

MY FIRST DINNER PARTY.

(Continued.)

I had, however, another ordeal to go through of a different kind. It was my first experience of ladies' after-dinner talk. And when I heard how they pulled their friends to pieces, and when I observed more than one eye-glass fixed for a leisurely stare at poor me, and heard Lady Daire say in an audible whisper to my hostess, "She is a very ordinary-looking school-miss, not at all what I expected from Sir Harry's description," and my aunt's reply, "Yes, indeed, she could not hope for much from the training of such a one as her old aunt, but I certainly did expect something a little more comme il faut"—when, as I was saying, I heard and saw all this, my heart sank within me, and I almost longed for the support of the eccentric Sir Harry.

To think of these being such cruelty and treachery in the world! Here was my aunt's particular friend speaking of her with utter contempt and scorn; and here was the lady who had expressed herself so kindly and warmly in inviting me to her house, treating me not only with supreme indifference, but with a coldness for rudeness! If these were the manners of high life, I preferred the low life to which I was accustomed. Vexation and indignation were almost getting the better of me, and I longed to go somewhere by my self, where I could indulge in a good cry.

Attempting to raise my eyes at this juncture, I observed that the hostess took out the napkins, that it was only five minutes to eleven. Hastily I rose, and approaching Mrs. Daire with all my remaining courage, said: "If you please, may I go now?" I ordered my cab at half past ten. And my aunt likes early hours.

"Your aunt!" exclaimed my hostess in an unbecomingly loud voice. "What could she not trust you to us without following you up like this? It is a poor compliment, I must confess."

Not knowing what reply to make to this peculiar remark, which made me wonder whether poor Sir Harry's eccentricity might not have been in part inherited, I only urged my former request for leave to depart.

Mrs. Daire, turning from me with an expression of contempt on her handsome face, said:

"Early hours are doubtless best suited for school girls and nannies" (turning to a footman), "inquire if a cab is waiting."

The reply was quickly brought. A cab had been sent away as it was a mistake, the name of the lady being quite a strange one. The driver had been very obstinate, and would not take me for an answer for a long time, but had at last been got rid of.

This was almost too much for me. The rebellious tears would well into my eyes, and the gentlemen entering at this moment, Mrs. Daire turned from me with a gesture of impatience saying to her son:

"I leave Mabel to you, Sir Harry. Perhaps you understand home-sick children better than I do."

Sir Harry, seeing my tears fall fast, with gentle kindness put my hand within his arm, and led me from the room, and across the corridor to the pretty boudoir where I had spent my one peaceful hour that evening. Arrived there, he placed me in the arm-chair, and standing with his back to the fire, looking down upon poor wretched me, he said:

"What is it that troubles you, Mabel? I fear Mabel has been disagreeable, but you mustn't mind her. She is very properly, you know, and expected to find you one of her own sort, I fancy, from your aunt's description; and so I suppose she is disappointed, and riled besides at the old lady's take-in."

"I can't think how my aunt could be so unkind," I said, "to make such a joke of me, when she knew how I hated coming too."

"Then it was against your will you came?" he asked in a surprised tone.

"O yes," I said; "I would never have come if my aunt had not wished it so much. I knew it would be dreadful, but it has been much worse than I expected."

All this time I was trying to wipe away and keep back my tears, and had nearly succeeded; the familiar arm-chair, the sight of the volume of "Jane Eyre" by my side, the gentle tones of Sir Harry, all helping to calm me. Suddenly it struck me that my last remark was a very ungrateful one. So looking up at my host, and trying to smile through my tears, I said:

"I'm afraid I must appear very rude and that I know; for indeed you have been very good to me, and yet it was you I resented the most. But really I must be going now. Will you send for a cab for me? They have sent away the one I ordered."

"Going!" he exclaimed in a tone of still greater surprise than his mother's, when I had made up my mind to her like suggestion—"where are you going, child? Surely we have not so utterly disgusted you that you must actually run away from us!"

"I am going home to my aunt," I said.

"Your aunt! Is she in Britain, then?" "Yes, of course; how else should I be here?" I said, feeling more sorry than ever for poor Sir Harry. He had been so kind and sensible in his care for me in my trouble, but that a minute ago I had been tempted to believe that he had been quite right at last. And now alas, had come a fresh proof to the contrary.

Eager to get away before his mind should become still further obscured, I rose, and putting on my cloak, which I had left here, said, "I know you will send to your other kindness by doing as I ask."

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all saved. Try it once, and use it ever after-
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Every Family uses it!

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Used in all oriental countries, in the bath
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"Going!" he exclaimed in a tone of
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"Your aunt! Is she in Britain,
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Eager to get away before his mind
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To be continued.

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SALT LAKE BRANCH

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