

NETTIE'S TEMPTATION.

"Get the girl up, to light it, then, and you go to bed. I never can see what use you are in the house. Call the girl up, I say, and let me have some hot water. You seem to me to forget who is master here."

"Would you rather I remembered that, than that you were my father?" asked Nettie, slowly.

"I would have you remember I am both," he answered, trying to strike a light, but failing in the attempt, and, as he did so, muttering words which made Nettie shudder as the chill night air had no power to do.

"Well, what are you staring at?"

"I was trying," said the girl, turning her eyes slowly away. "I was trying to do as you say—to remember that you are both. I will light the fire, if you really mean it to be lighted."

"Am I a fool to say it if I do not? Make haste about it."

The great clock of St. Martin's was striking 2, when Nettie stole back into her little bedroom—dark, now, for the moon had glided away to look on other nights—and the two heavy strokes vibrated through her like two heavy beats of her own heart as she stood hesitating a minute on her cold bare feet, the hard, wicked words she had been listening to ringing round her in the darkness.

Striking a light, she opened her neat little desk once more, and began to write. Neither slowly nor carefully this time, and putting in no word that was unnecessary, no love, no word of thanks. She only said:

"I will come—I will follow this letter at once. No need to trouble any one to fetch me. I have thought, and thought, and perhaps it is best. Your grateful NETTIE O'NEILL."

Nettie did not read this over. She folded it hastily, moistened the gum, and fastened the envelope with much unnecessary pressing. Then she found she had no stamp, her only one having been put on the long letter she had written three hours before.

Never mind, she could take it off in the steam of the kettle in the morning, only—suppose she should be tempted to post the first! It would be safer, perhaps, to destroy that one, preserving only the stamp; so she tore the elaborate, carefully written letter into fifty fragments, and burnt them all. Then once more the small face lay upon its pillow, and the dawn creeping in with its cold, sweet smile found the wide, untroubled eyes searching—searching still!

Twelve, St. Martin's bell told each stroke languidly, while the sunshine danced round the gray old tower, and even made a few slight, fickle attempts to reach the low windows of the formal houses below, and in cheerily.

12 o'clock, and Nettie sat at the table waiting breakfast, her hair and her dress neat and prim as ever; her work in one idle hand, as she leaned over the prettily arranged breakfast table and softly moved with the other a spray of fading hawthorn, rather brown at the edges, which stood in a glass near her father's seat, looking at it, and touching it very thoughtfully.

At the sound of the opening door she started up, reading her father's face rather intently as she greeted him. Poor child! there was little to read there save utter moodiness and discontent.

"Is this all you have for breakfast?" he asked sitting down before the little dish of ham.

"Yes, father, that is all to-day."

He dropped his knife and fork and pushed his chair a little back, tapping his foot impatiently. Nettie took his cup of tea, hardly wondering why he had no relish for his food.

"If you want some of this, help yourself," he said, nodding to her to put down the cup; and he did not speak again through all Nettie's futile attempts at conversation, until he rose.

"I shall not be home again until to-morrow," he said. "I suppose you won't cry about that, though. You can go to bed when you like to-night."

"You are away a great deal, father," said Nettie, with an odd little catch in her voice. "I never go away at all."

"You are welcome to go," he said carelessly. "If anybody likes to have you."

"Shouldn't you care?" she asked, with a pleading wistfulness in her eyes.

"Not a bit," he replied, in listless assurance of the impossibility of the truth of his words being denied. "What would it matter to me? Now, then, is my hat brushed?"

When Nettie brought it to him, she laid one nervous little hand upon his arm.

"Come, open the door," he began impatiently.

"But say good-bye, father; you are going away, you know."

"Fudge! what trifle. How many kisses do you want?"

"One."

"Take it then."

"Father," said Nettie, looking into his eyes with an odd, old look on her small face, "I believe if we were parting for ever you would not kiss me off your own free will. Should you?"

"Take your arms away, you baby. When you are going away forever you can judge for yourself. Trust I shall be likely to happen yet awhile. Open that door when I tell you."

Standing back almost shrinkingly in the little passage, Nettie watched the tall figure hesitate a moment on the step, looking up the street and down, then turn off slowly out of sight, with never a backward glance which little Nettie would have grasped at in this moment of doubt and indecision.

II

The dainty shadows rolled smoothly along the level lawn at Greenlands as the little fleecy clouds chased each other coyly over the broad face of the white August sun; and as these shadows hurried on they ran up Nettie's white dress and touched for a moment the little thoughtful face. But they passed quickly and softly, as shadows should pass from a young and guileless face, though some one strolling towards her thinks that the fitting shadows stay too long in the radiant space.

MINING

10 x 10

10 x 12

12 x 12

12 x 14

FROM

TEN TO THIRTY

FEET

AT

Truckee & Salt Lake

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ED.

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YAM.

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