

The Fireside.

AN OLD FASHIONED MOTHER.

BY FLORENCE A. JONES.

"I don't care — I think it is a shame: I can never do anything that other girls do," and Helen Gray threw herself down on the little white bed in her own room, her face buried in the soft cool pillows.

Such a pleasant room it was, with its pretty pictures on the wall, its easy chairs, and a rose in the south window with its one crimson, half-opened bud, that would surely greet Helen tomorrow, a full bloom rose, in honor of her fifteenth birthday.

In a few moments the door, which stood ajar, was opened gently. Then some one entered, and going up to the bed, bent over the little figure that lay curled up so disconsolately, the very picture of despair.

"What is it, deary?" And a soft hand brushed back the brown curls from the flushed face. "What is it; tell Auntie, won't you?"

The tears came faster as Helen tried to speak. Then she sprang up, and nestled in Auntie's arms — her sure refuge in trouble.

"Why, you see, Auntie, it is just this," she explained as the tears ceased to flow; "Nellie Stewart is to give a party next week, and I am invited. Each boy is expected to escort some girl, and Will Howard asked me to go with him. I promised him, Auntie, and now, after coaxing, mamma says I may go this once, but she says she does not wish me to accept any escort but that of my brothers. Oh! Auntie, it is so mortifying! I know just how the girls will all laugh at me, call me Miss Prude, and tell me I am tied to my mother's apron string. Other girls can go, and I don't see why I can't," and the tears again began to flow.

"Do you love your mother, Helen?"

"Why, of course, Auntie! What a question!"

"Do you think she loves you?"

"I know she does, Auntie."

"Well, then, seeing she loves you, don't you think you can trust her to do what is best for her little girl?"

"Why — yes, I suppose so, of course — but, Auntie, I am fifteen years old tomorrow, — don't you think I am old enough to be trusted?" and she drew herself up with an air of dignity that made Auntie smile, as she patted the soft cheek. "We'll talk about that later on. What else, deary?"

Helen looked at her aunt in astonishment. "Oh, Auntie, isn't that enough? I can't bear to be laughed at, as I know I shall be when the girls find it out. They will tease me unmercifully. I wish mamma were not so old-fashioned!"

Auntie sat in silence a moment, then said, "Listen, dear, while I tell you a story. When I was your age I attended a high school in a town ten miles from my home. I was a light-hearted girl, ready for fun and frolic, and invited to all the merry-makings, never lacking an invitation from some boy friend to be his partner on such occasions. But I was blessed with an old-fashioned mother — here Helen looked up with a sur-

prised expression on her tear-wet face — "and I was not allowed to accept. My mother knew that a girl of fifteen ought to be thinking of her studies, and while a party, occasionally, was not forbidden, I went under the escort of my brother, who was attending the same school. I thought it very hard that a young lady should not be supposed to be old enough for gentlemen company. But my mother made me understand that there was to be no question of her authority, so I made the best of what I thought very hard treatment.

"Lucy Avery was my dearest chum, and many were the secrets, the rose-colored plans, we confided to each other, as we walked together, arm in arm.

"Poor Lucy! How I used to envy her, as I saw her arrayed for some frolic, waiting for some boy of the village to escort her. This, I thought, was true freedom, and I had many unkind thoughts of my dear mother, as I thought of Mrs. Avery, who allowed Lucy so much liberty. 'Why,' Lucy would say, 'my mother thinks I am old enough to take care of myself. Don't you wish your mother were not so old-fashioned?' with a pitying look on her fair face, as she thought of my hardship.

"One morning I missed my chum from her accustomed place, and all day long I felt uneasy, for Lucy was very seldom absent from her class, as she had too much of what she called "fun" at school, to miss any of it voluntarily. As soon as I was free I hastened to Lucy's home to find out the reason of her absence.

"As I entered the house I heard weeping, and in a moment Mrs. Avery met me, sobbing as if her heart was broken, 'Oh, Helen, Lucy has gone, Lucy has gone!'

"Then she told me the story. Lucy had attended a party the night before with Ned Weston, a handsome, dissolute young fellow, and had failed to return. In the morning the mother found a note tucked behind the mirror in her daughter's room, saying she was going away with Ned, and that they need not look for her. 'Oh,' she said, 'if only Lucy had been like you. I thought I could trust her,' moaning and wringing her hands. I thought how little I deserved the credit given to me. Ah! that belonged to my dear, wise, old-fashioned mother, who knew what was best for me.

"Lucy was found in a hospital in a distant city, suffering from brain fever. She had been deserted by the man she had trusted. When she was able to be moved, she was taken back to the home she had left such a short time before, glad, oh! so glad to be once more in her own little room. But she never forgot that lesson — burned, as it seemed, into heart and brain."

How still the room was; for several minutes after the story ended neither spoke. Then Auntie, softly patting the warm little hand folded in her own, said gently, "Dearie, are you not glad you have an old-fashioned mother?"

As Helen's murmured "Yes," reached her, Auntie continued, "Don't you think it would be nice to go right now and tell dear mother that you are glad, and that you will trust to her years and experience to guide her little girl until she can see with a clearer vision for herself?"

Helen gave Auntie a hug, and then leaving her aunt, went quickly down the stairs in search of her mother. She soon found her, and whispered something in her ear, with her warm arms around her neck. I shall not tell you what it was, but the mother kissed the red lips, saying softly, — "Thank you, darling, and may God bless and watch over you, my dear little girl."—*Advance.*

MISS ABBIE'S TONIC.

BY HILDA RICHMOND.

"Margaret, I feel very much worried about Abbie," said John Carew after his sister had gone upstairs. "She doesn't seem ill, but she certainly is not perfectly well."

"I've thought of that, too, but did not mention it because it might have been imagination on my part. She is drooping and low-spirited, but I do not see why," answered Mrs. Carew. "Do you suppose she is tired of the city?"

"No, I think not. She was so happy at first and seemed so to enjoy her freedom from household cares when she came, that I don't believe she is lonesome this soon. I wish I knew, for I owe so much to her I want her to spend her declining days in peace."

"I've always heard that people who have led active lives are apt to become dissatisfied if suddenly left with nothing to do, but sister is busy from morning till night at something. You had better stop at the doctor's in the morning, John, and get her a tonic. Perhaps the weather affects her."

"Is this the sister you told me of who raised the family when your mother died?" asked the doctor when John Carew laid his sister's case before him.

"Yes; and as soon as she had us youngsters off her hands she had to begin all over again on some nephews and nieces, so it's no wonder she is breaking down."

"Breaking down! Nonsense! She is pining for her old active life, man. I've known hundreds of such cases. Women in the prime of life just fade away before anyone realizes it, because their well-meaning relatives insist on giving them an 'easy, quiet life in their old days.'"

"That may be true in hundreds of cases, doctor, but not in Abbie's. My wife says she is busy from morning till night with sewing and knitting, and pottering around. She's worked very hard in her life and I want her to have a good time now that she's getting old."

"How old is she?" asked the doctor, abruptly.

"Let me see. I'm thirty-two and Abbie was twenty when I was born. That makes her fifty-two."

"Do you expect to be laid on the shelf at fifty-two?" I'm past that myself and I don't thank any man to say I'm in my declining years," said the doctor, laughingly. "I'll not give you the tonic for Miss Carew till I've seen her. Call for me on your way home this afternoon for I shall be glad to meet her even if she

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does not need my services. I tell you what, Carew, this old world would be a poor place without the noble spinsters who laid aside their ambitions and hopes at duty's call."

During the doctor's visit that afternoon he turned the conversation to the subject of poor cooking and talked of the diseases brought on by ignorance of the kind of food to eat, and how it should be prepared, till John Carew began to wonder if his sister's lassitude was caused by lack of good victuals. Mrs. Carew mentally reviewed the bill-of-fare that had appeared for the past months, and determined to keep a sharp lookout on the cook from that time forward, but presently both realized why the doctor spoke as he did.

"About a dozen girls from the young people's society in our church started a little lunch room over on the South Side, near that new factory, to try to keep the men away from the saloons during the noon hour, but I'm afraid the whole thing will be a failure for lack of good, substantial food," went on the doctor, watching Miss Abbie. "They are eager to work, but lamentably ignorant. My own daughter is one of the number, and all the knowledge of cooking she has had is a few terms at a fashionable cooking school. Some of the others are not even that well equipped. I'll tell you the only way to learn to cook is to get into an old-fashioned kitchen with a mother or aunt to put you through your paces. Of course, since my wife has been crippled, and we have to depend altogether on servants, Nellie can hardly be expected to know much."

"I should think anybody could get up a lunch without much trouble," re-