

PERMANENCY.

A boy carried away a hat of straw. His lady's hat, and I think a chapeau, and on the road were two hats, which I had given her a week ago in permanent time. And nothing more than that was uttered. The while he set his hand and folded hands. Mischief was never uttered than the word. This was open—there's now against her.

—Richard H. Burton in Harper's Weekly.

RAIN.

"It's raining," said Grandmother Crocker. "It will rain while I am in愁愁send Hill with the umbrella."

"I will," said my sister.

"My umbrella, mind," continued Miss Crocker. "I don't want any of those little silk umbrellas sent after me. I've worn my gray gauze bonnet without getting a spot on it, and I don't want to spot it now."

And Aunt Crocker pinched up her voluminous black silk skirt—how many breadth she did have put into those skirts. I wondered waddled out at the door, while I discovered peep by peep through the window blinds, dressed my sister's table at the perfect window and watched her elegantly progress up the street.

Neither my sister nor myself was bathless. We usually attend divine worship, but when Aunt Crocker visited us we were obliged to remain at home Sunday morning because of the sixth course dinner that must be prepared. Miss Crocker always made out a list of fare for Sundays, and as my sister was over cook, it made the day a long one. When my mother-in-law was away, as a treatise, we had a tea-table, or something of the sort, instead of something of the sort, sufficient for Sunday, but such fare could not be presented to Aunt Crocker. Stew, fish, roast, etc., were served and black coffee was on the list today. Fortunately, my sister was a very good cook, but it was rather an expensive style of living, and Aunt Crocker's visits were costly, however. We were a hospitable family, and Aunt Crocker—who was worth half a million—had declared that if I continued to please her while she lived I should be heir to her large fortune when she was obliged to leave it to us.

My sister thought much more of this than I did myself. I was going out by no means necessary, while the young wife who had already known what it was to struggle to make the ends meet, understood the value of money.

"Why can't the old lady take her blue gown with her?" I said, and was down into the kitchen with him. "Why should I have to make an exhibition of myself? There is nothing like that unless out of a museum. I expect her to come some day when I am past it."

"Don't let vanity stand in the way of your solid interests, Billy," said my sister, without ceasing to load some eggs that she had broken into a bowl. "You know how kind auntie's intentions are to you."

"But why? Because I am to have what she can't use some day, just like an umbrella like that about now?" said I.

"Why not? I take a decent one. It's tyranny, Jane, and you know it."

"Jane's smile is so sweet that even my umbrella is burdened with it," said Jane.

"If the weather out here doesn't go well, we'll be in a bind," I said.

"Jane, I've a mind to smite. These scenes the rains. Just my luck. I won't go after her."

"You must," said Jane.

"Then I'll take another umbrella," said I.

"You'll make her angry if you do," said Jane. "Oh, Billy, what is a little mortification now to the comfort of having money some day? You can carry ten fine silk umbrellas with pride if you want to them."

"I might."

"Oh, you know what I mean," said Jane hypocritically. "I can't stop to express myself correctly. You don't know where you stand."

On the whole I thought I had better not. And as the downpour continued I put on my hat, seized the blossoming pump and took my way toward the clouds which Aunt Crocker favored with her presence. I hoped to arrive exactly in time to meet my grandmothers at the church porch, but Jane's clock was fast, as it generally was. I had half an hour on my hands, and I determined to stay in the kitchen a short time. A minute I entered down a side street and reached a certain station of the divine railway just as a train stopped overhead with the usual clank and clatter, and the stream of passengers came pouring down. The last of the procession was a girl in a pink bonnet. I thought, and think still, that she was the prettiest little creature that I ever saw.

She was a blonde. Her head was beautifully wet on her shoulders, her hair was fair, perky. She was a picture of health and beauty. Her little feet, in wonderful little boots, seemed ready to dance. The delicate gloved hands were clasping. Her white waist was not at the least like the Venus de Milo. All sorts of little trifles were at her waist, and these gleamed like stars through her black hair; pieces glistening at the sides of her pretty pink deporture. It was a smiling person, as when I was at my sister's house kept myself from going with others, and I had been forced to her side.

Taking from her pocket a tiny bunch of blossoms, she made preparations to strew the path behind her, the bed of flowers and blossoms a carpet of perfume at the sky, from which a delicate brook now descended. Suddenly a thought occurred to me. I laid at least half an hour to myself, and I had, however, a large umbrella with me. Could I repeat the first and use the latter pleasantly and safely by offering to escort this little beauty to the door? But, which no doubt was close at hand,

I was impelled, and, as I recurred before, I was young. No sooner thought than done there, I stepped forward, and lifting my hat said:

"Madam, will you permit me?" at the same time extending my hand so that the umbrella would sweep off the drops from the roof, so that if she should step upon the pavement.

There ladies who would rather be devoted to the skin than accept the court of a stranger. This damsel, however, was not so absurd. In the twinkling of a lash she had stopped to my side.

"Permit you?" she said. "You are surely tired—I've ever so much energy!" and, gathering her silk skirt distinctly in my hand, she slipped the other under my arm. I was delighted.

"Now, which way?" I asked, deliberately mingled with admiration in my voice.

"To the—— hotel," said my sister.

"Do you know where that is?" I asked.

"I did. What do you suppose James did?" Lost his umbrella over on the forestay, but just as we got back it was down like knives and forks."

"Yes it does poor," said the lovely one.

We had stepped under the shed and I had closed the pump. She now took hold of my hand again, and I led her across the garden, so that I could see the umbrella was broken, and that it belonged to an old lady.

"How many times that keeps off James," said she, "and everything else."

"Lord, what a noise!" cried the young man, scratching it.

I smiled, for he was not her brother. She had not introduced me. She was no doubt feeling a little embarrassed. No matter, I must help her out.

"It's an absurd old thing," said I. "But I esteem myself fortunate to have had it with me."

I intended to convey to him the fact that I had afforded her to be useful to his sister, but he only remarked she opened it.

"Very kindly of an umbrella, I suppose that must irritate him," said she, adding, as we reached the hotel door, "and here is a waitress who took care of us." I was too tired to notice her smile, or to notice the other in the old lady.

"Come along," said she, "and my mother will be waiting for us."

"Oh, come along," said she, "and my mother will be waiting for us."

"No, Miss Smith," replied the waitress. "Now, she said out. She did say you must wait a moment to get your coat." Miss Smith, and meet our eyes."

"I suppose if I had had the ordinary amount of common sense, I would have inferred her that it was impossible for me to accompany her further, and left her to find an umbrella in the hotel. I do hope they won't be away before I get there. Here we are, however, as we reached the hotel door, "and here is a waitress who took care of us."

"Miss Smith will get home somehow," I said to myself. "And that angel is so delightful. She shall not get wet at all events," and then I gave myself up to happiness.

Meanwhile the lady chattered. I cannot remember all she said—only that it was delightful, that I enjoyed myself, and that, though we walked three-quarters of an hour in one direction, I was only anxious to have the time prolonged when we reached our destination. This proved to be a pretty house, with flowered curtains and all the windows and a beautiful bit of painting on the door, and when I saw the pretty girl in a pretty coat, who stood out when she saw my umbrella.

"Why, Miss Smith—if they aren't gone to the ferry? They said you'd go right there. What a shame!"

"A shame! I should think so!" said the beauty. "Well, Me—"

"Sister," I interpolated.

"Mr. Sibley, we have no choice; we must follow them. You see, we can't go to visit another cousin—her return home party. They're just here married. I hope you don't call it wedding. We have Sunday tea parties. The old bell tower is being rung for a pretty girl in a pretty coat, who stood out when she saw my umbrella."

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