that he had been a pupil of his, but did not see much of him. So the two talked on; but they had got into a wrong key, as people do at times, and they mutually jarred upon each other. Even their silence was inharmonious. Occasionally came a long, low, peaceful breath: it seemed floating on the warm shadows.

Every thing was perfectly commonplace, and yet to Raban there seemed an element of strangeness and incongruity in the ways of the old house. There was something weird in the whole thing—the defiant girl, the sleeping woman, Lady Sarah, with her strange hesitations and emotions, and the darkness. How differently events strike people from different points of view! Here was a commonplace half hour, while old Sam prepared the seven-o'clock tea with Marker's help, while Rhoda slept a peaceful little sleep. To Raban it seemed a strange and puzzling experience, quite out of the common run of half hours.

Did he dislike poor Dolly? That off-hand manner was not Frank Raban's ideal of womanliness. Lady Sarah, with her chilled silence and restrained emotions, was nearer to it by far, old and ugly though she was. And yet he could not forget Dolly's presence for a single instant. He found himself watching and admiring and speculating about her almost against his will. She, too, was aware of this silent scrutiny, and resented it. Dolly was more brusque and fierce and uncomfortable that evening than she had ever been in all her life before. Dorothea Vanborough was one of those people who reflect the atmosphere somehow, whose lights come and go, and whose brilliance comes and goes. Dull fogs would fall upon her sometimes, at others sunlight, moonlight, or faint reflected rays would beam upon her world. It was a wide one, and open to all the winds of heaven.

So Frank Raban discovered when it was too late. He admired her when he should have loved her. He judged her in secret when he should have trusted or blamed her openly. A day came when he felt he had forfeited all right even to help her or to protect her, and that, while he was still repenting for the past, he had fallen (as people sometimes do who walk backward) into fresh pitfalls.

"My cousin Robert has asked me and Rhoda to spend a day at Cambridge in the spring," said Dolly, reluctantly struggling on at conversation.

Frank Raban was wondering if Lady Sarah was never coming back.

There was a sigh, a movement from the distant corner.

"Did you call me?" said a faint, shrill voice, plaintive and tremulous; and a figure rose from the nest of soft shawls and came slowly forward, dispersing the many wraps that lay coiling on the floor.

"Have I been asleep? I thought Mr. Henley was here?" said the voice, confusedly.

Dolly turned toward her. "No, he is not here, Rhoda. Sit down; don't stand. Here is Mr. Raban come to see us."

And then, in the dim light of the fire and distant candle, Raban saw two dark eyes looking out of a pale face that he seemed to remember.

"Mr. Raban!" said the voice.

"Have you forgotten?" said Dolly, hastily, going up to the distant sofa. "Mr. Raban, from Paris—" she began; then, seeing he had followed her, she stopped; she turned very red. She did not want to pain him. And Raban, at the same instant, recognized the two girls he had seen once before, and remembered where it was that he had known the deep gray eyes, with their look of cold repulsion and dislike.

"Are you Mr. Raban?" repeated Rhoda, looking intently into his face. "I should have known you if it had not been so dark." And she instinctively put up her hand and clasped something hanging round her neck.

The young man was moved.

"I ought, indeed, to remember you," he said, with some emotion.

And as he spoke he saw a diamond flash in the fire-light. This, then, was the child who had wandered down that terrible night, to whom he had given his poor wife's diamond cross.

Rhoda saw with some alarm that his eyes were fixed upon the cross.

"I sometimes think I ought to send this back to you," she faltered on, blushing faintly, and still holding it tight clasped in her hand.

"Keep it," said Raban, gravely; "no one has more right to it than you." Then they were all silent.

Dolly wondered why Rhoda had a right to the cross, but she did not ask.

Raban turned still more hard and more sad as the old memories assailed him suddenly from every side. Here was the past living over again. Though he might have softened to Lady Sarah, he now hardened to himself; and, as it often happens, the self-inflicted pain he felt seemed reflected in his manner toward the girls.

"I know you both now," he said, gravely, standing up. "Good-night; will you say good-by to your aunt for me?"

He did not offer to shake hands; it was Dolly who put out hers. He was very stiff, and yet there was a humble look in his pale face and dark eyes that Dolly could not forget. She seemed to remember it after he was gone.

Lady Sarah came in only a minute after Frank had left. She looked disappointed.

"I have just met him in the hall," she said

"Is he gone?" said Dolly. "Aunt Sarah, he is still very unhappy."

A few minutes afterward Rhoda said what a pity that Mr. Raban was gone, when she saw how smartly the tea-table was set out, how the silver candlesticks were lighted, and some of the good old wine that George liked sparkled in the decanter. Dolly felt as if Mr. Raban was more disagreeable than ever for giving so much trouble for nothing. Rhoda was very much interested in Lady Sarah's visitor, and asked Dolly many more questions when they were alone up stairs. She had been ill, and was staying at Church House to get well in quiet and away from the school-boys.

"Of course one can't ever like him," Dolly said, "but one is very sorry for him. Good-night, Rhoda."

"No, I don't like her," said Raban to himself; and he thought of Dolly all the way home. Her face haunted him. He dined at his club, and drove to the shabby station in Bishopsgate. He seemed to see her still as he waited for his train, stamping by the station fire, and by degrees that bitter vision of the past vanished away and the present remained. Dolly's face seemed to float along before him all the way back as the second-class carriage shook and jolted through the night, out beyond London fog into a region of star-lit plains and distant glimmering lights. Vision and visionary traveled on together, until at last the train slackened its thunder and stopped. A few late Cambridge lights shone in the distance. It was past midnight. When Raban, walking through the familiar by-ways, reached his college gates, he found them closed and barred; one gas-lamp flared —a garish light of to-day shining on the ancient carved stones and gabions of the past. A sleepy porter let him in, and as he walked across the dark court he looked up and saw here and there a light burning in a window, and then some far-away college clock clanged the half hour, then another, and another, and then their own clock overhead, loud and stunning. He reached his own staircase at last, and opened the oak door. Before going in Raban looked up through the staircase window at George Vanborough's rooms, which happened to be opposite his own. They were brilliantly illuminated, and their lights streamed out and lighted up many a deep lintel and sleeping window.

CHAPTER XIII.

LITTLE BROTHER AND LITTLE SISTER.

As the actors pass across the stage of life and play their parts in its great drama, it is not difficult at the outset to docket them for the most part "a lawyer," "a speculator," "an amiable person," "an intelligent, prosy man," "a parson," etc.; but after watching the piece a little (on this all-the-world stage it is not the play that ends, but the actors and speculators that come and go) we begin to see that, although some of the performers may be suited to their parts, there are others whose characters are not so well cast to the piece—Robert Henley, for instance, who is not quite in his element as a very young man. But every one is in earnest, in a certain fashion, upon this life-stage, and that is why we find the actors presently beginning to play their own characters instead of those which they are supposed to represent —to the great confusion, very often, of the drama itself. We have all read of a locksmith who had to act the part of a king; of a nephew who tried to wear his uncle's cocked hat; of a king who proclaimed himself a god, and of the confusion that ensued; and it is the same in private as in public life. Where people are set to work experiments in love, money, sermon, hay, or law making, with more or less aptitude for the exercise, what a strange jumble it is! Here is the lawyer making love to his client, instead of writing her will; the lover playing on the piano while his mistress is expecting him; the farmer, while his crops are spoiling, pondering on the theory of original sin. Among women, too, we find wives, mothers, daughters, and even professed aunts and nieces, all with their parts reversed by the unkind freaks of fate. Some get on pretty well; some break down utterly. The higher natures, acting from a wider conception of life, will do their best to do justice to the character, uncongenial though it may be, which happens to be assigned to them. Perhaps they may flag now and then, specially toward the middle of the performance; but by degrees they come to hear the music of "duty done." And duty is music, though it may be a hard sort of fugue, and difficult to practice—one too hard, alas! for our poor George as yet to master. Henley, to be sure, accomplished his ambitions; but then it was only a one-fingered scale that he attempted.

Dolly's was easy music in those early days of her life: at home or in Old Street the girl herself and her surroundings were in a perfect harmony. Dolly's life was a melody played to an accompaniment of loving tones and tender words among the tranquil traditions of the old house and the old ivy-grown suburb in which it stood. Rhoda used to wonder why people cared so much for Dolly, who was so happy, who never sacrificed herself, but did as she liked, and won all hearts to her, even Robert Henley's, thought Rhoda with a sigh. As for Dolly, she never thought about her happiness, though Rhoda did. The girl's life sped on peacefully among the people who loved her. She knew she meant so well

that it had not yet occurred to her that she might make mistakes in life and fail, and be sorry some day, like other folks. Rhoda, comparing her own little back-garret life in the noisy Morgan household with her friend's, used to think that every body and every thing united to spoil her. Dolly was undoubtedly Dorothea Regina—ruler of the household—a benevolent tyrant. The province of the tea-pot was hers, the fortress of the store-room. She had her latch-key; her aunt, Lady Sarah, spoiled her in every thing. Old Marker and George were the only people who ever ventured to oppose her. When they did so Dolly gave in instantly, with a smile and a sweet grace that were specially her own. She was a weak-minded, somewhat impetuous, and self-diffident person in reality; though as yet she did not know what she was. In looks she could see a tall and stately maiden, with a sweet, round, sleepy face reflected in the glass, and she took herself for granted at the loving valuation of those about her, as people both old and young are apt to do.

Dolly was one of those persons who travel on eagerly by starts, and then sit down to rest. Notwithstanding her impetuous, youthful manner, she was full of humility and diffidence, and often from very shyness and sincerity she would seem rude and indignant when she was half frightened at her own vehemence; then came passionate self-reproach—how passionate none can tell but those who, like Dolly Vanborough, seem to have many selves and many impulses, all warring with one another. There are two great classes of women—those who minister, and those who are taken care of by others; and the born care-takers and workers are apt to chafe in early life before people will recognize their right to do. Something is wrong, tempers go wrong, hearts beat passionately, boil over, ache for nothing at all; they want to comfort people, to live, to love, to come and go, to feel they are at work. It may be wholesome discipline for such natures to live for years in a kingdom of education, of shadows and rules. They may practice their self-denial on the keys of the piano, they may translate their hearts' interest into German exercises and back into English again; but that is poor work, and so far the upper classes pay a cruel penalty unknown to girls of a humbler birth. And so time goes on. For some a natural explanation comes to all their nameless difficulties. Others find one sooner or later, or, as years go on, the bright edge of impatient youth wears off. Raban once called Dolly a beautiful sour apple. Beautiful apples want time and sunshine to ripen and become sweet. If Dolly blamed others she did not spare herself; but she was much beloved, and, as I have said, she meant so well that she could not help trusting in herself.

So Dolly could not help believing in herself for the present through the loving faith of those in whom she trusted. She took it for granted she was all they wished, and that she ought to be. When the bitter awakening came, she thought she must have been dreaming, and that she had had two lives in her one life. Something of Dolly's life was written in her face, in her clear, happy eyes, in her dark and troubled brow. Even as a girl, people used to say that she had always different faces, and so she had for the multitude; but for those who loved her it was always the same true, trusting look, more or less worn as time went on, but still the same. She had a peculiar, sudden, sweet smile, that went to the very heart of the lonely old aunt, who saw it often. Dolly never had the training of repression, and perhaps that is why, when it fell upon her in later life, the lesson seemed so hard. She was not brilliant. She could not *say* things like George. She was not witty. Though she loved to be busy, and to accomplish, Dolly could not do things like Rhoda—clearly, quickly, completely. But how many stupid people there are who have a touch of genius about them! It would be hard to say in what it consists. They may be dull, slow, cross at times, ill informed, but you feel there is something that outweighs dullness, crossness, want of information.

Dorothea Vanborough had a little genius in her, though she was apt to look stupid and sulky and indifferent when she did not feel at her ease. Sometimes, when reproved for this, she would stand gaping with her gray eyes, and looking so oddly like her aunt Sarah that Mrs. Palmer, when she came home, would lose all patience with her. There was no knowing exactly what she was, her mother used to say. One day straight as an arrow—bright, determined; another day gray and stiff, and almost ugly and high-shouldered. "If Dolly had been more taking," said Mrs. Palmer, judging by the light of her own two marriages, "she might have allowed herself these quirks and fancies; but as it was, it was a pity." Her mother declared that she did it on purpose.

Did she do it on purpose? In early life she didn't care a bit what people thought of her. In this she was a little unwomanly perhaps, but unwomanly in the best and noblest sense. When, with time, those mysterious other selves came upon her that we meet as we travel along the road, bewildering her and pointing with all their different experiences, she ceased to judge either herself or others as severely; she loved faith and truth, and hated meanness and dissimulation as much as ever. Only, being a woman too honest to deceive herself, she found she could no longer apply the precepts that she had used once to her satisfaction. To hate the devil and all his works is one thing, but to say who is the devil and which are his works is another.

As for George Vanborough, his temper was alternately uproarious and melancholy: there was some incongruity in his nature that chafed and irritated him. He had abilities, but strange and cross-grained ones—of no use in an examination, for instance. He could invent theories, but somehow he never got at the facts; he was rapid in conclusion, too rapid for poor Dolly, who was expected to follow him wherever he went, and who was sometimes hard put to it, for, unlike George, her convictions were slower than her sympathies.

A great many people seem to miss their vocations because their bodies do not happen to fit their souls. This is one of the advantages of middle age: people have got used to their bodies and to their faults; they know how to use them, to spare them, and they do not expect too much. George was at war with himself, poor fellow: by turns ascetic and self-indulgent, morbid and overconfident. It is difficult to docket such a character, made up of all sorts of little bits collected from one and another ancestor; of materials warring against each other, as we have read in Mr. Darwin.

George's rooms at Cambridge were very small, and looked out across the green quadrangle at All Saints. Among other instincts, he had inherited that of weaving his nest with photographs and old china, and lining it comfortably from Church House. There were papers and music-books, tankards (most of them with inscriptions), and a divining crystal. The old windows were deep and ivy-grown: at night they would often be cheerfully lighted up. "Far too often," say George's counselors.

"I should like to entertain well enough," says Henley, with a wave of the hand, "but I can't afford it prudently. Bills have a knack of running up, particularly when they are not paid," the young man remarks, with great originality, "and then one can't always meet them."

George only answers by a scowl from his little ferret eyes. "You can pay your own bills twice over if you like," he grunts out, impatiently; "mine don't concern you."

Robert said no more; he had done his part, and he felt he could now face Dolly and poor Lady Sarah of the bleeding purse with a clear conscience; but he could not help remembering with some satisfaction two neatly tied-up bundles of bills lying with a check-book in his dispatch-box at home. He was just going, when there came a knock at the door, and a pale man with a red beard walked in and shook hands with George, and then somewhat hesitatingly with his companion, and finally sat down in George's three-sided chair.

Need I say that this was Raban, who had come to recommend a tutor to George? Was it to George or to Dorothea that Raban was so anxious to recommend a tutor?

George shrugged his shoulders, and said, "I don't know; I have got a theory of my own. I think I shall not take a coach."

Henley delayed a moment. "I am glad you agree with me," he said. "I also have been speaking to my cousin on the subject."

Raban bowed in the shy way peculiar to him. You never could tell if he was only shy or repelled by your advances.

"You and I have found the advantage of a good coach all our lives," the other continued, with a subdued air of modest triumph. It seemed to say, "You will be glad to know that I am one of the most rising men of the university;" and at the same time Robert looked down apologetically at poor scowling George, who was any thing but rising, poor fellow, and well up to his knees in the slough of despond. Nor was it destined that Robert Henley was to be the man to pull him out. Although he had walked over from St. Thomas's to do so, he walked back again without having effected his purpose.

"I did not know, till your sister told me, that Mr. Henley was your cousin," said Raban, as Robert left the room.

"Didn't you?" said George. "I suppose you did not see any likeness in me to that grenadier with the cameo nose?" and, turning his back abruptly upon Raban, he began strumming "Yankee Doodle" on the piano, standing as he played, and putting in a quantity of pretty modulations. It was only to show off; but Raban, who was easily repelled, might have been tempted to follow Henley down stairs if he had not caught sight of a photograph of a girl with circling eyes, in some strange, old-fashioned dress, with a lantern in her hand. It was the work of a well-known amateur, who has the gift of seizing expression as it flies, and giving you a breathing friend, instead of the image of an image. But it was in vain the young professor staid on, in vain that he came time after time trying to make friends with young Vanborough and to urge him to work. He once went so far as to write a warning letter to Lady Sarah. It did no good, and only made Dolly angry. At Christmas George wrote that he had not passed, and would be home on the 23d. He did not add that he had been obliged to sign some bills before he could get away.

George came home: with or without his laurels, he was sure of an ovation. Dolly, by her extra loving welcome only, showed her disappointment at his want of success.

The fatted calf was killed, and the bottle of good wine was opened. "Old Sam insisted on it," said Lady Sarah, who had got into a way of taking shelter behind old Sam

when she found herself relenting. It was impossible not to relent when Dolly, hearing the cab wheels, came with a scream of delight flying down the staircase from George's room, where she had been busy making ready. A great gust of cold wind burst into the hall with the open door, by which George was standing, with his bag, a little fussy and a little shy; but Dolly's glad cry of welcome and loving arms were there to reassure him.

"Shut the door," said Dolly; "the wind will blow us away. Have you paid your cab?" As she spoke the horse was turning round upon its haunches, and the cab was driving off, and a pale face looked out for an instant.

"It's no matter," said George, pushing to the door. "Raban brought me. He is going on to dine somewhere near."

"Horrid man!" said Dolly. "Come, George, and see Aunt Sarah. She is in the drawing-room."

Lady Sarah looked at George very gravely over her knitting, and her needles began to tremble a little.

"What do you wish me to say, George? That you failed because you couldn't or because you wouldn't try?"

"Some one must fail," said George.

"It is not fair upon me," said Lady Sarah, "that you should be the one.—No, Dolly, I am not at all unkind."

I have said very little of the changes and economies that had been made at Church House, they affected Lady Sarah and Dolly so little; but when George came home, even in disgrace, a certain change was made in the still ways of the house. Old Sam's niece, Eliza Twells, staid all day, and was transformed into a smiling abigail, not a little pleased with her promotion. One of Lady Sarah's old gray gowns was bestowed upon her. A cap and ribbons were concocted by Dolly; the ribbons were forever fluttering in and out of the sitting-room, and up and down the passages. There was a sound of voices now, a show of life. Dolly could not talk to herself all through the long months when George was away; but when she had him safe in his little room again the duet was unceasing.

Eliza Twells, down below in the pan-decorated kitchen, in all the excitement of her new dignities, kept the ball going. You could hear old Sam's chuckles all the way up stairs, and the maiden's loud, croaking, cheerful voice.

"It's like a saw-mill," said George; "but what is that?"

"That is Eliza laughing," said Dorothea, laughing herself; "and there is dear old Marker scolding. Oh, George, how nice it is to have you home again!" and then, as most happy vibrations bring a sadder aftertone, Dolly sighed and stopped short.

"Disgrace *is* hard to bear," said George, moodily.

"Disgrace! What do you mean?" wondered Dolly, who had been thinking of something quite apart from those unlucky examinations — something that was not much, and yet she would have found it hard to put her thought into words. For how much there is that is not in words, that never happens quite, that is never realized altogether; and yet it is as much part of our life as any thing else.

CHAPTER XIV.

RAG DOLLS.

THESE were days not to be forgotten by Dolly or by her aunt. Don't we all know how life runs in certain grooves, following phases of one sort or another? How dreams of coming trouble haunt us vaguely all through a night; or, again, is it hope that dawns silently from afar to lighten our hearts and to make sweet visions for us before we awake to the heat of the day?

It was all tranquil progress from day to day. Raban came to see them once or twice while George was away. It seemed all peace and silence during those years in the old house, where the two women lived so quietly each her own life, thinking her own thoughts. Rumors came now and then of Mrs. Palmer's return, but this had been put off so often, from one reason or another, that Dolly had almost ceased to dwell upon it. She had settled down to her daily occupations. John Morgan had set her to work in one of his districts. She used to teach in the Sunday-school, help her aunt in a hundred ways. This eventful spring she went into Yorkshire with Marker and a couple of new gowns on a visit to her uncle, Sir Thomas Henley, at Smokethwayte. She enjoyed herself extremely, and liked her uncle and the girls very much. Her aunt was not very kind—"at least, not so kind as I'm used to," said Dolly, afterward. They had gone for long walks across the moors; they had ridden for twenty miles one day. She had seen her mother's picture, and slept in the room that used to be hers when she was a girl, and her cousin Norah had taken her about; but her aunt Henley was certainly very cross and always saying uncomfortable things, and she was very glad to be home again, and didn't want to go away for years and years. Robert Henley had been there for a couple of days, and had come up to town with her. Jonah Henley was a very kind, stupid boy, not at all like Robert. He was very friendly to Dolly, and used to confide in her. He had made his mother very angry by insisting upon going into the Guards.

ON THE STEP OF A RAG-SHOP.

"She asked my advice," said Dolly. "She wanted to know if I didn't think it a foolish, idle sort of life."

"And what did you say?" said Lady Sarah.

"I said that it might be so for some people who were clever and thoughtful, but that he seemed to have no interests at all, and never opened a book."

"My dear child," cried Lady Sarah, "no wonder Lady Henley was annoyed!"

"Oh, dear me! I am so very sorry," cries Dolly, penitently, as she walked along. They were going along one of the narrow alleys leading to the Square.

Day after day Lady Sarah used to leave home and trudge off with her basket and her well-known shabby cloak—it was warm and green like the heart that beat under it—from house to house, in and out, round and about the narrow little Kensington streets. The parents who had tried to impose upon her at first soon found that she had little sympathy

for pathetic attitudes, and that her quick tongue paid them back in their own coin. They bore no malice. Poor people only really respect those who know them as they are, and whose sympathy is personal and not ideal. Lady Sarah's was genuine sympathy; she knew her flock by name, and she spared no trouble to help those who were trying to help themselves. The children would come up shyly when they saw the straight, scant figure coming along, and look into her face. Sometimes the basket would open, and red apples would come out—shining red apples in the dirty little back streets and by-lanes behind Kensington Square. Once Robert Henley, walking to Church House across some back way, came upon his aunt sitting on an old chair on the step of a rag-shop with a little circle of children round her, and Dolly standing beside her, straight and upright, with an apple in her hand. Over her head swung the legless form of a rag doll, twirling in the wind. On one side of the door was some rhymed doggerel about "Come, cookey, come," and bring "your bones" plastered up against the wall. Lady Sarah, on the step, seemed dispensing bounties from her bag to half a dozen little clamorous, half-fledged creatures.

"My dear aunt Sarah, what does this mean?" said Robert, trying to laugh, but looking very uncomfortable.

"I was so tired, Robert, I could not get home without resting," said Lady Sarah; "and Mr. Wilkins kindly brought me out a chair. These are some of my Sunday-school children, and Dolly and I were giving them a treat."

"But really this is scarcely the place to—If any one were to pass—if— Run away! run away! run away!" said Mr. Henley, affably, to the children, who were all closing in in a ragged phalanx, and gazing admiringly at his trowsers. "I'll get you a cab directly," said the young man, looking up and down. "I came this short-cut, but I had no idea—"

"There are no cabs any where down here," said Dolly, laughing. "This is Aunt Sarah's district; that is her soup-kitchen." And Dolly pointed up a dismal street with some flapping washing lines on one side. It looked all empty and deserted, except that two women were standing in the doorways of their queer old huddled-up houses. A little further off came a branch street, a blank wall, and some old Queen Anne railings and doorways leading into Kensington Square.

"Good-by, little Betty," said Lady Sarah, getting up from her old straw chair, and smiling.

She was amused by the young man's unaffected dismay. Philanthropy was quite in Henley's line, but that was, Robert thought, a very different thing from familiarity.

"Now then, Betty, where's your courtesy?" says Dolly; "and Mick, Sir!"

Mick grinned, and pulled at one of his horrible little wisps of hair. The children seemed fascinated by the "gentleman." They were used to the ladies, and, in fact, accustomed to be very rude to Dolly, although she was so severe.

"If you will give me an arm, Robert," said Lady Sarah, "and if you are not ashamed to be seen with me—"

"My dear Lady Sarah!" said Robert, hastily, offering his arm.

"Now, children, be off," says Dolly.

"Please, Sir, won't you give us 'napeny?" said Mick, hopping along with his little deft, bare feet.

"Go away—for shame, Mick!" cried Dolly again, while Henley impatiently threw some coppers into the road, after which all the children set off scrambling in an instant. "Oh, Robert, you shouldn't have done that," cried Dolly, rushing back to superintend the fair division of kicks and halfpence.

Robert waited for her for a moment, and looked at her as she stood, straight and tall in her long gray cloak, with a little struggling heap at her feet of legs and rags and squeaks and contortions. The old Queen Anne railings of the corner house, and the dim street winding into rags, made a background to this picture of modern times: an old slatternly woman in a night-cap came to her help from one of the neighboring doorways, and seizing one of the children out of the heap, gave it a cuff and dragged it away. Dolly had lifted Mick off the back of a smaller child: the crisis was over.

"Here she comes," said Lady Sarah, in no way discomposed.

Robert was extremely discomposed. He hated to see Dolly among such sights and surroundings. He tried to speak calmly as they walked on, but his voice sounded a little cracked.

"Surely," he said, "this is too much for you at times. Do you go very often?"

"Nearly every day, Robert," said Dorothea. "You see what order I have got the children into."

She was laughing again, and Henley, as usual, was serious.

"Of course I can not judge," said he, "not knowing what state they were in originally." Then he added, gravely turning to Lady Sarah, "Don't you somehow think that Dolly is very young to be mixed up with a—rag-shops and wickedness?"

"Dolly is young," said her aunt, not overpleased; "but she is very prudent, and I am not afraid of her pawning her clothes and taking to drink."

"My dear aunt, you don't suppose I ever thought of such a possibility," Robert exclaimed. "Only ladies do not always consider things from our point of view, and I

feel in a certain degree responsible and bound to you as your nearest male protector. (Take care—here is a step.) I should not like other people, who might not know Dolly as we do, to imagine that she was accustomed already to—"

"My dear Robert," said Lady Sarah, "Dolly has got an aunt and a brother to take care of her. Do you suppose that we would let her do any thing that we thought might hurt her in other people's opinion? Dolly, here is Robert horrified at the examples to which you are exposed. He feels he ought to interfere."

"You won't understand me," said Robert, keeping his temper very good-naturedly. "Of course I can't help taking an interest in my relations."

"Thank you, Robert," said Dolly, smiling and blushing.

Their eyes met for an instant, and Robert looked better pleased. It was a bright delightful spring morning. All the windows were shining in the old Square; there was a holiday thrill in the air, a sound of life, dogs barking, people stirring and coming out of their hiding-places, animals and birds exulting.

Dolly used to get almost tipsy upon sunshine. The weather is as much part of some people's lives as the minor events which happen to them. She walked along by the other two, diverging a little as they traveled along, the elder woman's bent figure beating time with quick, fluttering footsteps to the young man's even stride. Dolly liked Robert to be nice to her aunt, and was not a little pleased when he approved of herself. She was a little afraid of him. She felt that beneath that calm manner there were many secrets that she had not yet fathomed. She knew how good he was, how he never got into debt. Ah me! how she wished George would take pattern by him! Dolly and Rhoda had sometimes talked Robert over. They gave him credit for great experience, a deep knowledge of the world (he dined out continually when he was in town), and they also gave him full credit for his handsome, thoughtful face, his tall, commanding figure. You can not but respect a man of six foot high.

So they reached the doorway at last: the ivy was all glistening in the sunshine; and as they rang the bell they heard the sound of Minette's bark in the garden, and then came some music, some brilliant piano-forte playing, which sounded clear and ringing as it overflowed the garden wall and streamed out into the lane.

"Listen! Who can that be playing?" cries Dolly, brightening up still brighter, and listening with her face against the ivy.

"George," says Robert. "Has George come up again?"

"It's the overture to the 'Freischütz,'" says Dolly, conclusively: "it *is* George."

And when old Sam shuffled up at last to open the door he announced, grinning, that "Mr. Garge had come, and was playing the peanner in the drawing-room."

At the same moment, through the iron gate, they saw a figure advancing to meet them from the garden, with Gumbo caracoling in advance.

"Why, there is Rhoda in the garden," cries Dolly. "Robert, you go to her. I must go to George."

CHAPTER XV.

GEORGE'S TUNES.

THERE is George sitting at the old piano in the drawing-room. The window is wide open. The Venetian glass is dazzling over his head, of which the cauliflower shadow is thrown upon the wall. By daylight the old damask paper looks all stained and discolored, and the draperies hang fainting and turning gray and brown and to all sorts of strange autumnal hues in this bright spring sunshine.

The keys answer to George's vigorous fingers, while the shadow bobs in time from side to side. A pretty little pair of slim gloves and a prayer-book are lying on a chair by the piano; they are certainly not George's, nor Eliza Twells's, who is ostensibly dusting the room, but who has stopped short to listen to the music. It has wandered from the "Freischütz" overture to "Kennst du das Land," which, for the moment, George imagines to be his own composition. How easily the chords fall into their places! how the melody flows loud and clear from his fingers! (It's not only on the piano that