

# DOLLY'S DILEMMA

By Catherine Jewett

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FROM my youth up I took naturally to the science of mathematics. Even as a little child "I did my sums" without any conscious effort. Indeed, it was my well known "knack at figures" that induced old Deacon Dudley, the supervisor, to bestow upon me the much coveted Center school. It was the largest in town, the hardest and the best paid. I was only eighteen at the time, but family misfortune, followed by the sickness and death of my father, made the necessity for employment urgent and imperative.

Heavily handicapped by youth and inexperience, my first term was a succession of disappointments and dissatisfactions.

Gradually as I became acquainted with my pupils and accustomed to my duties I acquired the faculty of adjusting myself to my surroundings, after which my work became much easier and more satisfactory. Term after term passed until I felt my position to be assured. For six years I held it, ciphering annually through the higher algebra, to the wonder of my pupils and the satisfaction of their parents. Being a district school, there would be no real graduation, but gradually the day had taken upon itself the dignity and importance of an annual celebration.

At first I had been one of its most enthusiastic supporters, believing that the coveted successes would not only stimulate ambition and reward industry, but would also tend toward the establishment of a much needed free high school. Yet I now realized, with pain, that it had fair to be a culmination of jealousy, unkind emulation and unnecessary extravagance.

The leader in every extravagant display was naturally enough Muriel Mason, only daughter of the richest man in town. Born to command, she held her own against all opposition until the subject of dress was broached.

In her case the important gown was to be a dainty creation of white lace and tulle; therefore she decreed that her classmates should likewise drape themselves in white.

"That is not fair," protested Lura Wiley, who delighted in gay fabrics and vivid coloring. "I am sure I don't want to accentuate my natural ugliness."

"It won't make any difference on the stage," said Muriel with careless indifference.

After this experimental tilt, as no further opposition was hazarded, the white dress rule was supposed to be imperative. That evening Dolly Kempton came to me, her pretty face clouded by her young anger loaded.

"Poor Dolly! I divined her trouble before she voiced it. She was a delicate creature, studious and refined, yet not exactly popular among her mates. She was poor, unadvisedly and unduly so. She lived with her widowed mother and an aged woman known as Aunt Marty, who with the slightest possible pretext had burdened her for years. Her father had died for shelter to Mrs. Kempton, who was herself in straitened circumstances. The connection between them was of the slightest and carried neither legal nor moral obligations, yet she cared for the poor soul so stretching her meager income that it covered the bare necessities of life for the three—herself, her mother and their perennial guest.

Knowing the circumstances, I could well understand what a perplexing question graduating expenses must be to that pinched household, but I was ill prepared for the solution which she brought me. A big bundle contained, she said, spreading before my astonished eyes a garment quaintly beautiful in tint and texture, but grotesque in design—an ancient dress of silk tissue, gayly brocaded with large garlands of pink roses and green leaves. The fabric itself was exquisitely fine and delicate, the ground-work yellowed into the softest tawny tint; but, alas, the passing years brought no such refining change as the overblown roses and overgrown leaves running riotously over the skirt and low bodice of this antique gown.

"Miss Deacon," said Dolly, with a nervous laugh that had in it a faint tears, "do you think that any circumstances or combination of circumstances could make it one's duty to wear that for a graduating dress?"

"I had at her in astonishment. Her father wants me to wear it," she said, "and indeed I want to, after a fashion, yet, all the same, my soul shudders at those ancient roses. You see, I must Marty's wedding gown. It is her eyes, as fine and valuable as any. Through all the shifts and changes of her most unhappy life she has clung to this sole relic of happier days. I fancy that after her husband's death a people made much of her for it. Her father was wealthy, and she was always the chance of his re-union, but as one by one her over-looked were ignored and her letters were torn up, this possibility grew less and less until after the family quarrel it ceased altogether. She was a strong or smart or capable, and by little every one's patience was worn until even her home, with its traditions, seemed a very haven of rest to her.

That afternoon Mrs. Mason called and talked of nothing but "the neces-

sary expenses of the coming occasion." She left poor auntie nearly frantic and absolutely determined to throw herself upon the town. She had felt it her duty ever since she became so helpless with rheumatism. Nothing but the fact that she had rather die than live with Mary Ann Biggs had kept her with us for the last year. Poor old soul! She would have a hard time with that rough woman in that great barnful of paupers. We have made ourselves out perfect Vanderbilts to keep her quiet, but today she would not be pacified and, after nearly crying herself sick, wrote to the selectmen. Before she sent the letter, however, she thought of this dress. The idea of it came as a sort of reprieve. If she provided my graduating dress, she might venture to stay a little longer. If not, she is going at once. You see why I would like to wear the dress, and, besides, a few dollars saved is really an object with us. Still, those dreadful roses! Do you think I ever, ever can?"

The roses were dreadful. I almost doubted Mrs. Kempton's skill in her behalf, and I pitied the girl, shrinking with all her heart from a mortifying ordeal, but I knew there was only one answer to her question.

"Yes, my dear," said I. "I think you can and will. It takes a deal of pluck to have a tooth out, you know, but the sharp, relieving pain is far easier to bear than weeks of dull, wearing anguish. It is going to take real grit to wear that flowered dress, but the discomfort of an hour is not to be compared to the remorse of a lifetime."

"Just what mother told me," said Dolly, bundling up her unwelcome possession.

I did not see the dress again, but I heard a great deal about it before the important day arrived. I wanted to explain matters, but Dolly positively forbade anything of the kind, and so her flowered gown was regarded by some as a necessary concession to por-

osity, by others as a sign of open insubordination against the white dress rule.

Graduation day dawned bright and clear. The church was crowded. The expected governor arrived in excellent season, and everything seemed harmonious with the exception of one rosy looking dress among a half dozen white ones.

The exercises passed off with what might be termed "great eclat." The young ladies were graceful and winning; their parts well prepared; their enunciation clear and distinct. The young gentlemen were less awkward than usual under such circumstances. The pink dress was so conspicuous, still; it was stamped on the flushed cheeks of the wearer when she stepped forward to read her essay.

It was a very unambitious effort, simply a prose version of the story of Evangelist. Yet I saw with surprise that Senator Borden, a scholar as well as politician, gave the short reading the most profound and marked attention.

After the exercises the eminent visitors held an informal reception, shaking hands with every one and good naturedly giving their autographs to all petitioners. Dolly, however, took no part in this bit of impromptu festivity, but, anxious to divest herself of her obnoxious finery, hurried at once from the church.

When the crowd had nearly dispersed, Senator Borden surprised me by asking, with an expression of real interest, for the young lady in pink. I told him her name and volunteered the information that she had gone directly home.

"I am sorry," said he. "I wanted to meet her. Her face, her voice, her features, all seemed wonderfully familiar. I cannot place the resemblance, but it moved me strangely. Her name tells me nothing, and yet her face, her dress, some trick of voice or manner, took me back a half century. Ah! with a sudden start. 'I have it now. It was my sister she recalled. She wore just such a rosy gown the last time I ever saw her. Poor Marty! Pardon me, Miss Deacon, but do you know anything of her family history? The resemblance may be purely accidental, but it interests me."

Something of his interest had communicated itself to me, with his voluntary exclamation of "Poor Marty!" the girl who wore just such a rosy gown the last time he ever saw her.

"Mr. Borden," said I eagerly, "might it not have been the noticeable dress instead of the girl's personality that impressed you? Forty years ago it belonged to Martha Paget; was, in fact, her wedding gown."

"Martha Paget?" cried he. "That was my sister's name. She was older than I and very beautiful, but she disobeyed my father. He never forgave her, and while he lived I never heard her name mentioned. Since his death I have

sought for her long and unavailingly."

"I think your search is ended," said I, "and that you will find her living with Mrs. Kempton in this village."

"Is it far from here? Would you show me the way?" questioned he eagerly, and the next moment we were hurrying down the broad elm shaded street.

As we neared the Kempton cottage I saw Mrs. Paget sitting on the tiny vine wreathed piazza. Her soft white hair shone in the sunlight, her pain distorted hands lay idly on her lap, her cotton gown and stuffy starched apron were clean and speckless, but her face, sorrow seamed and time defaced, bore no trace of bloom or beauty.

"And yet," said my companion, seeming to divine my thoughts, "it is Marty herself, the very image of our mother as I saw her last." He went swiftly up the little gravel path, his face growing visibly paler as he walked.

Just in front of her he stopped, and for a moment's space no word passed between them. Then the woman arose, her worn face working, her faded eyes brightening, her hands appealingly extended.

"Father," she cried, "father, forgive me!"

"Father died years ago," answered Senator Borden gently, "and ever since I have been searching for you, my sister."

"Bennie! Bennie!" she screamed, flinging herself toward him. The scene that followed was too sacred for stranger eyes to look upon, and so I quietly withdrew, going back to my delayed duties.

That afternoon I was "a personage" in the village. Over and over again I told the story, fairly reveling in the first bit of romance that had ever stirred the monotony of my quiet life.

Of course there were a few ill-natured souls who declared that Mrs. Kempton had known all along which side her bread was buttered on, but as this idea seemed to be confined exclusively to those who had before times pronounced her quixotic and imprudent it did not greatly affect public sentiment.

Senator Borden made immediate arrangements to remove his sister to his own home; but she, poor soul, in absent fear of her august sister-in-law, clung to the dear second cousin who had so brightened the years of her adversity.

A compromise was at last effected, Mrs. Kempton selling her little home and removing to Anderson, where Mr. Borden lived and where the famous Anderson seminary was located. To attend this school had long been Dolly's highest ambition, an ambition which a grateful brother's liberality made it perfectly possible to gratify.

In a few days the little ripple of excitement that attended their departure died away, leaving in its place only a memory.

I missed Dolly sadly, feeling sure that the duties and pleasures of her new life would soon blot out all interest in her older and less favored friends.

I realized my mistake when, weeks afterward, I received a letter from her which wrought in my life a delightful change.

"One of our teachers," she wrote, "has resigned, and Senator Borden has secured the position thus left vacant for you. He knows how you helped and encouraged me through the pink dress ordeal, and he is very glad of this opportunity to show his appreciation of your good sense and kindness."

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A day or two later this delightful news was officially confirmed, and I at once set about my modest preparations for departure. Just before I left I called upon old Deacon Dudley and found him not only sympathetic but fairly jubilant over my improved prospects.

"I gave you your first chance," said he, "and I presume to say I helped you to your second one. I talked quite a spell with the senator when he was here, and I gave you a first class 'recommend.' 'She is young,' said I, 'and not great to look at, but she is a master hand at figures!'"

I thanked the old gentleman for his doubtful compliment with becoming gratitude. Not for the world would I have pained his kindly heart by the knowledge that anything so frivolous as a pink frock had far more to do with my good fortune than his unique and well meant "recommend."

Man proposes.

Jack—And what answer did you get? Reggie—Well, she said she had not yet questioned her heart. I must wait.

Jack—And what did you say to that? Reggie—I haven't the least idea. But, say, I'd be awfully glad if you would be my best man.—Brooklyn Life.

The Best Plan.

"Don't you consider it lucky to pick up a pin?" inquired the supercilious man.

"Not if you pick it up by sitting down on it," replied the schoolmaster promptly.—Philadelphia Press.

Where Everybody is Busy.

China is making arms at a great rate, all the Yangtze arsenals being at work full time, says the Pittsburg Dispatch. At Hankow over 200 workmen are employed in making field guns, Mauser rifles and all kinds of ammunition, including smokeless powder, and at Shanghai an equal number are employed in turning out a like product. As treaty stipulations prohibit the importation of foreign arms into China, its home production, particularly in view of the recent experiences, is stimulated to a degree of activity not often witnessed in any of its industries.

If The Baby is Cutting Teeth.

Be sure and use that old and well-tried remedy, Mrs. WINSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP, for children teething. It soothes the child, softens the gums, allays all pain, cures wind colic and is the best remedy for diarrhoea. Twenty-five cents a bottle.

## THE OCEAN COMBINATION.

Vastness of the New Steamship Scheme Outlined.

The announcement the other afternoon of the combination of six steamship lines—the White Star, Dominion, Leyland, Atlantic Transport, American and Red Star—under the direction of J. Pierpont Morgan was much discussed recently, says the New York Tribune.

The organization of the proposed company was planned on such a large scale that few people outside of the financial interests immediately concerned were able fully to appreciate the boldness of the scheme. The total tonnage of the fleets included in the combination is 840,077. Of this the Dominion contributes 73,749 tons and the Red Star 167,173.

The Dominion line has a route to Boston and another to Montreal in the open season and Portland, Me., in winter. At Boston it connects with the Boston and Albany railroad, a part of the New York Central system. At Montreal it connects with the Canadian Pacific, which has a transcontinental railway line to Vancouver and a steamship line from Vancouver to the orient, and both at Portland and Montreal it connects with the Grand Trunk railway of Canada, which extends to Chicago. All the other steamship lines in the new combination have New York as a western terminus. Here they connect with the Pennsylvania railroad, with which the International Navigation company, operating the American and Red Star lines, has close relations; with the Erie, controlled by the Morgan interests; with the New York Central, controlled by interests always reckoned as friendly to the Morgan party, and with the Baltimore and Ohio, which is controlled by the Pennsylvania railroad company, but which reaches New York over the tracks of the Reading and the Central Railroad of New Jersey, both Morgan roads.

These four trunk lines go to Chicago, whence the Burlington, controlled by the Hill-Morgan and Harriman-Union Pacific groups, extends to St. Paul and Minneapolis. From the Twin Cities the Great Northern and the Northern Pacific, both operated in the Morgan interest, stretch westward to the sea, the Great Northern at Seattle connecting with its own line of steamers to Japan and China. Other routes westward from Chicago are the Union Pacific, a Harriman-Standard Oil road, extending to San Francisco, whence the Pacific service of the White Star line is operated, and the Atchafalpa, in the board of which is a member of the firm of J. P. Morgan & Co., while the Rock Island, now dominated by First National bank interests, touches Denver on the west and, according to report, is planning extension to the coast.

The Red Star line also has a route terminating at Philadelphia and the Atlantic Transport line at Baltimore, at both of which cities connection is had with the Pennsylvania and the Baltimore and Ohio. The Leyland line goes to New Orleans, as well as to New York, Boston and Portland, and at New Orleans it connects for the west with the Southern Pacific, a Harriman property, and for the north and west with the Illinois Central, also under Harriman control, and the Louisville and Nashville, now under the sole control of Mr. Morgan. At New Orleans also is the terminus of the Texas and Pacific, which as part of the Missouri Pacific system gives a direct route as far west as Salt Lake City and Ogden.

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## GREAT BRITAIN'S DEBT

Why It Has Never Borrowed in Time of Peace.

STRIKING CONTRAST TO OUR OWN

British Taxpayers Still Contributing \$100,000,000 Per Annum to Pay For the Napoleonic Wars—Sir Michael Hicks-Beach's Gloomy View of Future Public Expenditure.

The recent announcement of a new consols loan of £32,000,000 marks the fifth large borrowing operation of the British government since the Transvaal war began. In view of the magnitude of this borrowing in the last three years—the total, including the new proposals, footing up £146,000,000—it will be interesting to review the history of Great Britain