

A Little Mistake

You would be somewhat surprised at learning what was the cause of the suppressed excitement in the faces of the group assembled in the rooms of the decorous and lady-like lady principals in the young ladies' seminary at —, now in the midst of the term, which had so far elapsed with the greatest éclat.

The simple fact was that two of the teachers had assumed a defiant attitude. They were not disposed to yield their plans and their rights, or at least what they felt were their plans and rights, and they stood now in the centre of the group in their jockeys, revenge glaring in their eyes, traitors *acknowledged* to the laws of the *institution* which they had resolved should be obeyed while they were stationed there. Or they said so at least, or their names should be cast aside; or at least, at very least, erased from the books of the institution, as it now stood before the world.

They wore a very martial appearance, these two young ladies, for they neither came back to their central position, nor were loyal and resigned to yield the position and place they occupied. They had indeed just been expressing themselves, giving their opinions, and demanding the help they needed, and at the very time they were standing, as we saw them, with heads set for victory, and with faces with their features all tangled in the mazes of doubts and triumphs.

But they had their faces set as I should have said. They were determined not to waver, and they did not.

It was in a school near Philadelphia they were teaching. They knew something of the social spirit that existed there—in that city—and it was their ardent attempt to defy that spirit that kept up the fire of defiance in their eyes. But the words they used, their arguments and special pleadings had their effect.

The opposition seemed to subside. The other teachers, and there were several in the school, yielded, and the excitement that for a space had existed in the school, was hushed. The mutinous teachers were hastily dressed, and were speedily on their way to the cars, from whence they were soon set free on their arrival in Philadelphia. They had never before found themselves in any similar position—never found themselves in one at all similar. They had one thought at arriving on Philadelphia, and that was to find a place somewhere in which a woman might make her own living, and have neither to depend on others to earn it for her, nor to receive it from the hand of another as a gift.

At the — Hotel, Philadelphia, one of the girls had often stopped. She had often been there, and she believed a place for her friend at least might be found there. This day they, after arriving at Philadelphia, strolled about the streets until the din and noise of travel had ceased, and her friend had, she believed, got quieted in feeling and mind, and ready to lay everything one side and bend her thoughts to the securing of the needed home.

Then she led her to the hotel through the quiet streets, and they soon found themselves in the large, well-remembered rooms where she and her friends had so often lived safely and happy. She remembered the features of the clerk who waited on them—and what troubled her more, he

still seemed to retain an indistinct remembrance of her face, though he had never seen it except as one of the ladies stopping for a day or two at the hotel; but he was very much struck by the face then, and she had no motive then for hiding it. Of course now he remembered it, as was shown by his embarrassed smile and half-assured manner. Servants were wanted in the house at that time. Their references were good, and for the kinds of work they could do. Nothing but chambermaids were needed; and the man who remembered Miss —, though feeling he had been mistaken, still favored her; and two fine places were found vacant by him at this time.

And so, the two perverse girls imagined they had triumphed. They had rebelled; left their school; and got situations as chambermaids in the — Hotel; and nobody knew them.

But alas! for their dreams of triumph. That night a robbery of valuable jewels was committed in the hotel; and on search, one of the stolen diamonds was found under the mattress of the bed occupied by the two new chambermaids. It was in vain for them to protest their innocence. The fact that they were, by education, and manners, and appearance, *above their station*, told powerfully against them.

Why should *they*—educated and accomplished girls—be in that hotel in disguise, and under assumed names, except for purposes of robbery.

“It’s a put up thing,” said the policeman, who was in charge of the matter. “Them girls are in with the thieves, and have been *trained to the business*. Any one can see that!”

And this was the general verdict; so, there was nothing left for the two runaways, except to tell who they were, and have their parents telegraphed for. This was done, and their astounded fathers appeared as soon as possible on the scene.

A capable detective having been called in, at once saw that the placing of the diamond under the mattress of the girls’ bed was a mere ruse, to throw pursuit off the scent; and the girls were allowed to go home with their parents, where they feel like staying for the rest of their natural lives.

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