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er—to open wide or shut close. Wilton felt unutterably shocked at the melancholy, sordid aspect of the place. The bell being broken, he felt at a loss how to summon the garrison; but, while he hesitated, two little girls, in short frocks, dingy stockings, and battered hats, came up bowling their hoops, and began rattling their hoop-sticks noisily against the railings, whereupon the front-door was flung suddenly wide open, and a grimy servant began to shout some objurgation to the juveniles.

"Pray, does Mrs. Kershaw live here?" asked Wilton, advancing to the door.

"No; there's no such name here."

For a moment Wilton felt annihilated.

"She used to live here?"

"P'raps so; we've not been here above a week, and I wish we was out of it."

"And do you know where Mrs. Kershaw is gone?"

"No, that I don't."

After a little talking, she suggested that "missus" might know; but that potentate, on being appealed to, confessed ignorance, stating, however, that "master" might know; but "master" was absent, and would not be back till to-morrow morning. More Wilton could not extract; and he most reluctantly left the long-sought villa, informing the inmates that he would call next day, hoping that "master" might be able to supply the desired information.

Still, with unshaken perseverance, Wilton lingered about. He stopped the postman, but he had no letter since the new people moved in for Mrs. Kershaw. She had very few letters at any time—still she had some. There was another postman that took the noonday delivery, he might know. When did he go round? Oh, from twelve to twelve-thirty. He might know, and he mightn't. Addresses were not given to the letter-carriers, but left at the district office.

"Ah! then I may probably find this Mrs. Kershaw's whereabouts at the post-office?"

"No, no, sir," said the man; "they won't give you no addresses at the office, and the letters is sent on to the district where the party has moved; so it's a chance if any of us knows."

"At any rate, I shall be here to-morrow to meet the twelve-o'clock man; meantime I am obliged to you."

So saying, Wilton deposited a judicious tip in the carrier's willing hand, and made for the main road, hoping that a favorable report of him would be given to the other carrier, and predispose him to be communicative.

It was long before Wilton forgot the oppressive monotony of that evening. He could not bring himself to seek out Moncrief. He would have him at breakfast, and that was bad enough. He strolled into the Adelphi, and felt savage at the pathos of the play, and the fun of the afterpiece. He left before it was finished, and returned to the coffee-room. He tried to sketch out an advertisement addressed to Mrs. Kershaw, but intended for Ella. He vexed himself with all kinds of conjectures, and finally retired, hoping for oblivion in sleep, which did not come for some weary hours; and his last waking

thought was that to-morrow would be the 19th of March, the day of the tryst, which he had so often pictured to himself. And here he was in total ignorance of Ella's dwelling—not a step nearer to the desired interview. The following day was not much brighter than the one just described, and Wilton rose with an unspeakable loathing for breakfast and Moncrief—especially Moncrief.

However, both had to be endured. The major was considerably puzzled by his entertainer's preoccupation and testiness. Every subject seemed distasteful, every person more or less offensive.

"What's come to you, lad?" asked the old soldier. "Are you in debt again? I thought you had left that class of troubles behind you; and you seem to have been quiet and steady enough of late."

"No, I am not in debt."

"Well, I do not think you are in love; and love, or money, is at the bottom of most troubles—eh?"

An inaudible muttering was the only reply.

"A——idiot?" repeated the major, thinking he caught the sound. "No, by no means. I never said so, though there have been times when I was afraid you would act like one. Have you seen the viscount?"

"No."

"I suppose you are going to call on him?"

"No, I am not."

"Then you are rather an idiot. Why will you throw away fortune?"

"I am not throwing it away. He is out of town."

"Why don't you go and pay him a visit?"

"I cannot; he has not asked me."

"Not asked you—bosh!"

"Moncrief," interrupted Wilton, "will you take some more kidney, or ham, or coffee, or any thing?"

"No, thank you; I have breakfasted well."

"Then go, will you? like a good fellow. You are partly right. I am in a pickle. You shall know all about it one of these days, but I cannot tell you just now. I have an appointment at—that is, I must be at Kensington at twelve."

"At twelve? Bless my soul, man, it is scarcely half-past ten now!"

## MISS ELISABETHA.

OVERLOOKING the tide-water river stands an old house, gleaming white in the soft moonlight of the South; the fragrance of tropic flowers floats out to sea on the land-breeze, coming at sunset over the pine-barrens to take the place of the ocean-winds that have blown all day long, bringing in the salt freshness to do battle with the hot shafts of the sun and conquer them. The side of the house toward the river shows stone arches, doorless, opening into a hall; beyond is a large room, lighted by two candles placed on an old-fashioned piano; and full in their yellow radiance sits Miss Elisabetha, playing, with clear, measured touch, an old-time minuet. The light falls upon her face, with its

sharp, high-curved features, pale-blue eyes, and the three thin curls of blond hair on each side. She is not young, our Elisabetha: the tall, spare form, stiffly erect; the little wisp of hair behind ceremoniously braided and adorned with a high comb; the long, thin hands, with the telltale wrist-bones prominent as she plays; and the fine net-work of wrinkles over her pellucid, colorless cheeks, tell this. But the boy who listens sees it not—to him she is a St. Cecilia, and the gates of heaven open as she plays. He leans his head against the piano, and his thoughts are lost in melody; they do not take the form of words, but sway to and fro with the swell and the ebb of the music. If you should ask him, he could not express what he feels, for his is no analytical mind; attempt to explain it to him, and very likely he would fall asleep before your eyes. Miss Elisabetha plays well, in a prim, old-fashioned way, but yet well; the ancient piano has lost its strength, but its tones are still sweet, and the mistress humors its failings. She tunes it herself, protects its strings from the sea-damps, dusts it carefully, and has embroidered for it a cover in cross-stitch, yellow tulips growing in straight rows out of a blue ground—an heirloom pattern brought from Holland. Yet entire happiness cannot be ours in this world, and Miss Elisabetha sometimes catches herself thinking how delightful it would be to use E-flat once more; but the piano's E-flat is hopelessly gone.

"Is not that enough for this evening, Theodore?" said Miss Elisabetha, closing the manuscript music-book, whose delicate little pen-and-ink notes were fading away with age.

"Oh, no, dear aunt; sing for me, please, 'The Proud Ladye.'"

And so the piano sounded forth again in a prim melody, and the thin voice began the ballad of the knight, who, scorned by his lady-love, went to the wars with her veil bound on his heart; he dies on the field, but a dove bears back the veil to the Proud Ladye, who straightway falls "a-weeping and a-weeping till she weeps her life away." The boy who listens is a slender stripling, with brown eyes, and a mass of brown curls tossed back from a broad, low forehead; he has the outlines of a Greek, and a dark, silken fringe just borders his boyish mouth. He is dressed in a simple suit of dark-blue cotton jacket and trousers, the broad, white collar turned down, revealing his round, young throat; on his slender feet he wears snowy stockings, knitted by Miss Elisabetha's own hands, and over them a low slipper of untanned leather. His brown hands are clasped over one knee, the taper fingers and almond-shaped nails betraying the artistic temperament, a sign which is confirmed by the unusually long, slender line of the eyebrows, curving down almost to the cheeks.

"A-weeping and a-weeping till she weeps her life away," sang Miss Elisabetha, her voice in soft *diminuendo* to express the mournful end of the Proud Ladye. Then, closing the piano carefully, and adjusting the tulip-bordered cover, she extinguished the candles, and the two went out under the open

arches, where chairs stood ready for them nightly. The tide-water river—the Warra—flowed by, the moon-path shining goldenly across it; up in the north palmettoes stood in little groups alongshore, with the single feathery pine-trees of the barrens coming down to meet them; in the south shone the long lagoon, with its low islands, while opposite lay the slender point of the main-land, fifteen miles in length, the Warra on one side, and on the other the ocean; its white sand-ridges gleamed in the moonlight, and the two could hear the sound of the waves on its outer beach.

"It is so beautiful," said the boy, his dreamy eyes following the silver line of the lagoon.

"Yes," replied Miss Elisabetha, "but we have no time to waste, Theodore. Bring your guitar and let me hear you sing that *romanza* again; remember the pauses—three beats to the measure."

Then sweetly sounded forth the soft tenor voice, singing an old French *romanza*, full of little quavers, and falls, and turns, which the boy involuntarily slurred into something like naturalness, or gave *staccato* as the mocking-bird throws out his shower of short, round notes. But Miss Elisabetha allowed no such license; had she not learned that very *romanza* from Monsieur Vocard himself forty years before? and had he not carefully taught her every one of those little turns and quavers? Taking the guitar from Theodore's hand, she executed all the flourishes slowly and precisely, making him follow her, note for note. Then he must sing it all over again while she beat the time with her long, slender foot, encased in a black-silk slipper of her own making. The ladies of the Daarg family always wore slippers—the heavy-sounding modern boot they considered a structure suitable only for persons of plebeian origin. A lady should not even step perceptibly; she should glide.

"Miss 'Lisabeet, de toas' is ready. Bress de chile, how sweet he sings to-night! Mos' like de mock-bird's self, Mass' Doro."

So spoke old Viny, the one servant of the house, a broad-shouldered, jet-black, comfortable creature, with her gray wool peeping from beneath a gay turban. She had belonged to Doro's Spanish mother, but, when Miss Elisabetha came South to take the house and care for the orphan-boy, she had purchased the old woman, and set her free immediately.

"It don't make naw difference as I can see, Miss 'Lisabeet," said Viny, when the new mistress carefully explained to her that she was a free agent from that time forth. "'Pears harnsome in you to do it, but it arn't likely I'll leabe my chile, my Doro-boy, long as I lib—is it, now? When I die, he'll have ole Viny burred nice, wid de priests, an' de candles, an' de singing, an' all."

"Replace your guitar, Theodore," said Miss Elisabetha, rising, "and then walk to and fro between here and the gate ten times. Walk briskly, and keep your mouth shut; after singing you should always guard against the damp."

The boy obeyed in his dreamy way, pacing down the white path, made hard with

pounded oyster-shells, to the high stone-wall. The old iron-clamped gate, which once hung between the two pomegranate-topped pillars, was gone; for years it had leaned tottering half across the entrance-way, threatening to brain every comer, but Miss Elisabetha had ordered its removal in the twinkling of her Northern eye, and in its place now hung a neat, incongruous little wicket, whose latch was a standing bone of contention between the mistress and the entire colored population of the small Florida village.

"Go back and latch the gate," was her constantly-repeated order; "the cows might enter and injure the garden."

"But th' arn't no cows, Miss 'Lisabeet."

"There should be, then," the ancient maiden would reply, severely. "Grass would grow with a little care and labor; look at our pasture. You are much too indolent, good people."

Theodore stood leaning over the little gate, his eyes fixed on the white sand-hills across the Warra; he was listening to the waves on the outer beach.

"Theodore, Theodore!" called Miss Elisabetha's voice, "do not stand, but pace to and fro; and be sure and keep your mouth closed."

Mechanically the boy obeyed, but his thoughts were following the sound of the water. Following a sound? Yes. Sounds were to him a language, and he held converse with the surf, the winds, the rustling marsh-grass, and the sighing pines of the barrens. The tale of steps completed, he reëntered the house, and, following the light, went into a long, narrow room, one of three which, built out behind the main body of the house, formed with its back-wall a square, surrounding a little court-yard, in whose centre stood the well, a ruined fountain, rose and myrtle bushes, and two ancient fig-trees, dwarfed and gnarled. Miss Elisabetha was standing at the head of the table; before her was a plate containing three small slices of dry toast, crisp and brown, and a decanter of orange-wine made by her own hands. One slice of the toast was for herself, two were for the boy, who was still supposed to be growing; a Northerner would have said that he was over twenty, but Spanish blood hastens life, and Teodoro in years was actually not yet eighteen. In mind he was still younger, thanks to Miss Elisabetha's care and strict control. It had never even occurred to him that he need not so absolutely obey her; and, to tell the truth, neither had it occurred to her.—Doro ate his simple supper standing; the Daarg family never sat down gluttonously to supper, but browsed lightly on some delicate fragments, moving about and chatting meanwhile as though half forgetting they were eating at all. Then Miss Elisabetha refilled his little glass, watched him drink the clear amber liquid to the last drop, and bade him good-night in her even voice. He turned at the door and made her a formal bow, not without grace; she had carefully taught him this salutation, and required it of him every night. "I wish you a blessed rest, Theodore," she said, courtesying in reply; "do not keep the light burning."

Half an hour later, when the ancient maiden glided out of her chamber, clad in a long frilled wrapper, the three curls in papers on each side of her head, she saw no gleam from under the low door of the little room across the hall; she listened, but there was no sound, and, satisfied, she retired to her high couch and closed the gayly-flowered curtains around her. But, out on the small balcony which hung like a cage from his eastern window, Doro stood, leaning over the iron railing and listening, listening to the far sound of the sea.

Such had been the life down in the old house for sixteen long, winterless years, the only changes being more difficult music and more toast, longer lessons in French, and longer legs to the little blue trousers, and increased attention to sea-baths and deportment, and always and ever a careful saving of every copper penny and battered shilling. What became of these coins old Viny did not know; she only knew how patiently they were collected, and how scrupulously saved. Miss Elisabetha attended to the orange-grove in person; not one orange was lost, and the annual waste of the other proprietors, an ancient and matter-of-course waste, hauded down from father to son, represented in her purse not a few silver-pieces. Pedro, the Minorcan, who brought her fish and sea-food, she had drilled from boyhood in his own art by sheer force of will, paying him by the day, and sending him into the town to sell from door to door all she did not need herself, to the very last clam. The lazy housewives soon grew into the habit of expecting Pedro and his basket, and stood in their doorways chatting in the sun and waiting for him, while the husbands let their black dugouts lie idle, and lounged on the sea-wall, smoking and discussing the last alligator they had shot, or the last ship, a coasting-schooner out of water, which had sailed up their crooked harbor six months before. Miss Elisabetha had learned also to braid palmetto, and her long fingers, once accustomed to the work, accomplished as much in a week as Zanita Perez and both her apprentices accomplished in two; she brought to the task also original ideas, original at least in Beata, where the rude hats and baskets were facsimiles of those braided there two hundred years before by the Spanish women, who had learned the art from the Indians. Thus Miss Elisabetha's wares found ready sale at increased prices, little enough to Northern ideas—sixpence for a hat—one shilling for a basket—but all down the coast, and inland toward the great river, there was a demand for her work, and the lines hung in the garden were almost constantly covered with the drying palmetto. Then she taught music. To whom, do you ask? To the black-eyed daughters of the richer townspeople, and to one or two demoiselles belonging to Spanish families down the coast, sent up to Beata to be educated by the nuns. The good sisters did their best, but they knew little, poor things, and were glad to call in Miss Elisabetha with her trills and quavers; so the wiry organ in the little cathedral sounded out the ballads and *romanzas* of Monsieur Vocard, and the demoiselles learned to sing



them in their broken French, no doubt greatly to the satisfaction of the golden-skinned old fathers and mothers on the plantations down the coast. The *padre* in charge of the parish had often importuned Miss Elisabetha to play this organ on Sundays, as the decorous celebration of high-mass suffered sadly, not to say ludicrously, from the blunders of poor Sister Paula. But Miss Elisabetha briefly refused; she must draw a line somewhere, she said, and a pagan ceremonial she could not countenance. The Daarg family, while abhorring greatly the Puritanism of the New-England colonies, had yet held themselves equally aloof from the image-worship of Rome; and they had always considered it one of the inscrutable mysteries of Providence that the French nation, so skilled in polite attitude, so versed in the singing of *romanzas*, should yet have been allowed to remain so long in ignorance of the correct religious mean.

The old house was managed with the nicest care; its thick coquina-walls remained solid still, and the weak spots in the roof were mended with a thatch of palmetto and tar, applied monthly under the mistress's superintendence by Viny, who never ceased to regard the performance as a wonder of art, accustomed as she was to the Beata fashion of letting roofs leak when they wanted to, the family never interfering, but encamping on the far side of the flow with calm undisturbed. The few pieces of furniture were dusted and rubbed daily, and the kitchen-department was under martial law; the three had enough to eat—indeed, an abundance—oysters, fish, and clams, sweet-potatoes from the garden, and various Northern vegetables forced to grow under the vigilant nursing they received, but hating it, and coming up as spindling as they could. The one precious cow gave them milk and butter, the well-conducted hens gave them eggs; flour and meal, coffee and tea, hauled across the barrens from the great river, were paid for in palmetto-work. Yes, Miss Elisabetha's household, in fact, lived well, better perhaps than any in Beata; but so measured were her quantities, so exact her reckonings, so long her look ahead, that sometimes, when she was away, old Viny felt a sudden wild desire to toss up fritters in the middle of the afternoon, to throw away yesterday's tea-leaves, to hurl the soured milk into the road, or even to eat oranges without counting them, according to the fashions of the easy old days when Doro's Spanish grandmother held the reins, and every thing went to ruin comfortably. Every morning after breakfast Miss Elisabetha went the rounds through the house and garden; then English and French with Doro for two hours; next a sea-bath for him, and sailing or walking as he pleased, when the sun was not too hot. Luncheon at noon, followed by a *siesta*; then came a music-lesson, long and charming to both; and, after that, he had his choice from among her few books. Dinner at five, a stroll along the beach, music in the evenings, at first the piano in the parlor, then the guitar under the arches; last of all, the light supper and good-night. Such was Doro's day. But Miss Elisabetha, meanwhile, had a hundred other duties which she never neglected, in

spite of her attention to his welfare—first the boy, then his money, for it was earned and destined for him. Thus the years had passed, without change, without event, without misfortune; the orange-trees had not failed, the palmetto-work had not waned, and the little store of money grew apace. Doro, fully employed, indulged by Viny, amused with his dogs, his parrot, his mocking-birds, and young owls, all the variety of pets the tropical land afforded, even to young alligators clandestinely kept in a sunken barrel up the marsh, knew no *ennui*. But, most of all, the music filled his life, rounding out every empty moment, and making an undercurrent, as it were, to all other occupations, so that the French waltzed through his brain, the English went to marches, the sailing made for itself *gondelieds*, and even his plunges in the Warra were like crashes of fairy octaves, with *arpeggios* of pearly notes in showers coming after.

These were the *ante-bellum* days, before the war had opened the Southern country to winter-visitors from the North; invalids a few, tourists a few, came and went, but the great tide, which now sweeps annually down the Atlantic coast to Florida, was then unknown. Beata, lying by itself far down the peninsula, no more looked for winter-visitors than it looked for angels; but one day an angel arrived unawares, and Doro saw her.

Too simple-hearted to conceal, excited, longing for sympathy, he poured out his story to Miss Elisabetha, who sat copying from her music-book a certain ballad for the *Demoiselle Xantez*.

"It was over on the north beach, aunt, and I heard the music, and hastened thither. She was sitting on a tiger-skin thrown down on the white sand; purple velvet flowed around her, and above, from embroideries like cream, rose her flower-face set on a throat so white, where gleamed a star of brilliancy; her hair was like gold—yellow gold—and it hung in curls over her shoulders, a mass of radiance; her eyes were blue as the deepest sky-color, and oh! so white her skin, I could scarcely believe her mortal. She was playing on a guitar, with her little hands so white, so soft, and singing—aunt, it was like what I have dreamed."

The boy stopped, and covered his face with his hands. Miss Elisabetha had paused, pen in hand. What was this new talk of tiger-skins and golden hair? No one could sing in Beata save herself alone; the boy was dreaming!

"Theodore," she said, "fancy is permitted to us under certain restrictions, but no well-regulated mind will make to itself realities of fancies. I am sorry to be obliged to say it, but the romances must be immediately removed from the shelf."

These romances, three in number, selected and sanctioned by the governess of the Misses Daarg forty years before, still stood in Miss Elisabetha's mind as exemplars of the wildest flights of fancy.

"But this is not fancy, dear aunt," said Doro, eagerly, his brown eyes velvet with moisture, and his brown cheeks flushed. "I saw it all this afternoon over on the beach; I could show you the very spot where the tiger-skin

lay, and the print of her foot, which had a little shoe so odd—like this," and rapidly he drew the outline of a walking-boot in the extreme of the Paris fashion.

Miss Elisabetha put on her glasses.

"Heels," she said, slowly; "I have heard of them."

"There is nothing in all the world like her," pursued the excited boy, "for her hair is of pure gold, not like the people here; and her eyes are so sweet, and her forehead so white! I never knew such people lived—why have you not told me all these years?"

"She is a blonde," replied Miss Elisabetha, primly; "I, too, am a blonde, Theodore."

"But not like this, aunt. My lovely lady is like a rose."

"A subdued monotone of coloring has ever been a characteristic of our family, Theodore. But I do not quite understand your story—who is this person, and was she alone on the beach?"

"There were others, but I did not notice them; I only looked at her."

"And she sang?"

"O aunt, so heavenly sweet—so strange, so new her song, that I was carried away up into the blue sky as if on strong wings—I seemed to float in melody; but I cannot talk of it; it takes my breath away, even in thought!"

Miss Elisabetha sat perplexed.

"Was it one of our *romanzas*, Theodore, or a ballad?" she said, running over the list in her mind.

"It was something I never heard before," replied Doro, in a low voice; "it was not like any thing else—not even the mocking-bird, for, though it went on and on, the same strain floated back into it again and again—and the mocking-bird, you know, has a light and fickle soul. Aunt, I cannot tell you what it was like, but it seemed to tell me a new story of a new world."

"How many beats had it to the measure?" asked Miss Elisabetha, after a pause.

"I do not know," replied the boy, dreamily.

"You do not know! All music is written in some set time, Theodore. At least, you can tell me about the words. Were they French?"

"No."

"Nor English?"

"No."

"What then?"

"I know not; angel-words, perhaps."

"Did she speak to you?"

"Yes," replied Doro, clasping his hands fervently. "She asked me if I liked the song, and I said, 'Lady, it is of the angels.' Then she smiled, and asked my name, and I told her, 'Doro'—"

"You should have said, 'Theodore,'" interrupted Miss Elisabetha; "do I not always call you so?"

"And she said it was a lovely name; and could I sing? I took her guitar, and sang to her—"

"And she praised your method, I doubt not?"

"She said, 'Oh, what a lovely voice!' and she touched my hair with her little hands,

and I—I thought I should die, aunt, but I only fell at her feet."

"And where—where is this person now?" said the perplexed maiden, catching at something definite.

"She has gone—gone! I stood and watched the little flag on the mast until I could see it no more. She has gone! Pity me, aunt, dear aunt; what shall I do? How shall I live?"

The boy broke into sobs, and would say no more. Miss Elisabetha was strangely stirred; here was a case beyond her rules; what should she do? Having no precedent to guide her, she fell back into her old beliefs gained from studies of the Daarg family, as developed in boys. Doro was excused from lessons, and the hours were made pleasant to him. She spent many a morning reading aloud to him; and old Viny stood amazed at the variety and extravagance of the dishes ordered for him.

"What! chickens every day, Miss 'Lisabeet? 'Pears like Mass' Doro hab every ting now!"

"Theodore is ill, Lavinia," replied the mistress; and she really thought so.

Music, however, there was none; the old charmed afternoons and evenings were silent.

"I cannot bear it," the boy had said, with trembling lips.

But one evening he did not return: the dinner waited for him in vain; the orange after-glow faded away over the pine-barrens; and in the pale green of the evening sky arose the star of the twilight; still he came not.

Miss Elisabetha could eat nothing.

"Keep up the fire, Lavinia," she said, rising from the table at last.

"Keep up de fire, Miss 'Lisabeet! Till when?"

"Till Theodore comes!" replied the mistress, shortly.

"De worl' mus' be coming to de end," soliloquized the old black woman, carrying out the dishes; "sticks of wood come to be no account!"

Late in the evening a light footstep sounded over the white path, and the strained, watching eyes under the stone arches saw at last the face of the missing one.

"O aunt, I have seen her—I have seen her! I thought her gone forever. O aunt—dear, dear aunt, she has sung for me again!" said the boy, flinging himself down on the stones, and laying his flushed face on her knee. "This time it was over by the old light-house, aunt. I was sailing up and down in the very worst breakers I could find, half hoping they would swamp the boat, for I thought perhaps I could forget her down there under the water—when I saw figures moving over on the island-beach. Something in the outlines of one made me tremble; and I sailed over like the wind, the little boat tilted on its side within a hair's-breadth of the water, cutting it like a knife as it flew. It was she, aunt, and she smiled! 'What, my young Southern nightingale,' she said, 'is it you?' And she gave me her hand—her soft little hand."

The thin fingers, hardened by much braiding of palmetto, withdrew themselves instinctively

from the boy's dark curls. He did not notice it, but rushed on with his story unheeding:

"She let me walk with her, aunt, and hold her parasol, decked with lace, and she took off her hat and hung it on my arm, and it had a long, curling plume. She gave me sweet things—oh, so delicious! See, I kept some," said Doro, bringing out a little package of *bonbons*. "Some are of sugar, you see, and some have nuts in them; those are chocolate. Are they not beautiful?"

"Candies, I think," said Miss Elisabetha, touching them doubtfully with the end of her quill.

"And she sang for me, aunt, the same angel's music; and then, when I was afar in heaven, she brought me back with a song about three fishermen who sailed out into the West, and I wept to hear her, for her voice then was like the sea when it feels cruel. She saw the tears, and, bidding me sit by her side, she struck a few chords on her guitar and sang to me of a miller's daughter who grew so dear, so dear. Do you know it, aunt?"

"A miller's daughter? No; I have no acquaintance with any such person," said Miss Elisabetha, considering.

"Wait, I will sing it to you," said Doro, running to bring his guitar; "she taught it to me herself!"

And then the tenor voice rose in the night air, bearing on the lovely melody the impassioned words of the poet. Doro sang them with all his soul, and the ancient maiden felt her heart disquieted within her—why, she knew not. It seemed as though her boy was drifting away whither she could not follow.

"Is it not beautiful, aunt? I sang it after her line by line until I knew it all, and then I sang her all my songs; and she said I must come and see her the day after to-morrow, and she would give me her picture and something else. What do you suppose it is, aunt? She would not tell me, but she smiled and gave me her hand for good-by. And now I can live, for I am to see her at Martera's house, beyond the convent, the day after to-morrow, the day after to-morrow—oh, happy day, the day after to-morrow!"

"Come and eat your dinner, Theodore," said Miss Elisabetha, rising. Face to face with a new world, whose possibilities she but dimly understood, and whose language was to her an unknown tongue, she grasped blindly at the old anchors riveted in years of habit; the boy had always been something of an epicure in his fastidious way, and one of his favorite dishes was on the table.

"You may go, Lavinia," she said, as the old slave lingered to see if her darling enjoyed the dainties; she could not bear that even Viny's faithful eyes should notice the change, if change there was.

The boy ate nothing.

"I am not hungry, aunt," he said, "I had so many delicious things over on the beach. I do not know what they were, but they were not like our things at all." And, with a slight gesture of repugnance, he pushed aside his plate.

"You had better go to bed," said Miss Elisabetha, rising. In her perplexity this was

the first thing which suggested itself to her; a good night's rest had been known to work wonders; she would say no more till morning. The boy went readily; but he must have taken his guitar with him, for long after Miss Elisabetha had retired to her couch she heard him softly singing again and again the romance of the miller's daughter. Several times she half rose as if to go and stop him; then a confused thought came to her that perhaps his unrest might work itself off in that way, and she sank back, listening meanwhile to the fanciful melody with feelings akin to horror. It seemed to have no regular time, and the harmony was new and strange to her old-fashioned ears. "Truly, it must be the work of a composer gone mad," said the poor old maid, after trying in vain for the fifth time to follow the wild air. There was not one trill or turn in all its length, and the accompaniment, instead of being the decorous, one octave in the bass, followed by two or three chords according to the time, seemed to be but a general sweeping over the strings, with long pauses, and unexpected minor harmony introduced, turning the air suddenly upside down, and then back again before one had time to comprehend what was going on. "Heaven help me!" said Miss Elisabetha, as the melody began again for the sixth time, "but I fear I am sinful enough to hate that miller's daughter." And it was very remarkable, to say the least, that a person in her position "was possessed of a jewel to tremble in her ear," she added, censoriously, "not even to speak of a necklace." But the comfort was cold, and, before she knew it, slow, troubled tears had dampened her pillow.

Early the next morning she was astir by candle-light, and, going into the detached kitchen, began preparing breakfast with her own hands, adding to the delicacies already ordered certain honey-cakes, an heirloom in the Daarg family. Viny could scarcely believe her eyes when, on coming down to her domain at the usual hour, she found the great fireplace glowing, and the air filled with the fragrance of spices; Christmas alone had heretofore seen these honey-cakes, and to-day was only a common day!

"I do not care for any thing, aunt," said Doro, coming listlessly to the table when all was ready. He drank some coffee, broke a piece of bread, and then went back to his guitar; the honey-cakes he did not even notice.

One more effort remained. Going softly into the parlor during the morning, Miss Elisabetha opened the piano, and, playing over the prelude to "The Proud Ladye," began to sing in her very best style, giving the flourishes with elaborate art, scarcely a note without a little step down from the one next higher; these airy descents, like flights of fairy stairs, were considered very high art in the days of Monsieur Vocard. She was in the middle of "a-weeping and a-weeping" when Doro rushed into the room. "O aunt," he cried, "please, please do not sing! Indeed, I cannot bear it. We have been all wrong about our music; I cannot explain it, but I feel it—I know it. If you could only hear her! Come with me to-morrow and hear her,



dear aunt, and then you will understand what I mean."

Left to herself again, Miss Elisabetha felt a great resolve come to her. She herself would go and see this stranger, and grind her to powder! She murmured these words over to herself several times, and derived much comfort from them.

With firm hands she unlocked the cedar chest which had come with her from the city seventeen years before; but the ladies of the Daarg family had not been wont to change their attire every passing fashion, and the robe she now drew forth was made in the style of full twenty-five years previous—a stiff drab brocade flowered in white, two narrow flounces around the bottom of the scant skirt, cut half low in the neck with a little bertha, the material wanting in the lower part standing out resplendent in the broad leg-of-mutton sleeves, stiffened with buckram. Never had the full daylight of Beata seen this precious robe, and Miss Elisabetha herself considered it for a moment with some misgivings as to its being too fine for such an occasion. But had not Doro spoken of "velvet" and "embroideries?" So, with solemnity, she arrayed herself, adding a certain Canton-erape scarf of a delicate salmon color, and a Leghorn bonnet with crown and cape, which loomed out beyond her face so that the three curls slanted forward over the full ruche to get outside, somewhat like blinders. Thus clad, with her slippers, her bag on her arm, and lace mits on her hands, Miss Elisabetha surveyed herself in the glass. In the bag were her handkerchief, an ancient smelling-bottle, and a card, yellow indeed, but still a veritable engraved card, with these words upon it:

"Miss ELISABETHA DAARG,  
DAARG'S BAY."

The survey was satisfactory. "Certainly I look the gentlewoman," she thought, with calm pride, "and this person, whoever she is, cannot fail to at once recognize me as such. It has never been our custom to visit indiscriminately; but in this case I do it for the boy's sake." So she sallied forth, going out by a side-door to escape observation, and walked toward the town, revolving in her mind the words she should use when face to face with the person. "I shall request her—with courtesy, of course—still I shall feel obliged to request her to leave the neighborhood," she thought. "I shall express to her—with kindness, but also with dignity—my opinion of the meretricious music she has taught my boy, and I shall say to her frankly that I really cannot permit her to see him again. Coming from me, these words will, of course, have weight, and—"

"Oh, see Miss 'Lisabeet!" sang out a child's voice. "Felipa, Felipa, do but come and see how fine she is!"

Felipa came, saw, and followed, as did other children—girls carrying plump babies, olive-skinned boys keeping close together, little blacks of all ages, with go-carts made of turtle-shells. It was not so much the splendor—though that was great, too—as it was the fact that Miss Elisabetha wore it. Had they not all known her two cotton

gowns as far back as they could remember? Reaching the Martera house at last, her accustomed glide somewhat quickened by the presence of her escort (for, although she had often scolded them over her own gate, it was different now when they assumed the proportions of a body-guard). She gave her card to little Inez, a daughter of the household, and one of her pupils.

"Bear this card to the person you have staying with you, my child, and ask her if she will receive me."

"But there is more than one person, señora," replied Inez, lost in wonder over the brocade.

"The one who sings, then."

"They all sing, Miss 'Lisabeet."

"Well, then, I mean the person who—who wears purple velvet and—and embroideries," said the visitor, bringing out these items reluctantly.

"Ah! you mean the beautiful lady," cried Inez. "I run, I run, señora;" and in a few minutes Miss Elisabetha was ushered up the stairs, and found herself face to face with "the person."

"To whom have I the honor of speaking?" said a languid voice from the sofa.

"Madame, my card—"

"Oh, was that a card? Pray excuse me.—Lucille, my glasses." Then, as a French maid brought the little, gold-rimmed toy, the person scanned the name. "Mam'selle Dag?" she said, inquiringly.

"Daarg, madame," replied Miss Elisabetha. "If you have resided in New York at all, you are probably familiar with the name;" and majestically she smoothed down the folds of the salmon-colored scarf.

"I have resided in New York, and I am not familiar with the name," said the person, throwing her head back indolently among the cushions.

She wore a long, full robe of sea-green silk, opening over a mist of lace-trimmed skirts, beneath whose filmy borders peeped little feet encased in green-silk slippers, with heels of grotesque height; a cord and tassels confined the robe to her round waist; the hanging sleeves, open to the shoulders, revealed superb white arms; and the mass of golden hair was gathered loosely up behind, with a mere *soupeon* of a cap perched on top, a knot of green ribbon contrasting with the low-down golden ripples over the forehead. Miss Elisabetha surveyed the attitude and the attire with disfavor; in her young days no lady in health wore a wrapper, or lolled on sofas. But the person, who was the pet prima donna of the day, English, with a world-wide experience and glory, knew nothing of such traditions.

"I have called, madame," began the visitor, ignoring the slight with calm dignity (after all, how should "a person" know any thing of the name of Daarg?), "on account of my—my ward, Theodore Oesterand."

"Never heard of him," replied the diva; it was her hour for *siesta*, and any infringement of her rules told upon the carefully-tended, luxuriant beauty.

"I beg your pardon," said Miss Elisabetha, with increased accentuation of her vowels. "Theodore has had the honor of

seeing you twice, and he has also sung for you."

"What! you mean my little bird of the tropics, my Southern nightingale!" exclaimed the singer, raising herself from the cushions.—"Lucille, why have you not placed a chair for this lady?—I assure you, I take the greatest interest in the boy, Miss Dag."

"Daarg," replied Miss Elisabetha; and then, with dignity, she took the chair, and, seating herself, crossed one slipper over the other, in the attitude number one of her youth. Number one had signified "repose," but little repose felt she now; there was something in the attire of this person, something in her yellow hair and white arms, something in the very air of the room, heavy with perfumes, that seemed to hurt and confuse her.

"I have never heard a tenor of more promise, never in my life; and consider how much that implies, ma'm'selle! You probably know who I am?"

"I have not that pleasure."

"Bien, I will tell you. I am Kernadi."

Miss Elisabetha bowed, and inhaled salts from her smelling-bottle, her little finger elegantly separated from the others.

"You do not mean to say that you have never heard of Kernadi—Cécile Kernadi?" said the diva, sitting fairly erect now in her astonishment.

"Never," replied the maiden, not without a proud satisfaction in the plain truth of her statement.

"Where have you lived, ma'm'selle?"

"Here, Mistress Kernadi."

The singer gazed at the figure before her in its ancient dress, and gradually a smile broke over her beautiful face.

"Ma'm'selle," she said, dismissing herself and her fame with a wave of her white hand, "you have a treasure in Doro, a voice rare in a century; and, in the name of the world, I ask you for him."

Miss Elisabetha sat speechless; she was never quick with words, and now she was struck dumb.

"I will take him with me when I go in a few days," pursued Kernadi; "and I promise you he shall have the very best instructors. His method now is bad—in sufferably bad—the poor boy has had, of course, no opportunities; but he is still young, and can unlearn as well as learn. Give him to me. I will relieve you of all expenses, so sure do I feel that he will do me credit in the end. I will even pass my word that he shall appear with me upon either the London or the Vienna stage before two years are out."

Miss Elisabetha had found her words at last.

"Madame," she said, "do you wish to make an opera-singer of the son of Petrus Oesterand?"

"I wish to make an opera-singer of this pretty Doro, and if this good Petrus is his father, he will, no doubt, give his consent."

"Woman, he is dead."

"So much the better; he will not interfere with our plans, then," replied the diva, gayly.

Miss Elisabetha rose; her tall form shook perceptibly.

"I have the honor to bid you good-day," she said, courtesying formally.

The woman on the sofa sprang to her feet.

"You are offended?" she asked; "and why?"

"That you, a person of no name, of no antecedents, a public singer, should presume to ask for my boy, an Oesterand—should dare to speak of degrading him to your level!"

Kernadi listened to these words in profound astonishment. Princes had bowed at her feet, blood-royal had watched for her smile. Who was this ancient creature, with her scarf and bag? Perhaps, poor thing! she did not comprehend! The diva was not bad-hearted, and so, gently enough, she went over her offer a second time, dwelling upon and explaining its advantages. "That he will succeed, I do not doubt," she said; "but in any case he shall not want."

Miss Elisabetha was still standing.

"Want," she repeated, "Theodore want? I should think not."

"He shall have the best instructors," pursued Kernadi, all unheeding. To do her justice, she meant all she said. It is ever a fancy of singers to discover singers—provided they sing other rôles.

"Madame, I have the honor of instructing him myself."

"Ah, indeed, very kind of you, I am sure; but—but no doubt you will be glad to give up the task. And he shall see all the great cities of Europe, and hear their music. I am down here merely for a short change—having taken cold in your miserable New-York climate; but I have my usual engagements in London, St. Petersburg, Vienna, and Paris, you know."

"No, madame, I do not know," was the stiff reply.

Kernadi opened her fine eyes still wider. It was true, then, and not a pretense—people really lived, white people, too, who knew nothing of her and her movements! She thought, in her vague way, that she really must give something to the missionaries; and then she went back to Doro.

"It will be a great advantage to him to see artist-life abroad—" she began.

"I intend him to see it," replied Miss Elisabetha.

"But he should have the right companions—advisers—"

"I shall be with him, madame."

The diva surveyed the figure before her, and amusement shone in her eyes.

"But you will find it fatiguing," she said—"so much journeying, so much change! Nay, ma'm'selle, remain at home in your peaceful quiet, and trust the boy to me." She had sunk back upon her cushions, and, catching a glimpse of her face in the mirror, she added, smiling: "One thing more. You need not fear lest I should trifle with his young heart. I assure you I will not; I shall be to him like a sister."

"You could scarcely be any thing else, unless it was an aunt," replied the ancient maiden; "I should judge you fifteen years his senior, madame."

Which was so nearly accurate that the

beauty started, and for the first time turned really angry.

"Will you give me the boy?" she said, shortly. "If he were here I might show you how easily—But, *ciel!* you could never understand such things; let it pass. Will you give me the boy—yes or no?"

"No."

There was a silence. The diva lolled back on her cushions, and yawned.

"You must be a very selfish woman—I think the most selfish I have ever known," she said, coolly, tapping the floor with her little slippered feet, as if keeping time to a waltz.

"I—selfish?"

"Yes, you—selfish. And, by-the-way, what right have you to keep the boy at all? Certainly, he resembles you in nothing. What relation is he to you?"

"He is—he is my ward," answered Miss Elisabetha, nervously rearranging her scarf. "I bid you, madame, good-day."

"Ward!" pursued Kernadi; "that means nothing. Was his mother your sister?"

"Nay; his mother was a Spanish lady," replied the troubled one, who knew not how to evade or lie.

"And the father—you spoke of him—was he a relative?"

A sudden and painful blush dyed the thin old face, creeping up to the very temples.

"Ah," said the singer, with scornful amusement in her voice, "if that is all, I shall take the boy without more ado;" and, lifting her glasses, she fixed her eyes full on the poor face before her, as though it was some rare variety of animal.

"You shall not have him; I say you shall not!" cried the elder woman, rousing to the contest like a tigress defending her young.

"Will you let him choose?" said Kernadi, with her mocking laugh. "See! I dare you to let him choose;" and, springing to her feet, she wheeled her visitor around suddenly, so that they stood side by side before the mirror. It was a cruel deed. Never before had the old eyes realized that their mild blue had faded; that the curls, once so soft, had grown gray and thin; that the figure, once sylph-like, was now but angles; and the throat, once so fair, yellow and sinewed. It came upon her suddenly—the face, the coloring, and the dress; a veil was torn away, and she saw it all. At the same instant gleamed, in the golden beauty of the other, the folds of her flowing robe, the mists of her laces. It was too much. With ashen face the stricken woman turned away, and sought the door-knob; she could not speak; a sob choked all utterance. Doro would choose.

But Cécile Kernadi rushed forward; her better nature was touched.

"No, no," she said, impulsively, "you shall not go so. See! I will promise; you shall keep the boy, and I will let him go. He is all you have, perhaps, and I—I have so much! Do you not believe me? I will go away this very day and leave no trace behind. He will pine, but it will pass—a boy's first fancy. I promised him my picture, but you shall take it. There! Now go, go, before I regret what I do. He has such a

voice!—but never mind, you shall not be robbed by me. Farewell, poor lady; I, too, may grow old some day. But hear one little word of advice from my lips: the boy has waked up to life, he will never be again the child you have known. Though I go, another will come; take heed!"

That night, in the silence of her own room, Miss Elisabetha prayed a little prayer, and then, with firm hand, burned the bright picture to ashes.

Wild was the grief of the boy; but the fair enchantress was gone. He wept, he pined; but she was gone. He fell ill, and lay feverish upon his narrow bed; but she was none the less gone, and nothing brought her back. Miss Elisabetha tended him with a great patience, and spoke no word. When he raved of golden hair, she never said, "I have seen it;" when he cried, "Her voice, her angel-voice!" she never said, "I have heard it." But one day she dropped these words: "Was she not a false woman, Theodore, who went away not caring, although under promise to see you, and to give you her picture?" And then she walked quietly to her own room, and barred the door, and wept; for the first time in her pure life she had burdened her soul with falsehood. Yet would she have done it ten times over to save the boy.

Time and youth work wonders; it is not that youth forgets so soon; but this—time is then so long. Doro recovered, almost in spite of himself, and the days grew calm again. Harder than ever worked Miss Elisabetha, giving herself hardly time to eat or sleep. Doro studied a little listlessly, but he no longer cared for his old amusements. He had freed his pets: the mocking-birds had flown back to the barrens, and the young alligators, who had lived in the sunken barrel, found themselves unexpectedly obliged to earn their own living along the marshes and lagoons. But of music he would have none; the piano stood silent, and his guitar had disappeared. One day by chance Miss Elisabetha came upon his lair, a little arbor made in the dense growth of the *chaparral*, where, under a careful thatch of the saw-palmetto leaves like a shrine, she found his treasures, the paper of *bonbons*, and a knot of purple velvet. She touched nothing, but sighed as she looked.

"It is wearing itself away so," she thought, "and then he will come back to me." But nightly she counted her secret store, and angered at its smallness, worked harder and harder, worked until her shoulders ached and her hands grew knotted. "One more year, only one more year," she thought, "then he shall go!" And, through all the weary toil these words echoed like a chant—"One more year—only one more!"

Two months passed, and then the spring came to the winterless land, came with the yellow jasmine. "But four months now, and he shall go," said Miss Elisabetha, in her silent musings over the bag of coin. "I have shortened the time by double tasks." Lightly she stepped about the house, counted her orange-buds, and reckoned up the fish. She played the cathedral-organ now on Sundays, making inward protest after every note, and



sitting rigidly with her back toward the altar in the little high-up gallery during the sermon, as much as to say: "It is only my body which is here. Behold! I do not even bow down in the house of Rimmon." Thus laboring early and late, with heart, and hand, and strength, she saw but little of Doro, save at meals and through his one hour of listless study; but the hidden hope was a comforter, and she worked and trusted on. There was one little gleam of light; he had begun to play again on his guitar, softly, furtively, and as it were in secret. But she heard him, and was cheered.

One evening, toiling home through the white sand after a late music-lesson, laden with a bag of flour which she would not trust Viny to buy, she heard a girl's voice singing. It was a plaintive, monotonous air that she sang, simple as a Gregorian chant, but her voice was a velvet contralto, as full of rich tones as a peach is full of lusciousness. The contralto voice is like the violoncello.

"The voice is not bad," thought Miss Elisabetha, listening critically, "but there is a certain element of the *sauvage* in it. No lady, no person of culture, would permit herself to sing in that way; it must be one of the Minorcans."

Still, in spite of prejudices, the music in her turned her steps toward the voice; her slippers made no sound, and she found it. A young girl, a Minorcan, sat under a bower of jasmine, leaning back against her lover's breast; her dark eyes were fixed on the evening star, and she sang as the bird sings, naturally, unconsciously, for the pure pleasure of singing. She was a pretty child, Miss Elisabetha knew her well—Catalina, one of a thriftless, olive-skinned family down in the town. "Not fourteen, and a lover already," thought the old maid with horror. "Would it be of any use, I wonder, if I spoke to her mother?" Here the lover—the Paul of this Virginia—moved, and the shadows slid off his face; it was Doro!

Alone in her chamber sat Miss Elisabetha. Days had passed, but of no avail. Even now the boy was gone to the tumble-down house in the village where Catalina's little brothers and sisters swarmed out of doors and windows, and the brown, broad mother bade him welcome with a hearty slap on the shoulder. She had tried every thing—argument, entreaty, anger, grief—and failed; there remained now only the secret, the secret of years, of much toil and many pains. The money was not yet sufficient for two; so be it. She would stay herself, and work on; but he should go. Before long she would hear his step, perhaps not until late, for those people had no settled hours (here a remembrance of all their ways made her shudder), but come he would in time; this was still his home. At midnight she heard the footfall, and opening the door called gently, "Theodore, Theodore." The youth came; but slowly. Many times had she called him lately, and he was weary of the strife. Had he not told her all, the girl singing as she passed, her voice haunting him, his search for her, and her smile; their meetings in the *chaparral*, where she sang to him by the

hour, and then, naturally as the bud opens, their love? It seemed to him an all-sufficient story, and he could not understand the long debates.

"And the golden-haired woman," Miss Elisabetha had said; "she sang to you too, Theodore."

"I had forgotten her, aunt," replied the youth, simply.

So he came but slowly. This time, however, the voice was gentle, and there was no anger in the waiting eyes. She told him all as he sat there, the story of his father, who was once her friend she said, with a little quiver in her voice, the death of the young widowed mother, her own coming to this far Southern land, and her long labors for him; then she drew a picture of the bright future opening before him, and bringing forth the bag showed him its contents, the savings and earnings of seventeen years, tied in packages with the contents noted on their labels. "All is for you, dear child," she said, "for you are still but a child. Take it and go. I had planned to accompany you, but I give that up for the present; I will remain and see to the sale of every thing here, and then I will join you—that is, if you wish it, dear. Perhaps you will enjoy traveling alone, and—and I have plenty of friends to whom I can go, and shall be quite content, dear—quite content."

"Where is it that you wish me to go, aunt?" asked Doro, coldly. They were going over the same ground, then, after all.

"Abroad, dear, abroad, to all the great cities of the world," said the aunt, faltering a little as she met his eyes. "You are well educated, Theodore, I have taught you myself. You are a gentleman's son, and I have planned for you a life suited to your descent. I have written to my cousins in Amsterdam; they have never seen me, but for the sake of the name they will—O my boy, my darling, tell me that you will go!" she burst forth, breaking into entreaty as she read his face.

But Doro shook off her hands. "Aunt," he said, rising, "why will you distress yourself thus? I shall marry Catalina, and you know it; have I not told you so? Let us speak no more on the subject. As to the money, I care not for it; keep it." And he turned toward the door as if to end the discussion. But Miss Elisabetha followed and threw herself on her knees before him.

"Child!" she cried, "give me, give yourself a little delay; only that, a little delay. Take the money—go; and if at the end of the year your mind is still the same, I will say not one word, no, not one, against it. She is but young, too young to marry. O my boy, for whom I have labored, for whom I have planned, for whom I have prayed, will you too forsake me?"

"Of course not, aunt," replied Doro; "I mean you to live with us always;" and with his strong young arms he half led, half carried her back to her arm-chair. She sat speechless. To live with them always, with them! Words surged to her lips in a flood, then, as she met his gaze, surged back to her heart again; there was that in the expression of his face which told her all words were vain; the placid, far-away look, unmoved in

spite of her trouble, silenced argument and killed hope. As well attack a creamy summer cloud with axes, as well attempt to dip up the ocean with a cup. She saw it all in a flash, as one sees years of past life in the moment before drowning; and she was drowning, poor soul!—Yet Doro saw nothing, felt nothing, save that his aunt was growing into an old woman with foolish fancies, and that he himself was sleepy. And then he fell to thinking of his love, and all her enchanting ways, her little angers and quick repentances, the shoulder turned away in pretended scorn, and the sudden waves of tenderness that swept him into paradise. So he stood dreaming, while tearless, silent Miss Elisabetha sat before her broken hopes. At last Doro, coming back to reality, murmured, "Aunt, you will like her when you know her better, and she will take good care of you."

But the aunt only shuddered.

"Theodore, Theodore!" she cried, "will you break my heart? Shall the son of Petrus Oesterland marry so?"

"I do not know what you mean by 'so,' aunt. All men marry, and why not I? I never knew my father, but if he were here I feel sure he would see Catalina with my eyes. Certainly, in all my life, I have never seen a face so fair, or eyes so lustrous."

"Child, you have seen nothing—nothing. But I intended, Heaven knows I intended—"

"It makes no difference now, aunt; do not distress yourself about it."

"Theodore, I have loved you long—your youth has not been an unhappy one; will you, for my sake, go for this one year?" she pleaded, with quivering lips.

The young man shook his head with a half smile.

"Dear aunt," he said, gently, "pray say no more. I do not care to see the world, I am satisfied here. As to Catalina, I love her. Is not that enough?" He bent and kissed her cold forehead, and then went away to his happy dreams; and, if he thought of her at all as he lingered in the soft twilight that comes before sleep, it was only to wonder over her distress—a wonder soon indolently comforted by the belief that she would be calm and reasonable in the morning. But, across the hall, a gray, old woman sat, her money beside her, and the hands that had earned it idle in her lap. God keep us from such a vigil!

And did she leave him? No; not even when the "him" became "them."

The careless young wife, knowing nothing save how to love, queened it right royally over the old house, and the little brown brothers and sisters ran riot through every room. The piano was soon broken by the ignorant hands that sounded its chords at random; but only Doro played on it now, and nothing pleased him so well as to improvise melodies from the plaintive Minorcan songs the little wife sang in her velvet voice. Years passed, the money was all spent, and the house full—a careless, idle, ignorant, happy brood, asking for nothing, planning not at all, working not at all, but loving each other in their own way, contented to sit in the sunshine, and laugh, and eat, and sing, all the



day long. The tall, gaunt figure that came and went among them, laboring ceaselessly, striving always against the current, they regarded with tolerating eyes as a species differing from theirs, but good in its way, especially for work. The children loved the still silent old woman, and generously allowed her to take care of them until she tried to teach them, then away they flew like wild birds of the forest, and not one learned more than the alphabet.

Doro died first, a middle-aged man; gently he passed away without pain, without a care. "You have been very good to me, aunt; my life has been a happy one. I have had nothing to wish for," he murmured, as she bent to catch the last look from his dying eyes.

He was gone; and she bore on the burden he had left to her. I saw her last year—an old, old woman, but working still.

CONSTANCE FENIMORE WOOLSON.

## AN ENGLISH SPORTSMAN IN FLORIDA.

### THIRD PAPER.

WHEN Captain Townshend returned to Key West from his excursion to the "Ever-faithful Isle," his first aim was to secure a schooner to convey his little party, which had been joined by a physician named Hicks, round to Biscayne Bay and Indian River, on the east coast of the peninsula. With great difficulty an arrangement was at last made with the captain and part owner of the vessel *Ida McKay*, by name Merritt, who engaged to convey them wherever they wished to go for the sum of eighteen dollars a day, on condition the voyage should not last more than six days, and that the schooner should be victualled for five men besides the cabin-passengers. The skipper was a professional wrecker, born of parents who had immigrated from the Bahamas, and who was known at Key West as a "conch." The mate was also of similar breed and character. During the war between the North and South this mate had commanded a schooner which was engaged in blockade-running between the Bahamas and the various inlets on the east coast of Florida, and the charterers of the vessel now depended on him to pilot them to the Indian River Inlet, as the captain had never been there. Next in rank of the crew came the cook, a half-bred Spaniard, who had once been at Biscayne Bay, which neither the mate nor skipper had ever entered, so he was considered pilot for that port. Lastly, the only able-bodied seaman was a fine, full-blooded negro named "Bob," a British subject from one of the Bahamas. Though of immensely strong frame, Bob was extremely lazy, and was consequently in everlasting hot water with both captain and mate, as their object was to make him do all the work of the ship, while his was to do nothing but sleep. During the voyage there was considerable difficulty in preventing the skipper from braining Bob, as the passengers were roused by his cries one morning to find the negro at the extreme end of the bowsprit, and the captain beating him on the head

with a capstan bar. After this, the threat was daily held over him that on the return-voyage he would be sold as a slave in Cuba.

The course lay among the coral keys, which forms a chain of reefs, inside which the deep-water channel is tortuous and intricate in the extreme, the depth of water being from two to ten feet. Immediately outside, it increases in a sheer precipitous descent to eight hundred fathoms. All along the reef are buoys and beacons, with occasional light-houses. Becalmed, they beguiled the time by fishing on the reefs with the spear, which was found to be highly-exciting sport.

"A flock of several hundred pelicans, busily employed fishing for their suppers, sailed majestically away as we approached, and, the water rapidly shoaling to about two feet, we were soon looking down intently through the crystal-clear sea, on that most beautiful wonder of the deep—a coral reef. Among the innumerable cavities in the coral rock darted fish of every size and color, from sharks to little gold-fish no bigger than minnows. Sea-weeds of many brilliant colors and rare species, the sea-fan, pavonia, or peacock's tail, and other beautiful forms of corallum, festooned the cavities, while sponges, sea-eggs, with their long, black spikes, conches, zoophytes, and shells of every variety, nearly concealed the coral-rock from view.

"One of the two spots where the reef appears above the water, we found covered with shells and guano, rising in a mound only a few yards in diameter. As we paddled slowly above the reef, our mate stood in the bows and darted the grains into the hollows of the rock with such effect that, in half an hour, we had secured in the boat six purple crawfish, four conches, one jack-fish weighing thirty pounds, and several angel-fish. Then, a light breeze beginning to ruffle the water, we hastened on board the schooner, which bore up to meet us, and at sunset dropped anchor near the little island of Cayo Sambe, one of the Pine-Island group, situated some five-and-twenty miles east of Key West."

Within the chain of desolate sand keys, called by the Spaniards "Los Martires," from the number of men who have perished on them, they saw a vast quantity and variety of animal life which had sought the calm waters within the reef—turtles, porpoises, sharks, sea-birds of various sorts, pelicans, ospreys, and thousands of the beautiful rainbow-hued paper-nautili or argonaut, swimming with their long arms extended in a straight line, their ugly bodies appearing hardly connected with the fragile shell. Nor did animal life alone engage their attention, as they fell in with a fleet of sponging-schooners, whose movements they followed with interest. Each schooner was towing a long tail of ten or twelve boats, in which the "spongers," when arrived in likely spots, row about examining the ground.

In order to see the bottom when the surface of the water is ruffled by a breeze, a bucket is used with a glass bottom, which, being immersed about six inches in the water, enables the sponger to peer down to the bottom through water varying in depth from three fathoms to three feet. When the sponges are spied out, a wooden pole with a hooked knife at the end is used to detach them from the bottom, the shallow water rendering divers unnecessary. The quality

of the sponges obtained in these waters and in the Gulf of Mexico is inferior, the value of the best sheep's-wool sponges at Key West being one dollar a pound, that of the still coarser sorts from thirty to fifty cents.

The third night they anchored opposite the light-house, which is built on Alligator Key, in the harbor of an island, the inhabitants of which, now limited to a half-dozen families, formerly did a very profitable business in wrecking, which they had been obliged to change for sponging. "I wish them d—d lights was sunk below the sea!" growled the humane skipper, as he related to his passengers tales of the many ships he had wrecked, and valuable cargoes he had obtained salvage on a few years ago, before the flashing light was there to send its merciful warning to the passing vessel. Indian Key is the smallest inhabited island in the world; it is not more than a hundred and fifty yards in diameter, and contains exactly five houses, six palm-trees, and one dozen plants of the sisal hemp. Its inhabitants are said to be little better than pirates, and are spoken of as lawless characters by those who scarcely consider murder a crime.

At daylight on the fifth day out from Key West, the schooner rounded Key-Biscayne light-house and entered the mouth of the Miami River. Throughout Florida the settlement of Miami, on Biscayne Bay, is represented as a sort of terrestrial paradise, cultivated like the garden of Eden, where every fruit of the tropics grows luxuriantly, where magnificent scenery delights the eye, and fever and death are unknown. It is in reality a very small settlement on a ridge of limestone, rising from five to thirty feet above the sea, with a loose, sandy loam over it, only a few inches in depth, but tolerably fertile. The climate is equable but very hot, the scenery is pretty but never approaches magnificence, while the multitude of insects makes life hardly endurable.

At Miami there are four houses, two on either bank of the river. On the right bank, overlooking the bay, stands the house of an English settler, Mr. Brettle, well situated on a bluff, with gardens and terraces, carefully kept and planted, making it about the prettiest residence in South Florida, and the only one with any claim to taste in the laying out of the grounds. At this time the owner was absent, and the place was for sale. Near it is a store kept supplied with necessaries from Key West, which does a considerable trade with the Indians, who resort thither for whiskey and beads.

On the left bank of the Miami River lives the gentleman in charge of what is called the Fort-Dallas estate, owned by a company, of which our fellow-traveler, the doctor, was one. The estate consists of six hundred and fifty acres of land, about twenty of which have been cleared and planted with cocoas, guavas, orange and other fruit trees, but now form a wilderness hardly distinguishable from the forest. There are some stone remains of the old Fort Dallas, occupied by soldiers during the Indian war, and a row of stone-houses, or out-buildings, now falling into ruins.

The estate formerly belonged to a gentle-