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Advertisement of a Lost Day.

BY MRS. LYDIA H. SIGOURNEY.

Lost! lost! lost!
A gem of countless price,
Cut from the living rock,
And graved in Paradise,
Set round with three times eight
Large diamonds, clear and bright,
And each with sixty smaller ones,
All changeful as the light.

Lost—where the thoughtless throng
In fashion's mazes wind,
Where trilleth folly's song,
Leaving a sting behind:
Yet to my hand 't was given
A golden harp to buy,
Such as the white-robed choir attune
To deathless minstrelsy.

Lost! lost! lost!
I feel all search in vain;
That gem of countless cost
Can ne'er be mine again;
I offer no reward,
For all these heart-strings sever,
I know that heaven-entrusted gift
Is reft away forever.

But when the sea and land
Like burning scroll have fled,
I'll see it in his hand
Who judgeth quick and dead,
And when of scathe and loss
That man can ne'er repair,
The dread injury meets my soul,
What shall it answer there?

Lilias Fane.

BY FANNY FORRESTER.

About five miles from Alderbrook there is a handsome red school-house, with a portico in front, shaded by an immense butternut; white window-shutters, to keep out rogues at night, but of no use at all during the day; and a handsome cupola, in which is a bell of sufficient power to be heard, particularly on the still days, all over the district. This specimen of architecture, being intended to serve the double purpose of church and school-house, is the pride of the little community; and, indeed, it well may be, for there is not its equal in the whole country round. When the school-house was first built, the neighbors all resolved to support a 'first-rate school;' and, for many years, they employed teachers who came well recommended, and claimed a large salary. Squire Mason said no pains were spared, every thing was done that man could do; yet, somehow, no teacher seemed to give general satisfaction; and so many left, either in indignation or disgrace, that 'the Mason school' gained the reputation of being the most ungovernable in the country. If truth must be told, this was not without reason, for people who build new school-houses must, of course, listen to new doctrines, and most of the families in 'the Mason district' had imbibed somewhat extensively the notions prevalent among reformers of the present day, who think that Solomon was only joking when he recommended the rod. At last, after some renegade youngsters had summarily dismissed, with a broken head, a dark, square-shouldered, piratical looking man, who, in a fit of desperation, had been chosen for his enormous strength, people became quite discouraged, and the principal men of the district, old Farmer Westborn, Deacon Martin, and Squire Mason, called a meeting to discuss affairs. Some proposed whipping all the boys around, and starting a new school; others thought it best to shut up the house entirely, and set the young rebels to cutting wood; while Deacon Martin was of the opinion that if some of the 'worst ones' could be kept at home there could be no difficulty with the rest. Upon this hint others spake, and the meeting at last decided on obtaining a female teacher to take charge of the little ones, the 'big boys' being entirely voted out. Squire Mason himself had a son who was considered a 'rollicking blade,' up to all sorts of mischief, and of the half-dozen shock-headed Westborns, there was not one that had failed to give the former master blow for blow. Affairs were, however, now to assume a calmer aspect; and the meeting proceeded forthwith to appoint a school committee, consisting of Deacon Martin, who had no children of his own, and was consequently expected to take a great interest in those of his neighbors, Mr. Fielding, a quiet bachelor of thirty-five or thereabout, and one or two others, who were selected for the sake of making the numbers strong, and not for any thing that they were expected to do. The principal duty of the *acting* part of the committee was to obtain a teacher; but they were also to manage all other affairs thereunto pertaining.

Luckily a lady had been recommended to Deacon Martin, during the preceding autumn, as a perfect prodigy; and our school committee-men, being quiet sort of people, who did not like to make unnecessary trouble, a letter, superscribed '*Miss Lilias Fane*,' was thrown into the post-office box, which, in due time, brought as favorable an answer as could be desired.

It was a cold, stormy morning in December, when the public stage-coach set down the new school-mistress at the door of Deacon Martin's house. A bundle of cloaks and blankets rolled from the open door into the hands of the good deacon, who was obliged to support, indeed almost to carry, an invisible form into the house, where his good dame stood ready to divest it of all unnecessary incumbrances. At first a large blanket was removed, then muff and cloak, and yet shawl, hood and veil remained; and Mrs. Martin could not help conjecturing how precious must be the nut which was blessed with so much shell. The task of untying strings and removing pins being accomplished, a volume of flaxen ringlets descended over a pair of tiny white shoulders, and a soft, blue eye stole timidly from its silken ambush up to the face of Mrs. Martin, but meeting no sympathy there, it retreated behind the drooping lid, and little Miss Fane, blushing up to the pretty flaxen waves that just shaded her forehead, smiled, and curtsied, and then crouched by the blazing fire like a petted kitten. Mrs. Martin retreated involuntarily, and the deacon parted his lips, drew up his eye-brows, and shrugged his shoulders, between astonishment and contempt. What! that child to assume the duties and responsibilities of a school teacher, and, above all, in such a school! Why, Susan Harman could put her out of the door with one hand, and the very littlest boy overmaster her. There sat the new school-mistress, and there stood the deacon and his dame, gazing at her perfectly speechless, when Mr. Fielding drove up to the door; it being considered his especial duty to introduce new teachers, and particularly lady teachers, to the school-house. Now the bachelor had some very fine notions of tall elegant figures, and dignified manners; indeed he had a rule for every thing, stepping, looking, and even thinking; and, consequently, he was taken all aback when his eye first lighted on the unpretending little school-mistress. Her figure was slight and exceedingly fragile, and her face the very perfection of infantile sweetness.—This was all that Mr. Fielding had an opportunity to observe, as she stood before him in graceful confusion, replying to his formal salutation, and answering his still more formal questions about the weather, the state of the roads, and the time of her arrival. The bachelor, however, was confident that Miss Fane was a very incompetent school teacher; and Miss Fane was quite as confident that the bachelor was a very incompetent beau. First, he gave her what the little lady considered an impertinent stare—as a school committee-man has a right to do—then he made a great many commonplace remarks, as a man that wishes to appear very dignified will do; and then he desired to see Deacon Martin in private, as a man when he wishes to let you know that he is about to discuss your character should do. Poor Lilias Fane! with all her simplicity she was not deficient in discernment, and she felt piqued at the manners of the people, particularly Mr. Fielding, whose real superiority she instantly detected, despite of the clumsy awkwardness behind which he managed to hide himself. So, tossing back her sunny curls, and calling for hood and shawl, in spite of all Mrs. Martin's entreaties to the contrary, she was half way to the school-house before the gentlemen decided that they could do nothing less than give her a trial. It was with the utmost surprise that the bachelor heard of the flight of his bonny bird; for he was the greatest man in the district, and every one was but too much delighted to gain his notice. He owned a fine cottage close by the Maple Grove, with beautiful grounds about it, and every elegance that wealth could command and taste dictate within; and there he resided, with his mother and a little nephew, in very enviable quiet. It was evident that his knowledge of the world was thorough, and he had probably at some period of his life taken a part in its tumult; but the retirement of private life best suited him, and he had for several years buried the most perfect specimen of a gentleman of the old school extant among the rural luxuries of Grove Cottage. Here, however, none of the punctilios on which he set so high a value were omitted, for he was too thoroughly a gentleman to throw aside the character when behind the scenes, and all honored him for his strict integrity, as well as intellectual superiority. Mr. Fielding had not a particle of misanthropy in his composition: so, notwithstanding a secret touch of exclusive feeling, arising probably from a consciousness of possessing but little in common with those around him; he mingled with the people of the neighborhood as though nothing but a certain degree of coldness and personal dignity prevented him from being on a perfect equality with them, and he exhibited so much real interest in all that concerned their welfare that he possessed their entire confidence.

When Mr. Fielding learned that the little lady had gone off alone he looked surprised; but recollecting how bashful she had appeared when standing in his august presence, he at once saw the matter in a more pleasing light; so calling on Deacon Martin to bestow his burly corpus in the seat intended for pretty Lilias Fane, the two committee-men proceeded leisurely toward the school-house.

In the mean time poor Lilias was trudging through the snow, her nether lip pouting after the most approved style of angry beauties, and her little heart throbbing with a variety of contending emotions, none of which were actually pleasurable, except the one excited by a little pile of silver which she saw in prospect—the fruit of her own labor. At thought of this she brushed away the tear that sparkled on her lashes, and, drawing up her slight figure with an air of determination, stepped boldly and decidedly into the portico and placed her hand on the latch of the door. This done, she paused; the little heart, but a moment before so resolute, fluttered tumultuously, the head drooped, the eyes brimmed over, and the fingers extended so firmly, now quivered with agitation. Poor Lilias Fane! what would she not have given to feel her mother's arms about her, and weep on her sympathizing bosom.

Farmer Westborn, and Squire Mason, and the rest of the school meeting men were in earnest when they decided that the 'big boys' should not be allowed to attend school; but they had been in earnest a great many times before; so the boys knew perfectly well what it meant, and were now on hand preparing for the reception of the new teacher. Little did poor Lilias Fane imagine what stout hearts awaited her entrance, or her courage would not have been prompt to return; but the thought of home, her widowed mother, and helpless little brothers and sisters, in connection with the all-important salary, nerved her up. Again she erected her head and wiped away the tears, then throwing open the door, she walked quietly and firmly into the room. What a spectacle! children of all sizes, from the little apron-ed chap, hardly yet from the cradle, up to the height of the new school-mistress, and youths towering far above her, in almost the pride of manhood, turned their faces toward the door, and stood gaping in silent astonishment. There were Susan Harman, and Sally Jones, and Nabby Woods, all older than the school-mistress, and several others who were larger; and at the extremity of the room stood Alfred Mason, a man in size if not in form, surrounded by the six shock-headed Westborns, Bill Blount, Philip Clute, and Nehemiah Strong, all school rowdies of the first water. Well might they stare, for such a vision never met their eyes before; and well might bright Lilias smile at the looks of wonder that greeted her at every turn. A smile, if it is a perfectly natural one, full of mirthfulness and slightly spiced with mischief, is the best of all passports to a young heart, and not a face was there in the whole room but caught the infection, and answered with a bashful grin the twinkle of the little maiden's eye and the curl of her lip. Oh! sadly did naughty Lilias compromise the dignity of the school-mistress, but what she lost in one respect was more than made up in another. Nabby Woods went about brushing the slippery dried peas from the floor, lest the smiling fairy of a new school-dame should be made their victim, as had been duly planned for a week beforehand; and Philip Clute, first glancing at Alfred Mason for approbation, stepped awkwardly forward and put a whole chair in the place of the broken one that had been stationed before the desk for the benefit of the new teacher, thus making himself the first to receive her cheerful salutation. Philip had never been known to shrink before birchen rod or cherry ferule; but Lilias Fane, with her merry blue eye and face full of kindness and gentleness, half hidden in the mirthful dimples which played over it—sweet Lilias Fane was a different thing. She could not be looked upon with indifference, and poor Philip twisted himself into as many shapes as a cloud wreath in a tempest, or a captured eel, and turned as red as the blood beets in his father's cellar. On passed the bright-faced Lilias around the room, nodding to one, smiling to another, and addressing some cheerful remark to those who seemed a little afraid of her, until she reached the group over which the redoubtable Mason presided. By this time she had gained all hearts; for had'nt she said *we* when talking to the 'big girls,' as though she did't feel herself a bit above them? and had'nt she patted the heads of the younger one, with her pretty little hand, in a way which proved beyond the possibility of a doubt that she was a decided enemy to hair pulling? Alfred Mason had seen it all, and to prove to the new school-mistress that he was a little superior to the Westborns & Co., he advanced three steps and made a bow as much like Mr. Fielding's as he could. This done he passed his fingers through his shining black hair, twitched his shirt collars, and elevated head and shoulders after a very manly fashion, and as though silently resolving not to be afraid of any thing this side of fairy land, though appearing in the shape of Titania herself. But bewitching, roguish, naughty Miss Fane did bewilder him notwithstanding; for having always considered himself a rascally scape-grace of a boy, bound to do as much mischief as he could, he suddenly found himself transformed into a man, and a beautiful creature, with a child's blushes and a woman's smiles, asking him questions in the most respectful tone, hoping that she should be seconded by the young gentlemen before her in all her efforts, and insinuating very gracefully and very sweetly how much she relied upon them for success in her present undertaking. The smile, the tone of voice, the manner, combined with the flattering address, were perfectly irresistible; and Alfred Mason, after perpetrating another bow, addressed a few whispered words to his companions, and walked away to his seat. His example was immediately followed by the whole school, and Miss Fane was left standing in the midst of subjects as loyal as any sovereign would care to reign over. At this agreeable crisis the door opened, and it may well be believed that in every dimple of Lilias Fane's young face lurked a roguish smile, as her eye lighted on Mr. Fielding and Deacon Martin. The bachelor observed it, and he was the least bit in the world disconcerted, while the Deacon raised his eye-brows and shrugged his shoulders more emphatically than ever, but not contemptuously. If the two committee-men had been astonished before they were doubly so now, and it was with a much more respectful air than he had at first assumed that Mr. Fielding saluted the little lady, and apologised for his previous neglect.

'You have undertaken a very heavy task, Miss Fane,' he remarked in a tone which, from the proximity of the audience on the seats, was necessarily low, and thus seemingly confidential.

Thoughtless Lilias! she shook her head and smiled.

'It is a dreadful responsible station,' chimed in the deacon.

A shade of seriousness flitted over the face of Lilias, and then she smiled again.

'Our school is considered a very difficult one,' observed the bachelor.

'I apprehend no difficulty at all,' Lilias replied in a tone of gaiety.

'But, Miss Fane,' persisted the deacon, 'it is my duty to undeceive you as to the character of our school.'

Still the lady smiled confidently.

'Very difficult to manage, I can assure you,' added the bachelor.

Lilias glanced around the room with a triumphant, incredulous air, as much as to say, 'it seems to me just the easiest thing in the world,' (the saucy little gipsy;) but she did not say it. Her only reply was to beg the privilege of consulting two such able advisers should she chance to meet with unexpected difficulties. The deacon received the compliment graciously, not probably observing a touch of sarcasm more discoverable in the dancing blue eye than in the voice; but Mr. Fielding looked displeased, bowed stiffly, and, after a few formal words, took his leave, followed by the worthy deacon.

'I shouldn't wonder,' remarked Deacon Martin, after they were seated in the sleigh, 'I shouldn't wonder if this little Miss Fane made a pretty good teacher after all. It's wonderful that the children should be so orderly this morning.'

Mr. Fielding gave his head a twitch, something between a shake and a nod, and looked knowing. It was evident that he could say a great deal if he chose. This non-committal movement is wisdom's favorite cloak; and so much in vogue is it, that it sometimes even passes current when the cloak is missing.

For that day at least Lilias Fane was happy. She smiled and was smiled upon. And she began to think it was just the pleasantest thing in the world to be the presiding genius of such a place, exercising uncontrolled power, dispensing smiles and sunshine at will, beloved and loving. But her day of darkness was to come. Scarce a week had passed before there were indications of a revolt among some of her subjects—and she was alarmed to find that there were difficulties which a smile and a loving word could not heal. At home, her dear delightful home, she had been taught to believe them a universal balm—oil for the wildest wave, a hush for the deadliest tempest. But yet never was school-mistress idolized like darling Lilias Fane. Even the hearts of the Westborns began to melt beneath the glances of her beaming eye, and Alfred Mason was her never failing friend and champion. Poor Alf. Westborn! Sad was the reputation he bore in the district; and nobody would believe he was in earnest when he behaved properly; but he was in reality more given to mirth than malice, fonder of fun than real mischief—and he could see no fun at all in annoying sweet Miss Fane. But she was annoyed nevertheless, not so much by her pupils, as by remarks which were constantly reaching her concerning her youth, inexperience, and consequent inefficiency. It was said that she was a child among the children, and so she was, and how could she help it—the bright pet Lilias! Scarce sixteen summers had burnished her fair locks, and her heart was full of childish impulses. It was said that she had no dignity of manner, and stood among her pupils as one of them—faults which she was too conscious of possessing. As well might you look for dignity in a humming-bird or a fawn as in Lilias Fane—the darling! She loved her pupils dearly, and could not but betray her interest.—She had too many sympathies in common with them to stand aloof in joy or sorrow; and in the loved and the loving were merged the teacher and the taught. It was even said that her voice had been known to mingle in the merry shout that sometimes arose from the school-room; and there must have been some truth in the report—for her pupils could not have the heart to laugh when she was serious. In truth, Lilias Fane was a strange teacher; though she may have taught the lore most needed—those heart lessons richer than all the theories of all the schools united. In other lessons she was capricious. She taught what she loved and that she made her pupils love; but what was dry and difficult she passed over, as in studying she had been allowed to do by her too indulgent governess. Yet she was unwearied in her efforts, and never thought of self when the good of her pupils was concerned; and so, despite the faults in her system of education, her school made rapid improvement. But no degree of improvement was sufficient to satisfy those who detected these faults; and soon the war of words ran high for and against the poor school-mistress, whose only offences were too much beauty, too immature youth, and a too kind heart. These things could not occur without Miss Fane's knowledge, for her young friends, in their mistaken zeal, repeated every word to her, and she (poor simple child!) was undignified enough to listen to their representation, and receive their expression of sympathy. They were all the friends she had. Thus passed one-third of Lilias Fane's term of service, in alternate storm and sunshine, till at last farmer Westborn took a decided step; and in spite of young shock-head's remonstrances, removed all of his six children from school. Sad was the face poor Lilias Fane exhibited on this occasion, and all of her flock were sad from sympathy.—Looks, some of sorrow and some of indignation, were exchanged among the elder pupils; and the younger ones gazed in silent wonder on the flushed face and tearful eye of her, who nevertheless would now and then give them a smile, from sheer habit. At last the day ended, and sad, and low, and kinder even than usual, were the *good-nights* of the sympathizing group, as, one by one, they disappeared through the door till the poor little school-mistress was alone, and then she covered her face with her hands and wept.

'I wouldn't mind it, Miss Fane,' said a timid, but sympathizing voice close by her ear.

'How can I help it, Alfred?' asked Lilias, without raising her head, 'Mr. Westborn must have a dreadful opinion of me, or he never—'

'Mr. Westborn is a fool! the meanest man—'

'Alfred!'

'You don't know him, Miss Fane, or you would say so too. But don't cry any more—don't—come over and see Mary—you have true friends, Miss Fane—you—they—' and here Alfred stopped short; for, although particularly anxious to console Miss Fane, he seemed to be suffering under a most painful embarrassment.—The gentle, indeed touching tone of voice was not lost on poor Lilias; although there seemed to be some reason why she should not listen to it; for she raised her head, and with more calmness than she could have been expected to command, 'You are very kind, Alfred, and I thank you, but—'

'I understand you, Miss Fane,' interrupted the youth somewhat proudly, 'kindness should not be obtrusive.'

'No, Alfred, you mistake me. I prize the sympathy of my friends but too highly; and it is gratifying to know that all my pupils, if no others, are of the number.'

'Yes they all are—yet—Miss—Miss Fane—' and Alfred stammered on, more embarrassed than ever.

'I can assure them that their kindness will be remembered most gratefully, and their friendship warmly returned,' added Miss Fane, with a gentle dignity, which prevented familiarity, while it soothed.

Alfred Mason stood for a few moment irresolute, and Lilias resumed. 'To you in particular, Alfred, am I deeply indebted. You have defended me in my absence, assisted me in school both by your example and counsel; and have performed the thousand little services which have contributed thus far to make my time here among strangers pass so agreeably. I shall never forget you, kind, generous friend that you are! And Mary too—my own brother and sister could not have watched more carefully over my comfort and happiness. I have much to say to you of this, but not now. To-night I have subjects of thought less pleasant, and must be alone.'

'I shouldn't like to trouble you, Miss Fane, but I came to tell you there is to be a school-meeting to-night. Oh, how I wish I was a man! in influence I mean, for I know that I have a man's soul, a—'

'What is the school-meeting for, Alfred?'

'Oh, Mr. Fielding—cross old bachelor!—but I won't tell you any thing about it—it's too provoking.'

'I shouldn't expect any good from Mr. Fielding,' said Lilias, with an unusual degree of acrimony. Why so exceedingly indignant at him, when, if he had not sympathized, he surely had done thee no injury, gentle Lilias.

'He! no danger of his doing good any where—though he says he pities the young lady—pities! But who do you think he wants to get in your place?'

Lilias stood aghast, for in all her troubles the thought of losing her situation had not occurred to her, and now they had actually planned her removal, and were about appointing a successor. 'Who, Alfred?' she gasped tremblingly.

Would you believe it, Miss Fane—that ugly, cross, vinegar-faced Miss Digby—it is too bad! At any rate they will rue the day they get her here. What is the matter, Miss Fane? you are as pale as death.'

'Nothing—go now, Alfred—you shall tell me more to-morrow.'

Well might young Lilias Fane turn pale, poor child! at this intelligence; for at that very moment she held her mother's last letter in her bosom; and in that letter had the fond hoping mother rejoiced over the bright prospects of her darling, called her the guardian angel of the family, and hoped that through her efforts comfort might again be restored to their little home. And now to be obliged to return in disgrace, disappoint the expectations of that doating parent, and become a burden where she should be a helper, was too much—more than she could bear. Alfred obeyed her, and retired in sorrowful silence, and poor Lilias, pressing one small hand upon her aching head, paced the floor in a bitterness of spirit that she had never felt before. We may be angels while love makes an Eden for us, but when we go out among the thorns, we find another spirit rising up, and learn alas! that we are not yet all meekness and purity. The disheartening lesson was embittering still more the spirit of Lilias, as she paced up and down her deserted room. But why should Mr. Fielding be so unkind? how had she offended him? These questions puzzled her most painfully; and then, heavily and hopelessly came thoughts of the future.—What should she do? She was sure of the sympathy of good-natured Mary Mason; but such a friend was scarce sufficient for the exigency. There was no one to advise her—no one, who, acquainted with all the circumstances of the case, could say what was best; no one even who could be made to comprehend her feelings. And she longed to pour out all her troubles in some friendly bosom. Once the thought of Alfred Mason crossed her mind, but she only muttered, blushing even then, 'kind silly boy!' and again recurred to the one grand question—what *should* she do? In the midst of these reflexions, a footstep sounded on the threshold, and before she had time to wonder who was there, Mr. Fielding stood before her. The surprise seemed mutual; but Lilias, probably from her sense of injury, was the first to recover her presence of mind. She crushed a whole shower of bright crystals that were in the act of descending, elevated her head, and with a slight curtesy was proceeding to adjust her cloak, when Mr. Fielding approached her.

'Excuse me, Miss Fane, for this intrusion; I did not expect to find you here, but since I have, perhaps you will favor me with a few moments' conversation.'

'With pleasure, sir, in a proper place,' said Lilias, keeping down her anger with a strong effort. 'I presume Deacon Martin will be happy to see you.'

'It is you I wish to see, Miss Fane, and for that I shall have no good opportunity at Deacon Martin's.'

'Your communication must be of consequence,' said Lilias, endeavoring to assume an air of carelessness.

'You are right—it is of some consequence to you, and so of course to your friends.'

'Among which I am well aware that I have not the honor to reckon Mr. Fielding,' said Lilias, provoked beyond endurance by this seeming duplicity. The bachelor was evidently the most imperturbable of mortals. The little maiden's eye flashed and her cheeks were crimson with indignation, but not a muscle of his face moved; he neither looked confused nor angry, but in his usual tone replied, 'I will not contend with you upon that point, Miss Fane, for mere professions are empty things. However, it is my wish to act the part of a friend by you now.'

'You will have an opportunity to exhibit your friendship in the school meeting this evening,' said Lilias with a curling lip, and, if I am rightly informed, it is your intention to do so.'

Strange to say, Mr. Fielding was not yet demolished, but with increasing *sang froid* he replied, 'If you had received less information from injudicious persons it might have been better for you, and most assuredly would have saved you much unhappiness.'

The lady trotted her foot in vexation, for she knew his remark to be true; meantime muttering something about even injudicious friends being preferable to the most punctilious enemies.

"There I beg leave to dissent," said Mr. Fielding, with perfect coolness; "honorable enemies—"

"Excuse me, sir," interrupted Lilias, losing all patience, "I am not in a mood for discussion to-night, and you—it is almost time for the school-meeting."

"The school-meeting has been deferred."

"Deferred!" Miss Fane's young face brightened, like the sky with an April sunflash, for what might not a little more time do for her? and she extended her hand involuntary, while a "forgive me," hovered on her smile-wreathed lips.

"It will not take place till next week; and in the meantime," continued Mr. Fielding, hesitatingly, "it would—if I might—if you would but have confidence in my motives, Miss Fane, I would venture a piece of advice."

"To which I am bound to listen," said Lilias, gaily, and turning upon the adviser a face radiant with happiness, for the week's respite had quite restored her fallen spirits.

"Bound!"

"From choice, I mean," said Lilias, with a smile, which made the bachelor quite forget that she had been angry.

"Then I will talk freely as to a friend—a sister," and Mr. Fielding spoke in a low tone, and hurried his words as though the ice might be beginning to thaw. "Your position must be a very painful one. You have, I know, gained all hearts, but the judgments of many are against you, and the prejudices of more. You have many professed friends, and they do indeed feel kindly toward you; but each has some petty interest to serve, some feeling of rivalry to gratify, and there is not one among them in whom you can place implicit confidence."

"I know it! I have felt it all, only too deeply, too bitterly! but what can I do? Oh, if my mother could be here!" and overcome by the sudden revulsion of feeling, Lilias burst into tears.

"Then go to her, Miss Fane, go to-morrow—her disinterestedness you cannot doubt."

"Nor is there room for doubt in the case of another individual," retorted Lilias, in a tone of bitterness. "You have, at least, the merit of dealing openly, Mr. Fielding."

"You distrust me without cause, Miss Fane," said the bachelor, warmly; "it is to save you pain that I recommend this course; and it was in the hope of inducing you to withdraw that I persuaded them to defer the meeting. We have coarse natures, here, and *you* must not come in contact with them. Allow me to advise you, and do not enter your school again."

Poor Lilias Fane! the net was about her, and flutter as she would she could not get free. "Then they intend to dismiss me?" she asked despondingly.

"If you give them the opportunity, I fear they will."

"What have I done, Mr. Fielding, to deserve this?"

"Every thing that is good and praiseworthy; but a district school is not the place for one like you. A school teacher must not be too sensitive—she must know how to endure, to return buffetings."

"Oh, Mr. Fielding, I am sure it is not necessary for a school-teacher to be bad or heartless. I know what unfits me for the place—I have too little character—too little self-dependence—but I should improve—I am sure I should. I *cannot* leave my school until I am obliged to leave it, as perhaps even you will do me the justice to believe, I would have undertaken it only from necessity. Even a week is of importance to me."

"I have not felt at liberty to inquire your motive, Miss Fane, but I have felt assured that it was no unworthy one, and your partial failure is attended with no disgrace. Indeed," and there was so much sincerity in Mr. Fielding's words, that he did not think how warmly he was praising, "I have watched your patience, your industry, your gentleness and sweetness, with admiration; and it is to the very qualities most admirable, that your want of success may be traced."

"And so I must go!" exclaimed Lilias, with a fresh gush of feeling. "My poor, poor mother! Indeed, Mr. Fielding—but you must be my friend, and I will do as you bid me, for there is nobody in the world to say just what I ought to do."

The bachelor was almost as much agitated as poor Lilias Fane. Fresh interest seemed to be gathering around the school mistress, and yet he had too much delicacy to press inquiries, which at any other time would seem impertinent. There was however a better understanding between the school committee-man and the lady-teacher; and so another half hour was passed in conversation without a single angry word, after which the two emerged from the school house together, and taking a seat in the sleigh, proceeded towards Deacon Martin's.

That night, bright young Lilias Fane, for almost the first time in her life, went to her bed with an aching heart, though caused by a seeming trifle when compared with her other sources of sorrow.—Nurtured in the lap of luxury, made beggars by the death of a husband and father, who was an object of almost idolatry to a loving, helpless group; visited by disappointment, neglect and sickness, the little family had struggled on and been happy. They had stemmed the torrent together. But Mrs. Fane's exertions were wasting life. Lilias was the eldest child and her only dependence. What could the delicate, fragile young girl do to be useful? Plain sewing yielded but slight recompense to fingers too little accustomed to its mysteries, and, in the retirement which Mrs. Fane had chosen, ornamental needle-work found no market. True, Lilias knew something of drawing and music; but she had never thought of either as a profession, and she felt conscious that her knowledge of both was too superficial to turn to account. Little did Mrs. Fane or Lilias know of a district school, particularly in the winter, but they knew that teaching was considered a respectable employment; so the trial was made, and bitter to Lilias was the result.

The next morning the children assembled at the school-house as usual, but they were soon dispersed by the sad intelligence that Miss Fane had been called suddenly [illegible]; which information caused quite a sensation throughout the district. Alfred Mason kicked over he breakfast table when he heard the news, declared that it was Mr. Fielding's work, and he ought to be hanged, and chopped wood furiously all the rest of the day.

Some people thought it quite strange that Miss Fane did not go home in the stage coach, as she came, and there was some little gossipping on the subject; but Mrs. Martin said Mr. Fielding had convinced her that his sleigh, with the buffalo robes, was much more comfortable, and safe, and had talked so much of the inconveniences of stage coach travelling, that the good dame declared she should "be afeared of the ugly things all the days of her life."

In the meantime the lady and gentleman were pursuing their way very sociably, if not very happily; and Lilias found, to her finite astonishment, that Mr. Fielding, when he threw off the school-committee-man, and had no unpleasant point to gain, (such as telling a lady she is mistaken in her vocation) could be vastly agreeable.—He even went so far as to draw a picture of her successor, the vinegar faced Miss Digby, at which Lilias laughed so heartily that she could not help wondering the next moment what had become of her sadness. Looking for sadness, or any other unwelcome visitor, (vide the old adage,) is the very way to bring it to your presence; and so Mr. Fielding felt himself called upon to play the agreeable to an unusual extent; and Lilias wondered how she could be so happy, until she was obliged to explain the cause of her misery, just for the sake of refreshing her memory. And then Mr. Fielding was sad too—oh, *so* sad!—And then he said something in a very low tone—doubtless to let her know how much he pitied her; but it must have been awkwardly done, for Lilias blushed a great deal more than when she was angry with him. Mr. Fielding blushed too, and both looked as though they were quite ready to quarrel again. What a lucky circumstance that they did not arrive at this crisis before, for now Lilias exclaimed joyously, "O, we are home!" and the sleigh drew up before Mrs. Fane's door.

It would be impossible to say whether Mrs. Fane felt more gladness or surprise at sight of Lilias; and the little ones gathered around her 'all clamorous' not 'for bread,' but kisses.

Mrs Fielding glanced from the noisy, happy group, to the pale, thin face of the mother, and then around upon the scanty furniture, and, callous old bachelor as he was, he felt as though his heart was swelling in his throat, and the moisture in his eye made him ashamed of himself.

Mr. Fielding did not return that day, for his horse had lost a shoe, which it was necessary should be replaced; and the next day there came a snowstorm, which only a madman would brave; then the third day I do not quite know what detained him, but it must have been something of importance, as he was the last man in the world to exchange the comforts of home for the inconveniences of a village hotel without sufficient reason. On the fourth day, however toward night, he was so fortunate as to undertake his homeward journey, but before this he was closeted a long time with the again radiant Lilias, and afterward with her mother; and he finally quitted them, with a face so brimming over with happiness, as to show—*perhaps*—how glad he was to get away!

Early the ensuing spring the cottage down by the Maple Grove had a new mistress, and another close by was purchased and fitted up tastefully, for a pale sweet widow and her bright-eyed children, the eldest of whom Alfred Mason declares a vast deal prettier than her sister Lilias.

THE MESMERIZER AND THE EXPRESS MAN.—A few years ago, before the railroad companies between Albany and Buffalo, had provided the long and comfortable cars now used by the Mail agents and Livingston & Wells' Express, the messengers of the latter rode in the passenger cars 'just like any body,' and of course encountered all sorts of characters. One of the firm, whose love of waggery is well known, happened to be going to Buffalo, and was seated quietly in the car, when his attention was directed to the conversation of two individuals opposite. One of these was, as it appeared, a travelling mesmerizer—a regular "professor of the science." He was dilating upon its rapid development—the wonderful phenomena it exhibited—its astonishing curative power for disease—the extraordinary discoveries developed through its agency. Finally he got upon his own superiority as a "professor,"—a congenial theme—and here he was at home. After narrating a variety of experiments—some of them astounding, of course—he spoke of the following with a *gusto* that was irresistible. Said he:

"Last week I was going through one of the streets of this very city (Rochester,) and saw a man just ahead to whom I was anxious to speak. He walked too fast for me to overtake him without running, so I just straightened out my right arm, concentrated my will, made a pass at him—*thus*—and he stopped quicker than lightning."

"Wh-wh-wh-why mister, y-y-you don't call that m-m-'uch of a t-r-i-'ick, do you?"

"Yes, sir, I rather flatter myself, sir, that it was a pretty strong demonstration."

"W-w-w-well, it don't b-be-g-in with wh-wh-wh-what I once did."

"Then you are familiar with the science, sir, I presume."

"S-s-s-*some*."

"Might I enquire what was the case you spoke of?"

"Oh, c-c-cer-certainly. Y-y-you see I h-h-ha-ha-'appened to be up here in B-Batavia once in the winter. G-g-going down to the c-'ars I saw a m-a-'an on t-t-t-top of a building, sh-'ovelling off snow; pr-etty soon his f-f-foot slipped and d-d-d-'own he came; wh-wh-wh-'en he had got about half way down, I just made a p-p-pass at him, and it st-'opped him quicker than powder. I c-c-c-'ame off with-o-out thinking a-a-'ything more a-bout it. If you are go-o-oing to Batavia, I wish y-y-you would just t-ell him down, for I pr-p-pre-sume he is b-b-b-'anging there yet!"—*Spirit of the Times.*