colored man or a colored woman. Next morning, George duly turned up to carry my valise down to the station.

"I didn't see you at the lecture last night," I ventured to observe.

"Leckchaw!" retorted George, with undisguised contempt. "Psha! I don't shin around no leckchaws! Why, I traded off them 'ere tickets for twenty-fi' cents!"

And away he tramped with the valise, mumbling depreciatory comments in reference to "leckchaws."

Archibald Forbes.

THE STREET OF THE HYACINTH.

BY CONSTANCE FENIMORE WOOLSON,

Author of "Rodman the Keeper," "Anne," etc.

IN TWO PARTS:—I.

It was a street in Rome, narrow, winding, not over-clean. Two vehicles, meeting there, could pass only by grazing the doors and windows on either side, after the usual excited whip-cracking and shouts which make the new-comer imagine, for his first day or two, that he is proceeding at a perilous speed through the sacred city of the soul.

But two vehicles did not often meet in the street of the Hyacinth. It was not a thoroughfare, not even a convenient connecting link; it skirted the back of the Pantheon, the old buildings on either side rising so high against the blue that the sun never came down lower than the fifth line of windows, and looking up from the pavement was like looking up from the bottom of a well. There was no footwalk, of course; even if there had been one no one would have used it, owing to the easy custom of throwing from the windows a few ashes, and other light trifles, for the city refuse-carts, instead of carrying them down the long stairs to the door below. They must be in the street at an appointed hour, must they not? Very well, then—there they were; no one but an unreasonable foreigner would dream of objecting.

But unreasonable foreigners seldom entered the street of the Hyacinth. There were, however, two who lived there, one winter not long ago; and upon a certain morning in the January of that winter a third came to see these two. At least he asked for them, and gave two cards to the Italian maid who answered his ring; but when, before he had time to even seat himself, the little curtain over the parlor door was raised again, and Miss Macks entered, she came alone. Her mother did not appear. The visitor was not disturbed by being obliged to begin conversation immediately; he was an old Roman sojourner, and had stopped fully three minutes at the end of the fourth flight of stairs to regain his breath, before he mounted the fifth and last to ring Miss Macks's bell. Her card was tacked upon the door: "Miss Ettie F. Macks." He surveyed it with disfavor, while the little, loose-hung bell rang a small but exceedingly shrill and ill-tempered peal, like the barking of a small cur. "Why in the world doesn't she put her mother's card here, instead of her own?" he said to himself. "Or, if her own, why not simply 'Miss Macks,' without that nickname?"

But Miss Macks's mother had never possessed a visiting-card in her life. Miss Macks was the visiting member of the family; and this was so well understood at home, that she had forgotten that it might not be the same abroad. As to the "Ettie," having been called so always, it had not occurred to her to make a change. Her name was Ethelinda Faith, Mrs. Macks having thus combined euphony and filial respect—the first title being her tribute to æsthetics, the second her tribute to the memory of her mother.

"I am so very glad to see you, Mr. Noel," said Miss Macks, greeting her visitor with much cordial directness of voice and eyes. "I have been expecting you. But you have waited so long—three days!"

Raymond Noel, who thought that, under the circumstances, he had been unusually courteous and prompt, was rather surprised to find himself thus put at once upon the defensive.

"We are not always able to carry out

our wishes immediately, Miss Macks," he replied, smiling a little. "I was hampered by several previously made engagements."

"Yes; but this was a little different, wasn't it? This was something important—not like an invitation to lunch or dinner, or the usual idle society talk."

He looked at her; she was quite in earnest.

"I suppose it to be different," he answered. "You must remember how little you have told me."

"I thought I told you a good deal! However, the atmosphere of a reception is no place for such subjects, and I can understand that you did not take it in. That is the reason I asked you to come and see me, here. Shall I begin at once? It seems rather abrupt."

"I enjoy abruptness; I have not heard any for a long time."

"That I can understand, too; I suppose the society here is all finished off—there are no rough ends."

"There are ends. If not rough, they are often sharp."

But Miss Macks did not stop to analyze this; she was too much occupied with her own subject.

"I will begin immediately, then," she said. "It will be rather long; but, if you are to understand me, you ought of course to know the whole."

"My chair is very comfortable," replied Noel, placing his hat and gloves on the sofa near him, and taking an easy position with his head back.

Miss Macks thought that he ought to have said, "The longer it is, the more interesting," or something of that sort. She had already described him to her mother as "not over-polite. Not rude in the least, you know—as far as possible from that; wonderfully smooth-spoken; but yet, somehow—awfully indifferent." However, he was Raymond Noel; and that, not his politeness or impoliteness, was her point.

"To begin with, then, Mr. Noel, a year ago I had never read one word you have written; I had never even heard of you. I suppose you think it strange that I should tell you this so frankly; but, in the first place, it will give you a better idea of my point of view; and, in the second, I feel a friendly interest in your taking measures to introduce your writings into the community where I lived. It is a very intelligent community. Naturally, a writer wants his articles read. What else does he write them for?"

"Perhaps a little for his own entertainment," suggested her listener.

"Oh, no! He would never take so much trouble just for that."

"On the contrary, many would take any amount, just for that. Successfully to entertain oneself—that is one of the great successes of life."

Miss Macks gazed at him; she had a very direct gaze.

"This is just mere talk," she said, not impatiently, but in a business-like tone. "We shall never get anywhere if you take me up so. It is not that your remarks are not very cultivated and interesting, and all that; but simply that I have so much to tell you."

"Perhaps I can be cultivated and interesting dumbly. I will try."

"You are afraid I am going to be diffuse; I see that. So many women are diffuse! But I shall not be, because I have been thinking for six months just what I should say to you. It was very lucky that I went with Mrs. Lawrence to that reception where I met you. But, if it had not happened as it did, I should have found you out all the same. I should have looked for your address at all the bankers', and, if it was not there, I should have inquired at all the hotels. But it was delightful luck getting hold of you in this way, almost the very minute I enter Rome!"

She spoke so simply and earnestly that Noel did not say that he was immensely honored, and so forth, but merely bowed his acknowledgments.

"To go back. I shall give you simply heads," pursued Miss Macks. "If you want details, ask, and I will fill them in. I come from the West. Tuscolee Falls is the name of our town. We had a farm there, but we did not do well with it after Mr. Spurr's death, so we rented it out. That is how I come to have so much leisure. I have always had a great deal of ambition; by that I mean that I did not see why things that had once been done could not be done again. It seemed to me that the point was—just determination. And then, of course, I always had the talent. I made pictures when I was a very little girl. Mother has them still, and I can show them to you. It is just like all the biographies, you know. They always begin in childhood, and astonish the family. Well, I had my first lessons from a drawing-teacher who spent a summer in Tuscolee. I can show you what I did while with him. Then I attended, for four years, the Young Ladies' Seminary in the county-town, and took lessons while there. I may as well be perfectly frank and tell the whole, which is that everybody was astonished at my progress, and that I was myself. All sorts of things are prophesied out there about my future. You see, the neighborhood is a very generous-spirited one, and they like to think they have discovered a genius

at their own doors. My telling you all this sounds, I know, rather conceited, Mr. Noel. But if you could see my motive, and how entirely without conceit my idea of myself really is, you would hold me free from that charge. It is only that I want you to know absolutely the whole."

"I quite understand," answered her visitor.

"Well—I hope you do. I went on at home, after that, by myself, and I did a good deal. I work pretty rapidly, you see. Then came my last lessons, from a third teacher. He was a young man from New York. He had consumption, poor fellow! and cannot last long. He wasn't of much use to me in actual work. His ideas were completely different from those of my other teachers, and, indeed, from my own. He was unreliable, too, and his temper was uneven. However, I had a good deal of respect for his opinion, and *he* told me to get your art-articles and read them. It wasn't easy. Some of them are scattered about in the magazines and papers, you know. However, I am pretty determined, and I kept at it until I got them all. Well, they made a great impression upon me. You see, they were new." She paused. "But I doubt, Mr. Noel, whether we should ever entirely agree," she added, looking at him reflectively.

"That is very probable, Miss Macks."

Miss Macks thought this an odd reply. "He is so queer, with all his smoothness!" she said to her mother afterward. "He never says what you think he will say. Now, any one would suppose that he would have answered that he would try to make me agree, or something like that. Instead, he just gave it right up, without trying! But I expect he sees how independent I am, and that I don't intend to *reflect any* one."

"Well, they made a great impression," she resumed. "And as you seemed to think, Mr. Noel, that no one could do well in painting who had not seen and studied the old pictures over here, I made up my mind to come over at any cost, if it was a possible thing to bring it about. It wasn't easy, but—here we are. In the lives of all—almost all—artists, I have noticed—haven't you?—that there comes a time when they have to live on hope and their own pluck, more than upon anything tangible that the present has to offer. They have to take that risk. Well, I have taken it; I took it when we left America. And now I will tell you what it is I want from *you*. I haven't any hesitation in asking, because I am sure you will feel interested in a case like mine, and because it was your writings really that brought me here, you know. And so, then, first: I would like your opinion of all that I have done, so far. I have brought everything with me to show you. Second: I want your advice as to the best teacher; I suppose there is a great choice in Rome. Third: I should be glad if you would give a general oversight to all I do, for the next year. And last, if you would be so kind, I should much enjoy making visits with you to all the galleries and hearing your opinions again by word of mouth, because that is always so much more vivid, you know, than the printed page."

"My dear Miss Macks! you altogether overestimate my powers," said Noel, astounded by these far-reaching demands, so calmly and confidently made.

"Yes, I know. Of course it strikes you so—strikes you as a great compliment that I should wish to put myself so entirely in your hands," answered Miss Macks, smiling. "But you must give up thinking of me as the usual young lady; you must not think of me in that way any more than I shall think of you as the usual young gentleman. You will never meet me at a reception again; now that I have found *you*, I shall devote myself entirely to my work."

"An alarming girl!" said Noel to himself. But, even as he said it, he knew that, in the ordinary acceptation of the term at least, Miss Macks was not alarming.

She was twenty-two; in some respects she looked older, in others much younger, than most girls of that age. She was tall, slender, erect, but not especially graceful. Her hands were small and finely shaped, but thin. Her features were well cut; her face oval. Her gray eyes had a clear directness in their glance, which, combined with the other expressions of her face, told the experienced observer at once that she knew little of what is called "the world." For, although calm, it was a deeply confident glance; it showed that the girl was sure that she could take care of herself, and even several others, also, through any contingencies that might arise. She had little color; but her smooth complexion was not pale—it was slightly brown. Her mouth was small, her teeth small, and very white. Her light-brown hair was drawn back smoothly from her forehead, and drawn up smoothly behind, its thickness braided in a close knot on the top of her head. This compact coiffure, at a time when most feminine foreheads in Rome and elsewhere were shaded almost to the eyebrows by curling locks, and when the arched outline of the head was left unbroken, the hair being coiled in a low knot behind, made Miss Macks look somewhat peculiar. But she was not observant of fashion's changes. That had been the mode in Tuscolee; she had grown

accustomed to it; and, as her mind was full of other things, she had not considered this one. One or two persons, who noticed her on the voyage over, said to themselves, "If that girl had more color, and if she was graceful, and if she was a little more womanly,—that is, if she would not look at everything in such a direct, calm, impartial, impersonal sort of way, —she would be almost pretty."

But Miss Macks continued without color and without grace, and went on looking at things as impersonally and impartially as ever.

"I shall be most happy, of course, to do anything that I can," Noel had answered. Then to make a diversion, "Shall I not have the pleasure of seeing Mrs. Macks?" he asked.

"Mrs. Macks? Oh, you mean mother. My mother's name is Spurr—Mrs. Spurr. My father died when I was a baby, and, some years afterward, she married Mr. Spurr. She is now again a widow. Her health is not good, and she sees almost no one, thank you."

"I suppose you are much pleased with the picturesqueness of Roman life, and—ah—your apartment?" he went on.

"Pleased?" said Miss Macks, looking at him in wonder. "With our apartment? We get along with it because we must; there seems to be no other way to live, in Rome. The idea of having only a story of a house, and not a whole house to ourselves, is dreadful to mother; she cannot get used to it. And, with so many families below us,—we have a clock-mender, a dress-maker, an engraver, a print-seller, and a cobbler,—and only one pair of stairs, it does seem to me dreadfully public."

"You must look upon the stair-way as a street," said Noel. "You have established yourselves in a very short time."

"Oh, yes. I got an agent, and looked at thirty places the very first day. I speak Italian a little, so I can manage the housekeeping; I began to study it as soon as we thought of coming, and I studied hard. But all this is of secondary importance; the real thing is to get to work. Will you look at my paintings now?" she said, rising as if to go for them.

"Thanks; I fear I have hardly time to-day," said Noel. He was thinking whether it would be better to decline clearly and in so many words the office she had thrust upon him, or trust to time to effect the same without an open refusal. He decided upon the latter course; it seemed the easier, and also the kinder to her.

"Well,—another day, then," said Miss Macks, cheerfully, taking her seat again. "But about a teacher?"

"I hardly know ——"

"Oh, Mr. Noel! you *must* know."

And, in truth, he did know. It came into his mind to give her the name of a good teacher, and then put all further responsibilities upon him.

Miss Macks wrote down the name in a clear, ornamental handwriting.

"I am glad it isn't a foreigner," she said. "I don't believe I should get on with a foreigner."

"But it is a foreigner."

"Why, it's an English name, isn't it? Jackson."

"Yes, he is an Englishman. But isn't an Englishman a foreigner in Rome?"

"Oh, you take that view? Now, to me, America and—well, yes, perhaps England, too, are the nations. Everything else is foreign."

"The English would be very much obliged to you," said Noel, laughing.

"Yes, I know I am more liberal than most Americans; I really like the English," said Miss Macks, calmly. "But we keep getting off the track. Let me see— Oh, yes. As I shall go to see this Mr. Jackson this afternoon, and as it is not likely that he will be ready to begin to-morrow, will you come then and look at my pictures? Or would you rather commence with a visit to one of the galleries?"

Raymond Noel was beginning to be amused. If she had shown the faintest indication of knowing how much she was asking,—if she had betrayed the smallest sign of a desire to secure his attention as Raymond Noel personally, and not simply the art-authority upon whom she had pinned her faith,—his disrelish for various other things about her would have been heightened into utter dislike, and it is probable that he would never have entered the street of the Hyacinth again. But she was so unaware of any intrusion, or any exorbitance in her demands, probably so ignorant of—certainly so indifferent to—the degree of perfection (perfection of the most quiet kind, however) visible in the general appearance and manner of the gentleman before her, that (he said to himself) he might as well have been one of her own Tuscolee farmers, for all she knew to the contrary. The whole affair was unusual; and Noel rather liked the unusual, if it was not loud—and Miss Macks was, at least, not loud; she was dressed plainly in black, and she had the gift of a sweet voice, which, although very clear, was low-toned. Noel was an observer of voices, and he had noticed hers the first time he heard her speak. While these thoughts were passing through his mind, he was answering that he feared his engagements for the next day would, unfortunately, keep him from putting himself at her service.

Her face fell; she looked much disappointed.

"Is it going to be like this all the time?" she asked, anxiously. "Are you always engaged?"

"In Rome, in the winter, one generally has small leisure. It will be the same with you, Miss Macks, when you have been here a while longer; you will see. As to the galleries, Mr. Jackson has a class, I think, and probably the pupils will visit them all, under his charge; you will find that very satisfactory."

"But I don't want Mr. Jackson for the galleries; I want *you*," said Miss Macks. "I have studied your art-criticisms until I know them by heart, and I have a thousand questions to ask about every picture you have mentioned. Why, Mr. Noel, I came to Europe to see you!"

Raymond Noel was rather at a loss what to answer to this statement, made by a girl who looked at him so soberly and earnestly with clear gray eyes. It would be of no avail again to assure her that his opinions would be of small use to her; as she had said herself, she was very determined, and she had made up her mind that they would be of great use, instead of small. Her idea must wear itself out by degrees. He would try to make the degrees easy. He decided that he would have a little private talk with Jackson, who was a very honest fellow; and, for the present, he would simply take leave.

"You are very kind," he said, rising. "I appreciate it, I assure you. It has made me stay an unconscionable time. I hope you will find Rome all you expected, and I am sure you will; all people of imagination like Rome. As to the galleries, yes, certainly; a—ah—little later. You must not forget the various small precautions necessary here as regards the fever, you know."

"Rome will not be at all what I expected if *you* desert me," answered Miss Macks, paying no attention to his other phrases. She had risen, also, and was now confronting him at a distance of less than two feet; as she was tall, her eyes were not much below the level of his own.

"How can a man desert when he has never enlisted?" thought Noel, humorously. But he kept his thought to himself, and merely replied, as he took his hat: "Probably you will desert me; you will find out how useless I am. You must not be too hard upon us, Miss Macks; we Americans lose much of our native energy if we stay long over here."

"Hard?" she answered,—"hard? Why, Mr. Noel, I am absolutely at your feet!"

He looked at her, slightly startled, although his face showed nothing of it; was she, after all, going to——? But no; her sentence had been as impersonal as those which had preceded it.

"All I said about having contrary opinions, and all that, amounts to nothing," she went on, thereby relieving him from the necessity of making reply. "I desire but one thing, and that is to have you guide me. And I don't believe you are really going to refuse. You haven't an unkind face, although you *have* got such a cold way! Why, think of it: here I have come all this long distance, bringing mother, too, just to study, and to see you. I shall study hard; I have a good deal of perseverance. It took a good deal to get here in the first place, for we are poor. But I don't mind that at all; the only thing I should mind, the only thing that would take my courage away, would be to have you desert me. In all the troubles that I thought might happen, I assure you, I never once thought of *that*, Mr. Noel. I thought of course you would be interested. Why, in your books you are all interest. Are you different from your books?"

"I fear, Miss Macks, that writers are seldom good illustrations of their own doctrines," replied Noel.

"That would make them hypocrites. I don't believe you are a hypocrite. I expect you have a habit of running yourself down. Many gentlemen dó that, and then they think they will be cried up. I don't believe you are going to be unkind; you *will* look at the pictures I have brought with me, wont you?"

"Mr. Jackson's opinion is worth a hundred of mine, Miss Macks; my knowledge is not technical. But, of course, if you wish it, I shall take pleasure in obeying." He added several conventional remarks as filling-up, and then, leaving his compliments for "your mother,"—he could not recall the name she had given,—he went toward the little curtained door.

She had brightened over his promise.

"You will come Monday, then, to see them, wont you?—as you cannot come to-morrow," she said, smiling happily.

When she smiled (and she did not smile often), showing her little white, child-like teeth, she looked very young. He was fairly caught, and answered, "Yes." But he immediately qualified it with a "That is, if it is possible."

"Oh, *make* it possible," she answered, still smiling and going with him herself to the outer door, instead of summoning the maid. The last he saw of her she was standing in the open door-way, her face bright and contented, watching him as he went down. He did not go to see her pictures on the following Monday; he sent a note of excuse.

Some days later he met her.

"Ah, you are taking one of the delightful walks?" he said. "I envy you your first impressions of Rome."

"I am not taking a walk—that is, for pleasure," she answered. "I am trying to find some vegetables that mother can eat; the vegetables here are so foreign! You don't know how disappointed I was, Mr. Noel, when I got your note. It was such a setback! Why couldn't you come right home with me now—that is, after I have got the vegetables—and see the pictures? It wouldn't take you fifteen minutes."

It was only nine o'clock, and a beautiful morning. He thought her such a novelty, with her urgent invitations, her earnest eyes, and her basket on her arm, that he felt the impulse to walk beside her a while through the old streets of Rome; he was very fond of the old streets, and was curious to see whether she would notice the colors and outlines that made their picturesqueness. She noticed nothing but the vegetable-stalls, and talked of nothing but her pictures.

He still went on with her, however, amused by the questions she put to the vegetable-dealers (questions compiled from the phrase-books), and the calm contempt with which she surveyed the Roman artichokes they offered. At last, she secured some beans, but of sadly Italian aspect, and Noel took the basket. He was much entertained by the prospect of carrying it home. He remarked to himself that, of all the various things he had done in Rome, this was the freshest. They reached the street of the Hyacinth and walked down its dark center.

"I see you have the sun," he said, looking up.

"Yes; that is the reason we took the top floor. We will go right up. Everything is ready."

He excused himself.

"Some other time."

They had entered the dusky hall-way. She looked at him without replying; then held out her hand for the basket. He gave it to her.

"I suppose you have seen Mr. Jackson?" he said, before taking leave.

She nodded, but did not speak. Then he saw two tears rise in her eyes.

"My dear young lady, you have been doing too much! You are tired. Don't you know that that is very dangerous in Rome?"

"It is nothing. Mother has been sick, and I have been up with her two nights. Then, as she did not like our servant, I dismissed her, and as we have not got any one else yet, I have had a good deal to do. But I don't mind that at all, beyond being a little tired; it was only your refusing to come up, when it seemed so easy. But, never mind; you will come another day." And, repressing the tears, she smiled faintly, and held out her hand for good-by.

"I will come now," said Noel. He took the basket again, and went up the stairs. He was touched by the two tears, but, at the same time, vexed with himself for being there at all. There was not one chance in five hundred that her work was worth anything; and, in the four hundred and ninety-nine, pray what was he to say?

She brought him everything. They were all in the four hundred and ninety-nine. In his opinion, they were all extremely and essentially bad.

It was one of Raymond Noel's beliefs that, where women were concerned, a certain amount of falsity was sometimes indispensable. There were occasions when a man could no more tell the bare truth to a woman than he could strike her; the effect would be the same as a blow. He was an excellent evader when he chose to exert himself, and he finally got away from the little high-up apartment without disheartening or offending its young mistress, and without any very black record of direct untruth—what is more, without any positive promise as to the exact date of his next visit. But all this was a good deal of trouble to take for a girl he did not know or care for.

Soon afterward he met, at a small party, Mrs. Lawrence.

"Tell me a little, please, about the young lady to whom you presented me at Mrs. Dudley's reception—Miss Macks," he said, after some conversation.

"A little is all I can tell," replied Mrs. Lawrence. "She brought a letter of introduction to me from a far-away cousin of mine, who lives out West somewhere, and whom I have not seen for twenty years; my home, you know, is in New Jersey. How they learned I was in Rome I cannot imagine; but, knowing it, I suppose they thought that Miss Macks and I would meet, as necessarily as we should if together in their own village. The letter assures me that the girl is a great genius; that all she needs is an opportunity. They even take the ground that it will be a privilege for me to know her! But I am mortally tired of young geniuses; we have so many here in Rome! So, I told her at once that I knew nothing of modern art,—in fact, detested it,—but that, in any other way, I should be delighted to be of use. And I took her to Mrs. Dudley's *omnium gatherum*."

"Then you have not been to see her?"

"No; she came to see me. I sent cards, of course; I seldom call. What did you think of her?"

"I thought her charming," replied Noel, remembering the night-vigils, the vegetables, the dismissed servant, and the two tears of the young stranger,—remembering, also, her extremely bad pictures.

"I am glad she has found a friend in you," replied Mrs. Lawrence. "She was very anxious to meet you; she looks upon you as a great authority. If she really has talent—of course *you* would know—you must tell me. It is not talent I am so tired of, but the pretense of it. She struck me, although wofully unformed and awkward, of course, as rather intelligent."

"She is intelligence personified," replied Noel, qualifying it mentally with "intelligence without cultivation." He perceived that the young stranger would have no help from Mrs. Lawrence, and he added to himself: "And totally inexperienced purity alone in Rome." To be sure, there was the mother; but he had a presentiment that this lady, as guardian, would not be of much avail.

The next day he went down to Naples for a week, with some friends. Upon his return he stopped at Horace Jackson's studio one afternoon, as he happened to be passing. His time was really much occupied; he was a favorite in Rome. To his surprise, Jackson seemed to think that Miss Macks had talent. Her work was very crude, of course; she had been brutally taught; teachers of that sort should simply be put out of existence with the bowstring. He had turned her back to the alphabet; and, in time, in time, they—would see what she could do.

Horace Jackson was English by birth, but he had lived in Italy almost all his life. He was a man of forty-five—short, muscular, his thick, rather shaggy, beard and hair mixed with gray; there was a permanent frown over his keen eyes, and his rugged face had marked lines. He was a man of strong individuality. He had the reputation of being the most incorruptibly honest teacher in Rome. Noel had known him a long time, and liked him, ill-tempered though he was. Jackson, however, had not shown any especial signs of a liking for Noel in return. Perhaps he thought that, in the nature of things, there could not be much in common between a middle-aged, morose teacher, who worked hard, who knew nothing of society, and did not want to know, and a man like Raymond Noel. True, Noel was also an artist—that is, a literary one. But he had been highly successful in his own field, and it was understood, also, that he had an income of his own by inheritance, which, if not opulence, was yet sufficiently large to lift him quite above the usual *res angusta* of his brethren in the craft. In addition, Jackson considered Noel a fashionable man; and that would have been a barrier, even if there had been no other.

As the Englishman seemed to have some belief in Miss Macks, Noel did not say all he had intended to say; he did, however, mention that the young lady had a mistaken idea regarding any use he could be to her; he should be glad if she could be undeceived.

"I think she will be," said Jackson, with a grim smile, giving his guest a glance of general survey that took him in from head to foot; "she isn't dull."

Noel understood the glance, and smiled at Jackson's idea of him.

"She is not dull, certainly," he answered. "But she is rather—inexperienced." He dismissed the subject, went home, dressed and went out to dinner.

One morning, a week later, he was strolling through the Doria gallery. He was in a bad humor. There were many people in the gallery that day, but he was not noticing them; he detested a crowd. After a while, some one touched his coat-sleeve from behind. He turned, with his calmest expression upon his face; when he was in an ill-humor he was impassively calm. It was Miss Macks, her eyes eager, her face flushed with pleasure.

"Oh, what good luck!" she said. "And to think that I almost went to the Borghese, and might have missed you! I am so delighted that I don't know what to do. I am actually trembling." And she was. "I have so longed to see these pictures with you," she went on. "I have had a real aching disappointment about it, Mr. Noel."

Again Noel felt himself slightly touched by her earnestness. She looked prettier than usual, too, on account of the color.

"I always feel a self-reproach when with you, Miss Macks," he answered—"you so entirely overestimate me."

"Well, if I do, live up to it," she said, brightly.

"Only an archangel could do that."

"An archangel who knows about Art! I have been looking at the Caraccis; what do you think of them?"

"Never mind the Caraccis; there are better things to look at here." And then he made the circuit of the gallery with her slowly, pointing out the best pictures. During this circuit, he talked to her as he would have talked to an intelligent child who had been put in his charge in order to learn something of the paintings; he used the simplest

terms, mentioned the marked characteristics, and those only of the different schools, and spoke a few words of unshaded condemnation here and there. All he said was in broad, plain outlines. His companion listened earnestly. She gave him a close attention, almost always a comprehension, but seldom agreement. Her disagreement she did not express in words, but he could read it in her eyes. When they had seen everything,—and it took some time,—

"Now," he said, "I want you to tell me frankly, and without reference to anything I have said, your real opinion of several pictures I shall name—that is, if you can remember?"

"I remember everything. I always remember."

"Very well. What do you think, then, of the Raphael double portrait?"

"I think it very ugly."

"And the portrait of Andrea Doria, by Sebastian del Piombo?"

"Uglier still."

"And the Velasquez?"

"Ugliest of all."

"And the two large Claude Lorraines?"

"Rather pretty; but insipid. There isn't any reality or meaning in them."

"The Memling?"

"Oh, *that* is absolutely hideous, Mr. Noel; it hasn't a redeeming point."

Raymond Noel laughed with real amusement, and almost forgot his ill-humor.

"When you have found anything you really admire in the galleries here, Miss Macks, will you tell me?"

"Of course I will. I should wish to do so in any case, because, if you are to help me, you ought to thoroughly understand me. There is one thing more I should like to ask," she added, as they turned toward the door, "and that is that you would not call me Miss Macks. I am not used to it, and it sounds strangely; no one ever called me that in Tuscolee."

"What did they call you in Tuscolee?"

"They called me Miss Ettie; my name is Ethelinda Faith. But my friends and older people called me just 'Ettie'; I wish you would, too."

"I am certainly older," replied Noel, gravely (he was thirty-three); "but I do not like Ettie. With your permission, I will call you Faith."

"Do you like it? It's so old-fashioned! It was my grandmother's name."

"I like it immensely," he answered, leading the way down-stairs.

"You can't think how I've enjoyed it," she said, warmly, at the door.

"Yet you do not agree with my opinions?"

"Not yet. But all the same it was perfectly delightful. Good-by."

He had signaled for a carriage, as he had, as usual, an engagement. She preferred to walk. He drove off, and did not see her for ten days.

Then he came upon her again, and again in the Doria gallery. He was fond of the Doria, and often went there, but he had no expectation of meeting Miss Macks this time; he fancied that she followed a system, going through her list of galleries in regular order, one by one, and in that case she would hardly have reached the Doria on a second round. Her list was a liberal one; it included twenty. Noel had supposed that there were but nine in Rome.

This time she did not see him; she had some sheets of manuscript in her hand, and was alternately reading from them and looking at one of the pictures. She was much absorbed. After a while he went up.

"Good morning, Miss Macks."

She started; her face changed, and the color rose. She was as delighted as before. She immediately showed him her manuscript. There he beheld, written out in her clear handwriting, all he had said of the Doria pictures, page after page of it; she had actually reproduced from memory his entire discourse of an hour.

There were two blank spaces left.

"There, I could not exactly remember," said Miss Macks, apologetically. "If you would tell me, I should be so glad; then it would be quite complete."

"I shall never speak again. I am frightened," said Noel. He had taken the manuscript, and was looking it over with inward wonder.

"Oh, please do."

"Why do you care for my opinions, Miss Macks, when you do not agree with them?" he asked, his eyes still on the pages.

"You said you would call me Faith. Why do I care? Because they are yours, of course."

"Then you think I know?"

"I am sure you do."

"But it follows, then, that you do not."

"Yes; and there is where my work comes in; I have got to study up to you. I am afraid it will take a long time, wont it?"

"That depends upon you. It would take very little if you would simply accept non-combatively."

"Without being convinced? That I could never do."

"You want to be convinced against your will?"

"No; my will itself must be convinced to its lowest depths."

"This manuscript wont help you."

"Indeed, it has helped me greatly already. I have been here twice with it. I wrote it out the evening after I saw you. I only wish I had one for each of the galleries! But I feel differently now about asking you to go."

"I told you you would desert me."

"No, it is not that. But Mr. Jackson says you are much taken up with the fashionable society here, and that I must not expect you to give me so much of your time as I had hoped for. He says, too, that your art-articles will do me quite as much good as you yourself, and more; because you have a way, he says, like all society men, of talking as if you had no real convictions at all, and that would unsettle me."

"Jackson is an excellent fellow," replied Noel; "I like him extremely. And when would you like to go to the Borghese?"

"Oh, will you take me?" she said, joyfully. "Any time. To-morrow."

"Perhaps Mrs.—your mother, will go, also," he suggested, still unable to recall the name; he could think of nothing but "stirrup," and of course it was not that.

"I don't believe she would care about it," answered the daughter.

"She might. You know we make more of mothers here than we do in America," he ventured to remark.

"That is impossible," said Miss Macks, calmly. Evidently she thought his remark frivolous.

He abandoned the subject, and did not take it up again. It was not his duty to instruct Miss Macks in foreign customs. In addition, she was not only not "in society," but she was an art-student, and art-students had, or took, privileges of their own in Rome.

"At what hour shall I come for you?" he said.

"It will be out of your way to come for me; I will meet you at the gallery," she answered, radiant at the prospect.

He hesitated, then accepted her arrange ment of things. He would take her way, not his own. The next morning he went to the Borghese Palace ten minutes before the appointed time. But she was already there.

"Mother thought she would not come out—the galleries tire her so," she said; "but she was pleased to be remembered."

They spent an hour and a half among the pictures. She listened to all he said with the same earnest attention.

Within the next five weeks Raymond Noel met Miss Macks at other galleries. It was always very business-like,—they talked of nothing but the pictures; in truth, her systematic industry kept him strictly down to the subject in hand. He learned that she made the same manuscript copies of all he said, and, when he was not with her, she went alone, armed with these documents, and worked hard. Her memory was remarkable; she soon knew the names and the order of all the pictures in all the galleries, and had made herself acquainted with an outline, at least, of the lives of all the artists who had painted them. During this time she was, of course, going on with her lessons; but, as he had not been again to see Jackson, or to the street of the Hyacinth, he knew nothing of her progress. He did not want to know; she was in Jackson's hands, and Jackson was quite competent to attend to her.

In these five weeks he gave to Miss Macks only the odd hours of his leisure. He made her no promises; but, when he found that he should have a morning or half-morning unoccupied, he sent a note to the street of the Hyacinth, naming a gallery and an hour. She was always promptly there, and so pleased, that there was a sort of fresh aroma floating through the time he spent with her, after all,—but a mild one.

To give the proper position to the place the young art-student's light figure occupied on the canvas of Raymond Noel's winter, it should be mentioned that he was much interested in a French lady, who was spending some months in Rome. He had known her and admired her for a long time; but this winter he was seeing more of her, some barriers which had heretofore stood in the way being down. Madame B—— was a charming product of the effects of finished cultivation and fashionable life upon a natural foundation of grace, wit, and beauty of the French kind. She was not artificial, because she was art itself. Real art is as real as real nature is natural. Raymond Noel had a highly artistic nature. He admired art. This did not prevent him from taking up occasionally, as a contrast to this lady, the society of the young girl he called "Faith." Most men of imagination, artistic or not, do the same thing once in a while; it seems a necessity. With Noel it was not the contrast alone. The French lady led him an uneasy life, and now and then he took an hour of Faith, as a gentle soothing-draught of safe quality. She believed in him so perfectly! Now Madame appeared to believe in him not at all.

It must be added that, in his conversations with Miss Macks, he had dropped entirely even the very small amount of conventional gallantry that he had bestowed

upon her in the beginning. He talked to her not as though she was a boy, exactly, or an old woman, but as though he himself was a relative of mature age—say an uncle of benevolent disposition and a taste for art.

February gave way to March. And now, owing to a new position of his own affairs, Noel saw no more of Faith Macks. She had been a contrast, and he did not now wish for a contrast; or a soothing-draught, and a soothing-draught was not at present required. He simply forgot all about her.

In April, he decided rather suddenly to leave Rome. This was because Madame B—— had gone to Paris, and had not forbidden her American suitor to follow her, a few days later. He made his preparations for departure, and these, of course, included farewell calls. Then he remembered Faith Macks; he had not seen her for six weeks He drove to the street of the Hyacinth, and went up the dark stairs. Miss Macks was at home, and came in without delay; apparently, in her trim neatness, she was always ready for visitors.

She was very glad to see him; but did not, as he expected, ask why he had not come before. This he thought a great advance; evidently she was learning. When she heard that he had come to say good-by, her face fell.

"I am so very sorry; please sit as long as you can, then," she said, simply. "I suppose it will be six months before I see you again; you will hardly return to Rome before October." That he would come at that time she did not question.

"My plans are uncertain," replied Noel. "But probably I shall come back. One always comes back to Rome. And you—where do you go? To Switzerland?"

"Why—we go nowhere, of course; we stay here. That is what we came for, and we are all settled."

He made some allusion to the heat and unhealthiness.

"I am not afraid," replied Miss Macks. "Plenty of people stay; Mr. Jackson says so. It is only the rich who go away, and we are not rich. We have been through hot summers in Tuscolee, I can tell you!" Then, without asking leave this time, as if she was determined to have an opinion from him before he departed, she took from a portfolio some of the work she had done under Mr. Jackson's instruction.

Noel saw at once that the Englishman had not kept his word. He had not put her back upon the alphabet, or, if he had done so, he had soon released her, and allowed her to pursue her own way again. The original faults were as marked as ever. In his opinion all was essentially bad.

He looked in silence. But she talked on hopefully, explaining, comparing, pointing out.

"What does Mr. Jackson think of this?" he said, selecting the one he thought the worst.

"He admires the idea greatly; he thinks it very original. He says that my strongest point is originality," she answered, with her confident frankness.

"He means—ah—originality of subject?"

"Oh, yes; my execution is not much yet. But that will come in time. Of course, the subject, the idea, is the important thing; the execution is secondary." Here she paused; something seemed to come into her mind. "I know *you* do not think so," she added, thoughtfully, "because, you know, you said," —and here she quoted a page from one of his art-articles with her clear accuracy. "I have never understood what you meant by that, Mr. Noel; or why you wrote it."

She looked at him questioningly. He did not reply; his eyes were upon one of the sketches.

"It would be dreadful for me if you were right!" she added, with slow conviction.

"I thought you believed that I was always right," he said, smiling, as he placed the sketches on the table.

But she remained very serious.

"You are—in everything but that."

He made some unimportant reply, and turned the conversation. But she came back to it.

"It would be dreadful," she repeated, earnestly, with the utmost gravity in her gray eyes.

"I hope the long summer will not tire you," he answered, irrelevantly. "Shall I not have the pleasure of saying good-by—although that, of course, is not a pleasure—to Mrs.—to your mother?"

He should have made the speech in any case, as it was the proper one to make; but as he sat there, he had thought that he really would like to have a look at the one guardian this young girl was to have during her long, lonely summer in Rome.

"I will tell her. Perhaps when she hears that you are going away, she will feel like coming in," said Miss Macks.

She came back after some delay, and with her appeared a matron of noticeable aspect.

"My mother," she said, introducing her (evidently Noel was never to get the name); "this is Mr. Noel, mother."

"And very glad I am to see you, sir, I'm sure," said Mrs. Spurr, extending her hand with much cordiality. "I said to Ettie that I'd come in, seeing as 'twas you, though I don't often see strangers nowadays on account of poor health for a long time past; rheumatism and asthma. But I feel beholden to

you, Mr. No-ul, because you've been so good to Ettie. You've been real kind."

Ettie's mother was a very portly matron of fifty-five, with a broad face, indistinct features, very high color, and a breathless, panting voice. Her high color—it really was her most noticeable feature—was surmounted by an imposing cap, adorned with large bows of scarlet ribbon; a worsted shawl, of the hue known as "solferino," decked her shoulders; under her low-necked collar reposed a bright blue necktie, its ends embroidered in red and yellow; and her gown was of a vivid dark green. But although her colors swore at each other, she seemed amiable. She was also voluble.

Noel, while shaking hands, was considering, mentally, with some retrospective amusement, his condition of mind if this lady had accepted his invitations to visit the galleries.

"You must sit down, mother," said Miss Macks, bringing forward an easy chair. "She has not been so well as usual, lately," she said, explanatorily, to Noel, as she stood for a moment beside her mother's chair.

"It's this queer Eye-talian air," said Mrs. Spurr. "You see I aint used to it. Not but what I aint glad to be here on Ettie's account—real glad. It's just what she needs and oughter have."

The girl put her hand on her mother's shoulder with a little caressing touch. Then she left the room.

"Yes, I do feel beholden to you, Mr. No-ul. But then, she'll be a credit to you, to whatever you've done for her," said Mrs. Spurr when they were left alone. "Her talunts are very remarkable. She was the head scholar of the Young Ladies' Seminary through four whole years, and all the teachers took a lot of pride in her. And then her paintings, too! I'm sorry you're going off so soon. You see, she sorter depends upon your opinion."

Noel felt a little stir at the edges of his conscience; he knew perfectly that his opinion was that Miss Macks, as an artist, would never do anything worth the materials she used.

"I leave her in good hands," he said.

After all, it was Jackson's responsibility, not his.

"Yes, Mr. Jackson thinks a deal of her. I can see that plain!" answered Mrs. Spurr, proudly.

Here the daughter returned, bringing a little note-book and pencil.

"Do you know what these are for?" she said. "I want you to write down a list of the best books for me to read this summer, while you are gone. I am going to work hard; but if I have books, too, the time wont seem so long."

Noel considered a moment. In one way her affairs were certainly none of his business; in another way they were, because she had thrust them upon him.

"I will not give you a list, Miss Macks; probably you would not be able to find the books here. But I will send you, from Paris or London, some things that are rather good, if you will permit me to do so."

She said he was very kind. Her face brightened.

"If she has appreciation enough to comprehend what I send her," he thought, "perhaps in the end she will have a different opinion about my 'kindness'!"

Soon afterward he took leave. The next day he went to Paris.

(To be continued.)

DROUGHT.

THERE is a drought that lasts so far in May
  That buds that waited for the vernal showers,
  Mourning their absence long and dreary hours,
Dewless and dusty, wither quite away.
In vain the clouds, atoning long delay,
  With wet lips kiss the shrunk, unopened flowers
  With steady, soft insistence. Life's full powers,
So strong in spring, not till midsummer stay.
Then were it better that the plant should die,
  Sink down to mother earth, and be forgot,
Than drink the rainfall of the summer sky,
  Living a life that bloom or fruit has not.
Oh, thou whose love this spring-time me might bless!
Canst thou, beloved, not my meaning guess?

Andrew B. Saxton.

THE STREET OF THE HYACINTH.

BY CONSTANCE FENIMORE WOOLSON,

Author of "Rodman the Keeper," "Anne," etc.

IN TWO PARTS:—II.

THE events of Raymond Noel's life, after he left Rome that spring, were various. Some were pleasant, some unpleasant; several were quite unexpected. Their combinations and results kept him from returning to Italy the following winter; and the winter after that he spent in Egypt. When he again beheld the dome of St. Peter's, he remembered that it lacked but a month of two full years since he had said good-by to it; it was then April, and now it was March. He established himself in some pleasant rooms, looked about him, and then began to take up, one by one, the old threads of his Roman life, such, at least, as remained unbroken. He found a good many. Threads do not break in Rome. He had once said himself that the air was so soft and historic that nothing broke there,—not even hearts. But this was only one of his little speeches. In reality he did not believe much in the breaking of hearts; he had seen them stretch so!

It may be said with truth that Noel had not thought of Miss Macks for months. This was because he had had other things to think of. He had sent her the books from Paris, with an accompanying note, a charming little note—which gave no address for reply. Since then, his mind had been otherwise occupied. But, as he never entirely forgot anything that had once interested him, even although but slightly (this was in reality a system of his; it gave him many holds on life, and kept stored up a large supply of resources ready for use when wanted), he came, after a while, on the canvas of his Roman impressions to the figure of Miss Macks. When he came to it, he went to see her; that is, he went to the street of the Hyacinth.

Of course, she might not be there; a hundred things might have happened to her. He could have hunted up Horace Jackson; but, on the whole, he rather preferred to see the girl herself first, that is, if she was there. Mrs. Lawrence, the only person among his acquaintances who had known her, was not in Rome. Reaching the street of the Hyacinth, he interrogated the old woman who acted as portress at the lower door, keeping up at the same time a small commerce in fritters; yes, the Americans were still on the fourth floor. He ascended the dark stairway. The confiding little "Ettie" card was no longer upon the door. In its place was a small framed sign: "Miss Macks' school."

This told a story!

However, he rang. It was the same shrill, ill-tempered little bell, and when the door opened, it was Miss Macks herself who opened it. She was much changed.

The parlor had been turned into a school-room,—at present empty of pupils. But, even as a school-room, it was more attractive than it had been before. He took a seat and spoke the usual phrases of a renewal of acquaintance with his accustomed ease and courtesy; Miss Macks responded briefly. She said that her mother was not very well; she herself quite well. No, they had not left Italy, nor indeed the neighborhood of Rome; they had been a while at Albano.

The expression of her face had greatly altered. The old direct wide glance was gone; gone also what he had called her over-confidence; she looked much older. On the other hand, there was more grace in her bearing, more comprehension of life in her voice and eyes. She was dressed as plainly as before; but everything, including the arrangement of her hair, was in the prevalent style.

She did not speak of her school, and therefore he did not. But after a while, he asked how the painting came on. Her face changed a little; but it was more in the direction of a greater calm than hesitation or emotion.

"I am not painting now," she answered.

"You have given it up temporarily?"

"Permanently."

"Ah,—isn't that rather a pity?"

She looked at him, and a gleam of scorn filtered into the glance.

"You know it is not a pity," she said.

He was a little disgusted at the scorn. Of course, the only ground for him to take was the ground upon which she stood when he last saw her; at that time, she proposed to pass her life in painting, and it was but good manners for him to accept her intentions as she had presented them.

"I never assumed to be a judge, you know,"

he answered. "When I last had the pleasure of seeing you, painting was, you remember, your cherished occupation!"

"When you last had the pleasure of seeing me, Mr. Noel," said Miss Macks, still with unmoved calm, "I was a fool."

Did she wish to go into the subject at length? Or was that merely an exclamation?

"When I last had the pleasure of seeing you, you were taking lessons of Mr. Jackson," he said, to give a practical turn to the conversation. "Is he still here? How is he?"

"He is very well, now. He is dead."

(She was going to be dramatic then, in any case.)

He expressed his regret, and it was a sincere one; he had always liked and respected the honest, morose Englishman. He asked a question or two. Miss Macks replied that he had died here in the street of the Hyacinth; in the next room. He had fallen ill during the autumn following Noel's departure, and, when his illness grew serious, they —her mother and herself—had persuaded him to come to them. He had lived a month longer, and had died peacefully on Christmas Eve.

"He was one of the most honest men I ever knew," said Noel. Then, as she did not reply, he ventured this: "That was the reason I recommended him, when you asked me to select a teacher for you."

"Your plan was made useless by an unfortunate circumstance," she answered, with an evident effort.

"A circumstance?"

"Yes; he fell in love with me. If I did not consider his pure, deep, and devoted affection the greatest honor of my life, I would not mention it. I tell you, because it will explain to you his course."

"Yes, it explains," said Noel. As he spoke, there came across him a realization of the whole of the strength of the love such a man as Horace Jackson would feel, and the way in which it would influence him. Of course, he saw to the full the imperfection of her work, the utter lack of the artist's conception, the artist's eye and touch; but probably he had loved her from the beginning, and had gone on hoping to win her love in return. She was not removed from him by any distance; she was young, but she was also poor, friendless, and alone. When she was his wife, he would tell her the truth, and in the greatness of his love, the revelation would be naught. "He was a good man," he said. "He was always lonely. I am glad that at the last he was with your mother and you."

"His goodness was simply unbounded. If he had lived, he would have remained always a most faithful, kind, and respectful son to my dear mother. That, of course, would have been everything to me." She said this quietly; yet her tone seemed to hold intention.

For a moment, he thought that perhaps she had married the Englishman, and was now his widow. The sign on the door bore her maiden name; but that might have been an earlier venture.

"Had you opened your school at that time?" he asked. "I may speak of it, since, of course, I saw the sign upon the door."

"Not until two months later; I had the sign made then. But it was of little use; day-schools do not prosper in Rome; they are not the custom. I have a small class twice a week; but I live by going out as day-governess. I have a number of pupils of that kind; I have been very successful. The old Roman families have a fancy for English-speaking governesses, you know. Last summer I was with the Princess C——, at Albano; her children are my pupils."

"Her villa is a delightful one," said Noel; "you must have enjoyed that."

"I don't know that I enjoyed; but I learned. I have learned a great deal in many ways since I saw you last, Mr. Noel. I have grown very old."

"As you were especially young when you saw me last, it does not matter much," he answered, smiling.

"Yes, I was especially young." She looked at him soberly. "I do not feel bitterly toward you," she continued. "Strange! I thought I should. But now that I see you in person, it comes over me that, probably, you did not intend to deceive me; that not only you tried to set me right by selecting Mr. Jackson as my teacher, but again you tried when you sent me those books. It was not much to do! But, knowing the world as I now know it, I see that it was all that could have been expected. At first, however, I did not see this. After I went to Mr. Bellot, and, later, to Mr. Salviati, there were months when I felt very bitterly toward you. My hopes were false ones, and had been so from the beginning; you knew that they were, yet you did not set me right."

"I might have done more than I did," answered Noel. "I have a habit of not assuming responsibility; I suppose I have grown selfish. But, if you went to Bellot, then it was not Jackson who told you?"

"He intimated something when he asked me to marry him; after that, his illness came on, and we did not speak of it again. But I did not believe him. I was very obstinate.

I went to Mr. Bellot the first of January; I wished him to take me as pupil. In answer, he told me that I had not a particle of talent; that all my work was insufferably bad; that I better throw away my brushes and take in sewing."

"Bellot is always a brute!" said Noel.

"If he told the truth brutally, it was still the truth; and it was the truth I needed. But even then I was not convinced, and I went to Mr. Salviati. He was more gentle; he explained to me my lacks; but his judgment was the same. I came home; it was the tenth of January, a beautiful Roman winter day. I left my pictures, went over to St. Peter's, and walked there under its bright mosaics all the afternoon. The next day, I had advertisements of a day-school placed at the bankers', and in the newspapers. I thought that I could teach better than I could sew." All this she said with perfect calm.

"I greatly admire your bravery, Miss Macks. Permit me to add that I admire, even more, the clear, strong, good sense which has carried you through."

"I had my mother to think of; my—good sense might not have been so faithful otherwise."

"You do not think of returning to America?"

"Probably not; I doubt if my mother could bear the voyage now. We have no one to call us back but my brother, and he has not been with us for years, and would not be if we should return; he lives in California. We sold the farm, too, before we came. No; for the present, at least, it is better for us to remain here."

"There is one more question I should like to ask," said Noel later. "But I have no possible right to do so."

"I will give you the right. When I remember the things I asked you to do for me, the demands I made upon your time, I can well answer a few questions in return. I was a miracle of ignorance."

"I always did you justice in those respects, Miss Macks; all that I understood at once. My question refers to Horace Jackson: I see you appreciated his worth—which was rare—yet you would not marry him."

"I did not love him."

"Did any of his relatives come out from England?" he said after a moment of silence.

"After his death a cousin came."

"As heir to what was left?"

"Yes."

"He should have left it to you."

"He wished to do so. Of course, I would not accept it."

"I thank you for answering. My curiosity was not an idle one." He paused. "If you will permit me to express it, your course has been very brave and true. I greatly admire it."

"You are kind," said Miss Macks.

There was not in her voice any indication of sarcasm. Yet the fact that he immediately thought of it, made him suspect that it was there. He took leave soon afterward. He was smarting a little under the sarcasm he had divined, and, as he was, it was like him to request permission to come again.

For Raymond Noel lived up with a good deal of determination to his own standard of what was manly; if his standard was not set on any very fine elevation of self-sacrifice or heroism, it was at least firmly established where it did stand, and he kept himself fairly near it. If Miss Macks was sarcastic, he had been at fault somewhere; he would try to atone.

He saw her four times during the five weeks of his stay in Rome; upon three other occasions when he went to the street of the Hyacinth, she was not at home. The third week in April he decided to go to Venice. Before going he asked if there was not something he could do for her; but she said there was nothing, and he himself could think of nothing. She was well established in her new life and occupations, and needed nothing, at least nothing that he could bestow.

The next winter he came back to Rome early in the season, before Christmas. By chance, one of the first persons he encountered was Mrs. Lawrence. She began immediately to tell him a piece of American news, in which he, as an American, would of course be interested; the news was that "the brother of the Princess C——,—that is Count L——, you know—is determined to marry Ettie Macks. You remember her, don't you? I introduced you to her at the Dudley reception, three years ago."

Noel thought that probably he remembered her better than Mrs. Lawrence did, seeing that that lady had never troubled herself to enter the street of the Hyacinth. But he did her injustice. Mrs. Lawrence had troubled herself—lately.

"It seems that she has been out at Albano for two summers, as governess to his sister's children; it was there that he saw her. He has announced his determination to the family, and they are immensely disturbed and frightened; they had it all arranged for him to marry a second cousin down at Naples, who is rich,—these Italians are so worldly, you know! But he is very determined, they say, and will do as he pleases in spite of them. He hasn't much money, but of course it's a great match for Ettie Macks. She will be a countess, and now, I suppose, more American

girls will come over than ever before! Of course, as soon as I heard of it, I went to see her. I felt that she would need advice about a hundred things. In the beginning she brought a letter of introduction to me from a dear cousin of mine, and, naturally, she would rely upon me as her chief friend now. She is very much improved. She was rather silent; but, of course, I shall go again. The count is willing to take the mother, too, and that, under the circumstances, is not a small matter; she is a good deal to take. Until the other day I had not seen Mrs. Spurr! However, I suppose that her deficiencies are not apparent in a language she cannot speak. If her daughter would only insist upon her dressing in black! But the old lady told me herself, in the most cheerful way, that she liked 'a sprinkling of color.' And at the moment, I assure you, she had on five different shades of red!"

Noel had intended to present himself immediately at the street of the Hyacinth; but a little attack of illness kept him in for a while, and ten days had passed before he went up the dark stair-way. The maid said that Miss Macks was at home; presently she came in. They had ten minutes' of conversation upon ordinary topics, and then he took up the especial one.

"I am told that you are soon to be a countess," he said, "and I have come to give you my best good wishes. My congratulations I reserve for Count L——, with whom I have a slight acquaintance; he is, in my opinion, a very fortunate man."

"Yes, I think he is fortunate; fortunate in my refusal. I shall not marry Count L——."

"He is not a bad fellow."

"Isn't your praise somewhat faint?" This time the sarcasm was visible.

"Oh, I am by no means his advocate! All I meant was that, as these modern Romans go, he was not among the worst. Of course I should have expressed myself very differently if you had said you were to marry him."

"Yes; you would then have honored me with your finest compliments."

He did not deny this.

"Shall you continue to live in Rome?" he asked.

"Certainly. I shall have more pupils and patronage now than I know what to do with; the whole family connection is deeply obliged to me."

They talked awhile longer.

"We have always been unusually frank with each other, Miss Macks," he said toward the end of his visit. "We have never stopped at conventionalities. I wonder if you will tell me why you refused him?"

"You are too curious. As to frankness, I have been frank with you; not you with me. And there was no conventionality, simply because I did not know what it was."

"I believe you are in love with some one in America," he said laughing.

"Perhaps I am," answered Miss Macks. She had certainly gained greatly in self-possession during the past year.

He saw her quite frequently after this. Her life was no longer solitary. As she had said, she was overwhelmed with pupils and patronage from the friends of the Princess C——; in addition, the American girl who had refused a fairly-indorsed and well-appearing count, was now something of a celebrity among the American visitors in Rome. That they knew of her refusal, was not her fault; the relatives of Count L—— had announced their objections as loud and widely as the count had announced his determination. Apparently neither side had thought of a non-acceptance. Cards, not a few, were sent to the street of the Hyacinth; some persons even climbed the five flights of stairs. Mrs. Spurr saw a good deal of company; and enjoyed it.

Noel was very fond of riding; when in Rome he always rode on the Campagna. He had acted as escort to various ladies, and, one day, he invited Miss Macks to accompany him; that is, if she was fond of riding. She had ridden in America, and enjoyed it; she would like to go once, if he would not be troubled by an improvised habit. They went once. Then a second time, an interval of three weeks between. Then, after a while, a third time.

Upon this occasion an accident happened, the first of Noel's life; his horse became frightened, and, skilled rider though he was, he was thrown. He was dragged, too, for a short distance. His head came against some stones, and he lost consciousness. When it came back, it did not come wholly. He seemed to himself to be far away, and the girl who was weeping and calling his name, to be upon the other side of a wide space like an ocean, over which, without volition of his own, he was being slowly wafted. As he came nearer, still slowly, he perceived that in some mysterious way she was holding in her arms something that seemed to be himself, although he had not yet reached her. Then, gradually, spirit and body were reunited, he heard what she was saying, and felt her touch. Even then, it was only after several minutes that he was able to move and unclose his heavy eyes.

When she saw that he was not dead, her wild grief was at once merged in the thought

of saving him. She had jumped from her horse, she knew not how; but he had not strayed far; a shepherd had seen him, and was now coming toward them. He signaled to another, and the two carried Noel to a house which was not far distant. A messenger was sent to the city; aid came, and before night Noel was in his own rooms at the head of the Via Sistina, near the Spanish steps.

His injuries proved to be not serious; he had lost consciousness from the shock, and this, with his pallor and the blood from the cuts made by the stones, had given him the look of death. The cuts, however, were not deep; the effect of the shock passed away. He kept his bed for a week under his physician's advice; he had a good deal of time to think during that week. Later his friends were admitted. As has been said before, Noel was a favorite in Rome, and he had friends not a few. Those who could not come in person sent little notes and baskets of flowers. Among these, Miss Macks was not numbered. But then she was not fashionable.

At the end of two weeks the patient was allowed to go out. He took a short walk to try his strength, and, finding that it held out well, he went to the street of the Hyacinth.

Miss Macks was at home. She was "so glad" to see him out again; and was he "really strong enough;" and he "should be very prudent for a while;" and so forth and so forth. She talked more than usual, and for her, quite rapidly.

He let her go on for a time. Then he took the conversation into his own hands. With few preliminaries, and with much feeling in his voice and eyes, he asked her to be his wife.

She was overwhelmed with astonishment; she turned very white and did not answer. He thought she was going to burst into tears. But she did not; she only sat gazing at him, while her lips trembled. He urged his point; he spoke strongly.

"You are worth a hundred of me," he said. "You are true and sincere; I am a dilletante in everything. But, dilletante as I am, in one way I have always appreciated you, and, lately, all other ways have become merged in that one. I am much in earnest; I know what I am doing; I have thought of it searchingly and seriously, and I beg you to say yes."

He paused. Still she did not speak.

"Of course I do not ask you to separate yourself from your mother," he went on, his eyes dropping for the moment to the brim of his hat which he held in his hand; "I shall be glad if she will always make her home with us."

Then she did speak. And as her words came forth, the red rose in her face until it was deeply colored.

"With what an effort you said that! But you will not be tried. One gray hair in my mother's head is worth more to me, Mr. Noel, than anything you can offer."

"I knew before I began that this would be the point of trouble between us, Faith," he answered. "I can only assure you that she will find in me always a most respectful son."

"And when you were thinking so searchingly and seriously, it was *this* that you thought of,—whether you could endure her! Do you suppose that I do not see the effort? Do you suppose I would ever place my mother in such a position? Do you suppose that you are of any consequence beside her, or that anything in this world weighs in my mind for one moment compared with her happiness?"

"We can make her happy; I suppose that. And I suppose another thing, and that is that we could be very happy ourselves, if we were married."

"The western girl, the girl from Tuscolee! The girl who thought she could paint, and could not! The girl who knew so little of social rules that she made a fool of herself every time she saw you!"

"All this is of no consequence, since it is the girl I love," answered Noel.

"You do not. It is a lie. Oh, of course, a very unselfish and noble one; but a lie, all the same. You have thought of it seriously and searchingly? Yes, but only for the last fourteen days! I understand it all now. At first I did not, I was confused; but now I see the whole. You were not unconscious out there on the Campagna; you heard what I said when I thought you were dying, or dead. And so you come—come very generously and self-sacrificingly, I acknowledge that—and ask me to be your wife." She rose; her eyes were brilliant as she faced him. "I might tell you that it was only the excitement, that I did not know or mean what I was saying; I might tell you that I did not know that I had said anything. But I am not afraid. I will not, like you, tell a lie, even for a good purpose. I did love you; there, you have it! I have loved you for a long time, to my sorrow and shame. For I do not respect you, or admire you; you have been completely spoiled and will always remain so. I shall make it the one purpose of my life from this moment to overcome the feeling I have had for you; and I shall succeed. Nothing could make me marry you, though you should ask me a thousand times."

"I shall ask but once," said Noel. He had risen also; and, as he did, he remembered the time when they had stood in the same place and position, facing each other, and she had told him that she was at his feet. "I did

hear what you said. And it is of that I have been seriously thinking during the days of my confinement to the house. It is also true that it is what you said which has brought me here to-day. But, the reason is, that it has become precious to me—this knowledge that you love me. As I said before, in one way I have always done you justice, and it is that way which makes me realize to the full now, what such a love as yours would be to me. If it is true that I am spoiled, as you say I am, a love like yours would make me better, if anything can." He paused. "I have not said much about my own feelings," he added; "I know you will not credit me with having any. But I think I have. I think that I love you."

"It is of little moment to me whether you do or not."

"You are making a mistake," he said, after a pause, during which their eyes had met in silence.

"The mistake would be to consent."

She had now recovered her self-possession. She even smiled a little.

"Imagine Mr. Raymond Noel in the street of the Hyacinth!" she said.

"Ah,—I should hardly wish to live here; and my wife would naturally be with me."

"I hope so. And I hope she will be very charming, and obedient, and sweet." Then she dropped her sarcasms, and held out her hand in farewell. "There is no use in prolonging this, Mr. Noel. Do not think, however, that I do not appreciate your action; I do appreciate it. I said that I did not respect you, and I have not until now; but now I do. You will understand, of course, that I would rather not see you again, and refrain from seeking me. Go your way, and forget me; you can do so now with a clear conscience, for you have behaved well."

"It is not very likely that I shall forget you," answered Noel, "although I go my way. I see you are firmly resolved. For the present, therefore, all I can do is to go."

They shook hands, and he left her. As he passed through the small hall on his way to the outer door, he met Mrs. Spurr; she was attired as opulently, in respect to colors, as ever, and she returned his greeting with much cordiality. He glanced back; Miss Macks had witnessed the meeting through the parlor door. Her color had faded; she looked sad and pale.

She kept her word; she did not see him again. If he went to the street of the Hyacinth, as he did two or three times, the little maid presented him with the Italian equivalent of "begs to be excused," which was evidently a standing order. If he wrote to her, as he did more than two or three times, she returned what he wrote, not unread, but without answer. He thought perhaps he should meet her, and was at some pains to find out her various engagements. But all was in vain; the days passed, and she remained invisible. Toward the last of May he left Rome. After leaving, he continued to write to her, but he gave no address for reply; she would now be obliged either to burn his letters or keep them, since she could no longer send them back. They could not have been called love-letters; they were friendly epistles, not long,—pleasant, easy, sometimes amusing, like his own conversation. They came once a week. In addition he sent new books, and occasionally some other small remembrance.

In early September of that year there came to the street of the Hyacinth a letter from America. It was from one of Mrs. Spurr's old neighbors at Tuscolee, and she wrote to say that John Macks had come home,—had come home broken in health and spirits, and, as he himself said, to die. He did not wish his mother to know; she could not come to him, and it would only distress her. He had money enough for the short time that was left him, and when she heard, it would be only that he had passed away; he had passed from her life in reality years before. In this John Macks was sincere. He had been a ne'er-do-well, a rolling stone; he had not been a dutiful son. The only good that could be said of him, as far as his mother was concerned, was contained in the fact that he had not made demands upon her small purse since the sum he took from her when he first went away. He had written to her at intervals, briefly. His last letter had come eight months before.

But the Tuscolee neighbor was a mother herself, and, doing as she would be done by, she wrote to Rome. When her letter came, Mrs. Spurr was overwhelmed with grief; but she was also stirred to an energy and determination which she had never shown before. For the first time in years she took the leadership, put her daughter decisively back into a subordinate place, and assumed the control. She would go to America. She must see her boy (the dearest child of the two, as the prodigal always is) again. But even while she was planning her journey, illness seized her—her old rheumatic troubles, only more serious than before; it was plain that she could not go. She then required that her daughter should go in her place,—go and bring her boy to Rome; this soft Italian air would give new life to his lungs. Oh, she should not die! Ettie need not be afraid of that. She would live for years just to get one look at him! And so it ended in the daughter's departure, an efficient nurse being left in charge; the physician said

that although Mrs. Spurr would probably be crippled, she was in no danger otherwise.

Miss Macks left Rome on the fifteenth of September. On the second of December she again beheld the dome of St. Peter's rising in the blue sky. She saw it alone. John Macks had lived three weeks after her arrival at Tuscolee, and those three weeks were the calmest and the happiest of his unsuccessful—unworthy it may be—but also bitterly unhappy life. His sister did not judge him. She kissed him good-by as he lost consciousness, and soon afterward closed his eyes tenderly, with tears in her own. Although he was her brother, she had never known him; he went away when she was a child. She sat beside him a long time after he was dead, watching the strange, youthful peace come back to his worn face.

When she reached the street of the Hyacinth, a carriage was before the door; carriages of that sort were not often required by the dwellers on the floors below their own, and she was rather surprised. She had heard from her mother in London, the nurse acting as amanuensis; at that time, Mrs. Spurr was comfortable, although still confined to her bed most of the day. As she was paying her driver, she heard steps on the stairway within. Then she beheld this: The nurse, carrying a pillow and shawls; next, her mother, in an invalid-chair, borne by two men; and last, Raymond Noel.

When Mrs. Spurr saw her daughter, she began to cry. She had not expected her until the next day. Her emotion was so great that the drive was given up, and she was carried back to her room. Noel did not follow her; he shook hands with the new-comer, said that he would not detain her, and then, lifting his hat, he stepped into the carriage which was waiting and was driven away.

For two days Mrs. Spurr wished for nothing but to hear, over and over again, every detail of her boy's last hours. Then, the excitement and renewed grief made her dangerously ill. After ten days she began to improve; but two weeks passed before she came back to the present sufficiently to describe to her daughter all "Mr. No-ul's kind attentions." He had returned to Rome the first of October, and had come at once to the street of the Hyacinth. Learning what had happened, he had devoted himself to her "most as if he was my real son, Ettie, I do declare! Of course, he couldn't never be like my own darling boy," continued the poor mother, overlooking entirely, with a mother's sublime forgetfulness, the small amount of devotion her boy had ever bestowed; "but he's just done everything he could, and there's no denying that."

"He has not been mentioned in your letters, mother."

"Well, child, I just told Mrs. Bowler not to. For he said himself, frankly, that you might not like it; but that he'd make his peace with you when you come back. I let him have his way about it, and I *have* enjoyed seeing him. He's the only person I've seen, but Mrs. Bowler and the doctor, and I'm mortal tired of both."

During Mrs. Spurr's second illness, Noel had not come in person to the street of the Hyacinth; he had sent to inquire, and fruits and flowers came in his name. Miss Macks learned that these had come from the beginning.

When three weeks had passed, Mrs. Spurr was back in her former place as regarded health. One of her first requests was to be taken out to drive; during her daughter's absence, Mr. Noel had taken her five times, and she had greatly enjoyed the change. It was not so simple a matter for the daughter as it had been for Mr. Noel; her purse was almost empty, the long journeys and her mother's illness had exhausted her store. Still she did it. Mrs. Spurr wished to go to the Pincio. Her daughter thought the crowd there would be an objection.

"It didn't tire me one bit when Mr. No-ul took me," said Mrs. Spurr, in an aggrieved tone; "and we went there every single time,—just as soon as he found out that I liked it. What a lot of folks he does know, to be sure! They kept him a-bowing every minute."

The day after this drive, Mr. Noel came to the street of the Hyacinth. He saw Miss Macks. Her manner was quiet, a little distant; but she thanked him, with careful acknowledgment of every item, for his kind attentions to her mother. He said little. After learning that Mrs. Spurr was much better, he spoke of her own health.

"You have had two long fatiguing journeys, and you have been acting as nurse; it would be well for you to give yourself entire rest for several weeks, at least."

She replied, coldly, that she was perfectly well, and turned the conversation to subjects less personal. He did not stay long. As he rose to take leave, he said:

"You will let me come again, I hope? You will not repeat the 'not at home' of last spring?"

"I would really much rather not see you, Mr. Noel," she answered, after hesitating.

"I am sorry. But of course, I must submit." Then he went away.

Miss Macks now resumed her burdens. She was obliged to take more pupils than she had ever accepted before, and to work harder. She had not only to support their little house-

hold, but there were now debts to pay. She was out almost the whole of every day.

After she had entered upon her winter's work, Raymond Noel began to come again to the street of the Hyacinth. But he did not come to see her; his visits were to her mother. He came two or three times a week, and always during the hours when the daughter was absent. He sat and talked to Mrs. Spurr, or rather listened to her, in a way that greatly cheered that lady's monotonous days. She told him her whole history; she minutely described Tuscolee and its society; and, finally, he heard the whole story of "John." In addition, he sent her various little delicacies, taking pains to find something she had not had.

Miss Macks would have put an end to this if she had known how. But, certainly, Mr. Noel was not troubling *her;* and Mrs. Spurr resented any attempt at interference.

"I don't see why you should object, Ettie. He seems to like to come, and there's but few pleasures left to me, I'm sure! You oughtn't to grudge them!"

In this way two months passed, Noel continuing his visits, and Miss Macks continuing her lessons. She was working very hard. She now looked not only pale, but much worn. Count L——, who had been long absent, returned to Rome about this time. He saw her one day, although she did not see him. The result of this vision of her was that he went down to Naples, and, before long, the desirable second cousin with the fortune was the sister of the Princess C——.

One afternoon in March, Miss Macks was coming home from the broad, new, tiresome piazza Indipendenza; the distance was long, and she walked with weariness. As she drew near the dome of the Pantheon, she met Raymond Noel. He stopped, turned, and accompanied her homeward. She had three books.

"Give them to me," he said, briefly, taking them from her.

"Do you know what I have heard to-day?" he went on. "They are going to tear down your street of the Hyacinth. The Government has at last awakened to the shame of allowing all those modern accretions to disfigure longer the magnificent old Pagan temple. All the streets in the rear, up to a certain point, are to be destroyed. And the street of the Hyacinth goes first. You will be driven out."

"I presume we can find another like it."

He went on talking about the Pantheon until they entered the doomed street; it was as obstinately narrow and dark as ever. Then he dropped his pagan temple.

"How much longer are you going to treat me in this way, Faith?" he said. "You make me very unhappy. You are wearing yourself out, and it troubles me greatly. If you should fall ill, I think that would be the end. I should then take matters into my own hands, and I don't believe you would be able to keep me off. But why should we wait for illness? It is too great a risk."

They were approaching her door. She said nothing, only hastened her steps.

"I have been doing my best to convince you, without annoying you, that you were mistaken about me. And the reason I have been doing it is that I am convinced myself. If I was not entirely sure last spring that I loved you, I certainly am sure now. I spent the summer thinking of it. I know now, beyond the possibility of a doubt, that I love you above all and everything. There is no 'duty' or 'generosity' in this, but simply my own feelings. I could perfectly well have let the matter drop; you gave me every opportunity to do so. That I have not done it should show you—a good deal. For I am not of the stuff of which heroes are made. I should not be here unless I wanted to; my motive is the selfish one of my own happiness."

They had entered the dark hall-way.

"Do you remember the morning when you stood here, with two tears in your eyes, saying 'Never mind; you will come another time'?" (Here the cobbler came down the stairs.) "Why not let the demolition of the street of the Hyacinth be the crisis of our fate?" he went on, returning the cobbler's bow. (Here the cobbler departed.) "If you refuse, I shall not give you up; I shall go on in the same way. But—haven't I been tried long enough?"

"You have not," she answered. "But, unless you will leave Rome, and—me, I cannot bear it longer."

It was a great downfall, of course; Noel always maintained that it was.

"But the heights upon which you had placed yourself, my dear, were too superhuman," he said, excusingly.

The street of the Hyacinth experienced a great downfall, also. During the summer it was demolished.

Before its demolition, Mrs. Lawrence, after three long breaths of astonishment, had come to offer her congratulations, in a new direction this time.

"It is the most fortunate thing in the world," she said to everybody, "that Mrs. Spurr is now confined to her bed for life, and is obliged to wear mourning."

But Mrs. Spurr is not confined to her bed; she drives out with her daughter whenever the weather is favorable. She wears black, but is now beginning to vary it with purple and lavender.