

put them off with a laugh, and answered, "Not so, dear friends—the skin is nearer than the fleece! In-doors there, at the work-bench, is my post. Other people understand politics and government better than I—I leave the task to them."

The friends and companions tried again two or three times—Heinzelmann, however, remained firm; they gave up and came no more. But the old customers returned, and the old journeymen also, who had thought better of their strike—and above all, the old joy of tranquil, domestic life.

Baptist would not change with any one. And Frau Margaret!—only go by the house some day toward evening, when she is playing with the children, or sitting with them and her husband in the garden; then, when you hear her clear, silvery laugh, then, I can believe, you will no more ask if she is happy. Such a laugh can come only from a truly happy heart.

#### MY FIRST PLACE.

MY father died before I can remember any thing. My mother had a hard life; and it was all that she could do to keep herself and me. We lived in Birmingham, in a house where there were many other lodgers. We had only one room of our own; and, when my mother went out to work, she locked the door and left me there by myself. Those were dreary days. When it was summer, and the bright sun shone in at the window, I thought of the green fields that I used to see sometimes on Sundays, and I longed to be sitting under a shady tree, watching the little lambs, and all young things that could play about. When it was winter, I used to sit looking at the empty grate, and wishing to see the bright blaze which never came. When mother went away in the winter mornings, she told me to run about to warm myself; and, when I was tired and began to feel cold, to get into the blankets on the bed. Many long and wearisome hours I passed in those blankets; listening and listening to every step upon the stairs, expecting to hear mother's step. At times I felt very lonely; and fancied, as it began to grow darker and darker, that I could see large, strange shapes rising before me; and, though I might know that it was only my bonnet that I looked at, or a gown of mother's hanging up behind the door, or something at the top of the old cupboard, the things seemed to grow larger and larger, and I looked and looked till I became so frightened, that I covered my head with the blanket, and went on listening for mother's return. What a joyful sound to me was the sound of the key put into the door-lock! It gave me courage in an instant: then I would throw away the blanket; and, raising my head with a feeling of defiance, would look round for the things that had frightened me, as if to say, "I don't care for you now." Mother would light the fire, bring something from the basket, and cook our supper. She would then sit and talk to me, and I felt so happy that I soon forgot all that had gone before.

Mother could not always get work. I was glad then; for those days were the Sundays of my life; she was at home all day; and although

we often had nothing to eat but bread and potatoes, she had her tea; and the potatoes always tasted to me at these times better than they did on other days. Mother was not a scholar, so she could not teach me much in that way; but she taught me how to keep our room clean and free from dust. I did not know much of other children; but I had a little cousin about my own age, who came sometimes on Sundays with my aunt, and sometimes we went to see them.

At last mother was taken ill—so very ill that she could not go out to work, and as I could not do for her all that was wanted to be done, my aunt came to be with us. Mother became worse and worse, and the doctor said he did not think she would ever get better. I heard him say this to aunt, and he said it in such a way as if he thought I could not feel; and I do think there are some people who think that children can not feel; but I *did* feel it very much. Aunt used to sit up at nights. I had a little bed made in a corner of the room on the floor. One night after I had cried myself to sleep, I started up from a bad dream about dear mother. At first I could not remember where I was, not being used to my strange bed; but, when I did remember, I saw that the rush-light was just burning out. All was very quiet. The quietness frightened me. The light flared for an instant, and then it was gone; but it showed me my aunt lying on the floor with her head leaning on the bed; she was fast asleep. I thought mother was asleep, too, and I did not dare to speak. Softly creeping out of bed, I groped my way as well as I could to mother's side. I listened, but I heard no sound; I got nearer to her; I could not hear her breathe; I put out my hand to feel her face; the face was clammy and almost cold. "Mother! dear mother!" I cried. The cry awoke my aunt; she got a light. Mother was dead.

I can not remember what happened for a long time afterward; for I was very ill, and was taken to my aunt's house. I was very miserable when I got better again. I felt quite alone in the world; for though aunt was kind, her kindness was not like mother's kindness. Whenever I could get to be by myself, I used to think of poor mother; and often in the long, long nights, I would lie awake thinking about her, fancying that she was near, saying things to comfort me. Poor mother!

Time passed on, and by degrees I began to feel happier; for through the interest of a kind lady—a Mrs. Jones—I was got into a school, where I was kept entirely, and taught not only reading, writing, arithmetic, and to do needle-work; but was also taught how to do every branch of household work, so as to qualify me to be a servant. At the age of sixteen, suitable places were provided for the girls.

I pass over my school-days. They were very happy ones; but, when I was selected to be the servant of a lady in London, I was very miserable at parting from every body that I knew in the world, and at going among strangers who would not love me one bit.

It rained heavily on the day I left; and every thing to be seen out of the window of the railway train looked dismal and dripping. When I got to the station, in London, I went into the waiting-room. I waited a long time: one after another went away, till at last I was left alone to watch the pouring rain as it fell faster and faster. I was beginning to feel very dismal indeed, when a smartly dressed young woman came into the waiting-room. At first I thought she was a lady; she came toward me, "Are you the young person from Birmingham?" she said. I was up in a moment, saying, "Yes, ma'am," courtesying as I spoke. But the minute afterward I was sorry that I had courtesied; for I was sure *she* was not my mistress.

We were soon in the cab. "Well," said my companion, whom I soon knew to be Maria Wild, the housemaid, "and so you took me to be your mistress, did you?" and she laughed in a disagreeable way; "I shan't forget your humble courtesy, and I'll try to keep you up to it." The house at which we stopped was a pretty stone house, standing at a little distance from the road, surrounded by a nice garden. I was glad it was in the country, for the sight of trees and green fields always called to mind those happy Sundays when dear mother was alive. But the country looked very gloomy just then; every thing seemed as dull as I was.

I was chilly and shivering, and glad to creep to the fire; no one was in the kitchen. The kettle was boiling: it sounded cheerily, like the voice of friends I had often heard. The tea-things were set ready, and every thing around looked comfortable. By-and-by in came Maria and another servant—the cook. She was so smart! I looked at her timidly. "Well!" she said, "now for your courtesy." I knew at once that Maria had been telling her about my mistake. I looked grave, and felt very uncomfortable; but I did not courtesy. "Come, come," said she, "I'll excuse you to-night; you shall have some tea to cheer you up a bit. But don't look so down-hearted, girl; this'll never do; you must pluck up."

Then we sat down. She asked me a great many questions, all about the place I had come from; the relations that I had; every thing about the school; what I had done there; till at last I was quite tired of answering. Then I asked some questions in my turn.

The family consisted of a master and mistress, three children (all young), and four servants. My business, I heard, was the care of the second drawing-room, to help the nurse till two o'clock, and after that time to help the cook. I wished that it had fallen to my chance to have had a place more decidedly a *one* place than this seemed to be; but I did not dare to say a word. I was very much tired, and cook told me that I might go to bed; for mistress (who was out) would not return till too late to speak to me that night. Very glad I was to go. I was to sleep in the room with the cook and housemaid; but had a small bed to myself. Tired as I was, I could not

sleep. When they came into the room, they believed me to be asleep, and they went on talking for a long time. I wished not to hear what they said; for though I could not understand half of it, I was sure that what they talked about was very wrong. With such companions I felt that I could never be happy. I longed for morning, that I might write at once to the matron of my school and tell her so.

But what would the matron say? I knew well that she would chide me; for in the very last advice she gave me, she said that I must expect, when I went into the world, to meet with evil-speakers and with evil-doers, and that it must be my constant care to keep myself unspotted from bad example. I thought of this over and over again, and determined that, whatever might happen, I would try to do right. Besides, I had not seen the nurse yet; she might be a person that I could like; and in this hope I went to sleep.

When I awoke, the bright sunlight was shining in through the window; I was alone in the room, and I was sure that it was very late. I was dressing hurriedly when the door softly opened. It was Maria Wild. "How soundly you have slept!" she said; "I had not the heart to awake you; but you must make haste now, for mistress is down, and has asked for you, and we have finished breakfast." I was not long in following her. The cook had kept some tea warm for me; her manner seemed kinder, and I wished that I could forget what had passed. By-and-by the parlor bell rang. It was for me; and, with a beating heart, I prepared to go into the presence of my first mistress.

What a pretty, sweet, gentle lady! and so very young that I could scarcely believe she could be my mistress. She spoke to me most gently, hoped I should prove a good girl; and, without entering into the nature of my duties, merely said that the cook and the nurse would put me in the right way. Dear lady! she was like many other ladies who marry as soon as they leave school; and who, without knowing any thing at all about the management of a house, rush into housekeeping.

I wish I could have had all my instructions from my mistress. As it was, I had three distinct mistresses; my real one knowing less about what I did, than either of the others. I was often very much tempted to peep into the beautiful books which were lying about the drawing-room I had the care of. As I dusted them with my brush, once or twice I could not resist; and, one morning I opened the prettiest, in which there were such beautiful engravings, that I turned them all over till I came to the end. One engraving seemed so very interesting that I could not resist reading a little of the story which told about it. I was standing with the book in one hand, the dusting brush in the other, forgetting every thing else, when I was startled by the sound of my own name. I turned round and saw my mistress. "Fanny!" repeated my mistress, "this is very wrong; I do not allow this." I could not speak, but I felt myself turn very red,

and I put the book hastily on the table. I did not try to make any excuse for what I had done. I was touched by the gentleness with which my mistress had reproved me.

Several weeks passed. I was very miserable, but I struggled hard to bear all as well as I could. I was sure that both the nurse and the cook gave me a great many things to do that they ought to have done themselves; so that I had very little rest, and was very tired when night came. I was certain that I was a restraint on what they had to say to each other: they were by no means sure of me; and, when I entered the kitchen unexpectedly, I knew by their altered tone and manners that they spoke of something different to what they had been speaking about before. I saw many signs pass between them, which they did not think I saw. Sometimes I knew they were trying to see how far they might trust me, and I had a strong wish that they would find out they *never* would be able to trust me.

One day I was cleaning the children's shoes in a little out-house near the kitchen, when my mistress came down to give orders for dinner. The cook did not know I was there. Most of what was said I could hear very distinctly; for the kitchen-door was open. "Oh! indeed, ma'am," said the cook, "these young girls eat a great deal; you'd be astonished to see how she makes away with the puddings."—"Change of air has given her an appetite, I suppose," said my mistress.—"Yes, indeed, ma'am; but if it was an appetite in moderation, I should say nothing about it; but to see her eat in the way she does—why, ma'am, yesterday, besides the pudding left from the nursery, I had made another for our dinner, and though Mary and I took only the least morsel, there was not a bit left."—"Indeed!" said my mistress, and left the kitchen.

It was hard work for me to keep quiet. Twice I went toward the kitchen-door. I felt myself burn all over with anger; but I was struck dumb by the falsehoods I had heard. There had been no pudding for dinner the day before, and having had a headache, I had eaten no meat; nor could I have been tempted even by the savory-looking veal cutlets that the cook had prepared for herself and Mary. For some time after my mistress had left the kitchen I remained quite still; indeed, I was scarcely able to move; then I made a rush toward the kitchen-door, intending to upbraid the cook with her wickedness; but again I checked myself. I waited till I could leave the out-house and pass up the back stairs without being seen; then I went into the room where I slept, threw myself upon my little bed, and cried bitterly.

I was roused by the nurse, who had been seeking the children's shoes to take the children out to walk. I washed my eyes, and went out with them. The baby was a nice chubby little thing, about seven months old, but he was what the nurse called "lumpish, and had no spring," so that he was very heavy to carry. When we went out to walk, the nurse always carried baby till we got out of sight of the house; then

she gave him to me; and when we returned she always took him again at the same place. After taking one turn on the heath "promenade," we went down by the sand-pits, and walking on till we came to a retired place, the nurse seated herself near a heather bush, and took a book. My arms ached so very much that I should have been glad to sit down too; but she told me to go on, the other children following me. After I had walked some distance, baby awoke, and began to cry. I could not comfort him. The more I tried, the louder he screamed, and the two little children, frightened at his screams, began to cry too. I turned to go back, but we had gone further than I thought; and the road being irregular, we had picked our way round many tall bushes of heather, all looking so much alike—that I did not know which way to take. In great trouble what to do, and scarcely being able to hold the baby any longer, I shouted "Nurse! nurse!" as loud as I could shout; but so great was the noise made by the screaming of the children, that my voice could not be heard. Presently, however, to my great relief, the nurse suddenly appeared from behind the bush, near which we were sitting.

What a face of rage she had! "How dare you," she said, "how dare you go so far?" Then snatching the child from my arms, she would not hear a word; but as soon as she had made him and the rest of the children quiet, she went on abusing me very much indeed.

We were still some way from home when the church clock chimed a quarter to two. Suddenly the nurse stopped, put her hand into her pocket, and looked very much frightened. "I've left the book," she said, "left it on the bank; run—run directly—make haste—don't lose a moment, or it may be gone." I stood still; for I felt angry at having been scolded so undeservedly. "Go! go this instant!" I was too late; the book was gone! I scarcely dared to go back. "Not find it!" said the nurse, when I came up to her; "it must be there; you've done this on purpose." When we had reached home, she flung the baby hurriedly into my arms. "I'll go myself," she said.

The book I had seen her take out of her pocket looked very much like one placed on a side-table in the room of which I had charge, and so great was my curiosity to know if it really were the same, that I could not resist going down to see; so putting the baby (who had begun to cry again) upon the bed, and telling the little ones to sit still for a minute, down I went. The book was not on the table. I was sure that I had dusted and placed it there that very morning, and I now felt certain that *that* book was the lost one. The nurse returned, but without the book. She seemed very much hurried, and was very cross. She could not have been more so if the book had been lost by any fault of mine. She asked me if I knew the name of it. I told her that I did not; taking care not to mention my suspicion—nay, my certainty—that it was the very book I had dusted and placed on the table that morning.

The next day a great change seemed to have come over both the nurse and the cook; their manner was much kinder than ever it had been before. Neither of them said a cross word; yet I was almost certain that the nurse had been telling the cook that I had overheard what she had said to my mistress. The cause of this change puzzled me at first, but I soon suspected that they each wanted to coax me; the one to say nothing about "the large appetite," the other about the lost book.

Since the loss of the book, every time the bell had rung, my heart leaped as though it would burst through my body, and I looked anxiously at Mary Wild when she came into the kitchen again; but nothing came of all this. One day, Mary, having a bad fit of toothache, I had to wait at table. That very afternoon mistress sent to speak to me; she was sitting in the inner drawing-room. Strange to say, that much as I had thought about the book, at that very moment I had forgotten all about it, and almost started when mistress said, "Fanny, I want to know if you have misplaced a book that was on that table: it is nearly a week since I missed it, but not chancing to want it till now, I forgot to make inquiry about it." I turned very red. I could not speak. My mistress looked questioningly into my face. "Do you know where it is, Fanny?" "No—yes—no, indeed, ma'am, no." "Fanny, Fanny! I am sure you are not speaking the truth; there is something wrong—you *do* know something about it." And she looked fixedly on my face. I became redder still, but did not answer. "Where is it? what is become of it?" "Indeed, I have had nothing to do with the loss of that book." "To do with the *loss*? Then you allow that you do know that it is lost! How can you know this without having something to do with it?" "Oh! pray, ma'am, pray, pray ask the nurse." "The nurse! what can she possibly have to do with the loss of that book?" Again I was silent. The bell was rung, and the nurse ordered to come down. A glance at her face told me that she knew what was going on. "Nurse," said my mistress, "Fanny asks me to go to you to account for the loss of a book which has been missing for some days out of this room. Do you know any thing about it?" "I, ma'am!" said the nurse, pretending to be very much surprised. "Yet I can't say that I know nothing about a book that *was* in this room." Then turning to me—"Did you not put it back again? you know very well that I threatened to tell mistress about it; and I'm very sorry, now, that I did not tell her."

The only word I could say was, "Nurse!"

"I am sure, ma'am," said the nurse, "I should have been very sorry to say any thing against her—and if you had not found her out, I should not have told about her. She is but young, ma'am, and may improve—but, indeed, ma'am, never in my life did I see a young girl tell a lie with such a face of innocence." I was bursting with shame and vexation. "May I speak, ma'am? Oh! pray hear me—it was not I: it was *she* who

lost the book. Do let me speak, ma'am; pray let me tell you—" "No, you shall have no inducement to tell more falsehoods. I fear I shall be obliged to send you home again; I can not have any one with my children who tells untruths." And she pointed to the nurse to open the door for me. As she was doing so, nurse said, "She told me, ma'am, how you had caught her reading one morning, when—" Here she shut me out and herself in.

If I had had money enough to take me to Birmingham, I believe I should not have staid in the house an hour longer; but how often have I been thankful that I had not; for, if I had gone away then, nothing could ever have cleared me in the eyes of my mistress, and I should have been disgraced forever.

Though I had been five months in my place, I had written but two letters; one to my aunt, the other to the matron. I was never allowed a light to take up-stairs, so that I had no opportunity of writing there. It was late when the servants came to bed that night; and, after having cried a great deal, I was just dropping to sleep when they came into the room. I did not sleep long. When I awoke, there was darkness in the room again, and the servants were snoring. Then all at once the thought came into my head that I would get up and write a letter to my aunt. I slipped on a few things. It was too dark for me to be able to see any thing in the room, and I did not know where the candle had been put. Very much disappointed, I was preparing to get into bed again, when I remembered the lamp standing on the centre-table in the inner drawing-room; that room of which I had the charge. I opened the door softly, and found my way into the drawing-room. I flamed up a match, which gave light long enough for me to find the lamp; then I flamed up another, and lighted it. The lamp gave but a dull light; all in the house was so quiet, and every thing looked so dusky, that I was frightened, and went on trembling more than before. There was paper in the case before me, and there were pens in the inkstand, but I never thought of using *those*. My own paper and pens were under the tray of my work-box, and that was in the kitchen. The lamp was not too large to be easily carried; so, taking it up with care, I went into the kitchen. The two cats on the hearth roused up when I opened the door. One rushed out and began to mew loudly. How frightened I was! I waited, hoping the cats might settle again; but they began mewing louder than ever, looking up to my face, and then rubbing themselves against the meat-screen. I was sure that they smelt something that they wanted me to give them; so I went toward the meat-screen to see what it was. There I saw a hand-basket, and something wrapped up in a cloth. Pushing the meat-screen cautiously aside, I lifted the basket out. Within I found a medley of things that would have puzzled wiser heads than mine to know how they could come together. There was a thick slice of uncooked veal, two sausages, a slice of raw salmon, some green



pease, and seven new potatoes, half a pot of raspberry jam, a nutmeg, and half a cucumber. I did not dare to untie the bundle—which was folded up very carefully—but I could feel bits of candles, and a basin among the oddments it seemed to contain. I put the basket quickly down again. The cats had been mewing about me all this time. At length I did contrive to escape. I had reached the drawing-room, placed the lamp on the table, when I saw the two bits of burnt matches which I had forgotten to pick up, and which might have left traces of my wanderings. There was another bit somewhere. In my gladness to have remembered this, I moved the lamp quickly, and in carrying it toward the floor, I knocked the glass against the edge of the table; it fell to shivers, and the light was extinguished. What was to be done? Nothing: there was nothing to be done but to leave things just as they were, and to creep into bed again.

In the morning I hurried down, fearful lest any of the servants should chance to go into the drawing-room before I had picked up the broken glass. I opened the shutters, and soon found that the shattered glass was not all the injury that had been done. There was lamp-oil on the beautiful carpet! There seemed no end to my troubles.

"Broken the lamp-glass!" said the cook, as I passed through the kitchen with the broken bits of glass; "what ever will you do?"—"I can do nothing but tell mistress."—"Then I'll tell you what to do; take my advice, and deny it." "Deny what?"—"Why, that you've broken the lamp-glass."—"What! tell my mistress a lie! how can you give me such wicked advice?"—"Well; it's no business of mine," said the cook; "if you won't tell her a lie, I'll tell her the truth." I determined, however, to speak first. I could not go about my usual work till I had spoken to my mistress; and yet, when I heard the dining-room door open, and knew that she would be coming up, I ran out of the room, and went up-stairs; my courage failed me, and I hardly dared to go down again. From the top of the stairs I saw her go into the room, and I saw the cook following her. I expected every moment to be called. Soon the door opened, and the cook came out. I heard her say, distinctly, "Indeed, ma'am, I'm afraid she'll turn out badly; but I've done what I can to make her confess." At the sound of the opening of the door, with a sudden determination, I had rushed down stairs, and was within a few steps of the room as the cook came out. On seeing me, she shut the door quickly, and turned quite red; then, speaking in a voice on purpose for my mistress to hear, she said, "What! have you been listening?" I made no answer; but went into the room.

There was an expression of displeasure on the face of my mistress as she looked at me. She asked, "How did you break the lamp-glass? Tell me the truth—for though I may pardon the accident, I will not pardon any falsehood about it."

I begged that I might tell her every thing, and that I might begin from the day when I came to my place. I did so. I told her all, and very much in the same way that I have just been writing it now. She listened to me with great attention, and at parts of what I told her, I could see her countenance change very much indeed. When I had done, she said, "Fanny, you have told me that which has shocked me very much. I can say nothing further to you till I have spoken to Mr. Morgan; meantime you must be silent, and go on as usual."

Mr. Morgan was at that time from home, and not expected for some days. Meanwhile, Mrs. Morgan had missed several bottles of wine from the cellar. She had a distinct knowledge of three bottles that were not in their places.

The morning after his arrival he did not go to London as usual. He and my mistress were talking together in the study for a long time. I knew well what they were talking about, and so flurried did I feel, that I could hardly get on with my work. At length I met mistress as she was going up-stairs. She said she was coming to bid me go into the study; and her manner was so kind that I obeyed her without fear. My master, too, spoke very kindly to me. I found that my mistress had written to tell him what had been passing at home in his absence, and that he, chancing to be at Dudley, which is only a short distance from Birmingham, had gone there to make further inquiry about me; that he had been at the school, had seen the matron, and had also seen my aunt. All that he had heard about me had satisfied him, and convinced him that what I had told my mistress was nothing but the truth. "Is this your handkerchief, Fanny?" said my master, taking up one from a side table. "Yes, sir, it is," I said, unfolding it, "and here is my name marked; it was given to me by a favorite little schoolfellow, and I feared I had lost it."—"Where do you think I found this handkerchief, Fanny?"—"Indeed, sir, I can't tell; but, thank you, sir, for I am so glad it is found." "I found it in the wine-cellar." I must have looked very much alarmed, for my mistress said kindly, "Don't look so frightened, Fanny." My master rang the bell: it was answered by Mary Wild. "Stay here," he said; "and, Fanny, go and tell the nurse to come down." When the nurse entered, he rang the bell again. No one came. Indeed, there was no one to come but the cook; and that not being *her* bell, she did not think of answering it. "Shall I tell her, sir?" said Mary Wild, who, as well as the nurse, now beginning to suspect something was wrong, turned very pale. "No!" said my master, angrily, "no one shall leave the room." Just then the door opened, and the cook entered. The plausible smooth face she had put on was gone in an instant, on seeing what was the state of things. After a moment's silence, he began: "This handkerchief," he said, "though marked with Fanny's name, was not put in the wine-cellar by her." He looked sternly at the cook—"Silence!" he said, to the cook, when she tried

to speak. He then went on: "If the three bottles of wine stolen out of the cellar are still in the house, they *shall* be found—here is a search warrant, and at the door is a policeman, ready to enforce its execution. There is no escape, and in confession is the best chance of mercy." Mary Wild looked at the cook. I shall never forget that woman's face at that moment. She seemed choking with feelings that she tried to hide, and uncertain what it would be the best for her to do; she went at last toward the door, and suddenly opening it, was rushing out of the room and up-stairs. "Stop!" cried my master, following her—"I must go," she said, "I am ill. This sudden shock—to think that I—that it should come to this—to be suspected."—And then she screamed, and tried to throw herself into a fit; but the fit would not come. Mr. Morgan said, "You had better be quiet, and submit quietly to what you can not escape from."—"I will," she screamed out; "I have nothing to fear—I am innocent; only let me go up-stairs; only let me have a few minutes to—" "Not an instant," said my master. He then opened the window, and called to the policeman, who had been waiting in the garden. The boxes of each of the servants were examined. In the cook's box were found two of the bottles, besides many things belonging to my mistress—cambric pocket-handkerchiefs, chamber-towels, silk-stockings, and many other articles, marked with the names of visitors who had been staying in the house. Folded up in some crumpled bits of paper, and put into the sleeve of an old gown, was a silver fork, that had been lost more than a year ago, and that mistress had supposed to have been stolen by the housemaid who had lived there before Mary Wild came. In the nurse's box were several things that looked very unlikely to be her own, but they did not belong to mistress. In a corner of the nursery cupboard was the third bottle of wine; that also had been opened. In Mary Wild's box there was nothing to excite suspicion.

When the examination was over, master gave the cook in charge to the policeman. The nurse was told to leave the house within an hour. She would have had much to say, but master would not hear her.

A month's notice was given to Mary Wild. I was glad of it; for though I knew that she had entered into many of the wicked cook's deceptions, there was a something about her that made me think she would have been good, if she had not been under such evil influence. All had been so sudden, that I almost fancied it had been a dream. For a few days we went on without other servants, and I thought things had never been so comfortable as they were during this time; but Mary Wild was taken so very ill, that a doctor was sent for. She became worse and worse, and I scarcely ever left her. In her delirium she would talk about things that had passed between the cook and herself; and though she did not know what she was saying, I felt sure that what she said *had been*. A very long time

she was ill; then a sudden change took place; and she was out of danger. Poor thing! how quiet, and patient, and sorrowful she was: and how grateful for every thing that was done for her! Mistress was so much touched by the many signs of sorrow Mary had shown, that she allowed her to remain in her place. Though I was so young, only just seventeen, my mistress, knowing that I was fond of the children, trusted them to my care. She engaged another nurse for three months to "put me in the way." At the end of that time she sent to the school for another girl to fill the place which had been mine. Very great was my delight to find that she was the one who had been my most favorite schoolfellow; the very girl who had given me the handkerchief.

The cook was committed for trial; her sentence was six months' imprisonment. What became of the nurse I never knew.

#### THE POINT OF HONOR.

ONE evening in the autumn of the year 1842, seven persons, including myself, were sitting and chatting in a state of hilarious gayety in front of Señor Arguellas' country-house, a mile or so out of Santiago de Cuba, in the Eastern Intendencia of the Queen of the Antilles, and once its chief capital, when an incident occurred that as effectually put an extinguisher upon the noisy mirth as if a bomb-shell had suddenly exploded at our feet. But first a brief account of those seven persons, and the cause of their being so assembled, will be necessary.

Three were American merchants—Southerners and smart traders, extensively connected with the commerce of the Colombian archipelago, and designing to sail on the morrow—wind and weather permitting, in the bark *Neptune*, Starkey master and part owner—for Morant Bay, Jamaica; one was a lieutenant in the Spanish artillery, and nephew of our host; another was a M. Dupont, a young and rich creole, of mingled French and Spanish parentage, and the reputed suitor for the hand of Donna Antonia—the daughter and sole heiress of Señor Arguellas, and withal a graceful and charming maiden of eighteen—a ripe age in that precocious clime; the sixth guest was Captain Starkey, of the *Neptune*, a gentlemanly, fine-looking English seaman of about thirty years of age; the seventh and last was myself, at that time a mere youngster, and but just recovered from a severe fit of sickness which a twelvemonth previously had necessitated my removal from Jamaica to the much more temperate and equable climate of Cuba, albeit the two islands are only distant about five degrees from each other. I was also one of Captain Starkey's passengers, and so was Señor Arguellas, who had business to wind up in Kingston. He was to be accompanied by Señora Arguellas, Antonia, the young lieutenant, and M. Dupont. The *Neptune* had brought a cargo of sundries, consisting of hardware, cottons, *et cetera*, to Cuba, and was returning about half-laden with goods. Among these, belonging to the American mer-