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Feb 27, '79

H. L. TOWNER, M. D.,
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Office on State Street, second floor of Dr. Pratt's Office. apr 3 79.

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Office—Rooms formerly occupied by Y. M. C. A. Reading Room. [Jan.31'78.

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Office—North Side Public Square. Jan. 1, 1878.

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Office—South side Poplar street, opposite Ward House. [Nov. 13, 1879.

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Dec 23-75. TOWANDA, PA.

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Office over Turner & Gordon's Drug Store, Towanda, Pa. May be consulted in German. [April 12, '76.)

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TOWANDA, PA.
Office—second door south of the First National Bank Main St., up stairs.

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ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW.
OFFICE.—Formerly occupied by Wm. Watkins, Esq.
H. N. WILLIAMS. (oct. 17, '77) E. J. ANGLE.

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Office over Dayton's Store.
April 12, 1876.

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Office in Wood's Block, first door south of the First National bank, up-stairs.
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DR. S. M. WOODBURN, Physician and Surgeon. Office at residence, on Pine Street, East of Main.
Towanda, May 1, 1872 tf

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DISEASES OF THE EYE } Special attention given to and } DISEASES OF THE EAR

G. W. RYAN,
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Office day last Saturday of each month, over Turner & Gordon's Drug Store, Towanda, Pa.
Towanda, June 20, 1878.

C. S. RUSSELL'S
GENERAL
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May23-70tf. TOWANDA, PA.

FIRST NATIONAL BANK,
TOWANDA, PA.
CAPITAL PAID IN.....$125,000
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This Bank offers unusual facilities for the transaction of a general banking business.
N. N. BETTS, Cashier.
JOS. POWELL, President.
April 1, 1879

EDWARD WILLIAMS,
PRACTICAL PLUMBER & GAS FITTER,
Place of business in Mercur Block, next door to Journal Office, opposite Public Square.
Plumbing, Gas Fitting, Repairing Pumps of all kinds, and all kinds of Gearing promptly attended to. All wanting work in his line should give him a call. Dec. 4, 1879.

Poetry.

THE THINGS IN THE BOTTOM DRAWER.

There are whips and tops and pieces of strings,
There are shoes which no little feet wear,
There are bits of ribbon and broken rings
And tresses of golden hair,
There are little dresses folded away
Out of the light of the sunny day.

There are dainty jackets that never are worn,
There are toys and models of ships,
There are books and pictures all faded and torn
And marked by the finger tips
Of dimpled hands that have fallen to dust,
Yet I strive to think that the Lord is just.

But a feeling of bitterness fills my soul
Sometimes, when I try to pray,
That the reaper has spared so many flowers
And taken mine away.
And I almost doubt if the Lord can know
That a mother's heart can love them so.

Then I think of the many weary ones,
Who are waiting and watching to-night
For the slow return of faltering feet
That have strayed from the paths of right;
Who have darkened their paths by shame and sin,
Whom the snares of the tempter have gathered in.

They wander far in distant climes,
They perish by fire and flood,
And their hands are black with the direst crimes
That kindled the wrath of God.
Yet a mother's song has soothed them to rest;
She hath lulled them to slumber upon her breast.

And I think of my children three,
My babes that never grow old,
And know they are waiting and watching for me
In the city with the streets of gold.
Safe, safe from the cares of the weary years,
From sorrow and sin and war.
And I thank my God with falling tears
For the things in the bottom drawer.

Selected Tale.

RUTH MORRISON.

CHAPTER I.

"God bless you, dearest!"

The low, earnest voice that uttered these words was the only voice on earth that would now speak in tender or loving tones, to the desolate orphan girl. Almost as the farewell was uttered, the coach in which Ruth Morrison sat, its sole occupant, and for that she was thankful, drove off from the Imperial Hotel, Dublin, upon its northern route. The young man who had bidden her adieu, stood with folded arms and dimmed eyes watching the vehicle, the Belfast day-coach, until it was quite lost to view. The streets at that early hour of a cold November morning were nearly deserted, the lamps were being rapidly extinguished, though it was still dusk, while the bitter freezing wind that swept by portended severe weather.

"My poor little darling!" exclaimed he who was left behind, as he looked up to the leaden sky, from which already one or two flakes of snow were dropping, "What a terrible day I fear you will have for your sad journey."

Ferdinand Munroe and Ruth Morrison had been neighbors' children, living in the county Kildare; the fact of both their families having been originally from Scotland drew them more together, and companions from early youth, they became deeply attached; first, with the often evanescent love of childhood, yet afterwards with the stronger passion of riper years. "The course of true love never did run smooth," sorrow and disaster seemed to settle down upon both their homesteads, until, at the time of which we are speaking, they were alike orphans in the fullest sense of the word; each, too, similarly circumstanced, in having an uncle as their only relative. Ferdinand's uncle had aided the young man to the utmost of his power, and he was now, chiefly through his instrumentality, successfully prosecuting his studies as an engineer. Ruth's uncle offered her, it is true, an asylum at his house, on her mother's death, but in so cold a manner that she rightly preferred independence, and was, this very morning that we write of, setting out to fill the situation of governess in the family of a Mr. Sinclair, who lived some miles beyond Newry. She had been stopping with a friend in Belfast some few days, at whose house Ferdinand had often met her, and had stipulated that he was to be her escort to the coach, and to see her off upon her journey.

"Please God, dearest, it shall not be long; I'll soon be working in my profession, and we shall soon have enough to begin the world together." Such were some of his last words to his betrothed, and with little of hope or prospect as they were fraught, they served in some degree to cheer the heart of the poor lonely traveler. Cold and dreary the day proved. Long ere the coach reached Drogheda, where they remained a short time for breakfast, the snow was falling thickly; and when late in the day it ceased, it was followed by a severe frost. Ruth, chilled and weary, had fallen into a doze soon after they left Newry, and was roused by their again stopping to change horses at a wayside inn, when she heard a deep rough voice calling out to the coachman: "Is there one Miss Morrison with you in the coach?"

"Yes," cried Ruth; "I am here."

"A car for you, miss, from the captain's."

Ruth with difficulty alighted, so cramped and frozen had she become; a hurried, confused search for her luggage, the accustomed gratuities to guard and coachman, a blast of the horn, and off went the vehicle, leaving her standing, in the dusk, on the road, shivering with cold, and sinking in the crisp snow nearly up to her ankles. As well as she could descry in the dim light, it seemed a coarse, common kind of stable-boy who had been sent for her, with an equally common-looking hack-car. Brought up as a lady, with delicacy and care all her life, this careless indifference as to comfort or propriety jarred painfully on her feelings. "Perhaps," she thought, "I am expecting too much; things will be different now," and she climbed up the side of the car as well as her chilled, stiffened limbs would permit. The night was fine and comparatively clear, both from the mass of brilliant stars that thronged the heavens and from the glare of the snow with which the entire country was mantled. The drive, though really but a few miles in length, seemed interminable; their progress was necessarily slow, from the state of the roads; and once, when laboring up a steep hill, her good-natured companion insisted on wrapping a coat of his own round her feet. He volunteered, too, some scraps of information about her future home, not altogether uninteresting to Ruth, although the encouragement he received in his communications was but an occasional monosyllabic reply. She gathered that, as the lad expressed it, "the captain was most-ways from home;" that "misses was very sickly entirely;" that "they didn't see much of her;" "but," said he, "did ye ever hear tell, miss, of missis's own woman—her that come, they say, from Ingee with her?" and when Ruth replied "No," and asked who she was: "She Mrs. Montserratt, they call her," rejoined the youth; "and I'll tell you what, miss," he added, cracking his whip, "she's—my eye!"—and he gave a long, low whistle—"she's just that!"

What this ambiguous description might imply, Ruth was at a loss to imagine; nor did the further explanation her informant annexed convey any more definite idea, as he added in a lower tone, as if imparting some intelligence: "We calls her, down stairs, Thunder and Lightning." He also informed Ruth that the two young ladies were "nate little craythurs." About them, indeed, Ruth would have been disposed to make inquiries, if about any, as being her future charge, she felt naturally special interest in the topic. At length the cold and dreary journey drew to its close, and when, stopping for a large gateway to be opened, and passing up a long avenue, the driver announced: "Now, miss, we're here; this be Oaklands; yon is the house, and down there is the lake and the grove," Ruth felt her heart beat quickly with the indescribable nervous shrinking sensation that is felt by the timid when first coming among strangers, and that is ever enhanced when the position is that of a dependent, and the reception of future treatment uncertain. The entrance to the residence at Oaklands was at the side; there was a kind of veranda or covered passage running along from the door to the end of the house, and there Ruth and the driver of the car stood for several moments after the first application for admittance, which consisted of two loud knocks by the latter like a postman's rap. When this failed he tried the bell, and rang it so violently that they could hear its peal resounding through the lower parts of the house. Immediately afterwards, there was the noise of doors slamming, and then a quick tread along a hall, and the door was opened by a man with a candle in his hand. Before he had done so the carman had whispered to Ruth: "This be Mr. Marks—Joshua Marks, the butler; I knows his walk."

"Oh, is that you, Patsey?" exclaimed the man, shading the light which he held with his hand. "How late you are!"

"Not so aisy, Misther Marks, to come quick along slippy roads. Be gorra! we went back a'most two steps for every one we came forrard, and the coach was late, too."

"Will you please come in, miss?" said the butler to Ruth, and she stepped within a narrow hall or passage into her new—home; if she might be able, in any sense, to call it by that loved but often sorrowful name!

"Here, Patsey, will you lend a hand?" cried the butler, in a sharp tone, as the boy was laying down Ruth's luggage on the doorstep. "Bring it in here." And he lifted one end of the large box himself.

When the things were all in, the man closed and barred the outer door, and giving a half curious, half contemptuous look at poor Ruth, who stood trembling alike from cold as from nervousness—"Follow me, miss, if you please," he said, and they passed into a square inner hall, lit by a lamp from the ceiling, and into which five or six doors opened, which were then all closed. The butler stood for a moment, as if in doubt what next to do. "If you please," said he at last, "wait here, and I'll send some one to you."

For nearly ten minutes Ruth stood alone in the hall. All was silent around her, saving the tick of the clock that stood at one corner. She was beginning to wonder who would next appear, or if any one would come at all, when the door through which the servant had gone was again opened, and a female entered. She was tall and slight, apparently about thirty-five years of age, pale, with thin lips, and an exceedingly unpleasant expression of countenance; her eyes were dark and piercing, tho', as Ruth afterwards found, she rarely looked straight at the person whom she was addressing. Now, as she advanced towards the young girl, her gaze for an instant was painfully penetrating; then she dropped the lids, and eyed Ruth only with a furtive, stealthy glance, that made her feel very uncomfortable.

"Mademoiselle—Miss Morrison, that is, I mean—I suppose."

"Yes," replied Ruth, bowing slightly. She was, for an instant, at a loss to know whether this was her future mistress, or the person whom Patsey, the driver, had denominated "Thunder and Lightning." She was wrapped up in a large loose shawl, that might have been either from delicacy of health or the bitterness of the evening; her accent (though she uttered each word in distinct English) implied the foreigner; so did her appearance. But her next sentence cleared up the momentary doubt as to who she was.

"Madame," she continued, "is very poorly—very delicate; but she bade me tell you that she will see you by and by." Ruth bowed. The speaker then made a move towards one of the other doors, but stopped as she was turning the handle. "Yes," she exclaimed, as if to herself, "'twill be better—I think;" then, addressing Ruth, she added, "you had best come to your own room; I'll show you the way. But stay, where are your things?" Ruth explained that they were in the outer hall. "Oh, then I'll have them sent up; come with me."

Ruth experienced, she could not tell why, a decided repugnance to her companion. She at the same time felt that the woman viewed her with dislike, and might very soon become a dangerous associate.

"My name, I may as well tell you," she said, addressing Ruth as they came to the first landing, "is Montserrat—Mrs. Montserrat; I am housekeeper here, and companion to Madame, and have been with her for many years."

"Indeed," was the reply. Ruth did not care to tell her that she had learned her name before.

"Yes," she continued, as they ascended the stairs, "*your mistress*," and she laid an emphasis on the words that made Ruth wince at the implication. "Your mistress is in broken health; she has never been the same since the birth of her little girl in India, and I now have to manage everything for her. Captain Sinclair, poor man,"—and she shrugged her shoulders, half contemptuously—"is so much away on his business, that we see little of him."

"I thought," rejoined Ruth, "that there were two little girls—that I was to have the charge of two; you speak but of one."

"Oh, did you not know?" returned the housekeeper. "Gertrude—Mademoiselle Gertrude is Madame's child; while Alice is only the captain's neice; and very different children they are—but here are your rooms," exclaimed Mrs. Montserrat, throwing open a door. "*Mon Dieu!* only see—*bete! stupide!*—a fire that would roast an elephant!" And the housekeeper pulled the bell angrily. "That fool Bridget!" she continued, "no getting her to do as she is told."

It was, no doubt, a large fire that burned in the grate, and that sent its bright warm glow all over the small neat room, but not too large or hot, Ruth thought, for so severe a night. For the first time, a feeling like comfort and hope crept into her disconsolate heart, as she beheld the pleasant look of this little sitting-room, that, as she gathered, was to be her own; the bed-room, still smaller, opened into it, and she was considerably relieved to find that she would be alone, as she had some apprehension that possibly she might have been obliged to share her sleeping apartment with her pupils.

When Bridget appeared in answer to the bell, a sharp war of words ensued between her and Mrs. Montserrat, to which Ruth was necessarily a listener. She saw plainly that this servant, at least, disliked and resented the woman's authority, while it was equally manifest that the housekeeper was most tyrannical in the exercise of whatever power was vested in her. That first evening of their acquaintance, Ruth observed that when the housekeeper introduced, as she sometimes did, a French word or expression into her conversation, it seemed involuntary, except when she was irritated or excited, and that then the patois broke out with all the volubility of an under-educated person. More than once, too, she fancied that she disliked its being known that she was a foreigner, or that she should be thought one at all. Mrs. Montserrat withdrew after her battle with Bridget, ordering her to have Miss Morrison's luggage brought up, and telling the latter that she would come for her whenever Madame was ready to see her.

When the housemaid returned, bringing up Ruth's packages, first seeing that the coast was clear, she burst into the bitterest invectives against Mrs. Montserrat. "Ther's no standing the place with that woman," she exclaimed. "Tell you what, miss, you're a stranger in the house here; if you'let that one get a hand over you, mind I tell you, miss, you'll not be able to stay at all. She and Misther Marks—misther, indeed!" ejaculated the damsel parenthetically, "as if he were any better than Patsey Donoyan or Corbett the coachman, and should be nothing more nor less, we all knows, but plain Joshua—the two of them are to rule us all, indeed! And there's missis, she minds nothing but what *that one* tells her; she can twist her round her little finger, she can. I wishes, the Lord knows, she were back in the Ingees, or in a hotter place—*that* would be the fittest place for her!"

Ruth mildly expostulated with the angry servant; and by her gentleness of tone and manner, succeeded in soothing her perturbed spirit. The girl remained for some time, assisting in the unpacking of Ruth's trunk and the arrangement of the rooms; and the ladylike kindness of the governess so won upon the domestic that it was agreeable to the former to find that in that strange household she had already gained the good-will of one at least, however humble, as was manifest from the warm yet respectful manner of her attendant. When the housemaid left her, Ruth remained alone and undisturbed for nearly an hour. She heard the house-clock strike eight; she had not tasted food for some hours, indeed but light refreshments at all during the day, and she began to feel the physical exhaustion attendant upon long abstinence, that at first was unnoticed from nervousness and mental agitation. "Surely," she thought, "it is strange that they should leave me so long without food;" and then recollections of bygone times came up, with all the old care and watchful love that had tended her young life, when she never knew a want—all now gone, buried in the village churchyard, beside her childhood's home. Standing by the fire, with her head on her hand, leaning upon the mantlepiece, she fell into a reverie so sad and so absorbing that she did not at first detect a low knock at the door, until it was repeated more loudly. Starting up, she cried; "Who's there? Come in." There was no answer. She accordingly moved forwards, and opened the door. A little girl, dressed in white, apparently about ten years of age, was standing outside; her cheek was flushed, and she was shyly looking down, and moving her foot about nervously, as Ruth stood before her. "Well, my dear," said Ruth gently, "are you Miss Sinclair?"

"No; I'm Alice Sinclair," whispered the child. "Aunt wants you; she sent me for you."

"Well, come, take me to her, will you?" and she took the litte girl's hand.

The governess and her young charge crossed the lobby, went up another short flight of stairs, when the child stopped at a door. "Here it is; here's aunt's room—her," and she hesitated an instant as if in doubt how to say the next word—"her boudoir, Marguerite calls it."

Ruth knocked gently, and passed in with Alice, in answer to the summons to enter. The room in which Ruth now found herself was spacious and handsomely furnished; but her attention was centred upon the figure of Mrs. Sinclair, who was reclining on a sofa, at a little distance from the fire. She had a cloak, lined with fur, wrapped round her; her face was strikingly handsome, and did not betoken the delicacy that Ruth had anticipated from what she had heard; her eyes were large and dark, and served to set off a complexion naturally pale and clear, but tinged with the dark hue that residence in an Indian clime imparts. Mrs. Montserrat was standing behind the sofa, with her arms folded, and cast upon Ruth, as she entered, the quick, furtive glance she had before been and recoiled from. Near her another little girl was standing, who, Ruth concluded, was Gertrude Sinclair, her employers' own child. Alice withdrawing her hand from her governess, as they came into the room, took up her place at the head of her aunt's sofa. Ruth bowed respectfully to the lady, and remained standing in the middle of the room. Mrs. Sinclair looked at her steadily from head to foot, returning the salutation with a scarcely perceptible movement of the head. "Well, Miss Morrison, you are younger looking than I was led to expect," she said, in a voice that seemed feeble, it might have been from sickness, or possibly from indolence.

"I mentioned to you, ma'am, as you may remember, in our correspondence, that I was twenty my last birthday."

"Well, yes; I do remember."

There was another awkward pause, during which Mrs. Sinclair closed her eyes, as if exhausted by her exertions. Alice slipped forward, and gently moved a chair towards the stranger. The little thoughtful act of politeness from one so young—that might have been a reproof to her seniors—was sweet to Ruth, who thanked her with a smile; but Mrs. Montserrat, frowning, told the child to keep quiet—a direction that was at once peevishly echoed from the sofa, with: "Do be still, child, and don't keep drumming in that way, and shaking me all over;" and the voice of the invalid was marvellously stronger when raised in the sharp key. The child's hint, however, was not lost, for Mrs. Sinclair immediately asked Ruth to be seated.

Ruth Morrison, though bashful and timid naturally, had about her a great deal of quiet dignity, that almost, without a word, repelled anything bordering on the slightest insult. In face and appearance, she was not at all handsome or striking; her figure was too short and set; her features, taken singly, plain; yet there was an animated intelligence in her expression that not only redeemed it from being common place, but to most observers gave a singular charm, far beyond what actual beauty conveys. Just now, indeed, she appeared to disadvantage, wearied in body from her long journey, and want of food, and so utterly dispirited, that she was well aware the least thing would overthrow the balance, and betray an emotion that might no longer be controlled. She sat down, however, quietly, in the seat that little Alice had moved to her, and waited without speaking for Mrs. Sinclair again to address her. "I forget, Marguerite," said that lady, turning to Mrs. Montserrat, in a low tone, "what's this we were settling about?" The housekeeper bent over the back of the sofa, and whispered something in French to her mistress; the only word that Ruth caught was *noir*. "Ah, *oui*," she replied; but before she had time to say anything Mrs. Montserrat again bent down and spoke a few words more, but still in an inaudible voice. Mrs. Sinclair nodded, and after a moments pause, addressing Ruth, said: "Mrs. Montserrat will tell you all my wishes and requirements about these young ladies; but every day that I am equal to it I shall expect you to give them their music lessons here. Perhaps, Miss Morrison," she added, "you would just let me hear you play a little," pointing to a piano at the other end of the room; "music I am particular about, and I flatter myself that I'm a judge."

Ruth's education was, for her age, good in every respect, and in music she was specially proficient; yet at this moment she felt so exhausted and unstrung that she knew her performance could not be successful. "I shall, of course, ma'am, comply with your wish," she answered; "but I must ask you to judge leniently of me to-night, as I am very tired, and not likely to do justice to your instrument." As there was no sign of yielding in the matter, Ruth played two or three simple pieces, and better than she had anticipated, for the superior character of the instrument acted as a stimulus; even her exacting listener seemed satisfied, and approved of her style.

"I observe, Miss Morrison," again began Mrs. Sinclair, "that you are in black. I have a particular dislike to anything gloomy about myself or the children; I expect, therefore, that you will conform to the circumstances of this house, and put off your mourning."

Ruth rose quickly from the seat which she had resumed after her musical effort. Had it not been for the angry emotions this unfeeling requirement evoked, she would have given way to tears; as it was her low, sweet voice trembled as she answered: "Pardon me, Miss Sinclair, my mother," and a pause for an instant ensued; but with a strong effort, swallowing down her choking sensation, she continued: "My mother is but three months dead, my father scarcely a year—her voice again grew thin—"and I should rather leave your house to-morrow than comply with a request so wounding to my own feelings, and so disrespectful to their memories."

"Oh, well," returned Mrs. Sinclair hesitatingly, as she looked toward Mrs. Montserrat, "I shan't press the matter, as you think so much of it. That will do," she continued. "You have dined, I suppose?"

"No," returned Ruth; "but I don't mind."

"Not dined! Marguerite, why did you not order dinner for Miss Morrison? Let her have something to eat immediately." The housekeeper frowned, and was brushing past Ruth out of the room, when Miss Sinclair added: "You won't mind, I suppose, my calling you Morrison; I can't make differences with persons in this establishment." A bow was the only answer Ruth could give. Mrs. Montserrat, as she passed her on the stairs, giving her another scornful look said, sharply: "I'll send you up some refreshment by the servant."

Weak as she felt, it was little that Ruth could take; her heart was too full, and her prospects of comfort in this, her first situation, too gloomy. Before lying down, she opened the window shutters of her little sitting-room. The night was beautifully calm and bright; a late moon had risen, the stars were countless, and the snow sparkled dazzlingly beneath the frost that had bound it. Not far from the house, the waters of a small lake gleamed like silver through the naked branches of the trees that fringed its margin. The still scene without breathed something of rest upon the unquiet spirit of its watcher; and its wintry aspect was in unison with her own sad meditations. Soon she wandered off in musings to the last home of her people, the place where her father and her mother were sleeping side by side—its green mounds clad at this moment, she thought, in the pure white covering that met her eyes all round—until the anguish of memory became insupportable; and like one of old, bereft of a parent's blessing, her very soul, if not her voice, went out "in a great exceeding bitter cry." Exhausted by suppressed weeping, she threw herself on her bed, and sank at length into a deep sleep.

CHAPTER II.

It was a rougher voice than used to rouse poor Ruth Morrison in the old mornings at home that called her from her slumbers the day after her arrival at Oaklands. When she opened her eyes, she could not remember where she was. A female figure holding a lighted candle was standing at the bed-room window, the shutters of which she had just opened; the light from without was cold and gray, that of the early winter morning, and contrasted dismally with the candle light.

"Oh, you're awake," said the voice; and by degrees Ruth began to recollect where she was, and recognized Mrs. Montserrat as the speaker. "We're early people in this house—at least I am," she continued; and I generally wake up the other servants; so I came first to you. I suppose you'll have light enough to dress without this," pointing to the candle; "and by the time I think your ready, I'll be back, and give you your instructions." So saying, and without waiting for any response, she left the room.

With a bitter feeling, that served to mitigate for the time the depressing sensation of loneliness that would otherwise have been paramount, Ruth rose from her couch, and proceeded to dress by the dim morning twilight. "If," she thought, "this woman be permitted to act towards me as she seems inclined, I'll not stay here a week. What business had she intruding into my room at this hour of the morning? I'll soon find out whether this is with Mrs. Sinclair's knowledge, or by her permission. *Other servants*, indeed! I'll let her know that I'll not be treated as a servant by her." These and such thoughts found audible utterance from the irritated girl, as she moved about through the room in the necessary arrangements of her toilet. When it was completed she passed out into the sitting-room, to await Mrs. Montserrat's return. The morning, like the preceding evening, was intensely cold; the windows were so coated with ice that it was impossible to see out; and as no fire had yet been kindled in the apartment, Ruth began to walk quickly up up and down, as well to keep up vitality in her chilled frame as to endeavor to allay the feelings of vexation that she was just then a prey to. She determined in her own mind that she would bear as far as possible any indignity, and wait patiently, for a while at least, until she could better understand her position, and then by the tactics pursued, shape her own course. But this prudent resolve was almost instantly defeated, as Mrs. Montserrat returned, for, on abruptly entering the room, "Oh, *Morrison*," she exclaimed, "are you ready?"

This insolent address, enhanced by the tone in which it was uttered, was like the dropping of a spark on inflammable tinder; yet, though boiling with indignation, a sense of her own dignity happily came to her aid; and it was in a comparatively calm voice that Ruth replied: "Excuse me for one moment, Mrs. Montserrat; I quite understand your position in this house; may I request that you take care to remember mine. I am not a servant here, in the ordinary sense. In whatever terms Mrs. Sinclair may choose to address me, I shan't dispute the matter, so long as I remain in her employment; but I'll not permit *you* to speak to me as you have just now done; it may be better for us both to have this explanation at the outset. And now, if you please, I'll be happy to receive from you whatever directions your mistress may have ordered you to convey to me."

The look that the housekeeper cast upon the speaker was like a flash of lightning from the dark cloud, and gave peculiar meaning to the sobriquet by which Ruth had heard she was known in the lower regions of the house; but with marvellous power she suppressed every outward token of anger. "Pardon, Mademoiselle," she said in a sarcastic tone, and courtesying low; "I was not aware that a gouvernante was so exalted a personage as I now learn that she is; but, ma foi, I must try and remember. Well, if it will not demean you too much, Mademoiselle, to accompany me, I'll take you to a room with a fire, where I shall impart to you Madame's wishes, I hope that their being brought to you by so humble a person as myself will not interfere with their being carried out;" and then with a mock politeness more galling than the most studied rudeness, she opened the door for Ruth, adding: "I must be excused for taking the liberty of going before Mademoiselle, as otherwise, she would not know the way."

Ruth silently followed to one of the rooms—a sufficiently comfortable apartment, with the agreeable adjunct of a brisk fire burning clearly and brightly in its polished grate.

"This," continued Mrs. Montserrat, in the same sneering manner, "will be the future study and school-room of the gouvernante and her pupils. Madame desires that you will have the goodness, Mademoiselle, to be here every morning at eight o'clock, when the young ladies will meet you; and from that time until they retire for the night, they are to be under your charge; they are to walk out with you every day that the weather permits; their music-lessons are, when Madame is well enough, to be always given in her boudoir. As to their other business, Madame supposes that you will understand how to arrange that yourself; and she also says, that as I have had hitherto a great deal to do with these young ladies" (and here Mrs. Montserrat's voice and manner became haughty and severe), "I am still to have what control over them I wish."

"I am glad," replied Ruth, "that you told me this, as I shall inquire from Mrs. Sinclair the nature of that control, and how far it is to interfere with my authority over the children."

"Indeed!" indignantly returned the other; "you can ask, I suppose, what you like. I shall send the young ladies to you;" and as she left the room, and gave Ruth the same malignant glance from under her eyes, which had thrilled through her so disagreeably the preceding evening. In two or three minutes, the little girls came. They were at first, as is natural with those of tender years, shy and reserved; but their young instructress soon broke down this barrier, for she had a peculiarly winning way with children. She succeeded more readily with Alice, the younger of the two. Gertrude, who was about a year older, had more of natural coldness, but yielded ultimately in a great degree to the gentle advances of her governess. A short trial elicited the fact, that for their years—ten and eleven—both the children were very backward in their learning. Ruth inquired who had taught them before.

"Oh, no one," returned Gertrude, "I mean, we had no governess like you. Mamma sometimes heard us our lessons; papa taught us when he was at home; but Marguerite, you know, she used almost always to hear us when she had time."

"Yes," interrupted Alice; "and Marguerite did not want you to come at all—she was angry about it; but uncle made aunt send for you."

"Oh, but," said Ruth laughing, "why did Marguerite, as you call her, object to my coming? What did she know about me?"

"Oh, not you," added Gertrude; "but any governess at all. I heard mamma laughing at her, and saying that she was jealous about any one coming."

"I'm very glad that you have come, though," said Alice, looking up, with her soft eyes, into Ruth's face, and laying her hands on her lap. "I don't like Marguerite."

"Fie, Alice!" said Gertrude; sharply, "you shouldn't say that; "she's fond of us both, and I like her very much."

"Gertrude is quite right," said Ruth; "we must not say, Alice, that we don't like people."

"But I do not like her," repeated the child; "and I can't tell a lie. Do you like her, Miss Morrison?"

Before Ruth could frame any reply to this embarrassing question, they were called to breakfast, a meal at which the governess sat down to alone; and after it, the latter were sent for to Mrs. Sinclair. In the spare hour that followed, Ruth happened by mistake to go back suddenly into the breakfast-room, supposing it was the one appropriated as the children's study, and found there Mrs. Montserrat and Marks the butler in close, and apparently intimate converse; and as she caught her own name repeated, accompanied with laughter by both, she concluded that her little episode of the morning with the housekeeper was the theme of their amusement. "Well, now, and if that isn't rich, Mrs. M. Pride and poverty, they say, hunt in couples," was the response from Marks that reached her ear as she stood confused for a moment. Neither of them seemed much embarrassed at her unexpected entrance; they merely turned away, Marks regarding her with an impertinent cynical stare as he passed, leaving the room. The butler himself was not psepossessing in appearance, being a very heavy man, with a pale flabby face, small grey eyes, and a double chin that rested complacently on the folds of a white cravat. His manner, cringing and servile to his superiors, pompous and consequential to any whom he chose to patronize, made him peculiarly repulsive. Ruth could not help observing, as she met the two thus together, that there seemed to be an unusually close intimacy between them, but just then it gave her little concern. She did not at all regret what, on the impulse of the moment, she had said to Mrs. Montserrat, as she perceived that, whatever inward feelings of dislike it might have originated or augmented, it secured all that she cared for—some outward manifestation of respect. For a fortnight or more little occurred to vary the monotonous routine of Ruth's daily course. The regular hours for instruction, the music lessons—generally given in Mrs. Sinclair's own room—continued each day; the weather admitted of but little out-door recreation. The one bright phase of her life was the attachment that sprang up between her and her young charges, especially with Alice. Gertrude was harder to manage; more under the influence of Mrs. Montserrat, who never failed to thwart the wishes of their instructress, when it was possible for her to do so. Ruth did not carry out her intention of inquiring into the nature of the authority which the housekeeper affirmed she was to retain, as she feared that such a step might be injurious to her own comfort; she felt pleased to think that she certainly did not seem to decline in Mrs. Sinclair's estimation, since that lady became more kind and courteous; but this, Ruth remarked, was only in Mrs. Montserrat's absence; whenever she was present her mistress appeared as if she thought that the least friendliness shown to the governess needed some apology to the housekeeper. The first break in the way of variety from the ordinary course was one morning about three weeks after Ruth's arival, when her pupil's joyously announced to her that "Papa had come home," for so both the little girls always called the captain.

"He came very late last night," said Gertrude; "and we have not seen him yet; but," and the child's face brightened up, "I know he'll soon send for us." It was easy to see that the attachment between Captain Sinclair and his niece and daughter was of no ordinary stamp, and Ruth felt that it spoke well for for both parties; the more so, as his frequent absence must have weakened the bond of union between them. It was always with reluctance that he left his home, and with extreme satisfaction that he returned; but extensive agency business which he had undertaken, since, in delicate health, he had left the army, and settled in an old family place in Ireland, necessitated constant journeys; some property of his deceased brother's (who had left his affairs in extreme confusion), that he wished to improve for his orphan niece, Alice, also entailed on him much anxiety. Upon Captain Sinclair's entering the study, he was greeted by the children with rapturous demonstrations of affection. Ruth stood for a moment apart, watching with pleasure the reciprocal feelings of delight that were manifested; and then he came forward, and won yet further her favorable opinion by the courteous, yet frank and friendly manner with which he welcomed her to Oaklands.

"I trust, Miss Morrison," he said, "that you will find your residence with us an agreeable one. I think I can see," he continued, surveying the little girls attentively—"I think I can see improvement here already."

Captain Sinclair was a plain man, tall, slight, and of middle age. In manners, he was perfectly a gentleman, with a uniform kindness, the result of natural amiability of disposition, that rendered him a general favorite; though in his own house, there were two exceptions to this—his butler and housekeeper. Both were afraid of the keen, penetrating eye, that more than once, they feared, might have read an inward page they would rather have kept closed; while they felt, that if he detected aught astray he would be sure to act shortly and decisively. At breakfast, that morning, when both teacher and