

Amy Mixton had played her part well as eavesdropper and purloiner of private correspondence, and the result of it was the denouement before described, less than a week after the reception. Poor Bab, it did seem to her now, more than ever, that Harold was the only friend she had in the world. Even Dora had weakened. But her grief soon gave way to indignation, and a new element in her nature gained the ascendancy. She was gentle and yielding to a fault, or she could be fierce and relentless. The same indomitable will that had planned, and would have carried out self destruction in her early home, had not deliverance come, came to her aid now, and Madame was surprised at her almost hauteur, when, after hearing Dora's tearful, incoherent story, she hastened to comfort her. But kindness was a key that never failed to unlock Bab's heart, and she was soon kneeling at her friend's feet, begging to know if it was a disgrace to be born under a false religion and government.

"No, my darling child, no; and as I know your history, there is nothing in it for which you are to blame or that you need blush for. Rev. Max did not think so, anyway," she added, slyly.

"Does he know—did you tell him?"

"Yes, dear."

"Before—before we talked, that night?"

"Yes, dear."

A faint color stole into the girl's cheeks, but she said no more. What passed between Madame and Amy Mixton none but themselves knew, but never had the girls seen the former wear such a threatening look as on that day; and in the evening they were treated to a lecture so unlike her usual mild remonstrance that they were thoroughly frightened. Amy kept her room for a day, and then all went on as before, except that nothing could induce Bab to speak to or even notice her late accuser, and it was some time before Dora felt that she was fully forgiven for even doubting. Night and morning the young Mormon girl knelt at her bedside in prayer, but as yet her heart was unregenerated. She had yet to learn of Him who could forgive His enemies. Her's was a nature above petty retaliation, however, and she simply ignored her foe.

Time passed on and school would close early in June, and most of the girls go to their own homes. Harold had written Bab that he would visit her then, and assist Madame in searching for her mother's people. She had had a long letter from Nellie Swinton, too, full of love and telling of her probable return to America in the autumn.

June was almost at hand and Bab was counting the days till Harold would be with her.

"How happy you are of late, Bab," Dora was saying, when Marie LaRue, one of Madame's nieces, entered the library with the evening budget of mail. Most of the girls were present. The recipients of letters quickly sought a quiet place to peruse them, and the rest consoled themselves with the magazines and newspapers. As Bab had received nothing she went on with the bit of fancy work she had in her hand, which was nothing more or less than a slipper front she was working for Harold.

"Here, Bab, since you're not in luck to-night I'll divide with you," said one of the girls, laughingly, as she tore the wrapper from a magazine and tossed it into her lap.

"Generous, aren't you?" said Bab, laying down her work and picking it up. "They are economical out west, anyway, to wrap their publications in old newspapers."

There was silence for a moment, broken by a low moan, and Bab fell to the floor, crumpling the bit of paper in her clinched hand. A chorus of screams brought the ladies of the household to the room.

"She has fainted, I think," said Dora, who was already on her knees beside the prostrate form, chafing the cold hands and temples. "There, she is reviving."

Madame, with her usual ready wit, drew the crumpled paper from the nerveless fingers and put it in her pocket. Instantly she had indicted it as the cause of the present condition of her favorite. "She is not the one to faint at nothing," and when the opportunity offered she smoothed out the crumpled fragment and found her worst fears realized, but kept her own counsel. When fully conscious Bab begged to be left alone, saying that she was not sick, only tired, and Madame granted the request, judging she would be better alone. But morning found her raving in a wild delirium, while the fire of fever raged through her veins. Poor Bab! Madame's determination was quickly taken, and the next morning Harold Swinton received the following dispatch—

*Come at once we fear she will die.*

MADAME.

He made all possible speed, and three days later rang the bell at the Villa LaRue. It was Madame's white, stern face that met him.

"Come with me," she said, tersely.

"How is she?" he faltered, but received no answer until Madame's private parlor door had closed behind them.

"Harold Swinton, how could you blight that fair, young life?" and then she handed him the fatal bit of newspaper. His face grew ashen as he read—