

Just then the front door opened and some one was heard to step inside. Instantly the voices in the parlor ceased, and Amy went to the door, where she found Frank.

"Won't you come in, Mr. Von Brean?" said she, opening the parlor door.

After the introduction, Frank, in his easy way, said: "This is, indeed, an honor and a pleasure not anticipated by me. I hope, Miss Harrington, I am not intruding."

"Not in the least," she replied.

"We were just speaking about you," said Clara.

"May I inquire in what way I provoked your conversation?"

"Certainly; we were upbraiding Miss Harrington for keeping you so close a prisoner."

"One would willingly remain a prisoner to so fair a jailor," replied Frank.

"Mr. Von Brean is inclined to deal in flattery, I fear," said Amy, slightly coloring.

"You must find it hard to amuse yourself in this quiet town," said Miss Poindexter.

"For my part," said the perverse Clara, "I think the country horrid. Nothing but trees and hills to look at, and the crazy old farm wagons, loaded with hay, while the driver sits perched on top, looking as though he would fall off at any minute, frighten one half out of their senses. Give me the city, with its beautiful parks, fountains, statuary, fine buildings and fine streets. And the theatre—oh, it must be grand!"

"I admit all Miss Vaughn says regarding the city, but she forgets that the beautiful parks and grand buildings which we meet with in the city become very dull, and the sight of them monotonous, when we behold them day after day; and we soon become so we can almost tell the number of bricks in each building, and involuntarily fall to counting the windows in the houses as we pass by. The parks, too, fall into insignificance, compared with the grand old forests, where one can wander, undisturbed, away from the eyes of the world and the buzzing voices of the people, which you can not escape in the city."

"There are many things to admire in the city," said Amy, "and many advantages to be gained over the country, and I enjoy a visit there; but I agree with Mr. Von Brean, that the city, with its beautiful parks and buildings, does not compare with the grandeur of our native forests. I am always glad to leave the busy, restless, ever-noisy city for my country home."

The young ladies soon took their leave, and as Clara started, she said: "Remember the meeting to-night, Amy."

"Miss Vaughn is quite vivacious, and rather pretty," said Frank, after the girls had gone.

"Yes," replied Amy, "Clara is very pretty, and good company. She sometimes speaks without thinking, but will overcome that fault with a few more years. The trouble is, she has been spoiled by her father, who is one of our prosperous merchants, and Clara is the only child."

Tea was announced, and when Frank and Amy went into the dining room they found Mrs. Harrington awaiting them.

"I hope," said she to Frank, "your walk this afternoon has given you a good appetite."

"While I enjoy a run through the woods very much, it is not at all essential to the enjoyment of your table."

"I suppose you take to the woods in self defense, now that Amy is so much occupied with her work. I fear she is very poor company."

"Not at all. I find much to enjoy in the forests, and I am sure I do not wish to trespass on Miss Harrington's time, while there is so much outside to interest me."

"Mamma, Mr. Von Brean is thinking of leaving us, and I have been trying to prevail upon him to remain with us through the winter."

"I hope Mr. Von Brean has not tired of us so soon."

"By no means," said Frank.

"We should be pleased," continued Mrs. Harrington, "to have you extend your visit much longer. Mr. Harrington hoped you might find it agreeable to stay with us through the winter."

"If I can, in any way, be of service to you ladies, I should be only too happy."

"We will try and find enough for you to do to keep you out of mischief," said Amy. "Oh! since I think of it, our society is in need of a shipping clerk, and if you will accept the position, I can secure it for you."

"By all means. But stay—first define the duties of the office, that I may know whether I will be able to perform them."

"As to that, I think you need have no fear. The duties will not be very arduous, consisting chiefly of the shipping of our stores as we get them ready for the Sanitary Commission."

"With a little instruction from you, I may be able to do that in at least a passable manner."

"Oh, I think so. There is going to be a meeting here to-night, to transact important business, and I will bring the matter of your appointment to the notice of the members, and I doubt not they will decide to secure your services."

"Then I may consider myself already engaged?"