

"LISA'S LITTLE STORY."

BY FANNIE HODGSON BURNETT.

LISA crept up stairs, and paused at the door of the little saloon one moment, to look in at Doris and her admirers.

"She'd be awfully savage, in her quiet way, if she was to see me," she said. "But she don't see me; and, of course," with a shrug of her shoulders, "I'm not fit to be seen."

There was some truth in this final statement, too. A young person, in a second-hand-looking black alpaca, whose crushed folds and frills are full of dust, with her abundant shock of hair threatening to fall about her ears, and with her hat hanging from her hand by an absurd twist of veil, is certainly not a very presentable object.

And Doris inside! Ah, how immaculate! How cool, and fresh, and fair, Doris was; and how impossible it would have been to imagine her looking anything else but fresh and immaculate, and beautiful! Lisa had not really known how hot her own black was until she saw Doris' silvery-white, simple alpaca, too; but of a very different texture from Lisa's; and such a dainty, artistic affair, with its graceful train, and pearly pale-blue silk trimmings. Doris was fond of pearly tints, and always wore them. She had a great pale-pink rose in her hair now, and it was so becoming to her, that Lisa clenched her hand, and just checked a little groan. Not that she had any ill-feeling against Doris, poor child! It was because she was so bitter against her own dark, thin, overgrown young self.

"It's no wonder they adore her," she said. "And that is a new one, too. And he's as handsome as she is. Everybody's handsome but me. And, oh," in a passionate little burst, "what a little beast I am!"

Having bestowed this objectionable appellation upon herself, she cooled down somewhat; perhaps because her attention was specially attracted to the new visitor, who had turned her face toward her. She drew a step nearer the door, and warmed into new admiration.

"Oh!" she cried, under her breath, "if there is anything to choose between them, I think he is the handsomer of the two. He's actually beautiful! He has jet eyes, like a—like a deer!"

But at that very moment she was forced to ignominious flight. The charming individual, with eyes like a deer, was evidently going to

cross the room for something, so there was nothing left for Lisa but to gather up her alpaca, and dart up the third stair-case, like a young person who had suddenly been afflicted with dementia.

She reached her own room quite out of breath, and, in her excitement, shut the door with a bang, which made Doris raise her eyebrows when she heard it, and Mrs. Drummond exclaim, plaintively,

"There's Lisa, Doris! I wonder where she has been tearing about all day."

When she had made up her mind that her second daughter was neither a beauty nor a genius, Mrs. Drummond had given her over to the Fates. It was a religious belief of hers, that Lisa was always either "tearing" or "racing" about when she was out of sight.

"A girl who gets so disheveled must do something," she would say, resignedly. "And when did you ever see Lisa that she was not disheveled?"

She did not take into consideration the fact that the clothes handed down from Doris to her sister had always been made the very most of by that artistic and really deft-fingered young woman, the elder Miss Drummond, and that they had not, even in their early bloom, been made of the less perishable materials richer people could afford to buy. Even Lisa, herself, did not think of this.

"Florentine dust sticks so," she said, ruefully, as she looked at herself in the glass; "and I think, of all the places we have been to, Florence is the dustiest. But sometimes I think it is I who stick to the dust, and not the dust that sticks to me. Doris never looks dusty. She's not untidy, even when she is painting. I should be a palette in myself. I accumulate dirt. I'm that kind of person. Oh!" flinging herself into a chair before the spindle-legged toilet-table, and laying her head on her arms, "how I wish—how I wish I was like Doris!"

It seemed to more people than Lisa that Doris Drummond was to be envied somewhat. When she had been a child, she had been a handsome child—fair, clever, well-regulated, and amiable. When she became a woman, she was a beautiful woman; a woman with a wonderfully fair, finely-chiseled face, with large, deep-violet

eyes, with an exquisite, calm voice, and soft, warmly-tinted hair. She was a young woman who must necessarily be admired, and, added to this, she was a genius; at least, there were people who said so. She had at least a talent for painting charming, correct little pictures, and making excellent, correct little copies of good things. Whether she believed in herself or not, it would have been a difficult matter to decide; but Mrs. Drummond believed in her, and had lived on the Continent year after year, upon her account. She had lived economically, too, as she was obliged to do, with her small income. And when, in course of time, Doris occasionally sold a picture, she had rejoiced exceedingly, and believed in her great future with still greater firmness. She could do nothing with Lisa. Lisa was a Drummond; and no Drummond had ever been or done anything in particular. She had been a beauty herself, and it was a sad blow to her to find Lisa, at seventeen, a tall, thin slip of a girl, all eyes and hair, and with impossible mouth, and nose, and skin. "All three," she said, confidentially to Doris, "of the most indifferent description. A skin like an Italian, and a mouth like nothing in particular, and a nose— Well, I can say, in the presence of my Maker, Doris, that I have shed tears over her nose a score of times. But, I must say, I am devoutly grateful that it is not a snub. I do not think you could call it a snub, Doris. Do you?"

"No, mother," answered Doris, with her placid air.

Mrs. Drummond glanced up at her admiringly.

"Your own, my dear, has been an inexpressible comfort to me!" she sighed.

Doris smiled faintly.

"Yes," Mrs. Drummond continued, shaking her head. "And if you have noticed, Doris, noses, as a rule, are such an unsatisfactory, uncertain feature. It is a theory of mine, that more people's happiness and prospects for life are rained by noses than by anything else. Did you ever see a person with a Roman nose who looked as if it belonged to him? I must say, I never did. And what is more absurd than a Roman nose with one of those low foreheads, or receding-chins, for instance? As if the nose was trying to look at the chin, and the chin was trying to avoid it. 'And I am sure a little nose, Doris, an absolutely little nose, on one of those large, red faces, is really distressing. It seems to me as if the right people had all got the wrong noses. Just think how beautifully old Mr. Bebbington's little nose would snit Amelia Loring's face! It would be absolutely piquant. And I always shall believe that young Perry's intentions toward

Laura Bellingham would have been of the most serious character, if he could have become reconciled to her profile. And to think of her wretched marriage with her cousin, and all those frightful children!"

So, in consequence of her indefinite nose, Lisa was allowed to run rather wild. Nobody paid any particular attention to her, though certainly Doris was always kind enough, in a placid way. She was sent to school at Boulogne, and at sixteen was taken away, and began her wanderings with her mother and sister. She grew taller and thinner, and more objectionable in Mrs. Drummond's eyes. She wore Doris' cast-off garments, and was kept out of sight, as much as possible, by tacit consent on both sides. When they stopped at a new place, she explored every corner of it, and knew more of it in a month than the other two did in a year. She visited all galleries, and museums, and palaces, which were open to the proprietors of empty purses, and, in the end, gained, as a fashion of her own, an art education such as few girls possess. She did not know that she was gaining anything. She was only restless and curious in a childish way, and needed amusement; but she assimilated knowledge, nevertheless. Even Doris was startled sometimes by the truth and value of her crude criticism, and by the amount and nature of the information she found her able to give.

"She is a queer child," she would say, calmly.

"I don't know where she learns things."

"I see things," said Lisa, once. "How can I help learning? I don't know anything about schools, and all that; but I can't help seeing when I roam about so much."

"Where do you roam, principally?" inquired Doris.

"Anywhere where there are pictures or statuary; or—or—well, anything interesting. I must do something."

This evening, as she sat before the shaky toilet-table, the child was unhappy enough. She grieved over her own unsatisfactoriness far more deeply than her mother did. She was full of a hungry longing for some of Doris' beauty, or grace, or genius. She believed implicitly in Doris' genius. In secret she longed, with childish vehemence, for a few crumbs of the adoration lavished upon Doris.

"I'm a woman—almost," she said, staring at herself, with big, sad, tawny eyes. "I'm seventeen, and nobody has ever even thought of falling in love with me. Oh!" clasping her impassioned hands, "how I wish I had a lover—a lover exactly like the one down stairs!"

She was quite in earnest. There was not an

atom of coquetry in the manner in which she regarded the face the glass showed her. There were people who would have seen a rare enough picturesqueness in it, but she did not. It had not a thin, fair skin, and a straight nose, like Doris'. That was enough for her to know, since she had been measured by Doris, and had so measured herself all her life.

“I wonder what he says to Doris, when he—when he makes love to her,” she murmured; and then she blushed suddenly, remembering the eyes she had so poetically likened to a deer's.

She had not gone to bed when Doris came up stairs; and Doris, seeing the light, opened the door to look at her; and, standing against a background of darkness, with her own light in her hand, appeared so additionally charming, that Lisa uttered a little admiring exclamation.

“Oh, Doris!” she said.

“What is it?” asked Doris; and just at that moment moved her little lamp so that its light fell upon the soft pink of her full-blown rose.

“You are so—so pretty!” answered Lisa, and with so odd and pathetic an inflection in her voice, that Doris laughed.

“So pretty!” she echoed. “My dear Lisa, what is your objection?”

Lisa shook her head.

“None,” she said, ruefully. “Only—Come in, and let me look at you.”

Doris did as she was told. It must be admitted that she rather liked this kind of thing. She was even kind enough to trail her shining skirts across the room, and come to the glass itself. She was accustomed to Lisa's unceremonious admiration, but she was as nearly touched as it was possible for her to be when the girl leaned forward abruptly, and kissed her round, white wrist.

“Lisa!” she cried.

“I—I'm out of sorts,” answered Lisa, quite humbly, drawing her little brown hand hurriedly across her eyes. “I'm hot, and tired, and dusty, and—I think I've got a headache. Never mind me, Doris.”

Doris cleared her throat gently, and looked at herself in the glass again. Ah, it was that, was it? So like Lisa, to be vehement, and pathetic, and a trifle hysterical, over every-day physical inconveniences. And yet, in a well-regulated, sisterly manner she was quite fond of Lisa.

“Lisa,” she said, “I have been thinking that I should like you to help me to entertain people on Thursday night, my birthday, you know. So don't run away, and keep out of sight. There will be some new people here, an American lion among the rest—a Mr. Adrian Basilhurst.”

“A lion?” said Lisa. “What is he a lion for?”

“Because he cannot help it, I suppose,” said Doris. “If you mean why do people make a lion of him, that is explained easily enough. He has an immense deal of money. If he was not an unusual sort of person, he would be so rich as to be positively unpleasant.”

“I can stand that,” said Lisa. “I thought he was an author, or an artist. I can stand him if he is only rich.” And then she started, slightly, “Was he here to-night?” she asked.

“Yes,” Doris answered.

“O—oh!” said Lisa.

After that there was a little pause, broken by Doris.

“There is my green tulle, you can wear,” she said. “I have done with it.”

“Thank you,” answered Lisa. “You are very kind, Doris, though green isn't at all my color, and I shall look demoniacal in it.”

“No, you won't,” said Doris. “And do not use such strong terms, Lisa.”

She went out of the room shortly afterward, carrying her pretty train daintily over her arm; and Lisa was left to herself in a rueful mood enough.

When Doris' light footsteps had died out of hearing, Lisa even burst into a wretched little laugh.

“Green tulle!” she said. “Green tulle, of all colors of tulle in the world. She would look better in orange-color herself than I shall in green.”

It was a little hard, but it was her usual fate. Pale-green, and lilacs, and blues, which made her delicate olive skin look almost unwholesome, were the very thing for Doris, and consequently Lisa was invariably doomed to them in their faded stages. She seldom had a positively new garment, poor Lisa! It was imperative that Doris should look well, but she was not of much consequence. “And traveling is so expensive. And how much of your allowance have you left, Lisa?” Mrs. Drummond always found it necessary to say at some time or other during the month. It was a miserable pittance enough, this poor, little allowance; and though it was Lisa's by courtesy, she seldom reaped the benefit of it.

If she had only had something respectable left to her this month, just enough to buy one solitary dress for Doris' birth-night party! She could have bought one for so little; a maize-colored gauze, for instance, which she could have made herself, in a fashion elaborate enough to atone for its simplicity, or rather lack of other trimming.

“It is so easy to puff, and frill, and plait those

light, airy things," she said, with a sigh. "And they always look pretty when they are fresh."

She put her hand in her pocket, and drew out her purse. But there was little use in examining. There was some money there, but not enough. "Just like my hat-trimmings and dress-materials always turn out, just enough to drive one mad. Only a few liras more would do it," she said.

She threw the purse across the room, and let it lie there. The thought of the green tulle made her desperate. "He would be sure to think she had chosen it herself, and would naturally despise her. How could he help despising a yellow-faced creature, who was so utterly devoid of intellect as to wear a green dress. Oh!" she groaned, with all the inconsistent fervor of youth, "I wish I was dead and buried!"

She went to sleep, picturing to herself the contempt with which Doris' admirer would regard her, and she awakened thinking of the green tulle in the early morning. She was really too miserable to sleep, and she sprang out of bed, and began to dress.

"I must do something," she said, feverishly, as she went to the glass to arrange her hair; and it was, as she said the words, that a sudden, wild thought played across her mind. She had just taken the pins out of her hair, and let it fall loose about her shoulders. Such hair as it was, too—at least, in the matter of hair, she could triumph over Doris, though she had never thought of doing so. Up to this time, she had been rather prone to regard the great, heavy, curly rope as something of a bore, always threatening to tumble down, always needing new supplies of hair-pins, and setting them at defiance with its obstinate weight. It was so long that it almost reached her knee. It was so thick that she lost patience with it; and it was so prone to twist into loose curls, that it was out of the question to keep it quite straight. But just this minute it brought her heart into her mouth.

"Why didn't I think of it before?" she gasped. "It is the most expensive thing one can buy, and I'm sure they must pay decently for it, at least. There is that little snuffy man in the next street—Guiseppe Corsini—he hasn't got a tress in his place like this," holding up a long lock.

She made a mad little dash at a drawer, and took out a pair of scissors. She did not pause for a moment to think of the thousand and one things which would have presented themselves as objections to Doris' well-balanced mind. She lifted her hair, and deliberately cut off two heavy under-tresses.

"I will not wear the green tulle, if I can help it," she said through her little shut teeth.

Half an hour later, Doris, who had risen early, also met her younger sister coming up the staircase, in her wide-brimmed hat and rough shawl.

"Lisa!" she exclaimed, "what can have induced you to go out so early. It is scarcely respectable. And how excited you look! And your hair down! You are getting too old to wear your hair in that way. And your cheeks flaming!"

"Flaming!" said Lisa, putting her hands up to them with a short, nervous laugh. "Flaming! That's queer! I went out because it was cool. The guide-books may say what they like, Doris, but the days are not much cooler, during September, in Florence, than they are in August. It is only in the early morning that one can enjoy a cool walk."

"You do not look cool, at least."

Lisa ran up stairs with her small purse crushed tight in her trembling hand. No wonder she was disheveled and excited. Guiseppe Corsini, who was a little scamp, had cheated her outrageously; had made her even cut off more of her hair, and this was why her hair was down; but she had lire enough to buy the maize tarlatane, and even a few flowers, and leave a trifle over.

"Diagonal cuffs," she murmured, "and plenty of them, and two ruffles; and I have some black lace; and one can get tube roses, and leaves, and things, for next to nothing. And, oh!—what a relief it is to think of it! I even wish it was Thursday night now."

But Fate was more cruel than she could have fancied. She went down to breakfast looking radiant, and could scarcely control herself. But before the meal ended, she was cool enough. Over her second cup of chocolate, Doris looked up at her.

"Lisa," she said, "how much of your allowance have you left this month?"

Lisa felt the blood fly to her forehead, and then she turned quite cold.

"How much!" she faltered, in positive agony.

"Yes," returned Doris. "I want to borrow what you have left. You see, there will be so many little things to buy, and I want plenty of flowers, and— What is the matter? What were you going to do with it?"

"I was going to buy a new dress," stammered Lisa. "I—"

Doris opened her eyes with just a suggestion of cold surprise.

"A new dress!" she echoed. "I thought you were to wear my green tulle!"

"Oh, Doris!" cried the poor girl. "Green makes me so diabolical, and—and—" And

the fact was, she was obliged to stop because her words seemed to choke her.

“Oh!” said Doris, a trifle more frigidly still. “If you have any use for the money—if you do not wish—of course—”

Lisa could not speak. She pushed her chair aside, and ran up to her room once more. She flung herself, face downward, upon the bed, and burst into a passion of tears.

“I may as well give it up,” she cried. “And I will. I cannot even sell any more now, because she would think I had kept it back. And I suppose it is selfish in me, too. She uses all her money, only—only—everything seems to be so becoming to her.”

She felt that there was quite a tragic element in her misery, but she did not quite like to blame Doris. She was more disheveled than ever when she got up and emptied her purse. She wrote a few words to Doris on the scrap of paper in which she rolled the coin.

“DEAR DORIS,—I was a selfish little animal to care at all. And I do not care either; only green is ghastly. I am not pretty, like you, you see. Here is the money; and I wish it was more.

“LISA.”

Doris found the girlish scrawl on her table, when Lisa was gone out; and when she read it, she smiled, a gentle, tolerant smile. It was so like Lisa. And she counted the money carefully, and put it into her pretty pearl purse with a feeling of relief.

The toilet on Thursday night was a horrible task to Lisa. A childish spirit of grotesque defiance seized upon her when, after helping Doris to dress, she retired to her own room with the green tulle.

“I will make myself look as frantic as possible,” she said. “What do I care? What does anybody care? Who will look at me when Doris is near?”

She shook her hair out, and let it hang loose below her waist, and then she put a real flower in it, laughing savagely.

“Red and green will suit the queen,” she quoted. “And I look like an Ashantee!”

When her dress was on, she thought of something else. She ran down stairs, into the studio, and stole some of Doris’ vermilion, and brought it back, laughing more than ever.

“There isn’t color enough,” she said, and forthwith dipped the corner of a handkerchief into the powder, and rubbed it vindictively on to her cheeks.

Then she sat down on the edge of the bed, her eyes wide open, bright, and staring with misery.

She dare not cry, for fear the paint should come off. She would not go down until the company had arrived, and then Doris could not send her back. She laughed a little again, when she thought how horrified her mother and sister would be when they saw how she had decked herself for the sacrifice.

“Good Heavens! What a bizarre-looking young woman!” some one said to Mr. Adrian Basilhurst, when she came into the room.

Doris almost turned pale as Lisa advanced toward her.

“Lisa!” she cried, “what have you been doing with yourself? What induced you to dress your hair in that absurd fashion? And what is the matter with your face? You are a figure for a masquerade!”

She was all the more amazed because she saw Mr. Adrian Basilhurst looking at the girl in a puzzled, half-startled sort of way.

“Is that little girl your sister?” he asked her afterward. “I did not know you had a sister, Miss Drummond.”

If Lisa had never distinguished herself before, she distinguished herself this evening. She amazed Doris, and made her mother gasp for breath more than once. She was, apparently, in such wild spirits, that a sensitive person would have found it painful to watch her. She talked and laughed, and made other people laugh so with her daringly witty speeches, that she was quite a prominent feature of the entertainment. Individuals who had scarcely realized the fact of her existence heretofore, began to listen to her, and wonder.

“What has she been thinking, to stand in the back ground so long,” murmured a reflective, elderly artist. “She is dressed in defiance of every rule of good taste, her cheeks are painted infamously, and she is too excitable; but eyes like hers would be any woman’s redemption; and there is ten times as much in her as there is in that pretty, correctly-outlined Miss Doris.”

Of course, everybody did not see this. There were those who were scandalized, and all the more scandalized, because the girl won a sort of queer triumph. There was one person who was a sore trouble to Lisa, and this was no other than Mr. Adrian Basilhurst. Whatever she did or said, she could not look up without finding that this gentleman was watching her. And in an unusual manner, too, with a kind of gentle pity in his dark eyes. “As if he was sorry for me,” said Lisa, inwardly, quite gulping down a sob. “Oh, what a kind, beautiful face he has!” At last, toward the end of the evening, she found herself set in a slight tremor by seeing Mr. Ad-

rian Basilhurst cross the room, and advance toward her. He came to ask her to dance with him, but Lisa noticed that he did not speak to her as the other men did. Something in the gentle kindness of his voice and manner made her feel ashamed of her vermilion.

She made no more wild speeches when they danced together; she laughed no more excitable laughs; her excitement had died out, and left her quite pale, except where the horrible paint burned her cheeks. She wondered how he could care to dance with her at all. But he seemed to enjoy himself very much in a quiet way, so much that if she could have forgotten her vermilion, she might have gained courage. As it was, she could not, and when the dance was ended, and her partner suggested that they should turn into the studio to cool themselves, she was quite relieved.

"You look tired," he said, "and even as if you were not quite well. Miss Drummond's pictures will refresh us both."

But the fact was that Lisa could not quite understand him; something in his manner puzzled her; something which suggested that he had a motive in paying her these attentions. He made her sit down when they reached the studio, and he brought her refreshments with his own hands, and then he took a seat near her, and talked to her in a low, well-trained voice, about pictures, and books, and divers of her Florentine favorites, until she felt as if she must be dreaming.

"How much you know about everything," she burst forth, in her innocent, headlong fashion, at last. "And how—how kind you are to tell me so much. If it had been Doris, or if I had been like Doris—"

He stopped her, with a smile,

"Suppose I tell you the truth of the matter?" he said.

It was such a remarkable thing to say, under the circumstances, that Lisa could only stammer a word or so, incoherently.

"The truth?" she said. "I don't—"

But he still smiled, and appeared so undisturbed that she was further from understanding him than ever.

"I have known you very much longer than I have known Miss Doris," he said. "I have known you for three months at least."

"You!" gasped Lisa. "You have known me?"

"Yes," he answered. "I have known you for three months, and I have a piece of your property in my pocket now."

He looked a little grave, but with a peculiarly gentle gravity, as he drew something from his

pocket—a something wrapped in a small compass.

"Is it something I lost?" Lisa faltered. "I am always losing things."

"No," he replied. "You parted with it willingly." And then and there he unfolded the paper, and showed her the long, curly twist she had sold to Guiseppe Corsini for lire enough to help to buy the maize dress.

"Don't be angry with me, Miss Lisa," he said. "It was a fancy of mine." But there he broke off.

Lisa's trembling hands had fallen upon her knee, her hot blushes threw her vermilion into the shade, and her eyes were full of tears of bitter humiliation.

"Oh, where did you get it?" she cried. "How did you know? How could he dare to tell?"

It was not after the manner of ordinary modern young men that Mr. Adrian Baselhurst made his explanation; considering the dramatic situation, he was very untheatrical, indeed, very straightforward, and very frankly in earnest.

"Will you let me tell you all about it?" he said.

"If you please." And Lisa bent her head, in spite of her emotion.

"I have been in Florence three months," he explained; "and the first day I came here I saw you. I was in the Church of the Annunciation, and you came in. You looked pale and unhappy, and you knelt down on the steps of one of the altars, and said a prayer. I knew, by your manner, that you were not a Catholic, and I watched you, and your face fixed itself on my memory. Since then I have seen you almost every day; sometimes in the street, sometimes in the picture-galleries and churches; and I have always seen something in your face which did not belong to your youth. I have wondered what it was, and it has troubled me in a way you would, perhaps, scarcely understand. I have seen a good deal of life, Miss Lisa, and you are too young to look tired and fagged out. Well, one morning I went out early, and met you in a side street. You had something under your shawl, and you looked a little frightened. So, I followed you at a safe distance, and I saw you turn into a small, dark shop. When you came out, I went in. The man was holding his purchase in his hand, and I knew it at once. I did not like to see the oily little rascal hold it; and so I indulged myself in the luxury of buying it from him. He cheated me, as, I have no doubt, he cheated you; but I knew he would. Since that time I have had it in my pocket, and I should like to keep it there,

if you will let me. I never dreamed of your being Miss Drummond's sister. I did not know she had one. And when you came into the room to-night, for a second or so, I did not feel quite sure of you——"

Indiscreet and ill-regulated to the last, Lisa burst into passionate tears of shame.

"It was no wonder," she said. "I had made myself as dreadful as I could. I think it was out of spite. My cheeks are covered with paint. I stole it out of Doris' color-box. I wonder you don't despise me. I—I have been so miserable."

"Never mind that," said her hero, almost tenderly. "Perhaps I may be able to help you to forget it. I want you—— Miss Lisa, promise that you will let me be your friend."

Lisa wiped tears and vermillion, together, off her cheeks, with her handkerchief, and regarded Doris' lion with beautiful, woeful, childishly grateful eyes.

"If you will," she cried, innocently. "If you will. I don't deserve it. And it is like a dream. I never had a friend in my life."

"Lisa!" exclaimed Mrs. Drummond, shaken out of all self-possession, when, scarcely six months afterward, Mr. Adrian Basilhurst had a little interview with her, in the course of which he asked her for the hand of her youngest daughter. "Surely, not Lisa, Mr. Basilhurst!"

"Mamma," remarked Doris, who sat near, looking rather pale, "Mr. Basilhurst said Lisa." And Lisa it was, though it was some time before even Lisa herself believed it.

"I do not see why it isn't Doris, instead," she said, reflectively, on several occasions after she was married; and, on one of these occasions, Adrian went to her side, and showed her a crushed scrap of paper, with a few lines written upon it, in a girlish hand.

"DEAR DORIS," it ran—"I was a selfish little animal, to care at all. And I do not care, either; only green is ghastly. I am not pretty, like you, you see. Here is the money, and I wish it was more. "LISA."

"I picked that up just before you came into the room, that night, and could not help reading it," Basilhurst said. "And I could not tell you how the poor little scrawl went to my heart, Lisa."

Lisa looked up quickly.

"Might it have been Doris, if you had not seen that?" she asked.

Adrian laid his hand on her shoulder, and kissed her.

"No, no!" he answered. "Not Doris. I do think it would ever have been Doris. But it was that which made me speak so soon. For you must confess, my dear," with a laugh, "that it was rather an unusual proceeding."

ONE LESS TONIGHT.

BY MARIE J. MACCOLL.

HERE she stood, beneath the mantle,
Just a year ago, to-night,
With her rosy face uplifted,
In the glowing rosy light.
Holding up a tiny stocking,
While her sweet voice eagerly
Pleaded, "Won't you hang it, mamma,
Where good Santa Claus can see."

Lone I sit by dying embers,
Christmas Eve has come and gone,
And the bell in yonder steeple
Slowly tolls the hour of one.
One, my heart re-echoes sadly,
Two were here one year ago;
By my side my boy lies dreaming;
She is sleeping 'neath the snow.

Here, with soft hands meekly folded,
Did she hush her evening prayer;
But no white-robed form now kneeleth
By the tiny vacant chair.
Once for all the tired lips murmured,
"Now I lay me down to sleep,"
And her blue eyes closed forever,
In a slumber long and deep.

True, we know 'tis but the casket
We have hidden from our sight;
In our Father's crown the jewel
Gleams forever, pure and bright.
So we try to bow in silence,
'Neath the blow that on us fell,
Knowing He whose hand had dealt it,
Ever "doeth all things well."

But we miss her, sadly miss her,
And we list, alas! in vain,
For the sound of coming footsteps
We shall never hear again.
Little feet, the loving Saviour,
Early through the Pearly Gate,
Led them, knowing, in life's journey,
Thorns must wound them, soon or late.

Oh, the loneliness and sorrow,
In our hearts, and in our home,
When we know on no to-morrow
Will our absent darling come.
Why this cross? we, grieving, question;
God, who took our idol, knew,
If our treasure were in heaven,
We would long to follow, too.