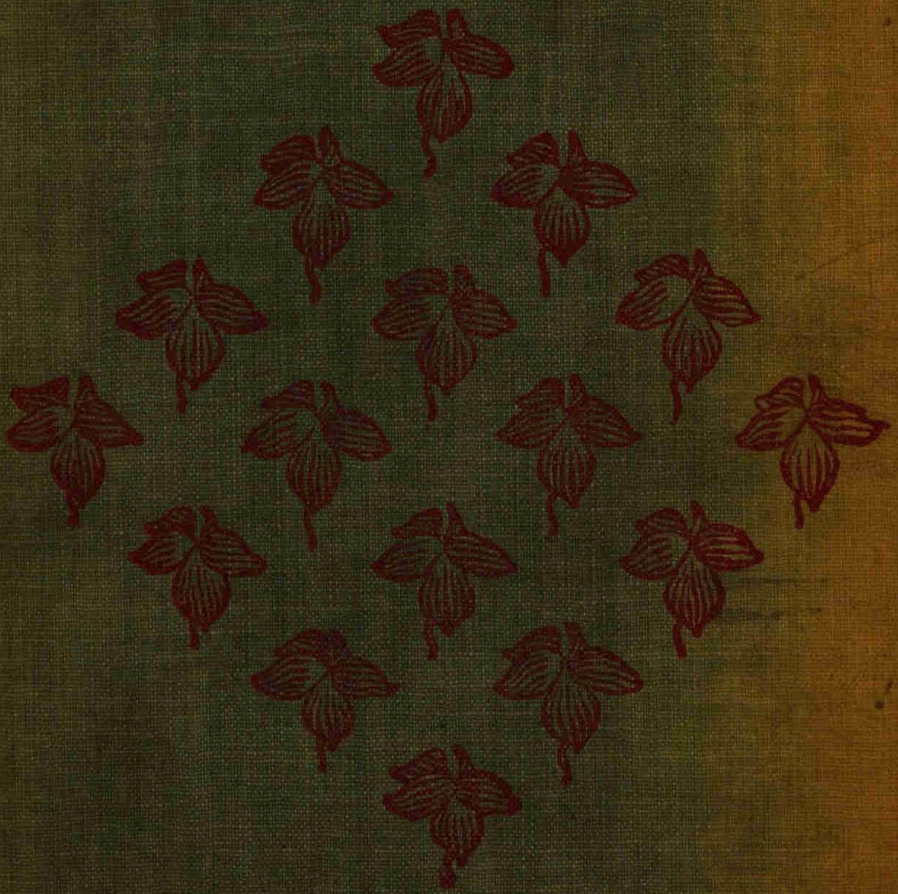
Trevelyan's Little Daughters.



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Trevelyan's Little Daughters

BY

VIRNA SHEARD

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

REGINALD B. BIRCH.

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To My Mother

ILLUSTRATIONS

TREVELYAN’S LITTLE DAUGHTERS.

CHAPTER I.

It was morning of the second day in the new year, and Edwin Van Norman, a gray and silent figure, sat at his breakfast-table alone.

The sunshine streamed warmly through windows facing the south-east, a glorious wood-fire sent long golden-red flames fluttering up the chimney of the wide fireplace; the table sparkled with old china and chased silver; chiffonniere and mantel gleamed where the light caught them, and a gay little French clock ticked away in frivolous fashion—almost, indeed, as though it snapped the fingers of its tiny hands straightway in the face of that hoary tyrant Time.

Everything in the beautiful room looked bright and cheery save the master. He was not more than three or four and forty, a man of iron strength and of iron will, one who controlled by a look; for words were ever few with him and smiles fewer. There were those who said Edwin Van Norman never smiled; but that was going too far—he did smile sometimes, and then it was worth remembering. During the years behind him he had fought many a battle with the world and himself, and had come off victor, but his face was lined and serious, the heavy hair on his temples snow-white.

Alone and single-handed he had rebuilt the fallen fortunes of his fathers. Long before, his people had been planters in the south, his father and himself being the last of the old stock. After the war he was without a father, and the land and money of many generations had been swept away, He then, a lad of sixteen, turned his thoughts to New York, his mother's old home. Behind were devastation, ruin, loss; before, the future, and in his strong young soul a vow that all that had been taken from them should be given back—all but his father; they could not make good that heart-breaking loss. Everything else, though, should be paid, to the uttermost farthing.

So they came north, where the struggle began and went on, till now at forty-four years he could say he had more than won. It had been as an unknown, penniless boy he first came to the city, with only his beloved mother beside him. That long past day was becoming as part of a dream—for now, when she was no longer here, he was rich, and a power in the land of busy, money-making men. Luck in affairs of the world had followed him from that time onward—such luck that he was watched from afar by those less fortunate, and had more than once been called "Van Norman of the golden touch."

When he was thirty he had married Violet Trevelyan, a charming young English girl. She was lovely to look on, and had most winning ways with her. They were both entirely happy, and, when their baby-boy was born, thought themselves quite the richest young people in all the wide State.

And he was a wonderful baby. In many of the rooms of the house there now hung one exquisite picture—the same sunny face looking out of it always—the picture of a baby-boy with short brown curls, and a mouth made for kisses. His dimpled shoulders rose soft and white out of the pretty frock he wore, and his eyes seemed to tell of gladness and delight. That baby had been king of their hearts for three short summers; then he laid his sceptre down and went away.

What dreams went with him, what castles in the air crumbled to pieces at his going, only the father knew. But his place was left desolate, for no other child had come in all the years to fill it.

Still the great fortune went on piling up, and Edwin Van Norman took his soul's pleasure out of making it greater. Now he sat with the *Herald* before him, and his sombre eyes fixed upon the fire—thinking.

Presently there was a soft rustle in the hall, and a little figure in a fluffy morning dress flew into the room.

"I'm late again, Eddie!" she exclaimed, "Oh, quite half an hour late, so there's another of my good resolutions gone. Some one told me on New Year's Day," nodding airily, "that those resolutions would resemble our egg-shell cups and saucers—easily broken, you know, and *very* easily chipped. Really, dear, I don't intend to be the 'Amen' at breakfast any longer, because"—with a dimple flickering at the corner of her mouth—"getting up late is very injurious—it shortens one's days! So we won't count this time, and *to-morrow* you shall see."

His bright little wife was very dear to the heart of Van Norman. She knew nothing of the many schemes he was turning over in that wise brain of his, and wished to understand nothing of his heavy responsibilities and cares; but she looked to him as to a tower of strength,—he was the one who gave her the desires of her heart, and she was but the spoiled child of fortune. A butterfly she had been when he married her, a butterfly she was now, and no one could have guessed her age as she sat, a thing of pink and white ribbons, laces and smiles, behind the big tea-urn. She was like a Dresden figure—like anything delicate, lovely, breakable—and he smiled at her his own rare and quickly passing smile.

"You are late, sweetheart, and I believe everything is cold. Shall I ring for them to bring something hot?"

"No, no, thank you," she answered, "it will do very well; I had my chocolate. Here are the letters," as the footman brought them in. "Five for you, six for me. I always have the most, don't I? One, two, three, invitations; four, one of Madam Dumouriez's charity bazaars; five, note from Major Willoughby—can't come Friday evening—awfully sorry—sprained his ankle. Poor man! So on and so on, he always has such a lot to say. 'Tell Edwin to drop in and see a poor beggar—laid up on sofa for three weeks.' You had better go and see him, Eddie. Ah! six, one from dear old Jack! dear old Jack! Cornwall postmark; he must be home. Oh, what heavy paper; I can't break the envelope. At last! now let me see what he says."

There was silence in the sunshiny room save for the crackling of the burning logs and a sound of sleigh-bells passing on the road—then a little cry, and the fluttering of a letter to the floor.

"Why, Violet, what is it?" exclaimed her husband. "Nothing wrong with Jack, I hope? Or the children, or Margarita?"

No answer, only she stooped, picked the letter up, and handed it to him.

"Read it," she said; and the tears were rolling down her face. Van Norman took the letter and read:—

"Charleston, Cornwall,
"December —.

"Dearest Violet:—

"I am in desperate trouble, and need your help. I had hoped to be home earlier, but the weather was rough, and we could not make it. A presentiment of evil followed me, a feeling that something was wrong, and against heavy odds I managed to reach Cornwall three nights ago. They had cabled that Margarita was ill, but the message failed me.

"She was dying, Violet, and only lived till I came; she said she would have lived till I came anyway. I cannot write about that, and there is no need; you will understand.

"My three little maids! What is best for them? I do not dare look ahead. There is only the sea for me after this, but can you not come and stay here for a while? It may be in a few weeks I will find my way again.

"Old Madelon is taking charge of everything, and I must be off on the 7th. My heart is broken, and I would be away, for there is no rest here.

"We have so long looked forward to the time these voyages should be over, and we be together. They will never be over now. I shall see my children often, but my beloved will be nearer to me on sea than on land. Send word if you will come, and when.

"Your brother,
"JACK TREVELYAN."

They looked at each other. "This is hard," said Van Norman, "I suppose he must leave when his ship does."

"Oh, Eddie! Eddie!" she cried, with her eyes swimming in tears, "Think of those three children alone, with only old Madelon. I'll have to go, won't I?"

"Well, if you do, dear," he said gently, "it will have to be alone; I can't leave New York this winter."

"Alone!" she exclaimed, "Alone! you don't know what you say; I never could go alone! I could not."

"Then what will you do?" he asked slowly.

There was a long pause; again the fire rustled, and the bells jingled outside. Presently Violet rose, went over to her husband, laying one hand softly on his shoulder. "Eddie," she said, then stopped. "Eddie, dear, they could come here."

Van Norman spoke no word, but gazed, with face grave and set, into the fire; then turned to where the baby smiled down at them, with his ever unclouded eyes. "Tell Jack to bring them," he said.

CHAPTER II.

When the great liner left Liverpool, on the 7th of January, there were three small maidens aboard, in charge of an old Italian nurse, and their father was the captain.

Those who had known Captain Jack Trevelyan before, and had crossed with him on other voyages, looked at him twice now to be certain they were right before they spoke.

Could this be the happy fellow they remembered, with sparkling blue eyes and bronzed and ruddy face, that to all had been the soul of merriment? They used to say he carried the sunshine with him, that the best weather followed him, the best luck. Those who had seen him on the bridge during a storm invariably went back to their cabins with quieter nerves and lighter hearts, for he had that in his face which gave them confidence. He was an Englishman, a sailor, a gentleman to the manner born, and the youngest and most popular sea captain on all the ocean steamers, so it was said.

Thirteen years before, when he was a gay young sailor, mate on a trader bound for southern parts, whilst going through the Mediterranean they stopped at Naples, and by some misadventure were detained there for a month. Jack Trevelyan had plenty of time on his hands, some money, and lots of friends. He passed his days as it pleased him best, and his nights with the young rollicking fellows of the city, amongst whom was one Reggeoletto, son of an old notary and antiquarian.

Antonio Reggeoletto, the elder, a man of wealth, had the name of being avaricious and disagreeable past all believing. Antonio, the younger, though distinctly a scapegrace, was his father's idol, and able, by means unknown to others, to wile money out of his pockets and forgiveness out of his heart.

The old man had for housekeeper a niece. Years before two children, Raphael and Margarita Reggeoletto, had been left orphans. They were the children of his brother, and quite destitute, therefore he took them in the name of charity—may the deed stand him in good stead. He had made their lives most unhappy, but they lived with him, "cribbed, cabined and confined," till Raphael was sixteen.

Then the boy, who loved the sea and hated his uncle, shipped before the mast, and was heard of no more. Before going he promised his sister that he would return rich and powerful, to take her away with him. That was a boy's

dream. Then he had kissed the forlorn little maid and gone away. Twelve years had passed. Margarita was twenty and she still waited for him to come back.

Jack Trevelyan was taken to the old notary's house by the gay Antonio, and there he met Margarita Reggeoletto. So beautiful, so sad she was, so unlike any other girl the young sailor had seen, that he loved her from the first. He felt like the prince in some fairy tale who had come to rescue a princess long shut up from the world and its doings in a gloomy prison—for indeed the old gray stone house, with its high walled garden and small iron-studded doors, was not unlike a prison.

It was a chance-meeting, for Margarita seldom saw any of her cousin's friends; but this was fate, and from the first they loved each other. Again and again they met, in spite of close barred windows and cruel uncle. The end was that they were married, and when his vessel left Naples, Trevelyan, by permission of the captain, took with him his wife, beautiful, but no longer sad, for she knew she had left behind in the old walled house all real unhappiness.

To see them together had been a sight to remember, and the common sailors thought of it for many a day—both were so young, so radiant, so fearless of the future, as they started out on life's voyage.

Captain Trevelyan was thinking of that far-off time now, as he walked his deck under the light of the stars. It did not seem far away to him. He remembered every line of her graceful girlish figure, every turn of her lovely head, every tone of her voice. He had known but very little of her language, she a little of his; but their eyes had spoken the language of the whole world, and there was no misunderstanding.

And so he was walking and thinking—his heavy pilot coat buttoned close to his throat, for the night was cold—walking and thinking of the past and of the future. Those three children of his could not stay long in New York—he would not wish it—still it was the only way. Oh! he hoped that Violet would be good to them. She was so fond of the world and its gaieties, her home so filled with company coming and going through most of the year—she herself so taken up with the thousand and one things that enter into the life of a woman of fashion—that there would not be much time left for those three little maids. Still she was most kind, he knew, and before many years Daisy would be old enough to take charge of the others. Dear Daisy—"little Dame Durden" he sometimes called her—such a contrast to Maida, the merriest of all merry madcaps! He smiled at the thought. There was only

a year between those two, and Daisy was now twelve. Maida had been the most demonstrative in her grief at first,—there was nothing to be done but let the storm wear itself away—and now, when they were but two days out, she was the brightest of all. Such was her buoyant nature. The others were quieter; they reminded him of the "still waters." But the Baby! she was but seven. If it were not for old Madelon, he thought, she would have stayed with him. Yet what could he do with a child on these constant voyages of his? It could not be! No, it was out of the question; and he continued to pace up and down in deep perplexity.

By and by he fancied he saw a small dark figure making its way across the slippery deck, now holding on to the railing, now steadying itself by a deck-chair,—yes, it was coming towards him.

"Who is this?" he called.

"Daisy, father," she answered. "Are you alone?"

"Yes, dear, come on; but it's very late and cold."

"I could not rest below, father, and I thought I'd find you. Maida and Gwyneth are sound asleep, so some of us are not troubling you," she said apologetically.

"You are no trouble, darling!" he answered, "but I'm afraid to have you come to me up here at night; you mustn't do so again. Now, though, you may stay a little while, for I have a few things to say. Are you warm?"

"Yes, I'm warm, father, quite warm."

They stood by the deck-railing looking out over the wide, dark water, and listening to the wind whistling above. It was very solemn, Daisy thought. Her father was different—older—and his voice had lost altogether its happy ring. It was still a wonderful voice—a voice that could sound above the tumult of wind and water, and be heard mellow and full from end to end of his ship—but a sad voice now, she thought. Presently he spoke.

"We have all been very sorrowful, Daisy!"

"Yes, father!" she said, in a little muffled tone.

"I always will be, dear; but for you and the others such sorrow is not good. I would have you remember your mother as she was—bright, lovely, full of life—not as I found her, or afterwards—" He stopped abruptly, and the ship slipped on through the night; perchance the man saw beyond there that white, white face he loved. A long pause. Then a little cheek rubbed gently against his rough jacket.

“I’ll try to be cheerful, father.”

“Do, dear, I cannot bear to see you look so unhappy, or Baby—you know what I mean. To-morrow we must try to cheer them up a bit, won’t we? And another thing, Daisy, when you reach Aunt Violet’s you may not always find it smooth sailing, not always. I know she is most kind; but you three children will be often alone with old Madelon, I fancy, and if there should be any storms, little capfuls of wind, darling,” he said, trying to see her face in the dark, “you must be brave, and think first of Maida and Baby.”

“I’ll try, father,” the child answered, with a half stifled sob, “I’ll think of you out here, in a different storm, perhaps; and—and, anyway, we have had the worst storm we can have, dear father.”

“I know,” he said, “I know,” and bracing back his strong square shoulders, turned, put his arms around her, and carried her safely below. “Remember, to-morrow we must be brighter,” he said, as they parted with many a fond good-night.

CHAPTER III.

Old Madelon had been a servant in the house of Antonio Reggeoletto when he brought his dead brother's children home. She loved them, and hated and feared their uncle. Many times during the years she had lived with the old man she might have married and gone away; but, with a noble devotion, she stayed on and made them as happy as she was able. It became her life's business to outwit the old notary whenever she could, to get ahead of him if she might. She grieved for the boy Raphael when he ran away to sea, and never ceased to look for tidings of him from the ships that came into the Bay of Naples. Many a summer evening had she spent among the foreign sailors, coming in or going out of port, asking of one and all some word of the lad; but none of them could tell her of him. And time went on.

When the young Prince Charming came to carry away her beautiful mistress, Madelon, then a woman of sixty, went with them. She could not bear the thought of parting, and so she, too, sailed upon that happy voyage. After a year passed they went to England to the homestead of the Trevelyans in Cornwall. It had long been closed, this old picturesque ivy-covered house, for death had come there, and many changes. Roses red and white swung against the small diamond-paned windows, and looked in at the empty rooms. Lilacs knocked softly, with perfumed plumes, at the doors; around about trees grew close and heavy, and the place seemed like a nest from which the birds had flown. But voices were heard echoing through the quaint rooms again, and the windows were thrown open to the sun. There Daisy was born, and her mother grew to love the place passionately. By and by came Maida and Gwyneth, and in the sea-girt isle of ideal homes was no sweeter one. When its doors had to be shut again—when news came that the children were to go to New York—old Madelon said quietly, "I must go, too," so here she was with them.

Thus far on the voyage the poor old nurse had been unable to leave her stateroom, and Captain Trevelyan had had all the responsibility of the care of his little daughters, who, fortunately, were good sailors.

They were on deck with him whenever his duties permitted it, wrapped in dark ulsters, and with curls flying from under their "Tams." All three were lovely—Daisy with serious dark face; Maida, like Daisy, only she was never still, and had many dimples. They were like their mother, both of them, true daughters of the South; but Baby was simply a small feminine edition of her

father. Her eyes were the color of the sea, and as changeable; and as for her hair, everybody said it was a wonder, so it must have been. Her mother had thought it the most beautiful thing in the world, and as for her father, well, it was too much like his own for him to say what he thought; but while his was close and curly, Gwyneth's floated about her in a golden cloud.

Once their mother had said to Madelon, "They are my three Graces."

Old Madelon had looked at them a moment, and then replied in her own tongue, "When they grow up they will be three Fates!"

On the next morning Daisy remembered what her father had said, and tried to talk more brightly to the little ones while they were dressing.

"Do try, Gwyneth, not to look sorrowfully at father to-day—no, that way, the way you're looking now, darling," she said, as Baby's lips began to tremble. "It's worse for him than for us, and I believe when he sees you looking at him so—yes, the way you're looking now, dear."

"But how can I help it, when I feel this way, Daisy?" asked the child.

"Well, dear," said Daisy, "Maida doesn't look so sad as that; try to look like Maida." She glanced at her sister, who was sitting on the low locker running round their cabin. "Try to look like Maida," she said again, buttoning Gwyneth's block frock.

"Maida don't feel the way I do," said Gwyneth presently. At this Maida looked up quickly, and her dark eyes, usually so laughing, grew dim. "O Baby, I do!" she cried.

"No, Maida, dear, not like me; I'm the littlest," she answered.

There was silence for a while, and then Maida said, "Now, Daisy, you dress, and I will brush Gwyn's hair."

"I'll wait for Daisy," said Gwyn.

"Now, darling, you know I don't ever have a chance to brush your hair; and I love to. Just let me do it this once; I won't pull."

"Well, then, you may," she replied, with a half-sigh. "If you don't do it sometimes you'll never learn how; but I don't like the learning very much."

Maida took the brush, and commenced to straighten out the glistening hair.

"Does it hurt, Baby?" she asked, pausing.

“Yes, it does, a little bit, but never mind; go on if you are enjoying yourself.”

“Enjoying myself, Baby! What funny things you say. How could I enjoy myself hurting you? But you have a tangle in it for every day in the week, and somebody has to get them out, you know, darling.”

“Yes, I know,” said Gwyneth, meekly.

The work went on till, the novelty wearing off, Maida stopped to rest.

“I know one man on this boat I like,” she said, reflectively.

“I should think you did,” said Gwyn, “Father.”

“Father? of course, father; but I don’t mean him.”

“Well, who then?” looking up, with questioning blue eyes—there was only one man on board for her—“Is he a sailor?”

“Yes, he’s a sailor,” said Maida, “second officer. Haven’t you seen him, Daisy? he is dark, dark; and his teeth shine when he talks. He told me a lovely story yesterday, about tattooing.”

“Oh, yes; I have seen him,” said Daisy; “but I never speak to anyone I don’t know, dear.”

“Why, he is father’s second mate, and anyway father introduced him to me.”

“Then, of course, it’s all right,” answered Daisy.

“I shall ask father to introduce him to Daisy and me,” remarked Gwyn; “and we will ask him to be kind enough to tell us that story.”

“Yes, do,” said Maida; “I’d like to hear it again.”

So, at the request of the children, Captain Trevelyan introduced Mr. Harry Barton, his mate, to them, and from that time to the end of the voyage he was their devoted slave and admirer. He made snug quarters for them, with chairs and rugs, behind the wheelhouse, where they sat by the hour listening to his tales of the sea, and of his adventures. He was, indeed, a very marvellous young man; even Daisy thought so, although she hardly found it in her heart to believe the whole of those wonderful stories. It seemed impossible that anyone could have been wrecked on quite all of the cannibal islands of the South Sea, and been made king of so many of them. To be sure, he was most beautifully tattooed; but then all sailors were, more or

less. One day his cuff slipped back, and Gwyn saw what looked like an anchor.

"Please show me that big blue anchor on your arm, Mr. Barton," she said.

He was delighted to have her ask him anything; for although he and Maida were fast friends, the other two were still a little shy, and rarely spoke to him of their own accord.

"Why, certainly, with pleasure, Miss Gwyneth," he answered, rolling up his sleeve. It was a fine anchor, and to the end of it was tattooed a chain.

"The chain seems to go a long way, Mr. Barton," remarked Baby, when she was through admiring the anchor.

"It does," he said.

"Where does it go?" she asked sweetly.

"Well," he answered, "it goes up my arm, round my throat, and is fastened to a goddess on the back of my neck—at least, it is the South Sea islander's idea of a goddess."

"Really, Mr. Barton! I should like to see the goddess," she said.

"Ah! Miss Gwyneth, we'll have to ask the captain about that," he replied, with a smile, amused that she should have so far forgotten her shyness.

"Did it hurt very much to do it all?" she asked, sympathetically.

"Oh! no, not at all; they just take your arm, like this, and punch it full of little holes with a fine-pointed ivory stiletto, then rub in the color."

"Oh! dear me, it must have hurt dreadfully," she cried. "I am so sorry it hurt you, Mr. Barton."

Just then the captain came up. "You seem to have made fast friends," he said. "Do you like him, Baby?" turning to his small daughter.

"Oh! yes, father," she answered quickly; "I have grown very fond of him; he has had such dreadful adventures."

"You see, Captain," laughed young Barton, "she loved me for the dangers I had passed, and I loved her that she did pity them."

There was someone else on board who was very kind, and that was an old salt named Brady. Now and then the children went down to the

forecastle with their father, and this old seaman spun them many a yarn. He had once been on a whaler and sailed far north; so his stories were all of ice and snow, great spouting whales and heavy walruses, of the polar bear and the fur-clad people of the north. Once, as he finished a most thrilling story, they all drew a long breath, and Maida cried, “Oh! Mr. Brady, that was perfectly delightful!”

“You have been very kind! We won’t forget you, Mr. Brady,” said Daisy; “we will often think of these interesting stories when we are in New York.”

“No,” chimed in Baby, “we won’t forget.”

“Thank you, me little ladies,” he answered; “and if you’d do me the honor to accept some things Oi was going to take to me own little gurl, who wasn’t livin’ when Oi got home, Oi’ll jest get them now!”

“Oh, thank you,” they all said warmly, as he went off to his locker. Presently he came back with a gold coin, old and battered, for Daisy, a string of pink coral for Maida, and a little ivory figure of St. Patrick for Baby. “You see, me gurl Molly was born on the Saint’s day,” he said, his weatherworn face softening, “an’ Oi was takin’ him home to her for luck.”

“Now, that’s a very strange thing, Mr. Brady,” said Baby; “my birthday is on the 17th of March, too—St. Patrick’s Day.”

He was delighted when he heard this, and called down manifold blessings on Gwyneth’s head, which benedictions she listened to gravely and accepted in good faith. Afterwards good-bye was said to the queer old fellow, for they reached New York next day.

When they entered the harbor, and just as the great figure of Bartholdi’s Statue of Liberty came well in view, Harry Barton went up to Baby, where she was standing by her father on the bridge. “I hope you won’t forget me, O maid of the golden fleece!” he said.

“No, indeed,” seriously; “I never forget people I like. I remember them always.”

“Always?” he repeated.

“Yes, always!” she answered.

“Then I’ll remember you, my fair one with the golden locks,” he replied, smiling as he went below.

CHAPTER IV.

The west wing of Edwin Van Norman's house had long been unused. Many years before it had been a bright and busy place. There was the nursery, the most beautiful in many ways of all the rooms—certainly the most important. On one side of it was built an oriel window, with stained glass of soft and perfect color. Upon this window stood the figure of the Good Shepherd, and against His heart lay the lamb that had been lost.

The rest of the room was white—the walls white, the frescoes of silver, the floors laid with shining white wood, while here and there were rugs of the softest and whitest fur.

In the afternoon, when the sun shone brightly, the floor was chequered with violet, orange, blue and crimson; but at night, when there was a full moon looking in—ah! you should have seen it then. Around the head of the Christ the halo seemed to send up moving rays, and the fleece of the little lamb would be all silvery.

The setting sun and the full moon had shone in at the great window many times since any child's voice had been heard there.

Now, however, all was life and movement in the west wing. Servants were coming and going; doors were swinging on their hinges, and the little mistress of the place was everywhere.

First, she was having three bedrooms furnished most charmingly; she herself busy over them, touching the curtains here, the toilet tables there, making perfection more perfect.

Flitters, the maid, was in an equal state of excitement. The whole house was in commotion, as the heavy and not easily aroused Wilkinson, a conservative son of Britain, and butler for many years to Edwin Van Norman, remarked to Flitters, when he met her flying through the upper hall on her way to the new rooms, with her arms full of pink silk ruffled cushions.

"This 'ouse, Flitters, this 'ouse, I say, is in a state of hexcitement I've never seen hequalled."

"Well, ain't you glad it is, Wilkinson?" she answered, briskly.

"I don't know as I ham, and I don't know as I'm not," he ruminated, as she left him standing. "This 'ouse needs *somethink* wot it's not got, and it may be *them*; but things won't be that *calm* as they 'ave been." And in this mood of solemn consideration he took himself below.

When everything was quite ready, on the day before Captain Trevelyan's steamer was expected, Violet Van Norman sat opposite her husband at luncheon. He was unusually silent, she thought; his mind appeared to be concentrated upon some object far from the things around him.

"His railroads, I suppose," she said to herself, with a little sigh.

She waited, hoping that he would speak, and when it appeared altogether unlikely he would, remarked lightly, "A penny for your thoughts!"

"Show me first your penny," he replied, with an effort to follow her mood.

"What was it—tell me?" she asked, coaxingly.

"I was thinking how I could condense my work so as to catch the four-thirty train to Chicago. I must go west to-day—*business*, you know. I won't be gone more than four or five days," he added, as he caught sight of her face. "I found out only half an hour ago that I must start so soon."

These trips to the West were not unusual; but to-day! She looked at him —"You must?" she asked.

"O yes! I *must*, dear."

"Then you can't go with me to meet them? You won't see Jack. Couldn't the railway wait once, Eddie—just this once?" sweetly.

"Not this time," he said, with that grave half-smile again on his face.

"Well, anyway you will see the pretty bedrooms, won't you, and all I have done?"

"They are in the west wing, are they not?" he asked, after a pause.

"Yes," she answered softly.

"I have not been in the west wing for many, many years," he replied; then, as he got up to go: "I will see Jack when I come back—he will not sail for a while. Now, good-bye, sweetheart!" So saying, he kissed her and went out.

She sat still at the table after he was gone, with her chin resting on her small jewelled hands. "So long ago, and he does not forget!" Then came the

thought of to-morrow, and she ruffled up her pretty hair.

"Perhaps it is just as well, anyway. They will have time to grow a little used to the place, and feel less strange before he comes back," she said. "I do hope they won't be too shy with him, or too—too—the other thing. They were perfectly lovely four years ago. How I envied Margarita! I wanted them—three dolls I said they were—to dress, to kiss, to pet. I remember saying so to her one day; and she raised those solemn soft eyes of hers up to mine, and answered, 'No, dear; three souls to lead, to teach, to live for!'

"I had forgotten that. Perhaps it is because she is dead that it came back to me; perhaps her soul spoke it to mine just then! Oh, dear! Whatever is the matter? I am never like this!" she cried, springing up; "I will get dressed and go out."

During all that bright January afternoon the high sleigh, with its fleecy robes, perfect horses, and silver bells, carried Mrs. Van Norman from street to street and from house to house amongst her many friends. Everywhere her shining face told its own story, for in the joy their coming gave, her sorrow had almost been forgotten. She would stay ten minutes here, a trifle longer there, then back out of the flower-scented rooms to her sleigh to drive through the crisp delightful air. Never had there been such a winter in New York, she thought; how the children would enjoy it! They should skate if they wanted to, and have the loveliest long drives.

Everywhere she said, "My brother, Captain Trevelyan, is coming to-morrow; his steamer is looked for then. He is bringing me his little daughters, you know!"

Afterwards one man said to another, "That is Mrs. Van Norman's latest! Always has something new on hand—she's looking awfully bright, though! Seemed to sparkle to-day, did you notice? Pretty woman! Have heard that her brother, the Captain, is the handsomest man on the high seas."

"Yes, yes; I have heard so, too," the other replied.

When Captain Trevelyan stepped ashore, with his children and old Madelon, they were met by a small whirlwind, a little dark figure with mink tails flying from ruff and muff, and a wee fur cap set lightly on her wind-blown hair, who flew at them, each one.

"Oh, Jack," she cried; "Oh, dear Jack! I am so sorry!—I am so glad!—I don't know what to say, dear! But come! Come, Daisy! Come, Maida! Madelon? Dear old Madelon! Come, Golden Locks! Here we are! Here is

the carriage! so we are all right—now we will go home, darlings." Thus capturing them, she tried to keep their minds from sad thoughts.

That night Violet sat late with her brother, when the tired children were fast asleep in their beds. They talked together, these two alone, till the clock struck one. Then she remembered he must be weary, for they had forgotten all about time, and only knew that they were together; the two left of what, when they were boy and girl, had been a large family.

Trevelyan told her of his wife—all he could; he talked of the children, of their ways, and of the future for them, when Daisy should be old enough to take charge. She smiled wisely then, but said nothing. She meant to keep them always, unless Jack gave up the sea. He said he would never do that now. "Then they will stay with me," was her thought.

During the ten days Trevelyan was ashore, his sister had many enquiries to make, and found out all she wished to know regarding their studies and other matters.

Van Norman was still away. Business, he wrote, detained him; he hoped each day to be home, and yet did not come. Violet waited every hour for the telegram that would give them the time of his return.

"I'm afraid he'll miss you, Jack," she said. "I am so unhappy about it."

"Never mind, dear," he answered. "He's an awfully good fellow—would have made it if he could, you know."

Then came the day when Captain Trevelyan must leave them. It was a sad few minutes; but Daisy had told the little ones not to cry, and they did not. They were used to saying "Good-bye" to their father; but this was quite, quite different.

"Jack," said his sister, as she stood beside him a few minutes before they left the dock, "would you mind if I dressed the children in white? They look so mournful in their wee black dresses, especially Baby."

"No, no," answered the man; but his voice sounded a bit husky. "No, dear; their mother always liked to see them in white." So saying he went forward to give his men their orders, for they were about to sail.

CHAPTER V.

Mrs. Van Norman drove straight home after seeing her brother off. She longed to enter into full and complete possession of those little nieces of hers. “Time will be the only thing for him, dear fellow; there is no doubt about it, he is completely broken-hearted. After two or three voyages he will look once more as he used to. I do hope he won’t stay this way; he never was quiet in his life before; dear Jack, dear fellow!” was her thought.

She went into the house, and straight up to old Madelon’s room. “Give me one of each of their dresses, Madelon,” she said. “Are the children in the nursery?”

“They are there, madam,” answered the old nurse as she wrapped up the plain black frocks.

“Well, put on their bonnets and cloaks, and I will order the carriage. You go with them, nurse; they should be out, should they not? and as I intend to be very, very busy all the afternoon, they must go with you.”

So the little old brown woman called her darlings, dressed them, and took them down. Brown had received his orders, and he drove around about the great city, past the places that would interest them most.

That was a snowy season in New York, a white winter from beginning to end.

To the children, who had never driven over smooth and frozen roads, behind flying horses with gay bells jingling from their harness, it was entrancing. They were so wrapped up with furs that the cold did not reach them, and all three sat still and looked with wondering eyes as the big sleigh skimmed past the bright shops and hurrying people.

They were a vision of delight for those who were fortunate enough to see them on that winter afternoon. For the time being, sorrow and trouble lay behind, and the old nurse’s heart was glad.

“Is it not lovely, Daisy?” said Maida. “Did you ever think you’d be riding in a sleigh like this?”

“No, never,” said Daisy, with a little contented sigh, “never.” Then presently, “It’s very kind of Brown to take us down these gay streets; I am sure he has picked out all the best.”

“Why, Gwyn, what makes you so very still? You don’t look quiet—your hair is flying, and your cheeks are so pink, and your eyes just go this way,” said Maida, opening her dancing eyes very wide.

“Am I quiet?” asked the child. “Well, I was only thinking that now I know how Santa Claus feels when he drives through the air on Christmas eve, with his sleigh and eight tiny reindeer.”

“Oh! you’re such a funny child,” said Maida.

When they reached home tea was waiting for them in the white nursery; and afterwards—it was about six o’clock then—Daisy and Maida took up their books.

Gwyneth was too small to read, so she went across to the window and stood looking up at the “Good Shepherd” awhile. Then she drew a long breath, and went into her own pink bedroom. When she came back the little St. Patrick was in her hands. “Madelon,” she said, “may I go downstairs? There is a room down there that I like.”

“Yes, Miss Gwyneth,” replied the old nurse, doubtfully.

“But don’t you like this room, dear?” asked Daisy, looking up.

“I love this room, Daisy, but I love that one better,” she answered, starting off alone.

“I wonder which room it is,” said Maida. “Anyway, she can’t get lost; Flitters is good about taking care of her.”

Downstairs she went, stopping often on the way and looking into the different rooms where the doors were open, to see the baby’s picture. She never tired of looking at that picture. She knew her way, and stopped at the door of Edwin Van Norman’s library; as it was closed, she knocked gently. There was no response, so she opened it and went in. Her bright hair seemed to catch and hold all the light left at this twilight hour in the solitary book-lined place.

Gwyneth crossed to the hearth, and stood gazing seriously at the rows and rows of books. Above the shelves were marble busts of poets. She did not know them by name, but looked long at them, and loved their faces. There was Dante, then Shakespeare, Keats, Shelly, Byron, Goethe, Longfellow and Tennyson—those men who were for all countries and all time. After a while she sat down in a huge chair before the fire.

“We have always wanted a brother, Maida and Daisy and me,” said the child, half aloud. “I wish that baby had not died. He would have been here

now, and he is so dear in all those pictures!"

By and by her eyes closed, and she lay very still, while the shadows deepened in the room.

Soon the library door opened, and two men came in. "Look out, Willoughby," said Edwin Van Norman, "remember your foot! Ah! here comes Wilkinson with the light." The room was flooded with a soft red glow from the rose-shaded lamp, and as he turned to get some letters from their rack, a low exclamation reached him from the Major.

"By all that's beautiful! Here's one of them, Van Norman." They both went toward the chair where Gwyneth lay asleep.

Truly, you might go far and not see so fair a sight; the glittering hair curled around the small face, and the long dark lashes on her cheeks were wonderful to see. In one hand was held tightly the little ivory saint.

Willoughby gave a suppressed whistle. "Didn't imagine they would be exactly like this," he said. "Did you, Van Norman? Wonder what the heathenish thing is that she is holding so fast? Some of your bric-a-brac?"

"No, not mine," said Van Norman; then, thoughtfully, "she is a copy of Captain Trevelyan. Come, we will not wake her, Major." So both men turned softly and went out of the room.

On their way to the dining-room they met the old Italian nurse, with her brown, wrinkled face still browner against the white of her cap and huge apron. "I look for little Miss Gwyneth, signor," she said, dropping a curtsey.

"Ah! Madelon, you do not know me," said Van Norman; "but you have not changed. Did you have a good passage?"

The old woman dropped another curtsey. "The saints made me to arrive safely, signor," she answered.

"That is well," he replied. "You will find the little one in the library. She is asleep, so do not disturb her; wait till she wakes," he added, going on with the Major.

"Thanks, signor," she answered, "I will wait."

Next day the children were very busy; there was so much to see, and so much to talk about. Once during the morning Daisy noticed Baby's face looking thoughtful. "Do you think of father often, Gwyneth?" she asked.

"Yes, often," was the answer. "Oh, very often, Daisy."

“So do I,” she said, wistfully. “So do I, darling.”

CHAPTER VI.

One afternoon Aunt Violet took the children for a long, long drive, and promised that after dinner they should go down to dessert.

When half-past seven o'clock came they were waiting, all ready for Flitters to take them to the dining-room.

"You look very nice, Maida," said Gwyneth; "very pretty I should say instead." Then turning to Daisy, "You do, too, Daisy."

Both of the sisters laughed, she said it so sweetly, and with such self-forgetfulness.

Major Willoughby and Edwin Van Norman rose with grave courtesy when the little girls came in.

Van Norman said only, "We are glad you have come, my dears," and shook hands with Daisy and Maida; but Baby held up her face to be kissed.

He introduced Willoughby to them, who after speaking to the others turned to Gwyn and said, "I'm here, too, Miss Gwyneth." She kissed him more shyly, and so the ice was broken, and after that they began really to know each other.

Aunt Violet took Daisy and Maida and seated them, one on each side of her, while Gwyn sat with Van Norman on her right and the Major on her left. She turned from one to the other her lovely face, and when they spoke to her, answered in very friendly fashion.

"Have you had a nice day of it, Daisy?" asked Van Norman.

"Oh, yes, indeed, delightful, Uncle Edwin; we have been sleigh-driving, you know."

"And we went miles and miles," added Maida. "You have such a beautiful sleigh, and to-day the horses just flew."

"I'm glad you enjoyed it," he answered.

"And what did you see in New York that you liked best this afternoon, Miss Daisy?" inquired Willoughby.

"Oh! the rink, Major Willoughby," said Daisy. "The rink in Central Park; so did Maida, too. It was just charming to see all the people skating."

“You shall skate, also,” said Aunt Violet. “To-morrow we will start to learn.”

“Thank you, Aunt Violet,” they answered.

“But you, Gwyn—what did you see that you liked best?” asked Van Norman again, turning towards the child.

“It was something we heard—not something we saw—I liked best, Uncle Edwin,” she said soberly.

“Something you heard? Now what could that have been?” looking at her curiously.

“Well, as we drove down Broadway, I think it was, there was an old Italian man, so dark, like Madelon, and he had an organ on wheels. A boy, a very nice boy, Uncle Edwin, was pulling it for him. The boy was older than Daisy, two or three years,” she said thoughtfully, then paused.

“Yes?” said Van Norman.

“Well,” she continued, “they stopped just where our sleigh did, outside of the shop. Aunt Violet went into the shop, you know, and they commenced to play. They played ‘God Save the Queen!’ ” Then she looked up into Van Norman’s face with a little tremulous smile. “It makes one feel very strange to hear anyone play ‘God Save the Queen’ when you’re in a foreign country,” she said.

Major Willoughby arose. “It does, Miss Gwyneth,” he said, “rather! I have felt that way myself. I propose a toast: The British National Anthem.” So Wilkinson filled up the glasses, and they stood, Baby and all. Van Norman clinked his glass lightly against hers, and looked down with grave eyes as he drank.

CHAPTER VII.

A few days after this, Mrs. Van Norman came into the nursery, where the children were busy threading necklaces of beads. The day was dreadfully stormy, and they had given up all thought of going out; so when, after luncheon, Flitters brought in a box of most fascinating blue and white beads for them to thread, they were very happy indeed.

Maida strung hers into rings, and had her little fingers loaded up with the shining things. Daisy and Gwyn were stringing theirs into long chains, and they were all very much engaged when their aunt came in.

"These are beautiful beads, Aunt Violet; I just love to see the rings on my fingers," said Maida.

"Little Vanity," replied her aunt, laughingly. She was very fond of Maida; they understood each other best, she thought.

"Now, come with me," she said, taking hold of Baby's hand; "there is something in Daisy's room for you to see."

"You are very kind to us, Aunt Violet," said Daisy.

"Is it something nicer than these beads?" asked Baby.

"Well, I think so," her aunt answered.

On going into Daisy's room, they found three long boxes on the floor, and opening them, saw they were filled with white dresses.

"Look at them, darlings!" cried Aunt Violet, "are they not lovely? I do not want you to be in black all the time, but in white, like three white doves. There are white serges for the morning, and cashmeres and flannels for the afternoon; then just see those white India silks, so soft and fine—they are for the evening, when you come to dessert, and Uncle Eddie is there, you know."

Maida gave a long sigh of delight. "Oh, I never, never saw anything like them! What made you think of it, Aunt Violet, dear?"

"Well, put one on, then," she answered. "This one," as Maida commenced to remove her dress. "I won't call Flitters or Madelon, but will just help you myself."

"You, too, Daisy," she said.

Daisy was standing very quietly watching Maida. “If you really want me to,” she answered.

“Yes, dearie, I want you to, of course. Your father said I might get these white dresses. Why, where’s Baby?” glancing around. “Was she not here a minute ago?”

“Perhaps she went back into the nursery, Aunt Violet. Shall I find her?” asked Daisy.

“I’ll go with you,” Mrs. Van Norman replied.

They found her with her little hands clasped behind her back, standing looking out of the oriel window. She stood very still.

“Gwyneth, dear, I want you to try on one of the white dresses; Daisy and Maida are going to put on theirs now. Come, dear.”

She turned and looked at Mrs. Van Norman, and her eyes were filled with tears. “Thank you, Aunt Violet,” she said, “but I will not wear them. I will wear my black frock.” Her voice was gentle, but quite firm.

She looked, as she said it, very much like her father, Violet thought—absurdly like. What should she say to her next?

“Why, Gwyneth, Daisy will, and Maida will; don’t say that you won’t, darling.”

The little figure turned again and looked out of the window; she just shook her head quietly.

Mrs. Van Norman went over, put her arms around the child, and kissed her twice. “You need not,” she said; “I don’t want to trouble you for the world.” Then, as her eyes rested on the golden hair, shining against the black dress, a thought struck her. “Never mind, anyway, Baby, I think perhaps black is all right; your hair looks so wonderful against it. Such hair!” she said again.

Gwyneth glanced up quickly. “I was not thinking of my hair, Aunt Violet; but I am sorry if I was naughty.”

Afterwards, when she was helping Daisy and Maida to dress, Baby being with old Madelon, Mrs. Van Norman put the cover on the box that held Gwyneth’s dresses.

“Does she often say ‘I will not,’ Daisy?” she asked.

“I do not remember when she ever said it before,” Daisy replied.

That evening Mrs. Van Norman told the story to her husband. They were alone, and he listened and smoked in silence.

“You have not had that said to you for many a day, Violet,” he said in a moment, looking at the charming figure with half amused eyes.

“Not for many a long day,” she replied, laughingly. “Not even by you, Edwin.”

The man went on smoking thoughtfully, then leaned over the fireplace, knocked the ashes out of his pipe, and laid it down. “I like a strong will,” he said, as he rose to leave the room.

CHAPTER VIII.

The children spent many hours alone with Madelon. They already had a governess, who came in the morning and left after luncheon. She was a middle-aged English lady, and they were quite happy with her, for she made their lessons interesting, and grew fond of them.

In the afternoons they went out, sometimes with Mrs. Van Norman, sometimes with old Madelon and Flitters; and when they came home there was always the delightful white room to go to—a place entirely their own. If it were stormy, they would gather round the fire, while Daisy read or told them fairy stories; she could tell very nice stories, they thought. These were generally about maidens in distress, or princesses kept by fierce and awful giants in gloomy towers, built in inaccessible regions. Often the towers were surrounded by green and fiery-eyed dragons, whose mildest expression of countenance was enough to chill the marrow in one's bones, and make the hair of the head rise upon end, absolutely refusing to resume its proper position.

To have one of these guardians of the peace gaze upon you in any other than his mildest way was to cause you to flee, and never to leave off fleeing, till far, far beyond his range of vision, and in a place of safety.

Indeed, for such a gentle little maiden, Daisy had a most vivid imagination. To all the unhappy damsels in her stories—whether they were princesses or not—invariably came a deliverer. He it was who, alone and single-handed, overthrew the horrible dragons; he it was who scaled the tower walls; he it was who, in spite of blood-thirsty giants, carried the princesses away to their own homes, where all was happiness and endless joy at their return.

Now, strange to say, this brave and true knight was always the distressed maiden's brother.

One Saturday afternoon Daisy had just finished a thrilling tale of this description, and they were sitting talking the story over.

"I think, Daisy, you made the brother even nicer to-day than usual," said Maida.

Daisy nodded. "I do think of lovely brothers," she answered.

“Daisy,” said Gwyn presently, “if that little baby in all the pictures had lived he would have been our cousin.”

“He is our cousin now, Gwyn,” Maida remarked, in her quick way.

“Yes, Maida, dear, I know,” said the child gently. “But he’s not here now; he’s away.”

Just then Flitters came in. “Miss Daisy, would you and Miss Maida and Miss Gwyneth like to hear one of those big organs?” she asked. “Wilkinson says there’s a good one out on the street now—he knows the tunes—shall I tell the man to bring it around?”

“Oh, yes, Flitters! thank you,” they all cried eagerly, and ran over to the great window, where they stood watching for the organ to make its appearance.

It came up and stopped. An old sad-faced Italian turned the handle, and by him stood a boy of about sixteen, who had helped to pull the cart.

“Oh, Daisy, do look!” said Baby, with a little joyful cry. “It’s *my* boy, the one I told you of. It’s the organ that played ‘God Save the Queen!’ Oh, I am so glad it’s that organ, so very glad, indeed.”

They listened entranced to “Liberty Bell,” to “My Pearl, She’s a Bowery Girl,” to the “McGinty” who insisted upon going to the bottom of the sea and staying there in utter disregard of his best suit of clothes; to the “Little Alabama Coon,” and the “Water-melon Smiling on the Vine,” all of which were charmingly new and fresh to them. After those were played came the one they waited for, “God Save the Queen.”

However Her Majesty’s National Anthem got in amongst those jocular airs the maker of that organ alone knows. Probably he liked the tune, but did not know the words.

“Do you admire the boy, Daisy?” asked Baby, when she had been listening for a while with sparkling eyes, her slippered foot beating on the floor.

“Do I admire him?” said Daisy, “I should think I do; I don’t know when I’ve seen such a nice boy; he reminds me of somebody.”

“Mr. Barton?” suggested Maida.

“No, not Mr. Barton. Oh, no.”

“Well, he don’t remind me of anybody,” remarked Baby, “but I think if he were dressed in blue and silver he would be just like one of the brothers

in Daisy's stories. Now he's touching his cap; do you see his curly hair, Daisy? Are they going, Flitters?" turning to the maid behind, "because we must give them some money, you know. May I go down with Flitters to give the music boy some money, Aunt Violet?" she asked, as Mrs. Van Norman entered the room; "I have a shilling of my own!"

"Why, yes, dearie; give it to him if you like. It's blowing dreadfully! Put something around her and tie her bonnet on, Madelon."

Down the stairs by Flitter's side Gwyneth went gaily, with her own piece of silver, and some money Aunt Violet had given her for them, held tight in her small hand.

Old Wilkinson smiled as he opened the door for the sunny little figure. It was many a day since a street-organ had played before Edwin Van Norman's house, and Wilkinson was glad to hear the sound of its merry tunes. In his secret soul Wilkinson admitted that the music of the street-organ was the kind he liked best. He kept a concertina, upon which in hours of loneliness and at befitting times he discoursed sweet melody; and the organ struck him as being but a concertina on a larger scale, played with infinitely less trouble.

"*The old man . . . . thanked the child as she handed him the money.*"

Now he watched Gwyneth as she and Flitters ran down the wide steps and across the walk to where the old man stood with his waggon-load of

tunes. The boy took off his cap and waited, bareheaded; the old man touched his, and thanked the child as she handed him the money.

"Thank you for the music," she said, graciously, "You *do* play *beautifully*, we hope you will come again." Then she held out her hand to him.

He looked at the boy doubtfully. Evidently they were not used to having their patrons shake hands with them. The boy said something rapidly in Italian, and the old man turned with many smiles and shook hands with Gwyneth. So she bid them both good-bye and went back into the house with Flitters.

Aunt Violet was waiting for her in the nursery. "Well, darling, did you give it to them?"

"Oh, yes, Aunt Violet," she answered.

When they took off her hood she walked over to the grate and stood looking into the red coals, with absent, thoughtful eyes. Then, seeing Aunt Violet watching her—"It's very cold and windy on the streets, and very warm and beautiful in here," she said, softly.

CHAPTER IX.

Often and often, when five o'clock tea was over, and Daisy and Maida were busy with their books, old Madelon knitting beside them, Baby would go away down the stairs to the room she loved best. There she could stay alone and quiet, thinking of many things as she sat in her uncle's big arm-chair before the fire. The logs never burned cheerily and bright in that room, as they did in the others, she fancied; but, instead of sending great showers of sparks and long dragon-tongues of flame up the chimney, tiny red and blue lights would flicker over them, and the coals underneath turn quickly to white ashes.

One evening the child was coming down the great staircase, just as Wilkinson was about to light the tall lamps in the hall. These were held by bronzed knights in armor. There were three of them, with boat-shaped lamps high up in their hands. Their heads were inclined forward, as though trying to pierce the gloom of some Eastern temple or mysterious cavern. They were very interesting, Gwyneth thought, and she often stopped and looked at them wonderingly.

"Wilkinson," she said, as she saw the old man below; "Wilkinson, will you be kind enough to tell me if there is anyone in Uncle Edwin's library?"

The old butler looked up; he was not imaginative, but he fancied that her tiny hand, as it glided down the baluster, was like a snow-flake. "No, Miss Gwyneth," he answered, " 'heverybody is in the drawing-room."

"Yes, I hear them," she said, as voices laughing and talking reached her ear. Now and then there was the tinkle of a cup against its saucer, the closing of a door, the rustling of silken skirts—for they were not far away.

"Won't you go in for a little while, Miss Gwyneth?" said Wilkinson. It seemed to him the child's face had a wistful expression, and he knew how bright and gay those long drawing-rooms were when filled with guests coming and going, with flowers everywhere, with lovely faces to see and musical voices to hear.

"Won't you go in to your aunt, Miss Gwyneth? It is wery cheerful in there," he added.

"No, Wilkinson—no, thank you; I would rather go into the library."

“ ’Ave you hever noticed the big white ’orned howl aswinging on the silver moon in the corner by the books?” he asked, thinking it might startle her if she came upon it suddenly.

“Oh, yes, Wilkinson, I have noticed him,” she answered. “But I am not afraid of him; he’s stuffed, you know,” reassuringly.

“Well,” he answered, “ ’e don’t look it, you see, that’s the trouble. Then there’s the big lion-rug. ’Is ’ead might hupset one, arestin’ upon ’is paws that natural.”

“Thank you, Wilkinson, but I am not afraid at all,” she said; “not that I am really brave, you know, but he is not *alive*, and although his eyes do glare dreadfully—why they are not his *own* eyes, are they? I should be afraid of him if he were the least little bit alive—but then,” meditatively, “anyone would. I never heard of but one person in all my life who was not afraid of lions.”

“ ’Oo might that be, Miss Gwyneth?” he asked, curiously, looking down at the little lass, as he held the library door open for her.

“Why, *Daniel*, Wilkinson,” the child replied, gravely, as she passed into the room.

“Daniel!” said the old butler, as he was left standing. “Why, certainly, of course; but I thought she were agoin’ to say the Dook of Wellington, or ’Enry Stanley. It’s strange she likes that room at this time of the hevening. It’s ’ardly time to light the lamps there yet, and the place is that full of shadders and glimmers from them poet chaps; and that old howl ’as the hevil eye if hever a bird ’ad. Talk about the raven wot quothed ‘Nevermore,’—’e just sits there alookin’ it.”

After a few minutes Van Norman came in, and entered his library. He paused a moment at the door, listening to the sounds of music and laughter across the hall. He was too tired to mix with that glad company, too world-worn and weary, he thought. No gaiety had been his during the early years of his life, to him had come no heydey; there had been no hours to spare for pleasure, no halcyon hours when he was young and the blood beat high through his fresh boy’s heart. Now, when he could rest on his oars, having won the harbor of wealth and ease, it was too late—too late to enter into the spirit of the thing, at least, he said to himself; so he turned into the room of shadows beyond.

“Ah, Gwyneth, dear!” he exclaimed, seeing the golden-haired maiden standing upon the lion-rug. “You seem fond of being in here alone with my

poets."

"And *you*, Uncle Edwin," she said, smilingly, "won't you stay?"

"Would you like me to?"

"Oh, yes, very much, unless you would rather be in the drawing-room," she added, quickly.

"Not I," he replied; then, seeing the ivory figure she held, "Why don't someone get you a doll? That is not one, is it? or isn't it dressed?—it looks odd, anyway."

"Oh, no, he isn't a doll," with a little laugh, "he is St. Patrick."

"St. Patrick!" exclaimed her uncle, "why, how did he come your way?"

"Oh," she replied, "Brady gave him to me. Brady is a sailor, a common sailor, one who goes up the rigging, you know; he used to spin us yarns coming over, about the great seas away up north. When we said good-bye to him he gave Daisy a queer gold coin, Maida a string of most lovely, lovely coral, and this to me. I am very fond of this little saint, Uncle Edwin. Daisy says he has a history; anyway, Brady told us he bought him long ago to take home to his little girl, but she was dead when he reached home—so," after a pause, "he gave him to me. Molly Brady's birthday was on the seventeenth of March, and Brady was very pleased when I told him that mine is, too."

"And your birthday is on the seventeenth of old Ireland, is it?" he asked.

"Yes, Uncle Edwin; on 'St. Patrick's Day in the Morning.' Father says if I had been a boy he should have had to name me after the saint. I sometimes think he would have liked that," she said, thoughtfully. "Anyway, Daisy and Maida would have had a brother, and that's what we're always wanting."

"I think your father and Daisy and Maida are very lucky to have you as you are," remarked her uncle, looking at the child's sensitive face.

"You are very kind to think so, Uncle Eddie," she said, "very!"

Then she went across to a small table upon which lay a violin case, and, touching it gently, turned and looked at her uncle.

"Is there a violin in this case, Uncle Edwin?"

"Yes," he answered.

"And does anyone play on it?" eagerly.

"Yes, someone does, sometimes," said Van Norman.

"You, I believe," smiling at him.

"When there are no professionals around."

She took the case up very carefully, and carried it over to him; he watching her the while.

"There are none around now," she said, with pleading eyes, "please, Uncle Edwin!"

He took the instrument lovingly out of its silken-lined case, drew the bow lightly across it two or three times, and began to play.

The divine melody of "Traümerei" floated through the room. The man was perhaps not a master of his art, but he loved it, and the violin knew him and answered to his touch. On and on swept the music, that air the whole world knows. It rose and fell, rose and fell, while Gwyneth stood gazing with pale, spell-bound face, and when the last exquisite notes trembled off the strings, her lashes were wet with tears, and she gave a long, long sigh.

"There is no need of other listeners," thought he, "with such an audience as this. Well, little one," he said, gently, "have I made you sad?"

"Not sad, Uncle Edwin, no; but I was thinking of my mother—perhaps she hears that kind of music now, she did so love the violin. Old Madelon has brought one with her that used to belong, years and years ago, to my uncle—my little uncle that ran away to sea, you remember. He used to play the violin wonderfully—wonderfully, Madelon says; that is why my mother loved it so. And when they left Italy Madelon brought with her the violin that he used to play. She said his cousin Antonio Reggeoletto gave it to him, but he did not take it when he ran away. Madelon brought it, though. Sometime, she says, he perhaps will play on it again. She calls it a Cremona."

"A Cremona! You will let me see it, won't you, and soon? But, Gwyneth, dear, I must dress for dinner—I should say I must," looking at the clock; "Bishop Salisbury dines with us to-night; it would never do to keep my Lord Bishop waiting, Golden Locks!"

"Will you come down to me and my poets again?" he asked, opening the door for her.

"I will come to-morrow afternoon, Uncle Edwin," she answered, looking into his eyes.

"I will be with you then, sure," and he stood for a moment or two watching the little maid go up the stairs.

CHAPTER X.

They were waiting for their father from day to day, and now Daisy was growing anxious. His steamer should have reached New York some time before; but they had received no news of him, and the ships coming in all told of rough, belated passage.

Van Norman said he would have the earliest word from the docks, and when she was sighted he would telephone.

Aunt Violet gave them but scant time to think; she knew what a strain their childish natures had already borne, and so, for their father's sake, tried to keep them bright and contented. She wanted him to find them happy—happy as she could make them. Still Daisy was troubled—that could be seen; her face had no color, and beneath the dark eyes were shadows that Mrs. Van Norman could not bear to see.

"I wonder if she has been sleeping well, Madelon?" she asked.

"Ah! madam," answered the old nurse, "she has the look of her mother when the voyage was long and his ship made great delay. Last night, madam, I went through their rooms soft, soft; I made not to awaken them. Maida slept, and my Baby slept; but Daisy, she was awake.

" 'Is that you, dear Madelon?' she say.

" 'Yes, my lamb,' I answer, 'why you sleep not?'

"Then she gave a little cry. 'O Madelon! Madelon! do you hear the wind?' she said. 'How can I sleep; how can I sleep?'

"So I sat myself upon the side of the small bed and told her the story, madam—the story that is for all sailors, and for those that love them—of how He made the sea to be calm; of how He made the wind to go down; of how He brought them to the haven where they would be"—raising her wrinkled face to where the Good Shepherd stood in all His beautiful tenderness—"to where they would be," she repeated.

" 'I know, Madelon, He is able, most able, so to do, but some ships—some ships never reach the land. You remember,' she said, 'my Uncle Raphael Reggeoletto. My mother waited, but he did not return!'

"I could hardly my voice find, dear madam, to make answer; still I would not leave my child so. I did remember—I do remember—my dear

lad, that in the year so long ago sailed, and did not come back; but I have the hope, madam, I have always the hope—here in my heart," her voice breaking, "when all have forgotten and say that he is lost, I have the hope that I, old Madelon, will some day find him. And so I looked into her anxious eyes. 'Margarita,' I said—we do not often call her so, though that is her name—'Margarita, thy father is in the care of Him who holds the sea in the hollow of His hand; thou canst trust Him, my sweetheart! And as for thy uncle, Raphael Reggeoletto, do not take from me the hope I have so long kept that I will see him again; I wait and hope.' "

"Dear Daisy!" said Mrs. Van Norman, "she is too young to bear anxiety of this kind; perhaps it is only because she has hardly recovered from the shock of her mother's death that she is so easily frightened. You do not think, Madelon, that she is ill?" as the possibility struck her. "There is no danger—we think of no danger from this slight delay of Captain Trevelyan's steamer. She is only two days late now, and this has been a stormy month."

"No, no, madam. The child is well, I think, only she is like my dear mistress, her mother; she was ever so."

"Maida seems all right," Mrs. Van Norman remarked.

"Yes, Maida is not the same, although we thought her heart would have broken when the trouble came," the old nurse answered.

"Ah, well, I will take them to the rink; they begin to skate very nicely. Perhaps when we return the vessel will have been sighted, and our hearts be at rest about that. Flitters will help you to get them ready, nurse, and I will not be long; so bring them down when their bonnets are on."

"Yes, madam."

Half an hour afterwards they were being driven swiftly over the frozen roads toward the open rink of which Maida had grown so fond. Such a dazzling day it was; such a glitter of silvery-white everywhere; such sparkles on the trees, fences and cornices of the houses! It was Saturday afternoon, and the city was out in holiday attire. The windows of the shops, as they passed them quickly, looked like huge bouquets of flowers, so bright were they and full of color. Everywhere people turned their steps toward the theatres or rinks, and the sound of sleigh-bells rang upon the air. If there was want, misery, unhappiness amongst the people, it did not walk abroad.

"I don't see many poor persons, Aunt Violet," said Daisy. "Everybody seems to me to be rich—nearly everybody, at least." Mrs. Van Norman

shook her head and laughed lightly; she looked very charming with her cheeks colored by the fresh cold wind.

"Do you think so, Mignonne?" she said. "Oh, no, dear; everybody couldn't be rich; but the poor people do not come up this way often, I fancy. The city, and committees, and men that are paid, look after the poor people, you know."

"Do they?" asked Daisy, thoughtfully.

"Yes, dear; and Uncle Edwin often gives them money for their soup kitchens and refuges and hospitals, where they go when they are ill."

"Does he? That is very good of him, Aunt Violet."

"Yes, dear, he has a very kind heart. People come to him at the office with all sorts of tales of woe, and he won't let the clerks turn one away without some assistance; at least, that is what Mr. Browning, an old gentleman who has been for years with Uncle Edwin, once told me."

"That is very kind of him," she said again.

Baby leaned over, with parted lips, as though she were going to speak, and then stopped. Her little face had a most intense expression, and her eyes were soft and shining.

"What is it, Gwyn?" asked Mrs. Van Norman.

"I love him," the child answered; "I love him very, very much."

They all smiled at that, and she wondered why.

Everything was extremely gay at the rink; and when Daisy and Maida, hand-in-hand, were moving over the ice with the rest, Mrs. Van Norman and Baby drove away, leaving the tall and dignified Simmers to take care of them.

Maida already skated well; Daisy was growing steadier each day, and both were wildly enthusiastic over the exercise. Simmers listened with inward delight and outward stoniness of feature to the many pretty things said within his hearing of his two charges.

Simmers and the Sphinx might have vied with each other as to which was able to give the least expression of emotion upon their respective countenances. Simmers' face had probably stood the greater test. He had many a time and oft been placed in positions under which the ordinary footman had been obliged to look somewhat human or expire. But Simmers did neither. His reason might totter on its throne, inward convulsions might

seize and rend him, but, outwardly at least, he would be as the laws of the Medes and Persians—changeless and unalterable; and by this metallic calmness of expression he stood or fell.

Now, as he watched the bewitching little figures fly past him, saw their sparkling eyes, their floating curls, and the bright color coming and going in their olive-tinted faces, by some process, unknown to mortals in general, he gave vent to an inward and invisible smile. When they skated by they invariably turned their heads and gaily nodded to him.

"Them two are no ordinary ones," he said to himself, "and the small one, Miss Gwyneth, some day she's agoing to make a sensation, that's what it is!" And so, altogether, Simmers enjoyed himself nearly as much as the children did.

By the time the little skaters began to grow tired, Mrs. Van Norman returned, and they went home together in almost a merry mood.

"I was dreadfully unhappy about father last night," said Daisy, "but things look so different by daylight. I feel certain that he will come to-morrow. Don't you, Aunt Violet?"

"Yes, I think he will, Daisy, dear," answered Mrs. Van Norman.

But when the message reached them, half an hour later, saying that Captain Trevelyan's steamer had been sighted, each knew by the relief she felt how great had been her fear.

In the nursery old Madelon sat listening to the fresh, unspoiled voices of the little ones, and thoughts came to her of her own far-off youth, when the whole world had seemed young, and grim care and weary old age things to hear of, never to know.

By and by Baby went over to the window and stood looking out. A light snow fell softly and the day was closing in. She waited there quietly a long time, with her hands behind her back, in a quaint fashion she had. Daisy knew by the way the fingers clasped and unclasped that the child was trying to be patient over something.

"You look just as though you were watching for somebody, Gwyn," said Maida, dancing across to her; "but you don't know anyone in this city to look for, unless it is Uncle Edwin or Major Willoughby."

"I am watching for someone," she answered; "but it isn't Uncle Eddie or the Major; not but what I would like to see them both, of course."

“Who are you looking for, then?” glancing curiously up and down the street; “father may not be here for hours; you know how long it takes them to get in sometimes.”

“Yes, Maida, dear, but it isn’t father. I’m thinking of him nearly all the time, though,” she added, by way of afterthought.

“Why don’t you tell me, Baby? I can’t bear to be kept waiting when I want to know anything,” her sister answered, impatiently beating a tattoo on the glass with her little brown hands. “It isn’t a secret, surely?”

“I believe I see him now!” cried Gwyneth. “Yes, yes!” Then turning to Maida, and noting the exasperated expression on her face—

“My *music* boy, you know. See, they are coming! It is Saturday he comes, always. I’ll be very glad to see him.”

“Oh, so will I, but I’d forgotten every single thing about him,” said Maida, laughingly.

“I don’t forget people when I like them, Maida,” replied the child.

In a short time they came along, the weather-beaten old man and the beautiful boy. They pulled the heavy cart slowly, for the roads were rough. When they stopped under the oriel window, both looked up and took off their caps.

The children watched and listened. Old Madelon sat by, knitting at the perpetual stocking, that was sometimes toe, sometimes heel, sometimes leg, but had been in transition stages ever since Daisy was born, and before, if she had but known. They all regarded it as a friend; it seemed to them as much a part of Madelon as the cap and apron she wore. The light glanced on her silver needles, dancing up and down and over them. She nodded her head to the music, and seemed to dream.

“Call Flitters, Gwyn, I want her to tell me the names of the tunes as he plays them. We don’t know any American songs,” Maida said.

Flitters came, and as the tunes were rolled out she called off their names.

“Don’t you love it, Gwyn?”

“What, Maida? The music? I wasn’t thinking so much about the music as the boy.”

“He is an awfully nice boy; there wasn’t one boy on that rink to-day as good-looking.”

“Do you like his eyes, Maida?” asked Baby.

“Indeed I do; they are perfectly beautiful!” she answered.

“Yes,” said Daisy, “I think they are, too.”

“Do you like his shoulders, Daisy?” inquired Maida, later.

“Oh, yes, of course, anyone would; they are exactly like father’s, I think, only that father’s are so much broader.”

“I wish,” said Baby—then she stopped. The organ had got as far as “The Alabama Coon” by this time, and they thought that she was enjoying that delightful southern melody—“I wish,” she said again.

“What do you wish, Baby? You seem to want somebody to ask you,” laughed Maida. “Do you wish they would play it again? I don’t think they can. I think when it starts it has to go right through them all without stopping.”

“Oh, it isn’t that, I like the next nearly as well; but I wish that boy—look at him smiling up at us, Daisy—yes, I wish that boy were our brother. Truly, I do.”

“Why, Gwyneth Trevelyan!” exclaimed Maida, while Daisy gazed at her with eyes very wide open, and Flitters laughed. “Why, *that* boy is the music organ man’s boy; if *we* had a brother he would have to be a gentleman. He is awfully nice to look at, but how does he speak?”

“I know—I have heard him—but Daisy, dear, *what is* a gentleman?” Then without waiting—for she saw they were through playing—“Daisy, the *money*; I haven’t any this time.”

“Neither have I,” said Daisy.

“I had a shilling,” said Maida, “but I spent it, oh, quite a long time ago.”

Old Madelon took a silver coin out of her pocket, and held it out—“Give the man this, my children,” she said.

“No, thank you, Madelon, I remember I have something. Quick, Flitters, get my hood, please; I will go down, too,” said Gwyn, running into her own room.

“What have you got, Gwyn?” asked Maida, as she came out and waited for Flitters.

“I’d rather not tell you, Maida,” the child replied, gently.

“I know!” cried Maida, when the two had disappeared. “It’s the tiny gold dollar father gave her such a long time ago, and that’s her own, I suppose; but isn’t she a funny little thing, though?”

Daisy did not answer, and old Madelon went on knitting—and as she knit she smiled.

CHAPTER XI.

"Madelon," said Baby, "will you please look at me?"

"Yes, my lamb; what is it?" asked the old nurse.

"Is my dress all right, and my pinafore?" pulling out the ruffles on her shoulders, "and my hair?"

"Why, yes, dear, you look very nice; do you go anywhere?"

"Only down to the library, nurse," starting away, "so good-bye."

"She's always going down to the library, Daisy, at this time of day; and it's as gloomy and forlorn in that room as it can be. It's ever so much nicer up here, with the lovely colors on the floor. It's all violet splashes under your chair now," said Maida.

"I suppose she likes it for some reason," answered Daisy, going on with her book; "one of these days I'm going with her myself."

"At this time to-morrow, Madelon, father will be here," glancing up at the old nurse.

"Thou wilt be glad then, my little one," answered the old woman.

When Van Norman entered his library at half-past six o'clock, he found Gwyneth waiting. He saw the look of expectancy on her face as the door opened, and caught the brilliant smile that followed; it was answered by one of his own, one of the kind worth remembering.

"We have half an hour," he said.

"Have we, Uncle Edwin? As long as that?"

"Yes, quite, for Aunt Violet is making a most elaborate toilet. You must see her when she is dressed, for she will be very pretty. You like pretty things, don't you, Gwyn?"

"Oh, yes!" replied the child, "and Daisy and Maida and I always just love to look at Aunt Violet."

"What have you been doing to-day?" he asked, as she sat down on an ebony stool beside him, and leaned her golden head against the arm of his chair. Above the mantel hung the baby's picture, and in the uncertain light the dimples seemed to come and go on the sweet child face.

“What have I been doing?” she said; “let me see. This morning we had our lessons; I don’t have such long ones as Daisy and Maida, you know. When mine were finished, Aunt Violet’s dachshund came into the nursery, and we played together. It upset Maida a good deal—she could hardly go on with her French. You know Fritz is funny when he stands and just looks at you; his short little front legs are bowed round, like this,” fixing her hands together in a circle, and laughing—“and he is so long, so dreadfully long! He should have *three* pairs of legs, we think, Uncle Edwin.”

“I am glad you like him,” said the man, enjoying the sight of her bright face and childish voice.

“I do like him very much, indeed,”—then, on second thought—“and he likes me.”

“I can quite understand that,” gravely.

“Uncle Edwin!” she asked, then paused and leaned forward, clasping her two little hands.

“Yes?” he answered.

“Uncle Edwin, what is a gentleman?”

“Why!” he said, looking rather surprised at the question, “have you met anyone lately that you thought was *not* a gentleman?”

“Oh, no,” raising her eyes to his quickly, “oh, no! but it’s my music boy, the one I told you of, you remember. He came to-day with the old Italian and the organ, and we were talking about him—Daisy and Maida and me. We admire him very much,” she said, sweetly. “I would like you to see him, Uncle Edwin.”

“Well?” he asked, as she stopped.

“You see,” she went on, “I said I wished he were my brother, for we have always been wishing for one—always. Then Maida laughed, and said he was only an organ-man’s boy; that our brother, if we had one, would have to be a *gentleman*. He seemed to me like a gentleman,” she added, seriously.

Van Norman rose, walked over to the mantel, turned his broad back to it, as was his custom, and stood looking at her. There was an odd expression in his eyes.

“Gwyneth, dear”—his voice not quite steady—“a gentleman is one who is faithful, honest, gentle and brave—a king could be no more,” he said.

The ashes dropped from the heavy logs, the shadowy room was still. Then Simmers entered quietly and lit the tall red-shaded lamps, and down the stairs came the rustling of silken perfumed garments. Mrs. Van Norman paused at the library.

“Announce me, Wilkinson,” she said, in a low voice, “as the Duchess of Devonshire.”

The door was flung wide open, and—“ ’Er Grace, the Duchess of Devonshire!” cried the old butler, in his most ponderous tones.

"*She advanced to the centre of the room, and . . . . dropped them a deep and most elaborate curtsey.*"

They turned toward the door and beheld a beautiful little figure, all shining and glistening from head to toe. Her powdered hair was puffed and

rolled, and upon her shoulders lay softest curls. A hat of generous proportions, befeathered and beribboned, was tilted sidewise on the bewitching head, and around her square-cut tight-sleeved bodice was crossed a fichu of richest lace. Here and there upon it trembled small diamond butterflies. She advanced in stately fashion to the centre of the room, and holding wide her dainty skirts, dropped them a deep and most elaborate curtsey; then rose, and throwing the tail of her gown over one arm, stood with folded hands, smiling at them sweetly—a counterpart of the famous picture.

"Oh, Aunt Violet!" exclaimed Baby. "How lovely you look! How lovely! Are all duchesses like that?"

"You are charming," said Van Norman. "It is for the Schuyler's fancy ball, I suppose; but are you not dressed early?"

"Early for the ball, of course, but the Rubenstein Club have an eight o'clock musicale, and there will be a number in fancy dress. You will go to the musicale with me, won't you? And now, do be a little enthusiastic over my dress—please, dear! I don't care what the rest say, you know," turning so that he could admire her from all points.

"Indeed, it is very dazzling! That silver effect on the pink is like frosting; and the butterflies on your shoulders seem as though they might fly at any moment. By the way, the butterflies are not consistent with the costume, are they?"

"No, not really; it is a case where consistency is *not* a jewel!" she answered, laughingly; "but they were so pretty I had to wear them."

He seemed amused, but went on critically, looking down at her tiny silver slippers with their shining buckles:

"The shoes match perfectly, and your hair, sweetheart, is really wonderful! A masterpiece, a veritable masterpiece!"

"Thanks, Eddie, awfully! I think you have quite taken me in, and I defy other critics."

So, gaily chatting, they all moved towards the dining-room.

When they reached the stairs, and as Gwyneth started to go up to the nursery, Van Norman held out his hand. "Are we going to be good friends?" he asked.

"For always, Uncle Edwin," said the child, looking down at him; and she stood thus watching them till he and the gay little Duchess disappeared.

CHAPTER XII.

Next day being Sunday, they were to take breakfast in the morning-room below. As they fluttered down, Daisy and Maida in white, and Baby in black, with dainty ruffled pinafore, their hearts beat high with hope. Surely some news would be awaiting them—or even father; and they went in with eager faces.

Ah! there he was, standing so tall and straight; so like himself and nobody else in the wide, wide world. They flew to him. "O father! O father!" was all he heard; but it was his reward for long stormy days and nights, when the spirit of the gale entered into him, and he had not slept, but paced the deck to and fro sharing the dark hours of watching with his men. Trevelyan turned to his sister and Van Norman.

"Thank you both," he said, "you have been more than good to them, I see."

"O Jack, we have had a perfectly delightful month," cried Violet. "They repay me over and over again for all I do. I love to go up to the west wing and find it bright and cheery. They have made me entirely happy."

Everyone had so much to tell him that the breakfast was really of very slight importance.

Wilkinson moved about in his heavy solemn way, with an expression entirely new upon his face. This brought another set of muscles into play, and must have been decidedly restful—at any rate it seemed to have come to stay, for it did not disappear during the entire meal. He looked at Captain Trevelyan whenever an opportunity presented itself; he seemed, indeed, to enjoy looking at him.

"Flitters," said the old butler to that sprightly maid, during the morning, "what do you think of 'im? you've not seen 'im before."

"What do I think of Captain Trevelyan?"

"Yes *'im*, Flitters," he answered.

"I think, Wilkinson, he's the finest man I ever saw, and I don't wonder now, one bit, that those children are so sweet, all of them. I should have liked to see their mother."

“Ah!” said Wilkinson, “ ’e brings the breath of the sea with ’im; and when I cross again, Flitters, I ’ope ’e will be aboard.”

“I hope he will, if it will make your mind easier,” she answered, leaving him.

After breakfast the Captain, Mrs. Van Norman and the children went to church. It was a good distance to Broadway and Eleventh street; but they wanted to walk, as the morning was sunny, and they enjoyed having their father beside them. He held Daisy’s hand and Baby’s, while Maida fluttered sometimes behind, sometimes in front, in her own erratic fashion. The steady church-going people of the city felt compelled to look after that particular quartette—the stalwart, handsome man, and the three children, two with such Italian faces, the third so entirely English.

Of course, Aunt Violet did not walk—she was not used to going so far afoot—but the children had climbed the Cornwall cliffs and taken long strolls with their mother, ever since they were babies, and to them the walk was a pleasure.

After the service was over they drove back together.

“I am glad Bishop Salisbury preached, father; we all like him very much,” remarked Maida.

“Do you know his Lordship?” asked the Captain.

“We met him one evening when he dined with Uncle Edwin, and he told us a fairy story; he is not very solemn for a bishop,” said Maida.

“He drew us some dear wee Brownies, father, and told us about them,” added Gwyn; “I never saw such dear little things. When he was preaching to-day those wee Brownies kept coming into my mind; but I shut my eyes, and tried so hard—*so* hard—not to think of them in church; and then the next thing I knew I was quite interested, listening about Absalom, and they went all away.”

“You darling!” cried Aunt Violet.

“Well,” Maida exclaimed, “well, if it is wrong to think of Brownies in church, I was quite as bad, because I kept thinking about Absalom’s hair; and how it was just exactly like Gwyn’s. I *could* not help fancying her riding fast through the woods, and her hair catching just the same way.”

“Oh, Maida,” said Daisy, “that was a punishment because he turned against his father; *Baby* would never do that!”

“Hardly,” said the Captain, as he put his arms around the child and drew her to him, “hardly, I think, sweetheart.”

And so the happy days of Captain Trevelyan’s stay ashore flew quickly by.

The little maids took him to the rink, knowing well that none of their doings was indifferent to their father; for he had never failed them hitherto, and now, though often his eyes were sad, he was the best of good companions, and listened to every childish story with deepest interest. Gwyneth felt troubled that during those days the organ-grinder and boy did not come, but her father gave her some silver to give them.

When the time came for him to go, Trevelyan took many messages for Mr. Barton and Brady. His heart was much lighter regarding the children. Although they did not forget, the burden of their sorrow pressed less heavily here than at the old home in Cornwall.

A very pleasant time followed; the weather changed and turned warmer —regular English weather, everybody said. Sometimes Aunt Violet would invite the little ones of her acquaintance to take tea, and the white room would ring with many glad voices.

Now and again the drawing-rooms were filled with people, and the children were taken down. Maida enjoyed this intensely. She made friends on every side; her impulsive southern nature loved all forms of pleasure, and she would go from one to another of Aunt Violet’s friends with radiant face, and with bright words for all. Mrs. Van Norman enjoyed watching her flit about the room like some tropical bird; she had so many quick movements and turns of the head, and used her tiny hands in such a foreign way.

The other two were rather quieter on these occasions. It was always pleasant when Major Willoughby was there, because he was quite an old friend by this time, and stood by them during moments that might otherwise have proved trying. But then the Major was not always there, so to them these drawing-rooms were a mixed pleasure.

On one occasion of this kind, when they had been allowed to come down, and were moving about speaking to one and another that they knew, a woman who had been watching them and talking to Daisy—a clever woman, well-known amongst musical and literary people of the city—went over to Mrs. Van Norman.

“Do you know, Violet,” she said, “those children are very charming, very exquisite.”

“I am glad you find them so,” Mrs. Van Norman answered, “we think they are.”

“There is no doubt about it; and their pronunciation is something unusual, is it not?—somewhat foreign, and yet with such a fine broad English ‘a.’ ”

“Their mother was Italian, you know,” replied Mrs. Van Norman, “and did not speak English until after she was married. I often notice they have insensibly copied her words.”

“They are unusual in other ways; try to keep them as they are, Violet,” said her friend.

Mrs. Van Norman laughed. “I do not think they will change. You have not met my brother, Captain Trevelyan, I believe? No! And you did not know their mother?”

“No, I did not, unhappily,” answered the other, “but I should have liked to. I have missed something, my dear, indeed I have.”

CHAPTER XIII.

On Saturday, about ten days after this, Van Norman entered his library as the clock struck the quarter past five. He was tired, for many things had crossed his path that day to trouble and annoy him, and the lines between his eyes, as he threw himself heavily into a chair, were deep and forbidding.

"Such a day it has been," he said to himself, half aloud, "even the weather, the least of all things, bad."

He usually came in later and found Gwyneth waiting for him, but to-day the huge dark room seemed intolerably lonely. He drew a long sigh, then felt in his coat-pocket, and took out what appeared to be a cablegram.

> "Will not leave with my steamer. Huntington in charge. Have word from estate of Reggeoletto that both are dead. Go to Naples direct. Will write.
>
> "JOHN TREVELYAN."

The man looked at it long, then folded it up and gazed ahead with unseeing eyes.

"That means one thing," he thought, "the estate of Reggeoletto goes to the children of Margarita Reggeoletto; they are the only living heirs. Jack would not have touched it, I firmly believe, unless he had been told by his wife that the original fortune belonged to her grandfather, and that Antonio had in some way and by some unfair means absorbed the whole, so that her father was left nothing; it is theirs by right now."

He leaned his head wearily against the chair. "Oh, gold," he said, "oh, the struggle for it! Hard to get, heavy to hold—it is true, it is true."

Beside him that day upon the Stock Exchange had stood a man many years older than himself, rich—as the world counts it—one who was in every daring speculation of the times, whose hand had grown unsteady from hours and weeks of protracted nervous strain. They had been talking together when a telegram was brought in and given to his friend. He saw him read it; saw his suddenly whitened face, and caught him as he fell.

"Too far, Van Norman," he heard him faintly say, "TOO FAR—*this time*;" then all was over, and the heart, tried beyond its power of endurance, refused to beat.

Van Norman thought of this as he sat here listening to the wind outside and the beating of the rain against the windows. Again and again he caught the falling figure; again and again heard the half-broken words, “Too far!”

And for his own gold, that lay in the coffers of the bank, or was secure in mortgages, bonds and real estate—what of it? What of it? Why had he wasted the days of the one youth God would give him? He had wrested wealth from the country; to the country it should return. Into his heart there had crept the hope that it would some day have gone to enrich those children who so lately had come into his home. Now they would not need it, it might go where it would. O bootless task that he had set himself!

Gently the door opened, and Gwyneth came in, crossing over to him so softly he did not hear her step.

“Uncle Eddie; Uncle Eddie, dear! here is little Raphael Reggeoletto’s violin.”

“Ah! Gwyneth,” he answered, “it was very kind of you to come; I was a bit lonely, I believe.”

“Were you, Uncle Eddie?” she asked, “I have been *almost* lonely this afternoon, too.”

“You!” he exclaimed, carefully examining the violin, and turning it over.

“Yes,” she replied, with a long breath, “it has been raining so dreadfully that my old Italian and the music boy didn’t come; it will be another whole seven days before they do!”

“I’m always hearing of that music boy of yours,” he said, absently; then, “this is a very wonderful old violin—an Amati—it is one of the few. I fancy it must have been in your mother’s family for many years. It is genuine.”

“A name is on it somewhere; written very, very small, ‘Raphael Reggeoletto,’ Uncle Eddie.”

“Yes! ah, yes, here it is,” he answered, laying the instrument gently down. Then he sighed. The child looked at him wistfully, noting the sadness of his face, the weariness of his eyes, the ineffaceable lines that the chisel of care had graven upon his forehead, the heavy frosted hair upon his temples. She was troubled, and laid her warm little hand on his knee.

“Ah! Gwyneth, I am not good company to-night; I’m afraid you’ll not come down again. The room upstairs must be somewhat brighter than this; somewhat, I fancy.”

“You are always good company to me,” she answered, earnestly, “and I come because I like to; but—but—you are not happy to-night, Uncle Eddie, are you?”

“No,” he answered, “no, Golden Locks, not very. You seem to have discovered it.”

“I know what it is,” she said, “I know what it is that you have been thinking of,” raising her eyes to the baby’s face; “I have thought of him, too, a great deal, Uncle Edwin, since we came. At first, you know, I used to wish and wish that he were here. Every day I’d wish it, and many times a day, whenever I saw the picture. He is so dear, so lovely,”—pausing. “Well, one night I happened to look at Madelon when she was knitting, and I saw how old she was—how old and sorrowful. Then I thought of Daisy and Maida, and even me, how we will grow old some day, Uncle Edwin, all of us. We cannot help it, you know, but I never thought of it before. I’m glad,” she added, “that my mother will never grow old. I am glad, Uncle Eddie, that *he* will never grow old, but be a baby always!” So saying, she kissed him of her own sweet accord upon the whitened hair, as a rose might brush against a rock where its branches had climbed, as a violet might bend and swing against a forest tree; then she went away.

When the man was left alone he walked over to the high mantel, and, folding his arms, rested his head upon them. Before his eyes the panorama of the day’s bitter hours unrolled itself. Again he lifted that heavy weight and felt for the pulseless heart; then slowly, slowly the vision passed. In its place came the form of a child; her tender voice sounded in his ears. What was it she had said?

Ah! he remembered; “I am glad, Uncle Edwin, that *he* will never grow old.” O words most wise—most wise beyond her years in deed and truth.

Then he, who had borne the heat and burden of the day, and run the race where every man is against his brother and the one who falls is trodden underfoot, lifted his face to where that little son of his smiled down at him in ever radiant beauty, and looking long upon him thus, into his weary spirit there stole sweet peace.

CHAPTER XIV.

Some days after the cablegram reached Van Norman, two letters came from Captain Trevelyan—one for him and one for the three little maids.

They were written shortly before he left England for the south. In the one to Van Norman he simply said that news had been sent him of the sudden and violent death of Antonio Reggeoletto the younger, and that of his father, which followed almost directly after from the shock and grief. The will of old Antonio Reggeoletto, when found, was very concise, leaving everything to his son; but in case of his death, to his niece, Margarita Trevelyan, and her children. There were no other heirs. No mention had been made of the boy Raphael, who without doubt had long since perished at sea. However, Captain Trevelyan said, now he would leave no stone unturned to find him, as he felt that he had quite equal rights with his sister. Reggeoletto should be advertised for at all the principal ports, and in every possible way. The extent of the fortune was utterly unknown to him, but he would have everything made perfectly straight and clear upon returning to Naples. The old home of the Reggeolettos certainly held curios and many things which would be of value and interest to the children in years to come. That should be left as it was. He did not expect to make a settlement of the business and reach New York again until the middle of May. Captain Huntington, who was a friend of his, and in the employ of the company, had been secured to take his place in command for some months. He thanked Van Norman and Violet that they had made his heart so happy regarding his dear daughters, and entrusted them still further to their kindness and care. He would again see the place, he said, where he had found that which, now it was taken away, the world could not give him again.

To Daisy, Maida and Gwyneth he wrote:

"My Little Daughters,—

"I will not see you again until spring has come—not, indeed, till nearly summer—but you will be with me in my thoughts every hour of every day.

"I go to Naples, to the old home of your mother, which has been left empty by the death of the two Reggeolettos. I know nothing of the estate of your grand-uncle, except that such as it is it belongs to you; therefore, I go to find out, and furthermore to

see that the old house, which was your mother's home for so many years, and her father's before, be left untouched, that you may see it, darlings, as I saw it in a year of the past.

"We sailors are not scribes, you know, so I will just send the love of my heart, and leave Maida and Baby in Daisy's care, and all of you in the charge of dear old Madelon and Aunt Violet. Mr. Barton wishes me to remind you of him. Brady is well and hearty. I trust you will often hear your friend, Bishop Salisbury, and that you sometimes see the old organ-man and his boy, as Gwyn seems to like them.

"I know, sweethearts, that you remember your mother always, and her gentle words; while you do, I have no fear for you at any time.

"Your father,
"JOHN TREVELYAN."

They were rather unhappy for the rest of that day, and when Aunt Violet had finished reading the letter to them (which they all read separately, and together afterwards), there were tears in their eyes, and Maida threw herself on the sofa, refusing to be comforted.

"I never did like my grand-uncle Reggeoletto, anyway, and if he hadn't died father would have been here next month."

"Maida," said Gwyneth, gravely, "you have got to like him now he is dead. It's quite different about liking people when they are dead, you know."

"No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't," came in muffled tones from the pillows. "He just knew we wanted father, and so he died now."

"That is a dreadful thing to say, Maida Trevelyan," said Baby, walking away.

But the days went by—as the days always do, no matter what comes—and taking a calendar, they marked off each as it passed.

It was now near the end of February.

Every evening after tea, in the lengthening twilight, Gwyneth would go down to the quiet room and watch for Van Norman's appearing. He always came, sooner or later; never was she disappointed. They would be very gay sometimes; she and Fritz, who was her shadow, could bring smiles to his face when the world's paid comedians failed to do so.

Never, he had said, would he sadden her again, but would set himself the task—the pleasure, rather—of making that hour of the day the one she loved best.

Sometimes he would read. Now it was the "Pied Piper" of Hamelin Town; now, the "Jackdaw of Rheims"; again, a scrap of Eugene Field, or a passage from "The Bells."

And she would listen, with delighted face, to the voice she loved; such a fine voice, rich, low-pitched, with the beautiful soft intonation of the South, that long years spent in the North had not worn away. Again, perchance, they would walk around the sombre place, hand-in-hand, pausing before the poets; then he would take down the books of each in turn, and read some verse or couplet that her mind could master, over and over till she knew it by heart; some line of beauty, some wonderful thought that, in melodious words, had gone "echoing down the corridors of time."

Very fond was he of the poets of his own country, and often waited before them during that twilight hour; or afterwards, when the lamps were lit, and the room full of soft glowing light, they would talk of the things they loved best. In that delightful library were some of Carroll's wonderful nonsense stories. (Probably they had but lately taken their residence upon those classic shelves.) So Baby heard of Alice and all her queer, queer following.

They also enjoyed the adventures of that fortunate little "Dorothy" who went through dreamland with "The Admiral's Caravan." Soon "The Admiral," "Sir Walter Rosettes," and the absurd "Highlander" were to them as old and never-to-be-forgotten friends. As for "Sahara" (whom that most ridiculous caravan fed on glue, with the praiseworthy object of stiffening her up, as she suffered from perennial weakness of the knees, and whom they called "Sara" for short), they never read of her and her lament without enjoying it.

"And yet, Uncle Edwin," said Baby, after he had finished reading it aloud for the third time, and she had listened with undiminished enthusiasm —"and yet, Uncle Edwin"—still half smiling, and with her eyes shining —"it is pitiful! Just think of that line—

" 'As for a camel, she's
Ridden by families;
Any load does for me!'

"or that last one—

" 'A camel's all humpy and lumpy and bumpy;
ANY shape does for me.'

"Indeed, Uncle Eddie, it is true; they are a *very* uncomfortable shape. I should like to see a little one; perhaps it would look fresher than the old ones; *they* all have such a worn-off look, as if they had put their coats on the wrong side out; and they do wear such a meek expression, don't they?"

Oh, yes, they liked those stories very much.

One evening he brought home the "Jungle Tales," and Gwyneth made the acquaintance of all the captivating jungle people, the monkey people and Kaa, Bagheera, and Mowgli, and grew fond of them every one.

But the "Pied Piper"! He was most favored of all. "Do read about him again, Uncle Eddie," she would say, "I always love him; I think I can see

" 'His sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
And lips where smiles go out and in.' "

Those were hours of happy memory, during which they grew to know each other well.

Now and then her uncle would play for her; now on his own violin, again on the Cremona, and these, the child thought, were the best times of all. She would sit in the great arm-chair and listen, so still, with those sea-blue eyes of hers growing dark and darker as the melody flooded the room. The flickering fire would light up her hair, turning it to waves of molten gold. It would fall on her dimpled hands, and make them as ivory-white as the little image of St. Patrick she so often held.

Well might the old horned owl, aswing in his corner upon the silver moon, stare at her, and stare again; he was a lucky fellow to have anything so lovely to stare at.

So Van Norman would often think when the time came for her to go away to the nursery.

CHAPTER XV.

Three Saturdays had gone by, and the old Italian and his organ failed to appear. The children had passed busy days—days of coming and going, and of many pleasures—but the Saturday afternoon always found Gwyneth talking and thinking of her music boy.

"Indeed, madam," said old Madelon to Mrs. Van Norman, on the fourth Saturday, when she was paying them her morning visit, "indeed, madam, I wish in my heart that to-day that absent organ will come! She did watch last week, the week before, and the week before. Miss Daisy and Miss Maida, they do not notice or much care; they say, 'Oh, he comes not, Gwyn; but do not yourself trouble, he will make himself to appear next week!' but my Baby, madam, she look, and she look, and she look, and she say nothing; but when she leave the windows her eyes are full of tears."

"Whatever makes her care so much about it, Madelon? She is, indeed, a strange child. Does she often take such fancies, do you know?"

"Not often, madam; but sometimes. Once it was the child of a miner, one who goes down to the coal, away in Cornwall; often she would, with her mother, go to see this small child, who was ill of a long illness—the decline; and my Baby would grow so fond of her, so fond; everything she loved she would carry to her, and talk, and talk. Then the little one died, and Miss Gwyneth did fret for long. We wish not to see her take these violent fancies, madam, for with them might come much unhappiness."

"Yes, indeed, I quite understand, Madelon," answered Mrs. Van Norman. "Do you not think it would be best for them all to go out now? I will leave Gwyneth with you this afternoon when I take Daisy and Maida, for we are going such a long way it might tire her."

"Yes, madam, that would be well. I will now dress them; there is no wind, and the sun does most brightly shine; it is even like my Italy."

When they were all wrapped up in their furs, Flitters took them for a walk. Fritz went, too, in his funny little crimson coat.

Young he was and light of heart; the lines had fallen unto him in pleasant places; his life was rose-colored and a perpetual holiday; therefore to see him take his walks abroad was a pleasant sight. He regarded the earth as his own, and everything upon it as made especially for him to investigate. Each

English sparrow they saw—and their name was legion—apparently offered him a pressing and-not-to-be-disregarded invitation to pursue and capture it. Often did he pursue, never did he capture.

The perambulators they met were to him "a joy forever." As he had never been personally acquainted with a baby, he allowed himself to miss no opportunity of finding out what one was like; so when he espied a small carriage he would fly to it, stand upon his bandy hind legs, and, in spite of protesting nursemaid, poke his wee cold nose and long flapping ears around till he discovered what his soul desired. Sometimes the baby liked him, sometimes it did not; and when it lifted up its voice in protest and attuned to woe, he would fall back upon his haunches and howl dismally, while Daisy, Maida and Gwyn, with Flitters in the rear, hurried to the scene, offering apologies to the nursemaid, and soothing words and kisses to her afflicted charge. If the baby happened to be unusually sweet, they found it difficult to tear themselves away. Generally one of them would undertake to administer a mild form of punishment to the culprit, but he persistently offended again, and thereby they made the acquaintance of nearly all the dear babies in that vicinity.

On that particular Saturday the children had a most interesting walk; every baby for blocks around appeared to be out, and, thanks to Fritz, had friendly interviews with them, so they enjoyed themselves immensely.

After luncheon, Mrs. Van Norman took Daisy and Maida away, while Baby stayed with Madelon. The sun went in; the sky turned gray, and a wind came up from the sea, damp and cold.

"I'm glad you stopped with me, my lamb," said the old nurse, from the cosy seat where she was resting.

"Yes, Madelon, now I will be able to watch for my Italian and his boy," replied the child, walking over to the window, and looking anxiously up the street.

CHAPTER XVI.

About four o'clock Van Norman turned homeward. His wife had said she was going to take the two children out, and leave Gwyneth at home, so as he walked he thought of the child. In his pocket was a new *St. Nicholas*, and he intended reading it to her at once. Her face too often wore a grave and serious expression, he thought, and of late her lovely mouth had fallen into curves too sad for a child. She had grown dear to him, very dear; he said as much to himself that afternoon as he bent his head against the buffeting wind.

When he reached home, and Wilkinson opened the heavy doors, he told the old butler to send up word to Miss Gwyneth that he would like to have her come down to the library, and soon she came.

"Uncle Eddie, dear," she said, "won't you come up to the nursery this afternoon and see me? I am all alone with Madelon, and I want to watch for my music boy; then you can see him, too."

He drew a heavy breath.

"It's years since I was in that room, Golden Locks," he said.

"Well, come now, then," she answered, softly, taking his hand and drawing him toward the door.

Together they went up the stairs, where they could look down upon the three Crusaders ever holding the lamps above their helmeted heads; together they went through the long halls, together they reached the nursery.

One moment the man waited, holding back a heavy white curtain and looking in. All was as it had been when a baby of three summers lived there, in the long ago. Before his eyes rose a mist, hot and blinding, then he felt the clinging of soft little fingers to his arm, and saw the child's sweet face before him.

"Come," she said, persuasively, and as he would not again grieve her, he went in.

No colors mottled the polished floor to-day, for the sun was hidden behind dark clouds, but the beautiful Shepherd had not changed. He stood as of old, ever patient, ever waiting, ever wonderful; and as Van Norman

looked again upon the gracious, well-beloved figure, he was glad he had come, glad once more to be in that room of many memories.

The old nurse arose when they entered. “I am most happy, signor, that you come to visit us,” she said, with a curtsey.

“Thank you, Madelon,” he answered, “do not let us interrupt your knitting.”

“Will you not sit over here by the window, Uncle Edwin?” asked Gwyn. “See! in this big wicker chair,” pulling it out, “it is very, very comfortable, then I will sit *so* in my rocking-chair, where I can talk to you and watch for my music boy.”

“Ah! that boy again—one might easily grow jealous of him.”

“You need not, dear Uncle Eddie,” laying one hand in his, “not for a minute; but I have been thinking of what you said a gentleman was, ‘one who is faithful, gentle, honest and brave.’ I wish I were *sure* my music boy were all of these. He is gentle, that I know, because I have spoken to him; very gentle in the way he speaks to Flitters, the old Italian man, and Wilkinson, and me. Then he is *honest*, because the other day, the last Saturday he was here, Flitters dropped her brooch when we went to give them the money. You know Flitters’ little gold brooch, don’t you, Uncle Edwin?” anxiously.

“No,” as he shook his head.

“It is a most valuable one; it has ‘*John’s*’ hair in it, in the back, she told me. I suppose,” thoughtfully, “John is Flitters’ brother; well, anyway, she dropped it and didn’t miss it, and after we had gone in that boy of mine found it, and brought it to Wilkinson. He said he saw it glittering on the snow where we had been standing; so he is honest, you see, Uncle Edwin.”

“Yes?” said Van Norman as she stopped. “Yes?” he repeated questioningly.

“It would be harder to find out that he is faithful and brave,” she went on, wistfully; “but I do hope we *will* find out, some day.” Then starting to her feet, and looking down the road—

“Oh! there is the organ now. It’s coming, Madelon; but it’s a long way up yet. Dear, dear me!”

“What is it, Gwyn?” asked Van Norman, who had risen and was standing beside her.

“Why, Uncle Eddie, it doesn’t look like the Italian; no, it isn’t, nor the boy—it’s two others I don’t know.”

Disappointment was in the blue eyes raised to his, and her lips trembled.

“Never mind, Gwyneth; never mind, darling,” he said, vowing that the entire orchestra of man, organ and boy should be found and brought to the house on the morrow. “Don’t vex yourself; I will find out where they are and all about them for you, at once.”

“Thank you so much, Uncle Eddie,” said the child; “I do want to know.”

The man had reached the house by this time, and evidently intended to stop and play. After the first turn of the handle, Gwyn gave a little cry of joy.

“Why, it’s their organ!” she exclaimed.

“Then I’ll go down at once and tell Wilkinson to find out where they got it, and all about the other man and the boy.”

“You are so kind,” she said, with shining eyes; “and will you come up here some other time?”

“I will,” he replied, gently, “I will, indeed.”

The old butler was in the hall listening to the strains without; and as he heard them muffled by distance, they certainly sounded very well.

“Wilkinson,” said Van Norman, coming up to him, “I want you to find out from the men who have that organ where the old man lives who brought it around before.”

“Yes, sir, I will find out at once, sir,” opening the door.

“And Wilkinson.”

“Yes, sir.”

“You had better make a note of the name or number of the street, and of the house where he lives, and the man’s name. See there is no mistake. Ask about the boy, also.”

“Yes, sir,” he answered, hurrying out.

Van Norman waited. Presently Wilkinson appeared, evidently successful.

“You have it?”

“Yes, sir, ’ere it is, sir,” handing him the address.

“The man’s name is Gouvisi; this street is on the water front. I think you will have no difficulty in finding them, Wilkinson.”

“Shall I go to-night, sir?”

“At once;” then handing him some money, “go the easiest, quickest way you can, and bring me word.”

Afterwards he went into the library. By and by he heard his wife and the two children come in, and go laughing and talking up the stairs. They were late, for it was now after six o’clock. Gwyneth would not come to-night, so he determined to take her word when Wilkinson brought it.

Daisy and Maida had spent the afternoon at a fancy fair held for a charity that Mrs. Van Norman was interested in. They came in now flushed and excited, and with their arms full of parcels.

“Oh, Gwyneth, we have thought of you so often this afternoon,” cried Daisy; “we do wish you had been with us; it was a perfect fairyland!”

“Yes, Baby dear, you really missed a great deal; but we have brought you lots and lots of things! Just open the parcels,” Maida said, as Madelon took off her cloak.

Gwyneth untied the packages with words of delight, while the others stood watching.

“Aunt Violet and both of you are very kind, very kind,” she said, admiring a gay little jester, with silver bells hanging from many points of his tunic and cap, and feeding Fritz with a bonbon at the same time.

“Yes, dear, she is kind,” said Daisy; “and we went into *all* the booths, and saw the May-pole dance, and bought silken flags—‘Stars and Stripes,’ you know—from Uncle Sam, and rode on ‘Alexander the Great,’ ”—pausing.

“Rode on whom?” asked Gwyneth.

“Oh, the gray donkey! There was a donkey-ring, you know, and they had scarlet blinkers on, and gold and leather harness, and bells,” said Maida.

“Did they?”

“Yes, dear, and an old woman who lived in a shoe, and a Gypsy fortune-teller who was lovely! and a little French baker with a tray and sweets on it; and ever so many flower girls; and a Ferris-wheel; and a great white camel, with beautiful trappings and fringes of silver and purple, and you could ride on him, dear—but we didn’t, of course!”

“A camel?” said Gwyneth; “I haven’t seen a camel since I was quite little, when father took us to the Zoo in London. Was he all humpy and bumpy and lumpy?”

“That was only a year ago, Baby,” answered Daisy, with a sad expression coming into her eyes. She remembered who had been with them then.

“Why do you ask that absurd question about his being humpy—and—what was it, Gwyn?” asked Maida.

“That is just a line of the ‘Camel’s Lament,’ that Uncle Edwin read me the other evening in the library.”

“Oh, I see,” said Maida, “Uncle Eddie! Oh, that’s the reason you like to go down to the library! Does he *always* read to you?”

“No, not always; sometimes we talk, sometimes he plays.”

“Well, anyway you wish you had been with us, don’t you, darling?” said Maida; “but never mind, we will tell you all the rest of it after tea,” as she heard Madelon say that it was quite ready.

“I should like to have been there and seen it all, especially the great white camel in purple and silver; but I would rather have been at home, Maida,” with a sweet smile.

“Why would you, dear?” asked Daisy.

“For one thing,” she answered, “Uncle Eddie came up here to the nursery with me. He said he had not been here for many years. You know why it was, Daisy?”

“Yes, yes, dear,” replied Daisy, “and what else?”

“Well, he didn’t stay long, but we talked about my music boy, and waited for him to come. When he didn’t come, Uncle Eddie said he would find out where he lived and all about him. So you see *why* I am glad I stayed at home.”

“Oh! Gwyneth Trevelyan, you are a very queer child,” Maida remarked, as she helped herself to a piece of sponge-cake.

CHAPTER XVII.

Major Willoughby and Edwin Van Norman were sitting at the square table in the dining-room. Mrs. Van Norman had left them, and they were just lighting their cigars.

To unaccustomed eyes the room would have seemed singular, as well as beautiful.

It was hexangular in shape, and around it ran a wainscoting of most exquisitely carved cherry-wood; the walls above were painted in shaded reds; the velvet curtains, at door and window, continued the prevailing tone; branching candelabras from the walls and upon the table filled the room with a warm light from the small crimson shades that were like silken poppies.

Five of the panels held, each one, a stag's head, with perfect antlers, and these had been chosen from amongst many for their beauty. In the sixth panel was the wide fireplace, with shining, opalescent tiles, and the high mantel, above which hung the baby's picture.

The table reflected a heavy bunch of roses that drooped in the warm air. The two men sat opposite each other, and between them now hung a faint blue haze.

"Seems to me I've missed something to-night, or somebody," remarked the Major, breaking the silence that had fallen since Mrs. Van Norman departed, and putting up his eye-glass as he gazed around. "Don't it strike you, Van Norman, that there's something lacking? Not in the dinner, old fellow—not in the dinner, you know; but in the a—the a—surroundings?"

"Wilkinson, very probably," said Van Norman. "Simmers served us to-night, and he is certainly not Wilkinson, although he is a good man."

"Ah, yes, Wilkinson, of course! I must be growing absent-minded. Anything happened Wilkinson? Thought he was an institution."

"Nothing has happened to him; but he has gone to discover the whereabouts of that most interesting Italian organ-man and boy that little Gwyneth talks of so much. They did not turn up when she expected them, so I sent the man to find them—that's all."

“Oh! I say, Van Norman, you musn’t spoil those children; Trevelyan has to congratulate himself on the way they have been brought up. Positively never saw nicer children; did you? But you know, old fellow, if you keep going on giving them everything they want, and sending Wilkinson around to find everybody they lose, why, I say, you’ll spoil them; and that’s all there is about it!”

Van Norman glanced up, and there was an unusual expression in his eyes.

“I fancy it would be rather difficult to change Gwyneth,” he said.

“Not at all, not at all, my dear fellow. Little girls are simply women in miniature, don’t you know. Simplest thing in the world to spoil them; give them their head, give them their own way a few times, and where are you? I know, for I have lots of nieces and sisters-in-law in Essex. There was a new one in the last letter.”

“Niece or sister-in-law?” asked Van Norman, rising.

“Let me see,” ruminated the Major, feeling in his pockets. “Had the letter about me somewhere this afternoon. Niece, I think.”

Van Norman laughed.

“You certainly are growing absent-minded, Willoughby,” he said; and then turned the conversation to some affair of the times.

Soon there was a knock at the door, and Wilkinson entered.

“Ah! Wilkinson, did you find them?”

“Yes, sir, the haddress was not quite right, sir, so I ’ad a ’unt; but I found them.”

“Tell us your story, then, Wilkinson.”

“Well, sir,” said the old butler, “I took the cars down to the water front, and found that this street was near the docks. Malcolm street it is, and a bit of a short one,—’ard to find. ’Owever they two pulled that ’eavy cart all this way I won’t hever see, sir! I ’unted almost an hour before I found them.”

“Go on,” said Van Norman.

“Well, I came to the ’ouse, sir, and went hup to their rooms; they was at the top, sir. The people below told me the hold man Gouvisi lived there. When I got to the top, a bit blowed, I hadmit, I stopped, for I ’eard the sound

of a violin. It was not far off, and being played that 'eavenly it brought tears to my heyes."

"Ah! you are fond of music, Wilkinson, are you?" remarked Willoughby.

"Oh, yes, sir, very! I play a little; but only on the 'umble concertina."

"Indeed!" said the Major. "I used to play that instrument when I was at Eton, years ago; I have not heard one for ages."

"Go on, go on, Wilkinson!" as the old man stood waiting.

"Yes, sir, as I was asaying, someone was playing the violin till I could 'ardly draw my breath for listening. 'Owever, I knocked at the door I 'ad the number of, and it was hopened by a little girl; she was about Miss Maida's size. There was a bed in the room, and the hold Italian lay in it. A woman sat bolstered in a chair, and in the centre of the room, beside a little table where there was a poor hoil lamp, sir, stood Miss Gwyneth's music boy." The old butler paused, then continued, " 'E were aplayin' the violin, sir."

"He?" said Van Norman, quickly.

"Yes, sir; that 'eavenly, sir, I seem to 'ear it yet. And to see 'im too! Well, he stopped when I went in, and I found hout about them. The hold man is hill sir, very, and 'is wife is, too; and the boy 'as been akeeping them by playing on the streets; 'e could not come as far as this, because 'is fingers got numb. I asked 'im 'is name, sir, and 'e said 'e was called Gouvisi. 'E said they would come when the hold man was better, and seemed very pleased when I told 'im who 'ad sent me. I made so bold as to hadd that *Miss Gwyneth* wished to know; she 'as been speaking to me of them, sir."

"You are all right, Wilkinson, go ahead. Is that all?" asked Van Norman.

"That is hall, hexcept that I made again so bold as to leave the rest of the money you gave me with them, and they were very grateful;" then, as he turned to go, "I 'ope I did right; the boy is a fine little chap, sir."

"Thank you, Wilkinson, quite right; you may go."

"Now you can set the little Beauty's heart at rest, I suppose, Van Norman," remarked the Major, "but I say, look out and don't spoil her before Trevelyan gets back from Italy. I must be off"—taking out his watch —"have to meet St. Albans at nine; so good-night, old fellow."

"Good-night, Major, good-night."

When he was alone, Van Norman went over to the table where lay the violin case, opened it, and took out the thing he loved. "I wish I could hear

some music to-night not my own," the man said to himself, drawing the bow over the strings. "Wilkinson's story keeps going through my head; I fancy I can see that boy and hear him play. The old fellow was quite graphic, quite graphic! Dear little Gwyneth, she takes such fancies;" then, as the thought struck him, "I rather believe she has taken one to me!"

His rugged face softened, he raised the violin to his shoulder, and soon was lost in a dreamy tune.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Next morning the children went downstairs as usual to breakfast. They were a joy to the eyes, Aunt Violet thought, as they entered. One could find it in the heart to wish that they might stay thus, for now they were the embodiment of youth, innocence, and delight.

"Gwyneth, dear," she remarked, after the morning greetings were given, "do you know what little girls are made of?" smiling at the child, and dropping square lumps of sugar into the blue teacups.

"Sugar and spice and all things nice, I've heard," answered the child, "but of course that's only what Mother Goose says; it's just nonsense, isn't it?"

"Oh, well, that's a good recipe; but I know one little girl who was made of flowers!"

"Flowers, Aunt Violet?"

"Yes, darling," pouring out the tea, "her hair was made of daffodillies, her eyes of violets, her face of snowdrops—of snowdrops and wild roses—and her mouth a rosebud; oh, she was as sweet—as sweet!"

"Indeed, she must have been, Aunt Violet; who was she?" raising those truthful eyes of hers questioningly to Mrs. Van Norman.

Maida and Daisy laughed lightly, and Mr. Van Norman said, "Violet, dear, I'll have to tell Willoughby to talk to you; he has some ideas on the guidance of the young."

Mrs. Van Norman took no notice of him, but shook her fluffy head, and only answered Gwyn, "I'll tell you some day, sweetheart, if you are good."

"There are wonderful bells in the churches here, Uncle Edwin; they must be made of silver, I think. Don't you love to hear the Sunday morning bells?" asked Daisy, turning to him.

"Well, yes, Daisy, I suppose one would miss them if they didn't ring," the man answered, a troubled look creeping into his eyes. It was long since those bells had meant very much to him.

"I like the service at sea the best of all," said Maida. "I don't like sitting still in church; I suppose I shouldn't say so, but really I don't. At sea, though," drawing a long breath, "that is the way father always goes to

church, with the sky above and the water all around, and only a few, few people in the very centre of it all. The only time I ever feel solemn, Uncle Eddie, is when I go to church at sea. I never feel at all the same way in a building—there are always so many lovely bonnets, you know," putting her head on one side with a quick movement.

"I can quite imagine the bonnets upsetting some people, and counteracting the Rector's influence," gravely.

"Yes, they upset me a little," she answered, nodding. "A good deal, I should say."

When they were about to leave the room, Gwyneth went over to Van Norman. He held out his two hands and took hers.

"Wilkinson found out," was what he said to her unspoken question.

"You are so kind to trouble about it, Uncle Edwin, and Wilkinson, too. Are they all right? I do hope they are all right!"

"The music man is not, but the music boy is. The old man is ill. I will send someone to look after him; there is a woman ill there, too."

"Thank you," said the child again, "but are they very, very poor? How do they get enough to eat if they do not take the organ around?"

"You see, the boy has been playing the violin on the streets; but he could not go far, as his fingers grew too numb to handle the bow—at least, that is the story," watching her.

"The violin! the violin!" she cried. "Oh, I am glad he plays the violin. And you say he takes all the money home to those poor people, Uncle Edwin?" leaning towards him, and speaking eagerly. "I am glad you sent Wilkinson. Now I know that he is *faithful*. Gentle, and honest, and faithful! I have only to prove that he is *brave*, and I can tell Maida, and know in my own heart, that he is a gentleman." Then she went away, looking back often to smile at him; and Van Norman watched her go, with a strange expression on his face.

There were letters constantly coming from their father in those days, "short letters—dear letters," telling them how he took them about with him in his heart. They were sad letters, too; Daisy was always very quiet for a day or two after they came.

He wrote to his sister often, thanking her again and again for the care she gave the children.

One day, after reading a letter to her husband, Mrs. Van Norman put it back slowly into the envelope, and sat with folded hands looking absently ahead.

"What is troubling you, Violet?" asked her husband.

"Oh, it's Jack!" she said; "who could ever take *this* for one of his letters. There's the scent of the sea about it, and that's the only thing like him."

"He's been hard hit, poor fellow," said the man, "but we will have him here in May, and the sight of the three little maids will pull him through."

"That ought to," she answered, "but you don't remember Jack as I do. He was the lightest hearted, the gayest, with a laugh it did you good to hear, and he's lost it all. Why, Edwin, did you not notice his hair? It is turning gray. It was so yellow and curly. Perhaps you did not notice, but I did. If we could only keep him here with us for awhile—with us and the little ones."

"Yes," he replied, "or, I was thinking, if we could all go back to Italy with him during the summer to see the old Reggeoletto homestead; would you not like that?"

"Oh, that is a good plan," she cried, "nothing could be better. If you can manage to go with us, and Jack agrees, we will go in June or July."

"Willoughby crosses about the end of June. We could all sail together, if that would please you?"

"Indeed it would be quite delightful to have the Major; he appreciates the children, I think."

"Yes, I believe he does. He's a good adviser regarding the management of children, is Willoughby," remarked Van Norman laughingly, as he went out.

CHAPTER XIX.

It was spring, no doubt of it. The sparrows proclaimed it upon the housetops. The Broadway shop windows told the tale so plainly that he who ran might read. Flowers were everywhere. Gone were the fascinating winter trappings of fur, and in their place had come no less bewitching and ensnaring boas of feathers, and little fly-away capes of silk and lace. The tailor-made girl also was abroad.

Before all the club-houses and grand hotels stood great urns and baskets of pansies; the purple and yellow darlings turning their faces up to passers-by, nodding as though to say, "This time we've come to stay."

In the country "all the trees on all the hills unfurled their thousand leaves." In the city squares were immense beds of blue and white hyacinths. Sitting on the park benches at noontide might be seen those whose faces told the story of illness, trouble and want; of the struggle for existence during the long bitter months just over. Now some of them at least could say, "Gone is 'the winter of our discontent!' " for with such a blue sky above, such a soft and tender green on every side, such a warm velvety air, fresh from the sea, blowing in their faces, who could be entirely sad?

So thought Van Norman as he crossed Washington Square on his way back to lunch. He gave of his abundance always to those who came in his way and needed help. Having once been poor himself, he did not forget. Old Mr. Browning alone knew where the immense sum of money went that was set aside each year for the unfortunate.

But the man was thinking to-day, as he saw about him the faces of those who had been prisoners in hospitals, and sojourners in dark and dismal places of the city, how little could be done for so many, so many; and of how good a thing it was that spring and summer came back to the earth.

When he reached his own house it struck him that it, too, repeated the same sweet story. On all the stone window-ledges were banks of pansies, with their pretty heads turned downward toward the streets. One big gray balcony was wreathed in daffodils; they made him think of Gwyneth, and of what his wife had said about her hair. Little Gwyneth! he hoped that Jack would not take her away. Sometimes he forgot that she did not belong to himself, she seemed to have been with them always; but she was not his—he must remember that—she was Trevelyan's. Had he not all his life—for the

past thirteen years at least—paid the penalty of growing too fond of a child? His face clouded, and he went in with heavy heart.

Mrs. Van Norman and he were alone at luncheon. She was rather quiet, it seemed to him as he rose to leave the table; indeed, they had both been more silent than usual.

"Anything wrong, dear?" he asked.

"Oh, no, Eddie; only another abominable birthday!"

He laughed, looking at the troubled pink and white face.

"I shouldn't think you need mind them," he said, "they don't show."

"You mean, I must be getting used to them, Ed!" with a little petulant shrug of the shoulders. "I know my original one is lost in the mists of antiquity; there is no one alive, I believe, who remembers it!"

"No, sweetheart, mine, I didn't mean that. I meant that you are no older than you look, and that is twenty-four, and when you are very much worried about anything, or tired—twenty-five!"

"That is very charming to hear; no one would believe you had it in you to say such things," she answered, brightening; "but then you know, dear, that no one looks old or gets old nowadays. Some few of us reach thirty, but I never knew of but one woman in my life who got to thirty-five; and she used to own up to it with perfect calmness. She was the most *beautiful* woman I ever saw. It would have made no difference if they had said she was as old as 'She.' Her hair was always rolled off her face, too. When anyone can stand *that* she is perfect. The men used to wait around her to give them a dance—at balls in London, you know, dear; you never saw her—*three* deep! and the pretty debutante behind would not have her programme half full."

"Indeed?" with an amused expression, "but you must begin to grow a little older, Violet, or I will be such a terrible contrast to you; don't you see?"

"Ah, Ed!" laying her curly head against his arm, "I *should* be contented. I had never seen anyone to be compared with you when we were married—but Jack, of course, but Jack—and I have never seen anyone to compare with you since!"

"Thank you," he answered, "thank you, little wife; come with me into the library."

As they were crossing the hall she gave a little laugh. “Age has its compensations,” she said.

“What, particularly?”

“Well, you remember when we were married I had a few freckles, don’t you? Just a few?”

“Yes, dear, I remember; but I considered them becoming—made you look whiter where there were none, you know.”

“Oh, you were good enough to say that; but, of course, it was absurd! They were my chief cause of unhappiness, and now they are all gone. However, when I am an old lady—oh, yes, there are old, old ladies; it is in the intervening stages there is nobody—then I will have Daisy and Maida and little Gwyneth. What joy to launch three such beauties upon the world! Maida will be a duchess, I have not a doubt. She is going to be the most beautiful.”

“Do you think so?” he said, walking across to a cabinet, unlocking it, and taking out a box.

“Of course.” Then, as he handed her the box, open—“Emeralds! what wonderful emeralds!” she cried, enraptured, “you are so good to me, so very, very kind. Emeralds for May! I am glad my birthday is on May-day. I will take them up to the nursery and show them to the children. Oh, thank you again and again; and Eddie, this afternoon, if I drive to the office for you at five, will you come home with me?”

“Yes, sweetheart,” he said, watching her as she went out of the room. How pleased she is—almost like a child in her haste to show the children her gift—he thought. No, she was not growing older. Life was still a joyous thing to her. How could she change? Could butterflies grow old? Whoever saw one? Do they turn gray and white, and weary of the summer flowers? They die, of course. You now and then find one with its exquisite wings quite still; it does not flutter when you touch it, but it is not old—it is not old.

CHAPTER XX.

Violet Van Norman ran up to the nursery with her box of emeralds. The gleaming stones were perfect in form and color. Every little while on her way she would stop, open the box, and look in at the beautiful things.

"See, darlings!" she cried to the three children, who were being dressed to go out; "see what Uncle Eddie has given me; it is my birthday!"

They all wished her many, many happy returns of the day, and, with exclamations of delight, gazed wonderingly at the jewels.

"Do put them on, Aunt Violet," said Maida.

"Oh, dear, I must be in evening dress to wear them—well, perhaps the bracelet."

"No, Aunt Violet; the collar, and the ring, too; and the girdle. Oh, I never saw anything like that!"

"Do you like them, Gwyneth?" turning to the child.

"Oh, yes, indeed, they are lovely; but I like pearls best—a *little* best, that is. Mother had a string of pearls; they are Daisy's now, and she will wear them when she is grown up. Those I like next, though. Aunt Violet, look! they flash from light to dark."

"Do you remember, darling," said Daisy, "what they read last Sunday about the city where mother is? Aunt Violet, that is why I listened and remembered, I fancy. All the foundations are of precious stones."

"And each of the twelve gates," said Baby, lifting up her great blue eyes seriously to Mrs. Van Norman, "each of the twelve gates is a pearl. I listened, too, Daisy."

"Yes, dear; yes, I know," said Mrs. Van Norman, slowly, putting the emeralds away and shutting the box. "Now, Madelon, Miss Daisy and Maida are to go out, and then come home and stay with you. I am going to take Baby with me this afternoon. Do you want to drive down to Uncle Edwin's office, and bring him home early, Gwyn?"

"Oh, yes, Aunt Violet, I would rather do that than anything," she answered.

So at half-past four they started. It was a glorious afternoon, and the trees were in their beauty, for it was lilac time.

"I believe Simmers and Brown have new buttons on their green coats, Aunt Violet," said the child; "they glitter like new ones."

"All the livery is new, dear; it has to be in the spring, you know," she answered, thinking how lovely the golden hair looked under the child's wide black hat.

"I suppose so," said Gwyn; "and, Aunt Violet, dear, it's an awfully long time since I saw my music boy; he will have grown quite tall by this time, I believe."

Aunt Violet smiled. "Oh, it's only five or six weeks, is it not? And you know we send them a big, big basket of things every Saturday, Gwyneth."

"Oh, yes, and it's very good of you; but I am sorry we missed him when he called at the house, though."

"Did he come?" asked Mrs. Van Norman, bowing to some people that drove by; "I had forgotten. Perhaps you did not tell me."

"Yes, I told you, Aunt Violet. He brought his violin, Wilkinson says, and was going to play for us."

"Was he?" she said, looking again at the eager little face.

"I was *dreadfully* disappointed," said the child, "and I *hope* he will not come when we are out again."

"I hope not, dear; and here we are at the office. Come in, I am going to introduce you to Mr. Browning. We may have to wait for Uncle Eddie, anyway."

Mr. Browning, a small white-haired old gentleman, in heavy gold spectacles, with twinkling eyes behind, shook hands with Gwyn, and talked to her very nicely, she thought.

"I am interested in little girls," he said, looking over his spectacles at her, "because I have a lot of little granddaughters."

"Have you, indeed, Mr. Browning?" she replied; "I think it must be very pleasant to have a grandfather. I never had one."

"I think it would be very pleasant to be *your* grandfather, at any rate, Miss Gwyneth; some two old gentlemen have certainly missed a decided treat."

She laughed merrily at that, and when Van Norman came up he found her deeply engrossed in the histories of the aforementioned grandchildren.

Van Norman was particularly good company that afternoon, and his wife thought often of her emeralds, and smiled whenever she did.

"Brown is going to stop at the florist's," she said, as they drove up to the side of the street. Broadway was then filled with carriages of all descriptions, for the day was perfect. "Come, dear," to Gwyneth. "Come, Eddie, I want you both to go in with me and help decide what I shall have."

"You and Uncle Edwin go over to the roses," said Gwyn; "I would like to see the people going by; I will just stand by the door, Aunt Violet."

"All right, dearie," she answered, as they crossed to the counter.

Gwyneth stood by the open door, watching the passing throng. The odor of the flowers came to her heavily sweet and overpowering. Outside the light was dazzling. Presently, as she looked up, a familiar figure went by. Could it be? could it be? she thought, clapping her hands.

Yes, it was her music boy! She ran out quickly, but he was gone. No, there he was crossing the road; oh, she *must* speak to him!

On she went, possessed by the one thought.

Van Norman had missed her, and had gone to the door.

As she crossed she gave a little call, and the boy, some way ahead, heard and turned.

At that moment, two carriage horses fresh from the stables, came dashing by. Just before they reached the children they shied violently. Van Norman, following, saw the boy spring forward, catch the child, and throw her lightly to one side. Then a red mist came before the man's eyes, and he saw only a confusion of people, and two children on the road. Quickly the way was cleared, and they were carried to the walk. Van Norman took Gwyneth from the man who had reached her first.

She was white, but not unconscious; not even injured, he hoped.

"Are you hurt, darling—are you hurt at all?" he cried, with trembling lips and unsteady voice.

"No, Uncle Edwin, only just my arm; but he is killed. Put me down—go to him!" she cried, with wide and frightened eyes. "Oh, go to him!"

He lifted her to the carriage, where his wife was waiting with colorless face and tightly-clasped hands.

"Is she all right, Edwin?" she asked, with a little sob.

"Take her, her arm is hurt; I must go to the boy."

"What boy? What boy? I did not see it, you know."

But he was gone.

"My music boy," Gwyneth sobbed. "He is killed."

"Your arm, darling; does it hurt you?" cried Mrs. Van Norman, as she saw the strained and agonized look in her eyes.

"My arm? No, there *is* something the matter with it; but I do not feel it much. I wish—I wish they would bring him!"

Van Norman went back to the shop where the boy had been carried. The crowd opened respectfully to let him pass. Inside were two policemen; no doctor had yet come.

"He is quite unconscious," said one of them; "that off-horse struck him with its fore-foot as he caught the little girl. I saw it; there is no mark on him, but he got a bad knock. Shall we ring for the ambulance, or wait for the doctor. I think he had better go to the hospital, sir."

"Take him to my carriage; he will go home with me," said the man. "One of you telephone for a doctor to go direct to my house; for two, or any number, so that they get there by the time we do."

They lifted the slender, boyish figure, and gently carried it away, then laid him as best they could on the seat.

"Here's his violin, sir," said one of the policemen, as the horses started; "it's pretty badly smashed, but he might want to see it."

Brown drove with all the care he could, and over the smoothest roads; but the way seemed endless. Often Van Norman would glance at the child, and wonder at the expression on her face. She never took her eyes from the boy's beautiful features as he lay like a piece of carven marble against Van Norman's sleeve.

"He is not dead, Gwyneth," he said to her. "He is not dead, dear. Do not fear it."

She turned her face to him.

"He is *brave*," she said; "I know now he is a gentleman."

"Yes," he replied; "he *is* a gentleman."

They carried him into the great hall, and from there to the library. The doctors who came said he was suffering from shock and concussion of the brain, and must be kept perfectly quiet.

Gwyneth's poor little arm was broken, and Van Norman put in a bad quarter of an hour while it was being set. She did not say a word as he held her while they put it in the bandages.

"Does it not pain dreadfully?" he asked.

"Yes, rather, dear Uncle Eddie; but he is not *dead*, you know. I keep thinking of that all the time."

Mrs. Van Norman went up to the nursery to tell the children the story, after Gwyneth's arm was set. She had left her sitting in the big chair—a pathetic little figure—for she would not leave the room contentedly.

Old Madelon raised her hands as she listened to her mistress.

"The blessed saints had her in their charge, madam; they saved her this day. I go to my lamb at once. She will want me," shaking her old white head.

"Yes, go, Madelon, and I will stay with Daisy and Maida. The boy is in the library; it was really he who saved her, you know."

"I know, madam, but the saints were there," she answered, going away; "the saints were there."

Van Norman was standing by the sofa, looking down at the boy's still form.

"There is a difference," he said to himself, "between his face and his fortune. He does not look as though he came from the masses, poor little chap, so forlorn, so brave!" The broken violin lay beside him; as the man saw it his eyes filled with unaccustomed tears. Then he looked at the child as she sat so quietly watching.

"Ah! Gwyneth," he said, "I cannot think of what might have been had this lad not caught you!"

At that moment old Madelon entered.

"My lamb! my lamb!" she cried, going over to Gwyneth, and kissing the bandaged arm.

"*Raphael Reggeoletto!*" *she cried,* "*it is my dear lad; it is my dear, dear lad!*"

“I’m all right, Madelon,” the child answered quickly, “but *there* is my music boy. We thought at first he was dead. The doctors say he will be better after a while, though.”

The old woman walked unsteadily over to the sofa, and stood one moment, then she gave a sharp cry, and fell down sobbing beside him. “Raphael! Raphael Reggeoletto!” she cried. “It is my dear lad; it is my dear, dear lad!”

CHAPTER XXI.

Before Van Norman realized what the old nurse said, Gwyneth ran to her. Then he also went over and laid one hand on the bent head. She was trembling, he could see. What strange fancy possessed her—what wandering thought?

"Madelon!" he said, "listen to me. Raphael went away years ago, and would be a man of my age now." Glancing down, he noticed a change had come, and very soon the boy opened his eyes. So dark they were and full of dreams, as though in spirit he had been wandering far from the turbulent scenes of earth. On the white face lay deep violet shadows. He looked at the anxious group watching him breathlessly, then tried to rise upon one arm, but fell back and seemed to sleep again.

Van Norman turned to the old nurse and Gwyneth. "Take her up to the nursery, Madelon; I will call Dr. Lincoln."

She arose and dropped a curtsey of ancient fashion. Taking Baby's hand, she waited a moment with tear-dimmed eyes fastened upon the boy; then she raised them to Van Norman, who was watching her.

"I am not deceived, signor," she said; "this is no other than Raphael Reggeoletto;" and the two went out, closing the door.

In a few minutes Dr. Lincoln, a man who had been family physician and friend for many years, entered. He laid his hand lightly on the slender wrist.

"Is there a change?" asked Van Norman; "I fancied so just now."

"I think he hears us," answered the other. "Hand me that stimulant."

After what seemed an hour to the watching men, the boy opened his deep and questioning eyes again, and turned them upon Van Norman.

"Where is she?" he asked.

"She is all right, my lad, and was here not long ago. Lie still and rest."

He looked up with patient persistency.

"Who called my name, signor?"

"Your name?" replied Van Norman, in startled tones, "your name?"

"Answer him," said Dr. Lincoln.

“Yes, my name, Raphael Reggeoletto. No one calls me that now.” He turned wearily.

“Why,” said Van Norman, with unsteady voice, “it was old Madelon who called you. Old Madelon, do you remember having heard of her?”

He smiled a faint, fleeting smile; then lay quiet, without answering.

“I will watch,” said the doctor; “you go and take a glass of brandy; you look shaken, my dear fellow; you look worn out. The little lad will sleep now, for I think he is all right. He may sleep for hours, indeed.”

Van Norman went into the dining-room and did as the doctor advised. He needed something to pull himself together, he admitted. Ever and ever he saw the dashing horses swerve to one side; ever beheld those two little figures on the road. The boy’s face rose before him oftener than Gwyneth’s, which was strange, he thought.

Who could he be? The name was a coincidence, of course; but what a strange one!

As the man thought, another face came to his mind—a girlish one, with the same haunting, shadowy eyes, dark and mournful; the same olive tints, the same tangle of bronzed hair, all threads of copper color in the sun. It was Daisy Trevelyan. Daisy! Then the picture of the boy returned. They were alike, unquestionably—very, very much alike. This must be Reggeoletto’s son. It flashed upon him as the truth. But where was his father? Why had they never heard of him? He thought and thought, and always the boy’s face was before him.

By and by Wilkinson came in. “You dine at ’ome to-night, sir?” he asked, seeing his master there at this unusual hour.

“Oh, yes, Wilkinson,” Van Norman answered, absently, “we dine always, though the skies fall.”

After the master left, Wilkinson went about polishing a glass here, filling a decanter there, and making everything beautiful; but there was a shakiness in his hand, an unsteadiness in his gait, an unsettled expression in his eye, hitherto unknown. Also, he was decidedly erratic; made fruitless trips around the table and over to the sideboard, but was even more solemn than usual, and quite as slow and ponderous.

After everything was in place, he set a great bowl of narcissus in the centre, and stepped back to view the effect.

"I 'ope heverything is right; but I won't be sure," he said, huskily, "I *won't* be *sure*; I'm that hupset to-night, I'd forgive myself for aforgetting my hown name. When I thinks of what *might* 'ave 'appened, my blood it runs cold, like hicicles! And when I thinks of the Captain, my 'eart it seems as though it were agoing to stop! And when I thinks of that little chap hin there, I feel like I did when once I 'eard Miss Rose Coghlan recite 'The Charge of the Light Brigade.' I told Flitters 'ow it would be. I says, says I, 'Flitters, things ain't agoing to be that *calm* as they 'ave been'; and they *ain't*!"

In the nursery they were just beginning to grow more settled, and tea had been brought in as usual. It was really a charming tea, and looked very pretty when set on the shining round table. There was honey, that Gwyneth loved; a certain kind of entrancing small cake, too, that she had on some occasion been heard to express a liking for. There were strips of toast, and ladies' fingers of bread-and-butter; but though the children admired it very much, they were not able to do more than admire.

Madelon sat in her chair by the chimney-piece, but she did not knit; her thoughts were far away. Gwyneth lay on the sofa, surrounded by many cushions. Daisy was beside her, holding her little bandaged hand, while Maida was everywhere. She insisted on giving Baby all her most cherished possessions; and not content with that, brought them to the sofa and made a pile of them there at the foot.

"I can give them all *back*, you know, Daisy," whispered Gwyn, "and Maida seems to *like* to give them to me; doesn't she?"

"Yes, indeed," answered Daisy.

"You are awfully quiet, Daisy, dear," said the child.

"I am thinking of a great many things, Baby—a great many things. I am glad father will not be back till your arm is better."

"Oh, don't fret about my arm, Daisy; it is not troubling me, for one thing; and if he had not been hurt I would be glad about it."

"Glad, dearest? Not glad, surely, when we are troubled."

"Well, not exactly glad I was *hurt*, but that I had the chance to know how *brave* he was. Ah!" with a puzzled shake of her head, "was it not strange what Madelon said—what she called him, you know?"

"Very, very strange; I suppose he looked as our Uncle Raphael did so many years ago."

"That was it, of course," gravely.

Then Mrs. Van Norman came in and fluttered over to the sofa, talking very brightly about all the treats Baby should have when she was well.

"Aunt Violet," said Gwyneth, "is my music boy better?"

"Oh, yes, dear, you remember we sent up word."

"But can he sit up and talk?"

"Not to-night, but perhaps to-morrow."

"You see," she answered, thoughtfully, falling back on the pillows, "I have a great deal to say to him; will he be here till then?"

"Oh, yes, for we have sent word to his people."

The old nurse came softly over to the sofa where they were. "We are his people, madam," she said.

"I heard, Madelon, what you thought for the moment; but, you know, it could not be."

"Ah, madam, did you not see how like he is to Miss Daisy? If he be not Raphael Reggeoletto—and even the blessed saints could not keep him ever young—he is his son, madam. To-morrow will I know the truth." So saying Madelon went back to her chair.

"Oh, Aunt Violet! it is true; he is like me!" cried Daisy, her two hands tight together, and her eyes wide and dark. "I told Maida and Gwyneth long ago that he reminded me of some one. It was *myself*!"

Mrs. Van Norman leaned over and kissed Baby. "You are all very much excited, darlings," she said. "Now I must go down to dinner, so good-bye for a while; I will be up again before long."

The children looked at each other, and then at old Madelon.

"Daisy, dear, we won't talk any more about it till to-morrow, for then he will tell us himself who he is. No matter what his name is, *he* will be the same," said Baby; "quite the same, you know."

CHAPTER XXII.

Dinner was over, but they still sat at the table. They had said nothing of the afternoon's doings. Each waited for the other to speak. Dr. Lincoln had dined with them, but he had risen when the table was cleared, and insisted upon going back to the library alone, being somewhat anxious yet.

So they waited in silence.

Mrs. Van Norman leaned over, took a few of the narcissus out of the bowl, and fastened them in the lace she wore.

"Violet."

She looked up.

"That little lad in yonder is named Raphael Reggeoletto!"

"So old Madelon says," she replied.

"He *calls himself* by that name; he spoke once, you know."

"And he looks like Daisy," she answered, slowly. "Edwin, it must be! Yes, it must be that he is Reggeoletto's son!"

"I wish he were mine," said Van Norman.

"I wish he were, too, dear"—her voice was very gentle—"for he is quite the most interesting boy I ever saw."

They moved him to another room, and through the night watched while he slept. Dr. Lincoln stayed till late, and, when he left, said that his patient was stronger.

"He is a beautiful boy, Van Norman," he remarked, as he was going, "a beautiful boy to be a waif and stray in a city like this. He has had to rough it, poor little chap, out in all kinds of weather, I suppose, half-clothed and half-starved."

"He will never be a waif and stray again, Doctor," said Van Norman. "If no one claims him, or if I can withstand their claim, and he will come to me, he shall be mine."

"Great heavens! Do you mean to adopt him, Van Norman? You don't know anything about him, you know, my dear fellow."

“I think I do,” he answered, in a strangely clear decided voice, as the doctor went down the steps, “I think I do.”

Next morning they found out that it was all true.

The boy was awake when Van Norman went in, and a bit of color had come into his face. Later the doctor saw him, and said he was all right.

“May he talk?” asked Van Norman.

“Not too much, for he may not remember things, and if it is an effort he must not try.”

“I remember everything,” said the lad, suddenly, “everything.”

When they were alone, Van Norman drew a chair up beside the bed, and laid his firm hand over the one on the coverlid.

“Will you tell me, my lad,” he said, “where your father is?”

“My father, sir? He is dead,” he answered, with eyes growing misty. “He was drowned at sea five years ago. I was with him. There was a dreadful storm, and two sailors were washed overboard—one was my father. We were in the Indian Ocean, sir.”

“What was his name, if you don’t mind telling me?”

“The same as my own, Raphael Reggeoletto. He ran away to sea from Naples, years and years ago.”

“Ah!” said Mr. Van Norman; “and your mother?”

“She died when I was a baby; I never remember her, sir.”

“Do you know of her or her people, my lad?”

“No sir. My father told me nothing of her; but here,” putting his hand to his throat and showing a slender chain, “I have her wedding ring on this, and a picture. Would you like to see them?”

“Yes,” said the man, “I would.”

The boy unfastened the chain and handed it to him. On it hung a wedding ring, and a miniature upon ivory set in pearls. The picture was discolored by sea water, but the face that smiled out of it was the youthful face of Margarita Reggeoletto. Van Norman looked long at the small pearl-set miniature. In it he saw Daisy, Maida, and the boy before him.

“Did you know her, sir?” asked the lad, wistfully. “She was my father’s sister. That was painted when she was but a little child.”

"Yes, I had the happiness of knowing her. By and by, this afternoon or to-morrow, we will have another talk together. Now I must thank you for having saved Gwyneth from what might have been more than death—not that I *can* thank you in words."

The boy's face flushed. "Ah! sir, I am most glad I was able to save her," he answered; "she is so lovely and sweet! When I close my eyes I see those dreadful horses, and her golden hair in the sun."

"Do not think of it, but rest," said Mr. Van Norman, as he left him.

He told his wife the story, and both were satisfied that there was no manner of doubt as to the boy's identity.

"Who will he go to, Edwin?" she asked, an excited tremble in her voice.

"He has no one nearer to him than the Trevelyan's; at least, I think not," answered Van Norman. "He told me nothing of Gouvisi, but I fancy he is a chance acquaintance. I will look after *him*. And now, dear, listen to me. If Jack consents, and the lad also, I will take him—"

"Eddie!" she cried.

"Is it so strange?"

"No, no, and I will be very, very glad to have him for our own," she cried; "but it is so wonderful, the way it has come about!"

"It is," he said, raising his face to the baby's picture. "It is as though *he* had been long away and had come *home* again."

"Yes," she answered, tenderly, "he would have been just so old, and very like him—the same brown wavy hair, the same brown eyes."

"I will not speak to Raphael of this until he has seen Trevelyan. It shall be a free choice," said Van Norman.

Later Aunt Violet told the three little maidens the story, and joy reigned supreme. Old Madelon heard it, too, and went about wearing a look of perfect content. "May I go to my dear lad soon, madam?" she asked.

"Yes, Madelon, this afternoon. We will let you tell him all."

"It will be good to tell and good to hear, madam," she answered.

"When can we see him, Aunt Violet?" asked Maida.

"Very soon, but not to-day."

"Oh, to think of it! Oh, to fancy what father would say!"

They were quite beside themselves. “Just imagine him turning out to be our real cousin, Gwyn!” exclaimed Maida; “it is almost as nice as though he were our brother. He will be with us a good deal, I suppose; and a boy is so useful!” Then, in a thoughtful way, “Boys don’t talk exactly like girls, Gwyneth.”

“No,” said Gwyneth, “don’t they?”

“Well, not *exactly*.”

“How do you know?” asked Gwyn.

“Oh, once at home, last summer, I was swinging on the little front gate, watching some birds—thrushes, I think, for they had speckledy breasts—that were just beginning to fly. They were on a limb of the great larch tree in front of the garden—”

“Yes, what else?”

“Well, while I was swinging, that Peterkin boy came along. Do you remember him? He lived in the tiny stone house, you know.”

“I remember,” said Baby; “his hair was red, very.”

“Yes, that’s the one—and he came up and watched the thrushes, too. They were dreadfully wobbly and excited, and after a minute one *wee, wee* one tumbled off the limb, right on to the ground.”

“Oh, dear,” exclaimed Baby; “go on.”

“And the Peterkin boy said: ‘*Great Scott! he came a cropper!*’ ”

“Did he?” said Gwyn; “that was a very funny thing to say.”

“Well, I thought it was so funny that I always remembered it. I asked him what it meant, and he laughed awfully hard, and asked me what I was giving him—and I wasn’t giving him anything, dear. So that is why I think boys talk so strangely.”

“But, Maida, Raphael, our cousin Raphael Reggeoletto, is not like Mrs. Peterkin’s little boy.”

“Oh, dear no, of course not; and I am glad of it, too. He is a great deal better looking,” answered Maida, as she ran off.

CHAPTER XXIII.

That afternoon old Madelon was alone with the lad a long time. She told him of the way he had been brought home; who the three children he knew by sight so well were; of herself, and the long, long years she had hoped to find his father.

He in turn told of those days of wandering when he sailed and had no home but the ship.

"My father kept me with him after I was five years old," he said, "then, when he was taken away, I got back to New York as best I could. We had often been there, and I knew it better than other cities."

He went on to relate how he had played the violin on the streets, and lived as he might, till he fell in with the old Italian Gouvisi and his wife, two years before. "They were kind," he said, "and I stayed with them."

Old Madelon wept over the hard fortune of the boy. In her mind he and his father had become one.

He had heard of her all his life, and so she was an old friend.

"Tell me, Madelon, who is the gentleman with the white hair and the grave face, the one who comes and sits beside me?"

"He is Signor Van Norman, whose house we are in," said she.

"I wish, Madelon," he answered, "that *he* were Captain Trevelyan."

"Ah, no, my dear lad! There is not anyone upon the world like the Captain!" cried the nurse, "when you *see* him then you will know."

"Perhaps," he answered, slowly, "for he is little Gwyneth's father; but I like the one with the deep eyes and white hair—I like his voice, Madelon."

"Wait, wait, my lad, and see!" she said, leaving him.

They expected Captain Trevelyan very soon. Raphael grew quite well, and he and the three children were the best of friends; but he was oftenest by Gwyneth's side. Her arm tied up in its silken sling made her look very pitiful, they all thought, and they did everything possible to amuse her. Raphael would sit by the window in the white room, and tell them stories of his life, of the time he had been at sea with his father, and later when he was poor and alone in the vast city.

“O, Raphael,” said Daisy, one morning after one of these tales, “don’t tell us any more like that; it makes my heart ache to think that we have had everything and you nothing. Don’t tell us any more.”

“I won’t then, Daisy,” he answered; “but it’s all over now, you know.”

Truly, so it was; and with the adaptability that children alone possess, they all fell into their right relationship.

Van Norman drove with him to see old Gouvisi the first day he was able to go out.

“He was very kind to me, Mr. Van Norman,” said the boy; “I think they will not want me to go away.”

“Do you know whether there is any one thing he wishes?” asked Van Norman.

“Oh, yes, he and his wife want to go back to Italy and take Bébé, their granddaughter, with them.”

“They shall go,” Van Norman answered.

“You are very good, sir, and kinder than any man I ever knew but my father,” said the lad, impulsively, his voice trembling over the words.

On the twenty-fifth of May Captain Trevelyan reached New York. The time had seemed very long since he left, and as for the children, they had checked off every day of it; but the last week did spin itself out to a good length.

Old Madelon overheard Maida, who was possessed of the very spirit of restlessness as his return drew near, remark to Gwyneth, “It’s perfectly absurd, Baby, for people to say every day has the same number of hours. Anyone could tell by their feelings some days are longer than others.”

“I think it must be our feelings that make them seem that way, Maida; they wouldn’t tell us they were all the same if they were not, you know.”

“Well, perhaps not,” was the answer, with a shrug, “but it seems very queer to me; there’s something wrong about it, I think, and it may be the almanacs.”

However, the longest days go by; he came at last, and Mrs. Van Norman took them to the steamer to meet him.

It had been settled that nothing should be told of Raphael till they had reached the house; but the man saw there was a suppressed something about

them. Anyhow, Baby's arm required an explanation, which Aunt Violet gave, going into as few details as possible. But with those clear eyes looking so closely at each of them, and seeming to read their very secret thoughts, it was hard not to tell at once.

After they had driven some way towards home, Baby sitting on his knee, Daisy and Maida on each side gazing up at him in absorbed admiration, Trevelyan leaned over to his sister, who was watching him adoringly from the opposite seat, her face all smiles and dimples, and said, "Violet, these children have something on their minds. What is it? A secret? I am sure there is something by the way they look at me."

"Well, yes, Jack, we all have something on our minds; in fact, we are keeping a surprise for you at home."

"Yes, father, a surprise," they cried together, "a very nice one, too."

"Are you? well, that is awfully good of you all. Is it something you bought?"

"Oh, no, father, no."

"Something alive?" he asked, looking down at Gwyneth.

"Yes, yes, something very much alive; but you musn't guess," said Daisy.

"Yes, yes, you may, father; for you'll never, never guess in the wide world."

"Is it something you had given to you?"

"No, not exactly," they cried; "but you are getting near it."

"Then something you found?"

"Yes, father, something Gwyneth found."

"Gwyneth, little Gwyneth? and it's very valuable, is it?"

"Here we are, Jack, at home," said Mrs. Van Norman, "you will soon know now."

They took him directly up to the nursery, and he greeted Madelon. Over by the window, where the Good Shepherd was, stood a boy, tall and slender, with wavy brown hair, olive-tinted skin, and full red lips, like—like whose? He could not think.

"Who is he?" he asked, looking from one of the children to the other.

“Who is he like, father?” asked Daisy.

The boy did not move, but kept his eyes upon them.

“He is like you, Daisy.”

“Father,” she said, “he is our cousin Raphael. His father was our uncle, who ran away from Naples so long, long ago. Gwyneth found him. It was he who saved her from being killed that afternoon. He was the boy—the boy who came with the old Italian music man.”

Captain Trevelyan took in the story as Daisy told it so earnestly. He asked nothing more, but strode across the room and caught the boy’s two hands with his own.

“Let me look at you!” he cried. “Ah! I see it is true, and thank heaven you are found—that you are found at last, my lad.”

Two or three days after this, Van Norman and Captain Trevelyan were talking in the library. Trevelyan was telling of the fortune left by old Antonio Reggeoletto, and of the way it would now be divided.

“The lad shall have half of everything, and there is plenty for all,” he ended.

Van Norman did not reply; his face was set, and he gazed before him with troubled eyes.

“He shall have *half*, I said. Did you hear, Van Norman?”

“Yes, Jack, I heard,” he answered, shortly.

Just then there was a knock at the door, and Gwyneth and Raphael entered.

“May we come in, Uncle Edwin?” asked Gwyn.

“Certainly, come over by me.”

She took the ebony stool, and drawing it to its old place by his chair, sat down and leaned her lovely head against it; then she put out her hand, the one that was not hurt, and touched her father’s arm, for he was close by.

“Stand over by the mantel, Raphael, where Uncle Edwin so often stands,” said the child; “I like to look at you.”

The boy did as she told him, a wave of color rising in his face.

Van Norman went to him.

“Raphael,” he said, “the old Reggeoletto of Naples is dead, and the younger one, too. There is a large fortune left, which belongs now to your cousins. Captain Trevelyan wished to divide this with you; it is your right. Now, listen, will you take that money and return to the land of your fathers and re-establish the old name and home? You are the last of them. Or,” and there was a tremor in the hitherto firm voice, “or, listen, will you give yourself to me? Believe me, I speak from my heart when I say I want you.”

The room was very still. Gwyneth’s hand clinched tight, tight upon her father’s arm.

Raphael looked into the Captain’s handsome sun-browned face, into the kindly eyes, so like little Gwyneth’s, whom he loved. Truly here was a friend; his own father had followed the sea also—and yet—and yet; he turned slowly to the one beside him. There was a loneliness about this silent man who would speak no more persuasive word,—a look in his face which stole the lad’s heart away; and he could not have told why a tightness came to his throat and a blurr rose before him, but he knew well—oh, well, indeed—that they, too, understood each other.

“Ah, sir,” he said, “I would rather stay with you. What is the Reggeoletto name or fortune? What did it do for my father or for me? He often spoke bitterly of it. Indeed, I would rather stay with you.”

And so it was that the heir came home.

CHAPTER XXIV.

One night after this, Maida and Gwyn were sent for to come to dessert. Daisy and Raphael dined always with Aunt Violet, which did not suit Maida; but as Baby did not mind, why perforce she must bring herself to the arrangement also.

They ran gaily downstairs, and behold, when they entered the red room, there, beside Major Willoughby, was their old friend Mr. Harry Barton. Oh, that was most joyful! and the young gentleman must have felt flattered at the reception he received.

After dinner they had a great many things to talk over.

"And so you have not forgotten me, most fair one with the golden locks," said Mr. Barton to Gwyneth.

"No, indeed! I have thought of you often and often."

"*Semper fidelis*," he said, looking over at Trevelyan, his dark face brightening. "I still come *next* to the Captain?"

"No," she said, "not next—not *exactly* next."

"Well, pray may I enquire who has usurped my place?" in tragic tones.

"Uncle Edwin comes next to father."

Van Norman glanced over at her quickly.

"Where do I come in, Miss Gwyneth?" enquired the Major, putting up his eye-glass and gazing at the charming little maiden; "I don't feel like being left entirely on one side, you know. It's not at all pleasant."

"Oh, you come *after* Mr. Barton, Major Willoughby."

"After Barton? I say! oh, that's not fair! Just because he had the luck to cross with you!"

"After me—so you are *fourth*, Major; oh, you are not in it at all," laughed Barton; "not at all."

"Why, Gwyneth, what about *me*?" asked Raphael, who had been standing by the Captain listening.

She turned and held out her hand to him, "Oh, you come after Uncle Edwin, Raphael. Father, Uncle Edwin and you."

"Then that makes *you* fourth, Barton!" cried the Major to that young Briton, who refused to say anything more, but fixed his great eyes reproachfully on Gwyneth.

"Please, please don't look at me like that," she said, sweetly; "you know I am very fond of you, too," and turning the subject with feminine tact, "won't you come over here and be kind enough to show Raphael and me the blue anchor? He has never seen it."

Trevelyan stood alone, looking about the place with its exquisite silken hangings, its delicately carved cabinets and chairs, its many wonderful art treasures. His sister and Major Willoughby had just left him and were gathering up a bunch of roses which, by their own weight, had fallen out of a rose-bowl across the room. Her brother watched the graceful figure as she and Willoughby arranged the flowers again.

He was looking exceedingly handsome himself to-night, but this had not occurred to him, for his mind was on other things. To him they all seemed very happy.

Yonder was Van Norman talking to Maida and Daisy. They were making merry over something, and yet, noticing the man's rugged face lit up for a moment, a couplet came into Trevelyan's mind that he had read or heard:

> "Lightness and laughter, with such a one as he,
> Is but the foam upon his soul's deep sea."

That was very true of Van Norman, he thought. Over in a corner Barton had been showing his interesting anchor to Baby and Raphael. Now she was evidently telling them some little story in her own quaint way.

He was the boy's debtor for life, the man said to himself.

From time to time he saw Van Norman glancing over to them with that new light in his eyes.

"Yes, they all seem happy," thought Trevelyan again. They did not forget; he knew they did not, nor ever would.

But sorrow like his own was not for them, and he had best take himself and it away upon the high seas, where, amid the wildness of wind and water, perchance he could bear it better. He had always been a rover; and on him, so long accustomed to the severe discipline of a ship, these soft and beautiful things did but jar. To one used to breathe the salt air blown to him over thousands of miles of sea, these warm and perfumed rooms were but stifling. This time the children were going, as he had agreed to take them all

back to Naples in June. There would be quite a party, for Willoughby was to go also.

Suddenly there came a low exclamation from Raphael that startled them. He was standing with a violin in his hand, which he must have just discovered. Van Norman had brought it in quietly a while before, and laid the case down open. They had agreed not to speak to the boy of his music till he spoke of his own accord first.

Away in a cabinet in the library a man had locked a broken violin, there ever to remain.

Raphael was glancing tenderly over the old Cremona.

"Here!" he cried, "here is my own name, written very small, but quite plainly, 'Raphael Reggeoletto.' "

"It was your father's," said Trevelyan.

The boy laid it slowly back in its case; then, after a moment's hesitation, took it up again, raised it to his face, and played. Ah! all that music told them! It carried them with it over the southern seas, through velvety darkness and dazzling sunlit days, through nights when they had sailed by the light of the stars, where the Southern Cross hung low in the skies. They went with it through storm and tempest, sorrow and death; through weary days and nights of loneliness, such as only a child can know, and they seemed to hear the sobbing of a voice in the dark. Slowly it took them through winter to spring, and sweet and low the wind was blowing upon the budded tree-tops, birds were swinging on the branches, trilling their sweet love songs; the scent of violets was on the air: daffodils and crocuses broke through the earth. "The spring has come!" sang the violin.

"The Spring has come,
The Spring has come!
Gone is the winter's sadness.
Oh, heart, awake, awake! rejoice!
The earth is full of gladness."

Old Wilkinson, with the debonair Flitters beside him, waited in the hall and listened, till the tones fell into silence.

"You were right, Wilkinson, about his music," she said; "you were right."

"Yes, Flitters," answered the old butler, "I said it were 'eavenly, and I were right."

Upon all in the room silence had fallen, and as Raphael laid down the violin, Van Norman went over to him.

“Who taught you to play, my lad?” he asked.

“It was my father,” they heard him say; “but afterwards, when I was with Gouvisi, a man who lived just across the hall all alone taught me again. He was a musician, and very, very poor. When he was the poorest then he played the most beautifully. He used to tell me that it was a good way to forget one’s troubles,” added the boy, wistfully. “One day, though, he went away, and we have never heard of him since.”

Trevelyan was listening; Daisy, too, and Maida and little Gwyneth.

Van Norman looked down into the boy’s dreamful eyes.

“I will find that man, Raphael,” they heard him say.

Gwyneth put her hand on his arm—“And we will help you, Uncle Edwin,” she said.

Presently they turned and saw Madelon standing in the doorway. She gave the group her deep old-world courtesy. Upon her wrinkled face was a look of great happiness. “I come for my children, signor,” she said, turning toward Trevelyan.

Raphael went over to the old nurse with the others. “Did you hear me play, Madelon?”

“Aye, my lad,” she answered, tenderly; “it was upon the old Cremona.”

THE END

TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been corrected. Where multiple spellings occur, majority use has been employed.

Punctuation has been maintained except where obvious printer errors occur.

Illustrations have been relocated due to using a non-page layout.

[The end of *Trevelyan's Little Daughters* by Virna Sheard]