

Meeting Colonel Benton on the Avenue, soon after the delivery of his great speech, I told him I wished to make my acknowledgments for the instruction and satisfaction I had derived from reading that extraordinary production. The old gentleman strutted and swelled like an exaggerated turkey-cock.

"Did you like it, Sir? did you like it?" he inquired, with supreme self-complacency.

"That word don't express my feelings at all," I replied. "The speech was an illumination to me. A year's reading would not have supplied me with the information which was contained in your exposition of the Treaty of Utrecht. You exhausted the subject, Sir, and there is nothing more to be said on either side."

"You take so much interest in this matter, Sir," he answered, "that I should like to illustrate two or three points that I had time merely to glance at in the Senate. Come and see me, and I will make every thing plain to you."

"Pray tell me, colonel, what you meant when you spoke of cutting General Cass for the simples."

"Did you not understand that, Sir? The term has a local signification. In my State horses are often afflicted with a disease known as the simples. It is something like the blind staggers. The suffering animal loses control of himself, reeling about under the influence of the malady, and unless speedily relieved, dies after a short time. Taken in the early stage of the attack, a vein judiciously opened in the mouth or neck will generally restore the creature. Then we have another horse distemper, known as the *big head*. It prostrates the animal at once, and is generally fatal. The head swells to twice the usual size, blindness frequently ensues, and recovery rarely takes place. A few cases have occurred in which the horse has been saved by a desperate remedy. When in the last extremity a charge of powder is fired into the back of his neck, and he is killed or cured at once. Generally the horse dies, but there are said to have been instances where the creature has been saved. Now if I had not cured Cass by cutting him for the simples, by Jove, Sir, I would have shot him for the big head."

ONE QUIET EPISODE.

THEY had been waiting for her all the evening; tea had been ignored altogether in the general anxiety, and at last they had settled down round the fire. Tom absorbed in a book as usual, and consequently oblivious to surroundings; Letty half kneeling, half sitting, on the hearth-rug; Norah in her father's chair, knitting in defiance of suspense and the dimness of the fire-light. The good mother was in the

kitchen superintending the preparation of some marvelous tea-cakes.

They had settled down thus, because it seemed the best plan. It was no use "fidgeting," Norah said, discreetly. She would come, of course; she had promised to come, and she never broke her word in her life. "She" meant Jenny Galloway.

"Never broke her word in her life!" said Letty, after pondering the matter over. "That was what you said, Norah. Don't you mean that you never knew her to break her word?"

"No," answered Norah, decidedly. Norah was decided, just as Letty was thoughtful and conscientious. "No; I mean what I say. She is the sort of girl who could no more break her word than she could be glaringly-dishonest in a great matter. You don't know her, you see, and I do. She was pupil-teacher at Miss Fell's for five years—all the time I was there; and in the worst of her troubles—and she had plenty, I can tell you—she never did one thing, no, not one thing, that could lead one to believe she could ever falter in doing what was right. She was only fourteen, too, when her father died, and she came to school to be a drudge for Miss Fell; but she was just as bright and quick-witted and industrious then as she is to-day, and the way she managed all those troublesome children was a positive miracle."

Just at this moment Tom rather incomprehensibly roused himself and looked up from his book—incomprehensibly, because it was so seldom that any thing had power to rouse him when he was reading.

"Who is it you are talking about?" he asked, in his usual absent fashion, his delicate, intellectual, unhealthy face looking scarcely half awake even while he spoke.

"Jenny Galloway," answered Norah, "the young lady who is coming here to-night to pay me a visit before she is married. We have been talking about her all day, only I suppose you have not heard us."

"I dare say not," he said, and turning to his book again, heard nothing, saw nothing, and forgot himself and the world so utterly that in the lapse of ten minutes Jenny Galloway was as much of a myth to him as before.

It was scarcely ten minutes after this that the cab which brought her rattled up to the door, and Norah, rushing out of the room with very unusual enthusiasm, met her guest with open arms, creating quite a little excitement thereby in the narrow hall. Letty was quite bewildered, it was so unlike Norah to be enthusiastic—it was so unlike her, in fact, to be any thing but sensible and decided and cool; and here she was with her face absolutely on fire with joy, fairly dragging the new arrival into their midst.

And seeing this new arrival, Letty was

bewildered again. She had been quite sure of seeing a soft-voiced, quiet little creature with a saintly face—the sort of woman people would be likely to invest with poetic attributes; but this Jenny Galloway of Norah's, who entered amidst a pleasant bustle, half held in Norah's arms and laughing in a ringing, high-pitched, joyous fashion—well, the truth was, Letty was compelled to admit that she was too thorough a girl, and too bright and commonplace, to look saintly in the least. She was rather tall, and very supple of figure; her face was soft and round, and even a trifle babyish; and her upcurled lashes gave her big hazel-brown eyes an innocent, surprised air. And somehow or other—so Letty decided—though she was by no means pretty, she was lovable and attractive from head to foot. She thought this even at first when the girl, setting aside the ceremony of their introduction, stooped down and kissed her, and shook hands unaffectedly with poor sensitive, awkward Tom; but ten minutes later she began to comprehend dimly how it was that Norah appeared so infatuated. She was so honestly unsophisticated, and seemed so ready to enjoy herself with *naïve* if rather unceremonious heartiness. Indeed, when, having been up stairs to remove her things, she came down without her hat, and slipped down upon the hearth-rug, nestling up to Norah with her eyes all alight, chatting and laughing like a talkative child let loose from school, Letty could not help wondering if she really was twenty years old, as she had heard.

"I wonder how it is that I have never seen a girl like her in all my life before," she said to herself, after looking on with secret admiration for a while. "What pretty hair she has! And how unlike a woman she seems! and how fond of her the lover Norah spoke of must be! I am sure I should be fond of her myself if I was a gentleman."

It seemed quite a natural thing that every one should like her, and that she should be installed prime favorite at once. The good mother, coming in warm from the kitchen and the tea-cakes, fell in love with her at once in a motherly style, and was rendered quite happy by the hearty, girlish way in which the said tea-cakes were praised and appreciated. Even Tom was wakened up a little, and chancing to glance up once, found his attention arrested by the careless, comfortable grace of the figure on the hearth-rug near Norah. He noticed the pretty hair, too, just as Letty had done: it was pretty hair, soft and thick, and massed up in a great loose curly knot, like the wondrous graceful knots on the heads of Greek goddesses; but Jenny Galloway's face had not a Greek, or even a tolerably regular, feature to boast of. Perhaps in the whole of his life

before he had never looked at a woman as he looked at Jenny Galloway that night. He had always been too studious to care for women; and besides this, his studious habits had worked upon his naturally delicate constitution, and made him almost an invalid. So he had been shut out from the world through all his manhood, and the sight of such a woman as Jenny was a bewildering novelty to him. Before the evening was half over he began to discover that though her ringing laugh disturbed him and prevented his reading, he did not exactly object to hearing it; in fact, it was actually pleasant. He liked to look at her too; and though he was quite unconscious of the fact, he looked at her with absent-minded admiration of her every peculiarity. Her small turned-up nose, her dimples, her wide but nicely curved red lips, her unclassical chin, and her lovely upcurled lashes, were each charming alike to his ignorant and unaccustomed eyes. He had never seen an orthodox beauty, so he was not fastidious; and besides, as I have said before, the girl really was attractive in defiance of her imperfect style.

When she bade him good-night before retiring she upset his equilibrium altogether with the mere touch of her soft, heartily grasping young hand; and after she had gone out of the room with the girls he could not return to his studies at all, but sat poring over his book without being in the least conscious of what he was reading. Indeed, his usually quiet face wore so disturbed and uncertain an expression that the good mother, always on the alert, looking up from her darning of stockings, saw that something was wrong, and at once laid his perturbation to the merry chatter of the girls.

"They have been too noisy for you, my dear," she said, regretfully. This silent only son of hers she regarded quite in the light of the figurative ewe lamb, the more so because his ill health made him so great an anxiety to her mother heart. "I am afraid they have annoyed you; but girls will be girls, you know; and this friend of Norah's seems such a bright, lively young creature."

He gave a little start at the sound of her sweet, deprecating voice, and then recovering himself, closed his book and stood up, stretching his long limbs—a pale, overworked young man, with an actually gentle face, and a mouth too sweet and feminine not to be a dangerous feature in a man whose chief experience of the world had lain within four walls.

"The girls," he repeated, abstractedly: "Norah's friend. No, I don't think they disturbed me, or—or at least—I should say it mattered very little."

"You shall have a fire in your own room to-

morrow night," said his mother. "It would be a pity to check their enjoyment, dear. I never saw Norah enjoy herself so heartily as she seemed to this evening. It is so unlike Norah to be excitable like other girls. Yes, you shall have a fire up stairs to-morrow."

"Thank you," he answered, a trifle hesitatingly; and as he said it a faint color showed itself on his thin cheek.

And in the mean time, up stairs in one of the tiny bedrooms, Jenny and Norah were discussing the future, as they crooned together, in true girl fashion, over the fire.

"Are you happy?" said Norah, half wonderingly. "Are you quite happy? It seems such a queer thing to think that you are going to be married, and have had a romance, just like the people in books. Is it as nice as you thought it would be, Jenny?"

"It is a great deal nicer," answered Jenny, with pretty frankness, "because it is more real. In the books, you know, every thing seemed to be brought to an end after the wedding, but we—Robert and I—look forward to being happy together all our lives, until we grow old and die. And it is the being happy *together*, Norah, that makes it all seem so beautiful. I had quite made up my mind, you see, to being a teacher all my days, and when I fell in love with Robert, and Robert fell in love with me, it made me happier than it would have made most people, because I had nothing before, and after that it seemed as if I had every thing—all at once, you may say."

"But," said Norah, reflectively, "if this had never happened, would you have been happy always alone at Miss Fell's?"

"I would have tried to be," said Jenny, her bright face falling somewhat; "and when one tries honestly one can hardly fail. But oh, Norah"—with a sudden subtle softening of both voice and eyes—"since the very first night when Robert kissed me and said, 'Is this my wife?' and I answered, 'Yes,' I have never said my prayers once without thanking God for him."

It was not a rich man she was going to marry: he was only a poor young drawing-master, this Robert to whom she was so willing to render up her whole existence. There was plenty of hard work before her, and perhaps something of privation; many small economies and much self-denial; but poor pretty Jenny Galloway was quite happy in her prospect of facing them for Robert's sake. A small household in which she could reign supreme as the mistress of Robert's heart and life would hold quite enough of bliss to seem restful and fair to her simple mind. Only give her life to Robert and Robert's to her, and she was unselfish and tender enough to take the two threads of existence into her loving young hands, and weave them from heart to heart into a cord bright to see and firm to depend upon.

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Catching glimpses of her from day to day, and sharing with the rest in his silent, restrained manner the influence of her light-hearted, innocent joyousness, poor absent-minded Tom Grahame found his studies seriously interrupted. It was useless to retire to his room: one merry laugh would rouse him strangely, even if for a few minutes he had managed to fix his attention upon his books, and five minutes after such a sound had fallen upon his ear he would wake up to discover that he was listening for a repetition of it, and had forgotten all else. He never asked himself why this was. Two weeks after the girl's arrival he was quite as unconscious of the intensity of his own admiration for her as he had been the first night he watched her as she nestled on the hearth-rug close to Norah's side, the light of the fire touching her hair.

He had never thought again of Norah's reference to her approaching marriage, and though he had observed once or twice that his mother accompanied the two girls on mysterious shopping expeditions, which seemed to occupy much attention and give rise to grave consultations, he knew nothing of what their object might be. The fact was that the simple bridal outfit was the matter under deliberation, and the good mother, ruled by the gentle instinct of maternity, was as deeply interested in its small economies as if she had been managing the affair for a daughter of her own. But of this the young man knew nothing, and no one thought of telling him. It would have been such incongruous nonsense to imagine that Tom cared to hear bridal outfits discussed. So Tom, looking on from his apparent stronghold of preoccupation, began to regard Norah's favorite with a nervous, secret admiration. In time the mere sight of her thrilled him to his finger ends, and the sound of her voice, when she re-entered the room after having been absent for a while, set his heart beating.

"Don't let me interrupt you," she would say, coming in sometimes when he was pretending to read; "I'm only going to write a letter." And then when she sat down, and drawing ink and paper toward her, began to write one of Robert's letters quite unconsciously, he would sit opposite in an agony of sensitive watchfulness, taking in the bright charm of her innocent, self-possessed face, and making notes of every peculiarity in spite of himself, from the shadow of the thick brown lashes to the simple dress and the round, long, white throat with the strip of black velvet about it. They rarely talked to each other, though Jenny liked and admired him very much, sheerly because she was so generously fond of the rest of the family. She thought he was quiet, and worked too hard, and she felt somewhat drawn toward him because he was so pale, and his mother had said he was

so delicate, and so her manner gained an additional touch of warmth from her pity.

"You have a dreadful cough," she said to him, with naïve concern, stopping in her run down the stairs just as he was going out one foggy night. "I am sure you oughtn't to go into the damp air without something round your throat. Stop a moment, and I will run up to my room and bring you a woolen muffler I have in my trunk."

She did not wait for his reply, but turned round, and was half-way up the staircase before he could speak. And she came down again just as quickly with the woolen muffler in her hands.

"There!" she said. "You see, if you fold this round your throat, it will protect it. It used to be poor papa's; he was consumpt—" She had been going to say "consumptive," but stopped. "He was very delicate," she added.

It was not a romantic sort of thing to look at, the woolen muffler, but it was a very dangerous thing for Tom Grahame, and when he took it from the friendly young hands, and began to try to put it on, with Jenny standing near, under the hall lamp, he was so nervous and excited that he was quite clumsy about it. And Jenny seeing this, and being so accustomed to wait on people and offer assistance upon all occasions, volunteered to help him, quite forgetting, in her warm-hearted interest, that it was Norah's brother, instead of Norah, she was talking to.

"Oh dear!" she said, in some consternation at his awkwardness; "that isn't the way. Let me help you." And she rearranged the refractory folds and ends with the merest touches in the world.

But the next instant all at once she started and looked up with half-questioning, half-frightened eyes. As her head had been bent she had felt something brush against her hair, ever so lightly and ever so swiftly, but she felt it, and at the same time she was sure she had felt that Tom Grahame stooped for just one second. And when she started and looked up she saw that he seemed oddly excited, and also that he faltered miserably instead of returning her gaze. Still he did not speak, and how could she accuse him; and puzzled as she was, what could she accuse him of? though for one brief moment she had been almost certain that his lips had touched her hair. She drew back a little, coloring scarlet.

"It is right now," she said.

"Thank you," he answered; "you are very good. Will you tell my mother that I shall not be in until late? Good-night, Miss Jenny." And the next minute she was left standing alone, and the door had closed upon him.

In the intensity of her bewilderment she actually put her hands up to her eyes and rubbed them.

"I can't believe it," she said; "and yet for a minute I was so sure that I was quite angry. But then he is the last person in the world likely to do such a foolish, unkind thing. Oh dear, no; I must be mistaken." And she went into the parlor, humming a little song Robert was fond of, just at the very time poor excited, wretched, yet happy Tom Grahame was turning the corner of the street, thrilled to his very heart by the memory of his mad and uncontrollable audacity.

It was so unlike him to have done such a thing that by the time they met again Jenny had quite banished from her mind the possibility of his guilt, and accordingly met him without any embarrassment. It seemed far more probable that she herself had been mistaken than that this silent, awkward young man should have suddenly lost possession of his senses.

But the next morning an event before unheard of in the annals of this quiet family occurred. As Norah was going out of the parlor after breakfast Tom called her back, and having called her back, began fumbling in his pockets for something or other.

"I have got some—some tickets for the theatre here, Norah," he said, blushing quite painfully, poor fellow, in his efforts to speak indifferently. "I—I thought that perhaps you would like me to take you and Miss Jenny while this London company is performing. The acting is worth going to see, I hear; and—and so" (with a desperate attempt at calmness)—"there are the tickets;" and he laid them on the table.

In her astonishment Norah's eyes opened to their widest extent. "Why, Tom!" she exclaimed, "what a strange thing for you to do!" And then, seeing his nervous face, she added, quickly, "But it is very kind of you, dear, and I know Jenny will be delighted, for she was only saying to me last night that she had never been to the theatre in her life. I will go tell her about it; and thank you, dear. But perhaps," suggestively, "you had better put the tickets in your pocket again, as you are going to take us."

If the unromantic woolen muffler had been a dangerous sort of thing, Jenny's delighted face and open rejoicings were doubly dangerous when she ran into the room shortly afterward to give thanks and accept the unexpected offer. To most girls of her age the prospect of spending the evening in the least fashionable part of the theatre would not have been an especially exciting one, but to poor pretty, unexacting Jenny Galloway, who was so easily pleased, and to whom the smallest of pleasures was a novelty, it was quite an era. It never occurred to her for an instant that she was unnecessarily thankful, and that her escort's enjoyment was likely to be enhanced by her presence. It only seemed to her guileless mind that this studi-

ous, fireside-loving brother of Norah's must be making something of a sacrifice in giving up one of his quiet evenings for the sake of three girls. So she came down, and finding him in the breakfast-room, poured out such a pretty, impulsive gush of thanks that he was quite bewildered, and scarcely knew how to reply to her.

"It was very good of you to think about it," she said, lifting the big, sweet eyes to his. "I am sure we shall all enjoy it, and it will be so new to me. I dare say Norah told you I had never been in a theatre. I never had any one to take me, you know, when I was at Miss Fell's."

And even this was not the most dangerous part of the affair. To see her, when night came, in such a charming state of excitement about it; to see her bewitchingly simple out-door costume; to see her innocent anxiety lest they should be too late or should fail in getting seats; to hear her delightfully unsophisticated queries; and having lived through this, to have the exquisite pleasure of piloting her through the crowded streets, and taking entire charge of her, was enough to have proved hazardous even to a more worldly-wise and less susceptible man than Tom Grahame. To him the evening's venture was a desperate, ecstatic undertaking, feverishly enjoyed, and never to be forgotten. If she had only known what irreparable mischief she was doing that night—poor bright, simple-minded Jenny Galloway! But she never even guessed at the truth, and so threw herself heart and soul into the enjoyment of her present happiness, and was so merry and sweet-tempered, and so ready to laugh at the poorest of jokes or let the tears gather in her soft eyes at the most ranting exhibition of sentiment, that she was a bewitching and novel entertainment in herself. And when, the evening over, they returned home together, and she, standing by the fire with her hat in her hand, and her cheeks tinted, and her soft hair a little roughened, and consequently defiantly lovely and curly, detailed their joint experiences to Mrs. Grahame in quite a flush of delight, she was enough to have stirred the heart of a stoic or a cynic, or any one else equally uncomfortable.

"It was beautiful from the beginning to the end," she said; "wasn't it, Norah? wasn't it, Letty? I couldn't help thinking all the time how Robert would have enjoyed it if he had been with us. And but for Mr. Tom we should never have gone. I am sure I shall never forget it."

It was very unwise in the object of her gratitude to be so utterly oblivious to that affectionate mention of Robert, but Tom Grahame's attention was too fully occupied with the speaker herself. He leaned on the mantel, listening and looking on, drinking in every tone of the girl's voice and marking

her every gesture and expression. He was not sufficiently self-possessed to make gallant, fine speeches to her; it would never have suggested itself to his mind that he might tell her this was the happiest evening he had spent in his life; but he knew it was the happiest, and, knowing it, was a new man.

He never slept at all that night, but lay awake thinking excitedly and making wild, blissful plans for the future. He was unconscious no longer: he loved this girl, and longed to win her. How loving she was! how inimitable! how fond she was of Norah! and how fond all of them were of her! If he could only make her love him as she loved Norah, talk to him as she talked to Norah! If there was only the barest possibility that at some future period, however far away, she would caress him with one tithe of the warmth she lavished upon Norah! And then he pictured to himself again the bright pleasure in the eyes that had been lifted to his so often during the evening, and tried to realize again the light touch of her hand as it had rested on his sleeve as they made their way through the streets together. Oh! to have her always in the house, to know that she would be there to greet him when he came in, to be allowed to sit and watch her as she moved about the room helping Norah and Letty with their work, or standing by their mother talking in her loving, appealing fashion! It could not be that such perfect bliss could fall to his lot, and yet he meant to fight hard for it. He would not wait another day before beginning to try to win her; he would put forth all his powers. He could scarcely wait until the morning came, in his restless fear lest something should come between him and his new hopes. And the next day he began, with nervous trepidation and much self-distrust, but with earnest steadfastness enough.

There was not an hour of his life during the weeks following which was not an anxious sacrifice laid at her unconscious feet. He tried to please her in a hundred ways, and because he was sure he succeeded was fearfully happy, though he was never at rest or content.

There were so many little things he could do, and, in her kindly, half-pitying liking for him, she was so ready to let him do them. Perhaps there was a letter to post (Robert's letters always), or some trifling commission to execute in town, and so he gradually gained upon her warm, unsuspecting heart. There was a pleasant confidence established between them, which made it the most natural thing in the world that she should ask him to take such commissions in charge. Another man would have learned by instinct that her readiness to rely upon him was too unsentimental and frank, and another woman would in

all probability have seen that the sudden, subtle change in his manner had a meaning of its own; but his heart was too full of his efforts at success, and hers was too utterly free. And then, again, it was so incongruous and inconsistent a thing that he should be roused to an interest in any woman; and the fact of his being a tyro in the school of such tender art made him so reserved and silent even in his most anxious moods that the rest of the household did not suspect that the apparently slight change in his manner implied other than a simple liking for their guest.

"It is a wonderful thing for Tom to be so fond of a girl, even in his restrained, quiet way," they said sometimes; "but he really must be fond of you, Jenny." And then they would forget all about it, and go on talking about Robert, and the wedding outfit, and the hundred and one things connected with the exciting topic. So, if the awakening was bitter enough, at least Tom Grahame tasted perfect bliss before it came to him. There was nothing to disturb his happiness. She was always near, and that itself was happiness enough. She was so fond of them all, and so great a favorite, and every hour of the day showed him some fresh charm. To come down to breakfast and find her in the room, to think of her all day, and returning at night to see her again, and sit watching her, drinking in her simple sweetness—was not this a fair if frail foundation for future hope?

But inexperienced and unsuspecting as she was, there came a time when Jenny was somewhat puzzled. At first when she found Tom's eyes following her about the room, and resting upon her wherever she was, she used to smile back at him brightly, feeling a little flattered by the unusual attention, but after a while it became rather trying, and at last something occurred which startled her strangely.

Her visit was drawing to a close; the modest outfit was all safely packed in her trunks but the wedding-dress, which was expected home every day. Robert's letters were becoming more frequent and tender, and contained sundry allusions to the pretty homeliness of a certain small house which awaited its youthful mistress. So Jenny was looking brighter and happier than ever, and had taken to much practicing of before rather neglected music and divers little jewels of love-songs much affected by Robert. It would be so nice to be able to play them to him when he came home tired in the evening, she told herself, with a simple thrill of happiness: she had so many guileless dreams of that gentle, orthodox bliss which takes the form of easy-chairs and blazing fires, drawn curtains and warmed slippers. So she used to play these songs and merry trilling pieces of music with

such an innocent throb of joy at her heart that Tom, looking on and seeing its glow on her face, used to listen and quite forget himself in blind dreams, which she would have found strangely like her own if she had only known of their existence. But she did not know of it, and indeed was so full of her own that she used to forget every one else but that fortunate Robert of hers, so of course it was quite a shock to her to be awakened from her reverie as she was.

She had been playing for an hour one evening without looking round, and in the mean time one by one had dropped out of the room until only poor Tom remained; and Tom, drawn nearer and nearer to the piano, at last stood close behind her, so worked upon by his foolish, sweet fancies and the music that he forgot his shyness; forgot he had only known Jenny Galloway a few weeks; forgot that, as he had never uttered a word of love to her or paid her a compliment in the whole course of their acquaintance, she could scarcely know the passion of love and tenderness swelling his heart; forgot every thing but the impulse he could not resist.

"Oh, Jenny!" he cried out; "oh, Jenny!"

There was such a thrill of actual suffering in his imploring tone that it fell upon Jenny's unaccustomed ears like a shock. Even Robert had never spoken to her in such a tone; but then there had never been any need for Robert to doubt either her love or his power. She swung round on the music-stool and looked up at his pale, agitated face, startled and bewildered.

"What is it?" she exclaimed, feeling half frightened. "Is any thing the matter, Mr. Tom?"

And then all at once he snatched both her hands and covered them with wild, beseeching kisses. But this only frightened her more, and worse still, made her angry. She pulled them away from his grasp, quite fierce in her indignation at his usurpation of her Robert's rights.

"How dare you do such a thing?" she broke out, with a tiny stamp of her foot. "I don't know what you mean. How dare you be so rude, Sir? I shall tell Norah."

And how it would all have ended it is impossible to tell, had not Norah's voice broken in upon them just at that moment. When Jenny had turned round to speak to Tom there had come a loud ring at the door-bell, and Norah having answered it, summoned her friend from the lobby in some small excitement.

"Jenny," she called out, "it is here at last! Do come up stairs."

And Jenny, perhaps finding her courage fail her all at once at the sight of Tom's blank, miserable, thunder-struck face, turned away from him without another word, and ran out of the room, with burning cheeks.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed Norah and Letty both at once when she almost rushed into the little chamber up stairs and confronted them; "what ails you, Jenny?"

Jenny put her hands up to her hot cheeks and actually stared at them in her flutter of amazement.

"I don't know," she said, wofully. "Don't ask me."

And then for a few seconds there was an uncomfortable silence, which at last was broken by Norah, who pointed to a large bandbox.

"Your wedding-dress has just come," she said; "that was why I called you up stairs. Do put it on, Jenny, and let us call mamma to look at it."

But it took Jenny fully ten minutes to recover herself sufficiently even to get up an interest in the bridal dress, whose arrival had been so anxiously looked for. She was so distressed and terrified. She had been rather fond of Tom Grahame before, but his sudden outburst had quite destroyed her good-natured platonic affection for him. What right had he to kiss her hands when he knew—when he must know—all about Robert? How would he like it if he was engaged to be married, and some gentleman was to kiss the hands of his betrothed? And then she recollected the night she had fancied he kissed her hair, and how she had persuaded herself that it was all fancy, and he was too steady and shy to be guilty of such a piece of audacity. But by the time she had got this far the bandbox was opened, and Norah and Letty were becoming ecstatic over the white dress.

"How pretty it is!" they cried. "Let us call mamma. Wasn't it a good thing we got the tulle instead of the tarlatan, Jenny? It was only another shilling, you know, and see how much better it looks!"

Of course it was quite natural then that in the general enthusiasm Jenny should forget poor Tom almost entirely, and be a trifle excited too. It was such a pretty zephyr of a dress, and Robert was so fond of white, cloud-like attire. Indeed, it had been all for Robert's sake that she had admitted to that extra shilling on the yard which had been such a grave consideration with her.

"You had better try it on, my dear," said Mrs. Grahame, on being summoned up stairs to join the council. "It is better to be sure that there will be no alteration needed." So the dress was donned, with every body's assistance; and when the dress was donned the two girls insisted on adding the veil and the orange flowers, and even Robert's gifts, the pretty, simple necklace and bracelets; and then they gave her her fan, "just to see how it would all look," as they said. And then all three stepped back to admire, and Jenny stood laughing and blushing up to her great

soft, lovely eyes, and playing with her fan through sheer nervousness.

"If the girls at Miss Fell's could just see you," said Norah, "wouldn't they be pleased, Jenny? Don't you remember how we all used to crowd to the window to get a peep at the weddings at the little church across the way, and how we used to enjoy it, and say what we would be married in when our turn came?"

"I tell you what, mamma and Norah," said Letty, suddenly, "Tom must see her; he really must. You wouldn't mind, would you, Jenny, just showing yourself to Tom? He is so fond of you, you know, and it will make the poor old silent fellow feel as if he had a bit of a share in you."

A thought flashed across Jenny's mind with odd rapidity. "Of course; yes, of course. Tom knows about it," she said; "he couldn't help knowing, could he?"

"Oh dear, no," was the answer. "How could he help hearing us talk about the shopping? though of course we never said much to him openly. Besides, Norah told him the first night you came that you were going to be married. He may have forgotten, he is so absent, but he knew then."

"Then he meant to be rude," was Jenny's mental comment—a comment made with new indignation. "And it will serve him right to be punished a little."

"Surely you don't mind Tom," said Letty. "No," answered Jenny; "I don't mind Tom, and I would as soon let him see me as not."

And in the mean time Tom, stunned and blind with the blow he had received, was still staggering under it. Somehow or other, in the simplicity of his passionate first love, he had been so sure she would understand him—so sure, when he made that blundering, tender appeal, that at least she would know what it meant, and would, in some undefined way, be prepared for it. He did not ask himself what he had ever said or done that would be likely to prepare her for it. He had been so absorbed in the growth of his secret, his life had been so full of it, that he never dreamed it could be possible that it could be a secret to quick-sighted Jenny Galloway. And if she did not love him yet, surely it could not surprise her to know that he was ready to die for her, to lay down his life at her feet, to be her faithful slave forever; and surely, surely such love could not go unrewarded. And yet when she looked up at him when his foolish heart cried out aloud to her, he had seen that she was only puzzled and alarmed; and when she tore her indignant young hands from his grasp, he had seen that his caresses had made her angry, and he had never seen her angry before. What wrong had he done? Only forgotten himself so far as to show her that he loved her, and longed for a word of comfort

and hope. Wherein lay the wrong of this? Blind as he was, he could not help seeing that the wrong lay in his blindness. She did not love him; she never could. That was what it meant.

He dropped into a chair near the table, and hid his face on his folded arms, stunned, dead to every thought but this one. He had staked all the long-boarded passion of his life upon this one poor throw, and lost. He knew that now. Jenny Galloway—pretty, bright Jenny Galloway!—all the tissue of bright dreams with which he had surrounded her was as far out of his reach as if she had been a star.

This was what he was stumbling at, in a stupefied way, when the whispering at the door fell on his ear, but he had no thought of what was coming, poor fellow! The door was flung open wide, and Letty entered, holding a lamp high above her head, so that all the light could fall on Jenny as she came in. And Letty was laughing a little in a pleased, triumphant way.

"Open the gates as high as the sky, and let the queen and her court pass by," she cried out. "See, Tom!—why, he must be asleep. Tom, look at her!"

Tom got up.

But he had been so long in the darkness that he was only dazzled for a minute, though after that minute the girl in the filmy white drapery stood out against the dark background of the narrow lobby like a picture seen in a dream. If she had seemed sweet and fresh before in her half-shabby every-day dresses, what was she now, all white from head to foot, all spotless and soft like a dove, the mist of her veil vesting her with an actual radiance, the spray of white blossom clinging to her hair, the tiny downy fan fluttering in her nervous fingers, her eyes drooping in spite of her effort to set him at defiance? It was not Jenny Galloway's way to be defiant; she was deprecating and appealing even while she was trying to look grand and angry.

"What!" he cried out. "Norah—Letty—mother!"

"What!" echoed Letty. "You don't mean to say you don't see what it means? You dear old stupid bat-blind Tom. It is her wedding-dress, you know."

So the sword fell, and in falling cut his last frail golden thread of hope in two.

"I did not remember," he faltered; "I must have forgotten—" A ring at the door-bell broke in upon him there, as it had done before. Norah answered the summons, and came back with some one following her.

"Jenny—" she began.

Jenny turned round; there was a little start, a little cry of "Robert," and the newcomer, meeting her more than half-way, caught her, laughing and crying, veil and wedding finery and all, in his arms.

He had come sooner than he was expected, that was all. Business had brought him to town, and he could not go away without seeing Jenny. And then Jenny was introducing him to them, one after the other, but when she turned to the table, Tom was gone.

A few days more and Jenny left them, taking the girls with her to London to the house of the relative who had charitably decided to give the hard-worked young bride her wedding breakfast. Tom was not well enough to go; his cough was worse, which naturally precluded all possibility of the good mother's leaving him; but she gave Jenny her blessing in true mother fashion, and bestowed upon her much counsel and many recipes, and promised her a visit in the spring, when they should be "settled."

And Tom—well, the fact was, Jenny was a trifle shy of Tom, and was not really sorry to leave him behind; but she shook hands with him at parting, and was very grateful for his good wishes.

"I hope you will be happy, Jenny," he said, wistfully: "you deserve to be."

"I am sure to be," said Jenny, in her soft young voice; "I am sure to be—with Robert." And though she was beginning to comprehend dimly that she had been mistaken in being angry with the poor fellow, she never dreamed for an instant what a terrible pang her words gave him.

When she was gone he settled back into his old groove again, laboring steadily among his books and musty parchments, and growing even more absent-minded than he had been before. Yet no one but Letty really suspected his secret, and Letty only showed that she suspected it by being very tender and solicitous for his comfort indeed. "Norah," she said once to her sister, "did you ever fancy Tom cared for Jenny?"

"For Jenny? My dear child, Tom never cared in *that way* for any body," answered Norah, decidedly.

But Letty, keeping close guard upon herself, and never referring to the matter again, knew better.

MY QUEEN.

A SONNET.

I CALL her "Queen"—the lady of my love—
 Since, that in all one sceptreless may claim
 Of true nobility to suit the name,
 She is right royal, and doth so approve
 My loving homage. All that painter's art
 And poet's fantasy delight to find
 In queenliness is hers: the noble mind,
 The stately bearing, and the gracious heart;
 The voice most musical; the brow serene,
 And beaming benediction—like a queen;
 And oh! such peerless beauty, that I swear
 (Recalling each fair face that loud Renown
 Hath found or feigned beneath a jeweled crown)
 I flatter queens to call her "queenly fair!"

JOHN G. SAZZ.