The Bradford Reporter.

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Judge Jessup having resumed the practice of the law in Northern Pennsylvania, will attend to any legal business intrusted to him in Bradford county. Persons wishing to consult him, can call on H. Streeter, Esq., Towanda, Pa., when an appointment can be made.

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Feb 27, '79

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Office—North Side Public Square. Jan. 1, 1875.

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

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Dec 23-75. TOWANDA, PA.

J. ANDREW WILT,
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW.
Office over Turner & Gordon's Drug Store, Towanda, Pa. May be consulted in German. [April 12, '76.]

W. J. YOUNG,
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW,
TOWANDA, PA.
Office—second door south of the First National Bank, Main St., up stairs.

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

WM. MAXWELL,
ATTORNEY-AT-LAW.
TOWANDA, PA.
Office over Dayton's Store.
April 12, 1876.

MADILL & CALIFF,
ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW,
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Office in Wood's Block, first door south of the First National bank, upstairs.
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DR. S. M. WOODBURN, Physician and Surgeon. Office at residence, on Pine Street, East of Main.
Towanda, May 1, 1872 1y*.

W. B. KELLY, DENTIST.—Office over M. F. Rosenfield's, Towanda, Pa. Teeth inserted on Gold, Silver, Rubber, and Aluminium base. Teeth extracted without pain. (oct. 34-72.

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Office over Montanyes' Store. Office hours from 10 to 12 A. M., and from 2 to 4 P. M.
Special attention given to
DISEASES OF THE EYE and DISEASES OF THE EAR

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

C. S. RUSSELL'S
GENERAL
INSURANCE AGENCY
May28-70tf. TOWANDA, PA.

FIRST NATIONAL BANK,
TOWANDA, PA.
CAPITAL PAID IN.....$125,000
SURPLUS FUND..... 66,000
This Bank offers unusual facilities for the transaction of a general banking business.
N. N. BETTS, Cashier.
JOS. POWELL, President.
April 1, 187.9

MRS. H. PEET,
TEACHER OF PIANO MUSIC,
TERMS.—$10 per term.
(Residence Third street, 1st ward.)
Towanda, Jan. 13, '79-1y.

Poetry.

PAPA'S LETTER.

I was sitting in my study,
Writing letters, when I heard,
"Please, dear mamma, Mary told me
Mamma musn't be 'sturbed."

"But I's tired of the kitty;
Want some ozzer fing to do,
Writing letters, is 'ou, mamma?
Tan't I write a letter, too?"

"Not now, darling, mamma's busy,
Run and play with kitty now,"
"No, no, mamma, me write letters—
Tan if you will show me how."

I would paint my darling's portrait,
As his sweet eyes searched my face—
Hair of gold and eyes of azure,
Form of childish, witching grace.

But the eager face was clouded,
As I slowly shook my head,
Till I said, "I'll make a letter
Of you, darling boy, instead."

So I parted back the tresses
From his forehead high and white,
And a stamp in sport I pasted
'Mid its waves of golden light.

Then I said, "Now, little letter,
Go away and bear good news;"
And I smiled, as down the staircase
Clattered loud the little shoes.

Leaving me, the darling hurried
Down to Mary in his glee;
"Mamma's writing lots of letters—
I's a letter, Mary—see!"

No one heard the little prattler,
As once more he climed the stair,
Reached the little cap and tippet,
Standing on the entry stair.

No one heard the front door open,
No one saw the golden hair,
As it floated o'er his shoulders
In the crisp October air.

Down the street the baby hastened,
Till he reached the office door;
"I's a letter, Mr. Postman;
Is there room for any more?"

"'Cause dis letter's going to papa,
Papa lives with God 'ou know,
Mamma sent me for a letter;
Does 'ou fink at I tan go?"

But the clerk in wonder answered:
"Not to-day, my little man."
"Den I'll find anozzer office;
'Cause I must go if I tan."

Fain the clerk would have detained him,
But the pleading face was gone,
And the little feet were hastening,
By the busy crowd swept on.

Suddenly the crowd was parted,
People fled to left and right,
As a pair of maddened horses
At this moment dashed in sight.

No one saw the baby figure—
No one saw the golden hair,
Till a voice of frightened sweetness
Rang out on the autumn air.

'Twas too late—a moment only
Stood the beauteous vision there;
Then the little face lay lifeless,
Covered o'er with golden hair.

Reverently they raised my darling,
Brushed away the curls of gold,
Saw the stamp upon the forehead,
Growing now so icy cold.

Not a mark the face disfigured,
Showing where the foot had tred;
But the little life was ended—
"Papa's letter" was with God.

—*Burlington Hawkeye.*

Selected Tale.

RUTH MORRISON.

[CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER III.

Some months passed on; the dark winter days were over, and the fresh, balmy spring weather brought with it brightness and hope. This was a period of much enjoyment to Ruth. Captain Sinclair had been longer at home than usual; his wife's health seemed to improve, and with it her temper; at all events, she was now generally kind to her governess, though Ruth sometimes thought that this was to be attributed to her husband's influence. Mrs. Montserrat never held the same position when the captain was at home, and, consequently, she evidently hated him. Indeed, Ruth more than once suspected that the control which the housekeeper maintained over her mistress was often irksome to her; but naturally of an indolent disposition, Mrs. Sinclair was powerless, even if she desired it, to struggle against her; while very adroitly did Mrs. Montserrat fall in with her failings, and with consummate skill and perseverance mend anew and coil afresh the thread that might on any occasion have been weakened or broken through. The housekeeper now seldom came in contact with Ruth at all; but the jealous soreness as regarded the children, and her lost power over them, especially with respect to Gertrude, rankled bitterly in the woman's heart; and circumstances that occured just at this time brought it out more prominently. There were many beautiful walks about Oaklands; but the one that was a favorite with Ruth and the children was a long avenue, which ran through the wood that gave the place its name, and skirted the lake before mentioned, and then, by a small wicket-gate communicated with the road, forming a short cut to the house for any one coming in that direction.

One fine April day, the governess and the children had gone out for their accustomed exercise. Both Gertrude and Alice were but just recovering from bad colds; and Mrs. Sinclair had been particular in her directions that they were to keep to the walks, and not venture on grass that might be damp from the showers of the season. They had gone, as usual, along their favorite route, and had reached a turn where the broad walk left the shade of the trees, and ran between the lake and the grove. "I declare," said Gertrude, "there's Marguerite coming from Common Cross. I heard mamma giving her a message to take there. May I run to meet her, Miss Morrison?"

Before Ruth could well reply, Gertrude was off, while Alice looked wistfully after her. As Mrs. Montserrat came on, holding Gertrude by the hand, Ruth saw that she had given something to the child; and as they drew nearer, the housekeeper, taking no notice of Ruth, beckoned Alice towards her, and was proceeding to fill the little girl's hand with comfits from a paper bag, when Ruth gently interposed: "Pardon me, Mrs. Montserrat; but these young ladies have not been well lately, and Mrs. Sinclair would not wish them, I know, to eat sweetmeats."

Ruth's desire elicited no reply or attention of any kind, save that the housekeeper's arm trembled as she continued to pour out the *bonbons* into Alice's hand.

"Children I desire that you will not eat these things without your mother's permission," said Ruth, in a more determined tone.

Alice, ever ready to respond to the least intimation from her governess, let the comfits drop on the walk.

"There, you *petite bete*," exclaimed Mrs. Montserrat, angrily, and pushing the child away from her: "go; you'll always be a fool. Come with me Gerty; you're not such a little *stupide!*" and she seized the elder girl's hand, and turned from the walk towards a field, through which a pathway led more directly to the house.

"Stop, Gertrude!" exclaimed her governess, who was now excited and annoyed. "I must beg Mrs. Montserrat, that you will leave the child with me; her mother has given positive orders that she is not to go on the grass, and I desire you not to take her from me."

"*You desire!*" returned the housekeeper, in a voice that shook with anger, while her thin lips quivered and grew pale. "And who are you, pray? or who gave you authority over me, I'd like to know? I took those children where I chose before your handsome face shone upon us here, and, *ma foi*, I'll take them still;" and surveying Ruth with a look of ineffable scorn, she grasped Gertrude's hand so forcibly that the child winced from the pressure, and swept by Ruth towards the field referred to. Ruth saw that there was no use in further remonstrance, and returned silent and irritated along the oak-walk towards the house, Mrs. Montserrat still holding Gertrude's hand as in a vice, and almost dragging her after her, for the child was frightened at the altercation that had taken place, and was hanging back. "Come on, do!" exclaimed the housekeeper, panting with indignation, and she strode over a high stile into the adjoining field, lifting Gertrude in her arms. On they went in silence, broken only by Mrs. Montserrat's occasional French invectives that betrayed the turbulent current of her thoughts. She was walking rapidly—so rapidly that the little girl was obliged to trot beside her, and with her eyes bent down, when suddenly Gertrude stopped short, with an exclamation of alarm that caused her to turn on her with a frown, and ask what ailed her.

"Look! look!" said the terrified child, pointing to one end of the large field, the middle of which they had reached. A bull was coming on quickly towards them, pawing the ground, snorting, and showing unmistakable symptoms of mischief.

"*Misericorde!*" exclaimed the woman, with a face that became white from fear. "Quick, child, come this way;" and dragging Gertrude on, she commenced a retreat in an opposite direction to that they had been taking. The effect of this course was to accelerate considerably the movements of the dangerous animal; in fact, from a brisk trot he instantly broke into a canter.

"Run, child, run!" shrieked the housekeeper, rapidly disengaging her hand from Gertrude's and concerned only for her own safety.

"Oh, don't leave me, Marguerite, don't leave me!" cried Gertrude; but Mrs. Montserrat, deaf to every consideration but one, flew towards that side of the enclosure that offered the speediest escape. Having succeeded in reaching and rapidly clambering over the boundary-wall of the field, she plunged into the grove, and, though perfectly safe, continued her course with undiminished speed, until she stood gasping and exhausted in her own room at Oaklands. Meanwhile, Gertrude remained for an instant stock-still, paralyzed with fear, and then, with one wild shriek, ran as fast as she could toward the walk, where she had so unfortunately left her governess. Ruth and Alice had been slowly walking on by the lake, when the first note of alarm reached their ears. "What is that?" asked Alice.

"Oh 'tis from the road responded Ruth, who was at the instant too chafed in spirit to pay much attention to anything; but soon another sharper cry attracted their attention.

"Miss Morrison," exclaimed Alice, "that's Gerty, I am sure. I suppose that Marguerite is beating her." The same thought flashed upon Ruth's mind too.

"Stay here, Alice," she said quickly, "don't stir from this walk until I come back;" and she moved hastily towards the field. Very soon the renewed screams of the child warned her that some greater danger than she had imagined was impending, and running with all her might, she crossed the field, almost at the instant that Gertrude had turned, and was fleeing on, with the bull in full pursuit. Ruth at once forsaw that her own position would be one of extreme danger if she went on; but without a single thought for herself, she rushed towards the child.

"O save me, Miss Morrison—save me!" were entreaties now mingled with the wilder cries of terror. A considerable distance still intervened between the little girl and her governess, while the bull was each instant drawing nearer to the former. An old stump of a tree just then tripped Gertrude in her flight, and after an ineffectual effort to recover herself, she fell headlong to the ground. All seemed lost for the ill-fated child, as the animal, tearing along, came up with her before she could attempt to rise; when Ruth, struggling forward, in an agony raised a roar in imitation of his own, though her tongue was parched and her throat dry with the sickening sensation of fear. The bull was bending down to attack the almost senseless form before him, when this strange sound drew his attention; he lifted up his head, tossing it furiously, and glared upon Ruth, as she undauntly faced him. He stood for a second or two irresolute, when the governess quickly opened her parasol, and twirled it in his face. The animal retreated several paces at this unexpected onset, and Ruth called earnestly to Gertrude to get up and run to the oak-walk to Alice, and that she would keep off the bull. The hope of deliverance aroused the poor child; she scrambled to her feet, calling out as she ran: "O Miss Morrison, you'll be killed, you'll be killed!"

"Don't mind me, Gerty; run as fast as you can." And it would no doubt have fared but ill with Gertrude's heroic protector, as the terrible animal was recovering his self-possession, and preparing for a fresh assault, when Captain Sinclair, accompanied by a workman who was with him in the wood, attracted by the cries and commotion, appeared most opportunely upon the scene, and not a moment to soon, extricated Ruth from certain destruction. The whole party returned to the house weary and exhausted after the alarm and excitement.

Mrs. Montserrat, the cause of the entire misadventure, waited in considerable uneasiness until she ascertained that all were safe, when she quickly repaired to Mrs. Sinclair, and tried to make good her own story, and to exculpate herself from her share in the transaction. She succeeded to a certain extent, for a time, as Gertrude, who could perhaps alone have explained the matter fully, was for some days confined to bed, threatened with fever, from the shock she had sustained. Her father, however, afterwards elicited the full account from her in Mrs. Sinclair's room, and Ruth and Mrs. Montserrat were both present by his command. When all was disclosed, exactly as it had occurred, Captain Sinclair, in the sternest manner, told the housekeeper what his opinion of her conduct was, and that the slightest interference for the future with Miss Morrison would ensure her dismissal from Oaklands. "And I hope," he continued, turning to his child, "that you, Gertrude, will never forget that Miss Morrison saved you from a most shocking death, at the peril of her own life: I, as your father, trust that I never shall." And the voice in which he spoke was one of deep emotion, as he shook Ruth warmly by the hand.

Whether Mrs. Sinclair fully participated in her husband's gratitude, it was hard to know; she thanked Ruth, it is true, but in feeble terms compared with what the circumstances demanded; and she certainly did not seem in the least altered towards her housekeeper, notwithstanding the selfish pusillanimity she had displayed. Her husband did not, however, let the matter rest in words, but some days after presented Ruth with a beautiful gold watch and chain, the gift he said, of himself and his wife, a small token of their esteem and regard; while on the back was engraved, under Ruth's name, their joint initials. Ruth, however, while she thanked both alike, was satisfied that Mrs. Sinclair was passive in the bestowal of this handsome present.

Two results followed from the day's events: one, most gratifying to her governess, that the link between her and Gertrude—who had hitherto been always more attracted to Mrs. Montserrat—became from that time stronger, as the child was fully conscious of the difference in the way in which each had acted in the hour of danger; the second, was a yet deeper hostility and dislike in the mind of the housekeeper towards her. Not many days subsequent to the encounter with the bull, Ruth was sitting on a seat in the verandah. The day was warm, and she had been reading; Captain and Mrs. Sinclair were both out, and her pupils were at work in a garden of their own at the other end of the building. Ruth had nearly fallen asleep over her book, when she was roused by voices close to her; the window of the dining room that looked into the verandah was open, and the speakers were in that room. She did not at first, in that dreamy state that she was in, recognize who they were, or what they were saying, but her attention was soon arrested by detecting Mrs. Montserrat's tone. "Now, Joshua," were the first words she caught, "I can't, nor won't stand this much longer. Will you soon be able to manage what we were settling about?"

"Patience, patience, Mrs. M.," returned the butler; "things must take their course for a little. I'm on the watch—believe me, I'm on the watch. Rome, you know, wasn't built in a day."

"Tut, nonsense, man," replied the other, speaking angrily; "you don't know the torture I'm in. That girl—perdition to her!" and she hissed the words through her shut teeth—"foils me at every turn. 'Tis as much as I can do to hold my own with my idiot of a mistress! She's quite changed to me of late; and there's Gertrude, that I could do anything with, and that was my strong point with the mother—that one, since the unfortunate business of the bull, is turned against me. I'll not rest, I swear, until I have revenge."

"By Jove, Mrs. M.!" exclaimed the butler with a low laugh, "you gave leg-bail with a vengeance when the bull came down upon you."

"Tush, fool! who'd stand to be gored, I'd like to know, for the sake of a puling child? But, Joshua," she added, more softly, laying her hand upon his arm, "will you soon be able to do what you said?"

"Hush, Mrs. M.; hush, for God's sake; walls have ears;" and that single expression startled Ruth into the recollection that she was occupying the position of an eavesdropper.

She rose quickly from her seat. "They shall see me, at any rate," she thought; and walking forward, she passed through the open window into the dining-room. Mrs. Montserrat was standing with her back to Ruth as she entered; the butler was facing her; a decanter of wine was open on the sideboard; and the man had a tumbler half-full of sherry in his hand. The look of consternation on the face of Marks made the housekeeper turn round with a start. Seeing Ruth coming in with her bonnet on, and a book in her hand, it never for an instant occurred to her that she might have been a listener to any of their conversation; her only anxiety seemed to be to cover the butler's retreat, and to turn Ruth's attention from the wine he was drinking. With the self-possession this woman could, in general, command, and with a hypocritical smile playing round her thin lips, she moved forward between Ruth and Marks.

"I'm just preparing medicine for madame. It is a warm day; will mademoiselle try a glass of wine?"

"No, thank you," replied Ruth, with marked coldness, as she passed from the room through the door at which Marks had just rapidly vanished. "What can these creature's be plotting?" thought Ruth. "Nothing good, I am sure. For myself, I defy that woman's malice. Ought I," she continued in her own mind, to speak about the wine?" She was a little perplexed as to what she had better do; but had determined on telling Captain or Mrs. Sinclair, when, that same evening, while she was with the little girls and their mother in the boudoir, the housekeeper came in, and in the course of conversation, turning to her mistress with a laugh, she exclaimed:

"Only think, Madame, what I did to that *bete* Marks to-day; I was making your bitters, and I gave him some of the dregs, pretending that it was wine. Oh, if you but saw him when he gulped it down! *Mon dieu!* the face of him! It was that time, Mademoiselle, you remember, when you came in, and that he ran off in such a hurry."

The children laughed, and Mrs. Sinclair said she hoped that she had not wasted much of her medicine. Mrs. Montserrat cast a stealthy look of triumph at Ruth, which implied: "I have foiled you now, if you intended mischief." She knew well that she had not deceived the governess, but she guarded thus skillfully against any complaint that might be prejudicial to herself. Ruth often pondered over the disjointed fragments of conversation that she had overheard, but could make nothing of them. She determined to be on the alert and to endeavor to detect or subvert whatever machinations her foes might have in view; but some months passed on, and as nothing transpired again to arouse suspicion, the circumstance almost faded from her recollection.

CHAPTER IV.

One day towards the close of the summer Captain Sinclair returned home after a short visit to Dublin. Next morning he met Ruth Morrison in the garden with her pupils; and sending them to Mrs. St. Sinclair, he told their teacher that he wished to speak with her for a few minutes. Accordingly they turned down one of the walks, and after a short pause the captain addressed Ruth with a smile: "Miss Morrison, I met a particular friend of yours in Dublin last week."

"Of mine!" exclaimed Ruth, surprised. "I have very few friends in the world now."

"Well, this person, at all events, is a sincere one. I knew something of him before, and was very glad to make his acquaintance."

In an instant the tell-tale flush suffused the whole girl's face, and she hung down her head without replying, for she guessed at once that it was to Ferdinand Munroe Captain Sinclair referred.

"Yes," resumed her companion, interpreting by her confusion that he was understood; "it is to Mr. Munroe that I allude. He told me of your mutual engagement, Miss Morrison, and I was rejoiced to hear it. I know that he bears the highest character, and is considered in his profession to be a young man of first-class ability."

"Is he quite well?" asked Ruth, in a low, timid voice.

"Quite well. He told me, likewise, of the prohibition that you had enforced against correspondence. Now, my dear young friend, I can quite understand and respect your feelings; but you must allow me to act as a parent or guardian for you in this matter. I have taken on myself to break this unnatural silence between you; just as well, perhaps, that it has been so hitherto; you might have been exposed to prying curiosity and annoyance"—and here Captain Sinclair spoke with some vexation in his manner—"but I shall guard you from that. Here," added he, taking a sealed letter from his pocket, "I am very glad to be the bearer of this to you; and if you'll intrust me with your reply, I shall send it under cover; in fact, Miss Morrison, let your correspondence pass to and fro through my hands, and no one else need be the wiser."

Ruth seized the precious letter with avidity, and again cordially thanked her kind friend for the affectionate concern he had manifested.

Now, Mrs. Montserrat was sitting at this very time in Mrs. St. Sinclair's boudoir, at one of the windows that looked out upon the garden. She noticed with a pang of bitter and jealous resentment—as she had always done—Captain Sinclair's friendly manner to Ruth, when they met underneath the window; and she watched them intently as they went slowly down the walk, observing that the children had been previously sent in. Intently she wished that she could overhear what they were saying; but as if to atone for her ears being in this case useless, she put her eyes on double duty. "I'on my word!" she ejaculated, as she observed the stop, and Ruth looking down confusedly; "*bien tres bien vraiment!*"

It could scarcely be said that an actual suspicion of anything wrong was, even for a moment, harbored by the housekeeper, but she forced herself to imagine that she had grounds for such an idea. So close was the intense scrutiny, that her mistress, attracted by the muttered exclamation, had asked her twice what she was looking at before she heard her. In an instant the housekeeper saw the opportunity offered for deadly mischief.

"O Madame, I was only observing," she said with a laugh, "how glad Miss Morrison seemed to be to meet the captain again, after his long absence!"

"His long nonsense. What do you mean? He has been only a fortnight away."

"Well, *ma foi*, you'd think, madame, if you had seen them meet down there in the garden, that they had not seen each other for six long weeks!"

"I do not understand you, Marguerite," said Mrs. Sinclair, angrily; "I beg that you will not speak of Captain Sinclair and the governess in that way."

"Pardon, *ma chere maitresse*," replied the other, softly; "but only look out there yourself. I wouldn't for the world say or think a word about the dear master, I'm sure; but few know *her* as well as I do."

Mrs. Sinclair glanced uneasily in the direction indicated by Mrs. Montserrat. Her husband was walking beside Miss Morrison, and speaking evidently in an earnest and confidential manner; while just as they reached the end of the walk she saw that he handed something to her, though what it was they were too far off to detect. The housekeeper remarked with malignant triumph the effect upon her mistress, for although she turned away saying coldly that of course Captain Sinclair was giving the governess some orders about the children, two burning spots rose instantaneously to her cheeks.

"That bait took, at any rate," was Mrs. Montserrat's exulting soliloquy; "and, my word for it, she shall have another bite before long. I'll ruffle the plumage of that demure minx, or I'm not here. Oh, if I could but see her out of this in disgrace! *Mon Dieu*, I'll wait for that—I'll wait for that!" and she rubbed her hands nervously together, as she left the room.

Ruth was scarcely conscious of Mrs. Sinclair's unwonted petulence of manner that morning while with her pupils at their music—her heart was so joyous at the letter she had just received, and at the removal of this one dark cross of her existence—the silence between her and Ferdinand. The gladness of her spirit threw its light upon her countenance, and it chafed Mrs. St. Sinclair yet more to observe her unusual cheerfulness. It was not that she entertained any unworthy suspicion of her husband; nor, if pressed, would she have admitted that she thought so ill of the governess, either, as to suppose Mrs. Montserrat's implication correct; but she felt annoyed that Captain Sinclair should seem the confident and adviser of Miss Morrison, and he, as was palpable, so much more of a favorite with her than herself. There was something, she fancied, either about the children, or of a more private or personal nature, upon which they had secret communication, that she was in ignorance of. All this, with the housekeeper's covert insinuations, left a vague sense of uneasiness, trying, almost beyond endurance, a temper never very equable. From that morning, as she could not but see, Ruth began to retrograde in favor with Mrs. Sinclair; to what she might impute this, she was completely at a loss to know. She had the unspeakable pleasure of frequent correspondence with Ferdinand—of hearing of all his plans and prospects of success—and this compensated for a great deal. He had told her of Captain Sinclair's kindness, and in an after-letter mentioned that, partly through his instrumentality, he should soon be taking a journey to France on some engineering business, that would be at once agreeable and advantageous; and when he named Montpelier in Languedoc as the probable destination, it reminded Ruth that the captain had mentioned that town as the native place of Mrs. Montserrat. In her next letter she detailed all she knew of her; referred to her own uncomfortable relations with her, and, half jestingly, asked Ferdinand to ascertain, if he could, all about this woman, as she was most curious to know who or what she had been.

It was a few days before Christmas that, one morning at breakfast, Mrs. Montserrat, coming in to take up her mistress' tray, happened to bring in the post bag, and opening it at the sideboard, brought over the letters to Captain Sinclair. His eye fell, as she laid them beside him, on the topmost letter; and as it did so a look of anxious surprise for an instant stamped her usually expressionless features. She lingered about the breakfast-table, as if preparing something for Mrs. Sinclair, while the captain took up the letters. He opened the first one, and an enclosure fell upon the floor. At once the woman pounced upon it like a hawk, ostensibly to hand the letter back to her master; but though he quickly and almost angrily took it from her, she contrived to see the address upon the cover, and as she glided from the table to the door, Ruth saw upon her face what she had never observed before—a mingled expression of curiosity and alarm that quite took her by surprise. As breakfast concluded, the captain slipped the letter into Ruth's hand, unnoticed by the children, who alone were present; and absorbed soon after in its contents, the reader soon forgot Mrs. Montserrat and the trivial circumstance that had just taken place. The letter was from Ferdinand, from Montpellier. It gave a continuation of some previous communications from the same quarter; a further account of his proceedings, mentioning, among other matters, that he would very soon be returning; that he should then visit his uncle in the north for a few days, and that it would go hard with him if he did not manage to see Ruth, when, comparatively speaking, so near her. There was a long postscript that Ruth had glanced at when she got her letter in the morning, but late at night, with her little table drawn to the fire, her candle snuffed, and her writing materials all laid out, to begin her answer, she spread out the sheet before her, and began to read the letter anew. The postscript was as follows: "You speak in your last of that unwholesome woman you have with you at Oaklands, is the shape of a housekeeper and companion to Mrs. Sinclair; though you refer to her but leniently, I can gather that she is no very amiable specimen of womankind. You would, under ordinary circumstances, in a town like this, ask an impossibility of me to inquire something about her in what, you say, is her native place. But are you acquainted with her maiden name? I ask you, because a curious circumstance occurred here the other day, and it reminded me of what you wished to know. In some excavations that were being made about the works in which we are engaged, close to a deserted and almost ruined tenement, we came upon a large trunk, iron-bound and nailed up, which had been buried, or built in, in a cellar belonging to the old house. The workmen thought that they had lit upon a treasure; but on opening it, found that it contained the skeleton of a man—an officer, it would appear, from the worn and disfigured fragments of his dress. There was a dagger beside him in the trunk, with dark rusty stains on it—supposed to be blood; a small book of French poetry was found in the tattered pocket of the coat; some writing in it is almost effaced, but a single name is still barely legible—Marguerite du Bois or du Lois. This discovery is causing a great deal of talk and inquiry, but little can be made out. That the unfortunate man met with foul play seems almost certain. Some sixteen years ago, they say, a retired officer, who was living in the house in question with a young female (but whether married to her or not is not known), suddenly disappeared, and it was thought that he had secretly left the place; as the young woman also vanished at the same time, suspicions were afloat that she had been made away with for some cause or other. Now, it looks as if the crime lay on the other side. Could it be that this woman and the one you speak of are identical? I don't know what put so unlikely a thought into my head, except your inquiry coming just at the instant of this strange discovery here. Make out if you can, at all events, by what name this Montserrat went in her early years. Beware of her, too; she may be a dangerous individual."

Ruth read this postscript with a good deal of anxiety, and was somewhat disconcerted at the coincidence—"Could there be anything in it?" Again she pored over the letter, engrossed in its contents so entirely that she was abstracted from everything else, until a quick short breath just at her ear made her turn round with a start of horror—a feeling by no means lightened as she saw the housekeeper standing close behind her chair. She bounded from her seat, and with difficulty suppressed a scream. "What on earth brought you here, Mrs. Montserrat?" exclaimed Ruth, speaking thick with agitation. "I never heard you come in; I declare you frightened me most terribly."

"Oh, did I? Pardon, mademoiselle," she replied; but her voice was hollow and unnatural, and she spoke in so absent a manner, that at first Ruth thought she must have been walking in her sleep. "I knocked twice," she continued, "but madamoiselle was so occupied with *that*"—and she pointed to the open sheet on the table—"that I suppose she did not hear me."

Ruth quickly gathered up her letter and shuddered as she remembered the closing allusion, and thought of the possibility of this terrible woman having read it over her shoulder before she had detected her presence.

"I was very cold to-night," resumed the housekeeper, "and my fire went out, and I thought that you might allow me to warm myself here for awhile before going to bed;" and without waiting for a reply, she drew a chair to the fire and sat down. Ruth moved away the table, hastily put up her letter and writing materials, and moved about the room, being extremely unwilling, if she could avoid it, to come in any close proximity to her disagreeable companion. At length, suddenly lifting herself up from her stooping posture, the housekeeper exclaimed: "You had a letter from Montpelier to-day, had you not?"

"How do you know?" replied Ruth, guardedly.

"How do I know? Did I not see the post-mark this morning, and the letter enclosed for you when the captain opened it?" she returned, angrily. "I know more of your secrets than you think."

"Well, may I ask your right, even supposing that I had secrets, to inquire after or pry into what does not concern you?"

"But I tell you," replied the other almost fiercely, "it does concern me. Your secrets! Ha! do you think that I'd trouble my brain about you or your secrets, if they didn't cross my road? But," and her eyes flashed fire, "mark you, I'll not be meddled with. And now, I ask you, who is it that writes to you from Montpelier? What do you know of that place? Have you friends there?" And she rose from her seat, and moved toward where the young girl was standing, with a gesture almost menacing.

Ruth was frightened at the vehemence of manner displayed by Mrs. Montserrat; apprehensive too, that it would be unsafe to exasperate such an unprincipled woman as she possibly was, when thus alone with her, and at night; so, in as quiet a manner as she could assume, she replied: "I really cannot understand you, Mrs. Montserrat. I have no desire to interfere with your concerns, and I surely may ask as much from you. I have a friend who is just now staying at Montpelier, and the letter you allude to is from that friend; but you must excuse me if I decline entering any further with you into my own private affairs."

The eyes of her listener glared upon Ruth as she spoke, and seemed as if they would pierce into her very soul. "Tell me this," she said, after a pause; "is not my name in that letter? I know the place," and her voice trembled, and her pale lips grew whiter. "Does your correspondent know me? Tell me quick, girl; I won't be trifled with."

"My correspondent does *not* know you, Mrs. Montserrat," responded Ruth, trying to speak calmly, and to suppress every sign of agitation. "Surely I may be at liberty to receive my letters without being subjected to this intrusion."

Mrs. Montserrat stood for a few minutes in silence, with her eyes fixed on the fire. "*Tres bien, peut etre*," she began, in a kind of soliloquy, and then suddenly breaking off, she laid her hand on Ruth's arm with a force that made her leap with terror. "You need not be in such a fright, my little bird," she said, mockingly; "I'm not going to twist your neck; though"—and she cast a look of scornful hate upon the small form before her—"it wouldn't give much trouble to do so. But mind you this well"—and she lifted her hand and frowned darkly—"better for you to be a bird in the talons of the falcon than to mix yourself up with any business of mine. I'll know who writes to you from Montpelier, and what you talk about in the garden to the captain, I can tell you; and I give you now"—and her voice sunk to a quivering whisper—"but one last warning. Pass me by." So speaking, she drew her shawl more tightly round her and swept fiercely from the room.

[CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.]

Mark Twain's Regrets.

During a recent warm discussion between the Catholics and Protestants of Lancaster, Pa., Miss Mary Kyle, a lady who had always taken a deep interest interest in religious matters, conceived a brilliant idea as to how these differences between the denominations could be amicably settled. Believing that the only way by which this end could be accomplished would be to have the ministers and master minds of the country assemble at a large dinner, and discuss at the same time religion and victuals, Miss Mary issued invitations to a number of prominent men soliciting their aid in the furtherance of her object, and asking their presence at a dinner to be given by her. Among others invited was Mark Twain. The letter addressed to the latter gentleman was long, covering a number of closely-written pages, and after giving a history of the contest which was being waged in religious circles in that city, stated that the writer had been favored with visions and inspirations from heaven, by which she was told that the only way to settle the matter was in the way proposed by her. In answer, Mr. Clemens sent the following letter containing his regrets, and stating his reasons for not being present:

FARMINGTON AVENUE,
HARTFORD, CONN.,
Feb. 21, 1880.

Well, Mary, my friend, you must think I am a slow sort of correspondent, and the truth is, I am. You must forgive this fault; it is one which I have never been able to correct. I am a pretty busy person, and a very lazy one; therefore I am apt to let letters lie a long time before I answer them. However, once a year, on or about Washington's Birthday, I rake together all the unanswered letters and reply to them. I meant to answer the letter you sent me some weeks ago, but waited for Washington's Birthday to come. Write to me when you feel like it, Mary, but don't you feel hurt if I keep you waiting till the next Washington's Birthday for an answer. I do not feel half so much hurried and bothered when I have a year to answer a letter in as I do when people expect an answer right away. I only send money to people once a year, too, and that is on Washington's Birthday, so you see if I had answered you earlier I could not have sent you the five dollars