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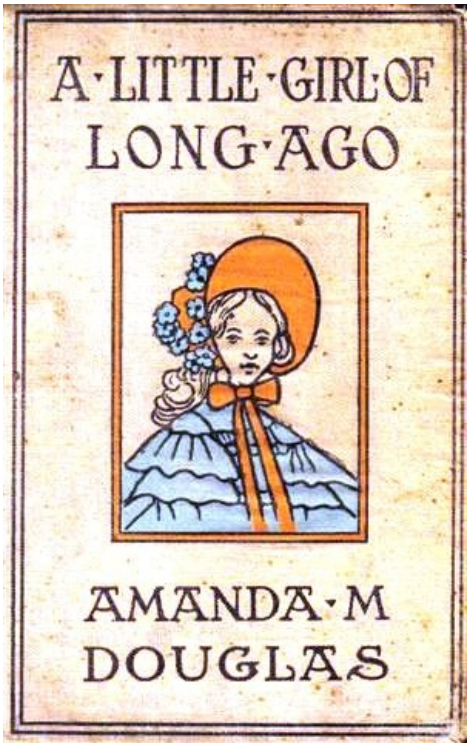

A LITTLE GIRL OF LONG AGO

OR HANNAH ANN

A SEQUEL TO A LITTLE GIRL IN OLD NEW YORK

By AMANDA M. DOUGLAS

A. L. BURT COMPANY
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TO

EDNA ESTELLE CORNER.

THE LITTLE GIRLS OF LONG AGO ARE GROWING OLD WITH THE CENTURY, BUT GIRLHOOD BLOSSOMS AFRESH WITH SPRING AND REMAINS FOREVER A JOY.

A. M. D.
Newark, 1897.

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HANNAH ANN

CHAPTER I

1846

New Year's came in with a ringing of bells and firing of pistols. Four years more, and the world would reach the half-century mark. That seemed very ancient to the little girl in Old New York. They talked about it at the breakfast-table.

"Do you suppose any one could live to see nineteen hundred?" asked the little girl, with wondering eyes.

Father Underhill laughed.

"Count up and see how old you would be, Hanny," he replied.

"Why, I should be—sixty-five."

"Not as old as either grandmother," said John.

"If the world doesn't come to an end," suggested Hanny, cautiously. She remembered the fright she had when she was afraid it would come to an end.

"It isn't half developed," interposed Benny Frank. "And we haven't half discovered it. What do we know about the heart of Africa or the interior of China—"

"The great Chinese wall will shut us out of that," interrupted the little girl. "But it can't go all around China, for the missionaries get in, and some Chinese get out, like the two little girls."

"There is some outside to China," laughed Benny Frank. "And India is a wonderful country. There is all of Siberia, too, and British America, and, beyond the Rocky Mountains, a great country belonging to us that we know very little about. I believe the world is going to stand long enough for us to learn all about it. Some day I hope to go around a good bit and see for myself."

"Some people," began Mrs. Underhill, "reason that, as it was two thousand years from the Creation to the Deluge, and two thousand years more to the birth of Christ, that the next two thousand will see the end of the world."

"They are beginning to think the world more than four or five thousand years old," said Benny Frank. He had quite a taste for science.

"It'll last my time out, I guess," and there was a shrewd twinkle in Father Underhill's eye. "And I think there'll be a big piece left for Hanny."

The little girl of eleven mused over it. She had a great many things to think about, and her mother suggested presently that there were some things to do. Margaret went upstairs to straighten the parlor and arrange a table in the end of the back room for callers. Hanny found plenty of work, but her small brain kept in a curious confusion, as if it was running back and forth from the past to the future. Events were happening so rapidly. And the whole world seemed changed since her brother Stephen's little boy had been born on Christmas morning.

It was curious, too, to grow older, and to understand books and lessons so much better, to feel interested in daily events. There was a new revolution in Mexico; there was a talk of war. But everything went on happily at home. New York was stretching out like a big boy, showing rents and patches in his attire, but up-town he was getting into a new suit, and people exclaimed about the extravagance.

As for Stephen's baby, there wasn't any word in Webster's Dictionary to do him justice. He grew fat and fair, his nose became shapely, his dimple was deeper, his chin double, and his pretty hands began to grasp at everything. Stephen said the only drawback was that his hair would be red. Hanny felt curiously teased about it. She couldn't be sure that it was quite a subject for prayer; but she took great comfort in two lines of the old hymn—

> "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
> Uttered or unexpressed,"

and she hoped God would listen to the sincere desire of her heart.

Early in February the children were all excitement about Mr. Bradbury's concert. The Dean children were among the chorus singers, and Charles Reed had a prominent part. Would his mother let him go?—the children all wondered.

"Mr. Reed can manage it," said Josie Dean, confidently. "Wives have to mind their husbands about boys, because the men know best, and the boys are to grow up into men."

Hanny's interest was divided by Margaret being made ready for the Valentine ball. Everybody was to go in a fancy dress. Dr. Hoffman chose Margaret's, which was to be a lady of 1790. Miss Cynthia came and looked over the old green-and-white brocade that had descended from Miss Lois. It had a low square neck, and a bodice with deep points back and front, laced with a silver cord. The front breadth, "petticoat," as it was called, was white satin, creamy now with age, embroidered with pink and yellow roses and mossy green leaves. The brocade fell away in a long train, and at the joining was a cascade of fine old lace called Mechlin. The elbow-sleeves were edged with it, and at the neck, the lace had a fine wire run through it at the back that made it stand up, while in front, it fell to a pretty point, and was clasped with a brooch. It had been made for Miss Lois' wedding outfit when she was a happy young girl, dreaming over a joyous future that had never come to pass.

But Margaret's hair they all thought the crowning glory. Miss Cynthia was very fond of adorning people for parties, and so deft that she was in frequent demand. She had brought a great high comb of beautiful, clear shell that had belonged to her mother. There was a loose twist made like the figure eight at the back, and in front, rows of dainty puffs and ends of curls, that dropped down on her white forehead.

The brooch, too, was curious. It was a portrait painted on ivory of the Marquis de Lafayette, and set round with beautiful pearls, one of Miss Cynthia's precious belongings also.

When Margaret looked at herself in her mother's tall glass, she was so mystified that she felt for a moment as if she was Miss Lois come back. For when the gown fitted her, she must have been tall and slim and young.

Hanny had begged to ask in all the girls, and was delighted to have Daisy Jasper and her mother.

But when Dr. Hoffman came in Continental costume, with buff small-clothes and black velvet coat, great buckles of brilliants at his knees and lace ruffles at his wrists and shirt front, and his hair powdered, they all exclaimed. He carried his three-cornered hat under his arm as he bowed to the ladies.

John Underhill declared laughingly that he felt honoured by being the footman to such a grand couple, as he helped them into the carriage.

"Why don't people dress as beautifully now?" said Daisy Jasper, with a sigh. "Everything looks so plain."

Then the elders began to talk of past fashions. Miss Cynthia said her mother's wedding gown was made with a full straight skirt six yards around, and had one little hoop at the hips to hold it out. When Miss Cynthia's elder sisters were grown, she cut it up and made them each a frock, with skirts two and a quarter yards wide, short full waists, and puffed sleeves. Big poke bonnets were worn with great bunches of flowers inside, and an immense bow at the top, where the strings were really tied. If you wanted to be very coquettish, you had the bow rather on one side. The skirts barely reached the ankles, and black satin slippers were to be worn on fine occasions; white or sometimes pale colours to parties.

"And now we have come back to wide full skirts," said Miss Cynthia. "We're putting stiffening in to hold them out. And there's talk of hoops."

Another odd custom was coming into vogue. It was considered much more genteel to say "dress." Frock had a sort of common country sound, because the farmers wore tow frocks at their work. The little girl had been laughed at for saying it, and she was trying very hard to always call the garment a "dress." Gown was considered rather reprehensible, as it savoured of old ladies' bed-gowns. Now we have gone back to frocks and gowns.

"The Continental fashions were extremely picturesque," said Mrs. Jasper. "And the men were strong and earnest, and equal to the emergencies of the day, if they did indulge in adornments considered rather feminine now. But I like the variety. The newly-arrived emigrants in their native garb interest me."

"There are some around in Houston Street," laughed Ben. "Dutch girls with flaxen hair and little caps, and those queer waists with shoulder straps, and thick woollen stockings. Some of them wear wooden shoes. And Irish women with great plaid cloaks and little shawls tied over their heads, short skirts and nailed shoes that clatter on the sidewalk."

"I should like to see them," said Daisy.

"Joe ought to take you out on St. Patrick's day," returned Ben. "But they soon reach the dead level of uniformity."

"Fancy an Indian in coat and trousers instead of blanket, war-paint, and feathers," and Jim laughed at the idea.

"I think we shall hardly be able to reduce him to modern costumes. He does not take kindly to civilisation."

"He's shamefully treated anyway."

"Oh, Jim, it won't do to take your noble red men from romance. The heroes of King Philip's time have vanished."

Jim was reading Cooper, and had large faith in the children of the forest. The next generation of school-boys called them "sneaking red dogs," and planned to go out on the plains and shoot them.

"If we absorb all these people, we shall be a curiously conglomerate nation by and by," exclaimed Mrs. Jasper.

"As we were in the beginning," returned Father Underhill. "We started from most of the nations of Europe. We have had a French state, Dutch and German, English and Scotch, but the one language seems a great leveler."

The little girls talked about the concert. Doctor Joe said he thought Daisy might venture. She was beginning to grow quite courageous, though the comments on her lameness always brought a flush to her cheek. Sometimes he stopped at school for both girls, and the wheeling-chair went home empty. His strong, tender arm was help enough.

Mr. Reed had quite a battle to win the day for his son. "The singing-school was foolishness and a waste of time; and there was not a moment to waste in this world, when you had to give a strict account of it in the next." Mrs. Reed had never considered whether so much scouring and scrubbing was not a waste of time, when everything was as clean as a pin. When a very polite note from Mr. Bradbury reached Mr. Reed, begging that Charles might be allowed to take a prominent part in the concert, there was war, a more dreadful time than going to the barber had caused.

"Charles"—she occasionally left off the John Robert—"was too big a boy for such nonsense! It spoiled children to put them forward. He ought to be thinking of his lessons and forming his character, instead of spending his time over silly songs. And to sing on a public stage!"

"Some of the best families are to let their children participate in it. I don't think it will hurt them," her husband said decisively.

Then she actually sobbed.

"You will ruin that child, after all the trouble I've taken. I've worked and slaved from morning till night, made him get his lessons and be careful of his clothes, and kept him out of bad company; and now I'm not allowed to say a word, but just stand by while you let him go to ruin. The next

thing we'll have him in a nigger minstrel band, or playing on a fiddle!"

"I've known some very worthy men who played on a fiddle. And all the children growing up can't be minstrels, so perhaps our boy will be compelled to find some other employment. I am going to have him like other boys; and if it can't be so at home, I'll send him away to school."

That was a terrible threat. To be gone months at a time, with no one to look after his clothes!

Mrs. Reed went about the house sighing, and scrubbed harder than ever. She made Charles feel as if he brought in dirt by the bushel, and scattered it about in pure spite. She even refused his help in clearing away the dishes; and she tried to make him wear his second-best clothes that eventful evening.

Oh, what an evening it was! The hall was crowded. The stage was full of children, one tier of seats rising above another. The girls were dressed in white, and most of them had their hair curled. The boys had a white ribbon tied in the buttonhole of their jackets. How eager and pretty they looked! Hanny thought of the day at Castle Garden when the Sunday-schools had walked.

It was a simple cantata, but a great success. Charles Reed sang charmingly. His father had said, "Don't get frightened, my boy, and do your very best;" and he was just as desirous of pleasing his father as any one, even Mr. Bradbury.

Daisy Jasper could have listened all night, entranced. Tall Doctor Joe sat beside her, easing her position now and then, while Hanny smiled and made joyful comments of approval in so soft a tone they disturbed no one.

"I've never been so happy in all my life," Daisy Jasper said to Doctor Joe. "It seems as if I could never feel miserable again. There are so many splendid things in the world that I am glad to live and be among them, if I can't ever be quite straight and strong."

"My dear child!" Doctor Joe's eyes said the rest.

They waited for the crowd to get out. Charles came down the aisle with his father and Mr. Bradbury, and Mr. Dean was escorting his little girls. They had a very delightful chat, and were charmed with the leader of the children's concert.

"Charles must take good care of his voice," said Mr. Bradbury. "It may sometime prove a fortune to him. He is a fine boy, and any father might well be proud of him."

"I just wish mother had wanted to be there," Charles said, as his father was opening the door with his latch-key. The light was turned low in the hall, and Mrs. Reed had gone to bed, an unprecedented step with her.

Hanny found that she couldn't spend all the Saturdays with little Stevie. She wished they were twice as long; but they always seemed shorter than any other day. Dolly came down now and then, and was just as bright and merry as ever.

But old Mr. Beekman grew more feeble, and was confined to the house most of the time. Hanny had to go down-town and visit him and Katschina. He was delighted to have her come, and Katschina purred her tenderest welcome. She was like a bit of sunshine, with her cheerful smile and her sweet, merry wisdom. She told him about the school and Daisy, their plays and songs; and they were never tired of talking about Stephen's baby. It could laugh aloud now; the reddish fuzz was falling out, and the new soft hair shone like pale gold on his pink scalp.

There were so many other friends, the Bounett cousins, and Dele Whitney, who was just as jolly as ever, with the old aunts down in Beach Street, and who declared the little girl was the sweetest thing in the world, and that some day she should just steal her, and carry her off to fairyland.

CHAPTER II

AN INTERVIEW WITH A TIGER

There came to New York in May a menagerie. A chance like this roused the children to a pitch of the wildest enthusiasm. Wonderful posters were put up. It was not considered a circus at all, but a moral and instructive show, if it did not have delightful Artemas Ward to expatiate upon it. There were a great many children who had never seen an elephant. Hanny Underhill had not.

Jim said, "There was a live lion stuffed with straw; a zebra that had fifty stripes from the tip of his nose to his tail, nary stripe alike; a laughing hyena of the desert, who could cry like a child when he was hungry, and who devoured the people who came to his assistance, thereby showing the total depravity of human nature; an elephant that could dance; and monkeys who climbed the highest trees and swung in the gentle zephyrs by the tail." The crowning point was that he had money enough saved up to go.

The celebrated lion-tamer, a Mr. Van Amburgh, was to perform with some trained animals. Oh, what a crowd there was!—most people going early so they could walk around and view the

animals in their cages. There were two beautiful striped hyenas, lithe as cats, and so restless you were almost afraid they would find some loose bar and spring out at you. The two lions roared tremendously when disturbed. A great cage full of the funniest chattering monkeys, ready for nuts or cake or bits of apples, and who could swing with their heads downward and turn astonishing somersaults. Many other curious animals that we see nowadays in Central Park; but, alas! there was no Park then, and such indulgences had to be paid for.

The big elephant was very gentle, or in a gentle mood, which answered the same purpose. The keeper had to have eyes everywhere to see that the boys did not torment him. How he could take a peanut or a bit of candy in his trunk, and carry it up to his mouth without dropping it, puzzled Hanny. For of course all the First Street children went. Mr. Underhill and Margaret and Mrs. Dean were to keep them safe and in order.

It seemed so hard to leave Daisy Jasper out. But her father could not go, and her mother was much too timid.

"I'll be her knight," said Doctor Joe. "I will take her up in the buggy, and we'll squeeze through the crowd."

That settled it. Seeing real live animals was so different from the stuffed and moth-eaten ones at Barnum's.

There was a great tent and some temporary sheds, with one or two side-shows. They went quite early, and Doctor Joe paid a man to stand guard over some seats while they walked around and inspected the cages. There was a smaller trick elephant, but even Columbus was not as big as the famous Jumbo.

One of the great pleasures or curiosities was a ride on his back in a howdah. This was ten cents extra, and only for children. Most of the boys had spent their money for refreshments at the booths, so they could only look longingly. The little girls were afraid at first.

"I am going," declared Charles Reed. "Oh, you will not be afraid!"—to the Deans.

"Don't you want to?" asked Mr. Underhill of his little girl.

Hanny drew a long breath and her eyes dilated. The howdah filled up, and the ponderous creature moved slowly down to the end of the space and up again, amid childish exclamations and laughter.

"Yes—I would like to go," said Hanny, when she realised the safety of the proceeding.

"Oh, Doctor Joe, couldn't you help me up? It would be such a wonderful thing to ride on an elephant that I should be glad all my life."

Daisy Jasper looked so eager and pleading out of her beseeching blue eyes. So many pleasures must be foregone that he had not the heart to deny this.

"Are you quite sure you will not be afraid up there?" he asked earnestly.

"Oh, no, not with Hanny, dear Doctor Joe!"

He looked at Hanny. The little girl could climb trees and walk out to the ends of the limbs and jump; she had swung her arms and said one, two, three, and gone flying over the creek without falling in; she could do "vinegar" with a skipping rope; she could walk the edge of the curb-stone without tilting over; she could swing ever so high and not wink; she wasn't afraid to go up stairs in the dark; but when the elephant took the first long, rocking step, she felt something as she had when Luella Bounett had run downstairs with her in her arms. She grasped Daisy's hand on the one side and Charlie's arm on the other.

"Oh, Hanny, you're not afraid?"

"It's like being out at sea," and Daisy laughed.

But the back of the huge creature seemed up so high and his steps so long. Then she summoned all her courage, and resolved that she would not be a "little 'fraid cat."

The keeper interspersed the rides with stories of elephants in India taking care of babies, fanning flies away from them, watching over sick masters, and moving great timbers. Even if his eyes were small, he could see any danger. You could trust him when he was once your friend; but he never forgave an injury.

The big india-rubber feet came down with scarcely a sound. He flapped his ears lazily, he turned around without spilling them out, and marched up the line as if it was just nothing at all.

Daisy was thrilling with enjoyment. Her eyes shone and her cheeks were like roses. She even put her hand on the elephant's crumply back, as they came down the steps, and smiled in Doctor Joe's face, as he held her by the arm.

"You were so good to let me go. Thank you a thousand times. It was just splendid!"

They were all in a burst of enthusiasm with "ohs and ahs." But Hanny was very glad to get back to her father's protecting hand. She felt as if she had been on a long and perilous journey.

They took their seats, and after one more caravan the performances began. The trick elephant did several odd things rather clumsily. Then he stood on his head, and the boys clapped their hands with delight. He trumpeted, and the very ground seemed to shake. Then he looked around in a queer sort of fashion, as if he was sure he had frightened everybody.

But what would they have said to the later acrobatic feats and going through the figures of a quadrille! Half-a-dozen elephants would have startled any audience.

Presently a big cage was uncovered, and Mr. Van Amburgh went into the lions' den. Everybody shuddered a little. Hanny thought of the story of Daniel—perhaps other people did. He shook hands and rubbed shoulders with them; and they put their paws on his shoulders and shook their shaggy heads.

Charles said they ought to have finer bodies for such magnificent heads.

Then the lion-tamer told them to lie down. He made a bed of one and a pillow of the other, and threw himself upon them, hugging them up. He made them open their mouths, and he thrust in his hand. They pranced up and down, sprang over the stick he held in his hand, jumped over him; and it really seemed as if they had a tender regard for him. But Doctor Joe observed that he always faced them, and kept his eyes steadily upon them. The applause was tremendous.

Then an incident occurred that was not down in the programme. A handsome tiger walked out from between two of the cages as if he had a part to play. He scanned the audience in a deliberate manner; he gave his lithe body a twist, and switched his tail in a graceful fashion, while his yellow eyes illumined the space about him. The attention of the audience was concentrated upon him, while he appeared to be considering what to do next.

Two keepers came out, while a man in the space between the cages shook something in his hand. The tiger turned and followed him, and the men watched until a bar snapped.

Then one of them faced the audience.

"Ladies and gentlemen," he began, "I wish to announce that there is not the slightest danger. The tiger is securely caged. The animals are under perfect control."

Two or three women screamed, and one fainted. Several hurried to the entrance; but the keeper begged them to be tranquil. There had not been the slightest danger.

Doctor Joe motioned to his party to remain seated while he went to attend to the women. The performance was mostly over, and the audience began to disperse, from a sense of insecurity.

"Was he really loose?" asked Tudie Dean, in a little fright.

"Of course he was," replied Charles. "I'm not sure but it was done purposely after all."

Doctor Joe returned, and they appealed to him.

"Well,"—with a gay air,—"the tiger was quite obedient, wasn't he? You were not frightened, Daisy?"

"But you stood right there,"—Doctor Joe had given his seat to a lady just as the performance began. "Why, he looked at you," and Daisy's nerves gave a little quiver.

"I supposed Mr. Van Amburgh would come and put him through some paces," returned Joe.

"It was immense, wasn't it?" exclaimed Jim. "But why did the woman squeal when it was all over?"

Doctor Joe laughed.

To make amends, a pretty trick pony came out, who really could dance, and he looked as if he laughed, too. He did a number of amusing things, and the audience stopped going out. Then the monkeys set up such a shrill chatter that the people began to laugh. The lion started to roar; and it seemed as if the tigers joined the chorus. For a few moments it was a forest concert.

"If only the hyena would laugh," said Jim. The girls were a little nervous. Joe had gone to get Prince. "Oh, you needn't be a mite afraid. Mr. Van Amburgh would just have thrown a cloth over his head; and in his surprise they would have had him all right in a moment. I would not have missed it for a dollar; though I wouldn't care to encounter him in his native wilds."

"He did look grand surveying the audience," said Daisy. "I am so glad I could come—for everything."

The Doctor put Hanny and Daisy in the buggy, as they were both so slim. Hanny hugged his arm, and said in a voice still a trifle shaky,—

"Weren't you the least bit frightened, Joe?"

"Why, I never imagined there was any danger until it was over. I think so many people rather dazed Mr. Tiger."

"Oh, if anything had happened to you, what should I do?" asked Daisy, with lustrous eyes.

"Nothing is going to happen to me. You have been a brave girl this afternoon, and it is not the

first time either."

Her cheek flushed with pleasure.

It was a great thing to talk over, that and the ride on the elephant. Hanny found her natural history, and she and her father read about elephants most of the evening.

The days were so pleasant that the children often took Daisy out in her chair to see them at their plays. They went around to Houston Street, to the German settlement, as it was beginning to be called. Lena and Gretchen were out on their stoop with their knitting, and the baby between them. They were Lutherans, and they looked quite different from the Jews.

There were still quaint old houses in Ludlow and Orchard streets,—two stories with dormer windows in the roof, and some frame cottages with struggling grass-plots. No one dreamed of the tall tenements that were to take their places, the sewing-machines that were to hum while the workers earned their scanty pittance, and swarms of children crowded the streets.

Everybody had more leisure then. Some of the women sat and chatted while their little ones played about.

A little girl came out of an alley way with a peculiar jerky movement, like a hop and a skip, while she kept one hand on her knee. Her hip was large, her shoulder pushed up and apparently bent over.

"Hello!" she said to Hanny. "What's the matter with her?" nodding her head. "Wish't I had a cheer like that. I'd cut a great swell. My! ain't she pritty?"

"She's been ill," returned Hanny.

The child stared a moment and then hopped on.

"Her father works about the stable," explained Hanny, with rising colour. "She comes up sometimes. They're very poor. Mother gives them ever so many things. She can't stand up straight; but she doesn't seem to mind. And one leg is so much shorter. The boys call her Cricket, and Limpy Dick."

"Oh, Hanny, if I were poor and like that!" The tears came in Daisy's eyes. "I can stand up straight, and I am getting to walk quite well. I have so much that is lovely and comforting; and oughtn't one be thankful not to be real poor?"

The little lameter went hopping across the street, and called to some children "to look at the style!"

Down by the corner there was a candy and notion store, kept by an old woman with a queer wrinkled face framed in with a wide cap-ruffle. She had a funny turned-up nose, as if it had hardly known which way to grow, and such round red-apple cheeks. When it was pleasant, she sat in the doorway, regardless of the fate of the heroic young woman of Norway.

"Good day!" she ejaculated. "The Lord bless ye. Yon's got a pretty face, an' I hope it will bring her good fortune." She nodded, and her cap-ruffle flapped over her face.

"If ye see that omadhawn of a Biddy Brady in yer travels, jist send her home. The babby's screamin' himself into fits. Won't her mother give it to her whin she comes in!"

Down below the next corner, there was a throng of children. One big boy was whistling a jig tune, and clapping on his knee.

"That's old Mrs. McGiven," explained Hanny. "The school-children go there for cake and candy and slate pencils, because hers have such nice sharp points. And—Biddy Brady!"

Jim was with the boys. He gave Hanny a nod and laughed and joined the whistling.

"Oh, Jim—Biddy's baby is crying—"

"Come, start up again, Biddy. You haven't given us half a cent's worth! You don't dance as good as the little Jew girl on the next block."

"Arrah now—"

"Go on wid yer dancin'."

Biddy was a thin, lanky girl with straight dark hair that hung in her eyes and over her shoulders. A faded checked pinafore, with just plain arm-holes, covered her nearly all up. To her spindle legs were attached mismatched shoes, twice too large, tied around the ankles. One had a loose sole that flapped up and down. It really wasn't any dancing, for she just kicked out one foot and then the other, with such vigor that you wondered she didn't go over backward. Her very earnestness rendered it irresistibly funny. She certainly danced by main strength.

Hanny began again. "Jim, her baby is crying—"

"He gets his living by crying. I've never heard of his doing anything else."

Biddy brought her foot down with an emphatic thump.

"There now, not another step do yees get out o' me fur that cint. I've give ye good measure and

fancy steps throwed in. An' me shoe is danced off me fut, an' me mammy'll lick me. See that now!" and she held up her flapping sole.

They had to yield to necessity, for none of the crowd had another penny. When Biddy realised the fact, she ran off home and bought a stick of candy to solace herself and the baby. Mrs. Brady went out washing, and Biddy cared for the baby when she wasn't in the street. It must be admitted the babies languished under her care.

The school-children had a good deal of fun hiring her to dance. Biddy was shrewd enough about the pennies.

Jim joined the cavalcade as the boys went their way.

"Why, she likes the money," he said in answer to an upbraiding remark from Hanny. "That's what she does it for."

"It was very funny," declared Daisy. "She's such a straight, slim child in that long narrow apron. If it hadn't been for the baby, I would have given her a penny."

They went on down the street. There were several fancy-goods stores and some pretty black-eyed Jewish children with the curliest hair imaginable. There was the big school across the way, and a great lock factory, then a row of comparatively nice dwellings. They turned into Avenue A., and were in a crowd of Germans. The children and babies all had flaxen or yellow hair and roundish blue eyes. The mothers were knitting and sewing and chattering in their queer language. Even the little girls were knitting lace and stockings. The boys seemed fat and pudgy. They stared at the chair and its inmate, but Sam went quietly along. Here were German costumes sure enough.

They turned up Second Street, and so around First Avenue, home.

"Why, it's like going to foreign countries," Daisy said. "Some of the children were very pretty. But that Biddy Brady—I can see her yet."

The very next day Daisy drew two pictures, and held them before Hanny.

"Why, that's Biddy Brady!" the little girl said, with a bright wondering laugh. "And that's old Mrs. McGiven! They're splendid! How could you do it?"

"I don't know. It came to me."

Mrs. Craven said the old lady was excellent. And she laughed about Biddy Brady's dancing.

Sometimes they went up to Tompkins' Square. They would study their lessons or do a bit of crocheting. Daisy was learning a great many things. Or they went a little farther up and over to the river, which was much wider at that time. The old farms had been cut up into blocks; but while they were waiting for some one to come along and build them up, the thrifty Germans had turned them into market gardens, and they presented a very pretty appearance.

They could see the small clusters of houses on Long Island, and the end of Blackwell's Island,—a terrible place to them. The boys had seen the "Black Maria," which the little girl thought must be some formidable giant negress capable of driving the criminals along as one would a flock of sheep, and she was quite surprised when she learned it was a wagon merely. The East River was quite pretty up here, and the ferry-boats made a line of foam that sparkled in the sun.

Occasionally Doctor Joe joined the party, and took them in other directions. He had accepted the offer of an old physician on East Broadway, which was then considered very aristocratic. The basement windows had pretty lace curtains, and the dining-rooms had beaufets in the corners, on which the glass and silver were arranged. The brass doorknobs and the name-plate shone like gold, and the iron railings of the stoops were finished with quite pretentious newels, that the children called sentry boxes.

Grand Street, at the eastern end, had many private dwellings. Ridge and Pitt and Willet streets were quite steep and made splendid coasting places in winter. There was the Methodist church, in which many famous worthies had preached, and even at the end of the century the old place keeps its brave and undaunted front.

Strawberries did not come until June; and the girls took them round the streets in tiny deep baskets. There were no such mammoth berries as we have now; but, oh, how sweet and luscious they were! Little girls carried baskets of radishes from door to door, and first you heard "strawbrees," then something that sounded like "ask arishee," which I suppose was brief for "ask any radishes."

The fish and clam men were a great delight to the children. One curious, weather-beaten old fellow who went through First Street had quite a musical horn, and a regular song.

> "Fine clams, fine clams, fine clams, to-day,
> That have just arrived from Rockaway.
> They're good to boil, and they're good to fry,
> And they're good to make a clam pot-pie.
> My horse is hired, and my waggon isn't mine.
> Look out, little boys, don't cut behind!"

Where the rhyme was lame, he made up with an extra flourish and trill to the notes. The cats

used to watch out for him. They seemed to know when Friday came, and they would be sitting on the front stoops, dozing until they heard the welcome sound of the horn. There were huckster waggons with vegetables, and a buttermilk man.

An old coloured woman used to come round with brewer's yeast, and one morning she had a great piece of black cambric twisted about her bonnet.

"Who are you in mourning for, auntie?" asked Margaret.

"My ol' man, Miss Margret. Happened so lucky! He jest died Sat'day night, an' we buried him on Sunday, an' here I am goin' round on Monday,—not losin' any time. Happened so lucky!"

Jim went into spasms of merriment over the economy of the incident.

CHAPTER III

CHANCES AND CHANGES

The Whitneys had moved in May, to the great regret of everybody. Their family had changed considerably through the winter. Archibald, the younger son, was married, and Mr. Theodore had an opportunity to go abroad for a year.

The widowed cousin in Beach Street was married and went to Baltimore with her two children. That left the two old aunts who owned the house quite alone. Mrs. Whitney and Delia had taken turns staying with them.

The children were all sorry to lose Nora and Pussy Gray.

"People say it's bad luck to move a cat," said Nora, in her sententious fashion; "but we don't believe in it. We've moved him twice already. And you just put a little butter on his feet—"

"Butter!" interrupted the children, amazed.

"Why, yes. That's to make him wash his paws. If you can make him wash and purr in a new place, he will stay. And then you must take him round and show him every room and every closet. And you must come down real often, Hanny. There's the lovely little park, you know. Aunt Boudinot has a key. They're such nice queer old ladies, you'll be sure to like them."

"I don't always like queer people," said Hanny, rather affronted.

"I don't mean cross or ugly. Aunt Clem has soft down all over her cheeks, and such curly white hair. She's awful old and wrinkled and deaf; but Dele can make her hear splendid. Aunt Patty isn't so old. Her real name is Patricia. And Aunt Clem's is Clementine."

The children were not alone in regret. Ben was almost broken-hearted to lose Mr. Theodore. The boy and the man had been such good friends. And Ben was quite resolved, when he had served his apprenticeship, and was twenty-one, to be a newspaper man and travel about the world.

Delia had told them quite a wonderful secret the day she came up after some articles her mother had left. She had written some verses, and had them printed unknown to any one. The. had said they were very fair. And she had actually been paid for a story; and the editor of the paper offered to take others, if they were just as good. She had changed her check for a five-dollar goldpiece, which she carried about with her for luck. She showed it to them; and they felt as if they had seen a mysterious object.

Hanny was greatly amazed, puzzled as well. That a grown man like Mr. Theodore should write grave columns of business matters for a newspaper had not surprised her; she had a vague idea that people who wrote verses and stories must needs be lovely. She pictured them with floating curls and eyes turned heavenward for inspiration. It seemed to her that beautiful thoughts must come from the clouds. Then their voices should be soft, their hands delicate. And the divine something that no dictionary has ever yet found a word to describe must surround them. There was a fair-haired girl at school who had such an exquisite smile. And Daisy Jasper! For her to write verses would be the supreme fitness of things.

But careless, laughing, untidy Dele Whitney, neither fair nor dark and—yes, freckled, though her hair was more brown than red now. And to laugh about it, and toss up her goldpiece and catch it with her other hand!

"Handsome!" Ben ejaculated when Hanny confided some of her difficulties to him in a very timid fashion. "Great people don't need to run to beauty. Still, Mr. Audubon had a lovely face, to my thinking," he added, when he saw how disappointed the little girl looked. "And, oh! see here, Mr. Willis is handsome and Gaylord Clark, and there is that picture of Mrs. Hemans—"

The little girl smiled. Dr. Hoffman had given Margaret a beautifully bound copy of Mrs. Hemans's poems, and the steel engraving in the front *was* handsome. She had already learned two of the poems, and recited them at school.

"And I don't think Delia so very plain," continued Ben. "You just watch what beautiful curves

there are to her lips, and her brown eyes lighten up like morning; and when they are a little sad, you can think that twilight overshadows her. I like to watch them change so. I'm awfully sorry they're gone away. If we *could* have another big brother, I'd like it to be Mr. Theodore."

Hanny used to hope when she was as big as Margaret she would be as pretty. She didn't think very much about it, only now and then some of the cousins said,—

"Hanny doesn't seem to grow a bit. And how very light her hair keeps! You'd hardly think she and Margaret were sisters."

The little girls drew mysteriously closer after Nora went away. They all kept on at the same school, and played together. But dolls and tea parties didn't appear to have quite the zest of a year ago.

One Saturday, Mr. Underhill took Hanny down to Beach Street. They were all delighted to see her, even to Pussy Gray, who came and rubbed against her, and stretched up until he reached her waist, and, oh, how he did purr!

"I think he's been kind of homesick for the children," remarked Nora, gravely, as if she might be quite grown up. "You see he *was* spoiled among you all. I was a little afraid at first that he would run away."

"Did you put butter on his paws?"

"Oh, yes. He licked them, and then washed his face; but he kept looking around and listening to strange noises. He'd sit on the window-sill and watch the children, and cry to go out. But he doesn't mind now."

He had a chair and a cushion to himself, and looked very contented.

They went upstairs to see the old ladies. Aunt Clem had a round, full, baby-face, for all she was so old. Nora said she was almost ninety. Aunt Patty was twenty years younger, quite brisk and bright, with wonderful blue eyes. They had the front room upstairs, and their bed stood in the alcove. The furnishing looked like some of the country houses. Mrs. Whitney had the back room, and Nora shared it with her. There were great pantries between with shelves and drawers, and in one a large chest, painted green, that Nora said was full of curiosities.

Delia's room was up on the top floor. She had made it oddly pretty. There was a book-case and the small desk. They had used, ever so many pictures, and a pot of flowers on a little table. It had quite an orderly aspect.

"And I have another five-dollar goldpiece," laughed the girl. "I shall be a nabob presently. I ought to invest my money; but it is so comforting to look at, that I hate to let it go."

Then Hanny had to tell them about the new neighbours. They were foreigners, by the name of Levy; and there were four grown people, five little children, and two servants. Mr. Levy was an importer, and they all seemed jolly and noisy, but did not talk English, so there could not be any friendliness, even if they cared.

"We shall soon be a foreign city," declared Mrs. Whitney. "It's astonishing how the foreigners do come in! No wonder people have to move up-town."

Nora and Hanny went over in the Park after dinner. But it wasn't much fun to be alone; so they walked up and down the street, and then Delia took them in the stage down to the Battery. People were promenading in gala attire. Saturday afternoon had quite a holiday aspect. There was a big steamer coming up the bay. The Whitneys had heard twice from Mr. Theodore, who was now going over to Ireland.

"Tell Ben that The. is going to write to him," remarked Dele. "He said so in his last letter."

When they returned to Beach Street, they found Doctor Joe waiting for Hanny. But Ben said afterward he wished he had gone instead, he was quite longing to see them all. And he was delighted with the prospect of a letter.

Whether they would have liked their new neighbours or not, if they could have talked to them, made little difference to Mrs. Underhill. Margaret was to be married in the early autumn. Dr. Hoffman had bought a house not very far from Stephen's, in a new row that was just being finished. He wouldn't like it to stand empty, and he did not want to rent it for a year, and perhaps have the pretty fresh aspect spoiled. And then it was better for a doctor to be married and settled.

Father Underhill sighed. Mrs. Underhill said sharply that she couldn't get ready; but for all that, pieces of muslin came into the house for sheets and pillow-cases, and Margaret was busy as a bee.

Another trouble loomed up before the anxious housekeeper. A sprightly widower belonging to the same church as Martha, came home with her every Sunday night, and class-meeting night, which was Thursday.

"You ought to consider well," counseled Mrs. Underhill. "A stepmother is a sort of thankless office. And two big boys!"

"Well—I'm used to boys. They're not so bad when you know how to take them, and they'll soon be grown up. Then he's quite forehanded. He owns a house in Stanton Street, and has a good business, carting leather in the Swamp."

The Swamp was the centre for tanneries and leather importers and dealers, and it still keeps its name and location.

"I don't know what I shall do!" with a heavy sigh.

"You'll have good long warning. I wouldn't be mean enough to go off and leave you with all this fuss and worry on your hands. And, land sakes! his wife hasn't been dead a year yet. I told him I couldn't think of such a thing before Christmas, anyhow. But he has such a hard time with both grandmothers. One comes and fixes things her way, and gets tired and goes off, and then the other one comes and upsets them. It's just dreadful! I do believe a man needs a second wife more than he did the first. They're poor sticks to get along alone when they've had some one to look after things. And when this affair is over, you'll kind of settle down, and the family seem smaller. Just don't fret a bit, for the whole thing may fall through."

"I shouldn't want you to give up the prospect of a good home," rather reluctantly.

"Well, that's what I've thought about. And I ain't a young girl with years of chances before me. But I'm not going to be caught too easy," and Martha tossed her head.

Ben was very much interested in the war that was going on now in good earnest. The Americans had taken Fort Brown, crossed to the Rio Grande and driven the Mexicans from Matamoras. A plan had been laid to attack Mexico on the Pacific side, and to invade both Old and New Mexico. Santa Anna had escaped from his exile in Cuba, and was longing to reconquer Texas. The whole question seemed in great confusion; but there was a great deal of enthusiasm among some of the younger men, who thought war a rather heroic thing, and they were hurrying off to the scene of action. There was a spirit of adventure and curiosity about the wonderful western coast.

George Horton used to talk all these matters over with Ben, when he came down on his occasional visits. He was a fine big fellow now, but he was getting tired of farming. It was quite lonely. Uncle Faid read the county paper, but was not specially interested in the questions of the day; and Retty and her husband never went beyond stock, and the crops, and the baby. Ben kept his brother supplied with books that opened a wider outlook for him, and made him a little discontented with the humdrum round.

"I wouldn't mind it if you were all there," he would say. "After all the city is the only real live place! I've half a mind to come down and learn a trade. Only I *do* like the wide out of doors. I couldn't stand being cooped up."

"And I'm going round the world some day," returned Ben.

"I'd like to go out with Frémont. The other side of our country seems so curious to me, I want to see what it is like. The other side of the Rocky Mountains! It's almost like saying the Desert of Sahara," and the young fellow laughed.

There was the usual spring and summer dress-making for the ladies. Even Miss Cynthia, looking sharply at Hanny, said:—

"I don't see what's the matter with that child! I supposed she'd have everything outgrown, and some of her last summer's skirts won't need any letting down. They're wearing them shorter now; and you know, Cousin Underhill, you would have them made rather long last summer."

The little girl sometimes felt quite sore on the point. The Deans were getting to be tall girls, and even Daisy Jasper had taken to growing. And her lovely curls were quite long again. She certainly was very pretty.

But when Hanny took this trouble to her father, he only laughed and squeezed her in his arms, and sometimes rubbed her soft cheeks with his beard, his old trick, as he said:—

"But I want to keep you my little girl. I don't want you to grow big like Margaret. For if you should, some nice fellow will come along and insist upon carrying you off, and then I should lose you. Whatever would I do?"

That view of the matter was alarming to contemplate. She clung closer to her father, and said, in a half-frightened tone, that she never would be carried off. It quite reconciled her to the fact of not growing rapidly.

The girls all went down to see Nora Whitney one Saturday in June. It looked rather threatening in the morning, but a yard or two of blue sky gave them hope. Mr. Underhill took them all in the family carriage. Oh, how lovely the little park looked with its soft grass and waving trees! And in the area windows there were pots of flowers: ten-weeks' stock, and spice pinks, and geraniums that were considered quite a rarity.

Nora was out on the front stoop with Pussy Gray, who arched his back and waved his tail with an air of grandeur, and then sat down on the top step and began to wash his face, while Father Underhill was planning to take them all for a drive late in the afternoon.

Pussy Gray watched his little mistress out of one green eye, and washed over one ear. He was just going over the other when Nora caught him, "Why do you stop him?" asked Daisy.

"Because he wants to make it rain and spoil our day. Pussy Gray—if you do!"

"But it wouldn't really?"

"Well, it's a sure sign when he goes over both ears. When I don't want it to rain, I stop him."

"But suppose he does it when he is by himself?"

"I think sometimes he runs away and does it on the sly. Aunt Patty says it is as sure as sure can be."

Pussy Gray winked at Hanny, as if he said he didn't believe in signs, and that he should wash over both ears when he found a chance.

Dele was bright and merry. She "bossed" the house, for Mrs. Whitney had subsided into novel-reading again, and now took books out of the Mercantile Library. A woman was doing the Saturday morning's work, and scrubbing the areas. After that she went over the front one with a red wash that looked like paint, and freshened it. The girls took a run in the yard. There was a long flower-bed down the side of the fence, and at one end all manner of sweet herbs, lavender, thyme, and rosemary, sweet verbena, and then tansy and camomile, and various useful things.

"Camomile tea is good for you when you lose your appetite," said Nora; "but it's awful bitter. Aunt Patty cuts off the leaves and blossoms of the sweet herbs, and sews them up in little bags of fine muslin, and lays them among the clothes and the nice towels and pillow-cases. And it makes them all smell just delicious."

The air was full of fragrance now. They played tag around the grass-plot. Daisy sat on the stoop and said she didn't mind, though she gave a little sigh, and wondered how it would feel to run about. The little lame girl in Houston Street could get over the ground pretty rapidly. She had interested Doctor Joe in her, and he had hunted up the child's mother, who wouldn't listen to anything being done for her.

"Sure," said she, "if it's the Lord's will to send this affliction to her, I'll not be flying in the face of Providence. She can manage, and she's impident enough now. There'd be no livin' with her if she had two good legs. And I'll not have any doctor cuttin' her up into mince-meat."

Pussy Gray came and sat beside Daisy with a flick of the ear and turn of the tail, as if he said: "We'll let those foolish girls fly about and squeal and laugh and get half roasted, while we sit here at leisure and enjoy ourselves."

Afterward they swung, and then went up to Nora's play-house. Aunt Patty had given her a rag doll that she had when she was a little girl, and it was over fifty years old. It was undeniably sweet, because it had been steeped in lavender, but it was not very pretty. There was a curious little wooden cradle Aunt Patty's brother had made. All the children's story-books were up here in a case Dele had made out of a packing box.

They thought after a little they would rather go over in the Park. Nora took the key. It was very pleasant; and they watched the carts and waggons going by, and the pedestrians. Presently a young woman unlocked the gate at the lower end, and came in with two little children rather queerly dressed. She had a white muslin cap on her head, very high in front. We often see them now, but then they were a rarity. The little children had very black eyes and curly black hair, and stared curiously at the group of girls.

"They're French," explained Nora. "They live a few doors down below. And they can't speak a word of English, nor the maid either, though we do sometimes talk a little. There are two quite big boys, then the mother and father, and the grandmother and grandfather. The old people come out and sit on the stoop, now that it is warm. He reads French books to her, and she makes lace. About four o'clock, the servant brings out a tea-table, and they have some tea and little bits of cake. They do it all summer long, Aunt Patty says, and the old lady is beautiful,—just like a picture."

The girls walked down a little. The maid smiled and nodded. The children made queer stiff bows, both alike, though they were girl and boy; but they looked half afraid. The maid said "Bon jour" to Nora, who replied with a longer sentence. And then she began to explain in English and her scanty French that these were her friends, and that they were studying French in school. The Deans talked a little; but Hanny was too shy, and the conversation would have been very amusing to a spectator. But just when it was getting quite exciting, and they couldn't make each other understand at all, Hanny caught sight of Delia waving her handkerchief from the front stoop, which was a signal that dinner was ready, so they all curtsied and said good-bye.

Afterward Aunt Patty showed them her "treasures," some very odd dishes and pitchers that were more than a hundred years old, and some jewels, and the gown Aunt Clem had worn to Washington's Inauguration, and told them about Mrs. Washington and going to the old theatre in John Street. She had some beautiful combs, and buckles that her father used to wear, and kid-gloves that had long arms and came most up to her shoulders. She told the children so many entertaining stories that before the afternoon seemed half gone Mr. Underhill came for them. Nora wanted to go also.

"You can take her home with you," said Dele; "and I'll come up for her this evening. I'm just wild to see Mrs. Underhill and the boys. I hope the children have had a good time. I've hardly had a

glimpse of them except at dinner."

They crossed the ferry and went over to Jersey. It was still pretty wild and country-like, but the trees and shrubs and bloom everywhere lent it a glory. The children chatted merrily, and all agreed the day was too short.

"But you can come again," said Nora.

When the Deans sprang out, Charles Reed stood by the stoop talking to Mr. Dean. Nora said the place hadn't changed a bit, and she wished she was back again. There were nothing but old people in Beach Street, and she had no little girls to play with. She didn't know what she should do when vacation came.

They were just through supper when Delia arrived, and she insisted upon sitting down at the table and having a cup of Mrs. Underhill's good tea. She was her olden jolly self, and had her brother's letters almost by heart. She thought them a great deal brighter and more amusing than those published in the "Tribune."

"But I like those," exclaimed Ben; "I'm cutting them out for a scrap-book. I just wish I was with him!"

"And he would like to have you," returned Dele. "I don't believe he ever took so much of a fancy to any one as he did to you."

They talked books a little. No, Dele had not written any more stories. The old ladies took a good deal of her time. And she had been studying. She wished she were going to school again; she should appreciate it so much more. She was reading the English essayists and Wordsworth, and learning about the great men and women.

Ben walked out to the Bowery to put them in the stage; and Dele said, rather ruefully:—

"I just wish we could study and read together. I miss The. so much, I could always ask him questions; but now I have to look up everything myself, and it's slow work."

"Dele has quite a family on her hands," said John, when she had gone. "She's getting to be rather good-looking, too. Her eyes are very fine."

"But she doesn't grow much tidier," returned his mother.

"Her hair is curly and always looks tumbled," was the half-apologising rejoinder. "But she is very bright, and she'll do something with herself."

Mrs. Underhill glanced sharply at her son. There was no danger in Ben being a little soft about Delia Whitney; but she was surprised at John's commendation.

Doctor Joe walked down to see how his patient had stood the day. Her mother had been almost afraid to have her go, lest "something might happen." She was very tired, of course, and glad to take to the reclining chair with all the pillows; but her eyes were in a glow, and her cheeks a pretty pink that Mrs. Jasper was quite sure was undue excitement.

"It was just splendid," Daisy declared; "Mamma, I do want to be like other girls, and see what is going on in the world. The old ladies were so quaint; and it was wonderful to have seen President Washington and so many famous people. And what interested me, was her talking about them just like ordinary persons. And Nora is so amusing. I want to learn French so that I can really talk it. You can't imagine how funny it was in the Park, trying to make each other understand. Oh, there are so many things I want to learn."

"There will be time enough," said her mother.

When Doctor Joe took her hand and bent over her to say good-night, she whispered softly,—

"I *did* try to forget my own misfortune, and I was very happy. I am going to be brave. It is such a lovely world; and it is such a splendid thing to be happy. Doctor Joe, you are my Mr. Greatheart."

CHAPTER IV

A WEDDING

There was a very fine noisy Fourth of July, and shortly after that came vacation. The Jaspers were going to Lebanon Springs, and then to Saratoga. Hanny came near to envying Daisy. She and Margaret had to visit both grandmothers, and go over to Tarrytown, for the Morgans had insisted upon it.

Hanny and her father had been reading some of Washington Irving's stories, beside his famous history. He was abroad now; he had been sent as Minister to the Court of Madrid, that wonderful Spanish city with its Court so full of interest and beauty. She had been learning about it in her history. But this old house was not grand, only in its splendid elms and maples and lindens and tall arbor-vitæs. Wolfert's Roost was almost hidden by them; but you could catch glimpses of its

curious roof, full of quaint corners and projections, and the old-fashioned stone mansion said to be modelled after the cocked hat of Peter the Headstrong. Its low stories were full of nooks and angles. There were roses and hollyhocks like rows of sentinels, and sweet brier clambering about. The little girl thought of it many a time afterward, when it had become much more famous, as Sunnyside. Indeed, she was to sit on the old piazza overlooking the river and listen to the pleasant voice that had charmed so many people, and study the drawings of Rip Van Winkle and Sleepy Hollow, to hear about Katrina Van Tassel, and the churn full of water that Fammetie Van Blarcom brought over from Holland because she was sure there could be no water good to drink in the new country.

Already she was coming to have a great interest in people who wrote books and stories. It seemed such a wonderful gift.

Dr. Hoffman paid the cousins the compliment of a visit. Afterward there were mysterious communings between the sisters.

Wedding presents were gifts of real preference and affection in those days. A girl had her "setting out" from home, and perhaps some one gave her an heirloom for her name, or because she was an especial favourite.

"Dr. Hoffman's well-to-do," said Joanna; "and Margaret's folks won't let her go empty-handed. But I'd like to have some of our things go where they would be appreciated. We've no one of our very own to leave them to," and Miss Morgan sighed. "Margaret doesn't consider store articles so much better than those made long ago. Let's each give her a pair of linen sheets. I've a dozen good ones now, and, land sakes! we sha'n't wear out half our bedding. And my tablecloth of the basket pattern, and two towels. And—let me see—that white wool blanket of Aunt Hetty's. It was spun and woven in 1800; and the sheep were raised here on the old farm. Some peculiar kind they were, with long, soft fleece."

"Well," said Famie, slowly, "there's my snowball tablecloth and two towels. 'Rastus's wife won't ever care for them with her fine Paris things. But we won't give away the silver, nor the old pewter flagon, nor the basin and cups. They've the crown mark on them, 1710 for a date. Deary me, they'll outlast us," and she sighed also.

Roseann agreed. Six sheets and pillow-cases, three tablecloths and half-a-dozen towels, and two blankets, one spun and woven by their own mother. The initials and date were marked on them in old-fashioned cross-stitch, which was a little more ornate than regular sampler-stitch.

Aunt Hetty's blanket had been made from the wool of an especial cosset lamb that had lost its mother and been brought up by hand. The little girl was very much interested.

"Did it follow her about?" she asked.

"Dear sakes!" and Aunt Famie laughed. "I just guess it did. It grew very troublesome, I've heard tell, and was quite quality, always wanting to come into the sitting-room. And it would curl down at Aunt Hetty's feet like a dog. She saved the wool every year, and spun it, and laid it away until she had enough. But I don't believe it went to school, although it could spell one word."

"One word!" cried the little girl, in amaze. "What was that?"

"Why b-a ba, of course. They said it could spell through the whole lesson, and I don't see why not. I've heard lambs make a dozen different sounds."

The little girl laughed. She was very fond of listening to what Aunt Famie did when she was little; and they went to call upon some curious old people who kept to the Dutch ways and wore the old costume. Some of them had wooden clogs for rainy weather. When they talked real Dutch, Hanny found it was quite different from German. They had a picture of some old ancestor's house with the windmill in the front yard.

The drives about were beautiful then, and so many places had queer old legends. Dr. Hoffman was very much interested, and it seemed to Hanny as if she had strayed over into Holland. She resolved when she went home to ask Ben to get her a history of Holland, so she and her father might read it together. Her mother never had any time.

Margaret was much surprised at her gifts, and thanked the cousins with warmest gratitude. Even Grandmother Van Kortlandt had hinted "that she wasn't going to save up everything for Haneran." But the elder people in those days were fond of holding on to their possessions until the very last.

Uncle David came up for them and took them to White Plains, where they had a nice visit; and grandmother selected some articles from her store for the prospective bride.

Hanny remembered what Cousin Archer had said about the mittens, and asked Uncle David. He found his hook, and, sure enough, it was something like a crochet-needle. He took what the little girls called single stitch. But he admitted that Hanny's pretty edgings and tidies were quite wonderful.

"I thought the Germans must have brought the knowledge to the country," she said. "How long have you known it?"

"Oh, since my boyhood," and he gave a smile. "I heard a very old man say once that Noah set his

sons to work in the Ark making fishing-nets. Perhaps Mrs. Noah set her daughter-in-laws to crocheting, as you call it. Forty days was a pretty long spell of rainy weather, when they had no books or papers to read, and couldn't go out to work in the garden."

"Didn't they have any books?" Hanny's eyes opened wide.

"All their writing was done on stone tablets, and very little of that."

"I think I wouldn't have liked living then. Books are so splendid. And you get to know about so many people. But there was the Bible," and the child's voice dropped to a reverent tone.

"Still, if Moses wrote the first books, that was a long while after the Flood."

Hanny's vague idea was that the Bible had been created in the beginning, like Adam and Eve.

Cousin Ann and Aunt Eunice were as much in love with the little girl as ever, but were tremendously surprised at her stock of knowledge. It didn't seem possible that one little girl could know so much. That she could play tunes on the piano, and repeat ever so many French words, then explain what they meant in English, was a marvel. But the child never seemed spoiled by the admiration.

They had to come down to Yonkers, for Uncle Faid and Aunt Crete would have been hurt and jealous. Only it did not seem now to Hanny as if she had ever lived there. The old kitchen, the creek that went purling along, bearing fleets of ducks and geese, and the wide old porch looked natural, but the daily living was so changed! Old black Aunt Mary was dead. Some of the neighbours had gone away. Cousin Retty had a new baby, a little girl; but she said it was the crossest thing alive, and it did seem to cry a good deal. It couldn't compare with Stephen's baby, who was always laughing and jolly.

They had to stop at Fordham to see some cousins. When people live a century or so in one place and intermarry, they get related to a good many people. And there was a sweet little grandmother here, who, in her girlhood, had the same name as the little visitor—Hannah Underhill. There was no Ann in it to be sure. And now her name was Hannah Horton.

There were lots of gay, rollicking cousins. The little girl felt almost afraid of the big boys, and she was used to boys, too.

Her mother had said she might make a visit with the Odell girls. They had grown and changed; and Hanny felt quite as if she were undersized. Mr. Odell had been building a new part to the house; and oh, what a lovely garden they had! It made the little girl almost envious.

Margaret left her there for several days. At least, Dr. Hoffman drove up one afternoon and took Margaret home, as Hanny's visit wasn't near finished. They had to talk about their schools and the girls they knew. Polly and Janey wanted to hear about the First Street girls and Daisy Jasper, who was getting well, and Nora, who had moved away, and the quaint old ladies in Beach Street.

There was a splendid big cat at the Odell's who liked nothing better than being nursed, and two kittens that Hanny never tired of watching, they were so utterly funny in their antics, and seemed to do so much actual reasoning, as to cause and effect, that it amazed her. And, oh, the beautiful country ways and wild flowers on every hand!

It does not look so now. One wonders where all the people have come from to fill the rows and rows of houses, and to keep busy about the mills and factories. But then the great city had only about five hundred thousand inhabitants, and did not need to overflow into suburban districts.

It seemed strange for the little girl to come home to a city street. It looked narrow and bare, with its cobblestones and paved sidewalks. And, oh, what a racket the waggons made! and she was amazed at the crowds of people, as she thought there were then.

But inside everything was homelike and delightful. She was so glad to see her mother and father and the boys. Ben looked like a young man. Jim was to go to a preparatory school for a year, and then enter Columbia College. Mrs. Craven had sold her house, and gone up to Seventh Street, and was to have quite a young ladies' school. Josie Dean had decided to study for a teacher. That made her seem quite grown up.

Old Mr. Beekman had died while the little girl was away; and Katschina had grieved herself to death, and followed her master. Annette had a lover, but of course she could not marry in some time. The old farm was to be sold—at least, streets were to be cut through it, and the outlying lots sold off. Mrs. Beekman was to keep the down-town house for her part.

And now it was considered that Stephen Underhill had done a grand thing for himself in marrying Dolly Beekman. Mr. Beekman owned no end of real estate, was indeed much richer than people imagined. The girls would each have a big slice. But Dolly was just as sweet and plain, and as much interested in everybody as before. She was so ready to help and advise Margaret, and go out shopping with her. For was she not very wise and experienced, having been married two whole years!

Dr. Hoffman had bought his house up-town as well. Some people scouted the idea that the city could be crowded even in fifty years. But the long-headed ones reasoned that it must go up, as it could not expand in breadth, and "down-town" must be given over to business.

Hanny went up to see the new house one Saturday. The front basement was to be the office, and

was being fitted up with some shelves and cabinets. The back basement was the kitchen. There were two large parlors and a third room, that was the dining-room. And one thing interested the little girl greatly,—this was the "dumb waiter."

"Of course it can't talk," said she, laughingly. "And it can't hear; but you can make it obey."

"It can creak and groan when it gets dry for a little oil. And it will be like a camel if you put too heavy a load on it," returned the Doctor.

"Does the camel groan?"

"Horribly! And he won't stir an inch toward getting up until you lighten his load."

There was a pretty pantry across the corner, with a basin to wash china and silver, so it would not need to go downstairs. Hanny thought she would like to come sometime and wash the pretty dishes.

Upstairs there were three rooms and a bath, and beautiful closets, and on the third floor three rooms again.

"But what will you do with all of them?" asked Hanny.

Margaret had said the same thing to her lover. And Mrs. Underhill said it was an awful extravagance to have such a great house for two people. But John Underhill declared Dr. Hoffman had done just the right thing, buying up-town. He would settle himself in a first-class practice presently, as the well-to-do people kept moving thither.

There had been a good deal of discussion about the wedding. Dr. Hoffman wanted to take Margaret to Baltimore, where his married sister resided, and an aunt, his mother's sister, who was too feeble to undertake a journey. They would go on to Washington as well. Wedding journeys were not imperative, but often taken. An evening party at home seemed too much for Mrs. Underhill; and Dolly, being in mourning, could not lead any gaieties.

She cut the Gordian knot, however,—a church wedding, with cards for all the friends, and a reception at home. They would take the train at six from Jersey City. Mr. Underhill was rather sorry not to have an old-fashioned festivity. But Miss Cynthia said this was just the thing.

So the marriage was at St. Thomas' church at two o'clock. A cousin of Dolly's and a school friend were bridesmaids, though Annette Beekman had been chosen. The bride wore a fine India mull that flowed around her like a fleecy cloud, Dolly's veil, and orange blossoms, for it was good luck to be married in something borrowed. The little girl headed the procession, carrying a basket of flowers, and looked daintily sweet.

The "Home Journal," the society paper of that day, spoke of the beautiful young couple in quite extravagant terms. Mrs. Underhill said rather tartly afterward, "That Margaret was well enough looking; but she had never thought of setting her up for a beauty." Yet down in the depths of her heart her mother love had a little ache because her last born would never be as beautiful. But Mr. Underhill considered they had not been praised a bit too much, and sent in a year's subscription to the paper.

Miss Cynthia was in her glory. She seemed one of the people who never grow old, and though a great talker, was seldom sharp or severe. Everybody knew she could get married if she desired to, so she rather gloried in staying single.

Margaret cut her wedding-cake, and the piece with the ring fell to Dolly's cousin, who turned scarlet, which brought out a general laugh. There was much wishing of joy, and presently Margaret went upstairs and put on her pretty grey silk with the "drawn" bonnet to match, and the grey cloth *visite*, looking as handsome as she had in her wedding gown.

They left so many people behind no one had a chance to feel lonesome. There were ever so many relations who were going to stay for a visit, and shop a little. People were given to hospitality in those days. The constricted living of flats had not come into existence. And your friend would have felt insulted to be taken to a restaurant for dinner, instead of at your own house.

Hanny had quite a girls' tea-party afterward. Martha spread a table for them upstairs. And the funny thing was, that her father and the boys teased to come, and her mother really had to rush to the rescue. But they did let Doctor Joe remain, and they had a delightful time.

Josie and Tudie and Nora told how they would do when they were married.

"Now, Hanny!" Daisy Jasper had not spoken. It was not likely any one would want to marry a lame girl, and the others were too kind to make it a matter of embarrassment.

"I don't believe I *can* get married," said Hanny, with sweet seriousness. "I shouldn't like to leave father, and mother will want somebody, for the boys will be away."

Daisy stretched out her hand. "We'll just have a good time together," she rejoined, smilingly. "And if Doctor Joe doesn't get married, we'll work slippers for him and cigar cases, and if we could learn how, we might make him a dressing-gown."

"If you will be as good as that, I don't think I will get married. And when I drop in, you can give me a cup of tea, and we'll have the best of times. I hope I won't be very queer."

He said it so seriously, they all laughed.

Afterward he declared he was going to take all the girls home. That was a bachelor's prerogative, and he would begin at once. He took the Deans first, then Nora, whom he put in the Bowery stage. Daisy and Hanny spent that leisure admiring baby Stephen, who had six cunning white teeth and curly hair, which the little girl doted on.

Daisy told the tea-party over to her aunt and her mother, and was very happy. And she felt someway as if she had settled her life, and shouldn't mind it very much. But husbands who were as tender as Dr. Hoffman, and babies like laughing, dimpled Stevie!

Were there some childish tears in her eyes? But the main thing for her was to get strong and be courageous, and take her share of the world's knowledges and beautiful things. She wondered sometimes why the Lord Jesus, who was so wise and good and pitiful, should have let this misfortune come upon her, or why, when all the doctors were so in earnest, they could not have made her straight and well. And when people said, "Oh, what a pity, with that lovely face!" she thought she could have borne it better if she had been plainer.

When the great love that thinks for its neighbour imbues us all, we shall cease to make personal comments, and endeavour to bear each others burdens with silent, tender grace.

Doctor Joe was her comfort and inspiration. No one could ever estimate what his kindly interest had done for her. He was so cheerful and full of fun and sunshine. Elderly women had begun to pet up the young doctor, in spite of his youth.

In fact there were many virtues ascribed to experience in those days; and now we have learned the truth is in the application, that living through a great deal doesn't always bring wisdom.

Grandmother Van Kortlandt and Aunt Katrina had a fine time visiting Stephen. They were quite stylish, old-fashioned style, that wore fine English thread-laces with the scent of lavender, and had their silvery hair done up in puffs with side-combs. They were a little precise and formal, and would have been horrified if the children had not said "Yes, ma'am," and "No, ma'am." No free and easy manners for them!

The little girl was quite sure she loved Grandmother Underhill the best. Both called her Haneran, as if they were a little jealous of a full share in her name. Grandmother made quite a long visit, for she said, "She might never come again, she was getting rather feeble. She didn't expect to live to see the little girl married."

Hanny's father declared, "She couldn't be married until she was twenty-five, just in time to save her from being an old maid."

"But I won't be very old at twenty-five," she replied, smiling out of her big innocent eyes. "And I thought I wouldn't get married at all."

They *did* miss Margaret. But the little girl had to study hard, and wait on her mother, and practise her music, and visit. There were so many places clamouring for her.

The boys at Houston Street missed Jim Underhill also, though he often came up that way when he could get off, which meant when he did not have to stay for a recitation. Though they were up to pranks, they were not cruel or malicious. If they could "make fun," and rhyme a fellow's name ridiculously, and ring door-bells now and then, or leave a nicely done-up parcel on some one's stoop, wrapped and tied and directed, containing a box of ashes, or a brick, they were satisfied. They still considered it fun to have Biddy Brady dance, and Limpy Dick, as they called the lame girl, run a race. She hopped along with her hand on her lame knee with surprising rapidity.

CHAPTER V

WINTER HAPPENINGS

Margaret came home and had a party at her house, "Infair" the older people called it. Then a family tea at home, and another at Stephen's. Mrs. Verplank, the Doctor's half-sister, gave her a very elegant reception.

She was oddly changed, somehow, just as sweet, but with more dignity and composure; and Jim couldn't make her turn red by teasing her. The little girl noticed that her mother treated Margaret with a peculiar deference and never scolded her; and she said Philip to Dr. Hoffman.

He had some serious talks with the little girl, for he pretended to be afraid she would love Dolly and Stephen the best. Everybody had a desire to hold her, because she was so little and light. She was not to make the baby an excuse to go the oftenest to Dolly's.

"Oh, dear," she rejoined, with a sigh, "and if John should get married, and the rest of them, as they grow up, I wouldn't have any time left for myself. But Joe isn't going to be married."

Dr. Hoffman laughed at that.

John had a sweetheart. He always dressed up in his best on Wednesday night. Young men in

those days thought of homes and families of their own. There were no clubs to take them in.

An odd little incident happened to Margaret's *menage*. Stephen had one of Aunt Mary's grandsons as porter in the store. Another, who had been brought up as a sort of house-servant to some elderly people that death had visited, came to the city, and Stephen sent him to Dr. Hoffman, who was inquiring about a factotum. He was a very well-looking and well-mannered young coloured lad, and knew how to drive and care for a horse. He was quite a cook also, and soon learned to do the marketing.

Margaret kept house for herself, and enjoyed her pretty new china and beautiful cut-glass. And after a month or two Dolly persuaded her to rent two rooms to two ladies, the back room on the second floor, and one on the third. She was glad to have some company when the Doctor had to be out. One of the ladies coloured plates for magazines and illustrated books. This was done by hand then, and was considered quite artistic work. We had not printed in colours yet. The ladies were very refined, and had a small income beside the work.

The Doctor took Margaret out every pleasant afternoon. His practice was not large enough to work him very severely. In the evening they read or sang, as she played very nicely now. But she missed the breezy boys and their doings, and her mother's cheery voice ordering every one about, and, oh, she missed the little girl who didn't come half often enough.

She began a choice piece of work for her, a silk quilt. No one had gone insane over crazy work then. This was shapely, decorous diamonds, with the name of the wearer, or a date, embroidered on each block. The Morgans had given her pieces from Paris and Venice and Holland, and even Hong Kong. Some were a hundred and more years old, and were gowns of quite famous people.

This fall the American Institute Fair was held at Niblo's Garden. There were many curious things. Both telegraphs had been put up,—House's with its letter printing, Morse's with its cabalistic signs. How words could travel through a bit of wire puzzled most people. Uncle Faid went with them one afternoon.

"No use to tell me," he declared. "The fellow at one end knows just what the fellow at the other end is going to say. Now if they sent it in a box, or a letter, it would look reasonable."

"I'll send you a message," said Ben; "you go down at the end, and see if this doesn't come to you."

He wrote on a slip of paper, and gave it to Uncle Faid, who went to the other end with a disbelieving shake of the head. And when the receiver wrote it out, and Uncle Faid compared it, the astonishment was indescribable.

"There's some jugglery about it," he still insisted. "Stands to reason a bit of wire can't really know what you say."

Hanny brought home her telegraph message; and when she showed it to Nora Whitney, the child declared it was like the queer things in some books her papa had, called hieroglyphics. But Doctor Joe told her a stranger thing than that. He found the verses in the Psalms that were supposed to prefigure the telegraph:—

> "There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.
>
> "Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world."

"But they can't go across the ocean," said the little girl, confidently.

"Why, they are discussing the feasibility of crossing the Hudson with some kind of sunken cable. What we shall be doing fifty years from now—and I shall not be such a dreadfully old man! We are learning how to live longer as well."

Fifty years! and she would be as old as the grandmothers!

The other wonderful thing was the sewing-machine. Elias Howe had learned how to thread the needle, the opposite way, by putting the eye in the point. There was a little bent piece underneath that caught the loop while a thread ran through it. They gave away samples, and everybody admitted that it *was* wonderful.

The little girl said she could sew a great deal better. And her mother declared such sewing was hardly good enough for a feed-bag. Her father laughed, and told her rosy fingers were good enough sewing-machine for him.

Artificial legs and feet interested Doctor Joe very much. They had curious springs and wires, and the outside was pink, like real flesh,—in fact, they looked uncanny, they were so real. Hanny had seen several old men stumping around on cork or wooden legs about which there could be no deception. But when any one met with a mishap now, they could fix him up "limber as an eel," Doctor Joe said.

There was a deal of curious machinery and implements that some people smiled over, which, like the sewing-machines, made fortunes for their inventors presently; beautiful articles and jewelry; a great vegetable and flower exhibit; a small loom; weaving; carving of all kinds; and cloths and silks. Indeed, the Fair was considered a very great thing, and the country people who came in to visit it felt almost as if they had been to a strange country. Every afternoon and evening it was crowded.

Jim liked his new school very much, and soon flung his Latin words at his little sister in perfect broadsides. Then he found that Ben had somehow picked up a good deal of Latin, and knew all the Greek alphabet; and instead of laughing at Charles Reed, as a Miss Nancy, he became quite friendly with him.

All the children came home for a Christmas dinner, and had a delightful time. Then Martha was married, and went to her own housekeeping, and a cousin of the little German girls who lived in Houston Street, who had just come from Germany, petitioned for a trial. She was so bright and clean and ambitious to learn American ways that after a fortnight, Mrs. Underhill decided to keep her.

When all the visitors had gone, Hanny found it very lonely sleeping in a big room by herself. And as they couldn't move her downstairs, Mr. and Mrs. Underhill went upstairs and changed their room to the guest-chamber. Hanny missed her sister very much when night came. But then she had so many lessons to study; and after the history of Holland, they took up that of Spain, which was as fascinating as any romance.

Everybody was a good deal excited this winter about a curious phenomenon. At a small town in Western New York two sisters had announced that they could hold communication with the spirit-world, and receive messages from the dead. Little raps announced the spirit of your friend or relative. To imaginative people, it was simply wonderful. And now the Misses Fox were giving exhibitions and making converts.

People recalled the old Salem witchcraft, and not a few considered it direct dealing with the Evil One. Ben was deeply interested. He and Joe talked over clairvoyance and mesmerism,—a curious power developed by a learned German, Dr. Mesmer, akin to that of some of the old magicians. Ben was very fond of abnormal things; but Joe set down communication with another world as an impossibility. Still, a good many people believed it.

The children joined the singing-school again, and Charles Reed sang at several concerts. He went quite often to the Deans, and occasionally came over to the Underhills. Both houses were so delightful! If he only had a sister, or a brother! Or if his mother would do something beside scrub and clean the house! Social life was so attractive to him.

One day she did do something else. It was February, and the snow and ice had melted rapidly. All the air was full of the sort of chill that goes through one. She wanted some windows washed, and the yard cleared up, and was out in the damp a long while. That night she was seized with a sudden attack of pleurisy. Mr. Reed sprang up and made a mustard draught; but the pain grew so severe that he called Charles, and sent him over for Doctor Joe. By daylight, fever set in, and it was so severe a case that Doctor Joe called a more experienced doctor in consultation, and said they must have a nurse at once.

Charles had never seen her ill before. And when the doctors looked so grave, and the nurse spoke in such low tones, he was certain she could not live. He was so nervous that he could not get his lessons, and roamed about the house in a frightened sort of way. The nurse was used to housekeeping as well, and when she was needed downstairs Charles stayed in the sick-room. His mother did not know him or any one, but wandered in her mind, and was haunted by the ghosts of work in a manner that was pitiful to listen to. The nurse said she had made work her idol. There were two days when Mr. Reed stayed at home, though he sent Charles off to school. They had a woman in the kitchen now, a relative he had written for, Cousin Jane that Charles had once met in the country. She was extremely tidy; but she put on an afternoon gown, and a white apron, and found time in the evening to read the paper.

On the second afternoon both doctors went away just as Charles came home. His father was standing on the stoop with them, and Doctor Joe looked down and smiled. The boy's heart beat with a sudden warmth, as he went down the area steps, wiped his feet, and hung up his cap and overcoat with as much care as if his mother's sharp eyes were on him. There was no one in the room; but he sat down at once to his lessons.

Presently his father entered. His eyes had a pathetic look, as if they were flooded with tears.

"The doctor gives us a little hope, Charles," he said, in a rather tremulous voice. "It's been a hard pull. The fever was broken yesterday; but she was so awful weak; indeed, it seemed two or three times in the night as if she was quite gone. Since noon there has been a decided change; and, if nothing new happens, she will come around all right. It will be a long while though. She's worked too hard and steady; but it has not been my fault. At all events, we'll keep Cousin Jane just as long as we can. And now I must run down-town for a few hours. Tell Cousin Jane not to keep tea waiting."

Charles sat in deep thought many minutes. His father's unwonted emotion had touched him keenly. Of course he would have been very sorry to have his mother die, yet how often he had wished for another mother. The thought shocked him now; and yet he could see so many places where it would be delightful to have her different. Careful as she was of him, he had no inner consciousness that she loved him, and he did so want to have some one he could love and caress, and who would make herself pretty. Hanny loved her father and mother so much. She "hung around" them. She sat in her father's lap and threaded his hair with her soft little fingers. She had such pretty ways with her mother. She didn't seem ever to feel afraid.

Neither did the Deans. Of course they were all girls; but there were Ben and Jim and, oh, Doctor

Joe teased his mother, and was sweet to her, and even kissed her, grown man that he was!

Charles could hardly decide which mother he liked the most, but he thought Mrs. Dean. Mrs. Underhill sometimes scolded, though it never seemed real earnest.

He felt more at home with the Deans. Perhaps this was because Mrs. Dean had always coveted a boy, and, like a good many mothers, she wanted a real nice, smart, refined boy. Charles was obedient and truthful, neat and orderly, and always had his lessons "by heart." He was very proud of his standing in school. He could talk lessons over with more freedom to Mr. Dean than with his own father. And Josie was always so proud of him. Perhaps the reason he liked the Deans so well was because he was such a favourite with them, and appreciation seemed very sweet to the boy who had so little in his life.

Mr. Dean seemed to think there was great danger of his growing up a prig; but Mrs. Dean always took his part in any discussion. Mr. Dean was very fond of having him over to sing; and Josie gave him her piano lessons, only she kept a long way ahead.

Oh, how many, many times Charles had wished he was their son! There were so many boys in the Underhill family, he was quite sure they couldn't want any more.

But just now he felt curiously conscience-stricken, though greatly confused. He supposed his mother *did* want him, though she always considered him so much trouble, and talked about her "working from morning to night and getting no thanks for it." He had felt he would like to thank her specially for some things, but ought he, *must* he, be grateful for the things he did not want and were only a trouble and mortification to him? And was it wicked to wish for some other mother?

He would try not to do it again. He might think of Mrs. Dean as his aunt, and the girls his cousins. And he would endeavour with all his might to love his own mother.

Years afterward, he came to know how great an influence this hour had on him in moulding his character. But he did not realise how long he had dreamed until he heard Cousin Jane's brisk voice,—it was not a cross or complaining voice,—saying:—

"Why, Charles, here in the dark! Well, we have had a pretty severe time; but your mother's good constitution has pulled her through. And that young doctor's just splendid! I haven't had much opinion of young doctors heretofore. To be sure, there has been Dr. Fitch; but I think Dr. Underhill works more as if his life depended on it. And if you weren't very hungry, Charles, we might wait until your father comes home. About seven, he said. I must confess that Cousin Maria has one of the best and most faithful of husbands. He isn't sparing any expense, either."

Charles flushed with delight to hear his father praised for his devotion to his mother.

"I'd like to wait, Cousin Jane," he replied in an eager tone.

"I'll make a cup of tea and take a bit of bread and cold meat up to Mrs. Bond. Then I'll come back and set the table."

She had lighted the lamps while she was talking, and Charles hurried up with his neglected lessons, studying in earnest.

It was half-past seven when his father came in. No one fretted, however. His brisk walk had given him a good colour, and his eyes had brightened. He seemed so pleased that they had waited for him. Cousin Jane did make events go on smoothly. The tea was hot, as he liked it; and there was a plate of toast, of which he was very fond.

When he took out his paper, he said to Charles:—

"You might run over to the Deans and tell them the good news. They have been so kind about inquiring. I wouldn't stay more than ten or fifteen minutes."

He had not been over in a week, and they were glad to see him, as well as to hear the hopeful tidings. But the girls had quite a bit of casuistry in their talk that night as they were going to bed, partly as to how Charles could be so glad, and partly whether one ought to be glad under all circumstances, when events happened that did not really tend to one's comfort.

"But Mary Dawson said she wasn't sorry when her stepmother died, and she wouldn't tell a story about it. Her stepmother wasn't much crosser than Mrs. Reed. You know Mrs. Dawson wouldn't let the girls go to singing-school, and she made them wear their outgrown dresses, and she did whip them dreadfully. I couldn't have been sorry either."

"But it would be awful not to have any one sorry when you were dead."

"I think," began Josie, gravely, "we ought to act so people *will* be sorry. If you are good and kind, and do things pleasantly—Mrs. Reed is always doing; but I guess it is a good deal the *way* you do. You see mother and father do think of the things we like, when they are right and proper. They show they love us and like to have us love them in return."

"Oh, I just couldn't live without mother!" and the tears overflowed Tudie's eyes.

"And I know it would break her heart, and father's, too, if they lost us. And so we ought to try and make each other happy. I mean to think more about it. And, oh, Tudie, if Mrs. Reed could be

converted! People are sometimes when they've been very ill. Suppose we pray for that."

They did heartily; and Josie resolved not to miss one night. It would make bonny Prince Charlie so happy to have his mother changed into a sweet, tender woman.

Charles didn't dare pray for that. God knew what was best for any one, and He *did* have the power. He wondered what things were right to put in one's prayers. Some years after he came to know it was "all things," just as one might ask of a human father, knowing that sometimes even the father after the flesh, in his larger wisdom, saw that it was best to deny.

"Don't you want to look in on your mother?" Cousin Jane said the next morning. He had not seen her in several days.

"Oh, yes," answered Charles.

Mrs. Reed had been thin before; but now she looked ghostly, with her sunken eyes and sharpened nose and chin. Charles had a great desire to kiss her; but she did not approve of such "foolishness." Her poor skeleton hand, that had done so much hard and useless work, lay on the spread in a limp fashion, as if it would never do anything again.

Charles took it up and pressed it to his cheek. Mrs. Reed opened her eyes, and a wavering light, hardly a smile, crossed her face.

"I've been very sick," and, oh, how faint the sound was, quivering, too, as if it had not the strength to steady itself! And then the thin lids fell. The death-like pallor startled him.

"But you're going to get well again."

The boy's sweet, confident tone touched her. She did not dare open her eyes, lest she should cry, she was so weak. Then he said, "Good-morning," and went softly out of the room, feeling that he was glad in every pulse of his being that God had given her back to them.

Doctor Joe had a good deal of credit for the case. Dr. Fitch admitted that it had been very severe, and required the utmost watchfulness. Mrs. Underhill was very proud of her son's success "in his own country," as she termed it. And she said when Mrs. Reed was well enough to see visitors, she would go over and call. Indeed, it had created a good deal of interest in the neighbourhood, and Charles found himself treated with a peculiar deference among the children.

Mrs. Reed's recovery was very slow, however. Mrs. Bond went away when she could begin to go about the room and help herself. Cousin Jane was a good nurse, and she declared, "There wasn't work enough to keep her half busy." She did the mending and the ironing; Mr. Reed insisted they should have a washerwoman. Mrs. Reed sighed when she thought of the expense. It had been the pride of her life that she never had a fit of illness, and had never hired a day's work done except when Charles was born.

She was sure now that the house must be in an awful plight. She never found time to sit down in the morning and read a book or paper. Cousin Jane changed her gown every afternoon, and wore lace ruffles at the neck, just plain strips of what was called footing, that she pleated up herself. Then, too, she wore white muslin aprons,—a very old fashion that was coming back. And though Mrs. Reed couldn't find fault when she saw Charles and his father always as neat as a pin, still she was sure there must be a great need of thoroughness somewhere. She prided herself upon being "thorough."

Mrs. Underhill came over one day with the Doctor, and they had a really nice call. Of course Mrs. Reed couldn't understand how she ever managed with such a houseful of boys. Yet she was fresh and fair, and seemed to take life very comfortably. Then they were always having so much company at the Underhills.

"Yes," said Mrs. Underhill, with a mellow sort of laugh that agreed capitally with her ample person,—"yes, we have such a host of cousins,—not all own ones, but second and third. And since my daughter was married, the house seems lonesome at times. All the boys are away at work but Jim; and Hanny has so many places to go, that, what with lessons and all, I don't seem to get much good of her. But I've a nice kitchen-girl. She was a great trial when she first came, with her not knowing much English, and her German ways of cooking. But she's quite like folks now, and very trusty. How fortunate you found a relative to come in and do for you! And the Doctor says you must give up hard work for a long while to come."

Mrs. Reed sighed, and said she should be glad enough to get about again.

The Deans came over, and some of the other neighbours; and Mrs. Reed found it very pleasant. One afternoon late in March, Mr. Reed came home quite early, and carried his wife down into the dining-room. He had asked the Deans over to tea, and Doctor Joe. And there was the table, spick and span, the silver shining, the windows so clean you couldn't see there was any glass in them, the curtains fresh, the tablecloth ironed so that every flower and leaf in it stood out. There wasn't a speck of dust anywhere!

The kitchen was in nice order; the range black and speckless, the closets sweet with their fresh white paper. And Cousin Jane's bread and biscuit were as good as anybody's, her ham tender and a luscious pink, her two kinds of cake perfection.

Charles sat next to his mother, a tall, smiling boy with a clean collar and his best roundabout. It

was the first tea-party he ever remembered, and he was delighted. He was so polite and watchful of his mother that it really went to her heart.

For seven weeks the house had gone on without her, and she couldn't see any change for the worse. Mr. Reed looked uncommonly well, and was a very agreeable host. The Doctor complimented her, and said next week he should come and take her out driving; and that, to do him real credit, she must get some flesh on her bones.

It was a very pleasant time; and Charles was so happy that his mother wondered if there wasn't something better in the world than work and care.

CHAPTER VI

THE LAND OF OPHIR

Spring came on apace, and spring in New York had many beautiful features then. The Battery, the Bowling Green, City Hall Park, with its fountain, the College grounds, Trinity and St. Paul's churchyards, and the squares coming into existence farther up-town. Trees and grass and flowers delighted the eye, and lilacs made the air fragrant. All up the country ways there were patches of wild honeysuckle,—pinxter flowers, as it was called.

The little girl had so many things to distract her attention that she wondered how grown-up people could be so tranquil with all their knowledges and their cares. She began to realise the great difference in tastes and characteristics, though she would not have quite comprehended that long word. Perhaps Ben, being in the midst of stories and books, and hearing so much talk about the great men of the day, roused the same train of thought in her, though I think hero-worship came natural to her. The Dean girls read the sweet pretty domestic stories with great relish. Miss Macintosh, Mary Howitt, and even Jane Austin were their delight. Hanny and Daisy were deeply interested in history. And during the last year some very spirited stories had been written on the Mexican war, and all the struggles of a few years before. The wealth and splendour of Montezuma and his sad ending, the wonders of that land of ancient romance, were rendered more real on account of the present struggle that Hanny and her father had followed closely. She kept in touch with all the generals. The hero of Monterey, General Worth, General Scott's entry into the city of Montezuma, General Watts Kearny, who led his men a thousand miles through the desert to seize Santa Fé, and hold New Mexico, and his brilliant young nephew, Philip, who was the first man to enter the gate of San Antonio, and who lost his left arm at the battle of Churubusco. Little did she dream, indeed, who could have dreamed then, that he was to be one of the heroes of another war, nearer and more dreadful to us!

Then there was a great celebration over the final victory. City Hall was crowded. There were some magnificent fireworks and much rejoicing. And though there were questions for diplomacy to adjust, we had gained California and New Mexico; and both were destined to have a great bearing on the future of the country.

When Hanny could spare time from this exciting topic and her lessons, there was little Stevie, who was the sweetest and most cunning baby alive, she was quite sure. He could run all over, and say ever so many words. The hard ones he had to shorten, so he called the little girl Nan, and Dolly and Stephen caught it up as well. When they came over to First Street, the neighbourhood paid him the highest honours. All the children wanted to see him, and walk up and down with him. He was so merry, laughing at the least little thing, and chattering away in his baby language, with a few words now and then in good English. And, oh, delight! his hair curled all over his head, and had a golden gleam to it. Certainly, as a baby, he was a tremendous success.

But the crowning point of this May was Hanny's birthday party. She was twelve years old. Dolly and Margaret came down to spend the day and help. Oddly enough, Hanny knew very few boys. First, she thought she would only have a girls' party. But there was Charlie, and some of her schoolmates had brothers; and Jim said he knew two splendid boys in school that he would like to ask; and when they counted them up, they found there were plenty enough.

They played games, of course,—pretty laughable things that had not gone out of fashion. And the supper-table was a feast to the eye as well as to the appetite. Toward the last, there were mottoes, and they had a good deal of fun in exchanging. Doctor Joe was as merry as any boy, in fact, he laid himself out, as people say, to make the party a success, for Hanny would have been a timid little hostess. Dolly and Margaret were not much behind.

After they went upstairs some one proposed the Virginia Reel. The older ones were not long in taking their places.

"Come," said Doctor Joe to Daisy Jasper. "It's very easy. You will have to learn some time."

"Will I surely have to?" and she gave an arch little smile.

"Yes. You are to learn all the things girls do, even if you can draw portraits, which every girl can't do."

"Oh, no," when she saw that he was in earnest; "I am afraid. And then, I—"

"You are not to be afraid." He put his arm about her and gently drew her out. "You are to be my partner."

Hanny stood second in the row, looking so bright and eager that she was absolutely pretty. And Jim's chum, the handsomest lad in the room, had chosen her. When she saw Daisy, she wanted to run down and kiss her, she was so delighted.

What with braces, and several appliances, Daisy now had only one shoulder that was a little high; and as she had grown stronger, she could get about without much of a limp. She was quite tall for her age, and every gesture and motion was very graceful, in spite of the misfortune. She sometimes danced at school.

Dolly struck up some merry music, and Stephen called off. How prettily they balanced and turned, and joined hands left and right, and marched down and up again, and then the first couple chasséd down the middle! When it was Hanny's turn, she came down looking like a fairy, and smiled over to her friend.

Daisy was a good deal frightened at first, and would have run away but for Doctor Joe's encouraging eyes. However, when her turn came, she did very well. By this time they were all so intent upon their own pleasure no one really noticed her. Oh, how jolly it was!

After that some of the children tried the three-step polka, and found it very fascinating. A little after ten, the plates of cream came in, and at half-past, they began to disperse.

Stevie was asleep upstairs on Nan's bed. All the girls had to go and look at him; and when Dolly picked him up, and bundled his cloak about him, and put on his cap, he only stretched a little and settled himself, being as famous a sleeper as some of his Dutch ancestors. But the girls had to kiss him; and then he did wake up and laugh and rub his eyes with his fat fist. Before Stephen had him settled on his shoulder, he was asleep again.

"Oh!" cried Hanny, "it's *his* first party as well as mine. And when he gets old enough, I'll have to tell him all about it."

"Yes," laughed his father. "His memory can hardly he depended upon now."

Jim's friend came to wish Hanny good-night, and say that he had enjoyed himself first rate,—quite a boy's word then. And he added, "I think your doctor-brother is the nicest man I ever met. If my mother is ever ill, I mean she shall have him. He is so sweet and kindly. And that Miss Jasper is a beautiful girl!"

Hanny flushed with delight.

One day, not long afterwards, Mrs. Jasper took both little girls down to Stewart's beautiful store at the corner of Chambers Street and Broadway. When the ladies were out for a promenade, they used to drop in and see the pretty articles. It was the finest store in New York; kid-gloves and laces were specialties, but there were no end of elegant silks and India shawls, which were considered family heir-looms when you became the owner of one.

Some of the more careful business-men shook their heads doubtfully over the young merchant's extravagance, and predicted a collapse presently. But he went on prospering, and even built another marble palace, and a marble dwelling-place for himself.

Then the Reeds and the Underhills were full of interest in their boys who were to pass examinations for Columbia College. Charles stood high, but he was rather nervous about it; and Jim never studied so hard in all his life as the last three months. When there was any doubt, or even when there wasn't, he pressed Joe into service. However, they both came off with flying colours. Charles was the best scholar, undoubtedly; but Jim had a way of making everything tell in his favour.

Miss Lily Ludlow had quite given Jim the cold shoulder; but now she smiled upon him again. Her sister had married very well; but Lily had quite resolved upon a rich husband. Still it would be something to have the young and good-looking collegian in her train.

Mrs. Jasper pleaded to take Hanny with them to Saratoga for a little while; and Margaret said she and her husband would go up and spend a week and bring her home. The Jaspers were to stay at a quiet cottage; and, after much persuasion, Mrs. Underhill consented, though she had an idea a fashionable watering-place was hardly proper for little girls; and her father was very loath to give her up even for a few weeks.

To tell the truth, the little girl was rather homesick for a night or two. There was so much to see, so many drives and all; but she had never been away alone before. And she did so miss sitting in her father's lap, and kissing him good-night. She was too big a girl of course; and one time her mother asked her if she meant to keep up the habit when she was a woman grown!

She had not thought of being grown-up. And she wished she could stay a little girl forever. Josie Dean was quite womanly already, and didn't want to wear her hair in "pigtails" any more—indeed, quite fretted because her mother wouldn't let her put it up. But Tudie confessed to Hanny "that she should be awful sorry when she was too big to play with dolls."

"I put my beautiful doll away the Christmas Stevie was born," said Hanny.

"Oh, well, if we had a big brother married, and a lovely little baby like that, I wouldn't mind so

much. But Josie is going to study and teach, and—oh, dear! Hanny Underhill, you're just the luckiest girl I know."

And the Deans thought it another piece of luck that she should go to Saratoga.

They went to Congress Hall, and drank some of the water that Hanny thought just horrid. Daisy didn't like it very much; but it had proved beneficial the summer before. And they used to watch the beautifully attired ladies promenade the long piazza. Such lovely lawns and organdies and embroidered white gowns; such laces and sashes and ribbons! Every afternoon they were out in force. They promenaded up and down the street too, with dainty parasols, and often times no bonnet, but a little square of lace with long lappets.

One evening after Margaret and the Doctor came, they all went in to the hop to look on. Hanny thought the dancing a bewitching sight, and could have stayed up until midnight watching it. There were a good many quite famous people whom Dr. Hoffman knew, and Hanny had seen on Broadway or up at Washington Square.

Daisy was almost in despair at the thought of Hanny's return. Dr. Hoffman had promised to take a brother physician's practice when he went away to recuperate, so he felt that he really could not extend his stay beyond the week.

"Oh, I do wish I had a sister!" groaned Daisy. "Auntie is very nice, and mamma is the sweetest mother in the world; but I like to have some one who thinks real young thoughts. I don't want to be grown up and sensible, and take an interest in tiresome things."

"Let's just stay little," laughed Hanny. "Twelve isn't so very old."

"But being in your 'teens' seems on the way to it. *You* may stay little; but see how tall I am getting. I grow like a weed."

Hanny gave a soft sigh. How curious to want to stay little, and feel sorry you were not getting big at the same time!

When they returned to the city, Hanny found that Charles and his mother had gone to the sea-side, out on Long Island. Mrs. Reed didn't seem to get strong. She had thought all along first she could soon do without Cousin Jane; and to give her the opportunity Cousin Jane went away on a little visit. But Mr. Reed sent for her ten days later.

"I'm never going to be good for anything again!" Mrs. Reed said fretfully.

"Oh, yes, there are a good many useful things in the world beside work," replied Mr. Reed. "You've done your share. Cousin Jane is splendid to have around. Anyhow, I think we will keep her for awhile."

"You just go down on Great South Bay, and eat fish and clams, and have the sea-breeze," advised Cousin Jane. "The Seamens will board you very reasonably. And Charles looks as if something of the kind wouldn't hurt him. He will have a pretty hard pull in college the first year, and he ought to have some good backbone to start on."

It was very extravagant to go away to board when they were paying house-rent. And there had been a doctor's bill, and a nurse for three weeks, and Cousin Jane—

"Never you mind," said Mr. Reed, "I'm not anywhere near the poor-house. I've only you and Charles. He is going to be a credit to us if he keeps his health; but he does look rather pale and thin. You ought to go for his sake."

The Reeds seemed insensibly to have changed places. It was Mr. Reed who gave the orders and suggested the plans, and Mrs. Reed who acquiesced.

"You've worked steadily all your life, harder than I ever wanted you to," continued her husband. "We had better take the good of what we have, and let Charles earn his own money when it comes his time to work. And if you could improve a little,—at least I think it is your duty to try for both our sakes. It will be a sad thing if, when Charles takes his degree, you are not here to congratulate him."

She was not anxious to die; very few people are. So she listened, and allowed herself to be over-ruled. She was really proud of her son's manliness, though she would not have admitted it. They went off to stay a fortnight, and both improved so much they remained a whole month.

Janey and Polly Odell and another cousin came to visit Hanny, and had a fine time seeing the city sights. Then Daisy came home, school began, and wonderful events were happening all the time.

The old story of Eldorado repeated itself. Strange rumours ran about like wildfire in meadow grass. A Captain Sutter was having his mill-race on one of the forks of the Sacramento River deepened and repaired, when a workman accidently discovered a shining nugget that proved to be gold. Crowds flocked to the spot: men who had been in the army, adventurers who had followed Frémont in his prospecting journeys; and they found gold on every hand.

When Congress opened, President Polk proudly announced the wealth of our new possessions. It was Mexico and Peru over again. The Spaniards had not despoiled the whole earth.

Men talked themselves up to fever-heat. Why plod along years making a fortune, when here you

could dig it out of the ground in a few months! As if wealth was the great and only good to mankind.

Now, when one flies across the continent in a palace-car, it seems strange indeed to think of the long journey of these pilgrims to the land of Ophir, as it was called. The overland route, that across Mexico, or the isthmus, comprised the sail to Vera Cruz, and then up the Pacific coast, and was costly. That around Cape Horn took five months. Yet men were selling their property or business that they had been years in building up, leaving their families, and hurrying off, promising to be back in a few years, millionaires perhaps.

The Underhills were not seized with the mania. There were several other matters that occupied their attention. John was to be married in January, and to go in business with his employer, who would be his father-in-law. And in December, two granddaughters were added to the family.

Hanny was quite dazed with the conflicting claims. Margaret's little girl had large dark eyes like Dr. Hoffman, and dark, silky hair; while Dolly's daughter was fair. Margaret's baby was really beautiful.

But in her secret heart the little girl thought no baby in the world could ever be the sweet and joyful surprise that Stevie had been,—the Christmas gift to them all. Dr. Hoffman declared that he was really jealous that she should not transfer all her affections to his little daughter. "He should not call her Haneran now."

"I should hope you wouldn't," declared Hanny, mirthfully. "You ought to name her Margaret, and we could all call her Daisy. That's such a cheerful, pretty name!"

"But she won't be white and gold. She would have to be a Michaelmas daisy. And we couldn't call her Pearl, with her dark eyes and hair. Still, I think Margaret one of the noblest and sweetest of names."

"I don't suppose any one will think Hannah a sweet name," said the little girl, rather ruefully. "They all say—it's a *good* name. But I don't want to be just like Grandmother Van Kortlandt. When I am real old I would rather be like Grandmother Underhill."

"Luckily, the names do not endow us with the natures."

In the end, it *was* Margaret; and they called her Daisy, much to the little girl's delight. When Mrs. Jasper heard of the name, she sent her a beautiful pair of sleeve-pins. They were used to pin through the shoulders and sleeves of babies' dresses. It seemed then as if all babies had beautiful fat necks, and pretty dimpled arms.

Dolly's little girl was called Annette Dorothea; but her household name was Annie.

Little Stevie had come to grandmother's to stay a week or so. He cried a little the first night for mamma. Hanny begged to have him put in her bed; and she sat and told him Mother Goose Melodies until he dropped asleep. He was such a sweet, cunning roly-poly, that she couldn't help kissing him when she came to bed; and she longed to take him in her arms and hug him up; but she was afraid he might wake and cry.

The next night he was quite ready to go to Nan's bed, and didn't cry a bit.

Hanny had a delightful time taking him round among the girls. Her mother said, "You and your father will have that child spoiled." But Hanny might have turned the tables, if she had seen grandmother when she had to be in school.

As for Grandfather Underhill, he thought with Hanny there never had been such a smart and wonderful baby. Jim taught him some rather reprehensible tricks. He was still full of fun and mischief, and already had a crowd of admirers in college.

And, oh, how they missed the baby when he was gone! It didn't seem as if one little mite could fill the house; but it was big and empty now.

John's courtship had not been so engrossing as Stephen's. They had met Miss Bradley, to be sure; and Mr. Bradley was a well-to-do man with two sons and one daughter who had been named Cleanthe, after the heroine of a story Mrs. Bradley had read in her girlhood. Mr. Bradley had wanted his daughter called Priscilla, after his mother; and Mrs. Bradley's mother's name was Jemima.

"I did think Mimy and Silly two of the worst names in the world. And there isn't any nickname for Cleanthe," was Mrs. Bradley's explanation when any one wondered at the name.

Miss Cleanthe was a very nice, well-bred, rather conventional girl, with none of Dolly's dash and spirit. She was a good housekeeper, and could make all but her best dresses. They were to take the second floor of Mr. Bradley's house, and set up their own home, until they felt rich enough to indulge in a house owned by themselves.

George came down about this time to spend a month. He was decidedly tired of farming.

"Of course, if I wanted to marry and build on the old place, it wouldn't be so bad. Uncle Faid keeps in the same rut, and you can't shake him out of it. Barton Finch is the kind of man who begins with a great flourish, but flats out towards the end. I'm tired of them all!"

"It will be your turn to marry next," said his mother. "And then I'll seem quite a young woman with only three children. I *do* suppose we'll go up to Yonkers some time and spend our old age there; though I begin to think your father is weaned away."

George laughed. "Father seems about half Uncle Faid's age. And at eighty, you won't be as old as Aunt Crete. If I had lots of money, to do as I liked—but farming so near by doesn't amount to much."

The Germans and Swiss had to come in and show us about market-gardening and floriculture.

George went down-town with Stephen, and talked with Ben, and listened to the groups on every corner discussing the golden land. He was young and strong; why shouldn't he go and seek his fortune?

Miss Bradley had a very nice evening wedding, with dancing and a supper. She was very well looking, but not as handsome as Margaret, or as pretty and piquant as Dolly. She did not seem to come close to their hearts, as Dolly had; though Mrs. Underhill was very well satisfied, and knew she would make John happy. John was a sort of solid, sober-going fellow, quite different from Steve and Joe.

CHAPTER VII

THROUGH THE EYES OF YOUTH

Then George surprised everybody by his determination to go to California.

"There are chances to make fortunes here," declared Stephen. "With the crowds going out there, and no homes and no provision made for them, there must be a good deal of suffering. The stories of gold are too fabulous for belief."

"I want to see something of the world. And all the countries on the Pacific Coast are rich in gold and treasures. I wonder what the history of the world would have been if that side had been settled first?"

"The history of Mexico and Peru. Wealth and indolence and degeneration. And the East is nearer the commerce of the world. Oh, the old Pilgrim fathers didn't go so far out of the way!" laughingly.

"And they went in the face of almost everything. We have a little of their love of adventure. I don't know as my heart is so set upon a fortune. You wouldn't believe it; but I've wished myself that intrepid explorer Frémont dozens of times. There is such a splendid excuse for going now."

At first, they were all strongly opposed. John told him to come and join them, and keep turning his money over in up-town real estate. Mrs. Underhill pleaded. She was very fond of having her children about her. But when he went down-town, and heard the exciting talk, and saw the vessels of every kind fitting out, he came home more resolved than ever.

"And then we will build the house on that beautiful knoll,—a large, rambling, commodious place, big enough to take us all in, a refuge for our old age," laughed George.

They found he was not to be talked out of it. Ben was on his side, and not only gave him encouragement, but offered to lend him a little money he had saved up, and proposed to go shares with him.

Indeed, it was a time of great excitement. The ship-yards on the East River were veritable bee-hives; and morning, noon, and night the streets were thronged with workmen. The clipper-ships began to astonish the world, and the steamers to compete with those of England. The new treaty with China was opening possibilities of trade to that country.

George decided to go by water to Vera Cruz. Round the Horn seemed too long a journey for impatient youth. If he shouldn't like it, and should not see any special prospect, he could come back the richer by his experience, if nothing else. People went to China. They often stayed two years in Europe.

"Yes," said Ben; "there's Mr. Theodore Whitney. He has had no end of a good time, and is in much better health then when he went away."

"And Frémont has gone through a great many hardships, and been in some battles, and still lives," added George, laughingly. "And some of the people in Yonkers died who had never been more than ten miles away from home."

Mrs. Underhill gave in, as mothers of big sons are often forced to do. Mr. Underhill was rather pleased with the boy's spirit. Doctor Joe felt that it wasn't a bad thing altogether, and that it would be nice to have an authentic account of that wonderful country.

So the last of March, George said good-bye to everybody. His father, Stephen, and Joe went down to see him off. It looked as if half the sailing-craft in the world were gathered in New York harbour.

Right on the top of this, something happened that engrossed the attention of the younger members of the family. There had been a disturbance in Paris; the old Bonaparte faction coming to the fore, and Louis Philippe had fled from the throne to England. Napoleon Bonaparte had shattered the divine right of kings nearly forty years earlier.

But the most startling link in the chain of events, was that Louis Napoleon, the son of Hortense Beauharnais and the once King of Holland, who, for fomenting one revolution, had been confined in the Fortress of Ham for life. He had escaped, and, with the prestige of the family name, had roused the enthusiasm of France, and helped to form a Republic. He was elected as one of the Deputies. Everybody was saying then the French were too volatile, and too fond of grandeur, to accept the democratic tendencies of a republic for any length of time. And they wondered if he would not follow in the steps of his famous uncle, and one day aim at a throne and an empire. Others hailed the step as a great advancement in the rights of the people, and thought it prefigured that Europe would be republican rather than Cossack, recalling the elder Emperor's prediction.

And Hanny learned that this young man, who was before long to be Emperor of the French, had lived in New York, as well as Louis Philippe. Joe took her down-town to the old Delmonico Restaurant, which was considered quite elegant in its day, and had entertained many famous people. Here, the young fellow who had been the son of a king, and was now an exile, used to dine, and gather about him the flower of the fashionable world, as it was called. And Lorenzo Delmonico, who rarely went into his kitchen now, would go and cook a dinner for this guest, who had the high art of persuasion in an eminent degree, it would seem. Afterward the Prince would entertain the other guests with curious tricks with cards, and conversation. Now his life bid fair to be almost as eventful as his uncle's; and, like him, he was doomed to die an exile on English soil.

Joe and Hanny took their dinner in the old place, though now the Delmonicos were fitting up a hotel at the lower end of Broadway which was destined to become quite as famous, and to house many notable people.

She was so engrossed with reading and studying that sometimes she hardly found an hour for the babies. She and Daisy, like most very young girls, had a passion for poetry. Mrs. Sigourney they thought rather grave and dry; but Mrs. Hemans, with her soft flowing numbers and beautiful face, was a great favourite. Longfellow was beginning to be appreciated, and several other poets that one saw now and then on Broadway. There were some pathetic poems by a Western writer, Alice Cary, that used to go quite to the little girl's tender heart. She had a wonderful memory for any rhythmic production, and used to say them over to her father. If she didn't sit on his lap,—and her mother had almost laughed her out of it,—she leaned her arms on his knee, or rested her head against his shoulder, while her soft, sweet voice went purling along like,—

"A hidden brook
In the leafly month of June."

The Dean girls did not care so much for poetry. They wanted stories; and stories and books were beginning to spring up on every hand. Miss Delia Whitney was writing a novel. She had accomplished some successful stories, and had one in "The Ladies' Book," the pretty fashion magazine of the day.

Poor deaf Aunt Clem had dropped out of life like a child going to sleep. Aunt Patty kept well and bright. Nora was growing up into a tall girl, and went to Rutger's Institute, though she confessed to Hanny, "She just hated all schools, and wouldn't go a day longer, only it was not quite the thing to grow up an ignoramus."

And there was Frederica Bremer, a Swedish novelist, whose "Home or Family Cares and Family Joys" was Hanny's delight. And Irving was ever new and bright. "Salmagundi" always amused her father so much. The recent and delightful stories were the talk of every one.

Daisy was not such a ravenous reader. She was quite taken up with painting, and had done some very nice work in water-colours. She had a decided gift for catching resemblances, and had sketched some excellent likenesses. She confided to Hanny that her ambition was to paint portraits on ivory.

This spring a plan was mooted that almost rendered Hanny speechless. Mr. Jasper had some business connections abroad that needed his personal supervision, and he proposed to take his family. Tours to Europe were not a common occurrence then, and one could hardly run over for a six weeks' trip. Daisy had improved so much that she was sure to enjoy it; and there were some German baths Doctor Joe thought he would like her to try.

Italy had been the children's land of romance. But the Deans never expected to go; and Hanny was quite sure she should feel awfully afraid on the ocean. But Joe said some time when he had grown quite rich, and needed a rest for his tired-out body and nerves, he and Hanny might go,—ten years hence, perhaps. It wasn't nearly so formidable when you looked at it through the telescope of ten years; and Hanny could be learning French and German, and may be Italian. She had picked up a good deal of German already from Barbara, who had proved an excellent servant after she had acquired American ways.

The Jaspers would give up their house and store their choicest furniture. Opposite, a great many foreigners were crowding in; and down below, Houston Street and Avenue A. were filling up with

them. We felt so large and grand then, with our great stretches of unoccupied land, that we invited the oppressed from everywhere. It was our boast that,—

"Uncle Sam was rich enough to give us all a farm."

Very good thrifty citizens many of them made; but some of the early experiences were not so agreeable. And people were beginning to think "up-town" would be the choice for residences. Even Mr. Dean had a vague idea of buying up there while property was cheap. Stephen and Margaret were trying to persuade their parents to do the same thing.

It would be dreadful to have Daisy go away for a whole year. When Daisy considered the point, it didn't seem as if she could leave all her girl friends and her dear Doctor Joe. But the days passed on, and the passage was taken. Mrs. Jasper asked the children in to a supper, which would have been delightful, except for the thought that it was a farewell supper. The table was spread in most artistic array; and Sam waited upon the company. They tried very hard to be merry; but every little while they would all subside and glance at each other with apprehensive eyes.

The grown people came in the evening. The most wonderful thing was that Mr. and Mrs. Reed were among the parents. Cousin Jane was still at the Reeds'; and, as she was "handy" about sewing, she had altered Mrs. Reed's old-fashioned gowns, and made her some new ones.

Mrs. Reed did not get real strong, and was troubled somewhat with a cough when cold weather came on. But she lost her weather-beaten look, and did gain a little flesh. She was very presentable in her black-silk dress, with some lace at the throat and wrists that she had bought at her marriage. She wore a little black-lace head-dress with a few purple bows; and she admitted to Charles that the Jaspers were very fine people, and she was sorry they were going away; but it would take a mint of money for a whole family to travel around like that.

The Jaspers' house was then dismantled; but they were going to board for about ten days. Hanny and Josie Dean went down to see the state-room and wish them *bon voyage*. Doctor Joe had given Mrs. Jasper counsel about everything that might happen to Daisy.

Then the signal was given for all who were not going to return on shore. There were some tender kisses and tears; and Doctor Joe took both girls by the arm and steadied them down the gang-plank. What a huge thing the steamer looked! But it was nothing compared to the later ones.

It was very lonesome. The night was pleasant, and Hanny sat out on the stoop with her father; but, whenever she tried to talk, something swelled up in her throat and made her feel like crying. But her father hugged her up close. She would always have him.

It had not seemed so sad to have Nora go away; in fact they could see her any time. And she had not loved Nora quite so well. She didn't love any girl as she loved Daisy, and it seemed as if she could not live a whole year without her.

They talked about it at school, and most of the girls envied her the splendid journey. "I don't know as I would mind being a little lame, if I could have such a beautiful face, and be taken everywhere," said one of the girls.

But Hanny didn't want to be anybody else, if she had to give up her own mother and father, and dear Joe and Ben and, oh, little darling Stevie.

Just after this a black-bordered envelope came up from Hammersley Street. Grandfather Bounett, who had been very feeble of late, had died. Hanny had seen him a number of times since her memorable introductory visit. Luella had been sent to boarding-school, and was quite toned down, was indeed a young lady.

Doctor Joe had made frequent visits, and the old gentleman had told him many striking incidents of his life. Hanny used to think how queer the city must have been in seventeen hundred, when people had a black servant to carry the lantern so one could see to get about. She knew so much of the early history now,—the Dutch reign and the British reign and the close of the war.

Old Mr. Bounett looked like a picture in his handsome, old-fashioned attire; and he just seemed asleep. The large rooms and the hall were full, and men were standing out on the sidewalk. He had rounded out the century. A hundred years was a long while to live. There were a number of French people, and a chapter was read out of grandfather's well-worn French Bible.

Somehow it was not a sorrowful funeral. It was indeed bidding him a reverent God speed on his journey to the better land.

About ten days afterward, they were surprised by a visit from the eldest married daughter, Mrs. French, whom Hanny had taken such a fancy to years before.

"I've come of a queer errand," she explained, when they had talked over the ordinary matters. "I want a visit from little Miss Hanny. I have been away with my husband a good many times since we first met, and now he has gone to China, and will be absent still a year longer. I am keeping house alone, except as I have some nieces now and then staying with me. I want to take Hanny over on Friday, if I may, and she shall come back in time for school on Monday morning. I have a great many curiosities to show her. And perhaps some of her brothers will come over and take tea with us Sunday evening."

Hanny was a little shy and undecided. But her mother assented readily. She thought a change

would do her good, as she had moped since Daisy's departure.

So it was arranged that Mrs. French should come on the ensuing Friday. Hanny almost gave out; but when the carriage drove up to the door, and Mrs. French looked so winsome and smiling, she said good-bye to her mother with a sudden accession of spirits.

They drove to Grand Street Ferry and crossed over on the boat. Williamsburg was a rather straggling place then. It was quite a distance from the ferry, not closely built up, though the street was long and straight. At the south side of the house was an extra lot in a flower and vegetable garden. The house was quite pretty, two stories with a peaked roof, and a wisteria going up to the top. There was a wide porch with a hammock hung already. All the air was sweet with a great bed of lilies of the valley,—quite a rarity then.

There was a long parlor, and then a music-room; in a sort of an ell, a dining-room and kitchen; upstairs, two beautiful sleeping chambers and a small sewing-room with a writing-desk and some book-shelves.

Hanny felt as if she were entering an Oriental palace. The doorways and windows were hung with glistening silk that had flecks of gold and silver in it; and there were such soft rugs on the floor your feet were buried in them. It was almost like a museum, with the queer tables and cabinets, and the curious fragrance pervading every corner.

They went upstairs and took off their hats and capes, which were one of this spring's fashions.

"This is my room," explained Mrs. French. "And with the door open you won't feel afraid in the guest-chamber."

"I have had to sleep alone since Margaret was married," returned the little girl. "No, I am not afraid."

"I thought I would not ask any one else. I wanted you all to myself," and Mrs. French smiled. "I have hosts of nieces and nephews. There was such a large family of us."

Hanny thought she would rather be the only guest now. She was quite fascinated with Mrs. French.

She bathed her face and brushed her hair. She had brought a pretty white ruffled apron. The little girls didn't wear black-silk aprons now; but they were taught to be careful of their clothes, and I think they were quite proud of their pretty aprons. Hanny's had dainty little pockets and a pink bow on each one.

The frocks were made shorter, and the pantalets kept them company. All that was really proper now, was a row of fine tucks and a ruffle, or an edge of needlework. There was some fine imported French needlework, much of it done in convents; but nearly every lady did it herself, and it was quite a great thing for a little girl to bring out her work and show it to aunts and cousins. No one dreamed then that there would be machines to make the finest and most exquisite work, and save time and eyesight.

Hanny looked very sweet and pretty in her pink lawn and white apron. Her hair was braided in the two tails that every little girl wore who had not curly hair. On grand occasions, Hanny's was put in curl-papers, and it made very nice ringlets, though it was still a sort of flaxen brown. But then she was fair, rather pale a good deal of the time. She flushed very easily though. There was an expression of trustful innocence that rendered her very attractive, without being beautiful like Margaret.

"Come and let us walk about the garden," said Mrs. French. "It is light enough to see the roses. They are my especial pride."

Hanny took the outstretched hand. She could not have explained it, but she did feel happy and at home with Mrs. French. There was a graciousness about her that set one at ease.

At the side was a long porch with curtains that rolled up when they were not needed for shade. At the front of the garden, there was considerable young shrubbery, then an arrangement of beds; the centre one, which was a circle, was filled with the most beautiful roses. The middle was raised somewhat, mound shape, with the dark red roses, then growing a little paler to pure rose-colour and pink, tea-rose with the salmon tint, and a border of white. And, oh, how fragrant!

Beside this bed there were others in clusters, and one clump in an exquisite yellow.

"Some of them have been great travellers," said Mrs. French. "There are roses from Spain, from France and Italy."

Hanny opened her eyes very wide, and then she looked at them again in surprise.

"Oh, how could you get them?" she asked.

"I brought them from their homes. You see I have been quite a traveller, also."

The child drew a long breath. "Did you go with Captain French?" she inquired.

"Yes. When we were first married, his vessel traded in the Levant, and brought back fruits and silks and shawls and nuts, and ever so many things. After that we went to India, Calcutta. We took one of my sisters, and she married an English merchant, and has been home only once since

then."

"Oh, I shouldn't like Margaret to live in Calcutta," the little girl said, startled.

Mrs. French smiled. "Then we were away almost four years. We went to the Chinese ports as well, and to some of the curious islands. We took a cargo of tea to London."

"I know a little girl who has just gone to London, and who is to go on to Germany to take some special kind of baths. She is my very dear friend."

"Is she ill?"

"She is a great deal better now. When we first knew her, she couldn't walk but a few steps. She was in the hospital where my brother used to go when he was first a doctor. Then she came to live in our street."

"With her parents?"

"Oh, yes. She has one aunt, but no brothers or sisters. It must seem strange not to have any," and Hanny glanced up.

"It would be strange to me. I had ten in all, and there is only one dead. Eugene is the oldest of the second family. One married brother lives in Baltimore, one only a short distance from here. And you have six brothers,—a good supply for one little girl."

"I suppose some of them belong to Margaret," and she gave a soft, rippling laugh. "We haven't ever divided them up. But Joe belongs to me. When I get to be a woman, and he has a good big practice, I am going to keep house for him."

"But what will your father do?"

"Why—" Hanny had not considered that point. "Oh, it won't be in a long while! And then father will be old, and he will come and live with us, I think. Dolly says she is going to have mother."

Mrs. French thought the division rather amusing.

"Where is Captain French gone now?"

"To China again. He has been going back and forth to Liverpool; but he had an excellent offer for the long trip. I concluded not to go, grandpa was so old and feeble. And my sister is coming to England to live. Her husband is heir now to a fine estate and a title; and they have quite a family of children."

"Then you will want to go to England to see her," said Hanny.

"Indeed, I shall. I have not seen her in seven years; since the time she was here."

"We all liked Mr. Eugene so much," Hanny remarked. "And Luella has grown so, I hardly knew her."

"They have a trick of growing up. I hope you won't be in any hurry."

"I am small of my age," and Hanny gave a soft sigh.

"It will take you a long time to get as large as your mother."

Hanny wasn't sure that she wanted to be quite so large. Yet she didn't really want her mother changed. And, oh, she wouldn't have her as thin as Mrs. Reed for all the world!

They had been walking around the paths that were clean and solid as a floor. What beautiful plants and flowers there were! Strange things, too, that Hanny had never seen before. Then the tea-bell rang, and they came up to the rose garden, where Mrs. French broke off several partly opened buds and pinned them on the little girl's bodice.

The dining-room windows opened on the porch, and they walked in that way. It had a great beaufet with carved shelves and brackets going nearly up to the ceiling, and full of the most curious articles Hanny had ever seen. Then there was a cabinet in the corner containing rare and beautiful china. The table was small and dainty, oval, with a vase of flowers at the ends; and the two sat opposite each other, while a tidy young coloured girl waited upon them.

Hanny felt as if she was part of a story; and she tried to recall several of her heroines who went visiting in some curiously elegant house. It was different from the Jaspers, from anything she had ever seen, and there was a subtle fragrance about it that made her feel dreamy.

CHAPTER VIII

GOING VISITING

"Don't you want to tell me about your little friend?" Mrs. French said when she had put Hanny in the hammock, and hedged her about with silken cushions. She sat in a willow rocker that Hanny

thought quite as fascinating as the hammock.

"Oh, yes," and Hanny smiled brightly, and, like a true biographer began at the beginning, the first time the children had seen Daisy, with her long golden curls and pallid face, like a snow-drift. And how Doctor Joe had been in the hospital when she had the operation performed.

"Poor little thing!" exclaimed Mrs. French. "And now there is something they can use that gives a blessed unconsciousness, and when you wake up the worst of the pain is over. I do not know how any one could endure such torture."

"Joe said she was very brave, though she fainted several times. And she's growing straight and tall, and her hair curls lovely again. I have always wished my hair curled naturally. It just twists a little at the ends, but won't make ringlets."

People in those days curled their hair a great deal; but they had to put it in papers. Patent curlers, like a great many other things, had not been invented. When you wanted to be very fine, you went to the hair-dresser's. The real society ladies had some one come to the house to "do" their hair; and sometimes it was very elaborate.

Mrs. French thought curly hair would not improve the little girl. There was something charming in her very simplicity, and her hair was like floss silk.

As she told about Daisy she detailed bits of neighbourhood life, and descriptions of the other children. Mrs. French heard about John Robert Charles and his mother.

"But she's so different now. She is not real strong any more; and then Charles is such a big boy, and goes out with his father. It's queer, but Jim and he are great friends, and Jim goes over there to study with Charles. Mrs. Reed did not use to like boys; and Jim is so full of fun and pranks, mother calls them, and he knows so many funny stories! Mother tries very hard not to laugh at them; but she can't always help it."

The evening passed so quickly that it was bed-time before either of them realised it. Mrs. French took the large square pillows off the bed, and laid one of the silken spreads over the footboard. How beautiful and soft they were, with great flowers so natural it seemed as if you could pick them up! And the fragrance was so delicate and puzzling: one moment you thought it violets, then it suggested roses and lilies and the smell of newly cut grass.

Mrs. French kissed her, and said if she felt strange in the night to call her; but she was asleep in five minutes, and never woke until quite in the morning, it was so much more quiet than in First Street.

When she did sit up in the bed and glance around, she had a queer feeling that she was a part of a fairy story, like the white cat in her enchanted palace, waiting for the Prince, or perhaps Psyche, blown from the hill-top to her beautiful place of refuge, where she found and lost Love, and had to do many hard tasks before she could regain him.

She was quite sure, an hour or two later, that she *was* in some enchanted realm. There were such queer things,—some beautiful, and some she thought very ugly, especially the grotesque idols.

"I couldn't believe a god like that had any power. And I am sure I couldn't worship him," Hanny said emphatically.

"They beat their gods sometimes and break them to pieces, and go off and get new ones. It seems very singular to us."

The little girl had been deeply interested in Judson, the missionary to Burmah. There had been a good deal of romance about his last marriage, to "Fanny Forester," who wrote tales and sketches and poems, and had made herself quite a name for brightness and gay humour, and then had surprised her friends by going to India as a missionary's wife. And she knew Bishop Heber's beautiful poem to his wife all by heart, and often sang "From Greenland's icy mountains." So she had a feeling that she did know something about India.

But Mrs. French had really been there, and spent two months at Bombay, and almost six months at Calcutta. There were so many gorgeous things,—silks, and bright stuffs with threads of gold, jackets all embroidery, and queer Eastern dresses, two made of pineapple cloth,—a sheer, beautiful fabric,—and one had delicate flowers embroidered in silk.

But the oddest of all, Hanny thought, was burning incense. Mrs. French had several curious incense bowls and jars. She lighted one, and in a little while the room was filled with an indescribable fragrance and a hazy purplish air.

"They burn incense in the Roman Catholic churches. Joe took us one Easter Sunday. It was very strange, I thought. And a little boy swung the—something—"

"Censer."

"Oh, yes, censer. And the singing was beautiful. But we couldn't understand the prayers; Joe said they were Latin. I suppose he could follow them."

"No doubt; I have attended some very grand services in churches abroad and in England."

The incense burned out presently, and they went downstairs to dinner. Afterward, a niece and

nephew, her brother's children, came. The girl was not quite twelve, but most a head taller than Hanny, who felt rather shy with her. The boy was older still, and his name was Harold, which suggested to Hanny the last of the Saxon kings. But he was very dark, and didn't look like a Saxon, she thought.

Mrs. French sent to the livery and ordered a carriage, and they all went to drive. Hanny was quite conversant with upper New York and Westchester County; but she had only been once to Brooklyn. It had quite a country aspect then; but there were beautiful drives, and Greenwood Cemetery had already some extremely handsome monuments.

There was something about Eva Bounett that suggested Lily Ludlow, and kept Hanny from liking her cordially. She laughed at so many things, made fun of them; and Hanny wondered if she was criticising her, and would laugh at her when she returned home.

Now and then, Mrs. French would remark, "Don't, Eva, that is not a nice thing to say." Still she was bright, and at times Hanny had to laugh. She found so many Dickens' people along the streets; and really they did look like the pictures by Cruikshank. And one tall fierce old woman, with wisps of hair hanging about her neck, and an old torn shawl, who was brandishing her arms and talking wildly, she said was Meg Merrilies.

The children remained to tea, and Harold played and sang some very pretty songs afterward.

"But you ought to hear our sister Helen," declared Eva. "She sings in church, and sometimes at concerts; she's just magnificent. She's nineteen now. And Mary has a good voice; while I sing like a crow! Do you do any of the fine things,—draw or paint? I take music lessons; but I make my teacher's hour vexation of spirit, not vanity," and she gave a satisfied kind of laugh.

"I study music and French. I embroider and crochet—"

"I hate sewing; I'd like to be a man and a sea-captain. Uncle French is just magnificent; I hope he will take me to sea sometime; I'm not a bit sick; are you?"

"I have never been to sea," replied Hanny.

"Well, just a little ways; I've been down to the Fishing Banks; and it's awful rough. And last summer we were at Great South Bay, and went out in a yacht; and I learned to row. At all events, I mean to marry a sea-captain; and I'll just go with him every time."

One of the older brothers dropped in for the children. Eva was very effusive in her good-bye, and kissed Hanny, and said she must surely come to see her.

Hanny felt quite relieved when she was alone again with Mrs. French, who talked of Helen and Mary, and seemed to admire them very much. "But I don't know what they will do with Eva. My half-sister, Luella, was just such a noisy harum-scarum; but she had only boys to play with. Now, she is getting to be a nice lady-like girl."

Hanny recalled two visits in Hammersley Street when Luella had kept her in a fright all the time.

They went to church Sunday morning, and heard Helen Bounett sing. It was very fine and moving. Hanny wished Charles could hear her.

About mid-afternoon, as they were sitting on the front piazza, which was shady now, Hanny espied her two brothers. Why, Ben was quite as tall as Joe! He looked more like Stephen; but Joe was *very* good-looking.

She flew down to meet them, and gave one hand to each brother.

"Oh," she cried joyfully, "I've had a lovely time! I've been to India and China; and I've had incense and ginger preserve, and some beautiful silks to take home, and a pineapple handkerchief, and a ginger-jar; and I haven't been a bit homesick."

Mrs. French was watching the eager little face that looked so pretty in its enthusiasm of love. Doctor Joe stooped and kissed her; Ben waited until he was up on the porch.

They were very cordially welcomed. Mrs. French said she was afraid a patient would come to hand at an inopportune moment.

"The city is desperately healthy," returned Joe, laughingly. "That's a young doctor's experience. When I am wrinkled and grey-haired, I shall probably tell a different story."

"What do you think I have?" turning to Hanny. "A letter from Mr. Jasper. A steamer was just going out, so he sent a few lines."

He handed it to her while he resumed his conversation with Mrs. French.

Hanny devoured it with a thrill. A letter from across the ocean!

They had a very pleasant journey, with only one storm worth mentioning. Mrs. Jasper, who had dreaded sea-sickness, had only a slight attack. Aunt Ellen was ill four days, and Daisy a whole week. Once they were quite alarmed about her. But her recovery was more rapid than they had expected; and now they were all well, and the ladies would write more at length.

An ocean voyage was quite an undertaking then. Some people of leisure went by a packet, which

took three weeks, occasionally longer.

It was very odd to think of Daisy Jasper in England. But how many times Mrs. French had come home safely.

Of course they must go out and see the flowers: the beautiful red rose whose mother, or grandmother, had come from the Escurial at Madrid; and a real English hawthorn, from Windermere, just out of bloom now; and several valuable and curious foreign plants, quite common at this day. At the southern end there was a conservatory for the housing of the more delicate ones.

Ben was wonderfully interested with the indoor curiosities, and a case of stuffed birds, the like of which he had never seen. They had a little more incense too, and opened jars of rare perfume that was nobody knew how many years old. There were some Chinese paintings on fine transparent silk, and ivory carvings that were enough to puzzle the most astute brain. Ben thought he would like to spend at least a month over them.

Supper-time came too soon. Mrs. French said she had enjoyed every moment of Hanny's visit, and hoped to have her a whole week in the summer vacation, and the young men must feel they would be welcome any time.

"I've just been crowded full of delight," exclaimed Hanny, with her good-bye kiss.

It was quite a walk down to the ferry; then they had their sail across. How still and tranquil everything seemed! When they reached the city, people were going to church, and a few last bells were ringing. They walked leisurely up Grand Street; and, at the junction of East Broadway, Joe said he would run up to the office to see if he was needed for anything. Then Ben and Hanny kept on. There were a good many private residences in Grand Street, but the stores were creeping along. Already they began to show foreign names, and on some stoops a whole Jewish family would be sitting with their black-eyed children. And so many of them had such beautiful curling hair that it made Hanny sigh.

Across Norfolk Street to Houston, and a turn in their own First Street. Mr. Underhill had walked down to the corner, and was sauntering about. He was very glad to get his little girl home and hear about the good time.

A fortnight later, the little girl had a letter from Daisy Jasper, all to herself. They had gone straight up to London on account of business, and were at a hotel; but it was all so queer and unlike New York. She certainly did like her own city best. But there would be so many things to see; not the least among them would be the Queen and Prince Albert, and the royal children, who were often out driving, and the Mall and the Row, and the palaces, and the Tower, and the great British Museum! Daisy thought, if she went everywhere, it would take a whole lifetime. She was beginning to feel very well; but she admitted that she was awfully seasick, and that it was "horrid." She wanted Hanny, and dear Doctor Joe. And Hanny must tell her about everybody in the street. She must get some thin foreign paper, so the postage wouldn't cost so much.

For then postage was regulated by the distance, and we had no international union. I think we were doing without a good many useful things; yet the older generation professed to believe there was so much luxury and ease that people would be soon demoralised.

Jim had rather fallen behind, with all his fun and nonsense, and was studying day and night. He wasn't going to have Charley Reed get so far ahead of him! Examinations were coming on, and he didn't want any one to be ashamed of him, neither did he want to be conditioned.

The little girl was studying very hard also, and reading a great deal. She had taken up the wonderful things of London that had been accumulating year by year. She had thought New York was getting quite ancient, but, oh, dear! England had been colonised by Julius Cæsar, and was a country with a government even before that.

There was no one to go out with, and she was too old to play. Last summer, they had gone around with Daisy in her wheeling-chair, and found so many amusing incidents, beside being out of doors in the vivifying air and sunshine. Josie Dean was almost a young lady, so tall that she wore her hair in a French twist, with a pretty silver comb, which was as much a girl's ambition as the big shell comb had been her mother's. And Tudie was just crazy over worsted work. She was doing a pair of covers for large ottomans, and then meant to go at the back and seat for a daintily carved reception-chair. There were some nice schoolmates who lived up above Mrs. Craven's; but they seldom came down to First Street. And as the little girl never complained, no one seemed to notice that she grew pale and thin, until one day Mrs. Underhill exclaimed:—

"Mercy me! What is the matter with that child! She looks like a ghost."

"She never does have red cheeks except when she is excited," said her father. "But she has fallen away."

"Too hard study and too much staying in the house," said Doctor Joe.

"But I *must* study one week more," declared the little girl. "I'm going to have a beautiful French exercise,"—they didn't always adapt their adjectives to the fine shades of meaning,—"and I'm at the head in history. I want to get in the senior grade. I feel well, only tired, and my head aches sometimes."

Doctor Joe examined her pulse and nodded.

"I'll give you the week," he said; but her heart went up to her throat. What if he had *not* given her the week!

They all came off with flying colours. Charles's Latin was the finest; but he had been studying it several years. Jim's essay won him much praise. And the little girl achieved her heart's desire. She was in the second grade of the seniors, and would graduate in two years.

They had hardly decided what to do with her; but one day Mrs. Odell came down with Polly, who had cheeks like roses and was fat as a seal, her mother said.

"You just let her come up and stay awhile with us, and drink buttermilk, and run out of doors and play in the hay. She's lived in the city long enough for a country girl, and she wants a change to freshen up her blood. She's fairly blue, she's so white."

"That wouldn't be a bad idea," rejoined Mr. Underhill. "We could drive up every few days and see her."

Mrs. Underhill looked up much interested.

Margaret was engrossed with her baby, and then she went out driving every day, though they did talk of going away for a week the last of the summer. She was very fond of having her little sister visit her, and Hanny enjoyed the talks about books and the delightful people the Hoffmans were always meeting.

All the Beekman daughters were going to stay awhile at the farm and discuss the settlement of the estate. The city authorities were to cut two streets through it in the early autumn. They had a very fair offer for the house, from a second or third cousin who fancied he wanted a part of the old family estate. The ground, of course, was too valuable for farming purposes. Annette's husband, who was in a shipping firm then on Water Street, preferred living down-town. So Mrs. Beekman would keep the old city house, and they would live together.

Dolly proposed to take the little girl, for there would be a large out-of-doors.

"There are too many grown people," declared Doctor Joe. "She's too old herself, and too anxious for knowledge of all kinds. She wants to run and play with children. We must keep her a little girl as long as possible, and not bother her brains with the wisdom of the ages. Send her up to West Farms. As Father says, we can see her every few days."

That settled the matter. Father Underhill did not care to give her up anyhow, and he was best pleased with this plan. Mrs. Underhill imagined she had so many things to do, as mothers of households did in those days, and somehow she did not like to hurry Hanny about as she had Margaret. There really was not so much sewing. Joe insisted upon ordering his shirts made; and Margaret had sent Ben half-a-dozen for Christmas. Then Barbara was very efficient, and, with true German thrift, improved every moment. She insisted on darning the stockings and knitting the woollen ones for winter. She was also a very neat hand at sewing.

Mrs. Underhill had learned another lesson in her city life. There were a good many poor people who really needed work, and she found it a much wiser plan to give them employment and pay them for it, and advise them to lay in coal and various other matters for winter. She was not a stingy woman; but she did not believe in confirming people in indolent habits.

Martha came often to see them; and at times she felt almost jealous of Barbara. But she had a very pleasant home, and her stepchildren proved tractable. She did a good deal of church work, and through her Mrs. Underhill heard of really worthy poor people.

Hanny wasn't a bit enthusiastic about going to West Farms.

"Janey and Polly seem so childish," she said to her brother Joe.

"And you are getting to be a little old woman. We don't want you to turn old and grey before your time, and have to wear spectacles and all that."

"But I can see the least little thing," protested the child, earnestly. "And if I do go, can't I take my 'Queens of England' with me? I had so many lessons that I couldn't read them as I wanted to."

Margaret had sent the volumes to her for a birthday gift. She had just skimmed through them, and was saving them up for her leisure time. Everybody was talking about them, and recommending them to girls. Miss Strickland certainly knew how to interest readers.

Doctor Joe shook his head, with a sort of mirthful regret which couldn't help but soothe the disappointment a little.

"I don't want you to read or to study, but just run out in the sunshine and get fat. If we have such a poor pale little thing in our family, people will wonder if I really am a good physician."

He looked so grave, not a bit as if he was "making fun," that she gave a sort of sighing assent.

"If you get real homesick, you need not stay more than a fortnight. But there is a good deal to learn out of doors. There are trees and wild flowers and birds. I'll come up now and then and take you out driving."

"I shall like that. I suppose I may write to Daisy Jasper?" she returned with a flash of spirit. "You see I want to know about London, and Berlin, and ever so many places, so that I won't seem like an ignoramus when she comes back."

"You will have all winter to learn about them." Then he kissed her and went off about his own business.

She had to go and say good-bye to Stevie, who was just too sweet for anything, and Annie, and dark-eyed Daisy Hoffman.

CHAPTER IX

ANNABEL LEE

It was queer up at West Farms, delightful, too. The house was old, with a hall through the middle, and a Dutch door just as there was up at Yonkers. The top part was opened in the morning, sometimes the whole door. The front room was the parlour, and it had not been refurnished since Mrs. Odell came there as a bride; so it looked rather antiquated to modern eyes. The back room was the sleeping chamber; on the other side, a living room with rag carpet on the floor; then a kitchen and a great shed-kitchen, one side of which was piled up with wood. There was a big back stoop that looked on the vegetable garden; there was an orchard down below, and then cornfields and meadows.

The old house was what was called a story and a half. The pointed roof had windows in the end, but none in the front. There were two nice big chambers upstairs, and a garret. Mr. Odell began to talk about building a new house; and Mrs. Odell said the things—by which she meant the carpets and furniture—were good enough for the old place, but they'd have all new by the time the girls grew up, to fit the new house.

Mr. Odell had a peach-orchard and a quince-orchard, and two long rows of cherry-trees. Then he kept quite a herd of cows, and sold milk. He had a splendid new barn, with two finished rooms in that, where the hands slept in summer. The old barn was devoted to the hay and the horses. There were chickens and ducks and geese, and a pen of pigs. This summer, they were raising three pretty calves and one little colt, who was desperately shy. But the calves would come up to be patted, and eat out of your hand.

Both of the girls were what their mother called regular tomboys. Polly was a few months older than the little girl, and Janey two years her senior. They were smart too. They could wash dishes and make beds and sweep, weed in the garden, look after the poultry; and Janey could iron almost as well as her mother. But they did love to run and whoop, and tumble in the hay, and they laughed over almost everything. They were not great students, though they went to school regularly.

A second or third cousin lived with the Odells, and did a great deal of the housework. She was not "real bright," and had some queer ways. Her immediate relatives were dead; and the Odells had taken her from a feeling of pity, and a fear lest at last she would be sent to the poor-house. She had an odd way of talking incoherently to herself, and nodding her head at almost everything; yet she was good-tempered and always ready to do as she was told. But the worst was her lack of memory; you had to tell her the same things everyday,—"get her started in the traces," Mr. Odell said.

Mrs. Odell put a cot in the girls' room for Hanny, since there was plenty of space. And Polly seemed to find so many funny stories to tell over that Hanny fell asleep in the midst of them, and woke up in the morning without a bit of homesick feeling. Then Mr. Odell was going to the mill, and he took Polly and Hanny along, and they had a rather amusing time.

Hanny was very much interested in the process, and amazed when she found how they made the different things out of the same wheat. They used "middlings" for pancakes at home, when her mother was tired of buckwheat. Not to have had griddle-cakes for breakfast would have been one of the hardest trials of life for men and boys through the winter. It warmed them up of a cold morning, and they seemed to thrive on it.

Mr. Odell was very willing to explain the processes to Hanny. Polly wanted to know if she thought of going into the milling business, and suggested that she never would be big enough. Then they ran round to look at the water-wheel and the little pond where the stream was dammed so there would be no lack of water in a dry time.

They had a drawing pattern in school just like it, except that it lacked the broken rustic bridge a little higher up. She would take a new interest in drawing it now.

It was noon when they reached home, and Hanny felt real hungry, though Mrs. Odell declared she didn't eat more than a bird. She was glad her girls were not such delicate little things.

They went out on the shady back stoop afterward. Janey was sewing the over-seam in a sheet that her mother wanted turned. When she had finished, and picked out the old sewing, she was free. Then she said they would go down to the Bristows' and have a good game of hide and seek. They

always had such fun at the Bristows'.

Polly brought out her basket of carpet-rags,—a peach basket nearly full.

"I just hate to sew carpet-rags!" she declared.

"Couldn't I help you?" asked Hanny.

"Why, to be sure you *could*, if you would, and knew how to sew."

"Of course I know how to sew," said Hanny, rather affronted.

"Oh, I was only in fun! I'll find you a thimble. It's in my work-box that was given me on Christmas. It's real silver, too. Mother's going to change it when she goes to New York, only she never remembers. My fingers are so fat. Oh, Hanny, what a little mite of a hand! It'll never be good for anything."

"I have made a whole shirt myself, and I have hemstitched, and done embroidery, and I wipe dishes when I haven't too many lessons," interposed the little girl.

"You can't make your own frocks," in a tone of triumph.

"No. Miss Cynthia Blackfan comes and does it. Can you?"

"No, she can't," said Janey, while Polly threw her head back and laughed, showing her strong white teeth. "And she could no more make a shirt than she could fly. You're real smart, Hanny. I'm two years older, and I've never made a whole one. I'm going to try though, and father's promised me a dollar when I do it all by myself."

Polly had found the thimble. It wasn't any prettier than Hanny's, though Polly begged her "to be real careful and not lose it."

"Now you can just sew hit or miss; and then you can put in a long strip of black, 'cause there's more black than anything else. Oh, dear, I do hate to sew rags!"

"What kind of sewing do you like?" asked Janey, in a tone that would have been sarcastic in an older person.

"I just don't like any kind. Hanny, do *you* know that some one has invented a sewing-machine?" and Polly looked up with the triumph of superior wisdom.

"Oh, yes, I saw it at the Institute Fair. And there's a place on Broadway where a woman sits in the window and sews. It's very queer; but we think it doesn't sew real nice."

Polly was for the moment nonplussed. Hanny *did* seem to know almost everything. Then curiosity overcame her.

"Does it do really and truly sewing?"

"Why, yes. When you come down, I'll ask Joe to take us over to see it."

"Carpet-rags?"

"Well—I don't know. Long straight seams, and hems and stitching."

"Well, I'm going to have one when I'm married. I wonder if they cost very much!"

"There'll be lots of things for you to do before you are married. And some girls don't have any chance. You'll want to know how to keep house—"

"I like housekeeping. You just go from one thing to another. I'll have some one to cook and peel potatoes and all that. And we'll keep a horse and waggon, and I shall go to ride every day."

Janey laughed. "Just now, you had better sew carpet-rags."

"And I'll never have any rag carpets. I will give away all the old clothes."

"I'm afraid you'll never have much of anything, nor a husband either, Polly Odell," said her mother. "You talk, and leave the rags for Hanny to sew."

Polly turned scarlet, and sewed very industriously.

"I'd like to see a sewing-machine," began Janey, presently. "How does it go?"

"There is a strap around a wheel that is fast to a frame. You put your feet on, so, and just make them go up and down after you have started the wheel with your hand. The needle goes through, and something catches the thread, then it goes through again, and that makes the stitch. It is very curious."

"You know a good many things, don't you, Hanny?" said Janey, admiringly.

Hanny coloured.

"I can beat her all out running, I know; and I'll bet a penny she can't jump over the creek."

"And don't you dare her to, Polly. Remember how you fell in. Oh, Hanny, she was a sight to behold!"

"Well—it had been raining, and the ground was soft, so I slipped a little on the start. But I've done it time and again."

"And you're a regular tomboy. Girls don't train around that way in the city."

Janey had begun to rip out the old seam. She sighed a little, and wished she was sewing carpet-rags. That was such easy work.

"Hanny sews a great deal faster than you," she said to Polly. "See what a pile she has. I will wind them up."

It made quite a ball, and was a little rest from the ripping, that sounded so easy and yet was tedious. But Janey persevered, and finally, after turning about a time or two, came to the middle with a sigh of relief. Polly had been working like a steam-engine for ten minutes, and picked out a good many long pieces, so she had a ball as large as Hanny's.

Then they put on their sun-bonnets, and ran down to the Bristows', which was in the turn of the road. There were three girls,—one of nine who was almost as big as Hanny, and the one of eleven, much taller.

They all had a good drink of buttermilk: Mrs. Bristow had just been churning. Then they went out to the barn and played "hide-and-seek," and had a noisy, jolly time. They sat down and fanned themselves with their aprons, and presently started out for some blackberries.

"There's a German settlement down below, and the children are up here every day picking berries. You can't have anything now, unless it is planted in your own garden. We have some lovely big blackberries, when they get ripe."

Then the girls ran a race. Hanny was out of breath presently, and stopped, so did little Kitty Bristow. But Julie Bristow beat in the race. Polly wanted to run again; but the others were tired.

Mrs. Bristow gave Janey a beautiful, big pot-cheese to take home; and it was just delicious.

One of the cousins from Fordham had been down. The children were all to come up and spend the day to-morrow, and Mrs. Odell was invited to supper.

Hanny felt a little lonely. If she could just see her father and Joe, and her mother and the boys. But she slept very soundly; and truly she wasn't homesick when they all came to breakfast in the morning. Janey hurried around and did her work, and they were soon ready to be off. A day meant all day, then.

It was a pretty country walk, with here and there a house, and one little nest of Irish emigrants. Some of the women had their wash-tubs out of doors, and were working and gossiping. Then there was St. John's College, with its pretty, shady grounds, and on the other side a hotel where the trains stopped as they went up and down. After that, you climbed a long hill that wound a little, and on one side there was a row of beautiful, stately cherry-trees that were a sight to behold in their early bloom and in the rich harvest of fruiting.

Just at the brow of the hill stood a rather quaint house, with the end to the street. It was built against the side of the hill. You ascended a row of stone steps, and reached the lower floor, which was a dining-room with a wide stone-paved area, then you went up several more steps to a cheerful sunny room, and this was the kitchen. When you went upstairs again, one side of the house was just even with the ground, and the other up a whole story. Here was a parlour, a sitting-room, several sleeping chambers; but what the little girl came to love most of all was a great piazza built over the area downstairs, with a row of wide steps. When you were up there, you were two stories above the street, and you could look down the long hill and all about. It was a beautiful prospect. Afterward, the little girl found some chalets in Switzerland that made her think of this odd house that had been added to since the first cottage was built.

There was always a host of people in the old house. Hospitality must have been written on its very gates, for relatives, unto the third and fourth generation, were continually made welcome: a sweet, placid grandmother who had seen her daughter, the housemother, laid away to her silent resting-place, and who had tried to supply her place to the children; the father; the aunt who took part of the care; the sons and daughters, some of whom had grown up and married, and whose children made glad the old home.

There was a houseful of them now; but there was a wide out-of-doors for them to play in. A few hundred feet farther up, where the road turned and ran off to Kingsbridge, as well as to the Harlem River, stood the village smithy; and the Major, who had been in the War of 1812, had relegated the business mostly to his sons. He enjoyed the coming and going, the bright young faces, and had a hearty welcome for the children, though he sometimes pretended to scold them.

A queer tract of land it was, with a great rift of rock running through it where the children played house, and had parties, and occasionally took their dinner out to eat in picnic fashion. Just beyond the strata of rock, on the good ground, stood two splendid apple-trees called "Jersey Sweetings," and for nearly two summer months their bounty was the delight of the children. Farther down, the ground sloped abruptly and settled into a pleasant orchard; then another sudden decline, and here a pretty stream came purling through, making a tiny cascade as it tumbled over the rocks.

The little girl was deeply touched by beauty; and as they ran around she stopped now and then to

drink in the shady vistas and wild nooks that seemed fairy-haunted. She had been reading a little mythology, and she could believe in a great many things. There were places where she looked to see Pan piping on his reed, and dryads and nymphs coming out of the groves.

How they did run and play! The air was merry with shouts and laughter. Some of them took off their shoes and stockings, and waded in the brook. And one of the big boys proposed that on Saturday afternoon they should go down to the Harlem River and get some crabs and clams.

There were enough children for a second table, and that was laid in the upper kitchen. Auntie thought they must be starved; but instead they had been stuffed with sweet apples. Still most of them did justice to the bountiful dinner.

"This little girl looks tired out," said grandmother. "I think she had better stay in and rest a while."

Hanny was very glad to do this. While grandmother took her nap, she went upstairs where the grown-up people were talking and sewing. She wished she had brought her crocheting; but Polly had laughed her out of it. Then she took up a book, and was soon lost in that. It was an English novel, as most of our novels were then, "Time the Avenger."

"That is a rather sad book for a little girl," said Cousin Jennie. "I'll see if I can't find you something better. You look as if you were fond of reading. You are Vermilye Underbill's little girl. And your brother George has gone to California. I know him quite well, and the Yonkers family. I suppose he hasn't found his nugget of gold yet?"

The little girl smiled, and said she did not think he had yet. His letters had been full of the wonderful country; and it took so long to get a letter.

"Here are some magazines with pictures and verses. Are you fond of poetry? Maybe you are a poet. You have a delicate, ethereal look."

"Do poets have that?" asked Hanny. "I know a girl who writes verses and stories; but she isn't at all ethereal. I'm quite sure I couldn't write verses or anything," and she gave a soft laugh.

"Well, I think geniuses look quite like other people. I've seen a number of them lately. We have a genius living up the road, and ever so many people come to see him. Some quite famous ladies."

Hanny opened her eyes very wide.

"Let me see—I think I can find one of his poems." She took a pile of magazines from the top of the high old-fashioned bureau. "Oh, yes,—though, like 'Time the Avenger,' I think it's too old for you. I 'm not very fond of poetry. Here is 'Annabel Lee.'"

Then Cousin Jennie was called into the other room, where some one wanted to talk about the best way to ruffle a lawn skirt. Should the ruffles be on the straight or bias?

Hanny read the verses over and over, and saw the city by the sea where dwelt beautiful Annabel Lee, and how her high-born kinsman, who came in great state in a chariot, carried her away from the one who loved her so dearly. But when, later on, she came to know and understand the poem, and the high-born kinsman had come for some of those she held most dear, she could always go back to the vague mysterious awe that filled and thrilled her then. She sat as if in a trance until grandmother, who had taken her nap, came and took the arm-chair beside the open window.

"Well, are you rested?" said grandmother, cheerfully. "I should think Janey and Polly would wear you out. It isn't a good thing for little girls to run too much. But everything has changed since my day. Although I think they ran and played then; but they had to help work, there was so much out-of-doors work. Everything is easier now. There are so many improvements. And, oh, how much there is to read! I'm not sure that is so good for them."

"But it is very delightful," returned the little girl.

"If it only made people wiser!"

"But they are growing curiously wise," said Hanny. "There is the telegraph. It seemed so queer that you could make a bit of wire talk, that at first people didn't believe it. Uncle Faid did not when he saw it at the Fair."

"And people laughed about the steamboat, I remember, and the idea of railroad trains drawn by an engine. Yes, there are a good many strange things. And steamships crossing the ocean. There used to be sailing-vessels, and it took such a long while."

Hanny told grandmother about her friend who had gone abroad; and grandmother, in return, told her about some Welsh ancestors who had to fly for their lives on account of being mixed up with some insurrection about a young prince, and the stormy time they had coming over,—how they were driven up and down the coast, and their voyage consumed two months. They were almost out of provisions, and suffered many hardships. So the wisdom of the world had amounted to something.

The children came in. They were going up the road, and didn't Hanny want to join them? Mrs. Odell said they must not stay very long, she was going home before supper.

There was a protest about this; but Mrs. Odell said there were people and children enough

without them, and she had told her husband they would be home to supper.

"Do we go by the poet's house?" Hanny asked as they passed the cross-road.

"The poet?" Two or three of the children stared blankly.

"Oh, Hanny means that Mr. Poe. Why, yes; it's the old Cromwell house. It isn't much to see. There, that little cottage."

No, it was not much to see,—a very bird's nest house with a great tree shading it, and a little porch at the side. A rather thin elderly woman sat sewing in a rocking-chair. She did not even look up at the children.

They were full of fun and nonsense, and presently were joined by two neighbouring girls. They went up by the old church, and then they wandered to the graveyard. It was a rather neglected place, as country graveyards were wont to be at that time. Some red clovers were in bloom, and a few belated buttercups. The trees were rather straggling, a few magnificent in their age. There were long-armed rose-trees that had done their best in the earlier season, a few wild roses, pale from growing in the shade, and the long slender blades of grass fell about in very weakness. There were some curious inscriptions; there were places where relatives of several of the children were buried.

"Oh, Hanny, come here," said Cousin Ann. "That Mr. Poe's wife is buried here. It's the Valentine plot. They're going to take her away sometime. They're all very poor, you know. She died in the winter. People said she was beautiful; but,"—Ann lowered her voice,—"they were awful poor, and it is said she didn't have comfortable things. I should hate to be so poor; shouldn't you?"

Hanny shuddered. She was glad to get out in the sunshine again with her few wild flowers in her hand.

Bessie Valentine made them come in and have a chunk of cake, and it was a chunk indeed. Those who liked had a glass of buttermilk.

Cousin Jennie had gone up to the corner to look for them. Hanny espied her, and ran forward.

"Oh," she cried, "I've seen the house where Mr. Poe lives. And we went in the graveyard. Who was the other lady sitting on the porch?"

"That was Mrs. Clemm. I go up there to borrow books; and I like Mr. Poe, only—well, he is rather unfortunate."

"Was she so beautiful?" asked the child, irrelevantly.

"Mrs. Poe? Yes; I think she must have been. She looked like a small white wraith—do you know what a wraith is?" smilingly.

"A kind of ghost. And were they very poor?"

"It's a sad story. I think they were proud as well, for any one would have come in and done any needed thing. They had friends in the city who used to visit them. Mrs. Clemm was Mrs. Poe's mother and the poet's aunt; and it is said Annabel Lee means his wife. It's a wild, musical thing. Every story or poem of his has a curious ghostly sound."

"But—the high-born kinsman—"

The little girl's eyes were vague and puzzled.

"You can't understand it. Poets say queer things. I'm not fond of poetry, only here and there. And the stories make you shiver. You wouldn't like them. He has all sorts of books, and he is very generous with them. We've planned that you are to come up and stay a week with us. Some of the folks are going away, and there will be plenty of room."

Hanny squeezed her hand. The throng of children ran over the grassy path from the shop; and they all began to clamour that Polly and Janey should come up Saturday and go crabbing with them.

Mrs. Odell said she'd see, if they could get their work done in time.

There was a hubbub of good-byes, and the small cavalcade started down the road.

CHAPTER X

WITH A POET

The city by the sea sung itself in Hanny's brain. The sweet, young, beautiful wife, ruthlessly torn away, was somewhere in space, among the stars perhaps, and not in the old graveyard. She was floating on and on amidst all lovely things and divine fragrances. She could never grow old; she would never want for anything. Ah, would she not want for the mother and the poet who loved her?

An incident that had moved her strongly only a few weeks before, was a strange bit of reminiscence that could hardly be called a story. Ben had brought home a volume of De Quincey, and "Suspiria de Profundis" was among the papers. The others were too intellectual to interest her; but the touching, tender, immeasurable longing for the little sister gone out of life, filled her inmost soul with an emotion so sacred she could not talk it over with any one. This was akin to it.

Yet Hanny did not live in the clouds or in vague memories all the time. Her father drove up the next day, and found she was not homesick; and her mother was coming up the next week to spend the day; and everybody was well. She had a great deal to tell him; and she seemed very merry. He wasn't quite sure about the crabbing expedition; but Mrs. Odell said there wasn't a mite of danger, for some of the big boys always went along; and that it was a regular frolic for the children.

So Saturday they put on their oldest clothes. Hanny wore an outgrown frock of Polly's. Mr. Odell said he would drive them down to the river, which would save half the walk. He had some business in that direction.

He had the farm-waggon, and put some hay in the bottom, though he insisted Hanny should sit on the seat with him. They stopped at Fordham, and took in another relay; and the children were wild with the unreasoning gladness of youth. Mr. Odell was in an uncommon good-humour, and took them down the river quite a distance, to High Bridge, and then up again, when they espied the boys and baskets and the net, which had a long handle and looked to Hanny like a butterfly-net, only larger.

A motley crew they were. The boys had their trousers rolled above their knees, and some of the girls took off their shoes and stockings and waded about in the wet, sedgy grass. There was a little dock where the boats were tied; and soon two of them were loosened and filled up with a jolly crew. Big, cheerful Cousin Ben took charge of the little girl, and would not allow the others to frighten her. Ann was quite a famous hand on these expeditions.

They rowed out a short distance, and then began business. Oh, the shrieks and laughter that came from the other boat, when some one dipped up two hands full of water and dashed it over the others. And it is strange how much you can make your hands hold at such a time. Hanny was glad she was not in that boat, when they rocked it up and down. But most of the children could swim, and they were not in the channel.

"Quick!" exclaimed Cousin Ann, and the net was held out in a twinkling, Ann drew up a great green fellow with a frightful lot of legs, and he dropped in the net. They dumped him into a basket, and covered him with a piece of old fish-net; and the more he struggled to get out, the more he entangled himself. Hanny felt rather glad he was not down her end of the boat.

They had brilliant luck for a little while. Then the other boat shifted about; they had not caught a single crab, and there were loud murmurs of discontent. The others had the best place.

"You make such a racket you frighten them away," said Ben.

"Can they hear?" asked Hanny.

"I think about everything in this world can see and hear in some fashion."

They certainly were dreadful looking. The laughter and the exclamations, the disappointment at losing one, the funny conundrums the children propounded to one another, and the limp appearance of the voyagers, partly made amends for the sudden fright every time the great sprawling things came up. Hanny would not even undertake the capture of one.

The crabs grew wise presently. Not one of them could be aroused to the faintest curiosity concerning bait. Ben's boat had nineteen, the other eleven. They rowed up to the little dock, and managed to get them all in one basket. Jack showed Hanny how you could take hold of a crab, and render him helpless. It certainly did look funny to see him struggling with all his might and main, and his numerous legs. The two front ones were very fierce.

"He could give you an awful pinch with them," said Jack; and he made believe fling him at a group of girls, who scattered pellmell.

"I suppose the legs are oars, and help him swim," said Hanny.

"And help him grab his prey. He's a sort of savage fellow, and lives on smaller folks."

Then Ben and Jack went to dig for clams. There were very nice clam and oyster beds along the river then. There were not many people to disturb them, and no sewage to starve them out.

Hanny thought planting oysters a very funny idea. They were put in their beds like other babies.

The boys, and some of the girls, picked up the clams, until they had a half-bushel basket full. Tony Creese, the black man who did odd jobs, was to drive down for the "freight;" but he seemed in no hurry. Some of the boys went in swimming; and Janey Odell did wish she had brought another frock along. She could swim very well. They waded instead. Ben walked up to a little bank that, having lain in the sun all day, was warm and dry, and stretched himself out. Ann was too big to go "larking" about with the girls, so she and Hanny, and one or two others, sat down on the soft, sunburned turf.

How beautiful it all was! The sun was going down behind the New Jersey hills. The little rise of

ground between this and the Hudson shut out the river; but it could not shut out the amethystine splendour. Back of it all was heaven, to the child's faith. Miss Lois and her sister were there, and old Mr. Bounett, and the poet's young wife, and ever so many others. It was only the other side of the clouds, with their scarlet and gold and green battlements. She could see the ships sailing into port. She recalled "Pilgrim's Progress," and Christiana going across. In that moment of ecstasy she could have gone herself.

Tony came down the road singing "Oh, Susannah;" Ben answered "Hillo!" and shook himself like a great bear. The two baskets were put into the waggon.

"Now you girls who are too delicate for a long walk, or too much worn out by your day's toil, had better hop in. Ann, you go and keep an eye on Hanny. Now who else?"

They were all pretty tired with their racing about, and the three smallest ones were picked out, as there was but one horse. The others formed the rear-guard, and marched on behind, with their arms about each other. They were too tired for even the tempting game of "tag," or the ambition of running races.

Mr. Odell was waiting at the uncle's, having come around the other way. Supper was ready; but he thought they had better be "gettin' on," as mother would wait supper for them.

Hanny was very tired, and went to bed immediately after the meal.

They had some splendid clam-fritters for breakfast. Ben had proposed to divide the crabs; but Mr. Odell reckoned, "He'd go crabbing the first leisure day," and was satisfied with part of the clams.

And then, unexpected delight, Stephen and Dolly and the two babies came up to dinner. Little Stevie captured everybody, he was so merry and cunning; and Polly wished they could keep him.

"When he gets to be a big boy, and has a school vacation, I'll be very glad to send him up, I dare say," was the response.

"But, dear me, we'll be big too," said Polly; "and it won't be any fun."

Dolly told her little sister-in-law all the news, and what everybody was doing. It seemed as if she had been away so long. Mother had spent a day with Martha, which she had been promising to do ever since Martha was married.

The little girl almost wanted to go home with them; but no one invited her, and she would not have been so silly or ungracious as to plead homesickness, for she really wasn't homesick a bit.

Then, on Tuesday, Joe came up with a letter from Daisy, who had gone to some German baths, and was drinking water twice as horrid as that at Saratoga. The things you had to eat were so very queer; but the music everywhere was perfectly bewitching. Everything was so different. She was taking lessons of a Fräulein, and had to talk German at the table. They had been through several churches, and one picture gallery that was magnificent. A little withered-up old German was giving her some painting lessons. If Hanny could only be there, she would be quite content; yet she did think she loved America best.

Hanny was so delighted that her eyes shone, and her cheeks were pink as a rose-leaf.

But Mrs. Odell said she could notice that her appetite was better, and she was doing her best to fat her up a little, and make her look like a country girl.

Mr. Odell took her about with him when he could. There were so many beautiful places up and down the valley of the Bronx. They went up to White Plains, and took everybody by surprise. Grandmother up there was quite feeble now.

Then it happened, rather oddly, that when Cousin Jennie came down for her, as there was no one scarcely at Fordham but the regular family, Mrs. Odell was going to have a houseful of relatives from the West. She just wished they had their new house at such times as these. She could make a bed on the floor for Janey and Polly, and that would give her two spare rooms.

The girls didn't feel so badly, as there were two Western cousins of their age, and they would bring them up to Fordham.

The little girl was not at all tired of her pleasant hosts; but there was a romantic side to the coming visit that she could not talk over with Polly and Janey; and she was most famished for reading, as the Odells were not of the intellectual sort. Mrs. Odell didn't like the children to handle her parlour books, in their red morocco bindings, that were spread around on the centre-table.

Hanny's favourite place at the Fordham house was up on the high piazza. To be sure, it was sunny in the morning; but then Doctor Joe said sunshine was good for her, and one corner soon grew shady. There was some one passing up and down continually: the priests from St. John's College, in their long black coats and queer hats, generally reading as they walked; the labourers who worked on the railroad; the people going to the station; and the girls out calling in the afternoons in their pretty white gowns. There was no Jerome Park for stylish driving. Indeed, it was a plain little country village, and most of the life centred about the corner grocery and the blacksmith shop, where men talked politics and the discovery of California, and discussed the merits of the heroes of the Mexican War.

She sewed some patchwork for Cousin Jennie, who was making several bed-quilts, and who had a lover,—a tall, bright-eyed young man who drove a very handsome horse. Hanny felt quite wise on the subject of lovers; and though no one said anything special, she understood what the preparations meant.

"Now," Cousin Jennie said the next afternoon, "I am going up to Mr. Poe's, to return some books and get others. Will you go along?"

Hanny was very glad. She had seen Mr. N. P. Willis and General Morris, and some others, on the street; but that wasn't like going to their houses. The dead young wife lent him a glamour of romance, to her girlish imagination.

Mrs. Clemm sat on the farther end of the porch. It almost seemed as if she had not stirred since Hanny caught the first glimpse of her. She rose, a tall, rather thin woman with a sad, quiet face and a grave smile; and the two had a little chat.

There was no hall to the house, at least the door opened into the front room. A half closet stood at one side of the chimney, piled with books and papers, an old sofa and some chairs, a table in the centre, strewn with pamphlets and writing-materials, and the poet sitting beside it in a melancholy pose, marking passages in a book.

He glanced up and spoke. The little girl had an impression of a pallid face framed in dark, tumbled hair, and luminous eyes that seemed to be of some other world in their abstracted light.

"You are quite welcome to any of the books, as you well know," said the poet. "I am glad to have some one interested in them."

Then the white hand went on turning pages and making notes. The little girl stood by the window, almost expecting the frail ghost to walk down from the graveyard and enter the door again. Later on, she understood the impression of weirdness, the almost ghostly stillness of the room; and she found herself thinking over the poem that had so impressed her.

Fordham, in those days, was neither poetical nor intellectual. That a man should starve on writing poetry, when there was other work to be done in the world, seemed rather absurd. In some of the centres, literature was becoming an honourable employment; but country places had not emerged from the twilight of respect for brawn rather than brain.

Jennie made her selections, and expressed her obligation. The poet nodded absently.

Mrs. Clemm rose, as they emerged from the door, and walked to the end of the porch with them. There was something wonderfully pathetic in the care-worn face, the reticent air, and gentle voice.

"I wonder if you have a few eggs to spare," she asked, in a hesitating manner. "My poor Edgar's appetite is so wretched. He has had a bad spell, and eats next to nothing."

"Yes, I can find you half-a-dozen, I know. Our hens are afflicted a little with summer laziness," and Jennie smiled. "We have been baking to-day, and I wish you would accept a loaf of bread. I'll send this little cousin up with them."

"Oh, don't trouble! I will come down."

"I shall be glad to do it," said Hanny, with a gentle eagerness.

Cousin Jennie put the bread and the eggs,—she found seven,—and part of a cake, in a little basket, and said, "Run along, Little Red Riding Hood. There are no wolves to catch you."

They teased Cousin Jennie a little because the tall young man with bright eyes was named Woolf.

Mrs. Clemm received the little girl's parcel with her usual quiet air, and thanked her for coming. And before she could hunt up her ever-scanty purse the child had said Good-evening, and vanished.

Hanny heard the "spells" rather rudely explained a day or two after, and understood the melancholy shadow that hung about the house. People were not any more delicate in gossiping about their neighbour's short-comings then than now, when all the little faults and frailties of heroes are paraded to the public gaze and comment.

But the exquisite care with which the mother watched over the son of her heart, made her one of the little girl's heroines later on, when she could fully appreciate the tender solicitude that tried to shield him and save him from temptation, when possible, bearing her burthen with such heroic dignity that she was fain to persuade her own soul that she covered it from critical eyes. When one woman suffers bravely to the death, amid untold privation, and another takes up the dropped burthen with a devotion no anxiety can wear out, is it not proof that there must have been some charm in the poet seen more clearly by those who loved him?

There was a new book by Miss Macintosh among those they had brought home; and this Hanny devoured eagerly, sitting on her high perch, while the rest were busy in the household routine. In the afternoon, she read aloud while the others sewed. Sometimes the Major came in to listen; but he thought there were no novels written nowadays like "The Mysteries of Udolpho," "The Children of the Abbey," and "The Vicar of Wakefield."

"Oh," said the little girl, "isn't this funny! We have the first volume of 'The Grumbler' and the second of 'The Grandfather.' I don't believe I can piece them together," with a bright, mirthful expression.

"And I picked those up myself. No; we are interested in the 'Grumbler' now and must know what became of him."

They were English novels by a Miss Pickering, long since forgotten, while less worthy ones are remembered.

"We'll walk up after supper and change them," continued Cousin Jennie.

But visitors came in shortly afterward to stay to supper. People were not specially invited then; and the hostess did not expect to prepare a feast on ordinary occasions. So Jennie said Hanny might go up alone, if she didn't mind.

She started gladly, yet a sense of diffidence oppressed her as she stood at the door, a half guilty consciousness, as if she had no right to the secret Mrs. Clemm was trying so assiduously to hide.

The poet was pacing up and down the room; but his pallid face and strange, shining eyes seemed looking out from some other world. Mrs. Clemm sat by the window with a magazine in her hand.

Hanny preferred her request timidly.

"Oh, come in and hunt them up. Your cousin is quite welcome to anything. Then there are some upstairs, though I brought down that pile over in the corner this very morning."

The corner looked attractive. Hanny went thither, and knelt down on the checked matting. There were two books of engravings containing portraits of famous people, some old volumes of verse, some new ones, and magazines.

The volumes she wanted were not among them. But she exhumed something else that made her forget the slight, nervous man pacing up and down, and the woman at the window. Turning the leaves of an old novel that had lost one cover, she came across the name of one of her heroes, "Richard of the Lion Heart." She had a passion, just then, for English history. And there was Bulwer's "White Rose of England," in paper covers with a Harper imprint.

"Could I take these beside?" she asked, with some hesitation.

He glanced over at them as he came to that end of the room.

"Those old novels? Yes. Do they let you read novels?"

"I read almost anything," and Hanny glanced up with rising colour. "But there are not so many books up here—I live in New York," she added, by way of explanation.

A half smile crossed his face, but its melancholy haunted the little girl long afterward.

Then she went over to the closet, and soon found her missing volumes, and uttered her gentle Good-afternoon. Mrs. Clemm had folded her sewing, and came out on the porch where the water-pail stood empty, so she started to the well.

"Please thank your cousin for her kindness," she said in a soft tone. "I am glad she is fond of books."

The modern realistic school, or even the analytic school, would flout Madame Cottin's old novel of "The Saracen" to-day. Perhaps in the year two thousand the novels of to-day will be wondered at. The next morning, the little girl was up in her eyrie in the corner of the porch, and began her story. She was deeply interested in the Crusaders as well. Richard, Saladin, and his noble and knightly brother Melek held her spell-bound. She let the patchwork lie unheeded.

Queen Joan, Richard's sister, beautiful and unfortunate in her marriage, almost a prisoner for years, rescued and taken to the Holy Land in company with Berengaria, and treated with Oriental suavity and honour, and loved by Melek Adel, indeed, almost married to him, though history considers it only as one of the many feints of Eastern diplomacy, roused all Hanny's youthful ardour. And Saladin's young nephew, taking knighthood at Richard's hands on Easter morning, was so striking a picture that the child could not understand why Turks and Christians should be bitter enemies, when friendships like this could be cemented, and apparently appreciated by men of such qualities.

She lost interest in the "Grumbler," and I am afraid her mind wandered as she read aloud. She was really glad that for several days there were no children to play with. She sat out of doors, and was pretty sure that would answer Doctor Joe's requirements; and the Major took her out driving, but she smuggled in her book. She was not quite so pale, though that might have been due to sun-burn.

She had just finished her enchanting story one morning, and was glancing idly down the hill, watching the toilers who bent over as if they were carrying heavy loads, or drawing something behind them. Physical culture had not yet been applied to the fine art of walking.

A barouche, drawn by two nodding horses, came slowly along. There were four ladies in it; but one especially attracted the child. She wore a gown of softest cerulean blue, a bonnet of blue crape with delicate pink roses, and a large bow of airy tulle tied under her chin. Her long

ringlets, the fashion of the day, drooped about her lovely face, that smiled and dimpled as she talked. Her hands were daintily gloved, and one held her parasol up high so she could glance about. Hanny was quite sure she espied her, for her companion leaned out and looked also.

She left the child in a daze as she went by. Hanny had a secret, exultant consciousness that she had seen her ideal poet; then she smiled and wondered if she could write poems. Dolly was quite as pretty, but she couldn't; and Margaret was handsomer. She could not quite associate the sad, abstracted man up the road with "Annabel Lee." What a puzzle it all was!

She went downstairs presently, and was sitting on the area steps watching Cousin Jennie iron, when the tall figure in her shabby black hat and veil, which she invariably wore, came up the outer steps. Hanny ran to open the gate.

Mrs. Clemm was always quietly dignified. It was the intangible good breeding that distinguished her from the ordinary country-folk. She had a small tin kettle in her hand, and her manner was apologetic.

"They had some unexpected visitors from the city, dear friends of Eddie's" (she oftener called him that than any other name, and she often said "My poor dear Eddie!"). "Could they spare her some milk, and a few eggs? They had no milk at the store."

"With pleasure," said Jennie, who went to the milk-room, and cast a glance around to see if there was not something else that would help out the feast.

The little girl wanted to ask some questions, but she hesitated from diffidence.

She wondered afterward how the quiet, almost listless woman could concoct dainty feasts for these illustrious people out of her poverty; for they were illustrious in their day. Were the wit and poesy and knowledge the successive desserts, and bright gossip the sparkle of the Barmecide wine? She thought of the little cottage, when she read of Madame Scarron among the French wits.

She described them to Cousin Jennie when the tall black figure was going slowly up the road.

"Yes, they have a good many visitors," said Jennie. "They did last summer, when poor Mrs. Poe was alive."

"Was *she* very beautiful?"

"Oh, child, beauty isn't everything!" and Jennie smiled. "Yes; it was said she was. But she was so thin and pale. She used to sit out there on the porch, wrapped in a white shawl, with his arm about her, or her head resting on his shoulder. You see no one knew much about them then, and they kept so to themselves. Then there is his unfortunate habit, that you cannot help feeling ought not to belong to a person of his intelligence. It is a great pity."

Hanny sighed. She was to know a great deal more about the world later on, and the appreciation that was spread as a garment about the poet when his life's fitful fever ended.

There was an influx of quite elderly people one afternoon; and Hanny, gathering up some books, stole up to the little cottage, quite assured no one would need her, or even miss her.

The corner of books had been "cleared up." In the wide fireplace, there was a jar of feathery asparagus, and on the table a vase of flowers. There were a number of pictures, Hanny noticed. She had hardly glanced about the room before,—the plain, low-ceiled room to which people were to make pilgrimages as time went on.

The poet sat by the table in a dreamy, indolent mood.

"Did you find what you wanted the other day?" he asked gently.

"Oh, yes! And I have read 'The Saracen.' It interested me so, I couldn't leave it a moment. I didn't want to like Saladin so much; but I had to. But I shall never give up Richard."

He smiled a little at that, kindly, cordially, and her heart warmed to him. The pervasive eyes were so deep and beautiful! In spite of the pallor and attenuation, the face had a rare charm.

"So Richard is your hero? Well, you will doubtless change your heroes a good many times before you get through with life. I think I had a boy's fancy for Saladin once. Yet heroes come to be quite common-place people after all. I wonder if I have any more that you would like?"

Hanny said they had several books yet, and she was going down to West Farms in a few days. She wanted to finish "The White Rose of England."

"History in romance,—I dare say that suits young people best."

She stood in a sort of vague uncertainty.

"Well?" in a voice of suggestive inquiry, as if she might ask him anything.

"Oh!" she cried, summoning all her courage, and flushing as she did so, "will you please tell me who the pretty lady in blue was, who came up the other day in the carriage? She looked like a poet!"

He did laugh then, softly, as if laughing was a little strange.

"Is that your idea of a poet? Well, she *is* one,—an airy, light-winged poet with dainty conceits, and a charming woman, too. I must tell her she captured you at sight. That is Frances Sargent Osgood. And beside her sat Mrs. Gove Nichols, one of the new lights. Stay, I think I can find a poem or two of Fanny Osgood's for you."

He hunted up two or three magazines. Hanny sat down on the door-sill; it was so softly, so enchantingly bright out-of-doors, and the room a little gloomy. She wanted to have a glimpse of sunshine, for Mrs. Osgood looked as if she belonged to the brighter world.

They were dainty and bright. One was set to music afterward; and the little girl learned to sing it very prettily:—

"I've something sweet to tell you,
    And the secret you must keep,
For remember, if it isn't night,
    I'm talking in my sleep."

Then they talked about poetry. I dare say he was amused at a little girl whose ideal poem was "Genevieve," by Coleridge, and who knew "Christobel," "The Ancient Mariner," and "The Lady of the Lake" half by heart. When, in her young womanhood, she read some of his sharp, scathing criticisms, she wondered at his sweetness that afternoon. With a little more courage, she would have asked him what was really meant by "the high-born kinsman;" but she did not know as it was quite proper to talk to him about his own verses.

The wood-robins were singing in the tall trees, and the sun made dancing shadows on the stoop that was always clean as a floor. Mrs. Clemm brought her splint rocker out, and begged her to try it, and asked after the cousins, sending thanks for the cake that she had found in her basket, and the pot-cheese that had proved such a treat to her visitors.

She thanked Mrs. Clemm prettily for the chair, but said she must go home. The poet nodded. He had taken up his pen then, and she wondered what the spell was like that inspired a poem.

The next forenoon, they saw Mr. Poe going down to the station. Cousin Jennie shook her head; and the stout old Major said, "It was a pity Mrs. Clemm couldn't keep him at home steadily."

She was never to see him again; but when she heard of his tragic death, her heart ached for the poor desolate mother.

CHAPTER XI

THE KING OF TERRORS

They all admitted that Hanny had improved a good deal. She seemed to have grown every way. Her mother was sure she must let her skirts down; and her last winter's frocks were too tight about the shoulders, and too short in the sleeves. She had absolutely gained five pounds, and her little face had rounded out. But still she was smaller than most girls of her age.

She had so much to talk about that her mother said she was a regular little gossip. Her father liked to hear about grandmother and the kindly, large-hearted Major. She had found out that when grandmother was a young girl her name was Hannah Underhill, now it was Horton. So many elderly people had been visiting at Fordham, and her father knew most of them. But Ben and Doctor Joe were interested in the poet Poe; Joe knew more about him than he confessed to his little sister.

Oh, how glad she was to get back to school! There were so many things to learn. But Dolly had to have her one Saturday; and Mrs. French came over and took her to the house Beautiful. Ben was quite in love with Mrs. French. And now they were filling up the conservatory for winter blooming; and Hanny wished *they* could have some house-flowers. Her mother had hydrangeas and an oleander; but they were put in the end of the stable for winter.

Now and then she went up to Margaret's to stay all night. Daisy was growing to be almost as lovely as Stevie had been; and though she did not suggest Daisy Jasper, the name always recalled her dear friend. And Stevie was quite a big boy. He was getting some rough ways, too, and wanted to drive Hanny about for a horse, just as he did papa. Great-grandmother Van Kortland had knit him some beautiful horse-lines.

And Annie was such a sweet little thing! Stevie wished she was a little brother, "'tause dirls ain't no dood," he said. "You'm dot to be so tareful." He talked quite crooked, and could not pronounce "g" at all. He said "umbebella" and "peaapoket" and "tea-tettletel." Philadelphia always floored him. But then he had been Hanny's first love, and she could never forget the Christmas morning when he came.

There had been another exciting matter as well, and this was a presidential election. Zachary Taylor, Old Rough and Ready, as he was called, had become a great hero to her. She found that he had served gallantly in the War of 1812, fought against the mighty Tecumseh, and been in the Black Hawk War, beside all the late Mexican engagements, where he had so distinguished

himself. At the nomination, she had been a little sorry to have her old favourite Harry Clay superseded, and General Scott was a war-veteran as well. Then there had been famous Daniel Webster, whose speeches were the favourite of school-boys, though they had not banished Patrick Henry. But the real race was between Cass, Van Buren, Charles Francis Adams and himself; and Old Rough and Ready won. She wore a rough-and-ready straw bonnet this fall; all the girls did.

Margaret agitated the school question again. Hanny ought to be making some useful friends, and though the "First Avenue and First Street girls might be very nice—"

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Mrs. Underhill. "She's too little to be sent so far off. And I don't want any lovers put in her head this many a year."

Margaret was getting to be rather aristocratic. She kept her whole house now, and had a maid-servant beside the coloured "boy." Some stylish people were building up-town. Dr. Hoffman had a good many friends, and he was very proud of his handsome wife. But Mrs. Underhill sometimes said, in the bosom of her family, that Margaret "put on airs."

Hanny was well satisfied, and found a great many things to learn at Mrs. Craven's.

Then Mr. Theodore Whitney came home, and published a book of travel letters. And another young man, one Bayard Taylor, had been abroad and seen all of Europe with knapsack and staff, and had published his "Views Afoot." Ben was so interested. He often stopped at the Whitneys for supper and a talk.

Nora grew like a weed, and developed a good deal of musical ability. They had a steady servant now; and Mrs. Whitney was more "intellectual" than ever, and beginning to be proud of Delia's stories. She was generally paid for them; although young writers of that day were satisfied with the chance of being heard of, and read. She was getting quite a library together, and had her corner of the back parlour, which Mr. Theodore took possession of at once. He had brought home some fine engravings and studies, and half-a-dozen different "Virgins." The aspect of the rooms changed altogether. Delia began to cultivate quite a "circle."

She and Ben were splendid comrades. She had plans for going abroad also; and he entered into them with great zeal. She "didn't suppose she could pay her way like The.; but she was saving up her money for that object." Aunt Clem was real good to her; and when her quarterly allowance was paid she often dropped five dollars into Dele's bank.

"I don't know how much there is, and I am not going to open it under two years. Of course a woman couldn't take matters as Bayard Taylor did; but if she was economical and found cheap places! I do wonder if she could go alone?"

Tourists' parties had not been invented, though men occasionally clubbed together and obtained accommodations more cheaply.

"Two years," returned Ben, musingly.

Dele was certainly growing prettier. Her hair wasn't even Titian colour now, but a decided bright brown, and the curly roughness seemed just to suit her. Then the freckles were disappearing. He didn't know as freckles spoiled any one's complexion when it had that peachy softness and the kind of creamy look. If her mouth was wide, it had some pretty curves, and her teeth were beautiful. A Grecian nose would take all the piquancy out of her face.

"It may be a little more than two years," considered Delia, "and The. may start off again. Oh, I'm pretty sure to go some time!"

"I've quite made up *my* mind to go some time," Ben announced gravely, then laughed.

"It would be such fun to go together," said Dele, in her harum-scarum fashion, without a thought of any future contingency. "I'll try to make The. wait until I get rich enough."

Ben went home thinking what rare fun it would be to travel with some one who saw the comical side of everything, and who could extract pleasure straight along, as a bee could gather up honey. He enjoyed the fun mightily, but he could not always bring it to pass. Joe and Jim had a humourous side; but John had always been grave and steady-going. Ben wanted some one to stir up the spirit of fun, and then he did his best to keep it going. But he always had so much of the past seething in his brain. The world had such a wonderful history! He was almost afraid that now, when there was no war on hand, only Indian skirmishes, it would grow common-place. There were no breathless romances about it, as there were about Europe and Asia, where such conquerors as Tamerlane, Genghis Khan, Alexander and Philip and Attila, Charlemagne and Napoleon had stalked across the world as it was known then. Not that Ben had any soldierly ambitions, but to youth everyday plodding along seems unheroic.

The pleasant neighbourhood-life went on, though it must be confessed that Hanny often longed for Daisy Jasper. Mr. Jasper had returned; and the plan was now that the others might stay abroad two or three years. Daisy had improved wonderfully at the baths. They would spend the winter at Naples, and go back to Germany in the summer. Daisy was taking lessons in music and painting and Italian.

She wrote about herself to Hanny. She only practised an hour a day, and could stand it very well. Everything was so queer and foreign, though often very beautiful. But the operas were

enchanting beyond description.

"I want to learn to play a little for myself," she wrote. "And I find I have quite a good voice. I don't want to drop behind you all, and have you ashamed of me when I come back, for I couldn't spend a whole lifetime here, unless I had you, Hanny, and dear Doctor Joe. Tell me everything about everybody."

Hanny was always two or three days answering the letters. There were new girls in school to talk about, and the many things the others were doing. Charles and Jim were at the Deans so much; Mr. Dean was so interested in them, and Mrs. Dean made it so pleasant! Mrs. Reed was induced to come over now and then. She had softened considerably; but she had never regained her strength, and sometimes she felt quite useless, she declared to Mr. Reed. But he thought they had never been so happy or comfortable.

That left Hanny quite alone. Josie seemed such a very large girl, and she classed Hanny and Tudie as "the children." Tudie was a good deal engrossed with her first large piece of worsted work. Not that Hanny was lonely! She read to her father when lessons were done, or he came upstairs to hear her play. She was learning some of the old-fashioned songs that he had loved in his youth, though I think sometimes he leaned his head against the high back of his chair and went sound asleep.

Everybody was always wanting her; and her mother said she was a sad little gad-about. Even John's wife insisted upon a share of her. Cleanthe wasn't bright and full of fun like Dolly, but she was very fond of the little girl, and both she and John considered it a great treat to have her come in to tea.

There was a grand time when Zachary Taylor was inaugurated. Stephen and Dolly and the Doctor and Margaret went on to Washington with many others. They were fain to take Hanny.

"Such a crowd is no place for children," said Mrs. Underhill. "There'll be presidents likely, if the world should stand, and she'll have chances to go when the journey will do her more good."

Ben went with Mr. Whitney. And at the eleventh hour, Theodore gave in and said Delia might go, and she needn't rob her bank either.

Oh, what a splendid time they had! Washington has changed wonderfully since then; but the White House and some of the government buildings are just the same. Ben was a little startled at the splendour. Mr. Theodore was much engrossed with some friends, so Ben and Delia rambled about, lost themselves, and came to light in out-of-the-way places, hunted up famous spots, and rehearsed old-time stories of brave men and notable women. The sail down the Potomac was delightful. There was Alexandria and Mount Vernon and Richmond, all of which were to become a hundred times more famous in the course of a few years. Ben went over this youthful trip, so full of delight, many a time when, as a soldier, he slept under the stars, not knowing what the morrow would bring.

They were just a big boy and girl, in search of fun and knowledge, and they found plenty of both. Ben made up his mind that, when he did go abroad, Delia certainly should be his companion.

Margaret and her husband went to Baltimore at once, as they were not partial to crowds; and Dolly felt that she must get back to the children. But Mr. Theodore had some business on hand, so the young people had their holiday lengthened.

Still the season in New York had been a rather brilliant one, with various noted singers. An opera troupe from Havana had been giving some famous operas; and Hanny was delighted to hear "La Somnambula," because now she could compare notes with Daisy Jasper.

And in May, the famous rivalry between two leading theatres, that culminated in a great riot, occurred. Edwin Forrest, the great tragedian of that day, and many a year later, and Macready, a celebrated English actor, seemed almost pitted against each other in the same play, Hamlet. A certain party coming into existence had taken for its watchword Americanism of a rather narrow sort, and was protesting against all foreign influence. Macready had played, and then gone to fulfil another engagement, but was to return and play again. Some of the hot heads decided he should not; and though all precautions were taken, the feeling was that the better sense of the community would prevent any absolute disturbance. But the mob had grown larger and stronger in their narrow prejudice, and, before the play was half through, an onslaught was made on the opera-house. The rioters were in such force that the famous Seventh Regiment had to be called out. It was a night of terror and tragedy, and the whole city was wild with alarm. So serious did it become, that it was not quelled without bloodshed; and for days the whole city seemed amazed that such a thing could have happened.

But before the surprise and regret had died away, a sudden sound of alarm ran through the city, in curiously muffled tones that blanched the bravest faces,—a visitant, then feared beyond measure, that science had not been able to cope with. People spoke of it with bated breath. It was not simply among the poor and destitute, or those indifferent to cleanliness and order, but it spread everywhere,—the dreaded, mysterious cholera.

The older people remembered the scourge of almost twenty years before, and many of them prepared to fly to places of safety. The plague spot of the city was then the old Five Points, where the lowest and poorest, beggars and thieves, and sometimes murderers, had crowded in until it was a nest to be shunned and feared. Through this tract the plague swept like wildfire.

Margaret had accepted the urgent invitation of the cousins at Tarrytown, and gone thither with her baby, insisting also upon taking her little sister. Father Underhill was glad to have her out of danger, and was fain to persuade his wife to follow.

"No," she said stoutly; "Joe must remain; and you and Stephen cannot run away from business. With Margaret and Hanny safe, I shall stay to keep watch over the rest of you. I may be needed."

Dolly had taken her two children up to her sisters', who lived on the Hudson near Fort Washington. Stephen could drive up every day or two with news of everybody.

It did not seem at all alarming up at the Morgan's rural home. True, Cousin Famie was aging fast, and had grown more feeble than her years really warranted. Mrs. Eustis was quite the head of the house, and very bright and chatty, with a rather romantic turn of mind, just as fond of reading as some of the younger folks.

And it seemed to them as if the world was quite full of famous people then. For beside Cooper and Irving, there were Prescott's splendid histories, that were full of romance. And for story-writers, Miss Leslie, who was entertaining magazine-readers, and Miss Sedgwick and Lydia Maria Child. Then there was Hanny's favourite Mrs. Osgood, Alice Carey, and Mrs. Welby coming into notice, and Longfellow, Hawthorne and Emerson. The Doctor brought them up the new magazines, and said everybody kept well. Ben came up and stayed a week, and added to their stock of books.

They went down to Sleepy Hollow, though it had not become so famous for pilgrimages. Mr. Irving had come home from Madrid, and friends dropped in upon him. He always had a delightful welcome for them. They used to sit out on the old porch and talk; or, when there were no guests, his two nieces and some of his brothers' kept him company.

Ben summoned up courage and went down to see the charming man, beloved of so many friends, taking his little sister with him. What a delightful hour it was! Hanny was too shy to talk much, although she had been so brave on the poet's old stoop at Fordham. Perhaps, really, there was no opportunity, Ben kept the floor so entirely. They went in and looked at the drawings from Rip Van Winkle and Ichabod Crane and Katrina. But she still loved the old history that had charmed her so at first, and she would have given him her child's adoration freely, if he had written nothing else.

Ben had already seen a number of notable people. They often came in at the Harpers'. He used to talk them over with Delia; and he thought now what a fascinating story he should have to tell her.

The next day they went over to see grandmother and Uncle David. Jim was up making a visit. His mother preferred to have him out of danger. He and Ben were to go down to Yonkers; and though they were loth to spare the little girl, she went back to Tarrytown.

It was October before the Doctor would let Margaret return to the city. Daisy had grown so much, and was talking in a cunning, broken fashion. Mrs. Underhill had made two brief visits; and though she seemed rather nervous for her, she declared, "She had been very well all summer, and that they had a great deal to be thankful for. She couldn't have left father and the boys."

She had never been so demonstrative to Hanny, much as she had loved her. She kept one arm around her, and could hardly bear her out of her sight.

"Had she been content, and not made any trouble, and waited upon Cousin Famie, and helped all she could? She was such a large girl now, and ought to be useful."

Hanny smiled, and kissed her mother, and said: "She had tried to do her best. And she had been very, very happy."

"Cousin Margaret, I do wonder if you appreciate that child," said Roseann, when Hanny had gone out on the porch to have a romp with little Daisy. "She's such a smart little thing, and not a bit set up about it. I've been clear beat to see how she understands books, and people, too. And she's so industrious and pleasant-tempered. She makes me think of Grandmother Underhill and Aunt Eunice. I do hope you'll be able to keep her. It's a providential mercy she hasn't been in the city all summer. The cholera has been just awful! I don't see how you had the courage to stay."

"My sons were there." The tears came to Mrs. Underhill's eyes. "And though they were spared, they often needed me. No one really can know what it was, unless they have been through it. Joe came home one night so worn out that he stayed in bed all the next day. I just prayed every moment; I felt as if I'd never prayed before. And there was all of John's trouble. Yes; many a one has been called upon to part with their nearest and dearest."

John Underhill's wife had lost both father and mother, within twenty-four hours of each other. Then Cleanthe's little baby had been born dead; and they had to move her to Mother Underhill's, more dead than alive; but good care had at last restored her. The old Archer cousins in Henry Street had gone; and many another among friends and relatives.

They did not tell Hanny until she came home who had gone out of the neighbourhood. Mrs. Reed had been among the first. She was getting ready to go away with Charles, when the summons came. But the greatest sorrow of all to her was the loss of Tudie Dean. She had been rather drooping for several days; and one night Doctor Joe had been summoned, but in vain. Two of the

prettiest of the little Jewish children who had come to the Whitney house were buried on the same day.

Cleanthe was still at home, as she called her mother-in-law's house. She was very pale and wan, and just hugged Hanny to her heart, and cried over her.

Charlie Reed sorrowed deeply for his mother.

"I don't just know how it came about," he said tremulously; "but we were getting to be such friends; she took such a real interest in my studies; and she seemed to want father to be happy in the things he liked. He's most broken-hearted over it; and the house seems dreadful! Cousin Jane advises father to break up and board; I think she's kind of nervous, and wants a change. Oh, what a terrible time it has been; I am glad you were away. And poor little Tudie Dean!"

They both cried over her. And when she went in to see Josie, she was almost heart-broken; for Josie looked so strange and grown-up, and was so grave.

Mrs. Dean pressed her to her heart.

"Thank God, my little dear," she exclaimed, "that your mother hasn't to sorrow over any loss. Your brother has been heroic; and there was one time when we were all afraid. He was so dead-tired that I know he couldn't have lived if it had been cholera. The doctors were all heroes; and many of them have given their lives."

Yet the world went on, over the thousands who had dropped out of it. Business resumed its sway; even amusements started up. But there were many sad households.

And though the Underhills had not taken Cleanthe to their hearts with quite the fervor Dolly had awakened, they loved her very tenderly now; and she seemed to slip in among them with a new and closer bond.

There would be a good deal of business to settle. John thought it better to look about for a new partner. Mr. Bradley had left quite a fortune for the times. He had been investing in up-town property, and John thought it would be wise to build, and sell or rent as his wife desired. The old home was dismantled, the best of the furniture stored for further use.

He tried to persuade his father to go farther up-town. Joe was also a factor in this matter.

For though the cholera had spared Dr. Fitch, the infirmities of age and hard work had overtaken him. A nephew who had recently graduated, and had the prestige of the same name, was anxious to take the practice. Joe felt as if circumstances were shaping a change for him; and he was ready now to take up a life of his own.

Then the Deans sold, and were to go up a little farther. Sometime, and before many years, there would be street-cars, instead of the slow, awkward stages, and people could get to and fro more rapidly. The trend was unmistakably up-town.

Mr. Reed hired out his house furnished, and went over to the Deans to board.

It seemed to Hanny that no one was quite the same. Nora Whitney was almost a head taller than Hanny, and was getting to be a very stylish girl. Her voice was considered promising, and was being cultivated. But poor old Pussy Gray had rounded out his life, and slept under a great white rosebush at the end of the yard. Mrs. Whitney's hair was nearly all white, and she was a very pretty woman. Mr. Theodore was showing silver in both hair and beard; but Delia changed very little. Aunt Clem went on living in her serene and cheerful fashion.

And then the bells rang out for the mid-century, 1850! How wonderful it seemed.

"I wonder if any one of us will live to nineteen hundred," questioned Hanny, with a strange thrill of awe in her voice.

"I don't suppose I will," replied her father; "but some of you may. Why, even Stephen wouldn't be much above eighty; and you'll be a little past sixty!" He laughed with a mellow, amused sound. "And all you young people of to-day will be telling your grandchildren how New York looked at the half-century mark. Well, it has made rapid strides since eighteen hundred. I sometimes wonder what there is to happen next. We have steam on land and water. We have discovered Eldorado, and invented the telegraph; and there are people figuring on laying one across the ocean. That may come in your day."

"And a sewing-machine," added the little girl, smilingly.

The sewing-machine was attracting a good deal of attention now, and making itself a useful factor.

But to live to see nineteen hundred! That would be like discovering the fountain of perpetual youth.

CHAPTER XII

UP-TOWN

There had been so many delightful things in First Street, the little girl thought at first it would almost break her heart to go away. Her father, with the inertia of coming years, hated to be disturbed.

"I hoped, when we did make any change, we would build on the old place," he said. "I'd like country life again. But I am getting too old to farm; and none of the boys care about it. If George had stayed at home," and Father Underhill sighed.

George had not yet found his bonanza. There was gold in plenty in that wonderful country. There were hardships, too. He kept those to tell of in after years. It was a wild, rough, marvellous life; and every man of them was waiting for a run of luck, that he might go East with his pile. Meanwhile cities were begun.

Mrs. Underhill sighed a little also, in an undecided fashion. All the children were here, and surely they could not go away and leave them behind. The attractive, rural aspect of Yonkers had changed, or was it that she had changed? Some of her old friends had gone to new homes some had died. Then she had grown so accustomed to the stirring life of the city.

"No, we should not want to go alone," she said.

"Steve's a bright business-man. John's long-headed, if he isn't quite so brilliant. Ben will be all for books and travel. And Jim—well, it's odd, but there won't be a farmer among them."

"No," returned their mother, not knowing whether to be glad or sorry.

"Then farming is changing. And the near-by places are turning into towns. What the next half of the century will bring—"

Since there was no prospect of the homestead, they allowed themselves to be persuaded to join the migration. Foreigners were crowding them a little. There was a finer, freer air up-town.

The Deans suited themselves, and Mr. Reed and Charles went with them. Charles was now a tall, fair young fellow, rather grave from the shock of the loss of his mother, intensified perhaps by his sympathy with Mrs. Dean and Josie. It was a great comfort to keep together.

John looked up a new home; but Cleanthe, with her arms around Mrs. Underhill's neck, said, in a broken sort of tone:—

"Oh, you must be somewhere near us! I don't feel as if I could live, if I did not see you every day. I have no mother but you."

Twentieth Street seemed a long way up, to be sure. But there was an odd, rather oldish house, with a two-story ell that seemed to have been added as an after-thought. There was a stable and quite a garden. It had been considered rather a country house in its inception.

Joe insisted that it was just the thing. He could have an office and a library, and a sleeping-room overhead, without disturbing the family.

Mrs. Underhill declared there was twice too much room; and if any of the other boys should marry and go away—

"There's only Ben. I am a fixture; and it will be years before Jim reaches that tempting period. Oh, I think you need not worry!" comforted the Doctor.

Hanny was glad to go with everybody else. They had one sad sweet time at the Deans, talking over old days and the tea in the back-yard, when there had been Nora and the pussy, and the one who was not. It was rather sad to outgrow childhood. Ah, how merry they had been! What a simple idyllic memory this was to be for all her later years! Mrs. Reed always lived in First Street to her; and Tudie Dean used to go up and down the street, a blessed, beautiful ghost. The little girl was quite sure she would not be afraid to clasp her white hand, if she should meet her wandering about those sacred precincts. She could not have put her idea into Longfellow's beautiful lines; but it haunted her in the same shape of remembrance.

> "All houses wherein men have lived and died
> Are haunted houses."

They went down to the Jasper house also. There had been a family of children to tramp over the flower-beds and leave debris about. There was no pretty striped awning, no wheeling-chair, no slim, picturesque negro lad, and no ladies in light lawns sitting about. It looked common-place.

"We can write Ichabod on it," said Charles, half regretfully.

Hanny asked Joe why they should; and he showed her the verse, "Thy glory has departed."

"The glory has departed from the whole street," she said, glancing around. The new-comers were of a different class. No one swept the debris up to the crown of the street any more; and the city street-sweepers were infrequent visitors.

"It will be beginning all over again," Dr. Hoffman said to his brother-in-law. "It seems a pity to waste so much endeavour. Yet if you *can* wait, the practice will be better worth while."

"It wouldn't be the fair thing to crowd in on young Dr. Fitch. He did suggest a partnership, but I thought I would rather strike out for myself. And I prefer having all my interests at home. Mother begins to miss the children that have gone out; and there were so many of us."

When Mrs. Underhill looked back, she always thought those early years in First Street were among the happiest of her life. They were broader and richer than the first wedded years. They could not keep together always. She wanted her children to know the sweetness of life and love. Steve and Margaret were very happy. John and his wife had supped of sorrow; but they were young and had each other; and children would come to restore beauty for ashes, and the oil of joy for mourning.

She was delighted with Joe's decision. That night, when Joe had come home a very ghost of himself, and dropped down on Hanny's bed, because he hadn't strength to go up another pair of stairs, and she had clasped her arms about him and cried, in her terror: "Oh, Joe, my dear son, is it cholera?" had been an awful moment for her.

"No, mother dear; but if I can't have a few hours' rest, I shall die of fatigue. Just let me sleep, but watch me well."

She had sat beside him the rest of the night, from midnight to morning, counting his pulse now and then, which showed no indication of collapse. Other mothers had their sons snatched from them,—mothers who were tender and worthy, and who loved as fervently as she did.

When he awoke at the next noon, she felt as if he had been given back to her out of a great danger. And she was glad now to have him plan for the home-interest, glad there would be several years before she was called upon to share him with any other woman.

So they said good-bye to the old house again, and placed their household gods in a new home. They had gone farther than any of the others, though they were nearer Margaret and Dolly. The Deans were lower down and on Second Avenue. Up above them were great open spaces. They had two lots, which gave them a grassy space beside the drive. The lot being deeper than usual, they could have a little garden where the fruit-trees did not shade. There was a tall, gnarled old pear-tree, and they found it bore excellent fruit. Right by the porch, in a lovely southern exposure, was a delicious nectarine.

The little girl was deeply interested in Joe's house, as she began to call it. A door opened from the main hall, and one quite outside from the flagged path. That would be the patients' entrance, when they began to come. Joe went up to Yonkers and exhumed some old furniture. There was a queer, brass-studded, leather-covered sofa, with high roll arms, and a roll at the back that suggested a pillow. There were two small spindle-legged tables; some high-backed, oaken chairs, rudely carved, and almost black with age; and a curious old *escritoire* that was said to have come from France with the French grandmother who had landed with the emigrants at New Rochelle.

His office was plainly appointed, with an oil-cloth on the floor, a row of shelves for jars of medicines; for even then many doctors compounded their own prescriptions. There was a plain business-desk, a table, and some chairs, and a small book-case. All the odd old things were to go in his sitting-room.

Across one end, he had it filled in with book-shelves. One corner was for the little girl. And there was to be a special chair for her, so she could come in and study her lessons, or read or talk to her dear Doctor Joe.

Mrs. French made a splendid addition to the room in a large Oriental rug that Doctor Joe valued more highly as the years went on. For then we were getting bright-hued carpets from French and English looms, and these dull old things were not in any great favour. Only it was so thick and soft, the little girl said it was good enough for a bed.

Joe laughed. "I daresay I shall take many a nap on it. You must make me a nice pillow-cushion, out of some of your bits of silk."

People made real sensible patchwork then, or worked a cover in worsted, with perhaps a pretty bunch of flowers.

The house had a basement-kitchen at the back, and a dumb-waiter like Margaret's. Mrs. Underhill thought at first she shouldn't like it. There was a spacious area, which made Hanny think of Mrs. Dean's in First Street, where they used to play tea.

It took a long while to get settled, somehow. Ben thought it a great way up-town; and he often went to the Whitneys to tea, when he wanted his evening. Jim grumbled a little, too; there were no nice fellows around. Joe insisted that he had better not hunt up any, but pay strict attention to his studies, for he was falling dreadfully behind. But when Jim had to work or study, he went at it with all his might and main, and generally managed to catch up.

The little girl and her father were perhaps the best pleased. He liked the little garden spot. He was not confining himself very closely to business now. There were so many pretty walks around, for it was still quite rural, and you could find a few wild flowers. There was another very amusing feature farther up-town, and that was the "squatters," with their pigs and goats and geese, and their rich, wonderful brogue, their odd attire, which was in the same style as when they landed. Connemara cloaks had not then attracted the fashionable eye; but the women seemed to wear them to keep out both heat and cold. Red, green, and plaided seemed the favourites. The wide

cap-ruffles caught the breeze, for one always found a breeze in this vicinity.

The little girl's happiness was rendered complete by the gift of a beautiful Maltese kitten about half-grown. It had a black nose, and black pads to its feet, and a fashion of pricking up its small ears like a dog. There was a great discussion about a name; and Joe suggested "Major," as she was still fond of military heroes.

One evening Ben said: "Jim, the Whitneys are going over into Jersey on an exploring expedition, to view some curious old places, Cockloft Hall among them. Don't you want to go?"

Jim glanced up lazily. The boys were to play ball, as they often did, on Saturday afternoon.

"Oh, that's the place where the Salmagundi Club used to meet," cried Hanny, with eager interest. "It is in Newark."

"Yes; and there's another queer nest on the Passaic where a great sportsman lives, Henry William Herbert, the Frank Forrester of some stirring adventures. Mr. Whitney is to see him. And there are some other old haunts; Delia was looking them up,—the Kearny house, and an old place that was once used as a sort of fort."

"Dele Whitney goes round just like a boy!" said Jim, disdainfully.

"Well, why shouldn't she go with her brother?"

"Oh, Ben, can't I go with you?" pleaded Hanny.

"Jersey's a queer sort of State," said Jim, teasingly. "The Blue Laws are still in operation. You are not allowed to stay out after dark."

"Are they printed in blue? And you don't mean to stay out after dark, do you, Ben?"

Hanny's expression was so simply honest they all laughed, which rather disconcerted her.

"It is because you feel pretty blue when you have to obey them; and Jersey is out of the United States."

"It just isn't, Mr. Jim!" cried Hanny, indignantly. "It's one of the Middle States."

It was quite the fashion then to laugh at New Jersey, in spite of the geography; though even at that remote date New Jersey peaches were held in high esteem.

"But if you went with Dele Whitney, we shouldn't know when to look for you—hardly where," and Jim winked.

That was an allusion to an old visit at the Museum, when they stayed all the evening, for the same admittance.

"I've half suspected you were the ringleader of that scheme, Jim," said his doctor-brother. "I have a mind to go. One good thing about the Whitneys is that you can invite yourself, and no one takes umbrage."

"Oh, do go!" said Ben; and Hanny came around to give his hand a tender, persuasive squeeze. "I haven't explored the State very much, but it has some curious features. The magnolia and many Southern flowers grow there. I believe almost every kind of mineral, even to gold, is found in the State. And it is rich in historic lore."

"There was Valley Forge," said Hanny, softly.

"Yes, the Delaware River is beautiful. And the Passaic winds half around the State. It is twenty-seven miles by water,—a delightful sail we must take some time, Hanny."

"We shouldn't have time for that now. We are to start at one. Delia'll be glad enough to have you go, Hanny."

"Then you may count on us," returned Joe.

"Well, I'll take the ball game," said Jim.

Mrs. Underhill had been settling on a final negative. She had a little feeling about Delia Whitney; she could not quite approve of grown girls running about so much with boys. And she thought if she was going to set up for a genius, she ought to be delicate and refined. But Joe always carried the day, and she could trust her darling with him.

It was Margaret's Saturday, so Hanny ran around in the morning to tell her of the new arrangements. They were to meet the Whitneys at Courtlandt Street, so they had an early lunch, and started in good time. Hanny was so interested in everything that she was a charming companion.

It seemed queer that Mr. Whitney could remember when there was no railroad, and you travelled mostly by stage-coaches. It had cost almost a quarter then, with the ferriage and toll-gates, if you walked to Newark. And now you could go through to Washington on the train.

She thought it quite a fearful thing to go through the Harlem tunnel; but here there was a road cut through great, high, frowning rocks that made you feel as if you were in a dungeon. Then a long, level stretch of salt meadows with ditches cut across them, that suggested a vague idea of

Holland. We did not know the world quite so well then.

Newark, in those days, was a sort of country town with country roads in all directions. At intervals, a stage went up Broad Street, which was handsome and wide and lined with stately trees. They thought it best to wait awhile for this, lest Hanny should get too tired.

"But you can't half see," declared Delia.

"When we come to the curiosities, we will get out," said Mr. Whitney. "We can't afford to miss them."

They passed a pretty park full of magnificent elms, with an old grey stone church standing in it, one of the oldest churches in the State. There were a number of stores, interspersed with private dwellings, and everything wore a sort of leisurely aspect. A little farther up was another park,—commons, they were called then. The modest old houses and large gardens and fields gave it a still more complete country aspect.

The stage stopped at a tavern where some people were waiting. The sign was "The Black Horse Tavern."

"We will get out and begin our adventures," said Mr. Whitney, smilingly. "This little sort of creek was called First River. I dare say in past days it came rushing over the hill in quite a wild way."

"Is there a Second River?" asked Delia, mirthfully.

"Indeed there is, at Belleville. There used to be an old mill hereabouts, and this was the mill brook. Once or twice, in a freshet, the stream has risen so that it swept the bridge away."

"It's meek enough now," said Ben. "Black Horse Tavern! That ought to be in a book."

It was a small one-story building, looking very old even then. Over opposite, a pretty house stood on a slight elevation, that dated back to 1820, with its sloping lawn and green fields, its churn and bright milkpans standing out in the sunshine.

"We shall have to go round, as the frogs advise," said Mr. Whitney, looking about him with an air of consideration. "We might get through some of these driveways; but there seems to be no regular street."

"And if we go round?" commented Delia, questioningly.

"We go straight up this road until we come to a winding path called the Gully, then down to the river, where we shall find Herbert's, thence down the river to Cockloft Hall. But we will return by the upper railroad, as we shall be near that."

"Come on, then," said Dele, laughingly, when her brother had ended his explanations, "if you *can* go straight on a crooked road; and if Hanny gets tired, Ben and I will make a chair and carry her."

Joe smiled down at his little sister. He had linked his arm within hers. Ben and Delia were fond of falling behind. They were so merry, that Hanny was a little curious to know what they found to laugh about. It does not take much to amuse healthy young people before their tastes become complicated.

The old road wound a little, and had the curves that prove no one horse or man ever walks in a straight line. But, oh, how beautiful it was with the fruit-trees and shrubbery in bloom, wild flowers, and stretches of meadow, where cows were pastured, and here and there a small flock of sheep! Up above, on the brow of a hill, a wooded background gave it a still more picturesque appearance.

They passed an old stone house on the west side that was really a Revolutionary relic. The stone ran up to the eaves; but the two gables were of timber. It was on quite a bit of hill then, and had broken stone steps up to the first terrace, where great clumps of brownish yellow lilies were in bloom. When strolling parties of British soldiery went marauding about, the residents of this vicinity used to flee to the old Plum house as a place of refuge. The heavy double doors and wooden shutters could not well be battered down, though bullet-marks could be traced here and there.

A Captain Alden lived in it now, who was himself quite a character. He had been in the British navy, with Admiral Nelson's command. When his time in the service ended, he had shipped with what he understood was a merchant vessel, but on learning it was a slaver, bound for Africa to gather up a human cargo, he sprang overboard, when he saw a vessel passing that halted for his signal. Several shots were fired at him, which he escaped. Later on, he was impressed in the naval service again, but at the first opportunity came to America. A hale, hearty old man, rather short in stature, but lithe and active, and with a merry look on his weather-beaten face, he was still proud of his schooner that lay at Stone Dock, at the launching of which, in the early part of the century, the Jersey Blues had turned out, and Major Stevens had christened it the "Northern Liberties." It had been all built of Essex County lumber, and constructed on the Passaic. But the river had been quite a famous stream in those days. There were no factories using up its volume of water.

They sat on the stone coping and listened to the Captain's stories, indeed, could have spent all the afternoon, so entertaining did he prove. Then he took them through the old house with its

ample hall and spacious rooms on one side. They concluded it must have been able to stand quite a siege, judging from its present solidity. And Mrs. Alden treated them to a pitcher of freshly churned buttermilk, and a slice of excellent rye bread, which they found delightful.

"I shall have to come over again, and get some material for a story," declared Delia, when they were fairly started, tearing themselves away with quite a struggle. "That experience on the 'Slaver' was very graphic."

"If you want to hear something that will make your hair stand on end," said Doctor Joe, "come up and talk to father. When I was a little lad, we had a farm-hand working for us who had gone through with it all, been to Africa for a cargo, and come to the States with what was left of it. He never spoke of it when sober; and though he was in the main steady, once in a while he drank enough to start him going, and he always rehearsed this horrible experience. I remember father used to lock him in the barn to sober up; because he did not want us children to hear the terrible story."

"Were the slaves brought that way?" asked Hanny, with a shudder.

"Most every civilised country condemns that part of the awful practice," answered Ben. "But it is a fact that the native tribes in Africa sell prisoners to one another, or whoever will buy them. Do you suppose Africa will ever be explored?" and Ben looked up at Mr. Whitney.

We did not know much about Africa even then. But Ben was afterward to see the great explorer Stanley, whose journey across that country was a wonderful romance. And although the question of slavery was seething even then, he could not have dreamed, this lovely afternoon when all was at peace, that one day he should be in the thick of the battle himself, with many another brave soul, when his country was nearly rent in twain.

A few lanes led up to places, the outline of streets, and lost themselves in the fields. Cottages had been built to face nearly every way. Here and there was an old colonial house of greater pretensions, some of them at the end of a long driveway lined with stately trees. Here also were the remnants of orchards, meadows where cows were pasturing, thickets of shrubbery with bread-and-butter vine running over them, showing glossy green leaves.

Mr. Whitney paused at a queer, long, one-story house with a high-peaked roof in which were set three small dormer windows. There was a little dooryard in front, a Dutch hall door with an iron knocker, a well near by with the old oaken bucket General Morris had immortalised, and back of the house a picturesque ravine through which ran a clear stream of water that presently found its way out to the Passaic. Willows bent over it, elms and maples stood, tall and handsome, like guardian sentinels.

A little old woman sat sewing by the window.

"We haven't time to stop," said Mr. Whitney. "Hanny, that lady is your hero's grandmother, and the mother of General Watts Kearny. He not only distinguished himself in the Mexican War, but also in the War of 1812. Then he was Governor of Vera Cruz and the City of Mexico."

"And the hero of no end of stories," added Ben. "Jim and I were wild over them a few years ago. Why do people keep saying we have no romance in our own country, because we have no ruined old castles? Why, Mexico itself is a land of historical romance!"

"What a lovely cool dell!" exclaimed Dele. "Just the place to take your book on a hot summer day."

"I believe your young hero Philip was born in New York. But this is the old home, one of the landmarks."

Opposite was a rather pretty place,—a rambling brick house with sharp, pointed roofs, and a long stretch of evergreens. It was beautiful in this soft atmosphere. The birds made a swift dazzle now and then, and filled the air with melody.

"Up here is a hedge of hawthorn that was brought over from England by a Yorkshireman living up above. It is out of bloom now; but another year you can come over early in May and see the 'hawthorn blossoms white' that poets never tire of praising."

Dele broke off a sprig for herself, and one for Hanny. The spaces were larger, the houses farther apart. On the west side was a tree-nursery and garden, and two quaint old frame-houses that hardly looked large enough for any one to live in; but there were children playing about; and on the other side a cemetery. All this tract was known as Mount Pleasant.

At the north of the cemetery, they plunged down a stony way called a road, mostly by courtesy, though it was the only way of getting up from the river. Great trees overhung it on one side, and gave it a weird, darkened aspect.

"It might be a ghost-walk, at night," exclaimed Delia. "Edgar A. Poe could have put a story here. I like the tragic; but I'm not so fond of the horrible."

Another turn showed them the river and the opposite shore crowned with green glittering in the afternoon sunshine. They all paused, it was such a wonderful outlook.

And when they reached it, and glanced up and down, it was a picture indeed. The river made little bends, and wound around tiny points, edged with the greenest of sedge grass in some places, then grey stones with mossy sea-growth, or willows dipping their branches in the lightly

ruffled water. Not a soul to be seen anywhere, not a sound save the voices of birds; but while they looked, a flock of geese came floating grandly down.

"On thy fair bosom, silver lake,
The white swan spreads her snowy sail,"

quoted Delia.

"It is not the first time swans have proved geese," said Mr. Theodore, with a smile. "But for the sake of the picturesque we will let it pass."

"I wonder if the Wye or the Severn would be so enchanting to us if poets had not lived there and immortalised them?"

"When we are an old country, we will, no doubt, sigh for relics. In 1666, this was called 'Neworke or Pesayak towne;' and a little more than a hundred years ago this Gully was made the dividing line between the towns. There are many historic spots in Belleville, and an old copper mine that once made a great addition to her prosperity. But my quest ends here. I don't know as I have a hero exactly, Miss Hanny, yet my friend, Frank Forrester, has had a varied and eventful life. This way."

Mr. Whitney led them up a path mostly over-grown with pale, spindling grass that had no chance for sunshine, so close and tall were the trees. It was undeniably gloomy, hidden away here. A little old brown, weather-beaten house hung with vines, that even stretched up into the trees; small, narrow windows, with diamond-shaped panes that could not let in much light, it would seem.

"It's a horrid place," cried Dele. "Hanny, we shall surely see a ghost. The idea of living at the very foot of a burying-ground!"

Hanny held tight to Joe's hand. She was beginning to have what Miss Cynthia called the "creeps."

CHAPTER XIII

OUT-OF-THE-WAY CORNERS

If the outside was gloomy, it had a queer, disorderly, and rather cheerful aspect within, for the sun was pouring a flood of gold in one window where it happened to strike a spot between two trees. And Frank Forrester was by no means melancholy to-day. He shook hands cordially with Mr. Whitney, and welcomed the rest of the party with the utmost affability,—a fine-looking Englishman with a picturesque air, due largely to his rather long hair, which fell about his forehead and neck in a tumbled manner, suggesting a tendency to curls.

"These young people may like to look over my curiosities, while we have our talk," he said. "Take a cigar, and I'll bring a bottle of wine. Won't you join us, Doctor? Here, young folks, are curiosities from everywhere."

He ushered them into a small room that was library and everything by turns. There were trophies of hunting expeditions, some rare birds stuffed and mounted, looking so alive Hanny would not have been surprised if they had suddenly begun to warble; books in every stage of dilapidation, some of them quite rare copies, Ben found; portfolios of old engravings; curious weapons; foreign wraps; Grecian and Turkish bits of pottery; and the odd things we call bric-à-brac nowadays.

Delia began to make some notes. Ben laughed a little. Interviewing was not such a fine art then; and people were considered greater subjects of interest than their belongings. But Delia was saving up things for stories which she meant to write as she found time.

Doctor Joe had come in here with the young people, leaving the two friends to discuss their business. He, too, found much to interest him; and he was amused at Delia's running comments, some of them very bright indeed. She was quite a spur to Ben, he found; and he was surprised at the varied stock of knowledge Ben had accumulated.

It did not seem as if they had explored half, when Mr. Whitney opened the door.

"Young folks, we must be going, if we expect to reach home that very same night, like the old woman with her pig," he said.

"Are you talked out?" asked Delia, archly; "for we haven't half looked through things."

"I want your brother to stay and have some supper with me. I'm my own housekeeper now; but I think we could manage."

"What fun it would be," said Delia. "As there are no stores, we should have to start at the foundation of things."

"I have a loaf of bread, and some cold mutton, and eggs, I think, and tea and coffee. Come, you had better accept my hospitality."

"I must be home in the early evening," remarked Doctor Joe.

"And Hanny's not to stay out after dark," appended Ben.

"We are going down to Cockloft Hall," explained Mr. Whitney. "I am sorry we cannot accept."

"Then you must bring your happy family again. If they are fond of curiosities, the old house could entertain them all day long."

"And if they are fond of adventures, which they are, they might put you to the test," said Delia, daringly.

Herbert laughed at the vivacious tone.

"Then you'd have to find me in the mood. In that respect, I am variable."

"Do you have a mood for each day? Then your friends could be sure—"

"A good idea, like the ladies' reception-days. Must I put on the card, Serious, Jolly, Adventurous, etc.?"

"And supernatural. I should come on the ghost days. For if ever a ghost walked out of its earthy habitation, I should think it would be here. Did you ever see a ghost, Mr. Herbert?"

"I have seen some queer things. But these up here," nodding his head, "seem a very well behaved community. I can't say that they have troubled me; and I've come down the road at twelve or so at night. Perhaps my imagination is not vivid enough in that line. Have you ever seen a ghost, Miss Whitney?"

"No, I have not, except the ghosts of my imagination. I can shut my eyes now, and see them come trooping down that lonely road by twos and threes."

Herbert laughed again. "A vivid imagination is worth a good deal at times," he said. "There ought to be a ghost-walk about here; and next time you come over, we'll arrange one so perfectly that he shall defy detection. I'll walk a bit with you, if I am not a ghost."

When he put on his wide-brimmed, rather high-crowned hat, he looked more Spanish than English. They went through another room that opened on a porch, and, from thence, through the garden, or an attempt at one that did not betoken signal success.

The cemetery sloped down from a high hill that was such a thicket of woods it hid all indications of the City of the Dead. The placid river, in which there was only a gentle tide up here, lapped the shores with a little murmur as it came up from the bay. The green, irregular shore opposite showed here and there a house. The wood-robins were beginning their vespers already. Hanny thought them the sweetest singers she had ever heard.

Just here there was a terraced garden-spot and an old house adorned with all kinds of blossoming shrubbery.

"You see we two are guardians of the place, at either end. Miss Whitney, this house could tell some interesting tales of the bygone time; but the glory is departing. In a few years the city will stretch out and invade our solitude."

A wild spot of ground it was below, hilly, gravelly, sloping sharply down to the river. But people were beginning to take advantage of the shore-edge for business. There were shops, and a foundry stretching out smoky, dingy arms in various directions.

They said their good-byes here, as they were in sight of the old Gouverneur mansion. And no one guessed then that a tragedy of love and desperation to madness was soon to follow, and that in the dreary old house "Frank Forrester" was to lie, slain by his own hand, that he waved so jauntily to them as he bade them "Come again."

They scrambled up the small ascent, and sprang over the wall. Here was where the Nine Worthies used to come for their merry-making in their exuberant youth, and, as one of their number said afterward, "enlivened the solitude by their mad-cap pranks and juvenile orgies." The house had not been much modernised up to that period. Its young owner, Mr. Kemble, who was the Patroon of the merry company, still held it. They found the old honeydew cherry-tree standing; but some of its long-armed branches were going to decay. The odd, octagonal summer-house had not then fallen down.

They went up to the old room in the south-western angle, the green moreen chamber, as it had been called, where the Nine Worthies used to congregate, and where Irving concocted some choice bits of fun for the Salamagundi Club. And here was the great drawing-room where they disposed themselves to sociable naps on Sunday afternoons, the vine-covered porch on which they sat and smoked starlit evenings, and the grassy lawn over which they rambled. And now Mr. Washington Irving had been minister to Spain, and the guest of noted people in England and on the continent. He had won fame in more than one line, and hosts of appreciative readers.

Hanny could hardly realise it all, as she thought of the still handsome though rather delicate man, past middle life, gracious and dignified and kindly, sitting on his own porch at Sunnyside. She couldn't help going back to her first love, the old "Knickerbocker History" that seemed so real to her, even now.

The hand of improvement touched Cockloft Hall shortly after. The old summer-house was taken down; the famous cherry-tree, where the robins sang and reared their young for so many generations, succumbed to old age and wintry blasts; but she was glad she had seen it in its romantic halo.

They were not far from the upper railroad station then,—the old Morris and Essex that had stirred up the country people mightily when it first went thundering through quiet vales, and screaming out at little way-stations. They were just in time for a train. The sun had dropped down behind the Orange Mountain, though the whole west was alive with changeful gold and scarlet, melting to fainter tints, changing to indescribable hues and visionary islands floating in seas of amber and chrysoprase.

Hanny was quite tired, and leaned her head on Joe's shoulder. Ben and Delia were in front, and Mr. Whitney in the seat behind. They kept up an animated conversation, and thought it had been a delightful afternoon.

"And I feel like quoting a bit out of a letter of the Poet Gray," said Ben. "'Do you not think a man may be the wiser, I had almost said better, for going a hundred or two miles?' We have gone a tenth or so of that, and I feel ever so much richer as well as wiser. How is it with you, little Hanny?"

"I've been to the land of heroes," she replied, with a soft smile. "I shall insist that Jim must honour New Jersey in the future."

"Bravo!" said Mr. Whitney. "And there are many more heroes in it, and I think some heroines, that we must hunt up at a leisure day. There was Ann Halsted of Elizabethtown, who saw the British foraging expedition coming over from Staten Island, where the ship lay at anchor; and, donning a suit of her father's clothes, and taking an old musket, she went down to the only road they could come up, and blazed away at them with such intrepidity that the red-coats were alarmed lest a whole squad might be quartered there, and retreated in haste. It was said when Washington heard of it, he toasted the young lady. And there were the brave women of Valley Forge."

"And Moll Pitcher, don't forget her," put in Ben. "We in New York don't own quite everything."

They went rumbling into the tunnel, and Hanny started. She was used to the Harlem tunnel; but this came upon her unexpectedly.

"And there are three considerable tunnels," laughed Delia. "Yet there are people who believe the State is one vast sandy plain, and that the agricultural products are solely watermelons and peaches. Some one always stands ready to believe ridiculous things."

"Hereafter, we will take up the cudgels for New Jersey," declared Ben. "I am hungry as a bear! That rye bread was splendid, wasn't it! We must ask mother to make some, Joe."

Mr. Whitney begged them to stop to tea; but Doctor Joe thought they had better get home. They were late, of course; but Mrs. Underhill had a nice supper for them.

When Jim heard about Captain Alden, he half wished he had gone.

"But I had to come in and save the day, or we should have been beaten out of sight, so I was of some use," he announced.

Mrs. Underhill was put on her mettle by hearing about Mrs. Alden's rye bread; and the very next week she made some quite as splendid.

Hanny displayed her sprig of hawthorn,—real hawthorn.

"Are you sure it isn't artificial?" asked Jim, teasingly.

"An artificial branch can't grow," she said indignantly.

The next week at school, the girls' compositions had to be read aloud; and Hanny wrote about her tour, which received the highest commendation.

Delia came up to get the story of the man who had been on board the slave ship. She had a sketch of her own under way, and she wanted to make it very thrilling.

"And I shall have to give you half the money for it," she said laughingly.

It had a rather amusing hitch about its acceptance. The editor of the paper to which it was offered liked it extremely for its vigourous treatment, but begged her to use a masculine name, or simply initials, because it didn't sound like a young girl's story.

She told this over with great gusto, and showed her check for twenty dollars. But Mr. Underhill magnanimously refused to accept the half of it.

"I don't approve of so much mannishness in a girl," Mrs. Underhill said decisively. In her heart she wished Ben did not like her so well. But they really were more like two boys than lovers.

She took every occasion to make sharp little comments. Delia was rather careless in her attire; and while she dressed her heroines in the styles of their period, or in good taste, if they were modern, she had a rather mismatched look herself, except when she wore white, which she

nearly always did evenings at home.

And she made home a really delightful place. She was quite ambitious for reception evenings. Mrs. Osgood was holding them for a literary circle. Of course she could not aim at anything as elegant as that; but newspaper men, young and old, were in the habit of dropping in upon Mr. Whitney quite informally. About ten, they might be asked down to the dining-room, where there was a dainty little spread, sometimes a Welsh rarebit that Dele could concoct to perfection. To be sure, they smoked the room blue; and Mr. Whitney often brought out a bottle of wine, as was the custom then; true, he waited until Delia and Nora had gone upstairs, and taken some of the younger men. Delia had made a strong protest against it, in her humourous way.

"I don't so much mind you old fellows, who, if you haven't sense enough not to addle your brains, never will have. But the young men oughtn't have the temptation thrust in their way. They think it looks smart and manly; and they make themselves so silly that I'm like a lump of ice to some of them. I like clear-brained people."

So upstairs they had music and recitations. Every young man of any elocutionary ability felt himself empowered to recite "The Raven," that much admired and sharply discussed poem by the Poet Poe, whose melancholy end still created much interest. Critical spirit ran high. One party could see only a morbid faculty heightened by opium and intoxicants; others found the spirit of true and fine genius in many of his efforts, and believed the circumstances of his life had been against him.

Ben was reading one evening in Doctor Joe's cosy library, enjoying the most capacious arm-chair, and improvising a foot-rest out of one not quite so luxurious. The Doctor had been making out bills, and feeling quite encouraged, perhaps lighter-hearted than he would when he had waited a year for the payment of some of them.

"Joe," began his brother, abruptly, "what do you suppose makes mother so bitter about Delia Whitney?"

"Bitter?" repeated Joe, in the tone of indecision people often use when a proposition or question takes them by surprise.

"Yes. We all used to be so nice and jolly together, and Delia likes us all so much. Hanny has such good times down there, with the old lady who sings such pretty old-fashioned songs, if her voice is rather cracked and tremulous; and Nora is bright and entertaining. But the other day mother wouldn't let her go; and she was dreadfully disappointed; and mother is not as cordial to Delia as she used to be. Dele spoke of it."

Ben looked straight at his brother, out of the frankest of eyes. It was Joe who changed colour.

"I hate things to go crosswise. And when something keeps you just a little ruffled up all the time —"

Ben drew his brows. Was he really unconscious of the trouble?

"You go there a good deal, you know. Some of the men are not quite the company a young fellow should choose, mother thinks."

That was begging the main issue, of course.

"I don't see much of the older men. They're mostly smoking downstairs, and I don't care a bit for that. But their talk is often worth listening to. People who just keep in one little round have no idea how rich the world is growing intellectually, scientifically; and on what broad lines it is being laid."

"It is not the men altogether. Ben, you don't go anywhere else. Perhaps it would be wisdom to enlarge your acquaintance among girls, young ladies," and Joe gave a short laugh that betrayed the effort.

"I don't care a penny for girls in general," said Ben, with elderly gravity. "Delia sometimes asks them in; and we seldom have as good a time. She's a host in herself; and I've always liked her."

"You haven't had a very wide experience. And you are too young to make up your mind about—anything."

Ben started up suddenly and flushed. What a fine, strong, solid face he had! It wasn't the face of one turned about with every wind of doctrine; it was not as handsome as Jim's bid fair to be, but it had hardly a weak or selfish line in it. Ben had always been such a good, generous, steady boy.

"You don't mean," he began with a little gasp,—"Joe, you can't think that mother—that any one would object if the time came for me to—to marry Delia?"

"You are too young to think of such things, Ben," said his brother, gently.

"Why—I've been thinking of it ever since Mr. Theodore came home. We were talking one time about going to Europe—"

"Are you really engaged, Ben?"

The young fellow laughed and blushed.

"Well—I suppose not exactly," he answered slowly. "We've never come to that boshy stuff you find now and then in stories. But we know all about each other's plans; and we like so many of the same things; and we always feel so comfortable together, not a bit as if we were trigged up in Sunday clothes. I don't think she's the most beautiful girl in the world; but she has lovely eyes, and I've never seen a handsome girl I have liked as well. Steve chose his own wife, and so did John. Cleanthe's a splendid housekeeper; but she doesn't have time to read a newspaper. Dolly's well informed, and has something fresh to talk about. But it seems to me Margaret is always caring about society and etiquette, and who is in our set, and a hundred things that bore me. Phil has all his life been used to style, so Margaret's just the one for him. And why shouldn't I have just the one for me?"

Joe laughed heartily then.

"I'd wait a year or two," he answered drily. "You are not out of your time; and it is an unwise thing to take the responsibilities of life too early. Delia may fancy some one else."

"Oh, no, she won't," replied Ben, confidently. "We just suit. I can't explain it to you, Joe; but it is one of the things that seem to come about without any talking. Are some things ordained? I should be awful sorry to have mother object to it; but I know Dolly would stand by us when the time came."

"Well—don't hurry; and, Ben, take the little comments patiently. If mother was convinced that it was for your happiness, she would consent. We all know there are unwise marriages, unhappy ones, as well."

"Oh, we're not in any hurry! You see, Delia is really needed at home. The old aunt is awfully fond of her. And she's so interested in her stories. We have such fun planning them out; and she does some capital little sketches."

Joe nodded in a friendly manner, as if he did not altogether disapprove. But there was a belief that literary women could not make good wives. People quoted Lady Bulwer and Lady Byron; and yet right in the city were women of literary proclivities living happily with their husbands.

And Joe had found careless, fretful, indifferent wives and poor housekeepers among women who could not even have written a coherent account-book. Come to think, he liked Delia a good deal himself. And if she wasn't such a great worker, she did have the art of making a cheerful, attractive home, and putting everybody at ease.

The new woman and cooking-schools were in the far future. Every mother, if she knew enough, trained her daughter to make a good wife, to buy properly, to cook appetisingly if not always hygienically, to make her husband's shirts, and do the general family sewing, to keep her house orderly, to fight moths and mice, and to give company teas with the best china and the finest tablecloth.

To be sure there was a little seething of unrest. Mrs. Bloomer had put forth a new costume that shocked the feminine world, though they were complaining of the weight of heavy skirts and the various devices for distending them. Lucretia Mott and some other really fine women were advocating the wider education of the sex. Women were being brought to the fore as teachers in schools, and higher institutions were being discussed. There was a Mrs. Bishop who had preached; there were women who lectured on various subjects.

The sewing-machine was making its way; and the argument in its favour was that it would save a woman's strength and give her more leisure. But employment of any kind out of the house *was* considered derogatory unless one had no father or brother to supply her needs.

Still, the old simple life was going out of date. There was more style; and some leaders of opinion professed to be shocked at the extravagance of the day. There was a sudden influx of people up-town. There were new stores and offices. One wondered where all the people came from. But New York had taken rapid strides in her merchant-marine. The fastest vessels in the China trade went out of her ports. The time to both California and China was shortened by the flying clippers. The gold of that wonderful land of Ophir was the magic ring that one had only to rub, if he could get hold of it, and work wonders.

But the little girl went on her quiet way. They were finding friends in the new neighbourhood; yet Daisy Jasper could not be superseded. Every letter was carefully treasured; and, oh, how many things she found to say in return.

They kept up the intimacy with the Deans, though Josephine seemed almost a young woman. Mr. Reed enjoyed the pleasant home wonderfully. Charles spent much of his leisure over music, of which he was passionately fond. He and Jim were not so intimate. Jim was going with a gayer lot of young fellows, while Charles was seriously considering his life-plans.

CHAPTER XIV

AMONG GREAT THINGS

Were people more enthusiastic in old New York than they are at the end of the century? We have done so much, we have had so many wonderful happenings since then. To be sure, Dickens had been over and made, people thought, a somewhat caustic return for the hospitable welcome; Harriet Martineau had made a tour, and gone home rather favourably impressed; and the winter before the intellectual circle—and it was getting to be quite notable—had honoured the Swedish novelist, Frederica Bremer, and been really charmed by her unaffected sweetness. If they were not quite ready to take up her theories for the advancement of women, they fell to reading the delightful "Neighbours" and "Home." And now there was to be another visitant, "The Swedish Nightingale."

For Mr. Barnum was still the prince of entertainers. Theatres waxed and waned, and new stars came to the front who had still their laurels to win; people strove for cards to the Steven's Terrace, just back of Columbia College on Park Place. Bleecker Street was not out of date, though Mrs. Hamilton Fish had gone up to Stuyvesant Square, and was gathering about her a political clique. There were card-parties and dances; there were Christy's Minstrels and the Hutchinson family; and some of the more intellectual circles had conversaziones where the best talent displayed itself. Still, Barnum could not be crowded out. No sarcasm withered him; and his variety was infinite. It was a safe place for mothers to go and take their children. The men had formed several ambitious clubs, and were beginning to entertain themselves.

Jenny Lind had already captivated Europe. Mr. Barnum judiciously brought interest up to fever heat. After the bargain was made known, and the young singer had taken her passage with her suite, a musical rage pervaded the very city. The streets leading to the wharf were thronged by crowds in the wildest enthusiasm. Triumphal arches were built across Canal Street, and as she came down the gang-plank of the steamer, shouts rent the very air.

The young traveller and poet, Bayard Taylor, had captured the prize offered for the finest ode to be sung at her first concert. Two hundred dollars seemed a large price at that time, as Tennyson had not been offered a thousand for a poem. So great was the inquiry for tickets, that they were sold at auction a few days previous. And Mr. Genin, a Broadway hatter, signalised himself by making the highest bid for a ticket,—two hundred and twenty-five dollars. Over one thousand tickets were sold on the first day.

The concert was to be at Castle Garden. At five, the doors were opened, and people began to throng in, though each seat had been secured to its proper owner; and by eight, the audience was in a perfect transport of expectation. It was said to be the largest audience assembled to listen to her. And when she was led on the stage by her manager, the enthusiasm was beyond description. It seemed to divine beforehand that the fair-haired Swedish songstress would meet all expectations; and she passed beyond it.

Ben had been caught by the enthusiasm, and squandered his savings on a ticket. He and Jim had been in the crowd around the hotel, that first night when the New York musical society had serenaded her, and she had bowed from the old stone balcony to the admiring crowds.

"There isn't any word to express it," declared Ben, at the breakfast-table the next morning. "Joe, you must hear her, and Hanny—all of you. Never mind the cost."

"Ben, you have lost your senses," said his mother, with a touch of her old sharpness. "As if we were all millionaires! And I have heard people sing before."

"Not anything like that. You can't imagine such melody. And the enthusiasm of the crowd is worth something!"

The little girl looked up wistfully. She was beginning to understand the value of money.

"Yes," returned Joe; "Hanny must hear her. I wouldn't have her miss it for anything. But the tickets won't be so high after a little."

They dropped to regular prices, but that was high for the times; and the rush continued unabated. New York broke out in a Jenny Lind furore. There were gloves, and hats, and shawls, and gowns, beautiful little tables, and consoles, and furniture of all sorts that bore her name. The bakers made Jenny Lind cake. What a time there was! Enthusiastic adorers took her carriage from its shafts, and dragged it from Castle Garden to the hotel. Was New York old in those days? Rather, it was the glowing, fervid impetuosity of early youth.

And the serenade, when Broadway was jammed for blocks, and lighted by torches in the street, and illuminations in the houses and stores. There was a wonderful cornetist, Koenig, who could have won another Eurydice from the shades with his playing. Out on the balcony he stood and moved the crowd with his melody. Then she came out beside him, and, in the hush, a thousand times more appreciative than the wildest applause, the magnificent voice sang to its large, free audience, "Home, Sweet Home," as no one will ever hear it sung again. That alone would be fame enough for any writer of song!

The furore did not abate. But they must all go,—Stephen and Dolly, Margaret and her husband, Joe and the little girl, and her father.

"It is nonsense for an old fellow like me," he declared, half humourously.

"But I shall like it so much better, and then we can talk it over afterward. That's half the pleasure."

She looked so wistful out of her soft eyes, and patted his hand with her caressing little fingers, of course he couldn't say No.

It was so much harder to persuade Mrs. Underhill. "It certainly *was* wicked to spend so much money just to hear one woman sing. She had heard the 'Messiah,' with Madame Anna Bishop in it; and she never again expected to hear anything so beautiful this side of heaven."

They carried the day, however, in spite of her objections. Castle Garden looked like fairyland, with its brilliant lights, its hundred ushers in white gloves and rosettes, their wands tipped with ribbon as if for some grand ball. The quiet was awe-inspiring. One did not even want to whisper to his neighbour, but just sit in fascinated silence and wonder what it would be like.

Then Jenny Lind was led on the stage, and the entire audience rose with one vast, deafening cheer,—a magnificent one, as hearty as on her first night. It seemed as if they would never stop. There was a cloud of waving handkerchiefs, shaking out fragrance in the air.

A simple Swedish maiden in her gown of soft, white silk, with no blaze of diamonds, and just one rose low down in her banded hair, only her gracious sweetness and simplicity, a thousand times finer and more effective than flashing beauty. She has heard the applause many a time before, in audiences of crowned heads; and this from the multitude is just as sweet.

When all is listening, attentive silence, she begins "Casta Diva." "Hark to the voice," and every one listens with such intensity that the magnificent sound swells out and fills the farthest space. There is no striving for effect. A woman singing with a God-given voice, in simple thanks for its ownership, not a queen bidding for admiration. Had any voice ever made such glorious melody, or so stirred human souls?

The applause has in it an immensity of appreciation, as if it could never get itself wholly expressed.

Then another favourite, which everybody sang at for years afterward: "I dreamt I dwelt in marble halls." In some of the sorrows of her womanhood, the little girl was to recall the sweet refrain—

"That you loved me still the same."

Then "Comin' thro' the Rye," with a lilt and dainty deliciousness that one never can forget. But "Home, Sweet Home," moves to tears and enthusiasm. Surely, no voice ever put such pathos, such marvellous sweetness, into it!

And sometimes now, when the little girl looks over to the other country, one of the many joys she thinks will be hearing such blessed voices as Jenny Lind's and Parepa Rosa's. You could not shake her faith in immortality and all these precious joys to come.

She was quite a heroine at school for many days to come. People did not think it worth while to spend so much money on children at that time.

Margaret and her mother had compromised on the school question, or rather Margaret had yielded.

Hanny would graduate at the end of the year. Margaret preferred a stylish boarding-school after that. The Hoffmans were quite in the swim of that period. The Doctor's connections, and Margaret's beauty, made them welcome in circles that were beginning to grow a little exclusive, and demand grandfathers for vouchers. There was a little talk, even then, about *nouveaux riches*; but, after all, no one seemed to absolutely despise wealth.

Margaret was really very ambitious for the younger members of the family. Jim, with his good looks and the brightness that was akin to wit, was her favourite. Then he took naturally to elegance.

Dolly was very happy and jolly with her husband and children. They lived in a very pleasant manner; and society courted Dolly as well. Stephen was prospering wonderfully, and had a fine standing among business-men.

Hanny was extravagantly fond of the children. Stevie called her Auntie Nan, now; but Annie said simply Nan. Margaret had adopted it as well. Hannah was rather awkward and old-fashioned. Even Ben sometimes warbled,—

"Nannie, wilt thou gang wi' me?"

She had another great and unexpected treat a few weeks later. She had gone on Friday to make a real visit at Dolly's, and go from there to school on Monday morning. And, fortunately for her, she had taken her best Sunday frock, which she was wearing a good deal lest she might outgrow it.

And who should drop in but Delia Whitney. Whether Dolly suspected all was not clear sailing for the young people, no one could have told from her friendly manner. She had taken quite a liking to Delia, and was much interested in her success.

They talked over the Jenny Lind concert. Delia had attended two. She was going about quite a good deal among literary people.

"And to-morrow night, The. and I are going to take Ben to the Osgoods. Oh, Hanny, that's the

author of the little song you sing:—

"'I love you, I adore you; but
I'm talking in my sleep.'

And she's just lovely."

"Oh," cried Hanny, "I should like to see her, truly. You know I told you about seeing her in the carriage when she went up to Mr. Poe's."

"Well, can't you go? The. has a standing invitation to bring friends. Why, Nora has gone! She sang up there one evening, and did wonderfully well. Her teacher thinks in a year or two she can try concerts; only it isn't best to strain her voice now. And you may see some famous people, and some yet to be famous, myself among them."

"Oh, I don't care about the others," said Hanny, naïvely. "And if you are quite sure—Dolly, ought I to go?"

"Why not?" answered Dolly. "It's fortunate that you brought your best frock; though we could have sent for it. Why, yes, if you would like to."

Hanny drew a long breath. Twice of late her mother had found excuses when she had asked to go down to Beach Street. She, too, had a vague feeling there was something in the air; but her simple nature was not suspicious. And it wasn't like going to the Whitney's. She couldn't do such a thing without asking permission.

Delia finished her call, kissed the babies and Hanny, and said they would all be up at eight, sharp.

"I'll have Hanny in apple-pie order," answered Dolly, with her bright smile.

Stephen was delightful in his family; and he had the same odd little look in his eye as her father, suggestive of fun. He was teaching her to play checkers; and, although Dolly helped sometimes, she found it hard work to beat him. Dolly sat by embroidering.

The next morning they drove down-town and did some shopping, and called on Annette, who made them stay to luncheon. Mrs. Beekman was quite poorly now, and had grown very, very stout. She said, "she had lost all her ambition. It was a great thing to be young, and have all your life before you."

It was so delightful; and Dolly was sure they wouldn't have many more such Indian summery days, so they went over to Washington Parade-ground, where the style promenaded on Saturday afternoon. Hanny wore her best dress and a pretty cloth cape trimmed with a little edge of fur. They took Stevie, who was delighted of course, and who ran about, very proud of his new jacket and trousers.

Many of the promenaders nodded to young Mrs. Stephen Underhill. Belles and beaux went by; prettily dressed children; stylish little boys, who carried canes, and had long tassels drooping over one side of their caps. Hanny enjoyed it all very much.

Then after supper, Dolly put a fine lace tucker over the edging at the neck of her frock, and found a blue sash, and curled her hair so as to make it all wavy at the edge of her forehead; and there was a very sweet, attractive girl, if she wasn't a beauty.

Mr. Theodore Whitney seemed very much amused and pleased, and politely inquired if he might be Miss Underhill's escort. Delia looked unusually nice in her new brown silk and some beautiful old lace Aunt Clem had given her.

People did not wait until ten o'clock for "functions" to begin; neither did they give them that uneuphonious name. Hanny had read and heard a good deal since her first visit to genius in the plain, poor, little cottage; and this certainly had more of the true aspect one connects with poesy. The two rooms were daintily furnished; pictures everywhere. Mr. Osgood was a painter, and his portraits were quite celebrated. The curtains fell with a graceful sweep. The light brocade of the chairs threw out glisteny shades; the little tables set about held books and engravings, and great portfolios leaned against the wall. There was a case of choicely-bound books, and an open piano. Flowers were in vases on brackets, and low, quaint china bowls. It was like a lovely picture to the little girl; but she felt afraid of the people talking so earnestly, and wondered if they were all poets and authors.

The party greeted their hostess, and Hanny was introduced. Was it the glamour of the summer and the blue gown that had made Mrs. Osgood so lovely sitting there in the carriage? Now she was thin, and her hair was banded down in the fashion of the day; then it had been flying in ringlets. Her gown was black silk, and that made her look rather grave; but when she smiled, all the old sweetness was there. Hanny knew her then.

Delia took charge of Hanny, and seated her by a table with a book of choice engravings. Ben had found some one he knew, and Mr. Whitney had gone to talk to General Morris. A tall young lady came over and began complimenting Miss Whitney on her story in Godey's, and Delia flushed up with pleasure. Then she begged to introduce her to a friend. She wrote verses only, and her friend had composed music for them.

Hanny kept watching her hostess. She knew some of the guests, from having had them pointed out to her in the street. There was Mr. Greeley, thin of face and careless of attire in those early days. In the street he could always be told by a shaggy light coat that he wore.

A very sweet-looking elderly lady came up presently and spoke to Delia, who was in full flow of eager talk with the young musical composer.

"Isn't that your sister, or your niece,—the one who sang here some time ago? I saw her come in with Mr. Whitney."

"Oh, no," returned Delia. "But she is a very dear friend,—Mr. Underhill's sister."

"Mr. Stephen Underhill?"

"Yes, she is his sister; but it is Mr. Ben Underhill who is here."

"I know Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Underhill very well. She was a Beekman. And Dr. Hoffman's wife belongs to the family."

Delia turned and introduced Mrs. Kirtland.

She had such an attractive face, framed in with rows of snowy puffs, quite gone out of date, but becoming to her nevertheless.

"I feel that I almost know you," she said sweetly, "though I half mistook you for Miss Whitney; but she is dark, and you are fair, so I ought not to have made the blunder. I know your brother Stephen and his wife."

"Oh!" Hanny gave it a glad little sound, and smiled, as she put out her small hand.

Mrs. Kirtland took the unoccupied seat.

"I suppose you have hardly begun life, you look so young. But no doubt you are a genius of some sort. Mrs. Osgood is so extraordinarily good to young geniuses."

"No, I haven't any genius," and Hanny flushed, as she gave a beguiling smile that lighted up her face. "And though there are a good many of us, we have not even a family genius."

"That depends upon whether you restrict the word to painting a picture or writing a poem or a story. Mr. Stephen Underhill is very highly spoken of as one of the promising young business-men. And is it your brother who was in the office of old Dr. Fitch, and in the hospital?"

"Yes, ma'am," returned Hanny, with a glow of pleasure. Young people were still expected to say "Yes, sir," and "Yes, ma'am," to their elders, out of respect.

"That does very well for one family, though the Whitneys seem to have a good share. Miss Delia is quite a success, I hear. And we always find Mr. Whitney very entertaining. Have you known them long?"

"Oh, for years, seven almost. And we used to be neighbours."

"A friendship is said to be certain when you have held it seven years. Have you met Mrs. Osgood before?"

"No, ma'am; but I saw her quite a long while ago at Fordham."

"At Fordham! Then you must have known the poet Edgar Allan Poe."

"A little," returned Hanny, timidly.

"There's such a romance to his life at that place,—his lovely young wife dying, and the devotion of Mrs. Clemm. Oh, tell me about your episode!"

Hanny told the story, very simply, charmingly as well.

"Oh," exclaimed Mrs. Kirtland, "Frances must hear that!" Then she glanced around. Mrs. Osgood was no longer receiving guests, but mingling with the company. Some one was going to the piano; and everybody listened to an exquisite voice singing a beautiful Italian melody. When that was finished, a young man who was to be famous in after years read a sweet, simple poem that touched every one's heart. Then the talk began in little groups again.

Mrs. Kirtland signalled to her hostess, who came over to them.

"Frances," she said, "here is a youthful worshipper who remembers you as a lovely lady all in cerulean blue, and with long curls, going up to the Poe cottage. See how you have lived in the child's memory. And she sings a song of yours."

Hanny's face was scarlet for a moment; but Mrs. Osgood sat down beside her, and they talked of the poet and Mrs. Clemm, and touched lightly upon the sad after-happenings. He had at one time been a frequent guest. There was even yet a deep interest in him, though opinion was sharply divided. And Mrs. Osgood had known the beautiful Virginia, whose sad fate even then was hardly realised. They talked a little about "Annabel Lee" and the "high-born kinsman;" and Hanny thought she had a delightful time.

There was coffee and chocolate and lemonade, with plates of dainty cakes and confectionery, in

an ante-room. Then a gentleman sang a hunting-song in a fine tenor voice; and another paper on Art was read.

If people came early, they also dispersed at a reasonable hour. It was not quite ten when Delia, Hanny, and Ben made their adieus to the hostess, who stooped and kissed Hanny for "old remembrance' sake," she said.

Mr. Whitney was going down with some of the older men. Ben saw his little sister safe in Stephen's hands, and then went on with Delia.

"I've had such a splendid time!" exclaimed Hanny. "I wouldn't have missed it for the world."

When she told the home-folks about it, her mother made no comment; but Joe and her father were very much interested. And when, not long after that, "the high-born kinsman" came for the charming woman who had given much pleasure in her brief way through the world, and who had not disdained to write a verse and her name in many a society album, Hanny felt quite as if she had lost a dear friend.

Two other poets, sisters, Alice and Ph[oe]be Cary, came to New York, and held receptions that were quite famous as time went on. To be sure, there was the old name of blue-stocking applied to them now and then; for people, women especially, were taking a wider interest in other affairs beside literature, prefiguring the new woman. Miss Delia Whitney was very much interested. They were not quite up to clubs in those days, or she would have been a charter-member.

But the child Hanny had enough to do to study her lessons, practise her music, and make her visits, with a little sewing in between. She did make her father a set of shirts; but underclothing of all kinds was being manufactured; and though the older-fashioned women sneered at it, as rather poor stuff, the men seemed to like it. At gentlemen's furnishing stores, you could buy shirts cut and made in the latest style, the neckbands of which always seemed to fit, or else the men discreetly refrained from grumbling when they had spent so much money. And women began to find it eased their burdens.

No one wanted home-knit stockings, the English and French and Germans sent us such perfect ones. White was still all the style, unless you wore black, or blossom-coloured silk. Of course there were common people who put slate-colour on their children, because white made so much washing. And as for pantalets, there were none left.

There were other people called away beside poets, and changes made in families. Grandmother Underhill went to the country wherein the faithful abide, and Aunt Katrina. Grandmother Van Kortlandt came to make her home with her daughter. Aunt Crete and Cousin Joanna Morgan, and here and there some of the old people, as well as the young, passed over the narrow river.

But there seemed new babies all around. Dolly and Margaret had little sons, and Cleanthe a daughter. John was quite jealous of Hanny's notice; for his little girl was fair, and had light hair, and they were quite sure it looked like her. John wanted to call her Hannah Ann.

"Oh, no," said Hanny; "there are so many beautiful names now!" Then she laughed. "I shall not promise her a hundred dollars, nor my string of gold beads. I am not sorry, for I have loved both grandmothers; and one is gone—"

"Why don't we name her after *her* grandmothers?" exclaimed Cleanthe. "One of hers is gone," and she sighed. "It seems such a long name for a wee baby."

"Margaret Elizabeth,—it is a beautiful name," said Hanny, with delight. "Mother will give her something, I know. And I will be her godmother, and endow her for the Elizabeth."

"With all your worldly goods?" asked John.

"Not *quite* all—"

"You'll be impoverished, Hanny," interrupted John, with a glint of humour. "Six nephews and nieces already! And there are four of us still to marry, if George ever comes back. He hasn't made his fortune yet. He was crazy to go. The good times here suit me well enough."

Grandmother Underhill put fifty dollars in the bank for the new baby, and gave it a silver spoon. Hanny gave her a silver cup with her name engraved on it, and, with Dolly's help, made her a beautiful christening robe, which Cleanthe saved up for her, the sewing and tucking on it was so exquisite. She used to show it to visitors with a great deal of pride.

CHAPTER XV

THE BEGINNINGS OF ROMANCE

There was Saratoga and Newport; and Long Branch laid claim to some distinction; even Cape May was not unknown to fame,—still the Jersey coast, with all its magnificent possibilities, really had not been discovered, and was rather contemptuously termed sand wastes. It was getting to be quite the thing to go off awhile in the summer. Some of the style had spent a "season" in

London, and seen the young Queen and the Prince Consort and the royal children, and gone over to Paris to see "the nephew of his uncle," who was taking a hand in the new French Republic.

But plain people still visited their relatives a good deal. Ben had taken a holiday, and gone up to Tarrytown after Hanny; and they had made pilgrimages along to different cousins. They sat on the old porch at Fordham; but one of the cousins was married, and gone to her own home, taken the tall, bright-eyed young man who had been about so much the olden summer.

It was really a delightful walk over there. Ben was finding out odd places for Delia, who was now interested in some Revolutionary sketches. They had explored Kingsbridge; they had found Featherbed Lane; they learned the Harlem River once had borne the Indian name of Umscoota. Here, more than forty years before, Robert Macomb had built his dam, in defiance of certain national laws, as he wanted a volume of water for his mill.

Many and ineffectual were the efforts made to remove it by the surrounding property-owners who had large and beautiful estates. For no one dreamed then that the great city would sometime absorb everything, and that here was to stand a beautiful bridge, the pride of the city. But the old dam was one dark night assaulted by a "piratical craft," that demanded entrance, and, on being refused a right through the waterway, demolished the old affair; and the freed and happy river went on to the sea unvexed, and still kept Manhattan an island, to be bridged over as convenience required.

Down in one of the pretty valleys was the home of Cousin Jennie, that Hanny always connected with Mrs. Clemm and the poet. All about were green fields and orchards, hills and valleys. Between them and the Harlem lay a high wooded ridge from whose top you could see the Hudson, and the Harlem was like a cord winding in and out of green valleys. There was Fort George and Harlem plains; and Hanny recalled the two old Underhill ladies whose lives had reached back to Revolutionary times.

They rambled about the historic ground, peaceful enough then. There was the old Poole house, the De Voe house, and further up the Morris mansion. What names they recalled!—Washington, Rochambeau, the Hessian General Knyphausen.

And then Cousin Jennie's husband pointed out a place with a romantic story. When the Hessian Army had swept on in the steps of General Washington's retreating men, they had been encamped for some time, foraging about for food and demanding supplies of the farmers,—an ill-fed, and ill-clothed set of conscripts, without much enthusiasm, many of them torn from home and friends, neither knowing nor caring about the land where they had gone to fight, and perhaps lay their bones.

Among them a young fellow, Anthony Woolf by name, whose mother, in a district in distant Germany, had yielded to the blandishments of a second husband, thus rendering her son liable to conscription, as he was no longer her sole protector. Young Anthony knew his stepfather grudged him the broad acres of his patrimony, and guessed whose influence had sent the press-gang one night, and hurried him off, without even a good-bye to his mother, to the nearest seaport town, and there embarked him for a perilous ocean-journey, to fight against people struggling for their liberty.

He had fought, like many of the others, under a sort of rebellious protest. Several had deserted: some joining the American army from sympathy. But Anthony was sick of carnage and marching and semi-starvation. Winter was coming on. So, one night, he stole out unperceived, and hurried down to the river's edge. On the other side, at some distance, he could see a faint gleam of light between the leafless trees. He had watched it longingly. There were many kindly disposed people who gave shelter to deserters. He threw off his heavy coat, and his boots, with the soles worn through, and made a plunge. The water was cold, the way longer than it looked; but he buffeted across and crawled out in the autumn blast, dripping and shivering, and ran up to the kitchen steps, that looked more friendly than the great wide porch and stately doorway. The maids were frightened, and a man came, to whom he told his story in broken English, and was taken in, warmed and fed and clothed, and kept out of sight for several days.

In his gratitude and delight, he made himself useful. He had been accustomed to farming and herds and flocks. The old Morris estate was large; and when the British Army was safely out of the way, there was work in plenty; and a faithful hand Anthony Woolf proved.

When the long summer days came the next year, there was no end of spinning in the great house, where linen and woollen were made for the family use. The farmers' daughters used to be eager for the chances; and one day, when pretty Phebe Oakley's grandmother was going over to the great house, as it was so often called, the young girl begged her to speak a good word for her, as she could spin both wool and flax.

"They'll be glad to have you," said grandmother on her return. "But, Phebe, they have a young Woolf over there; so look out he doesn't catch you."

Phebe tossed her head. She was in no hurry to be caught. And yet it so fell out that when Anthony Woolf had saved up a little money, and negotiated for a farm over in the valley, he caught pretty Phebe Oakley, and built a house for her, and prospered.

They looked at the place where the Hessian Army had been encamped, and traced the course of the young fellow's daring swim. And here was the old part of the house he had built, and where

he had outlived his own son, but left grandsons behind him, one of whom had married Cousin Jennie. Grandmother was still alive,—a little, rather-faded, and shrunken old lady who had once been pretty Phebe Oakley, who lived with her daughter in the old part.

"There are lots of romances lying about unused," said Ben. "I should like to have a story-teller's gift myself."

Hanny was so interested in young Mr. Woolf that she had to tell Joe all the story when she came home; and he said they must go up the historic Harlem some day. And he said Umscoota meant "Stream among the green sedge."

This year it had to be Rutger's Institute for Hanny. There were a great many new schools; but Dolly and Margaret carried the day. She thought at first she shouldn't like it at all; but when she came to know the girls, she began to feel quite at home, and, in some queer fashion, as if she were growing up. But she didn't seem to grow very fast.

Ben came to his twenty-first birthday. He was a tall, well-grown young fellow, and often surprised Jim by the amount of knowledge he possessed. And then he went over to the "Tribune" office, and sometimes tried his hand at queer, out-of-the-way bits of past lore that people were almost forgetting. Just how it came about, he never clearly remembered himself; but one night, when Delia had seemed unusually attractive to three or four young men who haunted the place, he rose abruptly and said he must go. There was a set look in his usually pleasant face, and he shut his lips, as if something had displeased him.

Delia went to the hall door. As he turned, she caught his arm.

"What is it, Ben?" she said in a hurried whisper. "Something has happened to vex you."

"Something!" with youthful bitterness. "We never have any good times any more. There's always such a crowd—"

"Oh, Ben! Are you jealous? Why, you know I like you better than any of them! Gordon only comes to get ideas; he's so very anxious to do something in literature. As if I could help anybody!" and she laughed. "The others come for fun. You're worth them all, Ben. Oh, don't go away angry!" with a voice of tender pleading.

Ben felt suddenly foolish. Was he angry over such a trifle? Then he glanced up in Delia's face; he was on the step below. What was there in her eyes; and she had said she liked him better than any of them, even that handsome Van Doren. Well, he was most jealous of Van Doren, who was in his last year at Columbia, and whose father was rich and indulgent.

"Oh," he said with an indrawn breath, "you must know that I love you. I've always loved you, I think."

She put her arms about his neck, and kissed him. It was very reprehensible, I suppose. Young people were honestly friendly in those days, and seldom had a chaperone; yet they did not play at love, unless they were real flirts; and a flirt soon gained an unenviable reputation.

"Come down a ways with me," he entreated, with a little tremulous sound in his voice that touched her.

The street was very quiet. He put his arm about her, and drew her close to his side.

"Oh, it's cool out here, and you've no wrap!" He was suddenly very careful of her. "But I wanted to say—it isn't only a like, but a love. You *do* love me, Delia?"

"I love you, love you! I love you and yours."

"Of course we will have to wait. We are both young. But I'm doing a bit of outside work, and have a chance to come up—"

"If we did marry, you'd have to come and live with me; for I have promised Aunt Patty never to leave her. I haven't really thought about marriage. There is so much to my life all the time. Oh, yes, we can wait. But you must not feel afraid, Ben. I like fun and nonsense, and plenty of people to talk to. I'm not sure I shall make a good wife, even, though both of my sisters do."

"I want you, good or bad," said Ben, sturdily.

They both laughed, and then he kissed her again.

"Oh, you must go back! You'll get an awful cold."

"I never do take cold. I'll run like a flash. Come to-morrow night. Oh, Ben!"

"Oh, Delia, my darling!"

Then she flew back. How long had she been gone? She re-entered the room with a most nonchalant air; and in two minutes she had them all in a whirl of conversation, even if they did look rather curious.

Ben sauntered up home. It was quite early. Hanny was upstairs reading to grandmother, who went to bed at nine, and liked to have Hanny come in and read to her. Joe sat in his office, poring over an abstruse medical article. He glanced up and nodded.

"Joe," the lad began, with a bright flush that gave a certain tenderness to his eyes, which were dewy sweet,—"Joe, listen a minute. I am engaged to Delia Whitney,—just to-night. But I hate mean, underhand things. I wanted some one to know it. And—shall I tell mother? Of course she won't like it; though I don't see why."

"Ben, I don't believe I would just now. You are young, and you won't be married under a year or two. No, I would wait a little. She may settle to it presently," said the elder, thoughtfully.

"I don't want her to feel hurt. I'd just like to go and tell her, I am so happy."

He looked so brave and manly that Joe was almost sorry not to send him. But he *did* know that his mother objected to it strenuously, and might say something that would cut Ben to the heart.

Latterly, he had been cherishing a vague belief that the affair would end in a sort of a good comradeship.

"Thank you," Ben laid his hand on the elder's shoulder. "You are a dear good brother, Joe. Don't you suppose you will ever marry? No one will be quite good enough for you. You're a splendid fellow."

Joe went back to his book; but it had lost interest. Well—it was rather queer. He had been made very welcome in several houses; and Margaret had given delicate little suggestions. But he had never cared for any one. He would be nine and twenty on his next birthday,—quite a bachelor.

It was somewhat curious; but Ben, who had never cared for fixing up, though he was always clean, suddenly developed a new care for his cuffs and collars, and indulged in light-coloured neckties, and gloves that he could no longer "run and jump in," as Jim had accused him of doing. He went out Sunday evening to tea, which was a new thing, though he often stayed at the Whitneys' through the week. There was a certain air of being of supreme consequence to some one; Mrs. Underhill rather resented it.

Jim was very gay this winter. A good-looking young collegian who was bright and full of fun, and could sing college glees in a fine tenor voice, tell a capital story, and dance well, was not likely to go begging.

One evening he stumbled over his old friend Lily Ludlow, whom he had not seen for two years,—a tall, stylish girl, handsome in the ordinary acceptation of the word, but lacking some of the finer qualities, if you studied her closely. There had been some great changes in her life. Her father had died suddenly, leaving but small provision for them. Chris had her hands full trying to live pretentiously on a rather small income.

They had found an elderly aunt of Mr. Ludlow's who, in her day, had been quite a society woman. She had an old-fashioned but well furnished house in Amity Street, and had not given up all her acquaintances. The house was to go to her husband's family when she was done with it, there being no children; and her income ended with her life, so there was nothing to expect from her.

"But I do want a housekeeper and a nurse, sometimes," she said to Mrs. Ludlow. "If you like to fill the place, you will have a good home and good wages. And Lily's fine looks ought to get her a husband."

Amity Street still had a rather select air, if its fashion was falling off a little. The house was old, but not out of date, and quite imposing; and the big doorplate, with "Nicoll" on it, stamped it as undeniably aristocratic, Miss Lily thought. She urged her mother to accept it.

"I don't feel as if I could be at that queer old woman's beck and call. I remember when we were first married she said some very mean things. My family was quite as good as your father's, Lily. Neither of his brothers amounted to much, though his sister married a rich Southerner and went off to forget all her relatives. We've never asked anything of the Ludlows, and I don't want to now."

"But it will only be for a year or two. Of course I shall marry; and then you will have two homes."

"I'd a sight rather go with Chris. And if you could teach—seems to me you might, with your education. And you have had two lovers already."

"Who couldn't take care of me. I am not going to marry that way. But, as Aunt Nicoll says, 'We shall be sure of a good home.'"

Lily gained her point. Early in the preceding spring they had gone to Amity Street. The spacious, old-fashioned parlours were a little out of date, but had been elegant in their day. Lily laid off her mourning, and fell heir to some handsome gowns that Chris helped her remodel. Mrs. Nicoll was queer and bad-tempered; and the difficulty had been to keep servants who would submit to such exactions. Matters went a little smoother; but poor Mrs. Ludlow had to suffer.

Lily spent a month at Saratoga with Mrs. Nicoll and the maid. The old lady was a good deal entertained by the airs and graces and bright ways of her grand-niece. Lily made several conquests; but the desirable offer of marriage was not forth-coming.

Mrs. Nicoll gave a reception early in the season,—a thing she always did; and her friends attended with a certain kindly feeling that she was old, and the duty might never be required of them again. Miss Lily made quite an impression; and cards and invitations were left for her. And when she attended a dance at the Apollo Rooms, the height of her ambition was reached.

At a pretty private dance she met her school-day admirer again, and tried her charms, which had increased notably since that youthful period. She did dance beautifully, and had no lack of the small talk of the day. Jim promised to call, and did so at an early date, rather surprised at the solid elegance of the place. Lily expatiated skilfully on dear old Aunt Nicoll, who *would* have mother come and stay with her; since they were alone it seemed the best thing to do; and Aunt Nicoll had no near relatives of her own. There were plenty of her husband's family "hungry for what she had," said Lily, with a sort of sneer, as if they might find themselves mistaken in the end.

Certainly, Jim thought, Lily had dropped in a clover-field. He found that Mrs. Nicoll was considered a rich woman. Lily was handsomely dressed, and no doubt she would be kindly remembered in the old lady's will. Not that Jim was speculating on any part or lot in the matter. He was too young; he would have his three years in the law school, and after that, getting established.

Lily begged him to bring some of his friends. The house was lonely, with no young people for companionship; and she raised her eyes in the old pleading fashion that even now had quite an effect upon him.

Jim chose several young men that he associated with. Some of them had sisters, who declared Miss Ludlow charming. She was not anxious now to have any of the Underhills on her visiting-list; but she did mean to make use of Jim. She had grown quite worldly-wise and experienced.

Two of Jim's friends were generously supplied with pocket-money. One was a young Virginian, Mr. Weir, the other, Harry Gaynor, and both spent lavishly. Flowers were costly then; and Lily was the recipient of many a handsome bouquet. In return, she now and then gave a dainty supper, simple to be sure, or a card-party, with some delightful confections, and a little coffee or chocolate. Mrs. Nicoll always retired early, and took some drops to make sure of sleeping the first part of the night, so she was not easily disturbed.

Then there were stars at the theatres. Parodi was emulating Jenny Lind, who had gone to Havana; and the houses were crowded, if the tickets were not so high. It was so easy to spend money when an artful girl, with softest voice and bewitching eyes, planned for you. And it was so easy to borrow, when you had good friends.

Miss Lily looked carefully over her ground; Harry Gaynor was gay and delightful, but one couldn't be quite sure he was not flirting. And though Mr. Weir had plenty of money, there was a large family of brothers and sisters, and they lived on an extensive plantation miles away from any considerable town. There was a Mr. Lewis, not so young, who had an interest in an old well-established leather firm that had been left him by an uncle. There were some non-eligibles.

Mrs. Nicoll had said, in her caustic way:—

"You make the most of your time, Lily Ludlow. I'm past eighty, and you may find me dead in my bed some morning. I have not a stiver to leave any one; so don't you count on that. I can hardly pay my own way."

Still she had every luxury for herself; for years she had considered nothing but her own wants and indulgences.

Poor Jim! In his young mannishness he was quite sure there was no danger of falling in love; of course such a thing would be wildest folly. But Lily was very fascinating and very flattering. She put it on the score of old friendship; but, with a coquette's ardour, she did enjoy the young fellow's struggles to keep himself on a firm footing. And when he saw Gaynor's attentions, and listened to Weir's rhapsodies, a passion of boyish jealousy sprang up in his heart.

Miss Lily kept her other admirers out of the way, except as she might meet them at dances or whist parties. She was not much in love with Mr. Lewis; he was slow and really conceited, and, for a young man, rather careful of his money. If she only dared run the risk, and take Mr. Weir, who was to finish his college course in the summer! And then arose a new star on her horizon.

Mr. Williamson was forty and a widower; but he drove an elegant pair of bays, belonged to a club, and had apartments at a hotel. She tried captivating simplicity, and succeeded, to her great surprise, though she knew his habits were not irreproachable. She had begged of Mr. Lewis a little time for consideration, when one morning Mr. Williamson astonished her by a call, and an offer of his hand and fortune.

Miss Ludlow did not show her amazement, neither did she jump at the offer. She was very delicately surprised. Was he quite certain of his wishes? And—it was so unexpected!

So certain indeed that he would bring her a ring that very afternoon, and take her out driving,—a man of his years not to know his own mind!

She could hardly believe her good fortune. For a fortnight she engineered her way skilfully, still keeping Mr. Lewis in reserve. And then she was convinced, and dismissed him.

"Guess who is engaged?" Harry Gaynor cried, one morning. "I never was so beat in my life! Jim, maybe this will hit you hard. Seems to me you've been rather distraught of late and sighing like a furnace."

"These exams are enough to make any one sigh. And I am way behind. I must study day and

night."

"There are always engagements at this season, and weddings at Easter," returned Weir, laughingly.

"That isn't guessing, Jim!"

"Oh, bother! What do I care?"

"Then your charmer told you last night?"

"My charmer? What are you driving at, Gaynor?"

"Oh, how innocent! Miss Lily Ludlow."

"I've met that Lewis there," returned Jim, with an air of bravado, though he flushed a little. "He's a regular stick."

"But it isn't Lewis. It's that Gerald Williamson,—a man about town. And the queer thing is that he thinks he has struck a fortune. Do *you* know, Jim? Is she to be the old lady's heir?"

Jim was silent. What should he say?

"Of course she is," said Weir. "That is—I think it depends on whether Mrs. Nicoll approves of the marriage."

He had turned very pale.

"Are you sure it is Williamson?" asked Jim.

"He announced it himself. My cousin heard him. And as for the old lady—the house is willed away. I've heard some talk; I can't just remember what. She's been shrewdly giving the impression."

"It would be a shame to sell her to the highest bidder! And Williamson's double her age. No sister of mine would be allowed to do such a thing. She can't love him! Why, she has only been driving out with him a few times."

"If she's sold, she has done the business herself. She's a girl to look out for the main chance. Weir, I hope you haven't been hovering too near the flame. The Ludlow is capital to flirt with,—quick, spicy, sentimental by spells, not the kind of a girl to waste herself on a young, impecunious fellow like our friend Jim, here, so he goes scot-free. Weir, I hope you're not hard hit. We've all had a good time; but I think now we must address ourselves to the examinations in hand, and let the girls go. Though I am in for two big weddings, presently."

There was a summons to the class-room that stopped the chaffing. Jim felt very sober. Lily had indirectly led him to think she cared a great deal about him, and if matters only *were* a little different! He ought not to get engaged; but the preference was flattering when a man like Weir was head over heels in love with her!

But to marry an old man like Gerald Williamson! thought the young fellow, disdainfully.

CHAPTER XVI

COUNTING UP THE COST

Jim failed miserably. What was the matter? He couldn't seem to remember the simplest thing. Did it make any difference to him whom she married? Well—if it *had* been Weir; but that imperious, pretentious, half-dissipated Williamson, who report said had run though with one fortune, and two years ago had fallen heir to another! Why were some people so lucky! Grandmother Van Kortlandt had some money; but Hanny was named for her, and Joe was a great favourite. Then Jim flushed hotly. The idea of counting on any one's money!

Still he had a boyish, chivalric idea that he would like to snatch Lily from this awful peril, as it seemed to him. Could it be really true? The older men said Williamson was a braggart. There might be no truth in it. He would ask Lily.

Several days passed before Jim achieved his desire. Then, as he loitered around one afternoon, he saw Williamson leave the house. After a few moments he knocked.

"Miss Lily is indisposed, and cannot see any one," announced the maid.

"She will see me," returned Jim, with an air of dignity; and he walked into the parlour that had an atmosphere of twilight, quite determined to remain until she came down.

She seemed in no hurry, and Jim's temper began to loose its serenity. The maid came and lighted the gas jet in the hall. Then there was a rustle of silken garments on the stair.

"Oh, Jim dear," the entreating voice said, "I've had such a horrid headache all the afternoon. I've been in the bed. I really did not feel fit to see any one," with a languid, indifferent air.

And Williamson had just gone away!

"So you will excuse me, if I'm stupid—"

"Is the story true about your—your engagement?" asked the young fellow, abruptly.

"My engagement? Well, I've had an offer of marriage,—two of them. Wouldn't you advise me to take the best one?" rather archly.

The tone rang flippantly. Jim felt she was evading.

"You see I can't be young always. And Aunt Nicoll may go without a moment's warning. She had a bad spell yesterday; and she does get in such horrid tantrums! Mother is awfully tired of staying with her. And most girls get married—those who have a chance." She ended with a forced little laugh.

"Is it Williamson? You don't know the sort of man he is," and Jim's voice was husky with emotion.

"Oh, everybody gets talked about sooner or later! He has been rather wild; but he wants to settle down now. And I'm not a sentimental girl. Yes, I do think I'll take him," hesitatingly.

"Lily!"

"Oh, Jim, you are very young and inexperienced! If you were ten years older, there wouldn't be a man on the whole earth I'd marry as soon. But you know I said we could only be friends; and I hope you haven't been cherishing any silly romances about me," tossing her head coquettishly. "I shall always like you, and I want us to keep friends. But you can't understand all the reasons. Some girls might drag you into an engagement, and waste all your young years; but I could not be so mean to any friend I cared about. We have settled all this matter."

Her tone took on a rather sharp business accent. It was almost curt.

Yes, it had been settled. Yet she had demanded a lover-like devotion, and allowed him to speculate on what might have been if she were rich or he older. And though Jim's sturdy common-sense had kept him from going very deep, he felt wretched and jealous that any other man should have the supreme right; and yet he had a conviction that the friendship or flirtation ought to end.

"He thinks you are Mrs. Nicoll's heiress."

She gave a light laugh. "Oh, that will do to talk about; and she may leave me a little. If I was her heiress—"

The glance roused Jim's anger. He rose suddenly.

"I hope you love Williamson," he said, in a tone that he meant to sound bitterly cutting. "A girl who sells herself for money to such a man—"

"Nonsense, Jim!" She rose also. "You'll find most of the world will consider it a good marriage; and anyhow, I have to look out for myself. It's too bad to break up the pleasant times we've had this winter; but you must not be angry. You will understand it better presently. I wouldn't let you go off in this way if I hadn't such a wretched headache; but you will come in again."

Jim said good-evening with superb dignity. What a stylish fellow he was. Of course he felt a little "huffy" now; but next winter, when she had a home of her own, she would give attractive parties, and invite Jim among the very first. By that time he would be over his boyish folly. And now, what must she wear to the theatre to-night? She must look her prettiest. Her wretched headache was gone.

James Underhill felt as he had sometimes in the old school days, that he had been duped. He was angry with her, with himself. He had brought his friends to the house; and he knew Weir was really in love with her, yet she had laughed daintily about some of his peculiarities. What if she had laughed with Gaynor about him? She did satirise people. It was strange how many faults he saw in her! Yet he did hate to have her marry Williamson.

He heard of her being at the theatre that evening with an array of diamonds, which young girls seldom wore. In a week or so the marriage was discussed with a little wonder. Mrs. Nicoll was one of the old New Yorkers, a Ludlow herself. It was fortunate for Lily's prestige that her plain, unambitious father was dead, and her mother kept well in the background. No one quite knew about the fortune.

Richard Weir was certainly hard hit. He made a pretence of devoting himself to his studies to keep away from Gaynor's raillery. But one day he said to Jim,—

"Something ought to be done to save Miss Ludlow from such an awful sacrifice; don't you think so, Underhill? That old aunt has egged her on, and she's doing this for her mother's sake. If I was in a position to marry, I know I could persuade her to throw it up. What shall I do, Jim? I know she really loves me. She is heroic about it. She thinks it would spoil my life in the very beginning. I don't know how father would take it; and there's such a family of us to provide for."

"Let her alone," returned Jim, gruffly. So she had played with this honest-hearted young fellow as well; and the saddest of all was that he really believed in her.

"She will marry Williamson, no matter what comes. Weir, I'm sorry enough I introduced you, if you are going to take it that way. Lily Ludlow is a flirt, pure and simple. I've never believed it until now. There is no use in our wasting our sympathies upon her."

"You don't half do her justice, Jim; if you could hear her side—"

"I have heard it," laconically. "Weir, I'm awful sorry," and he wrung the young fellow's hand.

There was another aspect to Jim beside the mortification. He had dropped behind in his standing. Late hours and planning all sorts of amusements had distracted his attention. And there was another fact to face. He had been spending money with a lavishness that he wondered at now. He had borrowed of Weir, of Gaynor, of Ben. When he counted up the total he was dismayed. His father had been generous. They had all been very proud of him. How could he confess the miserable fiasco to any one? Perhaps, after he had taken his degree—

But he had to study hard for that. No more frolicking about! He had a good deal of resolution, when it was put to the test. He would ask sober-going Ben to lend him a hundred dollars, which he would pay back by degrees. No girl should ever win a smile out of him again. He would never borrow when he was once out of this difficulty.

He knew Dick Weir really needed his money, and this emboldened him to apply to Ben. Alas!

"I'd do it in a minute Jim; but I've been trying a sort of experiment. I had a chance to buy some capital stock, five hundred dollars' worth, and I just scraped up everything I had, and borrowed, so I'm behind, and must catch up. You've been pretty gay, haven't you, Jim?"

"I have been an idiot," replied Jim, sturdily. "But I have learned a lesson."

"You just go to Joe. He's the best fellow in all the world. Don't worry father about it; he takes such pride in his young collegian," and Ben smiled with generous kindliness upon his younger brother.

That was the best thing certainly; yet it was days before Jim could summon sufficient courage. And then he found, as he blundered a little over the matter, that Joe thought it worse than it really was.

"Have you been gambling?" the elder asked gravely.

"No, not that, Joe. It's all been a silly sort of extravagance. I am mad at myself when I think of it." He wouldn't say he had been tempted by a girl into much unwise expenditure. How could he have been so weak!

"It will be all right," returned Joe. "I am glad it is not gambling debts; though a hundred dollars wouldn't cover much. I hope you are coming through in good shape."

"You may be sure of that. Oh, Joe, how kind you are!"

"What is brotherhood for, if not that?" said Joe gravely.

He would not put himself in the way of meeting Miss Ludlow, though she did send him two rather plaintive notes. Early in June, the marriage took place; and the bride's trousseau was quite magnificent, if it was not made in Paris. Mrs. Nicoll was delighted with what she termed her grandniece's good sense, and gave her a handsome set of rubies, beside having her diamonds reset for her. And when she died, some two months later, it was found she had made a new will on Lily's wedding day, in which she bequeathed the bride all her personal effects and some valuable bank-stock, if the amount was not very large. The next winter, Mrs. Williamson took her place in society, and was quite a married belle, managing her husband as adroitly as she had managed her lovers.

Jim studied day and almost night to make up for the dissipation of the winter, and passed with honour, though Joe had hoped he would have one of the orations. He went immediately into the law office of a friend of Stephen's as clerk and copyist while he was waiting for the new term of the law school.

Charles Reed did distinguish himself, and was one of the heroes of the occasion. He was a fine, manly fellow now, and Mrs. Dean loved him like a son. Indeed, it seemed as if he might be her son, the young people were so much to each other. Josie would graduate the next year at the high school.

Ben and Delia had gone along through the winter with very little change, except to learn how much they loved each other. The young men did not have quite such rollicking good times, though Nora was developing into a very attractive young girl and enchanted them with her singing. Delia was very busy trying her best to come up to some high standards of literary work. Everybody was not a genius in those days. Colleges had not begun to turn them out by the score, and the elder people were very often helpful to the younger ones.

There was, it is true, a certain kind of Bohemianism among the men that proved dangerous to more than one fine, promising mind. Ben liked the bright wit and keen encounters, and the talk that ran through centuries of intellectual activity as if it was only yesterday. He was taking a curious interest in politics as well, for some great questions were coming to the fore.

Mrs. Underhill had preserved a cautious silence respecting Delia, indeed, ignored the whole

matter. Dolly was cordial when they met. Jim had been so taken up with his engrossing experience that he rarely went to Beach Street; and the two sets of society were widely apart. Delia had supposed everything would come around straight; it generally did in her happy-go-lucky fashion.

But on Commencement day, when she was all smiles and gladness, Mrs. Underhill's coolness and Mrs. Hoffman's stately distance quite amazed her.

"Ben," she said, "something has happened with your people. Your mother hardly spoke to me, and Margaret was icy. And now that I come to think of it, Hanny hasn't been near us since Nora's birthday—February that was. Are they offended because—don't they like our engagement? And I love them all so, from least to greatest; only Margaret is rather high up."

"Hanny's had such lots of lessons, and her music, and she's corresponding with Daisy Jasper in French. Grandmother takes her time, too. You don't have so much leisure out of childhood."

"What jolly times we had back there in First Street! Oh, Ben, I did like you all so much! And I can't bear to have the good feeling die out."

There were tears in Delia's brown eyes. Ben was moved immeasurably.

"May be I ought to have said something to mother; Joe counselled me to wait."

"Then it has been talked about!" Delia stood up very straight, and looked like a spirited picture. "What is their objection to me? Your family are all prospering. Stephen is really a man of mark; Of course Dr. Hoffman was rich to begin with. And John's wife had quite a fortune when her parents died. Joe is up among the important people; and Jim will make a smart lawyer, every one says. You *are* a splendid lot!" and her honest admiration touched him.

"I don't know. I've never felt very splendid."

"You are solid, and strong, and sensible. What a pity that alliteration won't do in a poem!" and she laughed in her joyous manner. "I don't care if you never are rich, so long as we have good times. And as you can't write a bit of verse, you dear, lovely old Ben, nor a story, I do not believe our tastes will clash. Why shouldn't we agree just as well when we are married as we do now? Even that tremendous, gloomy, erratic Edgar Allan Poe adored not only his wife, but his mother-in-law. To be sure, there was Milton and Byron, and Mrs. Hemans and Bulwer, and a host of them; but Mr. and Mrs. Browning are going on serenely. And 'The Scarlet Letter' hasn't made trouble in Hawthorne's family yet. I think it is temper, rather than genius. And I have a good temper, Ben," looking up out of honest, convincing eyes.

"You just have," returned Ben, with emphasis, kissing her fondly.

"Ben, I love you too well to make you unhappy."

"You will never make me unhappy."

"May be I'm not careful enough in little things."

"I don't fret about the little things," said Ben. "We both like easy-chairs, and evenings at home, and reading about famous people, or queer people, and wonderful places. We both like a fire, and a cat; I adore a nice cat, it is such a comfortable thing. And we like to go out where people are bright and vivacious, and know something. We're fond of music, and pictures, and like a good play. Oh, there are things enough to agree upon all our lives; so what would be the use of hunting round to find a few things to dispute about."

"Why, there wouldn't be. But I want your mother to like me, and to feel sure I shall do my best to make you happy. Of course, we may not get rich."

"Bother riches! But I'm not going to give you up for anybody in Christendom."

"You are very sweet, Ben." There was a sound of tears in Delia's voice.

"I'll see what it is," subjoined Ben. "Oh, it will all come straight, I know."

"I shall not marry you for the next seven years, no, not for twenty, until everybody is willing," said Delia, decisively.

Why couldn't people be kindly affectioned one toward another, as the Apostle enjoined, when there was nothing very objectionable in the other? It puzzled Ben. He was passionately fond of his mother, too; but the issue had to be met. And the very next evening when Mrs. Underhill was out watering her garden, that had in it all manner of sweet herbs and the old-time flowers dear to her heart, Ben came wandering down the clean-cut path.

"Mother," when they had both stood silently several minutes,—"mother, I want to tell you—Delia Whitney and I are engaged."

"I supposed as much," said his mother, tartly. Then she turned to come up the path.

"Mother, you have welcomed Dolly and Cleanthe; and we have all been like brothers and sisters. Haven't you a tender word for Delia? You used to like her."

"Delia Whitney was well enough for a neighbour. You have run and run there, Ben, and really

never taken the trouble to look about. You are young, and hardly know what is best for you. You could have looked higher. But you've gotten in with those newspaper people; and they do drink, and are not very choice in their company."

"And lawyers drink; yet we are going to make a lawyer out of Jim. And we have known country farmers addicted to the habit. Newspaper-men are quite up to the average. But that has nothing to do with Delia."

"No, women don't so often take to drinking. But she is in it all; and I don't like such public business for a woman. A wife's place is at home; and Mrs. Whitney is a very poor housekeeper. Ben, a great deal of a man's happiness depends on the way his house is kept."

"But their house is always bright and pleasant. And think how Delia used to work in First Street. She can keep house good enough for me."

"You have always had things so neat and orderly, Ben, that you don't know how trying that sort of helter-skelter housekeeping can be. A woman can't run hither and yon, and write stories and what not; and now they are beginning to lecture and talk, and make themselves as mannish as possible! No, I don't like it. And I pity the man who has to live in that sort of neglected home. And then, Ben, come disputes and separations."

He had heard the narrow reasoning before. Mrs. Reed came into his mind. With her passion for cleanliness and order, she certainly knew nothing about a happy, comfortable home. His mother still scouted a sewing-machine. Delia had hired one with a good operator, and declared that in a week they had done up all the summer sewing. He knew his mother would say it was only half-done. To be sure, Delia's mother was a great novel-reader and had neglected her household many a time for an interesting book. But *she* wrote neither stories nor verses.

"Of course, you will do as you like. And you think you are the only one that will suffer. But a mother has many sorrowful hours over a son's unhappiness and discomfort."

Then she passed him, and went into the house. And, after the fashion of unreasoning women, she hurried up to her own room and cried a few bitter tears. Ben had been such a good, upright, pleasant son. He ought to have the best wife in the world, for he was easy-going and would put up with almost anything. She *was* disappointed.

She would have scouted the idea of being aristocratic or mercenary; yet she did want him to look higher. There had been such an attractive Hoffman cousin spending a month with Margaret, who thought Ben delightful. There were two or three girls in the neighbourhood. In fact, a young man might as well marry some one of distinction and character; Dolly and Cleanthe were none the worse for their money.

"I don't know what I can do," Ben said to Dolly, with a sigh. "Delia has a suspicion that mother is against her. I'm not in a hurry to marry; but Delia won't marry me until everybody is ready to welcome her."

"Yes, you are young; and a good many things come around straight if you give them time, just like a northeast wind. Ask Delia to come up to tea, whenever she and you are at liberty."

Dolly kissed Ben. In some respects he was still boyish.

Margaret was vexed over the certainty. It was said Nora Whitney had a chance to go abroad with a Madame Somebody who used to sing in operas. She would be educated for a professional. Of course a Jenny Lind or a Parodi or Malibran was different; but just an ordinary singer!—or one could admire an acknowledged woman of genius who had a position, or any social prestige!

Ben said nothing to Delia; but she guessed his announcement had not been satisfactory. She had not been to the Underhills for six months or more. But, in her generous fashion, she made no comment.

Late that summer a wonderful thing happened that filled everybody with elation, and for twenty-four hours set the city wild. Every show-window had a picture of a trim, spirited yacht that seemed to have triumph written all over her; and men and boys crowded around to look at it, and cheered it with an enthusiasm seldom inspired nowadays. We were all going wild over our great triumph; for we had distanced England on the seas and in British waters. The gallant "America" had borne off the "Queen's Cup," the prize offered for the fleetest yacht in the great race.

We had been very proud of our fleet "clippers" that were scudding about to different ports. Then the Steers brothers had built the "America" for Mr. Stevens, of the New York Yacht Club; and he decided to take her over to the great contest that was to be a race around the Isle of Wight. She met with a little mishap in the beginning; but, nothing daunted, her courageous captain kept on to the end, eighty-one miles, and distanced all competitors. Other yachts of all nations were entered; and it must have been a magnificent sight when she had eight minutes to spare, and could glance back at her really splendid rivals. The pretty story of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort was told over many times. The Queen asked the captain of the royal yacht who was first.

"The 'America,' your Majesty."

"And who is second?"

"There is no second, your Majesty," returned the Captain, gallantly admitting the defeat.

So the brave "America," after being flattered and fêted, brought home her trophy; and thousands rushed to see that and the beautiful yacht. But the English Club did not mean to resign honours so easily, and announced that efforts would be made to win back the famous cup. And to-day the cup is still ours, after many challenges and trials.

But the enthusiasm then knew no bounds. There were little flags with a miniature yacht and the American colours; and the patriotic boys wore them in their jackets. Jim put up a handsome engraving in his room.

He had been working like a Trojan all summer, except a brief fortnight, and had begun to pay back his debt.

Nora Whitney was to go abroad under the care of a well-known musician and his wife, who was a fine concert-singer. It seemed such an excellent opportunity; and Nora had an ambition to reach a high standard. The Professor and Madame had visited the Whitneys, and both parties were mutually satisfied.

"I could never let a child of mine go away among strangers in that manner," declared Mrs. Underhill. "No one can tell what will happen to her. I shouldn't have thought it of Mr. Theodore. The women, of course, are not overweighted with common sense, and the poor child has no mother."

"Oh, dear," sighed Hanny, "all the little girls are dropping out; and we used to have such nice times. I do wonder if Daisy means ever to come back. And Josie Dean is a young lady with long dresses, and does up her hair."

"Elenora Whitney is not worth worrying about," subjoined Mrs. Underhill, tartly; "and Josie Dean is a very nice, modest girl."

Charles Reed and Josie had dropped into a fashion of making frequent calls during the summer. The young fellow made a confidant of Doctor Joe, as young people were very apt to do, he was so sympathetic and kindly.

Mr. Reed had quite a fancy at first that he should study medicine.

"It is a fine profession, when one's heart is in it," said Doctor Joe. "And there are so many new discoveries and methods all the time. Still, I can't quite fancy Charlie taking up the disagreeable side."

"He could be a professor, I suppose," commented his father, rather reluctantly. "He loves study and books, and he ought to turn his education to some account. I would do anything for him; he knows that. He is all I have; and he is a fine boy."

It was odd; but Charlie talked his desire over with Josie first of all, and she approved of it enthusiastically. Then he rather timidly confessed it to his father.

"I used to believe that I never wanted to be a clergyman; but, after mother died, I began to think it over. She was so sort of sweet and changed that last year, almost as if she had a presentiment; and though she took such an interest in my studies, she never spoke of that, though I know it was her heart's desire. All the time I seem to have had a leaning towards it. It is a grand life, when one's heart and soul are in it; and I am sure now mine would be. I should feel as if I was keeping near to her, and doing something for her happiness. And if you would not feel disappointed—"

"My boy, I should be gratified," said his father, warmly. "I should not have tried to influence your choice; but I do think, in certain ways, you are especially fitted for this profession. I can trust you never to bring discredit on so sacred a calling; and I think you are alive to the true responsibility of it. Yes; it is what she would like, if she were here."

Jim declared he had felt sure of this decision all the last year. They all decided Charles Reed would make a fine conscientious clergyman.

CHAPTER XVII

A GLAD SURPRISE

Doctor Joe stood at the doorway of the Institute. It was still in Madison Street, though it was to go up-town and be transformed into a college. The girls came trooping out,—they were really girls then, and had a deliciously girlish air.

"Oh, Joe!" cried Hanny, glancing up rather in amaze. What had happened?

He bowed gravely to some of her compeers. They thought Jim splendid; but they stood a little in awe of grave Doctor Joe.

"I have come for you to go and make a call," he said. "Let me take your books."

She glanced up the street.

"Oh, this isn't in style," he began laughingly. "I have neither coach nor four."

"Then we will have a nice walk. Where? Down at the Battery?"

She had such a sweet, eager face, and she was so easily pleased.

"We will go over to Broadway, first," he replied. "Then—well, wherever you like."

So they chatted as they walked along, across City Hall Square, where the fountain was still playing on sunny days.

The Astor House was yet in its glory. She wondered a little, as they walked up the stone steps, through the hall, and then up the thickly padded stairs, and into the spacious parlour.

A lady, dressed in black, was standing by the window, and turned smilingly. Hanny was bewildered by a familiar likeness. Then a young girl sprang up from the sofa; and Hanny caught a glint of golden curls, as she was clasped in the outstretched arms.

"Oh, Hanny!"

"Oh, Daisy!"

That was all they said for a moment or two. They cried a little, as people often do, out of pure gladness, and just hugged each other tighter.

"I was so afraid I never should see you again. Papa laughed. You know he has crossed the ocean so many times. If I hadn't been coming home, I suppose I shouldn't have been worried. But it seemed such a long, long while, and I was just crazy to see you, to get home. I don't believe I shall ever really want to go abroad again."

Hanny raised her head from Daisy Jasper's shoulder. Oh, what a tall girl she was! Her complexion was like pearl and blush roses; her hair was a wonderful gold; and her eyes, somehow, suggested the starry heaven at night. Hanny felt strangely abashed.

Then Mrs. Jasper claimed a greeting. Hanny knew that a year ago they had lost Aunt Ellen, with an attack of fever. Mrs. Jasper looked rather pale, but she had not changed.

"Why, you haven't grown a bit!" cried Daisy. "And look at me! You'll have to go to German baths, and all that, to get a good start. What a pity you did not go with us! I've had such a longing for girls. You don't get acquainted with them on the continent. They are always in the school-room. And I am just hungry, all the way through, for some one young and enthusiastic, and foolish and merry things to laugh at."

"But—I didn't know you were coming—"

"No, dear Doctor Joe kept the secret well. We did hope to be in on Saturday."

"Then *you* knew?" and she looked half reproachfully at her brother.

He laughed. He had only done Daisy's bidding.

"Now, if you want to keep Hanny to dinner, I'll come down this evening. I have a few calls to make," he announced presently.

"Indeed we do. You have so many folks, you might give me Hanny," and Daisy glanced at Doctor Joe with a bright, arch smile.

"If you took Hanny, you would have to take father and me, sure. The others might squeeze along without her; but I am afraid they would get thin on it."

Then the Doctor nodded and went his way.

"Now that you have Hanny, I will go and unpack one of the trunks," said Mrs. Jasper.

Hanny and Daisy went down in the corner of the long apartment, and took possession of a *tête-à-tête*.

"Oh, you are so changed!" cried the little girl "And so—so beautiful!"

"And so well! That's the loveliest thing. I can take long walks and dance, think of that! I am only a little lame. Just the merest crook in my back, and one leg a tiny bit shorter, but a thick sole makes it all right. And I've grown like a weed, while you are a tiny bit of something very choice,—a dainty little white rose. And I am so glad to have you again. Oh, don't let anything ever come between us! Let us be friends all our lives long. I have brought you a beautiful ring to bind friendship."

"Oh," sighed Hanny, in delight.

"And there have been so many changes! Oh, who do you think we met in London? Not Whittington and his cat, but Nora Whitney without her cat. And poor Pussy Gray is dead, and Nora is a tall young lady with a splendid voice, and will make a famous singer, I suppose. And Delia is getting to be famous too, I hear. It is odd, but she doesn't suggest a genius to my mind. I think you often are disappointed in geniuses. We saw some while abroad, and they did not come up to my expectations, or else one expects too much. Still there are some lovely faces."

"But she is just delightful! Only she keeps so busy, we do not see much of her."

"And poor little Tudie! How sad it was! I can sympathise with her sister now, for being an only child."

Then Hanny said Charlie had entered a theological seminary; and Daisy agreed being a clergyman would prove just the calling for him, he was so earnest and conscientious. Hanny had written everything, she thought; but Daisy was so eager to hear it all over again.

Mr. Jasper came in. He had been back and forth, and kept up the habit of calling on the Underhills, so nothing about Hanny surprised him.

The little girl felt rather startled when she went into the large dining-room. At this period, there were people who spent the whole season at the Astor House, though there were some newer hotels that were very attractive. It was like a grand party, Hanny thought. The ladies were so prettily attired, so bright and chatty.

When they went back to the parlour, that looked like a party, too. Hanny felt very plain in her school-dress. There were a number of Mr. Jasper's business friends, that he brought up to introduce to his wife and the two girls. But they were so busy talking, that they hardly noticed any one else.

Doctor Joe returned, armed with an invitation from Mrs. Underhill, for Mrs. Jasper and Daisy, to come up and make them a visit; and Mrs. Jasper said she should be glad to go somewhere, and find an old-fashioned American home-feeling. Daisy could hardly let Hanny go. Doctor Joe proposed that he should come for Daisy the next day, for she could not be of any special service to her mother until some plans were decided upon. That was a splendid thought.

They kissed and kissed, as if they were never to see each other again. Hanny's eyes were lustrous, and her cheeks pink with excitement. And there was so much to tell her mother.

"You must go to bed," declared Doctor Joe. "It is after ten."

"But, oh, my lessons! I have not looked at them."

"Never mind lessons now. You can get up early in the morning."

She was very tired, she had talked so much and listened so intently. And in five minutes she was asleep, in spite of the unlearned lessons.

She studied every moment the next morning, and all the way down in the stage, and managed to get through. She was a very good scholar ordinarily, and ambitious to have perfect recitations. But she kept counting the hours, for she could hardly believe Daisy Jasper was really at home.

Joe brought her up to the house when he had finished his round of calls. He handed her out quite as if she was a stylish young lady, though she was not in long gowns. But Joe was curiously proud of her, as being one of his first cases.

Everybody gave her a cordial welcome. Jim was at once her most devoted. Mrs. Underhill soon concluded foreign ways had not spoiled her; and grandmother said she was a pretty-behaved, intelligent girl. But, oh, the things she had seen, and done! She could talk French and German; she had taken painting-lessons from real artists, and had some pretty studies for Hanny, in a box not yet unpacked. She had brought the friendship ring, which was two tiny hands clasped over a sapphire with diamond sparks around it. Hanny's eyes shone with delight; she was getting quite a collection in the way of gifts.

Daisy seemed to bring a fascinating atmosphere. She was not forward, indeed there was often a pretty air of deprecation; but she had seen a good deal of society without being actually in it, and, since her aunt's death, had been her mother's companion. Her different lessons had mostly been given at home, except those in oil-painting; and there was no air of schools about her. She was so ready to be entertaining, so fresh, and yet with a charming simplicity.

"I am so glad for Hanny to have such a friend," her mother said to the Doctor. "She hasn't seemed to take any one to her heart since we have been up here; and it does make her seem a bit old-fashioned to be so much with elderly people."

"Yes. They seem to suit exactly."

Jim took them over to the Deans' one evening. Oh, what a merry talk they had about old times, for it did seem quite old to them. They recalled the day in summer, when the "caravan" went down Broadway to the store where Charles had been employed one vacation, and dear old First Street. Biddy Brady, who had danced for them, had run away and married a young Irishman. Old Mrs. McGiven still sold candies and cakes, and slate-pencils, and, oh, Washington pie that was almost as great a necessity to childhood then, as chewing-gum is now.

Mr. Jasper brought up the pictures when he escorted his wife. There were two pretty bits of landscape on the shore of Lake Geneva, and the other a Holland scene, with a stretch of canal and a queer house that looked as if it might topple over some day, if the foundation was washed out.

"But they never do," explained Daisy. "It's all so curious, and most of it so clean! And, oh, the windmills, and the queer costumes that have not changed in a century!"

Beside that there was a water-colour, a study of the most elegant tulips, painted from a real bed.

Hanny was wild with delight. They hung the pictures in her room, though Doctor Joe declared they ought to go in his study. He pretended to feel very badly that Daisy had not done anything for him.

"I will wait until I can paint something really worthy," she replied with a bright flush. "I owe you so much, that I ought to give you the very best. I mean to go on with my lessons. I love the work, and if I have any talent, it certainly is that."

"But you used to draw figures, faces," said Hanny, "and they were so real."

"In the summer I took lessons in miniature painting on ivory. I must confess that is my ambition; but it will take years to attain to perfection. I suppose now I ought to go to studying solid branches," and she laughed lightly. "I've begun wrong end first, with the accomplishments. But I had to talk German, for mamma wouldn't bother. And as she had not forgotten all her French, she went at that with me, and so I am a tolerable scholar. But I dare say Hanny could twist me all up with mathematics. I only know enough to count change. Still, I am quite an expert in foreign money. And, Hanny, were my sentences fearfully and wonderfully constructed, and did I slip up often on spelling?"

"I am quite sure you did not," protested Hanny.

"I do suppose she ought to go to a good school," said Mrs. Jasper.

"I am afraid I should not like school now. I could no longer be the heroine. And how could I descend to an ordinary station in life? Oh, Dr. Underhill, can't you interpose on the score of my still delicate health."

She had such a pretty colour in her cheeks, and her eyes shone with merriment.

"Doctor, you really must begin to be severe with her. She has her own way quite too much."

But it was a very charming way, they all thought. She roused Hanny to an unwonted brightness. Even grandmother laid claim to her, for she was delighted with her piquant description of places and people. She had heard Jenny Lind, and several other noted singers; but it seemed to her that the ovation to the Swedish Nightingale in New York must have been magnificent.

Jim claimed her when he was indoors; and they had many a merry bout. It hardly seemed possible that the few years could have wrought such a change in her. Ben took glowing accounts to Delia; and although she felt hurt and sore over the coolness of the Underhills, she did not abate one jot of her love for Ben.

She had been very busy arranging Nora's wardrobe, and now most of the care of the house devolved upon her. Mrs. Whitney would read for hours to Aunt Patty; often the old lady went soundly asleep. To be sure, matters were not attended to with the niceness of Mrs. Underhill; but Barbara was a treasure with her German neatness, and Bridget kept her kitchen at sixes and sevens. Mr. Theodore brought home one guest or three, with the same indifference; and if Ben's mother could have seen the cheerful manner in which Delia hurried about and arranged the table on short notice, she must have modified her opinion a little. Theodore was quite negligent about money-matters as well. Sometimes he was very lavish; then he would declare he was "dead broke," and she must do the best she could. Three or four of his friends would be in about ten, and couldn't she fix up a bit of something?

Sometimes she ran a little in debt; but when the good times came, she was only too eager to get matters straight. And she was so bright and gay with it all, and made Ben's visits so pleasant, that he sometimes forgot there was any trouble.

She had said decisively that they could not marry yet awhile; and Ben had accepted her fiat. But they did begin to plan for the journey abroad, and had a good deal of entertainment counting the cost, and considering where they would go.

"I should so like to see Daisy Jasper," she said.

"I will ask her to come down," answered Ben.

But Dolly invited them both up one Saturday, when Hanny and Daisy were to be there to tea. And Daisy told Delia about meeting Nora, and how happy she was in her new prospects.

She had been a little homesick, she wrote to Delia, but only for a few hours at a time. Madame Clavier was as careful as any mother could be, fussy, she thought sometimes; but no doubt it was for her good.

Daisy was very attractive to the children until Delia came, when they deserted their new friend for stories. Delia had not lost her girlish gift.

The Jaspers were a month making up their minds what to do, and then decided to board until spring at least. Joe found them a very pleasant place in their neighbourhood, to Hanny's delight. She was so glad to get her dear friend back again, sweet and unchanged; not but what she had found several charming girls at school, and some of them were just wild to see that lovely Miss Jasper, so her circle was widening all the time.

Margaret thought she ought to wear long dresses. Girls not quite grown up wore them to their gaiter-tops. Crisp, elegant button-boots had not come in, like a good many other excellent things. And Hanny was undeniably petite. Stretch up her very utmost, she hardly measured five feet. Women had not, by taking thought, added an inch to their stature by high heels. There were one or two "lifts" put in between the soles, called spring-heels; but the hats helped out a little.

"I haven't grown an inch this year," she declared ruefully. "And I am afraid I never will be any taller. It's queer, when all the rest of you are large."

"You are just right," said her father. "You will be my little girl all your life long."

Doctor Joe comforted her with the asseveration that he liked little women, "honest and true;" and Daisy also insisted she was just right.

"For you see how admirably your head goes down on my shoulder; and if we were the same size, we should be bumping heads. Queen Victoria is only five feet, and she is very queenly."

"But I am not queenly."

"No, but you could be, if you set about it."

She had some frocks to wear out that could not be let down; and her mother settled the question according to that for the present.

There was another thing that gave her a vague suspicion of being grown up, and that was cards.

The "quality" used visiting-cards; but it would have been considered underbred and pretentious to sow them around in the modern manner. They were kept for state occasions. Of course Dolly and Margaret had them; and Hanny thought Joseph B. Underhill, M. D., looked extremely elegant. Jim had some written ones in exquisite penmanship. He had not given up society because one girl had proved false and deceitful. He made a point of bowing distantly to Mrs. Williamson, and flushed even now at the thought of having been such a ninny!

Daisy Jasper's name was on her mother's cards. But you couldn't persuade Mrs. Underhill into any such nonsense. She declared if Joe brought her home any, she would put them in the fire. One day, however, he dropped a small white box into Hanny's lap, as she sat in his easy-chair, studying her lessons. It was too small for confectionery; it might be—she had coveted a pair of bracelets.

So she looked up with an inquiring smile.

"Open it, and see if they suit."

She was sure then it was bracelets.

There was white tissue-paper and something stiff. She tumbled the contents out in her lap. A few cards fell the plain side up. She turned one over. In very delicate script she saw—

"Miss Nan Underhill."

"Oh!" with a cry of delight. They called her Nan altogether at Stephen's, and the school-girls wrote her name in that manner. She often used it in writing notes. It looked so very attractive now.

"Oh, you lovely Joe!"

"They are nice to use with your girl-friends. There are a great many little society regulations that show refinement and good breeding, and I want you to observe them. When you get to be a middle-aged woman, Hannah Ann will look solid and dignified. I consulted Daisy and Mrs. Jasper, and both approved."

"Just a thousand thanks," and she threw up her arms to bring his face down within kissing reach.

The long skirt was settled by a rather peculiar circumstance.

We were beginning to have real literary aspirations, and some writers who attracted attention abroad. Miss Bremer had found a great many things to like in us; and Jenny Lind had been enthusiastic. Some Englishmen of note had been over and found we were not a nation of savages or red men, and that the best and highest in English literature was not unknown to us. Several of our writers had been abroad; and there was growing up a spirit of cordiality.

Then Thackeray was coming over to lecture on The English Humourists. Nearly everybody went to reading him. Some because it was, as we should say now, a "fad;" others because they wanted to appear conversant with his works; and a few because they had learned to understand and to love the wonderful touches of the master-pen. Boston received him with open arms. Then he was to visit the principal cities.

Ben and Delia were tremendously interested; and most of their talk was spiced with bits and quotations, and the telling scenes from his novels. Delia was beginning to have a good deal of discrimination and judgment. Sometimes, in moments of discouragement, she admitted to Ben that she was afraid she really hadn't any genius. Her novel had been recast ever so many times, and still languished.

Ben brought up tickets for Mr. Thackeray's second lecture. He had gone to the first one, and meant to hear them all. Joe must take Hanny, who would always regret it if she didn't hear him. He had seen Mr. Jasper; and they were all going the same evening.

Joe had meant to hear him. He was fond of hearing and seeing notable people, and kept his mind freshened up with all that was going on in the great world.

Hanny was delighted, of course, though the fact of listening with Daisy beside her added a great deal. They had an enthusiastic, rather school-girlish friendship. Daisy's mind was, of course, the more experienced. But with youthful fervor they were training themselves into perfect accord, *en rapport*, so they could look at each other and understand.

There was a really fine audience. And when the large, burly, broad-chested Englishman stepped on the platform, he had a cordial and enthusiastic welcome.

This evening he was at his best. His manner was clear and engaging; he moved his audience to tears and smiles. There was satire and tenderness and the marvellous insight that made him absolutely personify the writers he touched upon. The audience was charmed.

Hanny could not decide upon him. She was being won against her will, rather her preconceived notions; and yet her first feelings about him would return to disturb her. Mr. and Mrs. Jasper were delighted beyond expression; Joe was deeply interested, though he confessed he did not know Thackeray as he ought. He had read only one or two of the novels and the "Yellowplush Papers."

"I am going to read 'Vanity Fair' over again," said Hanny, when they reached home. "I didn't like it, really and truly."

"You are hardly old enough to enjoy such things," returned Joe. "Even I have not made up my mind, and I know I would not have liked them at seventeen. We believe in heroes and great deeds then, and the possibilities of life look grander to us than they do afterward. I suppose it is right that we should want to be *pleased* then."

Hanny felt that she wanted to be pleased with a story, or else very sorry for the misfortunes that no human power could seem to avert. But when mean and shallow and selfish people caused their own trials, were they worthy of sympathy?

They talked at school with the wide diversity of crude, girlish opinions. The papers were full of him as well.

Ben was one of his enthusiastic admirers. And now they planned to give a banquet,—printers and newspaper-men,—and Mr. Thackeray was to be the guest of the occasion; there was to be a dinner, with some of the bright literary lights, music, and dancing,—a really grand affair. Theodore Whitney was on the committee; and Ben had a lesser position. They meant to make it the affair of the season. Joe must surely take tickets. It was such a shame Dolly couldn't go; and, of course, Steve wouldn't. John and Cleanthe were not interested in such things; and, after thinking it over, Mrs. Hoffman declined.

"I shall have to look up a girl," said Joe. "Hanny, you have never been to a ball. Would you like to go?"

"Oh, I think a ball would be splendid! If Daisy could go, or Dolly."

"Yes, Daisy's mother or Dolly would have to go."

That gave him an idea, and he went down to see Mrs. Jasper.

"Why, I really think I would like to go myself," she said. "We do not consider Daisy quite a grown-up lady. I should like to keep her just a young girl for a long while; but, perhaps, that will not be possible."

"Hanny is a very young girl," returned Joe. "And I do not think father could stand it to have her grown up. But she keeps so small, I don't just know how we should get mother coaxed around. Both girls would enjoy it immensely."

"Oh, she would trust her with Mr. Jasper and me, if we were to take Daisy. Dear me—one festivity doesn't really signify. And yet—" she blushed and smiled with a certain girlishness. "They may be dangerous; I went to a Christmas ball when I was sixteen, and met Mr. Jasper. I was out on a holiday,—a mere school-girl."

"I don't believe Hanny or Daisy will find any one to fall in love with," said Joe, seriously; "they are so in love with each other."

"Oh, yes. They are planning to live together. There must be a settlement; for both will have to bring their respective families."

Joe was a good deal amused at that.

CHAPTER XVIII

Mrs. Underhill said "No." It was not to be thought of for a moment. Hanny in short frocks!

"It would have to be made long in the skirt, I suppose," returned Joe, gravely.

"Long! What are you talking about!"

"She would enjoy seeing the dancing. And when she was an old lady, and Thackeray dead, she could tell her children she was at a banquet with the great novelist."

"What nonsense you do talk, Joe."

Doctor Joe laughed, gave his mother a squeeze and a kiss that brought the bright colour to her cheek, and then went off to comfort two rich old patients who had nothing the matter with them, except the infirmities of age. They thought there was no one like Dr. Underhill.

Perhaps his mother thought so, too. She was taking a good deal of comfort with him in these days, when she had cast Ben a little out of her good graces. She had a hope that Ben's sturdy common sense would convince him after a while that Delia would make a poor, improvident wife. And there was a chance that, while Ben was waiting to get ready, some one might capture Delia. She sincerely hoped it would be some one well-to-do and deserving, and who could afford servants and a generous household expenditure. Ben would get over it in time.

And much as she enjoyed Joe, she wanted him to marry and have a home and family of his very own. But was any one good enough for such a sweet, generous, noble soul!

Of course Hanny couldn't go; that was a foregone conclusion. But then the Jaspers were going, and it wasn't like taking a young girl out in society. Just one night would not matter. Daisy had been to several grown-up festivities abroad, where they were ever so much more strenuous about girls. There would be so many people, they would pass in the throng unnoticed; and it was not like a public ball.

It was a little odd, but Miss Cynthia settled it finally. Her verdict seemed to settle a good many things. She did not "dress-make" very steadily now; but there were some folks who thought they couldn't have a wedding, or a large party, without Miss Cynthia's advice and assistance.

She came to spend the day. Grandmother Van Kortlandt enjoyed her very much, as she could not visit a great deal herself. Cynthia always had the latest news about all the relatives. She gossiped in a bright social fashion, with no especial ill-nature, or sharp criticism, indeed her sharpnesses were amusing for the bit of real fun in them.

"Why, of course she ought to go," declared Miss Cynthia. "I'd like to see the great man myself, and shake hands with him, though I am not over fond of the English; and I do hope and pray he won't go home and make fun of us. As for the dancing, and all that, Peggy Underhill, you went to lots of frolics before you were as old as Hanny, and had young men beauing you round. I don't see but you have made a good and capable wife and mother; and it didn't hurt you a bit."

"But I was not going to school."

"It wasn't the fashion then. And now women are in Oberlin College, studying the same things as the men; and they fall in love and get married just as they always did. The ball, or whatever you call it, won't hurt Hanny a bit. There will be the Jaspers, and Joe, and Ben, and I'm sure that's enough to take care of one little girl."

"She has nothing to wear; she is still in short frocks. And the idea of buying a ball-dress, that she won't want until next winter!"

"Now see here. Let's look over the old things. There's her blue silk, outgrown of course. They ruffle everything now, and it will be wide enough for that. And I can just cover the waist, and ruffle the skirt with white tarleton. It is nearly two yards wide, and makes lovely trimming. There's no use saving it up for Stephen's children."

They all laughed at that.

"And, Aunt Marg'ret," to grandmother, "why didn't you keep *your* little girl shut up in a band-box, while all the other girls were having good times and getting lovers? She might have been a queer, particular, fidgety old maid, instead of having a nice family for us to quarrel over."

"I will buy her a new dress," said grandmother.

"She doesn't want anything but a few yards of tarleton. She won't be likely to get into the papers. She and Miss Daisy will sit and look on, and just whisper to each other, and feel afraid to say their souls are their own; but they'll enjoy the pretty dressing and the dancing, and they will see how the thing is done when it comes their turn in good earnest."

So Mrs. Underhill had to give in. Grandmother slipped five dollars in Miss Cynthia's hand, as she was going away.

"If that falls short, I'll give you some more. And you just buy that tarleton."

Hanny wasn't quite sure, and never said a word at school until the very day. But she and Daisy

had a thrill of delight talking it over. Miss Cynthia came armed with the tarleton. The skirt was let down; but girls' long dresses were not sweeping length in those days. Then it was covered with narrow ruffles that suggested drifting clouds over an azure sky. The bodice was not outgrown, after all. It was covered with the tarleton, and had a fall of beautiful old lace around the shoulders, a pretty frill at the neck, and short sleeves. Joe bought her white gloves, and she had a blue sash.

Miss Cynthia came in to dress her; but the little girl had a quivering fear that something had happened to her maid, for it was full eight o'clock. She put her back hair in a French twist, much worn then, with two big rings right on the top of her head that looked like a crown. Her front hair she curled over an iron, and then combed it out; and it was a mass of fluffy waves, gathered in bandeaux just above her ears. She had her mother's beautiful pearl earrings, that had come from France with the old French grandmother, and a handsome mother-of-pearl-topped comb in her hair.

They put on the ball-dress. "Now look at yourself," said Miss Cynthia, "and get used to it before I let in the folks."

Hanny stood before her mother's tall mirror. Oh, this was Miss Nan Underhill, and she had never seen her before. There was a mystery about her,—a sudden sense of a strange, beautiful, unseen world, a new country she was going into, an old world left behind, an intangible recreation that no words could explain, but that touched her with a kind of exalted sacredness, as if a new life was unfolding all about her. She hardly dared stir or breathe.

"For a girl with no special beauty, I think you look very well. But, land sakes! You'll see no end of handsome girls; Margaret and Jim carried off the beauty of this family."

Miss Cynthia's voice recalled her from the vision of coming womanhood, that she was to live over again on her wedding night, with its holy blessedness enshrining her within her bridal veil.

Her father's eyes shone with a softness that looked like tears. Her mother viewed her all over with a critical air.

"I must say, Cynthia, you've done wonderfully. The dress looks very nice. And now, Hanny, I do hope you won't be forward or silly. Mind everything Mrs. Jasper says, and don't you and Daisy giggle. Be careful and don't lose Margaret's handkerchief. I don't just know as you ought to carry that."

Joe said she was lovely; and Jim really was very complimentary. He *did* wish that he was going. But Jim counted the cost of everything now, for he was trying to get out of debt.

The coach came up from the Jaspers' and Hanny was put inside. Joe insisted on sharing the box with the driver.

When Daisy took off her wrap in the dressing-room, she had on a pale pink silk. Part of her curls were tied up in a bunch on top of her head, and fastened with a silver arrow and two roses. She would always wear it in ringlets, or at least until she was so old she wouldn't mind about her shoulders being not quite straight.

The affair was a banquet primarily. To be sure they gathered in the Assembly room; and there was Ben, and Delia, who looked very nice and bright in maize colour and brown.

"Oh, Hanny, you are as lovely as a picture," she whispered enthusiastically. "But you *are* a little mite; there is no denying it. I was so afraid you couldn't come, that something would happen at the last moment. Miss Cynthia is capital."

Hanny coloured and almost sighed. She might as well give up hoping to be tall, and accept the fact.

They went into the banquet-room, where there were two long tables. They passed around to where a circle of men stood, some of them very fine looking indeed. The advancing group were presented to the great novelist, and in future years Hanny was to treasure the cordial smile and pressure of the hand. But he was to come again when the world had learned to pay him a finer and more discriminating admiration.

His end of the table was literary. The Jasper party were opposite, at the other one. What brightness and wit spiced the party, they could gather from the genial laughter. There were toasts and responses that scintillated with gaiety and touched the border of pathos.

It was long, and of course the younger people who came for the ball were not compelled to stay. The novelist was to leave at the close of the dinner. And presently most of the company found their way to the dancing room, where the band was discoursing enchanting music, and where every one enjoyed the promenade.

But when the quadrille sets were formed and in motion, Hanny was enraptured. Ben and Delia were among them. Delia certainly had a frivolous side to her nature for a genius. She was very fond of fun and pleasure and dancing, and had no lack of partners all the evening.

Some there were who danced like a fairy dream; others who made blunders and gave the wrong hand, and betrayed various awkwardnesses. Doctor Joe found several lady friends, and danced two or three times, then proposed that Hanny should try, which he was sure "would inspire Daisy

into making the attempt," he said with a persuasive smile.

Hanny was very much afraid out on the large space. But Delia was in the same set, and her bright merry eyes were full of encouragement. It was not alarming. Indeed, in five minutes, the music had put a "spirit in her feet," and she felt quite at home.

Then a friend of Ben's came to ask her; and Doctor Joe sat down to persuade Daisy. While abroad, she had taken what we should now term a series of physical culture lessons to strengthen and develop her limbs, and to learn how to overcome her misfortune in every possible manner. Indeed, it was hardly noticeable now, and she had outgrown the sensitiveness of her childhood.

"Oh, mamma, do you think I could?"

"Of course she can," declared Doctor Joe. "I can't have you playing wall flower altogether at your first ball. And if you drop down in surprise, or faint away, I will carry you to the dressing-room at once."

He was so tender and full of nonsense, yet so much in earnest, that she rose reluctantly. But like Hanny, with the eager joy of youth, she soon forgot everything except the pure pleasure, and the delight of gratifying dear Doctor Joe, who was so strong and gentle that she could not even feel a bit nervous.

As for Hanny, she was really enchanted. The room full of people, smiling and happy, the changing figures, the light airy dresses, the shimmer of silks, the cloudlets of lace, the soft flying curls, for so many people wore ringlets still, the happy smiling faces, and the throb of the music was intoxicating. It was a strange, delightful world that she had gone into with her first long gown and her hair done up.

She came back, flushed and excited, her pretty eyes shining, her red lips all in a quiver.

"Now you must sit down and rest," said Mrs. Jasper. "And if you are very obedient, you may get up in that Spanish dance. I think that quite delightful and bewildering."

A lady sat on the other side of Mrs. Jasper, and resumed the incident she was describing. Mr. Jasper came up with a young man.

"Here is an old friend!" he exclaimed. "Where is Daisy?"

"Somewhere with the Doctor. Oh, what a surprise!" and she took the young man's hand.

"I wasn't sure I could get here; and it would have been very ungrateful to Mr. Jasper, when he sent me a ticket. I wanted to see Miss Daisy again. But I have just come on a flying business tour, and must start to-morrow for Philadelphia. Still, I may have a little leisure when I return. What a gay scene."

Hanny sat fanning herself, and feeling that her cheeks were scarlet. If it only wouldn't culminate in her nose! Then Mr. Jasper turned and introduced his young friend. Hanny moved a little, so he could sit between her and Mrs. Jasper,—a very attractive young man, a Mr. Andersen.

"Miss Underhill," he repeated, as Mr. Jasper turned away, "I've been speculating on a Miss Underhill for five minutes. I wonder if you will consider it impertinent; but perhaps you never speculate upon people, and then it might be reprehensible. Just as I entered the room, there was a merry group talking, and a sort of 'nut brown mayde,' all in brown and yellow with bright hair and laughing eyes said, 'Miss Nan Underhill.' Of course I was too well bred, and in too great a hurry to listen to any more, or I might have found out about her. I had just an instant interior gleam of what she must be like with that English name. And I wonder if the fates have directed my steps to her?"

Mr. Andersen was not the tall, stern, gloomy hero of romance; he was medium in height and figure, with a frank, eager sort of face, dark hair, and eyes she thought black then, but afterwards came to know that they were of the deep blue of a midnight sky in winter. He had such a smiling mouth, and his voice had a curious, lingering cadence that suggests that one may have heard it in a previous state.

Hanny caught the spirit of the half badinage, and the laughing light in his face.

"I think I ought to know the ideal before I confess identity," she replied.

"Can't I change the ideal? Or repent my vague, wild fancy?"

"Oh, was it wild? Then I must insist upon it. Miss Nan Underhill, an English girl; of course she was tall, this vision of your imagination?"

Hanny was quite sure her face grew redder. And this ideal girl was beautiful. Oh, dear!

"Yes, tall; a daughter of the gods, or the old Norse Vikings before they were Anglicised, with fair hair. And you have the fair hair."

"But I am not tall! I am sorry to have you disappointed."

"I am not disappointed. What does a vagrant fancy amount to? I consider myself fortunate in meeting Miss Underhill. Why, suppose I had gone rambling about and missed you altogether? Have you known the Jaspers long?"

"Oh, years and years. Before they went abroad."

"What a beautiful girl Daisy is! I am glad she is here enjoying herself. Oh, isn't it the regulation thing to speak of the hero of the feast? Of course when you heard he was coming to lecture you began to read his novels—if you had not before."

"I had not read them before. There are a great many books I have not read. But I tried at 'Vanity Fair;' and I am afraid I don't like it."

"I do not believe you will now. I can't imagine real young people liking them. But when one has grown older and had sorrow and suffering and experience, there are so many touches that go to one's heart. And 'Vanity Fair' is a novel without a hero. Still I always feel sorry for poor Major Dobbins. I wonder if Amelia would have liked him better if his name had been something else? Could you fall in love with such a name?"

They both laughed. She raised her eyes. How exquisitely fair and sweet and dainty she was! The soft hair had shining lights; and her eyes had a twilight look that suggested a pellucid lake, with evening shades blowing over it.

"A little more of something would have made him a hero, and spoiled the book."

"But I don't like Amelia, nor Becky; and the Crawleys are horrid. And Thackeray seems holding up everybody and laughing at them. I like to believe in people."

"I am glad there is a time when we can believe in them: it is the radiant time of youth. What did that little smile hide, and half betray? Confess!"

"Are you so very old?"

The charming gravity was irresistible.

"Seven and twenty, and I am beginning to worship Thackeray. At seven and thirty, he will be one of my passions, I know. Now and then I come to a sentence that goes to my heart. No, do not read him yet awhile, unless it is some of the little things. There is 'Dr. Birch and his Young Friends;' and if you want to be amused you must read his continuation of 'Ivanhoe.' But then you will have neither heroines nor heroes left. And if you and Miss Daisy want to laugh beyond measure, get the 'Rose and the Ring,' that he wrote for his two little girls."

"Oh," said Hanny, "are they at home, in England?"

"Yes, with an aunt."

"Haven't they any mother?"

"They have no mother," he said gravely.

Years later, the novelist was to be one of the little girl's heroes, when she knew all the bravery of his life, and why his little girls were without a mother.

Joe and Daisy returned, and there was a pleasant rencontre; then Delia and Ben came up, and they had a merry chat and a promenade.

"I wonder," as the musicians began tuning again, "if you are engaged for all the dances. Could I be allowed one?"

He took up her card.

"I have been dancing so much already; but Mrs. Jasper said I might try the Spanish dance."

"Oh, then try it with me! I am not too old to dance, if I have come to adoring Thackeray. And I am to go away soon."

"To go away—where?" And she glanced up with an interest that gave him a quick sense of pleasure.

"To Hamburg first; then to find some relations."

"In Germany? But you are not a German?" in surprise.

"I ought to be a Dane, if one's birth counts for anything; and if one's ancestors count, then an old Dutch Knickerbocker," he returned, with a soft, amused laugh. "But I believe I cannot boast of any English descent, such as the son of a hundred earls. That doesn't sound as poetic as the daughter of a hundred earls."

"Who was not one to be desired," interposed the young girl.

"Ah, you read Tennyson then? It is odd, but a good many of us begin on poetry. I like it very much myself."

A touch of thought settled between Hanny's brows.

"Are you wondering about my mixed lineage? Part of it came from the old Dutch governor, Jacob Leisler. My grandfather went to Germany, and ran away with a lady of high degree, and brought her back to America, where my father was born, and lived all his young life, until his marriage. Then business took him abroad, and I was born; and my mother died at Copenhagen. My father is

connected with the importing house of Strang, Zahner, & Co., of which Mr. Jasper is a member. He is married again, to a very sweet, amiable German woman. Oh, here we are to take our places!"

Hanny hesitated an instant. She longed to have Mrs. Jasper's approbation.

"We have been looking for you," said Ben. "Let us begin in the one set. Here is Daisy and Joe."

Then it would be all right. She glanced up and smiled with cordial assent.

The old-fashioned Spanish dance was a great favourite at that time, when germans were unknown. Its graceful turns and windings, its stately balances, until the dancers seemed all one long elegant chain, that moved to the perfect time of the music, was indeed fascinating. People danced then. Youth never dreamed of being bored, and walking languidly. Every movement was delicate and refined.

Was she really in some enchanted country? When Mr. Andersen was compelled to leave her, he glanced over or past his partner with an expression so near a smile that Hanny's pulses quickened. When he came back, the light touch of his hand gave her a little thrill that was quite delicious. Now and then they had a bit of conversation.

Once he said, in his charming fashion, that was admiration rather than criticism:—

"Why, you *are* very petite!"

"Yes; I am not the tall, slim English girl."

"I am very glad. We dance so well together; I wish I were not going away so soon. And you can't guess—you will think it strange,—to American ideas it is; but when I go back I have to hunt up a descendant of this grandmother of high degree who has been making matrimonial overtures to my father on my behalf."

"Oh, that is like a story! And what will you do?"

"I will think about it, and answer you when you return to me."

He gave her to the next partner, with a graceful inclination of the head.

There were numberless evolutions before he could take her again. She glanced up out of sweet, questioning eyes.

"I've been considering," he resumed, as if they had not parted. "You see, it is this way. My father is very, very fond of me, though there are other children. Then I have my mother's fortune, which he has been very watchful of. He is a splendid, upright, honourable man. Now, if your father asked such a thing of you,—what I mean is, if he asked you to see some one and learn how well you could like her or him—"

She was off again. Oh, what a sweet little fairy she was! What poet wrote about twinkling feet? Hers certainly twinkled in their daintiness. He had not considered her prettiness at first; now it seemed as if she was exquisitely fair, with that soft pink in her cheeks.

"Yes. Do you not believe you would go to please him, and see? And you might not like her, and she might not like you. But sometimes people do take sudden fancies. What do you think, looking at it out of an American girl's eyes?"

"I should go for my father's sake."

There was such a delicate gravity in her clear eyes as she raised them a little.

"Thank you," he returned softly. "What an odd thing to talk of in the midst of our dancing! When you are older, you will find people making a confidante of you very often, you seem so serious and truthful."

They were coming down to the end of the winding chain; Mr. and Mrs. Jasper stood there. One more figure, and the cornet and horns and violins gave three long breaths of melody and stopped.

"My dear children," said Mrs. Jasper, as she stretched out her hand. "Daisy, you will be in bed all day to-morrow! Your mother will never trust me with you again, Hanny; I didn't think it would be so long."

"But it was so delightful, mamma." Daisy was in a tumult of pleasure.

"We must go at once. Mr. Jasper will be back by the time we have found our wraps. Doctor, I can't thank you for making such a patient martyr of yourself, only you are always so good. Hanny, have you had a nice time?"

"It has been splendid," with a long, long breath, and shining lights in her eyes.

Delia went to the dressing-room with them.

"I'm going to have two more dances," she said. "It is the first real ball I've been to in a long while. I'm so glad you came. Ben says he never imagined you were so pretty. Think of that, from one's own brother! And Daisy did not shine you down, either."

Hanny kissed her with a sort of rapture. She couldn't understand; she seemed to be walking on

the azure clouds instead of solid earth.

Mr. Andersen went to the carriage with them, and said he should surely call when he returned from Philadelphia.

Daisy leaned her head down on her mother's shoulder. She was more tired than she would admit. Hanny's eyes were like stars, and her brain was still filled with wonderful melodies and light airy figures trooping to the ravishing sounds, the shimmering light and sparkle. Doctor Joe just carried her up the steps, and opened the door with his latch-key. But Mrs. Underhill had heard them, and she came downstairs, wrapped in a shawl.

"Oh, Joe, how could you keep her out so late! Do you know it's almost three o'clock?"

Then the mother folded her to her heart. It seemed as if she had been snatched from some great danger; and now that she had her safe and sound, she felt as if she should never let her go again.

"You're all excitement, Hanny; you tremble like a leaf. Such dissipations are bad for growing girls."

"Oh, mother, I think I'm done growing," Hanny laughed, with a soft ring of music in her voice. "I have wanted to be tall like Margaret; but now I do not mind a bit. I think I shall always be father's little girl. And the dancing was so delightful; but you can't think how queer and long the supper was. And Mr. Thackeray really shook hands with me. He has two little girls, and they haven't any mother. If you could have seen Daisy! And she dances beautifully."

"Hanny, your tongue runs like a mill-race. Do keep still, child. Cynthia has you pinned in every fashion. I hope your dress looked nice enough for a little girl. There, I'll take care of them all. You will never want to get up in the morning."

When she had hung the dress out of sight, she felt as if she had her little girl once more. And the little girl fell asleep to the sound of the most delicious music ever floating through one's brain.

CHAPTER XIX

THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE

Yes, Hanny Underhill was a little girl again in gaiter-length dresses, and her braids tied across at the back of her head. They let her sleep until the latest moment; and then she had to hurry off to school. But her eyes were bright; and she could have danced along the street, if it had been the proper thing to do.

Daisy did not fare so well. She had a headache, and was very languid. Joe said Hanny had better not go down; and that Daisy would be all right to-morrow. So Hanny studied her lessons, and began to read "Vanity Fair" aloud to grandmother. But grandmother said she didn't care about such a silly girl as Amelia; and though there were wretched women in the world, she didn't believe any one ever was quite so scheming and heartless as Becky.

Then Hanny told her father about the dancing, and the partners she had, and Mr. Andersen, who was going back to Germany to marry some distant cousin. Altogether, it was a splendid time, only she felt as if there had been some kind of a Cinderella transformation; and that she was safe only as long as she wore short frocks.

A week afterward, Mr. Andersen returned to the city, and Hanny was invited down to tea at the Jaspers. They had a nice time, only the talk was not quite so charming as when it was interspersed with dancing.

He was to go to Paris also. And now Louis Napoleon had followed in the footsteps of his illustrious uncle, and was really Emperor of France. What a strange, romantic history his had been!

After this, life went on with tolerable regularity. There was plenty of amusement. Old New York did not suffer. Laura Keene thrilled them with the "Hunchback," and many another personation. Matilda Heron was doing some fine work in Milman's "Fazio," and the play of "The Stranger" held audiences spell-bound. Then there were lectures for the more sober-minded people; and you heard youngish men who were to be famous afterward. Spirit-rappings had fallen a trifle into disfavour; and phrenology was making converts. It was the proper thing to go to Fowler's and have your head examined, and get a chart, which sort of settled you until something else came along. Young ladies were going into Combe's physiology and hygiene and cold bathing. Some very hardy and courageous women were studying medicine. Emerson was in a certain way rivalling Carlyle. Wendell Phillips was enchanting the cities with his silver tongue. There had been Brooke Farm; and Margaret Fuller had flashed across the world, married her Italian lover, who fought while she wrote for liberty; and husband, wife, and child had met their tragic death in very sight of her native land.

People were thinking really great thoughts; and there was a ferment of moral, transcendental, and æsthetical philosophy. Women met to discuss them in each other's parlours, prefiguring the

era of clubs. Alice and Ph[oe]be Cary's receptions had grown to be quite the rage; and Anne C. Lynch was another figure in the social-literary world. Beecher was drawing large audiences in Brooklyn, and telling the old truths in a new fashion. There is always a great seething and tumult before the water fairly boils and precipitates the dregs to the bottom.

But whatever comes and goes, young girls are always growing up with the flush and fragrance and elusive fascinations of spring. To-day, a credulous tenderness and overwhelming faith in the past; to-morrow, a little doubtful, hesitatingly anticipative, with the watchwords of "The True, the Good, and the Beautiful;" and still concerned in the latest style of doing one's back hair, and if silver combs and gilt pins would keep in fashion; and flushing celestial rosy red, yet with an odd sense of importance, when men began to lift their hats in a gravely polite manner, as if the laughing, hoydenish girl of yesterday, who strung herself out four or five wide on the sidewalk with books in hand, was the shy, refined, hesitating, utterly delicious young woman of to-day.

There were times when Hanny stood on the mysterious borderland. She used to steal up and look at the wraith of a ball-dress hanging in the third-floor closet, put away with the "choice" garments. The skirt looked so long, almost uncanny. She could see the girl who had gone to the banquet, who had danced with young men who asked "the pleasure" with the politest inclination of the head. And, oh, the lovely dances she had with Mr. Andersen! The bewitching Spanish movement floated through her brain; and the young man's voice—what a curious, lingering sweetness it had—went over her like a wave of music. Of course his German cousin would fall in love with him,—how could she help it?—and they would marry. They would go to Paris once a year or so, when business took him; they would go over to London; but their real home would be in some German town, or maybe in the castle from which the pretty grandmother had run away with her American lover. She was so glad there were real romances left in the world. It wasn't likely any would happen to her. She was not tall, nor elegant, nor handsome; and though she could sing "Bonnie Doon," "Annie Laurie," "A Rose-tree in Full Bearing," and "The Girl I Left behind me," for her father, she was not a company singer. But she really didn't mind. Her father would want her. She wasn't quite resigned to being an old maid; but then she need not worry until she was twenty-five. And when you came to that, half the relatives were fighting for Miss Cynthia Blackfan; and Mr. Erastus Morgan had invited her over to Paris to see the new Emperor, who was copying in every way his granduncle who had ruled half Europe.

Then she would close the closet door and run blithely downstairs with a bit of song. That was Miss Nan Underhill up there; and in her short school-girl frock she was plain household Hanny.

But they had delightful times. Doctor Joe bought a new buggy, very wide in the seat, and used to take her and Daisy out when the days were pleasant. Then Charles and Josie came over evenings, or they went to Mrs. Dean's, and talked and sang and discussed their favourite poems and stories, and thought how rich the world was growing, and wondered how their grandfathers and grandmothers had existed!

The little rue in the Underhills' cup became sweetened presently with the balm of love and forbearance, that time or circumstances usually brings about when truth and good sense are at the helm.

Matters had gone rather hard with Delia Whitney of late. In a certain fashion, she had come to the parting of the intellectual ways. People were as eager then as now to discover new geniuses. There were not so many writing, and it was easier to gain a hearing. She had been successful. She had been praised; her stories and poems were accepted, published, and paid for. She had been made much of by her brother's friends, and some of the literary women she had met.

She began to realise it was not altogether wandering at one's sweet will, unless one had a garden of unfailing bloom in which to gather the flowers of poetry, or even prose. There were greater heights than even girlhood's visions. But there must be training and study to reach them, and she had been lilting along in a desultory way, like a careless child.

But had she any real genius? When she bent her whole mind to the cultivation of every energy, what if she should find it was energy and imagination merely? Her novel did not progress to her satisfaction. Characters might be common-place; but there was to be force enough in their delineation to keep the attention of the reader. They must be clear-cut, vivid; and hers seemed all too much alike, with no salient points.

"Do you suppose no one ever felt discouraged before?" asked Ben, with his brave, sweet smile. "That's no sign."

"But if I really wasn't a genius? And I have had so many splendid plans and plots in my brain; but when they come out, they are flat and weak. I don't ever expect to stand on the top-most round; but I can't stay down at the bottom always. I would rather not be anywhere."

Ben comforted her in his quiet fashion.

"Oh, what should I do without you!" she cried. "I want to achieve something for your sake."

"You will achieve. And if you do not, there is enjoyment left. You inspire other people."

"With a kind of girlish nonsense that passes for wit. But older minds demand the real article."

"You have a certain brightness of talk that brings out the best in other people. That is a rare gift, I am beginning to observe. Put the novel by for a little while."

"But every time I take it out, it seems worse," she returned ruefully.

Then she admitted another worry.

"Aunt Patty stumbled and fell about a month ago in her room. She was lame for some days; and I can see she isn't quite the same. Mother thinks it was a stroke. She is old, you know, and if she should be laid up! She clings to me so. You see, she misses Nora, who was running in and out, and the young girls who came here, and—oh, Ben, I am afraid I am growing stupid!"

Ben laughed and kissed her, and told her not to cross bridges until she came to them.

Then Theodore went to Washington for a fortnight; and Ben felt that it was hard for Delia to be bereft of that useful article, a man around the house. When Theodore returned, there was an imperative journey to the West. Already there were clouds rising that disquieted the wisest statesmen who were studying how to prevent any outward clashing. Mr. Whitney, with his *savoir faire*, was considered one of the best men to send on a *quasi* political mission.

"You just drop in to supper every evening, Ben," he said with his Good-bye. "Dele has a head worth that of any half-dozen women; but I like to feel some one is looking after her. Mother is away a good deal."

The. had a misgiving Ben and Delia might want to marry; but they couldn't possibly spare Delia. So he was very friendly and obliging to Ben.

"Mother," oddly enough, was taking a great interest in the small end of the woman question, that was pushing its way in among other things. Mr. Whitney had been the most indulgent of husbands, and her sons had accepted household discomforts with no grumbling. But she took most kindly to the emancipation of women. She had a friend in Brooklyn who was lecturing on the subject; and she had vague aspirations that way herself. She was still a woman of fine presence and a fair share of intelligence.

Bridget had married, and been superseded by an untrained Katy. Aunt Patty was growing rather weak-hearted and childish, so Delia did have her hands full, and but little time for writing.

Theodore had been absent hardly a week when the stroke came. One morning, Aunt Patty was unable to move hand or foot on one side, and could hardly speak intelligibly, though her face kept its sweet expression. Mrs. Whitney had gone away somewhere with her friend.

When Ben heard the sad story that night, and folded the trembling, sobbing girl to his heart, his resolve was taken. A nurse had come, to be sure; but Delia should not bear this trial alone. He must live here, and comfort her with his love.

He went home quite early that evening. His father and Hanny were in Joe's study; his mother sat alone, darning stockings.

She glanced up and smiled; but when she saw his grave face, she said, "Oh, Ben, what has happened?"

"They are in great trouble down at Beach Street. Old Aunt Boudinot has had a stroke of paralysis. Mrs. Whitney has gone on a little journey with a friend; and Delia is alone. Mother, I have resolved to be married and help her bear her burthen. There is no immediate danger of Miss Boudinot dying, I believe; but since The. is away—they need some one—"

"Ben!"

Then she looked in her boy's face. Benny Frank and Jim were still boys to her. There was Joe to be married before it came their turn, and poor George, if he should live to come back. But it was not a boy's face, nor a boy's pleading eyes, that met hers. A man's grave sweetness, and sense of responsibility, shone in the clear, deep grey orbs, and the whole face had matured, so that she was amazed, bewildered.

"Mother dear," he began, "can't you wish me God speed, as you have the others? I've never loved any one but Delia; I never shall. I know I can make her happy; and isn't there some duty on my side? Am I to demand everything, and throw out a few crumbs of comfort now and then? We have known each other long enough to be quite sure, quite satisfied. But she has said all along she would not marry me until she could be considered a daughter of the house. I shall persuade her to now, unless—mother, can't you give her a welcome?"

He put his arms about his mother's neck. Was there some mysterious strength and manliness in him she had not realised before, even in his very voice. When had she lost her boy? What a pang went to her inmost heart. Yes, he was a man, and he had a right to himself. She was not a selfish woman; but her face dropped down on his shoulder and she cried softly.

"Mother—dear." There was a sweet, faint break in his voice, and he kissed her brow softly.

"You have been such a good boy, Ben. I've been a little worried sometimes about Jim; but you have gone on so straight and steadfast. I do thank the Lord for all of you. And I have wanted you to have the best—"

"She is the best to me, mother. Like her a little for my sake," he pleaded tenderly.

"I *do* like her. If she makes you happy—"

That was all. If Delia made her son as happy as Dolly or Cleanthe—

Ben kissed his mother. Ten years ago she had thought kissing rather foolish for anybody but the little girl. Now her big sons always kissed her. Perhaps there was more love in the world.

They began to make plans presently. Ben was in favour of a quiet marriage; and of course he would remain at Beach Street. Delia had promised to care for her aunt; and there was no one else to take charge.

"I don't know as I have been just right about it," said Mrs. Underhill. "But Mrs. Whitney's carelessness and inefficiency have always tried me. Still, the children have turned out well. Delia is smart, and capable; and since you are quite resolved—"

Ben smiled then; and it went to his mother's heart. He knew he had won the victory.

The next morning she said to him:—

"Ben, I've decided to go down and see Delia. I have never been there but once, since they went to Beach Street. Could you stop and tell her? Give her my love. I'm very sorry all this should happen, and she alone."

Mrs. Underhill was not given to half-hearted measures. When the work was done, and the dinner planned out, she dressed herself and went down-town. Delia was a little embarrassed at first; but they talked about Aunt Boudinot, and she went up to see her. The sweet old face lighted up, and she reached out her "best hand," in a sad sort of fashion; but she could utter only one word at a time.

"Ben said, I must keep you to dinner, and he would come up," exclaimed Delia, with a bright blush. It was so like old times to hear her cheerful voice. "And you will be late at home."

Delia ran down and put on a clean cloth, and wiped the dishes over with a dry towel, to take off the roughness Katy always left behind in her manipulations. And she broiled the steak herself. She could do that to perfection.

Then they arranged about the marriage. Delia certainly did need some one. It was not worth while to make any fuss. Mrs. Whitney would surely be back by Monday, and it was appointed for that evening.

Dolly took the news with cordial sweetness. Margaret was sorry that Ben had not looked a little higher; but since it must be, they would make the best of it. Hanny was delighted. Joe went down that very evening, and gave the young people his best love.

Mrs. Whitney came home on Saturday. She considered the step very judicious. She thought they had been engaged long enough. Then Ben and The. were such good friends; and with The. away so much, it was lonesome. "She was glad they had set the marriage for Monday evening, for she had promised to go out to Buffalo on Tuesday with Mrs. Stafford. A nurse was the proper thing for Aunt Patty. It was too bad, to be sure; but at her time of life, one might expect almost anything. And she, Mrs. Whitney, never had been any sort of a nurse; so it was folly for her to undertake it." She was very sweet to Aunt Patty. She had a good deal of the suavity that helps matters to run easily, and her sympathies were boundless.

Delia's sisters, and their children, and a few friends were invited. All the Underhills came, and Hanny was bridesmaid; but she wore her last summer's embroidered muslin, which was not long in the skirt.

They missed Ben a good deal, though he ran up every now and then. And Theodore was gone six weeks, instead of two or three. Now that Mrs. Underhill had really "given in," she was most cordial and sympathetic to her new daughter. Doctor Joe went down every day, though very little could be done, since even a physician could not fight against old age. Joe thought Delia very sweet and patient.

There were two great undertakings engrossing the public mind. One was a grand library. Old Mr. John Jacob Astor, some years previous, had left a large sum of money for this purpose; and there were heated discussions as to its scope and purpose. It would be a reference library rather than an entirely free library for general readers. But it would be a fine addition to the city.

The other was the Crystal Palace. There had been the first famous World's Fair at Sydenham, opened by the Prince Consort. And now, we were trying our energy and ingenuity to have something worthy of attracting the nations. Reservoir Square had been selected; and the great iron braces and supports and ribs had been watched with curiously eager eyes, as they spread out into a giant framework, and were covered with glass that glinted in the sun like molten gold. When its graceful dome arose, enthusiasm knew no bounds.

We had not dreamed of the great White City then. But we were only in the early middle part of the century.

A park had been opened on the east side, out of an old tract known as "Jones's Woods," and was quite a picnic-place for the working-people on a holiday. There was a talk about another, and, perhaps, the inspiration was evolved as the Fair grounds were being put in attractive order. A short time afterward, the Central Park board was appointed, with Washington Irving as president.

The country was wild and rough all about. Here and there, clusters of houses began to indicate the coming city. Kip farm had not disappeared; and people talked of Strawberry Hill and Harlem Heights; and there remained some fortifications of the old Rock House of 1812 memory. The old times were recalled, as people went rambling around.

Broadway still kept its vogue and elegance on the dollar side. There was Thompson's and Taylor's, where the stylish young ladies stopped in the afternoon for chocolate or cream and confections, and theatre parties went after the play. But, on the whole, there were mysterious strides up-town.

The old streets were quaint and cool in summer, with the trees that had grown for years in ungrudged spaces. The park in Beach Street was still lovely; and now Hanny often went over from school and stayed to tea with Ben and Delia. Daisy came down as well; and they talked of Nora, who was getting on famously, and who had sung at an out-of-doors fête for a children's charity.

Delia was happy and charming; but she was very much engrossed with home affairs. Nurses grew tired and went away; and Aunt Patty became more and more helpless.

Then came the great event to Hanny's life, and she was quite nervous over it. This was graduation; but when she had passed the examinations successfully, the real care was over.

And the new clothes! The old ones had been made to do through the spring; but now there was no question about long skirts. There were pretty plaid summer-silks,—everybody wore them then, and they were almost as cheap as now,—lawns, a light grey cashmere for ordinary occasions, and a white India muslin for graduation. The very next evening Dolly was to give her a party.

Grandmother thought it ought to be at home, instead.

"She will want one in the fall," said Dolly, "to announce that she is really Miss Underhill, and ready for society. Home will be the place for that. And she will be getting acquainted with young people through the summer. She's never been anything but a little girl."

There wasn't such a fuss made about sweet girl graduates then; and, later on, Rutgers Institute was to wheel into line and become a college; but even now they had bouquets and baskets of flowers. And some of the girls had lovers, and were engaged, even if there was no co-education. The chapel was crowded with admiring friends; and the girls looked sweet and pretty in their white gowns and flowing curls; for youth has a charm and beauty of its own that does not depend on regular features, or style, or any of the later accessories of life. It is an enchanted land of sunny skies and heavenly atmospheres.

She came home out of it all with a curious new feeling. That night of the banquet it had been almost a masquerade. Even now the blue shimmer and clouds of white ruffles seemed to belong to some other state. She wondered a little if she would ever wear it again.

There were some pretty gifts for her at home. Josie Dean and Charlie Reed came around in the evening. He had passed his first year's examinations successfully.

Doctor Joe and Jim and the elder people were talking very earnestly about the duties and the purposes of life. Josie touched Hanny's hand, and, with a little movement, the sign girls understand, drew her out on the porch.

"Let us walk down the path. Oh, Hanny, I've something to tell you!" and her voice was in a sort of delicious tremble. "May be you have suspected. I told Charlie I *must* confess it to you; though we do not mean to say much about it at present. Oh, Hanny, can't you guess?"

There were so many things; it was something joyful, certainly. She glanced up and smiled. Josie's face was all one roseate flush.

"Oh!" with a mysterious throb.

"We are engaged, dear. I don't know when we began to love each other. We have been so much with each other, you know. He has helped me with my lessons; and we have sung, and played, and read, and gone to church together. It was like having a brother. Tudie and I used to envy you the boys. And it was not quite like a brother either, for another feeling came in. Sometimes I wanted to run away, such a queer tremble came over me. Then there were hours when I could hardly wait for him to come home from the seminary. And for a while, he was so grave, I wondered if I had offended him. And then—do you suppose any one can tell just *how* it happens? —though they always do in books. All in an instant, you know some one loves you. It's strange and beautiful and exciting; and it seems as if the best and loveliest of all the world had come to you. We have been engaged a whole week; and every day it grows more mysteriously delightful."

"It is so strange," said Hanny, with a long, indrawn breath. "And—Charlie!"

"Oh, don't you remember how we waylaid Mr. Reed one night, and begged him to let Charlie go to singing-school? He laughed about it the other night, though he said you were the bravest of the three. And he is delighted with it. Then mother is so fond of Charles. Of course it will be a two years' engagement. Mother doesn't want me to teach school now. She thinks I ought to learn about housekeeping and sewing, and fit myself for a minister's wife. That seems so solemn, doesn't it? Oh, I do wonder if I can be good enough! And visiting the poor, and helping to the right way, and being patient and sweet, and real religious! But he will help me; and he is so good!

I think he couldn't have been anything but a minister. I *do* suppose Mrs. Reed knows about it in heaven. She was so different that last year, sweeter and kinder; and we feel sure she has gone to heaven. But we want her to know; and dear little Tudie! You must come over and spend the day, now that school is ended; and we will do nothing but talk about it. Oh, Hanny, I hope some day you will have a lover! But you seem such a sort of a little girl even yet. And I have worn long skirts a whole year."

A lover! Hanny's face was scarlet in the fragrant dusk.

"We must go in. I promised mother we would not stay late. And Charlie has some examinations for to-morrow. You may tell your mother and Daisy Jasper."

Joe said they needn't hurry off so; and Charles flushed as he looked at Josie. They rose and said good-night; and Josie kissed Hanny in a rapturous kind of fashion.

"I'll bet a sixpence those two youngsters are engaged," said Jim. "Hanny, what was all the long talk about?"

She was not quite sure all the rest were to be taken in the confidence; but she looked so conscious, and Jim was so positive, that she admitted the fact.

"That's just like a theological student."

"It is a very suitable engagement. Mrs. Dean has brought Josie up sensibly; and Charles is such a fine fellow. Of course they must all be pleased about it," commented Mrs. Underhill.

CHAPTER XX

MISS NAN UNDERHILL

Just a few days later, Mrs. Odell came down for some advice and help, for Janey was to be married. Her betrothed was a well-to-do young farmer up in Sullivan County. He was coming down in August to go to the World's Fair; and he wanted to be married and make a general holiday of it.

"I am not much judge of such matters; but Stephen's wife will go shopping with you. I don't know what we should do without her," said Mrs. Underhill.

That very morning two silver-embossed envelopes came for Miss Nan Underhill. One schoolmate was to be married in church at noon, and go to Niagara on a wedding journey. The other was an evening ceremony with a reception afterward. Mr. James Underhill had an invitation to this also.

Was all the world getting married, or being engaged! Standing on the threshold, Hanny shrank back in dismay. It was looking out of a tranquil cloister into a great, unknown world; and it gave her a mysterious shiver. She didn't feel safe and warm until she had dropped on her father's knee, and had his strong, fond arms about her.

Dolly's party was a great success. The young people were invited to meet Miss Nan Underhill. And Miss Nan wore her graduation dress and blue ribbons. Blue gave her a sort of ethereal look; pink added a kind of blossomy sweetness.

Dolly knew so many young folks. True, there were some older ones. Ben and Delia came up for an hour. Dolly said they were old-fashioned married people already. Hanny thought there didn't seem much difference, only Ben had a new strange sort of sweetness. She was very fond of Delia; and it was a delight to feel free to go down to Beach Street.

Peter and Paulus Beekman came; and they were nice, fine, rather stout young men. Peter was a lawyer; he and Jim were quite friends. Paulus was in shipping business.

"Oh," said Peter to Nan, "you look just as you did when you were a little girl and used to come to grandfather's. Do you remember that beautiful Angora cat? That was grandfather's sign. He always took to people Katschina liked. And your hair hasn't grown any darker. I like light hair. Aunt Dolly has such beautiful hair! And I'm glad you have not grown up into a great, tall May-pole. I just adore little women. When I marry, I am going to choose a 'bonnie wee thing,' like the wife in the song."

Hanny flushed rosy red. Oh, why would people talk about being married, and all that? And if Peter wouldn't look at her in just that way! It gave her a touch of embarrassment.

But oh, they had a splendid time! Modern young people would have been bored, and voted it "no spread at all." They played Proverbs, and What is my thought like? and everybody tried to bring out their very best, and be as bright and witty and joyous as possible. They had plain cake and fancy cake, and a new kind of dainty crisp crackers; candies, nuts, raisins, and mottoes, which were the greatest fun of all. Afterward, some dancing with the Cheat quadrille, and it was so amusing to "cut out," or run away and leave your partner with his open arms, and a blank look of surprise on his face.

Doctor Joe came to take the little girl home; for he was quite sure Jim would want to take some

one else's sister.

"Aunt Dolly," said Peter, when he was going away without any girl at all, though he had hoped to walk home with Hanny, "isn't Nan Underhill just the sweetest little thing in the world? I don't wonder grandfather liked her so. With that soft, indescribable hair, and her eyes,—twilight eyes, some one put in a poem,—and that cunning dimple when she smiles, and so dainty altogether. What made you say she was not pretty?"

"Why, I said, she was not as handsome as Mrs. Hoffman."

"She suits me ten times better. She is like this,

> "'A creature not too bright or good
> For human nature's daily food.'"

Dolly repeated the talk and the verses to Stephen. "And Peter is such a solid, steady-going fellow. He was really smitten."

"The idea! And with that child!"

Dolly laughed gaily. "I suppose when our girls get to be eighteen, you will still think them children. Why, I wasn't quite fifty when you fell in love with me!"

Fifty! How ridiculous it was to think of Dolly ever being fifty. Ah, it is love alone that holds the secret of eternal youth!

"Well, I hope there won't any one be foolish over Hanny, in a long while," said Stephen, decisively.

"Foolish!" repeated Dolly, in a tone of resentment. But then they both laughed.

The Odell girls came down to make a two days' visit. They went up to the Deans' to tea; and the two engaged girls strayed off by themselves, with their arms about each other, and had confidences in which the masculine pronoun played an important part. And poor Polly bewailed the prospect of being left alone. If she had a brother like Jim, she wouldn't mind.

Jim's girls were a kind of standing amusement to the family. This was a case where there was safety in numbers, Mrs. Underhill felt assured. If she had known of the episode of Lily Ludlow, her confidence would have been a little shaken. Jim was a general lover of the sex, and a good-looking, entertaining young fellow is apt to be spoiled.

Just now he had a penchant for Daisy, who teased him, and was as uncertain as an April shower. She and Hanny were inseparables. Jim took them round to Dolly's, or down to Ben's, or to Mrs. Hoffman, who had a new grand piano, and had refurnished her parlor, quite changing the simplicity of her first wedded life. Through the winter, she had given fortnightly receptions, that had an air and grace of the highest refinement. You always met some of the best and the most entertaining people. It was not a crush and a jam; but men and women really talked at that period, and brought out their best. Knowledge was not at a discount.

Young ladies came to call on Miss Underhill; and in the evenings, they brought their brothers or admirers. When she knew of it beforehand, she always had Daisy to help. Sometimes the whole party would go out for a little walk, and have some cream or water ices. The city was still so airy and open, you did not have to fly out of it at the first pleasant day.

This summer, nearly everybody was staying at home, and waiting for the big fair to open. Rooms at hotels and private houses were engaged; and the plainer country people came in to visit. There would be crowds, of course.

The Underhills had invited some of the elder relatives, since they had plenty of room.

And on July 4th, this great event occurred. The President, Mr. Franklin Pierce at that time, was the grand master of the occasion. Oh, what a Fourth of July it was! The grounds were crowded. The military were out in force; and the fireworks would have done credit to the empire of China. Never had the city seen such a gala time; the Victory of Peace it was called.

The men had it largely to themselves this day. It was more the ceremonies, than the articles exhibited, that attracted attention. That came later on.

There was a great influx of visitors in the city. The streets were thronged; the stages were crowded. One wonders what they did without electric cars. But numbers of people still kept carriages, and temporary lodging-houses were erected in the vicinity of the Palace. It certainly was a great thing for that day. And the interior, with its handsome dome, its galleries, its arched naves, and broad aisles, had a striking and splendid effect.

And, oh, the riches of the world that had contributed some of its choicest treasures! There were many people who never expected to go to Europe, and who were glad beyond measure to have it come to them. Here was the largest collection of paintings and sculpture that had ever been gathered in New York. Then, for the first time, we saw Powers' matchless Greek slave, and Kiss' Amazon, and many another famous marble. There was the row of the Apostles by the sculptor Thorwaldsen, about which there was always a concourse of people; and some of the devout could almost see them in the flesh.

We have had a Centennial since, and a famous White City, and almost any day, in New York, you can see some famous pictures and statuary. Then people run over to Europe, and study up the galleries, and write books of exquisite descriptions; but it was not so at that time. There is the grand Museum of Art near to where the old Palace stood; but all was new then. We had not been surfeited with beauty; we had not had a flood of art critics, praising or denouncing, and schools of this or that fad. It is good for cities, as well as nations, that they should once be young, and revel in the enchanting sense of freshness and delight.

Presently, it became a sort of regular thing to go,—a kind of summer-day excursion. There were delightful walks and drives up above. Bloomingdale was still a garden of sweetness. Riverside was unknown, only as the beautiful bank of the Hudson. You went and carried your lunch, or you found some simple cottage, where a country-woman dispensed truly home-made bread, and delicious ham, and a glass of milk, buttermilk on some days.

The remembrance of it to Hanny Underhill, through all her after years, was as of a golden summer. The little knot of young people kept together. When Josie Dean recovered somewhat, from the first transports of her engagement, she proved very companionable. Charles, in his long vacation, was quite at their service. Jim couldn't always be at liberty; but he did get off pretty often. Sometimes Joe, sometimes Father Underhill, chaperoned the party; but they were allowed to go by themselves as well. Girl friends joined them; Peter Beekman, and even Paulus, thought it a great thing to be counted in.

Oh, the wonderful articles! It was a liberal education. Sèvres china, Worcestershire with its wonderful tint, Wedgwood, Doulton, Cloisonnée, some rare Italian; and the tragic stories of Palissy, of Josiah Wedgwood, and Charles III. of Naples taking his secret to Spain; some queer Chinese ware, and Delft and Dresden, until it seemed as if half the genius of the world must have been expended in the exquisite productions.

And then the laces, the gossamer fabrics, the silks and velvets, the jewels, the elegant things from barbaric Russia, the wonders of the Orient, the plainer exhibit of our own land rich in mechanical wonders, the natural products, the sewing-machine that now could do the finest of work, the miniature looms weaving, the queer South American and Mexican fabrications, the gold from California,—well, it seemed as if one never could see it all.

Hanny wondered why Peter Beekman should want to stay close by her when Daisy was so bright and entertaining, and when there were other girls. When he looked at her so earnestly her heart gave a great throb, her cheeks burned, and she wanted to run away.

He wished she wasn't so shy and so ready to shelter herself under Charlie's wing, or her father's, or Joe's. And when she felt really safe she was so merry and enchanting!

It was a day in August, rather warm, to be sure; but Polly Odell had come down just on purpose to go, "for now that Janey was married and gone the house was too horrid lonesome!" They stopped for Josie. Doctor Joe brought Daisy up in the afternoon, and they were all in the picture-gallery, where they were ever finding something new. Perhaps Polly had made big eyes at Peter; perhaps Peter liked her because she talked so much about Hanny. Anyhow, they had rambled off way at one end. Daisy was resting, and telling the doctor about some pictures in the Berlin gallery. Hanny moved up and down slowly, not getting very far away. She was fond of interiors, and the homely Dutch or French women cooking supper, or tending a baby, or spinning. And there were two kittens she had never seen before, scampering about an old kitchen where a man in his shirt-sleeves had fallen asleep over his paper. It seemed to her she could see them move.

A man of six or seven and twenty, young for his years, yet with a certain stamp of the world and experience, went slowly along, glancing at the visitors in a casual manner. Of course he would know Miss Jasper and Dr. Underhill. It was like looking for a needle in a hay-stack; but Mrs. Jasper had suggested the picture-gallery; and suddenly he saw a small figure and fair face under a big leghorn hat full of wild roses and green leaves. She was smiling at the playful kittens. Oh, it surely was Miss Nan Underhill!

He came nearer; and she looked startled, as if she might fly. What a delicious colour drenched her face!

"Oh, you surely haven't forgotten me!" he cried. "I should remember you thousands of years, and I could pick you out of a world full of women."

"I—" Then she gave her soft little laugh, and the colour went fluttering all over her face in a startled, happy manner. "But I thought—"

"Did you think me a fixture in German wilds? Well, I am not. It's a long, long story; but I have come over now for good, to be a true American citizen all the rest of my days. The steamer arrived last night; but I couldn't get off until nearly noon. Then I went to a hotel and had some dinner, and came up to see Mrs. Jasper. She sent me here. Where are the others?"

"Daisy is—" she glanced about—"oh, down there with my brother,—and Miss Odell"—how queer that sounded!

"Let us stop here and rest until I get my breath and summon enough fortitude to encounter them. You are dreadfully surprised, I see by your face, I don't wonder. I must seem to you dropped from the clouds."

She wasn't a bit afraid, and sat down beside him. And she wondered if he had married the German cousin and brought her over; but it was strange not to mention her. It must be, however, if he was going to live in America.

"Oh, do you remember that night and the Spanish dance? I have shut my eyes and danced it ever so many times in memory. And you sent me away,"—with a soft, untranslatable laugh.

"I—" She looked amazed. She seemed caught and held captive in the swirl of some strange power. The colour fluttered up and down her sweet face, and her eyelids drooped, their long, soft lashes making shadows.

"Yes, you said I ought to go; and I shall always be glad I went,"—in a confident tone.

"Your cousin?" she said inquiringly, with no consciousness that a word would swerve either way.

"Yes. You know I told you my father's wishes. That sort of thing doesn't seem queer to continental people. But it was not so much his as the aunt's,—the relation is farther back than that; but it serves the same purpose. She had known about my father, and was desirous of being friends. So after I was home about a week, and had confessed to my father that the prospect of the marriage was not agreeable to me, he still begged me to go."

Hanny looked almost as if she was disappointed. He smiled and resumed:—

"It is a lonely spot on the Rhine, not far from Ebberfeld. We will look it up some day. I don't know how people can spend their lives in such dreary places. I do not wonder my grandmother ran away with her brave lover. The castle is fast going to ruins. There was a brother who wasted a great deal of the patrimony before he died. The Baroness is the last of her race. There is a poor little village at the foot of the mountain, and some peasants who work the land; and then the cousin, who is expected to rehabilitate the race by marrying a rich man."

"Yes." There was such a pretty, eager interest and pity in her eyes that he smiled.

"She is six and twenty; tall, fair, with a sorrowful kind of face, that has never been actually happy or pretty. Who could be happy in that musty old rookery! The father, I believe, did very little for their pleasure, but spent most of his time in town, wasting their little substance."

"Oh, poor girl!" cried Hanny, thinking of her own father, so loving and generous.

"She seemed to me almost as old as her mother. And then she told me her troubles, poor thing, and I found her in heart and mind a sort of inexperienced child. She has had a lover for two years; an enterprising young man, who is superintendent of an iron mine some fifty miles distant. It is the old story over again. I wish he had my grandfather's courage and would run away with her. He has no title nor aristocratic blood, and the mother will not consent. But I had made up my mind before I went there, and even if I had been fancy free, I couldn't resign myself to live in that old ruin."

"Oh, what will she do?"

"I advised her to run away." Herman Andersen laughed softly. "But I think I persuaded them both to come to the city and visit my father. They will find business isn't so shocking. They have lived in loneliness until they know very little of the real world. The old castle is not worth saving. Then I went home, and after a good deal of talking have arranged my life in a way that is satisfactory to my father, and I hope will be eminently so to myself. Some day I will tell you about that. Now where shall we find the others?" and he rose.

"Daisy is down here." Hanny rose also; but she had a queer sort of feeling, as if the world was turning round.

It seemed to Doctor Joe that he so rarely had a good talk with Daisy now, that he would make the most of this opportunity. Jim was always hovering about her. It was natural she should like the younger people. He was like a very much older brother. She was looking pale and tired. She could not stand continual dissipation. And while she often had a brilliant color and Hanny very little, the latter possessed by far the most endurance.

She liked to be alone with Doctor Joe. There was something restful and inspiriting, as if she absorbed his generous, superabundant strength.

So they almost forgot about Hanny, or thought her with the others. And now she came walking slowly down to them with a strange young man.

"Why, who can it be?" in a tone of surprised inquiry.

Daisy Jasper studied a moment. "Why, it looks like—no, it cannot be—yes, it is Mr. Andersen."

"I thought he was in Germany."

Daisy looked puzzled. Then she sprang up with a quick colour and a smile of pleasure, stretching out both hands.

"Oh, Miss Jasper!" and Mr. Andersen took her hands in a fervent clasp. "Do you know this is going to be a red-letter day in my life,—one of the happiest of days? Your mother sent me up here on a venture. First, I found Miss Underhill, and now you. And one might go all over the world and miss one's best friends. Ah, Dr. Underhill!"

A curious shock went over Dr. Underhill. He had to compel himself to take the outstretched hand. For what had this young man "crossed the seas?" He was not going to marry the cousin.

"But when did you come?" inquired Daisy. It was odd, but he took the seat the other side of her, and Hanny was by Joe.

Then Mr. Andersen told his voyage all over again, and that he had come for good. He was to take his father's money share in the house here, and his father's was to be transferred to Paris, where one of the elderly partners was in failing health and wished to retire.

"I am just delighted," exclaimed Daisy, enthusiastically. "If you would only come and board at our house! There are some people going away. Wouldn't it be splendid, Hanny?"

Hanny assented with a smile.

"I will see if I can find the others," said the doctor, rising and looking at his watch. "Father was to drive up with the Surrey at half-past five. Don't go away from here."

He walked slowly, looking a few moments in every room. Yes—there was Charles. He caught his eye and beckoned.

The estrays soon rejoined the others. Then they went out to the southern entrance, and so along to the gateway.

Yes, there was Mr. Underhill. He would take the four girls, and one more, as he had a team. This was decided to be Mr. Andersen, as he was to go to the Jaspers' to tea. The others would ride down in the stage. The doctor said he must make a few calls. Mr. Beekman expressed his intention of coming up in the evening, as Miss Odell was going to stay; and Miss Odell's eyes shone with delight.

Daisy having a lover! Dr. Underhill had not felt alarmed about Jim's attentions, he had so many fancies. But this young man—

Would it be best or wise for Daisy to marry? She appeared quite well, but she was not strong, and there was a remnant of the old spinal trouble that came out now and then in excruciating nervous headaches. Somehow she had seemed his especial property since she had cried in his arms with all the pain and suffering, and he had encouraged her to bear the little more. He had meant always to stand her friend. It wasn't likely he would marry, for he had seen no one yet that he wanted. But if this child went out of his life! For, alas! the child had grown to womanhood.

CHAPTER XXI

THE OLD, OLD STORY, EVER NEW

When Mr. Underhill took Polly home the next day, it was with the stipulation that she should come back and spend a week. Polly was wild with delight, and packed up her best things. There were some other visitors,—cousins of the elderly sort,—so the young people had their own good times. Daisy and Mr. Andersen were in, and Charlie and they had the happy enjoyment of youth.

Peter Beekman seemed devoted to them. Jim wouldn't be crowded out where Daisy was concerned, but he wanted to be first with her. Mr. Andersen gave way generously, and went over to Hanny, who somehow clung to Polly.

There was a good deal of business to be done for Mr. Herman Andersen. His father's share in the New York firm was to be transferred to him, as at the age of twenty-five he had come into possession of his mother's fortune, that had been accumulating. His father was to take charge of the Paris house. He spent some hours every morning with Mr. Jasper, acquiring a knowledge of his new duties; but the afternoons were for pleasure, until the autumnal business stirred up.

"I do wish young Beekman wouldn't come over here so much," Mrs. Underhill said in a fretted tone, "or that he would take a real fancy to Polly."

"They are just having a young people's good time," returned Joe. "Polly's a nice girl. He might do worse."

"But I am afraid it is not Polly. He watches Hanny like a cat watching a mouse."

"Nonsense!" declared Joe.

"But he does. And I don't like it."

"Oh, mother dear, you're a hen with one chick. If there is a rustle in the leaves you think a hawk is going to pounce down."

"Hanny's too young to have lovers." She tried to keep her face in severe lines.

"Hanny isn't thinking about lovers. And Peter is a fine, solid fellow, who is going to make his mark, and who may be a sort of ballast to Jim. I like him."

"Oh, he is well enough. But if there was any fuss it might annoy Dolly. And we have always been so cordial; Margaret was married too young."

"And you were married too young. Now, if you had waited and done without Steve and me, and begun with John—"

There was a twinkle in Doctor Joe's eye.

"I should have begun with the most sensible son," returned his mother; but she could not keep her voice sharp.

"Well, I will look after Hanny and the young man. I think myself that we don't need any more lovers right away."

She knew she could depend on him.

Then they had some anxiety at Ben's, and Delia's mother was away. Aunt Boudinot had her third stroke, and lay insensible for several days, then slipped out of life. Mrs. Underhill was quite surprised with Delia's good sense, as she called it, and really she wasn't such a bad housekeeper for a girl with no training.

There was the funeral, with some of New York's oldest families. Afterward the will was read. Aunt Patty had made a new one on the death of her sister.

There was a small legacy to the niece who had married; a remembrance to several relatives and friends. The use of the house was to be Mrs. Whitney's while she lived; at her death to be sold and divided between her niece, Delia Whitney, and her grand-niece, Eleanora Whitney. And to Delia Whitney, if she took faithful care of her until her death, the sum of five thousand dollars in bank-stock.

She had taken faithful care of her, and would have done it out of the kindness of her heart without any reward.

"I thought it might be a thousand dollars," she said to Ben, "and I made up my mind if it should be that, we would take it and go abroad. I had some savings beside. When Bayard Taylor told us about his tour I felt sure we could do something like it. We would keep out of the expensive tourists' ways, and live cheaply, keeping house when we could. Oh, Ben, won't it be splendid!"

He thought it splendid to have her so generous, but he had some savings as well.

Five thousand dollars was considered quite a legacy in those days; and the bank-stock was worth a good deal more than its face.

Every one said they would be crazy to waste their money in such a frivolous manner.

"I don't mind if I shouldn't ever be rich," declared Ben. "I want a piece of the big world, with its knowledges and wonders. I shouldn't care to live there always, but it broadens one to see what other nations have done; what has made their greatness and what has contributed to their downfall. And the arts and sciences, the mysteries of the East and of Egypt. We are young yet as a country, and we have a right to gather up the riches of experience. I only hope we shall profit by it."

So they planned and planned. Delia looked over the old things, and sent Dolly and Hanny some antiquities of a century or more. Then she packed and boxed hers, for she knew her mother might deal them out to indifferent people. She thought it would be a good plan to hire out the house to some one who would board her mother and Theodore; and presently one of the married sisters, Mrs. Ferris, decided she would come. So then they could plan to go away; and Delia might write her novel while she was abroad.

Meanwhile the summer was slipping away like a dream. The great fair still attracted a large concourse. But September came in, and schools opened. Jim went back to regular study; Charles to the seminary. Hanny had some more schoolmates married. There was another baby at Margaret's; and it was so delightful to go down to Delia's and hear all the plans! Now that Hanny had learned so much at the Crystal Palace, she had quite a longing for churches and museums and art galleries. Herman Andersen had visited so many of them!

Sometimes Daisy Jasper went down with her. Mr. Andersen came for them in the evening. Delia he thought wonderfully bright and entertaining. Ben liked him amazingly.

"But if I had all that money," said Ben, "I wouldn't confine myself to such puttering stuff as silks and laces and India shawls; I should want to do something high up and fine, like a magazine or a paper, that had influence and scope. Some day I mean to own a share in a paper, where you have a chance to touch up public opinion."

Herman Andersen seemed very happy and content. Mr. Jasper said he was going to make a fine, reliable business man. He really felt he wouldn't object to him for a son.

Grandmother Van Kortlandt was growing more feeble, and now and then had a bad spell. Doctor Joe made light of it, and told her red lavender and aromatic hartshorn were good for old ladies. She seemed to want her daughter near her. The young man who had alarmed Mrs. Underhill did not come so frequently, so she began to feel quite safe.

Oh, what a happy, happy summer it had been! The little girl was used to her long frocks, and studied ways of doing her hair, and practised Mendelssohn's "Songs without Words" because some one had said they were the most beautiful things he had ever heard. She and Daisy and Mr. Andersen talked German, and had no end of fun.

One afternoon Mr. Andersen came in.

"Let us go up to the Crystal Palace," he said. "It is the most glorious afternoon imaginable. There is a sort of hazy red gold in the air, that exhilarates one. You feel as if you could soar to heaven's gate."

"We haven't been up in almost a fortnight," said Hanny, laughing.

"The more need of our going now. I enjoy these superb days to the full."

Hanny went to get her hat. Grandmother generally took her nap early in the afternoon. Mother was not in her own room, she saw, as she looked in, so she ran on down. She was not in the kitchen either.

"Joe," she cried—there was no one in the office, and he sat with his legs stretched out, and a book on the table beside him, looking very comfortable,—"Joe, where is mother?"

"Up with grandmother, dear. Don't disturb her. What did you want?"

"Oh, nothing—only to say—we are going up to the fair."

"Very well; run along. You look as sweet as a pink."

A bright color flashed over her face, and settled in her dimple, making it look like a rose as she smiled.

She was putting on her blossom-coloured lace mitts as she entered the room. Some one else thought she looked as sweet as a pink when he rose, and led the way.

She turned down the street.

"Oh, Daisy is not going," he said. "She had a headache all the morning. You don't mind?"

"Oh, no. Poor dear Daisy! And I didn't go in!" Her voice was touched with the sweetest regret and compassion.

Doctor Joe went upstairs presently, to grandmother.

"Her breathing is better," he said. "I have tried a new remedy. When she has had some sleep she will be all right. This isn't quite a normal state yet. Call me if there is any special change."

Then he went down to the office again. People came more in the morning or the evening, and he had attended to his urgent calls. He was glad not to go out just then. But he thought of the young people on their way to the palace of delight. Had he ever been young and joyous, as the youth of to-day? He had studied and worked, taught some, used up all his time, and had none for the passing vagaries. What made him feel old, and as if some of the rarest delights would pass him by?

There was a light tap at the office-door, though it stood ajar. He rose and opened it wider.

"Why, Daisy Jasper!" he cried in amazement. "Or is it your wraith? I thought you had gone to the fair with Hanny."

She had been very pale; now she flushed a little. There was a tremulousness about her, and shadows under her eyes.

"I had a headache all the morning; most of the night as well. It has gone off somewhat, but I didn't feel well enough for that."

"No, of course not." He led her to the pretty library, that was always having a picture or a set of books added. You couldn't put in any more easy-chairs. He placed her in one. As he touched her hand, he felt the feverish tremble.

"My dear child, what is it?"

Her eyes drooped, and tears beaded the lashes.

"You shouldn't have come out. Why did you not send for me?"

"I—I wanted to come. I knew Hanny would be gone. I wanted to see you." She was strangely embarrassed.

He was standing by the side of the chair and took her hand again. How limp and lifeless it seemed!

"I wanted to see you—to ask you, to tell you—oh, how shall I say it!—if you could help me a little. You are so wise, and can think of so many ways—and I am so afraid he loves me—it would not be right—"

Yes, that was it. This bright, charming, well-bred, fortunate young fellow loved her. He could

keep her like a little queen. And she had some conscientious scruple about her health, and her trifling lameness, and all. A word from him would keep her where she was. He had carried her in his arms, his little ewe lamb. No man could ever give her the exquisite care that he would be able to bestow. Oh, could he let any one take her out of his life!

Yet some one younger and richer loved her. Yes, he *must* stand aside.

"My child,"—he would be grave and fatherly,—"I think you are making yourself needless trouble. Why should you refuse a good man's love? You have your beauty, and a gift that is really a genius, and though you may not be as strong as some women, that is no reason why you should deny yourself the choicest blessing of a woman's life."

"But"—she gave a little sob—"I thought you might blame me for being heedless. We have all been such friends. And I don't want anything to mar the perfect pleasantness. I know it is not right because—how can I make you understand! It might wound you if I said it—I think it can never be that kind of love—"

Did he hear aright, or was it some subtle temptation?

"You, of all other women, should be careful not to make a mistake. It would mean more to you afterward—if matters went a little wrong."

"And he is so gay, so full of life and fun, and always wanting one to keep up to the highest pitch. It would not be the right thing for him."

"But he is very gentle as well."

"Dr. Underhill, tell me that it isn't the right step for me to take, *ever*," Daisy said decisively.

"I cannot tell you any such thing. I will not bar you out of any happiness."

Perhaps he really approved of it. They were all in a way proud of the younger brother. And Jim thought there was no such splendid man in the world as the doctor. Oh, if she only knew! She was heroic enough to please them all for the sake of the past and present friendship. But she had a doubt of Mrs. Underhill's approval. She might give in as she had to Delia; and now she had really begun to find virtues in Ben's wife. But with Jim's brilliant nature always on the alert for amusement, she, Daisy, would be worn out trying to keep up to his standard.

She rose slowly. "I ought not have come," she began in a despondent tone. "I thought I could talk it all over with you; but I must decide, and bear the pain. You may all feel hurt, even if you acknowledge the wisdom of my decision. It would be a delight to come and live with you all; I who have had no brothers or sisters. But I think Jim will soon get over it, especially if *you* point out the unwisdom of it all. Maybe you will take me back into favour then, when the soreness is spent."

"Jim," he repeated, in a vague, absent sort of way. "Jim! Who are you talking about, Daisy?"

Her face was scarlet, and her eyes full of tears.

"Your brother James. It is a shame, I know, to betray one man's inmost secrets to another. But I am quite sure that I ought not, that I cannot, marry him. Oh, will you all forgive me, and help him to forget all but the friendship?"

She took a step toward the door. The scarlet went out of her face, and she swayed as if her strength was all gone. He caught her, and put her back in the chair.

"Jim!" now in a tone of great surprise, and giving a little incredulous laugh. "Why, I thought it was Herman Andersen."

Joe's heart seemed suddenly to enlarge and fill his whole body. There was a ringing in his ears, as of joy-bells.

"Herman Andersen!" she said composedly. "Oh, have you all been blind? Why, he is in love with Hanny! He came back to America to win her, and he will if he serves seven years."

Doctor Joe looked at her in amaze. Ah, yes, they had been blind. They had fenced out young Peter Beckman, and opened the door wide to this unsuspected lover. And he knew as well as it Hanny had confessed it, that her heart had gone to meet his on the magic sea of love, and they would come into port no longer twain, but one.

He sat down on the broad arm of the chair. He could see Daisy's long agitated breaths quiver through her body; and she looked tired and spent. Poor little girl!

"No, I had never thought of Jim," he began gravely, "because he is so fond of girls; a general worshipper. Not but what he might be very true and devoted to one. He seems so young yet. Daisy,"—his voice fell,—"did he ask you—"

Her head drooped a little, and her shining curls hid her face.

"Oh, do believe that when I thought of it first I did try to evade, to—to laugh him out of it. That was a month ago. He kept saying little things I would not heed or seem to understand. It has been such a gay, happy summer for us all! And there was Charlie's engagement. Last evening mamma and papa had gone out to call on a friend, and we were quite alone—"

How much was volatile temperament and the love of pursuit, and how much the deeper regard? Let him do his young brother justice.

"Charlie is young, to be sure, but he is a very steady-minded fellow, and his mother's and Tudie's death brought them together in a very sympathetic manner. Then Charles is about certain of a good position. Jim has his fortune all to make. And you are right about some other qualities. Herman Andersen would be a much better companion for you. Jim is strong and energetic, full of life, and will always be among the busy bustling things, and deep in excitements. He would wear you out."

"And don't you see that when he is five or six and twenty he will need something better than an invalid wife, who might have to go to bed with a headache when he was giving an important dinner, or having a brilliant sort of evening with some stylish guests? He ought to have a wife something like Mrs. Hoffman, who would help him to the finest things of life. And though I seem well, I shall never be real strong; and I do not care for grand society. I like a good deal of quiet and ease, and just everyday living, a little painting when I feel inspired, a little reading and talks with friends, and old-fashioned music. I sometimes feel as if I was an old girl, and ought to have lived a century ago. Perhaps I shall make a queer, stuffy old woman. And—I ought not to marry."

"You shall not give up the divine right," he made answer, earnestly.

"Oh, I have a pretty face just now, and people, I find, *do* admire beauty. But that will fade." Then she sprang up suddenly, parted her long ringlets, and stood with her back to him. "See," and her voice trembled, he knew there were tears in her eyes, "I have a little crook in my back, and one high shoulder. There has to be half an inch of cork in one boot-sole to keep me straight and from limping. No, I shouldn't do for a handsome young man like Jim, for I may grow lamer and crookeder as I grow older; nor for any man, although you try to comfort me with an almost divine compassion."

She was sobbing in his arms then. It was not the first time she had wept out her sorrow there.

He raised the golden head a little, and kissed down amid the passionate tears that were sweeping away a kind of regret that sometimes haunted her. He had kissed her often as a little child, but rarely since her return from abroad. Her girlhood had been a quality fine and rare and sacred to him.

"Except the one man who has always loved you from the poor little child in her pitiful pain and anguish, and the little girl who began to take courage and face the world, the larger girl who was brave and sunny-hearted, and looked out with hopeful eyes on the world that had so many blessings. And he knows now that no skill can ever shut out all suffering; but his sympathy and tender affection will help her through years that may be weary and sorrowful, and endure with her whatever burden comes, make her pathway easy and pleasant and restful."

"Oh, you must not," she cried, with a pang of renunciation. "Whatever applies to another man applies with double force to you. You are so noble, so tender; so worthy of what is best in life! And you have to carry so many burdens for other people that you must have some one brave and strong and full of energy and in perfect health—"

"The woman I love will be better than all this to me," he returned, with a sweetness in his voice that went to her very heart, and brought the tears to her eyes again. Then he dropped down in the great chair and took her gently in his arms, and he knew his case was as good as won.

"When you were a little girl you once said to Hanny if you could have a brother out of the clan you would like it to be me. And for days the quaint, generous little soul could hardly resolve whether it was not her duty to give me away. Then don't you remember you both planned to come and keep my bachelor-home? Some one else will take her. And we will wait, dear. We will go on in the same friendly, kindly fashion. You must run in and out and come to me with your headaches and perplexities, and I shall scold you a little and give you a bitter tonic; and when everything is just right I shall ask you to marry me; but all the time I shall be loving you so much that it will be impossible for you to refuse me. So you know what is in store, and no one need trouble about the future. You are not engaged, you are quite free; and, like Ben, I will wait seven years or twenty years for you. But I think you never can belong to any one else."

Ah, what delightful security!

"Dear, dear Doctor Joe. Oh, it would be too much happiness! No, I ought not; mamma thinks I ought not to marry. And," raising her head and showing a face full of scarlet flushes and tears, and eyes shining with love's own light, "it looks just as if I had come in here and really asked you to marry me. We have forgotten all about poor Jim. You will think me a coquette, and you ought to despise me."

His clasp tightened a little.

"I am sorry that Jim should have been so heedless. Perhaps it will be better to let him learn how much in earnest you are with your refusal. It may not be flattering to a young girl to think a man will forget her."

"But I want him to forget that part," she interrupted eagerly.

"I think he will. And if he comes to me for comfort, I will try to be a wise father-confessor. And yet

I can't help pitying the man a little who will lose you. Only in this case it would be like having an exotic without a conservatory, and not quite knowing how to build one."

"Joseph!" his mother called from upstairs.

Daisy sprang up and smoothed her ruffled plumes, Joe gave her one long, dear kiss, and she flashed out of the little room.

She held her head very high. It was the most splendid thing that could happen to a girl; but she was not going to spoil her dear Doctor Joe's life.

Are there days that the Lord of all the earth has created for love? Some days seem made especially for sorrow. But this had such an exquisite serenity brooding in the air. It was not late enough to have any regrets for the passing of summer, and oh, what a summer it had been!

"Do you really want to go up to the fair?" Herman Andersen had asked, when they reached the corner.

"Why,—" Hanny hesitated,—"we have seen it a good many times," and she gave her soft, rippling laugh.

"Let us go over to Tompkin's Square." He had something to say to her that would be easier said in those deserted walks. You could always find them except on Saturday or Sunday.

"Very well," with her graceful assent.

The birds, done with their summer housekeeping and child-rearing, had time to sing again. But it was all low, plaintive songs, as if they said: "We must go away from the place in which we have been so happy. Will we be sure to come another spring?" Now and then a branch stirred. The grass had been cut for the last time, and there were sweet little winrows that filled the air with fragrance. He was quiet, for he liked to hear her enchanting talk. It had turned upon when she was a little girl, and how queer things were! It didn't seem as if everything could change so. And what a great gay time they had at the Beekmans' when Stephen was married! So they walked around, and were at an entrance. A cabman put down a woman and some children just as Mr. Andersen had said, "We were going up there some day, you know; we ought to go before everything has faded."

"Yes," she made answer.

"See here, we might get this cab and go up now"—looking up with eager inquiry.

Dickens had not created Mr. Wemmick with his delightful off-hand premeditated happenings; but other people had them even then.

She made no demur, but assented with her innocent eyes full of exquisite sweetness.

He helped her in and sat along side of her. He had all kinds of young lover-like thoughts, and really he so seldom had her alone. He wanted to snatch up the hand and kiss it. It made such a tempting background for the lace mitt. No one but old ladies wore gloves, except on very fine occasions. And her slim little fingers, with their pink nails, were so pretty! If he could even hold her hand!

But they jolted over rough streets, through little clumps of Irish villages, and laughed over the pigs, and geese, and children. Then wastes again, with long, straight lines where streets were to be.

"That is the house over there," she said.

"I wonder if you could walk back? Or shall I keep the cab?"

"Oh, no. It is so delightful to walk!"

Ah, how the hand of improvement had disfigured everything! leaving ugly, square, naked blocks, with here and there a house, then a space where the trees were still standing; but the children despoiled the lilacs and dogwood in the spring, and thrashed the lindens and black walnuts all the later summer, until the poor things had a weary, drooping aspect. Over here was the great garden, and a street ran through it. The old house was shabby, and needed painting; and most of the vines had been cut away. The steps were broken. Several families inhabited it now. The cousin had thrown it up in disgust.

But the young man saw it through her eyes, glorified with the glamour of childhood. Slim young Dolly, Aunt Gitty netting, the ladies in rocking-chairs with their sewing under the trees, Mr. Beckman and Katschina, and the tea on little tables; and the boys she was afraid of.

"They were such pudgy little boys," she says, with a laugh in which there is only a remembered mirth. "They were like some of Irving's descriptions. You wouldn't expect them to grow up into such fine-looking men, now, would you? I think Peter is almost handsome."

It gives him a little twinge. He was jealous of Peter awhile ago; but he admits bravely that Peter is very good-looking.

And here are some poor willows. Oh, the lovely shrubbery that is neglected and dying!

"After all, it *is* the people who give the charm to places,—the loving care, the home delight. But no one could keep it up. Property gets too valuable, and taxation is too high; and there are so many poorer people who must have homes."

These sententious bits of wisdom he considers utterly charming. She has caught them from John.

Then they sit down on a great stone and rest, though she protests she is not tired. She can walk for hours.

Now he ought to tell her all that is in his heart. If the world stands thousands of years there will never be such a golden opportunity again. She breaks off a bit of yarrow and sticks it in her belt. How beautifully the lashes droop over her eyes, deepening and softening the tint, until it looks like a glint of heaven!

"Oh, we ought to go on," she says presently; and with a dainty smile and motion, she rises. Ah, if she knew what he is wild to utter!

They turn their steps homeward. A wood-robin in a thicket sings, "Sweet, sweet, I love you, I l-o-v-e you," with a maddening, lingering cadence.

Why is he not as brave as the bird? Are there any choicer, more exquisite words in which to say it?

They come to a little stream. "Oh, just down here is Kissing Bridge," she says, with a kind of girlish gleefulness.

She had made her father tell the old Dutch story one evening, when they were all sitting on the stoop. And as they go on, she, with a sort of eager, heedless step, as if she was not walking on his heart, tells about Stephen, and how he jumped out of the carriage and gathered a great bunch of roses for her. They have reached the spot. The stream has shrunken. You could step over it.

"They were just there." She indicates the spot with a pretty gesture of her head. "But there are no wild-roses now;" and a soft sigh escapes her, as she turns to him, and their eyes meet.

"Are there none?" he asks, his eyes drinking in the sudden radiance. For if ever dainty, delicate, ethereal wild-roses bloomed, they are in her cheeks; and oh, what are her scarlet lips that have meant to answer, and are mysteriously tranfixed with the rarest sweetness!

He kisses her—once, a dozen times. There is no one near. They own the city,—the whole world, for love is Lord of all.

He slips her hand in his arm. Its tremble thrills every nerve in his body. He experiences the overwhelming joy of possessorship, for she *is* his.

"My darling little Nan;" and his voice is unsteady with emotion.

He has rechristened Baby Stevie's pet name; but it has never sounded so enchanting before.

Then they walk on in delicious silence. Another bird sings in a drowsy afternoon tone,—

"Sweet, sweet, I love you, I l-o-v-e you."

They glance at each other, and both translate it. Her cheeks are redder than wild-roses now; and her dimple holds the sweetness of a great mystery. They both smile, and he kisses her again. Why not? There is no one about.

"My darling, can you guess when I first began to love you?" He wants her to know all the story. It seems as if his whole life will not be long enough to get it told and he must begin at once.

"When?" There is a startled sound in her voice, as if she was amazed that love had a beginning.

"That night in the dance,—the Spanish dance. We will go somewhere this winter and dance it over again; and the music beats will say—'I love you.'"

"Oh, so long ago?" she exclaims.

"Yes; and I have a visiting-card of yours." He hunts in his card-case. "Here it is—'Miss Nan Underhill.' I've kissed it thousands of times. I have almost worn it out. And when I went home I told my father about the little girl in New York that I must come back and win."

"Oh, did you!" She is touched by the revelation.

"He is a delightful father. Some time I must take you over to see him, or he may come here. But he had promised that I should go to Ebberfeld; and so I did. The aunt had proposed the match."

"And your poor cousin!" Her voice is full of such infinite pity that he gives the little hand a tender pressure for thanks.

"I couldn't have loved her anyhow. She seems older than I; and I am a very boy in heart. Then she was too large. I like little women."

"I am so glad," she cries, with unaffected joy, "for I am small; and I never can grow any larger. But I don't mind now."

"So when my father found how much in earnest I was, he planned the business change. It was my

own mother's money, you know. But he has been a good father to me, and I am glad he has some other children. I was to go to Paris."

That seems so magnificent she is almost conscience smitten.

Ah, how much there is to say!

"But you will get tired with all this long walk," he exclaims anxiously. Oh, blessed thought! he will have the right to keep her rested and happy, and in a realm of joy.

"Oh, no," she returns. "Why, the walk has not seemed long." The surprise in her voice is enchanting.

Is any walk ever too long for love? Is any day too long,—even all of life?

The crickets and peeps come out; a locust drones his slow tune. The sun has dropped down. Well, they are in an enchanted country that needs no sun but that of love. And if they walked all night they could not say all that has been brought to light by the mighty touch that wakes human souls.

At home grandmother's difficult breathing has returned, and they have had a troubled hour. But now she is all right, except that she will be weaker to-morrow. Mrs. Underhill goes downstairs and bustles about the supper as a relief from the strain. She makes a slice of delicately-browned toast. Joe comes rushing in.

"I'm sorry, but the servant at the Dentons has cut her hand badly. Don't wait supper for me," he exclaims.

"Jim has not come in, and no one can tell when those children will be back. If the fair should keep open three months longer every one will be dead with fatigue. Yes, we'll wait. I am going to take some toast up to mother."

"The children!" Doctor Joe has a strange, guilty sort of feeling. What if to-night should bring her a new son, as some future night will bring her a new daughter?

Father Underhill sits on the front stoop reading his paper. He glances up now and then. When he espies a small figure in soft gray with a wide-brimmed leghorn hat, and a young man, he studies them more attentively. What is this? She has the young man's arm,—that has gone out of date for engaged people,—and her head inclines toward him. She glances up and smiles.

And then a great pang rends the father's soul. They come nearer, and she smiles to him; but, oh! there is a light in her face, a gladness shining in her eyes, a tremulous sweetness about the mouth. Did he read all this in her mother's face years and years ago? Did *her* mother have this awful pang that seems to wrench body and soul asunder?

They say good-evening and that it has been a glorious afternoon. The young man will lose no time,—hasn't he been dangling three months already?

"Mr. Underhill, may I see you a moment?"

How brave and sweet and assured the voice is! And he helps the little girl up the steps, through the hall space, and the three stand in the parlour, where the young man prefers his request with such a daring that the elder man is almost dazed. Then the father holds out his arms as if he was grasping for something lost. She comes to them, and her head is on his breast, her hands reaching up to clasp him about the neck.

"And this little girl, too!"

His voice is broken, his face goes down to hers. The sweetest thing of his life,—how can he give her up?

"Oh, father, father!" The cry is so entreating, so piteous, and he feels the tears on her sweet face. "Oh, father, can I not love you both?"

She loosens one hand and holds it out to the young man. He feels the motion, and accepts the fact that her heart is divided. She draws her lover in the circle. "You will love him for my sake."

Alas! alas! she is his little girl no longer. She is another man's sweetheart, and will one day be his wife. It is the fashion in this world; it has God's favor and sanction.

CHAPTER XXII

1897

All that was long ago. It is nearing the end of the century, and the little girl who thought it a great thing to see the half-century mark, bids fair to shake hands with the new one. There have been many changes, there have been sorrows and deaths, and such exquisite satisfying happiness that she could say with the poet,—

"Let come what come may

I shall have had my day."

She is in the older generation now, and a grandmother. You may see her in Central Park, or some of the surburban places, a fair, sweet small personage, with a face more nearly beautiful than in her girlhood. Her hair has that shining silvery tint, her complexion is clear and fine, and her eyes, though they have wept bitter tears, still look out gladly, serenely, on life.

In the carriage will be her twin granddaughters, and sometimes a young man, her son. They are pretty children, and will be "summer girls" when their time comes, and "winter girls" as well, clad in cloth and velvet and furs. They will dance Germans instead of the bewildering Spanish dance she had that first night with her lover. Even children have changed in half a century. Beauty is no longer considered a delusion and a snare. Physical culture gives strength and grace and growth.

The lover of her youth and the husband of her love, and her first-born daughter, who was wedded, and who with her husband faced a railroad tragedy and were its victims, have gone into that "goodly land and large." It seems to many of us as we grow older that there is only a thin wall between this and the other country where we shall see them again. Sometimes she can almost fancy them leaning over the jasper walls, like the Blessed Damosel, and smiling down on her. There are so many of them now! And the children were given to her. They are spoiled, all the aunts and cousins declare. But grandmamma lives another youth over in them,—a delightful life, rich in love and interest.

For conditions have changed. The world, and all that therein is, has changed. It is Greater New York now, and it stretches out everywhere. What was Brooklyn, and Williamsburg, and many a pretty town up above the city, have all been merged into one grand metropolis. What it will do in the next fifty years passes conjecture.

As they drive around nothing interests them more than to have grandmamma talk of what it was like when she was a little girl. They find the places, and look at them through her eyes. There is no longer any Bowling-Green, only in name, and though part of the Battery is left, the elevated roads go winding about among the tree-tops; Castle Garden, after many vicissitudes and debasements, is again a place of interest and entertainment. Here was where she heard that sweet and wonderful Jenny Lind, who, with Parepa Rosa, and many another divine voice, is singing up in the New Jerusalem. And though hundreds in the glare of light and blaze of diamonds listen to Patti, she wonders if the enthusiasm is as deep and sincere.

Over opposite where modest Brooklyn lived its simple, friendly life fifty years ago, stretching out into country ways and green fields, there are miles of houses, and the great bridge is such an everyday affair one hardly gives it a second thought. And all is business now, with tall buildings that the glance can hardly reach. There is no City Hall Park, but a great space of flagging, though the fountain remains. Business crowds hurry to and fro where ladies used to sit and chat while the young people strolled about.

Stewart's old marble building is common-place and dingy. Delmonico has gone on up-town stride by stride, and people have forgotten the old balcony where Jenny Lind sang, and Koenig played to a street packed with people. And the Prince de Joinville was here; also Louis Napoleon, the nephew of his uncle, who followed his steps as Emperor and loser of crown and all, and exile. And the young Prince Imperial, whose birth, so long desired and celebrated with state as was that of the young King of Rome, met with as melancholy a fate and early death as the Duc de Reichstadt. And here the young Prince of Wales dined. He came down Broadway with his suite and procession, and the little wife thought it a fine sight as she stood there to see.

Broadway stretches on and on. Union Square is really a thoroughfare; but she came up here with father and the boys when it was a grand new thing.

Did she really live in First Street with Aunt Daisy for a playmate, and Auntie Reed, and Nora, who was a much admired singer in her day, and who married a Roman Count; and the little Tudie who died? Did she have that splendid Christmas and the beautiful wax doll, that seems sacredly alive to them both; only under some spell of enchantment laid upon her by Merlin's clan?

Oh, how full the streets are now with their great high tenement-houses, pouring out their myriads of children all day long, of every nationality! But you still hear the old plays, "Open the Gates," and "Scotland's Burning," and "Uncle John is very Sick," and "Ring around a Rosy." Little Sally Waters still sits in the sun,—

"Crying and sighing for a young man,"

though modern poesy advises her to—

"Rise, Sally, rise,
Wipe your eyes out with your frock."

And the strange Chinatown, with its cabalistic signs, its men in blue shirts and pigtails, and often snowy white stockings and queer pointed slippers!

They wind slowly about Central Park. Was the Crystal Palace here? And no park? To them it seems as if New York must have been born this way, with electric lights, and push-buttons, and telephones, and cars, and telegraphs, and everything. And did grandmamma come up here to the Fair; and was it anything like the Museum of Art? And wasn't there any menagerie, or

playground, or donkey-riding or bicyclers?

Here is Washington Arch, with its memory of a great anniversary. Over on the west side there is a curious spot fenced in with wooden palings, where Alexander Hamilton planted thirteen trees for the Union, when there were only thirteen States, and named them all. Even before his sad death, South Carolina was braced to keep her from growing crooked; but she went awry in spite of it all. They have moved the house in which he lived, across the street, to save it from destruction; and it is in the shadow of a church. And here is the old mansion where Aaron Burr lived a brief while with Madame Jumel for his wedded wife,—a beautiful old place on a hill.

They go on up to the grand Washington Bridge. They are very fond of the story of Anthony Woolf swimming across the Harlem that dark night to get away from the Hessian regiment, and begging shelter of kindly hearts. They turn into a shaded road, and pass by lovely grounds, where wealth has made gardens and terraces akin to those of Paradise. And winding down the old road leading to the vale, they find a little dark-eyed girl whose great-great-grandfather was this same Anthony Woolf. And the Revolutionary War was a century and a quarter ago! Here they have lived for generations. The Cousin Jennie has gone, but the tall bright-eyed man who married her is still hale and hearty, with snowy hair and beard.

Yes, it is all New York up to Kingsbridge. There are many historic spots, and several old manor houses still standing. But it has a city aspect in spite of some wildness. They go around to Fordham; the old house perched on the hill is there, though it has been enlarged, and the street widened and straightened. Up on the old porch grandmamma sat and read; and it still hangs out with a tempting aspect, just as when she watched the pedestrians and the reverend fathers, who yet go up and down. And here is the little old Poe Cottage, about which such a flavor of romance lingers, though the place has been modernised into a "Terrace," and built about with city pretentiousness. It is still the same little low place, not a bit changed since she sat there on the door-sill and talked over her heroes with the poet. She can still see the tall spare figure of Mrs. Clemm in her rocking-chair doing her bit of mending and casting anxious glances at the son of her love, about whom so much has been written in later days. People still quote the "Raven" and "Ullalume," but all she cares to remember is "Annabel Lee," and the weird stories are not to her taste.

The old Odell house at West Farms was swept away long ago; Janey is a grandmother on a big farm that is crowded with summer boarders. Polly is in Oregon, her sons coming up with the country. And up a short distance, Jerome Park used to be thronged by the beauty and fashion of the city on racing days. And that has gone, too.

A little to the eastward is the beautiful Bronx Park, that is going to tread closely on its down-town rival. Oh, is Central Park really down-town? There are woods and wilds, ravines and the leisurely stream, trees that have been brought from everywhere, walks and drives, hills clothed with verdure, and the old Lorillard mansion still grand, with its legend of love and tragedy. Its gardens have changed indeed. Grandmamma remembers the small old man, who used to gather his rose leaves day by day from the fragrant beds,—Lorillard's rose-snuff was a great thing two generations ago.

"Did they really take snuff?" asks Ethel, in disgust. "How queer!"

"And you know," says Rose, "that Uncle Herman told us of a man who declined to take snuff, because if nature had intended his nose for a dust-pan, she would have put it the other side up."

How they both laugh at that!

They have a governess friend at home, but they are continually picking up knowledge in their rides and rambles about. They know the old city that was afraid to stray above Union Square, they know the modern city with its fifty years of improvements, and they will grow up to womanhood in Greater New York, the Star City of the Continent.

Here in one of the pleasant streets overlooking the park, they live. They are not rich; no one is now who doesn't go up in the millions. There is a pretty house looking like a hotel, an apartment house,—very moderate since it only accommodates three families. Joseph, the eldest son, who should have been a doctor, but is a fine architect, is married, and with his wife and two babies, and a dear friend who is an artist, has one side, and the other is grandmamma's. It is quite like a house by themselves, only there is a beautiful square hall, and a handsome stairway one could hardly have space for in a small house. Herman, the second son, lives with them, and is a scientist, and wields the pen of a ready writer. He has no taste for the toil and moil of money-getting,—a refined, studious, thoughtful young man.

They have all had their share of happiness. Dolly and Stephen are really old people, and have a flock of grandchildren. Hanny can see her own father again in Stephen, and Dolly, since she has grown stout and white-haired, suggests her mother. Stephen's sons are promising young business-men. There is only one little grave marking their prosperous pathway,—a baby girl, who went so soon they have hardly missed her.

Margaret is still handsome and aristocratic. Dr. Hoffman long ago gave up practice, his property interests increased so rapidly. Their sons and daughters are of the higher society order, intellectual, fine and noble, and a power in the land. One daughter has married an Englishman of rank, the other is the wife of a Bishop. Margaret is serene and satisfied, and still very fond of her little sister.

Dear Doctor Joe lectures mostly, and attends to hospital surgery, still keeping his tender sympathy for suffering humanity. After Grandmother Van Kortlandt went away, he brought Daisy Jasper home, to help fill the vacant spaces. And presently, when Mrs. Jasper was left alone, she came, too, the house being so large. Two mothers-in-law, according to the rules of family lore, ought to have quarrelled and sulked, but they didn't. And the babies that came were a source of delight. Though there was suffering in Daisy's life, there was so much joy that, to her, it was the unalloyed delight of living.

And Jim outgrew his fancy, and had many another one that did not strike deep enough in the soil to lead him to ask a woman to marry him. But he and Daisy were fast friends, and he saw that no one could ever have cared for her as well and wisely as dear Doctor Joe, with his wonderful tenderness.

Jim, brilliant and gay and witty, was a fine, fluent speaker, studying such eloquent models as Webster and Choate, and the vanished Clay. Did Hanny remember, when they had lost his election, and he, Jim, had turned out with the Democratic boys? There are grave questions now, on wider than party lines, and sometimes the hearts of thoughtful statesmen beat with an undefined fear.

The fun-loving, dancing side of his nature often asserts itself. Women adore him. Though he is not rich, the mothers smile on him for the "promise yet to be." Even Lily Williamson tries her arts; admiration is what she lives for now. She is one of the handsome, fascinating society vampires, who make great capital out of matrimonial infelicities, to appeal to the sympathies of really good and generous men, who are the more easily caught in the silken nets. One day she leaves her worthless drunken husband, when his money is all spent, and elopes with a young fellow of excellent family who has just come into a fortune, and later becomes one of the adventuresses that disgrace Americans in the eyes of European propriety.

Ben and Delia go abroad,—Ben in the interest of his paper, which is next to his wife; Delia to write travel letters for a weekly, and find material for her novel. It is quite a picnic, and they enjoy the economies.

Then the clouds that have been gathering a long, long while, break over the country, and all is tumult from end to end. The Seventh Regiment "boys" go down to Washington, with brave, laughing, high-hearted Jim, who understands that it is no child's play, but a bitter struggle that will call forth the best energies of the country, and who enlists for "three years or the whole war." Ben hurries home, and takes his place in the ranks. When things are at their lowest ebb, and men's hearts are sinking with fear, quiet, grave John buckles on a soldier's haversack and marches away. The others have substitutes.

Ah, what times they were! It is well that flowers can spring up on a battlefield. The little girl keeps track of her heroes. Kearny, who has seen Magenta and Solferino, meets his fate at Chantilly. Many another one who has come up to fame, many new ones, who are on the march to win or die.

John is wounded, patched up in a hospital, and honorably discharged, lamed for life. But he has done good work. Ben has a slight mishap, and Delia sends her two babies and their nurse to her sister's, and goes to the hospital, and remains. Women of brains and kindly impulses are much needed.

And one night some wounded are brought in. There has been a fateful reconnoisance, but it has saved the regiment from destruction on the next day. This limp figure in a captain's uniform is laid tenderly on a cot; but the surgeon, after a brief examination, shakes his head. Oh, surely, she knows that handsome face with the clustering dark curls!

He opens his eyes, and after an instant says in a faint voice, "Oh, Dele, is that you?" then lapses into insensibility. There is nothing to be done; that is the cruelest of all. Once again, after a long while, he moves his head, and opens his eyes again, brave and clear even in death.

"Delia," in a strange, strong voice that surprises her, "kiss them all good-night for me;" and James Odell Underhill has gone to the land of everlasting morning.

The war ends; and Ben comes home none the worse. He has reached his ambition, and is a "newspaper man" in every sense of the word. Delia sets up housekeeping, takes home the babies, and in the course of time adds two more to them.

But there is another ferment, and women are coming to the fore. There are clubs and suffrage meetings, lectures; women have even invaded churches, and preach; and colleges for higher education are springing up everywhere. There are poets and philosophers, there are teachers and orators; some of them ill-judged, because they are fond of notoriety; but there are always some wry sheep in the best of flocks. Have men always been honest and wise and honourable and grand?

Delia lectures and writes, and is one of the able women of the day. Mrs. Hoffman on her serene heights *is* mortified. Mother Underhill is sure Ben has to go to a restaurant, that his stockings are never mended, his buttons always off. But patent buttons are invented, and collar-buttons that cannot be ironed off by the "washerwoman," supply a long-felt want. Ben is stout and comfortable-looking, and the same grave, affectionate fellow. The children seem to come up without much sickness or trouble. When Mother Underhill feels disposed to cavil and criticise, for

she *is* shocked by the new woman's heresies, she recalls the "last good-night kiss," and is silent. What if there had been no one at hand to bring it home?

Delia's girls grow up into "modern women." It is true they do not spend half a day a week darning stockings, neither have they learned to put the exquisite over and under darns in tablecloths that the little girl could do by the time she was ten. But they sing and play; they are ready speech-makers, and clubs are glad to get them. They know about Greek antiquities and Central American wonders; they can take up the questions of the day intelligently; one paints really very well, and has entered pictures at the Academy. One is interested in industrial schools for girls, and the doctor, who is "Daisy Jasper," a tall, bright, good-looking woman, has a big, tender heart for all babies who are suffering, and trains many a poor mother how to care judiciously for her offspring.

But all the nieces think Aunt Nan just the loveliest and sweetest body in the world. They send her flowers and bric-à-brac; they beg her to come here and there to receptions and charity bazaars, and reunions of all sorts. She is so small and dainty, and they are all growing up to the new stature.

George has come home at last, after varying fortunes. He has seen San Francisco built and destroyed by fire, and rebuilt, and at last planned into a handsome city. He has mined and been in the wild life known only to the few remaining "forty-niners." He has gained and lost, been burned out and robbed, been one of the heads of a Vigilance Committee, and mayor of a town; and at last, when all is serene and prosperous, a great wave of homesickness overtakes him.

It is twenty years since he went away, though he has been home once in the time. He is spare, and has a weather-beaten look, and is old for his years. Is the money worth all the sacrifice?

He will build a house on their part of the old farm at Yonkers, where his heart has turned in many a weary hour; but Uncle Faid and Aunt Crete are dead. Barton Finch and Retty are living in town, and Barton is a thriving manufacturer. Yonkers has stretched out; and the suburbs are in that ugly transition state of new unworked streets and dingy cottages, for property has been cut up and lots sold cheaply. Father Underhill is offered a great price for his, and sells it. It is no longer George's ideal home.

Mrs. Eustis begs him to come up to Tarrytown. All the other Morgans are gone, and she is left alone. The place shall belong to George if he will give her a home her few remaining years.

He will not listen to this, but buys it, and builds on a new part. Then he marries a nice girl whose youth is past, and who is delighted with her kindly, indulgent husband. They have no children; but the nieces and nephews flock hither for rest and recreation, and are always fascinated with Uncle George's adventures.

Delia is at middle life when she writes her book, but then it is no young girl's story with an imperious Rochester-like hero, that we used to shiver over and adore. It is a serious, inspiriting woman's book, and carries weight in spite of the flood of new literature.

Charles Reed has followed a manly, pure, and high-minded Christian course, and left an impress on the hurrying world. Josie has grown broader and more intelligent, and made a delightful household mother. There have been children enough to satisfy Grandmamma Reed.

These old friends meet now and then, and talk as people will when they begin to go down the decline on the other side of the hill that they climbed with such a light step and high heart. How simple life was then compared with the ramifications of to-day!

The old songs, the old poets, the old novelists are gone. "Jane Eyre" no longer holds us spell-bound, though the three sisters in the bleak old Haworth Rectory will never be forgotten; nor that strange "Rosemary," and Huntingdon's "Lady Alice," thought to be so unsettling to the faith. We read "Robert Elsmere," and "John Ward, Preacher," and go our way tranquilly. Education has become almost a synonym for genius.

The gold of the Pacific Coast, the oil wells, the rich spoils of the earth, have been touched with the wand of industry and science. Railroads run to and fro; vessels dot the ocean; we cross it now in less than a week. Cables bring us hour-old news from everywhere. We go abroad for seasons and touch elbows with royalty, and are not abashed. We gather the beauty and wisdom of the old world. We build palaces, and spend on an evening's entertainment what would have been a fortune fifty years ago. We have private palace-cars, and luxurious yachts for pleasure, and others for speed, so swift that the "America's Cup" has remained in our keeping all these years.

Will we presently utter the old cry of the wise man who "gat him everything," "that all is vanity"?

When the children are asleep the little grandmother goes down to her son's study. He is not ambitious for show or wealth, but he has a rather luxurious side. The rugs are soft; the chairs are easy, the library is filled with choice books. Sometimes she sits and reads, and brave old Thackeray is one of her favourites. It is as her lover said,—it takes years and experience to see all the tender, hidden mysteries of his best speech.

Then she puts aside her book, and he his work, and they talk. "What your father said" and "your father thought this way," always has a charm for him, and he misses his father more than any one can imagine. He knows about the trip to Germany, and the visit to grandfather, with Paris at its highest estate and the beautiful Empress Eugénie. And London with its Queen, who has reigned

sixty years, and who, like his mother, has made part of the pilgrimage with a great sorrow buried in her heart. Some day he is going over it all; but he will not see the handsome, golden-haired empress, who is but a pale, sorrowful ghost, and perhaps not the Queen. He would go to-morrow, if he could take the little mother.

They talk, too, of the future. There have been fifty magical years when you look back,—years of discovery, of perfection in art and invention, of nations making rapid strides, of Africa illumined by explorers, of Japan coming to the front when hardly fifty years have elapsed since she first opened her gates to strangers.

And of the great City that has gathered the little towns of children who went out from her again in her arms,—will she be beautiful and grand and wise, and a power among men and cities? She has gathered heroes, living and dead, in her bosom, and for the greatest of all reared a marble temple. Oh, what will she be in fifty more years?

"You may live to see it," the little mother says, and smiles.

For herself there is the other country, and the loves she holds most dear. And because they go, when the worst sorrow is spent, one knows they will be found again, and that immortality is no myth, but the crown and seal of God's love to human love.

THE END

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