

An Air-Castle.

I built a house in my beautiful dreams,
In a sunny and pleasant nook,
Where I might listen, the whole day long,
To the voice of the gurgling brook;
A cottage, with wide and airy rooms
And broad and shining floors—
A house with the hidden charms of home
And the freedom of out-of-doors.

Fair morning-glories climb and bloom
At will by the eastern eaves,
And on the doorstep and window-sill
The roses shake their leaves;
And fair old-fashioned lilacs toss
Their purple plumage high,
While honeysuckles drop their sweets
On every passer-by.

Down at the end of a pleasant path
Is a group of evergreen trees—
Pine and hemlock, and spruce and fir,
With their spicy fragrances;
And, sweetest picture of calm content
That mortal ever saw,
Under a low-boughed apple tree
Is a beehive made of straw.

I have pictured it all a hundred times—
I shall do it a hundred more;
But I never shall own the pleasant home,
With the roses over the door.
Never a dream of mine came true—
It is fate's unbending law;
I never shall see the apple tree,
Nor the beehive made of straw.

But yet in the airy realms of dreams,
Where all my riches lie,
I enter into the heritage
Which is else denied to me,
I have but to close my eyes to find
My Eden without a law;
The home, the garden, the apple tree,
And the beehive made of straw.

—Elizabeth Akers Allen.

A FAMILY GENIUS.

BY ETTIE ROGERS.

Fortunate is the family that is without a "black sheep," but blessed is the family that is without a genius.

It not infrequently happens that the poor "black sheep" has been dyed his "putout" hue by misadventure or ignorance, and that after leaving the unappreciated fold for new and more congenial pastures his wool is washed as white as snow by those who more properly value him.

But the family "genius"—ah, well! we have all met a specimen here or there, and are almost ashamed to confess that we are not a few instances were sadly disenchanted.

Nancy Develin was a family "genius." The divine seal was set upon her the moment she came into this cruel, censorious world; the divine afflatus was heard in the first faint cry and seen in the far-away gaze of her wondering eyes. Assuredly she was a marvellous child, and surpassing possibilities lay before her. It was not strange, considering that the world is proverbially blind to genius, and especially family genius, that she was given a most unpoetic and unsuggestive name.

However, the misfortune was alleviated a few years later when, the genius discovered that "Nancy" was convertible to "Anne," and that "De Velin" was the more proper and aesthetic form of the progeny cognomen. "So henceforth she was known as Anne De Velin."

The gifted girl had many talents, undoubtedly, although the simple people among whom she dwelt did not always readily recognize them. But she was admired and flattered for more prosy considerations. She was the only child of a wealthy but practical and unlettered farmer, who was fond of the latest fashions.

His dark eyes could look unutterably love, the touch of his white hand was mesmerizing, and every accent of his voice was thrilling as a caress. Miss Anne De Velin fondly believed that she had found in his sight, and she determined to have him for her husband.

She had better learn to dress well, the first thing you do, Anne," continued Mrs. Crowley, seeing the girl's agitation. "I want you to look very nicely at my party to-night. Fred Fitch is coming."

"I am glad of that," answered Anne, with charming frankness; "I think Mr. Fitch is really the only gentleman whom I ever admired."

There was nothing that this girl of many gifts imagined she could not win, and she thought the conquest of a gentleman was a very easy matter indeed. Besides, she had found in Mr. Fred Fitch her ideal lover, and he was quite the person to fascinate a much wiser and more experienced girl than Anne.

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He had known Mr. Fitch some months. Mrs. Crowley gave another party to the house was invited.

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She dressed herself for the evening in the most expensive she had ever worn, and would have been a charming if worn by one of an opposite style.

Miss De Velin was highly educated with her appearance as she went to the parlor and ensconced herself in a certain niche where she watched the guests unobserved until Mr. Fitch should arrive.

Presently he came, and leaning on his arm was a lovely woman. They stopped by the window where Anne was sitting, and she could have touched the ring jewels that the lady wore.

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"She really talented, Fred?" inquired Anne, with polite indifference.

"Talented?" he laughed; "she is one of the most ordinary girls I every met in life; but her system and self-conceit stunning."

"Suppose you found her tiresome, did not?" observed the lady, carelessly.

"Unpleasantly so," he returned, more wisely. "But of course one has to be nice, although no doubt she takes one's courtesies for the partialities of a most infatuated admirer."

"Maud, I have fancied at times she believed that I loved her."

"I hope you have not trifled with her," said the lady.

"Assure you I have not," answered he, gallantly; "I could not do that, especially as I am promised to your fair, sweet little Maud."

They moved away presently, and then poor Anne slipped unobserved out of the grand parlors.

She sobbed a little when she at length reached her own room. Her last illusion was gone, but had left her much wiser and much less hurt than might be supposed. She was only eighteen, but it remembered; and, after all, her fancies had not been more extravagant than those of many others who, unfortunately, for lack of this sort of salutary lesson, have remained fools to the end of their lives. And she was, quite certainly, not too much of an idiot to know how foolish she had been, nor to feel a womanly, resentful desire to confuse the elegant and vain Mr. Fred Fitch with some pretty and seemingly ingenious ally of strategic wit. She thought of noble, manly Joe Sanders, and smiled contentedly as a bright plan suddenly took shape and form in her giddy, egotistical brain, so rudely stung to defensive action. She sprang to her feet, and hurriedly flung aside the golden-tinted silk, the crimson carnations, and the set of rubies borrowed from her indulgent Aunt Crowley—all of

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"I really can't see what you want to go to the city for, Anne," he observed, very soberly.

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"Well, you see," she answered with dignity. "I was not born for this kind of life. Something higher and sweeter is necessary to one like me. You men here sow and reap, toiling on and plodding on year after year, never thinking of the beautiful things you might give to the world by a stroke of the pen or the pencil. Joe, life is a grand and glorious thing if lived as it ought to be. O, how I despise these poor, unrefined women who are content to drudge like oxen, with no rest and no amusement. A little gossiping, a little church-going, and a great deal of soul-crushing work is enough for them. But one like me, Joe, must have something different."

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"You sing on the stage? What an absurd child you are!" she cried, laughing heartily.

"I have been told that my voice is very fine," persisted Anne, much nettled at the critical and incredulous manner of her aunt.

"Of course you have a fine voice," said Mrs. Crowley, soothingly; "but not nearly fine enough for a public singer. Besides you would be obliged to study for years to perfect it."

"I thought one who had a great gift need not study at all," ventured Anne, who was loth to have her country reputation questioned. "And that I have the true artist inspiration, I know myself. You know how good my pictures are. I intend to put my best on exhibition."

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Anne's face grew hot, and angry tears gathered in her eyes.

"You had better learn to dress well, the first thing you do, Anne," continued Mrs. Crowley, seeing the girl's agitation. "I want you to look very nicely at my party to-night. Fred Fitch is coming."

"I am glad of that," answered Anne, with charming frankness; "I think Mr. Fitch is really the only gentleman whom I ever admired."

There was nothing that this girl of many gifts imagined she could not win, and she thought the conquest of a gentleman was a very easy matter indeed. Besides, she had found in Mr. Fred Fitch her ideal lover, and he was quite the person to fascinate a much wiser and more experienced girl than Anne.

His dark eyes could look unutterably love, the touch of his white hand was mesmerizing, and every accent of his voice was thrilling as a caress. Miss Anne De Velin fondly believed that she had found in his sight, and she determined to have him for her husband.

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He had known Mr. Fitch some months. Mrs. Crowley gave another party to the house was invited.

Mr. Fred will certainly propose to me," she thought, as she made her toilet for the event.

She dressed herself for the evening in the most expensive she had ever worn, and would have been a charming if worn by one of an opposite style.

Miss De Velin was highly educated with her appearance as she went to the parlor and ensconced herself in a certain niche where she watched the guests unobserved until Mr. Fitch should arrive.

Presently he came, and leaning on his arm was a lovely woman. They stopped by the window where Anne was sitting, and she could have touched the ring jewels that the lady wore.

Wonder where Mrs. Crowley's little niece is to-night?" observed Mr. Fitch, as you met her, Maud? No? Well, she is a curiosity. You ought really to hear and to hear her talk. It is better a comedy. She thinks herself as us, you know—fancies she sings like an angel and paints like a prodigy."

"She really talented, Fred?" inquired Anne, with polite indifference.

"Talented?" he laughed; "she is one of the most ordinary girls I every met in life; but her system and self-conceit stunning."

"Suppose you found her tiresome, did not?" observed the lady, carelessly.

"Unpleasantly so," he returned, more wisely. "But of course one has to be nice, although no doubt she takes one's courtesies for the partialities of a most infatuated admirer."

"Maud, I have fancied at times she believed that I loved her."

"I hope you have not trifled with her," said the lady.

"Assure you I have not," answered he, gallantly; "I could not do that, especially as I am promised to your fair, sweet little Maud."

which finery had become to her, in her abruptly-awakened sense of taste and discernment, correctly and odiously unbecoming and incongruous. Then, still smiling with a strange and new feeling of satisfaction, she put on a plain, pretty dress of white cashmere, arranged an exquisite affair of soft black lace about her neck and shoulders, fastened a pale pink rose in her fine dark hair, and so went again down to the elegant and crowded parlors.

"Auntie, please do introduce me to that charming young lady whom Mr. Fitch is entertaining," she solicited, slipping to the side of her relative at a momentary opportunity.

"Certainly, my dear child," complied Mrs. Crowley, at the same time favoring her niece with a glance of sincere but surprised admiration. "Really, Anne, she whispered, "you are looking remarkably well this evening. What fairy helped you to dress with such exquisite simplicity?"

The compliment was very gratifying to Anne, but she had no time to respond, for Mr. Fred Fitch and his stylish betrothed were very near. And the gallant young gentleman was somehow very attentive to Anne during the hour that followed. He thought her very pretty and graceful in her simple dress, and he began vaguely to wonder if she were really quite as much of a country simpleton as he had supposed her to be, although her new mood, that was charmingly naive and shyly coquettish, puzzled and piqued him.

"I protest, Mr. Fitch," said Anne, with an arch and sassy smile, when his soft flattery became somewhat profuse, "I must not listen to such nonsense."

"Why must you not?" he asked tenderly.

"Because," she returned, demurely, "the dear fellow who is to be my husband would certainly object, if he knew."

"Ah, indeed," observed Mr. Fred Fitch, dropping the little brown hand; and Anne smiled and mentally blessed the woman wit that had helped her to non-plus him who had ridiculed her.

She went home the next day, quite convinced that she preferred the rustic life she had once thought so prosy and inferior. Joe Sanders, the sensible and faithful, met her at the station.

"Has my little girl come back to be my wife?" he asked, lovingly, reading aright the expression of her tired and wistful eyes.

Anne's answer must have pleased him mightily, for he kissed her then and there, regardless of the gaping crowd. Her father was delighted.

I knowed how it would be," he declared; "cause the gal was bright and hansom, the rest of ye made her believe she could beat all creation at the big things them kin do as was born to 'em. Many is the gal as would make a right smart and bappified wife as has been poked into citified ways for nuthin' but misery. But I tell ye rare genius is alers satisfied with the life the good Lord provides. Kiss me, my little gal, and God bless ye."

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They moved away presently, and then poor Anne slipped unobserved out of the grand parlors.

She sobbed a little when she at length reached her own room. Her last illusion was gone, but had left her much wiser and much less hurt than might be supposed. She was only eighteen, but it remembered; and, after all, her fancies had not been more extravagant than those of many others who, unfortunately, for lack of this sort of salutary lesson, have remained fools to the end of their lives. And she was, quite certainly, not too much of an idiot to know how foolish she had been, nor to feel a womanly, resentful desire to confuse the elegant and vain Mr. Fred Fitch with some pretty and seemingly ingenious ally of strategic wit. She thought of noble, manly Joe Sanders, and smiled contentedly as a bright plan suddenly took shape and form in her giddy, egotistical brain, so rudely stung to defensive action. She sprang to her feet, and hurriedly flung aside the golden-tinted silk, the crimson carnations, and the set of rubies borrowed from her indulgent Aunt Crowley—all of

think?" thought Anne, when she knew she was really going. She rather liked Joe Sanders, who was sensible and fine-looking young land-holder, and who adored her. Him she had never considered boorish, nor was his persistent devotion obnoxious to her, although he was not at all the sort of gentleman whom she wanted for a lover.

Anne De Velin's ideal lover was not broad-shouldered and muscular, and bearded like a Turk, but he was tall and snappily; he was dark-eyed, aristocratically pale, and had a gracefully-curved mouthache. He wore elegant clothes, a diamond on his white hand, and a pink bud in his button-hole, and was as unlike Joe Sanders as a prince is like a plough boy. And this was the sort of Romeo to whom she expected to play Juliet in the new grand city life before her. But she was quite too much of a coquette to part lightly with Joe Sanders.

"I really can't see what you want to go to the city for, Anne," he observed, very soberly.

The girl twisted a showy amethyst on her plump finger, and looked as a family genius is supposed to look when talking

with an inferior sort of person who is too hopelessly stupid to comprehend her noble aspirations.

"Well, you see," she answered with dignity. "I was not born for this kind of life. Something higher and sweeter is necessary to one like me. You men here sow and reap, toiling on and plodding on year after year, never thinking of the beautiful things you might give to the world by a stroke of the pen or the pencil. Joe, life is a grand and glorious thing if lived as it ought to be. O, how I despise these poor, unrefined women who are content to drudge like oxen, with no rest and no amusement. A little gossiping, a little church-going, and a great deal of soul-crushing work is enough for them. But one like me, Joe, must have something different."

"Ah, indeed; that is it, is it?" returned the young man, eyeing the pretty egotist with an amused smile. "What do you mean to make your life, Anne? What will you be?"

"I mean to be a great and famous woman," she asserted; "I have not yet decided how. Perhaps I shall be an artist or a prima donna."

"And perhaps you will be my wife," was the thought that he did not utter.

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