When Irma came at her summons and resumed the book she had been reading. Mrs. Fontency listened for some minutes to the clear, sweet voice, then she said: "Put the book down, Aimee, and go

and bring me the locket that has a picture in it of your mother." Irma looked up in surprise, but she rose and obeyed Mrs. Fontenoy's bidding. She always hated to touch the locket, and she could not bear to look at the face inside. Those sweet, seriour eyes seemed to read her soul, and rebuke her for her deception.

But Mrs. Poutener opened the locket

Vane looked after the carriage as it and looked long and steadfastly at the pictured face of the friend she had

"Yes," was her thought; "I ought to be ashamed ever to have been unwil-ling that the child of my sweet, dead Aimee should become my child by marrying my son."
She laid the locket on her knee, and

"Sit close to me." she said. Irma sat down on the hassock at her

'Look at me. Aimee. Let me see into your eyes, while I talk to you. Awhile ago my son came to me. He was very unhappy. He had been rejected by the only woman he has ever oved. Yet that woman had given him cause to think she was not indifferent to him. Tell me, Aimee, and tell me truly, for my heart is in this thing, do you not love Bertrand Fontenoy All the color died out of Irma's face. Her lips dropped under the elder wo-man's intent look, and she faltered: 'Mrs. Fontenoy, it is not for me to love anyone. It is no part of the plan of my life. And you—you know that it is against your heart's wish that there should be any love between your

Aimee, I tell you that I give my free and full consent to your marriage with my son, and Mr. Fontency will think as I do."

u have come to this decision because of your love for your son, and your dislike to see him unhappy. He will not be unhappy long. I will go away, and this fancy will pass like a lamy, and you will be far better contented than if he had married me." "He will never forget you. You do not know the deep heart of my boy.

He will never love another, and if you | turtle.' do not become his wife, he will never am sorry, for I can never be his

"You do not love him, then?"

Irma rose, white, but calm.
"If I loved him as man never was loved before I should still say to o him. I can never be his wife.' Mrs. Fontenoy looked at her in wonder and pain. Her son's suit was in vain. She felt it as she looked at the sad, set face of the strange girl be-fore her. The next moment, Irma's face had softened, and she bent and took Mrs. Fontenoy's hand.

"Dear lady, I appreciate the sacrifice of your feelings in consenting to your son's marriage with a poor and unknown girl, but it can not be. Counsel him to be strong, and put me out of his thoughts. I will go away

ontenoy cried. "My home shall be But the girl only smiled-a sad, negative smile. She put the hand she held

to her lips, and murmured: 'Thanks; you are kind, indeed!" She dropped the hand, bent her head, and variety.'
and was gone before Mrs. Fontenoy She looked

could detain her.

"There is a mystery in this," the lady said to herself, sinking back against the velvet cushions of her chair. "She loves him, but she will not marry him. There is some cause we have no clue to."

She said this to her son that night.

Bert had the same thought. There is a mystery about her," he d. "There must be something in er past that is sad and strange; but no shame about it. Her face

"Yes, yes," Mrs. Fontenoy assented.
"Her face—her daily actions and words
speak for her there." and sat down. He leaned on the table and dropped his face in his hands.

His mother looked at him in silent and Irma? When she left lars. For all day, she went to her room and sat begged Maddie.

"I shall do no such thing," she anand Irma? When she left Mrs. Fon- Gray noted.

am here, a miserable fraud, whom Bertrand Fontenoy would despise if he knew. I have that in my past life which would make him and his mother passion for dress prevailed over every

the look in his eyes."

Vane had been wide-awake to the drama that was going on. Even while e was playing his own game with Miss Gray, his watchful eyes noted every movement and look of Irma's. He saw her set off on that sunset walk with young Fontenoy. Those keen eyes had flashed a subtle warning into hers, as he took down her hat and laughingly insisted on tying it on him-self. The laugh was for the others in

seif. The laugh was for the others in the hall, the dark look that held a threat was for Irma.

When the two returned, he glanced into Bert Fontenoy's face, and a smile, half pleasure, half sarcasm, touched his lips as he turned back to his task that of winning Mr. and Mr. that of winning Mr. and Mrs. Fon-

that of winning Mr. and Mrs. Fontenoy to like him.

He used all his tact and social genius to please and gain the confidence of the different members of the household. To Miss Gray alone he seemed indifferent. Mrs. Fontenoy wondered at this. She even mentioned it to John.

"It is strange" she said "what a "It is strange," she said, "what a mutual indifference, almost amounting to dislike, young Vane and Fannie have for each other! They have so

many tastes in common, they have been to the same places, and know the same people, one would fancy they would like each other's society. But they avoid each other, and never have any conversation that sharp little word thrusts do not pass between them"

thrusts do not pass between them."
"I have noticed it," answered he. "I have spoken of it to Fannie, I like Vane very much myself, but she seems to dislike having his name mentioned to her. It is another instance of 'I do not like you by Fell' etc." not like you Dr. Fell,' etc."
So short-sighted were these good people—so adroitly did Harold Vane play

his cards—slowly but surely carrying his point—making Fannie Gray believe that he loved her, but was struggling aganist it, and augmenting, day by day, her interest in him into the intenest feeling she was capable of. He did it cunningly, by looks and actions rather than by words. For days sometimes he avoided her. He piqued her by his indifference; then by some passionate look, or pressure of the hand, or murmured sentence, he would restore her belief in his devotion, and rekindle her love into stronger flame. His sharp retorts and his avoidance of her be-fore others gave her no uneasiness. He had managed to give her the impres-

sion that it was only to cover his true feelings, or that it proceeded from the bitterness of disappointed love. They had frequent brief little meetings in had frequent brief little meetings in the house, in the garden and grounds, when a look, a sigh, or a word from Harold's expressive eyes and lips said more than long speeches could from a less skilled and subtle actor. His music, his songs were all for her, though he never looked toward her, unless it was to send some swift. was to send some swift meaningful glance into her eyes when no one was observing him. things he said to others were for her ear, and had a significance which she

One afternoon a lady called upon the members of the household; upon Miss Gray particularly, whose "darling friend" she had been for a month at the White Sulphur Springs. Vane had also known her there. After she left they all went out on the plazza for the fresh air and the light. It was sun-

Vane looked after the carriage as it drove away. 'So she is married-Mistress Evans. Evans was not the name of the good-

looking young fellow who was flying around her at the Springs." "No, that was young Riverdale," said Mrs. Fontenoy. "That match was broken off. He was inclined to be wild, and he had very little means. She has made a much better match. Mr. Evans is a substantial, quiet, steady manby a good many years than Riverdale—a pillar in the church, and

minently respectable." 'And is she happy, do you think?" "She ought to be. She looks con-"She looks like a woman who is nar-

rewing to fit her narrowed conditions. When I knew that girl, a summer or so ago, there was the light of life-the fire of passion in her face. It has all died out now. Her face is growing blank. In five years it will be expressionless as a potato. Her life will be the same—a dead calm—an utter stag-Her marriage will have done it. If she married Riverdale it would have been different. There might have been no stagnation. She would have lived and grown in soul. An hour of such love as Riverdale's would have been worth years of the lukewarm regard of such a man as I conceive your pity that girl. Tied for life to a goodygood individual, who will harden her Into a 'pillar' such as you say he is. She had better have taken Riverdale. even if he had broken her heart. She would have lived while she did livenow she only exists. Deliver me from your good, steady men, who never have an erratic impulse, and who love, such love as it is, by rule and measure. I would as soon live with a green-back

'For shame. Harold Vane!" exclaimed Mrs. Fontenoy, "how can you talk so? What can make a woman happier than a good, steady husband always kind and reliable, always the

'Shining on, shining on, by no shadow made tender. Till love falls asleep in the sameness of splender," "quoted Harold. He seated himself by

her, and threw his half-smoked eigar off into the shrubbery. "Dear Mrs. Fontenoy, pardon me. I was only airing some of my pet theories. Let me untangle that worstd. You will see how clever I am at

"I knew you were not in earnest," she said, mollified, and yielding to him the skein of tangled zephyr. But Fannie Gray knew that he was n earnest, and every word sank deep

"Will my life be such a blank?" she thought. "Will my face grow as expressionless as a potato? I, too, despise goody-good men who have no impulses. I can never be happy as John Fotenoy's wife. I crave passion

She looked across at the slender, lithe figure now leaning against one of the fluted pillars, and smoking a cigar-That dark face with the rich flush in the cheeks the black, bright eyes, the slender black brows and mo-bile mouth, there was passion and variety enough there.

CHAPTER IX.

That same afternoon a box had come for Miss Gray from New Orleans.
"It is the wedding finery from Madame Olympe's," whispered Maddie to

It was one of Madcap's loud whispeak for her there."
"I told you all you could say would and glanced quickly at Vane, who was sitting near. But his head was bent over his book, and he gave no sign of having heard, unless it was a slight compression of the lips, which Fannie

"Open the box; do, Cousin Fannie," "And I must put it away from me," she thought, "the love that my heart craves. I cannot take it, and make my life rich with it, as I might if there was nothing dark in my past! I am here, a miserable fraud whom

which would make him and his mother and sisters stare at me in wondering horror. I marry? Never! If I was daring enough to consent to it, there is Harold Vane. 'Do not think of love or marriage,' he threatened. 'If you do, your secret shall be made known.'

He would keep his word. I know it by Lyons satin, another of moss-green velvet for traveling, and, lastly, a marvel of white satin and lace and myrtle flowers-the wedding-dress. She was arranging its folds when Belle came in. "Ah! your wedding-dress. Try it on; I am anxious about its fit," she

She helped Fannie put it on. The fit was excellent; Fannie looked at her fairy figure in the mirror with de-

"Come in, Miss Brazeale, and see what you think of it," called Belle to Irma, who was passing. Maddie was with her, and the two went in, and admired Titania in her robes of snow and gossamer. "It is a beauty," cried Madcap.
"Just think of it, Cousin Fan. In ten
days you will wear it as a bride. No
more Miss Gray, but Mrs. Doctor John
Fontenoy."
"Ten days!"

Fannie spoke faintly, and she turned sharply from the mirror. She waswhite, almost as her laces.
"Take it off," she said. "I don't like it." Her lips trembled and she burst into tears. She threw herself on the

ed, unmindful that she was crushing all the laces and friffs. nnie Gray, are you crazy? Get up! you are ruining your dresses," ex-claimed Miss Fontenoy.

But Fannie sobbed on.
"Was there ever such an hysterical creature? What are you crying for?"
"Let us leave her to herself," begged Irma, who knew well what the matter was, and pitied the girl, be better alone." "She will

"I will leave her to herself, and welcome. I don't understand such moods. Come on, Maddalon," said Belle, and she left the room with her stateliest

Half an hour later, Vane and Irma were alone on the piazza, watching the rising of a full moon. She reproached him for the part he was playing. "It is a bitter shame," she said. "No man of honor would do a thing like

He broke into one of his light, musical laughs, and turning quickly, put his arm around her. jealous, little darling; She freed herself from his clasp, and

pushed him from her.

"Jealous!" she said, with scorn in "I could not be jealous of her voice. one who holds honor so lightly." Of one you love so little, you mean. You do not love me, Irma Weir. know it. But you shall love me. At least, you shall love no one else. Let me marry Fannie Gray, let what may happen, Irma Weir is mine. She shall belong to no one else. I hold her by a bond she dare not break." Irma said nothing in reply to these passionate words. She could not defy

ly toward him. It was not always she felt so, for it was not often he had such outbursts. For days his conduct to her would be perfect; he would seek her society, share her walks, and sit with her by the river-side; but he said nothing, did nothing that she need resent. He was attractive in his ways and his talk, the brightest, the most entertaining of comrades : often so gentle that Irma felt herself wishing he were indeed the brother he called himself. Then would come one of those outbreaks of

him. She walked away, feeling bitter-

passion that would frighten away her regard and make her look on him as a serpent, liable any time to strike at The next afternoon these two, with Maddie, were returning from a walk to the river. As they neared the house, Maddie ran on ahead crying:

and yonder he stands, waving some letters at us. He has brought the afternoon mail. They had entered the gate, and were coming up the walk. Miss Gray appeared in the hall door, like a bit of sunset radiance, in a bright garnet

"John is here. There is his buggy,

dress. Harold turned to Irma, and grasped her arm. 'It is only nine days to the wedding," he said. "Don't you think I had better hurry up with my little game You feel sure I shall get euchred; but you shall see. You shall see, this very evening."

The letters were for Vane. 'Come into the sitting-room," Dr. Fontenoy said. "We have a little fire These October evenings are chilly-too chilly for walks on the river, Miss Aimee. Come in, all.' They went in, and Vane, asking to be xcused, went to the window to read nis letters by the fading light. Afterward, he sat, silent and abstracted, until Maddie said :

"Did your letters have bad news, Mr. Harold? You look so glum. "One of them summoned me away at once, Miss Madcap; and to leave Live Oaks is bad news for me.' Miss Gray was cutting the leaves of

a new magazire. She looked up quickly at Vane. A spasm of emotion pass-ed over her face, but she went on with her task, though her fingers moved nervously "Is the summons imperative? Must you really leave us?" Mrs. Fontency

"Oh, Mr. Harold," exclaimed Maddie, you must not go before John's wedding! It is only nine days off. You will stay to that, won't you?"

The pearl paper-cutter snapped in Miss Gray's fingers. 'No," heplied Vane; "I can not stay. I must go soon-very soon. He rose, and crumpling the letter in

his hand left the room. He did not come down to tea, he sent word that he wanted none. After it was over, he left his room, and came down the hall. He looked in at the half-lighted music-room. His swift glance detected a little figure huddled up on a settee in a shadowy corner, but he pretended not to have seen it. He went in and sat down to the piano. The music-room was connected with the parlor by a wide door, curtained with heavy damask. Usually cords coped these curtains back, but tonight they fell loose. Miss Gray had dropped them; she had a premonition that Vane would come into the musicroom and play. Indeed, he often did

n the evening. He sat down to the open piano, and began to play. At first, his favorite sonatas, then he sang fragments of songs that the listener in the corner believed to be improvisations, and that were indeed from the singer's own versatile brain. He put infinite tenderness into the air to which he sang:

"' Oh, would I were only a spirit of I'd float forever around, above you, For a musical spirit could never do And it wouldn't be wrong to love

Then he glided into a sadder mea-He played a plaintive prelude d began a strain that was inexpresemed to sob the words-it was a song

How shall I say farewell to thee-Farewell that means forever?"
The light was dim in the quiet brown m where the only bright color was little figure in red in the shadowy ner. The sad music pulsed through room; the flute-like voice seemed of tears. And when the song was ded, the singer's head was bowed wn on the piano-rest, and the girl in corner saw, or fancied she saw, ong quiver go over his frame. She e from her seat. She wavered and sitated a second; then she glided ickly to his side. She put her little and on his shoulder—half round his and bent her head close to his. shall never be farewell forever for , if you do not wish it," she said. "I

will not say you care for me : and He threw back his head and shook the curling locks from his forehead. He looked at her with those passion-

can not lose you from my life. You

How dare I say it, when you are another's ?" he asked.
"I am not another's. And you can dare to say it. You will after to-night, if—if you really feel it."

She turned quickly as she uttered the words, and before he could clasp her she was out of the room. He laid his head back and laughed softly.

"She is safe to do the rest," he said. "I will just remain in the passive

A message came for Fannie Gray she walked restlessly about the room, half frightened at what she had done, but resolute to carry her purpose "Miss Belle wants you in the parlor."
She went down, after delaying a moment to gain composure. They were all in the pleasant room with its cheery ire. Vane was talking to Mrs. Fonteroy; but he looked moody and abShe sat down and looked toward Bella.

"You wanted to see me?" she said.

"Yes, about the invitations to your wedding. John has just brought the cards and envelopes. They are very elegant. They will have to be printed to-morrow. What will you have on them? A few days ago you declared you would not have them like wedding-cards; they must be plain invitations as to a party. I thought it was one of your whims that you would think better of, for it will not be proper to send such cards as invitations to a to send such cards as invitations to a wedding. Do you think so?"
"I don't know," Miss Gray said. "I

don't want them sent at all." "You want no one invited to your wedding? When there are so many intimate friends, too, who expect—"
"I will have no wedding," she interrupted, pale as death, but with resolute voice. "I will not marry my cousin John. I do not love him as a wife should. I love him as a cousin, a brother—no more. I am not fit to be brother-no more. I am not fit to be his wife, and I will not be."

There was dead silence for a moment. John Fontenoy half arose from his seat, but sat down agin. A grey pallor overspread his face, and his eyes were fixed upon his betrothed. Mrs. Fontenoy broke the silence.

'Fannie Gray, you are simply crazy! You don't know what you are saying."
"I do know," said Miss Gray. " say it deliberately before you all, that there may be no misunderstanding. It has been in my heart for weeks, but I have not had the courage to speak it. I have known that I do not love my cousin John well enough to marry him. and I have known that I-I love another !

She looked expectantly, appealingly, at Vane, as though she hoped he would come forward and claim her. But his eyes were cast down. He made no movement, and she went on:

"I have said nearly all I wanted to say. I ask John Fontenoy's for-giveness. I did not mean to deceive him. He is all that is good and true, and he is worth; of a better wife than could ever be to him. I tried hard to love him, and if-

She stopped abruptly; then she lifted her little head with a defiant air. "I know what you will think of me what you will say of me," she said, "but I can not help it; and I will not care for it. I have done what I feel to be right."

She rose and started to leave the room. She felt the hard looks that were upon her. Mr. Fontenoy's stern eyes, Belle's scanful ones, Bert's indignant look, Mrs. Fontenoy's, Maddie's. She faltered when she was midway in the room. Her tiny figure wavered and might have fallen but for John Fontenoy's support. He was at her side, his arm around her—it was not the arm that should have supported her in this trial. When they reached the hall she withdrew from his support.

I thank you," she said. "I can go alone now. When John Fonteney re-entered the room his father was saying: "The fickle, brainless creature: She has acted with base ingratitude.

Father," he interrupted, "I can not let even you say such things of She has acted with courage and honesty. She could not love me; she was not to blame for that—and she spoke before it was too late. She has had a hard struggle with herself. I saw it, but I did not, I would not, un-

"It is something that has only come over her of late," Mrs. Fontenoy said. "She said she loved another; who can

"I do not know | I have not the faintest idea," answered John, growing paler and turning to the window which he had thrown open. He stood there with his face turned to the darkness of the night, not heeding or hearing the comments of the others-the utterances of amazement and indignation, Belle's cold sarcasm and her characteristic question as to what could be done to stop people from talking. Their friends were looking for a wed-Information had been given that there would be one, and now there

would be no end of gossip. At last all was quiet. They had left the room. Vane had gone out after Miss Gray. John still stood by the window. Presently he felt a pair of arms steal around his neck, a head found its way to his breast, and his little sister sobbed :

"Oh, John, I am so sorry for you! She wasn't good enough for you, though; she never was."
"Hush!" he said, "don't speak
against her, Maddie. Be kind to her.
She has enough to bear."

"Oh, John, you are too good; I love you, I love you!"

He clasped her in his arms, and bent his head to hers. Her simple words were a balm to his heart. In the morning Miss Gray did not come to breakfast, and her tea and muffins were sent up to her. After awhile two locked and labeled trunks were brought down, and Fannie made her appearance in a travelling dress, seeming to have been pushed back by her appearance in a travelling dress, and announced her intention of going

'I shall take the first boat," she said. "The Carrollton is due this morning." No one asked a question of her or made any comment, and she met their cold looks with defiant ones. Her trunks were sent to Live Oaks landing, and she put a servant on the lookout for a boat. She had not seen Vane all the morning, but now he passed her in the hall and bowed. He went on to the library. He had given her a look as he passed which she interpreted, and she followed him in a few minutes. He turned around from the table and the book he was pretending to read as she entered, and held out

to her aunt, in Mississippi.

"My brave little darling! My own!"

"Does this not tell you, and this, and his heart, were all he should ever ! this?" he answered, kissing her passionately. 'I have loved you so long

and struggled so hard against it." 'That struggle need be no longer she said softly, as her head lay against into his arm-chair. His gray cat got his breast. "I am free to give you my love. I am going now to my aunt to gain her consent to our—marriage. It will be a hard task. She thought so much of John Fontency. was so set upon my marrying him. But she loves me; she is wrapped up in me, and I think I can win her over. If not, it will make no difference. I am yours in spite of all obstacles."

Vane feit sure it made quite a difference to him if the rich aunt should alter her will and the little creatu he held in his arms should have no for

tune. He said : "I trust you may succeed, my sweet. Shall I not come to you? I may have "I shall write you when to come, Till then, good-bye. I hear them call-ing out that the boat is in sight."

ing out that the boat is in sight."

He pressed her to him with more kisses upon her lips and brow, and then suddenly released her, as he heard footsteps approaching. When Mrs. Fontency entered, he was bending over his book, and Fannie was turning from the mirror. No one knew she had even said good-bye to him. Formal adieus with a few members of the household were exchanged in the hall. "Where will you get the supper?" asked John, helplessly. "Aunt Mamsy has gone to see her sick daughter-in-

atracted. Fannie saw that at a glance. Charge. The officer turned away and ter—my old blue han's chicken. The officer turned away and ter—my old blue han's chicken. The officer turned away and ter—my old blue han's chicken.

tired part of the cabin. She came close to him and took his hand and pressed it in both hers. She raised her tear-filled eyes to his.

"Oh, John! can you ever forgive me?" she said

"I forgive you with all my heart, my child," he answered, his own moist, though he strove so hard for self-control. "You did right to speak out and save yourself from a marriage that would not have made you happy. My dearest wish is that you may be happy." Then he bent down to her. "You said you loved another," he said. "Does that other one also love

"Yes," she murmured. "You are sure, quite sure?" he questioned anxiously. "Oh, I am sure," she answered, raising her eyes, radiant with assured love.
A spasm passed over his face, but he

said, and the words were from his

"I am glad that he does. I trust that he may make you happy."
The warning bell of the steam-boat rang. He gave one look at the little figure and tear-stained face, then he caught her to his breast and pressed a

kiss upon her forehead. "If you should ever need a friend, come to me, my child," he said. She could not speak to him. As he turned away, she sank on the sofa, sobbing as though her heart would break. Harold Vane's summons by letter te leave Live Oaks was only a ruse on his part to bring matters to a focus, but the same afternoon that Fannie went away brought Bert Fontenoy a veritable summons by mail to come to New Orleans on business, but Bert represented his father in all matters of busi-

"You must go on the next down oat," Mr. Fontenoy said; and Bert dutifully packed his valise. As he did so, he said to himself:

There will be no boat until about midnight or daybreak, and meantime I will have one more interview with Aimee Brazeale. Her pale, sad looks give me hope that she does not care for me. If I can only get her to confide in me! I will try."

CHAPTER X.

John Fontenoy did not go back to Live Oaks after he had said good-bye to Fannie Gray. He mounted his horse and rode to his own home. His old gardener was in the front yard watering a dwarf Cape jasmine. He looked up as Dr. Fontenoy approached, his eyes blinking in the rays of the

"There'll be plenty of blossoms here for Miss Fannie's nosegay on your weddin'-night, Mars John," he said. yer ain't well, shurely," he added, pulling his spectacles down from his forehead over his eyes, and peering through them at John's face, which had a haggard, ashen look. "Your color's mighty low, mars. You is doin' too much work these sickly fall days. You must give yourself a rest.'

"I will some time, Uncle Caleb. We'll both drop work and go a-fishing," Dr. Fontenoy said, kindly. Fishing was Uncle Caleb's weakness.

He passed on and entered his house: it was not a home, he had often said.

An old bachelor could not make a home; it took a woman, music, love, and a child to make a perfect home. He went on to his study. It was dusky with shadows, for the sun had His Jamaica sparrows gave him a faint, sleepy twitter of welcome from their cage. The round eyes of the owl, Socrates, shone upon him through the gloom, and the bird open-ed and closed his broad wings in a noiseless greeting. not noticed. His master walked to the table and stood looking at the manuscript of a half-finished article for a medical journal. He had felt so lighthearted and clear-headed when he began it last night, with the memory of Fannie's good-night kiss on his lips. Now, he had not heart to finish it. He left the room and went out on the front piazza. Caleb came up to him from the yard, his watering-pot in one hand, in the other a few white roses and

Cape jasmines. "Here's your flower, mars," he said. "Dey's sweet wid the evenin' jews. I seed you was too tired to pick 'em

Dr. Fontenoy took the flowers mechanically: almost as mechanically he turned and went up the broad staircase that led to the upper rooms. one of these rooms he stonned and taking a key from his pocket, unlocked the door. A vague white glimmer, a faint perfume greeted his senses. threw back a heavy white damask curtain, and the pale amber after-glow lit up the Blue-beard room, as Maddie had christened the pretty boudoir he had fitted up in white and gold for his

He approached the white marble mantel-piece and stood looking at the picture that hung above it. It was a portrait of Fannie in her school-gir days. She wore a baby-waist frock of white muslin, lightly spotted with pale the mass of luxuriant blonde curls. A smile was on her red lips; a dimple, delicately defined, was in either cheek. Her eyes had a life-like sparkle under their long lashes. She seemed ready to say some saucy thing.

Under the portrait stood a tall vase of white marble, carved in the shape of a Nile lily with broad leaves at the base of the stem. The vase held some flowers, scarcely faded. There were always flowers in the marble They were a daily renewed offering of John Fontenoy to the woman he flowers from the vase and put the fresh roses in their place. He stood with folded arms looking at the picture that smiled down upon him, as she had done so often in her sweet, wilful childhood. The child he had snatched from the arms of death; the girl whose His look and tone dissipated the fact bitterness there was in her heart against him. She let him draw her to against him. She let him draw her to with all his future life—all his hopes with all his future life—all his hopes. and plans—that portrait on the wall, and the bitter-sweet memory of her

He went slowly down-stairs, and entered his study. He did not glance about him. He threw himself wearily up from the rug and rubbed herself against him and looked up in ag-grieved surprise that he did not invite her to leap into his lap as usual. head was bowed on his hands. He felt as though the current of his life had suddenly stood still—stagnated for-ever. He was startled out of his gloomy musings by a brisk rap upon the door. Before he could lift his head, Maddle bounded into the room, holding up her short riding-habit.
"Here we are," she said, "we've stormed your castle. You look just like you wanted to exclaim: 'Hence, vile intruders' but we won't hence. We have come to take supper with you —me and Git-up, and Miss Aimee. Miss Aimee is talking to Uncle Caleb. Where's your matches, Doctor John? I don't like gloomy rooms or glum faces."

'Oh, I know that! I get all the news from Grobeck. I've heard how you and Uncle Caleb made biscuit hard as cannon-balls for breakfast this morning, and burned your steak to a crisp. Where will we get supper? Why, we'll cook it."

"You and Git-up?"

"No; me and Miss Almee, and you. We've come to teach you. Here's the bill of fare: fried chicken and biscuit; Miss Almee is to make the biscuit while I fry the chicken. It's here in this basket, nicely cleaned, and fat as butter—my old blue ham's chicken.

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