

REDOLETTE'S ESCAPE.

"It is farther than it looks," said Redolette. "Not too far for us to climb," answered the sunny-faced boy who held Redolette's hand while he gazed resolutely up at the mountain's green-wood height. "We can be there by sundown, and run back before it is dark. "Well, then, I'll ask leave." "Ask leave? Are you not your own mistress Redolette?" "No; I must obey my husband," gravely the little maid replied. "Your husband?" cried Willie Locke. "Yes, he is here, in the house. I always ask his leave when he is at home. I do it in the beginning, because it will be so all the rest of my life. I am learning, he says, to be his wife." "What do you mean, Redolette?" asked the boy, dropping her hand and turning to her with earnestness, his eyes ablaze, his cheeks flushed. You do not— you surely do not mean Judge Hunt when you say my husband? Oh, you are not in earnest, you are teasing, you are joking; you are not in earnest Redolette?" "In earnest, Willie," the girl replied. "Do not look so fierce. Are you a wolf? Are you going to eat me up?" "No, he is the wolf," said Willie, indignantly. "I have always been his little wife," said Redolette. "I was born so. Ever since Redolette was a baby," he says, "she has been mine." He is my guardian. My dying father left me in his hands, and he takes care of me, and takes care of the money I am to have when I am of age; but before that, at least so Aunt Rhoda declares, although I don't say so quite— before that we shall probably be married. There? Now, Willie, I'll go and ask leave."

Here Willie was going to quote Carlyle at length, but he recollected that he was talking to a girl, and modified the grand sentences of the philosopher ending in, "Know what thou canst work at," into, "And you should do, Redolette, what you can do best. Now if you can really do nothing better than stitch and cook, then that is your work. But in this age of the world you are not forced; you can have your choice; and you must remember that we are living in the time of sewing-machines and scientific cooks. There is no need of immolation in these departments of labor. We are living in a time— Willie hesitated in the midst of his eloquence, flurried by a little thing, a very little thing; just the touch of his hand by Redolette's—an action softly, shyly done, but causing him to descend from his speech to look into her face. He paused for a moment, enchanted by the serious, sweet gaze of her dark eyes fixed upon his. But he recovered himself and went on: "Do you know what age of the world you belong to, Redolette? Do you know that you are a citizen of Christendom? You have no right to go back to an age that you were not born in; you have no right to marry a man who belongs exclusively to that age, and avail yourself of nothing that has occurred since in the great march of Progress. You can go back if you desire it. You are free; you live in a free land. But if you do not desire it, if you feel that there is something higher in you than a life of drudgery, unlighted by liberty that makes drudgery divine, unlighted by love—and, oh! Redolette, you do not know what you are relinquishing when you relinquish the possibility of love—if you feel a stir in your pulse that beats with what is highest and nearest true in the time we live in, darling Redolette" (this time the emphasis was laid with sufficient stress to compensate for the former restraint, "then I would die a thousand deaths rather than see you met in these woods by a selfish soul, like Red Riding-hood by the wolf, and lured into a thatched hut, and 'eaten up,' with no ear to hear your poor innocent cry of, 'Oh, what sharp eyes you've got!' and, 'Oh, what sharp teeth you've got!'")

Willie was excited now. He frightened Redolette. She sprang up before him with a low cry—a genuine cry of pain, like a hurt child—a sudden pallor swept her face; the paleness as of a woman's pang swept her childish face. Then Willie took her in his arms, and called her his precious love, and soothed her with his tenderness, as he had aroused her with his wrath. And then and there in the mountain solitude, witnessed only by lonely earth and sky, he made her make one solemn promise. Not the promise that his heart burned to have her make. For what he wished so ardently, that nothing "before or after" could compare in ardor with that hour's wish, was to make her promise to be his wife. He reminded himself that he had no right to do this. He was a young fellow not yet graduated from college; and after his Senior year, just commenced, there lay before him a course of professional study, and then the establishing of his profession's practice, for his patrimony was by no means commensurate with his wants. He had no right to ask her yet. He only made her make a promise formed disinterestedly and exclusively for her good. By this time the sun had set. Shadows mingled with shadows. The air gathered that strange pure cool which seems to blend and at the same instant define the precious woodland scents. The soft rustle of leaves, the twitter of sleepy birds, the faint crashing sound of "the long rank bent" as they entered the fields, the infinitesimal fine yet clear sounds of the summer night rasped not unusually by the tiny sharp cries and beating hum of the insect world—these were the vocal accompaniments of the homeward way, for Redolette and Willie hardly spoke. Claspings each other's hands they went down the rocky steeps, and across the meadows home. And at the garden gate he kissed her "good-night" and kissed her "good-by," for on the morrow he was to leave the mountain farm, and she would not see him again. Redolette lingered in the porch some time before she entered the house. She watched Willie's figure pass down the road, and disappear at the river turn; then she thought and thought. And when she went into the lighted room where Judge Hunt sat in his arm-chair reading the evening news, Aunt Rhoda, looking up from her needle-work to greet the child with some reproach for staying so late, led her promptly on her lips. Such a strange new look was on Redolette's face! "She never was the same girl," her aunt said, long afterward, when this evening was remembered as part of the story of a life—never the same girl after the walk to Clock Height. But I never see her" (Aunt Rhoda's grammar had grown rusty with her drudging life)—"I never see her look so beautiful and so proud-like as she did when the judge got up from the chair and was again to give her a kiss. She drew back her head like a queen, and just put out her hand for his lips; and he stared at her, astonished, a moment, and then kissed her fingertips." Redolette, said he, "you've been imprudent; you've been imprudent; you've got chilled through; your hand is as cold as ice." That was just all he thought about it, but women is more keen; and I say to myself, that very minute, 'Yes, she's caught a chill, and she's caught a fever; the fever may last or it may not; but the chill she's caught'll last her the rest of her life.' There comes into almost every experience a night that, for its very distinction of darkness and gloom and blinding fright, is counted ever afterwards as "the night." Such a night came to Redolette. It was the hour that Willie had anticipated when he made her make a solemn promise "for her good." A night of storm, of wild wind and drenching rain. But wind and rain seemed feeble elements in comparison with the cruel anger, the passionate upbraiding, and pitiless threats that formed the actual dark pre-eminence of the eventful night. One bright scene stood out in relief against the stormy background—the opening of a door in answer to a faint, despairing knock; a beaming home room warm with firelight and gay with cheer-

ful lamps; kind faces, kind voices—sympathy, encouragement, help. So every dark night—even the darkest—has its friend. Before morning dawned Redolette, urged with all the gentle and firm aid of which she had need, was speeded forth on a journey that was to cast into a higher plane her whole future life. By the time night had glimmered into day Redolette had made her escape. Examination week at the famous girls' school of N— had reached its closing act. Compositions were to be read in the afternoon; prizes were to be awarded; and at evening a collation would be spread at half past ten in the not spacious but particularly attractive grounds of the Y—Seminary, to end in garden-party style, with band of music and a merry dance, the arduous exercise of the week. Intense interest gathered about this closing afternoon. Indeed, when one considers how small a part of the great world of the female seminary of N—, with all its fame, actually was, it was wonderful how intense this interest became. One would say, who happened to peep into the greenroom of the composition-readers, waiting with cold fright or with hectic agitation, each for her turn to be called upon the stage, that the result of this evening would be something momentous enough to cause an aberration in the course of our planet, or at the very least, a trembling in its onward step. This impression would not have been lessened by reading the titles of the compositions: "Woman of our Century;" "The Dead Past burying its Dead;" "The Future of the American Republic;" "A very fine thing, and winner of the first prize;" "Spiritual Tendencies of Astronomical Research;" "Drawn's Development Theory confronted with Argyle's Reign of Law;" "Is Genius Hereditary, and if so, from the Paternal or the Maternal Side?" with Statistics from Galton, carefully compiled, and so on, and so forth. Very simply, after this array, came the announcement given by the principal of the seminary, "A Mountain Brook," by Miss R. Kane. Closing exercises had been lengthened beyond their fixed time, and daylight was departing as Miss Kane made her appearance from the greenroom, composition in hand. A side window had to be opened to give sufficient light, and through this opening came a rosy glow that almost atoned for the lack of floral tributes such as had overwhelmed the entrance of every other reader. Not a single flower was thrown to welcome the coming of Miss R. Kane. "A friendless girl," many of the audience thought. But no one in the world is a friendless girl, so the suddenly opened window said; for the sunset glow poured in and adorns her feet, and illumined her garments, and crowned her young head with flowers of light. And in a timid but clear voice the composition was read. "A Mountain Brook," not scientific or erudite, but a theme of action, and taking as a simile of useful life the trite figure of a river bearing from its rocky solitude, through wood and through field of grain, and over mill-wheel and by the town, its ever-augmenting stream of refreshing and compelling force. The trite comparison was treated with a novel grace. And one thing was quite remarkable about the composition—a description of the scenery in which the Mountain Brook was supposed to receive from high authority its mission through the thirsting earth. This description was so vividly accurate that any one familiar with a certain mountain locality would have recognized at once that the "Brook" sprang to light under the fern-fanned cavern of Block Height. No one among the audience, however, was familiar with that particular nook of upland scenery. No one excepting a handsome young man who had drawn to himself during the afternoon the shy admiring glances of very many of the girls. He had been restless, like the watcher who impatiently awaits the striking of the hour. When Miss Kane ended he became still and satisfied, like the watcher when the hour has struck. "Redolette! She has fulfilled her promise." These two unspoken sentences expressed the mental impression, complete. For to this young man, through the five years, including his Senior Year at college his law practice, his energetic establishment of law practice, "Redolette" had been the embodiment of all that is sweetest in a girl. And "she has fulfilled her promise," referred not so much to the fact that this sweetest girl had kept her word to him as that she had kept her word to Time—kept the promise of the lovely child to be the loveliest woman. "Redolette!" said Willie. They had entered one of the arbors that had been improvised of cedars to adorn the garden fete. They had been walking arm in arm through the grounds for a long time; for one of the earliest guests had been Willie Locke, and he had rushed immediately to Redolette's side, and had kept her to himself all the evening. They chose to walk in the garden, rather than join in the dance, for they had so much to say. And they had talked over their five years of separation and its leading events before they went into the arbor to rest. The last thing Redolette had said in the walk was, "So now, Willie, thanks to the inspiring leader of my choice, I am ready to take some part in the movement of my time. My schooling here is ended. My little inheritance is made secure. I am my own mistress now. I should like, if possible, to do a little good in the world; and the only question with me now is, 'How shall I do it best?'" And here it was that Willie with a sudden movement drew her into the arbor, and said, with such an electric vibration in his voice as made her heart for an instant stop to beat, "Redolette!" Something so far beyond the simple name was implied by his vital utterance of it that she made no response. "Since I was happy," he said, "to guide you, I ought to let me be your guide again. Let me tell you, Redolette, my queen, how I can do the most good in the world—how I am sure you can do the most good." He paused, and Redolette, whose eyes had been tremulously cast down, lifted her glance to his. And before she had time to really look, to see all he meant—before she had time to let the question, "How?" pass her beautiful red lips, he had seized her in his strong arms, he had answered her once and forever: "As my wife."—Harpers Weekly.

"HOW WOMEN LOVE DRESS." He sat by a window at twilight, And he did puff at his cigar, He gazed on a neighboring sky-light, And thought of his bank stock at par. Two voices came upward, as high as The place where he sat from the street; Two ladies on "gored" and on "bliss," Were holding communion sweet. Then he mused upon feminine folly And fashion's absurd excess; And he said with a tone melancholy: "How women do rave over dress!" "Just get any two of them started And they'll talk for a month about clothes." He spoke like a hero, strong-hearted, Who all such frivolity loathes. "And the way they oppress the poor creatures Who build all those dresses and things! They like to make marks on their features For a little mistake in the strings." Here a knock at the door. Then a waiter And a new suit of garments appear. "Oh, they've come, have they? Strange they're not later, Quick, light up the whole chandelier!" One glance from a proper position Suffices their fate to decide; The linings are only Silesian The trowsers a trifle too wide. "Well, if I don't pitch into that Schindler I never did see such a bill!" Why I told the outrageous old swindler I wanted the linings half silk! "Oh, hang all the scoundrelly tailors! The collar's a half-inch too high. The trousers—they might be a sailor's! Now wouldn't I look like a guy?" Each glance makes him more and more irate. "Why, they look worse from behind! I'll blow up the sneaking old pirate; I'll give him a piece of my mind." "I'm done with the scoundrel, that's certain. Now, if ever I saw such a sight— (But here we will let down the curtain The rest wouldn't suit ears polite.) A CLOSE SHADE. "Another step and you are a dead man." "By what authority do you bar my passage?" "Authority? Ha, ha! If this ain't enough," holding out a revolver in each hand, with a hideous leer in his evil face, "I reckon I have to explain further. By the authority of the Road Agency of this great overland route." It was in the days when Ben Halliday and the pony express served in lieu of locomotives and telegraph lines. When might was right throughout a region extending over nineteen hundred miles, from St. Joseph to Sacramento; when the stage ran the gauntlet of road agents and Indians, and bones, many of them human remains, grained up at the traveler unexpectedly as he crossed the plains; when to be "quick on the trigger" was worth more to a man than all the courage in the world. Dick Hartford looked into the man's face calmly, looked into the muzzles of the pistols, smiled and uttered a single word: "Well?" "Don't you aggravate me, or I will fire, and serve you right." "I never flinched in my life. I won't flinch now. What do you want?" "Throw down your revolver. Now turn round, and if you budge a hair's breadth I'll blow your brains out." Hartford obeyed. He permitted his hands to be tied behind his back. He saw his pockets turned inside out, his money appropriated, his watch pocketed, and only remonstrated when his captor felt for a money belt. "Don't cut me, there's no belt on me." "O! you did feel it then. Thought I had a bank to pry open. Now then, march. There's good ground here, and plenty of it. It will do you good to stretch your legs. Keep right on to the clump to the left, and mind you, don't stumble, for like as not you'll never get up. There was one fellow stumbled here about six weeks ago, and he never got higher than his knees. I'll show his bones directly." Was it a lie, a threat? Hartford cursed himself for refusing to listen to the advice of the conductor of the stage who warned him to beware of the road agents. He had answered that he would take the risk. He desired to see for himself if the stories told of the robberies and murders on the route were true. And he was learning. "A little faster, stranger. My horse is rether restive, and, beside, Jim Porter would like to see you." The road was unbroken, but the dust was stifling, and it blew from the horses' feet to the captive. The captive kept his head up, and strode on. "Rough, isn't? Now I suspect you came out to capture some one. Like as not Jim Porter?" No response from the captive. "They do say there is a party looking for us. Porter is anxious to see them. This yer's a god-send. Never thought to meet ye this way. Got tired ridin', I suppose. Thought you'd lay over, do up a little business, and take next stage. Now, I know a man to lay over that didn't run it. There was a man from Illinois said over about three months ago. Had some instruction. He was mighty sly that Illinoisian. I reckon he'd furnish a regiment of Vigilantes with cunning. Kind o' sauntered out of same town you left an hour ago, but he had some command. He wasn't such a fool as you. And his company went back on him. Shot him through the spine, then tickled his ribs with a knife. He was a powerful active Vigilante, was the company. He was too much for the Illinoisian." "Just as you were too much for me." "I like your pluck now. You do keep a stiff upper lip. But it'll be all day with you the moment Porter claps eyes on you. He makes short work of spies. I reckon that's your line." The captive did not reply. At that moment his thoughts were on home. A mighty throb rose in his throat—a suffocating throb—wrenched from him by that one thought of home. His wife and child, his boy that he would never see again. It was hard. He had played a bold game and he had lost. The Vigilantes were in league with the road agents. He had been outwitted. The stage company would be short another man, and the road would be under tribute as before. His plans, so carefully concealed in his own breast, were known to the murderous gang. Perhaps in less than an hour he would be dangling at the end of a rope. He half turned as he thought of the end. "None o' that, unless you want your early pill, in which case I'm bound to accommodate ye. Porter didn't say we were to run risks. He does like a friendly chat, and he pumps some people as dry as a limekiln." "I'll make you an offer." "Crack your whip." "I'll fight you fair, like a man. Tie one arm down, give me a pistol, and let us take shot about, you the first." "Sho, now." "Or I'll allow you two to one." "Yes, I see you can allow most anything, but unless you move right on, and keep movin', I'll make short work of ye." A coyote rose slowly from a sage brush, looked at them sneakingly over his shoulder, then trotted slowly away. A noisome bird of prey rose slowly from the carcass of a mule, flapped its wings lazily, sailed slowly through the air, then settled down upon a rib that protruded from the sand. The sun's rays poured down upon the plain until the dust and sand seemed to melt in the fervid heat. And, to crown all, the captive suddenly experienced the agony of excessive thirst. A faint sound in the distance arrested his attention. Was that not the sound of horses' feet? What if it should prove to be his friends—the Vigilantes? Impossible. His morning thirst was unknown to them. The sound came nearer and nearer to him. Then he observed for the first time a rocky defile further to the left, as though a chasm lay there, or a stream chiseled out its course across the plains. Now there could be no mistaking the sound. The steady trot of horses' feet and the clanking of spurs could be heard. Suddenly half a dozen horsemen swept around a low rock, at sight of whom the captor gazed. "Here's Captain Jim. Mind your manners now, for he's the perillest man you ever met." The captive shivered. When a boy he was detected in an act that brought upon the wrath of the teacher of the school in the New England village he would never see more. The eagle eye of the teacher singled him out from a score of mischievous makers, and he shivered as he felt that the punishment awarded incorrigibles was unavoidable. But he braced himself, walked out promptly to the middle of the floor the moment his name was called, and, to his lasting surprise, was let go with a mild rebuke. In much the same manner Dick Hartford braced him; self for the interview with the leader of the most desperate gang of miscreants that ever levied a tax upon the travelers who crossed the plains. This was the man he had dreamed of circumventing. The case was reversed. The road agents rode forward without order, and surrounded both horseman and captive. "What have you got, Barham?" "Make your bow. It's captain Jim," said Barham. Then to Captain Jim's query: "That's for you to find out. I obeyed orders." What a magnificent front the captive presented. His gaze was as clear and steady and level as though he were looking through Captain Jim, away beyond the range, and off to the mountains in the distance. "What have you got to say for yourself, anyhow?" Captain Jim's sinister face clouded still more as he met the unwavering gaze of the captive. "Nothing," replied the captive, as he walked in front of the leader. "You are locked up, and the keys lost," said Captain Jim, sneeringly. "I think I know your business, I've a mind to send Ben Halliday your ears. No, I'll send him your heart. This trips a failure, and Bent ought to know it. If you won't talk—" "I'll die first!" The words were flung at him so passionately that even Captain Jim was moved to admiration. "Die it is, then!" exclaimed one of the gang. "You are seven to one," said Hartford. "We are in the majority mostly," said Jim. "But I'll give you a chance. You are plucky. Now what does a milkops life do for you? Come along with us, share and share alike, we'll give you excitement, and opportunity to show the stuff you are made of." "To make one of a gang of murderers who are afraid to cope man to man," said the captive. One of the gang at that moment leveled his pistol at Hartford's head. But the leader ordered him to keep his fire until there was need for it. "Let us do this thing in order," said Captain Jim, as the scar on his cheek became livid, then a dull red. "We'll ride down to the old place and pull him up like a dog. You got what was on him?" to Barham. Barham nodded. There was not a word said further. The party rode on perhaps twenty minutes, when the defile deepened, narrowed, and the rocks shut over the horsemen's heads. Then at a given word from Jim the men dismounted. Advancing to Hartford, he said, with a cruel smile: "Say your prayers, you have got five minutes to live. Mount that stone." There was a ledge above the captive's head, with a jutting point, over which a rope was thrown, and a noose made at the end of it. "Will you allow me to speak?" "Blow away," answered Captain Jim. "I may as well tell you we know all about you. You've travelled fifteen hundred miles to trap us. Ben Halliday tried that game often. You gave yourself away. You expected to master the road, and the biggest boobly among us mastered you. Now fire away." "Well, then let me predict what your end will be," said the captive. With the noose around his neck, and glowing eyes and fierce faces for his audience, he spoke out clearly, defiantly. "When you've murdered me, you may prepare for the hereafter. There will be no rest for you. A man will come after me who will hunt you down like the cowardly dogs you are. He will never rest until you are driven out of the country, and his reach will sweep to California. Once he marks a man, that man's fate is sealed. He is not my friend. He knows my mission, and, if it fails, he will shoot every man down with his own hand whom he suspects of knowing anything about me, or my death. That's all. I'm ready now." "What's that!" exclaimed one of the gang listening. "Up with him." The rope tightened around Hartford's throat, he felt himself strangling, the color faded out, he was in a void, then shooting pains pierced his temple, myriad sparks played before his eyes, blended into brilliant colors, and still he could hear the voice of Captain Jim, now it was a stream of oath, an ex-

clamations. "The Vigilantes are upon us!" a blurring of sounds as he swam, or rather floated out upon the great void, and then all was over. It was true. A cloud of dust rolled up from Overland City, swept down towards the narrow defile from the rear, and sent a shiver of fear through the road agents, who scrambled hastily to their saddles galloped off in the opposite direction. All but one, Captain Jim, who deliberately approached Hartford as he lay on the ground where he fell when the crowd dropped the rope, and placing a revolver against his temple, pulled the trigger. The pistol snapped fire, and Captain Jim, rode off, turning in his saddle and aiming a second time at the apparently lifeless body of the prisoner, shot him in the arm. But it would have been better for Captain Jim had he never met the prisoner. For another party, also Vigilantes, armed to the teeth and expertly mounted, entered the road agents as they emerged from the defile, and although the latter put their steeds to the gallop, urging them on with oaths and spurs, the Vigilantes surrounded them with lightning-like swiftness, and standing up in their saddles opened fire upon the gang, who returned it and died like desperadoes as they were, either in their saddles or dropping from their horses' necks. Captain Jim proved the most cowardly of the lot. He begged for quarter, but for answer was riddled by a dozen bullets. When the fray was over and Dick Hartford sat upright, listening to the account of the fight, and of the severest and sharpest the Vigilantes experienced, he was complimented upon his courage, and, in turn, thanked his rescuers. In reality, he had performed his mission, but not in the manner he had planned. That he did not succeed in carrying out his plans was owing to the merest accident. The Vigilantes had been summoned at his instance, and were in time to save his life. "A close shave," as Ben Martin, the captain, remarked. "However, a miss is as good as a mile." "Just Dropped in." Neighbors are an excellent institution, if they only keep their places. But neighbors out of their places are quite another thing. The Bible enjoins it upon us to love our neighbor as ourself, and then pertinently inquires, who is our neighbor? If anybody can love a meddlesome, envious, prying back-door neighbor, he must have more grace and patience than the most of us. In large cities the inhabitants know very little about neighbors; but in country villages and in the rural regions it is altogether different. Every neighborhood has one or more of those troublesome people who are continually dropping in. They are of both genders, and equally disagreeable. Your female neighbor comes over while you are at breakfast and begs you won't mind her, and she sits down in the dining-room, and stares at you while you eat, and fixes her eyes on the patch on the tablecloth, and shows by her expression that she knows your fork are plated. If you have bacon for breakfast, she tells you she dislikes pork and insinuates that it is unfit for Christians to eat, but she will add, as a sort of qualifier, that, if you like it, it is all right. Then she will want the pattern of little Joe's apron, and she will go into your parlor to get the last fashion magazine, to save you the trouble of going, when you know she only does it for an excuse to pass by your bedroom door, to see if the bed is made. You never can have anything or do anything without your back-door neighbor's cognizance. She is as keen on the scent as a blood-hound. Your new spring suit, that you have vowed she should not see until you appeared in it at church, she spies out by a piece of trimming carelessly left in your work-basket, and she guesses at its cost, and asks where you got it, and how many yards you had, and who cut it, and if you made it yourself, and says she likes blue but then green is all the style. But she supposes you got blue because green is so trying to a sallow complexion. When she finds out that you purchased the material at Smith's she says that she always shops at Jones'. Jones is to be relied upon, but then Smith tells a good story, and knows just how to handle customers who do not understand goods. And then she asks again what you paid for your dress, and you dare not tell her a cent more on a yard than it really was, for you know she will go directly and ask Smith all about it. And this brings us to wonder why it is that women in general, and nearly everybody else, are prone to represent the price of articles they purchase a little higher than the actual facts will warrant? Why is it that we all want to have it thought that our twenty-dollar suits cost thirty? and our hundred-dollar parlors cost a hundred and fifty? Our back-door neighbor sees through all our little shifts to appear better than we are, and she lets us know that she does. She knows that the handsome rug was put before the sofa in our sitting room to hide that thin place in the carpet; she knows that we use brown sugar to sweeten pies and doughnuts, she knows that our Tom will swear when he is out of humor, and that Mr. Brown slams the doors when things do not suit him. She just drops in two or three times a week, sometimes oftener, and is only going to stop a minute. She never takes her hat and shawl off because she can't stop. And there she will sit and talk, and hinder you with your work, and spoil the whole forenoon for you, and ten to one, she stays to dinner, and protests that she wouldn't have stopped for anything in the world but because she was afraid of hurting your feelings. She only just dropped in a moment, and never thought of stopping. No, indeed! Nothing of your family affairs is safe from her observation. She knows just how often your oldest girl has gentlemen to call on her and who they are, and how late they stay nights, and who their grandfathers were, and all the other particulars. She is a perpetual thorn in the flesh, and it is better to live by a school-house, a kerosene refinery, a cotton mill, a piano saleroom, or a bone-boiling establishment than to live next door to a woman who is always dropping in.—Kate Thorn, in N. Y. Weekly.