

Warner Susan

# Nobody



Susan Warner

**Nobody**

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## CHAPTER I WHO IS SHE?

"Tom, who was that girl you were so taken with last night?"

"Wasn't particularly taken last night with anybody."

Which practical falsehood the gentleman escaped from by a mental reservation, saying to himself that it was not *last night* that he was "taken."

"I mean the girl you had so much to do with. Come, Tom!"

"I hadn't much to do with her. I had to be civil to somebody. She was the easiest."

"Who is she, Tom?"

"Her name is Lothrop."

"O you tedious boy! I know what her name is, for I was introduced to her, and Mrs. Wishart spoke so I could not help but understand her; but I mean something else, and you know I do. Who is she? And where does she come from?"

"She is a cousin of Mrs. Wishart; and she comes from the country somewhere."

"One can see *that*."

"How can you?" the brother asked rather fiercely.

"You see it as well as I do," the sister returned coolly. "Her dress shows it."

"I didn't notice anything about her dress."

"You are a man."

"Well, you women dress for the men. If you only knew a thing or two, you would dress differently."

"That will do! You would not take me anywhere, if I dressed like Miss Lothrop."

"I'll tell you what," said the young man, stopping short in his walk up and down the floor; – "she can afford to do without your advantages!"

"Mamma!" appealed the sister now to a third member of the party, – "do you hear? Tom has lost his head."

The lady addressed sat busy with newspapers, at a table a little withdrawn from the fire; a lady in fresh middle age, and comely to look at. The daughter, not comely, but sensible-looking, sat in the glow of the fire's shine, doing nothing. Both were extremely well dressed, if "well" means in the fashion and in rich stuffs, and with no sparing of money or care. The elder woman looked up from her studies now for a moment, with the remark, that she did not care about Tom's head, if he would keep his heart.

"But that is just precisely what he will not do, mamma. Tom can't keep anything, his heart least of all. And this girl mamma, I tell you he is in danger. Tom, how many times have you been to see her?"

"I don't go to see *her*; I go to see Mrs. Wishart."

"Oh! – and you see Miss Lothrop by accident! Well, how many times, Tom?"

Three – four – five."

"Don't be ridiculous!" the brother struck in. "Of course a fellow goes where he can amuse himself and have the best time; and Mrs. Wishart keeps a pleasant house."

"Especially lately. Well, Tom, take care! it won't do. I warn you."

"What won't do?" – angrily.

"This girl; not for *our* family. Not for you, Tom. She hasn't anything, – and she isn't anybody; and it will not do for you to marry in that way. If your fortune was ready made to your hand, or if you were established in your profession and at the top of it, – why, perhaps you might be justified in pleasing yourself; but as it is, *don't*, Tom! Be a good boy, and *don't*!"

"My dear, he will not," said the elder lady here. "Tom is wiser than you give him credit for."

"I don't give any man credit for being wise, mamma, when a pretty face is in question. And this girl has a pretty face; she is very pretty. But she has no style; she is as poor as a mouse; she knows nothing of the world; and to crown all, Tom, she's one of the religious sort. – Think of that! One of the real religious sort, you know. Think how that would fit."

"What sort are you?" asked her brother.

"Not that sort, Tom, and you aren't either."

"How do you know she is?"

"Very easy," said the girl coolly. "She told me herself."

"She told you!"

"Yes."

"How?"

"O, simply enough. I was confessing that Sunday is such a fearfully long day to me, and I did not know what to do with it; and she looked at me as if I were a poor heathen – which I suppose she thought me – and said, 'But there is always the Bible!' Fancy! – 'always the Bible.' So I knew in a moment where to place her."

"I don't think religion hurts a woman," said the young man.

"But you do not want her to have too much of it – " the mother remarked, without looking up from her paper.

"I don't know what you mean by too much, mother. I'd as lief she found Sunday short as long. By her own showing, Julia has the worst of it."

"Mamma! speak to him," urged the girl.

"No need, my dear, I think. Tom isn't a fool."

"Any man is, when he is in love, mamma."

Tom came and stood by the mantelpiece, confronting them. He was a remarkably handsome young man; tall, well formed, very well dressed, hair and moustaches carefully trimmed, and features of regular though manly beauty, with an expression of genial kindness and courtesy.

"I am not in love," he said, half laughing. "But I will tell you, – I never saw a nicer girl than Lois Lothrop. And I think all that you say about her being poor, and all that, is just – bosh."

The newspapers went down.

"My dear boy, Julia is right. I should be very sorry to see you hurt your career and injure your chances by choosing a girl who would give you no sort of help. And you would regret it yourself, when it was too late. You would be certain to regret it. You could not help but regret it."

"I am not going to do it. But why should I regret it?"

"You know why, as well as I do. Such a girl would not be a good wife for you. She would be a millstone round your neck."

Perhaps Mr. Tom thought she would be a pleasant millstone in those circumstances; but he only remarked that he believed the lady in question would be a good wife for whoever could get her.

"Well, not for you. You can have anybody you want to, Tom; and you may just as well have money and family as well as beauty. It is a very bad thing for a girl not to have family. That deprives her husband of a great advantage; and besides, saddles upon him often most undesirable burdens in the shape of brothers and sisters, and nephews perhaps. What is this girl's family, do you know?"

"Respectable," said Tom, "or she would not be a cousin of Mrs. Wishart."

And that makes her a cousin of Edward's wife."

"My dear, everybody has cousins; and people are not responsible for them. She is a poor relation, whom Mrs. Wishart has here for the purpose of befriending her; she'll marry her off if she can; and you would do as well as another. Indeed you would do splendidly; but the advantage would be all on their side; and that is what I do not wish for you."

Tom was silent. His sister remarked that Mrs. Wishart really was not a match-maker.

"No more than everybody is; it is no harm; of course she would like to see this little girl well married. Is she educated? Accomplished?"

"Tom can tell," said the daughter. "I never saw her do anything. What can she do, Tom?"

"Do?" said Tom, flaring up. "What do you mean?"

"Can she play?"

"No, and I am glad she can't. If ever there was a bore, it is the performances of you young ladies on the piano. It's just to show what you can do. Who cares, except the music master?"

"Does she sing?"

"I don't know!"

"Can she speak French?"

"French!" cried Tom. "Who wants her to speak French? We talk English in this country."

"But, my dear boy, we often have to use French or some other language, there are so many foreigners that one meets in society. And a lady *must* know French at least. Does she know anything?"

"I don't know," said Tom. "I have no doubt she does. I haven't tried her. How much, do you suppose, do girls in general know? girls with ever so much money and family? And who cares how much they know? One does not seek a lady's society for the purpose of being instructed."

"One might, and get no harm," said the sister softly; but Tom flung out of the room. "Mamma, it is serious."

"Do you think so?" asked the elder lady, now thrusting aside all her papers.

"I am sure of it. And if we do not do something – we shall all be sorry for it."

"What is this girl, Julia? Is she pretty?"

Julia hesitated. "Yes," she said. "I suppose the men would call her so."

"You don't?"

"Well, yes, mamma; she is pretty, handsome, in a way; though she has not the least bit of style; not the least bit! She is rather peculiar; and I suppose with the men that is one of her attractions."

"Peculiar how?" said the mother, looking anxious.

"I cannot tell; it is indefinable. And yet it is very marked. Just that want of style makes her peculiar."

"Awkward?"

"No."

"Not awkward. How then? Shy?"

"No."

"How then, Julia? What is she like?"

"It is hard to tell in words what people are like. She is plainly dressed, but not badly; Mrs. Wishart would see to that; so it isn't exactly her dress that makes her want of style. She has a very good figure; uncommonly good. Then she has most beautiful hair, mamma; a full head of bright brown hair, that would be auburn if it were a shade or two darker; and it is somewhat wavy and curly, and heaps itself around her head in a way that is like a picture. She doesn't dress it in the fashion; I don't believe there is a hairpin in it, and I am sure there isn't a cushion, or anything; only this bright brown hair puffing and waving and curling itself together in some inexplicable way, that would be very pretty if it were not so altogether out of the way that everybody else wears. Then there is a sweet, pretty face under it; but you can see at the first look that she was never born or brought up in New York or any other city, and knows just nothing about the world."

"Dangerous!" said the mother, knitting her brows.

"Yes; for just that sort of thing is taking to the men; and they don't look any further. And Tom above all. I tell you, he is smitten, mamma. And he goes to Mrs. Wishart's with a regularity which is appalling."

"Tom takes things hard, too," said the mother.

"Foolish boy!" was the sister's comment.

"What can be done?"

"I'll tell you, mamma. I've been thinking. Your health will never stand the March winds in New York. You must go somewhere."

"Where?"

"Florida, for instance?"

"I should like it very well."

"It would be better anyhow than to let Tom get hopelessly entangled."

"Anything would be better than that."

"And prevention is better than cure. You can't apply a cure, besides. When a man like Tom, or any man, once gets a thing of this sort in his head, it is hopeless. He'll go through thick and thin, and take time to repent afterwards. Men are so stupid!"

"Women sometimes."

"Not I, mamma; if you mean me. I hope for the credit of your discernment you don't."

"Lent will begin soon," observed the elder lady presently.

"Lent will not make any difference with Tom," returned the daughter.

"And little parties are more dangerous than big ones."

"What shall I do about the party we were going to give? I should be obliged to ask Mrs. Wishart."

"I'll tell you, mamma," Julia said after a little thinking. "Let it be a luncheon party; and get Tom to go down into the country that day. And then go off to Florida, both of you."



## CHAPTER II AT BREAKFAST

"How do you like New York, Lois? You have been here long enough to judge of us now?"

"Have I?"

Mrs. Wishart and her guest being at breakfast, this question and answer go over the table. It is not exactly in New York, however. That is, it is within the city bounds, but not yet among the city buildings. Somewhat distance out of town, with green fields about it, and trees, and lawn sloping down to the river bank, and a view of the Jersey shore on the other side. The breakfast room windows look out over this view, upon which the winter sun is shining; and green fields stand in beautiful illumination, with patches of snow lying here and there. Snow is not on the lawn, however. Mrs. Wishart's is a handsome old house, not according to the latest fashion, either in itself or its fitting up; both are of a simpler style than anybody of any pretension would choose now-a-days; but Mrs. Wishart has no need to make any pretension; her standing and her title to it are too well known. Moreover, there are certain quaint witnesses to it all over, wherever you look. None but one of such secured position would have such an old carpet on her floor; and few but those of like antecedents could show such rare old silver on the board. The shawl that wraps the lady is Indian, and not worn for show; there are portraits on the walls that go back to a respectable English ancestry; there is precious old furniture about, that money could not buy; old and quaint and rich, and yet not striking the eye; and the lady is served in the most observant style by one of those ancient house servants whose dignity is inseparably connected with the dignity of the house and springs from it. No newcomer to wealth and place can be served so. The whole air of everything in the room is easy, refined, leisurely, assured, and comfortable. The coffee is capital; and the meal, simple enough, is very delicate in its arrangement.

Only the two ladies are at the table; one behind the coffee urn, and the other near her. The mistress of the house has a sensible, agreeable face, and well-bred manner; the other lady is the one who has been so jealously discussed and described in another family. As Miss Julia described her, there she sits, in a morning dress which lends her figure no attraction whatever. And – her figure can do without it. As the question is asked her about New York, her eye goes over to the glittering western shore.

"I like this a great deal better than the city," she added to her former words.

"O, of course, the brick and stone!" answered her hostess. "I did not mean *that*. I mean, how do you like *us*?"

"Mrs. Wishart, I like *you* very much," said the girl with a certain sweet spirit.

"Thank you! but I did not mean that either. Do you like no one but me?"

"I do not know anybody else."

"You have seen plenty of people."

"I do not know them, though. Not a bit. One thing I do not like. People talk so on the surface of things."

"Do you want them to go deep in an evening party?"

"It is not only in evening parties. If you want me to say what I think, Mrs. Wishart. It is the same always, if people come for morning calls, or if we go to them, or if we see them in the evening; people talk about nothing; nothing they care about."

"Nothing *you* care about."

"They do not seem to care about it either."

"Why do you suppose they talk it then?" Mrs. Wishart asked, amused.

"It seems to be a form they must go through," Lois said, laughing a little. "Perhaps they enjoy it, but they do not seem as if they did. And they laugh so incessantly, – some of them, – at what has no fun in it. That seems to be a form too; but laughing for form's sake seems to me hard work."

"My dear, do you want people to be always serious?"

"How do you mean, 'serious'?"

"Do you want them to be always going 'deep' into things?"

"N-o, perhaps not; but I would like them to be always in earnest."

"My dear! What a fearful state of society you would bring about!

Imagine for a moment that everybody was always in earnest!"

"Why not? I mean, not always *sober*; did you think I meant that? I mean, whether they laugh or talk, doing it heartily, and feeling and thinking as they speak. Or rather, speaking and laughing only as they feel."

"My dear, do you know what would become of society?"

"No. What?"

"I go to see Mrs. Brinkerhoff, for instance. I have something on my mind, and I do not feel like discussing any light matter, so I sit silent. Mrs. Brinkerhoff has a fearfully hard piece of work to keep the conversation going; and when I have departed she votes me a great bore, and hopes I will never come again. When she returns my visit, the conditions are reversed; I vote *her* a bore; and we conclude it is easier to do without each other's company."

"But do you never find people a bore as it is?"

Mrs. Wishart laughed. "Do you?"

"Sometimes. At least I should if I lived among them. *Now*, all is new, and I am curious."

"I can tell you one thing, Lois; nobody votes you a bore."

"But I never talk as they do."

"Never mind. There are exceptions to all rules. But, my dear, even you must not be always so desperately in earnest. By the way! That handsome young Mr. Caruthers – does he make himself a bore too? You have seen a good deal of him."

"No," said Lois with some deliberation. "He is pleasant, what I have seen of him."

"And, as I remarked, that is a good deal. Isn't he a handsome fellow? I think Tom Caruthers is a good fellow, too. And he is likely to be a successful fellow. He is starting well in life, and he has connections that will help him on. It is a good family; and they have money enough."

"How do you mean, 'a good family'?"

"Why, you know what that phrase expresses, don't you?"

"I am not sure that I do, in your sense. You do not mean religious?"

"No," said Mrs. Wishart, smiling; "not necessarily. Religion has nothing to do with it. I mean – we mean – It is astonishing how hard it is to put some things! I mean, a family that has had a good social standing for generations. Of course such a family is connected with other good families, and it is consequently strong, and has advantages for all belonging to it."

"I mean," said Lois slowly, "a family that has served God for generations. Such a family has connections too, and advantages."

"Why, my dear," said Mrs. Wishart, opening her eyes a little at the girl, "the two things are not inconsistent, I hope."

"I hope not."

"Wealth and position are good things at any rate, are they not?"

"So far as they go, I suppose so," said Lois. "O yes, they are pleasant things; and good things, if they are used right."

"They are whether or no. Come! I can't have you holding any extravagant ideas, Lois. They don't do in the world. They make one peculiar, and it is not good taste to be peculiar."

"You know, I am not in the world," Lois answered quietly.

"Not when you are at home, I grant you; but here, in my house, you are; and when you have a house of your own, it is likely you will be. No more coffee, my dear? Then let us go to the order of the day. What is this, Williams?"

"For Miss Lot'rop," the obsequious servant replied with a bow, – "debo-quet." But he presented to his mistress a little note on his salver, and then handed to Lois a magnificent bunch of hothouse flowers. Mrs. Wishart's eyes followed the bouquet, and she even rose up to examine it.

"That is beautiful, my dear. What camellias! And what geraniums! That is the Black Prince, one of those, I am certain; yes, I am sure it is; and that is one of the new rare varieties. That has not come from any florist's greenhouse. Never. And that rose-coloured geranium is Lady Sutherland. Who sent the flowers, Williams?"

"Here is his card, Mrs. Wishart," said Lois. "Mr. Caruthers."

"Tom Caruthers!" echoed Mrs. Wishart. "He has cut them in his mother's greenhouse, the sinner!"

"Why?" said Lois. "Would that be not right?"

"It would be right, *if* – Here's a note from Tom's mother, Lois – but not about the flowers. It is to ask us to a luncheon party. Shall we go?"

"You know, dear Mrs. Wishart, I go just where you choose to take me," said the girl, on whose cheeks an exquisite rose tint rivalled the Lady Sutherland geranium blossoms. Mrs. Wishart noticed it, and eyed the girl as she was engrossed with her flowers, examining, smelling, and smiling at them. It was pleasure that raised that delicious bloom in her cheeks, she decided; was it anything more than pleasure? What a fair creature! thought her hostess; and yet, fair as she is, what possible chance for her in a good family? A young man may be taken with beauty, but not his relations; and they would object to a girl who is nobody and has nothing. Well, there is a chance for her, and she shall have the chance.

"Lois, what will you wear to this luncheon party?"

"You know all my dresses, Mrs. Wishart. I suppose my black silk would be right."

"No, it would not be right at all. You are too young to wear black silk to a luncheon party. And your white dress is not the thing either."

"I have nothing else that would do. You must let me be old, in a black silk."

"I will not let you be anything of the kind. I will get you a dress."

"No, Mrs. Wishart; I cannot pay for it."

"I will pay for it."

"I cannot let you do that. You have done enough for me already. Mrs. Wishart, it is no matter. People will just think I cannot afford anything better, and that is the very truth."

"No, Lois; they will think you do not know any better."

"That is the truth too," said Lois, laughing.

"No it isn't; and if it is, I do not choose they should think so. I shall dress you for this once, my dear; and I shall not ruin myself either."

Mrs. Wishart had her way; and so it came to pass that Lois went to the luncheon party in a dress of bright green silk; and how lovely she looked in it is impossible to describe. The colour, which would have been ruinous to another person, simply set off her delicate complexion and bright brown hair in the most charming manner; while at the same time the green was not so brilliant as to make an obvious patch of colour wherever its wearer might be. Mrs. Wishart was a great enemy of startling effects, in any kind; and the hue was deep and rich and decided, without being flashy.

"You never looked so well in anything," was Mrs. Wishart's comment. "I have hit just the right thing. My dear, I would put one of those white camellias in your hair – that will relieve the eye."

"From what?" Lois asked, laughing.

"Never mind; you do as I tell you."

## CHAPTER III

### A LUNCHEON PARTY

Luncheon parties were not then precisely what they are now; nevertheless the entertainment was extremely handsome. Lois and her friend had first a long drive from their home in the country to a house in one of the older parts of the city. Old the house also was; but it was after a roomy and luxurious fashion, if somewhat antiquated; and the air of ancient respectability, even of ancient distinction, was stamped upon it, as upon the family that inhabited it. Mrs. Wishart and Lois were received with warm cordiality by Miss Caruthers; but the former did not fail to observe a shadow that crossed Mrs. Caruthers' face when Lois was presented to her. Lois did not see it, and would not have known how to interpret it if she had seen it. She is safe, thought Mrs. Wishart, as she noticed the calm unembarrassed air with which Lois sat down to talk with the younger of her hostesses.

"You are making a long stay with Mrs. Wishart," was the unpromising opening remark.

"Mrs. Wishart keeps me."

"Do you often come to visit her?"

"I was never here before."

"Then this is your first acquaintance with New York?"

"Yes."

"How does it strike you? One loves to get at new impressions of what one has known all one's life. Nothing strikes us here, I suppose. Do tell me what strikes you."

"I might say, everything."

"How delightful! Nothing strikes me. I have seen it all five hundred times. Nothing is new."

"But people are new," said Lois. "I mean they are different from one another. There is continual variety there."

"To me there seems continual sameness!" said the other, with a half-shutting up of her eyes, as of one dazed with monotony. "They are all alike. I know beforehand exactly what every one will say to me, and however one will behave."

"That is not how it is at home," returned Lois. "It is different there."

"People are *not* all alike?"

"No indeed. Perfectly unlike, and individual."

"How agreeable! So that is one of the things that strike you here? the contrast?"

"No," said Lois, laughing; "I find here the same variety that I find at home. People are not alike to me."

"But different, I suppose, from the varieties you are accustomed to at home?"

Lois admitted that.

"Well, now tell me how. I have never travelled in New England; I have travelled everywhere else. Tell me, won't you, how those whom you see here differ from the people you see at home."

"In the same sort of way that a sea-gull differs from a land sparrow,"

Lois answered demurely.

"I don't understand. Are we like the sparrows, or like the gulls?"

"I do not know that. I mean merely that the different sorts are fitted to different spheres and ways of life."

Miss Caruthers looked a little curiously at the girl. "I know *this* sphere," she said. "I want you to tell me yours."

"It is free space instead of narrow streets, and clear air instead of smoke. And the people all have something to do, and are doing it."

"And you think *we* are doing nothing?" asked Miss Caruthers, laughing.

"Perhaps I am mistaken. It seems to me so."

"O, you are mistaken. We work hard. And yet, since I went to school, I never had anything that I *must* do, in my life."

"That can be only because you did not know what it was."

"I had nothing that I must do."

"But nobody is put in this world without some thing to do," said Lois. "Do you think a good watchmaker would carefully make and finish a very costly pin or wheel, and put it in the works of his watch to do nothing?"

Miss Caruthers stared now at the girl. Had this soft, innocent-looking maiden absolutely dared to read a lesson to her? – "You are religious!" she remarked dryly.

Lois neither affirmed nor denied it. Her eye roved over the gathering throng; the rustle of silks, the shimmer of lustrous satin, the fall of lace, the drapery of one or two magnificent camels'-hair shawls, the carefully dressed heads, the carefully gloved hands; for the ladies did not keep on their bonnets then; and the soft murmur of voices, which, however, did not remain soft. It waxed and grew, rising and falling, until the room was filled with a breaking sea of sound. Miss Caruthers had been called off to attend to other guests, and then came to conduct Lois herself to the dining-room.

The party was large, the table was long; and it was a mass of glitter and glisten with plate and glass. A superb old-fashioned épergne in the middle, great dishes of flowers sending their perfumed breath through the room, and bearing their delicate exotic witness to the luxury that reigned in the house. And not they alone. Before each guest's plate a semicircular wreath of flowers stood, seemingly upon the tablecloth; but Lois made the discovery that the stems were safe in water in crescent-shaped glass dishes, like little troughs, which the flowers completely covered up and hid. Her own special wreath was of heliotropes. Miss Caruthers had placed her next herself.

There were no gentlemen present, nor expected, Lois observed. It was simply a company of ladies, met apparently for the purpose of eating; for that business went on for some time with a degree of satisfaction, and a supply of means to afford satisfaction, which Lois had never seen equalled. From one delicate and delicious thing to another she was required to go, until she came to a stop; but that was the case, she observed, with no one else of the party.

"You do not drink wine?" asked Miss Caruthers civilly.

"No, thank you."

"Have you scruples?" said the young lady, with a half smile.

Lois assented.

"Why? what's the harm?"

"We all have scruples at Shampashuh."

"About drinking wine?"

"Or cider, or beer, or anything of the sort."

"Do tell me why."

"It does so much mischief."

"Among low people," said Miss Caruthers, opening her eyes; "but not among respectable people."

"We are willing to hinder mischief anywhere," said Lois with a smile of some fun.

"But what good does *your* not drinking it do? That will not hinder them."

"It does hinder them, though," said Lois; "for we will not have liquor shops. And so, we have no crime in the town. We could leave our doors unlocked, with perfect safety, if it were not for the people that come wandering through from the next towns, where liquor is sold. We have no crime, and no poverty; or next to none."

"Bless me! what an agreeable state of things! But that need not hinder your taking a glass of champagne *here*? Everybody here has no scruple, and there are liquor shops at every corner; there is no use in setting an example."

But Lois declined the wine.

"A cup of coffee then?"

Lois accepted the coffee.

"I think you know my brother?" observed Miss Caruthers then, making her observations as she spoke.

"Mr. Caruthers? yes; I believe he is your brother."

"I have heard him speak of you. He has seen you at Mrs. Wishart's, I think."

"At Mrs. Wishart's – yes."

Lois spoke naturally, yet Miss Caruthers fancied she could discern a certain check to the flow of her words.

"You could not be in a better place for seeing what New York is like, for everybody goes to Mrs. Wishart's; that is, everybody who is anybody."

This did not seem to Lois to require any answer. Her eye went over the long tableful; went from face to face. Everybody was talking, nearly everybody was smiling. Why not? If enjoyment would make them smile, where could more means of enjoyment be heaped up, than at this feast? Yet Lois could not help thinking that the tokens of real pleasure-taking were not unequivocal. *She* was having a very good time; full of amusement; to the others it was an old story. Of what use, then?

Miss Caruthers had been engaged in a lively battle of words with some of her young companions; and now her attention came back to Lois, whose meditative, amused expression struck her.

"I am sure," she said, "you are philosophizing! Let me have the results of your observations, do! What do your eyes see, that mine perhaps do not?"

"I cannot tell," said Lois. "Yours ought to know it all."

"But you know, we do not see what we have always seen."

"Then I have an advantage," said Lois pleasantly. "My eyes see something very pretty."

"But you were criticizing something. – O you unlucky boy!"

This exclamation, and the change of tone with it, seemed to be called forth by the entrance of a new comer, even Tom Caruthers himself. Tom was not in company trim exactly, but with his gloves in his hand and his overcoat evidently just pulled off. He was surveying the company with a contented expression; then came forward and began a series of greetings round the table; not hurrying them, but pausing here and there for a little talk.

"Tom!" cried his mother, "is that you?"

"To command. Yes, Mrs. Badger, I am just off the cars. I did not know what I should find here."

"How did you get back so soon, Tom?"

"Had nothing to keep me longer, ma'am. Miss Farrel, I have the honour to remind you of a *phillipoena*."

There was a shout of laughter. It bewildered Lois, who could not understand what they were laughing about, and could as little keep her attention from following Tom's progress round the table. Miss Caruthers observed this, and was annoyed.

"Careless boy!" she said. "I don't believe he has done the half of what he had to do, Tom, what brought you home?"

Tom was by this time approaching them.

"Is the question to be understood in a physical or moral sense?" said he.

"As you understand it!" said his sister.

Tom disregarded the question, and paid his respects to Miss Lothrop. Julia's jealous eyes saw more than the ordinary gay civility in his face and manner.

"Tom," she cried, "have you done everything? I don't believe you have."

"Have, though," said Tom. And he offered to Lois a basket of bon-bons.

"Did you see the carpenter?"

"Saw him and gave him his orders."

"Were the dogs well?"

"I wish you had seen them bid me good morning!"

"Did you look at the mare's foot?"

"Yes."

"What is the matter with it?"

"Nothing – a nail – Miss Lothrop, you have no wine."

"Nothing! and a nail!" cried Miss Julia as Lois covered her glass with her hand and forbade the wine. "As if a nail were not enough to ruin a horse! O you careless boy! Miss Lothrop is more of a philosopher than you are. She drinks no wine."

Tom passed on, speaking to other ladies. Lois had scarcely spoken at all; but Miss Caruthers thought she could discern a little stir in the soft colour of the cheeks and a little additional life in the grave soft eyes; and she wished Tom heartily at a distance.

At a distance, however, he was no more that day. He made himself gracefully busy indeed with the rest of his mother's guests; but after they quitted the table, he contrived to be at Lois's side, and asked if she would not like to see the greenhouse? It was a welcome proposition, and while nobody at the moment paid any attention to the two young people, they passed out by a glass door at the other end of the dining-room into the conservatory, while the stream of guests went the other way. Then Lois was plunged in a wilderness of green leafage and brilliant bloom, warm atmosphere and mixed perfume; her first breath was an involuntary exclamation of delight and relief.

"Ah! you like this better than the other room, don't you?" said Tom.

Lois did not answer; however, she went with such an absorbed expression from one plant to another, that Tom must needs conclude she liked this better than the other company too.

"I never saw such a beautiful greenhouse," she said at last, "nor so large a one."

"*This* is not much," replied Tom. "Most of our plants are in the country – where I have come from to-day; this is just a city affair. Shampuah don't cultivate exotics, then?"

"O no! Nor anything much, except the needful."

"That sounds rather – tiresome," said Tom.

"O, it is not tiresome. One does not get tired of the needful, you know."

"Don't you! *I* do," said Tom. "Awfully. But what do you do for pleasure then, up there in Shampuah?"

"Pleasure? O, we have it – I have it – But we do not spend much time in the search of it. O how beautiful! what is that?"

"It's got some long name – *Metrosideros*, I believe. What *do* you do for pleasure up there then, Miss Lothrop?"

"Dig clams."

"Clams!" cried Tom.

"Yes. Long clams. It's great fun. But I find pleasure all over."

"How come you to be such a philosopher?"

"That is not philosophy."

"What is it? I can tell you, there isn't a girl in New York that would say what you have just said."

Lois thought the faces around the lunch table had quite harmonized with this statement. She forgot them again in a most luxuriant trailing *Pelargonium* covered with large white blossoms of great elegance.

"But it is philosophy that makes you not drink wine? Or don't you like it?"

"O no," said Lois, "it is not philosophy; it is humanity."

"How? I think it is humanity to share in people's social pleasures."

"If they were harmless."

"This is harmless!"

Lois shook her head. "To you, maybe."

"And to you. Then why shouldn't we take it?"

"For the sake of others, to whom it is not harmless."

"They must look out for themselves."

"Yes, and we must help them."

"We *can't* help them. If a man hasn't strength enough to stand, you cannot hold him up."

"O yes," said Lois gently, "you can and you must. That is not much to do! When on one side it is life, and on the other side it is only a minute's taste of something sweet, it is very little, I think, to give up one for the other."

"That is because you are so good," said Tom. "I am not so good."

At this instant a voice was heard within, and sounds of the servants removing the lunch dishes.

"I never heard anybody in my life talk as you do," Tom went on.

Lois thought she had talked enough, and would say no more. Tom saw she would not, and gave her glance after glance of admiration, which began to grow into veneration. What a pure creature was this! what a gentle simplicity, and yet what a quiet dignity! what absolutely natural sweetness, with no airs whatever! and what a fresh beauty.

"I think it must be easier to be good where you live," Tom added presently, and sincerely.

"Why?" said Lois.

"I assure you it ain't easy for a fellow here."

"What do you mean by 'good,' Mr. Caruthers? not drinking wine?" said

Lois, somewhat amused.

"I mean, to be like you," said he softly. "You are better than all the rest of us here."

"I hope not. Mr. Caruthers, we must go back to Mrs. Wishart, or certainly *she* will not think me good."

So they went back, through the empty lunch room.

"I thought you would be here to-day," said Tom. "I was not going to miss the pleasure; so I took a frightfully early train, and despatched business faster than it had ever been despatched before, at our house. I surprised the people, almost as much as I surprised my mother and Julia. You ought always to wear a white camellia in your hair!"

Lois smiled to herself. If he knew what things she had to do at her own home, and how such an adornment would be in place! Was it easier to be good there? she queried. It was easier to be pleased here. The guests were mostly gone.

"Well, my dear," said Mrs. Wishart on the drive home, "how have you enjoyed yourself?"

Lois looked grave. "I am afraid it turns my head," she answered.

"That shows your head is *not* turned. It must carry a good deal of ballast too, somewhere."

"It does," said Lois. "And I don't like to have my head turned."

"Tom," said Miss Julia, as Mrs. Wishart's carriage drove off and Tom came back to the drawing-room, "you mustn't turn that little girl's head."

"I can't," said Tom.

"You are trying."

"I am doing nothing of the sort."

"Then what *are* you doing? You are paying her a great deal of attention. She is not accustomed to our ways; she will not understand it. I do not think it is fair to her."

"I don't mean anything that is not fair to her. She is worth attention ten times as much as all the rest of the girls that were here to-day."

"But, Tom, she would not take it as coolly. She knows only country ways. She might think attentions mean more than they do."



"I don't care," said Tom.

"My dear boy," said his mother now, "it will not do, not to care. It would not be honourable to raise hopes you do not mean to fulfil; and to take such a girl for your wife, would be simply ruinous."

"Where will you find such another girl?" cried Tom, flaring up.

"But she has nothing, and she is nobody."

"She is her own sweet self," said Tom.

"But not an advantageous wife for you, my dear. Society does not know her, and she does not know society. Your career would be a much more humble one with her by your side. And money you want, too. You need it, to get on properly; as I wish to see you get on, and as you wish it your self. My dear boy, do not throw your chances away!"

"It's my belief, that is just what you are trying to make me do!" said the young man; and he went off in something of a huff.

"Mamma, we must do something. And soon," remarked Miss Julia. "Men are such fools! He rushed through with everything and came home to-day just to see that girl. A pretty face absolutely bewitches them." *N. B.* Miss Julia herself did not possess that bewitching power.

"I will go to Florida," said Mrs. Caruthers, sighing.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANOTHER LUNCHEON PARTY

A journey can be decided upon in a minute, but not so soon entered upon. Mrs. Caruthers needed a week to make ready; and during that week her son and heir found opportunity to make several visits at Mrs. Wishart's. A certain marriage connection between the families gave him somewhat the familiar right of a cousin; he could go when he pleased; and Mrs. Wishart liked him, and used no means to keep him away. Tom Caruthers was a model of manly beauty; gentle and agreeable in his manners; and of an evidently affectionate and kindly disposition. Why should not the young people like each other? she thought; and things were in fair train. Upon this came the departure for Florida. Tom spoke his regrets unreservedly out; he could not help himself, his mother's health required her to go to the South for the month of March, and she must necessarily have his escort. Lois said little. Mrs. Wishart feared, or hoped, she felt the more. A little absence is no harm, the lady thought; *may* be no harm. But now Lois began to speak of returning to Shampuah; and that indeed might make the separation too long for profit. She thought too that Lois was a little more thoughtful and a trifle more quiet than she had been before this journey was talked of.

One day, it was a cold, blustering day in March, Mrs. Wishart and her guest had gone down into the lower part of the city to do some particular shopping; Mrs. Wishart having promised Lois that they would take lunch and rest at a particular fashionable restaurant. Such an expedition had a great charm for the little country girl, to whom everything was new, and to whose healthy mental senses the ways and manners of the business world, with all the accessories thereof, were as interesting as the gay regions and the lighter life of fashion. Mrs. Wishart had occasion to go to a banker's in Wall Street; she had business at the Post Office; she had something to do which took her to several furrier's shops; she visited a particular magazine of varieties in Maiden Lane, where things, she told Lois, were about half the price they bore up town. She spent near an hour at the Tract House in Nassau Street. There was no question of taking the carriage into these regions; an omnibus had brought them to Wall Street, and from there they went about on their own feet, walking and standing alternately, till both ladies were well tired. Mrs. Wishart breathed out a sigh of relief as she took her seat in the omnibus which was to carry them uptown again.

"Tired out, Lois, are you? I am."

"I am not. I have been too much amused."

"It's delightful to take you anywhere! You reverse the old fairy-tale catastrophe, and a little handful of ashes turns to fruit for you, or to gold. Well, I will make some silver turn to fruit presently. I want my lunch, and I know you do. I should like to have you with me always, Lois. I get some of the good of your fairy fruit and gold when you are along with me. Tell me, child, do you do that sort of thing at home?"

"What sort?" said Lois, laughing.

"Turning nothings into gold."

"I don't know," said Lois. "I believe I do pick up a good deal of that sort of gold as I go along. But at home our life has a great deal of sameness about it, you know. *Here* everything is wonderful."

"Wonderful!" repeated Mrs. Wishart. "To you it is wonderful. And to me it is the dulllest old story, the whole of it. I feel as dusty now, mentally, as I am outwardly. But we'll have some luncheon, Lois, and that will be refreshing, I hope."

Hopes were to be much disappointed. Getting out of the omnibus near the locality of the desired restaurant, the whole street was found in confusion. There had been a fire, it seemed, that morning, in a house adjoining or very near, and loungers and firemen and an engine and hose took

up all the way. No restaurant to be reached there that morning. Greatly dismayed, Mrs. Wishart put herself and Lois in one of the street cars to go on up town.

"I am famishing!" she declared. "And now I do not know where to go. Everybody has had lunch at home by this time, or there are half-a-dozen houses I could go to."

"Are there no other restaurants but that one?"

"Plenty; but I could not eat in comfort unless I know things are clean.

I know that place, and the others I don't know. Ha, Mr. Dillwyn!" —

This exclamation was called forth by the sight of a gentleman who just at that moment was entering the car. Apparently he was an old acquaintance, for the recognition was eager on both sides. The newcomer took a seat on the other side of Mrs. Wishart.

"Where do you come from," said he, "that I find you here?"

"From the depths of business – Wall Street – and all over; and now the depths of despair, that we cannot get lunch. I am going home starving."

"What does that mean?"

"Just a *contretemps*. I promised my young friend here I would give her a good lunch at the best restaurant I knew; and to-day of all days, and just as we come tired out to get some refreshment, there's a fire and firemen and all the street in a hubbub. Nothing for it but to go home fasting."

"No," said he, "there is a better thing. You will do me the honour and give me the pleasure of lunching with me. I am living at the 'Imperial,' – and here we are!"

He signalled the car to stop, even as he spoke, and rose to help the ladies out. Mrs. Wishart had no time to think about it, and on the sudden impulse yielded. They left the car, and a few steps brought them to the immense beautiful building called the Imperial Hotel. Mr. Dillwyn took them in as one at home, conducted them to the great dining-room; proposed to them to go first to a dressing-room, but this Mrs. Wishart declined. So they took places at a small table, near enough to one of the great clear windows for Lois to look down into the Avenue and see all that was going on there. But first the place where she was occupied her. With a kind of wondering delight her eye went down the lines of the immense room, reviewed its loftiness, its adornments, its light and airiness and beauty; its perfection of luxurious furnishing and outfitting. Few people were in it just at this hour, and the few were too far off to trouble at all the sense of privacy. Lois was tired, she was hungry; this sudden escape from din and motion and dust, to refreshment and stillness and a soft atmosphere, was like the changes in an Arabian Nights' enchantment. And the place was splendid enough and dainty enough to fit into one of those stories too. Lois sat back in her chair, quietly but intensely enjoying. It never occurred to her that she herself might be a worthy object of contemplation.

Yet a fairer might have been sought for, all New York through. She was not vulgarly gazing; she had not the aspect of one strange to the place; quiet, grave, withdrawn into herself, she wore an air of most sweet reserve and unconscious dignity. Features more beautiful might be found, no doubt, and in numbers; it was not the mere lines, nor the mere colours of her face, which made it so remarkable, but rather the mental character. The beautiful poise of a spirit at rest within itself; the simplicity of unconsciousness; the freshness of a mind to which nothing has grown stale or old, and which sees nothing in its conventional shell; along with the sweetness that comes of habitual dwelling in sweetness. Both her companions occasionally looked at her; Lois did not know it; she did not think herself of sufficient importance to be looked at.

And then came the luncheon. Such a luncheon! and served with a delicacy which became it. Chocolate which was a rich froth; rolls which were puff balls of perfection; salad, and fruit. Anything yet more substantial Mrs. Wishart declined. Also she declined wine.

"I should not dare, before Lois," she said.

Therewith came their entertainer's eyes round to Lois again.

"Is she allowed to keep your conscience, Mrs. Wishart?"

"Poor child! I don't charge her with that. But you know, Mr. Dillwyn, in presence of angels one would walk a little carefully!"

"That almost sounds as if the angels would be uncomfortable companions," said Lois.

"Not quite *sans gêne*" – the gentleman added, Then Lois's eyes met his full.

"I do not know what that is," she said.

"Only a couple of French words."

"I do not know French," said Lois simply.

He had not seen before what beautiful eyes they were; soft and grave, and true with the clearness of the blue ether. He thought he would like another such look into their transparent depths. So he asked,

"But what is it about the wine?"

"O, we are water-drinkers up about my home," Lois answered, looking, however, at her chocolate cup from which she was refreshing herself.

"That is what the English call us as a nation, I am sure most inappropriately. Some of us know good wine when we see it; and most of the rest have an intimate acquaintance with wine or some thing else that is *not* good. Perhaps Miss Lothrop has formed her opinion, and practice, upon knowledge of this latter kind?"

Lois did not say; she thought her opinions, or practice, could have very little interest for this fine gentleman.

"Lois is unfashionable enough to form her own opinions," Mrs. Wishart remarked.

"But not inconsistent enough to build them on nothing, I hope?"

"I could tell you what they are built on," said Lois, brought out by this challenge; "but I do not know that you would see from that how well founded they are."

"I should be very grateful for such an indulgence."

"In this particular case we are speaking of, they are built on two foundation stones – both out of the same quarry," said Lois, her colour rising a little, while she smiled too. "One is this – 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' And the other – 'I will neither eat meat, nor drink wine, nor *anything*, by which my brother stumbleth, or is offended, or made weak.'"

Lois did not look up as she spoke, and Mrs. Wishart smiled with amusement. Their host's face expressed an undoubted astonishment. He regarded the gentle and yet bold speaker with steady attention for a minute or two, noting the modesty, and the gentleness, and the fearlessness with which she spoke. Noting her great beauty too.

"Precious stones!" said he lightly, when she had done speaking. "I do not know whether they are broad enough for such a superstructure as you would build on them." And then he turned to Mrs. Wishart again, and they left the subject and plunged into a variety of other subjects where Lois scarce could follow them.

What did they not talk of! Mr. Dillwyn, it appeared, had lately returned from abroad, where Mrs. Wishart had also formerly lived for some time; and now they went over a multitude of things and people familiar to both of them, but of which Lois did not even know the names. She listened, however, eagerly; and gleaned, as an eager listener generally may, a good deal. Places, until now unheard of, took a certain form and aspect in Lois's imagination; people were discerned, also in imagination, as being of different types and wonderfully different habits and manners of life from any Lois knew at home, or had even seen in New York. She heard pictures talked of, and wondered what sort of a world that art world might be, in which Mr. Dillwyn was so much at home. Lois had never seen any pictures in her life which were much to her. And the talk about countries sounded strange. She knew where Germany was on the map, and could give its boundaries no doubt accurately; but all this gossip about the Rhineland and its vineyards and the vintages there and in France, sounded fascinatingly novel. And she knew where Italy was on the map; but Italy's

skies, and soft air, and mementos of past times of history and art, were unknown; and she listened with ever-quickening attention. The result of the whole atlast was a mortifying sense that she knew nothing. These people, her friend and this other, lived in a world of mental impressions and mentally stored-up knowledge, which seemed to make their life unendingly broader and richer than her own. Especially the gentleman. Lois observed that it was constantly he who had something new to tell Mrs. Wishart, and that in all the ground they went over, he was more at home than she. Indeed, Lois got the impression that Mr. Dillwyn knew the world and everything in it better than anybody she had ever seen. Mr. Caruthers was extremely *au fait* in many things; Lois had the thought, not the word; but Mr. Dillwyn was an older man and had seen much more. He was terrifically wise in it all, she thought; and by degrees she got a kind of awe of him. A little of Mrs. Wishart too. How much her friend knew, how at home she was in this big world! what a plain little piece of ignorance was she herself beside her. Well, thought Lois – every one to his place! My place is Shampuashuh. I suppose I am fitted for that.

"Miss Lothrop," said their entertainer here, "will you allow me to give you some grapes?"

"Grapes in March!" said Lois, smiling, as a beautiful white bunch was laid before her. "People who live in New York can have everything, it seems, that they want."

"Provided they can pay for it," Mrs. Wishart put in.

"How is it in your part of the world?" said Mr. Dillwyn. "You cannot have what you want?"

"Depends upon what order you keep your wishes in," said Lois. "You can have strawberries in June – and grapes in September."

"What order do you keep your wishes in?" was the next question.

"I think it best to have as few as possible."

"But that would reduce life to a mere framework of life, – if one had no wishes!"

"One can find something else to fill it up," said Lois.

"Pray what would you substitute? For with wishes I connect the accomplishment of wishes."

"Are they always connected?"

"Not always; but generally, the one are the means to the other."

"I believe I do not find it so."

"Then, pardon me, what would you substitute, Miss Lothrop, to fill up your life, and not have it a bare existence?"

"There is always work – " said Lois shyly; "and there are the pleasures that come without being wished for. I mean, without being particularly sought and expected."

"Does much come that way?" asked their entertainer, with an incredulous smile of mockery.

"O, a great deal!" cried Lois; and then she checked herself.

"This is a very interesting investigation, Mrs. Wishart," said the gentleman. "Do you think I may presume upon Miss Lothrop's good nature, and carry it further?"

"Miss Lothrop's good nature is a commodity I never knew yet to fail."

"Then I will go on, for I am curious to know, with an honest desire to enlarge my circle of knowledge. Will you tell me, Miss Lothrop, what are the pleasures in your mind when you speak of their coming unsought?"

Lois tried to draw back. "I do not believe you would understand them," she said a little shyly.

"I trust you do my understanding less than justice!"

"No," said Lois, blushing, "for your enjoyments are in another line."

"Please indulge me, and tell me the line of yours."

He is laughing at me, thought Lois. And her next thought was, What matter! So, after an instant's hesitation, she answered simply.

"To anybody who has travelled over the world, Shampuashuh is a small place; and to anybody who knows all you have been talking about, what we know at Shampuashuh would seem very little. But every morning it is a pleasure to me to wake and see the sun rise; and the fields, and the river, and

the Sound, are a constant delight to me at all times of day, and in all sorts of weather. A walk or a ride is always a great pleasure, and different every time. Then I take constant pleasure in my work."

"Mrs. Wishart," said the gentleman, "this is a revelation to me. Would it be indiscreet, if I were to ask Miss Lothrop what she can possibly mean under the use of the term '*work*'?"

I think Mrs. Wishart considered that it *would* be rather indiscreet, and wished Lois would be a little reticent about her home affairs. Lois, however, had no such feeling.

"I mean work," she said. "I can have no objection that anybody should know what our life is at home. We have a little farm, very small; it just keeps a few cows and sheep. In the house we are three sisters; and we have an old grandmother to take care of, and to keep the house, and manage the farm."

"But surely you cannot do that last?" said the gentleman.

"We do not manage the cows and sheep," said Lois, smiling; "men's hands do that; but we make the butter, and we spin the wool, and we cultivate our garden. *That* we do ourselves entirely; and we have a good garden too. And that is one of the things," added Lois, smiling, "in which I take unending pleasure."

"What can you do in a garden?"

"All there is to do, except ploughing. We get a neighbour to do that."

"And the digging?"

"I can dig," said Lois, laughing.

"But do not?"

"Certainly I do."

"And sow seeds, and dress beds?"

"Certainly. And enjoy every moment of it. I do it early, before the sun gets hot. And then, there is all the rest; gathering the fruit, and pulling the vegetables, and the care of them when we have got them; and I take great pleasure in it all. The summer mornings and spring mornings in the garden are delightful, and all the work of a garden is delightful, I think."

"You will except the digging?"

"You are laughing at me," said Lois quietly. "No, I do not except the digging. I like it particularly. Hoeing and raking I do not like half so well."

"I am not laughing," said Mr. Dillwyn, "or certainly not at you. If at anybody, it is myself. I am filled with admiration."

"There is no room for that either," said Lois. "We just have it to do, and we do it; that is all."

"Miss Lothrop, I never have *had* to do anything in my life, since I left college."

Lois thought privately her own thoughts, but did not give them expression; she had talked a great deal more than she meant to do. Perhaps Mrs. Wishart too thought there had been enough of it, for she began to make preparations for departure.

"Mrs. Wishart," said Mr. Dillwyn, "I have to thank you for the greatest pleasure I have enjoyed since I landed."

"Unsought and unwished-for, too, according to Miss Lothrop's theory. Certainly we have to thank you, Philip, for we were in a distressed condition when you found us. Come and see me. And," she added *sottovoce* as he was leading her out, and Lois had stepped on before them, "I consider that all the information that has been given you is strictly in confidence."

"Quite delicious confidence!"

"Yes, but not for all ears," added Mrs. Wishart somewhat anxiously.

"I am glad you think me worthy. I will not abuse the trust."

"I did not say I thought you worthy," said the lady, laughing; "I was not consulted. Young eyes see the world in the fresh colours of morning, and think daisies grow everywhere."

They had reached the street. Mr. Dillwyn accompanied the ladies a part of their way, and then took leave of them.

## CHAPTER V IN COUNCIL

Sauntering back to his hotel, Mr. Dillwyn's thoughts were a good deal engaged with the impressions of the last hour. It was odd, too; he had seen all varieties and descriptions of feminine fascination, or he thought he had; some of them in very high places, and with all the adventitious charms which wealth and place and breeding can add to those of nature's giving. Yet here was something new. A novelty as fresh as one of the daisies Mrs. Wishart had spoken of. He had seen daisies too before, he thought; and was not particularly fond of that style. No; this was something other than a daisy.

Sauntering along and not heeding his surroundings, he was suddenly hailed by a joyful voice, and an arm was thrust within his own.

"Philip! where did you come from? and when did you come?"

"Only the other day – from Egypt – was coming to see you, but have been bothered with custom-house business. How do you all do, Tom?"

"What are you bringing over? curiosities? or precious things?"

"Might be both. How do you do, old boy?"

"Very much put out, just at present, by a notion of my mother's; she will go to Florida to escape March winds."

"Florida! Well, Florida is a good place, when March is stalking abroad like this. What are you put out for? I don't comprehend."

"Yes, but you see, the month will be half over before she gets ready to be off; and what's the use? April will be here directly; she might just as well wait here for April."

"You cannot pick oranges off the trees here in April. You forget that."

"Don't want to pick 'em anywhere. But come along, and see them at home."

"They'll be awfully glad to see you."

It was not far, and talking of nothings the two strolled that way. There was much rejoicing over Philip's return, and much curiosity expressed as to where he had been and what he had been doing for a long time past. Finally, Mrs. Caruthers proposed that he should go on to Florida with them.

"Yes, do!" cried Tom. "You go, and I'll stay."

"My dear Tom!" said his mother, "I could not possibly do without you."

"Take Julia. I'll look after the house, and Dillwyn will look after your baggage."

"And who will look after you, you silly boy?" said his sister. "You're the worst charge of all."

"What is the matter?" Philip asked now.

"Women's notions," said Tom. "Women are always full of notions! They can spy game at hawk's distance; only they make a mistake sometimes, which the hawk don't, I reckon; and think they see something when there is nothing."

"We know what we see this time," said his sister. "Philip, he's dreadfully caught."

"Not the first time?" said Dillwyn humorously. "No danger, is there?"

"There is real danger," said Miss Julia. "He is caught with an impossible country girl."

"Caught by her? Fie, Tom! aren't you wiser?"

"That's not fair!" cried Tom hotly. "She catches nobody, nor tries it, in the way you mean. I am not caught, either; that's more; but you shouldn't speak in that way."

"Who is the lady? It is very plain Tom isn't caught. But where is she?"

"She is a little country girl come to see the world for the first time. Of course she makes great eyes; and the eyes are pretty; and Tom couldn't stand it." Miss Julia spoke laughing, yet serious.

"I should not think a little country girl would be dangerous to Tom."

"No, would you? It's vexatious, to have one's confidence in one's brother so shaken."

"What's the matter with her?" broke out Tom here. "I am not caught, as you call it, neither by her nor with her; but if you want to discuss her, I say, what's the matter with her?"

"Nothing, Tom!" said his mother soothingly; "there is nothing whatever the matter with her; and I have no doubt she is a nice girl. But she has no education."

"Hang education!" said Tom. "Anybody can pick that up. She can talk, I can tell you, better than anybody of all those you had round your table the other day. She's an uncommon good talker."

"You are, you mean," said his sister; "and she listens and makes big eyes. Of course nothing can be more delightful. But, Tom, she knows nothing at all; not so much as how to dress herself."

"Wasn't she well enough dressed the other day?"

"Somebody arranged that for her."

"Well, somebody could do it again. You girls think so much of *dressing*. It isn't the first thing about a woman, after all."

"You men think enough about it, though. What would tempt you to go out with me if I wasn't *assez bien mise*? Or what would take any man down Broadway with his wife if she hadn't a hoop on?"

"Doesn't the lady in question wear a hoop?" inquired Philip.

"No, she don't."

"Singular want of taste!"

"Well, you don't like them; but, after all, it's the fashion, and one can't help oneself. And, as I said, you may not like them, but you wouldn't walk with me if I hadn't one."

"Then, to sum up – the deficiencies of this lady, as I understand, are, – education and a hoop? Is that all?"

"By no means!" cried Mrs. Caruthers. "She is nobody, Philip. She comes from a family in the country – very respectable people, I have no doubt, but, – well, she is nobody. No connections, no habit of the world. And no money. They are quite poor people."

"That *is* serious," said Dillwyn. "Tom is in such straitened circumstances himself. I was thinking, he might be able to provide the hoop; but if she has no money, it is critical."

"You may laugh!" said Miss Julia. "That is all the comfort one gets from a man. But he does not laugh when it comes to be his own case, and matters have gone too far to be mended, and he is feeling the consequences of his rashness."

"You speak as if I were in danger! But I do not see how it should come to be 'my own case,' as I never even saw the lady. Who is she? and where is she? and how comes she – so dangerous – to be visiting you?"

All spoke now at once, and Philip heard a confused medley of "Mrs. Wishart" – "Miss Lothrop" – "staying with her" – "poor cousin" – "kind to her of course."

Mr. Dillwyn's countenance changed.

"Mrs. Wishart!" he echoed. "Mrs. Wishart is irreproachable."

"Certainly, but that does not put a penny in Miss Lothrop's pocket, nor give her position, nor knowledge of the world."

"What do you mean by knowledge of the world?" Mr. Dillwyn inquired with slow words.

"Why! you know. Just the sort of thing that makes the difference between the raw and the manufactured article," Miss Julia answered, laughing. She was comfortably conscious of being thoroughly "manufactured" herself. No crude ignorances or deficiencies there. – "The sort of thing that makes a person at home and *au fait* everywhere, and in all companies, and shuts out awkwardnesses and inelegancies."

"Does it shut them out?"

"Why, of course! How can you ask? What else will shut them out? All that makes the difference between a woman of the world and a milkmaid."



"This little girl, I understand, then, is awkward and inelegant?"

"She is nothing of the kind!" Tom burst out. "Ridiculous!" But Dillwyn waited for Miss Julia's answer.

"I cannot call her just *awkward*," said Mrs. Caruthers.

"N-o," said Julia, "perhaps not. She has been living with Mrs. Wishart, you know, and has got accustomed to a certain set of things. She does not strike you unpleasantly in society, seated at a lunch table, for instance; but of course all beyond the lunch table is like London to a Laplander."

Tom flung himself out of the room.

"And that is what you are going to Florida for?" pursued Dillwyn.

"You have guessed it! Yes, indeed. Do you know, there seems to be nothing else to do. Tom is in actual danger. I know he goes very often to Mrs. Wishart's; and you know Tom is impressible; and before we know it he might do something he would be sorry for. The only thing is to get him away."

"I think I will go to Mrs. Wishart's too," said Philip. "Do you think there would be danger?"

"I don't know!" said Miss Julia, arching her brows. "I never can comprehend why the men take such furies of fancies for this girl or for that. To me they do not seem so different. I believe this girl takes just because she is not like the rest of what one sees every day."

"That might be a recommendation. Did it never strike you, Miss Julia, that there is a certain degree of sameness in our world? Not in nature, for there the variety is simply endless; but in our ways of living. Here the effort seems to be to fall in with one general pattern. Houses and dresses; and entertainments, and even the routine of conversation. Generally speaking, it is all one thing."

"Well," said Miss Julia, with spirit, "when anything is once recognized as the right thing, of course everybody wants to conform to it."

"I have not recognized it as the right thing."

"What?"

"This uniformity."

"What would you have?"

"I think I would like to see, for a change, freedom and individuality. Why should a woman with sharp features dress her hair in a manner that sets off their sharpness, because her neighbour with a classic head can draw it severely about her in close bands and coils, and so only the better show its nobility of contour? Why may not a beautiful head of hair be dressed flowingly, because the fashion favours the people who have no hair at all? Why may not a plain dress set off a fine figure, because the mode is to leave no unbroken line or sweeping drapery anywhere? And I might go on endlessly."

"I can't tell, I am sure," said Miss Julia; "but if one lives in the world, it won't do to defy the world. And that you know as well as I."

"What would happen, I wonder?"

"The world would quietly drop you. Unless you are a person of importance enough to set a new fashion."

"Is there not some unworthy bondage about that?"

"You can't help it, Philip Dillwyn, if there is. We have got to take it as it is; and make the best of it."

"And this new Fate of Tom's – this new Fancy rather, – as I understand, she is quite out of the world?"

"Quite. Lives in a village in New England somewhere, and grows onions."

"For market?" said Philip, with a somewhat startled face.

"No, no!" said Julia, laughing – "how could you think I meant that? No; I don't know anything about the onions; but she has lived among farmers and sailors all her life, and that is all she knows. And it is perfectly ridiculous, but Tom is so smitten with her that all we can do is to get him away. Fancy, Tom!"

"He has got to come back," said Philip, rising. "You had better getsomebody to take the girl away."

"Perhaps you will do that?" said Miss Julia, laughing.

"I'll think of it," said Dillwyn as he took leave.

## CHAPTER VI

### HAPPINESS

Philip kept his promise. Thinking, however, he soon found, did not amount to much till he had seen more; and he went a few days after to Mrs. Wishart's house.

It was afternoon. The sun was streaming in from the west, filling the sitting-room with its splendour; and in the radiance of it Lois was sitting with some work. She was as unadorned as when Philip had seen her the other day in the street; her gown was of some plain stuff, plainly made; she was a very unfashionable-looking person. But the good figure that Mr. Dillwyn liked to see was there; the fair outlines, simple and graceful, light and girlish; and the exquisite hair caught the light, and showed its varying, warm, bright tints. It was massed up somehow, without the least artificiality, in order, and yet lying loose and wavy; a beautiful combination which only a few heads can attain to.

There was nobody else in the room; and as Lois rose to meet the visitor, he was not flattered to see that she did not recognize him. Then the next minute a flash of light came into her face.

"I have had the pleasure," said Dillwyn. "I was afraid you were going to ignore the fact."

"You gave us lunch the other day," said Lois, smiling. "Yes, I remember. I shall always remember."

"You got home comfortably?"

"O yes, after we were so fortified. Mrs. Wishart was quite exhausted, before lunch, I mean."

"This is a pleasant situation," said Philip, going a step nearer the window.

"Yes, very! I enjoy those rocks very much."

"You have no rocks at home?"

"No rocks," said Lois; "plenty of *rock*, or stone; but it comes up out of the ground just enough to make trouble, not to give pleasure. The country is all level."

"And you enjoy the variety?"

"O, not because it is variety. But I have been nowhere and have seen nothing in my life."

"So the world is a great unopened book to you?" said Philip, with a smile regarding her.

"It will always be that, I think," Lois replied, shaking her head.

"Why should it?"

"I live at Shampushuh."

"What then? Here you are in New York."

"Yes, wonderfully. But I am going home again."

"Not soon?"

"Very soon. It will be time to begin to make garden in a few days."

"Can the garden not be made without you?"

"Not very well; for nobody knows, except me, just where things were planted last year."

"And is that important?"

"Very important." Lois smiled at his simplicity. "Because many things must be changed. They must not be planted where they were last year."

"Why not?"

"They would not do so well. They have all to shift about, like Puss-in-the-corner; and it is puzzling. The peas must go where the corn or the potatoes went; and the corn must find another place, and so on."

"And you are the only one who keeps a map of the garden in your head?"

"Not in my head," said Lois, smiling. "I keep it in my drawer."

"Ah! That is being more systematic than I gave you credit for."

"But you cannot do anything with a garden if you have not system."

"Nor with anything else! But where did *you* learn that?"

"In the garden, I suppose," said Lois simply.

She talked frankly and quietly. Mr. Dillwyn could see by her manner, he thought, that she would be glad if Mrs. Wishart would come in and take him off her hands; but there was no awkwardness or ungracefulness or unreadiness. In fact, it was the grace of the girl that struck him, not her want of it. Then she was so very lovely. A quiet little figure, in her very plain dress; but the features were exceedingly fair, the clear skin was as pure as a pearl, the head with its crown of soft bright hair might have belonged to one of the Graces. More than all, was the very rare expression and air of the face. That Philip could not read; he could not decide what gave the girl her special beauty. Something in the mind or soul of her, he was sure; and he longed to get at it and find out what it was.

She is not commonplace, he said to himself, while he was talking something else to her; – but it is more than being not commonplace. She is very pure; but I have seen other pure faces. It is not that she is a Madonna; this is no creature

"... too bright and good For human nature's daily food."

But what "daily food" for human nature she would be! She is a lofty creature; yet she is a half-timid country girl; and I suppose she does not know much beyond her garden. Yes, probably Mrs. Caruthers was right; she would not do for Tom. Tom is not a quarter good enough for her! She is a little country girl, and she does not know much; and yet – happy will be the man to whom she will give a free kiss of those wise, sweet lips!

With these somewhat contradictory thoughts running through his mind, Mr. Dillwyn set himself seriously to entertain Lois. As she had never travelled, he told her of things he had seen – and things he had known without seeing – in his own many journeyings about the world. Presently Lois dropped her work out of her hands, forgot it, and turned upon Mr. Dillwyn a pair of eager, intelligent eyes, which it was a pleasure to talk to. He became absorbed in his turn, and equally; ministering to the attention and curiosity and power of imagination he had aroused. What listeners her eyes were! and how quick to receive and keen to pass judgement was the intelligence behind them. It surprised him; however, its responses were mainly given through the eyes. In vain he tried to get a fair share of words from her too; sought to draw her out. Lois was not afraid to speak; and yet, for sheer modesty and simpleness, that supposed her words incapable of giving pleasure and would not speak them as a matter of conventionality, she said very few. At last Philip made a determined effort to draw her out.

"I have told you now about my home," he said. "What is yours like?" And his manner said, I am going to stop, and you are going to begin.

"There is nothing striking about it, I think," said Lois.

"Perhaps you think so, just because it is familiar to you."

"No, it is because there is really not much to tell about it. There are just level farm fields; and the river, and the Sound."

"The river?"

"The Connecticut."

"O, *that* is where you are, is it? And are you near the river?"

"Not very near. About as near the river on one side as we are to the Sound on the other; either of them is a mile and more away."

"You wish they were nearer?"

"No," said Lois; "I don't think I do; there is always the pleasure of going to them."

"Then you should wish them further. A mile is a short drive."

"O, we do not drive much. We walk to the shore often, and sometimes to the river."

"You like the large water so much the best?"

"I think I like it best," said Lois, laughing a little; "but we go for clams."

"Can you get them yourself?"

"Certainly! It is great fun. While you go to drive in the Park, we go to dig clams. And I think we have the best of it too, for a stand-by."

"Do tell me about the clams."

"Do you like them?"

"I suppose I do. I do not know them. What are they? the usual little soup fish?"

"I don't know about soup fish. O no! not those; they are *not* the sort Mrs. Wishart has sometimes. These are long; ours in the Sound, I mean; longish and blackish; and do not taste like the clams you have here."

"Better, I hope?"

"A great deal better. There is nothing much pleasanter than a dish of long clams that you have dug yourself. At least we think so."

"Because you have got them yourself!"

"No; but I suppose that helps."

"So you get them by digging?"

"Yes. It is funny work. The clams are at the edge of the water, where the rushes grow, in the mud. We go for them when the tide is out. Then, in the blue mud you see quantities of small holes as big as a lead pencil would make; those are the clam holes."

"And what then?"

"Then we dig for them; dig with a hoe; and you must dig very fast, or the clam will get away from you. Then, if you get pretty near him he spits at you."

"I suppose that is a harmless remonstrance."

"It may come in your face."

Mr. Dillwyn laughed a little, looking at this fair creature, who was talking to him, and finding it hard to imagine her among the rushes racing with a long clam.

"It is wet ground I suppose, where you find the clams?"

"O yes. One must take off shoes and stockings and go barefoot. But the mud is warm, and it is pleasant enough."

"The clams must be good, to reward the trouble?"

"We think it is as pleasant to get them as to eat them."

"I believe you remarked, this sport is your substitute for our Central Park?"

"Yes, it is a sort of a substitute."

"And, in the comparison, you think you are the gainers?"

"You cannot compare the two things," said Lois; "only that both are ways of seeking pleasure."

"So you say; and I wanted your comparative estimate of the two ways."

"Central Park is new to me, you know," said Lois; "and I am very fond of riding, — *driving*, Mrs. Wishart says I ought to call it; the scene is like fairyland to me. But I do not think it is better fun, really, than going after clams. And the people do not seem to enjoy it a quarter as much."

"The people whom you see driving?"

"Yes. They do not look as if they were taking much pleasure. Most of them."

"Pray why should they go, if they do not find pleasure in it?"

Lois looked at her questioner.

"You can tell, better than I, Mr. Dillwyn. For the same reasons, I suppose, that they do other things."

"Pardon me, — what things do you mean?"

"I mean, *all* the things they do for pleasure, or that are supposed to be for pleasure. Parties — luncheon parties, and dinners, and — " Lois hesitated.

"*Supposed* to be for pleasure!" Philip echoed the words. "Excuse me – but what makes you think they do not gain their end?"

"People do not look really happy," said Lois. "They do not seem to measure if they really enjoyed what they were doing."

"You are a nice observer!"

"Am I?"

"Pray, at – I forget the name – your home in the country, are the people more happily constituted?"

"Not that I know of. Not more happily constituted; but I think they live more natural lives."

"Instance!" said Philip, looking curious.

"Well," said Lois, laughing and colouring, "I do not think they do things unless they want to. They do not ask people unless they want to see them; and when they *do* make a party, everybody has a good time. It is not brilliant, or splendid, or wonderful, like parties here; but yet I think it is more really what it is meant to be."

"And here you think things are not what they are meant to be?"

"Perhaps I am mistaken," said Lois modestly. "I have seen so little."

"You are not mistaken in your general view. It would be a mistake to think there are no exceptions."

"O, I do not think that."

"But it is matter of astonishment to me, how you have so soon acquired such keen discernment. Is it that you do not enjoy these occasions yourself?"

"O, I enjoy them intensely," said Lois, smiling. "Sometimes I think I am the only one of the company that does; but *I* enjoy them."

"By the power of what secret talisman?"

"I don't know; – being happy, I suppose," said Lois shyly.

"You are speaking seriously; and therefore you are touching the greatest question of human life. Can you say of yourself that you are truly *happy*?"

Lois met his eyes in a little wonderment at this questioning, and answered a plain "yes."

"But, to be *happy*, with me, means, to be independent of circumstances. I do not call him *happy*, whose happiness is gone if the east wind blow, or a party miscarry, or a bank break; even though it were the bank in which his property is involved."

"Nor do I," said Lois gravely.

"And – pray forgive me for asking! – but, are you happy in this exclusive sense?"

"I have no property in a bank," said Lois, smiling again; "I have not been tried that way; but I suppose it may do as well to have no property anywhere. Yes, Mr. Dillwyn."

"But that is equal to having the philosopher's stone!" cried Dillwyn.

"What is the philosopher's stone?"

"The wise men of old time made themselves very busy in the search for some substance, or composition, which would turn other substances to gold. Looking upon gold as the source and sum of all felicity, they spent endless pains and countless time upon the search for this transmuting substance. They thought, if they could get gold enough, they would be happy. Sometimes some one of them fancied he was just upon the point of making the immortal discovery; but there he always broke down."

"They were looking in the wrong place," said Lois thoughtfully.

"Is there a *right* place to look then?"

Lois smiled. It was a smile that struck Philip very much, for its calm and confident sweetness; yes, more than that; for its gladness. She was not in haste to answer; apparently she felt some difficulty.

"I do not think gold ever made anybody happy," she said at length.

"That is what moralists tell us. But, after all, Miss Lothrop, money is the means to everything else in this world."

"Not to happiness, is it?"

"Well, what is, then? They say – and perhaps you will say – that friendships and affections can do more; but I assure you, where there are not the means to stave off grinding toil or crushing poverty, affections wither; or if they do not quite wither, they bear no golden fruit of happiness. On the contrary, they offer vulnerable spots to the stings of pain."

"Money can do a great deal," said Lois.

"What can do more?"

Lois lifted up her eyes and looked at her questioner inquiringly. Did he know no better than that?

"With money, one can do everything," he went on, though struck by her expression.

"Yes," said Lois; "and yet – all that never satisfied anybody."

"Satisfied!" cried Philip. "Satisfied is a very large word. Who is satisfied?"

Lois glanced up again, mutely.

"If I dared venture to say so – you look, Miss Lothrop, you absolutely look, as if *you* were; and yet it is impossible."

"Why is it impossible?"

"Because it is what all the generations of men have been trying for, ever since the world began; and none of them ever found it."

"Not if they looked for it in their money bags," said Lois. "It was never found there."

"Was it ever found anywhere?"

"Why, yes!"

"Pray tell me where, that I may have it too!"

The girl's cheeks flushed; and what was very odd to Philip, her eyes, he was sure, had grown moist; but the lids fell over them, and he could not see as well as he wished. What a lovely face it was, he thought, in this its mood of stirred gravity!

"Do you ever read the Bible, Mr. Dillwyn?"

The question occasioned him a kind of revulsion. The Bible! was *that* to be brought upon his head? A confused notion of organ-song, the solemnity of a still house, a white surplice, and words in measured cadence, came over him. Nothing in that connection had ever given him the idea of being satisfied. But Lois's question —

"The Bible?" he repeated. "May I ask, why you ask?"

"I thought you did not know something that is in it."

"Very possibly. It is the business of clergymen, isn't it, to tell us what is in it? That is what they are paid for. Of what are you thinking?"

"I was thinking of a person in it, mentioned in it, I mean, – who said just what you said a minute ago."

"What was that? And who was that?"

"It was a poor woman who once held a long talk with the Lord Jesus as he was resting beside a well. She had come to draw water, and Jesus asked her for some; and then he told her that whoever drank of that water would thirst again – as she knew; but whoever should drink of the water that *he* would give, should never thirst. I was telling you of that water, Mr. Dillwyn. And the woman answered just what you answered – 'Give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hitherto draw.'"

"Did she get it?"

"I think she did."

"You mean, something that satisfied her, and would satisfy me?"

"It satisfies every one who drinks of it," said Lois.

"But you know, I do not in the least understand you."

The girl rose up and fetched a Bible which lay upon a distant table. Philip looked at the book as she brought it near; no volume of Mrs. Wishart's, he was sure. Lois had had her own Bible with her in the drawing-room. She must be one of the devout kind. He was sorry. He believed they were a narrow and prejudiced sort of people, given to laying down the law and erecting barricades across other people's paths. He was sorry this fair girl was one of them. But she was a lovely specimen. Could she unlearn these ways, perhaps? But now, what was she going to bring forth to him out of the Bible? He watched the fingers that turned the leaves; pretty fingers enough, and delicate, but not very white. Gardening probably was not conducive to the blanching of a lady's hand. It was a pity. She found her place so soon that he had little time to think his regrets.

"You allowed that nobody is satisfied, Mr. Dillwyn," said Lois then.

"See if you understand this."

"Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness."

Lois closed her book.

"Who says that?" Philip inquired.

"God himself, by his messenger."

"And to whom?"

"I think, just now, the words come to you, Mr. Dillwyn." Lois said this with a manner and look of such simplicity, that Philip was not even reminded of the class of monitors he had in his mind assigned her with. It was absolute simple matter of fact; she meant business.

"May I look at it?" he said.

She found the page again, and he considered it. Then as he gave it back, remarked,

"This does not tell me yet *what* this satisfying food is?"

"No, that you can know only by experience."

"How is the experience to be obtained?"

Again Lois found the words in her book and showed them to him. "'Whosoever drinketh of the water *that I shall give him*' – and again, above, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and *he would have given thee* living water.' Christ gives it, and he must be asked for it."

"And then – ?" said Philip.

"Then you would be *satisfied*."

"You think it?"

"I know it."

"It takes a great deal to satisfy a man!"

"Not more than it does for a woman."

"And you are satisfied?" he asked searchingly.

But Lois smiled as she gave her answer; and it was an odd and very inconsistent thing that Philip should be disposed to quarrel with her for that smile. I think he wished she were *not* satisfied. It was very absurd, but he did not reason about it; he only felt annoyed.

"Well, Miss Lothrop," he said as he rose, "I shall never forget this conversation. I am very glad no one came in to interrupt it."

Lois had no phrases of society ready, and replied nothing.



## CHAPTER VII

### THE WORTH OF THINGS

Mr. Dillwyn walked away from Mrs. Wishart's in a discontented mood, which was not usual with him. He felt almost annoyed with something; yet did not quite know what, and he did not stop to analyze the feeling. He walked away, wondering at himself for being so discomposed, and pondering with sufficient distinctness one or two questions which stood out from the discomposure.

He was a man who had gone through all the usual routine of education and experience common to those who belong to the upper class of society, and can boast of a good name and family. He had lived his college life; he had travelled; he knew the principal cities of his own country, and many in other lands, with sufficient familiarity. Speaking generally, he had seen everything, and knew everybody. He had ceased to be surprised at anything, or to expect much from the world beyond what his own efforts and talents could procure him. His connections and associations had been always with good society and with the old and established portions of it; but he had come into possession of his property not so very long ago, and the pleasure of that was not yet worn off. He was a man who thought himself happy, and certainly possessed a very high place in the esteem of those who knew him; being educated, travelled, clever, and of noble character, and withal rich. It was the oddest thing for Philip to walk as he walked now, musingly, with measured steps, and eyes bent on the ground. There was a most strange sense of uneasiness upon him.

The image of Lois busied him constantly. It was such a lovely image. But he had seen hundreds of handsomer women, he told himself. Had he? Yes, he thought so. Yet not one, not one of them all, had made as much impression upon him. It was inconvenient; and why was it inconvenient? Something about her bewitched him. Yes, he had seen handsomer women; but more or less they were all of a certain pattern; not alike in feature, or name, or place, or style, yet nevertheless all belonging to the general sisterhood of what is called the world. And this girl was different. How different? She was uneducated, but *that* could not give a charm; though Philip thereby reflected that there was a certain charm in variety, and this made variety. She was unaccustomed to the great world and its ways; there could be no charm in that, for he liked the utmost elegance of the best breeding. Here he fetched himself up again. Lois was not in the least ill-bred. Nothing of the kind. She was utterly and truly refined, in every look and word and movement showing that she was so. Yet she had no "manner," as Mrs. Caruthers would have expressed it. No, she had not. She had no trained and inevitable way of speaking and looking; her way was her own, and sprang naturally from the truth of her thought or feeling at the moment. Therefore it could never be counted upon, and gave one the constant pleasure of surprises. Yes, Philip concluded that this was one point of interest about her. She had not learned how to hide herself, and the manner of her revelations was a continual refreshing variety, inasmuch as what she had to reveal was only fair and delicate and true. But what made the girl so provokingly happy? so secure in her contentment? Mr. Dillwyn thought himself a happy man; content with himself and with life; yet life had reached something too like a dead level, and himself, he was conscious, led a purposeless sort of existence. What purpose indeed was there to live for? But this little girl – Philip recalled the bright, soft, clear expression of eye with which she had looked at him; the very sweet curves of happy consciousness about her lips; the confident bearing with which she had spoken, as one who had found a treasure which, as she said, satisfied her. But it cannot! said Philip to himself. It is that she is pure and sweet, and takes happiness like a baby, sucking in what seems to her the pure milk of existence. It is true, the remembered expression of Lois's features did not quite agree with this explanation; pure and sweet, no doubt, but also grave and high, and sometimes evidencing a keen intellectual perception and wisdom. Not just like a baby; and he found he could not dismiss

the matter so. What made her, then, so happy? Philip could not remember ever seeing a grown person who seemed so happy; whose happiness seemed to rest on such a steady foundation. Can she be in love? thought Dillwyn; and the idea gave him a most unreasonable thrill of displeasure. For a moment only; then his reason told him that the look in Lois's face was not like that. It was not the brilliance of ecstasy; it was the sunshine of deep and fixed content. Why in the world should Mr. Dillwyn wish that Lois were not so content? so beyond what he or anybody could give her? And having got to this point, Mr. Dillwyn pulled himself up again. What business was it of his, the particular spring of happiness she had found to drink of? and if it quenched her thirst, as she said it did, why should he be anything but glad of it? Why, even if Lois were happy in some new-found human treasure, should it move him, Philip Dillwyn, with discomfort? Was it possible that he too could be following in those steps of Tom Caruthers, from which Tom's mother was at such pains to divert her son? Philip began to see where he stood. Could it be? – and what if?

He studied the question now with a clear view of its bearings. He had got out of a fog. Lois was all he had thought of her. Would she do for a wife for him? Uneducated – inexperienced – not in accord with the habits of the world – accustomed to very different habits and society – with no family to give weight to her name and honour to his choice, – all that Philip pondered; and, on the other side, the loveliness, the freshness, the intellect, the character, and the refinement, which were undoubted. He pondered and pondered. A girl who was nobody, and whom society would look upon as an intruder; a girl who had had no advantages of education – how she could express herself so well and so intelligently Philip could not conceive, but the fact was there; Lois had had no education beyond the most simple training of a school in the country; – would it do? He turned it all over and over, and shook his head. It would be too daring an experiment; it would not be wise; it would not do; he must give it up, all thought of such a thing; and well that he had come to handle the question so early, as else he might – he – might have got so entangled that he could not save himself. Poor Tom! But Philip had no mother to interpose to save *him*; and his sister was not at hand. He went thinking about all this the whole way back to his hotel; thinking, and shaking his head at it. No, this kind of thing was for a boy to do, not for a man who knew the world. And yet, the image of Lois worried him.

I believe, he said to himself, I had better not see the little witch again.

Meanwhile he was not going to have much opportunity. Mrs. Wishart came home a little while after Philip had gone. Lois was stitching by the last fading light.

"Do stop, my dear! you will put your eyes out. Stop, and let us have tea. Has anybody been here?"

"Mr. Dillwyn came. He went away hardly a quarter of an hour ago."

"Mr. Dillwyn! Sorry I missed him. But he will come again. I met Tom Caruthers; he is mourning about this going with his mother to Florida."

"What are they going for?" asked Lois.

"To escape the March winds, he says."

"Who? Mr. Caruthers? He does not look delicate."

Mrs. Wishart laughed. "Not very! And his mother don't either, does she? But, my dear, people are weak in different spots; it isn't always in their lungs."

"Are there no March winds in Florida?"

"Not where they are going. It is all sunshine and oranges – and orange blossoms. But Tom is not delighted with the prospect. What do you think of that young man?"

"He is a very handsome man."

"Is he not? But I did not mean that. Of course you have eyes. I want to know whether you have judgment."

"I have not seen much of Mr. Caruthers to judge by."

"No. Take what you have seen and make the most of it."

"I don't think I have judgment," said Lois. "About people, I mean, and men especially. I am not accustomed to New York people, besides."

"Are they different from Shampuahuh people?"

"O, very."

"How?"

"Miss Caruthers asked me the same thing," said Lois, smiling. "I suppose at bottom all people are alike; indeed, I know they are. But in the country I think they show out more."

"Less disguise about them?"

"I think so."

"My dear, are we such a set of masqueraders in your eyes?"

"No," said Lois; "I did not mean that."

"What do you think of Philip Dillwyn? Compare him with young Caruthers."

"I cannot," said Lois. "Mr. Dillwyn strikes me as a man who knows everything there is in all the world."

"And Tom, you think, does not?"

"Not so much," said Lois hesitating; "at least he does not impress me so."

"You are more impressed with Mr. Dillwyn?"

"In what way?" said Lois simply. "I am impressed with the sense of my own ignorance. I should be oppressed by it, if it was my fault."

"Now you speak like a sensible girl, as you are. Lois, men do not care about women knowing much."

"Sensible men must."

"They are precisely the ones who do not. It is odd enough, but it is a fact. But go on; which of these two do you like best?"

"I have seen most of Mr. Caruthers, you know. But, Mrs. Wishart, sensible men *must* like sense in other people."

"Yes, my dear; they do; unless when they want to marry the people; and then their choice very often lights upon a fool. I have seen it over and over and over again; the clever one of a family is passed by, and the silly sister is the one chosen."

"Why?"

"A pink and white skin, or a pair of black eyebrows, or perhaps some soft blue eyes."

"But people cannot live upon a pair of black eyebrows," said Lois.

"They find that out afterwards."

"Mr. Dillwyn talks as if he liked sense," said Lois. "I mean, he talks about sensible things."

"Do you mean that Tom don't, my dear?"

A slight colour rose on the cheek Mrs. Wishart was looking at; and Lois said somewhat hastily that she was not comparing.

"I shall try to find out what Tom talks to you about, when he comes back from Florida. I shall scold him if he indulges in nonsense."

"It will be neither sense nor nonsense. I shall be gone long before then."

"Gone whither?"

"Home – to Shampuahuh. I have been wanting to speak to you about it, Mrs. Wishart. I must go in a very few days."

"Nonsense! I shall not let you. I cannot get along without you. They don't want you at home, Lois."

"The garden does. And the dairy work will be more now in a week or two; there will be more milk to take care of, and Madge will want help."

"Dairy work! Lois, you must not do dairy work. You will spoil your hands."

Lois laughed. "Somebody's hands must do it. But Madge takes care of the dairy. My hands see to the garden."

"Is it necessary?"

"Why, yes, certainly, if we would have butter or vegetables; and you would not counsel us to do without them. The two make half the living of the family."

"And you really cannot afford a servant?"

"No, nor want one," said Lois. "There are three of us, and so we get along nicely."

"Apropos; – My dear, I am sorry that it is so, but must is must. What I wanted to say to you is, that it is not necessary to tell all this to other people."

Lois looked up, surprised. "I have told no one but you, Mrs. Wishart. O yes! I did speak to Mr. Dillwyn about it, I believe."

"Yes. Well, there is no occasion, my dear. It is just as well not."

"Is it *better* not? What is the harm? Everybody at Shampushuh knows it."

"Nobody knows it here; and there is no reason why they should. I meant to tell you this before."

"I think I have told nobody but Mr. Dillwyn."

"He is safe. I only speak for the future, my dear."

"I don't understand yet," said Lois, half laughing. "Mrs. Wishart, we are not ashamed of it."

"Certainly not, my dear; you have no occasion."

"Then why *should* we be ashamed of it?" Lois persisted.

"My dear, there is nothing to be ashamed of. Do not think I mean that."

Only, people here would not understand it."

"How could they *mis* understand it?"

"You do not know the world, Lois. People have peculiar ways of looking at things; and they put their own interpretation on things; and of course they often make great blunders. And so it is just as well to keep your own private affairs to yourself, and not give them the opportunity of blundering."

Lois was silent a little while.

"You mean," she said then, – "you think, that some of these people I have been seeing here, would think less of me, if they knew how we do at home?"

"They might, my dear. People are just stupid enough for that."

"Then it seems to me I ought to let them know," Lois said, half laughing again. "I do not like to be taken for what I am not; and I do not want to have anybody's good opinion on false grounds." Her colour rose a bit at the same time.

"My dear, it is nobody's business. And anybody that once knew you would judge you for yourself, and not upon any adventitious circumstances. They cannot, in my opinion, think of you too highly."

"I think it is better they should know at once that I am a poor girl," said Lois. However, she reflected privately that it did not matter, as she was going away so soon. And she remembered also that Mr. Dillwyn had not seemed to think any the less of her for what she had told him. Did Tom Caruthers know?

"But, Lois, my dear, about your going – There is no garden work to be done yet. It is March."

"It will soon be April. And the ground must be got ready, and potatoes must go in, and peas."

"Surely somebody else can stick in potatoes and peas."

"They would not know where to put them."

"Does it matter where?"

"To be sure it does!" said Lois, amused. "They must not go where they were last year."

"Why not?"

"I don't know! It seems that every plant wants a particular sort of food, and gets it, if it can; and so, the place where it grows is more or less impoverished, and would have less to give it another year. But a different sort of plant requiring a different sort of food, would be all right in that place."

"Food?" said Mrs. Wishart. "Do you mean manure? you can have that put in."

"No, I do not mean that. I mean something the plant gets from the soil itself."

"I do not understand! Well, my dear, write them word where the peas must go."

Lois laughed again.

"I hardly know myself, till I have studied the map," she said. "I mean, the map of the garden. It is a more difficult matter than you can guess, to arrange all the new order every spring; all has to be changed; and upon where the peas go depends, perhaps, where the cabbages go, and the corn, and the tomatoes, and everything else. It is a matter for study."

"Can't somebody else do it for you?" Mrs. Wishart asked compassionately.

"There is no one else. We have just our three selves; and all that is done we do; and the garden is under my management."

"Well, my dear, you are wonderful women; that is all I have to say. But, Lois, you must pay me a visit by and by in the summer time; I must have that; I shall go to the Isles of Shoals for a while, and I am going to have you there."

"If I can be spared from home, dear Mrs. Wishart, it would be delightful!"

## CHAPTER VIII

### MRS. ARMADALE

It was a few days later, but March yet, and a keen wind blowing from the sea. A raw day out of doors; so much the more comfortable seemed the good fire, and swept-up hearth, and gentle warmth filling the farmhouse kitchen. The farmhouse was not very large, neither by consequence was the kitchen; however, it was more than ordinarily pleasant to look at, because it was not a servants' room; and so was furnished not only for the work, but also for the habitation of the family, who made it in winter almost exclusively their abiding-place. The floor was covered with a thick, gay rag carpet; a settee sofa looked inviting with its bright chintz hangings; rocking chairs, well cushioned, were in number and variety; and a basket of work here, and a pretty lamp there, spoke of ease and quiet occupation. One person only sat there, in the best easy-chair, at the hearth corner; beside her a little table with a large book upon it and a roll of knitting. She was not reading nor working just now; waiting, perhaps, or thinking, with hands folded in her lap. By the look of the hands they had done many a job of hard work in their day; by the look of the face and air of the person, one could see that the hard work was over. The hands were bony, thin, enlarged at the joints, so as age and long rough usage make them, but quiet hands now; and the face was steady and calm, with no haste or restlessness upon it any more, if ever there had been, but a very sweet and gracious repose. It was a hard-featured countenance; it had never been handsome; only the beauty of sense and character it had, and the dignity of a well-lived life. Something more too; some thing of a more noble calm than even the fairest retrospect can give; a more restful repose than comes of mere cessation from labour; a deeper content than has its ground in the actual present. She was a most reverent person, to look at. Just now she was waiting for something, and listening; for her ear caught the sound of a door, and then the tread of swift feet coming down the stair, and then Lois entered upon the scene; evidently fresh from her journey. She had been to her room to lay by her wrappings and change her dress; she was in a dark stuff gown now, with an enveloping white apron. She came up and kissed once more the face which had watched her entrance.

"You've been gone a good while, Lois!"

"Yes, grandma. Too long, did you think?"

"I don't know, child. That depends on what you stayed for."

"Does it? Grandma, I don't know what I stayed for. I suppose because it was pleasant."

"Pleasanter than here?"

"Grandma, I haven't been home long enough to know. It all looks and feels so strange to me as you cannot think!"

"What looks strange?"

"Everything! The house, and the place, and the furniture – I have been living in such a different world till my eyes have grown unaccustomed. You can't think how odd it is."

"What sort of a world have you been living in, Lois? Your letters didn't tell." The old lady spoke with a certain serious doubtfulness, looking at the girl by her side.

"Didn't they?" Lois returned. "I suppose I did not give you the impression because I had it not myself. I had got accustomed to that, you see; and I did not realize how strange it was. I just took it as if I had always lived in it."

"What?"

"O grandma, I can never tell you so that you can understand! It was like living in the Arabian Nights."

"I don't believe in no Arabian Nights."

"And yet they were there, you see. Houses so beautiful, and filled with such beautiful things; and you know, grandmother, I like things to be pretty; – and then, the ease, I suppose. Mrs. Wishart's servants go about almost like fairies; they are hardly seen or heard, but the work is done. And you never have to think about it; you go out, and come home to find dinner ready, and capital dinners too; and you sit reading or talking, and do not know how time goes till it is tea-time, and then there comes the tea; and so it is in-doors and out of doors. All that is quite pleasant."

"And you are sorry to be home again?"

"No, indeed, I am glad. I enjoyed all I have been telling you about, but I think I enjoyed it quite long enough. It is time for me to be here. Is the frost well out of the ground yet?"

"Mr. Bince has been ploughin'."

"Has he? I'm glad. Then I'll put in some peas to-morrow. O yes! I am glad to be home, grandma." Her hand nestled in one of those worn, bony ones affectionately.

"Could you live just right there, Lois?"

"I tried, grandma."

"Did all that help you?"

"I don't know that it hindered. It might not be good for always; but I was there only for a little while, and I just took the pleasure of it."

"Seems to me, you was there a pretty long spell to be called 'a little while.' Ain't it a dangerous kind o' pleasure, Lois? Didn't you never get tempted?"

"Tempted to what, grandma?"

"I don't know! To want to live easy."

"Would that be wrong?" said Lois, putting her soft cheek alongside the withered one, so that her wavy hair brushed it caressingly. Perhaps it was unconscious bribery. But Mrs. Armadale was never bribed.

"It wouldn't be right, Lois, if it made you want to get out o' your duties."

"I think it didn't, grandma. I'm all ready for them. And your dinner is the first thing. Madge and Charity – you say they are gone to New Haven?"

"Charity's tooth tormented her so, and Madge wanted to get a bonnet; and they thought they'd make one job of it. They didn't know you was comin' to-day, and they thought they'd just hit it to go before you come. They won't be back early, nother."

"What have they left for your dinner?" said Lois, going to rummage.

"Grandma, here's nothing at all!"

"An egg'll do, dear. They didn't calculate for you."

"An egg will do for me," said Lois, laughing; "but there's only a crust of bread."

"Madge calculated to make tea biscuits after she come home."

"Then I'll do that now."

Lois stripped up the sleeves from her shapely arms, and presently was very busy at the great kitchen table, with the board before her covered with white cakes, and the cutter and rolling pin still at work producing more. Then the fire was made up, and the tin baker set in front of the blaze, charged with a panful for baking. Lois stripped down her sleeves and set the table, cut ham and fried it, fried eggs, and soon sat opposite Mrs. Armadale pouring her out a cup of tea.

"This is cosy!" she exclaimed. "It is nice to have you all alone for the first, grandma. What's the news?"

"Ain't no news, child. Mrs. Saddler's been to New London for a week."

"And I have come home. Is that all?"

"I don't make no count o' news, child. 'One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh; but the earth abideth for ever.'"

"But one likes to hear of the things that change, grandma."

"Do 'ee? I like to hear of the things that remain."

"But grandma! the earth itself changes; at least it is as different indifferent places as anything can be."

"Some's cold, and some's hot," observed the old lady.

"It is much more than that. The trees are different, and the fruits are different; and the animals; and the country is different, and the buildings, and the people's dresses."

"The men and women is the same," said the old lady contentedly.

"But no, not even that, grandma. They are as different as they can be, and still be men and women."

"'As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.' Bethe New York folks so queer, then, Lois?"

"O no, not the New York people; though they are different too; quite different from Shampuahuh –"

"How?"

Lois did not want to say. Her grandmother, she thought, could not understand her; and if she could understand, she thought she would be perhaps hurt. She turned the conversation. Then came the clearing away the remains of dinner; washing the dishes; baking the rest of the tea-cakes; cleansing and putting away the baker; preparing flour for next day's bread-making; making her own bed and putting her room in order; doing work in the dairy which Madge was not at home to take care of; brushing up the kitchen, putting on the kettle, setting the table for tea. Altogether Lois had a busy two or three hours, before she could put on her afternoon dress and come and sit down by her grandmother.

"It is a change!" she said, smiling. "Such a different life from what I have been living. You can't think, grandma, what a contrast between this afternoon and last Friday."

"What was then?"

"I was sitting in Mrs. Wishart's drawing-room, doing nothing but playwork, and a gentleman talking to me."

"Why was he talking to *you*? Wasn't Mrs. Wishart there?"

"No; she was out."

"What did he talk to you for?"

"I was the only one there was," said Lois. But looking back, she could not avoid the thought that Mr. Dillwyn's long stay and conversation had not been solely a taking up with what he could get.

"He could have gone away," said Mrs. Armadale, echoing her thought.

"I do not think he wanted to go away. I think he liked to talk to me."

It was very odd too, she thought.

"And did you like to talk to him?"

"Yes. You know I have not much to talk about; but somehow he seemed to find out what there was."

"Had *he* much to talk about?"

"I think there is no end to that," said Lois. "He has been all over the world and seen everything; and he is a man of sense, to care for the things that are worth while; and he is educated; and it is very entertaining to hear him talk."

"Who is he? A young man?"

"Yes, he is young. O, he is an old friend of Mrs. Wishart."

"Did you like him best of all the people you saw?"

"O no, not by any means. I hardly know him, in fact; not so well as others."

"Who are the others?"

"What others, grandmother?"

"The other people that you like better."

Lois named several ladies, among them Mrs. Wishart, her hostess.



"There's no men's names among them," remarked Mrs. Armadale. "Didn't you see none, savin' that one?"

"Plenty!" said Lois, smiling.

"An' nary one that you liked?"

"Why, yes, grandmother; several; but of course – "

"What of course?"

"I was going to say, of course I did not have much to do with them; but there was one I had a good deal to do with."

"Who was he?"

"He was a young Mr. Caruthers. O, I did not have much to do with *him*; only he was there pretty often, and talked to me. He was pleasant."

"Was he a real godly man?"

"No, grandmother. He is not a Christian at all, I think."

"And yet he pleased you, Lois?"

"I did not say so, grandmother."

"I heerd it in the tone of your voice."

"Did you? Yes, he was pleasant. I liked him pretty well. People that you would call godly people never came there at all. I suppose there must be some in New York; but I did not see any."

There was silence a while.

"Eliza Wishart must keep poor company, if there ain't one godly one among 'em," Mrs. Armadale began again. But Lois was silent.

"What do they talk about?"

"Everything in the world, except that. People and things, and what this one says and what that one did, and this party and that party. I can't tell you, grandma. There seemed no end of talk; and yet it did not amount to much when all was done. I am not speaking of a few, gentlemen like Mr. Dillwyn, and a few more."

"But he ain't a Christian?"

"No."

"Nor t'other one? the one you liked."

"No."

"I'm glad you've come away, Lois."

"Yes, grandma, and so am I; but why?"

"You know why. A Christian woman maun't have nothin' to do with men that ain't Christian."

"Nothing to do! Why, we must, grandma. We cannot help seeing people and talking to them."

"The snares is laid that way," said Mrs. Armadale.

"What are we to do, then, grandmother?"

"Lois Lothrop," said the old lady, suddenly sitting upright, "what's the Lord's will?"

"About – what?"

"About drawin' in a yoke with one that don't go your way?"

"He says, don't do it."

"Then mind you don't."

"But, grandma, there is no talk of any such thing in this case," said Lois, half laughing, yet a little annoyed. "Nobody was thinking of such a thing."

"You don't know what they was thinkin' of."

"I know what they *could not* have thought of. I am different from them; I am not of their world; and I am not educated, and I am poor. There is no danger, grandmother."

"Lois, child, you never know where danger is comin'. It's safe to have your armour on, and keep out o' temptation. Tell me you'll never let yourself like a man that ain't Christian!"

"But I might not be able to help liking him."

"Then promise me you'll never marry no sich a one."

"Grandma, I'm not thinking of marrying."

"Lois, what is the Lord's will about it?"

"I know, grandma," Lois answered rather soberly.

"And you know why. 'Thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods.' I've seen it, Lois, over and over agin. I've been a woman – or a man – witched away and dragged down, till if they hadn't lost all the godliness they ever had, it warn't because they didn't seem so. And the children grew up to bescapegraces."

"Don't it sometimes work the other way?"

"Not often, if a Christian man or woman has married wrong with their eyes open. Cos it proves, Lois, *that* proves, that the ungodly one of the two has the most power; and what he has he's like to keep. Lois, I mayn't be here allays to look after you; promise me that you'll do the Lord's will."

"I hope I will, grandma," Lois answered soberly.

"Read them words in Corinthians again."

Lois got the Bible and obeyed, "'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?'"

"Lois, ain't them words plain?"

"Very plain, grandma."

"Will ye mind 'em?"

"Yes, grandma; by his grace."

"Ay, ye may want it," said the old lady; "but it's safe to trust the Lord. An' I'd rather have you suffer heartbreak follerin' the Lord, than goin' t'other way. Now you may read to me, Lois. We'll have it before they come home."

"Who has read to you while I have been gone?"

"O, one and another. Madge mostly; but Madge don't care, and so she don't know how to read."

Mrs. Armadale's sight was not good; and it was the custom for one of the girls, Lois generally, to read her a verse or two morning and evening. Generally it was a small portion, talked over if they had time, and if not, then thought over by the old lady all the remainder of the day or evening, as the case might be. For she was like the man of whom it is written – "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

"What shall I read, grandma?"

"You can't go wrong."

The epistle to the Corinthians lay open before Lois, and she read the words following those which had just been called for.

"'And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.'"

If anybody had been there to see, the two women made the loveliest picture at this moment. The one of them old, weather-worn, plain-featured, sitting with the quiet calm of the end of a work day and listening; the other young, blooming, fresh, lovely, with a wealth of youthful charms about her, bending a little over the big book on her lap; on both faces a reverent sweet gravity which was most gracious. Lois read and stopped, without looking up.

"I think small of all the world, alongside o' that promise, Lois."

"And so do I, grandmother."

"But, you see, the Lord's sons and daughters has got to be separate from other folks."

"In some ways."

"Of course they've got to live among folks, but they've got to be separate for all; and keep their garments."

"I do not believe it is easy in a place like New York," said Lois.

"Seems to me I was getting all mixed up."

"'Tain't easy nowheres, child. Only, where the way is very smooth, folks slides quicker."

"How can one be 'separate' always, grandma, in the midst of other people?"

"Take care that you keep nearest to God. Walk with him; and you'll be pretty sure to be separate from the most o' folks."

There was no more said. Lois presently closed the book and laid it away, and the two sat in silence awhile. I will not affirm that Lois did not feel something of a stricture round her, since she had given that promise so clearly. Truly the promise altered nothing, it only made things somewhat more tangible; and there floated now and then past Lois's mental vision an image of a handsome head, crowned with graceful locks of luxuriant light brown hair, and a face of winning pleasantness, and eyes that looked eagerly into her eyes. It came up now before her, this vision, with a certain sense of something lost. Not that she had ever reckoned that image as a thing won; as belonging, or ever possibly to belong, to herself; for Lois never had such a thought for a moment. All the same came now the vision before her with the commentary, – 'You never can have it. That acquaintance, and that friendship, and that intercourse, is a thing of the past; and whatever for another it might have led to, it could lead to nothing for you.' It was not a defined thought; rather a floating semi-consciousness; and Lois presently rose up and went from thought to action.

## CHAPTER IX THE FAMILY

The spring day was fading into the dusk of evening, when feet and voices heard outside announced that the travellers were returning. And in they came, bringing a breeze of business and a number of tied-up parcels with them into the quiet house.

"The table ready! how good! and the fire. O, it's Lois! Lois is here!" – and then there were warm embraces, and then the old grandmother was kissed. There were two girls, one tall, the other very tall.

"I'm tired to death!" said the former of these. "Charity would do no end of work; you know she is a steam-engine, and she had the steam up to-day, I can tell you. There's no saying how good supper will be; for our lunch wasn't much, and not good at that; and there's something good here, I can tell by my nose. Did you take care of the milk, Lois? you couldn't know where to set it."

"There is no bread, Lois. I suppose you found out?" the other sister said.

"O, she's made biscuits!" said Madge. "Aren't you a brick, though, Lois! I was expecting we'd have everything to do; and it's all done.

Ain't that what you call comfortable? Is the tea made? I'll be ready in a minute."

But that was easier said than done.

"Lois! what sort of hats are they wearing in New York?"

"Lois, are mantillas fashionable? The woman in New Haven, the milliner, said everybody was going to wear them. She wanted to make me get one."

"We can make a mantilla as well as she can," Lois answered.

"If we had the pattern! But is everybody wearing them in New York?"

"I think it must be early for mantillas."

"O, lined and wadded, of course. But is every body wearing them?"

"I do not know. I do not recollect."

"Not recollect!" cried the tall sister. "What are your eyes good for?

What *do* people wear?"

"I wore my coat and cape. I do not know very well about other people.

People wear different things."

"O, but that they do not, Lois!" the other sister exclaimed. "There is always one thing that is the fashion; and that is the thing one wants to know about. Last year it was visites. Now what is it this year? And what are the hats like?"

"They are smaller."

"There! And that woman in New Haven said they were going to be large still. Who is one to trust!"

"You may trust me," said Lois. "I am sure of so much. Moreover, there is my new straw bonnet which Mrs. Wishart gave me; you can see by that."

This was very satisfactory; and talk ran on in the same line for sometime.

"And Lois, have you seen a great many people? At Mrs. Wishart's, I mean."

"Yes, plenty; at her house and at other houses."

"Was it great fun?" Madge asked.

"Sometimes. But indeed, yes; it was great fun generally, to see the different ways of people, and the beautiful houses, and furniture, and pictures, and everything."

"*Everything!* Was everything beautiful?"

"No, not beautiful; but everything in most of the houses where I went was handsome; often it was magnificent."

"I suppose it seemed so to you," said Charity.

"Tell us, Lois!" urged the other sister.

"What do you think of solid silver dishes to hold the vegetables on the table, and solid silver pudding dishes, and gold teaspoons, in the most delicate little painted cups?"

"I should say it was ridiculous," said the elder sister. "What's the use o' havin' your vegetables in silver dishes?"

"What's the use of having them in dishes at all?" laughed Lois. "They might be served in big cabbage leaves; or in baskets."

"That's nonsense," said Charity. "Of course they must be in dishes of some sort; but vegetables don't taste any better out o' silver."

"The dinner does not taste any better," said Lois, "but it *looks* a deal better, I can tell you. You have just no idea, girls, how beautiful a dinner table can be. The glass is beautiful; delicate, thin, clear glass, cut with elegant flowers and vines running over it. And the table linen is a pleasure to see, just the damask; it is so white, and so fine, and so smooth, and woven in such lovely designs. Mrs. Wishart is very fond of her table linen, and has it in beautiful patterns. Then silver is always handsome. Then sometimes there is almost a superb centre-piece to the table; a magnificent tall thing of silver – I don't know what to call it; not a vase, and not a dish; but high, and with different bowls or shells filled with flowers and fruit. Why the mere ice-creams sometimes were in all sorts of pretty flower and fruit forms."

"Ice-cream!" cried Madge.

"And I say, what's the use of all that?" said Charity, who had not been baptized in character.

"The use is, its looking so very pretty," Lois answered.

"And so, I suppose you would like to have *your* vegetables in silver dishes? I should like to know why things are any better for looking pretty, when all's done?"

"They are not better, I suppose," said Madge.

"I don't know *why*, but I think they must be," said Lois, innocent of the personal application which the other two were making. For Madge was a very handsome girl, while Charity was hard-favoured, like her grandmother. "It does one good to see pretty things."

"That's no better than pride," said Charity. "Things that ain't pretty are just as useful, and more useful. That's all pride, silver dishes, and flowers, and stuff. It just makes people stuck-up. Don't they think themselves, all those grand folks, don't they think themselves a hitch or two higher than Shampuah folks?"

"Perhaps," said Lois; "but I do not know, so I cannot say."

"O Lois," cried Madge, "are the people very nice?"

"Some of them."

"You haven't lost your heart, have you?"

"Only part of it."

"Part of it! O, to whom, Lois? Who is it?"

"Mrs. Wishart's black horses."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed Charity. "Haven't Shampuah folks got horses? Don't tell me!"

"But, Lois!" pursued Madge, "who was the nicest person you saw?"

"Madge, I don't know. A good many seemed to be nice."

"Well, who was the handsomest? and who was the cleverest? and who was the kindest to you? I don't mean Mrs. Wishart. Now answer."

"The handsomest, and the cleverest, and the kindest to me?" Lois repeated slowly. "Well, let me see. The handsomest was a Mr. Caruthers."

"Who's he?"

"Mr. Caruthers."

"*What* is he, then?"

"He is a gentleman, very much thought of; rich, and knows everybody; that's about all I can tell."

"Was he the cleverest, too, that you saw?"

"No, I think not."

"Who was that?"

"Another gentleman; a Mr. Dillwyn."

"Dillun!" Madge repeated.

"That is the pronunciation of the name. It is spelt D, i, l, l, w, y, n, – Dilwin; but it is called Dillun."

"And who was kindest to you? Go on, Lois."

"O, everybody was kind to me," Lois said evasively. "Kind enough. I did not need kindness."

"Whom did you like best, then?"

"Of those two? They are both men of the world, and nothing to me; but of the two, I think I like the first best."

"Caruthers. I shall remember," said Madge.

"That is foolish talk, children," remarked Mrs. Armadale.

"Yes, but grandma, you know children are bound to be foolish sometimes," returned Madge.

"And then the rod of correction must drive it far from them," said the old lady. "That's the common way; but it ain't the easiest way. Lois said true; these people are nothing and can be nothing to her. I wouldn't make believe anything about it, if I was you."

The conversation changed to other things. And soon took a fresh spring at the entrance of another of the family, an aunt of the girls; who lived in the neighbourhood, and came in to hear the news from New Haven as well as from New York. And then it knew no stop. While the table was clearing, and while Charity and Madge were doing up the dishes, and when they all sat down round the fire afterwards, there went on an ceaseless, restless, unending flow of questions, answers, and comments; going over, I am bound to say, all the ground already travelled during supper. Mrs. Armadale sometimes sighed to herself; but this, if the others heard it, could not check them.

Mrs. Marx was a lively, clever, kind, good-natured woman; with plenty of administrative ability, like so many New England women, full of resources; quick with her head and her hands, and not slow with her tongue; an uneducated woman, and yet one who had made such good use of life-schooling, that for all practical purposes she had twice the wit of many who have gone through all the drill of the best institutions. A keen eye, a prompt judgment, and a fearless speech, all belonged to Mrs. Marx; universally esteemed and looked up to and welcomed by all her associates. She was not handsome; she was even strikingly deficient in the lines of beauty; and refinement was not one of her characteristics, other than the refinement which comes of kindness and unselfishness. Mrs. Marx would be delicately careful of another's feelings, when there was real need; she could show an exceeding great tenderness and tact then; while in ordinary life her voice was rather loud, her movements were free and angular, and her expressions very unconstrained. Nobody ever saw Mrs. Marx anything but neat, whatever she possibly might be doing; in other respects her costume was often extremely unconventional; but she could dress herself nicely and look quite as becomes a lady. Independent was Mrs. Marx, above all and in everything.

"I guess she's come back all safe!" was her comment, made to Mrs. Armadale, at the conclusion of the long talk. Mrs. Armadale made no answer.

"It's sort o' risky, to let a young thing like that go off by herself among all those high flyers. It's like sendin' a pigeon to sail about with the hawks."

"Why, aunt Anne," said Lois at this, "whom can you possibly mean by the hawks?"

"The sort o' birds that eat up pigeons."

"I saw nobody that wanted to eat me up, I assure you."

"There's the difference between you and a real pigeon. The pigeon knows the hawk when she sees it; you don't."

"Do you think the hawks all live in cities?"

"No, I don't," said Mrs. Marx. "They go swoopin' about in the country now and then. I shouldn't a bit wonder to see one come sailin' over our heads one of these fine days. But now, you see, grandma has got you under her wing again." Mrs. Marx was Mrs. Armadale's half-daughter only, and sometimes in company of others called her as her grandchildren did. "How does home look to you, Lois, now you're back in it?"

"Very much as it used to look," Lois answered, smiling.

"The taste ain't somehow taken out o' things? Ha' you got your old appetite for common doin's?"

"I shall try to-morrow. I am going out into the garden to get some peas in."

"Mine is in."

"Not long, aunt Anne? the frost hasn't been long out of the ground."

"Put 'em in to-day, Lois. And your garden has the sun on it; so I shouldn't wonder if you beat me after all. Well, I must go along and look arter my old man. He just let me run away now 'cause I told him I was kind o' crazy about the fashions; and he said 'twas a feminine weakness and he pitied me. So I come. Mrs. Dashiell has been a week to New London; but la! New London bonnets is no account."

"You don't get much light from Lois," remarked Charity.

"No. Did ye learn anything, Lois, while you was away?"

"I think so, aunt Anne."

"What, then? Let's hear. Learnin' ain't good for much, without you give it out."

Lois, however, seemed not inclined to be generous with her stores of new knowledge.

"I guess she's learned Shampuah's ain't much of a place," the elder sister remarked further.

"She's been spellin' her lesson backwards, then. Shampuah's a first-rate place."

"But we've no grand people here. We don't eat off silver dishes, nor drink out o' gold spoons; and our horses can go without little lookin'-glasses over their heads," Charity proceeded.

"Do you think there's any use in all that, Lois?" said her aunt.

"I don't know, aunt Anne," Lois answered with a little hesitation.

"Then I'm sorry for ye, girl, if you are left to think such nonsense. Ain't our victuals as good here, as what comes out o' those silver dishes?"

"Not always."

"Are New York folks better cooks than we be?"

"They have servants that know how to do things."

"Servants! Don't tell me o' no servants' doin's! What can they make that I can't make better?"

"Can you make a soufflé, aunt Anne?"

"What's that?"

"Or biscuit glacé?"

"*Biskwee glassy*?" repeated the indignant Shampuah lady. "What do you mean, Lois? Speak English, if I am to understand you."

"These things have no English names."

"Are they any the better for that?"

"No; and nothing could make them better. They are as good as it is possible for anything to be; and there are a hundred other things equally good, that we know nothing about here."

"I'd have watched and found out how they were done," said the elder woman, eyeing Lois with a mingled expression of incredulity and curiosity and desire, which it was comical to see. Only nobody there perceived the comicality. They sympathized too deeply in the feeling.

"I would have watched," said Lois; "but I could not go down into the kitchen for it."

"Why not?"

"Nobody goes into the kitchen, except to give orders."

"Nobody goes into the kitchen!" cried Mrs. Marx, sinking down again into a chair. She had risen to go.

"I mean, except the servants."

"It's the shiftlessest thing I ever heard o' New York. And do you think *that's* a nice way o' livin', Lois?"

"I am afraid I do, aunt Anne. It is pleasant to have plenty of time for other things."

"What other things?"

"Reading."

"Reading! La, child! I can read more books in a year than is good for me, and do all my own work, too. I like play, as well as other folks; but I like to know my work's done first. Then I can play."

"Well, there the servants do the work."

"And you like that? That ain't a nat'ral way o' livin', Lois; and I believe it leaves folks too much time to get into mischief. When folks hasn't business enough of their own to attend to, they're free to put their fingers in other folks' business. And they get sot up, besides. My word for it, it ain't healthy for mind nor body. And you needn't think I'm doin' what I complain of, for your business is my business. Good-bye, girls. I'll buy a cook-book the next time I go to New London, and learn how to make suflles. Lois shan't hold that whip over me."



## CHAPTER X

### LOIS'S GARDEN

Lois went at her gardening the next morning, as good as her word. It was the last of March, and an anticipation of April, according to the fashion the months have of sending promissory notes in advance of them; and this year the spring was early. The sun was up, but not much more, when Lois, with her spade and rake and garden line, opened the little door in the garden fence and shut it after her. Then she was alone with the spring. The garden was quite a roomy place, and pretty, a little later in the season; for some old and large apple and cherry trees shadowed parts of it, and broke up the stiff, bare regularity of an ordinary square bit of ground laid out in lesser squares. Such regularity was impossible here. In one place, two or three great apple trees in a group formed a canopy over a wide circuit of turf. The hoe and the spade must stand back respectfully; there was nothing to be done. One corner was quite given up to the occupancy of an old cherry tree, and its spread of grassy ground beneath and about it was again considerable. Still other trees stood here and there; and the stems of none of them were approached by cultivation. In the spaces between, Lois stretched her line and drew her furrows, and her rows of peas and patches of corn had even so room enough.

Grass was hardly green yet, and tree branches were bare, and the upturned earth was implanted. There was nothing here yet but the Spring with Lois. It is wonderful what a way Spring has of revealing herself, even while she is hid behind the brown and grey wrappings she has borrowed from Winter. Her face is hardly seen; her form is not discernible; but there is a breath and a smile and a kiss, that are like nothing her brothers and sisters have to give. Of them all, Spring's smile brings most of hope and expectation with it. And there is a perfume Spring wears, which is the rarest, and most untraceable, and most unmistakeable, of all. The breath and the perfume, and the smile and the kiss, greeted Lois as she went into the old garden. She knew them well of old time, and welcomed them now. She even stood still a bit to take in the rare beauty and joy of them. And yet, the apple trees were bare, and the cherry trees; the turf was dead and withered; the brown ploughed-up soil had no relief of green growths. Only Spring was there with Lois, and yet that seemed enough; Spring and associations. How many hours of pleasant labour in that enclosed bit of ground there had been; how many lapfuls and basketfuls of fruits their rich reward of the labour; how Lois had enjoyed both! And now, here was spring again, and the implanted garden. Lois wanted no more.

She took her stand under one of the bare old apple trees, and surveyed her ground, like a young general. She had it all mapped out, and knew just where things were last year. The patch of potatoes was in that corner, and a fine yield they had been. Corn had been here; yes, and here she would run her lines of early peas. Lois went to work. It was not very easy work, as you would know if you had ever tried to reduce ground that has been merely ploughed and harrowed, to the smooth evenness necessary for making shallow drills. Lois plied spade and rake with an earnest good-will, and thorough knowledge of her business. Do not imagine an untidy long skirt sweeping the soft soil and transferring large portions of it to the gardener's ankles; Lois was dressed for her work in a short stuff frock and leggings; and looked as nice when she came out as when she went in, albeit not in any costume ever seen in Fifth Avenue or Central Park. But what do I say? If she looked "nice" when she went out to her garden, she looked superb when she came in, or when she had been an hour or so delving. Her hat fallen back a little; her rich masses of hair just a little loosened, enough to show their luxuriance; the colour flushed into her cheeks with the exercise, and her eyes all alive with spirit and zeal – ah, the fair ones in Fifth or any other avenue would give a great deal to look so; but that sort of thing goes with the short frock and leggings, and will not be conjured up

by a mantua-maker. Lois had after a while a strip of her garden ground nicely levelled and raked smooth; and then her line was stretched over it, and her drills drawn, and the peas were planted and were covered; and a little stick at each end marked how far the planted rows extended.

Lois gathered up her tools then, to go in, but instead of going in she sat down on one of the wooden seats that were fixed under the great apple trees. She was tired and satisfied; and in that mood of mind and body one is easily tempted to musing. Aimlessly, carelessly, thoughts roved and carried her she knew not whither. She began to draw contrasts. Her home life, the sweets of which she was just tasting, set off her life at Mrs. Wishart's with its strange difference of flavour; hardly the brown earth of her garden was more different from the brilliant – coloured Smyrna carpets upon which her feet had moved in some people's houses. Life there and life here, – how diverse from one another! Could both be life? Suddenly it occurred to Lois that her garden fence shut in a very small world, and a world in which there was no room for many things that had seemed to her delightful and desirable in these weeks that were just passed. Life must be narrow within these borders. She had had several times in New York a sort of perception of this, and here it grew defined. Knowledge, education, the intercourse of polished society, the smooth ease and refinement of well-ordered households, and the habits of affluence, and the gratification of cultivated tastes; more yet, the *having* cultivated tastes; the gratification of them seemed to Lois a less matter. A large horizon, a wide experience of men and things; was it not better, did it not make life richer, did it not elevate the human creature to something of more power and worth, than a very narrow and confined sphere, with its consequent narrow and confined way of looking at things? Lois was just tired enough to let all these thoughts pass over her, like gentle waves of an incoming tide, and they were emphasized here and there by a vision of a brown curly head, and a kindly, handsome, human face looking into hers. It was a vision that came and went, floated in and disappeared among the waves of thought that rose and fell. Was it not better to sit and talk even with Mr. Dillwyn, than to dig and plant peas? Was not the Lois who did *that*, a quite superior creature to the Lois who did *this*? Any common, coarse man could plant peas, and do it as well as she; was this to be her work, this and the like, for the rest of her life? Just the labour for material existence, instead of the refining and forming and up-building of the nobler, inner nature, the elevation of existence itself? My little garden ground! thought Lois; is this indeed all? And what would Mr. Caruthers think, if he could see me now? Think he had been cheated, and that I am not what he thought I was. It is no matter what he thinks; I shall never see him again; it will not be best that I should ever pay Mrs. Wishart a visit again, even if she should ask me; not in New York. I suppose the Isles of Shoals would be safe enough. There would be nobody there. Well – I like gardening. And it is great fun to gather the peas when they are large enough; and it is fun to pick strawberries; and it is fun to do everything, generally. I like it all. But if I could, if I had a chance, which I cannot have, I would like, and enjoy, the other sort of thing too. I could be a good deal more than I am, *if* I had the opportunity.

Lois was getting rested by this time, and she gathered up her tools again, with the thought that breakfast would taste good. I suppose a whiff of the fumes of coffee preparing in the house was borne out to her upon the air, and suggested the idea. And as she went in she cheerfully reflected that their plain house was full of comfort, if not of beauty; and that she and her sisters were doing what was given them to do, and therefore what they were meant to do; and then came the thought, so sweet to the servant who loves his Master, that it is all *for* the Master; and that if he is pleased, all is gained, the utmost, that life can do or desire. And Lois went in, trilling low a sweet Methodist hymn, to an air both plaintive and joyous, which somehow – as many of the old Methodist tunes do – expressed the plaintiveness and the joyousness together with a kind of triumphant effect.

"O tell me no more of this world's vain store!  
The time for such trifles with me now is o'er."

Lois had a voice exceedingly sweet and rich; an uncommon contralto; and when she sang one of these hymns, it came with its full power. Mrs. Armadale heard her, and murmured a "Praise the Lord!" And Charity, getting the breakfast, heard her; and made a different comment.

"Were you meaning, now, what you were singing when you came in?" she asked at breakfast.

"What I was singing?" Lois repeated in astonishment.

"Yes, what you were singing. You sang it loud enough and plain enough; ha' you forgotten? Did you mean it?"

"One should always mean what one sings," said Lois gravely.

"So I think; and I want to know, did you mean that? 'The time for such trifles' – is it over with you, sure enough?"

"What trifles?"

"You know best. What did you mean? It begins about 'this world's vain store;' ha' you done with the world?"

"Not exactly."

"Then I wouldn't say so."

"But I didn't say so," Lois returned, laughing now. "The hymn means, that 'this world's vain store' is not my treasure; and it isn't. 'The time for such trifles with me now is o'er.' I have found something better. As Paul says, 'When I became a man, I put away childish things.' So, since I have learned to know something else, the world's store has lost its great value for me."

"Thank the Lord!" said Mrs. Armadale.

"You needn't say that, neither, grandma," Charity retorted. "I don't believe it one bit, all such talk. It ain't nature, nor reasonable. Folks say that just when somethin's gone the wrong way, and they want to comfort themselves with makin' believe they don't care about it. Wait till the chance comes, and see if they don't care! That's what I say."

"I wish you wouldn't say it, then, Charity," remarked the old grandmother.

"Everybody has a right to his views," returned Miss Charity. "That's what I always say."

"You must leave her her views, grandma," said Lois pleasantly. "She will have to change them, some day."

"What will make me change them?"

"Coming to know the truth."

"You think nobody but you knows the truth. Now, Lois, I'll ask you. Ain't you sorry to be back and out of 'this world's vain store' – out of all the magnificence, and back in your garden work again?"

"No."

"You enjoy digging in the dirt and wearin' that outlandish rig you put on for the garden?"

"I enjoy digging in the dirt very much. The dress I admire no more than you do."

"And you've got everythin' you want in the world?"

"Charity, Charity, that ain't fair," Madge put in. "Nobody has that; you haven't, and I haven't; why should Lois?"

"'Cos she says she's found 'a city where true joys abound;' now let's hear if she has."

"Quite true," said Lois, smiling.

"And you've got all you want?"

"No, I would like a good many things I haven't got, if it's the Lord's pleasure to give them."

"Suppose it ain't?"

"Then I do not want them," said Lois, looking up with so clear and bright a face that her carping sister was for the moment silenced. And I suppose Charity watched; but she never could find reason to think that Lois had not spoken the truth. Lois was the life of the house. Madge was a handsome and quiet girl; could follow but rarely led in the conversation. Charity talked, but was hardly enlivening to the spirit of the company. Mrs. Armadale was in ordinary a silent

woman; could talk indeed, and well, and much; however, these occasions were mostly when she had one auditor, and was in thorough sympathy with that one. Amidst these different elements of the household life Lois played the part of the flux in a furnace; she was the happy accommodating medium through which all the others came into best play and found their full relations to one another. Lois's brightness and spirit were never dulled; her sympathies were never wearied; her intelligence was never at fault. And her work was never neglected. Nobody had ever to remind Lois that it was time for her to attend to this or that thing which it was her charge to do. Instead of which, she was very often ready to help somebody else not quite so "forehanded." The garden took on fastidious dressed and ordered look; the strawberries were uncovered; and the raspberries tied up, and the currant bushes trimmed; and pea-sticks and bean-poles bristled here and there promisingly. And then the green growths for which Lois had worked began to reward her labour. Radishes were on the tea-table, and lettuce made the dinner "another thing;" and rows of springing beets and carrots looked like plenty in the future. Potatoes were up, and rare-ripes were planted, and cabbages; and corn began to appear. One thing after another, till Lois got the garden all planted; and then she was just as busy keeping it clean. For weeds, we all know, do thrive as unaccountably in the natural as in the spiritual world. It cost Lois hard work to keep them under; but she did it. Nothing would have tempted her to bear the reproach of them among her vegetables and fruits. And so the latter had a good chance, and thrived. There was not much time or much space for flowers; yet Lois had a few. Red poppies found growing room between the currant bushes; here and there at a corner a dahlia got leave to stand and rear its stately head. Rose-bushes were set wherever a rose-bush could be; and there were some balsams, and pinks, and balm, and larkspur, and marigolds. Not many; however, they served to refresh Lois's soul when she went to pick vegetables for dinner, and they furnished nosegays for the table in the hall, or in the sitting-room, when the hot weather drove the family out of the kitchen.

Before that came June and strawberries. Lois picked the fruit always. She had been a good while one very warm afternoon bending down among the strawberry beds, and had brought in a great bowl full of fruit. She and Madge came together to their room to wash hands and get in order for tea.

"I have worked over all that butter," said Madge, "and skimmed a lot of milk. I must churn again to-morrow. There is no end to work!"

"No end to it," Lois assented. "Did you see my strawberries?"

"No."

"They are splendid. Those Black Princes are doing finely too. If we have rain they will be superb."

"How many did you get to-day?"

"Two quarts, and more."

"And cherries to preserve to-morrow. Lois, I get tired once in a while!"

"O, so do I; but I always get rested again."

"I don't mean that. I mean it is *all* work, work; day in and day out, and from one year's end to another. There is no let up to it. I get tired of that."

"What would you have?"

"I'd like a little play."

"Yes, but in a certain sense I think it is all play."

"In a nonsensical sense," said Madge. "How can work be play?"

"That's according to how you look at it," Lois returned cheerfully. "If you take it as I think you can take it, it is much better than play."

"I wish you'd make me understand you," said Madge discontentedly. "If there is any meaning to your words, that is."

Lois hesitated.

"I like work anyhow better than play," she said. "But then, if you look at it in a certain way, it becomes much better than play. Don't you know, Madge, I take it all, everything, as given me by the Lord to do; – to do for him; – and I do it so; and that makes every bit of it all pleasant."

"But you can't!" said Madge pettishly. She was not a pettish person, only just now something in her sister's words had the effect of irritation.

"Can't what?"

"Do everything for the Lord. Making butter, for instance; or cherry sweetmeats. Ridiculous! And nonsense."

"I don't mean it for nonsense. It is the way I do my garden work and my sewing."

"What *do* you mean, Lois? The garden work is for our eating, and the sewing is for your own back, or grandma's. I understand religion, but I don't understand cant."

"Madge, it's not cant; it's the plain truth."

"Only that it is impossible."

"No. You do not understand religion, or you would know how it is. All these things are things given us to do; we must make the clothes and preserve the cherries, and I must weed strawberries, and then pick strawberries, and all the rest. God has given me these things to do, and I do them for him."

"You do them for yourself, or for grandma, and for the rest of us."

"Yes, but first for Him. Yes, Madge, I do. I do every bit of all these things in the way that I think will please and honour him best – as far as I know how."

"Making your dresses!"

"Certainly. Making my dresses so that I may look, as near as I can, as a servant of Christ in my place ought to look. And taking things in that way, Madge, you can't think how pleasant they are; nor how all sorts of little worries fall off. I wish you knew, Madge! If I am hot and tired in a strawberry bed, and the thought comes, whose servant I am, and that he has made the sun shine and put me to work in it, – then it's all right in a minute, and I don't mind any longer."

Madge looked at her, with eyes that were half scornful, half admiring.

"There is just one thing that does tempt me," Lois went on, her eye going forth to the world outside the window, or to a world more distant and intangible, that she looked at without seeing, – "I *do* sometimes wish I had time to read and learn."

"Learn!" Madge echoed. "What?"

"Loads of things. I never thought about it much, till I went to New York last winter; then, seeing people and talking to people that were different, made me feel how ignorant I was, and what a pleasant thing it would be to have knowledge – education – yes, and accomplishments. I have the temptation to wish for that sometimes; but I know it is a temptation; for if I was intended to have all those things, the way would have been opened, and it is not, and never was. Just a breath of longing comes over me now and then for that; not for play, but to make more of myself; and then I remember that I am exactly where the Lord wants me to be, and *as* he chooses for me, and then I am quite content again."

"You never said so before," the other sister answered, now sympathizingly.

"No," said Lois, smiling; "why should I? Only just now I thought I would confess."

"Lois, I have wished for that very thing!"

"Well, maybe it is good to have the wish. If ever a chance comes, we shall know we are meant to use it; and we won't be slow!"

## CHAPTER XI

### SUMMER MOVEMENTS

All things in the world, so far as the dwellers in Shampuashuh knew, went their usual course in peace for the next few months. Lois gathered her strawberries, and Madge made her currant jelly. Peas ripened, and green corn was on the board, and potatoes blossomed, and young beets were pulled, and peaches began to come. It was a calm, gentle life the little family lived; every day exceedingly like the day before, and yet every day with something new in it. Small pieces of novelty, no doubt; a dish of tomatoes, or the first yellow raspberries, or a new pattern for a dress, or a new receipt for cake. Or they walked down to the shore and dug clams, some fine afternoon; or Mrs. Dashiell lent them a new book; or Mr. Dashiell preached an extraordinary sermon. It was a very slight ebb and flow of the tide of time; however, it served to keep everything from stagnation. Then suddenly, at the end of July, came Mrs. Wishart's summons to Lois to join her on her way to the Isles of Shoals. "I shall go in about a week," the letter ran; "and I want you to meet me at the Shampuashuh station; for I shall go that way to Boston. I cannot stop, but I will have your place taken and all ready for you. You must come, Lois, for I cannot do without you; and when other people need you, you know, you never hesitate. Do not hesitate now."

There was a good deal of hesitation, however, on one part and another, before the question was settled.

"Lois has just got home," said Charity. "I don't see what she should be going again for. I should like to know if Mrs. Wishart thinks she ain't wanted at home!"

"People don't think about it," said Madge; "only what they want themselves. But it is a fine chance for Lois."

"Why don't she ask you?" said Charity.

"She thought Madge would enjoy a visit to her in New York more," said

Lois. "So she said to me."

"And so I would," cried Madge. "I don't care for a parcel of little islands out at sea. But that would just suit Lois. What sort of a place is the Isles of Shoals anyhow?"

"Just that," said Lois; "so far as I know. A parcel of little islands, out in the sea."

"Where at?" said Charity.

"I don't know exactly."

"Get the map and look."

"They are too small to be down on the map."

"What is Eliza Wishart wantin' to go there for?" asked Mrs. Armadale.

"O, she goes somewhere every year, grandma; to one place and another; and I suppose she likes novelty."

"That's a poor way to live," said the old lady. "But I suppose, bein' such a place, it'll be sort o' lonesome, and she wants you for company. May be she goes for her health."

"I think quite a good many people go there, grandma."

"There can't, if they're little islands out at sea. Most folks wouldn't like that. Do you want to go, Lois?"

"I would like it, very much. I just want to see what they are like, grandmother. I never did see the sea yet."

"You saw it yesterday, when we went for clams," said Charity scornfully.

"That? O no. That's not the sea, Charity."

"Well, it's mighty near it."

It seemed to be agreed at last that Lois should accept her cousin's invitation; and she made her preparations. She made them with great delight. Pleasant as the home-life was, it was quite favourable to the growth of an appetite for change and variety; and the appetite in Lois was healthy and strong. The sea and the islands, and, on the other hand, an intermission of gardening and fruit-picking; Shampush people lost sight of for a time, and new, new, strange forms of humanity and ways of human life; the prospect was happy. And a happy girl was Lois, when one evening in the early part of August she joined Mrs. Wishart in the night train to Boston. That lady met her at the door of the drawing-room car, and led her to the little compartment where they were screened off from the rest of the world.

"I am so glad to have you!" was her salutation. "Dear me, how well you look, child! What have you been doing to yourself?"

"Getting brown in the sun, picking berries."

"You are not brown a bit. You are as fair as – whatever shall I compare you to? Roses are common."

"Nothing better than roses, though," said Lois.

"Well, a rose you must be; but of the freshest and sweetest. We don't have such roses in New York. Fact, we do not. I never see anything so fresh there. I wonder why?"

"People don't live out-of-doors picking berries," suggested Lois.

"What has berry-picking to do with it? My dear, it is a pity we shall have none of your old admirers at the Isles of Shoals; but I cannot promise you one. You see, it is off the track. The Caruthers are going to Saratoga; they stayed in town after the mother and son got back from Florida. The Bentons are gone to Europe. Mr. Dillwyn, by the way, was he one of your admirers, Lois?"

"Certainly not," said Lois, laughing. "But I have a pleasant remembrance of him, he gave us such a good lunch one day. I am very glad I am not going to see anybody I ever saw before. Where are the Isles of Shoals? and what are they, that you should go to see them?"

"I'm not going to see them – there's nothing to see, unless you like sea and rocks. I am going for the air, and because I must go somewhere, and I am tired of everywhere else. O, they're out in the Atlantic – sea all round them – queer, barren places. I am so glad I've got you, Lois! I don't know a soul that's to be there – can't guess what we shall find; but I've got you, and I can get along."

"Do people go there just for health?"

"O, a few, perhaps; but the thing is what I am after – novelty; they are hardly the fashion yet."

"That is the very oddest reason for doing or not doing things!" said Lois. "Because it's the fashion! As if that made it pleasant, or useful."

"It does!" said Mrs. Wishart. "Of course it does. Pleasant, yes, and useful too. My dear, you don't want to be out of the fashion?"

"Why not, if the fashion does not agree with me?"

"O my dear, you will learn. Not to agree with the fashion, is to be out with the world."

"With one part of it," said Lois merrily.

"Just the part that is of importance. Never mind, you will learn. Lois, I am so sleepy, I can not keep up any longer. I must curl down and take a nap. I just kept myself awake till we reached Shampush. You had better do as I do. My dear, I am very sorry, but I can't help it."

So Mrs. Wishart settled herself upon a heap of bags and wraps, took off her bonnet, and went to sleep. Lois did not feel in the least like following her example. She was wide-awake with excitement and expectation, and needed no help of entertainment from anybody. With her thoroughly sound mind and body and healthy appetites, every detail and every foot of the journey was a pleasure to her; even the corner of a drawing-room car on a night train. It was such change and variety! and Lois had spent all her life nearly in one narrow sphere and the self-same daily course of life and experience. New York had been one great break in this uniformity, and now came another. Islands in the sea! Lois tried to fancy what they would be like. So much resorted to already, they must be

very charming; and green meadows, shadowing trees, soft shores and cosy nooks rose up before her imagination. Mr. Caruthers and his family were at Saratoga, that was well; but there would be other people, different from the Shampush type; and Lois delighted in seeing new varieties of humankind as well as new portions of the earth where they live. She sat wide-awake opposite to her sleeping hostess, and made an entertainment for herself out of the place and the night journey. It was a starlit, sultry night; the world outside the hurrying train covered with a wonderful misty veil, under which it lay half revealed by the heavenly illumination; soft, mysterious, vast; a breath now and then whispering of nature's luxuriant abundance and sweetness that lay all around, out there under the stars, for miles and hundreds of miles. Lois looked and peered out sometimes, so happy that it was not Shampush, and that she was away, and that she would see the sun shine on new landscapes when the morning came round; and sometimes she looked within the car, and marvelled at the different signs and tokens of human life and character that met her there. And every yard of the way was a delight to her.

Meanwhile, how weirdly and strangely do the threads of human life cross and twine and untwine in this world!

That same evening, in New York, in the Caruthers mansion in Twenty-Third Street, the drawing-room windows were open to let in the refreshing breeze from the sea. The light lace curtains swayed to and fro as the wind came and went, but were not drawn; for Mrs. Caruthers liked, she said, to have so much of a screen between her and the passers-by. For that matter, the windows were high enough above the street to prevent all danger of any one's looking in. The lights were burning low in the rooms, on account of the heat; and within, in attitudes of exhaustion and helplessness sat mother and daughter in their several easy-chairs. Tom was on his back on the floor, which, being nicely matted, was not the worst place. A welcome break to the monotony of the evening was the entrance of Philip Dillwyn. Tom got up from the floor to welcome him, and went back then to his former position.

"How come you to be here at this time of year?" Dillwyn asked. "It was mere accident my finding you. Should never have thought of looking for you. But by chance passing, I saw that windows were open and lights visible, so I concluded that something else might be visible if I came in."

"We are only just passing through," Julia explained. "Going to Saratoga to-morrow. We have only just come from Newport."

"What drove you away from Newport? This is the time to be by the sea."

"O, who cares for the sea! or anything else? it's the people; and the people at Newport didn't suit mother. The Benthams were there, and that set; and mother don't like the Benthams; and Miss Zagumski, the daughter of the Russian minister, was there, and all the world was crazy about her. Nothing was to be seen or heard but Miss Zagumski, and her dancing, and her playing, and her singing. Mother got tired of it."

"And yet Newport is a large place," remarked Philip.

"Too large," Mrs. Caruthers answered.

"What do you expect to find at Saratoga?"

"Heat," said Mrs. Caruthers; "and another crowd."

"I think you will not be disappointed, if this weather holds."

"It is a great deal more comfortable here!" sighed the elder lady. "Saratoga's a dreadfully hot place! Home is a great deal more comfortable."

"Then why not stay at home? Comfort is what you are after."

"O, but one can't! Everybody goes somewhere; and one must do as everybody does."

"Why?"

"Philip, what makes you ask such a question?"

"I assure you, a very honest ignorance of the answer to it."



"Why, one must do as everybody does?"

"Yes."

The lady's tone and accent had implied that the answer was self-evident; yet it was not given.

"Really," – Philip went on. "What should hinder you from staying in this pleasant house part of the summer, or all of the summer, if you find yourselves more comfortable here?"

"Being comfortable isn't the only thing," said Julia.

"No. What other consideration governs the decision? that is what I am asking."

"Why, Philip, there is nobody in town."

"That is better than company you do not like."

"I wish it was the fashion to stay in town," said Mrs. Caruthers. "There is everything here, in one's own house, to make the heat endurable, and just what we miss when we go to a hotel. Large rooms, and cool nights, and clean servants, and gas, and baths – hotel rooms are so stuffy."

"After all, one does not live in one's rooms," said Julia.

"But," said Philip, returning to the charge, "why should not you, Mrs. Caruthers, do what you like? Why should you be displeased in Saratoga, or anywhere, merely because other people are pleased there? Why not do as you like?"

"You know one can't do as one likes in this world," Julia returned.

"Why not, if one can, – as you can?" said Philip, laughing.

"But that's ridiculous," said Julia, raising herself up with a little show of energy. "You know perfectly well, Mr. Dillwyn, that people belonging to the world must do as the rest of the world do. Nobody is in town. If we stayed here, people would get up some unspeakable story to account for our doing it; that would be the next thing."

"Dillwyn, where are you going?" said Tom suddenly from the floor, where he had been more uneasy than his situation accounted for.

"I don't know – perhaps I'll take your train and go to Saratoga too. Not for fear, though."

"That's capital!" said Tom, half raising himself up and leaning on his elbow. "I'll turn the care of my family over to you, and I'll seek the wilderness."

"What wilderness?" asked his sister sharply.

"Some wilderness – some place where I shall not see crinoline, nor be expected to do the polite thing. I'll go for the sea, I guess."

"What have you in your head, Tom?"

"Refreshment."

"You've just come from the sea."

"I've just come from the sea where it was fashionable. Now I'll find some place where it is unfashionable. I don't favour Saratoga any more than you do. It's a jolly stupid; that's what it is."

"But where do you want to go, Tom? you have some place in your head."

"I'd as lief go off for the Isles of Shoals as anywhere," said Tom, lying down again. "They haven't got fashionable yet. I've a notion to see 'em first."

"I doubt about that," remarked Philip gravely. "I am not sure but the Isles of Shoals are about the most distinguished place you could go to."

"Isles of Shoals. Where are they? and what are they?" Julia asked.

"A few little piles of rock out in the Atlantic, on which it spends its wrath all the year round; but of course the ocean is not always raging; and when it is not raging, it smiles; and they say the smile is nowheremore bewitching than at the Isles of Shoals," Philip answered.

"But will nobody be there?"

"Nobody you would care about," returned Tom.

"Then what'll you do?"

"Fish."

"Tom! you're not a fisher. You needn't pretend it."

"Sun myself on the rocks."

"You are brown enough already."

"They say, everything gets bleached there."

"Then I should like to go. But I couldn't stand the sea and solitude, and I don't believe you can stand it. Tom, this is ridiculous. You're not serious?"

"Not often," said Tom; "but this time I am. I am going to the Isles of Shoals. If Philip will take you to Saratoga, I'll start to-morrow; otherwise I will wait till I get you rooms and see you settled."

"Is there a hotel there?"

"Something that does duty for one, as I understand."

"Tom, this is too ridiculous, and vexatious," remonstrated his sister.

"We want you at Saratoga."

"Well, it is flattering; but you wanted me at St. Augustine a little while ago, and you had me. You can't always have a fellow. I'm going to see the Isles of Shoals before they're the rage. I want to get cooled off, for once, after Florida and Newport, besides."

"Isn't that the place where Mrs. Wishart is gone," said Philip now.

"I don't know – yes, I believe so."

"Mrs. Wishart!" exclaimed Julia in a different tone. "*She* gone to the Isles of Shoals?"

"Mrs. Wishart!" Mrs. Caruthers echoed. "Has she got that girl with her?"

Silence. Then Philip remarked with a laugh, that Tom's plan of "cooling off" seemed problematical.

"Tom," said his sister solemnly, "*is* Miss Lothrop going to be there?"

"Don't know, upon my word," said Tom. "I haven't heard."

"She is, and that's what you're going for. O Tom, Tom!" cried his sister despairingly. "Mr. Dillwyn, what shall we do with him?"

"Can't easily manage a fellow of his size, Miss Julia. Let him take his chance."

"Take his chance! Such a chance!"

"Yes, Philip," said Tom's mother; "you ought to stand by us."

"With all my heart, dear Mrs. Caruthers; but I am afraid I should be a weak support. Really, don't you think Tom might do worse?"

"Worse?" said the elder lady; "what could be worse than for him to bring such a wife into the house?"

Tom gave an inarticulate kind of snort just here, which was not lacking in expression. Philip went on calmly.

"Such a wife – " he repeated. "Mrs. Caruthers, here is room for discussion. Suppose we settle, for example, what Tom, or anybody situated like Tom, ought to look for and insist upon finding, in a wife. I wish you and Miss Julia would make out the list of qualifications."

"Stuff!" muttered Tom. "It would be hard lines, if a fellow must have a wife of his family's choosing!"

"His family can talk about it," said Philip, "and certainly will. Hold your tongue, Tom. I want to hear your mother."

"Why, Mr. Dillwyn," said the lady, "you know as well as I do; and you think just as I do about it, and about this Miss Lothrop."

"Perhaps; but let us reason the matter out. Maybe it will do Tom good. What ought he to have in a wife, Mrs. Caruthers? and we'll try to show him he is looking in the wrong quarter."

"I'm not looking anywhere!" growled Tom; but no one believed him.

"Well, Philip," Mrs. Caruthers began, "he ought to marry a girl of good family."

"Certainly. By 'good family' you mean – ?"

"Everybody knows what I mean."

"Possibly Tom does not."

"I mean, a girl that one knows about, and that everybody knows about; that has good blood in her veins."

"The blood of respectable and respected ancestors," Philip said.

"Yes! that is what I mean. I mean, that have been respectable and respected for a long time back – for years and years."

"You believe in inheritance."

"I don't know about that," said Mrs. Caruthers. "I believe in family."

"Well, *I* believe in inheritance. But what proof is there that the young lady of whom we were speaking has no family?"

Julia raised herself up from her reclining position, and Mrs. Caruthers sat suddenly forward in her chair.

"Why, she is nobody!" cried the first. "Nobody knows her, nor anything about her."

"*Here*–" said Philip.

"Here! Of course. Where else?"

"Yes, just listen to that!" Tom broke in. "I ~~xx~~ow should anybody know her here, where she has never lived! But that's the way –"

"I suppose a Sandwich Islander's family is known in the Sandwich Islands," said Mrs. Caruthers. "But what good is that to us?"

"Then you mean, the family must be a New York family?"

"N – o," said Mrs. Caruthers hesitatingly; "I don't mean that exactly."

There are good Southern families – "

"And good Eastern families!" put in Tom.

"But nobody knows anything about this girl's family," said the ladies both in a breath.

"Mrs. Wishart does," said Philip. "She has even told me. The family dates back to the beginning of the colony, and boasts of extreme respectability. I forget how many judges and ministers it can count up; and at least one governor of the colony; and there is no spot or stain upon it anywhere."

There was silence.

"Go on, Mrs. Caruthers. What else should Tom look for in a wife?"

"It is not merely what a family has been, but what its associations have been," said Mrs. Caruthers.

"These have evidently been respectable."

"But it is not that only, Philip. We want the associations of good society; and we want position. I want Tom to marry a woman of good position."

"Hm!" said Philip. "This lady has not been accustomed to anything that you would call 'society,' and 'position' – But your son has position enough, Mrs. Caruthers. He can stand without much help."

"Now, Philip, don't you go to encourage Tom in this mad fancy. It's just a fancy. The girl has nothing; and Tom's wife ought to be – I shall break my heart if Tom's wife is not of good family and position, and good manners, and good education. That's the least I can ask for."

"She has as good manners as anybody you know!" said Tom flaring up. "As good as Julia's, and better."

"I should say, she has no manner whatever," remarked Miss Julia quietly.

"What is 'manner'?" said Tom indignantly. "I hate it. Manner! They all have 'manner' – except the girls who make believe they have none; and their 'manner' is to want manner. Stuff!"

"But the girl knows nothing," persisted Mrs. Caruthers.

"She knows absolutely *nothing*," – Julia confirmed this statement.

Silence.

"She speaks correct English," said Dillwyn. "That at least."

"English! – but not a word of French or of any other language. And she has no particular use for the one language she does know; she cannot talk about anything. How do you know she speaks good grammar, Mr. Dillwyn? did you ever talk with her?"

"Yes – " said Philip, making slow admission. "And I think you are mistaken in your other statement; she *can* talk on some subjects. Probably you did not hit the right ones."

"Well, she does not know anything," said Miss Julia.

"That is bad. Perhaps it might be mended."

"How? Nonsense! I beg your pardon, Mr. Dillwyn; but you cannot make an accomplished woman out of a country girl, if you don't begin before she is twenty. And imagine Tom with such a wife! and me with such a sister!"

"I cannot imagine it. Don't you see, Tom, you must give it up?" Dillwyn said lightly.

"I'll go to the Isles of Shoals and think about that," said Tom.

Where with he got up and went off.

"Mamma," said Julia then, "he's going to that place to meet that girl. Either she is to be there with Mrs. Wishart, or he is reckoning to see her by the way; and the Isles of Shoals are just a blind. And the only thing left for you and me is to go too, and be of the party!"

"Tom don't want us along," said Tom's mother.

"Of course he don't want us along; and I am sure we don't want it either; but it is the only thing left for us to do. Don't you see? She'll be there, or he can stop at her place by the way, going and coming; maybe Mrs. Wishart is asking her on purpose – I shouldn't be at all surprised – and they'll make up the match between them. It would be a thing for the girl, to marry Tom Caruthers!"

Mrs. Caruthers groaned, I suppose at the double prospect before her and before Tom. Philip was silent. Miss Julia went on discussing and arranging; till her brother returned.

"Tom," said she cheerfully, "we've been talking over matters, and I'll tell you what we'll do – if you won't go with us, we will go with you!"

"Where?"

"Why, to the Isles of Shoals, of course."

"You and mother!" said Tom.

"Yes. There is no fun in going about alone. We will go along with you."

"What on earth will *you* do at a place like that?"

"Keep you from being lonely."

"Stuff, Julia! You will wish yourself back before you've been there an hour; and I tell you, I want to go fishing. What would become of mother, landed on a bare rock like that, with nobody to speak to, and nothing but crabs to eat?"

"Crabs!" Julia echoed. Philip burst into a laugh.

"Crabs and mussels," said Tom. "I don't believe you'll get anything else."

"But is Mrs. Wishart gone there?"

"Philip says so."

"Mrs. Wishart isn't a fool."

And Tom was unable to overthrow this argument.

## CHAPTER XII

### APPLEDORE

It was a very bright, warm August day when Mrs. Wishart and her young companion steamed over from Portsmouth to the Isles of Shoals. It was Lois's first sight of the sea, for the journey from New York had been made by land; and the ocean, however still, was nothing but a most wonderful novelty to her. She wanted nothing, she could well-nigh attend to nothing, but the movements and developments of this vast and mysterious Presence of nature. Mrs. Wishart was amused and yet half provoked. There was no talk in Lois; nothing to be got out of her; hardly any attention to be had from her. She sat by the vessel's side and gazed, with a brow of grave awe and eyes of submissive admiration; rapt, absorbed, silent, and evidently glad. Mrs. Wishart was provoked at her, and envied her.

"What *do* you find in the water, Lois?"

"O, the wonder of it!" said the girl, with a breath of rapture.

"Wonder! what wonder? I suppose everything is wonderful, if you look at it. What do you see there that seems so very wonderful?"

"I don't know, Mrs. Wishart. It is so great! and it is so beautiful! and it is so awful!"

"Beautiful?" said Mrs. Wishart. "I confess I do not see it. I suppose it is your gain, Lois. Yes, it is awful enough in a storm, but not to-day. The sea is quiet."

Quiet! with those low-rolling, majestic soft billows. The quiet of a lion asleep with his head upon his paws. Lois did not say what she thought.

"And you have never seen the sea-shore yet," Mrs. Wishart went on. "Well, you will have enough of the sea at the Isles. And those are they, I fancy, yonder. Are those the Isles of Shoals?" she asked a passing man of the crew; and was answered with a rough voiced, "Yaw, mum; they be th' oisles."

Lois gazed now at those distant brown spots, as the vessel drew nearer and nearer. Brown spots they remained, and, to her surprise, *small* brown spots. Nearer and nearer views only forced the conviction deeper. The Isles seemed to be merely some rough rocky projections from old Ocean's bed, too small to have beauty, too rough to have value. Were those the desired Isles of Shoals? Lois felt deep disappointment. Little bits of bare rock in the midst of the sea; nothing more. Not trees, she was sure; as the light fell she could even see no green. Why would they not be better relegated to Ocean's domain, from which they were only saved by a few feet of upheaval? why should anybody live there? and still more, why should anybody make a pleasure visit there?

"I suppose the people are all fishermen?" she said to Mrs. Wishart.

"I suppose so. O, there is a house of entertainment – a sort of hotel."

"How many people live there?"

"My dear, I don't know. A handful, I should think, by the look of the place. What tempts *them*, I don't see."

Nor did Lois. She was greatly disappointed. All her fairy visions were fled. No meadows, no shady banks, no soft green dales; nothing she had ever imagined in connection with country loveliness. Her expectations sank down, collapsed, and vanished for ever.

She showed nothing of all this. She helped Mrs. Wishart gather her small baggage together, and followed her on shore, with her usual quiet thoughtfulness; saw her established in the hotel, and assisted her to get things a little in order. But then, when the elder lady lay down to "catch a nap," as she said, before tea, Lois seized her flat hat and fled out of the house.

There was grass around it, and sheep and cows to be seen. Alas, not trees. But there were bushes certainly growing here and there, and Lois had not gone far before she found a flower. With

that in her hand she sped on, out of the little grassy vale, upon the rocks that surrounded it, and over them, till she caught sight of the sea. Then she made her way, as she could, over the roughnesses and hindrances of the rocks, till she got near the edge of the island at that place; and sat down a little above where the billows of the Atlantic were rolling in. The wide sea line was before her, with its mysterious and infinite depth of colour; at her feet the waves were coming in and breaking, slow and gently to-day, yet every one seeming to make an invasion of the little rocky domain which defied it, and to retire unwillingly, foiled, beaten, and broken, to gather new forces and come on again for a new attack. Lois watched them, fascinated by their persistence, their sluggish power, and yet their ever-recurring discomfiture; admired the changing colours and hues of the water, endlessly varying, cool and lovely and delicate, contrasting with the wet washed rocks and the dark line of sea-weed lying where high tide had cast it up. The breeze blew in her face gently, but filled with freshness, life, and pungency of the salt air; sea-birds flew past hither and thither, sometimes uttering a cry; there was no sound in earth or heaven but that of the water and the wild birds. And by and by the silence, and the broad freedom of nature, and the sweet freshness of the life-giving breeze, began to take effect upon the watcher. She drank in the air in deep breaths; she watched with growing enjoyment the play of light and colour which offered such an endless variety; she let slip, softly and insensibly, every thought and consideration which had any sort of care attached to it; her heart grew light, as her lungs took in the salt breath, which had upon her somewhat the effect of champagne. Lois was at no time a very heavy-hearted person; and I lack a similitude which should fitly image the elastic bound her spirits made now. She never stirred from her seat, till it suddenly came into her head to remember that there might be dinner or supper in prospect somewhere. She rose then and made her way back to the hotel, where she found Mrs. Wishart just arousing from her sleep.

"Well, Lois" said the lady, with the sleep still in her voice, "where have you been? and what have you got? and what sort of a place have we come to?"

"Look at that, Mrs. Wishart!"

"What's that? A white violet! Violets here, on these rocks?"

"Did you ever see *such* a white violet? Look at the size of it, and the colour of it. And here's pimpernel. And O, Mrs. Wishart, I am so glad we came here, that I don't know what to do! It is just delightful. The air is the best air I ever saw."

"Can you *see* it, my dear? Well, I am glad you are pleased. What's that bell for, dinner or supper? I suppose all the meals here are alike. Let us go down and see."

Lois had an excellent appetite.

"This fish is very good, Mrs. Wishart."

"O my dear, it is just fish! You are in a mood to glorify everything. I am envious of you, Lois."

"But it is really capital; it is so fresh. I don't believe you can get such blue fish in New York."

"My dear, it is your good appetite. I wish I was as hungry, for anything, as you are."

"Is it Mrs. Wishart?" asked a lady who sat opposite them at the table.

She spoke politely, with an accent of hope and expectation. Mrs.

Wishart acknowledged the identity.

"I am very happy to meet you. I was afraid I might find absolutely no one here that I knew. I was saying only the other day – three days ago; this is Friday, isn't it? yes; it was last Tuesday. I was saying to my sister after our early dinner – we always have early dinner at home, and it comes quite natural here – we were sitting together after dinner, and talking about my coming. I have been meaning to come ever since three years ago; wanting to make this trip, and never could get away, until this summer things opened out to let me. I was saying to Lottie I was afraid I should find nobody here that I could speak to; and when I saw you, I said to myself, Can that be Mrs. Wishart? – I am so very glad. You have just come?"

"To-day," – Mrs. Wishart assented.

"Came by water?"

"From Portsmouth."

"Yes – ha, ha!" said the affable lady. "Of course. You could not well help it. But from New York?"

"By railway. I had occasion to come by land."

"I prefer it always. In a steamer you never know what will happen to you. If it's good weather, you may have a pleasant time; but you never can tell. I took the steamer once to go to Boston – I mean to Stonington, you know; and the boat was so loaded with freight of some sort or other that she was as low down in the water as she could be and be safe; and I didn't think she was safe. And we went so slowly! and then we had a storm, a regular thunderstorm and squall, and the rain poured in torrents, and the Sound was rough, and people were sick, and I was very glad and thankful when we got to Stonington. I thought it would never be for pleasure that I would take a boat again."

"The Fall River boats are the best."

"I daresay they are, but I hope to be allowed to keep clear of them all. You had a pleasant morning for the trip over from Portsmouth."

"Very pleasant."

"It is such a gain to have the sea quiet! It roars and beats here enough in the best of times. I am sure I hope there will not a storm come while we are here; for I should think it must be dreadfully dreary. It's all sea here, you know."

"I should like to see what a storm here is like," Lois remarked.

"O, don't wish that!" cried the lady, "or your wish may bring it. Don't think me a heathen," she added, laughing; "but I have known such queer things. I must tell you –"

"You never knew a wish bring fair weather?" said Lois, smiling, as the lady stopped for a mouthful of omelet.

"O no, not fair weather; I am sure, if it did, we should have fair weather a great deal more than we do. But I was speaking of a storm, and I must tell you what I have seen. – These fish are very deliciously cooked!"

"They understand fish, I suppose, here," said Lois.

"We were going down the bay to escort some friends who were going to Europe. There was my cousin Llewellyn and his wife, and her sister, and one or two others in the party; and Lottie and I went to see them off. I always think it's rather a foolish thing to do, for why shouldn't one say good-bye at the water's edge, when they go on board, instead of making a journey of miles out to sea to say it there? – but this time Lottie wanted to go. She had never seen the ocean, except from the land; and you know that is very different; so we went. Lottie always likes to see all she can, and is never satisfied till she has got to the bottom of everything –"

"She would be satisfied with something less than that in this case?" said Lois.

"Hey? She was satisfied," said the lady, not apparently catching Lois's meaning; "she was more delighted with the sea than I was; for though it was quiet, they said, there was unquietness enough to make a good deal of motion; the vessel went sailing up and down a succession of small rolling hills, and I began to think there was nothing steady inside of me, any more than \_out\_ side. I never can bear to be rocked, in any shape or form."

"You must have been a troublesome baby," said Lois.

"I don't know how that was; naturally I have forgotten; but since I have been old enough to think for myself, I never could bear rocking-chairs. I like an easy-chair – as easy as you please – but I want it to stand firm upon its four legs. So I did not enjoy the water quite as well as my sister did. But she grew enthusiastic; she wished she was going all the way over, and I told her she would have to drop *me* at some wayside station –"

"Where?" said Lois, as the lady stopped to carry her coffee cup to her lips. The question seemed not to have been heard.

"Lottie wished she could see the ocean in a mood not quite so quiet; she wished for a storm; she said she wished a little storm would get up before we got home, that she might see how the waves looked. I begged and prayed her not to say so, for our wishes often fulfil themselves. Isn't it extraordinary how they do? Haven't you often observed it, Mrs. Wishart?"

"In cases where wishes could take effect," returned that lady. "In the case of the elements, I do not see how they could do that."

"But I don't know how it is," said the other; "I have observed it so often."

"You call me by name," Mrs. Wishart went on rather hastily; "and I have been trying in vain to recall yours. If I had met you anywhere else, of course I should be at no loss; but at the Isles of Shoals one expects to see nobody, and one is surprised out of one's memory."

"I am never surprised out of my memory," said the other, chuckling. "I am poor enough in all other ways, I am sure, but my memory is good. I can tell you where I first saw you. You were at the Catskill House, with a large party; my brother-in-law Dr. Salisbury was there, and he had the pleasure of knowing you. It was two years ago."

"I recollect being at the Catskill House very well," said Mrs. Wishart, "and of course it was there I became acquainted with you; but you must excuse me, at the Isles of Shoals, for forgetting all my connections with the rest of the world."

"O, I am sure you are very excusable," said Dr. Salisbury's sister-in-law. "I am delighted to meet you again. I think one is particularly glad of a friend's face where one had not expected to see it; and I really expected nothing at the Isles of Shoals – but sea air."

"You came for sea air?"

"Yes, to get it pure. To be sure, Coney Island beach is not far off – for we live in Brooklyn; but I wanted the sea air wholly sea air – quite unmixed; and at Coney Island, somehow New York is so near, I couldn't fancy it would be the same thing. I don't want to smell the smoke of it. And I was curious about this place too; and I have so little opportunity for travelling, I thought it was a pity now when I had the opportunity, not to take the utmost advantage of it. They laughed at me at home, but I said no, I was going to the Isles of Shoals or nowhere. And now I am very glad I came." —

"Lois," Mrs. Wishart said when they went back to their own room, "I don't know that woman from Adam. I have not the least recollection of ever seeing her. I know Dr. Salisbury – and he might be anybody's brother-in-law. I wonder if she will keep that seat opposite us? Because she is worse than a smoky chimney!"

"O no, not that," said Lois. "She amuses me."

"Everything amuses you, you happy creature! You look as if the fairies that wait upon young girls had made you their special care. Did you ever read the 'Rape of the Lock'?"

"I have never read anything," Lois answered, a little soberly.

"Never mind; you have so much the more pleasure before you. But the 'Rape of the Lock' – in that story there is a young lady, a famous beauty, whose dressing-table is attended by sprites or fairies. One of them colours her lips; another hides in the folds of her gown; another tucks himself away in a curl of her hair. – You make me think of that young lady."



## CHAPTER XIII

### A SUMMER HOTEL

Mrs. Wishart was reminded of Belinda again the next morning. Lois was beaming. She managed to keep their talkative neighbour in order during breakfast; and then proposed to Mrs. Wishart to take a walk. But Mrs. Wishart excused herself, and Lois set off alone. After a couple of hours she came back with her hands full.

"O, Mrs. Wishart!" she burst forth, – "this is the very loveliest place you ever saw in your life! I can never thank you enough for bringing me! What can I do to thank you?"

"What makes it so delightful?" said the elder lady, smiling at her. "There is nothing here but the sea and the rocks. You have found the philosopher's stone, you happy girl!"

"The philosopher's stone?" said Lois. "That was what Mr. Dillwyn told me about."

"Philip? I wish he was here."

"It would be nice for you. I don't want anybody. The place is enough."

"What have you found, child?"

"Flowers – and mosses – and shells. O, the flowers are beautiful! But it isn't the flowers, nor any one thing; it is the place. The air is wonderful; and the sea, O, the sea is a constant delight to me!"

"The philosopher's stone!" repeated the lady. "What is it, Lois? You are the happiest creature I ever saw. – You find pleasure in everything."

"Perhaps it is that," said Lois simply. "Because I am happy."

"But what business have you to be so happy? – living in a corner like Shampushuh. I beg your pardon, Lois, but it is a corner of the earth. What makes you happy?"

Lois answered lightly, that perhaps it was easier to be happy in a corner than in a wide place; and went off again. She would not give Mrs. Wishart an answer she could by no possibility understand.

Some time later in the day, Mrs. Wishart too, becoming tired of the monotony of her own room, descended to the piazza; and was sitting there when the little steamboat arrived with some new guests for the hotel. She watched one particular party approaching. A young lady in advance, attended by a gentleman; then another pair following, an older lady, leaning on the arm of a cavalier whom Mrs. Wishart recognized first of them all. She smiled to herself.

"Mrs. Wishart!" Julia Caruthers exclaimed, as she came upon the verandah. "You *are* here. That is delightful! Mamma, here is Mrs. Wishart. But whatever did bring you here? I am reminded of Captain Cook's voyages, that I used to read when I was a child, and I fancy I have come to one of his savage islands; only I don't see the salvages. They will appear, perhaps. But I don't see anything else; cocoanut trees, or palms, or bananas, the tale of which used to make my mouthwater. There are no trees here at all, that I can see, nor anything else. What brought you here, Mrs. Wishart? May I present Mr. Lenox? – What brought you here, Mrs. Wishart?"

"What brought *you* here?" was the smiling retort. The answer was prompt.

"Tom."

Mrs. Wishart looked at Tom, who came up and paid his respects in marked form; while his mother, as if exhausted, sank down on one of the chairs.

"Yes, it was Tom," she repeated. "Nothing would do for Tom but the

Isles of Shoals; and so, Julia and I had to follow in his train. In my grandmother's days that would have been different. What is here, dear

Mrs. Wishart, besides you? You are not alone?"

"Not quite. I have brought my little friend, Lois Lothrop, with me; and she thinks the Isles of Shoals the most charming place that was ever discovered, by Captain Cook or anybody else."

"Ah, she is here!" said Mrs. Caruthers dryly; while Julia and Mr. Lenox exchanged glances. "Much other company?"

"Not much; and what there is comes more from New Hampshire than New York, I fancy."

"Ah! – And what else is here then, that anybody should come here for?"

"I don't know yet. You must ask Miss Lothrop. Yonder she comes. She has been exploring ever since five o'clock, I believe."

"I suppose she is accustomed to get up at that hour," remarked the other, as if the fact involved a good deal of disparagement. And then they were all silent, and watched Lois, who was slowly and unconsciously approaching her reviewers. Her hands were again full of different gleanings from the wonderful wilderness in which she had been exploring; and she came with a slow step, still busy with them as she walked. Her hat had fallen back a little; the beautiful hair was a trifle disordered, showing so only the better its rich abundance and exquisite colour; the face it framed and crowned was fair and flushed, intent upon her gains from rock and meadow – for there was a little bit of meadow ground at Appledore; – and so happy in its sweet absorption, that an involuntary tribute of homage to its beauty was wrung from the most critical. Lois walked with a light, steady step; her careless bearing was free and graceful; her dress was not very fashionable, but entirely proper for the place; all eyes consented to this, and then all eyes came back to the face. It was so happy, so pure, so unconscious and unshadowed; the look was of the sort that one does not see in the assemblies of the world's pleasure-seekers; nor ever but in the faces of heaven's pleasure-finders. She was a very lovely vision, and somehow all the little group on the piazza with one consent kept silence, watching her as she came. She drew near with busy, pleased thoughts, and leisurely happy steps, and never looked up till she reached the foot of the steps leading to the piazza. Nor even then; she had picked up her skirt and mounted several steps daintily before she heard her name and raised her eyes. Then her face changed. The glance of surprise, it is true, was immediately followed by a smile of civil greeting; but the look of rapt happiness was gone; and somehow nobody on the piazza felt the change to be flattering. She accepted quietly Tom's hand, given partly in greeting, partly to assist her up the last steps, and faced the group who were regarding her.

"How delightful to find you here, Miss Lothrop!" said Julia, – "and how strange that people should meet on the Isles of Shoals."

"Why is it strange?"

"O, because there is really nothing to come here for, you know. I don't know how we happen to be here ourselves. – Mr. Lenox, Miss Lothrop. – What have you found in this desert?"

"You have been spoiling Appledore?" added Tom.

"I don't think I have done any harm," said Lois innocently. "There is enough more, Mr. Caruthers."

"Enough of what?" Tom inquired, while Julia and her friend exchanged a swift glance again, of triumph on the lady's part.

"There is a shell," said Lois, putting one into his hand. "I think that is pretty, and it certainly is odd. And what do you say to those white violets, Mr. Caruthers? And here is some very beautiful pimpernel – and here is a flower that I do not know at all, – and the rest is what you would call rubbish," she finished with a smile, so charming that Tom could not see the violets for dazzled eyes.

"Show me the flowers, Tom," his mother demanded; and she kept him by her, answering her questions and remarks about them; while Julia asked where they could be found.

"I find them in quite a good many places," said Lois; "and every time it is a sort of surprise. I gathered only a few; I do not like to take them away from their places; they are best there."

She said a word or two to Mrs. Wishart, and passed on into the house.

"That's the girl," Julia said in a low voice to her lover, walking off to the other end of the verandah with him.

"Tom might do worse," was the reply.

"George! How can you say so? A girl who doesn't know common English!"

"She might go to school," suggested Lenox.

"To school! At her age! And then, think of her associations, and her ignorance of everything a lady should be and should know. O you men! I have no patience with you. See a face you like, and you lose your wits at once, the best of you. I wonder you ever fancied me!"

"Tastes are unaccountable," the young man returned, with a lover-like smile.

"But do you call that girl pretty?"

Mr. Lenox looked portentously grave. "She has handsome hair," he ventured.

"Hair! What's hair! Anybody can have handsome hair, that will pay for it."

"She has not paid for hers."

"No, and I don't mean that Tom shall. Now George, you must help. I brought you along to help. Tom is lost if we don't save him. He must not be left alone with this girl; and if he gets talking to her, you must mix in and break it up, make love to her yourself, if necessary. And we must see to it that they do not go off walking together. You must help me watch and help me hinder. Will you?"

"Really, I should not be grateful to anyone who did *me* such kind service."

"But it is to save Tom."

"Save him! From what?"

"From a low marriage. What could be worse?"

"Adjectives are declinable. There is low, lower, lowest."

"Well, what could be lower? A poor girl, uneducated, inexperienced, knowing nobody, brought up in the country, and of no family in particular, with nothing in the world but beautiful hair! Tom ought to have something better than that."

"I'll study her further, and then tell you what I think."

"You are very stupid to-day, George!"

Nobody got a chance to study Lois much more that day. Seeing that Mrs. Wishart was for the present well provided with company, she withdrew to her own room; and there she stayed. At supper she appeared, but silent and reserved; and after supper she went away again. Next morning Lois was late at breakfast; she had to run a gauntlet of eyes, as she took her seat at a little distance.

"Overslept, Lois?" queried Mrs. Wishart.

"Miss Lothrop looks as if she never had been asleep, nor ever meant to be," quoth Tom.

"What a dreadful character!" said Miss Julia. "Pray, Miss Lothrop, excuse him; the poor boy means, I have no doubt, to be complimentary."

"Not so bad, for a beginner," remarked Mr. Lenox. "Ladies always like to be thought bright-eyed, I believe."

"But never to sleep!" said Julia. "Imagine the staring effect."

"*You* are complimentary without effort," Tom remarked pointedly.

"Lois, my dear, have you been out already?" Mrs. Wishart asked. Lois gave a quiet assent and betook herself to her breakfast.

"I knew it," said Tom. "Morning air has a wonderful effect, if ladies would only believe it. They won't believe it, and they suffer accordingly."

"Another compliment!" said Miss Julia, laughing. "But what do you find, Miss Lothrop, that can attract you so much before breakfast? or after breakfast either, for that matter?"

"Before breakfast is the best time in the twenty-four hours," said Lois.

"Pray, for what?"

"If *you* were asked, you would say, for sleeping," put in Tom.

"For what, Miss Lothrop? Tom, you are troublesome."

"For doing what, do you mean?" said Lois. "I should say, for anything; but I was thinking of enjoying."

"We are all just arrived," Mr. Lenox began; "and we are slow to believe there is anything to enjoy at the Isles. Will Miss Lothrop enlighten us?"

"I do not know that I can," said Lois. "You might not find what I find."

"What do you find?"

"If you will go out with me to-morrow morning at five o'clock, I will show you," said Lois, with a little smile of amusement, or of archness, which quite struck Mr. Lenox and quite captivated Tom.

"Five o'clock!" the former echoed.

"Perhaps he would not then see what you see," Julia suggested.

"Perhaps not," said Lois. "I am by no means sure."

She was let alone after that; and as soon as breakfast was over she escaped again. She made her way to a particular hiding-place she had discovered, in the rocks, down near the shore; from which she had almost beautiful view of the sea and of several of the other islands. Her nook of a seat was comfortable enough, but all around it the rocks were piled in broken confusion, sheltering her, she thought, from any possible chance comer. And this was what Lois wanted; for, in the first place, she was minded to keep herself out of the way of the newly-arrived party, each and all of them; and, in the second place, she was intoxicated with the delights of the ocean. Perhaps I should say rather, of the ocean and the rocks and the air and the sky, and of everything at Appledore. Where she sat, she had a low brown reef insight, jutting out into the sea just below her; and upon this reef the billows were rolling and breaking in a way utterly and wholly entrancing. There was no wind, to speak of, yet there was much more motion in the sea than yesterday; which often happens from the effect of winds that have been at work far away; and the breakers which beat and foamed upon that reef, and indeed upon all the shore, were beyond all telling graceful, beautiful, wonderful, mighty, and changeful. Lois had been there to see the sunrise; now that fairy hour was long past, and the day was in its full bright strength; but still she sat spellbound and watched the waves; watched the colours on the rocks, the brown and the grey; the countless, nameless hues of ocean, and the light on the neighbouring islands, so different now from what they had been a few hours ago.

Now and then a thought or two went to the hotel and its new inhabitants, and passed in review the breakfast that morning. Lois had taken scarce any part in the conversation; her place at table put her at a distance from Mr. Caruthers; and after those few first words she had been able to keep very quiet, as her wish was. But she had listened, and observed. Well, the talk had not been, as to quality, one whit better than what Shampuah could furnish every day; nay, Lois thought the advantage of sense and wit and shrewdness was decidedly on the side of her country neighbours; while the staple of talk was nearly the same. A small sort of gossip and remark, with commentary, on other people and other people's doings, past, present, and to come. It had no interest whatever to Lois's mind, neither subject nor treatment. But the *manner* to-day gave her something to think about. The manner was different; and the manner not of talk only, but of all that was done. Not so did Shampuah discuss its neighbours, and not so did Shampuah eat bread and butter. Shampuah's ways were more rough, angular, hurried; less quietness, less grace, whether of movement or speech; less calm security in every action; less delicacy of taste. It must have been good blood in Lois which recognized all this, but recognize it she did; and, as I said, every now and then an involuntary thought of it came over the girl. She felt that she was unlike these people; not of their class or society; she was sure they knew it too, and would act accordingly; that is, not rudely or ungracefully making the fact known, but nevertheless feeling, and showing that they felt, that she belonged to a detached portion of humanity. Or they; what did it matter? Lois did not misjudge or undervalue herself; she knew she was the equal of these people, perhaps more than their equal, in true refinement of feeling and delicacy of perception; she knew she was not awkward in manner; yet she knew, too,

that she had not their ease of habit, nor the confidence given by knowledge of the world and all other sorts of knowledge. Her up-bringing and her surroundings had not been like theirs; they had been rougher, coarser, and if of as good material, of far inferior form. She thought with herself that she would keep as much out of their company as she properly could. For there was beneath all this consciousness an unrecognized, or at least unacknowledged, sense of other things in Lois's mind; of Mr. Caruthers' possible feelings, his people's certain displeasure, and her own promise to her grandmother. She would keep herself out of the way; easy at Appledore —

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