"Scrub Up! the Women are Coming."

What wonderful words are these that we hear?
In echoes repeating so loud and so clear—
From the west to the east, we listen again,
To the new wild words of strange refrain;
Did you hear it? Why there in a western town,
All the days of the year to one came down,
And that was "election," when in each man in his pride,
A free man walks by a freeman's side.

Now all these men had homes neat and clean,
As any man's wife or mother, I ween,
Could scour or sweep with brush or broom,
All the cobwebs and dust from every room
But one—and this they called the polls,
Where the man who preaches, and the man who rolls
All night at the revel, walk in side by side,
Each with a vote, a freeman's pride;
But the polls was no place for broom or brush,
Where only men came, and that in a rush,
With bets and boasts and whiskey rife;
No! the polls was no place for a voter's wife.

By some strange chance a law had passed,
That women might come to this den at last;
And help choose—only the school trustees—
And be on committees too, if they please—
When, hark! what wonderful words do we hear?
In echoes resounding so loud and clear,
From the west to the east, we listen their humming,
"Scrub up! scrub up! the women are coming!"

And the newspaper story went on to say,
When the dear women came on election day—
That the floor had been scrubbed with a right good will,
For these men were proud of their housekeeping skill;
And the snow-flakes of votes fluttered in air,
As pure at the polls as it was anywhere.

Aye! there's scrubbing to do in morals and schools
There is brightening up of old golden rules—
"As ye would that men should do unto you,"
So even to them. Ah, interpreters few
Are found in our lives, for all corners of law
Are cobwebbed and dusty, hiding virtue and flaw;
It is time they were scrubbed, and where is the man,
Like these, not afraid of the house-cleaning plan?
Who'll not think of rest till the victory is won,
But who'll scrub with the women till scrubbing is done.

PHYLLIS.

BY THE DUCHESS.

Author of "Molly Bawn," "The Baby," "Airy Fairy Lilian," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VII.

Friday brings Mr. Carrington, who is specially agreeable, and devotes himself a good deal to Roland. There is a considerable amount of talk about shooting, hunting, and so forth, and we can all see that Roly is favorably impressed. Dora's behavior is perfect—her modesty and virtuous bashfulness apparent. Our visitor rather affects her society than otherwise, but beyond listening to her admiringly when she speaks, shows no marked attention. In the country a visit is indeed a visitation and several hours elapse before he takes his departure. Once finding myself alone with him in the conservatory, I bestow upon him my promised picture, which he receives with open gratitude and consigns to his pocket as he hears footsteps approaching.

Roland's presence has inspired us all with much additional cheerfulness. We have never appeared so gay, so free from restraint, as on this afternoon, and Mr. Carrington finds it hard to tear himself away. I myself am in wild spirits, and quite outshine myself every now and then; and Billy who is not at any time afflicted with shyness, thinks it a safe opportunity to ask our friend before he leaves if he will some day take us out for a drive in his dog-cart.

"Of course I will," says Mr. Carrington. "How unpardonable of me never to have thought of it before! But perhaps," speaking to Billy, but looking at Dora and me, "perhaps you would prefer four horses and the coach? It will be a charity to give it a chance to escape from the moths."

"Oh, I say," says Billy, "are you in earnest?" and, being reassured on this point, fairly overflows with delight.

Dora and I are scarcely less delighted, and Roland is graciously pleased to say it will be rather fun, when he finds the two Hastings girls are also coming. Somehow nobody thinks of a chaperon, which heightens the enjoyment and proves what a reputable person Mr. Carrington must be.

When the day arrives, and our landlord, clad in a thick light overcoat, drives his four bright bays up to our door, our enthusiasm reaches its final pitch. Imagination can no farther go; our dream is fulfilled.

Mr. Carrington helps Dora carefully to the box-seat, and then springs up beside her. Billy and I sit very close to each other. Roland takes his place anywhere, with a view of changing it on the arrival of Miss Lenah Hastings. The whip crackles, the bays throw up their heads—we are off!

I kiss my hands a hundred times to mamma and Martha and Jane, the cook, who have all come out to the door-steps to see us start; while Brewster at the corner of the house stands agape with excited surprise.

At Rylston we take up the Hastings, and their brother, a fat but well-meaning young man, who plants himself on my other side, and makes elephantine attempts at playfulness. I do not mind him in the least; I find I can pour out my superfluous spirits upon him quite as well as upon a more companionable person, perhaps better; for with him at least I have all the conversation to myself.

I have succeeded in captivating his fancy, or else it is his usual mode to devote himself for the entire day to whoever may first happen to fall into his clutches; as, when we descend to Carlton Wood to partake of the lunch our host has provided for us, he still clings to me, and outwardly at least is almost loverlike.

Alas that October days should be so fleet! A day such as this one might have had forty hours without bringing *ennui* to any of us; but at length evening closes in, the time is come when we must take our departure. Regretfully we collect our shawls and move towards the drag.

Mr. Hastings, still adoring, scrambles on by my side, panting and puffing with the weight of the too solid flesh nature has bestowed upon him and the wraps he is compelled to carry. Mr. Carrington, Dora, and Miss Hastings are close behind; Billy straggles somewhere in the distance; Roland and pretty Lenah follow more to the left.

Just as we reach the road Mr. Carrington speaks, and colors a little as he does so.

"Miss Phyllis, I think I once heard you say you had never sat on the front of a drag; will you take it now? Miss Vernon agrees with me it is a good chance for you to see if you woud like it."

How good of him to remember that foolish speech of mine, when I know he is longing for Dora's society!

"Oh! thank you," I say, flushing; "it is very kind of you to think of it; but Dora likes it too, and I can assure you I was quite happy. I enjoyed myself immensely when coming."

"Oh! in that case——" returns Mr. Carrington, coldly, half turning away.

"Not but that I would *like* it," I go on, encouraged by a smile from Dora, who can now afford to be magnanimous, having been made much of and singled out by the potentate during the whole day, "if you are sure (to Mr. Carrington) you wish it."

"Come," says he with a pleased smile, and soon I find myself in the coveted position, our landlord in excellent temper beside me.

The horses tired of standing, show a good deal of friskiness at the set-off, and claim their driver's undivided attention, so that we have covered at least half a mile of the road before he speaks to me. Then stooping to tuck the rug more closely round me (the evenings have grown very chilly) he whispers with a smile:

"Are you *quite* sure that you would rather be here with me than at the back with that 'fat boy.'"

"Quite positive," I answer, with an emphatic nod. "I was only afraid you would have preferred—you would regret—you would have liked to return as you came," I wind up, desperately.

He stares at me curiously for a moment almost with suspicion, as it seems to me, in the gathering twilight.

"At this moment, believe me, I have no regrets, no troubles," he says at length, quietly. "Can you say the same? Did Hasting's eloquence make no impression? I couldn't hear what particular line he was taking, but he looked unutterable things. Once or twice I thought he was going to weep. The melting mood would just suit a person of his admirable dimensions."

"He was very kind," I return coldly, "and I don't wish to hear him spoken of in a slighting manner. He is so attentive and good-natured; he carried all those wraps without a murmur, though I'm sure he didn't like it, because his face got so red and he—he lost his breath so dreadfully as we came along. None of the others overburdened themselves, and *you*, I particularly noticed, carried nothing."

"I'm a selfish beast, I know," said Mr. Carrington, composedly, "and have always had a rooted objection to carrying anything, except, perhaps, a gun, and there is no getting out of that. There are so many disagreeable burdens in this life that *must* be borne, that it seems to me weak-minded voluntarily to add to them. Don't scold me any more, Phyllis; I want to be happy while I can."

"Then don't abuse poor Mr. Hastings."

"Surely it isn't abuse to say a man is fat when he weighs twenty stone."

"It is impossible he can weigh more than fourteen," I exclaim indignantly.

"Well, even that is substantial," returns he, with a provoking air. Suddenly he laughs.

"Don't let us quarrel about Hastings," he says, looking down at me; "I will make any concessions you like, rather than that. I will say he is slim, refined, a very skeleton, if you wish it, only take that little pucker off your forehead, it was never meant to wear a frown. Now tell me if you have enjoyed your day."

"Oh, so much!" I say, with a sigh for the delights that are dead and gone. "You see we have never been accustomed to anything but—but——" I cannot bring myself to mention the disreputable fossil that lies in the coach-house at home, so substitute the words 'one horse'; and now, to find one's self behind four, with such a good height between one's self and the ground, is simply bliss. I would like to drive like this forever."

"May I take that as a compliment?"

"A compliment?"

My stupidity slightly discomfits my companion.

"I only hoped you meant you—you would have no objection to engage me as coachman in your never ending drive," he says, slowly. "My abominable selfishness again, you see. I cannot manage to forget Marmaduke Carrington." Then, abruptly. "You shall have the four-in-hand any day you wish, Phyllis, as it pleases you so much; remember that. Just name the day whenever you choose, and I shall only be too happy to drive you."

What a brother-in-law he will make? the heart throbs with delight. This day, then, is to be one of a series. I feel a wild desire to get near Billy, to give him a squeeze in the exuberance of my joy, but in default of him can only look my gratitude by smiling rapturously into Mr. Carrington's dark-blue eyes.

"It is awfully good of you," I say, warmly; "you don't know how much we enjoy it. We have always been so stupid, so tied down, any unexpected amusement like this seems almost too good to be true. But"—with hesitation and a blush—"we had better not go *too* often. You see, papa is a little odd at times, and he might forbid it altogether if we appeared too anxious for it. Perhaps, in a fortnight, if you would take us again—will you? Or would that be too soon?"

"Phyllis, can't you understand how much I wish to be with you?" His tone is almost impatient, and he speaks with unnecessary haste. I conclude he is referring to pretty Dora, who is sitting behind, and is making mild running with Mr. Hastings.

"Do you know, I say confidentially, "I am so glad you have come to live down here. Before, we had literally nothing to think about, now, you are always turning up, and even that is something. Actually, it seems to us, papa appears more lively since your arrival; he don't look so gloomy or prowl about after us so much. And then this drive—we would never have had the chance of such a thing but for you. It is an immense comfort to know you are going to stay here altogether."

"Is it? Phyllis, look at me." I look at him. "Now tell me this; if any other fellow, as well off as I am, had come to Strangemore, and had taken you for drives and that, would you have been as glad to know him? Would you have liked him as well as me?"

He is regarding me very earnestly; his lips are slightly compressed. Evidently he expects me to say something; but, alas! I don't know what. I feel horribly puzzled, and hesitate.

"Go on; answer me," he says eagerly.

"I don't know. I never thought about it," I murmur, somewhat troubled. "It is such an odd question. You see, if he had come in your place I would not then have known you, and if he had been as kind—yes, I suppose I would have liked him just as well," I conclude, quickly.

Of course I have said the wrong thing. The moment my speech is finished I know this. Mr. Carrington's eyes leave mine; he mutters something between his teeth, and brings the whip down sharply on the far leader.

"These brutes grow lazier every day," he says with an unmistakable frown.

Five—six minutes pass, and he does not address me. I feel annoyed with myself, yet innocent of having intentionally offended. Presently stealing a glance at my companion, I say, contritely—

"Have I vexed you, Mr. Carrington?"

"No, no," he answers, hastily, the smile coming home to his lips. "Don't think so. Surely truthfulness, being so rare a virtue, should be precious. I am an irritable fellow at times, and you are finding out all my faults to-night," he says, rather sadly laying his hand for an instant on mine, as it lies bare and small and brown upon the rug. "You have proved me both ill-tempered and selfish. You will say I am full of defects."

"Indeed I will not," I return, earnestly, touched by his manner; "I do not even see the faults you mention; and at all events no one was ever before so kind to me as you have been."

"I would be kinder if I dared," he say, somewhat unsteadily.

While I ponder on what these words may mean, while the first dim foreboding—suspicion—what you will—enters my mind, we see Rylston, and pull up to give the Hastings time to alight and bid their adieux Then we go on again, always in the strange silence that has fallen upon us, and presently find ourselves at home.

Mr. Carrington is on the ground in a moment, and comes round to my side to help me down. I hold out my hands and prepare for a good spring (a clear jump at any time is delightful to me); but he disappoints my hopes by taking me in his arms and placing me gently on the gravel; after which he goes instantly to Dora.

When we are all safely landed, papa, to our unmitigated astonishment, comes forward, and not only asks but presses Mr. Carrington to stay and dine. Perhaps, considering he has four horses and two grooms in his train, our father guesses he will refuse the invitation. At all events he does so very graciously, and, raising his hat, drives off, leaving us free to surround and relate to mother all the glories of the day.

CHAPTER VIII.

The following Monday, as I sat reading in the small parlor we dare to call our own, I am startled by Dora's abrupt entrance. Her outdoor garments are on her; her whole appearance is full of woe; suspicious circles surround her eyes. I rise fearfully and hasten towards her. Surely if anything worthy of condemnation has occurred it is impossible but I must have a prominent part in it. Has the irreproachable Dora committed a crime? Is she in disgrace with our domestic tyrant.

"Dora, what has happened?" I ask breathlessly.

"Oh, nothing," returns Dora, reckless misery in her tone; "nothing to signify; only—Billy was right—I am quite positive he never cared for me—has not the slightest intention of proposing to me."

"What? who?" I demand, in my charming definite way.

"Who?" with impatient reproach. "Who is there in this miserable forgotten spot to propose to any one, except—Mr. Carrington?"

"What have you heard, Dora?" I ask, light breaking in upon my obscurity.

"Heard? Nothing. I would not have believed it, if I had heard it. I saw it with my own eyes. An hour ago I put on my things and went out for a walk, intending to go down by the river; but just as I came to the shrubberies, and while I was yet hidden from view, I saw Mr. Carrington and that horrid dog of his standing on the bank just below me. I hesitated for a moment about going forward. I didn't quite like," says Dora, modestly, "to force myself upon him for what would look so like a *tete-a-tete;* and while I waited, unable to make up my mind, he"—a sob—"took out of his waistcoat a large gold locket and opened it, and"—a second heavy sob—"and after gazing at for a long time, as though he were going to eat it"—a final sob, and an inclination towards choking—"he stooped and kissed it. And, oh! of course it was some odious woman's hair or picture or something," cries Dora, breaking down altogether, and sinking with rather less than her usual grace into the withered arm-chair that adorns that corner of our room.

A terrible suspicion, followed by as awful a sense of conviction, springs to life within me. The word "picture" has struck an icy chill to my heart. Can it by any possibility be my photograph he has been so idiotically and publicly embracing? Am I the fell betrayer of my sister's happiness?

A moment later I almost smile at my own fears. Is it likely any man, more especially one who has seen so much of the world as Mr. Carrington, would find anything worth kissing in my insignificant countenance? I find unlimited consolation in this reflection, that at another time would have caused me serious uneasiness.

Meantime Dora is still giving signs of poignant anguish, and I look at her apprehensively, while pondering on what will be the most sympathetic thing to say or do under the circumstances.

Her nose is growing faintly pink, large tears are standing in her eyes, her head inclines a little—a very little—to one side.

Now, when I cry I do it with all my heart. Once I have wept my fill, however, I recover almost instantaneously, feeling as fresh as young grass after a shower.

Not so with Dora. When she is afflicted the tears come one by one, slowly, decorously sailing down her face; each drop waits politely until the previous one has cleared off the premises before presuming to follow in its channel. In spite of the qualms of conscience that are still faintly pricking me, as I sit mutely opposite my suffering sister, I find myself reckoning each salt drop as it rolls slowly down her cheek. Just as I get to the forty-ninth, Dora speaks again—

"If he really is in love with somebody else—and I can hardly doubt it after what I have seen—I think he has behaved very dishonorably to me," she says in a quavering tone."

"How so?" I stammer, hardly knowing what to say.

"How so?" with mild reproof. "Why, what has he meant by coming here day after day, and sitting for hours in the drawing-room, and bringing flowers and game, unless he had some intentions in regard to me? Only that you are so dull, Phyllis, you would not require me to say all this."

"It certainly looks very strange," I acknowledge. "But perhaps, after all, Dora, you are misjudging him. Perhaps it was his sister's—Lady Hancock's hair he was kissing."

"Nonsense!" says Dora, sharply; "don't be absurd, Did you ever hear of any brother wasting so much affection upon a sister? Do you suppose Billy or Roland would keep *your* face or hair in a locket to kiss and embrace in private?"

I certainly cannot flatter myself that they would, so give up this line of argument.

"Perhaps the person, whoever she is, is dead," I suggest, more brilliantly.

"No. He smiled at it quite brightly, as one would never smile at a dead face. He smiled at it as if he *adored* it," murmurs Dora, hopelessly, and the fiftieth drop splashes into her lap. "I shall tell papa," she goes on presently, "I have no idea of letting him be imagining things when there is no truth in them. I wish we had never seen Mr. Carrington! I wish with all my heart something would occur to take him out of this place! I feel as though I hated him," says Dora with unusual vehemence and a rather vicious compression of the lips; "and, at all events, I hope he never will marry that woman in the locket."

And I answer, "So do I" with rather suspicious haste, as in duty bound.

CHAPTER IX.

It is in the evening of the same day, and we are seated in our accustomed places at table.

Papa sits down in a snapping fashion and commences the helping process in silence. Mamma never sits at the head of her table except on those rare and unpleasant occasions when the neighbors are asked to dine. Not a word is spoken; deadly quiet reigns, and all is going on smothly enough, until Billy, unhappily raising his head, sees Dora's crimson lids.

"Why, Dora," he exclaims, instantly, in a loud and jovial tone, "What on earth is the matter with you? Your eyes are as red as fire."

Down goes Dora's spoon, up comes Dora's handkerchief to her face, and a stifled sob conveys the remainder of her feelings. It is the last straw.

"William!" cries my father in a voice of thunder, "go to your room." And William does as he is bid.

The silence is becoming positively awful, when papa suddenly raises his head from the contemplation of his nail, and Roland utters a languid sigh, and says, mildly:

"Shall we say grace?"

"What is the meaning of this delay?" demands papa, exploding for the second time. "Are we going to sit here all night? Tell cook if this occurs again she can leave. Three-quarters of an hour between soup and fish is more than I will put up with. If there is no more dinner, let her say so."

"Perhaps Mrs. Tully is indisposed," says Roly, politely, addressing James. "If so, we ought to make allowances for her." Mrs. Tully's admiration for "Old Tom" being a well known fact to every one in the house except papa.

"Be silent, Roland; I will have no interference where my servants are concerned," declares papa; and exit James with his hand to his mouth, to return presently with a very red face and the roast mutton.

"Where's the fish?" asks papa, in a terrific tone.

"It didn't arrive in time, sir."

"Who has the ordering of dinner in this house?" inquires papa, addressing us all generally, as though ignorant of the fact of mother's having done so without a break for the last twenty-six yars. "*Nobody*, I presume, by the manner in which it is served. Now, remember, James, I give strict orders that no more fish is ever taken from that fishmonger. Do you hear?"

"Yes, sir." And at length we all get some roast mutton.

It seems to me that dinner will never come to an end; and yet, to watch me, I feel sure no stranger would ever guess at my impatience.

At length, however, the welcome word is spoken, and we rise from the table. Once outside the door, I fly to the cook, and, having obtained such delicacies as are procurable, rush up stairs, and enter Billy's room, to find him seated at the farthest end, the deepest look of dejection upon his features.

As our eyes meet this gloom vanishes, giving place to an expression of intense relief.

"Oh!" he says, "I thought you were Dora."

"No. I could not come sooner, as papa fought over every course. But I have brought you your dinner now, Billy. You must be starving."

"I had it long ago," says Billy, drawing a potato from his pocket and a plate from under the dressing-table on which mutton is distinctly visible. I feel rather disappointed.

"Who brought it to you?" I ask; but before I can receive a reply a heavy step upon the stairs strikes terror to our hearts.

Instantly Billy's dinner goes under the table again, and the dejected depression returns to his face. But I, what am I to do? Under the bed I dive, plate and all, thrusting the plate on before me, and am almost safe, when I tip over a bit of rolled carpet and plunge forward, bringing both hands into the gravy. In this interesting position I remain, trembling, and afraid to stir or breathe, with my eyes directed through a small hole in the valance.

The door opens noisily, and—enter Roly with a cane in his hand and a ferocious gleam in his eyes.

"Oh, Roly!" I gasp, scrambling out of my hiding-place, "what a fright you gave us! We were sure it was papa."

"Where on earth have you come from?" asked Roly, gazing with undisguised amazement at the figure I present. "And—don't come any nearer—'paws off, Pompey'—what is the matter with your hands?"

"Oh, I had just brought up Billy some dinner, and when I heard you I ran under the bed and tripped over the carpet and fell splash into the gravy. But it is nothing," I wind up, airily.

"Nothing! I wish it was less. Go wash yourself, you dirty child." Then resuming the ferocious aspect, and with uplifted cane, he advances on Billy.

"William"—imitating papa's voice to a nicety—"I have not yet done with you. What, sir, did you mean by exposing your sensitive sister to the criticisms of a crowded table? If your own gentlemanly instincts are not sufficiently developed to enable you to understand how unpardonable are personal remarks, let this castigation, that a sense of duty compels me to bestow, be the means of teaching you."

Billy grins, and for the third time commences his dinner while Roland leans against the window-shutter and contemplates him with lazy curiosity.

"Billy," he asks, presently, "is mutton—when the fat is growing white and the gravy is in tiny lumps—a good thing?"

"No it ain't," returns Billy, grumpily, and with rather more than his usual vulgarity.

"I ask merely for information," says Roly. "It certainly *looks* odd."

"It's *beastly*," says Billy. "If the governor goes in for any more of this kind of thing I'll cut and run; that's what I'll do."

"Why didn't you have some dumpling?" Roland goes on smoothly. "The whipped cream with it was capital."

"Dumpling?" says Billy, regarding me fixedly; "dumpling! Phyllis, *was* there dumpling?"

"There was," I reply.

"And whipped cream!"

"Yes," I answer, faintly.

"Oh, Phyllis!" says Billy in the liveliest tone of reproach. The flicker of an amused smile shoots across Roland's face.

"Phyllis, why did you not bring him some?" he asks, in a tone that reflects Billy's.

"How *could* I?" I exclaim, indignantly. "I could not carry more than one plate, and even as it was I was afraid every minute I would be caught. Besides——"

"Miss Phyllis, Miss Phyllis," comes a sepulchral whisper at the door accompanied by a faint knock. In the whisper I recognize James. Having taken a precautionary peep through the keyhole, I open the door, and on the threshold discover our faithful friend, a large plate of apples and cream in his hand, and considerable air of mystery about him.

"Miss Phyllis," he says, in a fine undertone, "cook sent this here to Master Billy; and the mistress says you are to come down at once, as the master has been asking where you all are."

"I am coming," I return; "and tell cook we are awfully obliged to her." Whereupon, having deposited the dainties before Billy, I charge down stairs into the library; and, having seized hold of the first book I can see, I collect myself, and enter the drawing-room with a sedate air.

"Where have you been?" demands papa, twisting his head round until I wonder neck doesn't crack.

"In the library, choosing a book."

"What book?"

I glance at the volume I carry, and to my unmitigated horror, find it a treatise on surgery.

"It is by Dr. Batly," I murmur vaguely.

"Come here and let me see it." Trembling, I advance and surrender my book.

"Is *this* a proper book for a young woman to study?" exclaims my paps, in high disgust, when he has read through the headings of the chapters, "What an abominable girl you are! Go over there and sit down, and keep yourself out of mischief for the remainder of the evening, if you *can*."

CHAPTER X.

The next day Dora is still low—very low indeed—and sighs heavily at intervals. We might, however in spite of this, have managed to knock some enjoyment out of our lives, but, unfortunately, whatever communication she had made to papa on the subject of Mr. Carrington's treachery has had the effect of rendering him almost unbearable.

I think Roland rather enjoys the murkiness of the atmosphere than otherwise, and takes a small but evident pleasure in winking at me as he presses the vinegar and pepper on our already highly seasoned father.

The latter knowing my nomadic tendencies, is successful in bringing to light during the day a dozen unhemmed cambric handkerchiefs, and before going to his customary afternoon ride leaves strict injunctions behind him that by my fingers they are to be begun and ended before his return. About 4 o'clock, therefore, behold me sitting in state in the drawing-room, in company with mamma and Dora, hard at work at my enforced task.

The conversation is limited; dwindles, indeed, until it gets so sparse that at length we are ashamed of it and relapse into silence.

Suddenly there comes a rattle of horses' hoofs upon the gravel outside. A little later, and Mr. Carrington's voice striking on our ears sets speculation at rest. Mamma glances furtively at Dora, and Dora breathes a faint sigh and blushes pale pink, while suffering an aggrieved expression to characterize her face.

A horrible thought comes into my head. Suppose—of *course* it is impossible—but *suppose* Mr. Carrington were to come in now, and in the course of conversation mention my photograph; what will mother and Dora think? What is to prevent their drawing a conclusion about what happened yesterday? Although I do not in the least believe it *was* my picture Mr. Carrington was seen embracing, still the very idea that it *might* be, and that he might at any time speak of it turns me cold. Something must be done, and that quickly. Without further hesitation I rise from my seat, put down my work, and make for the door. No one attempts to detain me, and in an instant I am in the hall, face to face with our visitor.

I lay my hand upon the front of his coat, and whisper hurriedly:

"Do not say a word about my picture, not a *word*. Do you understand?" I have raised my face to his in my anxiety, and shake him slightly to emphasize my words.

"I do;" he replies placing his hand over mine as it lies almost unconsciously upon his breast. "Of course I will not. But—why——"

"Nothing," I say "at least only a fancy. Go now, I will tell you some other time."

"Phyllis, will you meet me at the oak-tree to-morrow evening at five—at *four!*" he asks, eagerly detaining me as I seek to escape, and I say, "Yes," with impatient haste, and, tearing my hand out of his, I turn my back upon him and gladly disappear.

(To be continued

Jefferson Davis will celebrate his 76th birthday on June 3rd.