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The End of a Coil

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Содержание

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CHAPTER I
DOLLY'S ARRIVAL

The door stands open of a handsome house in Walnut Street – the Walnut Street which belongs to the city of William Penn; and on the threshold stands a lady, with her hand up to her brows, shielding her eyes from the light. She is watching to see what will come out of a carriage just driving up to the curbstone. The carriage stops; there descends first the figure of a handsome, very comfortable-looking gentleman. Mrs. Eberstein's eyes pass over him very cursorily; she has seen him before; and there is hardly a curl on his handsome head which his wife does not know by heart. What comes next? Ah, that is she! – the figure of the expected one; and a little girl of some eleven years is helped carefully out by Mr. Eberstein, and comes up the steps to the waiting and watching lady. A delicate little thing, delicate in frame and feature alike, with a fair, childish face, framed in by loose light brown curls, and a pair of those clear, grave, wise, light hazel eyes which have the power of looking so young and so spiritually old at once. Those eyes are the first thing that Mrs.

Eberstein sees, and they fascinate her already. Meanwhile kind arms are opened wide, and take the little one in.

"Come at last, darling! And do you remember your Aunt Hal? and are you half as glad to see her as she is to see you?" So Mrs. Eberstein gives her greeting, while she is drawing the child through the hall and into the parlour; gives it between kisses.

"Why, no," said her husband, who had followed. "Be reasonable, Harry. She cannot be so glad to see you as we are to see her. She has just come from a long stage-coach journey; and she is tired, and she is hungry; and she has left a world she knows, and has come to a world she doesn't know; hey, Dolly? isn't it true? Tell your Aunt Hal to stop asking questions, and give you something to eat."

"I have come to a world I don't know," repeated the little girl by way of answer, turning her serious small face to her questioner, while Mrs. Eberstein was busily taking off coat and hat and mufflers.

"Yes, that's what I say!" returned Mr. Eberstein. "How do you like the look of it, hey?"

"I wonder who is asking questions now!" said Mrs. Eberstein. "There, darling! now you are at home."

She finished with another kiss; but, nevertheless, I think the feeling that it was a strange world she had come to, was rather prominent in Dolly. She suddenly stooped to a great Maltese cat that was lying on the hearthrug, and I am afraid the eyes were glad of an excuse to get out of sight. She touched the cat's fur

tenderly and somewhat diligently.

"She won't hurt you," said her aunt. "That is Mr. Eberstein's pet. Her name is Queen Mab."

"She don't look much like a fairy," was Dolly's comment. Indeed, Queen Mab would outweigh most of her race, and was a magnificent specimen of good feeding.

"You do," thought Mrs. Eberstein. Aloud she asked: "What do you know about fairies?"

"Oh, I know they are only stories. I have read about them."

"Fairy tales, eh?"

"No, not much fairy tales," said Dolly, now rising up from the cat. "I have read about them in 'Midsummer Night's Dream.'"

"'Midsummer Night's Dream,' you midget!" exclaimed Mrs. Eberstein. "Have you read that? And everything else you could lay hands on?"

She took the child in her arms again as she spoke. Dolly gave a quiet assent.

"And they let you do just what you like at home? and read just what you like?"

Dolly smiled slightly at the obviousness of the course of action referred to; but the next minute the smile was quenched in a mist of tears, and she hid her head on Mrs. Eberstein's shoulder. Kisses and caresses of course followed, not successfully. At last Mr. Eberstein's repeated suggestion that food, in the circumstances, would be very much in place, was acted upon. Supper was served in the next room, which did duty for a dining-

room; and the little family gathered round a bountifully spread table. There were only those three; and, naturally, the attention of the two elder was very much concentrated upon the third new member of the party; although Mr. Eberstein was hungry and proved it. The more Mrs. Eberstein studied her new acquisition, however, the more incitement to study she found.

Dolly was not like most children; one could see that immediately. Faces as pretty, and more pretty, could easily be found; the charm was not in mere flesh and blood, form or colour. Other children's faces are often innocent too, and free from the shadow of life's burdens, as this was. Nevertheless, it is not often, it is very rarely, that one sees the mingling of childish simplicity with that thoughtful, wise, spiritual look into life, which met one in Dolly's serious hazel orbs; not often that sweetness and character speak so early in the lines of the lips; utterly childish in their soft, free mobility, and yet revealing continually a trait of thoughtfulness or of strength, along with the happy play of an unqualified tender disposition. "You are lovely! you are lovely!" was Mrs. Eberstein's inner cry; and she had to guard herself that the thought did not come to too open expression. There was a delicate air of refinement also about the child, quite in keeping with all the rest of her; a neat and noiseless handling of knife and fork, cup and saucer; and while Dolly was evidently hungry as well as her uncle, she took what was given to her in a thoroughly high-bred way; that is, she made neither too much nor too little of it.

Doubtless all the while she was using her power of observation, as Mrs. Eberstein was using hers, though the fact was not obtruded; for Dolly had heart wants quite as urgent as body wants. What she saw was reassuring. With Mr. Eberstein she had already been several hours in company, having travelled with him from New York. She was convinced of his genial kindness and steadfast honesty; all the lines of his handsome face, and every movement of his somewhat ease-loving person, were in harmony with that impression. Mrs. Eberstein was a fit mate for her husband. If Dolly had watched her a little anxiously at first, on account of her livelier manner, she soon made out to her satisfaction that nothing but kindness, large and bounteous, lodged behind her aunt's face, and gave its character to her aunt's manner. She knew those lively eyes were studying her; she knew just as well that nothing but good would come of the study.

The meal over, Mrs. Eberstein took her niece upstairs to make her acquainted with her new quarters. It was a little room off the hall which had been destined for Dolly, opening out of her aunt's own; and it had been fitted up with careful affection. A small bedstead and dressing-table of walnut wood, a little chest of drawers, a little wardrobe; it was a wonder how so much could have been got in, but there was room for all. And then there were red curtains and carpet, and on the white spread a dainty little eider-down silk quilt; and on the dressing-table and chest of drawers pretty toilet napkins and pincushion. It was a cosy little apartment as ever eleven years old need delight in.

Dolly forthwith hung up her hat and coat in the wardrobe; took brush and comb out of her travelling bag, and with somewhat elaborate care made her hair smooth; as smooth, that is, as a loose confusion of curly locks allowed; then signified that she was ready to go downstairs again. If Mrs. Eberstein had expected some remark upon her work, she was disappointed.

In the drawing-room, she drew the child to sit down upon her knee.

"Well, Dolly, what do you think you are going to do in Philadelphia?"

"Go to school – they say."

"Who says so?"

"Father says so, and mother."

"What do you think they want you to go to school for?"

"I suppose that I may become like other people."

Mr. Eberstein burst out into a laugh. His wife's eyes went over to him adjuringly.

"Are you not like other people now, Dolly?"

The child's sweet, thoughtful brown eyes were lifted to hers frankly, as she answered, "I don't know, ma'am."

"Then why do you say that? or why do they say it?"

"I don't know," said Dolly again. "I think they think so."

"I daresay they do," said Mrs. Eberstein; "but if you were mine, I would rather have you unlike other people."

"Why, Aunt Harry?"

"Yes," said Mr. Eberstein; "now you'll have to go on and tell."

And Dolly's eyes indeed looked expectant.

"I think I like you best just as you are."

Dolly's face curled all up into a smile at this; brow and eyes and cheeks and lips all spoke her sense of amusement; and stooping forward a little at the same time, she laid a loving kiss upon her aunt's mouth, who was unspeakably delighted with this expression of confidence. But then she repeated gravely —

"I think they want me changed."

"And pray, what are you going to do, with that purpose in view?"

"I don't know. I am going to study, and learn things; a great many things."

"I don't believe you are particularly ignorant for eleven years old."

"Oh, I do not know anything!"

"Can you write a nice hand?"

Dolly's face wrinkled up again with a sense of the comical. She gave an unhesitating affirmative answer.

"And you have read Shakespeare. What else, Dolly?"

"Plutarch."

"'Plutarch's Lives'?" said Mrs. Eberstein, while her husband again laughed out aloud. "Hush, Edward. Is it 'Plutarch's Lives,' my dear, that you mean? Caesar, and Alexander, and Pompey?"

Dolly nodded. "And all the rest of them. I like them very much."

"But what is your favourite book?"

"That!" said Dolly.

"I have got a whole little bookcase upstairs full of the books I used to read when I was a little girl. We will look into it to-morrow, and see what we can find. 'Plutarch's Lives' is not there."

"Oh, I do not want that," said Dolly, her eyes brightening. "I have read it so much, I know it all."

"Come here," said Mr. Eberstein; "your aunt has had you long enough; come here, Dolly, and talk to me. Tell me which of those old fellows you think was the best fellow?"

"Of 'Plutarch's Lives'?" said Dolly, accepting a position upon Mr. Eberstein's knee now.

"Yes; the men that 'Plutarch's Lives' tell about. Whom do you like best?"

Dolly pondered, and then averred that she liked one for one thing and another for another. There ensued a lively discussion between her and Mr. Eberstein, in the course of which Dolly certainly brought to view some power of discrimination and an unbiassed original judgment; at the same time her manner retained the delicate quiet which characterised all that belonged to her. She held her own over against Mr. Eberstein, but she held it with an exquisite poise of ladylike good breeding; and Mr. Eberstein was charmed with her. The talk lasted until it was broken up by Mrs. Eberstein, who declared Dolly must go to rest.

She went up herself with the child, and attended to her little arrangements; helped her undress; and when Dolly was fairly in bed, stood still looking at the bright little head on the

pillow, thinking that the brown eyes were very wide open for the circumstances.

"Are you very tired, darling?" she asked.

"I don't know," said Dolly. "I guess not very."

"Sleepy?"

"No, I am not sleepy yet. I am wide awake."

"Do you ever lie awake, after you have gone to bed?"

"Not often. Sometimes."

"What makes you do it?"

"I don't know. I get thinking sometimes."

"About what can such a midget as you get thinking?"

Dolly's face wrinkled up a little in amusement at this question. "I see a great many things to think about," she answered.

"It's too soon for you to begin that," said Mrs. Eberstein, shaking her head. Then she dropped down on her knees by the bedside, so as to bring her face nearer the child's.

"Dolly, have you said your prayers?" she asked softly.

The brown eyes seemed to lift their lids a little wider at that. "What do you mean, Aunt Harry?" she replied.

"Do you never pray to the Lord Jesus before you go to sleep?"

"I don't do it ever. I don't know anything about it."

The thrill that went over Mrs. Eberstein at this happily the little one did not know. She went on very quietly in manner.

"Don't you know what prayer is?"

"It is what people do in church, isn't it?"

"What is it that people do in church?"

"I do not know," said Dolly. "I never thought about it."

"It is what you do whenever you ask your father or mother for anything. Only that is prayer to your father or mother. This I mean is prayer to God."

"We don't call it prayer, asking them anything," said Dolly.

"No, we do not call it so. But it is really the same thing. We call it prayer, when we speak to God."

"Why should I speak to God, Aunt Harry? I don't know how."

"Why He is our Father in heaven, Dolly. Wouldn't it be a strange thing if children never spoke to their father?"

"But they can't, if they don't know him," said Dolly.

Here followed a strange thing, which no doubt had mighty after-effects. Mrs. Eberstein, who was already pretty well excited over the conversation, at these words broke down, burst into tears, and hid her face in the bedclothes. Dolly looked on in wondering awe, and an instant apprehension that the question here was about something real. Presently she put out her hand and touched caressingly Mrs. Eberstein's hair, moved both by pity and curiosity to put an end to the tears and have the talk begin again. Mrs. Eberstein lifted her face, seized the little hand and kissed it.

"You see, darling," she said, "I want you to be God's own child."

"How can I?"

"If you will trust Jesus and obey Him. All who belong to Him are God's dear children; and He loves them, and the Lord Jesus

loves them, and He takes care of them and teaches them, and makes them fit to be with Him and serve Him in glory by and by."

"But I don't know about Jesus," said Dolly again.

"Haven't you got a Bible?"

"No."

"Never read it?"

"No."

"Never went to Sunday School?"

"No, ma'am."

"Little Dolly, I am very glad you came to Philadelphia."

"Why, Aunt Harry?"

"Because I love you so much!" exclaimed Mrs. Eberstein, kissing the child's sweet mouth. "Why, Dolly, Jesus is the best, best friend we have got; nobody loves us so much in the whole world; He gave his life for us. And, then, He is the King of glory. He is everything that is loving, and true, and great, and good; 'the chiefest among ten thousand.'"

"What did He give His life for?" said Dolly, whose eyes were growing more and more intent.

"To save our lives, dear."

"From what?"

"Why, Dolly, you and I, and everybody, have broken God's beautiful law. The punishment for that is death; not merely the death of the body, but everlasting separation from God and His love and His favour; that is death; living death. To save us from that, Jesus died Himself; He paid our debt; He died instead of

us."

"Then is He dead?" said Dolly awefully.

"He was dead; but He rose again, and now He lives, King over all. He was God as well as man, so the grave could not hold Him. But He paid our debt, darling."

"You said, death was everlasting separation from God and good," said Dolly very solemnly.

"For us, it would have been."

"But He did not die that way?"

"He could not, for He is the glorious Son of God. He only tasted death for us; that we might not drink the bitter cup to eternity."

"Aunt Harry," said Dolly, "is all that true?"

"Certainly."

"When did He do that?"

"It is almost nineteen hundred years ago. And since then, if any one trusts His word and is willing to be His servant, Jesus loves him, and keeps him, and saves him, and makes him blessed for ever."

"But why did He do that? what made Him?"

"His great love for us."

"Us?" Dolly repeated.

"Yes. You and me, and everybody. He just came to save that which was lost."

"I don't see how He can love me," said Dolly slowly. "Why, I am a stranger to Him, Aunt Harry."

"Ah, you are no stranger! Oh yes, Dolly, He loves you dearly; and He knows all about you."

Dolly considered the matter a little, and also considered her aunt, whose lips were quivering and whose eyes were dropping tears. With a very serious face Dolly considered the matter: and came to a conclusion with promptitude unusual in this one subject of all the world. She half rose up in her bed.

"Then I love Him," she said. "I will love Him, too, Aunt Harry."

"Will you, my darling?"

"But I do not know how to be His servant."

"Jesus will teach you Himself, if you ask Him."

"How will He teach me?"

"He will make you understand His word, and let you know what pleases Him. He says, 'If ye love me, keep My commandments.'"

"His commandments are in the Bible, aren't they?"

"Certainly. You say you have not got a Bible?"

"No."

"Then we will see about that to-morrow, the first thing we do. You shall have a Bible, and that will tell you about His commandments."

"Aunt Harry, I would like Him to know to-night that I love Him."

"Then tell Him so, dear."

"Can I?"

"To be sure you can. Why not?"

"I do not know how."

"Tell Him, Dolly, just as if the Lord Jesus were here present and you could see Him. He is here, only you do not see Him; that is all the difference Tell Him, Dolly, just as you would tell me; only remember that you are speaking to the King. He would like to hear you say that."

"I ought to kneel down when I speak to Him, oughtn't I? People do in church."

"It is proper, when we can, to take a position of respect when we speak to the King; don't you think so?"

Dolly shuffled herself up upon her knees in the bed, not regarding much that Mrs. Eberstein threw a shawl round her shoulders; and waited a minute or two, looking intensely serious and considering. Then laying her hands involuntarily together, but with her eyes open, she spoke.

"O Lord Jesus, – Aunt Harry says you are here though I cannot see you. If you are here, you can see, and you know that I love you; and I will be your servant. I never knew about you before, or I would have done it before. Now I do. Please to teach me, for I do not know anything, that I may do everything that pleases you. I will not do anything that don't please you. Amen."

Dolly waited a moment, then turned and put her arms round her aunt's neck and kissed her. "Thank you!" – she said earnestly; and then lay down and arranged herself to sleep.

Mrs. Eberstein went downstairs and astonished her husband

by a burst of hysterical weeping. He made anxious enquiries; and at last received an account of the last half-hour.

"But, oh, Edward, what do you think?" she concluded. "Did you ever hear anything like that in your life? Do you think it can be genuine?"

"Genuine what?" demanded her husband.

"Why, I mean, can it be true religious conversion? This child knows next to nothing; just that Jesus died out of love to her, to save her, – nothing more."

"And she has given her love back. Very logical and reasonable; and ought not to be so uncommon."

"But it is uncommon, Edward. At least, people generally make a longer business of it."

"In which they do not show their wisdom."

"No; but they do it. Edward, can it be that this child is so suddenly a Christian? Will it stand?"

"Only time can show that. But Harry, all the cases, – almost all the cases reported in the New Testament are cases of sudden yielding. Just look at it. John and Andrew took but a couple of hours or so to make up their minds. Nathanael did not apparently take more than two minutes after he saw Christ. Lydia became a Christian at her first hearing the good news; the eunuch made up his mind as quick. Why should not little Dolly? The trouble is caused only by people's obstinate resistance."

"Then you think it may be true work?"

"Of course I think so. This child is not an ordinary child, there

is that to be said."

"No," said Mrs. Eberstein thoughtfully. "Is she not peculiar? She is such a child; and yet there is such a wise, deep look in her brown eyes. What pretty eyes they are! There is the oddest mixture of old and young in her I ever saw. She is going to be lovely, Edward!"

"I think she is lovely now."

"Oh yes! but I mean, when she grows up. She will be very lovely, with those spiritual eyes and that loose curly brown hair; if only she can be kept as she is now."

"My dear, she cannot be that!"

"Oh, you know what I mean, Edward. If she can be kept unspoiled; untainted; unsophisticated; with that sort of mixture of wisdom and simplicity which she has now. I wish we need not send her to school."

"We have no choice about that. And the Lord can keep His own. Let us ask Him."

They knelt and did so; with some warm tears on Mrs. Eberstein's part, and great and warm earnestness in them both.

CHAPTER II
CHRISTINA AND HER MOTHER

Mrs. Eberstein watched during the next few days, to see, if she could, whether the sudden resolve taking on Dolly's part that first evening "meant anything," as she expressed it, or not. She remained in doubt. Dolly was thoughtful certainly, and sweet certainly; "but that don't tell," Mrs. Eberstein remarked; "it is her characteristic." It was equally certain that she had attached herself with a trustful, clinging affection to the new friends whose house and hearts had received her. Dolly's confidence was given to them fully and heartily from that very first day; and they saw that it was.

Nearly a week passed before the school-term began. Meanwhile Dolly was taken about, in walks and drives, to see all that her friends thought would interest her. Everything interested her, they found; and upon every subject presented to her, her little head went to work; the result of which was the putting of a question now and then, which afforded her guardians, perhaps, as much entertainment as the ground of the question had given Dolly. These questions, however, were called forth most of all by the subject which had seized hold of Dolly's mind with such force that first evening. Mrs. Eberstein had not forgotten her promise about the Bible. One of the first expeditions undertaken the next

day had been in search of one; successful, in the judgment of both Dolly and her aunt; and since then the book was very often to be seen in Dolly's hands.

"What are you reading there, Dolly?" Mr. Eberstein asked, corning in one evening just before dinner. Dolly was on a low seat at the corner of the fireplace, reading by the shine of a fire of Liverpool coal, which threw warm lights all over the little figure. She looked up and said it was her Bible she was studying.

"You will put out your eyes."

"Oh no, Uncle Edward; the print is so good, and the fire makes such a nice blaze, I can see perfectly."

"And pray, what are you looking for, or what are you finding, in that book, little one?"

"I am looking for a great deal, – and I am finding a little," was Dolly's reply.

"Different with me," said Mr. Eberstein with a short laugh. "I generally find more in the Bible than I look for."

"What do you look for in it?" said Dolly, raising her head which had gone down to the reading.

Mr. Eberstein laughed again.

"Truly, Dolly," he said, "you have hit me there! I believe I often open the Bible without looking for anything in particular."

"Perhaps that makes the difference," said Dolly, letting her eyes fall again to her page.

"Perhaps it does; but, Dolly, I should very much like to know what you are looking for?"

"I am looking to find out the will of God, Uncle Edward."

"Come here, my pet," said Mr. Eberstein, coaxing the little girl into his arms and setting her on his knee. "What do you want to find out the will of God for? what about?"

"About me."

"What do you want to know the will of God about you for?"

"I want to do it, Uncle Edward."

"There couldn't be a better reason. Jesus says, 'He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me.' Do you find what you seek?"

"I find some," said Dolly.

"Where were you reading just now?"

"About Abraham."

"Abraham! What do you find in Abraham's life, may I ask, that tells you the will of God about Dolly Copley? You are not called upon to leave your country and go out into a strange land."

"No; not that. But God said to Abraham, 'Walk before Me, and be thou perfect.' And it puzzles me."

"What puzzles you?"

"I don't see how I can 'walk before Him.'"

"Dolly, – the Lord is here, here where we are, wherever we are."

"Yes. I know that."

"Then, if you know that and remember it, and do everything you do in His presence, and feeling that it is in His presence, you will be walking before Him; don't you see? Just as if Jesus were

here again upon earth, and you were always with Him; only you do not see Him now. He sees you."

"And 'be perfect'?" said Dolly questioningly.

"Yes. That means, I think, don't try to serve two masters. If you love God with all your heart, and give Him your whole life and service, – not a part of it, – that is what the word to Abraham means, I think. A servant of God is a perfect servant, if he does all the will of God that he knows, and as fast as he knows it. But you cannot do that of yourself, little Dolly."

"Why cannot I, if I want to?"

"Why, because there come temptations, and there come difficulties; and you will want to do something you like, and not what God likes; and you will do it too, unless the Lord Jesus keeps fast hold of you and saves you from making such a mistake. Only He can."

"Can He?"

"Certainly He can."

"Will He?"

"If you want Him to do it, and trust Him to do it, He will. He will just do all that you trust Him to do."

Dolly pondered. "Will He do that because He loves me?" she asked.

"Just for that reason, Dolly."

"Then He will do it," said Dolly confidently; "for I will trust Him. Won't you show me where he says that, Uncle Edward?"

Mr. Eberstein told Dolly to find Matt. xxi. 21. Dolly read

eagerly —

"Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

Dolly read to herself, then looked up, eager and confident, for the next reference.

"Turn to John xv. 7."

Again Dolly found and read, in silence —

"If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."

"What next, Uncle Edward?"

"Isn't that promise enough?"

"Yes; but I thought you had more."

"There is a great deal more. Look out Thessalonians v. 23, 24."

Dolly read, slowly, aloud now —

"'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.' That is beautiful, Uncle Edward!"

"Do you want another? Find Jude, and read the 24th and 25th verses."

With some trouble Dolly found it.

"'Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.'"

Dolly slipped off Mr. Eberstein's knee and retook her old place by the fire; where she sat turning from one passage to another of those she had been reading. Mr. Eberstein watched her, how the ribbon markers of the Bible were carefully laid in two of the places, and a couple of neat slips of paper prepared for the others.

"What have you been doing to-day, Dolly?" he asked at length.

"We went to see the water works."

"Oh, you did! And what did you think of the water works?"

"We went up to the top and walked about. Do the people in Philadelphia want so much water as all that?"

"They want a great deal more. The Fairmount works give only enough for part of the city."

"That is taking a great deal of trouble to get water."

"It would be worse trouble to do without it."

"But why don't people all live in the country, as we do at home? then they would have water for nothing."

"Humph! That would answer, Dolly, if people were contented with water; they all want wine. I mean, my child, that most people are not satisfied with simple doings; and for anything more they must have money; and they can make money faster in cities. Therefore they build cities."

"Is *that* what they build cities for?" said Dolly.

"Largely. Not altogether. A great many things can be better done where people are congregated together; it is for the convenience of trade and business, in many kinds and in many ways. What have you been doing since you came home from the water works?"

"O Uncle Edward!" said Dolly, suddenly rising now and coming to him, "Aunt Harry has opened for me her old bookcase!"

"What old bookcase? I didn't know she had an old bookcase."

"Oh yes; the one where she keeps the books she had when she was as old as I am."

"And as young, eh? Well, what is in that bookcase? is it a great find?"

"O Uncle Edward, there is a great deal in it! It is wonderful. Books I never saw, and they look so interesting!"

"What, for instance? Something to rival Plutarch's Lives?"

"I don't know," said Dolly; "you know I have not read them yet. There is 'Sandford and Merton;' I was reading in that, and I like it very much; and the 'Looking Glass' is another; and 'Rosamond' I am sure is interesting. Oh there is a whole load of them."

"Well I am glad of it," said Mr. Eberstein. "That is the right sort of stuff for your busy little brain; will not weigh too heavy. Now I suppose you will be reading all the time you are in the house."

"Aunt Harry has begun to teach me to knit."

"Very good," said Mr. Eberstein. "I believe in knitting too. That's safe."

They went to dinner, and after dinner there was a further knitting lesson, in which Dolly seemed absorbed; nevertheless, before the evening was over she brought up a very different subject again.

"Aunt Harry," she began, in the midst of an arduous effort to get the loops of wool on her needles in the right relative condition, – "does mother know about the Bible?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Eberstein, with a glance at her husband, "she knows about it, something."

"Then why did she never tell me anything about it?"

Mrs. Eberstein hesitated.

"I suppose, Dolly, her thoughts were fuller of other things."

"But how *could* they be?" said the little one, laying her hands with their knitting work in her lap, and looking up.

Her aunt did not answer.

"How could her thoughts be fuller of other things, if she knows the Bible?" Dolly urged.

"I don't think she really knows much of what is in the Bible," Mrs. Eberstein said. "She has never read it much."

"I don't think she knows about Jesus," Dolly went on gravely; "for she never told me; and she would if she had known, I think. Aunt Harriet, I think *I* ought to tell *her* now."

"What would you tell her, my darling?"

"Oh, I will tell her that I know Him and love Him; and I will tell her I have got a Bible, and some of the things I have found in it. I will ask her to get one too, and read it. I don't believe she knows."

"The reason why a great many people do not know, Dolly, is, as your Aunt Harry says, that they are so much taken up with other things."

"Then I think one ought to take care not to be too much taken up with other things," said Dolly very seriously.

"But you have got to be taken up with other things," Mr. Eberstein went on. "Here you are going to school in a few days; then your head will be full of English and French, and your hands full of piano keys and harp strings, from morning till night. How are you going to do?"

Dolly looked at the speaker, came and placed herself on his knee again, and laid a hand on his shoulder; eyeing him steadily.

"Ought I not to go to school?"

"Must! – else you cannot be the right sort of a woman, and do the right sort of work."

"How then, Uncle Edward? what shall I do?"

"I'll tell you one thing, Dolly. Don't study and practise to get ahead of somebody else; but to please the King!"

"The King – that is Jesus?"

"Certainly."

Dolly nodded, in full agreement with the rule of action as thus stated; presently brought forward another idea.

"Will He care? Would it please Him to have me play on the piano, or learn French and arithmetic?"

"Dolly, the more you know, and the better you know it, the better servant you can be; you will have the more to use for Jesus."

"Can I use such things for Him? How?"

"Many ways. He will show you how. Do you think an ignorant woman could do as much in the world as an elegant, well-informed, accomplished woman?"

Dolly thought over this question, nodded as one who had come to an understanding of it, and went back to her knitting.

"What ever will become of that child," said Mrs. Eberstein an hour or two later, when she and her husband were alone. "I am full of anxiety about her."

"Then you are taking upon you the part of Providence."

"No, but, Edward, Dolly will have a history."

"So have we all," Mr. Eberstein responded very unresponsively.

"But she will not have a common history. Do you see how open she is to receive impressions, and how fast they stay once they are made?"

"I see the first quality. I never saw a creature quicker to take impressions or to welcome affections. Whether they will prove as lasting as they are sudden, – that we have no means of knowing at present."

"I think they will."

"That's a woman's conclusion, founded on her wishes."

"It is a man's conclusion too; for you think the same thing, Edward."

"Don't prove anything, Harry."

"Yes, it does. When two people come to the same independent view of something, it is fair to suppose there are grounds for it."

"I hope so. Time will show."

"But, Edward, with this extremely sensitive and affectionate nature, how important it is that Dolly should have only the right surroundings, and see only the right sort of people."

"Just so. And so she is going out into the world of a large school; where she will meet all sorts of people and be subjected to all sorts of influences; and you cannot shield her."

"I wish I could keep her at home, and have her taught here! I wish I could!"

"Playing Providence again. We all like to do it."

"No, but, Edward, just look at her," said Mrs. Eberstein with her eyes full of tears.

"I do," said Mr. Eberstein. "I've got eyes. But you will have to trust her, Harry."

"Now she will go, I have no doubt, and write that letter to her mother. I wonder if Sally will get scared, and take her away from us?"

"Why, Hal," said her husband, "your self-will is getting up very strong to-night! What if? Dolly's future does not depend upon us; though we will do what we can for it."

What they did then, was to pray about it again; for these people believed in prayer.

The next day Mrs. Eberstein had invited an acquaintance to come to dinner. This acquaintance had a daughter, also about to enter Mrs. Delancy's school; and Mrs. Eberstein's object was to let the two girls become a little known to each other, so that Dolly in the new world she was about to enter might not feel everything utterly strange. Mrs. Thayer belonged to a good New York family; and it likewise suited her purposes to have her daughter received in so unexceptionable a house as Mrs. Eberstein's, albeit the young lady was not without other Philadelphia friends. So the party fitted together very harmoniously. Mrs. Thayer, in spite of her good connections, was no more than a commonplace personage. Christina, her daughter, on the other hand, showed tokens of becoming a great beauty. A little older than Dolly, of larger build and more flesh and blood development generally, and with one of those peach-blossom complexions which for fairness and delicacy almost rival the flower. Her hair was pretty, her features also pretty, her expression placid. Mrs. Eberstein was much struck.

"They are just about of an age," remarked Mrs. Thayer. "I suppose they will study the same things. Everybody studies the same things. Well, I hope you'll be friends and not rivals, my dears."

"Dolly will not be rivals with anybody," returned Dolly's aunt.

"She don't look very strong. I should think it would not do

for her to study too hard," said the other lady. "Oh, rivalry is necessary, you know, to bring out the spirit of boys and girls and make them work. It may be friendly rivalry; but if they were not rivals they would not be anything; might as well not be school girls, or school boys. They would not do any work but what they liked, and we know what that would amount to. I don't know about beating learning into boys; some people say that is the way; but with girls you can't take that way; and all you have to fall back upon is emulation."

"Very few young people will study for the love of it," Mrs. Eberstein so far assented.

"They might, I believe, if the right way was taken," Mr. Eberstein remarked.

"Emulation will do it, if a girl has any spirit," said Mrs. Thayer.

"What sort of spirit?"

"What sort of spirit! Why, the spirit not to let themselves be outdone; to stand as high as anybody, and higher; be No. 1, and carry off the first honours. A spirited girl don't like to be No. 2. Christina will never be No. 2."

"Is it quite certain that such a spirit is the one to be cultivated?"

"It makes them study," – said Mrs. Thayer, looking at her questioner to see what he meant.

"What do you think the Bible means, when it tells us not to seek for honour?"

"*Not* to seek for honour?" repeated the lady.

"Not the honour that comes from man."

"I didn't know it forbade it. I never heard that it was forbidden. Why, Mr. Eberstein, it is *natural* to wish for honour. Everybody wishes for it."

"So they do," Mr. Eberstein assented. "I might say, so *we* do."

"It is natural," repeated the lady.

"Its being natural does not prove it to be right."

"Why, Mr. Eberstein, if it is *natural*, we cannot help it."

"How then does trying to be No. 1 agree with the love that 'seeketh not her own'?"

Dolly was listening earnestly, Mr. Eberstein saw. Mrs. Thayer hesitated, in some inward disgust.

"Do you take that literally?" she said then. "How can you take it literally? You cannot."

"But Christ pleased not Himself."

"Well, but He was not like us."

"We are bidden to be like him, though."

"Oh, as far as we can. But you cannot press those words literally, Mr. Eberstein."

"As far as we can? I *must* press them, for the Bible does. I ask no more, and the Lord demands no more, than that we be like our Master *as far as we can*. And He 'pleased not himself,' and 'received not honour from men.'"

"If you were to preach such doctrine in schools, I am afraid you would have very bad recitations."

"Well!" said Mr. Eberstein. "Better bad recitations than bad hearts. Though really there is no necessary connection

between my premises and your conclusion. The Bible reckons 'emulations,' Mrs. Thayer, in the list of the worst things human nature knows, and does."

"Then you would have a set of dunces. I should just like to be told, Mr. Eberstein, how on that principle you would get young people to study. In the case of girls you cannot do it by beating; nor in the case of boys, after they have got beyond being little boys. Then emulation comes in, and they work like beavers to get the start of one another. And so we have honours, and prizes, and distinctions. Take all that away, and how would you do, Mr. Eberstein?"

Mr. Eberstein was looking fondly into a pair of young eyes that were fixedly gazing at him. So looking, he spoke,.

"There is another sort of '*Well done!*' which I would like my Dolly and Miss Christina to try for. If they are in earnest in trying for that, they will study!" said Mr. Eberstein.

Mrs. Thayer thought, apparently, that it was no use talking on the subject with a visionary man; and she turned to something else. The party left the dinner-table, and Dolly took her new acquaintance upstairs to show her the treasure contained in Mrs. Eberstein's old bookcase.

"Mr. Eberstein is rather a strange man, isn't he?" said Miss Christina on the way.

"No," said Dolly. "I don't think he is. What makes you say so?"

"I never heard any one talk like that before."

"Perhaps," said Dolly, stopping short on the landing place

and looking at her companion. Then she seemed to change her manner of attack. "Who do you want to please most?" she said.

"With my studies? Why, mamma, of course."

"I would rather please the Lord Jesus," said Dolly.

"But I was talking about *school work*," retorted the other. "You don't suppose *He* cares about our lessons?"

"I guess He does," said Dolly. They were still standing on the landing place, looking into each other's eyes.

"But that's impossible. Think! – French lessons, and English lessons, and music and dancing, and all of it. That couldn't be, you know."

"Do you love Jesus?" said Dolly.

"Love him? I do not know," said Christina colouring. "I am a member of the church, if that is what you mean."

Dolly began slowly to go up the remaining stairs. "I think we ought to study to please Him," she said.

"I don't see how it should please him," said the other a little out of humour. "I don't see how He should care about such little things."

"Why not?" said Dolly. "If your mother cares, and my mother cares. Jesus loves us better than they do, and I guess He cares more than they do."

Christina was silenced now, as her mother had been, and followed Dolly thinking there were a *pair* of uncomfortably strange people in the house. The next minute Dolly was not strange at all, but as much a child as any of her fellows. She

had unlocked the precious bookcase, and with the zeal of a connoisseur and the glee of a discoverer she was enlarging upon the treasures therein stowed away.

"Here is 'Henry Milner,'" she said, taking down three little red volumes. "Have you read that? Oh, it is delightful! I like it almost best of all. But I have not had time to read much yet. Here is 'Harry and Lucy,' and 'Rosamond,' and 'Frank.' I have just looked at them. And 'Sandford and Merton.' do you know 'Sandford and Merton'? I have just read that."

"There are the 'Arabian Nights,'" said Christina.

"Is that good? I haven't read much yet. I don't know almost any of them."

"'The Looking-Glass'" – Christina went on – "'Pity's Gift' – 'Father's Tales.'"

"Those are beautiful," Dolly put in. "I read one, about 'Grandfather's old arm-chair.' Oh, it's *very* interesting."

"'Elements of Morality'" – Christina read further on the back of a brown book.

"That don't sound good, but I guess it *is* good," said Dolly. "I just peeped in, and 'Evenings at Home' looks pretty. Here is 'Robinson Crusoe,' and 'Northern Regions;' I want to read that very much. I guess it's delightful."

"Have you ever been to school before?" said Christina. The books had a faint interest for her.

"No," said Dolly.

"Nor have I; but I know somebody who has been at Mrs.

Delancy's, and she says there is one lovely thing at that school. Every month they go somewhere."

"They – go – somewhere," Dolly echoed the words. "Who go?"

"Everybody; teachers and scholars and all. There is a holiday; and Mrs. Delancy takes them all to see something. One time it was a rope walk, I think; and another time it was a paper-mill; and sometimes it's a picture-gallery. It's something very interesting."

"I suppose we are not *obliged* to go, are we, if we don't want to?"

"Oh, but we *do* want to. I do."

"I would just as lief be at home with my Aunt Harry," said Dolly, looking lovingly at the book-case. But Christina turned away from it.

"They dress a great deal at this school," she said. "Does your mother dress you a great deal?"

"I don't know," said Dolly. "I don't know what you mean."

"Well, what's your school dress? what is it made of?"

"My school dress for every day! It is grey poplin. It is not new."

"Poplin will do, I suppose," said Christina. "But some of the girls wear silk; old silk dresses, you know, but really handsome still, and very stylish."

"What do you mean by 'stylish'?" said Dolly.

"Why don't you know what 'stylish' means?"

"No."

Christina looked doubtfully at her new little companion.

Where could Dolly have come from, and what sort of people could she belong to, who did not know *that?* The truth was, that Dolly being an only child and living at home with her father and mother, had led a very childish life up to this time; and her mother, owing to some invalidism, had lately been withdrawn from the gay world and its doings. So, though the thing was greatly upon her mother's heart, the word had never made itself familiar to Dolly's ear. Christina was reassured, however, by observing that the little girl's dress was quite what it ought to be, and certainly bespoke her as belonging to people who "knew what was what." So the practice was all right, and Dolly needed only instruction in the theory.

"'Stylish,'" – she repeated. "It means – It is very hard to tell you what it means. Don't you know? 'Stylish' means that things have an air that belongs to the right kind of thing, and only what you see in a certain sort of people. It is the way things look when people know how."

"Know how, what?" inquired Dolly.

"Know how things ought to be; how they ought to be worn, and how they ought to be done."

"Then everybody ought to be stylish," said Dolly.

"Yes, but you cannot, my dear, unless you happen to know how."

"But I should think one could always know how things ought to be," Dolly went on. "The Bible tells."

"The Bible!" echoed Christina.

"Yes."

"The Bible tell one how to be stylish!"

"The Bible tells how things ought to be."

"Why, no, it don't, child! the Bible don't tell you what sort of a hat to put on."

"Yes, it does, Christina. The Bible says, 'Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God.' I can show you the words."

"Oh, that is something quite different. That has nothing to do with being stylish. How shall I make you understand? If your cravat wasn't tied in a nice bow there, it wouldn't be stylish."

"Well," returned Dolly, "it wouldn't be to the glory of God either."

"What has that to do with it?"

"I think it would be wrong for a Christian to be anything but nice."

"Oh, it isn't being *nice!*" said Christina. "Your dress wouldn't be stylish if it hadn't those flounces."

"And is it now?"

"Yes – I think it is. I should say, your mother knows what is what. It isn't very easy to be stylish if you are poor; but I've seen people do it, though."

"I don't think I understand, quite," said Dolly. "But when I am old enough to dress myself, – to choose my own dresses, I mean, I shall dress to please Jesus, Christina."

"You can't," said Christina. "I never heard of such a thing. It's

making religion little, I think, to talk so."

"I think, if religion isn't little, it'll *do* so," answered Dolly. Whereby each kept her own opinion; notwithstanding which, at the end of the afternoon they separated, mutually pleased each with her new acquaintance.

CHAPTER III
THE MARINE DICTIONARY

As the weeks of the first school term went on, the two girls drew nearer to each other. Everybody inclined towards Dolly indeed; the sweet, fresh, honest little face, with the kindly affections beaming forth from it, and the sensitive nature quick to feel pleasure or pain, and alive to fun in the midst of its seriousness, made such a quaint mingling and such a curious variety and such a lovely creature, that all sorts of characters were drawn towards her. From the head of the school down, teachers and pupils, there was hardly one whose eye did not soften and whose lips did not smile at Dolly's approach. With Christina, on the other hand, it was not just so. She was not particularly clever, not particularly emotional, not specially sociable; calm and somewhat impassive, with all her fair beauty she was overlooked in the practical "selection" which takes place in school life; so that little Dolly after all came to be Christina's best friend. Dolly never passed her over; was never unsympathetic; never seemed to know her own popularity; and Christina's slow liking grew into a real and warm affection as the passing days gave her more and more occasion. In the matter of "style," it appears, Dolly had enough to satisfy her; thanks to her mother; for Dolly herself was as unconventional in spirit and manner as a child should be.

In school work proper, on the other hand, she was a pattern of diligence and faithfulness; gave her teachers no trouble; of course had the good word and good will of every one of them. Was it the working of Mr. Eberstein's rule?

The first monthly holiday after school began was spent in Fairmount Park. A few weeks later, Dolly and Christina were sitting together one day, busy with some fancy work, when one of their schoolmates came up to them.

"Guess where we are going next week!" she cried.

"Next week?" said the others, looking up.

"Next holiday – next week – next Saturday. Yes. Where do you think we are going? Just guess. Oh, you can't guess."

"I can't guess," said Dolly; "I don't know what there is to go to. The Mint? Mrs. Delancy did speak of the Mint."

"Not a bit of it! Something else has come up. Guess again."

"Something has *come up*. Then it must be something new."

"It isn't new, either. Can't a thing come to you that isn't new?"

"But you're talking riddles, Eudora," the other two said, laughing.

"Well, I'll tell you. There's a man-of-war come up the river."

"A man-of-war" – Dolly repeated.

"You know what that means, I hope, Dolly Copley?"

"I don't know. It means a soldier. The Bible says, Goliath was a man-of-war from his youth."

Dolly as she spoke looked mystified, and her words were met by a shout of laughter so loud and ringing that it almost

abashed the child. Some other girls had joined the group and were standing around, and there were many to laugh. However, Dolly was never given to false shame. She waited for more light.

"It's a *ship*, Dolly," they cried. "You dear little innocent, don't you know as much as that?"

"It's a ship; and this is a big one. It is lying out in the Delaware."

"Then why is it called a man-of-war?" said Dolly.

"Because it is a war ship. Won't it be fun! just think! – the guns, and the officers, and the midshipmen!"

"What are midshipmen?"

"I don't know!" cried another. "They are somebodies that are always on a man-of-war; and they are young too. Baby officers, I suppose."

"They *are* officers," said the first speaker.

"No, they're not. They are learning to be officers. They're at school, and their school is a man-of-war; and their teachers are the captain, and the lieutenants, and so on."

"And what are their lessons about?" said Dolly.

"*I* don't know. Oh, they are learning to be officers, you know. Really they are boys at school."

"Some of them are old enough," remarked another.

"Learning *what*, Eudora?" said Dolly.

"How do I know, chicken? I've never been a midshipman myself. You can ask them if you like, when we go on board. For we are going on board, girls! Hurrah! We shall drive over to the

Navy Yard, and there we shall get into boats, and then we shall row – I mean be rowed – out into the stream to the ship. It's a big frigate, the 'Achilles;' and Mrs. Delancy knows the captain; and she says it's a good chance, and she will not have us lose it. Hurrah, girls! this is prime."

"What's a *frigate?*" was Dolly's next question.

"Dolly Copley, you are ridiculous! you want to understand everything."

"Don't you?"

"No! I guess I don't. I am tired enough with trying to understand a little. I'll let alone what I can. You'll know what a frigate is when you have been on board of her."

"But I think I should enjoy it a great deal more if I knew beforehand," said Dolly.

"You had best study a ship's dictionary. *I* am going to study what I shall wear."

"That you cannot tell yet," Christina remarked. "You do not know what sort of a day next Saturday, I mean, Saturday week, will be. It may be cold or" —

"It mayn't be hot," said the other. "It will be cold, cold enough. It's November. You can wear your prettiest winter things, young ladies."

A little while after, the group had broken up, and Dolly sought out one of the teachers and begged to know where she could find a "ship's dictionary."

"A ship dictionary? My dear, there is no such thing. What do

you want to find out?"

"One of the girls said I could find out about ships in a ship's dictionary. We are going to see a man-of-war next week."

"Oh, and you want to study up the subject? It is a Marine Dictionary you are in quest of. Come to the library."

The library was always open to the girls for study purposes. The teacher was good-natured, and got out a big, brown square volume, and put it in Dolly's hand. Dolly had been followed by Christina; and now the two sat down together in a window recess on the floor, with the book before them. Dolly began at the beginning, and aloud.

"'*Aback*.'"

"That is nothing we want," remarked Christina.

"Oh yes, I think it is. It is 'the situation of the sails when their surfaces are flatted against the masts by the force of the wind.' I do not understand, though. The sails are said to be 'taken aback.' – Oh, I have heard mother say that. What could she mean? I have heard her say she was taken aback."

"I have heard people say that too," said Christina; "often. I never knew what they meant. Something disagreeable, I think."

"Well, you see," said Dolly, reading further, "it 'pushes the ship *astern*' – what's that? 'See *Backing*.' I suppose it means pushing it back. But I don't understand!" the little girl added with a sigh.

"Oh, well! we don't care about all that," said Dolly's companion. "Go on to something else. Find out about the

midshipmen."

"What about the midshipmen?"

"Nothing, – only I would like to know what they are. Madeleine said they were young officers; very young; not older than some of us."

"Then why do you want to know about them?" said Dolly. "We have nothing to do with young officers. We don't know any of them."

"But we might," suggested Christina. "We shall see them, if we go on board the ship."

"I don't care about seeing them," said Dolly. "Young officers are young men, I suppose. I understand *them;* what I don't know about, is the ship. Let us go on in this book, and see what we come to. '*Abaft*– the hinder part of a ship'" —

"O Dolly!" cried Christina, "we have not time to go through everything in this way. You have not turned over one leaf yet Do get on a little."

"It is good it's a holiday," said Dolly, turning the leaf. "We have plenty of time. I like this book. '*Aboard*, – the inside of a ship.' So when we go into the ship, we go aboard. That's it."

"Go on," urged Christina. "Here's '*Admiral*.'"

"'An officer of first rank and command in the fleet.' There is a great deal here about the Admiral. I don't believe we shall see him. We'll look a little further."

Dolly presently was caught by the word "*Anchor*," and lost herself in the study of the paragraphs following, and the plate

accompanying; after which she declared that she understood how a ship could be held by its anchor. Urged to go on again, she turned over more leaves, but got lost in the study of "*boats;*" then of "*cannon;*" then of the "*captain*'s" office and duties; finally paused at the plate and description of a ship's deck.

"It's just the deck of a ship!" said Christina impatiently. "You will see it when we go on board the 'Achilles.'"

"I want to understand it."

"You can't."

"Are those guns?" said Dolly, pointing to a row of pieces delineated along the side of the deck.

"Must be guns."

"Well, I should like to go on board of a ship very much," said Dolly. "There are twelve guns on that side. If there are the same on this side, that would make twenty-four. What do they want so many for, Christina, on one ship?"

"Why, to fight with, of course. To fire at other ships."

"But what do they want of *so many?* They would not want to fire twelve at once. I should think one would be enough."

"Perhaps it wouldn't. Go on, Dolly, do! let us get to something else."

It was difficult to get Dolly on. She was held fast again by the description of a naval engagement; then fell to studying the directions for the "*exercise*" of the guns; then was interested in some plates giving various orders of the line of battle. At last in due course they came to the word "*Midshipman*," which was

read, or the article under it, by both girls.

"'A naval cadet'" – repeated Christina.

"And a cadet must be four years at sea before he can become a lieutenant; and two years midshipman besides. I should think they would be tired of it."

"But if they are going to be sailors all their lives, it's no use for them to get tired of it," said Christina.

"They come on shore sometimes, don't they?"

"I suppose so. Oh yes, they have houses, I know, and wives and children. I shouldn't like to be the wife of a sailor!"

"Somebody must, I suppose," said Dolly. "But I shouldn't like to have my home – my principal home, I mean – on the sea; if I was a man. *They* must like it, I suppose."

Dolly went on reading.

"The midshipmen have plenty to do, Christina. They have to learn how to do everything a common sailor does; all the work of the ship; and then they must learn astronomy, and geometry, and navigation and mechanics. Hydrostatics, too; oh dear, I don't know what that is. I can look it out, I suppose. The midshipmen must be very busy, Christina, and at hard work too."

Christina's interest in the Marine Dictionary was exhausted. She went off; but Dolly pored over its pages still, endeavouring to take in details about vessels, and ropes, and sails, and winds, until her head was in a fog. She recurred to the book, however, on the next opportunity; and from time to time, as her lessons permitted, gave her time and attention to this seemingly very unnecessary

subject. How much she really learned, is doubtful; yet as little things do touch and link themselves with great things, it may be that the old Marine Dictionary in Mrs. Delancy's library played a not insignificant part in the fortunes of Dolly Copley. As we shall see. She studied, till a ship became a romance to her; till rigging and spars and decks and guns were like the furniture of a new and strange life, which hardly belonged to the earth, being upon the sea; and the men who lived that life, and especially the men who ruled in it, grew to be invested with characteristics of power and skill and energy which gave them fabulous interest in Dolly's eyes.

At home there had been a little scruple about letting Dolly join the party. She had had a cold, and was rather delicate at all times. The scruples, however, gave way before the child's earnest wish; and as Saturday of the particular week turned out mild and quiet, no hindrance was put in the way of the expedition.

CHAPTER IV
THE "ACHILLES."

It was a very special delectation which the school were to enjoy to-day. The girls thought it always "fun," of course, to quit lessons and go to see anything; "even factories," as one of the girls expressed it, to Dolly's untold astonishment; for it seemed to her that to be allowed to look into the mystery of manufactures must be the next thing to taking part personally in a fairy tale. However, to-day it was not a question of manufactures, but of a finished and furnished big ship, and not only finished and furnished, but manned. "*This* is something lively," Eudora opined. And she was quite right.

The day was a quiet day in November, with just a spice of frost in it; the air itself was lively, quick and quickening. The party were driven to the Navy Yard in carriages, and there received very politely by the officers, some of whom knew Mrs. Delancy and lent themselves with much kindness to the undertaking. The girls were more or less excited with pleasure and anticipation; but to Dolly the Navy Yard seemed to be already touching the borders of that mysterious and fascinating sea life in which her fancy had lately been roaming. So when the girls were all carefully bestowed in stout little row boats to go out to the ship, Dolly's foot it was which stepped upon enchanted boards, and

her eye that saw an enchanted world around her. What a field was this rippling water, crisped with the light breeze, and gurgling under the boat's smooth sweep ahead! How the oars rose and fell, all together, as if moved by only one hand. Was this a part of the order and discipline of which she had read lately, as belonging to this strange world? Probably; for now and then a command was issued to the oarsmen, curt and sharp; and obeyed, Dolly saw, although she did not know what the command meant. Yes, she was in an enchanted sphere; and she looked at the "Achilles" as they drew nearer, with profoundest admiration. Its great hulk grew large upon her view, with an absolute haze of romance and mystery hanging about its decks and rigging. It was a large ship, finely equipped, according to the fashion of naval armament which was prevalent in those days; she was a three-decker; and the port holes of her guns looked in threatening ranks along the sides of the vessel. Still and majestic she lay upon the quiet river; a very wonderful floating home indeed, and unlike all else she had ever known, to Dolly's apprehension. How she and the rest were ever to get on board was an insoluble problem to her, as to most of them; and the chair that was presently lowered along the ship's side to receive them, seemed a very precarious sort of means of transport. However, the getting aboard was safely accomplished; one by one they were hoisted up; and Dolly's feet stood upon the great main deck. And the first view was perfectly satisfactory, and even went far beyond her imaginings. She found herself standing under a mixed confusion of masts and

spars and sails, marvellous to behold, which yet she also saw was no confusion at all, but complicated and systematic order. How much those midshipmen must have to learn, though, if they were to know the names and uses and handling of every spar and every rope and each sail among them! as Dolly knew they must. Her eye came back to the deck. What order there too; what neatness; why it was beautiful; and the uniforms here and there, and the sailors' hats and jackets, filled up the picture to her heart's desire. Dolly breathed a full breath of satisfaction.

The Captain of the "Achilles" made his appearance, Captain Barbour. He was a thick-set, grizzly haired man, rather short, not handsome at all; and yet with an air of authority unmistakably clothing him like a garment of power and dignity. Plainly this man's word was law, and the girls stood in awe of him. He was known to Mrs. Delancy; and now she went on to present formally all her young people to him. The captain returned the courtesy by calling up and introducing to her and them some of his officers; and then they went to a review of the ship.

It took a long while. Between Mrs. Delancy and Captain Barbour a lively conversation was carried on; Dolly thought he was explaining things to the lady that she did not understand; but though it might be the case now and then, I think the talk moved mainly upon less technical matters. Dolly could not get near enough to hear what it was, at any rate. The young lieutenants, too, were taken up with playing the host to the older young ladies of the party. If *they* received instruction also by the way,

Dolly could not tell; the laughing hardly looked like it. She and the other young ones at any rate followed humbly at the tail of everything, and just came up to a clear view of some detail when the others were moving away. There was nobody to help Dolly understand anything; nevertheless, she wandered in a fairy vision of wonderland. Into the cabins, down to the forecastle, down to the gun deck. What could equal the black strangeness of *that* view! and what could it all mean? Dolly wished for her Uncle Edward, or some one, to answer a thousand questions. She had been reading about the guns, she looked curiously now at the realities, of which she had studied the pictures; recognised here a detail and there a detail, but remaining hugely ignorant of the whole and of the bearing of the several parts upon each other. Yet she did not know how time flew; she did not know that she was getting tired; from one strange thing to another she followed her leaders about; very much alone indeed, for even the other girls of her own age were staring at a different class of objects, and could hardly be said to see what she saw, much less were ready to ask what she wanted to ask. Dolly went round in a confused dream.

At last the party had gone everywhere that such a party could go; Captain Barbour had spared them the lower gun deck. They came back to the captain's cabin, where a very pleasant lunch was served to the ladies. It was served, that is, to those who could get it, to those who were near enough and old enough to put in a claim by right of appearance. Dolly and one or two more who were undeniably little girls stood a bad chance, hanging about on the

outskirts of the crowd, for the cabin would not take them all in; and hearing a distant sound of clinking glass and silver and words of refreshment. It was all they seemed likely to get; and when a kindly elderly officer had taken pity on the child and given Dolly a biscuit, she concluded to resign the rest of the unattainable luncheon and make the most of her other opportunities while she had them. Eating the biscuit, which she was very glad of, she wandered off by herself, along the deck; looking again carefully at all she saw; for her eyes were greedy of seeing. Sails, – what strange shapes; and how close rolled up some of them were! Ropes, – what a multitude; and cables. Coils of them on deck; and if she looked up, an endless tracery of lines seen against the blue sky. There was a sailor going up something like a rope ladder; going up and up; how could he? and how far could he go? Dolly almost grew dizzy gazing at him.

"What are you looking after, little one?" a voice near her asked. An unceremonious address, certainly; frankly put; but the voice was not unkindly or uncivil, and Dolly was not sensitive on the point of personal dignity. She brought her eyes down for a moment far enough to see the shimmer of gold lace on a midshipman's cap, and answered.

"I am looking at that man. He's going up and up, to the top of everything. I should think his head would turn."

"Yours will, if you look after him with your head in that position."

Dolly let her eyes come now to the speaker's face. One of

the young midshipmen it was, standing near her, with his arms folded and leaning upon something which served as a support to them, and looking down at Dolly. For standing so and leaning over, he was still a good deal taller than she. Further, Dolly observed a pair of level brows, beneath them a pair of wise-looking, cognisance-taking blue eyes, an expression of steady calm, betokening either an even temperament or an habitual power of self-control; and just now in the eyes and the mouth there was the play almost of a smile somewhat merry, wholly kindly. It took Dolly's confidence entirely and at once.

"You don't think you would like to be a sailor?" he went on.

"Is it pleasant?" said Dolly, retorting the question earnestly and doubtfully.

The smile broke a little more on the other's face. "How do you like the ship?" he asked.

"I do not know," said Dolly, glancing along the deck. "I think it is a strange place to live."

"Why?"

"And I don't understand the use of it," Dolly went on with a really puzzled face.

"The use of what?"

"The use of the whole thing. I know what ships are good for, of course; other ships; but what is the use of such a ship as this?"

"To take care of the other ships."

"How?"

"Have you been below? Did you see the gun decks?"

"I was in a place where there were a great many guns – but I could not understand, and there was nobody to tell me things."

"Would you like to go down there again?"

"Oh yes!" said Dolly. "They will be a good while at lunch yet. Oh, thank you! I should like so much to go."

The young midshipman took her hand; perhaps he had a little sister at home and the action was pleasant and familiar; it seemed to be both; and led her down the way that took them to the upper gun deck.

"How comes it you are not taking lunch too?" he asked by the way.

"Oh, there are too many of them," said Dolly contentedly. "I don't care. I had a biscuit."

"You don't care for your lunch?"

"Yes, I do, when I'm hungry; but now I would rather see things. I never saw a ship before."

They arrived in the great, gloomy, black gun deck. The midshipman let go Dolly's hand, and she stood and looked along the avenue between the bristling black cannon.

"Now, what is it that you don't understand?" he asked, watching her.

"What are these guns here for?"

"Don't you know *that?* Guns are to fight with."

"Yes, I know," said Dolly; "but how can you fight with them here in a row? and what would you fight with? I mean, who would you fight against?"

"Some other ship, if Fate willed it so. Look here; this is the way of it."

He took a letter from the breast of his coat, tore off a blank leaf; then resting it on the side of a gun carriage, he proceeded to make a sketch. Dolly's eyes followed his pencil point, spell-bound with interest. Under his quick and ready fingers grew, she could not tell how, the figure of a ship, – hull, masts, sails and rigging, deftly sketched in; till it seemed to Dolly she could almost see how the wind blew that was filling out the sails and floating off the streamer.

"There," said the artist, – "that is our enemy."

"Our enemy?" repeated Dolly.

"Our supposed enemy. We will suppose she is an enemy."

"But how could she be?"

"We might be at war with England suppose, or with France. This might be an English ship of war coming to catch up every merchantman she could overhaul that carried American colours, and make a prize of her; don't you see?"

"Do they do that?" said Dolly.

"What? catch up merchantmen? of course they do; and the more of value is on board, the better they are pleased. We lose so much, and they gain so much. Now we want to stop this fellow's power of doing mischief; you understand."

"What are those little black spots you are making along her sides."

"The port holes of her guns."

"Port holes?"

"The openings where the mouths of her guns look out. See," said he, pointing to the one near which they were standing, – "that is a port hole."

"That little window?"

"It isn't a window; it is a port hole."

"It is not a black spot."

"Because you are inside, and looking out towards the light. Look at them when you are leaving the ship; they will look like black spots then, you will find."

"Well, that's the enemy," said Dolly, drawing a short breath of excitement. "What is that ship you are making now?"

"That's the 'Achilles'; brought to; with her main topsails laid aback, and her fore topsails full; ready for action."

"I do not know what are topsails or fore topsails," said Dolly.

The midshipman explained; to illustrate his explanation sketched lightly another figure of a vessel, showing more distinctly the principal sails.

"And this is the 'Achilles,'" said Dolly, recurring to the principal design. "You have put her a great way off from the enemy, it seems to me."

"No. Point blank range. Quite near enough."

"Oh, what is 'point blank range'?" cried Dolly in despair. Her new friend smiled, but answered with good-humoured patience. Dolly listened and comprehended.

"Then, if this were an enemy, and that the 'Achilles,' and

within point blank range, you would load one of these guns and fire at her?"

The midshipman shook his head. "We should load up all of them – all on that side."

"And five them one after another?"

"As fast as we could. We should give her a broadside. But we should probably give her one broadside after another."

"Suppose the balls all hit her?"

"Yes, you may suppose that. I should like to suppose it, if I were the officer in command."

"What would they do to her? – to that enemy ship?"

"If they all hit? Hinder her from doing any more mischief."

"How?"

"Break her masts, tear up her rigging, make a wreck of her generally. Perhaps sink her."

"But suppose while you are fighting that she fights too?"

"Extremely probable."

"If a shot came in here – could it come in here?"

"Certainly. Cannon balls will go almost anywhere."

"If it came in here, what would it do?"

"Kill three or four of the men at a gun, perhaps; tear away a bit of the ship's side; or perhaps disable the gun."

"While you were firing at the enemy on this side, the guns of the other side, I suppose, would have nothing to do?"

"They might be fighting another enemy on that side," said the midshipman, smiling.

"I should think," said Dolly, looking down the long line of the gun deck, and trying to imagine the state of things described, – "I should think it would be most dreadful!"

"I have no doubt you would think so."

"Don't *you* think so?"

"I have never been in action yet."

"Don't you hope you never will?"

The young man laughed a little. "What would be the use of ships of war, if there were never any fighting? I should have nothing to do in the world."

"You might do something else," said Dolly, gazing at the lines of black guns stretching along both sides of the deck, so near to each other, so black, so grim. "How many men does it take to manage each gun? You said *three or four* might be killed."

"According to the size of the gun. Twelve men for these guns; larger would take fifteen."

Again Dolly meditated; in imagination peopled the solitary place with the active crowd of men which would be there if each gun had twelve gunners, filled the silence with the roar of combined discharges, thought of the dead and wounded; at last turned her eyes to the blue ones that were watching her.

"I wonder if God likes it?" she said.

"Likes what?" said the midshipman in wonder.

"Such work. I don't see how He *can*."

"How can you help such work? People cannot get along without fighting."

He did not speak carelessly or mockingly or banteringly; rather with a gentle, somewhat deliberate utterance. Yet Dolly was persuaded there was no unmanly softness in him; she never doubted but that he would be ready to do his part in that dreadful work, if it must be done. Moreover, he was paying to this odd little girl a delicate sort of respect and treating her with great consideration. Her confidence, as I said, had been entirely given to him before; and now some gratitude began to mingle with it, along with great freedom to speak her mind.

"I don't think God can like it," she repeated.

"What would you do, then?" he also repeated, smiling. "Let wicked people have their own way?"

"No."

"If they are not to have their own way, you must stop them."

"I think this is a dreadful way of stopping them."

"It's a bad job for the side that goes under," the young officer admitted.

"I don't believe God likes it," Dolly concluded for the third time, with great conviction.

"Is that your rule for everything?"

"Yes. Isn't it your rule?"

"I have to obey orders," he answered, watching her.

"Don't you obey *His* orders?" said Dolly wistfully.

"I do not know what they are."

"Oh, but they are in the Bible. You can find them in the Bible."

"Does it say anything about fighting?"

Dolly tried to think, and got confused. Certainly it did say a good deal about fighting, but in various ways, it seemed to her. She did not know how to answer. She changed the subject.

"How do you get the shot, the balls, I mean, into these guns? I don't see how you get at them. The mouths are out of the windows. Port holes, I mean."

For the upper gun deck had been put to a certain extent in order of action, and the guns were run out.

"You are of an inquiring disposition," said the midshipman gravely.

"Am I?"

"I think you are."

"But I should like to know" – pursued Dolly, looking at the muzzle of the gun by which they were standing.

"The guns would be run in to be loaded."

Dolly looked at the heavy piece of metal, and at him, but did not repeat her question.

"Now you want to know how," he said, smiling. "If I were captain, I would have the men here and show you. The gun is run in by means of this tackle, see! – and when it is charged, it is bowsed out again."

Seeing Dolly's wise grave eyes bent upon the subject, he went on to amuse her with a full detail of the exercise of the gun; from "casting loose," to the finishing "secure your guns;" explaining the manner of handling and loading, and the use of the principal tackle concerned. Dolly listened, intent, fascinated, enchained;

and I think the young man was a little fascinated too, though his attentions were given to so very young a lady. Dolly's brown eyes were so utterly pure and grave and unconscious; the brain at work behind them was so evidently clear and busy and competent; the pleasure she showed was so unschoolgirl-like, and he thought so unchildlike, and at the same time so very far from being young lady-like. What she was like, he did not know; she was an odd little apparition there in the gun-deck of the "Achilles," leaning with her elbows upon a gun carriage, and surveyeing with her soft eyes the various paraphernalia of conflict and carnage around her. Contrast could hardly be stronger.

"Suppose," said Dolly at last, "a shot should make a hole in the side of the ship, and let in the water?"

"Well? Suppose it," he answered.

"Does that ever happen?"

"Quite often. Why not?"

"What would you do then?"

"Pump out the water as fast as it came in, – if we could."

"Suppose you couldn't?"

"Then we should go down."

"And all in the ship?"

"All who could not get out of it."

"How could any get out of it?"

"In the boats."

"Oh! – I forgot the boats. Would they hold everybody?"

"Probably not. The other ships' boats would come to help."

"The officers would go first, I suppose?"

"Last. The highest officer of all would be the last man on board."

"Why?"

"He must do his duty. If he cannot save his ship, at least he must save his men; – all he can. He is there to do his duty."

"I think it would be better not to be there at all," said Dolly very gravely.

"Who would take care of you then, if an enemy's fleet were coming to attack Philadelphia?" said the young officer.

"I would go home," said Dolly. "I don't know what would become of Philadelphia. But I do not think God can like it."

"Shall we go above where it is more cheerful? or have you seen it all?"

Dolly gave him her hand again and let him help her till they got on deck. There they went roaming towards the fore part of the vessel, looking at everything by the way; Dolly asking the names and the meaning of things, and receiving explanations, especially regarding the sails and rigging and steering of the ship. She was even shown where the sailors made their home in the forecastle. As they were returning aft, Dolly stopped by a coil of rope on deck and began pulling at an end of it. Her companion inquired what she wanted?

"I would like a little piece," said Dolly; "if I could get it."

"A piece of rope?"

"Yes; – just a little bit; but it is very strong; it won't break."

She was tugging at a loose strand.

"How large a bit do you want?"

"Oh, just a little piece," said Dolly. "I wanted just a little piece to keep – but it's no matter. I wanted to keep it."

"A keepsake?" said the young man. "To remember us by? They are breaking up," – he added immediately, casting his glance aft, where a stir and a gathering and a movement on deck in front of the captain's cabin could now be seen, and the sound of voices came fresh along the breeze. "They are going – there is no time now. I will send you a piece, if you will tell me where I can send it. Where do you live?"

"Oh, will you? Oh, thank you!" said Dolly, and her face lifted confidingly to the young officer grew sunny with pleasure. "I live at Mrs. Delancy's school; – but no, I don't! I don't live there. My home is at Uncle Edward's – Mr. Edward Eberstein – in Walnut Street."

"What number?" said the midshipman, using his pencil again on the much scribbled piece of paper; and Dolly told him.

"And whom shall I send the – the piece of rope, to?"

"Oh, yes! – Dolly Copley. That is my name. Good bye, I must go."

"Dolly Copley. You shall have it," said he, giving the little hand she held out to him a right sailorly grasp. And Dolly ran away. In the bustle and anxiety of getting lowered into the little boat again she forgot him and everything else; however, so soon as she was safely seated and just as the men were ordered to "give

way," she looked up at the great ship they were leaving; and there, just above her, leaning on the guards and looking over and down at her, she saw her midshipman friend. Dolly saw nothing else till his face was too small in the distance to be any longer recognised.

CHAPTER V
THE PIECE OF ROPE

It was Saturday and holiday, and Dolly went home to her aunt's. There her aunt and uncle, as was natural, expected a long story of the morning's experience. And Dolly one would think might have given it; matter for the detail was not wanting; yet she seemed to have little to tell. On the other hand, she had a great deal to ask. She wanted to know why people could not do all their fighting on land; why ships of war were necessary; Mr. Eberstein tried to explain that there might be great and needful advantages attendant upon the use of them. Then Dolly begged for instances. Had we, Americans, ever fought at sea? Mr. Eberstein answered that, and gave her details of facts, while Mrs. Eberstein sat by silent and watched Dolly's serious, meditative face.

"I should think," said Dolly, "that when there is a fight, a ship of war would be a very dreadful place."

"There is no doubt of that, my little girl," said Mr. Eberstein. "Take the noise, and the smoke, the packed condition of one of those gun decks, and the every now and then coming in of a round shot, crashing through planks and timbers, splintering what comes in its way, and stretching half a dozen men at once, more or less, on the floor in dead and wounded, – I think it must be as good a likeness of the infernal regions as earth can give –

in one way at least."

"In what way?" Dolly asked immediately.

"Confusion of pain and horror. Not wickedness."

"Uncle Ned, do you think God can like it?"

"No."

"Then isn't it wicked?"

"No, little one; not necessarily. No sort of pain or suffering can be pleasing to God; we know it is not; yet sin has made it necessary, and He often sends it."

"Don't He always send it?"

"Why no. Some sorts people bring on themselves by their own folly and perverseness; and some sorts people work on others by their own wicked self-will. God does not cause that, though He will overrule it to do what He wants done."

"Uncle Ned, do you think we shall ever have to use our ships of war again?"

"We are using them all the time. We send them to this place and that place to protect our own people, and their merchant vessels and their commerce, from interference and injury."

"No, but I mean, in fighting. Do you think we shall ever have to send them to fight again?"

"Probably."

"To fight whom?"

"That I don't know."

"Then why do you say 'probably'?"

"Because human nature remains what it was, and will no

doubt do the same work in the future that it has done from the beginning."

"Why is fighting part of that work, Uncle Ned?"

"Ah, why! Greed, which wants what is the right of others; pride, which resents even a fancied interference with its own; anger, which cries for revenge; these are the reasons."

Dolly looked very deeply serious.

"Why do you care so much about it, Dolly?" her aunt asked at length, after a meditative pause of several minutes.

"I would be sorry to have the 'Achilles' go into battle," said Dolly; and a perceptible slight shudder passed over her shoulders.

"Is the 'Achilles' so much to you, just because you have seen her?"

"No – " said Dolly thoughtfully; "it isn't the *ship;* it's the people."

"Oh! – But what do you know of the people?"

"I saw a good many of them, Aunt Harry."

Politic Dolly! She had really seen only one. Yet she had no idea of being politic; and why she did not say whom she had seen, and what reason she had for being interested in him, I cannot tell you.

From that time Dolly's reading took a new turn. She sought out in the bookcases everything that related to sailors and ships, and especially naval warfare, and simply devoured it. The little Life of Lord Nelson, by Southey, in two small calf-bound volumes, became her darling book. Better than any novel, for it was *true*, and equal to any novel for its varied, picturesque, passionate,

stirring life story. Dolly read it, till she could have given you at any time an accurate and detailed account of any one of Nelson's great battles; and more than that, she studied the geography of the lands and waters thereby concerned, and where possible the topography also. I suppose the "Achilles" stood for a model of all the ships in which successively the great commander hoisted his flag; and if the hero himself did not take the form and features of a certain American midshipman, it was probably because there was a likeness of the subject of the Memoir opposite to the title-page; and the rather plain, rather melancholy, rather feeble traits of the English naval captain, could by no effort of imagination be confounded with the quiet strength and gentle manliness which Dolly had found in the straight brows and keen blue eyes and kindly smile of her midshipman friend. That would not do. Nelson was not like him, nor he like Nelson; but Dolly had little doubt but he would do as much, if he had occasion. In that faith she read on; and made every action lively with the vision of those keen-sighted blue eyes and firm sweet mouth in the midst of the smoke of battle and the confusion of orders given and received. How often the Life of Nelson was read, I dare not say; nor with what renewed eagerness the Marine Dictionary and its plates of ships and cannon were studied and searched. From that, Dolly's attention was extended to other books which told of the sea and of life upon it, even though the life were not war-like. Captain Cook's voyages came in for a large amount of favour; and Cooper's "Afloat and Ashore," which happened about this

time to fall into Dolly's hands, was devoured with a hunger which grew on what it fed. Nobody knew; she had ceased to talk on naval subjects; and it was so common a thing for Dolly to be swallowed up in some book or other whenever she was at home, that Mrs. Eberstein's curiosity was not excited.

Meanwhile school days and school work went on, and week succeeded week, and everybody but Dolly had forgotten all about the "Achilles;" when one day a small package was brought to the door and handed in "For Miss Dolly Copley." It was a Saturday afternoon. Dolly and her aunt were sitting comfortably together in Mrs. Eberstein's workroom upstairs, and Mr. Eberstein was there too at his secretary.

"For me?" said Dolly, when the servant brought the package in. "It's a box! Aunt Harry, what can it be?"

"Open and see, Dolly."

Which Dolly did with an odd mixture of haste and deliberation which amused Mrs. Eberstein. She tore off nothing, and she cut nothing; patiently knots were untied and papers unfolded, though Dolly's fingers trembled with excitement. Papers taken off showed a rather small pasteboard box; and the box being opened revealed coil upon coil, nicely wound up, of a beautifully wrought chain. It might be a watch chain; but Dolly possessed no watch.

"What is it, Aunt Harry?" she said in wondering pleasure as the coils of the pretty woven work fell over her hand.

"It looks like a watch chain, Dolly. What is it made of?"

Mrs. Eberstein inspected the work closely and could not determine.

"But who could send me a watch chain?" said Dolly.

"Somebody; for here is your name very plainly on the cover and on the paper."

"The boy is waiting for an answer, miss."

"Answer? To what? I don't know whom to answer," said Dolly.

"There's a note, miss."

"A note? where? – Oh, here *is* a note, Aunt Harry, in the bottom of the box. I did not see it."

"From whom, Dolly?"

Dolly did not answer. She had unfolded the note, and now her whole face was wrinkling up with pleasure or fun; she did not hear or heed her aunt's question. Mrs. Eberstein marked how her colour rose and her smile grew sparkling; and she watched with not a little curiosity and some impatience till Dolly should speak. The little girl looked up at last with a face all dimples.

"O Aunt Harry! it's my piece of rope."

"Your *piece of rope*, my dear?"

"Yes; I wanted a piece of rope; and this is it."

"That is not a piece of rope."

"Yes, it is; it is made of it. I could not think what it was made of; and now I see. Isn't it beautifully made? He has picked a piece of rope to pieces, and woven this chain of the threads; isn't it beautiful? And how kind! How kind he is."

"*Who*, Dolly? Who has done it?"

"Oh, the midshipman, Aunt Harry."

"*The* midshipman. What one? You didn't say anything about a midshipman."

"I saw him, though, and he said he would send me a piece of rope. I wanted a piece, Aunt Harry, to remember the ship by; and I could not break a bit off, though I tried; then he saw me trying, and it was just time to go, and he said he would get it and send it to me. I thought he had forgotten all about it; but here it is! I am so glad."

"My dear, do you call that a piece of rope?"

"Why, yes, Aunt Harry; it is woven out of a piece of rope. He has picked the rope apart and made this chain of the threads. I think he is very clever."

"*Who*, my dear? Who has done it, Dolly?"

"The midshipman, Aunt Harry."

"What midshipman?"

"On the 'Achilles.' I saw him that day."

"Did you see only one midshipman?"

"No; I suppose I saw a good many. I didn't notice any but this one."

"And he noticed you, I suppose?"

"Yes, a little" – said Dolly.

"Did he notice nobody beside you?"

"I don't know, Aunt Harry. Not that time, for I was alone."

"Alone! Where were all the rest, and Mrs. Delancy?"

"Eating lunch in the captain's cabin."

"Did you have no lunch?"

"I had a biscuit one of the officers gave me."

"And have you got a note there from the midshipman?"

"Yes, Aunt Harry."

"What does he say?"

Dolly unfolded the note again and looked at it with great consideration; then handed it to Mrs. Eberstein. Mrs. Eberstein read aloud.

> "Ship '*Achilles*,'
>
> "*Dec.* 5, 18 —
>
> "Will Miss Dolly Copley please send a word to say that she has received her piece of cable safe? I thought she would like it best perhaps in a manufactured form; and I hope she will keep it to remember the 'Achilles' by, and also
>
> *"A. CROWNINSHIELD."*

"What's all that?" demanded Mr. Eberstein now from his writing-desk. Mrs. Eberstein bit her lips as she answered.

"Billet-doux."

"Aunt Harry," said Dolly now doubtfully, "must I write an answer?"

"Edward," said Mrs. Eberstein, "shall I let this child write a note to a midshipman on board the 'Achilles'? What do you think? Come and counsel me."

Mr. Eberstein left his writing, informed himself of the circumstances, read "A. Crowninshield's" note, and gave his decision.

"The 'Achilles'? Oh yes, I know Captain Barbour very well. It's all right, I guess. I think Dolly had better write an answer, certainly."

So Dolly fetched her writing materials. Her aunt looked for some appeals for advice now on her part; but Dolly made none. She bent over her paper with an earnest face, a little flushed; but it seemed she was in no uncertainty what to say or how to say it. She did not offer to show her finished note to Mrs. Eberstein; I think it did not occur to her; but in the intensity of her concentration Dolly only thought of the person she was writing to and the occasion which made her write. Certainly she would have had no objection that anybody should see what she wrote. The simple words ran as follows:

> "MR. CROWNINSHIELD,
>
> "I have got the chain, and I think it is beautiful, and I am very much obliged to you. I mean to keep it and wear it as long as I live. You are very kind.
>
> *"DOLLY COPLEY."*

The note was closed and sent off; and with that Dolly dismissed the subject, so far at least as words were concerned; but Mrs. Eberstein watched her still for some time handling and examining the chain, passing it through her fingers, and regarding it with a serious face, and yet an expression in the eyes and on the lips that was almost equivalent to a smile.

"What are you going to do with it, Dolly?" Mrs. Eberstein asked at length, wishing to get into the child's thoughts.

"I'll keep it, Aunt Harry. And when I have anything to wear it with, I will wear it. When I am old enough, I mean."

"What did you do to that young fellow, to make him show you such an attention?"

"Do to him? I didn't do anything to him, Aunt Harry!"

"It was very kind of him, wasn't it?"

"*Very* kind. I guess he is kind," said Dolly.

"Maybe we shall see him again one of these days, and have a chance to thank him. The midshipmen get leave to come on shore now and then."

But no such chance offered. The "Achilles" sailed out of those waters, and her place in the river was empty.

CHAPTER VI
END OF SCHOOL TERM

Dolly's school life is not further of importance in this history; or no further than may serve to fill out the picture already given of herself. A few smooth and uneventful years followed that first coming to Philadelphia; not therefore unfruitful because uneventful; perhaps the very contrary. The little girl made her way among her fellow pupils and the teachers, the masters and mistresses, the studies and drills which busied them all, with a kind of sweet facility; such as is born everywhere, I suppose, of good will. Whoever got into scrapes, it was never Dolly Copley; whoever was chidden for imperfect recitations, such rebukes never fell on her; whoever might be suspected of mischief, such suspicion could not rest for a moment on the fair, frank little face and those grave brown eyes. The most unpopular mistress had a friend in Dolly; the most refractory school-girl owned to a certain influence which went forth from her; the most uncomfortable of her companions found soothing in her presence. People who are happy themselves can drop a good deal of oil on the creaking machinery around them, and love is the only manufactory where the oil is made.

With all this smooth going, it may be supposed that Dolly's progress in knowledge and accomplishments would be at least

satisfactory; and it was more than that. She prospered in all she undertook. The teacher of mathematics said she had a good head for calculation; the French mistress declared nature had given her a good ear and accent; the dancing master found her agile and graceful as a young roe; the drawing master went beyond all these and averred that Miss Copley would distinguish him and herself. "She has an excellent manner of handling, madame," he said, – "and she has an eye for colour, and she will have a style that will be distinguished." Moreover, Dolly's voice was sweet and touching, and promised to be very effective.

So things went on at school; and at home each day bound faster the loving ties which united her with her kind protectors and relations. Every week grew and deepened the pleasure of the intercourse they held together. Those were happy years for all parties. Dolly had become rather more talkative, without being less of a bookworm. Vacations were sometimes spent with her mother and father, though not always, as the latter were sometimes travelling. Dolly missed nothing; Mrs. Eberstein's house had come to be a second home.

All this while the "Achilles" had never been heard of again in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia. Neither, though Dolly I am bound to say searched faithfully all the lists of ship's officers which were reported in any American ports, did she ever so much as see the name of A. Crowninshield. She always looked for it, wherever a chance of finding it might be; she never found it.

Such was the course of things, until Dolly had reached her

seventeenth year and was half through it. Then, in the spring, long before school term ended, came a sudden summons for her. Mr. Copley had received the appointment of a consulship in London; he and his family were about to transfer themselves immediately to this new sphere of activity, and Dolly of course must go along. Her books were hastily fetched from school, her clothes packed up; and Dolly and her kind friends in Walnut Street sat together the last evening in a very subdued frame of mind.

"I don't see what your father wanted of a consulship, or anything else that would take him out of his country!" Mr. Eberstein uttered his rather grumbling complaint. "He has enough to satisfy a man without that."

"But what papa likes is precisely something to take him out of the country. He likes change" – said Dolly sorrowfully.

"He won't have much change as American Consul in London," Mr. Eberstein returned. "Business will pin him pretty close."

"I suppose it will be a change at first," said Dolly; "and then, when he gets tired of it, he will give it up, and take something else."

"And you, little Dolly, you are accordingly to be shoved out into the great, great world, long before you are ready for it."

"Is the world any bigger over there than it is on this side?" said Dolly, with a gleam of fun.

"Well, yes," said Mr. Eberstein. "Most people think so. And London *is* a good deal bigger than Philadelphia."

"The world is very much alike all over," remarked Mrs.

Eberstein; "in one place a little more fascinating and dangerous, in another a little less."

"Will it be more or less, over there, for me, Aunt Harry?"

"It would be 'more' for you anywhere, Dolly, soon. Why you are between sixteen and seventeen; almost a woman!" Mrs. Eberstein said with a sigh.

"No, not yet, Aunt Harry. I'll be a girl yet awhile. I can be that in England, can't I, as well as here?"

"Better," said Mr. Eberstein.

"But the world, nevertheless, *is* a little bigger out there, Ned," his wife added.

"In what way, Aunt Harry? And what do you mean by the 'world' anyhow?"

"I mean what the Lord was speaking of, when He said to His disciples, 'If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.'"

"That means, bad people?"

"Some of them are by no means bad people. Some of them are delightful people."

"Then I do not quite understand, Aunt Harry. I thought it meant not only *bad* people, but gay people; pleasure lovers."

"Aren't you a lover of pleasure, Dolly?"

"Oh yes. But, Aunt Harry," Dolly said seriously, "I am *not* a 'lover of pleasure more than a lover of God.'"

"No, thanks to His goodness! However, Dolly, people may be

just as worldly without seeking pleasures at all. It isn't that."

"What is it, then?"

"I don't know how to put it. Ned, can you?"

"Why, Hal," said Mr. Eberstein pondering, "it comes to about this, I reckon. There are just two kingdoms in the world, upon earth I mean."

"Yes. Well? I know there are two kingdoms, and no neutral ground. But what is the dividing line? That is what we want to know."

"If there is no neutral ground, it follows that the border line of one kingdom is the border line of the other. To go out of one, is to go into the other."

"Well? Yes. That's plain."

"Then it is simple enough. What belongs to Christ, or what is done for Him or in His service, belongs to His kingdom. Of course, what is *not* Christ's, nor is done for Him, nor in His service, belongs to the world."

There was a silence here of some duration; and then Dolly exclaimed, "I see it. I shall know now."

"What, Dolly?"

"How to do, Aunt Harry."

"How to do what?"

"Everything. I was thinking particularly just then" – Dolly hesitated.

"Yes, of what?"

"Of dressing myself."

"Dressing yourself, you chicken?"

"Yes, Aunt Harry. I see it. If I do not dress for Christ, I do it for the world."

"Don't go into another extreme now, Dolly."

"No, Aunt Harry. I cannot be wrong, can I, if I do it for Christ?"

"I wonder how many girls of sixteen in the country have such a thought? And I wonder, how long will you be able to keep it, Dolly?"

"Why not, Aunt Harry?"

"O child! because you have got to meet the world."

"What will the world do to me?" Dolly asked, half laughing in her simple ignorance.

"When I think what it will do to you, Dolly, I am ready to break my heart. It will tempt you, child. It will tempt you with beauty, and with pleasant things; pleasant things that look so harmless! and it will seek to persuade you with sweet voices and with voices of authority; and it will show you everybody going one way, and that not your way."

"But I will follow Christ, Aunt Hal."

"Then you will have to bear reproach."

"I would rather bear the world's reproach, than His."

"If you don't get over-persuaded, child, or deafened with the voices!"

"She will have to do like the little girl in the fairy tale," said Mr. Eberstein; "stuff cotton in her ears. The little girl in the fairy

tale was going up a hill to get something at the top – what *was* she going for, that was at the top of the hill?"

"I know!" cried Dolly. "I remember. She was going for three things. The Singing bird and the Golden water, and – I forget what the third thing was."

"Well, you see what that means," Mr. Eberstein went on. "She was going up the hill for the Golden water at the top; and there were ten thousand voices in her ears tempting her to look round; and if she looked, she would be turned to stone. The road was lined with stones, which had once been pilgrims. You see, Dolly? Her only way was to stop her ears."

"I see, Uncle Ned."

"What shall Dolly stop her ears with?" asked Mrs. Eberstein.

"These words will do. 'Whether ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.'"

There was little more talking, for as the evening drew on, the heaviness of the parting weighed too hard upon all hearts. The next day Dolly made the journey to Boston, and from there to her parents' house; and her childhood's days were over.

CHAPTER VII
PLAYTHINGS

Dolly did not know that her childhood was over. Every pulse of her happy little heart said the contrary, when she found herself again among her old haunts and was going the rounds of them, the morning after her return home. She came in at last to her mother, flushed and warm.

"Mother, what are we going away for?" she began.

"Your father knows. I don't. Men never know when they are well off."

"Do women?"

"I used to think so."

"Is it as pleasant in England as it is here?"

"Depends on where you are placed, I suppose, and *how* you are placed. How can I tell? I have never been in England."

"Mother, we have got the prettiest little calf in the barn that you ever saw."

"In the barn! A queer place for a calf to be, it seems to me."

"Yes, because they want to keep it from the cow. Johnson is going to rear it, he says. I am so glad it is not to be killed! It is spotted, mother; all red and white; and so prettily spotted!"

An inarticulate sound from Mrs. Copley, which might mean anything.

"And, mother, I have been getting the eggs. And Johnson has a hen setting. We shall have chickens pretty soon."

"Dolly Copley, how old are you?"

"Sixteen last Christmas, mother."

"And seventeen next Christmas."

"Yes, ma'am, but next Christmas is not come yet."

"Seems to me, it is near enough for you to be something besides a child."

"What's the harm, mother?"

"Harm?" said Mrs. Copley with a sharp accent; "why, when one has a woman's work to do, one had better be a woman to do it. How is a child to fill a woman's place?"

"I have only a child's place to fill, just now," said Dolly merrily. "I have no woman's work to do, mother."

"Yes, you have. You have got to go into society, and play your part in society, and be married by and by; and *then* you'll know that a woman's part isn't so easy to play."

Dolly looked grave.

"But we are going to England, mother; where we know nobody. I don't see how we are to go into much society."

"Do you suppose," said Mrs. Copley very irately, "that with your father's position his wife and daughter will not be visited and receive invitations? That is the one thing that reconciles me to going. We shall have a very different sort of society from what we have here. Why you will go to court, Dolly; you will be presented; and of course you will see nothing but people of the very best

circles."

"I don't care about going to court."

"Why not? You are a goose; you know nothing about it. Why don't you want to go to court? Your father's daughter may, as well as some other people's. Why don't you care about it?"

"It would be a great deal of fuss; and no use."

"No use! Yes, it would; just the use I am telling you. It would introduce you to the best society."

"But I am not going to live in England all my life, mother."

"How do you know?" very sharply. "How do you know where you are going to live?"

"Why, father won't stay there always, will he?"

"I am sure I don't know what your father will take into his head. I may be called to end my days in Japan. But you – Look here; has your aunt made you as old-fashioned as she is herself?"

"How, mother?"

"I am sure I can't tell how! There are ever so many ways. There's the benevolent sort, and there's the devout sort, and there's the puritanical sort. Has she put it into your head that it is good to be a hermit and separate yourself from the rest of the world?"

Dolly laughed and denied that charge.

"She's a very good woman, I suppose; but she is ridiculous," Mrs. Copley went on. "Don't be ridiculous, whatever you are. You can't do any good to anybody by being ridiculous."

"But people may call things ridiculous, that are not ridiculous,

mother."

"Don't let them *call* you ridiculous, then," said Mrs. Copley, chopping her words in the way people do when impatience has the management of them. "You had better not. The world is pretty apt to be right."

Dolly let the subject go, and let it go from her mind too; giving herself to the delights of her chickens, and the calf, and the nests of eggs in the hay mow. More than half the time she was dancing about out of doors; as gay as the daffodils that were just opening, as delicate as the Van Thol tulips that were taking on slender streaks and threads of carmine in their half transparent white petals, as sweet as the white hyacinth that was blooming in Mrs. Copley's window. Within the house Dolly displayed another character, and soon became indispensable to her mother. In all consultations of business, in emergencies of packing, in perplexities of arrangements, Dolly was ready with a sweet, clear common sense, loving hands of skill, and an imperturbable cheerfulness and patience. It was only a few weeks that the confusion lasted; during those weeks Mrs. Copley came to know what sort of a daughter she had. And even Mr. Copley began to divine it.

Mr. Copley has been no more than mentioned. He was a comely, intelligent, active, energetic man; a very good specimen of a typical Yankee who has enjoyed the advantages of education and society. He had plenty of common sense, acute business faculties, and genial manners; and so was generally a popular man

among his compeers. His inherited family property made him more than independent; so his business dealings were entered into rather for amusement and to satisfy the inborn Yankee craving to be doing something, than for need or for gain. Mr. Copley laid no special value on money, beyond what went to make him comfortable. But he lacked any feeling for art, which might have made him a collector and connoisseur; he had no love for nature, which might have expended itself in grounds and gardens; he cared little for knowledge, except such as he could forthwith use. What was left to him but business? for he was not of those softly natures which sit down at home in the midst of their families and are content. However, Mr. Copley could value his home belongings, and had an eye to discern things.

He was watching Dolly, one day just before their departure, as she was busying herself with a bunch of violets; putting some of them in a glass, sticking some of them in her mother's hair, finally holding the bunch under her father's nose.

"Dolly," said her father, "I declare I don't know whether you are most of a child or a woman!"

"I suppose I can be both, father; can't I?"

"I don't know about that."

"So I tell her," said Mrs. Copley. "It's all very well as long as she is here; but I tell her she has got to give up being a child and playing with the chickens."

"Why must I?" said Dolly.

"You will find other playthings on the other side," said her

father, fondly putting his arm round her and drawing her up to him.

"Will they be as good as chickens? What will they be?"

"Yes, there, 'what will they be,' she asks! I do believe that Dolly has no idea," Mrs. Copley remarked.

"She will find out soon enough," said Mr. Copley contentedly.

"What will they be, father?" Dolly repeated, making for the present a plaything of her father's head; for both her soft arms were around it, and she was touching first one side and then the other side with her own cheeks. Mr. Copley seemed to enjoy the play, for he gave himself up to it luxuriously and made no answer.

"Dolly has been long enough in Philadelphia," Mrs. Copley went on. "It is time she was away."

"So I think."

"Father," said Dolly now, "have I done with going to school?"

There ensued a debate upon this question; Dolly herself taking the negative and her mother the affirmative side. She wanted her daughter at home, she said.

"But not till I am fit to be at home, mother?"

"Fit? Why are you not fit?" said Mrs. Copley. "You know as much as I did when I was married; and I should think that would be enough. I do not see what girls want with so much crammed into their heads, nowadays! It does them no good, and it does nobody else any good."

"What do you think you want, Dolly, more than you have already?" her father asked.

"Why, father, I do not know *anything*. I have only begun things."

"Humph! Not know anything. I suppose you can read and write and cipher?"

"And you can play and sing," added Mrs. Copley.

"Very little, mother."

"And your drawings are beautiful."

"Oh, no, mother! That is one especial thing that I want to do better; a great deal better."

"I think they are good enough. And you have music enough. What's the use? When you are married you will give it all up."

"My music and my drawing, mother?"

"Yes. Every girl does."

"But I am not going to be married."

"Not just yet," – said Mr. Copley, drawing the soft arms round his neck, – "not just yet, Dolly. But when a girl is known to have so much money as you will have, there are sure to be plenty of fellows after her. Somebody will catch you up, some of these days."

"Somebody who wants my money, father?"

"Everybody wants money" – Mr. Copley answered evasively.

"They would not come and tell you so, I suppose?"

"Not exactly. That isn't the game."

"Then they would pretend to like me, while they only wanted my money?"

"Mr. Copley, do you think what notions you are putting in

Dolly's head? Don't you know yet, that whatever you put in Dolly's head, stays there?" Mrs. Copley objected.

"I like that," said Dolly's father. "Most girls' heads are like paper fly traps – won't hold anything but a fly. Dolly, in the pocket of my overcoat that hangs up in the hall, there is something that concerns you."

"Which pocket, father?"

"Ay, you've got your head on your shoulders! That's right. In the inner breast pocket, my dear. You'll find a small packet, tied up in paper."

Being brought and duly opened, Mr. Copley's fingers took out of a small paper box a yet smaller package in silk paper and handed it to Dolly. It was a pretty little gold watch.

"Why didn't you wait till you go to Geneva, Mr. Copley?" said his wife. "You could have got it cheaper and better there."

"How do you know, my dear, without knowing how much I paid for this, or how good it is? I am not going to Geneva, either. Well, Dolly?"

Dolly gave her father a mute kiss, which was expressive.

"*You* think it will do, then. What will you wear it on? I should have thought of that. You must have a chain."

"Oh, I have got a chain!" Dolly cried, and off she ran to fetch it. She came back presently with the little box which had been sent her from the "Achilles," and sat down by the lamp to put the watch on the chain. Her father's eye rested on her as she sat there, and well it might. The lamp-light fell among the light loose curls

of brown hair, glanced from the white brow, showed the delicate flush with which delight had coloured her cheeks, and then lit up the little hands which were busy with gold and wreathen work of the cable chain. The eyes he could not see; the mouth, he thought, with its innocent half smile, was as sweet as a mouth could be. Mrs. Copley was looking that way too, but seeing somewhat else. Eyes do see in the same picture such different things.

"What have you got there, Dolly?"

"A chain, mother. I am so glad! I never could wear it, before. Now I am so glad."

"What is it?"

"A chain, mother," said Dolly, holding it up.

"What sort of a chain? Made of what?"

Dolly told her story. Mrs. Copley examined and wondered at the elegance of the work. Mr. Copley promised Dolly a chain of gold.

"I do not want it, father. I like this," said Dolly, putting the chain round her neck.

"Not better than a gold one?"

"Yes, father, I do."

"Why, child?"

"It reminds me of the time, and of the person that made it; and I like it for all that."

"Who was the person? what was his name?"

"A midshipman on the 'Achilles.' His name was Crowninshield."

"A good name," said Mr. Copley.

"Why that was five and a half years ago, child. Did he make such an impression on you? Where is he now?"

"I don't know."

"You have never seen him since?"

"Nor heard of him. I could not even find his name in any of the lists of officers of ships, that I saw sometimes in the paper."

"I'll look for it," said Mr. Copley.

But though he was as good as his word, he was no more successful than Dolly had been.

CHAPTER VIII
LONDON

Mrs. Copley did not like London. So she declared after a stay of some months had given her, as she supposed, an opportunity of judging. The house they inhabited was not in a sufficiently fashionable quarter, she complained; and society did not seem to open its doors readily to the new American consul.

"I suppose, mother, we have not been here long enough. People do not know us."

"What do you call 'long enough'?" said Mrs. Copley with sharp emphasis. "And how are people to know us, if they do not come to see us? When people are strangers, is the very time to go and make their acquaintance; I should say."

"English nature likes to know people before it makes their acquaintance," Mr. Copley remarked. "I do not think you have any cause to find fault."

"No; you have all *you* want in the way of society, and you have no notion how it is with me. That is men's way. And what do you expect to do with Dolly, shut up in this smoky old street? You might think of Dolly."

"Dolly, dear," said her father, "are you getting smoked out, like your mother? Do you want to go with me and see the Bank of England to-day?"

Dolly made a joyful spring to kiss her thanks, and then flew off to get ready; but stopped at the door.

"Won't you go too, mother?"

"And tire myself to death? No, thank you, Dolly. I am not so young as I was once."

"You are a very young woman for your years, my dear," said Mr. Copley gallantly.

"But I should like to know, Frank," said Mrs. Copley, thawing a little, "what you do mean to do with Dolly?"

"Take her to see the Bank of England. It's a wonderful institution."

"You know what I mean, Frank. Don't run away from my question. You have society enough, I suppose, of the kind that suits you; but Dolly and I are alone, or as near as possible. What is to become of Dolly, shut up here in smoke and fog? You should think of Dolly. I can stand it for myself."

"There'll be no want of people to think of Dolly."

"If they could see her; but they don't see her. How are they to see her?"

"I'll get you a place down in the country, if you like; out of the smoke."

"I should like it very much. But that will not help Dolly."

"Yes, it will; help her to keep fresh. I'll get her a pony."

"Mr. Copley, you will not answer me! I am talking of Dolly's prospects. You do not seem to consider them."

"How old is Dolly?"

"Seventeen."

"Too young for prospects, my dear."

"Not too young for us to think about it, and take care that she does not miss them. Mr. Copley, do you know Dolly is very handsome?"

"She is better than that!" said Mr. Copley proudly. "I understand faces, if I don't prospects. There is not the like of Dolly to be seen in Hyde Park any day."

"Why don't you take her to ride in the Park then, and let her be seen?"

"Do you want her to marry an Englishman?"

Mrs. Copley was silent, and before she spoke again Dolly came in, ready for her expedition.

London was not quite to Dolly the disappointing thing her mother declared it. She was at an age to find pleasure in everything from which a fine sense could bring it out; and not being burdened with thoughts about "prospects," and finding her own and her mother's society always sufficient for herself, Dolly went gaily on from day to day, like a bee from flower to flower; sucking sweetness in each one. She had a large and insatiable appetite for the sight and knowledge of everything that was worth seeing or knowing; it followed, that London was to her a rich treasure field. She delighted in viewing it under its historical aspect; she would study out the associations and the chronicled events connected with a particular point; and then, with her mind and heart full of the subject, go some day to visit

the place with her father. What pleasure she took in this way it is impossible to tell. Mr. Copley was excessively fond and proud of his daughter, even though her mother thought him so careless about her interests; his life was a busy one, but from time to time he would spare half a day to give to Dolly, and then they went sight-seeing together. Old houses, old gateways and courts, old corners and streets, where something had happened or somebody had lived that henceforth could never be forgotten, how Dolly studied them and hung about them! Mr. Copley himself cared for no historical associations, neither could he apprehend picturesque effects; what he did care for was Dolly; and for her sake he would linger hours, if need were, around some bit of old London; and find amusement enough the while in watching Dolly. Dolly studied like an antiquary, and dreamed like a romantic girl; and at the same time enjoyed fine effects with the true natural feeling of an artist; though Dolly was no artist. The sense had not been cultivated, but the feeling was born in her. So the British Museum was to her something quite beyond fairyland; a region of wonders, where past ages went by in procession; or better, stood still for her eyes to gaze upon them. The Tower was another place of indescribable fascination. How many visits they made to it I dare not say; Dolly never had enough; and her delight was so much of a feast to her father that he did not grudge the time nor mind what he would have called the dawdling. Indeed it was a sort of refuge to Mr. Copley, when business perplexities or iterations had fairly wearied him, which

sometimes happened; then he would flee away from the dust and confusion of present life in the city and lose himself with Dolly in the cool shades of the past. That might seem dusty to him too; but there was always a fresh spring of life in his little daughter which made a green place for him wherever she happened to be. So Mr. Copley was as contented with the condition of things at this time as it was in his nature to feel. He had enough society, as his wife had stated; he had all he wanted in that line; he was just as well contented to keep Dolly for the present at home and to himself. He did not want her to be snapped up by somebody, he said; and if you don't mean to have a fire, you had best not leave matches lying about; a sentiment which Mrs. Copley received with great scorn.

It would have, so far, suited the views of both parents, to send Dolly to some first-rate boarding school for a year or two. Only, they could not do without her. She was the staple of Mrs. Copley's life, and the spice of life to her husband. Dolly was kept at home therefore, and furnished with masters in music and drawing, and at her pressing request, in languages also. And just because she made diligent, conscientious use of these advantages and worked hard most of the time, Dolly the more richly enjoyed an occasional half day of wandering about with her father. She came home from her visit to the Bank of England in high glee and with a brave appetite for her late luncheon.

"Well," said Mrs. Copley, watching her, – "now you have tired yourself out again; and for what?"

"O mother, it was a very great sight!" said Dolly. "I wish you had been along. I think it has given me the best notion of the greatness of England that I have got from anything yet."

"Money isn't *everything*," said Mrs. Copley scornfully. "I dare say we have just as good banks in America."

"Father says, there is nothing equal to it in the world."

"That is because your father is so taken with everything English. He'd be sure to say that. I don't know why a bank in America shouldn't be as good as a bank here, or anywhere."

"It isn't that, mother. A bank might be *good*, in one sense; but it could not be such a magnificent establishment as this, anywhere but in England."

"Why not?"

"Oh, the abundance of wealth here, mother; and the scale of everything; and the superb order and system. English system is something beautiful." And Dolly went on to explain to her mother the arrangements of the bank, and in especial the order taken for the preservation and gradual destruction of the redeemed notes.

"I should like to know what is the use of such things as banks at all?" was Mrs. Copley's unsatisfied comment.

"Why mother? don't you know? they make business so much easier, and safer."

"I wish there was no such thing as banks, then."

"O mother! Why do you say that?"

"Then your father would maybe let business alone."

"But he is fond of business!"

"I don't think business is fond of him. He gets drawn into a speculation here and a speculation there, by some of these people he is always with; and some day he will do it once too often. He has enough for us all now; if he would only keep to his consul's business and let banks alone."

Mrs. Copley looked worried, and Dolly for a moment looked grave; but it was her mother's way to talk so.

"Why did he take the consulship?"

"Ask him! Because he would rather be a nobody in England than a somebody in America."

"Mother," said Dolly after a pause, "we have an invitation to dinner."

"Who?"

"Father and I."

"Not me!" cried Mrs. Copley. "You and your father, and not your father's wife!"

"I suppose the people do not know you, mother, nor know about you; that must be the reason."

"How do they know about you, pray?"

"They have seen me. At least one of them has; so father says."

"One of whom?"

"One of the family."

"What family is it?"

"A rich banker's family, father says. Mr. St. Leger."

"St. Leger. That is a good name here."

"They are very rich, father says, and have a beautiful place."

"Where?"

"Some miles out of London; a good many, I think."

"Where is your invitation?"

"Where? – Oh, it is not written. Mr. St. Leger asked father to come and bring me."

"And *Mrs.* St. Leger has sent you no invitation, then. Not even a card, Dolly?"

"Why no, mother. Was that necessary?"

"It would have been civil," said Mrs. Copley. "It is what she would have done to an Englishwoman. I suppose they think we don't know any better."

Dolly was silent, and Mrs. Copley presently went on. – "How can you go to dinner several miles away? You would have to come back in the night."

"Oh no; we could not do that. Mr. St. Leger asked us to stay over till next day."

"It is just like everything else in this miserable country!" Mrs. Copley exclaimed. "I wish I was at home!"

"Oh, why, mother? We shall go home by and by; why cannot you enjoy things, while we are here?"

"Enjoy what? Staying here in the house and seeing you and your father go off to dinners without me? At home I am Mrs. Copley, and it means something; here, it seems, I am Mr. Copley's housekeeper."

"But, mother, nobody meant any affront. And you will not see

us go off and leave you; for I shall stay at home."

"Indeed you will do no such thing! I am not going to have you asked anywhere, really asked to a dinner, and not go. You shall go, Dolly. But I really think Mr. Copley might have managed to let the people know you had a mother somewhere. That's what he would have done, if it wasn't for business. It is business that swallows him up; and I don't know for my part what life is good for so. Once I had a husband. Now, I declare I haven't got anything but you, Dolly."

"Mother, you *have* me," said the girl, kissing her. And the caress was so sweet that it reminded Mrs. Copley how much that one word "Dolly" signified; and she was quiet. And when Mr. Copley came home, and the subject was discussed anew, she limited herself to inquiries about the family and questions concerning Dolly's dress, refraining from all complaints on her own score.

"St. Leger?" said Mr. Copley. "Who is he? He's a goodish old fellow; sharp as a hawk in business; but he's solid; solid as the Bank. That's all there is about him; he is of no great count, except for his money. He'll never set the Thames on fire. What did he ask us for? – Humph! Well – he and I have had a good deal to do with each other. And then – " Mr. Copley paused and his eyes involuntarily went over the table to his daughter. "Do you remember, Dolly, being in my office one day, a month ago or more, when Mr. St. Leger came in? he and his son?"

Dolly remembered nothing about it; remembered indeed

being there, but not who came in.

"Well, *they* remember it," said Mr. Copley.

"Is it a good place for Dolly to go?"

"Dolly? Oh yes. Why not? They have a fine place out of town. Dolly will tell you about it when she has been there."

"And what must Dolly wear?" pursued Mrs. Copley.

"Wear? Oh, just what everybody wears. The regular thing, I suppose. Dolly may wear what she has a mind to."

"That is just what you know she cannot, Mr. Copley. At home she might; but these people here are so very particular."

"About dress? Not at all, my dear. English people let you go your own way in that as much as any people on the face of the earth. They do not care how you dress."

"They don't *care*, no," said Mrs. Copley; "they don't care if you went on your head; but all the same they judge you according to how you look and what you do. And us especially because we are foreigners. I don't want them to turn up their noses at Dolly because she is an American."

"I'd as lieve they did it for that as for anything," said Dolly laughing; "but I hope the people we are going to will know better."

"They *will* know better, there is no fear," answered her father.

The subject troubled Mrs. Copley's head, however, from that time till the day of the dinner; and even after Dolly and her father had driven off and were gone, she still debated with herself uneasily whether a darker dress would have done better, and

whether Dolly ought to have had flowers in her hair, to make her very best impression upon her entertainers. For Dolly had elected to wear white, and would deck herself with no ornament at all, neither ribband nor flower. Mrs. Copley half grumbled, yet could not but allow to herself that there was nothing to wish for in the finished effect; and Dolly was allowed to depart; but as I said, after she was gone, Mrs. Copley went on troubling herself with doubts on the question.

CHAPTER IX
THE PEACOCKS

No doubts troubled Dolly's mind during that drive, about dress or anything else. Her dress she had forgotten indeed; and the pain of leaving her mother at home was forced to give way before the multitude of new and pleasant impressions. That drive was pure enjoyment. The excitement and novelty of the occasion gave no doubt a spur to Dolly's spirits and quickened her perceptions; they were all alive, as the carriage rolled along over the smooth roads. What could be better than to drive so, on such an evening, through such a country? For the weather was perfect, the landscape exceedingly rich and fair, the vegetation in its glory. And the roads themselves were full of the most varied life, and offered to the little American girl a flashing, changing, very amusing and abundantly suggestive scene. Dolly's eyes were incessantly busy, yet her lips did not move unless to smile; and her father for a long time would not interrupt her meditations. Good that she should forget herself, he thought; if she were recalled to the practical present maybe she would grow nervous. That was the only thing Mr. Copley was afraid of. However, for him to keep absolute silence beyond a limited time was out of his nature.

"Are you happy, Dolly?" he asked her.

"Very happy, father! If only mother was with us."

"Ah, yes, it would have been rather pleasanter for you; but you must not mind that."

"I am afraid I do not mind it enough, I am so amused with everything. I cannot help it."

"That's right. Now, Dolly."

"Yes, father."

"I should like to know what you have been thinking of all this while. I have been watching the smiles coming and going."

"I do not know that I was thinking at all – until just now; just before you spoke."

"And of what then?"

"It came to me, I do not know why, a question. We have passed so many people who seemed as if they were enjoying themselves, – like me; – and so many pretty-looking places, where people might live happy, one would think; and the question somehow came to me, father, what I am going to do with my own life?"

"Do with it?" said Mr. Copley astonished; "why enjoy it, Dolly. Every day as much as to-day."

"But perhaps one cannot enjoy life always," said Dolly thoughtfully.

"All you can, then, dear; all you can. There is nothing to prevent *your* always enjoying it. You will have money enough; and that is the main thing. There is nothing to hinder your enjoying yourself."

"But, father, don't you think one ought to do more with one's life than that?"

"Yes; you'll marry one of these days, and so make somebody else enjoy himself."

"What would become of you and mother then?" asked Dolly shyly.

"We'd get along," said Mr. Copley. "What we care about, is to see you enjoy life, Dolly. Are you enjoying it now, puss?"

"Very much, father."

"Then so am I."

The carriage left the high road here, and Dolly's attention was again, seemingly, all bestowed on what she saw from its windows. Her father watched her, and could not observe that she was either timid or excited in the prospect of the new scenes upon which she was about to enter. Her big brown eyes were wide open, busy and interested, at the same time wholly self-forgetful. Self-forgetful they remained when arriving at the house, and when she was introduced to the family; and her manner consequently left nothing to be desired. Yet house and grounds and establishment were on a scale to which Dolly hitherto had been entirely unaccustomed.

There was a small dinner party gathered, and Dolly was taken in to table by young Mr. St. Leger, the son of their host. Dolly had seen this gentleman before, and so in this concourse of strangers she felt more at home with him than with anybody. Young Mr. St. Leger was a very handsome fellow; with regular features and

soft, rather lazy, blue eyes, which, however, were not insipid. Dolly rather liked him; the expression of his features was gentle and good, so were his manners. He seemed well pleased with his choice of a companion, and did his best to make Dolly pleased also.

"You are new in this part of the world?" he remarked to her.

"I am new in any part of the world," said Dolly, dimpling, as she did when something struck her funnily. "I am not very old yet."

"No, I see," said her companion, laughing a little, though in some doubt whether he or she had made the fun. "How do you like us? Or haven't you been long enough here to judge?"

"I have been in England a good many months."

"Then is it a fair question?"

"All questions are fair," said Dolly. "I like some things here very much."

"I should be delighted to know what."

"I'll tell you," said Dolly's father, who sat opposite and had caught the question. "She likes an old suit of armour or a collection of old stones in the form of an arch or a gateway; and in the presence of the crown jewels she was almost as bad as that Scotch lady who worshipped the old Regalia of the northern kingdom. Only it was the antiquity that Dolly worshipped, you know; not the royalty."

"What is there in antiquity?" said Mr. St. Leger, turning his eyes again curiously to Dolly. "Old things were young once; how

are they any better for being old?"

"Not any better; only more interesting."

"Pray tell me why."

"Think of what those old stones have seen."

"Pardon me; they have not *seen* anything."

"Think of the eyes that have seen them, then. Or stand before one of those old suits of armour in the Tower, and think where it has been. Think of the changes that have come; and what a strange witness it is for the things that were and have passed away."

"I am more interested in the present," said the young man. "I perceive you are romantic."

Dolly was silent. She thought one of those halls of old armour in the Tower was in its attractions very far beyond the present dinner table; although indeed this amused her. Presently her companion began again and gave her details about all the guests; who they were, and how they happened to be there; and then suddenly asked her if she had ever been to the races? Dolly inquired what races; and was informed that the Epsom races were just beginning. Would she like to go to them? was inquired eagerly.

Dolly had no idea what was the real character of the show she was asked about; and she answered in accordance with her general craving to see everything. Nevertheless she was somewhat surprised, when the gentlemen came up from dinner, to hear the proposition earnestly made; made by both Mr. and

Mrs. St. Leger; that she and her father should go with them the next day to the Epsom races; and she was greatly astonished to hear her father agree to the proposal, although the acceptance of it involved the staying another day away from home and the sleeping a second night at the St. Leger place. But Dolly was not consulted. The family expressed their pleasure in undoubted terms, and young Mr. St. Leger's blue eyes had a gleam of satisfaction in them, as he assured Dolly that now they would "show her something of interest in the present."

Dolly was the youngest guest in the house, and by all rules the one entitled to least consideration; yet she went to sleep that night in a chamber the most superb she had ever inhabited in her life. She looked around her with wonder at the richness of every matter of detail, and a little private query how *she*, little Dolly Copley, came to be so lodged? Her mother would have no reason *here* to complain of want of due regard. And all the evening there had been no such complaint to make. People had been very kind, Dolly said to herself as she was falling asleep. But how *could* her father have consented to stay another day, for any races in the world – leaving her mother alone? But she could not help it; and no doubt the next day would be amusing; to-day had been amusing – and Dolly's thoughts went no further.

The next morning everybody drove or rode to the races. Dolly herself was taken by young Mr. St. Leger, along with one of his sisters, in an elegant little vehicle for which she knew no name. It was very comfortable, and they drove very fast – till the

crowd hindered them, that is; and certainly Dolly was amused. All was novel and strange to her; the concourse, the equipages, the people, the horses, even before they arrived at the race grounds. There a good position was secured, and Dolly saw the whole of that day's performances. Mr. St. Leger attended to her unremittingly; he and his sister explained everything, and pointed out the people of mark within their range of vision; his blue eyes grew quite animated, and looked into Dolly's to see what they could find there, of response or otherwise. And Dolly's eyes were grave and wide-awake, intent, very busy, very lively, but how far they were brightened with pleasure he could not tell. They were bright, he saw that; fearless, pure, sweet eyes, that yet baffled him; no trace of self-consciousness or self-seeking was to be found in them; and young St. Leger stood a little in awe, as common men will, before a face so uncommon. He ventured no direct question for the satisfying of his curiosity until they had returned, and dinner was over. Indeed he did not venture it then; it was his father who asked it. He too had observed the simple, well-bred, lovely little maiden, and had a little curiosity on his own part.

"Well, Miss Copley – now you have seen Epsom, how do you like it?"

Dolly hesitated. "I have been very much interested, sir, thank you," she said gravely.

"But how do you *like* it? Did you enjoy it?"

Dolly hesitated again. Finally smiled and confessed. "I was

sorry for the horses."

"Sorry for the horses!" her host repeated. "What for?"

"Yes, what for?" added the younger St. Leger. "They were not ill treated."

"No, – " said Dolly doubtfully, "perhaps not, – but they were running very hard, and for nothing."

"For nothing!" echoed Mr. St. Leger again. "It was for a good many thousand pounds. There's many a one was there to-day who wishes they had run for nothing!"

"But after all, that is for nothing," said Dolly. "It is no good to anybody."

"Except to those that win," said the old gentleman. "Except to those that win!" Probably *he* had won.

Dolly wanted to get out of the conversation. She made no answer. Another gentleman spoke up, and opined, were it not for the money won and lost, the whole thing would fail of its attraction. It would be no sport indeed, if the horses ran *for nothing*. "Do you have no races in – a – your country?" he asked Dolly.

Dolly believed so. She had never been present at them.

"Nothing like Epsom," said her father. "We shall have nothing to show like that for some time. But Dolly takes practical views. I saw her smiling out of the windows, as we drove along, coming here yesterday; and I asked her what she was thinking of? I expected to hear her say, the beauty of the plantations, or the richness of the country, or the elegance and variety of the

equipages we passed. She answered me she was thinking *what she should do with her life!*"

There was a general gentle note of amusement audible through the room, but old Mr. St. Leger laughed out in a broad "ha, ha."

"What did you conclude, my dear?" said he. "What did you conclude? I am interested to know."

"I could not conclude then, sir," said Dolly, bearing the laugh very well, with a pretty little peach-blossom blush coming upon her cheeks.

"'Tisn't difficult to know," the old gentleman went on, not unkindly watching Dolly's face play. "There is one pretty certain lot for a pretty young woman. She will manage her household, take care of her husband, and bring up her children, – one of these days."

"That is not precisely the ambition of all pretty young women," remarked one of the party; while Mrs. St. Leger good humouredly drew Dolly down to a seat beside her and engrossed her attention.

"You meant the words perhaps in another sense, more practical, that your father did not think of. You were thinking maybe what profession you would follow?"

"I beg your pardon, ma'am!" said Dolly, quite perplexed now. "How do you mean, profession?"

"Yes; perhaps you were thinking of being a governess some day, or a teacher, or something of that sort; were you?"

Dolly's face dimpled all over in a way that seemed to young St.

Leger the very prettiest, winningest, most uncommon loveliness that his eyes had ever been blessed with. Said eyes were inseparable from Dolly; he had no attention but for her looks and words; and his mother knew as much, while she too looked at the girl and waited for her answer.

"Oh no," Dolly said; "I was not thinking of any such thing. My father does not wish me to do anything of the kind."

"Then what *did* you mean, my dear?"

Dolly lifted a pair of sweet grave eyes to the face of her questioner; a full, rather bloated face, very florid; with an expression of eyes kindly indeed, but unresting, dissatisfied; or if that is too strong a word, not content. Dolly looked at all this and answered —

"I don't want to live merely to live, ma'am."

"Don't you? What more do you want? To live pleasantly, of course; for not to do *that*, is not what I call living."

"I was not thinking of pleasant living. But – I do not want my life to be like those horses running to-day," said Dolly smiling; "for nothing; of no use."

"Don't you think a woman is of use and fills her place, my dear, who looks after her household and attends to her family, and does her duty by society?"

"Yes," said Dolly hesitating, – "but that is not enough." The girl was thinking of her own mother at the moment.

"Not enough? Why, yes, it is enough. That is a woman's place and business. What else would you do?"

Dolly was in some embarrassment now. She must answer, for Mrs. St. Leger was waiting for it; but her answer could not be understood. Her eye took in again the rich appliances for present enjoyment which filled the room, above, below, and around her; and then she said, her eye coming back —

"I would like my life to be good for something that would not pass away."

"Not pass away? Why, everything passes away, my child" (and there came a sigh here), – "in time. The thing is to make the best of them while we have them."

Is that all? thought Dolly, as she noticed the untested, rather sad look of her hostess's face; and she wished she could say more, but she dared not. Then young Mr. St. Leger bent forward, and inquired what she could be thinking of that would *not* pass away? His mother saw the look with which his blue eyes sought the face of the little stranger; and turned away with another sigh, born half of sympathy with her boy's feeling and half of jealousy against the subject of it. Dolly saw the look too, but did not comprehend it. She simply wondered why these people put her through the catechism so?

"What could you be thinking of?" St. Leger repeated, sliding into the seat his mother had quitted.

"Don't you know anything that will last?" Dolly retorted.

"No," said the young man, laughing. "Do you? Except that I have heard that 'A thing of beauty is a joy forever.'"

This, which was a remarkable flight for St. Leger, was lost

upon simple Dolly.

"Oh, I know that is true," she answered; "but that is just a way of speaking. It would not be a joy to me, if I had not something else to hold to. I am sorry for you."

"Really? I wish I could think that. It would be delightful to have you sorry for me."

"It would be much better not to need it."

"I don't know about that. Perhaps, if you were very sorry for me, you would try to teach me better."

"Perhaps; but I shall not have time. I suppose we shall go away very early in the morning."

"I should like to show you the gardens, first."

"Haven't we seen them?"

"Why, of course not. All that you have seen is a little shrubbery and a bit of the park. Suppose we go over the gardens in the morning?"

"I am sure we shall return home immediately after breakfast."

"Before breakfast then? Why not?"

This plan went into effect. It was an occasion of great pleasure to both parties. No better time could be for seeing the utmost beauty of the flowers; and Dolly wandered in what was to her a wilderness of an enchanted land. Breakfast was forgotten; and young St. Leger was so charmed with this perfectly fresh, simple, and lively nature, that he for his part was willing to forget it indefinitely. Dolly's utter delight, and her intelligent, quick apprehension, the sparkle in her eye, the happy colour in her

cheeks, made her to his fancy the rarest thing he had ever seen. The gardener, who was summoned to give information of which his young master was not possessed, entertained quite the same opinion; and thanks to his admiring gratification Dolly went back to the house the possessor of a most superb bouquet, which he had cut for her and offered through Mr. St. Leger.

There were some significant half smiles around the breakfast table, as the young pair and the flowers made their appearance. St. Leger braved them; Dolly did not see them. Her sweet eyes were full of the blissful enchantment still. Immediately after breakfast, as she had said, her father took leave.

Mrs. Copley had awaited their coming in a mood half irritation, half gratification. The latter conquered when she saw Dolly.

"Now tell me all about it!" she said, before Dolly even could take off her bonnet.

"She went to the races," said Mr. Copley.

"That's a queer place for Dolly to go, Mr. Copley."

"Not at all. Everybody goes that can go."

"I think it's a queer place for young ladies to go," persisted the mother.

"It is a queer place enough for anybody, if you come to that; but no worse for them than for others; and it is they make the scene so pretty as it is."

"I can't imagine how there should be anything pretty in seeing horses run to death!" said Mrs. Copley.

"I just said it is the pretty girls that give the charm," said her husband. "Though *I* can see some beauty in a fine horse, and in good riding; and they understand riding, those Epsom jockeys."

"Jockeys!" his wife repeated. "I don't want to hear you talk about jockeys, Mr. Copley."

"I am not going to, my dear. I give up the field to Dolly."

"Mother, the first thing was the place. It is a most beautiful place."

"The race-ground?"

"No, no, mother; Mr. St. Leger's place. 'The Peacocks,' they call it."

"What do they give it such a ridiculous name for?"

"I don't know. Perhaps they used to have a great many peacocks. But the place is the most beautiful place I ever saw. Mother, we were half an hour driving from the lodge at the park gate to the house."

"The road so bad?"

"So *long*, mother; think of it; half an hour through the park woods, until we carne out upon the great lawn dotted with the noblest trees you ever saw."

"Better than the trees in Boston common? I guess not," said Mrs. Copley.

"Those are good trees, mother, but nothing to these. These are just magnificent."

"I don't see why fine trees cannot grow as well on American ground as on English," said Mrs. Copley incredulously.

"Give them time enough," put in her husband.

"Time!"

"Yes. We are a new country, comparatively, my dear. These old oaks here have been growing for hundreds of years."

"And what should hinder them from growing hundreds of years over there? I suppose the *ground* is as old as England; if Columbus didn't discover it all at once."

"The ground," said Mr. Copley, eyeing the floor between his boots, – "yes, the ground; but it takes more than ground to make large trees. It takes good ground, and favouring climate, and culture; or at least to be let alone. Now we don't let things alone in America."

"I know *you* don't," said his wife. "Well, Dolly, go on with your story."

"Well, mother, – there were these grand old trees, and beautiful grass under them, and cattle here and there, and the house showing in the distance. I did not like the house so very much, when we came to it; it is not old; but it is exceedingly handsome, and most beautifully furnished. I never had such a room in my life, as I have slept in these two nights."

"And yet you don't like it!" put in Mr. Copley.

"I like it," said Dolly slowly. "I like all the comfort of it; but I don't think it is very pretty, father. It's very *new*."

"New!" said her father. "What's the harm of a thing's being new? And what is the charm of its being old?"

"I don't know," said Dolly thoughtfully; "but I like it. Then,

mother, came the dinner; and the dinner was like the house."

"That don't tell me anything," exclaimed Mrs. Copley. "What was the house like?"

"Mother, you go first into a great hall, set all round with marble figures – statues – and with a heavy staircase going up at one side. It's all marble. But oh, the flower garden is lovely!"

"Well, tell me about the house," said Mrs. Copley. "And the dinner. Who was there?"

"I don't know," said Dolly; "quite a company. There were one or two foreign gentlemen; a count somebody and a baron somebody; there was an English judge, and his wife, and two or three other ladies and gentlemen."

"How did you like the gentlemen, Dolly?" her father asked here.

"I had hardly anything to do with them, except the two Mr. St. Legers."

"How did you like *them?* I suppose, on your principle, you would tell me that you liked the *old* one?"

"Never mind them," said Mrs. Copley; "go on about the dinner. What did you have?"

"Oh, everything, mother; and the most beautiful fruit at dessert; fruit from their own hothouses; and I saw the hothouses, afterwards. Most beautiful! the purple and white grapes were hanging in thick clusters all over the vines; and quantities of different sorts of pines were growing in another hothouse. I had a bunch of Frontignacs this morning before breakfast, father; and

I never had grapes taste so good."

"Yes, you must have wanted something," said Mr. Copley; "wandering about among flowers and fruit till ten o'clock without anything to eat!"

"Poor Mr. St. Leger!" said Dolly. "But he was very kind. They were all very kind. If they only would not drink wine so!"

"Wine!" Mrs. Copley exclaimed.

"It was all dinner time; it began with the soup, and it did not end with the fruit, for the gentlemen sat on drinking after we had left them. And they had been drinking all dinner time; the decanters just went round and round."

"Nonsense, Dolly!" her father said; "you are unaccustomed to the world, that is all. There was none but the most moderate drinking."

"It was all dinner time, father."

"That is the custom of gentlemen here. It is always so. Tell your mother about the races."

"I don't like the races."

"Why not?"

"Well, tell me what they were, at any rate," said Mrs. Copley. "It is the least you can do."

"I don't know how to tell you," said Dolly. "I will try. Imagine a great flat plain, mother, level as far as the eye can see. Imagine a straight line marked out, where the horses are to run; and at the end of it a post, which is the goal, and there is the judges' stand. All about this course, on both sides, that is towards the latter

part of the course, fancy rows of carriages, drawn up as close as they can stand, the horses taken out; and on these carriages a crowd of people packed as thick as they can find room to sit and stand. They talk and laugh and discuss the horses. By and by you hear a cry that the horses have set off; and then everybody looks to see them coming, with all sorts of glasses and telescopes; and everybody is still, waiting and watching, until I suppose the horses get near enough for people to begin to judge how the race will turn out; and then begins the fearfullest uproar you ever heard, everybody betting and taking bets. *Everybody* seemed to be doing it, even ladies. And with the betting comes the shouting, and the cursing, and the cheering on this one and that one; it was a regular Babel. Even the ladies betted."

"Every one does it," said Mr. Copley.

"And the poor horses come running, and driven to run as hard as they can; beautiful horses too, some of them; running to decide all those bets! I don't think it is an amusement for civilised people."

"Why not?" said her father.

"It is barbarous. There is no sense in it. If the white horse beats the black, I'll pay you a thousand pounds; but if the black horse beats the white, you shall pay me two thousand. Is there any sense in that?"

"Some sense in a thousand pound."

"Lost" – said Dolly.

"It is better not to lose, certainly."

"But somebody must lose. And people bet in a heat, before they know what they ought to say; and bet more than they have to spare; I saw it yesterday."

"*You* didn't bet, Mr. Copley?" said his wife.

"A trifle. My dear, when one is in Rome, one must do as the Romans do."

"Did you lose?"

"I gained, a matter of fifty pounds."

"Who did you gain it from, father?"

"Lawrence St. Leger."

"He has no right to bet with his father's money."

"Perhaps it is his own. I will give you twenty pound of it, Dolly, to do what you like with."

But Dolly would have none of it. If it was to be peace money, it made no peace with her.

CHAPTER X
BRIERLEY COTTAGE

A few months later than this, it happened one day that Mr. Copley was surprised in his office by a visit from young St. Leger. Mr. Copley was sitting at a table in his own private room. It was not what you would call a very comfortable room; rather bare and desolate looking; a carpet and some chairs and desks and a table being the only furniture. The table was heaped up with papers, and desks and floor alike testified to an amount of heterogeneous business. Busy the Consul undoubtedly was, writing and studying; nevertheless, he welcomed his visitor. The young man came in like an inhabitant of another world, as he was; in spotlessly neat attire, leisurely manner, and with his blue eyes sleepily nonchalant at the sight of all the stir of all the world. But they smiled at Mr. Copley.

"You seem to have your bands full," he remarked.

"Rather. Don't I? Awfully! Secretary taken sick – confoundedly inconvenient." Mr. Copley went on writing as he spoke.

"There are plenty of secretaries to be had."

"Yes, but I haven't got hold of 'em yet. What brings you here, Lawrence? Not business, I suppose?"

"Not business with the American Consul."

"No. I made out so much by myself. What is it? I see all's right with you, by your face."

"Thank you. Quite so. But you can't attend to me just now."

"Go ahead," said Mr. Copley, whose pen did not cease to scribble. "I can hear. No time for anything like the present minute. I've got *this* case by heart, and don't need to think about it. Go on, Lawrence. Has your father sent you to me?"

"No."

"Sit down, and tell me what I can do for you."

Mr. St. Leger sat down, but did not immediately comply with the rest of the invitation. He rested his elbow on the table, looked at Mr. Copley's pen for a few minutes, and said nothing; until Mr. Copley again glanced up at his face.

"I do not know that you can do anything for me," said the young man then; "only you can perhaps answer a question or two. Mr. Copley, would you like to have me for a son-in-law?"

"No," said the Consul shortly; "nor any other man. I'd as lieve have you as anybody, Lawrence."

"Thank you. I couldn't expect more. But you must allow somebody in that capacity, Mr. Copley."

"Must I? Depends on how much Dolly likes somebody."

"That is just what I want to find out about myself," said the young man eagerly. "Then you would not put any hindrance?"

"In the way of Dolly's happiness? Not if I know it. But *that's* got to be proved."

"You know, Mr. Copley, she would be happy with me."

"How do I know that? I know nothing of the kind. It all depends on Dolly, I tell you. What does she think about it?"

"That's just what I don't know and cannot find out. I have no chance. I cannot get sight of her."

"Her mother's sick, you see. It keeps Dolly at home."

"My mother has proposed several times to take Miss Copley out with her, and she will not go."

"She's very kind, and we are grateful; but Dolly won't leave her mother."

"So she says. Then how am I to see her, Mr. Copley? I can't expect her to like me if I never see her."

"I don't know, my boy. Wait till better times."

"Wait" is a word that lovers never want to hear; and Lawrence sat discontentedly watching the play of Mr. Copley's pen.

"You know it would be all right about the money," he said at length.

"Yes, yes; between your father and her father, I guess we could make it comfortable for you two. But the thing is all the while, what Dolly thinks of you."

"And how am I to find that out?"

"Can't tell, I declare. Unless you volunteer to become my secretary."

"Does your secretary live in your family?"

"Of course he does. One of us completely."

"Will you take me, Mr. Copley?"

"Yes, but you would never take the drudgery. It is not in your

line."

"Try me," said the young man. "I'll take it at once. Will you have me, Mr. Copley? But *she* must not know what you take me for. I don't care for the drudgery. Will you let me come? On trial?"

"Why is the boy in earnest? This is Jacob and Rachel over again!"

"Not for seven years, I hope."

"No, I shall not stay in this old crib as long as that. The question will have to be decided sooner. We haven't so much time to spare as those old patriarchs. But Dolly must have time to make up her mind, if it takes seven years. She is a queer little piece, and usually has a mind of her own. About this affair she certainly will. I'll give Mrs. Copley a hint to keep quiet, and Dolly will never suspect anything."

Lawrence was so thoroughly in earnest that he insisted on going to work at once. And the next day he was introduced at the house and made at home there.

It was quite true that Mrs. Copley was unwell; the doctors were not yet agreed as to the cause. She was feeble and nervous and feverish, and Dolly's time was wholly devoted to her. In these circumstances St. Leger's coming into the family made a very pleasant change. Dolly wondered a little that the rich banker's son should care to do business in the American Consul's office; but she troubled her head little about it. What he did in the office was out of her sphere; at home, in the family, he was a great

improvement on the former secretary. Mr. Barr, his predecessor, had been an awkward, angular, taciturn fourth person in the house; a machine of the pen; nothing more. Mr. St. Leger brought quite a new life into the family circle. It is true, he was himself no great talker; but his blue eyes were eloquent. They were beautiful eyes; and they spoke of kindness of heart, gentleness of disposition, and undoubted liking for his present companions. There was refinement too, and the habit of the world, and the power of comprehending at least what others spoke; and gentle as he was, there was also now and then a gleam which showed some fire and some persistent self-will; that amount of backbone without which a man's agreeable qualities go for nothing with women. It was pleasant, his respectful attention to Mrs. Copley; it was pleasant too the assistance he was to Mr. Copley's monologues; if he did not say a great deal himself, his blue eyes gave intelligent heed, and he could also now and then say a word in the right place. With Dolly he took very soon the familiar habit of a brother. She liked him, she liked to pour out his coffee for him, it amused her to hear her father talk to him, she was grateful for his kindness to her mother; and before long the words exchanged between themselves came in the easy, enjoyable tone of a thorough good understanding. I don't know but St. Leger would have liked a little more shyness on her part. Dolly was not given to shyness in any company; and as to being shy with him, she would as soon have thought of being on terms of ceremony with Berdan, the great hound that her father was so

proud of. And poor St. Leger was more hopelessly in love every day. Dolly was so fresh and cool and sweet, as she came down to breakfast in her white wrapper; she was so despairingly careless and free; and at evening, dressed for dinner, she was so quiet and simple and graceful; it was another thing, he said to himself, seeing a girl in this way, from dancing with her in a cloud of lace and flowers in a crowded room, and talking conventional nothings. Now, on the contrary, he was always admiring Dolly's practical business ways; the quick eye and capable hand; the efficient attention she bestowed on the affairs of the household and gave to her father's and mother's comfort, and also not less to his own. And she was quaint; she moved curiosity. With all her beauty, she never seemed to think of her looks; and with all her spirit and sense, she never seemed to talk but when she had something to say; while yet, if anything in the conversation deserved it, it was worth while to catch the sparkle of Dolly's eye and see her face dimple. Nevertheless, she would often sit for a long time silent at the table, when others were talking, and remind nobody voluntarily of her presence.

Spring had come now, and London was filling; and Lawrence was hoping for some gaieties that would draw Dolly out into society, notwithstanding his secret confession about ball rooms. He wanted to see how she would bear the great world, how she would meet it; but still more he hoped to have some chance to make himself of importance to her. And then the doctors decided that Mrs. Copley must go into the country.

What was to be done? Mr. Copley could not quit London without giving up his office. To any distance Mrs. Copley could not go without him. The dilemma, which Lawrence at first had heard of with dismay, turned for his advantage; or he hoped so. His father owned a cottage in a pretty part of the country, not a great many miles from London, which cottage just then was untenanted. Mr. Copley could run down there any day (so could he); and Mrs. Copley would be in excellent air, with beautiful surroundings. This plan was agreed to, and Lawrence hurried away to make the needful arrangements with his father and at the cottage.

"Oh dear!" said Mrs. Copley, when all this was communicated to her, – "why can't we go home?"

"Father is not ready for that, mother," Dolly said somewhat sadly.

"Where is this place you are talking of?"

"Down in Berkshire. Mr. St. Leger says you will be sure to like it."

"Mr. St. Leger doesn't know everything. Is the house furnished?"

"I believe so. Oh, I hope it will be very pleasant, mother dear. It's a pretty place; and they say it will be very good for you."

"Who says so?"

"The doctors."

"*They* don't know everything, either. I tell you what I believe would do me good, Dolly, only your father never wants what I

want, unless he wants it at a different time; I should like to go travelling."

"Travelling! – Where?" Dolly exclaimed and inquired.

"Anywhere. I want a change. I am so tired of London, I could die! I have swallowed dust and fog enough to kill me. I should like to go where there is no dust. That would be a change. I should like to go to Venice."

"Venice! So should I," said Dolly in a changed tone. "Well, mother, we'll go down first to this cottage in the country – they say it's delightful there; – and then, if it does you good, you'll be well enough, and we will coax father to take us to Italy."

"I don't care about Italy. I only want to be quiet in Venice, where there are no carts or omnibusses. I don't believe this cottage will do me one bit of good."

"Mother, I guess it will. At any rate, I suppose we must try."

"I wish your father could have been contented at home, when he was well off. It's very unlucky he ever brought us here. I don't see what is to become of you, for my part."

Dolly suppressed a sigh at this point.

"You know what the Bible says, mother. 'All things shall work together for good, to them that love God.'"

"I don't want to hear that sort of talk, Dolly."

"Why not, mother?"

"It don't mean anything. I would rather have people show their religion in their lives, than hear them talk about it."

"But, mother, isn't there comfort in those words?"

"No. It ain't true."

"O mother! *What* isn't true?"

"That. There is a difference between things, and there is no use trying to make out they're all alike. Sour isn't sweet, and hard ain't soft. What's the use of talking as if it was? I always like to look at things just as they are."

"But, mother!" —

"Now, don't talk, Dolly, but just tell me. What is the good of my getting sick just now? just now, when you ought to be going into company? And we have got to give up our house, and you and I go and bury ourselves down in some out-of-the-way place, and your father get along as he can; and how we shall get along without him to manage, I am sure I don't know."

"He will run down to see us often, mother."

"The master's eye wants to be all the while on the spot, if anything is to keep straight."

"But this is such a little spot; I think my eye can manage it."

"Then how are you going to take care of me? – if you are overseeing the place. And I don't believe my nerves are going to stand it, all alone down there. It'll be lonely. I'd rather hear the carts rattle. It's dreadful, to hear nothing."

"Well, we will try how it goes, mother; and if it does not go well, we will try somewhere else."

The house in town was given up, and Mr. Copley moved into lodgings. Some furniture and two servants were sent down to the cottage; but the very day when the ladies were to follow,

Mr. Copley was taken possession of by some really important business. The secretary volunteered to supply his place; and in his company Mrs. Copley and Dolly made the little journey, one warm summer day.

Dolly had her own causes for anxiety, the weightier that they must be kept to herself. Nevertheless, the influence of sweet nature could not be withstood. The change from city streets and crowds to the green leafiness of June in the country, the quiet of unpaved roads, the deliciousness of the air full of scents from woodland and field, excited Dolly like champagne. Every nerve thrilled with delight; her eyes could not get enough, nor her lungs. And when they arrived at the cottage, Brierley Cottage it was called, she was filled with a glad surprise. It was no common, close, musty, uncomfortable little dwelling; but a roomy old house with plenty of space, dark oak wainscotings, casement windows with little diamond panes, and a wide porch covered with climbing roses and honeysuckle. These were in blossom now, and the air was perfumed with their incomparable sweetness. Round the house lay a small garden ground, which having been some time without care looked pretty wild.

Dolly uttered her delight as the party entered the porch. Mrs. Copley passed on silently, looking at everything with critical eyes.

"What a charming old house, mother! so airy and so old-fashioned, and *everything* so nice."

"I am afraid there is not much furniture in it," remarked the

secretary.

"We don't want much, for two people," said Dolly gaily.

"But when your father brings a dinner party down," said Mrs. Copley; "how does he suppose we shall manage then? You must have chairs for people to sit on."

Dolly did not answer; it had struck her that her father had no intention of bringing dinner parties down, and that he had made his arrangements with an evident exclusion of any such idea. He had thought two women servants enough. For the rest, leaving parties out of consideration, the house had a rambling supply of old furniture, suiting it well enough; it looked pretty, and quaint, and cool; and Dolly for her part was well content.

They went over the place, taking a general survey; and then Mrs. Copley lay down on a lounge while supper was getting ready, and Dolly and Mr. St. Leger went out to the porch. Here, beyond the roses and honeysuckles, the eye found first the wild garden or pleasure ground. There was not much of it, and it was a mere tangle of what had once been pretty and sweet. It sloped, however, down to a little stream which formed the border of the property; and on the other side of this stream the ground rose in a grassy bank, set with most magnificent oaks and beeches. A little foot-bridge spanned the stream and made a picturesque point in the view, as a bridge always does. The sun was setting, throwing his light upon that grassy bank and playing in the branches of the great oaks and beeches. Dolly stood quite still, with her hands crossed upon her bosom, looking.

"The garden has had nothing done to it," said St. Leger. "That won't do. It's quite distressing."

"I suppose father never thought of engaging a gardener," said Dolly.

"We have gardeners to spare, I am sure, at home. I'll send over one to train those vines and put things in some shape. You'd find him useful, too, about the house. I'll send old Peters; he can come as well as not."

"Oh, thank you! But I don't know whether father would choose to afford a gardener," said Dolly low.

"He shall not afford it. I want him to come for my own comfort. You do not think I want your father to pay my gardener."

"You are very kind. What ground is that over there?"

"That? that is Brierley Park. It is a great place. The stream divides the park from this cottage ground."

"Can one go over the bridge?"

"Of course. The place is left to itself; nobody is at the house now."

"Why not?"

"I suppose they like some other place better," said St. Leger, shrugging his shoulders. "You would like to go and see the house and the pictures. The next time I come down I'll take you there."

"Oh, thank you! And may I go over among those grand trees? may I walk there?"

"Walk there, or ride there; you may do what you like; nobody

will hinder you. If you meet anybody that has a right to know, you can tell him who you are. But don't go to the house till I come to go with you."

"You are very good, Mr. St. Leger," said Dolly gratefully. But then, as if shy of what he might next say, she turned and went in to her mother. Dolly always kept Mr. St. Leger at a certain fine, insensible distance. He seemed to be very near; he was really very much at home in the family; nevertheless, an atmospheric wall, felt but not seen, divided him from Dolly. It was so invisible that it was unmanageable; it kept him at a distance.

CHAPTER XI
IN THE PARK

The next day was a delightful one in Dolly's experience. Mr. St. Leger went back to town early in the morning; and as soon as she was free of him, Dolly's delight began. She attended to her mother, and put her in comfort; next, she examined the house and its capabilities, and arranged the little household; and then she gave herself to the garden. It was an unmitigated wilderness. The roses had grown into irregular, wide-spreading shrubs, with waving, flaunting branches; yet sweet with their burden of blushing flowers. Lilac bushes had passed all bounds, and took up room most graspingly. Hawthorn and eglantine, roses of Sharon and stocky syringas, and other bushes and climbers, had entwined and confused their sprays and branches, till in places they formed an impenetrable mass. In other places, and even in the midst of this overgrown thicket, jessamine stars peeped out, lilies and violets grew half smothered, mignonette ran along where it could; even carnations and pinks were to be seen, in unhappy situations, and daisies and larkspur and scarlet geraniums, lupins and sweet peas, and I know not what more old-fashioned flowers, showed their fair faces here and there. It was bewildering, and beyond Dolly's powers to put in order. She wished for old Peter's arrival; and meantime cut and trimmed a

little here and there, gathered a nosegay of wildering blossoms, considered what might be done, and lost herself in the sweet June day.

At last it was growing near lunch time, and she went in. Mrs. Copley was lying on an old-fashioned lounge; and the room where she lay was brown with old oak, quaint with its diamond-paned casement windows, and cool with a general effect of wooden floor and little furniture; while roses looked in at the open window, and the light was tempered by the dark panelling and low ceiling. Dolly gave an exclamation of delight.

"What is it?" said Mrs. Copley fretfully.

"Mother, this place is so lovely! and this room, – do you know how perfectly pretty it is?"

"It isn't half furnished. Not half."

"But it is furnished enough. There are only two of us; and certainly here are all the things that we want, and a great deal more than we want; and it is so pretty! so pretty!"

"How long do you suppose there are to be only two of us?"

"I don't know that, mother. Lawrence St. Leger is just gone, and I don't want him back, for my part. In fact, I don't believe we have dinner enough for three."

"That's another thing. Where are we going to get anything to eat?"

"Lunch will be ready in a minute, mother."

"What have we got?"

"What you like. Frizzled beef and chocolate."

"I like it, – but I don't suppose it is very nourishing. Where are we to get what we want, Dolly? how are we to get bread, and butter, and marketing?"

"There's a village half a mile off. And, here is lunch on the table. We shall not starve to-day."

Mrs. Copley liked her chocolate and found the bread good. Nevertheless, she presently began again.

"Are we to live here alone the rest of our lives, Dolly? or what do you suppose your father's idea is? It's a very lonesome place, seems to me."

"Why, mother, we came here to get you well; and it's enough to make anybody well. It is the loveliest place I have ever seen, I think. Mr. St. Leger's grand establishment is nothing to it."

"And what do you mean by what you said about Lawrence St. Leger? Are you glad to have even *him* go away?"

"Yes, mother, a little bit. He was rather in my way."

"In your way! that's very ungrateful. How was he in your way?"

"Somebody to attend to, and somebody to attend to me. I like to be let alone. By and by, when you are sleeping, I shall go over and explore the park."

"What I don't understand," said Mrs. Copley, recurring to her former theme, "is, why, if he wanted me to be in the country, your father did not take a nice house somewhere just a little way out of London, – there are plenty of such places, – and have things handsome; so that he could entertain company, and we

could see somebody. We can have nobody here. It looks really quite like poor people."

"That isn't a very bad way to look," said Dolly calmly.

"*Not?* Like poor people?" cried Mrs. Copley. "Dolly, don't talk folly. Nobody likes that look, and you don't, either."

"I am not particularly afraid of it. But, mother, we do not want to entertain company while you are not well, you know."

"No; and so here you are shut up and seeing no creature. I wish we were at home!"

Dolly did not precisely wish that; not at least till she had had time to examine this new leaf of nature's book opened to her. And yet she sighed a response to her mother's words. It was all the response she made.

She was too tired with her unwonted gardening exertions to go further exploring that afternoon. It was not till a day or two later, when Dolly had become somewhat more acquainted with her new life and its conditions, that she crossed the bridge one fair, warm June evening, and set her hesitating steps upon what seemed to her a wonderful piece of ground. She entered it immediately upon crossing the bridge. The green glades of the park woods were before her; the old giants of the park trees stretched their great arms over her and shadowed her footsteps. Such mighty trees! their great stems stood as if they had been there for ever; the leafy crown of their heads was more majestic than any king's diadem, and gave its protecting shelter, each of them, to a wide domain of earth's minor growths. Underneath

their branches the turf was all green and gold, for the slant sun rays came in there and gold was in the tree tops, some of the same gold; and the green shadows and the golden bands and flecks of light were all still. There was no stir of air that evening. Silence, the stillness and solitude of a woodland, were all around; the only house visible from here was the cottage Dolly had just quitted, with its rose-covered porch.

Dolly went a little way, and stood still to look and listen, then went on a few steps more. The scene had a sort of regal beauty, not like anything she had ever known in her life before, and belonging to something her life had never touched. For this was not a primeval forest; it was not forest at all; it was a lordly pleasure ground. A "pleasaunee," for somebody's delight; kept so. There was no ragged underbrush; there were no wildering bushes and briars; the green turf swept away out of sight under the great old trees clean and soft; and they, the oaks and beeches, stretching their arms abroad and standing in still beauty and majesty, seemed to say – "Yes, we belong to the family; we have stood by it for ages." Dolly could see no dead trees, nor fallen lumber of dry branches; the place was dressed, yet unadorned, except by its own magnificent features; so most simple, most lordly. The first impression almost took away Dolly's breath. She again went on, and again stood still, then went further; at last could go no further, and she sat down on the bank under the shadow of a great oak tree which had certainly seen centuries, and gave herself up to the scene and her thoughts. They did not

fit, somehow, and took possession of her alternately. Sometimes her eyes filled with glad tears, at the wonderful loveliness and stateliness of nature around her; the sense of beauty overcame all other feelings; filling and satisfying and also concealing a certain promise. It was certainly the will of the Creator that all things should be thus perfect, harmonious, and fair. What was not, could be made so. But then again a shadow would come over this sunshine, as Dolly remembered the anxieties she had brought from home with her. She had meant to let herself look at them here, in solitude and quiet; could she do it, now she was here? But when, if not now? Gradually Dolly gave herself up to thinking, and forgot where she was, or more correctly, saw the objects around her only through a veil of her own thoughts.

She had several anxieties; she was obliged to confess it to herself unwillingly; for indeed anxiety was so new to Dolly that she had hardly entertained it in all her life before; and when it had knocked at her door, she had answered that it came to the wrong place. However, she could not but hear and heed the knock now; and she wanted to consider the matter calmly and see whether the unwelcome visitor must be really taken in, and lodged.

It was not her mother's condition. With the buoyancy of youth, and the inexperience, Dolly expected that Mrs. Copley would soon get well. Her trouble was about her father; and the worst thing about her mother's state of nervous weakness was, that she could not talk to her on the subject or get her help and co-operation. That is, if anything were to be attempted to be done in

the matter. – That was another question she wanted to consider.

In the first place, she could not help seeing one thing; that Mr. Copley was not flush with money as he used to be; as he had always been, ever since Dolly could remember. It was wholly unlike him, to send her and her mother down to this cottage with a household of two women servants; barely enough for the work that was indispensably necessary. Evidently, Mr. Copley entertained no idea of showing hospitality here in the country, and Dolly thought he had been secretly glad to be relieved of the necessity of doing it in town. Very unlike him. It was unlike him, too, to content his pride with so meagre an establishment. Mr. Copley loved to handle money, always spent it with a lavish carelessness, and was rather fond of display. What had made this change? Dolly had felt the change in still other and lesser things. Money had not been immediately forthcoming when she asked for it lately to pay her mantua maker's bill; and she had noticed on several occasions that her father had taken a 'bus instead of a hansom, or even had chosen to walk. A dull doubt had been creeping over her, which now was no longer obscure, but plainly enough revealed; her father had lost money. How, and where?

Impossible to answer this question. But at the same time there floated before Dolly's mind two vague images; Epsom and betting, – and a green whist table at Mr. St. Leger's, with eager busy players seated round it. True, the Derby came but once a year; and true, she had always heard that whist was a very gentlemanly game and much money never lost at it. She repeated

those facts to herself, over and over. Yet the images remained; they came before her again and again; her father betting eagerly in the crowd of betters on the race course, and the same beloved figure handling the cards opposite to his friend the banker, at the hospitable mansion of the latter. Who should be her guaranty, that a taste once formed, though so respectably, might not be indulged in other ways and companies not so irreproachable? The more Dolly allowed herself to think of it, the more the pain at her heart bit her. And another fear came to help the former, its fit and appropriate congener. With the image of Mr. St. Leger and his cards, rose up also the memory of Mr. St. Leger's decanters; and Dolly lowered her head once in a convulsion of fear. She found she could not bear the course of her thought; it must be interrupted; and she sprang up and hurried on up the bank under the great trees, telling herself that it was impossible; that anything so terrible could not happen to her; it was not to be even so much as thought of. She cast it away from her, and resolved that it could not be. As to the rest, she thought, poverty is not disgrace; she would not break her heart about *that* till she knew there was more reason.

So with flying foot she hastened forward, willing to put a forcible stop to thought by her quick motion and the new succession of objects before her eyes. Yet they were not very new for a while. The ground became level and the going grew easier; otherwise it was the same lovely park ground, the same wilderness of noble trees, a renewal of the same woodland views.

Lovely green alleys or glades opened to right and left, bidding her to enter them; then as she went on the trees stood thicker again. The sun getting more low sent his beams more slant, gilding the sides of the great trunks, tipping the ends of branches with leafy glitter, laying lovely lines of light over the turf. Dolly wandered on and on, allured by the continual change and variety of lovely combination in which grass, trees, and sunlight played before her eyes. But after a while the beauty took a different cast. The old oaks and beeches ceased; she found herself among a lighter growth, of much younger trees, some of them very ornamental, and in the great diversity of kinds showing that they were a modern plantation. What a plantation it was! for Dolly could not seem to get to the end of it. She went fast; the afternoon was passing, and she was curious to see what would succeed to this young wood; though it is hardly right to call it a wood; the trees were not close to each other, but stood apart to give every one a fair chance for developing its own peculiar manner of growth. Some had reached a height and breadth of beauty already; some could be only beautiful at every stage of growth; very many of them were quite strange to Dolly; they were foreign trees, gathered from many quarters. She went on, until she began to think she must give it up and turn back; she was by this time far from home; but just then she saw that the plantation was coming to an end on that side; light was breaking through the branches. She pressed forward eagerly a few steps; and on a sudden stood still, almost with a cry of delight. The plantation did end there

abruptly, and at the edge of it began a great stretch of level green, just spotted here and there with magnificent trees, singly or in groups. And at the further edge of this green plain, dressed, not hidden, by these intervening trees, rose a most beautiful building. It seemed to Dolly like a castle in a fairy tale, so bewitchingly lovely and stately it stood there, with the evening sunlight playing upon its turrets, and battlements, and all that grand sweep of lawn lying at its feet. This must be the "house" of which Lawrence had spoken; but surely it was rather a castle. The style was Gothic; the building stretched along the ground to a lordly extent for a "house," and yet in the light grace and adornment of its structure it hardly looked like anything so grim as a castle. The stillness was utter; some cattle under the trees on the lawn were the only living things to be seen.

Dolly could not satisfy herself with looking. This was something that she had read about and heard about; a real English baronial residence. But was it reality? it was so graceful, so noble, so wonderful. She must go a little nearer. Yet it was a good while before she could make up her mind to leave the spot where this exquisite view had first opened to her. She advanced then upon the lawn, going towards the house and scarce taking her eyes from it. There were no paths cut anywhere; it was no loss, for the greensward here was the perfection of English turf; soft and fine and thick and even. It was a pleasure to step on it; and Dolly stepped along, in a maze, caught in the meshes of the beauty around her, and giving herself up to it in willing captivity. But

the lawn was enormously wider than she had supposed; her eye had not been able to measure distances on this green level; she had walked already a long way by the time she had got one-third of its breadth behind her. Still, Dolly did not much consider that; her eye was fixed on the house as she now drew nearer to it, busied in picking out the details; and she only now and then cast a glance to right or left of her, and never looked back. It did occur to her at last that she herself was like a mere little speck cast away in this ocean of green, toiling over it like an ant over a floor; and she hurried her steps, though she was beginning to be tired. Slowly, slowly she went; half of the breadth of lawn was behind her, and then three quarters; and the building was unfolding at least its external organisation to her curious eyes, and displaying some of its fine memberment and broken surface and the resulting lights and shadows. Dolly almost forgot her toil, wondering and delighted; though beginning also to question dimly with herself how she was ever to find her way home! Go back over all that ground she could not, she knew; as little could she have told where was the point at the edge of the lawn by which she had entered upon it. *That* way she could not go; she had a notion that at the house, or near it, she might find somebody to speak to from whom she could get directions as to some other way. So she pressed on, feeding her eyes as she approached it upon the details of the house.

When now more than three-fourths of the lawn ground was passed, one of Dolly's side glances, intended to catch the beauty

of the trees on the lawn in their evening illumination, revealed to her a disagreeable fact – that, namely, she was looked upon as an intruder by some of the cattle; and that in especial a young bull was regarding her with serious and ominous bearing and even advancing slowly towards her from the group of his companions. It seemed to Dolly not desirable to stand the question, and she set off to run; which proceeding, of course, confirmed the young bull's suspicions, whatever they were, and he followed on a run also. Dolly became aware of this, and now, with all the strength of muscle that remained to her, fled towards the house; no longer seeing its Gothic mouldings and picturesque lights and shadows, only trying very hard to get near. She thought perhaps the creature would be shy of the immediate neighbourhood of the house, and not choose to follow her so far. But just as she reached that desirable vicinity she longed for, she was met by another danger, coming from the quarter from whence she sought safety. An enormous staghound dashed out from his covert somewhere, with an utterance from his deep throat which sounded sufficiently awful to Dolly, an angry or a warning bay, and came springing towards her. Dolly stood still dismayed and uncertain, the dog before and the bull behind; then, even before the former could reach her, a voice was heard calling him off and directing him to the advancing bull. In another minute or two a woman had come over the grass and stood at Dolly's side. Dolly was on her feet no longer; with the first breath of respite she had sunk down on the grass; nerves and muscles all trembling with

the exertion and with the fright.

The woman came up with a business air; then as she stood beside Dolly her look changed. This was no common intruder, she saw; this delicate-featured girl; and her dress too, simple as it was, was the dress of a lady. Dolly on her part looked up to a face not delicate-featured; far from it; solid and strong built as was the person to which it belonged; sense and capacity and kindliness, however, were legible even at that first glance.

"You've been rather badly frightened, ma'am, I'm afraid," she said, in a voice which precisely matched the face; strong and somewhat harsh, but kindly in accent.

"Very," said Dolly, whose face began to dimple now. "I am so much obliged to you!"

"Not in the vary least, ma'am. But you are worried with the fright, I fear?"

"No; I'll get up," said Dolly; "I'm only tired. I believe I'm a little weak too. I haven't quite got over trembling, I find."

"You haven't your colour yet again, ma'am. Would you come into my room and rest a bit?"

"Oh, thank you. You are very kind!" said Dolly with sincere delight at this proposition. For now she was upon her feet she felt that her knees trembled under her, and her footsteps were unsteady as she followed the woman over the grass. They went towards a small door in the long line of the building, the staghound coming back from his chase and attending them gravely. The woman opened the door, led Dolly through a

passage or two, and ushered her into a cosy little sitting-room, neat as wax, nicely though plainly furnished. Here she begged Dolly to rest herself on the sofa; and while Dolly did so she stood considering her with a kindly, anxious face.

"I'm all right now," said Dolly, smiling.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am, but you're growing paler every minute. If you'll allow me, ma'am, I will fetch you a glass of wine."

"Wine? Oh, no," said Dolly. "I don't want any wine. I do not drink wine. I am just tired. If you'll let me rest here a few minutes" —

"Lie still, ma'am, and don't talk."

She left the room, and Dolly lay still, with shut eyes, feeling very much exhausted. It was inexpressibly good to be under shelter and on her back; how she was to get home she could not yet consider. Before that question fairly came up, her entertainer was back again; but Dolly kept her eyes shut. If she opened them, perhaps she would have to talk; and she wanted nothing on earth at that moment but to be still.

After a little interval, however, she heard the door open and a second person enter; and curiosity brought her eyes open then. The second person was a maid-servant with a tray. The tray was set upon a table, and Dolly heard the other woman say —

"You'll bring the tea, Kitty, when I ring."

Dolly took this as a signal that she must go; of course she was in the way; yet rest felt so very comfortable, that for a

moment she still lay where she was; and lying there, she gave her hostess a more critical examination than she had hitherto bestowed on her. Who could she be? She was very well, that is very respectably, dressed; her manner and bearing were those of a person in authority; she was at home; but with gentle or noble blood she could have no connection unless one of service. Her features and her manner proved that. Nevertheless, both her face and bearing had a certain attraction for Dolly; a certain quiet and poise, an expression of acute intelligence and efficient activity, flavoured with good will, which was all very pleasant to see. Evidently she was not a person to be imposed upon. Dolly raised herself up at last to a sitting posture, preparatory to going.

"Are you recovered enough to be up, ma'am?" her hostess asked, standing still to survey her in her turn. "I'm afraid not."

"Oh, thank you, yes; I must go home. And I must ask you kindly to direct me; for I do not in the least know the way."

"Have you come far, ma'am? I couldn't make out by what direction it was or could have been; for when I saw you first, you seemed to be coming right from the middle of the lawn."

"Not quite that; but a little one side of the middle I did cross the lawn."

"I do not know, ma'am, anybody that lives in that direction, nor any village."

"Brierley Cottage? You know Brierley Cottage?"

"I ask your pardon, ma'am; I thought that was standing empty for months."

"It was, I suppose. We have just moved in. My mother wants country air, and Mr. St. Leger has let us the cottage. My mother and I are living there, and we came only a day or two ago. I wanted to see the beautiful ground and trees on this side the brook, and came over the bridge. I did not mean to have come so far; I had no notion of seeing the house or getting near it; but everything was so beautiful, I was drawn on from one point to another, till I found myself at the edge of the lawn. And then I saw the cattle, but I never thought of them."

"Why, ma'am," said the woman, looking surprised, "you must have walked a good bit. You must have come all through the plantations."

"I should not have minded the walk so much, if I had not had the fright at the end of it. But now the thing is, to get home. Can you tell me which way? for I am completely out of my reckoning."

"You will take a cup of tea first, ma'am," said the woman, ringing the bell. "I had it made on purpose for you. I am sure you'll be the better for it. I am the housekeeper here, ma'am, and my name is Jersey."

"The housekeeper?" said Dolly. "I thought the family were abroad."

"So they are, ma'am; and to be sure that makes me less to do; but enough still to take care of the place. Put the table up by the sofa, Kitty."

The girl had brought in the tea-pot, and Dolly saw some

magnificent strawberries on the board. The table was shoved up, a cup of tea poured out, and Mrs. Jersey cut bread and butter.

"How kind you are!" Dolly cried. "You are taking a great deal of trouble for me; a stranger."

"Is it for somebody that loves my Master?" said Mrs. Jersey, looking at her with keen eyes.

Dolly's face dimpled all up at this, which would have completed her conquest of Mrs. Jersey's heart, if there had been by this time any ground in that region not already subjected.

"Your Master?" she said. "You mean – ?"

"Yes, ma'am, I mean that. My Master is the Lord Jesus Christ; no other. One cannot have two masters; and I serve Lord Brierley only under Him."

"And what made you think – how did you know – that I am His servant too?"

"I don't know, ma'am," said the housekeeper, smiling. "I guessed it when I saw you sitting on the grass there. It seems to me, if the Lord don't just yet write His name in their foreheads, He does put a letter or two of it there, so one can tell."

"I am very glad to find I have a friend in the neighbourhood," said Dolly. "I am Dolly Copley; my father is American Consul at London, and a friend of Mr. St. Leger."

"I know Mr. St. Leger, ma'am; by name, that is."

By this time Dolly's tea was poured out. The housekeeper served her, and watched her as she drank it and eat her strawberries, both of which were refreshing to Dolly.

"I think, ma'am, if you'll allow me to say it, you should not try your strength with quite such long walks."

"I did not mean it. I was drawn on; and when I got a sight of the house from the other side of the lawn, I wanted to look at it nearer. I had no notion the distance was so much."

"Ay, ma'am, it's a good bit across the lawn. Perhaps you would like to come another day and see the house inside. I would show it to you with pleasure."

"Oh, may I?" said Dolly. "I should like it; oh, very much! But you are extremely kind, Mrs. Jersey!"

"It is only what I do for a great many indifferent people, ma'am. I would think it a privilege to do it for you. My lord and lady being away, I have plenty of time on my hands."

"I wonder anybody can stay away from so beautiful a home."

"They have no choice, ma'am; at least so the doctors say. Lady Brierley is delicate, and the air of England does not agree with her."

"And she must be banished from her own home!" said Dolly, looking out into the lovely landscape visible from the window. "How sad that is!"

"There's only one home one can always keep, ma'am," said the housekeeper, watching her.

"Heaven, you mean?"

"We are not in heaven yet. I meant what David says, 'Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations.'"

"I am not sure I understand it."

"Only love does understand it, ma'am."

"How do you mean, please?"

"Ma'am, it is only love that can live in the life of another; and when that other is God, one lives in a secure and wealthy abode. And then it does not much matter where one's body is. At least, so I find it."

Dolly looked very thoughtful for a minute; then she rose up.

"I am coming again," she said; "I am coming very soon, Mrs. Jersey. Now, will you tell me how I can get home? I must be as quick as I can."

"That is provided for, ma'am," said Mrs. Jersey. "It's a longish way round by the road, farther than even you came this afternoon; and you're not fit for it; far from it, I should say. I have ordered the dog-cart to take you home; and it's ready."

"How could you be so kind to a stranger?" said Dolly, giving her hand. But the housekeeper smiled.

"You're no stranger to me, ma'am," she said, clasping the hand Dolly had given. "It is true I never saw you before; but whenever I see one of my Lord's children, I say to myself, 'Jersey, there is another of the family, and the Lord expects you to do what you can for him, or for her, as the case may be.'"

Dolly laughed and ran away. The adventure was taking beautiful shape. Here she was to have a charming drive home, to end the day; a drive through the pretty country lanes. And they were charming in the evening light. And the dog-cart did not bring her to Brierley Cottage a bit too soon; for Mrs. Copley was

already fidgeting about her.

CHAPTER XII
THE HOUSE

Dolly did not tell all her experiences of that afternoon. She told only so much as might serve to quiet and amuse her mother; for Mrs. Copley took all occasions of trouble that came in her way, and invented a few more. Mrs. Jersey had sent along in the dog-cart a basket of strawberries for the sick lady; so Dolly hoped her mother's impressions of this day at least would be favourable.

"Did you ever see such magnificent berries, mother? black and red?"

"Why haven't we berries in our garden?" Mrs. Copley returned.

"Mother, you know the garden has not been kept up; nobody has been living here lately."

"Then why did not your father get some other house, where the garden *had* been kept up, and we could have our own fruit and vegetables? I think, to be in the country and not have one's own garden and fresh things, is forlorn."

"There is one thing, mother; there are plenty of markets in this country."

"And plenty of high prices for everything in them. Yes, if you have no end to your purse, you can buy things, certainly. But to look at what is around us here, one would think your father didn't

mean us to have much of anything!"

"Mother, he means you to have all you want. We thought you just wanted country air."

"And nothing to eat?"

"We are not starving *yet*," said Dolly, smiling, and arranging the strawberries.

"These are a gift. A gift I shouldn't think your father would like to take, or have us take, which comes to the same thing. We used to have enough for ourselves and our neighbours too, once, when we were at home, in America. We are nobody here."

"We are just ourselves, mother; what we always were. It does not make much difference what people think of us."

"Not much difference," cried Mrs. Copley, "about what people think of you! And then, what is to become of you, I should like to know? Nobody seeing you, and no chance for anything! I wonder if your father means you never to be married?"

"You do not want me married, mother; and not to an Englishman, anyhow."

"Why not? And how are you going to marry anybody else, out here? Can you tell me? But, O Dolly! I am tormented to death!"

"Don't, dear mother. That is what makes you ill. What is the matter? What troubles you?"

Mrs. Copley did not answer at once.

"You are as sweet as a honeysuckle," she said. "And to think that nobody should see you!"

Dolly's dimples came out here strong.

"Are you tormented to death about that?"

Another pause came, and Mrs. Copley finally left the table with the air of one who is thinking what she will not speak. She went to the honeysuckle porch and sat down, resting her head in her hand and surveying the landscape. Twilight was falling over it now, soft and dewy.

"I don't see a sign of anything human, anywhere," she remarked. "Is it because it is so dark?"

"No, mother; there are no houses in sight."

"Nor from the back windows?"

"No, mother."

"Where is the village you talk about?"

"Half a mile away; the woods and rising ground of Brierley Park hide it from us."

"And in this wilderness your father expects me to get well!"

"Why, I think it is charming!" Dolly cried. "My drive home to-night was perfectly lovely, mother."

"I didn't have it."

"No, of course; but the country is exceedingly pretty."

"I can't make your father out."

Dolly was hushed here. She was at a loss likewise on this point.

"He acts just as if he had lost his money."

Dolly did not know what to say. She had had the same impression. To her inexperience, this did not seem the first of evils; but she guessed it would wear another face to her mother.

"And if he *has*," Mrs. Copley went on, "I am sure I wish we

were at home. England is no sort of a place for poor folks."

"Why should you think he has, mother?"

"I *don't* think he has," Mrs. Copley flamed out. "But if he hasn't, I think he has lost his wits."

"That would be worse," said Dolly, smiling, though she felt anything but merry.

"I don't know about that. Nobody'll ask about your wits, if you've got money; and if you *haven't*, Dolly, nobody'll care what else you have."

"Mother, I think it is good to have one's treasure where one cannot lose it."

"I thought I had that when I married your father," said Mrs. Copley, beginning to cry. This was a very strange thing to Dolly and very terrible. Her mother's nerves, if irritable, had always been wont to show themselves of the soundest. Dolly saw it was not all nerves; that she was troubled by some unspoken cause of anxiety; and she herself underwent nameless pangs of fear at this corroboration of her own doubts, while she was soothing and caressing and arguing her mother into confidence again. The success was only partial, and both of them carried careful hearts to bed.

A day or two more passed without any variation in the state of things; except that old Peters the gardener made his appearance, and began to reduce the wilderness outside to some order. Dolly spent a good deal of time in the garden with him; tying up rose trees, taking counsel, even pulling up weeds and setting plants.

That was outside refreshment; within, things were unchanged. Mr. Copley wrote that he would run down Saturday, or, if he could not, he would send Lawrence. "Why shouldn't he come himself?" said Mrs. Copley; and, Why should he send Lawrence? thought Dolly. She liked it better without him. She was pleasing herself in her garden; finding little ways of activity that delighted her in and out of the house; getting wonted; and she did not care for the constraint of anybody's presence who must be treated as company. One thing she determined upon, however; Lawrence should not make the next visit with her at Brierley House; and to prevent it, she would go at once by herself.

She went that afternoon, and by an easier way of approach to the place. Mrs. Jersey was very glad to see her, and as soon as Dolly was rested a little, entered upon the fulfilment of her promise to show the house. Accordingly she took her visitor round to the principal entrance, in another side of the building from the one Dolly had first seen. Here, before she would go in, she stood to admire and wonder at the rich and noble effect; the beauty of turrets, oriels, mouldings, and arched windows, the wide and lofty pile which stretched away on two sides in such lordly lines. Mrs. Jersey told her who was the first builder; who had made this and that extension and addition; and then they went in. And the first impression here was a contrast.

The place was a great hall of grand proportions. There was nothing splendid here to be seen; neither furniture nor workmanship called for admiration, unless by their simplicity.

There were some old paintings on the walls; there were some fine stags' horns, very large and very old; there were some heavy oaken settles and big chairs, on which the family arms were painted; the arms of the first builder; and there were also, what looked very odd to Dolly, a number of leather fire buckets, painted in like manner. Yet simple as the room was, it had a great charm for her. It was lofty, calm, imposing, superb. She was not ready soon to quit it; and Mrs. Jersey, of course, was willing to indulge her.

"It is so unlike anything at home!" Dolly exclaimed.

"That's in America?" said the housekeeper. "Have you no old houses like this there, ma'am?"

"Why, we are not old ourselves," said Dolly. "When this house was first begun to be built, our country was full of red Indians."

"Is it possible! And are there Indians there yet, ma'am?"

"No. Oh, yes, in the country, there are; but they are driven far off, – to the west – what there are of them. – This is very beautiful!"

"I never heard anybody call this old hall beautiful before," said the housekeeper, smiling.

"It is so large, and high, and so simple; and these old time things make it so respectable," said Dolly.

"Respectable! yes, ma'am, it is that. Shall we go on and see something better?"

But her young visitor had fallen to studying the ceiling, which had curious carvings and panellings, and paintings which once

had been bright. There was such a flavour of past ages in the place, that Dolly's fancy was all alive and excited. Mrs. Jersey waited, watching her, smiling in a satisfied manner; and then, after a while, when Dolly would let her, she opened the door into another apartment. A great door of carved oak it was, through which Dolly went expectantly, and then stood still with a little cry. The first thing she saw was the great windows, down to the floor, all along one side of a large room, through which a view was given into the park landscape. The grand trees, the beautiful green turf, the sunlight and shadow, caught her eye for a minute; and then it came back to the view within the windows. Opposite this row of windows was an enormous marble chimney-piece; the family arms, which Dolly was getting to know, blazoned upon it in brilliant colours. Right and left of the fireplace hung old family portraits. But when Dolly turned next to give a look at the side of the hall from which she had entered, she found that the whole wall was of a piece with the great carved door; it was filled with carvings, figures in high relief, very richly executed. For a long while Dolly studied these figures. Mrs. Jersey could give her little help in understanding them, but having, as she fancied, got hold of a clue, Dolly pursued it; admiring the life and expression in the figures, and the richly-carved accessories. The whole hall was a study to her. On the further side went up the staircases leading to the next story. Between them opened the entrance into the dining-hall.

Further than these three halls, Mrs. Jersey almost despaired of

getting Dolly that day. In the dining-hall was a portrait of Queen Elizabeth; and before it Dolly sat down, and studied it.

"Did she look like that?" she said finally.

"Surely, she must," said the housekeeper. "The picture is thought a deal of. It was painted by a famous painter, I've been told."

"She was very ugly, then!" said Dolly.

"Handsome is that handsome does," said the housekeeper, smiling; "and, to be sure, I never could make out that Her Majesty was altogether handsome in her doings; though perhaps that's the fault of my stupidity."

"She looks cold," said Dolly; "she looks cruel."

"I'm afraid, by all I have read of her, she was a little of both."

"And how she is dressed! – Who is that, the next to her?"

"Mary Stuart; Mary, Queen of Scotland; this lady's rival."

"Rival?" said Dolly. "No, I do not think she was; only Elizabeth chose to think her so. How lovely, how lovely!"

"Yes, and by all accounts the portrait tells truth. They say, so she was to be sure."

"She looks so innocent, so sweet," said Dolly, fixed before the two pictures.

"Do you think she wasn't?"

"One cannot feel quite comfortable about her. The story is ugly, Mrs. Jersey. But how a woman with that face could do anything fearfully wicked, it is hard to imagine. Poor thing!"

"You are very kind, I am sure, to a person of whom you hold

such a bad opinion," said the housekeeper, amused.

"I am sorry for them both," said Dolly. "Life wasn't much good to either of them, I should think."

"Queen Elizabeth had power," said Mrs. Jersey; "and Queen Mary had admiration, I understand."

"Yes, but Elizabeth wanted the admiration, and Mary Stuart wanted the power," said Dolly. "Neither of them got what she wanted."

"Few people do in this world, my young lady."

"Do you think so?"

"Young people generally think they will," said the housekeeper; – "and old people know better."

"But why should that be?"

"Does Miss Dolly Copley know already what *she* wants?" the housekeeper asked.

"No," said Dolly, laughing out; "not at all. I do not know what I want. I do not think I want anything in particular, Mrs. Jersey."

"Keep so, my dear; that is best."

"Why? Because I should be so sure to be disappointed?"

"You might. But it is safe to let God choose for us, Miss Copley; and as soon as we begin to plan, we begin to work for our plans, generally; and if our plan is not *His* plan, – that makes trouble, you see, and confusion."

"Of course," said Dolly thoughtfully. "Yet it seems to me it would be pleasant to have some particular object that one was striving after. The days go by, one after another, one like another,

and seem to accomplish nothing. I should like to have some purpose, some end in life, to be striving for and attaining."

"A servant of Christ need never want that," said the housekeeper.

"I have not anything in special to do," said Dolly, looking at her.

"Every servant has something special to do," the other answered.

"I have to take care of mother. But that is not work; it is not work for Christ, at least, Mrs. Jersey."

"Dear, it may be. Everything you do, you may do for Him; for He has given it to you to do for Him. That is, unless it is something you are choosing for yourself."

Dolly pondered.

"And if there be nothing ready to hand that you call work, there is always preparation for work to be done," Mrs. Jersey went on.

"What sort?"

"The knowledge of the Bible, – and the knowledge of Christ, to seek and win. That surely."

"The knowledge of the Bible? Mrs. Jersey, I know the Bible pretty well."

"And Christ also?"

Dolly mused again, with a very grave face.

"I do not quite know what you mean."

"Then, there is something to be gained yet."

"But, – of course I know what the Bible says about Him."

"That is one sort of knowledge," said the housekeeper; "but it is not the knowledge of Him."

"What then?"

"Only knowing about Him, dear."

"What more can we have?"

"Just *Himself*, Miss Copley; and till you have that, dear, you don't rightly know what the Bible means."

"I don't think I quite understand you."

"Suppose I told you all I could about my Lady Brierley; would that make you know her as I know her?"

"No, certainly; it would not make me really know her at all."

"That is what I was thinking."

"But for *that* there must be sight, and intercourse, and the power of understanding."

"All that," said Mrs. Jersey, smiling; "and the more of that power you speak of, the more and the nearer knowledge there will be."

"But in the case you are speaking of, the knowledge of Christ, sight is not possible."

"No, not sight with the bodily eyes. It is not; and if it were, it mightn't do. Did all the people know the Lord that saw Him with the bodily eyes? 'Ye have neither known My Father nor Me,' He said to the Jews. 'Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip?'"

"You are setting me a regular puzzle, Mrs. Jersey."

"I hope not, my dear. I do not mean it; and it is the last thing I wish."

"But without sight, how is such knowledge to be gained?"

"Do you remember, Miss Copley, it is written, – 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.' And Jesus promised to him that loves Him and keeps His commandments, 'I will manifest Myself to him.' Doubtless we must seek the fulfilment of the promise too."

"How?"

"The same way as with other things. We must ask, and expect, and use the means. And no doubt one must be single-eyed and true-hearted. But dear, there is no knowledge like that, once get it; and no friend to be had, that can equal the Lord Jesus Christ."

Dolly sat still and pondered, gazing at the two portraits.

"It is very hard to think that this world is nothing!" she said at last. "To most people it seems everything. Just look at those two faces! How they struggled and fought; and how little good their life was to them, after all."

"Ay, and folks can struggle and fight for less things than what divided them, and lose all just the same. So the Lord said, 'He that loveth his life, shall lose it;' but He said too, 'He that loseth his life for My sake, shall find it.'"

"You are talking riddles again, Mrs. Jersey," said Dolly, laughing. "I thought I was beginning to understand you; but I do not understand that."

"No, dear; and surely it is a hard saying to many. But I'll give

you a key. Just you give your life to the Lord Jesus, and He will show you what the losing it means, and the gaining it, too."

"Thank you. I will," said Dolly.

They went on again after that, through more rooms of the house; but the afternoon did not serve for the whole. Dolly must return to her mother. Mrs. Jersey sent her home again in the dog-cart. The evening was very bright and fair; the hedgerows sweet with flowers; the light glittered on the foliage of trees and copsewood and shrubbery; the sky was clear and calm. Dolly tasted and rejoiced in it all; and yet in the very midst of her pleasure an echo from Mrs. Jersey's words seemed to run through everything. It did not depress; on the contrary, it excited Dolly. With all the beauty and enjoyment of this very beautiful and very enjoyable world, there was something still better to be sought and found; somewhat still more beautiful, far more enjoyable; and the correlative fact that the search and attainment were, or might be, attended with some difficulty and requiring some effort or resolution, was simply an additional stimulus. Dolly breathed the air with intense taste of it. Yes, she thought, I will seek the knowledge Mrs. Jersey spoke of. That must be better than anything else.

CHAPTER XIII
PREACHING AND PRACTICE

"How long you have stayed, Dolly!" was Mrs. Copley's greeting. "I don't see what is to become of me in this lonely place, if you are always trotting about. I shall die!"

Dolly took this cold-water bath upon her pleasure with her usual sweetness.

"Dear mother, I did not know I was so long away. I will not go again, if it is bad for you."

"Of course it is bad for me. It is very bad for me. It is bad for anybody. I just think and think, till I am ready to fly. – What have you been doing?"

"Looking at Brierley House. So beautiful as it is, mother!"

This made a diversion. Mrs. Copley asked and received a detailed account of all Dolly had seen.

"It don't sound as if *I* should like it," was her comment. "I should never have those old chairs and things sticking about."

"O mother! yes, you would; they are most beautiful, and so old-fashioned; with the arms of the barons of Coppleby carved on them."

"I shouldn't want the arms of the barons of Coppleby on the chairs in my house, if I was the Earl of Brierley."

"But they are everywhere, mother; they are cut and painted

over the fireplace in the baron's hall."

"I'd cut 'em out, then, and put up my own. Fire buckets, too! How ridiculous. What ornaments for a house!"

"I like them," said Dolly.

"Oh, you like everything. But, Dolly, what does your father think is to become of us? He in London, and we here! Such a way of living!"

"But you wanted country air, mother."

"I didn't; not in this way. Air isn't everything. Did he say, if he could not come down Saturday, he would send Mr. St. Leger?"

"I do not see why he should," said Dolly gaily. "We don't want him."

"Now, what do you say that for, Dolly?"

"Just because *I* don't want him, mother. Do you?"

"He's a very good young man."

Dolly was silent.

"And very rich."

Dolly said nothing.

"And I am sure he is very agreeable."

Then, as her utterances still met no response, Mrs. Copley broke out. "Dolly, why don't you say something? I have nobody to talk to but you, and you don't answer me! I might as well talk to the wall."

"Mother, I would rather have father come down to see us. If the choice lies between them, I would rather have father."

Mrs. Copley leaned her head on her hand. "Dolly," she began

again, "your father acts exactly as if he had lost money."

Dolly again did not answer. The repeated words gave her a very startled thrill.

"As if he had lost a good deal of money," Mrs. Copley went on. "I can't get it out of my head that he has."

"It's no use to think about it, mother," Dolly said as lightly as she could. "Don't you trouble yourself, at any rate."

"That's foolish. How can I help troubling myself? And if it *was* any use to think about it, to be sure I needn't be troubled. Dolly, it torments me day and night!" And tears that were bitter came into Mrs. Copley's eyes.

"It need not, dear mother. Money is not the only thing in the world; nor the best thing."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.