

answer and some I could not. Next he took me into the shop, set me a stool in front of a grand piano, and told me to play. I could not help trembling a good deal, but I tried my best. In a few moments, however, the tears were dropping on the keys, and when he asked me what was the matter, I told him it was months since I had touched a piano. The answer did not, however, satisfy him; he asked very kindly how that was, and I had to tell him my whole story. Then he not only promised to have the piano tuned for me at once, but told me that I might go and practice there as often as I pleased, so long as I was a good girl, and did not take up with bad company. Imagine my delight! Then he sent for a tuner, and I suppose told him a little about me, for the man spoke very kindly to me as we went to the brokers.

"Mr. Perkins has been a good friend to me ever since.

"For six months I continued to give Bertha Lampeter lessons. They were broken off only when she went to a dressmaker to learn her business. But her mother had by that time introduced me to several families of her acquaintance, amongst whom I found five or six pupils on the same terms. By this teaching, if I earned little, I learned much; and every day almost I practised at the music shop.

"When the house was let, Mrs. Conan took a room in the neighbourhood, that I might keep up my connection, she said. Then first I was introduced to scenes and experiences with which I am now familiar. Mrs. Percivale might well recoil if I were to tell her half the wretchedness, wickedness, and vulgarity I have seen, and often had to encounter. For two years or so we changed about, at one time in an empty house, at another in a hired room, sometimes better, sometimes worse off as regarded our neighbours, until, Mrs. Conan having come to the conclusion that it would be better for her to confine herself to charring, we at last settled down here, where I have now lived for many years.

"You may be inclined to ask why I had not kept up my acquaintance with my music-mistress. I believe the shock of losing my father and the misery that followed made me feel as if my former world had vanished; at all events, I never thought of going to her until Mr. Perkins one day, after listening to something I was playing, asked me who had taught me; and this brought her back to my mind so vividly that I resolved to go and see her. She welcomed me with more than kindness—with tenderness, and told me I had caused her much uneasiness by not letting her know what had become of me. She looked quite aghast when she learned in what sort of

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