

"A Little Aversion."

BY MARY CECIL HAY.

The village schoolroom was by no means an artistic specimen of architecture. It was a bleak, oblong building, with heavy windows, a door that grated on its hinges, and an obstinate stove which rarely emitted any heat. The whitewashed walls were bare this morning; not even a map graced them, for busy hands had removed such scholastic emblems, and carried them off, not to be brought back to light until the morrow, when insatiable village children—now let loose—might be expected to thirst for knowledge. Some of these children were now in attendance as volunteers, waiting for any task which the ladies or gentlemen might give them. They thought it warm and pleasant there near the diminutive stove, for they had not come from carpeted and curtained rooms, and so did not shudder at the chill, long bareness of the schoolroom, as two or three of the decorators did. At one end of the room, on a temporary platform, stood a piano and two music-desks, and in front of the platform sat two girls on a bench, tying holly into festoons, and laughing a good deal at the gentleman who was cutting the branches for their work. One of the girls was Julia Hartopp, the vicar's daughter—a small, thin girl of five or six and twenty, with sharp, inquisitive features, and a perpetual question in her cold round eyes. She was dressed in crimson, and crimson roses peeped over the crown of her high and heavily trimmed hat. A very gay, warm figure among the glistening foliage, and Julia delighted in knowing this. There were but few things Julia delighted in, and chief among these was the consciousness of having on "a nice dress" when within the range of those quizzical eyes under which she sat now, slowly moving her white hands among the prickly leaves. The other was a tall, fair, handsome girl, with a pair of very blue, sleepy eyes, light frizzled hair, and a great deal of blue about her dress, blue bows and feathers and streamers being visible wherever such decorations were possible. This was the belle of the village, Harriet, the younger daughter of Dr. Lee, who lived in the big red house beyond the church, and drove a pair of chestnuts as fat and as sleek as himself. Alice Lee, Harriet's elder sister, was at the lower end of the room, tying wreaths round the lamps. Of the gentlemen near to Julia one was Bentley Hartopp, almost universally called "Ben," who was short like his sister, but on whose small, thin face there was a kindly, ready laughter which hers never knew; and the other was Mr. Darby, of Broadband, a tall, bronzed, broad-shouldered fellow, who gave his help courteously, but ever rather lazily, to the two girls who seemed to need it so little. "I thought Kate Treherne was to come and help us," observed Alice, raising her voice from the far end of the room. "Where is she, Julia?" "Oh, she's coming, I expect. Papa asked her to make a motto for to-night, so I suppose she's plodding at it. If it doesn't come before we leave for dinner, it can't go up at all." "It is a satisfaction to think that we are not dying for it," remarked Jack Darby. "I think it is a silly idea to put up an illumination for a concert." "It will be a great improvement on that blank wall over the platform," called out Alice; "and it is sure to be pretty, as Kate does it." "It will not add to the proceeds of the concert, anyway," drawled Harriet. "No; and our motive is to get money," returned Julia. "Your sympathies are roused," said Mr. Darby, as he clipped the holly boughs; "you evidently take an interest in widows." "Why did you not take your motto from the glee we are going to sing, 'Let each bestow a trifle as he passes'? It would have looked well." "Yes, I feel great pity for the widows of those brave men who lost their lives in the life-boat," answered Julia, sentimentally; "and I want our concert to be of service to them." "Of course you do," spoke up Bentley, coming forward; "and I think we shall succeed. Have you heard of Kate's last freak, Darby?" "Which is the last?" "Why, you know, having so few amateurs here, the governor found it rather difficult to make up his programme. He misses Murray Hilton a good deal; he used to help so much in a sort of comic way, you remember, which attracted the people. Well, we found the majority of the people didn't show anxiety about the concert, and the governor began to despair. Some novelty was wanted, he said, and no one seemed to have an available idea to spare. I only wish I could sing; I would bring some folk, as Hilton used to do. Julia proposed several things; but being, like myself, no singer, her advice had no body in it. Well, at last, the vicar in despair told Mrs. Hilton and Kate, when he was calling at the

cottage, that our prospects were at a very low ebb, and he could think of no method to bring people flocking here to-night for the benefit of the widows of the boatmen. 'A new idea you want, Mr. Hartopp?' said Kate in a minute. 'Oh, there are plenty of new ideas available. If you can think of nothing better, I will sing a song in character. Will that do? Just let it be whispered about that somebody is going to do so, but that it is a great secret, and you will see that the few who would not come for the sake of the good music we offer will come for that.' That was just her way of putting it—the few who wouldn't come for our good music. And, bless you, after the governor and I had just once whispered this little fact, and said it was not to be told to any one, we found that everybody in the parish was coming. We actually could have sold twice as many tickets as we had. We have sold enough as it is to crowd every bench in the room, not to speak of the money we intend to take in at the door. So what do you think of Kate's plan?" "To sing a song in character is not very womanly, is it, Mr. Darby?" asked Julia, playfully. "Not at all, because most women have no character at all. What's that?" "That" was a sharp rap at the door, loud and heavy as if from an iron knuckle. Jack rose from his lounging posture, and opened the door even before active little Ben had reached it. Every pair of eyes in the room looked up, every pair of hands stopped in their occupation, as through the widely opened door came first a huge tray, on which lay two or three sheets of card-board, a paint box, a glass of water, a glue-pot, hammer and nails, with various other things; and behind the tray, with arms outstretched as she carried it, a girl of eighteen or nineteen, with a delicate, supple figure, and a small, rather sallow face, brightened wonderfully by a pair of luminous dark eyes. At first Jack Darby stood staring, as the others did, while Kate marched into the room, and looked about for an unoccupied place where she might deposit her burden; then he started toward her with the easy, patronizing gallantry which belonged to him. "All right, Kate; I have it, if you want to be useful," suggested Kate, in a cool, business-like tone; "don't let anything touch it. I can manage the tray very well." When Jack had prepared a place for it, she laid her burden down upon the platform, looking at it laughingly as she uttered an exclamation of relief: "There!" "Heavy, was it?" asked Jack, resting his eyes upon her as she stood among the evergreens. "No, not heavy, but a wide stretch for my arms." "Fancy carrying that great tray all down the village street!" exclaimed Julia. "Why didn't you send it?" "Because I don't know that our servant's arms are any longer than my own," replied Kate, brightly. "What are you going to do now?" drawled Harriet, looking superciliously at the girl and her surroundings. "Watch Mr. Darby while he puts the motto up," returned Kate, with the utmost coolness. "Mr. Darby is cutting holly for us," interposed Julia, with the sharpness which always came into her voice when she was vexed; "so you will have to wait." "Mr. Hartopp will be just as useful," returned Kate, pleasantly. And he came forward at once. They moved with the motto to the wall, and began their measurement, while Julia and Harriet went on tying and laughing together, and Jack, with his knife in his hand, watched Ben as if he would like to knock him down. Alice, standing a moment and endeavoring to read the illumination as the pieces were joined together, caught herself reading something else too. Five minutes ago she had loitered talking to Mr. Darby, and had thought, as she generally did think when she spoke to him, what a handsome face he had, and what lazy, careless eyes. Now she saw an utter change in them; the blue had darkened, the carelessness was almost defiance, and the whole expression of the face had a steady intentness in it which was almost fierce; yet, as she saw, he was only watching Bentley Hartopp. "At what height is it to be fixed?" inquired Ben, busily. "The height of excellence," replied Kate, laughing, and then they worked on in silence. "I think," said Julia, looking up stonily, "that papa meant you to paint some motto about the new year, as most suitable; and not such a thing as that." "I know the governor left it entirely to Kate," spoke up Bentley, "and I think her choice most suitable." "God sent his singers upon earth With songs of gladness and of mirth, That they might touch the hearts of men, And bring them back to heaven again," read Harriet slowly. "It sounds rather pedantic, I think."

"Oh, is that what it says? It is too brilliantly illuminated for an ordinary mortal to decipher it," observed Jack, coolly. "A little further illumination of the intellect would be good for you, Mr. Darby," returned Kate, with quiet droolery. "Now, children, bring me my holly." One or two of the school-children came at her call, dragging branches of holly; and Kate, seating herself at a little distance from the other girls, began to work in quiet earnestness. Now and then Bentley Hartopp came up to offer his assistance, to be speedily called away by his sister. Now and then Alice spoke to her in passing. Now and then the two girls who always kept so near together glanced up at the small bent head and swift fingers; and now and then Jack glanced across too, with a long, intent look in his half-closed eyes. Wonderfully the rich border grew under Kate's fingers, and presently she rose, holding one end as it lay in coils upon the ground. "Now, Mr. Darby, please nail it up—straight. That is right," she exclaimed when he had finished. "That looks something like." "Something like what? The height of excellence?" "How beautiful!" cried Alice. "Famous!" cried another voice as the vicar hurried in, seemingly taken by surprise. "Why, Julia, that's famous, isn't it? Beautiful; eh, Harriet?" "Yes," assented the girls, being appealed to so directly. "Even the ranks of Tuscany can scarce forbear to cheer—under the circumstances," quoted Jack, aside to Kate, his face full of fun. "How your work changes the whole aspect of the room, Kate!" went on the vicar, cordially. "And I actually offered you a sheet or two of foolscap! Where did you find that capital 'ard board?'" "I—I always have some in the house. Mr. Hartopp," replied Kate, a little inexplicable flush rising in her face. "Do you often use it?" "Yes," returned Kate, rearranging the music desks rather nervously. "Can it be a fact," drawled Harriet, with contempt, "that you, Miss Treherne, are going to dress up to sing?" "I am going to dress, Miss Harriet. I don't know how elevated the toilet must be to designate it dressing up." "Harriet's speech did not call for satire," put in Julia. "You are going to dress yourself up ludicrously, of course, if you intend to sing in character, and most girls would be ashamed of doing it before a roomful of people." "Why more so than in an empty room? If I were ashamed at all, it would be of doing it, not of being seen doing it." "Now, Kate, what is to be your second song?" asked the vicar. "I have just come from Broadband, Darby, and your mother wishes me to persuade Miss Treherne to sing, 'From the Alps resounds the horn,' and get you to play the cornet obligato. I should like it extremely, and I am sure your audience would. What do you say?" "I leave it to Miss Treherne," said Jack, watching her rather curiously. "I don't think Mr. Darby knows the part," remarked Kate, coolly. "I never feel any dependence on his cornet." "That's better than feeling no dependence on himself," laughed the vicar. "I don't know," returned Kate, meditatively. "Under the circumstances, I think it is more uncomfortable." "For myself, I feel perfectly competent to 'From the Alps resounds the horn,' if you feel compelled to mention the fact in song," said Jack. "Will you, Kate?" pleaded Alice. "Yes." "And now," said Jack, "I feel appreciated. Having attained this comfortable condition, we may, I presume, Mr. Hartopp, be dismissed with honors?" The girls began looking about for their gloves and muffs, while Kate gathered her tools and paints upon her tray. She gave it into the charge of two of the village children, whom she watched as they carried it toward her aunt's cottage, and then started off herself in the opposite direction. "How rough and ready Kate Treherne is! Isn't she, papa?" asked Julia Hartopp, as she and her father walked across the churchyard together. "No, dear, unless you understand the terms differently from what I do. She is quick and cool, passionate and self-controlled, very proud and very sensitive. I have a great fondness for little Kate." "I know you have, though I could never understand why. How she and Mr. Darby quarrel!" The vicar laughed a long, hearty laugh, which actually echoed in his own pulpit. "They do, indeed. I believe they have got into such a habit of quarreling that they cannot leave off." "He dislikes her very much, I think," ventured Julia, with a glance round the church. "I don't. Do you remember Mrs. Malaprop's opinion that it was well in certain cases, to begin with 'a little aversion'?" "But surely, papa, you cannot imagine

that there will ever be anything serious between Jack Darby and Kate Treherne?" "There is never much of anything serious between them in public, is there?" "Mrs. Darby must wish for a better wife for her only son." "Not she. But I am afraid that, if such an idea as Kate's marriage were to be mooted at the cottage, Mrs. Hilton would break her heart; and of course it would leave her very solitary, unless Murray comes back." "What do you really think about Murray Hilton, papa?" asked Julia, trying not to show how her father's former speech had provoked her. "I fear that all is not right though I have heard nothing of him, either good or bad, for nearly two years. He left in anger with his mother, and in another state too—entre deux vins, as the French say. And yet, Julia, I have hope of him. I always saw some good in Murray, and I could not help hoping good things of him. I do so still; perhaps only from knowing the certainty and confidence with which his poor mother expects to see him again, true and steady, and feels that all this time he is pursuing some honorable and upright calling. Poor Mrs. Hilton!" "Kate never mentions Murray," said Julia as they left the church. "I suppose she is fretting for him." Meanwhile, sauntering along in the bitter cold, silent and with a careless nonchalance, went Kate. When she had first left the school-room and taken the road which led from the village she had hurried breathlessly; but very soon Mr. Darby came up to her hurrying too though he would not show it. Then her whole manner changed. She turned lazy back toward home, slackened her step, and took a careless, loitering expression into her whole face and figure. Jack noticed this change, and wondered. "Kate, how did you manage that motto in the short time Mr. Hartopp gave you?" "You ought to tell me," she replied, stopping to pull a spray of ivy from the hedge bank. "Did I manage it well?" He fancied she was trying to exhaust his patience by her lingering, and his face darkened a little. "You know what I mean. I never saw you working at it when I called." "No, we never ask you into the kitchen." "Kate, you didn't paint that in the kitchen, surely!" "Most of it." "Why?" "Because it is so cold now in my own room." To be continued.

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THE ENEMY OF EDUCATION From a very able paper on "and its Greatest Foe," read by Currie, of St. Catharines before C. T. U. of Lincoln and Wells the following:— For ten months in the year of the bell at 9 a.m. 623,000 youth in this Province meet for the objects of imparting and receiving. This does not include the public and private schools. For the provided substantial buildings, quarters. Air, light, ventilation and cleanliness are in every school. Every child develops thought and character. Future citizen is pressed in \$8.44 per head is cheerful taxpayer, and he expects to 7,967 teachers to faithfully duties they have pledged to perform. Of this number 5,119 From the day woman made to equal education, the standard has been proportionally. There is better discipline with ment. The increase in the of instruction marks the development of both teacher's. The call is alike to both. Higher. Higher education has not had 25 years of this vince, and yet behold the results! In looking over the Minister of Education for that teachers holding first-class are in the Public Schools of first-class certificates, 30 third-class. On the other the number of female teachers receiving certificates, teachers or High School increasing. They receive honors and are two to great. The increase in the scientific temperance instruction added of late years to the Canada Citizen quotes from reports of Toronto says the \$15,600 daily, or \$5,600. They manufacture 12,000 used from malt liquid 000 derived from malt liquid wines. We have not the of the past year, but the revenue from tobacco, from we shall have between \$9,000,000 to pay one-quarter of the Dominion. We ted on these points. What Government lives on the facture, the Province licenses the seller and municipalities and our from this source. The M have the right to incite \$90 in the townships at They seldom avail the privilege. Cannot our wake up on this point have license let it be THE HIGHEST LICENSE We have 1,124 more for the sale of liquor previous, and an increase \$74,770. With the needed for food and to mate use to destroy morals and to wreck to see where the sick, the insane and the found. The chief of reports an increase of fame and 93 places illegally sold. Toronto city, its charities and tillery business of Toronto moralise and better Ontario paid for her five millions, the dis paid \$5,684,000. The dry, but is there a touch? Put the influence of the school evil of the distillery without raising a voice put down this growing You have heard how we leave the cost of investigation. Ask your M. P. to send you the reports and the public there see who rays the it goes. It will hurt the people to know are thinking men at Read them and talk friends—among you boy of to day may be the girl of to-day with good days yet to be, too much of the history of their native here that there is a should be in every Canadian Almanac cents. Do not think of the year, save full a volume and then a synopsis of Canada cheap form. It is no needs higher education long school. Limit things to divert attention hands—this is to get their education, to revive the lesson we not heard every of females was in relation?—and it is argument against franchise to women. in the Dominion. showed A MALE EXPORT Ontario male exports have for are 25,000 more the school age; 000 in ten years, increase it will be equal them in the unequal pay She does the same results, yet she re

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