

housekeeper, at another for the stable-boy, at another for one of us ; in which fits of partiality she would always turn a blind and deaf side upon everyone else, actually seeming to imagine she showed the strength of her love to the one by the paraded exclusion of the others. I cannot tell how much of this was natural to her, and how much the result of the foolish and injurious jealousy of the servants. I say *servants*, because I know such an influencing was all but impossible in the family itself. If my father heard anyone utter such a phrase as "Don't you love me best"—or, "better than" such a one? or, "Ain't I your favourite?"—well, you all know my father, and know him really, for he never wrote a word he did not believe—but you would have been astonished, I venture to think, and perhaps at first bewildered as well, by the look of indignation flashed from his eyes. He was not the gentle all-excusing man some readers, I know, fancy him from his writings. He was gentle even to tenderness when he had time to think a moment, and in any quiet judgment he always took as much the side of the offender as was possible with any likelihood of justice ; but in the first moments of contact with what he thought bad in principle, and that in the smallest trifle, he would speak words that made even those who were not included in the condemnation tremble with sympathetic fear. "There, Harry, you take it—quick, or Charley will have it," said the nurse one day, little thinking who overheard her. "Woman!" cried a voice of wrath from the corridor, "do you know what you are doing? Would you make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourself?" An hour after, she was sent for to the study, and when she came out her eyes were very red. My father was unusually silent at dinner ; and after the younger ones were gone, he turned to my mother, and said: "Ethel, I spoke the truth. All *that* is of the Devil—horribly bad ; and yet I am more to blame in my condemnation of them than she for the words themselves. The thought of so polluting the mind of a child makes me fierce, and the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. The old Adam is only too glad to get a word in, if even in behalf of his supplanting successor." Then he rose, and taking my mother by the arm, walked away with her. I confess I honoured him for his self-condemnation the most. I must add that the offending nurse had been ten years in the family, and ought to have known better.

But to return to Theodora. She was subject to attacks of the most furious passion, especially when anything occurred to thwart the indulgence of the ephemeral partiality I have just described.

Then, wherever she was, she would throw herself down at once—on the floor, on the walk or lawn, or, as happened on one occasion, in the water—and kick and scream. At such times she cared nothing even for my father, of whom generally she stood in considerable awe—a feeling he rather encouraged. "She has plenty of people about her to represent the Gospel," he said once ; "I will keep the department of the law, without which she never will appreciate the Gospel. My part will, I trust, vanish in due time, and the law turn out to have been, after all, only the imperfect Gospel, just as the leaf is the imperfect flower. But the Gospel is no gospel till it gets into the heart, and it sometimes wants a torpedo to blow the gates of that open." For no torpedo or Krupp gun, however, did Theodora care at such times ; and after repeated experience of the inefficacy of coaxing, my father gave orders that, when a fit occurred, every one, without exception, should not merely leave her alone, but go out of sight, and if possible out of hearing—at least out of her hearing—that she might know she had driven her friends far from her, and be brought to a sense of loneliness and need. I am pretty sure that if she had been one of us, that is, one of his own, he would have taken sharper measures with her ; but he said we must never attempt to treat other people's children as our own, for they are not our own. We did not love them enough, he said, to make severity safe either for them or for us.

The plan worked so far well, that, after a time varied in length according to causes inscrutable, she would always reappear smiling ; but as to any conscience of wrong, she seemed to have no more than nature herself, who looks out with *her* smiling face after hours of thunder, lightning, and rain ; and, although this treatment brought her out of them sooner, the fits themselves came quite as frequently as before.

But she had another habit, more alarming, and more troublesome as well ; she would not unfrequently vanish, and have to be long sought, for in such case she never reappeared of herself. What made it so alarming was that there were dangerous places about our house ; but she would generally be found seated, perfectly quiet, in some out-of-the-way nook where she had never been before, playing, not with any of her toys, but with something she had picked up and appropriated, finding in it some shadowy amusement which no one understood but herself.

She was very fond of bright colours, especially in dress ; and if she found a brilliant or gorgeous fragment of any substance, would be sure to hide it away in some hole or corner, perhaps known only to herself. Her love of approbation was

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