled herself upon a heap of bags and wraps, took offher bonnet, and went to sleep. Lois did not feel in the least likefollowing her example. She was wide-awake with excitement andexpectation, and needed no help of entertainment from anybody. With herthoroughly sound mind and body and healthy appetites, every detail andevery foot of the journey was a pleasure to her; even the corner of adrawing-room car on a night train. It was such change and variety! andLois had spent all her life nearly in one narrow sphere and theself-same daily course of life and experience. New York had been onegreat break in this uniformity, and now came another. Islands in thesea! Lois tried to fancy what they would be like. So much resorted toalready, they must be very charming;

and green meadows, shadowingtrees, soft shores and cosy nooks rose up before her imagination. Mr.Caruthers and his family were at Saratoga, that was well; but therewould be other people, different from the Shampuashuh type; and Loisdelighted in seeing new varieties of humankind as well as new portionsof the earth where they live. She sat wide-awake opposite to hersleeping hostess, and made an entertainment for herself out of theplace and the night journey. It was a starlit, sultry night; the worldoutside the hurrying train covered with a wonderful misty veil, underwhich it lay half revealed by the heavenly illumination; soft, mysterious, vast; a breath now and then whispering of nature'sluxuriant abundance and sweetness that lay all around, out there underthe stars, for miles and hundreds of miles. Lois looked and peered outsometimes, so happy that it was not Shampuashuh, and that she was away, and that she would see the sun shine on new landscapes when the morningcame round; and sometimes she looked within the car, and marvelled atthe different signs and tokens of human life and character that met herthere. And every yard of the way was a delight to her.

Meanwhile, how weirdly and strangely do the threads of human life crossand twine and untwine in this world!

That same evening, in New York, in the Caruthers mansion inTwenty-Third Street, the drawing-room windows were open to let in therefreshing breeze from the sea. The light lace curtains swayed to andfro as the wind came and went, but were not drawn; for Mrs. Caruthersliked, she said, to have so much of a screen between her and thepassers-by. For that matter, the windows were high enough above thestreet to prevent all danger of any one's looking in. The lights wereburning low in the rooms, on account of the heat; and within, inattitudes of exhaustion and helplessness sat mother and daughter intheir several easy-chairs. Tom was on his back on the floor, which, being nicely matted, was not the worst place. A welcome break to themonotony of the evening was the entrance of Philip Dillwyn. Tom got upfrom the floor to welcome him, and went back then to his formerposition.

"How come you to be here at this time of year?" Dillwyn asked. "It wasmere accident my finding you. Should never have thought of looking foryou. But by chance passing, I saw that windows were open and lightsvisible, so I concluded that something else might be visible if I camein."

"We are only just passing through," Julia explained. "Going to Saratogato-morrow. We have only just come from Newport."

"What drove you away from Newport? This is the time to be by the sea."

"O, who cares for the sea! or anything else? it's the people; and thepeople at Newport didn't suit mother. The Benthams were there, and thatset; and mother don't like the Benthams; and Miss Zagumski, thedaughter of the Russian minister, was there, and all the world wascrazy about her. Nothing was to be seen or heard but Miss Zagumski, andher dancing, and her playing, and her singing. Mother got tired of it."

"And yet Newport is a large place," remarked Philip.

"Too large," Mrs. Caruthers answered.

"What do you expect to find at Saratoga?"

"Heat," said Mrs. Caruthers; "and another crowd."

"I think you will not be disappointed, if this weather holds."

"It is a great deal more comfortable here!" sighed the elder lady."Saratoga's a dreadfully hot place! Home is a great deal morecomfortable."

"Then why not stay at home? Comfort is what you are after."

"O, but one can't! Everybody goes somewhere; and one must do aseverybody does."

"Why?"

"Philip, what makes you ask such a question?"

"I assure you, a very honest ignorance of the answer to it."

"Why, one must do as everybody does?"

"Yes."

The lady's tone and accent had implied that the answer wasself-evident; yet it was not given.

"Really," – Philip went on. "What should hinder you from staying in thispleasant house part of the summer, or all of the summer, if you findyourselves more comfortable here?"

"Being comfortable isn't the only thing," said Julia.

"No. What other consideration governs the decision? that is what I amasking."

"Why, Philip, there is nobody in town."

"That is better than company you do not like."

"I wish it was the fashion to stay in town," said Mrs. Caruthers."There is everything here, in one's own house, to make the heatendurable, and just what we miss when we go to a hotel. Large rooms, and cool nights, and clean servants, and gas, and baths – hotel roomsare so stuffy."

"After all, one does not live in one's rooms," said Julia.

"But," said Philip, returning to the charge, "why should not you, Mrs.Caruthers, do what you like? Why should you be displeased in Saratoga,or anywhere, merely because other people are pleased there? Why not doas you like?"

"You know one can't do as one likes in this world," Julia returned.

"Why not, if one can, – as you can?" said Philip, laughing.

"But that's ridiculous," said Julia, raising herself up with a littleshow of energy. "You know perfectly well, Mr. Dillwyn, that peoplebelonging to the world must do as the rest of the world do. Nobody isin town. If we stayed here, people would get up some unspeakable storyto account for our doing it; that would be the next thing."

"Dillwyn, where are you going?" said Tom suddenly from the floor, wherehe had been more uneasy than his situation accounted for.

"I don't know – perhaps I'll take your train and go to Saratoga too. Notfor fear, though."

"That's capital!" said Tom, half raising himself up and leaning on hiselbow. "I'll turn the care of my family over to you, and I'll seek thewilderness."

"What wilderness?" asked his sister sharply.

"Some wilderness – some place where I shall not see crinoline, nor beexpected to do the polite thing. I'll go for the sea, I guess."

"What have you in your head, Tom?"

"Refreshment."

"You've just come from the sea."

"I've just come from the sea where it was fashionable. Now I'll findsome place where it is unfashionable. I don't favour Saratoga any morethan you do. It's a jolly stupid; that's what it is."

"But where do you want to go, Tom? you have some place in your head."

"I'd as lief go off for the Isles of Shoals as anywhere," said Tom, lying down again. "They haven't got fashionable yet. I've a notion tosee 'em first."

"I doubt about that," remarked Philip gravely. "I am not sure but the

Isles of Shoals are about the most distinguished place you could go to."

"Isles of Shoals. Where are they? and what are they?" Julia asked.

"A few little piles of rock out in the Atlantic, on which it spends itswrath all the year round; but of course the ocean is not always raging; and when it is not raging, it smiles; and they say the smile is nowheremore bewitching than at the Isles of Shoals," Philip answered.

"But will nobody be there?"

"Nobody you would care about," returned Tom.

"Then what'll you do?"

"Fish."

"Tom! you're not a fisher. You needn't pretend it."

"Sun myself on the rocks."

"You are brown enough already."

"They say, everything gets bleached there."

"Then I should like to go. But I couldn't stand the sea and solitude, and I don't believe you can stand it. Tom, this is ridiculous. You'renot serious?"

"Not often," said Tom; "but this time I am. I am going to the Isles ofShoals. If Philip will take you to Saratoga, I'll start to-morrow; otherwise I will wait till I get you rooms and see you settled."

"Is there a hotel there?"

"Something that does duty for one, as I understand."

"Tom, this is too ridiculous, and vexatious," remonstrated his sister.

"We want you at Saratoga."

"Well, it is flattering; but you wanted me at St. Augustine a littlewhile ago, and you had me. You can't always have a fellow. I'm going tosee the Isles of Shoals before they're the rage. I want to get cooledoff, for once, after Florida and Newport, besides."

"Isn't that the place where Mrs. Wishart is gone," said Philip now.

"I don't know – yes, I believe so."

"Mrs. Wishart!" exclaimed Julia in a different tone. "*She* gone to the

Isles of Shoals?"

"'Mrs. Wishart!" Mrs. Caruthers echoed. "Has she got that girl withher?"

Silence. Then Philip remarked with a laugh, that Tom's plan of "coolingoff" seemed problematical.

"Tom," said his sister solemnly, "*is* Miss Lothrop going to be there?"

"Don't know, upon my word," said Tom. "I haven't heard."

"She is, and that's what you're going for. O Tom, Tom!" cried hissister despairingly. "Mr. Dillwyn, what shall we do with him?"

"Can't easily manage a fellow of his size, Miss Julia. Let him take hischance."

"Take his chance! Such a chance!"

"Yes, Philip," said Tom's mother; "you ought to stand by us."

"With all my heart, dear Mrs. Caruthers; but I am afraid I should be aweak support. Really, don't you think Tom might do worse?"

"Worse?" said the elder lady; "what could be worse than for him tobring such a wife into the house?"

Tom gave an inarticulate kind of snort just here, which was not lackingin expression. Philip went on calmly.

"Such a wife – " he repeated. "Mrs. Caruthers, here is room fordiscussion. Suppose we settle, for example, what Tom, or anybodysituated like Tom, ought to look for and insist upon finding, in awife. I wish you and Miss Julia would make out the list ofqualifications."

"Stuff!" muttered Tom. "It would be hard lines, if a fellow must have awife of his family's choosing!"

"His family can talk about it," said Philip, "and certainly will. Holdyour tongue, Tom. I want to hear your mother."

"Why, Mr. Dillwyn," said the lady, "you know as well as I do; and youthink just as I do about it, and about this Miss Lothrop."

"Perhaps; but let us reason the matter out. Maybe it will do Tom good.What ought he to have in a wife, Mrs. Caruthers? and we'll try to showhim he is looking in the wrong quarter."

"I'm not looking anywhere!" growled Tom; but no one believed him.

"Well, Philip," Mrs. Caruthers began, "he ought to marry a girl of goodfamily."

"Certainly. By 'good family' you mean – ?"

"Everybody knows what I mean."

"Possibly Tom does not."

"I mean, a girl that one knows about, and that everybody knows about; that has good blood in her veins."

"The blood of respectable and respected ancestors," Philip said.

"Yes! that is what I mean. I mean, that have been respectable andrespected for a long time back – for years and years."

"You believe in inheritance."

"I don't know about that," said Mrs. Caruthers. "I believe in family."

"Well, *I* believe in inheritance. But what proof is there that theyoung lady of whom we were speaking has no family?"

Julia raised herself up from her reclining position, and Mrs. Caruthersat suddenly forward in her chair.

"Why, she is nobody!" cried the first. "Nobody knows her, nor anythingabout her."

"*Here*– " said Philip.

"Here! Of course. Where else?"

"Yes, just listen to that!" Tom broke in. "I xxow should anybody knowher here, where she has never lived! But that's the way – "

"I suppose a Sandwich Islander's family is known in the Sandwich

Islands," said Mrs. Caruthers. "But what good is that to us?"

"Then you mean, the family must be a New York family?"

"N – o," said Mrs. Caruthers hesitatingly; "I don't mean that exactly.

There are good Southern families – "

"And good Eastern families!" put in Tom.

"But nobody knows anything about this girl's family," said the ladiesboth in a breath.

"Mrs. Wishart does," said Philip. "She has even told me. The familydates back to the beginning of the colony, and boasts of extremerespectability. I forget how many judges and ministers it can count up; and at least one governor of the colony; and there is no spot or stainupon it anywhere."

There was silence.

"Go on, Mrs. Caruthers. What else should Tom look for in a wife?"

"It is not merely what a family has been, but what its associationshave been," said Mrs. Caruthers.

"These have evidently been respectable."

"But it is not that only, Philip. We want the associations of goodsociety; and we want position. I want Tom to marry a woman of goodposition."

"Hm!" said Philip. "This lady has not been accustomed to anything thatyou would call 'society,' and 'position' – But your son has positionenough, Mrs. Caruthers. He can stand without much help."

"Now, Philip, don't you go to encourage Tom in this mad fancy. It'sjust a fancy. The girl has nothing; and Tom's wife ought to be – Ishall break my heart if Tom's wife is not of good family and position, and good manners, and good education. That's the least I can ask for."

"She has as good manners as anybody you know!" said Tom flaring up. "Asgood as Julia's, and better."

"I should say, she has no manner whatever," remarked Miss Julia quietly.

"What is 'manner'?" said Tom indignantly. "I hate it. Manner! They allhave 'manner' – except the girls who make believe they have none; andtheir 'manner' is to want manner. Stuff!"

"But the girl knows nothing," persisted Mrs. Caruthers.

"She knows absolutely *nothing*," – Julia confirmed this statement.

Silence.

"She speaks correct English," said Dillwyn. "That at least."

"English! – but not a word of French or of any other language. And shehas no particular use for the one language she does know; she cannottalk about anything. How do you know she speaks good grammar, Mr.Dillwyn? did you ever talk with her?"

"Yes – " said Philip, making slow admission. "And I think you aremistaken in your other statement; she *can* talk on some subjects.Probably you did not hit the right ones."

"Well, she does not know anything," said Miss Julia.

"That is bad. Perhaps it might be mended."

"How? Nonsense! I beg your pardon, Mr. Dillwyn; but you cannot make anaccomplished woman out of a country girl, if you don't begin before sheis twenty. And imagine Tom with such a wife! and me with such a sister!"

"I cannot imagine it. Don't you see, Tom, you must give it up?" Dillwynsaid lightly.

"I'll go to the Isles of Shoals and think about that," said Tom.

Wherewith he got up and went off.

"Mamma," said Julia then, "he's going to that place to meet that girl.Either she is to be there with Mrs. Wishart, or he is reckoning to seeher by the way; and the Isles of Shoals are just a blind. And the onlything left for you and me is to go too, and be of the party!"

"Tom don't want us along," said Tom's mother.

"Of course he don't want us along; and I am sure we don't want iteither; but it is the only thing left for us to do. Don't you see?She'll be there, or he can stop at her place by the way, going andcoming; maybe Mrs. Wishart is asking her on purpose – I shouldn't be atall surprised – and they'll make up the match between them. It would bea thing for the girl, to marry Tom Caruthers!"

Mrs. Caruthers groaned, I suppose at the double prospect before her andbefore Tom. Philip was silent. Miss Julia went on discussing andarranging; till her brother returned.

"Tom," said she cheerfully, "we've been talking over matters, and I'lltell you what we'll do – if you won't go with us, we will go with you!"

"Where?"

"Why, to the Isles of Shoals, of course."

"You and mother!" said Tom.

"Yes. There is no fun in going about alone. We will go along with you."

"What on earth will *you* do at a place like that?"

"Keep you from being lonely."

"Stuff, Julia! You will wish yourself back before you've been there anhour; and I tell you, I want to go fishing. What would become ofmother, landed on a bare rock like that, with nobody to speak to, andnothing but crabs to eat?"

"Crabs!" Julia echoed. Philip burst into a laugh.

"Crabs and mussels," said Tom. "I don't believe you'll get anythingelse."

"But is Mrs. Wishart gone there?"

"Philip says so."

"Mrs. Wishart isn't a fool."

And Tom was unable to overthrow this argument.

CHAPTER XII
APPLEDORE

It was a very bright, warm August day when Mrs. Wishart and her youngcompanion steamed over from Portsmouth to the Isles of Shoals. It wasLois's first sight of the sea, for the journey from New York had beenmade by land; and the ocean, however still, was nothing but a mostwonderful novelty to her. She wanted nothing, she could well-nighattend to nothing, but the movements and developments of this vast andmysterious Presence of nature. Mrs. Wishart was amused and yet halfprovoked. There was no talk in Lois; nothing to be got out of her; hardly any attention to be had from her. She sat by the vessel's sideand gazed, with a brow of grave awe and eyes of submissive admiration; rapt, absorbed, silent, and evidently glad. Mrs. Wishart was provokedat her, and envied her.

"What *do* you find in the water, Lois?"

"O, the wonder of it!" said the girl, with a breath of rapture.

"Wonder! what wonder? I suppose everything is wonderful, if you look atit. What do you see there that seems so very wonderful?"

"I don't know, Mrs. Wishart. It is so great! and it is so beautiful!and it is so awful!"

"Beautiful?" said Mrs. Wishart. "I confess I do not see it. I supposeit is your gain, Lois. Yes, it is awful enough in a storm, but notto-day. The sea is quiet."

Quiet! with those low-rolling, majestic soft billows. The quiet of alion asleep with his head upon his paws. Lois did not say what shethought.

"And you have never seen the sea-shore yet," Mrs. Wishart went on."Well, you will have enough of the sea at the Isles. And those arethey, I fancy, yonder. Are those the Isles of Shoals?" she asked apassing man of the crew; and was answered with a rough voiced, "Yaw, mum; they be th' oisles."

Lois gazed now at those distant brown spots, as the vessel drew nearerand nearer. Brown spots they remained, and, to her surprise, *small* brown spots. Nearer and nearer views only forced the conviction deeper.The Isles seemed to be merely some rough rocky projections from oldOcean's bed, too small to have beauty, too rough to have value. Werethose the desired Isles of Shoals? Lois felt deep disappointment.Little bits of bare rock in the midst of the sea; nothing more. Notrees, she was sure; as the light fell she could even see no green. Whywould they not be better relegated to Ocean's domain, from which theywere only saved by a few feet of upheaval? why should anybody livethere? and still more, why should anybody make a pleasure visit there?

"I suppose the people are all fishermen?" she said to Mrs. Wishart.

"I suppose so. O, there is a house of entertainment – a sort of hotel."

"How many people live there?"

"My dear, I don't know. A handful, I should think, by the look of theplace. What tempts *them*, I don't see."

Nor did Lois. She was greatly disappointed. All her fairy visions werefled. No meadows, no shady banks, no soft green dales; nothing she hadever imagined in connection with country loveliness. Her expectationssank down, collapsed, and vanished for ever.

She showed nothing of all this. She helped Mrs. Wishart gather hersmall baggage together, and followed her on shore, with her usual quietthoughtfulness; saw her established in the hotel, and assisted her toget things a little in order. But then, when the elder lady lay down to"catch a nap," as she said, before tea, Lois seized her flat hat andfled out of the house.

There was grass around it, and sheep and cows to be seen. Alas, notrees. But there were bushes certainly growing here and there, and Loishad not gone far before she found a flower. With that in her hand shesped on, out of the little grassy vale, upon the rocks that surroundedit, and over them, till

she caught sight of the sea. Then she made herway, as she could, over the roughnesses and hindrances of the rocks, till she got near the edge of the island at that place; and sat down alittle above where the billows of the Atlantic were rolling in. Thewide sea line was before her, with its mysterious and infinite depth ofcolour; at her feet the waves were coming in and breaking, slow andgently to-day, yet every one seeming to make an invasion of the littlerocky domain which defied it, and to retire unwillingly, foiled, beaten, and broken, to gather new forces and come on again for a newattack. Lois watched them, fascinated by their persistence, theirsluggish power, and yet their ever-recurring discomfiture; admired thechanging colours and hues of the water, endlessly varying, cool andlovely and delicate, contrasting with the wet washed rocks and the darkline of sea-weed lying where high tide had cast it up. The breeze blewin her face gently, but filled with freshness, life, and pungency ofthe salt air; sea-birds flew past hither and thither, sometimesuttering a cry; there was no sound in earth or heaven but that of thewater and the wild birds. And by and by the silence, and the broadfreedom of nature, and the sweet freshness of the life-giving breeze, began to take effect upon the watcher. She drank in the air in deepbreaths; she watched with growing enjoyment the play of light andcolour which offered such an endless variety; she let slip, softly andinsensibly, every thought and consideration which had any sort of careattached to it; her heart grew light, as her lungs took in the saltbreath, which had upon her somewhat the effect of champagne. Lois wasat no time a very heavy-hearted person; and I lack a similitude whichshould fitly image the elastic bound her spirits made now. She neverstirred from her seat, till it suddenly came into her head to rememberthat there might be dinner or supper in prospect somewhere. She rosethen and made her way back to the hotel, where she found Mrs. Wishartjust arousing from her sleep.

"Well, Lois" said the lady, with the sleep still in her voice, "wherehave you been? and what have you got? and what sort of a place have wecome to?"

"Look at that, Mrs. Wishart!"

"What's that? A white violet! Violets here, on these rocks?"

"Did you ever see *such* a white violet? Look at the size of it, andthe colour of it. And here's pimpernel. And O, Mrs. Wishart, I am soglad we came here, that I don't know what to do! It is just delightful.The air is the best air I ever saw."

"Can you *see* it, my dear? Well, I am glad you are pleased. What'sthat bell for, dinner or supper? I suppose all the meals here arealike. Let us go down and see."

Lois had an excellent appetite.

"This fish is very good, Mrs. Wishart."

"O my dear, it is just fish! You are in a mood to glorify everything. Iam envious of you, Lois."

"But it is really capital; it is so fresh. I don't believe you can getsuch blue fish in New York."

"My dear, it is your good appetite. I wish I was as hungry, foranything, as you are."

"Is it Mrs. Wishart?" asked a lady who sat opposite them at the table.

She spoke politely, with an accent of hope and expectation. Mrs.

Wishart acknowledged the identity.

"I am very happy to meet you. I was afraid I might find absolutely noone here that I knew. I was saying only the other day – three days ago; this is Friday, isn't it? yes; it was last Tuesday. I was saying to mysister after our early dinner – we always have early dinner at home, andit comes quite natural here – we were sitting together after dinner, andtalking about my coming. I have been meaning to come ever since threeyears ago; wanting to make this trip, and never could get away, untilthis summer things opened out to let me. I was saying to Lottie I wasafraid I should find nobody here that I could speak to; and when I sawyou, I said to myself, Can that be Mrs. Wishart? – I am so very glad.You have just come?"

"To-day," – Mrs. Wishart assented.

"Came by water?"

"From Portsmouth."

"Yes – ha, ha!" said the affable lady. "Of course. You could not wellhelp it. But from New York?"

"By railway. I had occasion to come by land."

"I prefer it always. In a steamer you never know what will happen toyou. If it's good weather, you may have a pleasant time; but you nevercan tell. I took the steamer once to go to Boston – I mean toStonington, you know; and the boat was so loaded with freight of somesort or other that she was as low down in the water as she could be andbe safe; and I didn't think she was safe. And we went so slowly! andthen we had a storm, a regular thunderstorm and squall, and the rainpoured in torrents, and the Sound was rough, and people were sick, andI was very glad and thankful when we got to Stonington. I thought itwould never be for pleasure that I would take a boat again."

"The Fall River boats are the best."

"I daresay they are, but I hope to be allowed to keep clear of themall. You had a pleasant morning for the trip over from Portsmouth."

"Very pleasant."

"It is such a gain to have the sea quiet! It roars and beats hereenough in the best of times. I am sure I hope there will not a stormcome while we are here; for I should think it must be dreadfullydreary. It's all sea here, you know."

"I should like to see what a storm here is like," Lois remarked.

"O, don't wish that!" cried the lady, "or your wish may bring it. Don'tthink me a heathen," she added, laughing; "but I have known such queerthings. I must tell you – "

"You never knew a wish bring fair weather?" said Lois, smiling, as thelady stopped for a mouthful of omelet.

"O no, not fair weather; I am sure, if it did, we should have fairweather a great deal more than we do. But I was speaking of a storm, and I must tell you what I have seen. – These fish are very deliciouslycooked!"

"They understand fish, I suppose, here," said Lois.

"We were going down the bay to escort some friends who were going toEurope. There was my cousin Llewellyn and his wife, and her sister, andone or two others in the party; and Lottie and I went to see them off.I always think it's rather a foolish thing to do, for why shouldn't onesay good-bye at the water's edge, when they go on board, instead ofmaking a journey of miles out to sea to say it there? – but this timeLottie wanted to go. She had never seen the ocean, except from theland; and you know that is very different; so we went. Lottie alwayslikes to see all she can, and is never satisfied till she has got tothe bottom of everything – "

"She would be satisfied with something less than that in this case?"said Lois.

"Hey? She was satisfied," said the lady, not apparently catching Lois'smeaning; "she was more delighted with the sea than I was; for though itwas quiet, they said, there was unquietness enough to make a good dealof motion; the vessel went sailing up and down a succession of smallrolling hills, and I began to think there was nothing steady inside ofme, any more than _out_side. I never can bear to be rocked, in anyshape or form."

"You must have been a troublesome baby," said Lois.

"I don't know how that was; naturally I have forgotten; but since Ihave been old enough to think for myself, I never could bearrocking-chairs. I like an easy-chair – as easy as you please – but I wantit to stand firm upon its four legs. So I did not enjoy the water quiteas well as my sister did. But she grew enthusiastic; she wished she wasgoing all the way over, and I told her she would have to drop *me* atsome wayside station – "

"Where?" said Lois, as the lady stopped to carry her coffee cup to herlips. The question seemed not to have been heard.

"Lottie wished she could see the ocean in a mood not quite so quiet; she wished for a storm; she said she wished a little storm would get upbefore we got home, that she might see how the

waves looked. I beggedand prayed her not to say so, for our wishes often fulfil themselves.Isn't it extraordinary how they do? Haven't you often observed it, Mrs.Wishart?"

"In cases where wishes could take effect," returned that lady. "In thecase of the elements, I do not see how they could do that."

"But I don't know how it is," said the other; "I have observed it sooften."

"You call me by name," Mrs. Wishart went on rather hastily; "and I havebeen trying in vain to recall yours. If I had met you anywhere else, ofcourse I should be at no loss; but at the Isles of Shoals one expectsto see nobody, and one is surprised out of one's memory."

"I am never surprised out of my memory," said the other, chuckling. "Iam poor enough in all other ways, I am sure, but my memory is good. Ican tell you where I first saw you. You were at the Catskill House, with a large party; my brother-in-law Dr. Salisbury was there, and hehad the pleasure of knowing you. It was two years ago."

"I recollect being at the Catskill House very well," said Mrs. Wishart,"and of course it was there I became acquain'ted with you; but you mustexcuse me, at the Isles of Shoals, for forgetting all my connectionswith the rest of the world."

"O, I am sure you are very excusable," said Dr. Salisbury'ssister-in-law. "I am delighted to meet you again. I think one isparticularly glad of a friend's face where one had not expected to seeit; and I really expected nothing at the Isles of Shoals – but sea air."

"You came for sea air?"

"Yes, to get it pure. To be sure, Coney Island beach is not faroff – for we live in Brooklyn; but I wanted the sea air wholly seaair – quite unmixed; and at Coney Island, somehow New York is so near, Icouldn't fancy it would be the same thing. I don't want to smell thesmoke of it. And I was curious about this place too; and I have solittle opportunity for travelling, I thought it was a pity now when I*had* the opportunity, not to take the utmost advantage of it. Theylaughed at me at home, but I said no, I was going to the Isles ofShoals or nowhere. And now I am very glad I came." —

"Lois," Mrs. Wishart said when they went back to their own room, "Idon't know that woman from Adam. I have not the least recollection ofever seeing her. I know Dr. Salisbury – and he might be anybody'sbrother-in-law. I wonder if she will keep that seat opposite us?Because she is worse than a smoky chimney!"

"O no, not that," said Lois. "She amuses me."

"Everything amuses you, you happy creature! You look as if the fairiesthat wait upon young girls had made you their special care. Did youever read the 'Rape of the Lock'?"

"I have never read anything," Lois answered, a little soberly.

"Never mind; you have so much the more pleasure before you. But the'Rape of the Lock' – in that story there is a young lady, a famousbeauty, whose dressing-table is attended by sprites or fairies. One ofthem colours her lips; another hides in the folds of her gown; anothertucks himself away in a curl of her hair. – You make me think of thatyoung lady."

CHAPTER XIII
A SUMMER HOTEL

Mrs. Wishart was reminded of Belinda again the next morning. Lois wasbeaming. She managed to keep their talkative neighbour in order duringbreakfast; and then proposed to Mrs. Wishart to take a walk. But Mrs.Wishart excused herself, and Lois set off alone. After a couple ofhours she came back with her hands full.

"O, Mrs. Wishart!" she burst forth, – "this is the very loveliest placeyou ever saw in your life! I can never thank you enough for bringingme! What can I do to thank you?"

"What makes it so delightful?" said the elder lady, smiling at her."There is nothing here but the sea and the rocks. You have found thephilosopher's stone, you happy girl!"

"The philosopher's stone?" said Lois. "That was what Mr. Dillwyn toldme about."

"Philip? I wish he was here."

"It would be nice for you. *I* don't want anybody. The place is enough."

"What have you found, child?"

"Flowers – and mosses – and shells. O, the flowers are beautiful! But itisn't the flowers, nor any one thing; it is the place. The air iswonderful; and the sea, O, the sea is a constant delight to me!"

"The philosopher's stone!" repeated the lady. "What is it, Lois? Youare the happiest creature I ever saw. – You find pleasure in everything."

"Perhaps it is that," said Lois simply. "Because I am happy."

"But what business have you to be so happy? – living in a corner like

Shampuashuh. I beg your pardon, Lois, but it is a corner of the earth.

What makes you happy?"

Lois answered lightly, that perhaps it was easier to be happy in acorner than in a wide place; and went off again. She would not giveMrs. Wishart an answer she could by no possibility understand.

Some time later in the day, Mrs. Wishart too, becoming tired of themonotony of her own room, descended to the piazza; and was sittingthere when the little steamboat arrived with some new guests for thehotel. She watched one particular party approaching. A young lady inadvance, attended by a gentleman; then another pair following, an olderlady, leaning on the arm of a cavalier whom Mrs. Wishart recognizedfirst of them all. She smiled to herself.

"Mrs. Wishart!" Julia Caruthers exclaimed, as she came upon theverandah. "You *are* here. That is delightful! Mamma, here is Mrs.Wishart. But whatever did bring you here? I am reminded of CaptainCook's voyages, that I used to read when I was a child, and I fancy Ihave come to one of his savage islands; only I don't see the salvages.They will appear, perhaps. But I don't see anything else; cocoanuttrees, or palms, or bananas, the tale of which used to make my mouthwater. There are no trees here at all, that I can see, nor anythingelse. What brought you here, Mrs. Wishart? May I present Mr.Lenox? – What brought you here, Mrs. Wishart?"

"What brought *you* here?" was the smiling retort. The answer wasprompt.

"Tom."

Mrs. Wishart looked at Tom, who came up and paid his respects in markedform; while his mother, as if exhausted, sank down on one of the chairs.

"Yes, it was Tom," she repeated. "Nothing would do for Tom but the

Isles of Shoals; and so, Julia and I had to follow in his train. In my grandmother's days that would have been different. What is here, dear

Mrs. Wishart, besides you? You are not alone?"

"Not quite. I have brought my little friend, Lois Lothrop, with me; andshe thinks the Isles of Shoals the most charming place that was everdiscovered, by Captain Cook or anybody else."

"Ah, she is here!" said Mrs. Caruthers dryly; while Julia and Mr. Lenoxexchanged glances. "Much other company?"

"Not much; and what there is comes more from New Hampshire than New

York, I fancy."

"Ah! – And what else is here then, that anybody should come here for?"

"I don't know yet. You must ask Miss Lothrop. Yonder she comes. She hasbeen exploring ever since five o'clock, I believe."

"I suppose she is accustomed to get up at that hour," remarked theother, as if the fact involved a good deal of disparagement. And thenthey were all silent, and watched Lois, who was slowly andunconsciously approaching her reviewers. Her hands were again full ofdifferent gleanings from the wonderful wilderness in which she had beenexploring; and she came with a slow step, still busy with them as shewalked. Her hat had fallen back a little; the beautiful hair was atrifle disordered, showing so only the better its rich abundance andexquisite colour; the face it framed and crowned was fair and flushed, intent upon her gains from rock and meadow – for there was a little bitof meadow ground at Appledore; – and so happy in its sweet absorption, that an involuntary tribute of homage to its beauty was wrung from themost critical. Lois walked with a light, steady step; her carelessbearing was free and graceful; her dress was not very fashionable, butentirely proper for the place; all eyes consented to this, and then alleyes came back to the face. It was so happy, so pure, so unconsciousand unshadowed; the look was of the sort that one does not see in theassemblies of the world's pleasure-seekers; nor ever but in the facesof heaven's pleasure-finders. She was a very lovely vision, and somehowall the little group on the piazza with one consent kept silence, watching her as she came. She drew near with busy, pleased thoughts, and leisurely happy steps, and never looked up till she reached thefoot of the steps leading to the piazza. Nor even then; she had pickedup her skirt and mounted several steps daintily before she heard hername and raised her eyes. Then her face changed. The glance ofsurprise, it is true, was immediately followed by a smile of civilgreeting; but the look of rapt happiness was gone; and somehow nobodyon the piazza felt the change to be flattering. She accepted quietlyTom's hand, given partly in greeting, partly to assist her up the laststeps, and faced the group who were regarding her.

"How delightful to find you here, Miss Lothrop!" said Julia, – "and howstrange that people should meet on the Isles of Shoals."

"Why is it strange?"

"O, because there is really nothing to come here for, you know. I don'tknow how we happen to be here ourselves. – Mr. Lenox, MissLothrop. – What have you found in this desert?"

"You have been spoiling Appledore?" added Tom.

"I don't think I have done any harm," said Lois innocently. "There isenough more, Mr. Caruthers."

"Enough of what?" Tom inquired, while Julia and her friend exchanged aswift glance again, of triumph on the lady's part.

"There is a shell," said Lois, putting one into his hand. "I think thatis pretty, and it certainly is odd. And what do you say to those whiteviolets, Mr. Caruthers? And here is some very beautiful pimpernel – andhere is a flower that I do not know at all, – and the rest is what youwould call rubbish," she finished with a smile, so charming that Tomcould not see the violets for dazzled eyes.

"Show me the flowers, Tom," his mother demanded; and she kept him byher, answering her questions and remarks about them; while Julia askedwhere they could be found.

"I find them in quite a good many places," said Lois; "and every timeit is a sort of surprise. I gathered only a few; I do not like to takethem away from their places; they are best there."

She said a word or two to Mrs. Wishart, and passed on into the house.

"That's the girl," Julia said in a low voice to her lover, walking offto the other end of the verandah with him.

"Tom might do worse," was the reply.

"George! How can you say so? A girl who doesn't know common English!"

"She might go to school," suggested Lenox.

"To school! At her age! And then, think of her associations, and herignorance of everything a lady should be and should know. O you men! Ihave no patience with you. See a face you like, and you lose your witsat once, the best of you. I wonder you ever fancied me!"

"Tastes are unaccountable," the young man returned, with a lover-likesmile.

"But do you call that girl pretty?"

Mr. Lenox looked portentously grave. "She has handsome hair," heventured.

"Hair! What's hair! Anybody can have handsome hair, that will pay forit."

"She has not paid for hers."

"No, and I don't mean that Tom shall. Now George, you must help. Ibrought you along to help. Tom is lost if we don't save him. He mustnot be left alone with this girl; and if he gets talking to her, youmust mix in and break it up, make love to her yourself, if necessary.And we must see to it that they do not go off walking together. Youmust help me watch and help me hinder. Will you?"

"Really, I should not be grateful to anyone who did *me* such kindservice."

"But it is to save Tom."

"Save him! From what?"

"From a low marriage. What could be worse?"

"Adjectives are declinable. There is low, lower, lowest."

"Well, what could be lower? A poor girl, uneducated, inexperienced, knowing nobody, brought up in the country, and of no family inparticular, with nothing in the world but beautiful hair! Tom ought tohave something better than that."

"I'll study her further, and then tell you what I think."

"You are very stupid to-day, George!"

Nobody got a chance to study Lois much more that day. Seeing that Mrs.Wishart was for the present well provided with company, she withdrew toher own room; and there she stayed. At supper she appeared, but silentand reserved; and after supper she went away again. Next morning Loiswas late at breakfast; she had to run a gauntlet of eyes, as she tookher seat at a little distance.

"Overslept, Lois?" queried Mrs. Wishart.

"Miss Lothrop looks as if she never had been asleep, nor ever meant tobe," quoth Tom.

"What a dreadful character!" said Miss Julia. "Pray, Miss Lothrop, excuse him; the poor boy means, I have no doubt, to be complimentary."

"Not so bad, for a beginner," remarked Mr. Lenox. "Ladies always liketo be thought bright-eyed, I believe."

"But never to sleep!" said Julia. "Imagine the staring effect."

"*You* are complimentary without effort," Tom remarked pointedly.

"Lois, my dear, have you been out already?" Mrs. Wishart asked. Loisgave a quiet assent and betook herself to her breakfast.

"I knew it," said Tom. "Morning air has a wonderful effect, if ladieswould only believe it. They won't believe it, and they sufferaccordingly."

"Another compliment!" said Miss Julia, laughing. "But what do you find,Miss Lothrop, that can attract you so much before breakfast? or afterbreakfast either, for that matter?"

"Before breakfast is the best time in the twenty-four hours," said Lois.

"Pray, for what?"

"If *you* were asked, you would say, for sleeping," put in Tom.

"For what, Miss Lothrop? Tom, you are troublesome."

"For doing what, do you mean?" said Lois. "I should say, for anything; but I was thinking of enjoying."

"We are all just arrived," Mr. Lenox began; "and we are slow to believethere is anything to enjoy at the Isles. Will Miss Lothrop enlightenus?"

"I do not know that I can," said Lois. "You might not find what I find."

"What do you find?"

"If you will go out with me to-morrow morning at five o'clock, I willshow you," said Lois, with a little smile of amusement, or of archness, which quite struck Mr. Lenox and quite captivated Tom.

"Five o'clock!" the former echoed.

"Perhaps he would not then see what you see," Julia suggested.

"Perhaps not," said Lois. "I am by no means sure."

She was let alone after that; and as soon as breakfast was over sheescaped again. She made her way to a particular hiding-place she haddiscovered, in the rocks, down near the shore; from which she had amost beautiful view of the sea and of several of the other islands. Hernook of a seat was comfortable enough, but all around it the rocks werepiled in broken confusion, sheltering her, she thought, from anypossible chance comer. And this was what Lois wanted; for, in the firstplace, she was minded to keep herself out of the way of thenewly-arrived party, each and all of them; and, in the second place, she was intoxicated with the delights of the ocean. Perhaps I shouldsay rather, of the ocean and the rocks and the air and the sky, and ofeverything at Appledore, Where she sat, she had a low brown reef insight, jutting out into the sea just below her; and upon this reef thebillows were rolling and breaking in a way utterly and whollyentrancing. There was no wind, to speak of, yet there was much moremotion in the sea than yesterday; which often happens from the effectof winds that have been at work far away; and the breakers which beatand foamed upon that reef, and indeed upon all the shore, were beyondall telling graceful, beautiful, wonderful, mighty, and changeful. Loishad been there to see the sunrise; now that fairy hour was long past, and the day was in its full bright strength; but still she satspellbound and watched the waves; watched the colours on the rocks, thebrown and the grey; the countless, nameless hues of ocean, and thelight on the neighbouring islands, so different now from what they hadbeen a few hours ago.

Now and then a thought or two went to the hotel and its newinhabitants, and passed in review the breakfast that morning. Lois hadtaken scarce any part in the conversation; her place at table put herat a distance from Mr. Caruthers; and after those few first words shehad been able to keep very quiet, as her wish was. But she hadlistened, and observed. Well, the talk had not been, as to quality, onewhit better than what Shampuashuh could furnish every day; nay, Loisthought the advantage of sense and wit and shrewdness was decidedly onthe side of her country neighbours; while the staple of talk was nearlythe same. A small sort of gossip and remark, with commentary, on otherpeople and other people's doings, past, present, and to come. It had nointerest whatever to Lois's mind, neither subject nor treatment. Butthe *manner* to-day gave her something to think about. The manner wasdifferent; and the manner not of talk only, but of all that was done.Not so did Shampuashuh discuss its neighbours, and not so didShampuashuh eat bread and butter. Shampuashuh ways were more rough, angular, hurried; less quietness, less grace, whether of movement orspeech; less calm security in every action; less delicacy of taste. Itmust have been good blood in Lois which recognized all this, butrecognize it she did; and, as I said, every now and then an involuntarythought of it came over the girl. She felt that she was unlike thesepeople; not of their class or society; she was sure they knew it too, and would act accordingly; that is, not rudely or ungracefully makingthe fact known, but nevertheless feeling, and showing that they felt, that she belonged to a detached portion of humanity. Or they; what didit matter? Lois did not misjudge or undervalue herself; she knew shewas the equal of these people, perhaps more than their equal, in truerefinement of feeling and delicacy of perception; she knew she was notawkward in manner; yet she knew, too, that she had not their ease ofhabit, nor the confidence given by knowledge of the world and all othersorts of knowledge. Her up-bringing and her surroundings had not beenlike theirs; they had been rougher, coarser, and if of as goodmaterial, of far inferior form. She thought with herself that she wouldkeep as much out of

their company as she properly could. For there wasbeneath all this consciousness an unrecognized, or at leastunacknowledged, sense of other things in Lois's mind; of Mr. Caruthers'possible feelings, his people's certain displeasure, and her ownpromise to her grandmother. She would keep herself out of the way; easyat Appledore —

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.