

"Come up-stairs, and I'll show you his new picture."

"But he may not care to have me see his picture, Mrs. Wauchope."

"He'll never know anything about it. He doesn't know you are in the house."

"That makes no difference," I say, my sense of integrity being, apparently, no mate for my landlady's.

I am sitting at the table in the middle of the room, finishing my breakfast. It is nine o'clock, and a cold gleam of March sunshine lights up my big dining-drawing-room, making the ancient carpet and curtains—which have faded into an indescribable shade between drab and dust-color—look still more ancient, and gleaming brightly on the breakfast-table, on the tin sardine-box, on the knives and forks, and on my silver salt-stand—for I have drawn the blinds up to the top of the windows that I may feel even that vague unsatisfactory bit of sunshine on my face. My landlady is standing opposite me, on the other side of the table—a fat, yellow-complexioned woman in a frilled gown of black lustre, with purple ribbons in her black net cap and a purple knitted fichu tied behind with woolen tassels.

"He wanted to know this morning if the drawing-rooms were taken," Mrs. Wauchope says, laughing in her silent fashion. "I told him they were—by a lady of a certain age from the country. That will keep him from asking any more questions."

Aunt Rosa's face rises before me, grimly disapproving. But I turn my back—metaphorically—on the menacing vision.

"How long has he been lodging here, Mrs. Wauchope?"

"Well," Mrs. Wauchope answers slowly, "he's been with me, off and on, for more than two years now; and I've never found him anything but most respectable and well-conducted, though his temper is none of the sweetest. Not that any of us is sweet when we're put out," she adds extenuatingly; "and, if one's born with a bad temper, why it's all the more creditable if one keeps it down."

This bad-tempered young man—whose name, Mrs. Wauchope informs me, is Baxter—Gerard Baxter—would be intensely gratified if he could hear us. But as he left the house hours ago—so Mrs. Wauchope also informs me—that gratification is denied to him.

"Come up, and I'll show you his studio, Miss Allie. You never saw such an old curiosity shop. And it would be as much as my life is worth to sweep it or anything—though, goodness knows, it wants it! But he'd fly at me like a young tiger for raising a dust on them weary old pictures."

"But if he were to come in and find us poking about his premises, Mrs. Wauchope," I say, divided between all the notions of propriety which aunt Rosa has been inculcating on me for nearly a score of years and a powerful desire to see the pictures, "fancy what a row he would have to pluck with you!"

"He's gone to Kennington, and won't be in till four o'clock," Mrs. Wauchope declares positively. "I wouldn't have you caught up there for the world, Miss Allie; but, even if there was a chance of his coming back, he has left his latch-key on his dressing-table, so that he can't get into the house unless he knocks."

I am more than doubtful about the whole proceeding; but I rise from the breakfast-table, and gathering up my long dress in my hand, follow Mrs. Wauchope out of the room and up the gloomy stairs.

It is a long way up—quite long enough for my better judgment to have had time to assert itself before we reach the top-most landing, under the very roof of the house.

"I shall only just peep in at the door," I say; and Mrs. Wauchope, passing on before me, nods her head and opens the low unpanelled door.

"He has had the wall raised, you see," ushering me in—for I do go in—"and got that glass roof put on. Makes it much lighter, you know, and quite cheerful and pleasant. You'd never guess there could be such a fine roomy place up here at the top of the house."

The great garret-room has certainly been metamorphosed into a very well-lighted studio. An awning has been stretched under part of the glass roof, throwing its light more fully upon the easel in the middle of the floor. The place is crowded for the most part with a litter of quaint odds and ends, but its untidiness does not trouble me as it does my landlady. Several pictures, finished and burnished, hang or lean against the walls: a lay figure does duty as a hat-rack in one corner; in another a pile of rusty armour shelters innumerable spiders, to judge from the webs with which it is festooned. On the easel in the middle of the floor stands an unfinished picture, with the colors still wet upon it—some, yet splendidly realistic view of mountain-scenery; in the fore ground

"A lake of sadness, seldom sunned, that stretched  
In sullen silence from a mirage of reeds."

I am not an artist; yet I stand before the unfinished canvas—I think a picture never looks so well as when standing unframed upon the easel where it was painted—lost in admiration of the power, clearness, and artistic completeness which breathes through the whole composition, and which even I am not too ignorant to understand and to appreciate.

"That is the picture he brought from Scotland," Mrs. Wauchope says, standing a little behind me with her head on one side. "I suppose there's a great deal in it—there ought to be, if he did nothing but paint at it all the time he was away. I tell him I am sure there is some young lady in Scotland, he goes there so often; but he says, No, he doesn't care for young ladies—which is ridiculous, you know," Mrs. Wauchope adds; "and he with

such a pair of eyes in his head! Whether he likes them or not, they like him; and so I tell him."

"Has he very handsome eyes?" I ask absently, fascinated by the picture before me.

"Handsome!" Mrs. Wauchope repeats. "I often tell him they were not put into his head for the good of his soul! But he only laughs at me, and asks me what I want him to do for me. He mends my spectacles, and the other day he touched up poor Wauchope's picture, and made it look as good as new."

"Is there anything he cannot do?" I ask, laughing.

"He doesn't seem to be able to make his fortune," Mrs. Wauchope says, shaking her head, with a glance round the studio. "Look at all those pictures on the walls—only half finished, most of them—thrown aside because he got tired of them, and wanted to begin something new! The greatest fault I find with him is that he won't stick to anything. Because he's not satisfied with it, he tells me; but that is all nonsense. It is because he's new-fangled, and wants to be at something else."

"An unlucky temperament!" I say to myself, wondering if any woman has lost her heart to this unstable young man.

Mrs. Wauchope has moved away to the other end of the room, intent on carrying away some empty cigar-boxes which she has found there, and I turn away from the canvas which has taken such hold on my imagination to glance round the precincts wherein I cannot help feeling I have no business. It is my first introduction to anything so Bohemian as the studio of a professional painter; and I like it, notwithstanding the litter of palettes and brushes, the bottle of "medium," the mahl-sticks and palette-knives, the colors and odds and ends of canvas scattered about the floor. There are pictures, framed and unframed, ranged anyhow about the room. There is a miscellaneous assortment of pipes on the tables—here a quaint china tobacco-jar, there a tall candlestick of Florentine bronze, wherein the candle has been allowed to burn down to the socket, fencing-foils on the wall, books thrown down carelessly here and there and anywhere, a faded blue velvet smoking-cap on one shelf, on another a dead camellia in its dusty specimen-glass—a dead brown camellia, which seems to have perished of thirst, for the leaf beside it, which reaches down to the drop of water in the bottom of the vase, is still fresh and green.

"I'll show you the photograph, if you'd like to see it," Mrs. Wauchope says, pausing beside a door leading into an inner room—or garret. "He leaves his album on the dressing-table mostly, and you might know some of his friends."

But to this proposal I at once put a decided negative. To look at his picture—which all the world may soon see—is one thing, to pry into the secrets of his photographic album another. I wonder if Mrs. Wauchope is equally obliging in exhibiting my photographic album to the Misses Fryce? I shall look it up religiously in future, lest she should be as anxious to amuse them at my expense as she is to amuse me at Mr. Baxter's.

"I'm just going in to dust his looking-glass," Mrs. Wauchope announces, and suits the action to the work by disappearing into the inner room.

And I look about me, utterly refusing to let the idea of aunt Rosa enter my head. A shaft of the early March sunshine streams in through the skylights, lighting up a dusty canvas here, a gilded frame there, bringing into greater prominence some bit of smiling landscape or some cobwebbed "property," and shining full upon the dead camellia in the little glass at my elbow. My eye rests on the withered "button-hole" meditatively at first, pitying the poor flower, which certainly no "useless water-springs" have "mocked into living." But all at once a spirit of mischief enters into me—a brilliant idea which is worthy of Olive Deane herself! Yet ought I to do it? Nobody will ever know—Mrs. Wauchope will never suspect, nor can the "subtle spider, which from overhead looks like a spy on human guilt and error," tell the secret, and within these four walls there are no living creatures but the spiders and myself. What living human being could turn informer, if I were to take the withered camellia out of the glass and put the fresh sweet dewy bunch of violets I am wearing into it instead?

If I do it at all, I must do it now, while Mrs. Wauchope's back is turned. Again my conscience whispers "Do not do it!" and again I turn a deaf ear to its voice. How he will puzzle over the changing! If he asks Mary Anne, she will be able to tell him nothing, she being at this moment in the market buying vegetables for the "parlors," and Mrs. Wauchope, even if she suspects me, would not dare to tell him that she had allowed me to pry into his rooms. Time and the opportunity are too much for me—in another instant I have transferred the violets from my dress to the glass, and am holding the dead camellia hidden in the palm of my hand.

"I suppose you've seen all you want to see, Miss Allie?" unsuspecting Mrs. Wauchope says, coming back with her black-silk apron full of the empty cigar-boxes. "And how any one can live in such a den," she adds, her cursory glance taking in the artistic litter which certainly abounds in the place with as much disgust as if it were her own ash-heap, "passes my comprehension! And the smell of tobacco-smoke would suffocate you sometimes—I'm often afraid Miss Fryce will get a whiff of it in the parlors! If you'll close the door, Miss Allie, I'd be obliged to you—you see my hands are full."

The moment I have closed the door, my mind misgives me. But it is too late. The deed done cannot be undone; and, with the camellia in my hand, I descend the stairs leisurely, laughing to myself, as I look round the passages which must

be so familiar to him, at Mrs. Wauchope's Machiavelian method of extinguishing all curiosity in Mr. Baxter's mind with regard to her drawing-room lodger.

"I wonder where he got this!" I say to myself, as I bring the dead exotic to light in the privacy of my own room, a minute later. "Perhaps somebody gave it to him. Perhaps he values it, dead as it is, more than tons of the sweetest and freshest violets! If that is the case, how he will bless the thief who stole it! How he will maltreat my poor little violets! Yet I fancy he bought this flower—there is half a yard of wire around it. And, if he cared very much for it, he would scarcely have left it to die for lack of water in a dusty vase."

Nevertheless I shut it up in a bon-bon box, and lock it in my wardrobe, feeling vaguely conscious of a possibility of having to produce it at some future time. I have stolen it, that is certain; and, should it chance to be discovered, I might be called upon to restore the pilfered property, even though it be only a dead camellia. I feel rather guilty as I turn the key in my wardrobe. What would Mr. Baxter say if he could have seen me putting up his discarded "button-hole" in a pastboard-box? Would he not think with reason that I valued the flower because he had worn it for one evening in his coat—I, who had never seen him in my life? And what would aunt Rosa say? I do not dare to dwell on aunt Rosa's sentiments. The mildest thing she could say of me would be that I had taken leave of my senses. I shall never tell her, or anyone else, what I have done—not even Olive Deane. Great madcap as Allie is, I doubt whether she would present a bouquet to a man who was a stranger to her. Thinking of it in this light, my cheeks grow hot suddenly, and I hope the violets will be dead before he sees them—violets wither very soon out of water—these will be black and dead to-morrow, if they spend the night in that dry dusty glass.

As I put on my turban to go to my singing-class I wonder vaguely if he is as handsome as Mrs. Wauchope describes him, and if he cares as little for young ladies as he tells her he does; and then I button on the jacket of thick gray tweed which matches my dress, and, saluting out into the cold March morning air, straightway forget that there is such a person in existence as Mrs. Wauchope's "attica."

"Wasn't it stupid of me? I quite forgot to ask Fred if he knew anything of 'G. B.'"  
Olive says, as we issue out of Madame Cronhelm's house with half a dozen other girls, all carrying portfolios of music. "They are all talking so much about the wedding that it puts everything else out of my head."

"His name is Baxter—Gerard Baxter. Mrs. Wauchope told me so this morning." I answer, the recollection of my morning's misdemeanour flashing into my mind for the first time since I left the house. "He is a landscape painter, and his people are Scotch; he has nobody belonging to him but an old grandmother, Mrs. Wauchope thinks, who lives in Edinburgh. And he's as proud as Lucifer and as poor as a church-mouse."

Olive laughs, looking at me through her gold-rimmed pince-nez.

"You must not fall in love with him, Allie—"

"He was but a landscape painter  
And a village maiden's son!"

"He won't fall in love with me from Mrs. Wauchope's description," I laugh in my turn; and then I relate that worthy woman's stroke of diplomacy in describing me as a spinster from the country "between the ages," as Madame Cronhelm would say. If I am tempted for a moment to relate the episode of the violets, Olive's words induce me to hold my peace.

"I didn't tell mamma a word about 'him,' she says, nodding her blond head sagaciously. "She would be sure not to like it; and she might—I don't say she would, but she might—write and tell your aunt Rosa. Mrs. Wauchope ought not to have pretended there were none but ladies in the house. Not that it's really any matter, you know—only mamma has charge of you in a manner, though you were an obstinate wretch, and would not come to stay with us at the square."

"I'll come for Poppy's wedding next month."

"Well, I should think you would!"

"And you are to come back with me to the Vicarage, Olive."

"My dear, I wouldn't miss being at Woodhay Manor on the eleventh of next June for anything."

"And I shouldn't care half as much for anything if you weren't there. Do you remember my birthday last year, and the fun we had with the school children? You said it was the first time you had ever helped in any parish work, and you rather liked it."

"I liked to see you play the Lady Bountiful, Allie. And besides, that dear delightful curate of your uncle's was there—the man with the romantic name."

"The Reverend Hyacinth Lockhart," I laugh, remembering how Olive flirted with him. "How do you like the new song with Madame Cronhelm has given you?"

"I don't like it at all," Olive says, shrugging her shoulders; "and I think Madame Cronhelm is very cross; don't you?"

"She is very strict. But you know you are horribly idle, Olive."

"My dear, I don't go to Madame Cronhelm's to learn. I only go for the fun of the thing."

"Then you can't expect her to take any pains with you."

"I don't want her to do so. She admires your voice, Allie."

"Your singing of that delicious 'Serenade' took her by surprise. And Herr von Konig put on his spectacles to look at you. Allie, its the greatest pity in the world that you are a woman of means! You'd make a fortune on the stage."

"I wish aunt Rosa could hear you!"

"I am sure Madame Cronhelm thinks you mean to sing in public."

"Madame Cronhelm is at liberty to think her own thoughts."

"Do they know you have such a voice down at the Vicarage?"

"I sing in church," I say demurely.

"I never knew such a queer girl as you are, Allie. If you were anybody else, you would be—"

"I wouldn't be Allie Somers Scott," I laugh, shrugging my shoulders.

"I suppose not. And I like you best just as you are, my dear. Have you seen the latest addition to Poppy's trousseau? A Louis XVI. morning dress of ruby plush with pink bows—we must have her put it on after luncheon. It is most becoming to Poppy, though you know, I think it is a ridiculous style for the morning—fancy crimson plush with pink surah bows!"

Poppy Deane is a tall dark girl, with a marble-white complexion and black eyes. Olive is quite different—a little plump thing with a round face, a pink and white complexion, very fair hair, in a wisp of curls over her forehead, and a pair of very saucy, if not particularly handsome, eyes. To-day she wears a "granny" bonnet lined with cardinal, and a coquetish dress of navy-blue and cardinal with shows off her prettily-rounded figure. Also she wears spectacles, not so much because she finds them necessary to aid her sight as because she fancies they improve the appearance of what she considers the worst features in her face.

"That serenade of Gounod's rings in my ears," she says, as we reach the door of the house in Dexter Square. "You must sing it again for me, Allie, after we have criticised Poppy's plush gown."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Domestic Curiosities.

A man long known for his good charities, a man of intelligence, who needs to proclaim his excellence, or to seek a position in the matter of offices.

An honest and trustworthy boy, of correct habits, well educated, who needs to advertise for a position in a place where such services are in demand.

A girl who is amiable and kind to all with whom she comes in contact, who aids and treats her mother well, favoring her when she is fatigued, who shows herself a true friend, who will need to seek for a friend, or a life companion.

A boy, with fair capacity, who is not able to find the best fruits in a neighbor's orchard, or cannot easily discriminate between mere professions and practical virtues.

Such a fruit tree without stones and clubs all about it—used by thieving boys—and men or women of real merit, such as rebuke less virtuous persons, who are not clubbed and villified by the law, and the lovers of vice.

A man of great mind and attainments, standing out from the masses, in consequence of his superiority, who will not be envied, and to that extent persecuted.

One who cherishes kindly feelings toward all, supplemented by deeds of compassion, benevolence and neighborly assistance, who will not have friends, his death be deplored, and he remembered long after death.

A Zereba.

The zereba is a native light barricade constructed in the form of a square, and, by the Arabs, made of mimosa brush, piled with the prickly branches outward, and built high enough to make the offer to overleap them impracticable. The sharp, jagged branches present a forbidding aspect to the Arabs and blacks, who have no taste for flinging their naked bodies against them. The great tactics of the Arabs is to attack by "rushing." In the hope to overwhelm, by the very impetus of the assault, the waiting enemy. As a means of checking this "rush" the zereba has been found very effective, and the English adopted the native example as a very excellent provision against decisive charge from the enemy in open fighting. But any sort of superficial fortification flung up to meet a temporary requirement is now referred to in the dispatches as a zereba. It corresponds, in fact, to the fence-rail breastworks and the light earthworks thrown up by troops in civilized warfare. The principle of construction is a very old one, and is a very good one in primitive warfare where the serious fighting is in hand-to-hand encounter.

Jerseys Owned by Women.

It is a noticeable feature of the advancement of the Jersey interest that many ladies become deeply interested in the welfare of their husbands' herds; in fact, quite a number of herds are registered in the ownership of ladies. The subject affords a wider field of profit than the poultry business, and gratifies a spirit of legitimate speculation that is not unpleasant to the female mind where suitable opportunity occurs for its indulgence.

The dairy, which is an almost inseparable companion to the breeding herd if any considerable number of cows are kept, is a feature of no little importance, and one that, to be successful, requires a peculiar care that is seldom dissociated from a greater degree of intelligence (one may almost say refinement) than is often found among hired help. Where it is conducted on a large scale it necessitates the employment of expert help; but many an owner of Jerseys in a small way has failed to get his butter to suit him until his wife became sufficiently interested to study the subject that was once her grandmother's pride and special accomplishment, and take the matter in hand.

The Buccaneers.

The bold English adventurers who first sailed the Pacific were actuated by patriotism, and by a detestation of the Pope, the priests, and the Spaniards, almost as much as by cupidity. But the profession they originated proved so attractive to their sea-faring countrymen that after passing through sundry doubtful stages it was degraded into the buccaneering that bordered on piracy. Buccaneering, strictly speaking, was merely the romance of the butcher's business. The buccaneer hunted down the herds of wild cattle that had multiplied and ran wild on many of the West Indian Islands, and, establishing his headquarters on Tortuga, he smoked the flesh and sold the superabundance. But those amphibious vikings, being far removed from law, were by no means fastidious as to how they made their money. They chased the Spaniards, had the better of them, and no mercy was shown. They ravished the Spanish colonies, they stormed and sacked fortified cities, and, when regular business was slack, or the Spaniards unusually formidable, they yielded easily to irresistible temptation, and preyed upon peaceful and neutral traders; so that now and then, if an Englishman came into the clutches of one of His Majesty's cruisers, he might be hung up in chains at Port Royal or elsewhere. But when any day he might be brought face to face with death, in the shape of shot, fever or famine, the particular form was merely a matter of detail. If he died game he had the regard of his comrades, who formed the circle in which his posthumous character was to be discussed; while, on the other hand, in buccaneering, as on the Stock Exchange, or elsewhere, success was sure to cover a multitude of sins. A rich man could sue out his letters of pardon, and even take high office under the tolerant government, grateful to him for adding to the national wealth and recruiting seamen who might serve in the navy. He might have his snug tombstone in the parish church, with a tablet in the chancel commemorating his virtues and parochial bequests. Did not Morgan, after being the terror of the tropical seas, hang or pardon his former comrades in his capacity as Deputy Governor of Jamaica, and ultimately die in the odor of respectability, a knight of considerable landed property?

The Statue of Memnon.

At a place called Koum el-Sultan, situated on the plains of Thebes, on the western banks of the river Nile, there stand two gigantic statues, or colossi, representing the Egyptian monarch Amenophis III., of the eighteenth dynasty, seated on his throne, his name and titles being inscribed upon them. The northernmost of these statues—each of which is said to have been originally 60 feet high—instead of being associated with the sovereign whose name it bore, came to be called by the ancient Greeks the statue of Memnon—said to have been a celebrated hero who fought bravely at Troy, and who was slain by either Ajax or Achilles—and as such it is still known. A remarkable peculiarity of this statue in former days was that at certain times, when it was first struck by the rays of the rising sun, sounds were emitted from it, which appeared to resemble the breaking of a harp-string or a metallic ring. There have been various suppositions formed to account for these curious noises, but no satisfactory explanation can be found in regard to them. The celebrated traveller Humboldt has stated that in certain granite rocks on the banks of the river Orinoko, in South America, musical notes were produced at sunrise, owing to the escape of confined air from their numerous crevices, and the sounds from the statue, which is also composed of granite, may have originated from the same cause; another authority suggests that the sounds may have been produced by a mechanical arrangement which was acted upon by the rays of the sun; but, beyond the fact that the notes were really heard, nothing is known. It is many hundreds of years, however, since the time to which we refer; and the strange sounds are now only a phenomenon of the far distant past.

A Strange Murder.

A paper called Nature, has picked up a story almost eclipsing that of the cock and bull, for which it cites as an authority the director of a glass factory in the district of Aniche. This gentleman had a dog, and this dog was turned out to play with other dogs in the open field behind the factory. It was the time of hard weather, shortly after the recent snow-storm, and the dog, which was a rough-haired terrier, had not finished his gambol when he was attacked by a whole flock of birds, described by the French paper as crows. By this, probably, rooks are meant, for the crow, as Yarell informs us, is a solitary bird found only alone or in pairs, whereas the glass manufacturer writes that there were 100 of the black birds in question in the field where the dog was, out of which only about thirty joined in the onslaught. However the battle, once begun, proved a very one-sided affair, half the attacking squadron keeping in front of the wretched quadruped and the other half behind him on the bank. The former, hovering at a height of about six feet, made dashes from time to time at the head of the victim, aiming their beaks at his eyes and at a particular spot in his neck, where they soon established an open wound. The unfortunate beast, who in vain attempted to flee, would have been actually picked to pieces on the spot had he not been rescued, and brought home in his arms, while the detachment of persecutors hovered with angry movements overhead. The dog's life was saved for the time, but the narrator adds that a day or two afterward his wounds became so dangerous that he was obliged to have the poor wretch executed. After this we may expect soon to hear of a fox assaulted and done to death by a confraternity of geese.