

Literature.

THE RIVERS.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ARRIVAL.

"Oh, mother, get up quick—the stage has driven up at the door and the driver is here upon her elbow, and pushing aside the rich, heavy curtains Mrs. Livingstone looked out upon the mud-bespattered vehicle, from which a leg, encased in black, and white stockings, was just making its egress. "Oh, heavens!" said she, burying her face again in the downy pillows. Woman's curiosity, however, soon prevailed over all other feelings, and she looked out and obtained a full view of her mother-in-law, having emerged from the coach, was poking out her boxes, trunks and so forth. When they were all found, Mrs. Livingston ordered two negroes to carry them to the side piazza, where they were soon counted by three or four little darlings, Thomas Jefferson among the rest. "John, John," said Mrs. Nichols, "what niggers won't grant my things will they?" "Don't talk, granny," whispered Lena, "painfully conscious of the curious eyes fixed upon them by the boys of blacks, who had come out to greet their master, who, with sidelong glances at each other, were inspecting her new costumes. "Don't talk! why not?" said Mrs. Nichols, rather sharply. "This is a free country, I suppose," then, bethinking herself, she added quickly, "Oh, I forgot, 't'ant free here!" After examining the sachel and finding that the night gown sleeve was safe, Mrs. Nichols took up her march for the house, herself carrying her umbrella and band box, which she would not intrust to the care of the negroes, "as like enough they'd break the umbrella, or squash her caps."

"Lena had not yet recovered from her angry fit, and thinking Anna only came to tease her, and perhaps again ridicule her bonnet, she tore the article from her head and, before she had time to throw it into the stream, which carried it down to the fish-pond, where for two or three hours it furnished amusement for some little negroes, who, fishing it with hooks and lines, and with their Anna stood watching the bonnet as it sailed down the stream, thinking it was dead, or back in Massachusetts, I don't care which!" With her impressions of the "Bay State," where her mother said folks lived on "cold beans and codfish," Anna thought she should prefer the first alternative, but she did not say so; and after a little she tried again to comfort "Lena, telling her to look her own way, or at least she was going to like her own."

"No, you ain't," returned "Lena. "You laugh at me and granny both, I saw you when you were here, and I know anything, but I do. I've been through the new geography, and Colburn's arithmetic twice!" This was more than Anna could say. She had no scholarship of which to boast, but she had a heart brim full of love, and in reply to Lena's accusation of having told her she did not know anything, she laughed, for grandpa looks so funny! "I couldn't help it. But I won't any more, I pity you because your mother is dead, and you never see any father, my says."

"How you do talk! Well, I've seen folks that it served just so; but you'll get over it. Now there was Nancy Scovandyke—did John ever say anything about her? Well, she couldn't bear snuff till after her disappointment—John told me, I suppose?" "No, madam, my husband has never told me anything concerning his eastern friends, neither did he know anything of them," returned Mrs. Livingstone, her patience on the point of giving out. "Never told you nothing about Nancy Scovandyke? If that don't beat all! Why he was—"

"She was prevented from finishing the sentence, which would undoubtedly have raised a domestic breeze, when Anna came to tell her that the trunks were carried to her room. "I'll come right up then," said she, being more to herself than to any else. "If I ain't mistaken, I've got a little paper of sarfen somewhere, which I mean to scarf for Tilda. Her skin looks deuced and dry!" When Mrs. Livingstone again entered his wife's room, he found her in a collapsed state of anger and mortification. "John, Quincy, Samp, Throat, Swellings and Sprains, Burns and Scalds, General Bodily Pains, Tooth, Ear and Headache, Frosted Feet and Ears, and all other Pains and Aches."

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