Carolyn Wells

The Mystery Girl

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Published by Good Press, 2022

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EAN 4066338095282

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Chapter I
A President-Elect

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Quite aside from its natural characteristics, there is an atmosphere about a college town, especially a New England college town, that is unmistakable. It is not so much actively intellectual as passively aware of and satisfied with its own intellectuality.

The beautiful little town of Corinth was no exception; from its tree-shaded village green to the white-columned homes on its outskirts it fairly radiated a satisfied sense of its own superiority.

Not that the people were smug or self-conceited. They merely accepted the fact that the University of Corinth was among the best in the country and that all true Corinthians were both proud and worthy of it.

The village itself was a gem of well-kept streets, roads and houses, and all New England could scarce show a better groomed settlement.

In a way, the students, of course, owned the place, yet there were many families whose claim to prominence lay in another direction.

However, Corinth was by all counts, a college town, and gloried in it.

The University had just passed through the throes and thrills of one of its own presidential elections.

The contest of the candidates had been long, and at last the strife had become bitter. Two factions strove for supremacy, one, the conservative side, adhering to old

traditions, the other, the modern spirit, preferring new conditions and progressive enterprise.

Hard waged and hard won, the battle had resulted at last in the election of John Waring, the candidate of the followers of the old school.

Waring was not an old fogy, nor yet a hide-bound or narrow-minded back number. But he did put mental attainment ahead of physical prowess, and he did hold by certain old-fashioned principles and methods, which he and his constituents felt to be the backbone of the old and honored institution.

Wherefore, though his election was an accomplished fact, John Waring had made enemies that seemed likely never to be placated.

But Waring’s innate serenity and acquired poise were not disturbed by adverse criticism, he was a man with an eye single to his duty as he saw it. And he accepted the position of responsibility and trust, simply and sincerely with a determination to make his name honored among the list of presidents.

Inauguration, however, would not take place until June, and the months from February on would give him time to accustom himself to his new duties, and to learn much from the retiring president.

Yet it must not be thought that John Waring was unpopular. On the contrary, he was respected and liked by everybody in Corinth. Even the rival faction conceded his ability, his sterling character and his personal charm. And their chagrin and disappointment at his election was far

more because of their desire for the other candidate's innovations than of any dislike for John Waring as a man.

Of course, there were some who candidly expressed their disapproval of the new president, but, so far, no real opposition was made, and it was hoped there would be none.

Now, whether because of the exigencies of his new position, or merely because of the irresistible charms of Mrs. Bates, Waring expected to make the lady his wife before his inauguration.

"And a good thing," his neighbor, Mrs. Adams, observed. "John Waring ought to've been somebody's good-looking husband long ago, but a bachelor president of Corinth is out of all reason! Who'd stand by his side at the receptions, I'd like to know?"

For certain public receptions were dearly loved by the citizens of Corinth, and Mrs. Adams was one of the most reception-loving of all.

As in all college towns, there were various and sundry boarding houses, inns and hotels of all grades, but the boarding house of Mrs. Adams was, without a dissenting voice, acclaimed the most desirable and most homelike.

The good lady's husband, though known as "Old Salt," was by no means a seafaring man, nor had he ever been. Instead, he was a leaf on a branch of the Saltonstall family tree, and the irreverent abbreviation had been given him long ago, and had stuck.

"Yes, indeed," Mrs. Adams asserted, "we've never had a bachelor president of Corinth and I hope we never will. Mrs. Bates is a nice sweet-spoken lady, a widow of four years

standing, and I do say she's just the one for Doctor Waring's wife. She has dignity, and yet she's mighty human."

Emily Bates was human. Not very tall, a little inclined to plumpness, with fair hair and laughing blue eyes, she was of a cozy, home-loving sort, and her innate good nature and ready tact were unfailing.

At first she had resisted John Waring's appeal, but he persisted, until she found she really liked the big, wholesome man, and without much difficulty learned to love him.

Waring was distinguished-looking rather than handsome. Tall and well-made, he had a decided air of reserve which he rarely broke through, but which, Emily Bates discovered, could give way to confidences showing depths of sweetness and charm.

The two were happily matched. Waring was forty-two and Mrs. Bates half a dozen years younger. But both seemed younger than their years, and retained their earlier tastes and enthusiasms.

Also both were bound up, heart and soul, in the welfare of the University. Mrs. Bates' first husband had been one of its prominent professors and its history and traditions were known and loved by the cheery little lady.

Perhaps the only person in Corinth who was not pleased at the approaching nuptials of John Waring and Emily Bates was Mrs. Peyton, Waring's present housekeeper. For it meant the loss of her position, which she had faithfully filled for ten years or more. And this meant the loss of a good and satisfactory home, not only for herself, but for her daughter Helen, a girl of eighteen, who lived there also.

Not yet had Waring told his housekeeper that she was to be dethroned but she knew the notice would come,—knew, too, that it was delayed only because of John Waring's disinclination to say or do anything unwelcome to another. And Mrs. Peyton had been his sister's school friend and had served him well and faithfully. Yet she must go, for the incoming mistress needed no other housekeeper for the establishment than her own efficient, capable self.

It was a very cold February afternoon, and Mrs. Peyton was serving tea in the cheerful living-room. Emily Bates was present; an indulgence she seldom allowed herself, for she was punctilious regarding conventions, and Corinth people, after all, were critical. Though, to be sure, there was no harm in her taking tea in the home so soon to be her own.

The two women were outwardly most courteous, and if there was an underlying hostility it was not observable on the part of either.

"I came today," Emily Bates said, as she took her tea cup from the Japanese butler who offered it, "because I want to tell you, John, of some rumors I heard in the town. They say there is trouble brewing for you."

"Trouble brewing is such a picturesque phrase," Waring said, smiling idly, as he stirred his tea. "One immediately visions Macbeth's witches, and their trouble brew."

"You needn't laugh," Emily flashed an affectionate smile toward him, "when the phrase is used it often means something."

"Something vague and indefinite," suggested Gordon Lockwood, who was Waring's secretary, and was as one of the family.

“Not necessarily,” Mrs. Bates returned; “more likely something definite, though perhaps not very alarming.”

“Such as what?” asked Waring, “and from what direction? Will the freshmen make me an apple-pie bed, or will the seniors haze me, do you think?”

“Be serious, John,” Mrs. Bates begged. “I tell you there is a movement on foot to stir up dissension. I heard they would contest the election.”

“Oh, they can’t do that,” Lockwood stated; “nor would anybody try. Don’t be alarmed, Mrs. Bates. I’m sure we know all that’s going on,—and I can’t think there’s any ‘trouble brewing’ for Doctor Waring.”

“I’ve heard it, too,” vouchsafed Mrs. Peyton. “It’s not anything definite, but there are rumors and hints, and where there’s smoke, there’s bound to be fire. I wish you’d at least look into it, Doctor.”

“Yes,” agreed Emily Bates, “do look into it, John.”

“But how can I?” Waring smiled. “I can’t go from door to door, saying ‘I’ve come to investigate a rumor,’ can I?”

“Oh, don’t be absurd!” Mrs. Bates’ plump little hands fluttered in protest and then fell quietly to rest in her lap. “You men are so tactless! Now, Mrs. Peyton or I could find out all about it, without any one knowing we were making inquiry.”

“Why don’t you, then?” asked Waring, and Mrs. Peyton gave a pleased smile as the guest bracketed their names.

“I will, if you say so.” Emily spoke gravely. “That is what I wanted to ask you. I didn’t like to take up the matter with any one unless you directly approved.”

“Oh, go ahead,—I see no harm in it.”

“But, Doctor Waring,” put in Lockwood, “is it wise? I fear that if Mrs. Bates takes up this matter she may get in deeper than she means or expects to, and—well, you can’t tell what might turn up.”

“That’s so, Emily. As matters stand, you’d best be careful.”

“Oh, John, how vacillating you are! First, you say go ahead, and then you say stop! I don’t mind your changing your opinions, but I do resent your paying so little attention to the matter. You toss it aside without thought.”

“Doctor Waring thinks very quickly,” said Mrs. Peyton, and Emily gave her a slight stare.

It was hard for the housekeeper to realize that she must inevitably lose her place in his household, and the thought made her a little assertive while she still had opportunity.

“Yes, I know it,” was the reply Emily gave, and went on, addressing herself to the two men.

“Persuade him, Mr. Lockwood. Not of his duty, he never misapprehends that, but of the necessity of looking on this matter as a duty.”

“What a pleader you are, Emily,” and Waring gave her an admiring bow; “I am almost persuaded that my very life is in danger!”

“Oh, you won’t be good!” The blue eyes twinkled but the rosy little mouth took on a mutinous pout. “Well, I warn you, if you don’t look out for yourself, I’m going to look out for you! And that, as Mr. Lockwood hints, may get you into trouble!”

“What a contradictory little person it is! In an effort to get me out of trouble, you admit you will probably get me into

trouble. Well, well, if this is during our betrothal days, what will you do after we are married?”

“Oh, then you’ll obey me implicitly,” and the expressive hands indicated with a wide sweep, total subjection.

“You’ll find him not absolutely easy to manage,” Mrs. Peyton declared, and though Emily Bates said no word, she gave a look of superior managing power that brought the housekeeper’s thin lips together in a resentful straight line.

This byplay was unnoticed by large-minded John Waring, but it amused Lockwood, who was an observer of human nature.

Unostentatiously, he watched Mrs. Peyton, as she turned her attention to the tea tray, and noted the air of importance with which she continued her duties as hostess.

“Bring hot toast, Ito,” she said to the well-trained and deferential Japanese. “And a few more lemon slices,—I see another guest coming.”

She smiled out through the window, and a moment later a breezy young chap came into the room.

“Hello, folkses,” he cried; “Hello, Aunt Emily.”

He gave Mrs. Bates an audible kiss on her pretty cheek and bowed with boyish good humor to Mrs. Peyton.

“How do you do, Uncle Doctor?” and “How goes it, Lock?” he went on, as he threw himself, a little sprawlingly into an easy chair. “And here’s the fair Helen of Troy.”

He jumped up as Helen Peyton came into the room. “Why, Pinky,” she said, “when did you come?”

“Just now, my girl, as you noted from your oriel lattice,—and came running down to bask in the sunshine of my smiles.”

“Behave yourself, Pinky,” admonished his aunt, as she noted Helen’s quick blush and realized the saucy boy had told the truth.

Pinckney Payne, college freshman, and nephew of Emily Bates, was very fond of Doctor Waring, his English teacher, and as also fond, in his boyish way, of his aunt. But he was no respecter of authority, and, now that his aunt was to be the wife of his favorite professor, also the President-elect of the college, he assumed an absolute familiarity with the whole household.

His nickname was not only an abbreviation, but was descriptive of his exuberant health and invariably red cheeks. For the rest, he was just a rollicking, care-free boy, ring leader in college fun, often punished, but bobbing up serenely again, ready for more mischief.

Helen Peyton adored the irrepressible Pinky, and though he liked her, it was no more than he felt for many others and not so much as he had for a few.

“Tea, Mrs. Peyton? Oh, yes, indeed, thank you. Yes, two lemon and three sugar. And toasts,—and cakies,—oh, what good ones! What a tuck! Alma Mater doesn’t feed us like this! I say, Aunt Emily, after you are married, may I come to tea every day? And bring the fellows?”

“I’ll answer that,—you may,” said John Waring.

“And I’ll revise the answer,—you may, with reservations,” Mrs. Bates supplemented. “Now, Pinky, you’re a dear and a sweet, but you can’t annex this house and all its affairs, just because it’s going to be my home.”

“Don’t want to, Auntie. I only want you to annex me. You’ll keep the same cook we have at present, won’t you?”

He looked solicitously at her, over a large slice of toast and jam he was devouring.

“Maybe and maybe not,” Mrs. Peyton spoke up. “Cooks are not always anxious to be kept.”

“At any rate, we’ll have a cook, Pinky, of some sort,” his aunt assured him, and the boy turned to tease Helen Peyton, who was quite willing to be teased.

“I saw your beau today, Helen,” he said.

“Which one?” she asked placidly.

“Is there a crowd? Well, I mean the Tyler person. Him as hangs out at Old Salt’s. And, by the way, Uncle President,—yes, I am a bit previous on both counts, but you’ll soon have the honor of being both President and my uncle,—by the way, I say, Bob Tyler says there’s something in the wind.”

“A straw to show which way it blows, perhaps,” Waring said.

“Perhaps, sir. But it’s blowing. Tyler says there’s a movement on foot to make things hot for you if you take the Presidential chair with your present intentions.”

“My intentions?”

“Yes, sir; about athletics, and sports in general.”

“And what are my so-called intentions?”

“They say, you mean to cut out sport—”

“Oh, Pinckney, you know better than that!”

“Well, Doctor Waring, some seem to think that’s what you have in mind. If you’d declare your intentions now,—”

“Look here, Pinky, don’t you think I’ve enough on my mind in the matter of marrying your aunt, without bringing in other matters till that’s settled.”

“Going to be married soon, Uncle Doc?”

“We are. As soon as your aunt will select a pleasant day for the ceremony. Then, that attended to, I can devote my mind and energies to this other subject. And meanwhile, my boy, if you hear talk about it, don’t make any assertions,—rather, try to hush up the subject.”

“I see,—I see,—and I will, Doctor Waring. You don’t want to bother with those things till you’re a settled down married man! I know just how you feel about it. Important business, this getting married,—I daresay, sir.”

“It is,—and so much so, that I’m going to take the bride-elect off right now, for a little private confab. You must understand that we have much to arrange.”

“Run along,—bless you, my children!” Pinky waved a teacup and a sandwich beneficently toward the pair, as they left the room and went off in the direction of the Doctor’s study.

The house was a large one, with a fine front portico upheld by six enormous fluted columns.

One of the most beautiful of New England doorways led into a wide hall. To the right of this was the drawing-room, not so often used and not so well liked as the more cozy living-room, to the left as one entered, and where the tea-drinking group now sat.

Behind these two rooms and hall, ran a cross hall, with an outer door at the end back of the living-room and a deep and wide window seat at the other end, behind the drawing-room.

Further back, beyond the cross hall, on the living-room side, was the dining-room, and beside it, back of the drawing-room was the Doctor’s study. This was the gem of

the whole house. The floor had been sunken to give greater ceiling height, for the room was very large, and of fine proportions. It opened on to the cross hall with wide double doors, and a flight of six or seven steps descended to its rug covered floor.

Opposite the double doors was the great fireplace with high over-mantel of carved stone. Each side of the mantel were windows, high and not large. The main daylight came through a great window on the right of the entrance and also from a long French window that opened like doors on the same side.

This French window, giving on a small porch, and the door that opened into the cross hall of the house were the only doors in the great room, save those on cupboards and bookcases.

On the other side of the room, opposite the French window was a row of four small windows looking into the dining-room. But these were high, and could not be seen through by people on the sunken floor of the study.

The whole room was done in Circassian walnut, and represented the ideal abode of a man of letters. The fireside was flanked with two facing davenports, the wide window seat was piled with cushions. The French window-doors were suitably curtained and the high windows were of truly beautiful stained glass.

The spacious table desk was in the middle of the room, and bookcases, both portable and built in, lined the walls. There were a few good busts and valuable pictures, and the whole effect was one of dignity and repose rather than of elaborate grandeur.

The room was renowned, and all Corinth spoke of it with pride. The students felt it a great occasion that brought them within its walls and the faculty loved nothing better than a session therein.

Casual guests were rarely entertained in the study. Only especial visitors or those worthy of its classic atmosphere found welcome there. Mrs. Peyton or Helen were not expected to use it, and Mrs. Bates had already declared she should respect it as the sanctum of Doctor Waring alone.

The two made their way to the window seat, and as he arranged the soft cushions for her, Waring said, “Don’t, Emily, ever feel shut out of this room. As I live now, I’ve not welcomed the Peytons in here, but my wife is a different proposition.”

“I still feel an awe of the place, John, but I may get used to it. Anyway, I’ll try, and I do appreciate your willingness to have me in here. Then if you want to be alone, you must put me out.”

“I’ll probably do that, sometimes, dear, for I have to spend many hours alone. You know, I’m not taking the presidency lightly.”

“I know it, you conscientious dear. But, on the other hand, don’t be too serious about it. You’re just the man for the place, just the character for a College President, and if you try too hard to improve or reconstruct yourself, you’ll probably spoil your present perfection.”

“Well nothing would spoil *your* present perfection, my Emily. I am too greatly blest,—to have the great honor from the college,—and you, too!”

“Are you happy, John? All happy?”

Waring’s deep blue eyes fastened themselves on her face. His brown hair showed only a little gray at the temples, his fine face was not touched deeply by Time’s lines, and his clear, wholesome skin glowed with health.

If there was an instant’s hesitation before his reply came, it was none the less hearty and sincere. “Yes, my darling, all happy. And you?”

“I am happy, if you are,” she returned. “But I can never be happy if there is a shadow of any sort on your heart. Is there, John? Tell me, truly.”

“You mean regarding this trouble that I hear is brewing for me?”

“Not only that; I mean in any direction.”

“Trouble, Emily! With you in my arms! No,—a thousand times no! Trouble and I are strangers,—so long as I have you!”

Chapter II
Miss Mystery Arrives

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Anyone who has arrived at the railroad station of a New England village, after dark on a very cold winter night, the train late, no one to meet him, and no place engaged for board and lodging, will know the desolation of such a situation.

New England's small railroad stations are much alike, the crowds that alight from the trains are much alike, the people waiting on the platform for the arriving travelers are much alike, but there came into Corinth one night a passenger who was not at all like the fellow passengers on that belated train. It was a train from New York, due in Corinth at five-forty, but owing to the extreme cold weather, and various untoward freezings occasioned thereby, the delays were many and long and the train drew into the station shortly after seven o'clock.

Tired, hungry and impatient, the travelers crowded out of the train and stamped through the snow to the vehicles awaiting them, or footed it to their nearby homes.

The passenger who was unlike the others stepped down from the car platform, and holding her small suitcase firmly, crossed the track and entered the station waiting room. She went to the ticket window but found there no attendant. Impatiently she tapped her little foot on the old board floor but no one appeared.

"Agent," she called out, rapping with her knuckles on the window shelf, "Agent,—where are you?"

“Who’s there? What d’y’ want?” growled a surly voice, and a head appeared at the ticket window.

“I want somebody to look after me! I’m alone, and I want a porter, and I want a conveyance and I want some information.”

“Oh, you do! Well, I can’t supply porters nor yet conveyances; but information I may be able to give you.”

“Very well then,” and a pair of big, dark eyes seemed to pierce his very brain. “Then tell me where I can find the best accommodations in Corinth.”

The now roused agent looked more interestedly at the inquirer.

He saw a mere slip of a girl, young, slender, and very alert of manner. Her dark, grave little face was oval, and her eyes had a strange uncanny way of roving quickly about, and coming suddenly back, greatly disconcerting the stolid ticket agent.

This agent was not unused to girls,—a college town is often invaded by hordes of smart young women, pretty girls and gay hoydens. Many Junes he had sold tickets or given information to hundreds of feminine inquirers but none had ever seemed quite like this one.

“Best accommodations?” he repeated stupidly.

“You heard me, then! About when do you propose to reply?”

Still he gazed at her in silence, running over in his mind the various boarding houses, and finding none he thought she’d like.

“There’s a rule of the Railroad Company that questions must be answered the same day they’re asked,” she said,

witheringly, and picking up her suitcase she started for the door, feeling that any one she might find would know more than this dummy.

“Wait,—oh, I say, miss, wait a minute.”

“I did,” she said coolly, proceeding to the door.

“But,—oh, hold on,—try Old Salt Adams,—you couldn’t do better.”

“Where is it?” she deigned to pause a moment, and he replied quickly:

“He’s right outside,—hurry up out,—you can catch him!”

Here was something she could understand, and she hurried up out, just in time to see an old man with long white beard jump into his sleigh and begin to tuck fur robes about him.

“He sprang to his sleigh,—to his team gave a whistle,—” she quoted to herself, and then cried out, “Hey, there, Santa Claus, give me a lift?”

“You engaged for our house?” the man called back, and as she shook her head, he gathered up his reins.

“Can’t take any one not engaged,” he called back, “Giddap!”

“Wait,—wait! I command you!” The sharp, clear young voice rang out through the cold winter air, and Old Saltonstall Adams paused to listen.

“Ho, ho,” he chuckled, “you command me, do you? Now, I haven’t been commanded for something like fifty years.”

“Oh, don’t stop to fuss,” the girl exclaimed, angrily. “Don’t you see I’m cold, hungry and very uncomfortable? You have a boarding house,—I want board,—now, you take me in. Do you hear?”

“Sure I hear, but, miss, we’ve only so many rooms and they’re all occupied or engaged.”

“Some are engaged, but as yet unoccupied?” The dark eyes challenged him, and Adams mumbled,—”Well, that’s about it.”

“Very well, I will occupy one until the engager comes along. Let me get in. No, I can manage my suitcase myself. You get my trunk,—here’s the check. Or will you send for that tomorrow?”

“Why wait? Might’s well get it now—if so be you’re bound to bide. ‘Fraid to wait in the sleigh alone?”

“I’m afraid of nothing,” was the disdainful answer, and the girl pulled the fur robes up around her as she sat in the middle of the back seat.

Shortly, old Salt returned with the trunk on his shoulder, and put it in the front with himself, and they started.

“Don’t try to talk,” he called back to her, as the horses began a rapid trot. “I can’t hear you against this wind.”

“I’ve no intention of talking,” the girl replied, but the man couldn’t hear her. The wind blew fiercely. It was snowing a little, and the drifts sent feathery clouds through the air. The trees, coated with ice from a recent sleet storm, broke off crackling bits of ice as they passed. The girl looked about, at first curiously, and then timidly, as if frightened by what she saw.

It was not a long ride, and they stopped before a large house, showing comfortably lighted windows and a broad front door that swung open even as the girl was getting down from the sleigh.

“For the land sake!” exclaimed a brisk feminine voice, “this ain’t Letty! Who in the earth have you got here?”

“I don’t know,” Old Salt Adams replied, truthfully. “Take her along, mother, and give her a night’s lodging.”

“But where is Letty? Didn’t she come?”

“Now can’t you see she didn’t come? Do you s’pose I left her at the station? Or dumped her out along the road? No—since you will have it, she didn’t come. She *didn’t* come!”

Old Salt drove on toward the barns, and Mrs. Adams bade the girl go into the house.

The landlady followed, and as she saw the strange guest she gazed at her in frank curiosity.

“You want a room, I s’pose,” she began. “But, I’m sorry to say we haven’t one vacant—”

“Oh, I’ll take Letty’s. She didn’t come, you see, so I can take her room for tonight.”

“Letty wouldn’t like that.”

“But I would. And I’m here and Letty isn’t. Shall we go right up?”

Picking up her small suitcase, the girl started and then stepped back for the woman to lead the way.

“Not quite so fast—*if* you please. What is your name?”

As the landlady’s tone changed to a sterner inflection, the girl likewise grew dignified.

“My name is Anita Austin,” she said, coldly. “I came here because I was told it was the best house in Corinth.”

“Where are you from?”

“New York City.”

“What address?”

“Plaza Hotel.”

By this time the strange dark eyes had done their work. A steady glance from Anita Austin seemed to compel all the world to do her bidding. At any rate, Mrs. Adams took the suitcase, and without a further word conducted the stranger upstairs.

She took her into an attractive bedroom, presumably made ready for the absent Letty.

“This will do,” Miss Austin said, calmly. “Will you send me up a tray of supper? I don’t want much, and I prefer not to come down to dinner.”

“Land sake, dinner’s over long ago. You want some tea, ‘n’ bread, ‘n’ butter, ‘n’ preserves, ‘n’ cake?”

“Yes, thank you, that sounds good. Send it in half an hour.”

To her guest Mrs. Adams showed merely a face of acquiescence, but once outside the door, and released from the spell of those eerie eyes, she remarked to herself, “For the land sake!” with great emphasis.

“Well, what do you know about that!” Old Salt Adams cried, when, after she had started him on his supper, his wife related the episode.

“I can’t make her out,” Mrs. Adams said, thoughtfully. “But I don’t like her. And I won’t keep her. Tomorrow, you take her over to Belton’s.”

“Just as you say. But I thought her kinda interesting looking. You can’t say she isn’t that.”

“Maybe so, to some folks. Not to me. And Letty’ll come tomorrow, so that girl’ll have to get out of the room.”

Meanwhile “that girl” was eagerly peering out of her window.

She tried to discern which were the lights of the college buildings, but through the still lightly falling snow, she could see but little, and after a time, she gave up the effort. She drew her head back into the room just as a tap at the door announced her supper.

“Thank you,” she said to the maid who brought it. “Set it on that stand, please. It looks very nice.”

And then, sitting comfortably in an easy chair, robed in warm dressing gown and slippers, Miss Anita Austin devoted a pleasant half hour to the simple but thoroughly satisfactory meal.

This finished, she wrote some letters. Not many, indeed, but few as they were, the midnight hour struck before she sealed the last envelope and wrote the last address.

Then, prepared for bed, she again looked from the window, and gazed long into the night.

“Corinth,” she whispered, “Oh, Corinth, what do you hold for me? What fortune or misfortune will you bring me? What fortune or misfortune shall I bring to others? Oh, Justice, Justice, what crimes are committed in thy name!”

The next morning Anita appeared in the dining-room at the breakfast hour.

Mrs. Adams scanned her sharply, and looked a little disapprovingly at the short, scant skirt and slim, silken legs of her new boarder.

Anita, her dark eyes scanning her hostess with equal sharpness, seemed to express an equal disapproval of the country-cut gingham and huge white apron.

Not at all obtuse, Mrs. Adams sensed this, and her tone was a little more deferential than she had at first intended