

enough. Mr. Thomasson pursued his path, satisfied, and less than a minute's walking brought them into the avenue.

Julia drew a breath of relief and looked behind and before. "Where is the carriage?" she whispered, shivering with excitement.

Before he answered he raised the lanthorn thrice to the level of his head, as if to make sure of his position, and lowered it again. Then, "In the road," he answered. "And the sooner you are in it the better, child, for I must get back and replace the key before he sobers—or 'twill be worse for me," he added snappishly, "than for you!"

"You are not coming with me?" she exclaimed, in surprise.

"No, I—I can't quarrel with him," he answered hurriedly. "I am under obligations to him. And once in the carriage you'll be safe enough."

"Then, please to tell me this," Julia rejoined, her breath a little short. "Mr. Thomasson, did you know anything of my being carried off before it took place?"

"I?" he cried. "Did I know?"

"I mean—were you employed to bring me to Mr. Pomeroy's?"

"I employed? Good heavens, ma'am, what do you take me for?" cried the tutor, in righteous indignation. "No, ma'am; certainly not!" And then, blurting out the truth in his surprise, "Why, 'twas Mr. Dunborough!" he said. "And like him, too! Heaven keep us from him!"

"Mr. Dunborough?" she exclaimed.

"Yes, yes."

"Oh," she said, in a helpless, foolish kind of way. "It was Mr. Dunborough, was it?" And she begged his pardon so humbly, in a voice so broken by feeling and gratitude, that, bad man as he was, his soul revolted from the work he was upon; he stood still, the lanthorn swinging in his hand.

She misinterpreted his movement. "Are we right?" she said anxiously. "You don't think we are out of the road?" Though the night was dark and it was difficult to make out anything beyond the circle of light thrown by the lanthorn, it struck her that the avenue they were traversing was not the one by which she had approached the house two nights before. The trees seemed to stand farther from one another and to be smaller. Or was it her fancy?

At any rate, it was not that which had moved him to stand; for presently, with a curious sound between a groan and a curse, he led the way on, without answering her. Fifty paces brought them to the gate, and the road. Thomasson held up his lanthorn and looked over the gate.

"Where is the carriage?" she whispered, startled by the darkness and silence.

"It should be here," he answered, his voice betraying his perplexity. "It should be here at this gate. But I—I don't see it."

"Would it have lights?" she asked anxiously. He had opened the gate; as she spoke they passed through, and stood looking up and down the road. The moon was obscured, and the lanthorn's rays were of little use to find a carriage which was not there.

"It should be here, and it should have lights," he said, in evident dismay. "I don't know what to think of it. I—ha! What is that? It is coming, I think. Yes, I hear it. It must have drawn off a little for some reason, and now they have seen the lanthorn."

He had only the sound of wheels to go upon, but he was right; she uttered a sigh of relief as the lights of a closed chaise, approaching round a bend of the road, broke upon them. They drew near and nearer, and he waved his light. For a brief second the driver appeared to be going to pass them; then, as Mr. Thomasson again waved his lanthorn and shouted, he drew up.

"Halloa!" he said.

Mr. Thomasson did not answer, but with a trembling hand hurriedly opened the door and pushed the girl in. "God bless you!" she murmured. "And——" He slammed the door, cutting short the sentence.

"Well!" the driver said, looking down, his face in shadow, "I am——"

"Go on!" Mr. Thomasson cried peremptorily, and, waving his lanthorn again, so startled the horses that they plunged away wildly, the man tugging vainly at the reins. The tutor fancied that he caught a faint scream from the inside of the chaise, but set it down to fright caused by the sudden jerk; and after standing long enough to assure himself that the carriage was keeping the road, he turned to retrace his steps to the house.

He was opening the gate, his thoughts no pleasant ones—for the devil pays scant measure—when his ear was surprised by the sound of wheels approaching from the direction whence the chaise had come. He stood to listen, thinking he heard an echo; but in a second or two he saw lights approaching precisely as the others had approached. Once seen, they came on so swiftly that he was still gaping in wonder, when a carriage and pair, a post boy riding, and a cloaked man sitting in the rumble, swept by, dazzling him a moment; the next it was gone, whirling away into the darkness.

(To be continued.)

THE ANNOUNCEMENT DINNER.

BY JULIET WILBOR TOMPKINS.

How a young couple who had ideals, and were determined to live up to them, celebrated the anniversary of their engagement.

THEY were intensely modern. And so, when they decided to break off their engagement, it was not because they had had a lover's quarrel, or a third person had made trouble, or they had ceased to care for each other; or for any of the old fashioned reasons that prevailed in the foolish days when 'twas love that made the world go wrong. They came to their conclusion not via tears and reproaches, but by a reasonable and temperate process of analysis, sitting side by side on the studio divan.

"The year will be up next week," said Mildred sadly, "and we've failed."

"It isn't that we don't still love each other," Ernest protested. "I think, perhaps, in some ways—"

"But we've come down to affection and friendship and esteem and things like that," she broke in. "What we condemn in people who've been married several years, we've come to ourselves in one year's engagement. We've grown humdrum, used to each other. Do you know what Aunt Flora said of us the other day?"

"Something unpleasent and practical, I suppose."

"She said we seemed suited to one another, and would probably *jog along very comfortably when we were over our first silliness!*"

"The old bird of ill omen!"

"But, Ernest, the worst of it is"—Mildred's voice dropped impressively—"it's true! We've almost begun to jog already."

"I know it, Mildred," he admitted, in a discouraged tone.

"Life without thrills—ordinary, every day companionship, with no excitement, no impulses, no complications—oh, Ernest, we couldn't stand it!" she exclaimed. "We'd fall to such a bourgeois level. When we went on journeys, people would know we were married because we didn't talk to each other."

"I suppose we'd get to sitting on opposite sides of the table and reading all the evening," he said listlessly.

"We'd find it was not worth while to do little things or be clever and amusing just

for us," she went on. "There would always have to be a third person present to stimulate us."

"We'd get sleepy at nine o'clock. And people would invite us to chaperon things."

"And we'd never discuss anything but the children." Mildred's voice was almost tearful. "We'd be twice as interested in them as we were in each other."

"I would *not* call you 'mamma,'" he exclaimed, with an emphatic thump at the cushions.

"Oh, yes, you would," she said sadly. "That or 'my dear.' I feel it. The prose is closing around us. We must break out at any cost. I'd rather give you up than see all the romance dulled out of you."

"I don't see why we can't make things exciting again," he said. "Think of those first six months—whew! I lost twenty pounds."

"And I had insomnia so that I nearly went crazy."

"We never just sat down and visited, as we do now. We couldn't be together five minutes without having a scene of some kind."

"Wasn't it lovely?" sighed Mildred. "Everything was so nice and complicated. I don't see how we ever became so brother-and-sisterly."

"Still, we always kiss each other if there aren't any people in the way," he protested.

"Yes; but if there are, we *can* wait. We don't sneak off, we don't even telegraph with our eyes. Even though we hold hands, like this, it doesn't mean what it did."

"We almost forget we're doing it," he admitted. "And now, when I see you fooling with some other fellow, I don't feel a tinge of jealousy. I'm even glad that you're having a good time. It's contemptibly tame. I've failed you dreadfully, Mildred."

"We've both been to blame," she answered, and they relapsed into thoughtful silence.

"The worst of breaking it off is the way people will talk," she went on presently. "They'll think we've quarreled or done something equally stupid. How can we let