

Besides, it won't matter much, he won't live long, and then you'll marry who you please."

But Bab only cried the harder. The next morning, however, when her father told her she ought to be a very good girl, indeed, for he had persuaded Dunham to let her have her way, she smiled and replied, with real or feigned jocularly: "Well, all right, maybe he'll be dead by that time. He must be somewhere about ninety-nine now, ain't he?"

Hugh Leslie felt relieved. He had little hope that matters could be adjusted so easily, and had prepared himself for an appeal to the prophet. Wilful and stubborn she might be, but she would not dare to withstand him. The next week, however, the ancient lover's patience and endurance forsook him, and he presented himself in person to urge an immediate marriage, and her father, not daring to do otherwise, seconded his importunities. Fiercely Bab set her white teeth into the red lip, ere she answered, pettishly—

"See here, father, Mr. Dunham, I don't want to marry at all; but if I must, it will not be one hour before I said, and all the prophets, priests and elders in Salt Lake can't make me."

"But, Barbara," began Mr. Leslie, when help came from a source least expected.

"Hugh Leslie, don't be a fool," snapped Julia. "Let the young one alone. You ought to know by this time that when a woman makes up her mind she ain't like a man, changeable as a weather cock."

For the first time in her life, Bab was conscious of a feeling of gratitude toward the odious woman. Disconcerted, at length, Brother Dunham took leave, feeding his bleared sensual, blood-shot eyes on the innocent beauty of his helpless victim to the last.

Early the following morning, Bab placed little Tom in his cart and drew him about the shady streets, pausing, at length, beneath a broad-branched elm to watch some boys play at marbles. A long while she lingered, and Tom was getting restless, when she said, turning to a boy with an honest, good-natured face—

"Ned, won't you draw Tommie for me? my arm is tired," at the same time giving him a peculiar nod.

"To be sure I will, Miss Bab," he replied, while a genial smile gave an almost handsome expression to his freckled visage, and soon they were out of hearing of the others.

"Ned, do you love me?" asked Bab, impressively.

"To be sure, Miss Bab, I do, to be sure."

Ned's vocabulary seemed always limited when in the presence of his heart's idol; but if there was a human being in the world whom the honest fourteen-year-old street Arab adored, it was Bab Leslie. His own home was but a mockery of the name, and nobody cared for him now, since his sister was dead, unless it was Bab; and, to serve the latter, he would have laid down his life.

"Can you keep a secret, Ned?" was the next question.

Again the answer, "To be sure, Miss Bab, to be sure."

"My life depends upon your faithfulness. Do you understand?"

"To be—oh, Miss Bab! what do you mean, and what makes you so white? Be you sick?"

"Sick at heart, Ned; but now walk close here and listen."

With each a hand on the cart handle, they walked along, sometimes talking out in careless tones to the baby, again lowering their voices to a whisper, as Bab told him of her difficulty. Rash it may have been to thus confide in a mere child; but what else could she do? They were within a block of home, when she bade him go no farther, and whispered a final injunction in his ear.

"To be sure, Miss Bab, to be sure," he said, earnestly, "if they kill me, I won't tell."

The next morning they met again, and when they parted he was tightly clasping a bit of folded paper; and then she had done all she could. But alas! how little that all was. Henceforth she could only wait with hope and despair alternating, wear her mask and play her part.

VELMA CALDWELL MELVILLE.