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THE

Angel and the Demon:

*G. M. Sturman*

A TALE OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM.

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BY T. S. ARTHUR.

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G. G. EVANS,  
439 CHESTNUT STREET, PHILADELPHIA.  
1858.

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## PREFACE.

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THE title at first chosen for this book was "The Young Governess;" but the one it now bears more clearly expresses its scope and meaning. The author regards Modern Spiritualism, as it is called, as a phase of Demonology, using the word in its bad sense; and classes it with witchcraft, necromancy, and like disorderly influences. So believing, he has written from that stand-point in the case. There will, of course, be plenty to reject his view,—to be angry and to denounce. But wiser ones will approve, and many, he trusts, be warned in time to escape the sad consequences which are sure to follow any enthrallment of the will made free by God.



## CONTENTS.

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	PAGE
CHAP. I.—THE YOUNG GOVERNESS.....	9
II.—GAINING INFLUENCE.....	21
III.—TRIALS.....	32
IV.—WORTH AND PRETENSION.....	40
V.—THE WIND AND THE SUN.....	48
VI.—THE GOVERNESS DISMISSED.....	60
VII.—A REVELATION.....	71
VIII.—THE NEW GOVERNESS.....	82
IX.—THE SHADOW OF EVIL.....	91
X.—A LITTLE BREEZE.....	101
XI.—THE DEMON UNVEILED.....	108
XII.—A FEARFUL MYSTERY.....	119
XIII.—DOUBT AND ANXIETY.....	127
XIV.—PAINFUL CONSEQUENCES.....	138
XV.—ALARMING OCCURRENCE.....	150
XVI.—DISAPPEARANCE OF MADELINE.....	158

	PAGE
CHAP. XVII.—THE SEARCH.....	165
XVIII.—A NEST OF PSUEDO-SPIRITUALISTS.....	189
XIX.—THE BIRD AND THE SERPENT.....	204
XX.—THE RESCUE.....	215
XXI.—THE ARREST.....	223
XXII.—BREAKING THE SPELL.....	236
XXIII.—THE ANGEL STRONGER THAN THE DEMON	245
XXIV.—AN UNEXPECTED REVELATION.....	269
XXV.—A REVELATION.....	278
XXVI.—REVIEWING THE MATTER.....	287
XXVII.—GETTING RIGHT.....	298
XXVIII.—CONCLUSION .....	304

THE  
ANGEL AND THE DEMON.

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CHAPTER I.

THE YOUNG GOVERNESS.

Mrs. DAINTY's health was poor, and her nerves delicate. It was no use, she said: the wear and tear of body and mind were more than she could stand. She must have a governess for the children. Mr. Dainty never opposed his wife in any thing, and so replied,—

“Very well, Madeline. Find your governess.”

But Uncle John—Uncle Johns, by-the-way, if they happen to be on the mother's side, and old bachelors at that, are proverbially inclined to interfere with the home-management of their nieces—had, as usual, a word to say after he was alone with Mrs. Dainty.

“Don't have any thing of the kind,” said he. “Be governess to your own children.”

“But I'm not equal to the task. It will kill me.

See how thin and pale I am getting; and my nerves are in a terrible condition."

"No wonder."

"Why?"

"Dissipation will destroy any woman's nerves.

"Dissipation! Why, Uncle John!"

"How many nights were you out last week?"

"Only three."

"Only three! and each time until long after midnight. Dancing, late hours, hot suppers, and confectionery! No wonder your nerves are shattered! Such a life would kill me up in half a year."

"Well, in my case, it is all that keeps me going. These social recreations, coming at intervals upon the enervating cares of domestic life, give new vitality to the exhausted system."

"Filigree and nonsense!" replied Uncle John, impatiently. "You know better than to talk after this fashion."

And so, for the time, the debate closed between them.

Meeting with no opposition from her husband, Mrs. Dainty proceeded at once to the work of procuring a governess. Among her fashionable friends she first made inquiry, but in no direction could she hear of the right individual. The qualifications

were set forth at large. She must speak French with the true Parisian accent, and be able to teach that language; her knowledge of music must be thorough; she must be perfect in drawing and painting; her manners must be ladylike, her tastes refined: in a word, she must possess all the high accomplishments necessary to educate the children of a fashionable mother who was "in society." She would greatly prefer a Frenchwoman.

At last she heard of a "French lady," the daughter of a French count of the old régime, who was desirous of procuring the situation of governess in a family of "good standing." An interview with this lady was held in the presence of Uncle John, who took occasion to ask her some questions about Paris, where he had spent several years. The stately manner and superior air which she assumed at the commencement of the interview gradually gave way under these questions, until madame showed considerable embarrassment.

"Your face is very familiar to me," said Uncle John, finally. "I am sure I must have met you in Paris."

"Monsieur is undoubtedly mistaken," said the lady, with returning dignity.

"Perhaps so," replied Uncle John. Then, in a more serious voice, he added, "But one thing is

certain: you do not possess the qualifications desired in the governess of my nieces."

The "French lady" offered no remonstrance, and asked for no explanations, but, with a flushed face, arose and retired.

"Better keep clear of counts' daughters," said Uncle John, as the applicant withdrew. "If you will have a governess for the children, procure one born and bred so near at home that you can readily learn all about her."

Mrs. Dainty, who was particularly attracted by the appearance of the French lady, was not altogether pleased with Uncle John's summary mode of despatching her, though a little startled at the idea of getting an impostor in her house.

What next was to be done? "Suppose we advertise?" said Mrs. Dainty.

"And have your bell-wire broken before ten o'clock the next morning," replied Uncle John. "Take my advice, and wait a few days."

"What good will waiting do? Unless we take some steps in the direction we wish to go, we shall never arrive at the end of our journey."

"Good steps have been taken," said Uncle John, cheerfully. "You have already made known to quite a number of your friends that you want a governess. The fact will not die; many will re-



member and speak of it, and somebody will happen to think of somebody who will just suit you."

So Mrs. Dainty concluded to wait a few days, and see what time would bring forth.

On the third morning after the interview with the French count's daughter, as Mr. and Mrs. Dainty and Uncle John sat talking together on the governess-question, the waiter opened the door, and said that a young woman wished to speak with Mrs. Dainty.

"Who is she, and what does she want?" inquired Mrs. Dainty, with an air of indifference, stroking the head of her King Charles spaniel, which, instead of her baby, occupied a comfortable position in her lap.

The servant went down to gain what information he could from the visitor touching her business with Mrs. Dainty, and returned with the information that she was an applicant for the situation of governess in the family, having been informed that the lady wanted a person in that capacity.

"Tell her to come up," said Mrs. Dainty. "I wonder who she can be?" was added, as the servant withdrew.

Uncle John sat with his chin resting on the head of his cane, apparently so much engaged with his

own thoughts as to be unconscious of what was passing.

In a few minutes the door reopened, and a young woman in plain attire, and of modest, almost timid aspect, entered. Mr. Dainty was standing with his back to the fire; Mrs. Dainty sat in her morning wrapper, with the King Charles spaniel still in comfortable quarters; and Uncle John remained in the same position, not stirring as the girl entered.

"Take a chair," said Mrs. Dainty, with that supercilious indifference which imagined superiority often puts on toward imagined inferiors.

The girl flushed, trembled, and sat down, letting her eyes fall to the floor.

"What is your name?" asked Mrs. Dainty.

"Florence Harper," replied the girl.

"Where do you live?"

"At No. — Elwood Street."

"With whom?"

"My aunt."

"Are your father and mother living?"

"No, ma'am." Even Mrs. Dainty felt the sadness with which this reply was made.

"I am in want of a governess for my children," said Mrs. Dainty, coldly; "but I hardly think you will suit."

The young girl arose at once.

"Sit down." Mrs. Dainty spoke with a slight impatience. The visitor resumed her chair, while Mr. Dainty kept his place before the fire, with his eyes fixed upon her curiously.

"Do you speak French?" inquired Mrs. Dainty.

"Yes, ma'am."

"What French school did you attend?"

"I was with Mr. Picot for six years."

"Indeed!" There was a new interest in Mrs. Dainty's voice.

"How is it in regard to your musical qualifications?" she continued.

"I will satisfy you, madam," said the applicant, in a quiet but firm and dignified manner, "in regard to my ability to teach the various branches of a polite education, by references, if you desire them."

"Oh, certainly! I shall expect references, of course. You don't imagine that I would take an entire stranger into my house without the most rigid inquiries touching her character?"

Miss Harper arose.

"Do you wish," said she, "to make any inquiries about me? Or have you concluded that I will not suit you?"

"You can leave your references," replied Mrs. Dainty.

The names of two ladies were given. Mrs. Dainty had no acquaintance with them, but she knew their standing.

"That will do," she replied.

"Shall I call again, or will you send me word if you desire to see me," said the young girl.

"You may call." Mrs. Dainty spoke in a very indifferent manner.

The visitor retired.

"I don't like her," said Mrs. Dainty.

"Why not?" inquired Uncle John, lifting, for the first time, his chin from the head of his cane.

"Too plebeian," said Mrs. Dainty.

"Nothing but a countess will do for your young hopefuls," retorted Uncle John. "Plebeian! There is the air of a lady in every movement. Take my advice, and learn all you can about her; and I'm mistaken if you don't at once secure her services."

Mrs. Dainty's heart was set on having a governess; and, as no better opportunity offered for procuring one, she made inquiries about Miss Harper, and received encouraging information. A family council, consisting of herself, husband, and Uncle John, decided in the affirmative on the question of engaging the young lady, who, as she did not return to know whether her services would be desired or not, was

sent for. Terms, duties, and the like being discussed and settled, Miss Harper, with many misgivings and strong reluctance, assumed the difficult and responsible position of governess in the family of Mrs. Dainty.

Three children were placed under her care: Agnes, the eldest daughter, now in her fourteenth year; Madeline, the second, eleven years old; and George, in his sixth summer. Many unwise remarks had been made about the young girl in the presence of the children; and when she assumed, formally, the charge of them, she perceived at a glance that they held her in contempt, and were not in the least inclined to obey her authority.

The first day's trials were severe enough. Mrs. Dainty, in whose mind there was a foregone conclusion adverse to the young governess, made it her business to be present with her for some hours while giving her introductory lessons to the children, or, rather, while making her first efforts to dive into their minds and see what had already been stored away. The mother did not act very wisely during the time; for she was not a very wise woman. Could she have seen the image of herself as it was pictured in the mind of Miss Harper, she would not have felt very much flattered. A small portion of light entered the region of perception

once or twice, the way being opened by a quiet answer to some remark that broadly displayed her ignorance. One result followed this rather meddling interference on the part of Mrs. Dainty. Her respect for the young governess was materially heightened.

On the second day, Miss Harper was left in the undisturbed charge of her young pupils, and she had a better opportunity for studying their natures. Agnes, the oldest, she found to be indolent, proud, and quite ready to imitate the example of her mother in disrespectful conduct toward herself. Madeline was of a gentler, more loving, and more obedient disposition; while George was a rude, well-spoiled specimen of a boy who showed no inclination whatever to come under even the mildest discipline.

"She'll never do any thing with them," said Mrs. Dainty, in a confident manner, as she sat alone with her husband and Uncle John, on the evening of the first day, and talked over the new arrangement.

"Why do you think so?" asked Uncle John.

"She's too young and inexperienced. She hasn't character enough. Agnes is almost as much of a woman as she is."

"Don't be too sure of that," said Uncle John.

“Agnes will have to live very fast if she ever overtakes Miss Harper.”

“She’s rather an indifferent-looking personage,” remarked Mr. Dainty, in a careless way, “and hasn’t stuff enough in her for the management of three such spirited children as ours.”

Uncle John smiled.

“You are quite taken with her,” said his niece.

“I haven’t had much time for observation,” replied Uncle John; “but the little I have seen impresses me favorably. Beneath that modest, quiet, almost timid exterior, there lies, if I am not mistaken, far more reserved power than you imagine. Give her a fair chance, second her efforts in every attempt she makes to bring the children into order and subordination, and particularly refrain from the slightest word in their presence that will lower her in their respectful regard.”

Mrs. Dainty saw, from the last remark, that she had erred in a very thoughtless way; and her cheeks burned a little when Uncle John added,—

“I have heard something of Miss Harper’s history from a lady friend, who represents her as a very superior girl, and says that she was raised in a circle of refined and highly-intelligent people.”

“Oh, well, we can give her a trial. Perhaps she will do,” replied Mrs. Dainty, in a languid manner.

"I'm glad she has been raised among refined people. My greatest fear was that she would impart vulgar manners to the children."

"I don't think she can do them any harm." Uncle John spoke a little ironically.

"I hope not," said Mrs. Dainty, seriously; and the subject, not taking a turn that was agreeable to her, dropped of its own weight.

We shall see, in another chapter, some of the results of this new arrangement in the home of the fashionable mother.



## CHAPTER II.

## GAINING INFLUENCE.

HAVING procured a governess for the children,—even if she were not all that was expected in the individual who was to fill so important a place,—our fashionable mother felt a weight of care removed from her shoulders. She could now go out when she pleased, and stay as long as she pleased, and not suffer from the troublesome consciousness that she was neglecting her children,—a species of dereliction that never escaped the watchful eyes of Uncle John, who had no hesitation about speaking plainly.

Miss Harper's experiences with the children on the first and second days were not very encouraging; and this was particularly so in the case of Agnes, whose conduct toward her was exceedingly offensive.

On the third morning, this young lady positively refused to give her French recitation at the time required by Miss Harper, declaring that it was her wish to take a music-lesson. She had overheard her mother and Uncle John conversing on the sub-

ject of Miss Harper's authority over the children, on which occasion Mrs. Dainty had said,—

“I will have no iron rule with Agnes. Miss Harper must treat her with that respectful consideration to which a young lady in her position is entitled. There must be no petty domineering; no ordering with upstart authority; no laying down of law.”

“Do you expect to be always present with Miss Harper in the school-room?” Uncle John asked quietly, as if he was really in earnest.

“Of course not! What a preposterous idea!” replied Mrs. Dainty.

“Then Miss Harper must have authority in your absence.” Uncle John spoke very decidedly.

“Agnes will never submit to any authority from her.”

“Why not from *her*, pray?”

“Because Agnes has reached an age when she can comprehend the wide difference between their respective stations. She is almost a young lady.”

“You are a weak woman, Madeline,” said Uncle John,—“a very weak woman, and I am almost out of patience with you. Now, do you wish to know, plainly, how I regard this matter?”

“Not particularly.” Mrs. Dainty gaped as she spoke.

"You shall know, for all your well-bred indifference," said Uncle John, a little sharply. "In my opinion, Miss Harper is in every way the superior to Agnes, and, if I am not vastly mistaken, will in a few years be recognised, in society, as superior."

"Society!" Mrs. Dainty curled her lip. "What do you mean by society?"

"Something more perhaps than you mean," was answered. "Men and women recognised by common consent as superior to the mass."

"Well, you can talk as you please, and think as you please, Uncle John; but I'm not going to have Agnes domineered over by this plebeian girl, and if she attempt any thing of the kind, she will get her immediate dismissal."

All of this was heard by Agnes, who very naturally made up her mind to be the director of her own studies in the absence of her mother.

"I wish to take my music-lesson now," she said, when the governess asked for her French recitation.

"From twelve to one is the hour for music," replied Miss Harper, mildly, yet firmly, fixing her eye steadily upon the eye of Agnes. There was something in the expression of that eye which the young lady had never seen before, and which held her by

a kind of fascination. It was not anger, nor rebuke, nor sternness, but the quiet power of a superior mind over that of an inferior. Agnes tried to withdraw her gaze, but it seemed impossible to do so. A strange feeling of respect, almost awe, came stealing into her heart and repressing her dominant selfhood. When Miss Harper withdrew her steady gaze, Agnes almost caught her breath, so marked was the sense of relief that followed.

"Madeline dear," said Miss Harper, in a cheerful, pleasant voice, speaking to the younger sister, "shall I hear you read now?"

Madeline came smiling to her side, and, lifting her book to her face, read the lesson which had been given to her.

"Very well done! You are improving already." Miss Harper spoke so encouragingly that Madeline looked up into her kind face, and said, without thinking of the place and the occasion, "Thank you!" The young governess had already opened a way into her heart.

"Now, Agnes," said Miss Harper, "if you are ready with your French lesson, I will hear it." She spoke kindly and cheerfully, fixing her eyes at the same time steadily upon her, and with the same look of quiet power which had subdued her a little while before.

"I would rather take my music-lesson first." Agnes could not yield without a show of resistance. Something was due to pride.

"The hours of study were fixed in consultation with your mother," said Miss Harper, mildly; "and it is my duty as well as yours to act in conformity therewith."

"Oh, mother won't care!" Agnes spoke with animation. "If I prefer this hour to twelve it will be all the same to her."

"Your mother don't care for her word, Agnes?" Miss Harper spoke in a tone of surprise.

"I didn't mean that," was answered, with some little confusion of manner. "I only meant that if she knew I preferred one time to another she would not hesitate to gratify my wishes."

"Very well. We will consult her this evening," said Miss Harper. "And if she consents to a new arrangement of the study-hours I will make no objection. But at present both you and I are bound to observe existing rules. I have no power to change them if I would. So, come up to the line cheerfully, to-day, and to-morrow we will both be governed by your mother's decision."

Agnes was subdued. Without a sign of hesitation she went on with her lesson in French, and said it all the better for this little contention,

through which she came with an entirely new impression of Miss Harper.

When the young teacher came to George, this little reprobate would do nothing that was required of him. His book he had, from the commencement of the school-hours, refused to open; replying to every request of Miss Harper to do so with a sullen, "A'n't a-going to."

"Now, George, you will say your lesson," said Miss Harper, in a pleasant tone.

"A'n't a-going to," replied the little fellow, pouting out his lips, and scowling from beneath his knit brows.

"Oh, yes; George will say his lesson."

"A'n't a-going to."

"Oh, yes, Georgie," said Agnes, now coming to the aid of Miss Harper. "Say your lesson."

"A'n't a-going to." His lips stuck out farther, and his brow came lower over his eyes.

"Come, Georgie, do say your lesson," urged Agnes.

"A'n't a-going to." The resolute will of the child had no other expression.

"I'll tell mother," said Agnes.

"Don't care! Tell her! You wouldn't say *your* lesson."

"Oh, yes, Georgie, Agnes did say her lesson

like a good girl; and so did Madeline." Miss Harper showed not the least excitement. Her voice was calm and her manner even. "Now say yours."

"A'n't a-going to." The persistent little rebel had no idea of capitulation.

"I knew a little boy once——"

There was such a pleasant, story-telling tone in the voice of Miss Harper that George was betrayed into looking up into her face, when she fixed his eye as she had, not long before, fixed the eye of his self-willed sister.

"I knew a little boy once," she repeated, "who had no mother. Before he was as old as you are now, his mother died and went to heaven. Poor, dear little fellow! it was a sad day for him when his good mother died and left him to the care of strangers."

George was all attention. Already the unpleasant lines of frowning disobedience were fading from his childish countenance, and a gentle, earnest look coming into his eyes.

"After this little boy's mother died," went on the governess, "there was nobody in the house to love him as she had done. His father was absent all day, and very often did not get home in the evening until poor little Willy was fast asleep in bed.

As it would not do to leave Willy alone with the cook and chambermaid, his father got a governess, who was to have the care of him and teach him all his lessons. Now, it so happened that this governess was not kind and good as Willy's mother had been, but was selfish and cruel. She gave him long, hard lessons, and if he did not get them—which he often could not—would punish him cruelly; sometimes by shutting him up in a dark closet, sometimes by making him go without eating, and sometimes by whipping him. And all the while she managed to make Willy's father believe that she was kind and good to him.

“Poor little Willy! He grew pale and sad-looking, and no wonder. I was at the house one day——”

“Oh, Miss Harper! Did you know him?” said George, with a countenance full of interest.

“Yes, dear, I knew little Willy; and I knew his mother before she died. As I was just saying, I called one day at the house, a few months after his mother was taken away from him; and, as the servant opened the door for me, I heard the voice of Willy, and he was crying bitterly. All at once the voice was hushed to a low, smothered sound.

“‘What is the matter with Willy?’ I asked; and



the servant answered that she supposed the governess was putting him into the dark closet again. In an instant there seemed to stand before me the child's dead mother, and she pointed upward with her finger. I did not stop to think, but ran upstairs into the nursery, where I found the governess sitting by the window with a book in her hand.

“ ‘Where's Willy?’ I demanded. She started, and looked very much surprised and a little angry. But I was in earnest.

“ ‘Where's Willy?’ I repeated my question more sternly. As she did not stir, I went quickly across the room and opened a closet door, which I found locked, with the key on the outside. There, lying on his face, was the dear child. I took him up in my arms and turned his face to the light. It was pale as marble. I thought he was dead.

“ ‘Bring me some water,’ I called, in a loud, quick voice. The frightened governess fled from the room, but soon returned with water. I threw it into the dear child's face, and rubbed his hands and feet. In a few minutes, he began to breathe.

“ ‘Give him to me, now,’ said the governess, endeavoring to lift him from my arms. But I said, ‘No; cruel woman!’ She looked angry, but I was

not moved. 'Untie my bonnet-strings,' I spoke to the chambermaid; and the girl took off my bonnet.

"'Jenny,' said I to the chambermaid,—I knew her name,—'Jenny, I want you to go for Willy's father.'

"Jenny did not hesitate a minute. 'There's no use in sending for his father,' said the governess. But we didn't mind what she said. When Willy's father came, she was gone. He was very much distressed when he saw his dear little boy, and very angry when I told him about the dark closet. After that I became Willy's nurse and teacher. But he did not stay with us very long. The angels came for him one lovely summer evening, and bore him up to the heavenly land; and he is now happy again with his mother."

Tears came into the eyes of all the children when Florence Harper ceased speaking. She had found the way to their hearts, and, not only this, had lifted for them just so much of the veil that concealed her true character as to let them see enough to win something of love and something of respectful consideration.

The book was still in the hand of George, and, as he let his eyes fall from the face of Miss Harper,

they rested on the open page. Nothing was said by the latter. A few moments of silence passed, and then George, in a low but rather earnest voice, said over his lesson.

The young governess had conquered. †

## CHAPTER III.

## TRIALS.

It was late when Mrs. Dainty came home. Her husband had already arrived, and was waiting for his dinner. George and Madeline, pleased as children usually are when the visiting mother returns from her recreations, crowded around her with their questions and complaints, and annoyed and hindered her to a degree that broke down her small stock of patience.

"Miss Harper!" she called, in a fretful voice, going to her chamber-door.

The governess heard, and answered from her room, leaving it at the same time, and coming down toward the chamber of Mrs. Dainty.

"Call those children away!" said the mother, sharply. "And see here! When I come home next time, don't let them beset me like so many hungry wolves. I've hired you to take the care of them, and I want the care taken. That's your business."

Mrs. Dainty was annoyed and angry; and she

looked her real character for the time. She was a superior, commanding an inferior, with a complete consciousness of the gulf that stretched between them. Her manner, even more than her words, was offensive to the young governess, whose native independence and self-respect impelled her at once to resign her position and leave the house.

"George; Madeline." She spoke quietly,—almost indifferently.

"Why don't you call them as if you had some life in you?" exclaimed Mrs. Dainty, losing all patience.

Miss Harper turned away without a word, and went up-stairs, intending to put on her bonnet and leave the house. Near her room-door she met Uncle John, who had overheard the offensive language of his niece. He saw that the young girl's face wore an indignant flush, and that both lips and eyes indicated a settled purpose.

"What are you going to do?" he asked, letting her see by look and tone that he understood her feelings.

"I am going away from here," she replied, firmly.

"You must not do it," said Uncle John.

"Self-respect will not permit me to remain," answered Florence.

"Feeling must yield to duty, my dear young

C

lady," said Uncle John, with an earnestness that showed how much he was interested.

"My duty is not here," was the slowly-spoken answer.

"Our duty is where we can do the most good. I know something of your morning's trials and wise discipline. You have done nobly, Florence,—nobly. There is good in these children, and you must bring it forth to the light."

"I am but human," said Florence, with a quivering lip.

"You are gold in the crucible," replied Uncle John. "The fire may be very hot, my dear young friend; but it will leave no mark upon your real character. It is not every spirit that has a quality pure enough to meet life's higher ordeals. No, no: shrink not from the trials in your way. The lions are chained, and can only growl and shake at you their terrible manes. Go back for the children. For their sakes, draw them to yourself with the singular power you possess. Be to them all their mother fails to be. And always regard me as your friend and advocate."

Uncle John left her and went back to his own room. A few moments Florence stood irresolute. Then, stepping to the head of the stairs, she called to George, who was pounding at his mother's door.

Mrs. Dainty had re-entered her chamber and locked it against the children. The child did not heed her in the least. Going down to him, and taking his hand, which the stubborn little fellow tried to prevent her from doing, she said, in a voice that was very kind, and in a tone full of interest,—

“George, dear, did I ever show you my book of pictures?”

Instantly the firm, resisting hand lay passively in hers; though he neither looked up nor answered.

“It is full of the sweetest pictures you ever saw,—birds, and sheep, and horses; children playing in the woods; and ducks and geese swimming in the water.”

“Won’t you show them to me?” said the child, turning to his young teacher, and half forgetting, already, in the pleasing images she had created in his thoughts, his angry disappointment in being thrust from his mother’s room.

“Yes; and you shall look at them just as long as you please,” answered Florence.

Madeline had thrown herself upon the passage-floor in a stubborn fit. Her mother’s discipline in the case, if the child had remained there until she came from her chamber, would have been to jerk her up passionately, and, while passion remained in the rapidly-acquired ascendant, inflict upon her

from two to half a dozen blows with her hand. Wild, angry screams would have followed; and then the repentant mother would have soothed her child with promised favors.

"Madeline must see them also," said Miss Harper, pausing and stooping over the unhappy little girl. "Don't you want to see my picture scrap-book?" She spoke very cheerfully.

"Oh, yes, Madeline! Do come! Miss Harper is going to show us a book full of such beautiful pictures."

The voice of George went home. Madeline arose to her feet. Taking, each, a hand of their governess, the two children went with light feet up to her room, and in her book of pictures soon lost all marks of their recent unhappy disturbance.

Mrs. Dainty appeared at the dinner-table in a bad humor, and commenced scolding about the new governess.

"She'll have to do better than this, before I am suited with her," she said, captiously.

"What's the matter now?" asked Mr. Dainty, in a manner that exhibited some annoyance.

"Matter!" replied his wife. "I guess you'd think it was some matter, if, when you came in late, tired and hungry, the whole body of children were to hover around you with their thousand wants and



complaints. It's Miss Harper's business to keep them out of the way. She's paid for doing it. I had to call her down from her room, and when I spoke to her sharply she turned herself from me with an air of offended dignity that was perfectly ridiculous. The upstart! I shall have it out with her this afternoon. No domestic shall treat me with even a shadow of disrespect. I scarcely think she comprehends her true position in the family; but I will enlighten her fully."

The children listened with wide open ears, from Agnes down to George. Mr. Dainty made no response, and Uncle John merely remarked, "I hope you will think twice before you act once in this business of defining Miss Harper's position and making yourself clearly understood. My advice is, to be very sure that you understand yourself first."

There was nothing to offend in the manner of Uncle John. He spoke in sober earnest.

"Mother," said Agnes, breaking in through the pause that followed Uncle John's remark, "did you say that I should take my French lesson first?"

"No: who said that I did?" Mrs. Dainty answered, without a moment's reflection.

"Why, Miss Harper said so, and made me give my French recitation before I was ready for it."

"I said no such thing." Mrs. Dainty spoke with some indignation, born of a vague notion, from what Agnes had said, that the young governess was assuming arbitrary rule over the children, and falsely quoting her as authority. "I said no such thing! What does she mean by it?"

"Well, she said you did, and made me say a lesson before I had half learned it. That's not the way to do!"

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Mrs. Dainty. "Here comes the trouble I feared! Give these vulgar people a position a little in advance of what they have been used to, and forthwith they take on airs. I saw it in the girl at the first interview. I knew then that she wouldn't suit, and if my judgment hadn't been overruled she never would have come into the house."

Mrs. Dainty glanced toward meddling Uncle John as she said this. But Uncle John did not seem to be in the least disturbed.

"Agnes," said he, looking across the table at the injured and complaining girl, "what lesson did you propose to recite in place of your French?"

Agnes flushed a little as she answered,—

"My music-lesson."

"Ah! That was the substitute. What about it?" And Uncle John turned his quiet eyes upon the

countenance of his niece. "If I am not mistaken, I heard you tell Miss Harper that you thought the hour from twelve to one the best for music."

"Maybe I did," answered Mrs. Dainty, pettishly; "but I didn't fix it as a law more binding than the statutes of the Medes and Persians. Something was left to the girl's own discretion."

"And I think it will be found on examination," said Uncle John, "that she used the discretion wisely."

"Oh, but she said"—Agnes had taken her cue from her mother—"that the hours for study had positively been fixed by mother, and that she had no authority to vary them in the least."

"Preposterous!" ejaculated Mrs. Dainty.

"What's the news to-day?" said Uncle John, turning to Mr. Dainty. "Any thing of importance stirring in the city?"

— He wished to change a subject the discussion of which could do nothing but harm among the children.

The answer of Mr. Dainty led the conversation into an entirely new channel. Once or twice, during the dinner-hour, Mrs. Dainty tried to renew her complaints against the governess; but Uncle John managed to throw her off, and so the matter was dropped for the time.

## CHAPTER IV.

## WORTH AND PRETENSION.

THE manner in which Florence Harper met the insolence of Mrs. Dainty—we give her conduct its true designation—chafed that high-spirited lady exceedingly. She could neither forget nor forgive such conduct in an inferior. What right had she to exhibit an independent spirit?—to show a womanly pride that would not brook an outrage? The very thought made the hot blood leap along the veins of indignant Mrs. Dainty. Oh, yes. She would “have it out with her!” So, toward the middle of the afternoon, Florence was sent for, and she went down to the sitting-room where Mrs. Dainty was alone. Uncle John was on the alert. He had remained in his own apartment, listening, with the door ajar, for nearly an hour, and heard the summons given to Florence. He was in the sitting-room almost as soon as she was, and in time to prevent an interview, the result of which would, in all probability, be the withdrawal of Miss Harper from the

family. His niece looked at him with a frown as he entered. An offensive interrogation was just on her tongue, but she repressed the words, substituting therefor this query:—

“When did we fix the hours of study for the children, Miss Harper?”

“On the day before yesterday, ma'am,” replied Florence, in a calm, respectful voice.

“I never had any thing to say to you on the subject!” Mrs. Dainty lost temper, and, of course, dignity and self-respect.

“Was not ten o'clock mentioned by you as the hour when it would be best to commence the lessons?” inquired Florence.

“If it was, that doesn't mean fixing all the hours of study!”

“You said you wished Agnes to begin with French,” said Florence, quietly.

“Well, suppose I did: what then?”

“Only, that I understood you to mean that you wished her to let French constitute her first lesson, as most important. You will, no doubt, remember that I approved this, as her mind would always come fresh to the study.”

“Approved!” Mrs. Dainty could not repress this manifestation of contempt.

“You will also remember, that you spoke of the

hour from twelve to one as most suitable for music."

Miss Harper looked at the excited lady with a steady gaze.

"And upon that you based a set of arbitrary rules, and tried to enforce them by representing me as their author!"

"No, madam, I did no such thing." Florence drew her slender form up to its full height, and looked calmly, steadily, and with an air of dignified self-respect upon Mrs. Dainty. "I simply remained firm to my duty when Agnes wished to begin with music; and said to her, that the hours of study had been arranged in consultation with you, and that I had no authority to change them. So I understood the matter, and, in my action, simply regarded the good of your child. I did not, of course, permit my pupil to direct the plan of study, and only yielded a reference to you in order to make my firmness of purpose the less offensive to her pride. And you must forgive me, madam, for saying, that it is neither just to me nor your children thus to react upon my honest efforts to meet your wishes in regard to their studies, and serve at the same time their best interests as a teacher. I wish, for the sake of your children, you knew me better. As it is, if you desire me to remain their instructor, you must either

fix the hours and subjects of study in so plain a way that no one can mistake them, or leave it altogether in my hands. In either case, I will guarantee submission on the part of the children."

The outraged pride of Mrs. Dainty broke through the pressure of involuntary respect which the dignified, resolute, perfectly independent manner of the young teacher had inspired, and the word "Impertinent!" was on her lips, when Uncle John said,—

"Miss Harper is clearly right, and I am pleased to know that she has acted with so much firmness and so much prudence. She is entitled to praise, not blame."

Mrs. Dainty waved her hand for the governess to leave the room. Without a word, or the slightest apparent hesitation, Miss Harper retired.

"Uncle John!" Mrs. Dainty turned angrily upon the old gentleman the moment they were alone, "I am out of all patience with you! What chance have I to command respect from inferiors in my house, if you step in to justify them to my face when I am attempting to blame improper actions? It's an outrage, and I won't have it!"

"There is only one way to command the respect of your household, Madeline," replied Uncle John, "and that is, to treat them with kindness and jus-

tice. You may demand respect from those whom you regard as your inferiors, forever; but, unless your actions toward them be marked with dignity and ladylike self-possession, your command will be no more heeded than was that of the old British king who commanded the waves of the sea to stop their advancing course. Respect or contempt is an independent thing, and always has free course. If a lady desires the first, she has to do something more than utter her proud behest. She has got to deserve it; and, if she fail in this, she will surely have the last,—contempt.”

“I don't wish to hear any more of that,” replied Mrs. Dainty, curtly. “I hardly think it fair to seek a justification of your own conduct in turning around and assailing me. What right had you to approve Miss Harper's conduct to her face, when I was blaming her?”

“The common right which every one has to drag another from the brink of a precipice over which he is about blindly casting himself. I have observed Miss Harper very closely since she has been in the house, and at times when she could not be aware of this observation. When you have been in the street, I have been at home, watching her deportment among the children; and it has always been kind, wise, and consistent. There has been no



shadow of that domineering spirit of which you seem so nervously afraid, but always a firmness that knew just how far to yield, and how far to be immovable. I happened to hear all that passed in regard to the French and music lessons. Agnes was all to blame, and Florence was all right. It was beautiful to see with what a gentle dignity Florence met the efforts of Agnes to be mistress instead of scholar, and how wisely she subdued the incipient lady's rebellious pride. She gave no offence in doing so, but really won upon her kind feelings; and, but for the opportunity given her pride to speak out its mortification, you would never have heard a word of complaint.

"You will thus understand," continued Uncle John, "why I threw in a word of justification in time to prevent the utterance of language on your part, which would inevitably have resulted in the loss of a governess for your children who has already gained more power over them for good than any other being in the world possesses. And now, Madeline, let me warn you against any further exhibitions of passion, pride, or contempt toward one into whose hands you have committed the well-being of your children. Seek to elevate, not depress her. Treat her with respect and consideration, and your children will do the same. You

make her the guide, counsellor, and companion of your children. Think of the vast influence she must exercise over them! The work of forming their young minds—of directing their characters—is in her hands, not yours. The mother's high prerogative you choose to delegate to one regarded as an inferior. Happily, in this case, the choice of a representative has not been foolishly made. In all respects Miss Harper is qualified for her position, and, if sustained in it; will act her part nobly. She is no common person, let me tell you, but one of superior mind, high moral worth, and almost perfect accomplishments,—in a word, a model for your children! But she is, at the same time, a young woman with too much self-respect to bear your haughty, insulting manners. If you wish to keep her, therefore, you must not repeat the offences of to-day."

"Does she expect me to curtsy every time I meet her, and to say, 'If you please,' and 'By your leave, miss'?" The lips of Mrs. Dainty curled, and she looked very scornful.

"No,—nothing of the kind. Only that you shall treat her with common decency,—which you have not done!" Uncle John was provoked.

"You are quite complimentary, I must confess," said Mrs. Dainty, with an offended manner.

"I speak the truth, and that is always the highest

compliment I shall ever pay you, my foolish niece!" retorted Uncle John, who used his prerogative, in most cases, to the full extent.

"I think we had better drop this subject," said Mrs. Dainty.

"Very well; let it drop now. I will renew it again when your feelings are less excited and your judgment less obscured. Only let me repeat my warning about Miss Harper. You have an angel in your dwelling: let her remain to bless your children. But the guest will not remain if you treat her as though she were a spirit of evil."

## CHAPTER V.

## THE WIND AND THE SUN.

"MOTHER, can't I take my music-lesson first?" said Agnes. It was on the morning after her fruitless effort to be mistress instead of scholar.

Mrs. Dainty was in the middle of one of the most absorbing chapters of the "Mysteries of Paris," a book which she had read until twelve o'clock on the night previous, and to which she had turned, immediately after her late breakfast, with the eagerness of a mere excitement-lover. She did not heed her daughter's question. Only the sound of a disturbing voice was perceived.

"Mother!" Agnes uttered her name in a loud, impatient tone, grasping her arm as she spoke, and shaking it to attract attention.

"What do you want, you troublesome girl?" Mrs. Dainty turned angrily toward her daughter.

"Can't I take my music-lesson first?"

"I don't care what lesson you take first! Go away, and don't disturb me!"

This was the mother's thoughtless answer. Agnes

glided away in triumph, and Mrs. Dainty's eyes fell back to the pages of her book, unconscious of the meaning of her reply.

"I'm going to take my music-lesson first!" said Agnes, as she came into the study-room, where Miss Harper was seated with George and Madeline. And she tightened her lips firmly, elevated her chin, and tossed her head jauntily, while from her clear, dark eyes looked out upon her teacher a spirit of proud defiance.

"Very well," replied Florence, in a voice that showed not the slightest disturbance. "At twelve o'clock I will be ready to give the lesson."

"I'm going to take it now," said Agnes, drawing up her petite form to its extreme height, and looking, or rather trying to look, very imperious.

Miss Harper could scarcely help smiling; but she repressed all feeling, and merely answered,—

"You can practise your scales for the next two hours, if you prefer doing so, Agnes. At twelve I will give you a lesson."

"I'll go and tell mother that you won't give me my music-lesson!" said the baffled, indignant girl, flirting out of the room.

"Mother!" She had grasped the arm of her mother again.

"Go away, and don't annoy me!" Mrs. Dainty

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threw out her arm, and swept her daughter away from her side.

“Mother!” Agnes had pressed back again, determined that she would be heard.

“What do you want?” Mrs. Dainty dropped her book from before her face, and turned, with anger flashing in her eyes, upon her daughter.

“Miss Harper won't give me my music-lesson!”

“Oh, dear! There's to be nothing but trouble with that stuck-up girl!” exclaimed Mrs. Dainty. “I saw it from the first.”

And, tossing her book from her, she started up, and went with quick steps and a burning face to the room where Miss Harper sat with the two children next younger than Agnes, who were leaning upon her and looking up into her face, gathering intelligence from her eyes as well as her fitly-spoken words.

“See here, miss!” exclaimed Mrs. Dainty, as she came sweeping into the room, “I'm getting tired of this kind of work, and it must end! What do you mean by refusing to give Agnes her music-lesson?”

“Do you wish her music to precede her French?” Very calmly, and with a quiet dignity that rebuked the excited mother, was this question asked; but Mrs. Dainty was partially blinded by anger, and, obeying an ill-natured impulse, made answer,—

“I want no airs nor assumptions from such as you! I hired you to instruct the children, not to set them by the ears. I saw from the beginning that you wouldn't suit this house,—that a little brief authority would make a tyrant of you, as it does of all vulgar minds.”

Mrs. Dainty was losing herself entirely.

The face of Miss Harper flushed instantly, and for a moment or two an indignant fire burned in her eyes. But right thoughts soon find a controlling influence in all superior minds. The assailed young governess regained, almost as quickly as it had been lost, her calmness of exterior; nor was this calmness merely on the surface. She made no further remark, until the stubble fire in Mrs. Dainty's mind had flashed up to its full height and then died down for want of solid fuel. Then, in a voice that betrayed nothing of disturbed feeling, she said,—

“If it is your wish, madam, that Agnes should take her music-lesson first, I have no objection. My duty is to teach her, and I am trying to do so faithfully. But things must be done in order. Establish any rules you deem best, and I will adhere to them faithfully.”

“Give Agnes her music-lesson!” Mrs. Dainty spoke with an offensive imperiousness, waving her hand toward the door.

Miss Harper did not move.

"Do you hear me?" exclaimed Mrs. Dainty. The fires had received a new supply of stubble.

"Fool!"

Mrs. Dainty turned quickly, a shame-spot already on her cheek, and met the angry eyes and contemptuous face of Uncle John, who had thrown his voice into her ears alone.

"Fool!" His lips shaped the word for her eyes; and she saw it as plainly as if it had been written in staring capitals.

Uncle John beckoned to her with his head, stepping back as he did so, in order to prevent the other inmates of the room from seeing him. Mrs. Dainty obeyed the signal, and, without venturing another remark, retired from the study-room, and, sweeping past Uncle John, sought refuge in her own chamber.

"A'n't you going to give me my music-lesson, miss?"

If her mother had retired from the field, there was no disposition whatever on the part of Agnes to follow her example.

"Certainly," was the mild, evenly-spoken answer.

"Come along, then, and give it to me now."

"I will be ready at twelve o'clock, Agnes."



"Mother told you to give it to me now, and you've got to do so."

"Oh, don't talk so to Miss Harper, Aggy!" said Madeline, her voice trembling and her eyes filling with tears.

The words came just in season. Miss Harper felt that all this was more than she ought to bear; and outraged pride was about rising above convictions of duty.

"Georgy and I love you. We will say our lessons." The sweet child lifted her large, beautiful eyes to the face of her governess.

"Tell us a story, won't you, Miss Harper?"

It was George who made the request.

"As soon as you and Madeline have said your lessons, I will tell you a nice little story." And Florence won him to her will with a kiss.

The lesson-books were opened instantly, and, the light tasks set, the little ones entered upon them with willing spirits.

"Come and give me my music-lesson!" broke in, discordantly, the voice of Agnes.

"At twelve o'clock, Agnes." There was not the smallest sign of disturbed feeling in the manner of the governess.

"Mother will turn you out of the house! I heard her say so!"

A red spot painted itself on the brow of Miss Harper. But it faded as quickly as it came.

Seeing that she was not to have her will with the governess, Agnes flirted from the room, and sought the apartment to which her mother had retired.

"Mother! mother! That upstart thing says she won't give me my music-lesson for you nor anybody else!"

Now Agnes went a step too far, and at the wrong moment. It was just then dawning upon the mind of Mrs. Dainty that her daughter had exaggerated the conduct of Miss Harper, and led her into an unladylike exhibition of herself. The sting of mortification excited her quite enough to make her turn with sharp acrimony upon this wilful daughter.

"I don't believe a word of it!" she said, angrily. "All this trouble has grown out of your bad conduct. Go off and say your lessons at the right time. I won't be annoyed in this way any longer."

"But, mother——"

Mrs. Dainty took her by the arm and thrust her from the room, saying, passionately,—

"Don't let me see your face again to-day!"

For several minutes Agnes sat upon the stairs leading up to the study-room, so disappointed and mortified that only anger kept her from tears. Down from this room came the low murmur of voices;

and her ears recognised now that of Madeline or George, and now that of Miss Harper. How musical was the latter, compared with the sound of her mother's rebuking tones that were still in her ears! In spite of pride and self-will, her heart acknowledged the contrast; and, with this acknowledgment, touches of shame were felt. Even with mean false accusation on her side, self-will had failed to triumph. Success would have blinded her to the quality of her own spirit; but failure made her vision clearer.

All remained still in the mother's chamber and still through the house, as the mortified girl sat almost crouching on the stairs, and quiet was only disturbed faintly by the muffled voices that were heard in the study-room.

Agnes could not help but think, for passion was subsiding; and thought dwelt naturally upon the persons and circumstances by which passion had been aroused into turbulence. A contrast between the mother's spirit and the spirit thus far shown by Miss Harper forced itself upon her mind, and she saw the beauty of the one and the deformity of the other. In spite of her pride, a feeling of respect for Miss Harper was born; and with this respect something of contempt for her weak, passionate mother found an existence.

“Now tell us the story, won't you, Miss Harper?”

It was the voice of George, ringing down from the study-room. The lessons were over; and the promised story was to come.

Scarcely conscious of what she was doing, Agnes moved quietly up the stairs, until she was near enough to the door of the study-room to hear distinctly.

“There was once a little flower-bud.” Miss Harper began her story in a low voice, and Agnes leaned forward, listening earnestly. “It was very small, and two green leaves gathered their arms closely around it, for there was a hidden treasure of sweetness in the heart of that bud. One day the cold, angry wind came along, and wanted the bud to open her beautiful pink leaves and give out from her heart the sweet perfumes that were hidden there. He blew harshly upon her, throwing her little head first on one side and then upon the other, and called angrily for her to open, that her sweetness might breathe in his ugly face. But the two green leaves only hugged their arms closer around the bud. Then he dashed her head upon the ground, and tried to trample the life out of her; for he did not love her at all: he only loved himself. The light stem that held the bud did not break, but only bent down, and, when the cruel wind was

gone, raised up again from the ground and lifted the bud into the warm sunshine that was coming abroad.

"It was very different when the gentle, loving sunshine came and asked the two green leaves to unclasp themselves and let the bud grow into a flower, that the sweetness might come out of its little heart. Greener and softer grew these leaves, and they seemed almost to smile with pleasure, as they gently fell back from the swelling bud, that opened and opened in the face of the sunshine until it became a beautiful flower, the perfume in its heart filling all the air around."

Miss Harper paused.

"What a sweet story!" said Madeline, looking still into the face of her governess, and with wondering eyes, for she felt, child as she was, that the story had a signification.

"Love and kindness are always better than anger," said Miss Harper, answering the child's eyes.

"The sunshine was love?" said Madeline.

"Yes; and the cold wind was anger."

"And what was the flower?" asked the child.

"You and George are human flowers, dear;" and, from the swelling love in her pure spirit, Miss

Harper pressed a kiss on the lips of both the children.

“Am I a flower?” asked George.

“I call you a little human flower,” answered the governess,—“a little human flower, with love in your heart, hidden away there like sweetness in the heart of the bud I was telling you about. Will you let me be your sunshine?”

The wayward boy flung his arms around the neck of Florence and clasped her tightly, but without speaking. He felt more than he could utter.

A tear dropped upon the hand of Agnes, as she sat upon the stairs near the door of the study-room. It seemed to her as if heaven were in that room, while she was on the outside. Never in her life had she felt so strangely; never had such a sense of desolation oppressed her. That lesson of the bud, the wind, and the sunshine,—how deeply it had sunk into her heart! Acting from a sudden impulse, she started up, and, going in where the young governess sat with an arm drawn around each of the two children, she said, with burning eyes, and a voice unsteady from emotion,—

“Be my sunshine also, Miss Harper! Oh, be my sunshine! I have long enough been hurt by the angry wind!”

An appeal so unlooked for surprised Florence; but she did not hesitate. Rising instantly, she took the extended hands of Agnes in both of hers, and answered,—

“I have only sunshine to give, dear Agnes. Regard me no longer as an enemy and an oppressor. I am your friend.”

“I know it, I know it, Miss Harper!”

“Your true friend,” added Florence, kissing her. “And now,” she added, in a sweet, persuasive voice, “let us make this room sacred to peace, order, and instruction, and open all its windows for love’s warm sunshine to stream in upon us daily.”

“It shall be no fault of mine if otherwise,” was the low, earnest reply of the young girl, whom love had conquered.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE GOVERNESS DISMISSED.

"How do you like your governess?" inquired a fashionable friend, who was making a call upon Mrs. Dainty.

Mrs. Dainty shook her head and pursed up her lips in a vulgar way that was natural to her.

"Not perfect, of course," said the friend.

"No,—not within a thousand miles of perfection."

"An American girl, I presume?"

"Yes." The lip of Mrs. Dainty assumed a curl of contempt.

"Poor American girls are an indifferent set," remarked the lady. "A'n't you afraid that your children will, imperceptibly, imbibe her low habits and vulgar ways of speaking?"

"Yes; that is my greatest fear. Already I think I see a change."

"I wouldn't keep her an hour, if that were the case," said the lady. "No, not for the fraction of an hour!" she added, with emphasis. "I had al-



most as soon see my children vicious as vulgar; for vice may be eradicated, but vulgarity is a stain nothing can polish out."

"And, to add to her offence," remarked Mrs. Dainty, "she has assumed an upstart authority which has kept the house in hot water ever since she came into it. The children, and particularly Agnes, will not submit to her rules and exactions."

"Why don't you pack her off? I'd do it in less than no time," said the refined acquaintance.

"I've about made up my mind to do it, and in spite of all opposition."

"Opposition! Who has any right to oppose?"

"That fussy old uncle of mine is always meddling in our affairs,—Uncle John."

"Why do you keep him about the house?"

"He's my mother's brother," replied Mrs. Dainty. She could have given a better reason; but it would have been at the expense of an exposure of selfishness she did not care to make.

"If he were my mother's great-grandfather, he couldn't find harbor in my house if he interfered in what didn't concern him," said the lady.

Mrs. Dainty sighed. Uncle John was a great trouble to her, for he would say what he thought and do what he pleased. But then Uncle John

owned the house they lived in, which they occupied rent free, or in compensation for board. And, moreover, Uncle John was worth two or three dollars where her not over-thrifty husband was worth one. No, no. It wouldn't just answer to turn Uncle John out of the house; for that would be a losing business.

"If I could only find the right stamp of a governess," said Mrs. Dainty, sighing again.

"I think I know a person who would just suit you."

"Oh, indeed! Where can I see her?"

"Have you any acquaintance with Mrs. Ashton?"

"No,—though I have long desired to be numbered among her friends."

"Only yesterday she mentioned to me," said the visitor, "that she knew a highly-accomplished English lady, a widow, whose husband died in the East India Company's service, and asked me to bear her in remembrance if I should hear of any one who wanted a governess."

"How fortunate!" exclaimed Mrs. Dainty. "An educated English lady! What more could I desire?"

"Nothing. Shall I speak to Mrs. Ashton about you, and learn the lady's address?"

"By all means. Won't you see her this very day?"

"If you desire it."

"Oh, I do desire it above all things."

"I will see the lady for you."

"How kind in you!"

"Shall I say that you wish to engage her?"

"Oh, by all means!"

"What will you do with your American girl?" asked the lady.

"Give her notice to quit immediately. She shall not pass another night under this roof: my mind is made up to that. The way she has acted this day decides me."

"At what time shall I tell this English lady to call?"

"I will see her at four this afternoon."

"Very well."

"In the mean time I will close up matters with Miss Harper."

"Is that the name of your present governess?" inquired the lady, evincing some interest.

"Yes."

"Florence Harper?"

"Yes. Do you know any thing about her?"

"I knew her mother when I was a girl," replied the lady,—“though I never fancied her a great deal. She had too much mock dignity for me. She married very well, and for some time moved in

moderately good society. But her husband failed in business several years ago, and died shortly afterward, I think. So it is her daughter you have for a governess! How things will come around! There was a time when she seemed to think I wasn't good enough to associate with her; and now her daughter has come down to the position of a hireling. Well, well! Isn't this a queer world? If Florence is like her mother, I don't think she will suit."

"She puts on airs above her station," said Mrs. Dainty.

"An inherited fault. Her mother had a way of looking down upon everybody. I couldn't bear her!"

"Humph! This spawn of hers actually assumed to put herself on a level with me, and to 'approve' my opinions in regard to the children's education! I was too provoked!"

"You'll always have trouble with her," said the lady. "The stock isn't right. Is Agnes taking lessons in music?" she inquired, in a pause that followed. The sound of a piano had for some time been heard.

Mrs. Dainty drew out her watch as she answered in the affirmative. She saw that it was half-past twelve o'clock. A moment or two she listened, while a serious expression came into her face.

"I don't like that," said she.

"What?"

"This girl is bound to have her way, I see!"

"Who?"

"Why, Miss Harper. There's been a contention between her and Agnes about the hour at which the music-lesson shall be given. Agnes wished to take it at ten o'clock; but Miss Harper said twelve. I told her two hours ago to give Agnes her lesson. But you see how it is! She means to be mistress. I'm too provoked!"

"If she begins by domineering over your children in this way, what will it be in the end? I only wonder that a girl like Agnes would submit."

"It is the last music-lesson she gives in this house," said Mrs. Dainty. "My mind is made up to that. Send me the English lady, and I will engage her on the spot. Tell her that I would like her to come this very day, if it is agreeable. I will send Miss Harper away, and take her without consulting anybody. When the thing is done, Uncle John may scold to his heart's content. He can't change the fact."

And so the thing was settled. At dinner-time Mrs. Dainty maintained a perfect silence in regard to the governess. Agnes looked subdued. Her

mother noticed this, and her blood grew hot as she imagined the cause to be a crushed spirit under the iron rule of Miss Harper. Uncle John had made it his business to see a great deal more of what was going on than any one imagined. He understood the state of Agnes's mind far better than did her mother. All was coming right, he saw, and his wise heart, so full of interest for the children, felt a burden of care removed. After dinner he went out.

"Just what I wished for," said Mrs. Dainty to herself, as she saw him take his hat and cane. "I will make clean work of it with this 'angel' of yours: see if I don't!"

"Tell Miss Harper that I wish to see her in my room," Mrs. Dainty spoke to a servant, half an hour later. The servant carried the message to the governess, who obeyed the summons without a moment's delay.

"I have sent for you, Miss Harper, to say what you must have yourself inferred,—that you will not suit me for a governess."

Mrs. Dainty spoke coldly,—almost severely. That Florence was surprised, her suddenly-heightened color showed plainly. She caught her breath, and for a few moments, looked bewildered. Mrs. Dainty observed this, and said,—

"You have no reason to be surprised or disappointed, miss. I told you in the beginning that I didn't think you would suit; and I have never seen cause for a moment to change my mind since you came into the house. Instead of falling into your place and doing your duty as became one in your position, you have done nothing but keep me and the children in hot water from the day you entered the house. When you get a good situation again, take my advice, and be content with a hireling's place, and don't assume the airs of a mistress. No lady will have her children domineered over as you have domineered over mine."

"Mrs. Dainty, I repel——"

"Not a word to me, miss! Not a word to me!" replied the lady, imperiously. "I permit no one in my house to answer back. Here are your wages for the time you have been instructing the children. Take the money, and go!"

Miss Harper did not touch the money, but turned away, and was leaving the room.

"Miss Harper!" The voice of Mrs. Dainty had in it a commanding tone.

Florence paused, and turned partly around.

"Why don't you take the money? say!"

"I cannot receive pay for services that are so poorly regarded," was her calmly-spoken answer.

"Impudent!" Miss Harper turned away again.

"Stop!" The foot of Mrs. Dainty jarred on the floor. Miss Harper looked back.

"Don't see one of the children; but go off with yourself immediately!"

The young governess flitted away almost as noiselessly as a spirit. At the same moment Mrs. Dainty rung her bell violently. To the servant who answered, she said,—

"Tell all the children to come to my room."

"They shall see who is mistress in this house." (So she talked with herself in the interval.) "Uncle John has had his way a little too long. But there is a point beyond which patience ceases to be a virtue; and I have arrived at that point."

"What do you want, mamma?" asked Madeline, as she came with Agnes and her little brother into her mother's apartment.

"I want you to stay here with me," was the cold answer.

"Can't I go back to Miss Harper? She was telling us such a sweet story when you sent for her."

"No; you can't go back. You must stay here."

"I don't want to stay here. I'm going back to Miss Harper. I like her better than anybody in this



house." And little self-willed George made for the door, in his determined way.

"You George! Come back this instant!" cried his mother, in anger.

"A'n't a-going to," replied the little rebel.

"George!"

"A'n't a-going to!" sounded resolutely down from the stairs.

"I'll punish you!"

"Don't care! Miss Harper! Miss Harper!"

Almost like a fury did the mother rush away after her child. He heard her coming, and ran to Miss Harper for protection. She had gone to her own apartment: not seeing her in the study-room, the child knew where to find her.

"Go back to your mother, George!" said Florence, speaking firmly, but kindly, as the child rushed toward her.

"A'n't a-going to!"

"Oh, yes; Georgie must."

"No, no! A'n't a-going to!"

"This is the way you encourage disobedience in my children!" exclaimed Mrs. Dainty, as she swept into the room at the moment when Miss Harper was stooping down to kiss the little boy in the fulness of her swelling love. "Out of my house! and quickly!"

Grasping George by an arm, she bore him, screaming, from the room; and, as his cries came back to her from the distance, Miss Harper could hear mingling with them the sound of passionate blows.

“Poor children!” she said. “There is good in them, but how sadly overgrown by weeds! With such a mother, what hope is there? But I must not linger here. For their sakes I would have remained, even though suffering insult daily. No choice is left me, however, and I must go.”

As Miss Harper passed the door of Mrs. Dainty’s room, on her way down-stairs, dressed to leave the house, she heard the sobbing of George and Madeline, mingled with stormy words that were passing between Agnes and her mother. The purport of these she did not stop to hear, but hurried on, and, without seeing or speaking to any one, took her silent departure.