THE GIRL
FROM
VERMONT
The Story of a Vacation School Teacher

By
MARSHALL SAUNDERS
Author of "Beautiful Joe," "My Pets," "For the Other Boy's Sake," "The House of Armour," etc.

"'How long,' they say, 'how long, O cruel nation,
Will you stand to move the world on a child's heart;
Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?' "

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I Dedicate this Story to My Esteemed Fellow-workers in the National Child Labor Committee, and the National Playground Association of America

—Marshall Saunders
PROLOGUE

The success of the playground movement in America surprises even the warm-hearted, hopeful friends of children who started it. Sentiment has been re-enforced by utilitarianism until now the whole nation is beginning to find out that it pays to take care of the children. Juvenile courts are good, but playgrounds are better. The one is remedial, the other preventive. A reformed criminal is a credit to a community, but an unfallen citizen is a crown of rejoicing. Direct the energy of the child into proper channels, and the worst truant of the school becomes the explorer, the thief a successful merchant, the forward girl a loving mother, and the boy banging on your front door the leader of an orchestra.

The playground movement is going to reform our schools. Playground work, on account of its adaptability, always holds the child. The schoolroom does not—witness the many unintellectual boys who leave school to go to work. The schoolroom ought to be made fascinating enough to retain the boys and girls till they are forced to leave it.
Prologue

Now, what has been the result of all this playground work in America? Approximately, three hundred and thirty-five cities have now established playgrounds. Previous to 1908, only ninety cities had play places for children. In two hundred and one cities, there are now ten hundred and twenty-four playgrounds. I am quoting from information furnished me by the Playground Association of America. In Massachusetts, all but two cities voted to have playgrounds supported by public taxes. This is just as it should be. In many cities, the playground movement was started by devoted men and women, who collected money to maintain them, until finally they were taken over by school boards or park commissioners. Chicago, Boston, New York, and many other cities have arranged for playgrounds to be kept open the year round. This too is just as it should be. I shall never forget crossing Brown Square playground in Rochester one winter’s day. Boys and girls were skating merrily on the pond, smaller children were sliding, running, and swinging. In a cosy library other children were reading and playing indoor games. Why should not a playground be kept open in winter? Children play all the year round.

In some cities, playgrounds are equipped with
Prologue

electric lights, so that the young people who work may play after the day's toil is over. Chicago has done nobly with regard to her playgrounds, having expended eleven millions of dollars on them during the past ten years. New York has spent sixteen millions. Many public-spirited men and women have donated playgrounds to their native towns. What more touching memorial could one leave than a training-place for girls and boys, who would have otherwise only the dusty street or dirty alley for a play place? Health associations favor playgrounds as an important agency in the prevention of disease. A criminal, a pauper, or a diseased person costs the State two or three dollars a week, but it is estimated that one dollar only is needed to pay for a child on a playground for six weeks—and there are six hundred and fifty cities and towns of the United States, with a population of five thousand or over, still without playgrounds. Will they not come into line with this important movement? A school for every district, a playground for every school, to be kept open all day and into the evening. The schoolyard belongs to the child—why keep him out of it?

Marshall Saunders.

Halifax, January 1, 1910.

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The Girl from Vermont

CHAPTER I

NUMBER NINE UNION STREET

THERE were only two people visible on this, one of the quietest streets of the quiet old town—the middle-aged woman sitting calmly on a doorstep, and the policeman pacing slowly up and down the sidewalk before her. Small houses, occupied mostly by mechanics, bordered the narrow street. A few trees shaded the walks. Hour after hour the woman sat without speaking, and the policeman paced like a sentinel near her.

Her head was resting on her hand. Her eyes were fixed on the moon solemnly beaming at her over distant treetops. Her face was not beautiful, but there was something in her expression—some faint reflection of the exquisite spirit of motherhood that made her for the time so remarkable, that a young man whose footsteps came echoing down the lonely street, stopped short and stared at her.

"By George! what's that woman thinking of? Must be in a trance. She neither hears nor sees me.
Hello, officer,” he added, to the policeman, whose bored face brightened at sight of him, “why are you ‘doing sentry go’ in this forsaken place; and who is that woman?”

“Mrs. Leslie, sir; agent of the Children’s Aid Society,” said the policeman, turning and walking beside him.

“Oh! one of those faddy women. Thought I’d seen her before. She belongs to one of those societies that always stick their noses into other people’s business—the L. H. S. and the P. F. O., and so on. I know them. What’s up here?”

“A call to a cruelty case—child-beating—can’t get in the house. People are downtown.”

“And you’ve got to wait till they come back? What about the kid? Is it with them?”

“No, it’s in the house,” said the policeman, staring toward the dingy cottage. “They leave him every night of their lives. Stay, sir, and see the thing through. We need a witness.”

“Not I,” and the young man laughed and shook his head. “I’ve got a dad who has got a big stick; I’m for home and bed.”

The policeman grinned, stopped short, and looked behind him.

A young girl was coming down the street with a suitcase in one hand and a bunch of flowers in the other.

“Whew! what a dolly!” said the young man under his breath.
The policeman stared too. This was certainly an uncommonly pretty girl. She had thick, curly hair; a trim, alert figure; an eager, open face; and a pair of frank, sweet, innocent brown eyes.

"Good evening, officer," she said, at the same time flashing a glance at the woman and the young man, as if to apologize for ignoring them. "Can you tell me where Number Nine is—Mrs. Drake's?"

"Yes, Miss," said the policeman politely, "it's that house," and he pointed to the cottage.

"Isn't she at home?" asked the girl, with a quick glance at the small house.

"No, Miss; we're waiting for her," he said meaningly. The girl gazed at him, at the young man, and at the woman, who, hearing the fresh, young voice, had come forward.

"This is Mrs. Leslie, Miss," said the policeman kindly, "agent of the Children's Aid Society."

The girl dropped her suitcase, and seizing the woman's hand, said eagerly, "Do you know Mrs. Granger?"

The woman smiled. "I see her every day."

"Well," said the girl, "I am Patty Green; you may have heard of me."

"Oh, yes;" and the woman pressed the slender fingers held in her firm grasp. "I know all about you. What are you doing here?"

"Why, Mrs. Granger wrote me to come here."

"To come here!" repeated Mrs. Leslie in surprise.
The Girl from Vermont

"Yes, she wrote: 'I have found you a good boarding-place with Mrs. Drake, Number Nine Union Street. Telegraph me when you are ready to come, and I will meet you and drive you there.' So I telegraphed that I would arrive here tomorrow. Then I found I could get away earlier, so I just started and came, and as every carriage at the station was taken, I had to get into a car that brought me to the corner yonder; then I walked here."

Mrs. Leslie shook her head. "Mrs. Granger never intended you to come here; you are to go to Mrs. Smith, 6 Lucas street. Mrs. Granger has been worried about this cruelty case, and having the woman's name and address in mind, she has written it instead of Mrs. Smith's."

"And what am I to do?" inquired Miss Patty with a comical face.

"You will go home with me," said Mrs. Leslie calmly. "The clocks are just now striking eleven, and it will be too late to disturb Mrs. Smith when we get through. To-morrow I will take you to her."

"How perfectly sweet of you!" exclaimed the girl impulsively. "But what are you doing here?"

"Some work for the Children's Aid Society," said the woman evasively. "Perhaps you are tired, and would step into one of the neighbors' houses till we finish. I see a light in that green house yonder."
Number Nine Union Street

"Oh, no; let me stay," said the girl pleadingly. "You know I love children."

"I say, Francis," whispered the young man in the officer's ear, "Dad can hug his big stick awhile longer. I'll stay to be a witness."

The policeman put his white-gloved hand to his lips to conceal a snicker.

"Who is this young gentleman?" asked Mrs. Leslie quietly.

"He's young Mr. Denner," said the policeman, "son of Stephen B. Denner."

"How do you do?" said Mrs. Leslie, stepping forward and offering him her hand.

"I'm proud to make your acquaintance," said the young man, taking off his hat with a flourish. "I've heard of your noble work in the C. A. S. That society, together with the L. H. S. and the P. F. O., does an immense amount of good in the city."

Mrs. Leslie flashed him a quizzical glance. "Your father helps us very substantially, but I did not know that you were interested in reform work. Let me introduce you to Miss Green."

The young man bowed again, receiving with immense approbation a smile revealing flashing white teeth, then shrugged his shoulders in disappointment as Mrs. Leslie retreated to her doorstep stronghold, and took Miss Patty with her.

"That young man," said Mrs. Leslie in a low voice, "is the son of one of the richest men in Greenport; but he is idle, and fond of pleasure."
The Girl from Vermont

“Doesn’t he do any good with his money—the son, I mean?” asked the girl earnestly.

“Not that I know of.”

“Then he ought to be ashamed of himself,” she said warmly, and she dismissed young Mr. Denner from her thoughts, and looking curiously about her, was just beginning to ply her new friend with questions, when the policeman came toward them.

“Two parties are hurrying from the car,” he said. “Our game, likely.”
CHAPTER II
THE CRUELTY CASE

Mrs. Leslie and Miss Patty stood up. A tall young man and a short young woman were stepping briskly toward them. When they reached their own doorstep they stopped short, and stared uneasily at the four persons confronting them.

Mrs. Leslie came forward. "You are Mr. and Mrs. Drake?"

"Yes," said the man shortly.

"I wish to see the child you have in your house."

Without a word the man drew a latch-key from his pocket, opened the door, and ushered them all into a narrow, dark hall.

"Great fool! why doesn't he protest?" whispered young Denner to the policeman. "Catch me letting four people into my house without a word."

"These poor folks are all mighty afraid of a uniform," muttered the policeman, "also of the Children's Aid Society. Maybe he's not guilty. We'll wait and see."

Still without speaking, the man took a match from his pocket, and lighted a lamp in the hall; then he motioned them into a small, stuffy parlor.

There were just four red and green plush chairs
The Girl from Vermont

in the room, and one narrow hair-cloth sofa. Mr. Drake set the lamp on the top of an enormous family Bible on a table in the middle of the room, then looked expectantly at his wife, who had seated herself as far from the guests as the narrow room would allow her to do.

"Why don't you get the child?" he asked, his nervousness betraying itself by the irritability of his tone.

The woman, who had tinted hair and darkened eyes, and who was dressed in a flashy way, made some kind of an inarticulate sound in her throat, and flounced out of the room.

Mrs. Leslie followed her, and after a short time, Miss Patty went after them.

The girl did not stay long upstairs. Victor Denner, Drake, and the policeman were soon amazed to see her flying downstairs, flinging herself about the little hall, and making various sounds expressive of great disturbance of mind.

Young Denner looked at the policeman in some alarm, and with an expression that plainly said, "What is the matter with her?—should we go to her assistance?"

The officer shook his head, and Victor sat still.

Presently Miss Patty appeared at the door. Her face was convulsed, and she was twisting her hands nervously together.

"Gentlemen," she said in a raging voice. "Gentlemen two, for you are a reptile," and she
The Cruelty Case

absolutely withered the cringing Drake by a volcanic glance, "I have been angry at times during my life; I may say that I have been in rages, but I never experienced anything like the frightful wrath that has now come over me. At last—and may heaven make me more merciful—I understand the rage that kills!"

The three men sat breathlessly observing her; and after glaring for a time at the speechless Drake, she turned her back on him and addressed the other two men.

"I followed Mrs. Leslie upstairs," she said; "I watched her take a little boy from his bed—a dear little boy about four years old. He stared, blinking his dear eyes at us, such a gentle little creature. Oh, how could any one ill-treat such a lamb!" And she burst into a violent fit of sobbing.

Drake fell into extreme sheepishness, the policeman and Victor were sympathetic, but unenlightened; and presently recovering herself, Miss Patty went on.

"Mrs. Leslie took the little child by the hand. She asked, 'Are you Archie Drake?' and he said, 'Yes.' Then she said, 'Some one told me that bad persons whipped Archie and made him scream. Is that so?' 'Not bad persons,' he said, 'only papa. Papa beats Archie with a strap with a buckle on it. He hurted Archie. Papa beats the dog too, and he stones the chickens.'"

"What kind of a man are you?" cried the girl,
The Girl from Vermont

flashing round on the uncomfortable Drake, "to beat a baby, and stone chickens, and a dog? You are not a man; you are a demon!" and she again turned her back on him.

"Officer," she said, earnestly regarding the policeman, "Mrs. Leslie drew back the child's little shirt. She looked at his back. It is one mass of bruises, and as discolored as the back of a Negro child. His throat is swollen and scratched, and he says mamma's fingers choked him when he made her cross. Now, I ask you what kind of people are these?"

The policeman shrugged his shoulders, while Victor stared angrily at the speechless Drake.

"Is this a Christian country?" exclaimed Miss Patty, "or are we in heathen Africa? You—brute—beast—hypocrite—whatever you are, what do you mean by having this on your table?" and she laid a finger on the ponderous Bible.

"Do you think the presence of that Bible will blind your neighbors' eyes, or stop their shocked ears when they hear the screams of your long-suffering child? You say—nothing," she observed witheringly. "You don't even try to defend yourself."

"I'll get the law on you," muttered the young man savagely, "tongue-lashing me in my own house."

"Why didn't you kill the child outright?" pursued Miss Patty wrathfully. "Would that not have been better than torturing it day by day? What
The Cruelty Case

animated you—what devil so blinded you that you would so maltreat your own flesh and blood?"

"He ain't me own flesh and blood," said the young man in a fierce undertone.

"Oh! an adopted child—worse still. How long have you had him?"

"It ain't any business of yours, but I've had him four months."

Miss Patty, with an arrest of thought, stared at him from top to toe. "You look very young," she said at last. "How long have you been married?"

"Six months."

"Why did you not wait for the Lord to send you a child, instead of adopting one in such a hurry?" inquired Miss Patty briefly.

Drake did not answer her, and a long silence followed. Miss Patty's bewildered gaze went around the room. There was a mystery here that she could not fathom. Finally, her eyes coming back to the big Bible, saw the edge of an envelope sticking from it: "The Smith Insurance Company."

Snatching the envelope from the Bible, she held it up to Victor Denner and the policeman. "I have a clue. This company makes a specialty of child-insurance. You insured your adopted child's life, you—" and she glared at the discomfited Drake. "I ain't agoin' to answer no questions," he said sulkily.

Miss Patty lifted her eyes to the ceiling. "Heaven grant me patience. Young man, it is not
The Girl from Vermont

for me to judge you—the law will do that—but let me make a prophecy. If you did this dreadful thing, if you took an innocent child, and with the connivance of your wife deliberately planned to gain a few paltry dollars by slowly murdering it, then there is no more happiness for you in life. You have murdered your happiness. Decent people will not associate with you. You must take up your portion with rogues and liars."

The young workman stood up. "You're not layin' a curse on me?"

Miss Patty turned to the policeman and Victor. "Am I? Is the righteous wrath of a lover of children a curse to the one who hates them? If it is, young man, you pursue your life's journey weighted by my condemnation unless you repent. But do repent—do feel sorry, can you not?"

Drake's untrained mind was not following her. He seemed to be listening to noises overhead. "She's takin' him away," he muttered, and going into the hall, he called out in dulcet tones, "I say, Bess, if you're dressing the child, put on the new shoes I gave him, and the red cap."

The policeman glanced at Victor, and whispered one word behind his hand, "Hypocrite!"

Miss Patty, subdued to absolute amazement, stood gazing at the shifty Drake. "You have much to learn," she said significantly. "From the bottom of my heart, I pity you. When every friend leaves you, come to me."

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The Cruelty Case

Drake gave her a queer glance, and waited in the hall for his wife and Mrs. Leslie, who were descending the staircase.

Mrs. Leslie had the child in her arms. His little hands were round her neck, and he was saying in a singsong voice, "Papa hurted Archie—Archie is goin' far away."

"Kiss papa good-bye," said Drake, with a contortion of his face, as he stepped toward the child.

Miss Patty suddenly flung herself between them. "Don't!" she cried with uplifted hand. "Don't! a kiss from you now would be worse than the most cruel blow you have ever given that innocent child. Hypocrite and liar! May God have mercy on your soul!"

Drake fell back as if he had been struck, and the policeman, with a savage glance at him, muttered to Victor, "I'd like to hang that cur twice; once is too good for him." Then he followed Mrs. Leslie to the street.

Miss Patty was sobbing again. "Poor little baby; poor little thing. What brutes! What brutes! his little body is a rack of bones."

"Don't cry," said Victor, as he followed behind with her suitcase, "you can't help it."

"Can't help it!" exclaimed the girl, suddenly stopping short; "I can help it; I do help it. I have given my life to the cause of suffering childhood in America."

"I wish I could help," said Victor readily.
The Girl from Vermont

"And do you do nothing to help others?" cried the girl. "There is much to be done in the world. Are you a drone?"

"I—I am afraid I am," confessed Victor humbly.

"Then join the workers. Do something, be somebody. Don't worship self from morning till night. There is that infamous insurance of children among the poor. The women pay five or ten cents a week, and when a child dies they get forty or fifty dollars. Do you see the temptation to neglect a child? You can drive these wretches that tempt the poor women from the country."

"Will you help me?" said Victor with enthusiasm.

"Certainly, I will help you."

"But—but who are you?" stammered the young man, staring at the pretty flushed face bathed in the moonlight.

"Who am I?" she repeated dreamily. "Oh! I can always be found. Ah—that dear baby—that dear baby! and she ran after him. Mrs. Leslie and the policeman had come to a stop at the corner where they were to wait for a car.

Miss Patty precipitated herself upon the child, and kissed his pale, apathetic face. "No one shall ever beat you again. We will make up to you for the past."

"Francis," said young Denner energetically after he had seen Mrs. Leslie and Miss Patty get into the car, "haven't you any idea who that girl can be?"
The Cruelty Case

"Not me, sir."

"Then it's for me to find out," said Victor cheerfully. "I'll telephone Mrs. Leslie first thing in the morning—good night, officer; I am much obliged to you."

The policeman laughed heartily as he stood gazing after the young man's retreating figure.
CHAPTER III

MISS PATTY

A FEW days later, on a sunny June morning, Victor Denner was walking along the street, whistling like a plowboy.

His father's big brick mansion lay far behind him. That was in the fashionable west end of the city. This was the east end. Here were the factories, the narrow streets, the stuffy, unwholesome dwellings, the ugly, dingy part of the town. Ah! here at last was the schoolhouse and the big school-yard that he was looking for. He paused an instant at the gate, and a crippled boy standing there said politely, "Won't you come in?"

"Hello! who are you?" inquired Victor, looking down at him good-naturedly.

"I'm the gatekeeper," said the boy proudly.

"Teacher, she put me here."

"'Teacher,' that is Miss Green, I suppose. What kind of a person is she?" he asked cunningly.

The boy rolled his eyes delightedly. "Oh, she's a beaut! She shows us how to play games, and she sings and dances. I tell you, she's great."

"Where is she?"

"In the schoolhouse. She's got classes there. It's most all play out here."
Miss Patty

"So I perceive," and Victor looked about him as he entered the gate. One side of the large yard was occupied by swings, teeters, vaulting-bars, and climbing-poles; on the other side little girls were playing croquet and basket-ball, and in one corner some scores of tiny children literally covered large boxes of sand in which they were digging with pails and shovels.

Victor hurried along to the schoolhouse, ran up the steps, and found himself confronted by an enormously tall, lean woman, who held a broom in her hand.

"You don't know me, sir," she said with a grin, "an' yet I've often seen you when I've been down to the west end."

Victor still looked mystified, and she went on. "When ladies in the west end has teas an' dinners, they often sends for me to help. Down there, I'm Betsy; up here I'm Mrs. Skellish, the caretaker of this school," she added proudly.

"Where's Miss Green?" inquired Victor.

"In that room," and she pointed with her broom across the hall. "She have just had a class. The girls do be agoin' out the other side."

"How does Miss Green get on here?" inquired Victor.

"Oh, she gets on," replied Mrs. Skellish with a comprehensive glance. "She ain't been here long, but she'll do—she'll do."

"I'm going in to see her," he said firmly. 

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Mrs. Skellish did not oppose him. She even stepped aside, and cast an admiring glance after him as he passed her.

Victor pushed open the schoolroom door. There, perched on a desk, and surrounded by a heap of rushes, sat Miss Patty, her feet on one of the low benches, her two sturdy young arms grappling with a big thing that looked to him like a scrap basket.

"Good morning," he said with a beaming face.

"Good morning," returned Miss Patty, lifting her flushed cheeks, and throwing him a doubtful glance.

"I have found out who you are," he said, advancing cautiously.

"And who am I? I should like to know."

"You are the girl from Vermont."

Miss Patty put down her basket and laughed a long, merry laugh.

"Why, what a clever person you are! How did you find that out?"

Victor contemplated her with the greatest satisfaction, then he said, "Yes, you are the girl from Vermont. Some of the women faddists here in Greenport wished to start some charity work among children, and they heard you were good at it, and sent for you."

"Pardon me," said Miss Patty, becoming sober, "it isn’t charity work, it’s schoolboard work, city council work, or it ought to be. This schoolhouse is kept up by the city."
Miss Patty

"Who pays you?" asked Victor shrewdly, "the faddists or the city?"

"No faddists pay me. Good, sweet angels of women pay me—women who are doing work that men ought to do."

"Won't you please explain?" asked the young man humbly, "and may I sit down? I have positively raced here. No car seems to run in this forsaken network of streets."

Miss Patty waved him to a distant bench, and went on with her work, though as she talked she occasionally flashed him a distracting glance from her brown eyes.

"Did you ever read 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' young man?"

"Yes, I have."

"What is it about?"

"Slaves."

"What kind of slaves?"

"Black slaves."

"Have we any white slaves in this country?"

"None that I ever heard of."

"What about the two millions of children who work hard in this glorious land of liberty, while you amuse yourself?"

"I don't believe it," he said promptly.

"If you don't believe me, I won't talk any more," she said crossly, shaking her curly head at him.

"I believe—I believe," he said abjectly. "Ten millions of children slaves in this—"
The Girl from Vermont

"Two millions," she corrected severely.
"Well, two then—any number you like."
"Ten thousand little boys, from nine to thirteen, work in the coalbreakers," she said in a stifled voice.
"Indeed!"
"Seven thousand five hundred children work in glass factories; hundreds of them work all night," she continued.
"Horrible!"
"Sixty thousand little children toil in Southern cotton mills. Little girls eight years old work through a twelve-hour night. What do you think of that?"
"If it's true, I think—oh, well, of course it's true—well, I think it's diabolical."
"A boy called Little Joe has spent six of his sixteen years on a low stool tying glass stoppers in the bottles in a glass factory," continued the girl in a mournful voice. "He is so expert that he can tie three hundred dozen during a day, and his shoulders are bent, and his chest sunken. His face is sallow, and his eyes are dull."
"Why, Miss Patty, you're crying," exclaimed Victor, springing up. "Don't cry; you've no relatives among those children."
Miss Patty dropped her basket, dashed the tears from her eyes, and sprang to her feet. "No relatives? Why, they are my brothers and sisters. The same Lord made us both. Young man, young man, my heart bleeds for those children. Can't we do
Miss Patty

something for them? can't we enable them to play and to go to school as other children do?"

Victor looked vastly disturbed, but made no suggestion.

"The sky is not all clear for the slave-owners!" exclaimed the girl, as she paced excitedly up and down the well-worn schoolroom floor. "There are clouds gathering. All over this country are mutterings. I believe that we shall live to see the day when this great American nation will rise in its strength and say, 'Our children shall be free; they shall not be slaves!'"

"You are dreadfully excited about it, are you not?" observed Victor sympathetically.

"You don't enter into my feelings one bit—not one little bit," said the girl vehemently. "However, I ought to be thankful that you are willing to listen to me; many persons just make fun."

"Very unkind in them," murmured Victor.

"Here in this city you have some splendid women," continued Miss Patty. "They decided to do something for the children in this factory district; so, when the schools closed, they got permission from the schoolboard to have this schoolhouse and the yard. They put up that gymnastic apparatus, they bought games, and hired me to come and teach the children."

"To teach them in vacation-time? Surely that is cruel."

"You have a lot to learn, haven't you?" said
The Girl from Vermont

Miss Patty abruptly. “You don’t know about scientific play.”
“No, I don’t. I only know about straight play.”
“Do you go in for baseball?”
“Yes.”
“And football?”
“Glory! Yes.”
“What makes you like to play those games?”
Victor looked puzzled. “Well, I never stopped to analyze my feelings.”
“You studied about pre-historic times when you were at school?”
“Certainly.”
“How did they live in those days?”
“Our forefathers lived in caves.”
“Or under rocks,” suggested Miss Patty. “The wild beasts liked the caves.”
“And each forefather had a big stick,” continued Victor, “and he used to club beasts and other savages, and when he wanted a wife he knocked her down and dragged her off by the hair to his den.”
“And what did the women do?”
“Stayed at home, dusted the bric-à-brac, and minded the children.”
“Did the men ever organize?”
“Sure, to make war on other tribes, and to hunt game.”
Miss Patty walked to the window, and Victor followed her.
“When I try to organize a team game among
"If the street boy cannot play, he will steal"
those girls," she said impressively, "it is difficult. The boys fall into line at once. The latest theory of an advanced educationist is, that the spirit of organized play that prevails among boys and men is a remnant of the fighting spirit of primitive times. They had to band together for purposes of protection. The women led individual lives."

"Then, when I play football, I am a savage."

"Precisely."

"But what has that to do with your craze about children?"

"Why, don't you see—this feeling exists, and ought to find proper expression. All children, rich and poor, should have fine, vigorous, supervised play, otherwise their energies will be misdirected. If the street boy cannot play ball, he will steal, and get his runs that way."

"So you women are trying to make boys nice, and good, and proper," said Victor thoughtfully.

"Yes, and the men are not helping us much," said Miss Patty sorrowfully. "Women are doing bravely, but they are not so strong as men. Delicate women, like Mrs. Granger, leave their beautiful homes and go all over the city to collect money for this playground, when the city ought to keep it up. If men would rise in their strength and say, 'The schoolboard must take care of the children all the time, and not half the time, then women would have more time to devote to their homes, and indulge their natural inclination to lead quiet lives."
The Girl From Vermont

"Here is one man that will help you," said Victor eagerly.

Miss Patty favored him with a shy, demure glance.

"How perfectly lovely in you! and this is only the second time you have seen me."

"I told you the other evening that I would help you," said Victor boldly, "and I meant it then and mean it now. True, I have only seen you twice, but I feel as if I had known you all my life."
DO you always fall into friendships as easily as this?” asked Miss Patty.

“This isn’t friendship,” he said courageously.

“What is it?” inquired his companion with lamb-like innocence.

“You know what it is,” he replied doggedly. “You are pretending now, and being feminine and sly.”

“Do you care for masculine girls?”

“No, I don’t; but I say, Miss Patty, I am in earnest. Please don’t make fun of a fellow.”

“Don’t you want to look at some birds’ nests?” she said gaily. “Just see here! My clay-modeling class did these.”

Victor reluctantly took the little clay nest molds, and afterward surveyed cups and saucers, and clay dogs and horses.

“And we make baskets too,” said the girl. You don’t know about Raffia work, I suppose. These are discs and spokes.”

“I don’t know anything about it. Won’t you please tell me something more about yourself?”

“About my special department of work?” she said, with a side glance. “Well, I belong to the
The Girl from Vermont

newest of new organizations. It is called the 'Children's Rights Association.' You have heard of men's rights, and women's rights—well, now we are going to have the children's.

Victor's head drooped, and he heaved a profound sigh.

"You don't like that talk, or rather, you don't enjoy too much of it," she said shrewdly. "Well, then, I am Patty Green, from St. Peters, Vermont, and when I shake my head," and she agitated her curls, "you conceited people from other States say that one can see the hayseed fly."

"Ah! that is better," said Victor approvingly. "I thought you could be silly like other girls if you tried."

"Silly!" exclaimed Miss Patty. "I get perfectly wild sometimes. You see, I can't think of problems all the time. They would drive me crazy. You just ought to see me dance!"

"Please dance for me," he said pleadingly.

"No, no, sir; I will walk a little farther into your friendship first."

"I'll give you some new swings for your playground if you will," he said.

She looked at him keenly.

"Honor blue?"

"Honor blue, and green, and every color of the rainbow."

Miss Patty flew to the door. "Mrs. Skellish!"

The tall, gaunt woman entered with a precipitancy
The Vermont Hayseed Dance

that showed she had not been far away. "Bear witness," said Miss Patty. "This gentleman offers to give us four—or was it six? new swings for our playground."

"Well, I didn't state the number. How much do the things cost?"

"Twenty-five dollars a swing."

"Whew! I'll give you two."

"Very well—two swings for witnessing Miss Patty Green's original Vermont hayseed dance. Now, who'll play for me? There's the piano I use for my children."

"I can play a little," said Victor.

Miss Patty waved him to the piano, then said, "No; first help me to move back some of these desks and benches. Mrs. Skellish, you bear a hand too."

Their task over, Miss Patty snatched up a child's hat and stuck it on the side of her curls. Then, with an enchanting smile at an imaginary audience, she began her original Vermont dance.

It was original, and Victor, looking over his shoulder from the piano, and Mrs. Skellish leaning open-mouthed on her broom, laughed delightedly as Miss Patty hopped, and skipped, and frisked to and fro in the figures of her hayseed dance. At intervals, as she gamboled about the room, she dipped her curly head and shook it vigorously; and when Victor at last appreciated the meaning of her gesture, he was convulsed with new delight.
The Girl from Vermont

The country girl come to town was trying to get rid of her verdancy by shaking hayseed from her comely locks.

"How she do wag that head!" exclaimed Mrs. Skellish, pounding her broom in her delight, "an' ain't she soupler than a cat! I never did see such sweeps an' cutseys. She looks like a white fairy a-dippin' and sweepin' up air, and then throwin' it off."

Victor at last laughed so violently that he had to stop playing. The girl was quite an impersonator. He saw clearly in her gestures and mimicry the country lass repelling the temptations of the city, and selecting what was instructive or improving in the new life.

"Fine! Magnificent!" he called to Miss Patty, who had sunk exhausted on a bench, and was regarding him with bright eyes behind a shock of loosened hair.

"Please," she said, shaking her locks once more, "when callers don't stay too long, I don't get dreadfully tired of them."

Victor took the hint, and prepared to retire. "May I stay outside and play with the children?" he asked humbly, as he went toward the door.

"Oh, as long as you like," she said agreeably. "Teach them some new games."

He was just about to follow Mrs. Skellish, who was sauntering from the room, when Miss Patty called to him. "By the way, do you know any
The Vermont Hayseed Dance

merchant in this town whose first name is Solomon?"

He thought a minute, a long minute, and then said, "No, I don't."

"I told you I had come to this town to help the children's movement," she said, "but I had another reason. In this town, or small city of Greenport, lives a man who was once with my dear father, and cheated him most outrageously."

"In what way?"

"As young men they were partners; then they sold out, and Solomon ran off with my father's share of the proceeds, and entered into business here. Father never would prosecute him. I found out his first name, and if I meet Mr. Solomon I am going to try to obtain my father's money from him."

"Why didn't you get his last name?"

"Father wouldn't tell me what it was. He is too good for this world. I am not such a saint," and she nodded roguishly at the young man.

"Well, I would canonize you," he said slowly, "but I guess Mr. Solomon would not after he meets you."

"Thank you for your good opinion. Now, if you really wish to be friendly and kind, get me a list of the business men whose first names are Solomon. And another thing I want to find out. I hear a lot of talk among poor people. There's some mystery about that poor child we rescued the other night. It
The Girl from Vermont

is reported that he is related to some man belonging to one of the first families in Greenport, and if the man’s relatives knew about it, they would take the child and have the miserable Drake properly punished.”

“So you want me to find out who owns the baby?”

“Yes, sir; please. I hear you have a little spare time on your hands,” she added mischievously.

He flushed warmly. “I see some one has been prejudicing you against me,” he said bitterly.

“Not at all; not at all,” she replied. “You can make your own reputation with me. There’s nothing fixed in this world. It’s never safe to judge a man or woman till after they’re dead. Some of us pull up at the end of the journey.”

“You’re a queer girl,” muttered Victor. Then he said aloud, “By the way, the Children’s Aid Society is going to prosecute Drake. The case comes on in a day or two. Will you attend?”

“I have to; I may be a witness.”

“I will see you there, then. Good-bye.” And regretfully backing out he ran into Mrs. Skellish.

“Say, sir, that’s a fine young lady,” remarked the caretaker, her lean face positively beaming with admiration.

Victor assented to this.

“An’ she ain’t poor,” continued Mrs. Skellish. “Her clothes are as fine as fine, an’ she has a fresh white frock every day.”
The Vermont Hayseed Dance

"Has she?"

"An' her stockings! She had her slipper off the other day. Such a teeny foot, an' such beautiful openwork, an' clocks! Looked handmade, they did."

"Did they?" observed Victor with interest.

"Now, there's some folks in the world as always gets on," remarked Mrs. Skellish. "I never see how they does it. They wants a thing, an' they asks for it. Now, I never can. I always has to get some one to ask for me. I can't help it. It's my way."

"What do you want?" asked Victor abruptly.

"Well, sir, I was just a-wonderin' is it possible, seein' that she has a fresh one every day, that that young girl from Vermont can wear out all them frocks?"

Victor suppressed a laugh. "You want me to ask Miss Green for some of her old clothes for you?"

"Well, sir, I wouldn't go for to say I don't."

He put his hand in his pocket. "Here is two dollars. Take them and buy something for yourself, and take good care of Miss Green."

The woman's kind though covetous eyes sparkled. "Oh, sir, you be a gentleman! but for the land's sake don't tell the girl from Vermont you give me this."

"Of course not; but why shouldn't I?"

"She'd kill me. She says she will not popperize."

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The Girl from Vermont

She won't give one cent away. If a child has holes in its shoes, she goes to the boss of the child's father. 'Look here,' she says, 'you ain't payin' that man enough wages. His child's feet is on the ground. Please give him more.'

"Then, if she won't give you money, she won't give you old clothes."

"But she might if you asked her, sir," she said with a ridiculously suggestive grin.

Victor shook his head, burst out laughing, and ran down the steps into the yard.
CHAPTER V

A MODEL FATHER

MR. DENNER, senior, sat in his study, writing at his big office desk. It was a warm afternoon, and after a time he swung his chair around and looked out at the open window.

The air was delightful; a faint breeze stirred the lace curtains. Between their folds he could see the glossy heads of flowering shrubs. Faint, delicious odors from flower-beds floated into the room; apparently his lines had fallen in pleasant places; and yet the expression of his face was dubious.

A sudden rattling of the doorhandle made him recall his wandering thoughts.

He passed his hand over his face, then said, "Victor, my boy, is it you? Come in."

Victor entered—his only son, his heir, and the hope of his house. His wife and two children had been taken from him. He had only this one son left, and his face softened as he turned toward him.

"What new sun has arisen on your horizon, Victor?" he said good-naturedly; "you are positively beaming."

"No sun, but a moon, father!" exclaimed Victor; and going straight to the mantelpiece he surveyed himself in the mirror. "Why, I'm beginning to
The Girl from Vermont

look like you, father," he said with boyish pride. "My prayer is answered. By and by I shall be the same prosperous, fine-looking man that my father is."

"How much is that lump of taffy to cost me?" inquired Mr. Denner amiably.

"Nothing," replied Victor enthusiastically. "I am sorry, father, that I have been such a care to you. Upon my word," and he hung his head, "it seems as if during the last few days I have had a pair of spectacles given to me, which enables me to see things in their true aspect."

"A gift from some girl, I suppose," said his father resignedly. "You are in love again. I can tell by your actions—and your appetite."

Victor laughed again, and threw up his head with a fine, manly gesture. "Yes, father, I have met the one and only at last."

"Where's the other one," inquired Mr. Denner mischievously, "and the one before that, and her predecessor?"

"Father, those were only shadows. I have the substance this time. This one inspires, the others only animated me. I'm going to work now. Will you give me another trial in the office?"

"I will see. Report to-morrow morning, and I may perhaps find something for you."

"And father, I want to thank you for your forbearance with me. You have been just right—neither too severe nor too lenient."
A Model Father

"I have waited a long time for this," said Mr. Denner patiently. "The universal dissatisfaction of children with parents is one of the peculiar problems of the day."

"I was bound to come around in time," said Victor; "I come of good stock. I am so proud of my un tarnished name. We haven't a rogue in the family, have we, father?"

"Well, your great-grandfather was no saint."

"That was pretty far back. I mean we have no present-day rogues. You, at any rate, are celebrated for your honor and rectitude. There is not a man in the whole city who stands as high as you do."

A slight flush overspread Mr. Denner's face, and he said abruptly, "Stop that, son."

"I can't stop, father; it makes me feel good all over to hear your praises sung. If I can only half fill your shoes!"

"Wait till I am done wearing them."

"I mean an old pair, of course. Father, I want you to see this girl. I suppose you would not call on her?"

Mr. Denner tried not to laugh, but finally had to give way. "Victor," he said at last, raising his eyes, "if I spent my time running after all your discoveries, who would do my business?"

Victor's face fell. "I'll get Aunt Carrie to make a party for her, and you will come. What time would suit you?"
The Girl from Vermont

Mr. Denner took out an engagement book. "One month from to-day."

"Father," said Victor seriously, "this is the girl I want to marry."

Mr. Denner shook his head slowly from side to side. "I don't want to see you embrace Mormonism, Victor, but you will have to do it, unless you give up some of your divinities."

Victor excitedly paced the floor. "I assure you, sir, that the others are all given up. This one reigns alone. Of course I have said nothing of marriage. I would not until I had mentioned the subject to you. But——" and he paused in his rapid walk and surveyed his father with some anxiety. "I am sure you will be sensible as to worldly position and wealth. You would not have me marry money, sir?"

"Would you marry a pauper?"

"Yes, sir; if I loved her."

"Well, love her and marry her." I have seen so many prospective daughters-in-law dancing before my eyes, that I have given up all but the two requisites we ask for in servants. If she is clean and honest, she will suit me."

Victor sprang toward him, and wrung his hand. "This girl will suit you, then. She is as poor as a church mouse, but brimful of character."

"Plain character, or complicated?"

"Complicated, dad. She has gone crazy over economic questions. She thinks that various re-
A Model Father

forms must be brought about, or destruction will come upon this nation. She says we are on the one hand too rich, too prosperous, too self-satisfied; on the other, we are too poor, too degraded, too bitter—that there is a frightful gulf between rich and poor. Unless we have a reformation, there will be a revolution. Capital and labor are at war instead of uniting and bringing about the universal brotherhood of man. A change must come or there will be anarchy."

"Why, Victor, that kind of a girl will drag you to the north pole with her opinions. She will run the streets, and let the baby cry, and the dinner burn. You are not a multi-millionaire. When you marry, you will be a poor young man on a salary."

Victor checked the flow of his eloquence. "I am prejudicing you against her by my talk. Just wait till you see my girl from Vermont."

"From where?"

"From Vermont, sir—St. Peters."

Mr. Denner's gaze fell on a white rose that a sudden movement of his hand had wrenched from the lapel of his coat, and seizing it, he slowly picked it to pieces.

Victor watched the white rose leaves falling on the carpet. "Yes, sir; she is from Vermont, and she is just as fresh and breezy as her native State."

"What is her name?"

"Green—Patty Green. Her whole name is Patricia Helen Mary Green."
The Girl from Vermont

There was another long pause, then Mr. Denner asked, “What is she doing here?”

“Teaching in a newfangled school—vacation school they call it, because it keeps the children off the streets. Miss Patty takes the children on picnics sometimes.”

“How long is she going to stay?”

“All summer. She says if children are allowed to play in the streets, their first lesson is one of disobedience to municipal law. The street is for grown people. The child cannot play games, cannot coast, nor skate, nor slide in winter. The storekeepers hate him, the policeman drives him on, and he takes refuge in holes and corners where vicious idling goes on.”

“How old is she?”

“I don’t know; she looks about eighteen or nineteen.”

“And you are twenty-one.”

“Yes, sir. By the way, do you happen to be able to tell me of any business man here whose first name is Solomon?”

Mr. Denner started slightly, and the ruined rose fell to the floor.

“What do you mean by that inane question?” he asked, after a long pause.

“Miss Patty is looking for a man who once cheated her father. His first name is Solomon. That is all she knows about him.”

“What does she want of him?”
A Model Father

"She says she is going to make him give back the money he stole from her father."

"Is she suffering for money?"

"No, sir; the ladies who brought her here give her a salary. Her father may be poor. I don't know about that—I didn't like to ask her."

"Why doesn't she let her father collect his own debts?"

"She says he has a weakness for the delinquent Solomon. He once liked him; and even though he betrayed his confidence, Mr. Green can never seem to lose his regard for him."

Mr. Denner's face softened. "A pity that there weren't more persons like that in the world."

"You too are very merciful, father," said Victor admiringly. "But the general run of men are not like you. If they found that Solomon fellow out here, they'd scorch him, and every one belonging to him. You don't know any Solomons, I suppose?"

"There is Solomon Jarvis, the old-clothes man," said Mr. Denner slowly.

Victor laughed. "Oh, rule him out! Well, father, to come back to the girl. After you meet her, if you like her—and you are dead sure to do so—I will ask her to marry me."

"Ask her anyway," said his father with a faint show of irritability. "You are no fool, and if she is what you say she is, she will make you a good wife."

Victor fell into incredulous delight.
The Girl from Vermont

"Then you give up your opposition to her radical opinions?"

"Bless the boy," said his father sharply, "you're going to marry her. I am not. If you can put up with her, I can—and I've heard of David Green of St. Peters. He is an honest man, and if she is his daughter, she comes of good stock."

"I'll go this very hour," exclaimed Victor. "Thank you, father, a million times," and he hurried from the room.

Left alone, Mr. Denner fixed his eyes on a spot in the carpet, and stared at it uninterruptedly for some time. Then, with a heavy sigh, he got up and walked to and fro, taking the same path that his son's happy feet had taken a few minutes before.

Finally he turned to his desk, and unlocking a drawer, took from it a faded photograph of a smiling young man, strangely like Victor. Turning it over, he read the inscription on the back, "Carrie, from her admiring and worshipful Solomon."

Mr. Denner frowned. "I have been gathering Solomon relics for some time, and destroying them," he said. "I had better dispose of this too," and he was just about to tear it in pieces, when a knock was heard at the door. Hastily thrusting the photograph back into the drawer and locking it, he said, "Come in."
CHAPTER VI

A FANCIED DISCOVERY

A MAID opened the door. "There's a lady to see you, sir; on business."

"Did you tell her to go to my office to-morrow?"

"Yes, sir; but she won't go; she's standin' here, listenin'."

"Well, let her in," said Mr. Denner grimly. "I'll soon get rid of her," he added under his breath.

He politely got up as his caller entered. She was a very pretty, curly-haired girl in a white gown, and her smile would have disarmed a sterner man than Mr. Denner.

"I'm very sorry to disturb you," she said sweetly, "but I just had to come here. I never visit men in their business offices if I can help it. You meet men in their own houses, and they are so charming; but once call on them in business hours, and they look as if they would eat you up."

Mr. Denner smiled faintly. This stranger could not pull the wool over his eyes. Then he said curtly, "May I ask who you are?"

"Well, most people call me the girl from Vermont," she replied, with a shy glance from under her dark lashes. "I don't know why they don't say Miss Green! They never do: if they don't say the
The Girl From Vermont

girl from Vermont they call me Miss Patty, which is quite incorrect, for I am an only daughter—not a second one.”

Her host got up abruptly, and went to the window. “Excuse me,” he said, “there is an abominable draft here.”

The girl stared slightly as he drew the window down with some violence, then she went on: “I will state my business just as briefly as possible, for I know the time of business men is precious. You may or may not know that certain ladies of this town made up their minds that for this summer, at least, one of the schoolhouses should be kept open for the children belonging to it. They had to hire a caretaker and a teacher—that is myself—and they had to equip a playground.”

Mr. Denner, who was staring fixedly at her, asked harshly, “What have the women to do with the schoolhouses; why don’t they go to the schoolboard?”

“Ah, that is a very pertinent question; but I assure you, my dear sir, that schoolboards and city councils don’t do things until you just make them do them. This supervised playground movement is a new thing. You know we have had juvenile courts. They are good, but the playgrounds are to keep the children out of the courts, and in nearly every instance they have to be started by private charity.”

“We pay a heavy school tax,” interrupted Mr. Denner.
... Playgrounds are to keep the child...
A Fancied Discovery

"Certainly you do; and it is an outrageous thing that your women citizens should have to travel about this city begging for what is the right of the city children. However, private charity, as I said, has to start these things; and then, when they are seen to be indispensable, the city takes them over. Now, how much are you going to give us?"

Mr. Denner stared gloomily at her; but Miss Patty was not discouraged. "I hear that you are a very generous man," she said encouragingly. "Your son also is generous."

"Yes, with his father's money."

"Don't be anxious about him," said the girl sweetly. "You will make a fine man of him yet."

"Are you disposed to take a hand in his reformation?" asked the merchant keenly.

"No, sir; I am not," she said promptly.

His face fell; indeed, he showed symptoms of such a strong disapproval that Miss Patty gazed at him in wonder.

"He—he has just gone to ask you to marry him," said Mr. Denner in a husky voice.

"Yes, yes, I know," she said with an irrepressible laugh. "I saw it in his eye, and I dodged him by going into a grocery until he got by. Never mind, there are plenty of nice girls in Greenport."

Mr. Denner got up and went to the mantelpiece, where he rested his head on his hand. "He has been an affectionate son to me," he said in a low voice, "and he has no mother. I should like to
have a good woman in the house again—we are lonely."

To Miss Patty's surprise she found her eyes full of tears.

"O sir," she said, springing up and running to him—"you touch my heart, and I never saw you before. I wish I could love your boy, but you see I have a dear father. I am the light of his eyes, and he would not have me make a loveless marriage."

"Young girl," said Mr. Denner sharply, "you could make yourself like any one you chose."

Miss Patty thought that sentence over a few instants, then she said, "I believe in the rights of all men, and women, and children. I don't want to marry your son, and I am not going to do so."

Mr. Denner went back to his desk, and seating himself said coldly, "Will you kindly finish telling me what is your errand here?"

"I want a thousand dollars," she said, also re-seating herself in the chair to which Mr. Denner waved her.

Her tone was as matter of fact as if she had asked him for a blank sheet of paper, and Mr. Denner, surveying her dimpled, girlish face said grimly, "Indeed!"

"Yes, sir; you will give one thousand dollars, and I will give another; then we can equip another playground."

"I dislike unseemly jesting," said the merchant sternly.
A Fancied Discovery

"So do I—most decidedly, especially when I am talking business; but I assure you, I allowed myself three thousand dollars for my summer expenses, and I can easily spare one."

Mr. Denner stared at her from the top of her curly head to the tips of her dainty shoes. "How can a poor school-teacher like you command three thousand dollars?"

"Now you are illogical," she said; and a charming dimple appeared in one of her pink cheeks. "A school-teacher, yes—but why poor?"

Mr. Denner made a gesture of helpless amazement.

"Of course, school-teachers are usually poor," she went on, "but I happened to be born in St. Peter's, which is noted as the center of the great butter and cheese business of my county. My father has made a large fortune. They call him 'King Butter and Eggs.' Naturally he gives his only child a generous allowance."

"But I thought——" began Mr. Denner impulsively; then he stopped.

"Oh!" she said shrewdly, "your son has been telling you of my Solomon quest. I don't want to find that miserable robber who defrauded my father just for the sake of the money."

"What do you want to find him for?"

"Why, because it is right that he should make restitution of stolen gains. That my father is a wealthy man doesn't matter. Rich people have
The Girl from Vermont

rights as well as poor ones. It's a great mistake to hound a man because he is rich, and to glorify a man because he happens to be poor."

"You're right there," said Mr. Denner thoughtfully, and taking his handkerchief from his pocket, he passed it over his heated brow. There was something very agitating about this girl.

"Hadn't you better open the window?" she asked kindly.

"I believe I will," he muttered, and he got up.

"I don't know what's the matter with me," she said innocently; "I seem to agitate persons when I talk with them. I'm sure I don't mean to. I guess it must be my discomposing, ever-present inner consciousness of the misery of our little white slaves."

Mr. Denner gave her a peculiar glance as he sat down, which made her exclaim, "You don't understand, sir; I will explain. When I was a little girl, I used to read 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' and cry over it. Then, when I grew up, I begged my father to take me for a trip to the South. Mr. Denner, there were no black slaves there; but I found plenty of little white ones."

"White slaves!" repeated the merchant wonderingly. "What do you mean?"

"Those children," she said; "those little girls and boys who work, not in the cotton fields as the Negroes used to do, but in the stifling cotton mills."
A Fancied Discovery

"Ah! child slavery. Alas! young lady, we have that in New England."

"Yes," said Miss Patty passionately. "New England learned it from Old England, and the South has learned it from New England, along with other lessons in cotton milling. Mr. Denner, they have spinning-frames built for children; there are adjustable legs for what they call 'small help.'"

"Shocking!" said the man with real feeling.

"India is too uncivilized to employ child labor," said Miss Patty vehemently; "spinning frames are high enough there for adult workers only."

"Good for India!"

"After I first saw them, I could not sleep at night," continued Miss Patty. "I kept asking my father, 'Why is it, that I, a big girl, can play all day long in the hotel garden, while little tots of six, eight, and ten are tottering off to the factories to work?'

"He used to sigh and tell me that it was the cursed national greed for money. He made a regular investigation, and found very young children employed in the tobacco factories of Virginia and North Carolina."

"Shame to Virginia and North Carolina," said Mr. Denner in his deep voice.

"Also in the woolen mills of Kentucky and Tennessee, in the coal mines in West Virginia and Alabama; and they were mostly American children, not foreigners. Think of their delicate little lungs
The Girl from Vermont

exposed to the flying dust and lint. So many had coughs and colds, I thought I’d go crazy. I pleaded with my father to do something; but he is a Northerner; he had no influence down South. Did you speak, sir?"

“No, no,” said Mr. Denner hastily.

“My father is so kind, so wise,” said the girl intensely. “He said, ‘Patty, don’t weaken yourself by excess of pity. Go on with your studies, and when you are older, devote yourself to the cause of children—all over America they are suffering. Ally yourself with older, wiser people; work cautiously but steadily, and before you die you may see your little white slaves set free.’”

“Your father is a good man,” burst from Mr. Denner involuntarily.

“He is a saint!” exclaimed the girl, and tears filled her eyes as she stretched her slim hands to the ceiling, as if to invoke a blessing on the absent parent. “Ah! those good fathers, how they watch over their children. I am dreadfully sorry, sir, that I cannot oblige you by marrying your son,” and she disconsolately dabbed her eyes with a tiny handkerchief. “You are another good father, I see.”

Mr. Denner looked thoughtful. “Victor is a good boy,” he said. “He has no vices. He has gone crazy over athletics, and has been a little idle between times, but at heart he is all right. He will settle down now.”

“Now, sir, I must go,” said Miss Patty, getting
A Fancied Discovery

up—"just as soon as you write me that check. Don't think I was boasting when I said I would give an equal amount; I just wanted to spur you on."

"Victor imagines that you are poor."

"Yes, the dear fellow has been sending me exquisite flowers, and candy, and books, because he thinks I never get such things. Isn't it sweet in him? The ladies of the Children's Aid Society too imagine that I am poor. I could not help smiling when they offered me two hundred dollars for seven weeks' work. That won't much more than pay my laundry bill."

"So you have expensive tastes."

"In some ways, sir. That is my besetting sin. I love soft, fine clothes and plenty of them, and lots of handwork on them. However, I try to reconcile myself to my conscience by getting poor girls to do my sewing; then my money helps them."

"Do you object to having it known that you have money?"

"Not a bit—only I don't advertise it. I haven't any secrets, sir; and I hate to deceive people, or to have them deceive me. Now, will you give me that check?"

Mr. Denner turned round to his desk and passively did what he would have scorned to do an hour previous to this, namely, wrote his check for a large amount payable to a perfect stranger.

As he wrote, he spoke to her without lifting his
head. "Your search for this missing man interests me; had you better not let me look for—for—"

"Solomon Rascal," said Miss Patty promptly.

Mr. Denner started and looked at her over his shoulder. "I thought you did not know his last name."

"I know some of them. Mother and I call him Solomon Rascal, or Solomon Beast, or Solomon Villain, and sometimes, I blush to say, Solomon Devil."

Mr. Denner was silent for some time; then, as the girl got up and stretched out her hand for the check, he put his clenched fist on it. "Whatever you choose to call him, looking him up is no task for a girl. You let me take charge of the case for you."

"Thank you, sir; but I have already put the affair into the hands of a first-class lawyer here, 'Old Secret and Confidential,' I believe is his nickname."

"Not Standish!" exclaimed Mr. Denner aghast.

"Yes, sir. Why, what is there to be disturbed about? I know quite a lot about business. Father trained me."

Mr. Denner's face was furiously red, and when Miss Patty's pink fingers again pleaded for the check, he said roughly, "I don't believe I shall give you this—you are a rash, irresponsible girl."

"I'm afraid I am," she said meekly, "but I'm trying to improve. Are you going to give me that check, sir? You'll never miss it, and the children
A Fancied Discovery

at the east end are just suffering for it. Poor little creatures; they play in the gutters, and sit on the doorsteps, and the shady schoolyards are shut up."

Mr. Denner was trying hard to control himself, but he was very angry. "I don't think I can give it to you."

Miss Patty's quick temper rose like a flash. Raising herself on her tiptoe to make herself seem taller, she exclaimed, "If you don't give me that check you will be just like old Solomon Thief. You intended to give it to me; you wrote the amount for me, and now you withhold it just because I am not willing to put my private affairs into the hands of a man I never saw before—a totally unauthorized person. If you don't give me that check, you lose my good opinion forever."

Mr. Denner, in a rage, sprang up and stood over her: "Here, take it, you provoking girl," he said, "and leave my house. I forbid you to marry my son."

"And I forbid you to marry my grandmother," she said teasingly. "She's the sweetest old lady I ever saw, and she lives up among our noble mountain scenery in Vermont, and she wants to marry you just about as much as I want to marry that boy of yours. Good afternoon, sir." And she tried to stalk majestically from the room, but failed, being petite and birdlike, and also in a rising state of anger that made her tremble and look even smaller than she was.
The Girl from Vermont

Left alone, Mr. Denner sank into his chair, wheeled round to his desk, and let his head sink on his folded arms.

"Standish, of all men!" he groaned, "that highly trained ferret. He will reveal the whole miserable past that I have been so anxious to conceal. Have I not done right to cover up criminal acts in the interest of public morals, and of decency? I should have paid Green, but I only partly understood the matter, and I hated to open up an old sore. O Lord! what have I done that I should be so persecuted?"

There was silence for some time; then he groaned again. "And to betray so much emotion before that sharp-eyed girl. If she should tell Standish——"

His suffering was so keen, his absorption so great, he did not hear the door that had been left ajar softly pushed open. Miss Patty, in her anxiety to get the check that she still held clutched in her hand, had let her tiny silk purse slip to the floor. She was just about to swoop noiselessly down upon it, when she caught sight of Mr. Denner.

She heard his groans, and she stood stock still, her face a prey to an extraordinary play of feeling. What did this mean? What had she done to throw this reserved, middle-aged man into such a paroxysm of emotion?

The solution came to her like a flash. She made a dumb show of expressing intense pity, murmured with uplifted eyes "At last, I believe, I have found
A Fancied Discovery

Solomon, and without making an effort to regain her purse, she closed the door with great gentleness and left the house.

The stricken man sat motionless for a long time—until his telephone bell rang. He impatiently pushed its stand from him. It still rang, and he got up and drearily paced the length of the handsome room. Presently the weary telephone ceased its ringing, and the disturbed man was left in peace. It was not for long, however; the bell rang again, and with an impatient gesture he took up the receiver.

"Miss Green!" he ejaculated, "you want to speak to me? What—what is that you say? You have seen Standish!"

His face was a study in emotions. "Yes, I understand. I will repeat as you wish. You went to Standish from this house. You are dissatisfied—No, no—what's that? Oh! you are not dissatisfied with the lack of progress he has made; but you have suddenly decided to put the case in my hands. I bow to your decision. I respect your trust in me. Oh, you won't come here again? Miss Green, we will call that a joke. I was disturbed; I am troubled with severe headaches, and the heat sometimes overcomes me. I did not mean to forbid you the house. Well, I will call on you in your schoolroom. Yes, yes. Thank you," and hanging up the receiver on its hook he sprang to his feet, muttering as he did so a fervent "Thank God!"
CHAPTER VII

THE MAJESTY OF THE LAW

MISS PATTY had been shivering with a kind of pleasant anticipation, but now her face fell as she looked disconsolately about her. She was sitting in the police court beside Victor Denner, and with a deeply disappointed air, she murmured under her breath, "Is this the majesty of the law?"

Victor nodded. "I told you that you would be disillusioned."

"I never was in any kind of a court before," she murmured. "I thought it would be grand and majestic, and clean, at least. Why, this place is filthy. I scarcely dare lean back on this bench," and she gathered her white gown about her.

Victor looked around him. The presiding justice, in his big chair, seemed bored and impatient. Some of the witnesses were flippant. At the back of the room was a crowd of vicious-looking young men, who should have been at work.

Near Miss Patty sat Mrs. Granger, and a number of well-dressed women, who were interested in the welfare of children.

While Miss Patty was disconsolately gazing at her surroundings, the lawyer for the defense rose suddenly. "Your honor," he said to the judge, "I
The Majesty of the Law

protest against the presence of so many strangers in the courtroom," and he stared at Mrs. Granger and her friends.

"Why, why," said the judge irritably, "what do you mean?"

"I mean, your Honor, that it may cause prejudice to arise against the prisoner," and he glanced at the forbidding-looking Drake, who sat biting one of his thumbs.

"That impertinent young lawyer," whispered Miss Patty indignantly. "Does he want to drive all those lovely, kind women out of this courtroom?"

"Yes," said Victor in the same tone, "and you among them."

"Isn't it dreadful to be suspected without a chance to defend yourself," said Miss Patty, in a despairing whisper. "How I want to speak."

"Restrain yourself," said Victor, "the law is beautifully impartial. It may speak for you. The prosecuting lawyer will be your mouthpiece."

"And isn't it a good thing that the law is impartial," said Miss Patty warmly. "Suppose public opinion only were the law. How many mistakes it would make."

"Yes, like Judge Lynch," said Victor disdainfully.

"Sitting here," said Miss Patty, "I feel that it is good for the accused, however bad, to have an advocate."
"Hush," said Victor, for true to his surmise, the young lawyer he had referred to had sprung to his feet, and was ejaculating, "Your Honor, I object. I suppose my learned friend refers to the presence of a number of ladies here. I see among them members of some of our most highly respected families—women whose names are well known in connection with various philanthropic movements. If my learned friend takes the ground that the accused is a long-suffering, persecuted man, why not conclude that these ladies are here in his interest, rather than in that of a wicked, malicious child of four years of age?"

The judge sat back in his chair, twisting his eyeglasses. "There is no jury here to be influenced," he said. "It is immaterial to me who attends the sittings of this court. I only order the court cleared in case of disorder, or indecent exposures in connection with a case. There is nothing of the sort evident yet."

"Serves that lawyer right," murmured Miss Patty, "why didn’t he complain about those tough-looking men at the back of the room? He merely wants turn out the decent people. Now, I believe respectable persons ought to come oftener to the police courts; then they would be kept cleaner in every respect. You ought to watch your judiciary, anyway. I have read about that. Lawyers and judges are getting all tangled up in a thicket of technicalities in America. We are losing sight of
The Majesty of the Law

the fact that the end in view ought to be simple justice."

"Listen," said Victor. "Here is the physician who examined the Drake child the morning after we took him away."

Miss Patty gazed breathlessly at the middle-aged man who was walking toward the witness stand. "How can he kiss that Bible. How dreadful to have it in such an unclean state. Why not bring a new one?"

"Hush," said Victor. "Listen to the doctor."
CHAPTER VIII

STILL IN THE COURTROOM

THE medical man, after giving his name and address, said: "Yes, I examined the child after he was taken from the Drakes. His shoulders, arms, and chest had marks of bruises. On his left arm was evidence of a recent fracture of both bones. He had a bruise over his left eye, and bruises on his throat with appearances of scratches, as if done with the fingers. The outer skin was broken on his throat. There was a cut on one shoulder, and both shoulders were swollen from injuries. The throat looked as if the child had been throttled."

"Faugh!" exclaimed Miss Patty; "it makes me sick—the little martyr."

"Hush," said Victor again; "listen to what he is saying."

"In my opinion," continued the medical man, "the bruises resulted from rough handling on the part of somebody. The child's injuries might have resulted from a series of falls downstairs, but in that case he would have bruises below his hips."

Miss Patty looked over to the bench where the Drakes sat. Their faces were sneering. This evidence would not convict them.

A neighbor was next called—a timid, little wo-
man, whose terror of the police court had almost reduced her to a state of idiocy.

“She’s telling a pretty straight story,” said Victor in Miss Patty’s ear, “but wait till it comes to the cross-examination.”

The lawyer for the defense, who was a youthful, red-bearded, ponderous-looking man, distorted his naturally fine features, and hurled a question at the shrinking little woman. “How far do you live from the Drakes’ house?”

“Do you mean in yards, sir, or feet?”
“Neither; give the answer in your own way.”
“How far can you throw a stone?”
“Pretty far, sir; but I can’t hit anything. Last week two dogs were fightin’ in front of my house, an’ I couldn’t hit ’em with one stone nor yet another, till I took a whole handful.”

The red-bearded man hurled another question at her. “When did you first hear this child crying in the Drakes’ house?”

“I jist don’t remember, sir; but I said to my husband, said I, ‘I can’t stand the awful thumps and beatin’s in that house, an’ the child’s screams makes me sick—’”

“Never mind what you thought; when did you first hear him scream—that is, how long ago?”
“I don’t know, sir; I guess it was a month; or, maybe six weeks.”
“Was it a month?”
The Girl from Vermont

“Yes, sir.”
“You just said it was two weeks ago.”
“Did I, sir?—well, I haven’t a good memory.”
“Woman!” he roared, “you are on oath; you must speak the truth.”
“I’m tryin’ to, sir,” she faltered.
“Speak up, then!” he shouted. “I can’t hear. You don’t look delicate. Let your voice come out.”

The lawyer for the prosecution rose quickly.
“Your Honor, I protest. My learned friend is bulldozing my witness.”
“Yes, sir,” said the woman, turning round to the judge with tears in her eyes. “When he do screw up his face, an’ lift the upper lip of him, an’ lean forard hard on his paws, he do look like a dog, an’ then when he yells, it kind o’ confuses me, ’cause it seems like our Towzer barkin’ at a tramp comin’ in.”

A suppressed laugh went round the courtroom, and the discomfited young lawyer sat down.
“Good for him,” murmured Miss Patty, “he brought it on himself.”
“By George! I pity Mrs. Leslie,” said Victor. “He will lay that up for her. She is the next witness.”

As in the former case, the plain, straight giving of testimony was successfully gotten through with. Mrs. Leslie related that complaints had reached the Children’s Aid Society from neighbors of the Drakes. The little child stuttered, and Mr. Drake had been
still in the courtroom

seen to take it by the throat and shake it. He had also beaten it severely and thumped its head against the wall, until at last the women in the neighborhood had told their husbands that they must interfere.

In the cross-examination, the lawyer for the defense, whose name was Dockrill, lifted his upper lip ominously, and said: "You assert that the bruises on the throat were caused by throttling. Are you prepared to say when you see a bruise that you know what caused it?"

Mrs. Leslie was an old hand at police-court work, and paused for an instant before she said, "I think I am. I have had a large experience with children."

Victor sighed. "She's made a mistake there—even the doctor would not affirm that."

"Then you are prepared to swear that the marks on the child's throat were caused by the clutch of human fingers?"

"Yes; I am."

He was relentlessly proceeding to make her contradict herself, when his evil genius prompted him to hold up one of his own hands. "If you are omniscient, as you claim to be, tell me what caused the bruise here, on the back of my hand."

"Mrs. Leslie surveyed him with a somewhat weary air. "Yes, I will tell you."

"May I ask how you know?"

"By direct evidence. I saw you help to make it. Hold up your other hand, please."

The surprised man lifted his other hand. "Your
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bruises,” continued Mrs. Leslie, “came from your habit of pressing your knuckles on the desk, and leaning heavily forward on your hands to stare at witnesses. There is a ridge on the desk, and it discolors your flesh.”

Mr. Dockrill looked ruefully at his hands, stared angrily about him as a suppressed titter ran through the courtroom, then once more sat down.

“Joy!” exclaimed Miss Patty. “I don’t like that man. If I were a witness, I should turn to the judge and say, ‘Please, your Honor, I am here to tell the truth; you want me to tell it, then why do you allow that man to roar at me, and distract my thoughts? It is not compatible with the majesty of the law.’”

“Here comes Mrs. Drake,” said Victor. “Now you’ll hear some tall lying.”

“Oh!” gasped Miss Patty when the gaily dressed woman reeled off a flippant but decided string of answers.

“Yes, I adopted the child. I never struck him, except just to pat his hand when he stuttered. I never hit him nor did he,” and she nodded emphatically toward her husband. “We never left him alone in the house, except that one night when that woman came,” and she glared at Mrs. Leslie. “He got his bruises by fallin’ downstairs, an’ runnin’ up ag’in the stove, an’ stickin’ his arm through the fence after a chicken. No, we never insured his life.”
Still in the Courtroom

"What beautiful lies!" exclaimed Victor, and he stretched out his hand for some photographs that were being passed round the courtroom. They were of the child, and showed the bruised state of his body at the time he was taken from the Drakes. "That child's face is familiar," said Victor musingly. "Where have I seen someone that looks like him?"
MISS PATTY was speechless and indignant. Tears stood in her eyes. She kept the photographs until she had regained composure. Then she said, "That child looks like you, Mr. Victor—see, his forehead is shaped like yours, and his nose too, for that matter."

"Why, so he does," said the young man lightly. "I'll ask dad to adopt him," and he passed the pictures on to Mrs. Granger and her friends.

Mrs. Drake covered herself with glory as far as her side was concerned. The prosecuting lawyer could not shake her by the most rigid cross-examination. She told her story well, and stuck to it.

"How perfectly shocking! how incredible!" murmured Miss Patty. "Why, I have talked to this woman's neighbors. I do pride myself on being impartial, and I was determined not to be swayed by what Mrs. Leslie, or Mrs. Granger, or any one thought about it. The neighbors all say that she and her husband are rough, cruel people; they have seen them both strike the child and throw him down; but the woman who saw the worst things cannot be pursuaded to come to court."

"Decent people hate law courts," remarked Vic-
"It's mostly liars that don't mind coming. It's a pity they can't catch the fellow that insured the child's life. If our side could have subpoenaed him we would have had a clear case."

"Mrs. Leslie says he is hiding," murmured Miss Patty. "Oh, that Mrs. Drake—what stories she is telling. Why, I saw one woman to whom she said, 'Archie has an awful whack under the chin that Simon gave him. I wish Simon hadn't such a temper'—and now she vows that this whack was accidental."

"Could you expect a woman like that to have any comprehension of the sacredness of an oath?" remarked Victor contemptuously. "I say, the air here is abominable. Does it not overcome you?"

"No," said Miss Patty, shaking her head. "I am so angry that I could breathe the air of the Black Hole of Calcutta and not mind it. These people are going to get off, aren't they?"

"Yes," said Victor, stifling a yawn. "There isn't evidence enough to convict them."

"But the dreadful condition of the child's body," said Miss Patty. "Why, if that child had been found dead in the house, there is enough circumstantial evidence to hang the Drakes."

"But he isn't dead," said Victor. "Our beautiful administrators of law are kinder to a dead child than a living one. Listen—here is more majesty of the law."

The lawyers were quarreling verbally, as they
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had done at intervals through the case. One would speak, and the other would interrupt; then they would both appeal to the judge. Finally, Mr. Dockrill drew himself up and made an impassioned appeal for the accused.

"I believe a wholly baseless charge has been brought against the prisoner. Unfortunately, Mr. Drake, being a beardless man, kept a razor-strop in his house. From that it has been argued that he beat his adopted child. If wild charges like this are to prevail, it will no longer be safe for a man to shave, if there is a child in his house. He will have to wear a beard *nolens volens*. These hysterical neighboring women are perhaps not aware of the fact that childhood is noisy. I would not care to have them live near me, for the sounds proceeding from the nursery where my children spend their time would probably cause them to accuse me of being a would-be murderer. I believe that all children cry, and scream, and fall down, and get up again. In the present case, the bruises on the child's back and chest were caused first by his falls down a long flight of stairs—"

"The scamp," murmured Miss Patty, "he wants to convince us that this poor innocent was a second Marchioness."

"Who was that?" whispered Victor.

"Don't you remember the little poor girl in Dickens' 'Old Curiosity Shop,' whom the cruel Sally
Brass used to order to throw herself downstairs to wake the lodger?"

"Oh, yes."

"The broken arm," continued Mr. Dockrill, "came from his thrusting his arm through the fence after a chicken that he wished to catch."

"Is that man a father," murmured Miss Patty, "and does he not know that a child's arm is as flexible as a piece of gristle? He couldn't break it by thrusting it through a fence. He would bring it back the same way he put it in."

"And the bruises under the chin—the swollen throat," interrupted the judge, "how do you account for them?"

"Here's the cause," and fishing under the desk Mr. Dockrill pulled up a toy cart with a long handle to it.

"In falling downstairs," he continued, "the boy held this toy clutched in his arms. The tongue went under his throat and bruised it."


"Do you really suppose he thinks that wretched man is innocent?" said Miss Patty wistfully.

"Innocent? no! He knows a lot more about human nature than you do. He thinks Drake is a scoundrel; but he's got to defend him. He's paid to do it. Dockrill is a kind-hearted fellow—he's begging for his dinner, that's all."

"If I were a lawyer, I wouldn't take a case un-
The Girl from Vermont

less I thought it was a just one," said Miss Patty warmly.

"Then you'd have to revive a few George Wash-ingtons and Abraham Lincolns to associate with you. I tell you, our courts are in a pretty bad state just now."

"I know it," said the girl indignantly. "Is not that what I have been telling you? What is going on now? This court is terribly noisy."
CHAPTER X

THE SCRAP OF YELLOW PAPER

WELL,” said Victor, “our lawyer has made his little speech, and the judge says there is not enough evidence to convict the man——”

“Not evidence enough!” exclaimed the girl, “what about the evidence of the child’s back?”

“The judge says that Mr. Drake is honorably acquitted,” pursued Victor.

“Honorably acquitted,” repeated the girl. “Oh, why not leave off ‘honorably,’” and she stood up, her face aflame.

Over in the corner the Drakes and their friends were having a jubilation.

The elegant Mrs. Granger and the ladies with her looked indignant and disgusted.

Miss Patty ran toward her.

“Go home, my dear,” said the lady, “and read the court scene in ‘Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland.’ Ponder the words of wisdom of the king and the jury, and the testimony of the Hatter.”

The judge, unaware of the lady’s criticism, and with the air of a man in haste to leave an unpleasant task, was locking his desk, and immediately afterward left the room.

The clerk of the court, lawyers, witnesses, and a
The Girl from Vermont

policeman, all disappeared. Only Mrs. Granger and her friends, Mrs. Leslie, Miss Patty, and Victor were left.

Miss Patty, after a brief time of speechlessness, became fluent in her wrath. "Those dreadful, dreadful people. Do you mean to say they have got off."

"Yes, my dear," said Mrs. Leslie with a sigh, "and now they are threatening to bring an action for libel against the Children's Aid Society."

Miss Patty's face suddenly became white, and as if talking to herself, she said in a hushed, awed voice, "Is there a God of justice?"

No one spoke for an instant; then Mrs. Granger said quietly: "Sometimes I think there is not, then reason, instinct, will, all tell me that there is, and furthermore, that a day of reckoning will come."

Miss Patty flashed round upon her, "Will you, dare you, can you let them have that child back?"

"Not while I live. And the suspicious feature of the Drakes' case is that they are making no effort to obtain it. They make not the slightest pretense of affection for it. They have been tried and found guilty at the bar of public opinion, and they know it."

Miss Patty flew up to the judge's desk. "Ladies, sit down. You are the jury, and I am the judge; and I am going to give you a charge."

Mrs. Granger, with a smile at her companions, took her seat.
The Scrap of Yellow Paper

"Mr. Victor," continued Miss Patty, "you will play lawyer. Go to that desk. Now, ladies of the jury, I don't know much about law-courts, but I know two kinds of evidence—direct and circumstantial. In this case a number of reputable working people accuse one of their number of having cruelly treated a child. Screams of pain, accompanied by blows, have been heard from a certain house, and the child in it was in a chronic condition of bruises. An insurance agent was seen going to the house every week. Mrs. Drake told a neighbor that she had insured the child’s life. Finally, the little creature was found dead in his bed—"

"Oh! you are going to kill him, are you?" interrupted Victor.

"Yes, I am," said Miss Patty firmly. "It is necessary. Well, he was found dead in bed with these marks of violence on him. The Drakes deny that they ever ill-treated him. The neighbors are unanimous in saying that they did. I ask you to decide whether it is possible for a whole neighborhood of honest working people to enter into a conspiracy to defame two of their number? I ask you to settle this question, and also to consider carefully the circumstantial evidence before you. Do not bewilder yourselves with the niceties of the law. We are here to search for justice—to find it; we want the truth, and nothing but the truth. Our courts must be kept pure, or the whole nation will go to destruction. Therefore weigh with the utmost care
The Girl from Vermont

and impartiality the evidence both for and against the two young people charged with the crime of child-murder. Ladies of the jury, you need not retire. You may settle the question in your seats.”

Presently Mrs. Granger rose: “Your Honor, we find the man Drake and his wife guilty of causing the death of this little child.”

“Then may God have mercy on their souls,” said Miss Patty solemnly, and she made a gesture as if to dismiss them from the world. “But they are very young; I give them an indeterminate sentence in a reformatory; they will be visited by these good jurors, and they must not be allowed their liberty unless they show decided signs of repentance. The court is adjourned.”

Victor stepped up beside her, and catching sight of a scrap of paper on the floor on which he saw his own name, he stooped and picked it up.

“What is the matter?” exclaimed Miss Patty, when he suddenly grew pale and shrank back.

“Nothing—nothing,” he muttered.

“That means it is something dreadful,” she said persistently. “You look exactly as if you were going to faint. Do sit down. It was that scrap of yellow paper that upset you. I remember seeing a man slip it into the judge’s hand after he pronounced the acquittal. What is it?”

Victor’s pale face dropped near her own. “Miss Patty, you are a good girl, and I will tell you a part of this secret, if you will promise to keep it.”
The Scrap of Yellow Paper

"Certainly, I will," she said promptly.

"Well—this slip contains the name of the real father of the child. Some one has thought the judge ought to know."

"And who is he—this father?" inquired Miss Patty.

"I cannot tell you that."

"I believe it is some one nearly connected with you," murmured the girl, "otherwise you would not look so disturbed. However, I must say nothing of my suspicions," and with her face still more heavy, and with a frown between her pretty eyebrows, she stepped to Mrs. Granger's side, and said, "The law is vindicated—long live the law!"

Victor, left alone in the courtroom, paced thoughtfully up and down the floor; finally, he passed his hand over his face, as his father had the habit of doing when he was disturbed; then he hurried to the doorway, and muttered, "I will follow Mrs. Leslie and find out where the child is. I think she said it was in some babies' home."
MISS PATTY had been having a class in dress-making, and the schoolroom tables and benches were littered with work. With a beaming face she watched the cotton-factory girls rolling up aprons, blouses, and skirts, and putting them away.

"Never mind the threads on the floor, girls," she said, "Mrs. Skellish will sweep them up. She is somewhere about the building. I will find her when you go. Good-night, good-night," and she gaily nodded and shook hands right and left as the girls filed out.

After they had gone, she went about the deserted room, picking up stray thimbles and needles, and finally, going to one of the windows, leaned her curly head far out.

"What a glorious night! Who is that coming in—Mr. Victor?"

"No, said a deep voice, "not Victor, but Victor's father."

Miss Patty blushed rosy red. "Come in, come in, Mr. Denner, I will open the door."

Presently the merchant entered the room, hat in hand.

He threw a searching glance about him. "This is
Miss Patty’s Caller

a dingy place for a bird of such bright plumage as I see before me.”

“Well, if it is dingy for me,” she said gaily, giving a little twitch to her pink skirts, “when I can fly away at times, what must it be for those poor wingless birds, the cotton-factory girls, who have to stay always in this neighborhood?”

“They are used to it; they don’t mind it.”

“Oh!” she said with an impatient gesture, “that old fallacy. If you knew—if you only knew what ambitions, what cravings are shut up in the breasts of those girls; but you don’t, and never will probably. However, sit down, won’t you?”

Mr. Denner put his hat on a table and sat down on a chair, while she perched on a desk near him.

“I believe in assisting the poor,” said Mr. Denner calmly; “but I certainly don’t think that they have the tastes and aspirations of those born in a higher sphere of life.”

“Do you believe you are more precious in the sight of your Creator than old, ragged, dirty Jim, who tends the furnace fires in the cotton factory?”

Mr. Denner hesitated an instant; then he said, “No, I don’t believe I am, yet I fancy if Jim were to be put in my environment he would be considerably at a loss how to behave himself.”

“Your great-grandchildren will probably be tending furnaces,” she said thoughtfully. “The wheel of fortune turns with frightful rapidity in this country.”

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The Girl from Vermont

"Granted," he responded politely.

She gave him a shrewd glance. "I hear that you do a great deal of good with your money."

He smiled faintly, and made a deprecatory gesture.

"Have you, in giving this money, felt no sympathy for the poor and suffering?" she asked wistfully, "or do you give merely from motives of duty?"

"My dear young lady," said the man with a sudden burst of confidence, "I seem to feel with those whose minds and bodies are racked by want and suffering. I think often of the poor women sheltersing drunken husbands—of their bitter toil, the tears they shed, their apparently aimless lives. Somewhere, sometime, I think, a great mind, a sovereign will must take knowledge of these things."

The girl stepped from the desk, and stood before him. "Why, you think just as I do. God reigns, my dear friend. Some day he will rout the forces of evil. These sad hearts will be comforted—but oh, the misery in the world—it takes hold of me too," and she buried her face in her hands.

"Don't cry," said the man softly.

She flung up her head. "You say that just like Mr. Victor. No, I will not cry. I have not time, nor will I waste my strength. I want it all for fighting."

She pulled out a tiny handkerchief, sniffed several times, dabbed her eyes, then asked abruptly, "Well, about the Solomon affair? Have you found him?"
CHAPTER XII

MR. DENNER'S RESENTMENT

Yes, I have found Solomon," said Mr. Denner. Miss Patty flashed him a peculiar glance, shook her curls, looked thoughtful, then asked, "And does he repent?"

Mr. Denner paused for a time before answering her.

"Oh! say that he does—say that he does," she pleaded eloquently. "It isn't a matter of dollars and cents only; it's a matter of souls."

"I think perhaps he does," said Mr. Denner deliberately, "but it is hard for him to say so."

"I understand how it is," replied Miss Patty earnestly. "In the days of his youth he committed this sin: he defrauded another man, and the other man did not protest. Our poor sinner has gone on enjoying the fruits of his dishonesty. In all other respects he is an honest man."

"In all other respects he is an honest man?" repeated Mr. Denner wonderingly.

"Yes, yes;" said Miss Patty fervently. "The older I grow, the more cases I see of persons who are good, and sane, and normal in all save one respect. There was a pillar in our church at home—I mean a man who was a pillar. He seemed to be
a model man, but when he died, we found that there was a little weak spot at the foundation of the pillar. As a young man he had committed a dreadful sin."

Mr. Denner stared at her without speaking.

"Now, this Solomon," continued Miss Patty eagerly, "I can quite understand that he is a highly honored man here; that he has never done anything dishonorable since he defrauded my father. We are anxious to forgive him—we will not make his dishonesty public."

"Have you the matter in your own hands?" asked Mr. Denner—"you, a girl?"

"I have, sir," she said proudly. "You don't know how my father has brought me up. He trusts me; and when I tell him I have found this poor man Solomon, he will authorize me to take the money that he restores and devote it to charitable work. You don't suppose my father wants it for himself? Oh, no!"

"Why do you not allow Solomon to keep it?" inquired Mr. Denner with a smile. "You seem to have infinite charity."

"Ah, that would not be right. He stole the money, and he has got to return it; but all unnecessary exposure shakes confidence in society. It is only necessary to expose wrong when it is for the public good—and you know that as well as I do."

Mr. Denner laughed heartily. "You seem to think you have a pretty intimate acquaintance with my modes of thought."

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Mr. Denner’s Resentment

“I have been studying you for the past few days,” she said shyly—“ever since I called on you.”

“When I forbade you my house,” he said with amusement, “and to marry my son. Well, what shall I tell Solomon?”

“Tell him to make me out a check for the whole amount, which is not an enormous one in these days, though it meant ruin for my father in his young manhood, or he thought it did.”

“It is an extraordinary thing to me that your father has never taken any steps to recover this money,” said Mr. Denner, “when he has known all these years where to put his hand on his man.”

“Why, he loved him,” said Miss Patty earnestly. “He says this Solomon, in spite of his one dastardly act, was a fascinating man—one that could charm the heart out of the body of any man, woman, or child. I believe if my father met him to-day he would go up to him with a smile, and put out his hand.”

“Your father must be a fine character,” said Mr. Denner musingly.

“Must be?” repeated the girl inquiringly.

“Yes—must be. I have had no chance of knowing him. I have only heard of him. Come, now, Miss Patty, if I promise you the fifteen thousand dollars that will cover up this old sore, you must tell me who it is you suspect of being the culprit, for I see you have a suspicion.”

“Tha is not fair,” said the girl falteringly.
The Girl from Vermont

"Yes, it is—a bargain is a bargain. You shall have the amount of Solomon's indebtedness to your father if you will tell me who you think he is."

"I would rather not," said the girl, shyly twisting her fingers and hanging her head.

"Then Solomon will not give you the money."

"Solomon always was a mean fellow," she said demurely.

"I know whom you suspect," said Mr. Denner, getting up and reaching for his hat. "You can talk pretty glibly, but you are only a girl, and you betray yourself—you suspect me."

"And didn't you do it?" she asked innocently.

Mr. Denner, in speechless amazement, took a few turns up and down the room before he answered her.

"This comes of putting business matters in the hands of women and children. You are a rash, foolish girl."

"Now, that I will not endure," she said, running up to him. "No aspersions on my sex, if you please. I may be foolish, inefficient, suspicious, but you shall not, without contradiction, say that all women are like me."

"Women cannot do business," he repeated doggedly.

"Oh! what a wrong and unjust thing to say," exclaimed Miss Patty, clasping her hands and half-choking with emotion. "Look at the women poets, the writers, the artists—"
Mr. Denner's Resentment

"They are not business women."

"Some of them are. And don't women carry on mercantile affairs—are they not in charge of offices, stores, hotels? Why, half the business done is managed by the women who advise the men what to do. Often no one sees or suspects, but it is their sound business wisdom that keeps the men afloat."

"They are not financiers, anyway."

"O misguided man," exclaimed Miss Patty. "They are the financiers. Many a man has never saved a cent until the day he married."

"Well, they may finance in a small way——"

"What about Mrs. Story?" asked Miss Patty quickly, "the noted woman financier, who can manage the affairs of a nation."

"I had forgotten her," said Mr. Denner slowly.

"I am tired of this talk about men and women being unequal," continued Miss Patty wearily. "It reminds me of Carlyle's chewed air. Why discuss it? The Lord created them alike. Men have no right to say to women, 'You shall vote, or you shall not; you shall do this kind of business, or you shall not.' Men have no right to dictate to women—no more than women to men. If you let the women alone, they will take quietly to their natural work, but when you hedge them about with restrictions, you rouse every evil passion in them. Equality, liberty, fraternity—that is what we want."

"Women are like children," muttered Mr. Denner, in an unconcerned voice.
The Girl from Vermont

“No, no; men are like children, and turn to women for guidance. Women are the mothers of the race.”

Mr. Denner made no reply, and a long silence fell between them.

At last Miss Patty said coaxingly, “You are Solomon, are you not?”

“No, I am not,” he repeated in a low, angry voice. “I would cut off my right hand sooner than defraud a man of one cent, and if you had known me longer you would understand that.”

“But, sir, I thought you had been tempted and fell just once, and had picked yourself up, and were going on again; and I didn’t hold it against you, not one bit. I can’t tell you how I sympathize with sinners. I am one myself.”

“When I wish your sympathy, I will call for it,” said Mr. Denner, walking toward the door. “You have upset me terribly. In all the years that I have been here, I never had such a slur cast on my business reputation.”

“He has gone out, and he slammed the door!” exclaimed Miss Patty in despair. “What is the matter with me that I always make that man so angry? And I like him so much, so much——”
CHAPTER XIII

MISS PATTY LOSES HER TEMPER

HELLO! What's up to-night?" inquired Victor gaily as he hurried into Miss Patty's schoolroom a few evenings later.

"Why, don't you know?" she said lugubriously. "We're giving the children and their parents a band concert to-night."

Victor put on a long face, and began to hum a few bars from a dead march. "What are you so solemn about it for?" he asked.

"I have things on my mind," she said evasively, and she kept on moving about the room, pushing a chair here, a music-rack there, and placing various musical instruments in order on the table.

"Dear me, those bandmen will be annoyed at the confusion their instruments are in," she said. "The transfer men just tumbled them down anywhere. Can't you help me find the can of oil?"

"Certainly; what size can?"

"Oh! a big one, to fill the torches. This poor unfortunate east end has nothing. At the west end you have all the parks and the open squares, and the bandstands. I think it is just mean. The people up here pay taxes."

"City governments are queer things," said Vic-
tor good-naturedly, as he assisted her in a search for the missing can.

"We've got to have torches to-night because we have no bandstand," continued Miss Patty, "and boys have got to hold them. The schoolyard is only half-lighted by one miserable electric lamp. How is your father?"

"Dad?—Oh, he's all right. I say, here's your can, under this cloak. Upon my word, it's a white opera cloak—look at the oil, and smell it! Faugh! Some one must have thrown it on that can."

"I did," said Miss Patty mournfully. "I don't seem to do anything right nowadays."

"Where did you get this pretty cloak?" said Victor, holding it up. "Whew! that must have cost a lot of money. Real lace, and satin lining. My Aunt Carrie has one something like it."

"I bought it for a birthday present for myself," said Miss Patty absently.

"You bought it! How could you afford it?"

"Well—I had the money."

Victor stared at her with a puzzled face. "I thought at first you were poor. Are you?"

"No, I am not; though I don't see that a young man whom I have had the pleasure of knowing for only a limited space of time, has the right to inquire into the state of my finances."

"I beg your pardon," said Victor humbly.

"Please look for the torches," said Miss Patty peremptorily.
Miss Patty Loses Her Temper

Victor, sighing heavily, said, "I think I saw them in the hall." Then he opened the door. "Yes, here they are—you don't want them inside?"

"No; see if the wicks are in."

"Yes, they are."

"Now please carry the can of oil into the hall, and fill the torches."

Victor in dismay looked at his hands. Then, finding a pair of gloves in his pocket, he put them on.

"I haven't seen you for three days," he said, coming back into the schoolroom in a few minutes, rolling up his gloves. Then throwing them in a corner he went on: "By George! the time seemed long!"

"Did it? How old is your father?"

"He is just forty-five."

"You told me once he was an old man. Forty-five isn't old."

"Isn't it? Seems to me when I get to be forty-five I will be ready to die."

"At twenty-one," said the girl disdainfully, "one is green and callow. One knows nothing."

Victor stared at her. "I think some one is pretty cross this evening. Tired, probably."

"Tired!" she repeated snappishly; "why should I be? Do I work all day in a cotton factory with lint filling my lungs?"

"No," he said seriously; "but you know as well as I that brain work tires more than body work."
The Girl from Vermont

"Here are the bandmen," she said with a wilful toss of her head. "Come in, boys; here are your instruments. I have tried to take good care of them, but the children were crazy to try them."

After the men had filed out of the room, Miss Patty said: "We might as well go too; I have to see that the benches are all arranged."

"Have you enough for all the people?"

"No, some will have to sit on the ground."

"I say, it's a shame to have you do all this," said Victor. "No wonder you get tired."

"This work doesn't tire me," said Miss Patty vehemently, as she paused on the threshold of the door. "What tires me is to have people scold me, and blame me for things I don't do."

"Who has been scolding you?" inquired Victor.

"Oh, a man—a great big strong man. He thought I was trying to hurt his spotless reputation. Some men think more of their reputations than of anything else in the world."

"Why, isn't that right?" asked Victor in surprise. "It is what you are always preaching."

"Let us go outside," responded Miss Patty irritably. "I don't want to discuss. I have work to do."

A few minutes after they left the room, Mrs. Skellish came in, the inevitable broom in hand. She made a few desultory dabs at the floor, then dragged it behind her to one of the open windows.

'Well, if that bain't a pretty sight," she said.
Miss Patty Loses Her Temper

"Sogers a-playin', and people a-pressin' hard up to hear 'em, so pleased be they to have the music. Little boys a-swayin' an' a-wigglin', a-tryin' to hold the torches straight, an' the girl from Vermont a goin' round encouragin' the p'lice to keep order. Children a-dancin'—a pity they ain't got more light! I guess rich folks thinks poor folks are like cats an' can see in the dark. How that young feller do foller the girl from Vermont. It's easy to see he's a-hankerin' arter her just like a puppy dog arter a nice sweet bone. My land! There they be; I guess I'll hide. It ain't my concert. I ain't got no call to work," and she slipped behind a desk where the bandmen had piled their top coats, making an effective screen of it.
CHAPTER XIV

VICTOR RECEIVES A SHOCK

A HOWLING success!" exclaimed Victor, as he and Miss Patty reentered the room. "You must have four thousand people inside, and another half-thousand outside the gates. It's a shame that they don't oftener have concerts up here. There must be a hundred babies here in arms and in go-carts."

He paused for some response from Miss Patty, but none coming, he went on, "I suppose poor people can't go out without their children. They don't have servants to leave them with, as the rich do. I was talking to a man out there, and he says half the people up here have never seen some of our west end parks. I say, Miss Patty, you'd better sit down and rest."

"I guess she had," murmured the ungainly Mrs. Skellish, rising up to look over the screen. "She looks all drug out."

"What's the matter with you this evening?" asked Victor curiously, when Miss Patty sank obediently into a chair. "First you were as cross as two sticks; and now you are as dreamy as an owl."

Miss Patty roused herself by an effort. "I feel
Victor Receives a Shock

dreamy, Mr. Victor; I don't know what is the matter with me these last few days. I seem to have lost something and to be always searching for it. It must be my personality.”

“I believe I know what makes you feel that way,” said the young man suspiciously—“you act exactly as if you were in love—and with the wrong man,” he added fiercely.

“What is it like—this being in love?” asked the girl sweetly.

“To be in love?” repeated Victor striding about the room. “It’s to have your mind fixed on one girl—to think Patty, dream Patty, and eat Patty—”

“de foie gras,” interrupted the girl mischievously, “and get indigestion.”

“And talk Patty,” he went on, glaring at her.

“And stand Patty and walk Patty,” she continued.

“I hate to be teased,” he observed sulkily.

“So do I—I apologize; but do you really think all the time of me, and wish to be with me, and to please me; and you don’t see another woman when you walk the street, but just my spirit flitting before you?”

“That’s it, Miss Patty: and the spirit is always elusive, and I wish so very much that it might become substance,” and he held out his arms to her.

“You are such an inspiration to me. You are so sweet, so genuine, so beautiful, so original——”
The Girl from Vermont

"My! my! ain't this delixhous," murmured Mrs. Skellish behind the screen.

"So unlike other girls," continued Victor. "If you will marry me, I feel I can become a famous man. Without you, I shall be a clod."

Miss Patty was immensely interested.

"Why, Mr. Victor, you are eloquent—positively eloquent. If I don't marry you, could you keep up that spirit, that flow, that wonderful outgush of feeling?"

"If you don't marry me?" he repeated slowly.

"I mean if I were to become engaged to you with the thought of marriage far in the future."

"I would wait for you," said Victor, with his hand on his heart, "for years if necessary."

"This enthusiasm is all you need to make you succeed in life," said Miss Patty. "It positively glorifies you, but would it last? Suppose we had a forty years' engagement—"

"A what?"

"Forty years. Suppose I should become old and ugly, would you still love me?"

"Patty, don't be ridiculous," he said uneasily.

"Suppose my hair should drop out," she said, shaking her curls, "and my skin should turn gray, and I should get lame, and deaf, and dumb, and blind, would you still love me?"

Victor, disdaining a reply, stood staring silently at her.

"Boy," she said slightly, "you don't know
Victor Receives a Shock

how to make love. Sit down there," and getting up she pointed to a chair.

The surprised young man did as he was told.

Miss Patty threw off her cloak, took two or three turns up and down the room, and then approached him.

"Solomon!"

"That isn't my name," he said, starting up.

"Of course it isn't. Do you suppose I am going to make love to you, Victor Denner? No—you are only a lay figure."

"Did you ever make love to a lay figure?"

"I never made love to any man," she said, blushing furiously, and stamping her foot at him. "I haven't thought about love, or cared about love, or sought love. I've had my mind on other things. Now keep still; you are a dummy."

Victor, only half-satisfied, sat back in his chair.

"Solomon," said Miss Patty sweetly, "It seems a long time since I have seen you—you cross old thing."

Mrs. Skellish, behind the screen, was bobbing up and down in an ecstasy of delight. Victor, in suspicious quiet, observed Miss Patty from the corner of his eye. He did not like her suddenly flushed and softened face, nor the shy grace of her manner.

"I don't suppose you care, Solomon," continued Miss Patty softly, "whether you ever see me again or not. You are such a queer old thing."

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"I say," interrupted Victor, "are you talking about that old fellow who stole your father's money?"

"No, I am not," she said, retreating a few steps from him. "Now, once more—if you don't keep still, I will stop."

"Oh! don't do that," said Victor, and half-shutting his eyes he watched her coming back and hovering over him.

"Once, Solomon," she said with outstretched hand, "I didn't know what love was. I used to laugh at other girls when they got tired and cross, or delighted and ecstatic over their lovers. Now, you old beast, I know just how they felt."

"Old beast," groaned Victor. "Good gracious! What kind of a girl is this?"

"I have to think about you all the time," continued Miss Patty, "and it makes me mad. Do you hear that?" and she slapped the back of the chair with her hand. "Mad!"

"Yes, I hear," murmured Victor with a start, "but I don't dare heed you."

"You had better not," she went on under her breath; then she said aloud, "Did I want to fall in love, did I wish to bow down and worship one man, to study his moods, perfect and imperfect, to wonder about him, to look up to him as a divinity, and yet to compassionate him as a poor sinful man?"

"Oh, horrors!" muttered Victor, stirring uneasily about in his chair.
Victor Receives a Shock

"Who are you—you Solomon," said Miss Patty in sudden wrath, "that you should dare to appropriate me? I am the apostle of suffering childhood. I have my work cut out in life. It was to benefit millions. Do you think I shall become the slave of one man?"

"I am going to get up," rebelled Victor, wriggling in his seat, "you're making love to another man through me—I can't stand it."

Miss Patty laid a hand on his shoulder. "Do I want to live in a cottage with you, and darn your stockings, and cook your dinners? No, the world for me and freedom. I hate you, Solomon; I am going to shake off your influence."

Victor this time sprang up and stood looking defiantly at her, but she did not seem to notice him.

"Unless, Solomon," she went on in a musing tone, "unless you would promise to go out into the world and do my work for me. They say that modern women like noise, and bustle, and notoriety. They don't. Modern women are like ancient women—they want their quiet homes, their little gardens, their husbands and children. It is only the wickedness of the world that forces them into the troubled arena of life to-day."

"She doesn't see me," ejaculated the unfortunate Victor, "she has forgotten my presence."

"So, Solomon," she said lingeringly, "if you will—then I—— Why, Mr. Victor, what a blank
The Girl from Vermont

face!” she burst into a merry peal of laughter. “Don’t you like that play?”

“It wasn’t play,” he muttered. “It was dead earnest,” and the tragedy of his voice so wrought upon Mrs. Skellish’s tender heart that she let her companion, the broom, fall clattering to the floor.
CHAPTER XV
AN OFFER OF MARRIAGE

VICTOR turned swiftly, pounced upon the unfortunate Mrs. Skellish, seized the broom, and swept her ignominiously from the room.

Then he turned his attention to Miss Patty, who still had a strange, sweet smile on her pretty face.

"I say, Miss Patty, were you trying to teach me a lesson?"

"A lesson? no, that was only a play."

"Patty," he said in a trembling voice, "can you never love me?"

"I shall never cease to love you—you are one of the most lovable young men I ever saw."

"Will you marry me?" he asked, trying to take her hand.

"Marry you? No; you dear, sweet germ—you tadpole, you calf," she said, drawing back.

He gazed incredulously at her, and then he asked, "What did you say then?"

"I said—Victor Denner, your humble servant Patty Green is twenty-five years old."

"You, twenty-five!" and he stared at her curls, her pink-and-white cheeks, her youthful figure.

"Yes, I can't help looking like eighteen. I was made that way."
The Girl from Vermont

"Patty, I shall die without you."
"You would be better off."

Victor sank on a bench, and putting his arms on a desk, buried his face in them.
"He looks like his father," murmured the girl; then she said aloud, "My dear sir, if I had married all the boys, and all the tottering graybeards who have asked me, I should be at the head of an asylum for prehistoric animals."
"You're going to marry some other man," said Victor despairingly—"some old fellow; I would like to kill him!"

Miss Patty, breathing defiance, surveyed him silently for a few seconds. Then she burst forth with an exclamation, "You boys dare the universe. You eat the bread and drink the wine of life, and then ask some girl to come and share them with you. If she has sense enough to stop and ask if you know the source of your supplies, you call her a hard-hearted monster. Now, what have you done in life that you can ask me to share your lot?"

"I had no idea you were so mercenary," said Victor, lifting his flushed face, "but my father is prepared at any time to give me a good salary."
"Fiddle-de-dee! I don't care about the amount of money you can command—I want to know what you have done. What have you succeeded in? What is your record? You were born into this old world; you have been nourished and educated. What have you done in return?"
An Offer of Marriage

Victor, in the midst of his despair, tried to reflect. "I—I can cut a pretty good figure at athletics."
"Excellent—I believe in the development of the body. Are you teaching others along those lines?"
"No; I have always learned."
"Why not impart something of what you have received? Well, now, if you are not going to figure as a professional gymnast, what do you plan to do?"
"Bookkeeping," said Victor.
"H'm—very good. What do you know about it?"
"Very little. I have to learn."
"Baby!" said Miss Patty in accumulated wrath. You are learning your letters, and you expect me, a girl who has lived four years longer in the world than you have, to give up work in an advanced grade, and come to sit down beside you."
"Ambitious, mercenary girl!" said Victor, starting up thoroughly aroused. "Does love go for nothing in your calculations?"
"Not your love, my boy—that naked little creature sitting out of doors in all kinds of weather, clothed only in his bow and arrow. I like a comfortable little cupid with a fur coat on, and his eye on the barometer."
"You don't know what true passion is," exclaimed Victor with a face absolutely purple from emotion, "that grand overmastering passion that throws all prudence to the winds—"
The Girl From Vermont

"And never finds it again, though searching for it with tears. That is the kind of love that fills the divorce courts, my friend."

Victor began to tramp up and down the room in speechless resentment and distress.

"Don’t feel badly," said Miss Patty consolingly, "you see a glimmering of the true light. There is a great, overwhelming love in the world that laughs at obstacles, and is faithful, true, and strong as death. Some day you will understand it, but now—now you haven’t learned “a” in its vocabulary.

An eloquent gesture accompanied the sentence, and after a long look at her unhappy admirer, Miss Patty went to the open window and called out "Boys, ask the band to play ‘The Star Spangled Banner.’"

When the stirring strains came floating into the room, she went up to Victor and touched him on the shoulder. "Listen to that. You love your country. Do something for it. Men and women are groaning and dying. Little children are suffering. Suffer with them, and improve their lot. Don’t make a god of physical love. There is too much talk about one kind of love. There are a dozen kinds, equally noble. Think of the devotion of a mother to her children, a son to his father, a brother to his brother. Oh! what is that?" and she started nervously as Mrs. Skellish’s broom was heard pounding against the door.

"A gentleman to see you. Are you through yet—"
An Offer of Marriage

can he come in? I told him as you was much engaged," resounded in Mrs. Skellish's shrill voice.

"Yes, yes," returned Miss Patty hastily, and Mrs. Skellish, thrusting in her head to see what was going on, proudly introduced Victor's father.

Mr. Denner bowed to Miss Patty, then glanced sharply at his son's flushed and disturbed face.

"Victor," he said, "I have just had a telegram from your Aunt Mary. Her heart is troubling her again, and she wishes us to take the midnight train to Boston. You had better go home and pack up a few things. I will meet you at the station."

"Aunt Mary is always fancying herself very ill," said Victor in a dull voice.

"She is; but we must humor her. She is your mother's only surviving sister."

Victor, without a word to Miss Patty, hurried from the room, and Mr. Denner stood gazing at her, as she, in great embarrassment, fingered the lace trimming of her pink gown.

"You have been refusing my son," he observed, in a non-committal voice.

"Yes, sir," she said meekly. "I don't want to play September to his June—I am twenty-five."

"You twenty-five!" and he gazed at her in astonishment.

"Yes, sir. September isn't so very far removed from June," she said, flashing a deprecatory glance.

"No, but you have the air of being younger, so much younger," he said thoughtfully. Then, with
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some severity he added, "Why did you flirt with my son?"

"Flirt, sir? I never flirt," and lifting her eyelids she gave him an innocent glance from a pair of melting eyes.

"There is a change in him since you came," said Mr. Denner.

"For the worse, sir?"

"Well, no," he replied reluctantly. "He is working steadily in the office now. He has a good head for figures."

"I hope I sent him there," said Miss Patty demurely. "I am supposed to have a good influence over boys."

"Poor lad! I am sorry to have him disappointed," said Mr. Denner with a sigh. "He has no mother."

"Has he a grandmother, sir?"

"Well, no—my mother is not living," said Mr. Denner in some confusion, "but it never seems so sad for me to be without a mother as it does for Victor. I suppose I should have married again when he was younger."

Miss Patty thoughtfully picked at her handkerchief. "A nice elderly woman would probably have a good influence over Victor—a widow, for example, with children of her own."

Mr. Denner stared at her, and made an involuntary movement of distaste.

"You are so kindly interested in my matrimonial
An Offer of Marriage

concerns,” said Miss Patty, “that I cannot help being interested in yours.”

Mr. Denner, brought back to the starting-point, said half-irritably, “I do wish you could see your way clear to marry my son.”

“If I did,” said Miss Patty with extreme gentleness, “would I have to live in the house with you, sir?”

“Well—well, I have not considered that subject fully yet, but I rather expected that when Victor was married that—that—well, in short, I fancied that his wife would keep house for us both in the old family mansion.”

“I couldn’t live in the same house with you and Victor, sir,” said Miss Patty, shaking her head dejectedly.

Mr. Denner’s face grew very red. “Am I, then, so very obnoxious? Have you heard that I am termed disagreeable.”

“Oh, no,” said Miss Patty airily; “but you see, you are a man, and Victor is only a boy. He would suffer by contrast.”

“I don’t understand you,” said her companion in a puzzled voice.

“I will explain,” replied the girl patiently. “You are a certain age. You have carved out your fortune in the world, you have carried on a large business, managed men and affairs, taken a hand in civic government, and in State politics. If you are not an utter simpleton, something of the man of
affairs would be cropping out at all times. If your daughter-in-law had any sense she would be eternally making comparisons between the undeveloped anything her husband Victor, and his father the——"

"Don't continue, I beg," interrupted Mr. Denner. "I never thought of this. When Victor marries, he shall have a house of his own. Am I to infer from this that you are inclined to change your decision?"

Miss Patty gave him a mischievous oracular glance. "I prophesy that a year from now, Victor will be a happily married man."

Mr. Denner looked pleased, embarrassed, and threw a glance about the room as if to ask the spirits of the air what the duty of a prospective father-in-law was in such circumstances. Finally, he approached Miss Patty, and lifting one of her hands kissed the pink fingers.

"You have made me very happy."

Miss Patty turned her back on him, and went to the window. For some time, during which the bewildered man stared steadily at her, she listened without speaking to the stirring air of "Yankee Doodle."
CHAPTER XVI
WAIT TILL TRIXY COMES

Mr. Denner could see one tiny foot tapping the floor, whether with impatience, or whether keeping time to the music, he did not understand. Finally, she turned around abruptly and said, "Trixie Travers is coming."

Mr. Denner considered a few minutes, and then said, "Is she an actress?"

"Oh, no!" Miss Patty laughed shortly. "She is my great friend. Just wait till your boy sees her. I shall suffer the most frightful eclipse."

"I—I don't understand this," uttered Mr. Denner. "First you give me to understand that you will marry my son; then you say that he will admire your friend."

"I never said that I would marry your son, sir."

"I thought you did."

She shrugged her shoulders. "Then you have been jumping at conclusions like a cat or a woman."

"Why, you let me congratulate you," said the annoyed man.

"Congratulate me!" exclaimed Miss Patty in a lofty voice.

"I beg your pardon; you confuse me so much that I don't know half the time what I am saying."
I should have said that you allowed me to express my pleasure at the prospects of a match that would heartily agree with my best wishes for my son."

"That is quite a long speech in reference to a predecessor whose birth I cannot recall," remarked Miss Patty in icy tones.

"Why, I kissed your hand," exclaimed the exasperated man.

"Take back your kiss, sir," cried the girl, holding out disdainful fingers, "I don't want it."

Mr. Denner's expression of ridiculous bewilderment and dawning anger so amused Miss Patty that she burst into sudden laughter.

"Sit down, Mr. Denner, sit down," she said, with a rapid change of tone, "and I will tell you about Trixy."

Mr. Denner, finding a chair near him, sat down on it, and closed his lips tightly. Evidently he had made up his mind not to speak again.

"I'll make you open them," said Miss Patty under her breath; then she continued aloud, "I just love my friend Trixy, and we follow each other about like two sisters. Your son talks about my attracting attention, and receiving admiration. Why, I am nowhere compared with Trixy. The men just act crazy about her. They are lined up at the station when they know she is coming. She is a reform girl too."

Mr. Denner's curiosity got the better of him, and he said hastily, "A reform girl?"
Wait Till Trixy Comes

"Yes, sir; she's had about fifty fads. Last year it was the insurance scandals. Before that the big trusts. She looks into things and makes up her mind; then she pulls wires, and there is a man attached to every wire."

"She is one of the newspaper women, I suppose."

"She never wrote a line in her life, except in a copy-book. You couldn't find a scrap of her penmanship in the length and breadth of America. Oh, no; she doesn't write—she inspires others."

"In what way?"

"I will explain: Take the frightful revelation with regard to tainted meat. That is one of her latest fads. She goes to a big city, she gets acquainted with influential men and women—and, by the way, women are just as crazy about Trixy as men are, for she is no flirt, and she never goes back on a woman. She'd give a man up first. Well, Trixy goes into society, she meets everybody, she charms everybody. Then she begins to tell things; the men and women get excited, and Trixy falls back."

"She is a lobbyist."

"No, sir; not directly. She would wear herself to shreds if she were. One woman could not do all she has set going. She never tells any one what to do, or what bills to have passed, but she influences them, inspires them, and sometimes she says with her dreadful lisp, 'Whoth's your thenator? Thuppothe you write a letter to the newthspaperths,' but

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that is all. She gives ideas and lets others do the work."

"And you say she is coming here."

"Yes, sir;" and Miss Patty laughed as she drew a slip of paper from her breast. "She never writes letters, but I got this note dictated by her to her secretary this morning. The wording makes me think that she has entered upon a crusade against the spelling reform. Listen—'The greatest thing in the world is the word of three letters, L, U, V. Am cumming. Trixy.'"

Mr. Denner did not smile. There was something about the Trixy affair that he did not like. Finally he said, "I wish it understood that this young lady is not to play any tricks with my son."

"She will scarcely look at him, my dear sir," returned Miss Patty coolly. "But as soon as he sees her, he will begin to circle around her like the proverbial fly around the pot of ointment."

"I dislike this scheming," said Mr. Denner, getting up and uneasily pushing back his chair. "I will send Victor away."

"Scheming," repeated Miss Patty. "Do you call it scheming to wish to find a wife for a lovesick boy who is ready to embrace the whole 'female sect,' as Mrs. Skellish calls us? Why, he would make love to her broom if I would dress it up attractively."

"You exaggerate," said Mr. Denner, leaning on the back of his chair, "but I am obliged to you for your interest in my son."
“Trixy is a fine girl—just your son’s age, and she wants to marry a young man—to ‘bring up a boy,’ as she expresses it. She has very strong opinions. An older man with cut and dried ways, like yourself, would drive her distracted.”

“I am not likely to fall under the wiles of Miss Trixy,” said Mr. Denner, hastily. “I am not looking for a wife.”

“Oh! don’t say that, sir; don’t say that,” remarked Miss Patty in a wheedling voice. “No one would for the most fleeting breath imagine that you were—you don’t need to proclaim it.”

Unmindful of her teasing expression, Mr. Denner went on thoughtfully, “I had a good wife, but she died young—at just about your age—and I have never cared to replace her.”

“I like to hear you say that,” responded Miss Patty heartily; “be true to her memory, and if ever in the future you should decide to marry again, a truly good woman would bear you no grudge to think that in a little lonely corner of your heart you still kept the image of your first love. But to return to Victor. I am a first-class matchmaker, sir. You have no idea how many happy couples I have brought together. I think that if Trixy would consent, she and Victor would make an ideal match.”

“Young lady, young lady,” said Mr. Denner, uneasily twisting about the chairback in his strong hands, “you are too precipitate. I have not had the pleasure of a long acquaintance with you. It
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seems to me that in placing my son in life you are taking an unwarrantable liberty."

"Hush! hush!" said Miss Patty commandingly, "the long-distance telephone ring."

Mr. Denner passed his hand over his face. Was the girl crazy? There was no telephone near. What an imaginative creature she was! With the utmost ease of manner she had run to a corner of a room, and was holding an imaginary receiver to a real pink ear, and with red lips and white teeth plainly and enchantingly visible, she was speaking into an imaginary mouthpiece.

"Yes, father dear—I am very well. Who is with me? Oh, Mr. Denner. He wants to arrange a marriage between me and his son. What is that you say? Mr. Denner has not had a long acquaintance with me, and he is taking an unwarrantable liberty? Very well, father; I will never speak to him again unless he apologizes—"

"Miss Green," ejaculated Mr. Denner, and he burst into a ponderous laugh, "you have beaten me. Suppose we cry quits."

Miss Patty put the receiver on its airy hook, and came gravely back to him. "Very well, sir."

"If you will let my son alone, and keep him from the wiles of your fascinating friend, I will never mention matrimony to you again."

"That doesn't just suit me, sir," said Miss Patty disconsolately.

"Why not?"
Wait Till Trixy Comes

"Well, for one thing, Trixy is a millionaire——"
"A millionaire!" echoed Mr. Denner in astonishment.

"Yes, sir. Cannot one be a reformer and a millionaire? I tell you, sir; unless things improve in our country, it will be impossible ten years hence for a man to get a decent wife, rich or poor, who has not a fad of some kind. The men won't effect reforms, and the women have simply got to do it. Now, sir, please go; the band is playing 'My country, 'tis of thee,' and at the close of it I am to make a speech. I don't want you to hear me. Good-bye—and what is your last word about Trixy?"

Mr. Denner got hold of his hat and fumbled with it. "If your friend is as good a girl as you are," he said slowly, "I say 'use your own discretion.'"

Miss Patty laughed merrily. "Some day when I have time, I will tell you of the funny way she got her fortune. Good-bye, sir," and she pointed to the door.
MISS PATTY, left alone, dabbed her face with her handkerchief, executed one of the figures of the Vermont hayseed dance about the schoolroom, then ran to one of the windows.

"Teacher! Teacher!" resounded from hundreds of little throats, mixed with "The girl from Vermont! Miss Green! Miss Green!" from the older ones.

Miss Patty smiled bewitchingly, and raising her voice, began to speak, to the amazement of Mr. Denner, who stood below under the window well out of sight, not in the squeaky voice of the untrained feminine speaker, but in the trained, far-reaching tones of the modern woman orator.

"Dear friends: It is such a pleasure to see so many of you here this evening. And that brings the question right to mind, why don't you oftener have these band concerts, and why don't you have them in a place more suitable than this schoolyard?"

"We haven't got a place," called out some one.

"Haven't you?" rang out Miss Patty's voice.

"Why haven't you?"

"'Cause the west end of the city has a monopoly of the parks," called out another voice.
Miss Patty's Speech

"How many parks has the west end?" inquired Miss Patty. "Quick, now; count them."

Some called out four, some five, and finally they decided on four small parks, and one large one.

"How many parks has the east end?" she asked.

"One little lost one far east," cried a jeering voice, "a-tumblin' down the side of a hill."

"Good!" said Miss Patty; "I've seen that apology for a park. Nicely kept, isn't it? with a fine plantation of weeds and a choked fountain! Now tell me how many tax-payers live in the east end?"

"Twice as many as in the west," a chorus of voices assured her.

"And you let the west end have all the parks," rang out Miss Patty's clear voice. "Are you mice or men?"

"We be mice," roared a husky voice, so near Mr. Denner that he ducked his dignified head to prevent the girl from seeing him as she leaned far out of the window.

The people were all nearly killing themselves laughing now. The great crowd shook with emotion. Never had their altruism or their indifference been placed before them in such a telling fashion—and by a girl too. The humor of it convulsed them.

"She be a daisy," muttered a man at Mr. Denner's elbow, "with a head for business. It's wishin' I am that she'd settle here."

"I don't wish to be a disturber of the peace,"
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Miss Patty went on, when the noise had subsided, "but I have been living among you east-end people for some weeks, and I am interested in you. I don't see why little east-end children are not so good as little west-end children, and I want to appeal to you fathers and mothers to do more for your children, to protect them, to look out for their rights!"

"Hear! hear!" interrupted many voices, accompanied by a great clapping of hands.

"You can't bring up children in crowded tenement districts and have them healthy, unless you have big breathing-places in the way of recreation grounds," continued Miss Patty. "Bad air poisons children, and it's almost as bad for grown people. Why do you live in such miserable houses up in this end of the town?"

"It's the fault of the landlords," shouted hundreds of voices.

"Who are your landlords?"

"Mostly rich men in the west end."

"Do any of them hold public office in the city?"

"Yes, Miss, there's three of them aldermen," vociferated the husky-voiced man near Mr. Denner.

"Who elected them?"

"We did—we did," yelled the same man. "I say, boys, don't she beat the Dutch! We'll run 'em out nex' time, Miss, unless they better the houses."

"Don't be vindictive, don't threaten," said the girl warningly, "just assert firmly that every man has
Miss Patty's Speech

dr the right of a decent roof over his head, and if he
doesn't get it, the landlord won't get his vote. Stand
up for your rights, men. Your employers don't
understand you. Half of them think you don't care;
that because you are poor, you like dirt and un-
comfortable surroundings. Let them know that you
are made of the same flesh and blood that they are.
Say to them: 'Gentlemen of the west end, we are
men like yourselves. Have we not eyes, ears, noses? Can we not appreciate a green park and pretty
flowers? Can we not enjoy listening to the harmony
of sweet sounds, such as can be provided by a band
like the excellent one that has so kindly favored us
to-night?''

Here the applause was so terrific that Miss Patty
had to break off for a few instants.

Finally she went on: "There is another thing I
wish to speak about. You have been having some
strikes up here during the last year. For the love
of your wives and children don't strike if you can
help it. See if you can't get your employers to agree
to arbitration, also to profit-sharing or some equiva-
 lent. Who knows what profit-sharing is?"

A little dark man leaped to the top of a barrel.
"I, Mees—French Harry, once of Paris, France.
My master he was a lithographer. We break many
stones in his work-rooms. He say one day, 'Mes
enfants, I give you profit-sharing, thirty-three per
cent. of what I makes.' I tell you we break no more
stones, and they was twenty-four francs apiece. You

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see if we break one, that cost us workmen about eight francs."

"Doesn’t that prove it?" exclaimed Miss Patty triumphantly. "Where the workman is interested in saving, he will do it, and he will try to make his firm popular. Tell me, French Harry, were the hands spoiled by this concession?"

"No, Mees; they not spoiled. They very good, very quiet."

"Did they feel that they were partners with your employer?"

"No, Mees, we had no right to see his books; we only take interest to save, to help him make money. We——"

But poor French Harry got no further, his barrel having collapsed under him.
CHAPTER XVIII

DECEPTIVE APPEARANCES

THANK you, thank you for the information," cried the girl. "And now, my dear friends, I must not keep you much longer, for you are all working as hard as I am, and we should get to bed early. I will merely say again that I am intensely interested in working people, especially in your children. From your ranks the great army of crime is reinforced. And why? Are your children worse than the children of the rich? By no means; but you take little pains to protect them. You let your women and children go into factories. That breaks up home life, and when home life goes, everything goes. Get the women and children out of factories. Let the men support the families."

"Good! That's right! Hear! hear!" broke in upon her remarks.

Miss Patty smiled and bowed as she went on: "Have supervised playgrounds for children, where they will not be allowed to lie, cheat, smoke, or swear. So will they grow up honest citizens. Don't rave against the rich; they are not all bad, and they have special temptations. If some of you were rich, you would be worse monsters than some of our millionaires."
The Girl from Vermont

“That’s plain talk, young woman!” called out an angry voice.

“Yes, it’s plain talk,” called Miss Patty wrathfully; “and I can make it plainer. I saw some of you men the other day listening to a traveling agitator. He was eulogizing the Nihilists in Russia. ‘Ah!’ he said, ‘a gun is a pretty sight in the hands of a determined revolutionist.’ I tell you, men, a gun is not a pretty sight in any man’s hands. You’ve got to get your rights by fighting for them; but is it not better to have mountains of snow than rivers of blood? Fight with paper, my good friends and brothers. Snow iniquities under with the ballot; you’ll win your way. I tell you, the gun and the bomb make enemies for you, but an appeal to law and order will bring even the big trusts to your side!”

The applause and the yelling was so terrific here that Mr. Denner put his hands to his ears.

Miss Patty leaned against the window, and after waiting calmly for a time, waved her little hands over the big crowd, “Now go home, my friends; go quietly out of the gates. Be good, work honestly, protect your homes, and may God bless you!”

A sudden hush fell over the great concourse of people, and they were quietly obeying her, when a stentorian voice rang out. “Hold on; wait a minute.”

Miss Patty, craning her young neck far out, saw to her amazement Mr. Denner detaching himself
Deceptive Appearances

from the bystanders, nimbly leaping up the steps, and coming toward the schoolroom.

She shrank back, and he took her place. "Fellow citizens, I am glad I happened to come here this evening. I approve of all this young lady has said, and I wish to add that profit-sharing has been, unknown to the public, going on for years in my shipping establishment. I will now do what I can to get other merchants to adopt it; and I want to say that I most heartily approve of the scheme to obtain a system of parks for the east end. I will not insult you by offering to help you get the land. You are fellow voters. You ask the city for it. Demand it as your right; but when you get the land, and whatever appropriation the city may see fit to make, I pledge myself to raise a substantial sum among my brother merchants to beautify and embellish those parks."

Immense applause broke out; many workmen came under the window, spoke warmly to Mr. Denner, then talking eagerly in contrast to their apathy after working hours, they filed in an orderly way toward the gates.

Mr. Denner turned to Miss Patty who had seated herself in a somewhat limp and helpless attitude on a chair.

"That was a noble speech of yours," he said with great animation. "You gave me a kind of electric shock."

"Did I?" she said weakly. "I thought you had gone home."
The Girl from Vermont

"You are an amazingly clever girl," he said, still with extraordinary animation, and looking larger and handsomer than ever as he bent over her. "I do wish you could recall that decision."

"What decision?" she said in a tired way, but with latent mischief in her tones.

"You know very well what I mean, teasing girl," he said laughing pleasantly.

Miss Patty, looking with half-shut eyes at his gleaming white teeth, thought to herself how much more fascinating her companion would be if he laughed oftener.

"I should be proud of you as Victor's wife," he continued, "proud—proud."

"And I would be proud of you as my father-in-law," she replied, extending a hand in a friendly fashion.

He took her fingers in a warm clasp. His touch was different now from the perfunctory one of a short time ago.

"Your hand is hot," he said kindly. "Poor little girl, you are tired. If you will marry Victor, he and I will fight your battles for you."

"Thank you, father-in-law," she said sweetly, and dutifully bending her head, her cheek dropped against his large hand.

Mr. Denner looked absolutely beatific for the space of a few minutes, then as Miss Patty did not raise her head, nor release his hand, he became first uneasy, then restless.
Deceptive Appearances

A slight noise in the doorway made him turn his head, and there he saw a sight that had he been tragically inclined, he would have said with Mrs. Skellish “it froze his blood.”

Victor stood on the threshold, his traveling cloak over his arm, his eyes accusing, amazed, and angry, fixed sternly on his father.

“Victor!” exclaimed the unfortunate man, “upon my word, I am—I was——”

“And shall be!” replied Victor in a sepulchral voice, and he vanished.

“What’s the matter, little girl,” said Mr. Denner tenderly, “have you fainted?”

“Almost, not quite,” murmured Miss Patty. “It’s only partial collapse. I hate making speeches. Help me to that bench, please; and on your way to the station, kindly send a carriage as soon as possible to take me home.”

“I shall not leave you till you are better, even if I miss that train, in which case Victor’s worst suspicions would be confirmed. Appearances were certainly very much against me.”

“Appearances were what?” inquired Miss Patty hysterically; then she burst into a weak little laugh that showed no signs of ending or diminishing, when the entirely confused Mr. Denner left the room in search of Mrs. Skellish.

Miss Patty, reclining on her bench, interspersed her laugh with broken remarks. “Well—I didn’t do it on purpose. It will break up that father-in-law
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business anyway. Victor will give him a bad quarter of an hour. What idiots men are!"

"My poor dear lamb!" exclaimed the ungainly Mrs. Skellish, bursting into the room. "You've been a-doin' too much. The genl'man has gone for a cab," and going down on her knees she looked adoringly into Miss Patty's face.

"Ah! there it comes," she went on, as a rattle of wheels was heard in the yard, "with the genl'man inside, likely. We'll take you home, my poor creeter."

Patty tottered to her feet, and walked hastily to the door, starting back as she met Mr. Denner.

"Oh, you are better," he said in a relieved voice, "I am delighted—now, will this good woman take you home?"

"Yes, sir," said Mrs. Skellish heartily, "just as soon as you gets out, an' I locks the schoolhouse door."

"We will wait here till you come back," said a sudden voice; and to their surprise, Victor appeared from the obscurity of the yard. "Our train is two hours late," he said, addressing his father. "There was an accident. We might as well wait here as at the station."

His eye was severe, and Mr. Denner shrank from it back into the partially lighted schoolroom. Mrs. Skellish and Miss Patty drove away in the carriage, and Victor turned expectantly to his father.
CHAPTER XIX

VICTOR DEMANDS AN EXPLANATION

SIR!” exclaimed Victor sternly, “now for your explanation.”

Mr. Denner stood like a sheepish schoolboy. Whether inadvertently or not, Victor had walked to the other end of the room, and had taken up his position by the teacher’s desk. How angry the boy was! His eyes were sparkling, his cheeks were red; truly his father was going to have a hard time with him.

Victor hurled another question at him. “Why don’t you speak, sir?”

Mr. Denner tried not to smile. He felt confused and ill at ease, and yet strangely young. His feet and hands were in the way, and it seemed to him that he was again a growing boy of fifteen, standing before his teacher in the little old country schoolhouse.

“Are you going to speak up, sir?” vociferated Victor, and this time it seemed to the delinquent father that the young pedagogue’s hands went out toward an imaginary ruler.

By a mighty effort he subdued his overpowering desire to laugh at the remembrance of numberless times when Victor had been summoned to his study
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for a fatherly lecture, and said weakly, "What is the matter with you, my boy?"

Victor now had his opportunity, and he was not slow to embrace it. "Are you my father?" he asked furiously, "you, man that I now see standing before me?"

Mr. Denner hung his head, twirled his thumbs, and made no answer. If Victor doubted the fact of his paternity at this late day, no number of asseverations on his part could strengthen his parental position.

Victor's face became more furious. "You are silent—the silence of guilt. I will recapitulate. From infancy up to manhood's dawning hour I have been accustomed to look up to you, to regard you as a pattern of all mankind. My trust in you has never been shaken—I have almost worshiped you—"

"Very wrong, that," murmured Mr. Denner, feebly shaking his head—"should not worship any one."

Victor, launched on the full torrent of his wrath, paid no attention to him, but went ragingly on. "A few weeks ago, I told you I had found the only girl I ever could love. At first you were inclined to be amazed; then you saw the girl, and so impressed were you by her worth that you encouraged me in my suit."

"Very true," murmured Mr. Denner, "very true. She is eccentric, but a very fine girl."
Victor Demands an Explanation

For some reason or other, this assertion seemed to infuriate Victor, and in a higher and still more angry voice he dashed on. "I sought out this girl, I asked her to marry me, and she refused me with scorn."

"With scorn," repeated Mr. Denner inanely, "that was unnecessary; quite unnecessary."

"Unnecessary, yes"; and Victor hurled the word back at him. And why unnecessary? Because—and oh! the shame of it—a man much older than myself had learned through me the worth of this girl, and had supplanted me."

"Supplanted you!" exclaimed his father.

"Yes, sir; that is the word. A week ago, as I was coming here to see the girl, I overheard Mrs. Skellish gossiping with some other women about a 'middle-aged gent,' as she called him, that was coming up here very often to see the girl from Vermont, and was bringing her toys of all sorts for presents to the children who play in the schoolyard—was worming his way into her heart by these unworthy means."

"Very reprehensible," said Mr. Denner, half to himself and half to Victor—"very reprehensible."

"I paid little attention to this gossip at the time," pursued Victor, "but when I hurried back here this evening to accompany you to the station and saw—saw—"

Mr. Denner hung his head. This was the only part of the story that looked black for him.

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"And saw that girl's head meekly bowed," Victor dashed on—"that head that has always been held upright and defiant before me; then I knew who had cut me out."

Mr. Denner started. This concatenation of circumstances embarrassed him.

"You," gasped Victor, "you—the perfect man—the upright. You had sunk to this depth of degradation."

At this point his emotion choked him, and clasping his hands behind his back, he strode wildly up and down the teacher's platform.

"I might have won her, had you kept in the background," exclaimed Victor, stopping short and digging his heels in the platform, "but when you appeared, with all your prestige, how could I expect to shine?"

At this flattering assertion, Mr. Denner fell into a pleasurable state of confusion.

"It is all very well for you to pretend to be old," Victor hurried on, "and to associate with all the old fellows at the club, but any one knows that you have only to show yourself in society at any time, and appear as you are so well fitted to do, to have all the women running after you."

Mr. Denner, at this, blushed and hung his head.

"Of course Patty would like you better than me," stormed Victor. "She just rails and rants about the young men of to-day. She says she despises them—that they don't do anything but dress up and
Victor Demands an Explanation

strut around and spend money, while their hard-working, clever fathers sit in the background."

"I don't think you strut about very much, Victor," remarked Mr. Denner agreeably. "I don't think you strut—upon my word I don't."

"It wouldn't matter whether I strutted or not," vociferated the poor lad, "she had her mind set on you. She was always talking about you—asking what your pursuits were, and what people you liked, and what your age was—"

"My age, son?" murmured Mr. Denner in a puzzled voice.

"Yes, your age—she was making a comparison between it and her own, and she said how black your hair was—not a gray hair in it—"

Here Victor's voice partly broke down. The strain of his emotion was too great, and was beginning to tell upon him. "Oh, sir!" he said in a choking voice, "the city is full of women. What made you steal my girl away?"

"Good Lord!" exclaimed the touched and exasperated Mr. Denner. "I didn't steal your girl—had no intention of doing it—and haven't."

"Of course, I don't hold Patty altogether blameless," continued Victor mournfully. "She is a minx of a creature. I say that, though I love her madly. If she took a fancy to you, she would lead you on."

"She didn't lead, and I didn't follow," ejaculated Mr. Denner.
The Girl from Vermont

“But of course now you have to stand by her,” continued Victor unheedingly. “I feel as if I could kill you if ever you were unkind to Patty. But I know you never will be. You will be a kind, tender husband to her. Good heavens! how can I give her up?” and sinking on the teacher’s arm-chair, Victor let his head fall on the desk.

His released pupil strode up to him. “See here, Victor,” he said, putting his hand on his son’s shoulder. “Don’t be an idiot. You have concocted a silly mess of mistakes in your brain.”

“Don’t talk to me, father,” said Victor, pushing him away, “not now, please; I would rather not.”

“I say you are mistaken,” exclaimed Mr. Denner, “and you have got to listen to me. I never made love to your girl, as you call her—”

“Father, don’t perjure yourself.”

“Victor,” said Mr. Denner decidedly, “have I been in the habit of lying to you?”

“No, sir; not before this.”

“Do you suppose I am going to begin now?”

“I don’t know, father; everything seems turned upside down.”

“Well, I repeat that I did not bring presents to her. What makes you think I did? Why do you suppose I was the ‘middle-aged gent’?”

“Because,” replied Victor miserably, “when Mrs. Skellish saw me coming, she said to the other woman, ‘I don’t want the young one to hear about the old one.’”

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Victor Demands an Explanation

"Did the woman mention my name?"
"No, sir."
"And the city is full of 'middle-aged gents,'" said Mr. Denner dryly. "I think you may give up that piece of evidence, Victor."
"I wish you wouldn't discuss it, father," said Victor drearily. "Patty has given me up, and I know it is for you; nothing else matters."
"And I wasn't making love to her this evening," said Mr. Denner bluntly. "You jumped to that conclusion because the poor girl was worn-out, and half-fainted as I sat talking to her. Didn't you see how pale she was as she went away?"
"Yes, father; but I thought it was conscious guilt."
"You are a conscious, love-sick simpleton, my boy. I have only seen this girl three times. I was begging her to marry you this evening, if the truth must be told. I am—that is—I have been interested in your girl from Vermont solely on account of you."
"Father!" exclaimed Victor, starting up. "Is that so? Are you telling me the truth?"
"I am. I have never told you anything else."
Victor seized his hand and wrung it. "O dad; what a load is off my mind. If I have you, I can do without the women."
"Oh, no, you can't," said Mr. Denner under his breath, "you will be running after some other girl inside of a month."
The Girl from Vermont

“I shall never marry,” continued Victor, still wringing his hand. “Patty is beautiful, but she is very trying. We will both give her up, and we will spend our days together.”

“Give her up,” echoed Mr. Denner suspiciously. “How can I give up what I never had?”

“See here, father,” faltered Victor; “your explanation is all right, and I believe you, and I can’t tell you what a comfort it is to me to know that you are still a rock of strength, and not the quicksand I thought you had become; but—”

“But what?” asked Mr. Denner as he paused.

“Just keep away from Patty,” said Victor, dropping his voice, and speaking in low, mysterious tones. “I tell you it isn’t safe to fool around a girl that has deceived you.”

“She hasn’t deceived me.”

“But she will, father—don’t you give her the chance.”

Mr. Denner burst into a roar of laughter. “Dog in the manger!” he exclaimed; then taking the discomfited Victor by the arm, he said, “Come on, boy, perhaps the train is made up by this time—and be sure that I shall never interfere with you in any love affair in which you are truly interested.”
A FEW days later, Victor stood on the platform at the railway station. A train was just about to come in, and while waiting for it he pulled a note from his pocket, and read half-aloud:

"Dear Mr. Victor: Please don’t be annoyed with me—you have not been to see me for days. You can’t tell how I hated to give you pain the other evening. Some day you will praise me for doing what you now blame me for. I shall always feel like a mother toward you."

“A mother!” he broke off to exclaim. “That is something new. Why not sister?—I have about a dozen of them now. Ah! that Patty is a slyboots; and dad is another. I saw him driving with her yesterday. I am going to ask for an explanation. I seem born to trouble,” and he heaved a bitter sigh, and continued reading:

“And now I want you to do me a great favor. Will you go to the station this morning for me—I am just dreadfully busy, and cannot get off—and meet my friend Miss Trixy Travers, who is coming to Greenport for a few weeks? Please di-
The Girl from Vermont

rect her to some hotel, and by so doing oblige, Your ever appreciative Patty Green."

"P. S.—You will know Trixy by her golden hair, her black dress, and her sweet smile. You will also know her by her mouse-colored pet, which sometimes gives trouble; so it is nice to have a resident of the place with her. Oh, by the way, telephone me if you can go. I hate to bother you, but you would only have to snatch one hour from your office work."

"Patty is a rogue," said Victor softly, as he folded the letter. "She has a kind heart, and wants to get around me. Of course I had to oblige her. But what in thunder does she mean by saying her friend travels with a pet? Why not say dog or cat, and be done with it. It must be a dog, for a cat would give no trouble. Well, I'm not afraid of anything in the dog line," and he put the letter in his pocket, "I've had too many in my day."

The train at this instant came thundering in. Victor's keen, young eyes ran up and down the line of cars.

"There is Miss Trixy," he muttered, as a tall girl dressed in black stepped off the sleeper. "She has a veil; but I catch a glimpse of golden hair. Seems to be bringing a lady with her," and he advanced, hat in hand. "Are you Miss Travers?" he said, his eyes on the veiled figure.
Miss Trixy Arrives

"Yes, that is Miss Travers; and who are you?" asked a sharp but not unpleasant voice in his ear.

He stared at the middle-aged woman, who had suddenly put herself between him and the golden hair and blue eyes. Then he said composedly, "Miss Green asked me to meet her friend, Miss Travers, and to recommend a hotel."

"Oh! very kind of you," said the little lady briskly; then she turned round to the blonde doll beside her. "You may shake hands with him, Miss Travers, he is accredited."

The tall young lady threw back her black veil. Her hair was certainly very golden, the smile was very sweet, and her eyes—well, a swimming mist came before his own, and he said in a bewildered way, "Good-morning, sir—that is, I mean Miss—er—madam."

He stuttered so much, and his voice was so low, that he doubted whether they heard what a botch he made of his introduction. They could, however, both see his embarrassment, but it did not seem to cause them the slightest surprise.

"Shall we walk on?" he asked, trying to recover himself, and looking into the safe gray eyes of the middle-aged lady, instead of into Miss Travers’ dazzling blue ones.

"No, for Marie has not come with the wraps yet," said the little lady sharply; "and where are your flowers, Miss Travers? My dear, you had three bouquets."
The Girl From Vermont

The tall girl looked down at her pretty gloved hands, then opened and shut them without speaking. "I'll go back and get them. Oh, no; I must not leave you alone," said her companion, staring at Victor as if he were a wolf. "Stay—here comes Mr. Jamieson. Did the trunks all arrive, sir?"

The little gray-haired man, approaching them, assured her with great sweetness that he could not tell just yet.

"Then, while you wait, please remain here with Miss Travers; and I will go and find Marie—I don't know what's keeping her," said the fussy little woman, bustling away.

Victor stared inquiringly at the new-comer. Who was this latest addition to the party?

"My thecretary, Mr. Jamieathon," lisped the tall girl, with a swift glance at Victor.

The young man shook hands with the meek, little, old one; then muttered under his breath, "I thought Miss Patty's friend was a poor school-teacher, but I guess she's masquerading like herself."

"I uthed to be ath poor ath a thcool-teacher," lisped a dulcet voice, "till a rich old uncle died and left me thome money."

Victor started. How well the blue eyes read his thoughts.

"Do you live here, sir?" the old gentleman asked politely.

Victor was beginning to give him some information about Greenport, when his attention was dis-
Miss Trixy Arrives

tracted by a terrible sobbing and groaning from the direction of the baggage car—a peculiar noise that was distinctly audible above the bustle and confusion of the station.

“Donkey,” he remarked with a smile—“poor fellow; he doesn't like railway travel.”

Miss Travers said nothing, but the little old gentleman observed hotly, “It can’t be helped.”

“You look like an amiable old dove,” reflected Victor, as he gazed in surprise at the gray-haired man, “now what was there in that remark to rouse you?”

Miss Travers, with an intensely amused air, had turned to the old gentleman. “Mithter Denner doethn't know that the donkey ith our traveling companion.”

Victor burst forth with a question, “Is that your pet?”

The tall girl nodded, smiled, then finally broke into a laugh.

Victor, absorbed in a contemplation of the milk-white teeth, looking like pearls in comparison with her black gown, forgot about the donkey till he heard another burst of sobs.

Then he began to laugh himself enjoyably, though nervously, and finally took a few steps in the direction of the baggage-car.

Two men-servants in black livery, one old, the other young, were engaged in the task of urging a recalcitrant donkey to leave the train. He did not
wish to do so, and they evidently were averse to forcing him beyond a certain limit.

"Have you any carroths?" lisped Miss Travers to her secretary.

The old gentleman took a couple from his coat-tail pocket, and went toward the stubborn animal.

Victor stepped back to Miss Travers' side, took another long and bewildering look into her glorious eyes, and was just about to speak, when Mrs. Fox and the missing maid came up, their arms laden with cloaks, flowers, books, and magazines.

"Such a time!" gasped Miss Travers' companion. "Marie lost that novel you were reading. We could not find it anywhere, and finally discovered that the porter had taken it—thought it had been left for him. I brought all these papers and things, my dear, for I never know which one you want. Now, I think we can start, if Peter has come."

"Peter!" gasped Victor, "he must be the shoe-black."

"Peter ith that little beatht," murmured Miss Travers, "my dear little donkey."

"Here he comes!" exclaimed Mrs. Fox. "Now I think we can proceed to the street."

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CHAPTER XXI

THE CARES OF A FAMILY

The other passengers had long since left the station. Like a man in a dream, the bewildered Victor walked along the station platform with the young lady, her companion, her secretary, her maid, her two men-servants, and her donkey.

The bystanders and railway officials were nearly killing themselves laughing. Victor himself had a dazed feeling that he had become part of a traveling circus show.

Miss Travers and her party, however, took the situation very coolly, and as they went along, she murmured to Victor, "That little donkey travelths tho much, that I think he likths it. We get uthed to him, and he doethn't theem funny."

Upon arriving at the station entrance, the donkey put his hoofs down firmly. He absolutely refused to leave the shelter of its roof. Finally, the one of his attendants who was young and strapping, went behind and urged him on, while the elderly one dragged him a few steps.

"I will thpeak to him," said Miss Travers; and approaching the little mouse-colored animal, she rubbed his ears, stroked his forehead, and finally got him into a state of such subjection that he rushed
The Girl from Vermont

gaily into the street, and disappeared in a wild gallop, his attendants running breathlessly after him.

"Hold on; please wait," cried Mrs. Fox, who seemed easily disturbed. "The men don't know where to take him. Young gentleman, recommend a stable—a nice, quiet stable, near our hotel," and she seized Victor by the arm.

"Why not put him in our stable?" asked Victor. "I am sure my father would be delighted. It is a pity to send such a pet to a public stable."

Miss Travers gave him a glance that more than recompensed him.

"You are very good," she murmured.

Victor scratched a line on the back of one of his visiting cards, and ran after the men. "Take the animal to Willow Avenue," he said, when he caught up to them, "and give this card to the stableman. Tell him I will follow shortly."

Then, with the air of a surprised paterfamilias who at one blow has had a ready-made family bestowed upon him, he returned to Miss Travers and said cheerfully and breathlessly: "Now, had we not better get into one of those carriages? I think the 'Fairview' is the best hotel to go to."

"But the luggage," squealed Mrs. Fox. "Mr. Jamieson hasn't attended to having it sent. He forgets everything but his books. Where is a transfer man?"

"Just give me your checks," said Victor, "I will attend to it."
"You can't have the checks," said Mrs. Fox in a flurry, "because Peter ate them up; Mr. Jamieson was absently fumbling them over in his hand, and as they happened to be pasteboard Peter grabbed them all."

Victor, with an air of perplexity, reconducted his party inside the station, and the matter of identifying the trunks took so long that he was by no means surprised to find a soft nose thrust inquiringly under his arm, and to see Peter, who had returned, staring inquiringly at his friends, as if to ask what kept them so long.

"Beg pardon, sir," said the elderly servant, touching his cap to Victor, "but he took a fitful streak down the street, and a S. P. C. agent said we were a co-urging him, and he ordered us back."

"All right—all right," said Victor hurriedly, "we will go along together now; are we all here? are we all ready?"

At last they were; and once again he led the way to the row of waiting carriages outside. Selecting two, he put Miss Travers and her flowers together with Mrs. Fox in the first one, Marie and the wraps went in the second. Mr. Jamieson said that he would walk; but Mrs. Fox, putting her head out the carriage door, screamed that he must not do so—he would get lost. So into the carriage beside Marie he promptly went.

Victor himself, at a glance from Miss Travers, seated himself in her carriage, facing her and Mrs.
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Fox, and at last they started for the "Fairview," situated only a few blocks from the station.

Four times on the way they had to pause, and Victor was obliged to get out with offerings of carrots, sugar, and other dainties for the utterly spoiled donkey, who seemed to have taken a dislike to the city of Greenport.

"He wanths a drink of water," murmured Miss Travers, at last; 'his voith ith thirsty."

Victor, with a suppressed sigh, dismounted for the fifth time.

The crowd of children following the donkey had by this time greatly augmented, and he could scarcely press his way among them to beg a pail of water from a storekeeper.

"Poor fellow!" he murmured, when holding the water to the donkey's head the little creature dipped his head gratefully to it.

"Little demon!" he muttered the next instant, for Mr. Peter, not being thirsty, but only mischievous, had raised his little hoof and had sent the contents of the pail all over Victor's light suit of clothes, and his nicely polished shoes.

"I can't get into the carriage with you, ladies," he said hurrying back to Miss Travers and her companion. "I am dripping wet. I will walk the rest of the way—the hotel is only around the corner."

And running on in advance of the procession that now slowly started again, Victor reached the hotel first, rushed into the office, and engaged the best
The Cares of a Family

suite of rooms available for Miss Travers and her party.

When they arrived, he, after infinite pains, saw them comfortably settled; then hot and perspiring he threw himself into a carriage and followed the donkey that had at last consented to trot soberly in the direction of Willow Avenue.

"Whew, I am hot," he said, taking out his handkerchief and mopping his heated face, "and yet it's a cool day. I have heard of the cares of a family. Is that what they are? Absorbingly interesting girl that; but what a surrounding she has! It must take something to run that show. I must get some one to tell me about her. Dad will be happy to do so, I daresay," he added bitterly. "He and Miss Patty seem as thick as thieves now-a-days. She did play me a pretty trick. I thought she was only leading me on; but she doesn't fancy me, and she has a will like iron. When a girl makes fun of you, the game is up. Now, her friend looks gentle and yielding," and he sank into a golden-hued, misty reverie, interspersed with blue-eyed gleams.
CHAPTER XXII

AN INTERVIEW WITH A BROOM

VICTOR, standing in the dining-room window was roaring with laughter. Away in the distance he could see a corner of the stable yard where the donkey was disporting himself.

"Why, he is a regular trick beast; look at those hoofs in the air."

"He is queer, isn't he?" said a friendly voice.

Victor, who had been alone, turned quickly and saw that his father had entered the room.

"Good-morning," he said stiffly; and he turned back to the contemplation of the donkey.

"Victor, my boy," said his father, coming behind him and laying a hand on his shoulder, "I am glad you brought the donkey here."

"I suppose you think he will have congenial companionship," said Victor sarcastically.

"Maybe so," said Mr. Denner, seating himself at the table. "Come, have your breakfast, my boy, before it gets cold."

"Do you know anything about that donkey?" asked Victor suspiciously.

"A little," said Mr. Denner, as he broke the top off an egg. "I know that he is a millionaire donkey."

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"A millionaire!" repeated his son wonderingly.

"Yes, the young lady who owns him was left a fortune by an eccentric uncle, who was devoted to this donkey. Miss Travers enjoys possession of her money on condition that she always wears black for the uncle, and always treats the donkey with kindness, and never allows him to be separated from her."

"And he left her a fortune on those terms!" exclaimed Victor.

"Yes, and certain disgruntled relatives who wished for more than they got, are always watching her dealings with the donkey, to see if they can get a chance to break the will."

"Who told you all this?" asked Victor in surprise.

"Miss Green told me," said Mr. Denner calmly.

"I saw you with her," said Victor hastily, "and I was surprised, for I thought our agreement was that we should not see her again."

"I gave my consent to no such agreement," said Mr. Denner taking another egg from the stand before him, "but since you are interested, I may say that I happened to be driving in Geary Park yesterday, and overtook Miss Green, who happened to be walking. Politeness led me to offer her a seat."

"I should think she might have given me that information about her friend," remarked Victor, in an injured voice, "seeing that she asked me to go and meet her."
The Girl from Vermont

Mr. Denner tried to look sympathetic, but his effort not meeting with success, he went calmly on with his breakfast.

"Patty didn’t ask you to go to the station to meet her friend, did she?" inquired Victor, after a short pause.

"No, she did not."
Victor looked relieved. "Girls are queer," he said boyishly. "I wish we could get on without them, father, they razzle-dazzle a fellow so."

"These are very fine eggs," remarked Mr. Denner in a matter-of-fact voice. "I must ask cook where she got them. Victor, you might ring for some fresh coffee. The table girl is a long time after it. I am in a hurry."

"So you haven’t seen Miss Patty’s friend, Miss Travers?" asked Victor absently, watching his father drinking the coffee that at this moment arrived.

"No—I haven’t seen her. Take your breakfast, boy."

"She’s stunning; absolutely stunning!" exclaimed Victor. "She is like a lily—a great tall lily in a black sheath. Now, Patty is like a wild rose."

"Which do you prefer?" inquired Mr. Denner. Victor gave him a peculiar glance. "I like them both in their own way. You say you haven’t seen Miss Travers."

"No, I have not," replied Mr. Denner patiently.
“Nor Patty didn’t ask you to go and meet her?” said Victor.
“No, she did not,” said Mr. Denner, still more patiently.
Victor sprang up. “I believe I will just run up to the hotel to see how she rested after her journey, and maybe afterward I will take a turn round by the schoolhouse to see if there is anything else I can do to help Patty. It’s not worth while to keep up a grudge, sir; is it?”
“Not at all,” replied Mr. Denner, starting on his third egg.
“I was mad with Patty the other day, very mad,” continued Victor, “but of course this is a free country. Every girl has a right to choose for herself. I say, father, you won’t mind if I am an hour late at the office, will you?”
“No, my boy,” said Mr. Denner indulgently, “but why don’t you take something to eat?”
“I am not hungry,” said Victor, tossing his head, and he hurried from the room.
“What a rattlehead that boy is!” soliloquized Mr. Denner when he was left alone. “Only his frankness saves him. I wish he would settle down. I would pay a good round sum to any decent creation of the feminine persuasion to attract him to herself, and stop his roving.”
Victor, upon arriving at the hotel, found that Miss Travers had gone to see Miss Green. He had, however, a lively interview with Mrs. Fox; then,
promising to call later in the day, he left her, and took a car as far as he could go in the direction of the cotton factory.

The schoolyard was, as usual, alive with children, who were playing under the superintendence of the assistant teacher whom Miss Patty had been obliged to engage.

The assistant told him that Miss Green had been called away. A child employed in the cotton factory had hurt his hand in one of the rollers, and Miss Green had gone to dress and bandage the wound.

Victor sauntered into the schoolhouse. He would wait for Miss Patty, and while waiting for her, would have a chat with Mrs. Skellish, who always amused him.

He knew where her rooms were, on the second floor, southeast corner; and going to them, he pushed farther back the open door of the little parlor.

Beyond was the kitchen; he could see the clean floor, the bright fire in the stove, the steaming kettle, the neat furniture, the open windows, and with her back to him, Mrs. Skellish herself sitting with her feet on the stove hearth. She seemed to be drinking a cup of tea, and talking to a thing leaning against the wall in front of her that looked like a scarecrow.

Victor was about to call out to her, when he caught the mention of his own name, and paused in surprise.
An Interview with a Broom

“So, I say,” Mrs. Skellish was observing, “when I has something real important on me brain like 'Gustus Denner, I don't tell it to no one 'cept my broom’; and she nodded toward the scarecrow.

Victor, in amazement, saw that she had really put one of her old dresses and a bonnet on the broom, and had propped it against the wall in the attitude of an attenuated, drooping woman. After a pause, in which she drank some tea from the cup in her hand, she went on with her talk: “Secrets is secrets. Who tells 'em?—nobody knows. Birds of the air, fish of the sea, dogs and cats of the street. I've seen much mischief in my day from secrets let loose. Keep 'em in cold storage, an' they're all right; but warm 'em up with the tongue, an' set 'em goin' an' they comes home like sarpents with stings in their tails an' they kills you!"

Here she drank more tea, and Victor, who was loath to act the part of an eavesdropper, was just about to step forward, when she made a remark in a low and bloodcurdling voice to the broom that effectually prevented him.

“I tell you, Mrs. Broom,” she said hoarsely, “I tell you that 'Gustus Denner is a varmint, an' what beats me is how all others don't see it. You can't fool poor folkses the way you can the rich. Money is an awful big cloak. Now, there's that 'Gustus Denner—what hasn't money done for him? He were a bad one from a boy. I know, 'cause I worked down at the west end by spells ever sence I
The Girl from Vermont

was a girl, an' I've seen him. No one seemed to think he was bad, 'cept his mother. She knew, an' when she was dyin', didn't she up an' tell Mr. Stephen to look arter his brother 'Gustus? I ain't got much patience with these dyin' ladies a-saddlin' burdens on young backs, an' bearin' 'em down with secrets.'

At this point in her revelations, Victor could no longer remain unseen. Hastily stepping forward he so frightened the unfortunate Mrs. Skellish, who had believed herself to be quite alone in her little corner of the big building, that she sprang to her feet, spilling her tea, and quite demolishing Mrs. Broom, who fell clattering to the floor.

"Sit right down again," said Victor, "and go on with those interesting disclosures. I wish to hear the rest of your confidences to your broom about my respected relative."

"La! now, young sir," said Mrs. Skellish, with a skittish toss of her head. "Do you suppose I'm agoin' to run down your own family to you!"

"No, I don't; but you have uttered certain insinuations against my uncle; you must either support them, or cease uttering them even to your broom."

Mrs. Skellish, with great deliberation, seized the prostrate broom, undressed it, hung up its dress, jacket, and bonnet, and veil, and then said calmly, "You an' I has always been friends, young sir."

Victor agreed to this with certain reserve.

"Now, tell me truly," said the bony widow, with
An Interview with a Broom

her head on one side, "what kind of a man you think your uncle 'Gustus to be."

"He's a jolly, good-hearted fellow," said Victor warmly. "A friend of all—even boys and girls—in spite of his gray hairs. He walks along the street nodding to every one. He is a general favorite."

"Goes to parties an' meetin's," said Mrs. Skellish; "keeps himself pretty much in front of the nose of the public."

"His popularity is well known," returned Victor impatiently.


"Of course he does; he is gifted."

"An' what has he done in the world. Show me his stunt," remarked Mrs. Skellish guilelessly.

"Well—well—he has been a man of business. He was in partnership with my father for some time. Then they separated. Uncle Augustus was not very strong. Now—I think he does some insurance business. He goes to town every day."

"Insurance," replied Mrs. Skellish. "Huff!" Her exclamation was contemptuous in the extreme, and Victor said irritably, "Why do you speak in that tone of a legitimate business?"

"Such lots of men fail in business, an' then goes into insurance, that I always calls it fool's play."

"You don't know anything about it," he responded hotly.
"Young sir," she said decidedly, "one thing I knows—that's honesty. You can't blind Betsy Skellish in that. I knows an honest man, an' I knows an honest woman. Your uncle 'Gustus ain't neither, an' it's time you feels it. I'm glad of a chance to rid my mind of one or two happenin's."

Victor looked uneasy and skeptical, but Mrs. Skellish went on serenely. "I ain't a gossip; I'm feared to tell things. If I tell me brother, he gits drunk and tells other men; if I tells women, they tells their husbands, so I commonly talks to Mrs. Broom there. But now I'm goin' to talk to you 'cause you don't git drunk, and you ain't got no wife. When your grandfather died, he didn't leave no money to your uncle 'Gustus. Why not?"

"I was a child at the time. I know nothing about it."

"'Cause he couldn't trust him," said Mrs. Skellish keenly. "Your father, he got it all. An' now tell me too, what makes your father so quiet, an' like an ole man sometimes?"

"Because he likes to be quiet," said Victor sharply. "He is a reserved man, and keeps to himself."

"You've bin a runnin' with other young lambs," said Mrs. Skellish indulgently; "you ain't took notice of anythin' but the pastures and the fodder. I hev noticed the ole sheep. My first cousin, Sally Jones, has bin cook for your aunt Carrie—your uncle 'Gustus' wife—this fifteen years. I hear her talk, an' I remember it."
An Interview with a Broom

Victor was silent. This woman was confirming some half-formed suspicions in his own mind.

"I wish you wouldn’t talk in this way about my uncle Augustus," he said in a boyish, appealing manner. "I think you are giving me unnecessary worry."

"Better worry too early than too late," she said. "It’s time you quit the lambs an’ stood by the ole sheep."

"You mean my father," said Victor.

"Yes, sir; the other one is a goat, an’ he’s a-kickin’ up his heels round this schoolyard too frequent for my peace o’ mind."

A sudden illumination overspread Victor’s face. "Do you mean to say that my uncle is ‘the middle-aged gent’ who brings presents to Miss Green?"

"He air that; an’ more."
VICTOR, plunged into a confused medley of thought, sat some time in silence. Mrs. Skellish, with her little dark lantern, had thrown a long streak of light over the trodden path of the past. How true it was, as the woman before him dimly perceived, that he, a young, careless lad, had been living among men and women who to him were as trees walking. How little he had understood of the hidden things of the heart.

His father was quiet and careworn for a man of his age. His uncle Augustus was a little too gay, too hearty, too boisterous—not sincere enough in his mirth, nor in his protestations of friendship.

Victor had not thought out causes. Now he must begin to look into them; and he drew himself up, and already felt more of a man.

"Mrs. Skellish," he said in a low voice, "you can imagine how painful it is to me to discuss my uncle with you, but you are right in coming to one of the family, rather than to go to a stranger. Now tell me truly, does my uncle worry Miss Green by coming here?"

"She don't let him worry her, sir; she's cute, an' I guess if he went too far, she'd fetch him a reminder."
She did an awful smart thing the other day. She happened to know when your uncle was comin', an' she writes a note to your aunt Carrie, an' I hurries down town with it. Mr. 'Gustus, he arrives, his arms full of flowers an' candy boxes, an' toy horses an' dogs, an' jist a-pantin'. The girl from Vermont, she calls out, 'O Mrs. Denner, do come an' see how generous your husband is.'

Victor could not help smiling at the picture she called up.

"Mrs. Denner, she come out," continued Mrs. Skellish, "an' if the poor lady hadn't had long trainin' I bet her face could a been took for a funeral. She explained so sweet that she had been invited to come up an' see the children, an' while she spoke, she looked at the flowers as much as to say, 'You don't never bring me no such things.'"

"What did my uncle say?" asked Victor in a low voice.

"Oh, you can't floor him," said Mrs. Skellish sarcastically. "Jist for one minute he looked flabbergasted; then, as polite as you please, he stood talkin' to the girl from Vermont, an' then he offered his arm to his wife, an' he took her all around the schoolyard, an' laughed an' chatted with the children."

Victor hung his head, and Mrs. Skellish's gaunt face softened until it became almost tender.

"You ain't ever a-goin' to grow like him, be you?" she asked, leaning forward and putting a
skinny hand on Victor's knee. "You've been a comin' up here, an' I've got to set a heap by you. You stan' by your father, sonny, an' let him know you know his troubles. That'll help him a heap, an' make a man of you."

"I think a lot of my father," said Victor hotly. "We are great friends. I never knew that he had anxieties about my uncle. I know he has had to help him financially; that is no secret, so I don't mind telling you. My uncle has no head for business."

"An' no right sense of pockets," said Mrs. Skellish, wagging her head with great seriousness. "So long as he gets the dollars he don't care whose purse his hands go into. Why, long ago, almost afore you were born, he were fitted out an' sent up into Vermont to do business—what was the name of the place?"

"Not St. Peter's?" exclaimed Victor.

"That were it. He went in a hurry, an' he stayed a few years, an' then he came back in a hurry. There was a fuss, but it was hushed up."

"My uncle went to St. Peter's," pursued Victor, like one in a dream.

"Yes, an' come home agin, an' your father an' grandfather was sorry enough to see him."

Victor sprang up, and going to the mantelpiece, absently took up a pair of shears, and opened and shut them. "How do you know all this?" he asked, raising his head and staring at Mrs. Skellish.
Victor Hears Further Revelations

"Oh! poor folkse is like mice," she said, "they comes an' they goes, creepin' in for a bit of cheese after the fam'ly has gone to bed, listenin' at doors for the cat——"

"Ah," said Victor profoundly, "there are various doors leading to increased knowledge—front doors and back doors."

"Secrets always takes the back door," observed Mrs. Skellish.

"You seem to know a good deal about my uncle's family," he said uneasily. "Can you tell me one thing more—was he ever called Solomon either as a jest or a nickname?"

"When he were a young man a-courtin' your aunt Carrie, he were called Solomon," said Mrs. Skellish. "I remember hearin' 'em jokin' him about bein' so wise an' knowin' everythin'."

"That settles it," said Victor, with a profound and weary sigh; and dropping the shears on the mantel, he leaned his head on his hand and stood moodily gazing at the shining little stove.

He looked so handsome in his boyish distress that Mrs. Skellish, from the very depths of her motherly heart, longed to comfort him, but she did not dare. She still stood without speaking, and at last bustled about the kitchen, hoping that she would arouse his attention and divert him from his painful thoughts by putting a shovel of coal on the fire and adding fresh water to that in the teakettle.

He never moved, and she was just about to sink
The Girl from Vermont

into the rockingchair, when he suddenly left the mantelpiece and went to one of the windows.

"I ain't told you all," she said cautiously. "There's something worse."

"Worse!" exclaimed poor Victor, "you don't know how bad this is. However, go on with your tale. 'In for a penny in for a pound.'"

"You know that poor child what got beaten in the cruelty case," said Mrs. Skellish in low, mysterious tones.

"You mean little Archie—certainly I know him."

"One of the nurses at the Babies' Home said as how you'd been comin' round askin' questions, an' lookin' at the child. Did you mistrust anything, sir?"

"Well, since you ask me, I may say that I heard by chance the name of the child's supposed father. I have been trying to find out whether the thing is true, or a fabrication."

"Why didn't you come to me, sir. That 'ere boy's father married me own second cousin's niece."

"Married!" exclaimed Victor.

"Yes, sir. When your sweet-appearin' uncle 'Gustus turned his only son out of the house, what did you suppose it was for?"

"That was several years ago," faltered Victor. "I knew there was some scandal about a girl in the cotton factory here. I supposed my uncle had turned Archie out of doors because he would not marry her."
Victor Hears Further Revelations

"Would not!" repeated Mrs. Skellish, shaking her head, "not would not, but would. Your fine uncle, he didn't want your cousin to marry a poor girl. Your cousin said he would, an' he had to go. An' he died on it."

"Yes, I know that," said Victor gloomily.

"He weren't used to sour baker's bread, an' canned meat, an' he wilted away in consumption. An' your uncle never come to see him. He worked by spells here in this very cotton factory," and she nodded her head in the direction of the big building, whose towering chimneys they could see through the open windows.

"And he really married?" said Victor.

"With book an' parson. I see it meself."

"And where is his widow?"

"In the next grave—alongside o' him. Poor smooth-faced thing. No harm in her, only weakness."

"And this child Archie, you say, is his?"

"Yes, sir—named for his father, Archibald Gray Denner; only when he were adopted by the Drakes they give him their name for his last."

"It is amazing that this should happen without my knowing it," said Victor, "but I supposed that my father kept himself informed of cousin Archie's doings."

Mrs. Skellish smiled grimly. "Your father lives west, and we lives east. Who was goin' to tell him? An' your uncle lied, and told him your cousin Archie"
The Girl From Vermont

had run away, so he wasn't like to look for him here. I've seen your father's advertisements in the papers a-beggin' A. G. D. to come home, an' all would be forgiven; an' Archie he was a-settin' up here in the east end, in his shirtsleeves, a-smokin' and laughin' bitterlike. He wanted his father's pardon, not his uncle's."

Victor's face lightened. "My father has a far better idea of keeping the family together than my uncle has."

"An' so he died, poor Archie," said Mrs. Skellish sadly, "an' we give him a good funeral here in the east end, under his new name of Smith. Six cabs there was, an' about two hundred on foot. An' the mother soon died as I said, an' the children—"

"The children!" exclaimed Victor, "were there more than one?"

"Two boys, young sir, two boys. One, Archie, went to the Babies' Home; the other, Danny, was taken by the grandmother. He works in the cotton factory now. Of course he's under age, but the grandmother swore he weren't, bein' in need of money."

"My cousin's child works here in the cotton factory!" exclaimed Victor, in horror-stricken tones.

"Aha!" said Mrs. Skellish, with some triumph in her tones, "see how the shoe pinches when it's on your own foot. A Denner in the cotton factory! It's awful, ain't it?"

"Woman," said Victor angrily, "you should have
told me this before. That child must be gotten out of there at once. I am going to take the necessary step immediately."

"Don't fret, don't fret," said Mrs. Skellish consolingly, "there ain't no harm done yet. He's young, is Danny, an' so is Archie; an' if I'd known what a free-spoken, pleasant young gent you was, I'd a-told you long ago. It's only sence you begun comin' up here to see the girl from Vermont that I made up my mind to speak. I was just a-practisin' on me broom, to help me give you the right words about your little cousins, an' I believe the Lord sent you up here this mornin', sir."

Victor's face was red and ashamed. Like his father, he had a large share of the family pride, and it had cut him keenly to hear of his uncle Augustus' delinquencies, and poor Archie's misfortunes.

"I'll look after the children," he said fiercely, "if I have to pawn my best coat."

"You won't have to do that," said Mrs. Skellish soothingly; "there's your father with his good, kind heart, as big as his body; but I'd recommend you, young sir, seein' as how I'm a sort of distant connection of the family, to get Danny out of the factory now, 'cause they've just set him at new work, which is dangerous."

"What is it?" asked Victor shortly.

"Fastenin' ends, sir; an' it takes him near the wheels an' spindles, an' he's an awful little fellow,
The Girl from Vermont

an' the boss is sharp—but whist! sir—there's some one comin'," and she looked over her shoulder.

There was the rustle of a gown in her little parlor, and a low, sweet voice was saying, "I want to thee Meethith Skellith."

The gaunt woman sprang up, and for a moment stood amazed at the blonde apparition behind her.

"I am Mith Green'th friend," lisped Miss Travers, and she put out a friendly hand.

"Come in, come in," said Mrs. Skellish recovering herself; and she stood back to allow Miss Travers to enter the sunny kitchen.

Miss Travers smiled, took her by the horny hand, and then gave two fingers to Victor, who, Mrs. Skellish was glad to see, had lost some of his moodiness as the new-comer greeted him, and was gazing abstractedly at her.

Miss Travers drew Mrs. Skellish's little rocking-chair into a broad streak of sunlight, and sat down on it.

After gazing demurely about the room, she stared at the teapot on the stove, and said, "I did not take much breakfathth thith morning. I with I could have thome tea."

Mrs. Skellish in an ecstasy sprang up, and striding about her little kitchen, soon had a cup of tea made for her beautiful visitor.

Miss Travers cast a shrewd glance at Victor's face that still showed signs of mental disturbance.
Victor Hears Further Revelations

Then she murmured, “I thuppoth you have had your breakfath.”

“No, I haven’t had any,” he said indifferently. “I was not hungry,” and he absently eyed the substantial slice of bread and butter in the young lady’s dainty hand.

Miss Travers made a little sign to Mrs. Skellish, and presently Victor found a cup of tea placed in his hand.

He took it gratefully, drank it with abstracted air, and with his face and manner relaxing only when Miss Travers spoke to him. Having finished his tea, he asked permission to call on her later in the day, and took his leave.

Miss Travers glanced after him. “That young man ith in trouble,” she said to Mrs. Skellish.

The wary woman murmured an assent to this, somewhat doubtfully. This young lady was very beautiful, and she was a friend of the girl from Vermont, yet she was a stranger, and Mrs. Skellish closing her thin lips, thought that she had effectually sealed them.

She had not. Miss Travers was exceedingly clever, and she had become interested in the Denner family, after hearing sundry revelations from her dear friend Patty as they talked the night before.

So Mrs. Skellish was as clay in the hands of the potter, and the discreet broom itself never listened to such a tale of Greenport doings as was unfolded to the clever, sympathetic Trixy.
CHAPTER XXIV

ALONE IN THE SCHOOLROOM

MISS PATTY was alone in her schoolroom. It was early evening, and her last class of cotton-factory boys had just gone out.

Holding a pamphlet in her hand, she was standing before a blackboard writing on it in large letters: "Boys should not work in the glass industry at night. One year ago, in the glassworks at Salem, N. J., two boys were carrying bottles from the blower to the cooling oven, when, being drunk with sleep, they collided, and their burden of white glass was shivered into a multitude of splinters; some of these particles flew into the eye of one of the boys, destroying it. No law is violated when these boys work at night, or when others are imported to work as they work. Ultimately, work in glass factories will doubtless be prohibited as dangerous for boys under the age of sixteen years."

"And very properly too," said a deep voice behind her.

Miss Patty started, and let her pamphlet and chalk fall to the floor. Mr. Stephen Denner promptly stooped down, found, and restored them to her, retaining her hand just an instant as he did so.

Miss Patty blushed, shrugged her shoulders, and
Alone in the Schoolroom

with a murmured “Pardon me, I must finish this,” turned again to the blackboard.

Seeing that she was not yet prepared to talk to him, Mr. Denner, in his turn, seized another piece of chalk, and turned to a second blackboard.

As he wrote, he walked to and fro, and sometimes his elbow almost touched Miss Patty’s.

She was writing vigorously: “The State of Vermont has fewer illiterate children than any other State.” Then, having written the sentence, she peeped under Mr. Denner’s arm to see what he was so busily putting on his board. He had no pamphlet issued by the friends of children. He must be composing. He was, and Miss Patty read, with a face growing more crimson, “A certain weary traveler was climbing a mountainside. His eyes were on the dusty road. He did not see the flowers growing by the way, until at last a wild rose attracted him by its perfume. He stopped, and his eyes fell on its blushing face. ‘Sweet rose,’ he said, and would have plucked it to cheer him as he went along his lonely way, but the wild rose suddenly put forth thorns—”

Miss Patty began to giggle. “Great long, horrid sharp, naughty, bad thorns,” she said aloud. Mr. Denner turned around softly. “Did you get my roses to-day?”

“Which were yours?” she asked demurely. “I am getting roses from three Mr. Denners now, for Victor has forgiven me.”
The Girl From Vermont

"Who is the third one?" asked her companion sharply.

"I should not have said that," and she bit her lips. "I don't usually tell one man what another sends. Forget it, please."

"Who is the third Mr. Denner that sends you flowers?" asked Mr. Stephen decidedly.

Miss Patty swept him a graceful curtsey. "Your servant, sir; but not your slave."

"It is my brother Augustus," said Mr. Stephen at last.

"Yes," she replied flippantly, "since you must know; your old baby, for you have been a father to him, have you not? Mrs. Skellish says you have."

Mr. Denner turned his head aside. "At last I have found out who Mrs. Skellish's 'middle-aged gent' is."

"Don't worry about it," said Miss Patty kindly. "He won't send any more. I told him yesterday that all his flowers go straight to the Children's Hospital, and he had better send them directly there."

Her suitor's face cleared, and gazing admiringly at her, he said, "Dear Miss Patty——"

"Wait a moment," she said, "there is a great noise outside. Some of the cotton-factory boys must be coming in—suppose you go behind that screen, and we can talk when they are gone."

She pointed to the corner, and Mr. Denner, hurriedly, yet with much dignity, stepped behind the
Alone in the Schoolroom

screen, found an easy chair there, and seated himself in it.

"Well, boys, what is it?" asked Miss Patty, as a number of young men came pouring into the room.

"We've brought him," they said, dragging forward a stranger who was taller than any of them.

"We told you he'd been doggin' you, an' to-night we caught him; you ought to have him arrested."

"Well, Drake, Simon Drake," remarked Miss Patty composedly, "how are you; and if you want to see me, why don't you come up to the door and ask for me, instead of walking about?"

The young man did not answer her, and after a sharp glance at his scowling face, she said to the cotton-factory lads, "Leave me alone with him, boys. He won't talk before you."

They hesitated, and Miss Patty said laughingly, "What is the matter with you?"

"We're afeared he'll do something to hurt you, miss," one of them blurted out.

"In what way?"

"Why, he'd just as soon knock you down and take your purse as look at you, miss," said one of them.

"How would he take my purse?" she asked guilelessly. "Come, now; you try. See, here it is in my pocket."

The young man hesitated until she urged him to come on. She wished to see how a robber attacked a woman, she said.
The Girl From Vermont

"Go on, Jack; go on," his companions said at last, seeing that it would please her; and Jack reluctantly stepped forward.

As his hand went out for the purse, Miss Patty’s arm flashed by him, and he went down like a stone before her.

His companions doubled themselves up with laughter at his amazed face. Picking himself up in a confused way, he put his hand to his neck. "I say, miss, what did you do? I feel as if I had been struck by lightning."

"Do you want to try it again?" she asked.

He shook his head, but one of his friends stepped forward. "Try me, miss; you’ll not down me so easy. Jack wasn’t watchin’ for you."

This time the would-be purse-snatcher was given a sudden twist of the elbow by the sharp Miss Patty. His arm flew up, he uttered a cry of pain, and went sprawling on the ground before her.

"Golly," exclaimed one of the lads, "he knocked himself down. What is that, miss? I say, can’t you teach us?"

"That’s the Japanese art of self-defense," she said laughingly. "You know they are ahead of us in some things. I paid a good round sum to have that taught me."

The boys were roaring with laughter, that seemed to come as an afterthought. To think that slender Miss Patty, with her meek, brown eyes, should successively floor two of their number, was a joke that
Alone in the Schoolroom

once it had got inside their minds, seemed loath to come out.

They pounded the two victims on the back, and went stamping about the room until at last Miss Patty, with a shrewd glance at the unhappy Drake, whose face had not once relaxed, said firmly, 
“Come, boys, leave me; I want to talk to this man.”

They all filed out except one, who stubbornly hung about the door.

Miss Patty, appreciating his thoughtfulness, went up to him and, laying her little hand on his coat-sleeve, said, “Jim, you good old soul, go behind that screen and get the book I left there. You may take it home and read it. It is lying on a small table.”

Jim, as he passed, gave her a bewildered look. He became enlightened, however, as he went behind the screen; and coming out with the book, he said in an undertone, “All right, miss, he’s big enough to take care of Drake—good night;” and he went away with the others.
CHAPTER XXV

THE REAPPEARANCE OF DRAKE

NOW, Drake," said Miss Patty, when they had all gone, and she was apparently alone with the man who had so cruelly treated one of the little children in whose welfare she was interested. "Now, Drake, what do you want with me? Sit down there, and we will have a talk."

The scowling young workman sank into a chair, and stared hard about the room.

"Of course, it is all nonsense for those good fellows to think that you wanted to assault me," said Miss Patty, "you are not such a simpleton; you would gain nothing by it."

"I don't know about that," he said sneeringly.

"Well, what would you gain by snatching my purse, as those boys hinted you might do?"

"I'd get satisfaction," he said in an ugly voice, "for you've ruined me. Before you set every one against me I had a good business as an ironworker. Now all the men are turned agin me, an' the boss—he told me to get out."

"Isn't that lovely!" exclaimed Miss Patty, clasping her hands. "Blessed be Greenport; in one town in this dear old Union you can't beat a child without some of the blows rebounding on yourself."
The Reappearance of Drake

"I'd like to hit some one," said the man suddenly; and he doubled up his fists.
Miss Patty looked at him with fearless eyes. "Hush, brother devil, hush."
"Brother," snarled the man, "and devil; what are you givin' me?"
"Brother, because I too have devilish streaks," said the girl, and she lifted her clasped hands to her breast. "Is not he that hateth his brother a murderer? And I hated you, and I am glad you are being punished, and that is not right."
"Oh, I thought you were perfect," he sneered. "Perfect! no; but never mind me. Let us talk about you. You have not come here prepared to say, 'I have done wrong; I am sorry.' Now, have you?"
"I don't know what I want to say," he returned, twisting about on his chair and screwing up his face like an ugly child's. "I'm all turned upside down. I ain't had work for two weeks, an' my money's all gone, an'—"
He paused, and seemed unable to continue.
"And you remembered, that even in the midst of my wrath that first day I saw you, I told you that if ever you wanted a friend you might come to me?"
He nodded, and his face cleared.
"Well, I am ready to help you; but there are conditions," she said.
He stared at her without speaking.
"I am not one to believe in unwise coddling of criminals," said Miss Patty, "for you are a criminal, though the law did not put you in jail; pardon me, the law did. The administrators, the guilty administrators of the law did not. Now, I could pet you and comfort you, and tell you what a poor abused fellow you are, to have been driven from your work by public opinion—not mine, remember that. I could do all that, I say, but I will not, for I should be lying if I did. You are a bad fellow, and you deserve your punishment."

"You're rough on me," muttered Drake; but he did not lift his voice very high, being anxious to hear what was coming.

"Your appeal to me is only partly an act of contrition," said Miss Patty. "You are desperate, and I, recognizing in you a fellow-sinner, must subdue my own natural impulse to have you still further punished, and must do something to help you."

Drake's eyes gleamed, and he raised his head.

"You are like a beast, poor creature," continued Miss Patty. "You are hungry and thirsty. Of the finer feelings of the soul you have not the faintest conception. Now, tell me truly, Simon Drake; for though I hate your sin, I am interested in yourself; do you not feel even one little bit of shame for the way you treated that poor innocent baby, for he was scarcely more?"

"I never laid a hand on him," said the man in an almost inaudible voice.
"There!" exclaimed Miss Patty, "I told you so; still lying. Drake, you have got to tell me the truth before I help you. Come, now, be frank. Did not you and your wife beat the child to within an inch of his life?"

The young man looked cunningly about him; then he said, with unexpected acquiescence, "Let's leave Bess out, miss—she's a woman. Yes, I used to maul him when my tempers was on me."

"Your tempers? You have, then, always been violent?"

"Yes, miss; my father knocked me round when I was a boy, an' I can't seem to help knockin' other boys round."

"Poor Drake! you poor, unhappy man; you had better sit down and write this confession of yours."

"Oh, no, miss," he said, backing away from her. "Oh, no; you don't ketch me that way."

"But I have your spoken words."

Drake wriggled uneasily. "You don't want a poor man to sign himself away, miss?"

"I want him to do what is for his good; and you might as well do it, Drake, for you would have to stand by your confession."

Drake gave a meaning glance about the room.

"Do you mean to say you would repudiate your spoken words? Come now, Drake, try to be an honest man."

"I ain't a-goin' to put my hand to no writin'," he said. "Bess would blame me."
The Girl from Vermont

“Very well,” said Miss Patty, coolly. “Then I can have nothing more to do with you—good evening.”

Drake slowly turned toward the door.

“Good-bye, Drake,” she said softly.

He looked over his shoulder, and said, “What will you do for me if I confess?”

“I make no promises,” said Miss Patty. “I will not bribe you.”

Drake, torn by conflicting emotions, said half-aloud, “If I go, things stay as they be. We was alone here. If she says I’ve been confessin’, I can say she’s lyin’. She’s got no witness agin me.”
YES, she has," said a deep voice; and Mr. Denner, to Drake's amazement, stepped from behind the screen, while Mrs. Skellish, to Miss Patty's amazement, appeared from the doorway, where she had been listening with her ear at the keyhole.

"I'll have the law on you," Mrs. Skellish exclaimed; and walking up to the astonished Drake, she shook her fist in his face. "Of course you're guilty, you brute; and when you was a-beatin' that poor baby wasn't you a-beatin' Mr. Denner there in his own flesh an' blood, the baby bein' his nephew's child; an' I know a man too, that once saw you throw poor Archie down, an' he says now he'll go into court and swear it too."

"Who is this woman?" asked Mr. Denner of Miss Patty.

"The caretaker," she replied, and she came a little nearer to him.

"My good woman," said Mr. Denner, approaching her, "come aside; I wish to ask you some questions;" and he took her to the other end of the room.

Drake, confused and humbled, turned to Miss Patty. "I might as well give in, miss. I'm all
The Girl from Vermont

broke up anyway. I've been pretendin' to be bolder than I be; I wish to heaven I'd never set eyes on that poor young one! He's brought me only bad luck, anyway."

Miss Patty's face glowed. "Why, Drake; you're beginning to be sorry. Now write, if you care to, but remember it must be of your own free will."

"Give me some paper and a pen, miss," he said, sitting down at a desk. "I'll make a clean breast of it—the Lord knows I want rest. I ain't slept a wink for three nights."

After a time, Mr. Denner, having dismissed Mrs. Skellish, walked toward the absorbed Drake, who was sprawling over the child's desk. His face was so stern that Miss Patty, going up to him, said pleadingly, "Let me deal with this man alone."

Mr. Denner's face softened as he looked at her; yet he said decidedly: "It is no task for a woman. You go behind the screen, and I will settle with him."

"No; you go," insisted Miss Patty.

"How will you reward me if I do?" asked Mr. Denner persistently.

Miss Patty glanced at Drake, who, in the agonies of composition, was totally oblivious of their presence.

"Will you give me the right to deal alone with such wretches in the future for you?" asked Mr. Denner, keeping one eye on Drake and one on Miss Patty.

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A Witness Appears for Miss Patty

The girl was deeply moved, and felt that this was no occasion for coquetry. She raised her slender right arm toward the ceiling, stood an instant with a far-away look, then bringing down the accusing or invocatory hand, she let it slip into Mr. Denner's generous palm.

He bent his head over it, kissed it, then walking behind the screen, sat down with enough scraping of chair legs to enable even the oblivious Drake to know that he still was there.

Miss Patty, looking over Drake's shoulder, smiled slightly; then sitting down at a desk opposite him, she took up a pen and began hastily scratching over the paper.

"Drake," she said suddenly, "listen to what I have written. 'To David Green, St. Peters, Vt. My dear father: The bearer of this letter is a man called Simon Drake. He has been used to work in an iron foundry, but is willing to do other things. Kindly give him a position where you can watch him and be interested in him. He has had an unhappy experience here, but I think he will do better amid new scenes and among new associates. Your loving daughter, Patty.'"

Drake sprang up. You're willing to send me away, miss?"

"Yes—in a way; you will be a prisoner on parole. I shall tell my father that. If you lay hands on a child or an animal in St. Peters, you will be arrested; and, Drake, if you are tried again, you will
The Girl from Vermont

be convicted. There will be a perjury charge, you know."

Drake did not look overcome by this intelligence, as she expected he would. "Will your father tell any one about me?" he asked suddenly.

"Not a soul; and I advise you to trust him fully. Come now, Drake, brace up; try to be a good man; cut loose from your evil ways; pray heaven for a humble heart. You are stubborn and wilful now."

Drake's ugly manner had fallen from him. He was sheepish and overcome, and evidently at a loss what to say. At last he ejaculated, "Well, miss, I ain't a-goin' to talk, but I'll try not to do anythin' to make you ashamed of me. I guess Bess'll be thankful."

The mention of his wife seemed to upset him, and fairly flinging his confession at Miss Patty, he rushed from the room.

"Repentance manifests itself in various ways," said Miss Patty to Mr. Denner, who had lost patience, and was coming out into the room. That poor fellow has been hounded to it by dire necessity, but I think he will get on now. He seems really touched, and he is evidently fond of his wife. That indicates some good in him."

Mr. Denner suddenly drew her toward him. "Don't worry further about him, dear child; you have done your duty, and more too."

Miss Patty's head sank on his shoulder. "In ancient times," she said, "when ladies were in
A Witness Appears for Miss Patty

trouble, they summoned a champion. I feel that I have found one."

"You are a pretty doughty young warrior yourself," said Mr. Denner with a smile, "and your little will is like steel. I foresee that I shall have some fine encounters with you."
CHAPTER XXVII

A CALL FROM MR. AUGUSTUS DENNER

BOtheration!" exclaimed Miss Patty a few minutes later, "if there isn't some one knocking at the door again! You go behind the screen, Stephen Denner. I will go see who it is;" and she went nimbly toward the door.

"I refuse to go behind the screen," said Mr. Denner wilfully. "I have played eavesdropper long enough. It is something new for me, and I don't like it."

"Then go through that hatroom to the schoolroom beyond," said Miss Patty, with her hand on the door-handle.

The next instant, Mr. Augustus Denner, hat in hand, was bowing politely before her. "My dear young lady, I saw the light in the schoolroom, and thinking you might be here alone, I thought I would come in and offer to escort you home."

"How kind of you," said Miss Patty demurely, "but I already have an escort. However, will you not come in and rest? We are far from your home. Take this armchair, the benches are not so comfortable."

"But, my dear young lady, you take the chair."

"Oh, no, sir," she said smilingly; "I cede the
A Call from Mr. Augustus Denner

chair to your crown of glory," and she glanced appreciatively at his thick shock of white hair.

Mr. Augustus outwardly beamed with pleasure, though he was inwardly much annoyed by this reference to his age.

"These gray hairs bring more honor than I deserve," he said gently. "Now, my brother Stephen is only four years younger than I am——"

"Four," murmured Miss Patty to herself; "ten, Mr. Augustus—ten."

"And he has not a gray hair," continued Mr. Augustus.

"Ah! what matters the hair if the heart keeps young," said Miss Patty amiably.

Mr. Stephen Denner, who had lingered an instant to see who Miss Patty's caller was, saw that she was tired and annoyed by his brother's visit, and to keep herself in countenance had put on a slightly affected manner. He had seen her frank, girlish, wilful, and decidedly angry before, but never affected. It amused him, and he continued to observe her through a crack in the screen, half inclined to surprise his brother by stepping out.

"And how have your poor children been getting on to-day?" Mr. Augustus was asking smoothly.

Miss Patty had sat down on a bench a little removed from her caller, and as he spoke she slightly wrinkled her pretty eyebrows. "A thousand pardons, Mr. Denner; but will you please not call them poor children?"
"If not, why not?"
"The children in this neighborhood are not all poor, and I believe in the rights of rich children as well as the rights of the poor. I work for all."
"That is noble in you," remarked Mr. Augustus appreciatively.
"All children have rights," continued Miss Patty. "Every school child has a right to his schoolhouse and his yard. I don't care what his station in life is. Children are gregarious and social in their habits, just like grown people. They like to get together and enjoy themselves, and they ought to be allowed to do so under proper supervision."
"Ah! children are a great comfort," exclaimed Mr. Augustus with an air that to his brother, who knew him so well, proclaimed a strong wish to change the subject of conversation. "I have no children of my own, but Victor is such a good boy—such a devoted nephew; my wife and I love him as if he were a son."
"He is a good young man," said Miss Patty softly.
"He is very like his mother, my late sister-in-law. She was a saint if ever there was one."
"Do you not think he is very much like his father?" asked Miss Patty in her most winning manner.
"Physically, yes; mentally, no. My brother is a different sort of a man."
At this remark, Mr. Stephen Denner tiptoed
The children in this neighborhood...
precipitately out of hearing. Now, that he himself had become the subject of conversation, he could listen no longer.

"Your brother seems to bear a very high reputation here," Miss Patty said aloud demurely; while she added mentally, "there is a chance for you to slip in a compliment too, you naughty man, but I am sure you won't do it."

"I believe you were never in Greenport before," Mr. Augustus said, with an evident desire to give the conversation a turn in still another direction.

"Never," said Miss Patty in her sweetest tones, though at the same time she made a decided effort to check a yawn of fatigue.

"Then you do not know very much about Greenport people?" observed Mr. Augustus.

"Very little—I have had no leisure to go about; but now that I have an assistant, I shall not be so hard worked."

"And you will learn all our Greenport stories—our local jokes, and mysteries, and gossip," said Mr. Augustus jocularly.

Miss Patty smiled a little faded, tired smile. "I expect to—I love a good dish of gossip when I have time to discuss it thoroughly."

"By the way," continued Mr. Augustus, in dulcet tones, "what became of that poor little abused child that you were befriending?"

"He is in an infants' home," said Miss Patty, "quite safe and happy."
The Girl from Vermont

"O Augustus, go home," muttered Mr. Stephen, who had crept once more from his place of concealment to see whether his brother had left the room. "Miss Patty, why don't you send the old goose to the right-about? What is he asking now—'Did they ever find out who the child's parents were?' The girl is not a detective."

"I will tell you something, Mr. Augustus," the girl was saying in a mysterious voice: "The day of the trial, Mr. Victor picked up a piece of paper containing the name of the real father of the child, but he would not tell me who it was."

Mr. Augustus looked surprised, then thoughtful, and finally said in a peculiar voice, "Naturally he would not tell you."

"Not tell me; why not? I am very much interested in the child."

"The very depth of your interest would keep Victor from telling you," said Mr. Augustus.

"The poor boy was certainly very much agitated," replied Miss Patty.

"That causes me no astonishment," said her hearer coolly, "he had reason to be agitated."

At this instant, there was a decided rustle behind them, and Miss Patty, saying with an enchanting smile, "Excuse me, I have forgotten my handkerchief," went behind the screen, as if to get it.

On arriving there, she shook both her fists at her restless admirer, and by expressive gestures gave him to understand that she wished to have Mr.
A Call from Mr. Augustus Denner

Augustus a little longer to herself. Mr. Stephen slipped into the passage between the two school-rooms with a resigned face, and stepping out, she remarked, “You were saying that Mr. Victor would be interested in the child——”

“I was, and I repeat it; that child is nearly connected with Victor.”

“He is too young to have had a secret marriage,” said Miss Patty cautiously.

“Yes; far, far too young.”

Miss Patty fell into a reverie, and Mr. Augustus did not interrupt it for some time. Then he asked, with an air of great frankness and sincerity, “I suppose you often see Victor’s father, my brother?”

“Why, yes,” Miss Patty admitted modestly, “I saw him this evening.”

“Indeed?” replied Mr. Augustus, and he too fell into a reverie.

Presently emerging from his silence, he said, “Pardon my frankness, but I am interested in you——”

“So kind in you,” murmured Miss Patty; “my work for children brings me such worthy friends; your wife too has been charming. I delight in praising you to her; it is such a joy to a wife when a husband shows an interest in right and proper things.”

Mr. Augustus switched from his main line of conversation, entered the sidetrack Miss Patty had opened for him. “Yes, indeed,” he said with a
The Girl From Vermont

happy sigh, "I am blessed in my wife. She is a noble woman, and a broad one. When I see excel-
lencies in other women or men, she joins with me in praise of them."

"How delightful to have a broad-minded wife!" exclaimed Miss Patty. "I should think a narrow-
minded one would drive one frantic."

Mr. Augustus cast down his eyes. "Well, as I was saying," he continued, "I take a warm inter-
est in you, and I was going to remark that I have a somewhat delicate mission to perform with regard to you that I hope you will take in good part."

Miss Patty bowed sweetly. "You have given me proofs of strong disinterestedness by your gifts to my pupils. I shall appreciate anything you say at its true value."

Mr. Augustus bowed ironically; then, slightly mincing his words as he spoke, he went on, "I have strong reasons to believe that one very dear to me is beginning to take a warm interest in you, but it is one whose admiration can bring nothing but grief to himself; for you, if you knew certain things, would scorn his slightest advances."

Miss Patty's eyes narrowed as she looked steadily at him; but she too spoke in a delicate and hesitating manner. "I think I may infer from what you say that you refer to your brother Stephen."

"I do." And Mr. Augustus bowed again. "In my intense interest in you both, I see nothing but disaster in a proposed union between you. I know
A Call from Mr. Augustus Denner

how determined my brother is when he once makes up his mind, and I thought I would warn you in time."

"Did it not cause a great struggle in your mind," asked Miss Patty evenly, "for you to resolve to breathe even an insinuation against your younger brother; one whom you must have felt bound to shield and protect through life?"

"It was a struggle," said Mr. Augustus modestly, "but I need not tell you that there is such a thing as duty, and we are bound to obey its behests."

Miss Patty’s face was preternaturally grave as she stared at him without speaking, though inwardly she was soliloquizing, "It is no harm to lead such a perverse old man as you are to the brink of a precipice."

Aloud, she said softly, "These dreadful things of which your brother has been guilty—I suppose you would rather not mention them?"

"Well, not to a lady; between men one might."

"Oh! I see; there are things men do too bad for some women to hear about, but not too bad for other women to suffer; that is not my doctrine. However, let it pass. Now, your brother is a different sort of man, and when I see him, I am going to ask him to tell me all the worst things he has done in his life."

"My dear young lady!" interposed Mr. Augustus in horror-stricken tones.

"Don’t be nervous about it," said Miss Patty,
with a reassuring smile, "I have practised this for some time. When I was younger, I used to cry over storybooks where the belief in some falsehood or trickery on the part of a friend ruined some other person's life. I used to say to myself, 'Why did not the two interested in each other get together and talk it over?'"

"I beg of you, do not put this plan in practice in the present case," said Mr. Augustus. "You don't know my brother."

"Oh, yes I do, slightly, and I hope to become better acquainted."

"Will nothing change your purpose?" asked the surprised man.

"Nothing," she said, shaking her head cheerfully. "Shall I mention you as authority for these stories?"

"No, indeed."

"I believe that you mean well," said Miss Patty artlessly, "but you have been misled. How glad you will be for me to clear your brother's reputation! I believe I can do it even now; stop, let me think," and she put her hand to her head. "Where is Mrs. Skellish? I will find her."

After allowing a sufficient interval of time to elapse for the nimble caretaker to get away from the keyhole, Miss Patty went to the door and called, "Mrs. Skellish! Mrs. Skellish! can you come here?" Then leaving the door wide open, she went back to the amazed Mr. Augustus.
A Call from Mr. Augustus Denner

"I understood you to mean," she said in a low voice, "that you bring no accusation against your brother's business reputation—it is simply his morals in private life that are at fault."

"Yes—yes," said Mr. Augustus; and his ruddy face grew a shade paler, "but surely we need discuss it no further. These matters are best not talked over."

"I don't agree with you," said Miss Patty amiably. "I believe in searching for the truth, and finding it, and knowing it. Then one does not walk in the dark. Here comes Mrs. Skellish!"
CHAPTER XXVIII

MRS. SKELLISH GIVES EVIDENCE

The caretaker arrived breathless from her run upstairs, and down again. On seeing Mr. Augustus she did not look surprised, and after giving him a sullen nod, went to stand near Miss Patty.

"Mrs. Skellish," said the girl gravely, "I know you are interested in the Denner family, and know a good deal about them. This gentleman is grieved to hear of certain insinuations against his brother, Mr. Stephen Denner. He is anxious to clear them up. Now, as some hint has been given as to a connection between the child Archie and Mr. Stephen Denner, I wish you to tell us what you know about the true parentage of the child."

"There stands his grandpa," exclaimed Mrs. Skellish, pointing a long forefinger at Mr. Augustus.

He started slightly, lost a little more of his rubicund color, and stared at her without speaking. Then, recovering himself, he turned to Miss Patty, and asked the question his brother had asked earlier in the evening, "Who is this woman?"

"She is the caretaker of this schoolhouse," replied Miss Patty, and an honest woman. "Go on, Mrs. Skellish; I wish Mr. Stephen Denner fully exonerated."
Mrs. Skellish Gives Evidence

"Yes, sir," continued Mrs. Skellish wagging her hand, "you be Archie's grandpa, and also Danny's—an' you know it."

"This woman is crazy," said Mr. Augustus positively, and taking up his hat, he started toward the door.

"Oh, no, she is not," said Miss Patty coolly. "Your joy at hearing the children given a legal status has upset your judgment; stay and hear more good news, sir."

"An' your son Archie was married lawful to my second cousin's niece," continued Mrs. Skellish; "so his children ain't got nothin' to do with Mr. Stephen."

Mr. Augustus, despite his best efforts, could not keep from looking crestfallen, and Mrs. Skellish, who had accustomed herself to dislike him bitterly, was not disposed to lose the occasion of triumphing over him. She knew too, that she had Miss Patty's good-will; she had found out that the girl could control what were to her vast sums of money, so she was sure that she did not imperil her financial situation in speaking freely. In addition to that, Mrs. Skellish had a woman's heart, and she had been deeply shocked by Mr. Augustus Denner's treatment of his only son.

"Yes, sir," she said, with her hands on her hips, "you go around the town a-smilin' an' smilin', an' folks think well of you, but I say you've made a pretty mess of your life. It warn't no good to give
you the name o' Solomon when you was young, you—"

"Solomon!" exclaimed Miss Patty, "was this man ever called Solomon?"

"Yes, miss," said Mrs. Skellish soothingly, "by way of a joke. He warn't no real Solomon."

"And were you ever in St. Peters, Vermont?" asked Miss Patty, disregarding her, and still staring at the silent Mr. Augustus.

"Yes, he were," said Mrs. Skellish, "and there were somethin' queer about his stay there; but that I never found out, Mr. Stephen not bein' one to talk much."

"Then I have a score to settle with you on my account," said Miss Patty, with blazing eyes. "You are the man who had the cruelty to defraud one of the best men that ever lived—my dear father."

Mr. Augustus, feeling that he must put on a bold front to brave all these charges, raised his head.

"Tut, tut, my dear young lady. The woman is rambling. I never was in Vermont in my life."

Miss Patty glanced at Mrs. Skellish, who shook her head vigorously, while her lips formed a good big round word—"Liar!"

"You say you never were in Vermont," continued Miss Patty; "then why did you restore the money, of which you defrauded my father?"

"I restore money!" exclaimed Mr. Augustus; and here his astonishment was so sincere that Miss Patty was forced to believe him.
Mrs. Skellish Gives Evidence

"Then it was your brother," she said; "your good, noble brother Stephen, whom you have been trying to traduce. Go, sir, before I say too much. Let this be your last call on me. When I wish to see you, I will send for you. Take this with you as a parting thought. The man you came here to-night to slander, and to prevent me from marrying for reasons best known to yourself, is to be my husband. My dearest task in life will be to drive from his mind bitter reflections on the subject of a brother who could cast off his only son, and allow his young grandchildren to become objects of charity."

Mr. Augustus, without a word, stepped carefully out to the hall. Mrs. Skellish followed him. "Don't you feel well in your broadcloth," she said tauntingly, "when you thinks of poor Danny working in the cotton mill!"

The man stopped suddenly. "Woman," he said, not harshly, nor angrily, but with the utmost incredulity, "you don't mean to say that one of those children is in the cotton mill?"

"Yes, I do say it; he's a workin' like a slave; night shift now. It's a wonder he don't break his little limbs among all them wheels!"

"He shall be taken out," said Mr. Augustus hurriedly; "I will see to it."

"You needn't worry your good self," she said scornfully. "Mr. Victor, he has been afore you, an' the child is to leave just as soon as the boss can get another to fasten ends in his place. They've got
The Girl From Vermont

to have a little feller, an' the children dies off, so there ain't a plenty. Good night to you, sir. Pleasant dreams!” Then, seeing that the schoolroom door was closed, she delicately forbore any more keyhole work, and went upstairs to her room.

Miss Patty, standing motionless, was repeating over and over again in a hushed voice, “What depravity, what awful depravity!”

“May I come in now?” asked her companion in a dissatisfied voice. “Nothing but your strict command has kept me here. I have positively suffered.”

Miss Patty took him by the hand and led him into the room. “Thank heaven, I have found a man who can obey,” she said absently. Then she went on in a higher key. “Listen! I have something to tell you,” and she related the part of his family history that had just been unfolded to her.

When she finished, she said in a surprised voice, “And you are not angry?”

“It is such an old story to me,” he said wearily, “it seems as if I have lost the power to feel on the subject of my brother.”

“Has he been always like this?” inquired Miss Patty.

“Always. There seemed to be something wrong in his make-up. As a man, he is what he was as a boy. He is lively and pleasant with every one, devoting himself to social pleasures, making friends all the time, and rarely losing one; every ill and burden in life seems to slip from his shoulders.”

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Mrs. Skellish Gives Evidence

"But this lying; this neglect of his own family," said Miss Patty.

"That is the worst part of his nature. He was proud of Archie, his son, but the boy made him angry, and he turned him out of doors."

"And his frightful egotism, and his slander of you," pursued Miss Patty wrathfully.

"He doesn't want you to marry me," said Mr. Denner; "he fears you will cut off some of his supplies, and it takes a good deal of money to keep him going."

"Do you love him?" asked Miss Patty in an awed voice.

Mr. Denner shook his head. "Not much; that sort of a life dries up family affection. At the same time, the blood tie keeps us together. I have reviewed the whole matter in my mind. Owing to me, Augustus keeps up a semblance of respectability, whereas, were I to withdraw my support, he would naturally drift into the criminal class."

"I reverence you for your patience!" exclaimed Miss Patty.

"It has become a matter of habit. Many families have such burdens to bear. For the protection of society, we must keep as many men and women as possible from becoming criminals."

"Do you suppose my father could influence him?" asked Miss Patty. "Suppose we send him up to St. Peters for a while?"

There was nothing amusing in her tone or her re-
mark, but for some reason or other, it sent the weary man beside her off into fits of laughter.

"O Patty," he exclaimed, "you are a jewel! But your poor father; let him struggle with Drake for a while. You and I will look after Augustus. Now, let me put your cloak on you, and take you home. It is getting late."

Putting on the cloak afforded an excellent opportunity for an embrace of the enchanting little figure inside of it, and Mr. Denner, in spite of his worry, was just availing himself of this opportunity, when there was a rattle of the doorhandle, and Miss Travers and Victor appeared.

"Do you know what time it is?" exclaimed Victor, "you dissipated schoolmistress—why, hello! father——" and he started back.

Mr. Denner still stood, holding the cloak in his hand.

"Just wrapping her up?" said Victor suspiciously; "here, let me do it."

"No, sir," said his father, and pushing him aside he completed his task of enveloping Miss Patty, who stood blushing furiously, and for once in her life speechless.

Miss Travers had a woman's eye, and calmly going up to the silent Patty, she put her hand under her chin, and looked earnestly into her face. Then she turned and nodded to Victor.

"It ith true; congratulationths," and she extended a hand to Mr. Denner.
Mrs. Skellish Gives Evidence

“Yes; I am going to marry your father,” said Miss Patty, looking straight into Victor’s eyes, “and I hope that you will prove a dutiful son.”

Victor heroically opened his arms. “Mother!” he said, with a comical face, and he enfolded Miss Patty in a boyish, bearish hug.

Then, mischievously humming the air of a wedding march, he motioned Miss Patty and his father to precede him and Miss Travers to the street.

“Mrs. Skellish,” he called out, when that good woman came rattling down the staircase, “you are about to lose your school-teacher. She is going to marry my father.”

Mrs. Skellish did not seem surprised. “I mistrusted as much,” she called out, as she stood dangling her keys.

“Yes, mistrusted through the keyhole,” said the young man to Miss Travers, “but that is an amiable weakness, and the only blot on an otherwise estimable character.”

“When the party of four reached the street on which was situated the front entrance of the cotton factory, Mr. Denner, looking down at Miss Patty, said, “I should like to carry you right away from here to-night.”

Miss Patty, who was silently clinging to his arm, looked up affectionately, “Why do you say that?”

“I am anxious to get you away from this environment—these grimy streets and dirty people. I know you hate filth and squalor.”
The Girl from Vermont

Miss Patty smiled. "How well you understand me! Most people think I like this sort of thing."

"Like it?" replied Mr. Denner, "how extraordinary! A girl brought up as you were, in beautiful country surroundings, could not be happy in such an ill-favored place as this."

"I have often puzzled over my friends' remarks," said Miss Patty. "They say, 'Small credit to Patty for working in poor districts of cities. She loves the life.' I don't love it. I hate it."

"Then the more merit to you for continuing here. You are trying to raise the neighborhood to your ideal. You believe it is possible to have neat cottages for workmen, with small gardens—"

Miss Patty pressed his arm, "And pretty flower beds—"

"Or large tenement buildings," went on Mr. Denner, "with window-gardening, and decent rooms inside—"

"Why," interrupted Miss Patty, with another friendly pressure of his arm, "you think my thoughts right along after me."

"But you won't object to living in the west end with me, will you?" inquired Mr. Denner, with some anxiety in his tones.

"In your lovely big house—oh! no, not if you will let me come up here every day. Stephen, do you know it is a dreadfully unromantic thing to say," and lowering her voice she looked behind her, "and I would not have that scamp of a boy hear me, for
he would tease me so, but in finding you, I feel as if one poor old tired workhorse had found another poor old tired workhorse, and they were glad to be able to find some consolation for their lot by jogging along life's journey together.”

Mr. Denner tried not to laugh, but despite his best efforts, he, being in a blissful mood, burst into uncontrollable amusement.

“Come on, Miss Travers,” said Victor to the demure Trixy, who was talking gaily with him, “let’s catch up and see what those two are doing. I bet you dad has been talking tall nonsense to his lady-love.”

“Can your father talk nonthenth?” inquired Miss Travers as she hurried on beside him.

“Yes, I guess he can. He’ll talk it to Patty anyway.”

“I thought you had all the nonthenth of the family in you,” observed Miss Trixy demurely.

“Now, Miss Travers,” he said protestingly; then he paused. “What is the matter with Patty?”

Mr. Denner had stopped laughing. Miss Patty, slipping her hand from his arm, had stopped in front of the cotton factory, and was looking through the iron gates into the yard and up to the building.

It was a busy season, and the factory was running night and day. The huge chimneys were belching smoke, and hurried figures of men, women, and children could be seen passing quickly to and fro behind the dirty windows.
“There are children in there,” said Miss Patty in a dull voice, “little children trotting to and fro, watching the machinery that it does not catch their sleep-laden limbs, keeping tired eyes on the strict foreman——”

Her voice died away, and Victor, after a glance at Miss Travers for his inspiration, began angrily: “It is a blot on our civilization, this employment of child labor. Fools, that the manufacturers are. Do they not see that by using up the rising race they will in time lose strong men and women to work for them? Look at England! During the Boer war she found that her army was insufficient and weak. The Colonists had to do the heavy fighting for her, and why? Her great manufactories have sapped the strength of her former laboring people. The jaws of her mills have crushed the life from her plowboys. England has got to wake up, and so have we,” and like an apt pupil expecting praise from a teacher, he glanced again toward Miss Travers.

She gave him a smile; then, without speaking, pointed toward Miss Patty.

The girl was trying to shake the iron gates. “I want little Danny,” she exclaimed; “he is in there. Why don’t you get him out for me?”

“Wait until the day after to-morrow, my dear child,” said Mr. Denner soothingly. “Unfortunately, the foreman is a man I once discharged from my employ, and he hates me. He vows that Danny
When a man can mend a river.

While the high children learn an old play.
Mrs. Skellish Gives Evidence

cannot be spared till he gets a substitute, but that will be in two nights from now."

"Another child," said Miss Patty, "another one offered up to Moloch;" then, pointing to the wreaths of smoke circling about the great chimneys, she went on in a low voice, "and the smoke of their torment ascendeth forever."

"Whew! that's tragic!" said Victor to Miss Travers.

"Yeth, Patty is tragic," she said lispingly. "Listen, and I will thay thomething lighter for you," and with her blonde head on one side, and in a low voice, she repeated to the interested Victor the lines of the old darkey who summed up the philosophy of the child-labor problem.

"I heah de chillun readin'
'Bout de worl' a turnin' 'roun',
Till my head giths thorter dithy,
Ath I than' upon de groun'.

"But let her keep a turnin',
It 'twill bring a better day,
When a man can mek a livin',
While hith chillun learn an' play."
CHAPTER XXIX

THE SCHOOLEYARD PARTY

COME on, dad,” called Victor gaily, “it’s time to go and see our girls. Are you dressed up enough? Patty said we were to wear evening rigs,” and he thrust his head in his father’s study, where Mr. Denner lay in an arm-chair dreamily smoking a cigar.

“Did she? I had forgotten,” and Mr. Denner started up.

“Surely you did not forget about her school-yard party,” said Victor in an injured voice. “Why, I’ve been up there all day with an army of men. We have a regular forest transplanted there, and Patty has had that dark old yard lighted at her own expense. Cute little colored globes, Chinese lanterns, and so on. Hurry up, dad! I want to be there when the show begins; I’m one of the masters of ceremonies. Crowe, and Hopkins, and Wilson, and Standish, and a lot of other young fellows and girls of our set are going up, and we were all ordered to put on our best duds to please the cotton-factory people. I tell you we are going to do it up brown.”

Mr. Denner got up, laid down his cigar, and said, “Must I put on an evening suit?”
The Schoolyard Party

“Yes, sir; sure—your second-best one will do. Make haste, now.”

Mr. Denner ran upstairs like a boy, and in a few minutes came down and joined Victor.

“I told Tom to bring around the carriage,” said Victor, “the streetcars don’t suit a bit to go in the cotton-factory district. Poor people can walk. It doesn’t matter if they do get tired.”

“Why, Victor, my boy, you are getting to be quite a Socialist,” said Mr. Denner, as he stepped into the surrey waiting for them.

“No, sir; not a Socialist, nor a radical, nor—well, I don’t know what I am; I guess I want to form a new party—a Protectionist, perhaps. We’ve got such a great lot of people that want looking after, little children, ineffectives—”

“What do you understand by ineffectives?”

“Worn-outs, physical and mental degenerates. They can’t work; and I tell you, sir, it all comes from neglect of childhood. Little ones are stunted, diseased, and made to work hard. What kind of parents do they prove in their turn?”

“Victor,” said his father suddenly, “you did very well at elocution, didn’t you, while you were in college?”

“Pretty well,” said the young man modestly.

“Well, look here; I want you to keep it up. I would give half what I own if I were a good public speaker. I wasn’t trained to it. Now, my boy, you pay attention to the matter of oratory. No Ameri-
The Girl from Vermont

can boy knows what position he may be called upon to fill. Be ready for it; you may make your mark as a public speaker along practical lines."

"All right, dad," said Victor meekly, "Miss Travers was telling me something like this only yesterday;" and he fell into a train of thought that kept him occupied until the carriage rolled quickly by the cotton factory.

"Oh, here we are," said Victor, "and late too! That's bad. Make haste, dad," and springing out of the carriage the instant it stopped, he hurried in the schoolyard gate.

Mr. Denner followed in a more leisurely manner, looking about him as he did so. The whole square of the schoolyard had been transformed. "It's wonderful what money will do," the merchant soliloquized. "My Patty has made a pretty hole in her purse by this day's doings," and he gazed about at the scores of transplanted forest trees, the boxes of greenhouse plants and flowering shrubs, the tents and booths, the pretty tables and rustic benches.

"I thought that if my children could not go to the country, I would bring the country to them," said a low voice beside him, and turning he saw what Mrs. Skellish called "his own true love with the nut-brown hair."

"Good evening, Patty," he said with his lips, but his eyes gave a more eloquent message, as he glanced shyly at her.
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"You look afraid of me, Mr. Stephen," she said mischievously.

"I never saw you dressed up before," he returned. "I am afraid of a woman 'with all her bravery on.'"

She slipped off her white cloak, and hung it over her arm. "The evening is warm," she said, "and I know my gown is pretty."

"What is it made of?" asked Mr. Denner in an awed voice.

"White lace, over silk," she said laughingly. "Come, let me show you about," and moving skilfully among the crowds of working people who respectfully made way for her, she kept pointing out further changes to Mr. Denner.

"See how well the old schoolhouse looks. I have it well lighted for once, and four rooms are fitted up for supper rooms."

Mr. Denner glanced up approvingly at the old building. Bunting and flags were displayed about its front, and long gay strips of carpeting hung from the windows.

"Don't you like this kind of a ball?" asked Miss Patty. "I have got tired of the other kind, where society people entertain society people."

"How do you prevent overcrowinging here this evening?" inquired Mr. Denner.

"Just as you would do if you were giving a large entertainment. I had invitations sent out, and there are policemen at the gates. I don't believe
in encouraging bad manners in the poor or the rich. Then, if I think there are any left-overs, I will make another party."

"This must have cost you a great sum, Patty. Let me help you pay the bills?"

"Not yet," she said with a blush. "At present I have my father, with his generous heart and his fat bankbook behind me. Now I must speak to the two bands, they are to play alternately. See, there is our dancing platform between them."

Mr. Denner, with increased admiration for his fiancée’s executive ability, watched her gliding among the crowd of people; then, as he lost sight of her, he wandered away in search of Victor.

He soon came in sight of him, laughing and joking with a set of his own friends—gay girls with brothers and lovers from the fashionable west end.

Mr. Denner stood aside, and keenly observed the effect of this gaily plumed flock among the more soberly dressed residents of the vicinity. Was there any ugly envy and jealousy visible?

He did not see any. He saw frank admiration, long stares of curiosity, and presently, thanks to Victor, a series of introductions, particularly among the younger set of the cotton-factory men and women, and Victor’s own dearest friends.

"Now, children," said a sudden laughing voice, "the music is to begin. Partners for dancing, please," and Miss Patty stepped among them, and clapped her hands as if to drive them away.
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"And," she added, going quickly among Victor's set, "don't one of you dare dance with another one of you. Dance with the neighborhood people."

Mr. Denner grinned broadly, then burst into a laugh, as Miss Patty, having driven all her flock away, came toward him.

"Isn't this fun?" she said, gaily looking up into his face. "Come and see the dancing."

"Why should not we take part?" he said. "I used to dance well."

"Why not?" laughed Miss Patty, "why, we should have opened the ball. Dear me! I should have arranged to have our notables dance the first set of lancers. I never thought of it; well, one must forget something," and she laughed merrily.

"I don't know when I have been so happy," she said; "I am so happy that I know something is going to happen. I have been able to-day to put the cotton factory out of my mind. I haven't thought of it once."

"That is right," said Mr. Denner heartily. "It worries me to have you worry. You know, Patty, that under certain conditions, factory life can be made a reasonably healthful employment for men and women."

"Yes, yes; I know that," she said quickly. "I don't object to men and women being employed during reasonable hours. It is the child labor that wears my soul and body to pieces. I absolutely suffer with the little creatures. I cannot sleep at
night sometimes for thinking of the children in the Southern cotton mills. There the evil is much greater than here."

"There is no room for us," said Mr. Denner, "that platform is too crowded now. Let us go back to the trees and those comfortable chairs."

Miss Patty took his arm, and together they threaded their way among groups of men and women. Very often she stopped to talk to them, particularly when there was a baby in the party.

"You never saw perambulators at a ball before, Stephen?" she asked.

"Never," he replied with emphasis.

"These women had either to bring their babies or stay at home," continued Miss Patty, "so we had a lot of fresh milk laid in, and told the babies to come. It won't hurt them, as it is a warm night, and they are in the open air."

"This is far better for them than the air in their stuffy dwellings," said her lover. "Good gracious! is that Miss Trixy's donkey?"

Miss Patty began to laugh merrily. "Now, please don't be surprised. I know you must have seen donkeys at a ball before now."

"Babies, and a donkey, and dogs," repeated Mr. Denner in an amused voice, and his gaze wandered to several curs of the cotton-factory neighborhood, that with beaming dog faces were circulating among the moving feet of the crowd, snuffing the ground for stray bits of cake or candy.
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"Well, Peter," exclaimed Miss Patty, as the donkey, catching sight of her, pulled his attendant in her direction, "are you having a good time?"

"There hain't no need to hask 'im," said the young Englishman who was Peter's second groom. "'E's 'avin' han hovation," and he nodded toward Miss Patty's boys and girls, who were pressing so closely about poor Peter that he could scarcely walk. Their arms were over his back, and round his tough little neck they had hung a wreath of roses.

"Happy donkey," said Miss Patty. "Take him on, Anderson; I want all the people to see him."

"And let us sit down here," said Mr. Denner, and he drew two reclining chairs under the shade of a group of young fir trees.

They were soon interrupted. "I say, teacher," said a young boy, running up, "they wants you to come an' see the backward quadrilles."

"What do you mean, child?" inquired Mr. Denner, getting up and patting the boy's head.

"Well, sir, I means that Joe Smith, an' Jack Tenis, an' Mag Gray, an' a lot of others got up this for fun. They dressed themselves backwards——"

"I don't understand that," said Mr. Denner, with a shake of the head.

"Why, look-a-here," said the boy, laying his eager young hands on Miss Patty, "s'pose teacher here dragged her hair over her face, an' put a mask on the back of her head, an' buttoned her clothes the back to the front—wouldn't she be backward?"
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"Well, I rather think she would," said Mr. Denner.

"An' then, sir, s'pose she danced with other girls and boys—wouldn't she look great? I say, come on, sir, they're beginning," and in his excitement he seized Mr. Denner by the hand and pulled him along.

Miss Patty smilingly followed, and soon she and Mr. Denner, together with all the bystanders, were in fits of laughter over the absurd spectacle of a number of preternaturally sober young persons going through all the figures of the set of quadrilles with their backs, instead of their faces, toward each other.

"They got this up for our entertainment," said Miss Patty; "they did not want to be entirely beholden to us, and they are going to give us recitations, and sing songs between the dances."

Mr. Denner was intensely interested. With as much self-possession as any drawing-room belle, girl after girl mounted the steps to the platform and sang or recited her prettiest and wittiest selections.

"This is remarkable," said Mr. Denner, with enthusiasm, after a burst of applause had greeted a young girl who sang a sentimental song about "blue eyes and a loving heart." These girls only want education."

"Some of the future leading citizens of Greenport are employed in that factory over there," said Miss Patty, waving her hand toward the great
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building that was sending a forbidding cloud of smoke toward them; "but tell me, do you not see a difference in these girls who have just been on the platform?"

"Yes, I do. Some are much more modest than others."

"The modest girls are the home girls. With scarcely an exception they lose their womanly manner when they go into the factory. That is one reason why I so strongly, so bitterly oppose the employment of women in factories. Get the children out first, then the women."

"Yes, home is the place for them," said Mr. Denner thoughtfully.

"The factory-bred girl marries, and is a wretched housekeeper. What does she know about housekeeping and cooking? She has had no chance to learn, having been in the factory; by the way, where is my dear Trixy? I have not seen her for some time."

"Suppose we go and look for her?" said Mr. Denner, offering her his arm.

Together they strolled away toward the further corner of the schoolyard, and there, just when they had forgotten Trixy in their absorbing interest in each other, Miss Patty exclaimed, "There she is; I thought so; that is so like Trixy."

Mr. Denner stood silent for a few seconds, then he began to laugh. Beyond them, in the quietest part of the yard—for the people were mostly press-
ing about the musicians and the dancing-platform—was a marquee with a group of chairs in front of it. On these wooden chairs sat a young woman and a number of young men, and at intervals one of the young men would get up and detach himself from the group, and walk excitedly up and down, until having got cooled off he again took his seat.

"She is preaching," said Mr. Denner.

"Suggesting," said Miss Patty.

He laughed again. "What a business eye she has! and yet to hear her talk sometimes, you would think she was an idiot."

"It takes some time to see through Trixy," said Miss Patty. "Listen! What are they saying?"

"I say it's diabolical," exclaimed a young man who was a great friend of Victor's, and flying out of his seat he paced around in widening circles and gradually approached Miss Patty and Mr. Denner.

"Hello, Wilson; what is the excitement?" inquired Mr. Denner.

"Miss Travers is telling us about a little boy, twelve years of age, who is employed in a toby factory."

"A toby factory?" repeated the mystified Mr. Denner.

"A toby is a cheap kind of a cigar. He has been at work for seven months," continued the young man. "His hours of labor are from 6 A. M. to 8 P. M., intermission for lunch fifteen minutes, for supper twenty minutes; in all, thirty-five minutes in
fourteen hours. He works Saturday nights from seven until midnight, and sometimes until two Sunday morning; does not work Saturdays, but works Sundays. The room in which he rolls his tobies is dark and poorly ventilated; the atmosphere is charged with tobacco dust, and the boy complains of a pain in his chest! What do you think of that, sir?" and he fiercely interrogated Mr. Denner as the two paused for a moment.

"I think that I would not like to be the owner of the toby factory," said that gentleman warmly.

Miss Patty and Mr. Denner drew nearer Miss Travers. She was really beautiful this evening. Though she could not wear a white gown on account of the conditions of her eccentric uncle's will, her black one was absolutely resplendent with jet and glittering spangles. Languidly turning a gold bangle round and round on her wrist, she was now imparting information about European peasants who are deluded into coming to America, and are then half-starved and driven to death by unscrupulous men who hold them in industrial slavery.

This topic not proving sufficiently interesting for the native-born young Americans about her to do more than cause them to utter "shameful!" and "abominable!" she adroitly changed the subject, and said, "Did any one hear what wath the lateth about the beef truht?"

Two or three of the young men spoke up. They had the latest news, and they told her, and in the
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telling lashed themselves into excitement over the wrongs sustained by the people.

"Corporathionths aren't alwayths a curth," murmured Miss Travers; and taking up her fan she gently swayed it to and fro.

Some of her admirers admitted that they were not, others claimed that they were. An animated discussion followed, during which Mr. Denner, looking down at the little hand resting lightly on his arm, whispered to Miss Patty, "What is coming to you girls nowadays? You used only to talk of frills and furbelows."

Miss Patty sighed gently, and said in a low voice, "Don't you know that in every generation there are a few far-seeing ones who look ahead and perceive what will take place during the lifetime of the next generation?"

"Yes, I know that; such persons are our prophets, and are usually without honor in their own day and generation."

Well, Trixy and I have been inspired by such persons. We see what is coming," said Miss Patty in a low voice. "We know to-day that there is prosperity and increase of riches, but our nation consists of men and women, not of filthy lucre. If we use up the children of this generation, where are the men and women to come from for the next?"

"True, my little prophetess," said Mr. Denner. "Now, what does that girl with the business eye want to know? Her lisp bothers me."

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“She is asking whether any of these young men know about patronal institutions,” said Miss Patty.
“I do,” said her lover modestly; “I have visited some in Belgium.”
“Then come forward and speak out,” said Miss Patty, proudly trying to draw him along.
“Wait a bit; let us see what Victor has on his mind,” said Mr. Denner.
His son was declaiming: “I tell you, friends, it all comes to this—we have got to protect our working people and their children better. Things are unbearable as they are. Henry George was right when he said, ‘The protection that certain employers give their workmen is the same as that afforded by man to his brutes, which they protect in order that they may make use of and devour them.’”
“Trixy, my friend,” called Miss Patty, “ask Mr. Denner to tell you about Belgium and its work people, and patronal institutions.”
Miss Travers raised her eyes, gave Mr. Denner a sweet, understanding glance, and motioned to him to speak.
“I am not going to make a speech,” he said, stepping forward and looking kindly around on the younger men, “but I am interested to see you young fellows taking up serious questions. Some of you, or your fathers rather, represent large business interests. We live in a small city, and we have no multi-millionaires here, but still we men of smaller fortunes need not hold ourselves guiltless.
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We have not studied our workmen properly. We have been looking upon them as a class apart. They are just like ourselves. They work hard, and when their work is over, they want to amuse themselves just as we do. They don't want their souls worried out of them by poverty, so that they have not a cent to spend on pleasure. I say, in the first place, pay them well, and let their wages be arranged on the basis that whatever they do to increase their employers' income shall also be a source of profit to themselves.”

“Thath's good!” murmured Miss Travers, gently waving her fan.

Mr. Denner gave her a smile, and went on, “Don't patronize workmen too much. Let them have their own associations. Employers need not be afraid of associations if they are paying good wages. Give the workman enough to protect his family, and in the long run the State will benefit, for we shall have fewer jails and workhouses to keep up. Now, I will tell you something about the Vieille Montagne Company in Belgium.”

“I hate to go, but I just have to,” murmured Miss Patty; “it is time I arranged a move toward the supper rooms. I will get Stephen to tell me later what he said,” and she slipped away.

Mr. Denner, after he had finished his speech, looked around for Miss Patty, and not finding her, sauntered in the direction of the schoolhouse.

Good-humored and rather demonstrative gaiety
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had full swing now. One line of guests was filing into the schoolhouse, another was filing out, with a very satisfied expression, especially among the children, and very suggestive of good things to eat. A group of them had surrounded the long-headed donkey that had been careful to follow the stream of people going in the direction of the supper rooms. Pressed close to the steps, Master Peter, with little admirers patting his fat sides, was nosing over a basketful of scraps that had been sent out to him.

"The small fry are having a fine time," said Mr. Denner with a smile; then he looked at his watch. On account of this same small fry, the affair was to break up early, and knowing that for the present Miss Patty had been swallowed up in the schoolhouse, he patiently sat down and waited for her.

The seat he had chosen was near one of the gates. Somewhat to his surprise, there were no onlookers staring over the fence, as there had been the night of the concert. Evidently, good taste kept those away who had not been invited this evening; so when two boys came slowly down the street, and paused before the gate, he watched them curiously.

They were little fellows, and he heard the policeman at the gate make some kind of an exclamation as he bent over them. Then, seeing Mr. Denner, he touched his helmet and said, "There's a boy here as has hurt his arm; shall I send him away, sir? He wants the teacher, he says."

Mr. Denner jumped up. "He has hurt his arm,
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you say. Let him come in. Why—why, what is this?” and he gazed at the two shabby little figures.

One little lad was supporting the other, who leaned on his shoulder, and took short and faltering steps.

Mr. Denner bent over them. “This child is as white as a sheet. What is wrong with him?”

“He was lookin’ out the winder, sir, over here toward the lights,” said the boy who was supporting his comrade, “an’ the boss saw him and yelled, an’ Danny, he run back to the machine, an’ he put his hand in too far, an’ the machine it bit at him like a dog, an’ afore the boss could shut the power off, it had hurted his arm.”

“Danny!” repeated Mr. Denner, stooping over and putting his arm round the injured boy.

“Yes, sir; old Granny Smith’s Danny, an’ I thinks he’s pretty bad, sir, cause he’s dropped three times on the way here.”

Mr. Denner ran his hand slightly down the boy’s dangling right arm, then stooping down he lifted him up, and carrying him inside a near-by tent, he laid him on a couch there.

“Officer!” He called so sharply that the policeman rushed toward him.

“Yes, sir,” said the man; “what is it?”

“This boy is bleeding to death. Telephone for the hospital ambulance and Doctor Haverhill—say Stephen B. Denner wants him—the case is a child with a crushed arm. If he can’t come, tell him to
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send some one at once. After you finish with him, telephone for my brother, Augustus Denner, number 1106, to come here."

"You, child," he said to the boy who had escorted Danny, "come in here," and he drew him in the tent, "and keep quiet. Don't talk about this."

The little boy sank down wearily. "I s'pose they're havin' supper in there," he said tentatively, and he nodded toward the schoolhouse.

Mr. Denner did not hear him. "I hate to shock her," he was muttering, "yet she knows about first aid to the wounded; I'll have to call her—or wouldn't her friend do? She likely knows. I'll get her, I say." And he stepped outside and hailed a young man who was passing. "Come in here, and watch beside this child while I go to the schoolhouse."

The young man stared, but came willingly in, and Mr. Denner, struggling among the people, forced his way into the schoolhouse where groaning tables were spread in several of the rooms.

Miss Patty, with a radiant face, was urging the people to eat and drink, and Miss Travers was seconding her.

Mr. Denner, stepping up to Miss Patty's friend, whispered a word in her ear. Her gracious, smiling face suddenly hardened. She nodded, and making her way so quickly from the room that Mr. Denner could scarcely follow her, she rushed into the big schoolroom that Miss Patty had conse-
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crated to her own use, and throwing open a medicine chest in the corner, her slim white fingers seized scissors, candles, matches, several bottles, a bundle of white cloth, that Mr. Denner rightly supposed contained bandages; then, turning, she scurried from the room.

On the threshold they met Victor, who, at a sign from his father, silently followed them.

Arriving outside, Miss Travers let Mr. Denner take the lead, and in a few seconds they were inside the tent.

Miss Travers gave one quick glance at the child sitting on the chair, the young man hovering anxiously over the couch, and the unconscious child himself. Then, as it was not very light inside the tent, she thrust the candles into Mr. Denner's hand, and signed to him to light them.

He and Victor held them, while Miss Travers' white hands took the sharp scissors and cut and slashed at the ragged, blood-soaked shirt-sleeve until the child's arm was laid bare.

Mr. Denner felt sick and faint. The bones of the boy's arm were split, and the flesh was hanging in shreds.

"Beyond me," murmured Miss Travers; "a bad break; can only check blood flow," and she took up her bandages.

Victor, divided between horror at the child's awful accident and admiration of Miss Travers' self-possession, was drawing back the tent flaps to admit
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more air, when a clear voice was heard. "Some one said there was a child hurt; that he walked from the factory to have me attend to him. Is he here?"

Mr. Denner at first tried to keep Miss Patty from the couch, but with an exquisitely gentle "Pardon me," she pushed him aside.

Without a word she stood looking down at the almost mortally wounded boy, at his little pathetic dirty face resting on the silk cushion of the couch. Then she said to her friend, "Will he die?"

"I hope not," said Miss Travers, "but hith arm will have to be amputated. It is horribly cruthed."

"How did he come here?" asked Miss Patty patiently, and turning she caught sight of the second little boy. "Did you bring him?"

"Yes, teacher," he said.

"Do you hear," she said to Mr. Denner, "they all call me 'teacher,' though they do not all have leisure to come and play in the schoolyard."

"We started for you as soon as we got him out of the machinery," the small boy went on; "he drug himself here."

"Do you mean to say he walked?" inquired Miss Patty in horrified tones.

"Yes, teacher; it's not far."

"But why did not some of the men carry him?"

"They was all too busy, an' the boss tole me to come, an' I've got to rush back, only first I thought if there was any rufffreshments——"
"Take him into the schoolhouse," said Miss Patty quietly to the older cotton-factory lad present. "Let him stuff his pockets, and then send him back to that that—there is only one word to characterize that awful place for children," she said pathetically, "but somehow or other, I don't like to say it."

"I'll say it," said Victor boldly. "It's a hell for children. If I were an honest workman, I would poison my children before I would send them there."

"You are desperate," murmured Miss Travers, with a protesting glance.

"The times call for desperation," said Victor doggedly.

"They do," said Miss Patty, in a low, quiet voice, "and friends, here about this child's unconscious body, I wish to say something. The wrongs of childhood have burned into my soul. As they suffer, so must I suffer with them. Here, in this awful presence of needless suffering of childhood, I make a vow. I give up the dearest thing I possess. I swear that I will never marry the noblest man I ever saw, the man I love better than life itself, until the curse of child-slavery is driven from this place that I planned to live in. I will not live here to be happy while children suffer. You hear me——" and an eloquent gesture completed her sentence.

Mr. Denner gave her one quick glance, then cast down his eyes. Miss Patty was crying now, quietly
and hopelessly, and she had thrown herself down at the foot of the couch, and with her hands clasped was curled up in a desolate heap.

Mr. Denner, with a gesture that plainly said he could not witness her grief, stepped from the tent. Victor followed him. "I say, dad," he murmured in a low voice, and laying a sympathetic hand on his father's shoulder, "this is rough on you. What are you going to do about it?"

Mr. Denner was gazing fixedly at the huge bulk of the cotton factory. "Victor," he said absently, "what is the name of that fellow that is Harley Foote's boon companion; you always see them driving about together?"

"Charlie Simpson," replied Victor promptly, "lots of money, and a bad egg. They say that he and Foote, with Jones-Melville, control the stock over yonder," and he gazed in the direction of the factory. "I say, dad," he went on presently in an excited voice, "you don't mean to say that you plan to run them out? Why, that's out of your line of business; you would be new to it."

"There's no business that a man of business can't do, boy," said Mr. Denner doggedly, "and I am going to marry that girl if I have to pull down that building brick by brick with my own hands."

Victor made an exclamation half-joyous, half-excited, that caused his father to put up a warning hand. "Not a word of this; I don't want my plans to get out."
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“...I heard one or two wordths,” said a quiet voice; “I couldn’t help it. Mithther Denner, I have thome money to invetht. I will get Mithther Jamiethon to telegraph to New York to-morrow for my lawyer. I want thome cotton-factory thares.”

Victor, in adoring reverence, seized her hand, but she drew it back, and silently pointed to the stains on it.

Victor, in boyish rage and anger at the awful injustice of the maiming of the little sufferer in the tent, stamped his foot on the ground, while furious tears sprang to his eyes.

“Father,” he exclaimed, “there is that money grandfather left me. It isn’t much, but take it; take it in heaven’s name and use it for the children!”

Mr. Denner nodded sympathetically, and Miss Travers gave him an approving glance; then she said aloud, “Here ith your uncle thauentering in.”

True enough, Mr. Augustus Denner, with his jaunty step, and twirling his cane, was stepping in through the gate.

His brother went to meet him. “Come this way, Augustus,” he said, and going before him he entered the tent.

Mr. Augustus entered, and his genial glance roved from one to another in the little dusky tent. From Miss Travers, who had stepped back to her old place at the head of the couch, and knelt there with her hand on the child’s pulse, to Miss Patty...
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still kneeling on the ground, and lastly to the child himself, pale, blood-stained, and unconscious.

He showed no sign of great emotion, or indeed of any emotion at all, except a faint irritability, until Mrs. Skellish came plunging over the yard outside and insinuated herself into the tent.

"I heard there'd been an accident," she said breathlessly. "I mistrusted it was little Danny, 'cause his grandmother said he cried 'cause he couldn't come here to-night."

Miss Patty sprang to her feet. "Is that Danny?" she cried, "our little Danny?" and she threw a passionate glance at the child on the couch.

"It air Danny," said Mrs. Skellish in a hard voice; "me that knows him says it."

"O Danny, Danny!" said the girl in a despairing voice, "I wanted you so much, but not a cripple, Danny, a worn-out Danny," she added pitifully, and she went slowly up to the child. "Look at those hollow cheeks, those shrunken limbs! I thought he would be young and fresh!"

"He had to support his grandmother," said Mrs. Skellish in a matter-of-fact voice, "an' bein' just turned ten it were hard on him."

"And how do you feel?" inquired Miss Patty vehemently, and she addressed the imperturbable Mr. Augustus, who had recovered his equanimity, somewhat upset by Mrs. Skellish's entrance.

"My dear young lady," he said coolly, "it is a great mistake for one of your impulsive tempera-
ment to imagine all the world equally gifted, for I assure you it is a gift. I would give worlds to be able to laugh and cry with as much enjoyment as you do.”

Miss Patty stared at him in horror.

“Your object in bringing me up here this evening was a laudable one,” continued Mr. Augustus, “and if I were a person given to gratitude, I should be grateful to you for it. You consider that I have done wrong, and you wish to see me repent. Save your endeavors for some more youthful person, my dear young friend; at fifty-five one does not change.”

Miss Patty, in speechless distress, gazed at him without speaking, and Miss Travers quickly interposed.

“Hear me,” she said, and drawing herself up to her full height, she looked at him with an air of authority, almost of sternness, “were you tottering on the edge of the grave, you could repent. While there is life, there is hope.”

Mr. Augustus turned to her with a grand bow.

“Granted, Miss Travers; yet, come, tell me—how many old sinners, how many old criminals in the course of your experience have repented when tottering on the edge of the grave?”

She was silent, and he continued, pointing to little Danny, “That is the age to reform hard hearts; begin there, and stop there, is my advice to you. I am happy in my way. I eat, drink, sleep, and fear
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death. As for great joy, or great sorrow, or great love, or great hope, or great charity, why, these are pretty sounds, not emotions.”

Mrs. Skellish, not being able to contain herself longer, vociferated. “An' is it no sorrow you feel to see your grandchild lyin' smashed there, an' through your doin's? He should have been here to-night along with the other Denners, instead of workin' his little soul out in that ole factory.”

Mr. Augustus surveyed her blandly. “A worthy woman, but given to chatter,” he said. “Now, good night, friends. I hear the rattle of the ambulance outside. Do not trouble yourselves and take up my time by further calls to the east end. I find it dirty and uninteresting,” and with a farewell bow he passed out of the tent.

As he went out, a short, stout man came in, and with a nod to Mr. Denner took two steps to the couch. After the most cursory examination of the little patient, he said, “To the hospital as quickly as possible. Stand back, please, and let my men come in.”

Victor and his father held back the tent flap, and two men with a stretcher entered.

Mr. Denner whispered to Victor, “What little success I have met with in life has been due to the fact that I never allowed grass to grow under my feet. I must get to work at once. You see Patty, will you, and make up a message from me.”

“I'll make up a hundred,” said Victor warmly;
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then he added, "I say, dad, what do you make of Uncle Augustus? Isn't he a pickle? and was he lying?"

"I don't know, but I think that it was part bravado. I think he was really touched by the spectacle of the ruin he has wrought. Anyway, boy, I will never give him up as long as I carry with me the remembrance of my mother's dying face. Now, good-bye till later."

"Good-bye, dad," said Victor affectionately; then he ran to aid the policeman in keeping back the crowd of people pressing round the ambulance.
CHAPTER XXX

THE TRIUMPH OF THE CHILDREN

Once more, and for the last time, though she did not know it, Miss Patty was alone in the schoolroom.

Tired from her day's teaching and superintendence of the children, she pushed aside her book, and saying, "I think I will have a little exercise," she sauntered into the adjoining caproom, and came back in a gymnasium suit, and with a pair of dumbbells in her hand.

"One, two, three," she was beginning, when the schoolroom door burst open and Victor rushed in.

Without a word to her, he ran around the schoolroom several times, jumping over chairs and benches, and conducting himself like a riotous schoolboy.

Miss Patty turned and stared at him without speaking. Finally, however, losing patience, she said, "Are you crazy, Victor Denner?"

"Yes," he cried, "stark, raving mad. Dad has made the greatest business deal ever known in these parts. I say, Patty, he's bought up the stock of the children's home yonder, the lovely, sweet place where they enable infants to support lazy grandsires. He has formed a new company, and
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got a new charter. No boy or girl under seventeen is to be employed in this cotton factory. I say, Patty, you'll have the time of your life now. Aren't you wild with joy?"

The girl let her dumb-bells drop, and sank down on a seat without a word.

Victor breathlessly dropped beside her, and pulled out his watch. "Dad has just got home from Boston, and he says will you please marry him to-night? He says you promised you would the minute he got control of that old prison. He has to go to New York to-morrow morning, for three weeks on business, and—"

"Victor," said Miss Patty decidedly, "stop your raving!"

"What, ho! Miss Travers!" called the young man, springing up, "I say that the bride is balky; come on, I need your assistance," and he went to the open door.

Miss Travers, who had been having a parley with Mrs. Skellish in the hall, came hurrying in, and going up to Miss Patty, embraced her again and again.

"Dear Patty, your reward hath come; and will you marry Mithther Denner thith evening? He hath worked tho hard for you."

Miss Patty shook her head in a dazed way.

"The thummer ith over," continued Miss Travers; "your work here ith done; you detherve a holiday."

"Come, now," exclaimed Victor, watch in hand,
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"decide—dad is waiting at the telephone. If you won't marry him, he will leave by an earlier train."

"Without seeing me?" cried Miss Patty.

"My dear girl," observed Victor, "he can't; you don't know what business is. It keeps a man jumping."

"I love your father, and I am willing to marry him at any time," said Miss Patty with dignity, "but I have a duty to my parents. I cannot take such a step as this without their presence."

"Good for you," cried Victor, dancing out of his seat. "Dad knows you like a book, and foreseeing this, he wrote your parents, and then telegraphed, and your beloved mother and father arrived here on the nine-ten train this evening."

Miss Patty flew out of her seat with a joyful exclamation.

"Go, get off your swimming things," said Victor, casting a glance over her gymnasium suit, "and hurry to your boarding-house, where your parents will soon be arriving. Pack up a few things, put on a white gown, and meet father and me wherever you want to be married. He will bring the parson and the ring and license if I telephone him."

Miss Patty looked at her friend, who nodded her head approvingly.

"Then, if I am to be married, I wish to be married here," said Miss Patty firmly.

"In this dingy schoolroom!" Victor almost shouted at her.
"Oh! let her alone; you are a man, you don't understand," said Miss Travers, caressing Miss Patty's nervous fingers.

"Yes," repeated Miss Patty, "here in this dingy room, where children have been my dear companions, where I have listened to the tale of their joys and sorrows. I want no more sacred place."

"All right," said Victor, with a shrug of his shoulders, "you girls settle it. Dad won't care. He is happy enough to go into the coal cellar if you bid him. It isn't my wedding, anyway," and he cast an eloquent glance at Miss Travers.

That young lady smiled calmly at him, and then said to Miss Patty, "There ith a carriage at the door with Mithith Fox in it. Will you go with her to your boarding-place? I will stay here and get things ready."

"And I will help," said Victor boldly.

"Go firtht and put Patty in the carriage, and telephone your father," commanded Miss Travers.

He disappeared, and Miss Travers, seeing that Mrs. Skellish was hovering about the hall, called her into the room, and gave her sundry directions that sent her bustling off in the direction of her own quarters.

Victor, returning to the room, was ordered to move back the desks and benches, and to clean the blackboards.

"Ah! Miss Travers," he said eloquently, as he paused, duster in hand, and looked over his shoul-
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der from the blackboards, "would that this were my own wedding I was preparing for."

"Don't fret," she said calmly, "you will get married thome day."

"But in the meantime, the girl I love, my pearl, my ruby, may be snatched from me."

"Ith the in delicate health?" asked Miss Travers mischievously.

"You know that better than I do," said Victor, coming toward her, and dropping his duster at her feet. "You, Trixy, are my darling, the adored of my heart. O will you not marry me? With you I can become anything. You are so sweet, so genuine, so original. Without you I shall be a clod, with you I can be a hero!"

"Seems to me," observed Mrs. Skellish, cautiously peering in through the open doorway, with her arms full of carpeting, "seems to me I have heard that same language from that ere young gent addressed to another young female."

"Come in, Mithith Skellith," said Miss Travers calmly, "put thoth rugths right down here; now, have you any flowerths?"

"Yes, miss; lots in nice pots with tissue paper round 'em," said Mrs. Skellish, and she fairly ran upstairs.

Victor listened to the sound of her footsteps until they died away in the distance; then, going down on one knee he adoringly raised Miss Travers' hand to his lips.
The Girl from Vermont

“A pretty cuththom,” she said, drawing her hand away. “I thuppoth you have theen it practithed in Europe; only, my friend, I aththure you it ith in better tathte to kith the handths of married ladieths.”

“Trixxy,” said Victor with importunity, “will you not give me hope?”

“Yeth, when you are manager of the cotton factory yonder,” she said, with a wave of her hand toward the big building, whose site he knew so well.

He fell back a few steps, and stared at her in dismay. “Trixxy, my darling, is your heart of stone?”

“I’ve heard it wath,” she said demurely, “but I like you, boy; and if you will diththinguith your-thelf, I will pothibly marry you.”

“But to be manager, Trixy; why, I don’t know a bobbin from a spindle.”

“Learn, then,” she said briefly; “you have brainths.”

“Trixxy, you are cruel. It will be failure for me until I am about eighty.”

“Ithn’t any thuch word as failure,” she replied, shaking her blonde head in a way that almost drove her admirer distracted.

He suddenly went back to her. “Trixxy,” he said in a low voice, “I love you; do you love me?”

He was in earnest now, and the girl dropped her trifling manner.

“Yeth,” she said seriously.
"You will wait for me?"

She nodded her head.

"Then I will work," and he went to meet Mrs. Skellish, who was coming in with a trayful of ugly little flower-pots containing uglier little plants.

Victor began to laugh, but Miss Travers stopped him by a gesture. "They are quite in keeping," she murmured, gazing about the ugly schoolroom. "Hot-houth flowerths would be out of plathe here," and with careful hands she arranged the little pots on the platform.

When Mrs. Skellish appeared with the next load, of which she had despoiled her little parlor, Victor, between his amusement at her, and his excitement over Miss Travers' concession, was taken with such a violent fit of coughing that he had to go out into the hall to recover.

Miss Travers never changed countenance, as she took from Mrs. Skellish four China dogs of hideous expression, a wax cat, and a basket of soap plums and peaches. These went on the teacher's desk. Pictures of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln were hung behind the desk, while a hair wreath, composed of locks taken from the heads of numerous departed Skellishes, was hung discreetly in the corner of the room.

"I say, miss," observed Mrs. Skellish, in a low voice and with a jerk of her arm toward the hall, "he's a proper young fellow; you'll not make him wait too long, will you?"

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Miss Travers started. She had forgotten the good-natured Mrs. Skellish's proclivity to listen at doors. Then she smiled in amusement, and said oracularly, "I'll thee."

"Here comes dad," said Victor, bursting into the room; "dad and the clergyman; and there's another carriage pulling up at the steps. We'll soon have them all here!"

He was right. In a few minutes Mr. Denner and his own elderly clergyman, Miss Patty and her parents, Mrs. Fox and Mr. Jamieson entered the schoolroom.

Miss Travers hurried up to Mrs. Green, who was a sweet-faced woman with eyes and complexion like Miss Patty's, and was warmly embraced by her.

Mrs. Skellish, in the background, was making semi-audible comments. "I say, that Mr. Green has got a face like he had never seen nothin' bad, nor said nothin' bad, nor heard nothin' bad in this evil world. I guess he don't live in any place like Greenport."

Mr. Denner took Miss Patty aside for one instant, and Mrs. Skellish observing them keenly, said, "I always did love a story of love an' murder. Now, Danny ain't quite murdered; they say he'll live and be a cripple, but it was mos' murder. An' if that ain't true love—if that man a-lookin' into them there eyes of that young girl, an' tellin' her how he's mos' worked himself to death for her—if that ain't true love, then my name ain't Betsy Skellish."
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After a time she continued her soliloquy, "While the minister is tellin' the bride and groom what to do, I'm goin' to make bold to ask a question of Mr. Green," and going up to him, she said: "Please, sir, I'm a friend of your young daughter, and I'm the caretaker of this school, an' I'm a wonderin' how the young man Drake is a-gettin' on. I ain't heard for some time."

The good-hearted Mr. Green looked at her. "Pretty well; pretty well, everything considered. You know, when one pursues a certain course in life for some time, it is hard to turn sharp about. But I have hopes of Drake."

"What's he doin', sir?"

"He is in my own employ, so I can keep an eye on him—a friendly eye, you understand. He assists about the house and garden. Mrs. Green manages him finely; finely."

"An' his wife, sir?"

"She takes care of their little cottage on our own grounds. I think we shall bring them around in time," added the good man patiently; and he beamed on Mrs. Skellish until she positively basked in the sunshine of his smile, and felt reluctant to tear herself away.

Mr. Green was now looking searchingly about the room. "Where is Mr. Denner's brother, Augustus," he said, "where is he? I expected to see him here."

"He'll not be here, sir," said Mrs. Skellish; "he's
been too bad, and I don’t think he wants to come.”

“No, no; don’t say that,” replied Mr. Green good-humoredly, “we must have him. At a wedding, all family bickerings are forgotten. Stay, I will just step out and get him; he will come for his old friend Green,” and he hurried from the room.

In a few minutes Mr. Denner looked around.

“Where is Mr. Green?”

“He’s gone out, sir,” said Mrs. Skellish discreetly; “He’ll be right back. I guess he went to send a message somewhere,” and she went to the doorway and looked out into the schoolyard. One of the carriages was just rolling quickly away.

“Oh, that man’s smile!” she murmured, “ain’t it sweet? I feel as if I was havin’ some nice kind of a bath when it shines on me.”

Miss Patty and Mr. Denner had just taken their stand on the platform before the clergyman, who stood with open book in his hand, when Mrs. Skellish again heard the sound of wheels.

Presently Mr. Green came into the room, his hand firmly clasped in that of Augustus Denner. No one ever knew what the good man had said, but certain it was, that for once Augustus Denner’s proud head was hanging, and his eyes were full of tears. He was about to take his stand a little apart, but Mr. Green drew him up among the others, close to Mrs. Green, who stood with a rapt face, her eyes on her adored daughter; close to Victor, whose attention was fixed on Trixy as she listened
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soberly to the solemn words being uttered for the friend so dear to her.

When the marriage ceremony was over, and the bridegroom had saluted the bride, the next person his eyes fell on was his brother. He started and stared, but Augustus seized him by the hand. "You and Green have conquered me, Stephen," he said. "Our mother's prayers are answered. I feel a very weak and pitiful old man. May God bless you, and give you the happiness you deserve!"

Stephen Denner tried to speak, but failing, wrung his hand and passed on to the others. In a few minutes he took out his watch. "I am sorry, friends, but the train waits for no one. Come, Patty."

She put her hand in his, and with a long, last, lingering look at her schoolroom home, went away with him.

"I say," cried Victor, with a flourish of his hands, "three cheers for the girl from Vermont and the anti-child-labor bridegroom!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!" resounded through the room, and from the schoolyard outside, for the news of Miss Patty's marriage had already spread through the neighborhood, and though the most of the working people had gone to bed, there were still enough left to raise some hearty cheers.

"And God bless the children of America!" added Mr. Green, in his happy voice, "and make them free, for in the children is the hope of the nation!"

"God bless the children of America!" rang
The Girl from Vermont

heartily through the room, and the cheer was caught up and spread from the yard to the street, and to the workmen's houses.

"Seems as if a better day was dawning' for the children," said Mrs. Skellish, with a wise shake of her head. "I wouldn't wonder if they gets 'em out of all the factories by and by."

Miss Travers went to the piano, and softly played "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," and Victor, leaning over her, said softly under his breath, "and I say God bless the girls of the nation, for they are the ones who keep us men on the right track!"
Saunders, Marshall
The girl from Vermont