

Their ring was answered by a servant who, on learning their errand, hastened away and in a moment returned with the mistress, an invalid lady of about fifty. Miss Kingsley gave her name and soon explained the matter. She then introduced "Mr. Stratton," who bowed politely. Miss Kingsley now asked if they could secure a carriage and driver to take them to the hotel that night. Their hostess, who had by this time ushered them into a cosy sitting room, told them that her son would soon be home and that he would drive them over.

Happily for them the eyes of their hostess were weak, thereby necessitating a very dim light, so that thus far she had no cause for any unbelief in "Mr. Stratton."

They had not been rested long before a step was heard in the hall and an instant later a young man stood in the doorway.

"Miss Kingsley, this is my son, John," said the matron. The old lady had forgotten that everyone was not so well acquainted with her son as she, and Miss Kingsley was tempted to call him "Mr. John," but she merely bowed.

When "Mr. Stratton" was presented John stepped forward and offered his hand, saying, "My other name is Winters."

"John Winters! Is it possible?" she exclaimed to herself. The dim light, his hunting suit, and above all the fact that she did not suspect him of being within several hundred miles of the Adirondacks, had prevented her from recognizing his athletic form when he entered the room. But now the astonishment at meeting him here and the unaccountably strange fluttering of her heart which his sudden advent had produced, almost took her senses.

Her first thought was of her costume. What would Jack say to see her in bloomers, those bloomers which she had ordered just on account of his emphatic condemnation of them. Heaven grant that he will not recognize me! But this was an empty hope.

As he grasped her small, soft hand, he gave a sudden start and bent upon her a quick, searching glance.

"Helen Stratton!" he exclaimed, not loosening his grasp. She blushed scarlet and dropped her eyes. Then looking up meekly, she faltered:

"Yes, I am Helen Stratton."

Then Jack, turning, said, "Mother, this is my friend, Miss Stratton, from Blake Seminary."

"Miss Stratton!" she exclaimed, eyeing her critically from head to foot; "that's Mr. Stratton."