

CHAPTER I.

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THE NEWCOMERS.

"If you please, mum," said the voice of a domestic from somewhere round the angle of the door, "No. 3 is moving in."

Two little old ladies, who were sitting at either side of a table, sprang to their feet with ejaculations of interest and rushed to the window of the sitting room.

"Take care, Monica, dear," said one, shrouding herself in the lace curtain; "No. no, Bertha. We must not give them reason to say that their neighbors are inquisitive. But I think that we are safe if we stand like this."

The open window looked out upon a sloping lawn, well trimmed and pleasant, with fuzzy rosebushes and a star shaped bed of sweet william. It was bounded by a low wooden fence, which screened it off from a broad modern new metaled road. At the other side of this road were three large, detached, deep bodied villas, with peaky eves and small wooden balconies, each standing in its own little square of grass and of flowers. All three were equally sew, but Nos. I and 3 were curtained and sedate, with a human sociable look to them, while No. 3, with yawning door and unkempt garden, had apparently only just received its furniture and made itself ready for its occupants. A 4-wheeler had driven up to the gate, and it was at this that the old ladies, peeping out birdlike from the curtains, directed an eager and questioning gaze.

The cabman had descended, and the passengers within were handing out the articles which they desired him to carry up to the house. He stood red faced and blinking, with his crooked arms outstretched, while a male hand, protruding from the window, kept pilling up upon him a series of articles, the sight of which filled the curious old ladies with bewilderment.

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"My goodness me!" cried Monica, the smaller, the drier and the more wizened of the pair. "What do you call that, Bertha? It looks to me like four batter puddings,"

"Those are what the young men box each other with," said Bertha, with a conscious air of superior worldly knowledge.

Two great bottle shaped pieces of yellow, shining wood had been heaped upon the cabman.

"Oh, I don't know what those are," confessed Bertha. Indian clubs had never before obtruded themselves upon her peaceful and very feminine existence.

These mysterious articles were followed, however, by others which were more within their range of comprehension—by a pair of dumbbells, a purple cricket big, a set of golf clubs and a tennis racket.

Finally, when the cabman, all top heavy and bristling, had staggered off up the garden path, there emerged in a very leisurely way from the cab a big, powerfully built young man, with a bull upu under one arm and a pink sporting paper in his hand. The paper he crammed into the pocket of his light yellow dust coat and extended his hand as if to assist some one cles from the vehicle. To the surprise of the two old ladies, however, the only thing which his open palm received was a violent slap, and a tall lady bounded unassisted out of the cab. With a regal wave she motioned the young man toward the door, and then with one hand upon her hip she food in a careless, lounging attitude by the gate, kicking her toe against the wall and listlessly awaiting the return of the driver.

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shood in a careless, lounging attitude by the gate, kicking her toe against the wall and listlessly awaiting the return of the driver.

As she turned slowly round and the sunshine struck upon her face, the two watchers were amazed to see that this very active and energetic lady was far from being in her first youth, so far that she had certainly come of age again since she first passed that landmark in life's journey. Her finely chisoled, clean cut face, with something red Indian about the firm mouth and strongly marked cheekbones, showed even at that distance traces of the friction of the passing years. And yet she was very handsome. Her features were as firm in repose as those of a Greek bust, and her great, dark eyes were arched over by two brows so black, so thick and so delicately curved that the eye turned away from the harsher details of the face to marvel at their grace and strength.

Her figure, too, was as straight as a dart—a little portly perhaps, but curving into magnificent outlines, which were half concealed and half accontuated by the strange costume which she wore. Her hair, black but plentifully shot with gray, was brushed plainly back from her high forehead and was gathered under a small round felt hat, like that of a man, with one sprig of feather in the band as a concession to her sex. A double breasted jacket of some dark friezelike material fitted closely to her figure, while her straight blue skift, untrimmed and ungathered, was cut so short that the-lower curve of her finely turned legs was plainly visible beneath it, terminating in a pair of broad, flat, low heeled and square toed shoes. Such was the lady who lounged at the gate of No. 3 under the curious eyes of her two opposite neighbors.

But if her conduct and appearance had already somewhat jarred upon their lim-

But if her conduct and appearance had already somewhat jarred upon their limited and precise sense of the fitness of things, what were they to think of the next little act in this tableau vivant? The cabman, red and heavy jowled, had some back from his labors and held out his hand for his fare. The lady passed



A reference in the character of the char

"She's hatching out some eggs. That is why we have the fire. Eliza always does better when she is warm. She is a sweet, gentle creature, but no doubt she thought that you had designs upon her eggs. I suppose that you did not touch any of them?"

"Oh, let us get away, Berthal" cried Monica, with her thin black gloved hands thrown forward in abhorrence.

"Not away, but into the next room," said Mrs. Westmacott with the air of one whose word was law. "This way, if you please! It is less warm here." She led the way into a very handsomely appointed library, with three great cases of books, and upon the fourth side a long yellow table littered over with papers and scientific instruments. "Sit here, and you there," she continued. "That is right. Now, let me see, which of you is Miss Williams and which Miss Bertha Williams?"

"I am Miss Williams," said Monica, still palpitating and glancing furtively about in dread of some new horror.

"And you live, as I understand, over at the pretty little cottage. It is very nice of you to call so early. I don't suppose that we shall get on, but still the intention is equally good." She crossed her legs and leaned her beak against the for some assistance, "said Bertha timity. "If there is anything which we could do to make you feel more at home."

"Oh, thank you; I am too old a traveler to feel anything but at home wherever I go. I've just come back from a few months in the Marquesas islands, where I had a very pleasant visit. That



For Mother's Sake.

Little Bessie was no "goody goody" child, but one who would no doubt have done her share in scrambling for the front rank in a street fight, or in thrusting herself forward when anything good was to be had. Yet her childish nature held within it seeds of heroism and feeling of which many a person more favored by fortune is destitute.

A tenement fire started at midnight in New York city, and many of the tenants were killed in attempting to reach the ground. On the fourth floor the firemen found a man penned in with his little girl and helped them to the window. As they were handing out the child she suddenly broke away from them and steepped back into the smoke, which seemed to hide certain death within its folds.

The firemen returned and groped about, shouting for her to come back. Half way across the room they came upon her, gasping and nearly smothered, dragging a doll's trunk over the floor.

"I couldn't leave it," she said, thrusting it at the men as they seized her. "My mother".

Then they flung the box angrily through the window. It fell crashing on the sidewalk, broke open, and revealed no doll or finery, but the deed for her dead mother's grave. Little Bessie was only 13, but she had not forgotten her trust.—Youth's Companion.



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