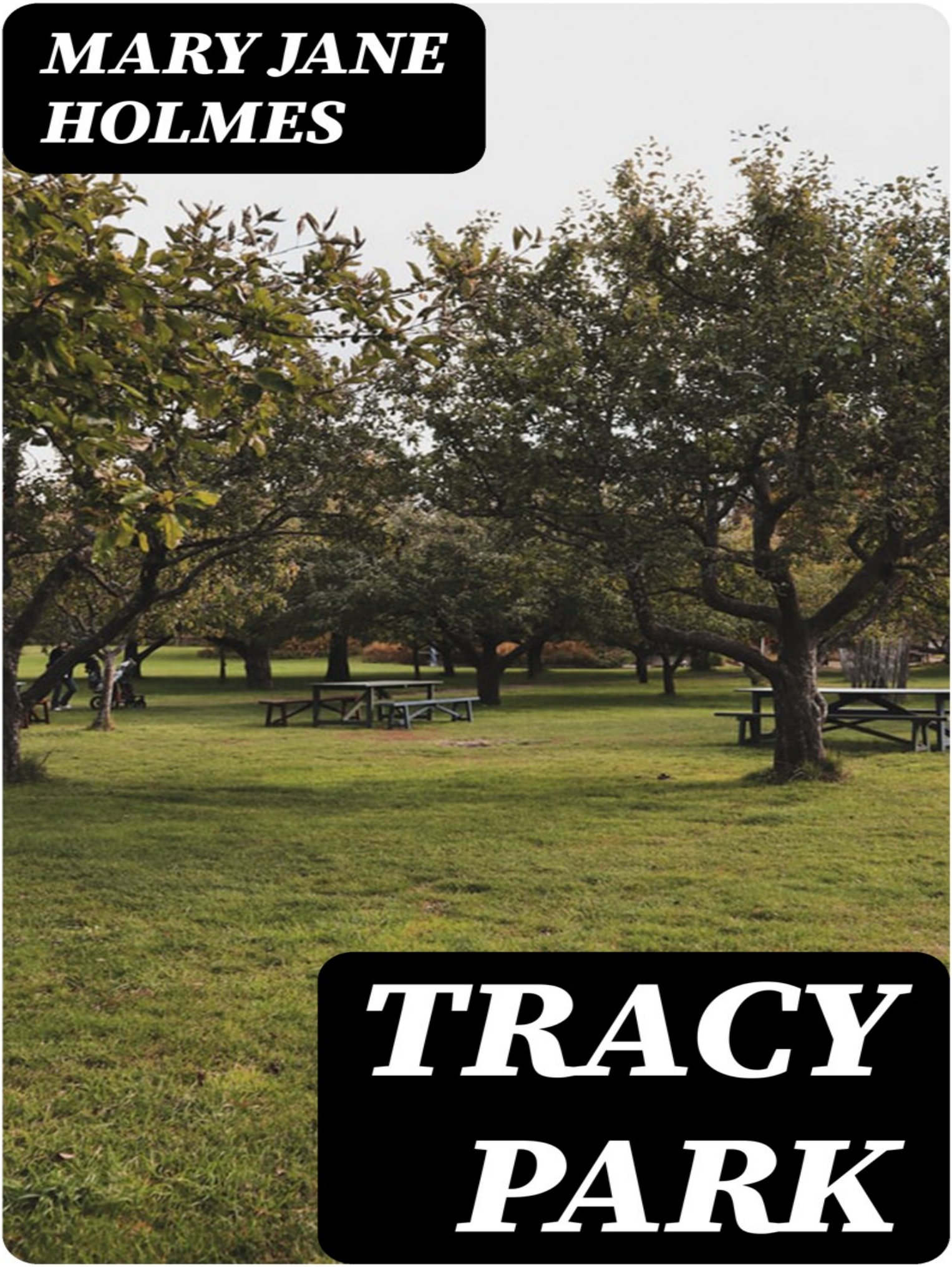
MARY JANE HOLMES



TRACY PARK

Mary Jane Holmes

Tracy Park

A Novel

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CHAPTER I.

THE TELEGRAM.

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'BREVOORT HOUSE, NEW YORK, Oct. 6th, 18—.

'*To Mr. Frank Tracy, Tracy Park, Shannondale*.

'I arrived in the Scotia this morning, and shall take the train for Shannondale at 3 p.m. Send someone to the station to meet us.

'ARTHUR TRACEY.'

This was the telegram which the clerk in the Shannonville office wrote out one October morning, and despatched to the Hon. Frank Tracy, of Tracy Park, in the quiet town of Shannondale, where our story opens.

Mr. Frank Tracy, who, since his election to the State Legislature for two successive terms, had done nothing except to attend political meetings and make speeches on all public occasions, had an office in town, where he usually spent his mornings, smoking, reading the papers and talking to Mr. Colvin, his business agent and lawyer, for, though born in one of the humblest of New England houses, where the slanting roof almost touched the ground in the rear, and he could scarcely stand upright in the chamber where he slept, Mr. Frank Tracy was a great man now, and as he dashed along the turnpike behind his blooded bays, with his driver beside him, people looked admiringly after him, and pointed him out to strangers as the Hon. Mr. Tracy, of Tracy Park, one of the finest places in the county. It is true it did not belong to him, but he had lived there so long that he

had come to look upon it as his, while his neighbors, too, seemed to have forgotten that there was across the ocean a Mr. Arthur Tracy, who might at any time come home to claim his own, and demand an account of his brother's stewardship. And it was this very Arthur Tracy, whose telegram announcing his return from Europe was read by his brother with mingled feelings of surprise and consternation.

'Not that everything isn't fair and above-board, and he is welcome to look into matters as much as he likes,' Frank said over and over to himself, as he sat stating blankly at the telegram, while the cold chills ran up and down his back and arms. 'Yes, he can examine all Colvin's books and he will find them straight as a string, for didn't he tell me to use what I needed as remuneration for looking after his property while he was gallivanting over the world; and if he objects that I have paid myself too much, why, I can at once transfer those investments in my name to him. No, it is not that which affects me so, it is the suddenness of the thing, coming without warning and to-night of all nights, when the house will be full of carousing and champagne. What will Dolly say! Hysterics of course, if not a sick headache. I don't believe I can face her till she has had a little time to get over it. Here, boy, I want, you!' and he rapped at the window at a young lad who happened to be passing with a basket on his arm. 'I want you to do an errand for me,' he continued, as the boy entered the office, and, removing his cap, stood respectfully before him 'Take this telegram to Mrs. Tracy, and here is a dime for you.'

'Thank you, but I don't care for the money,' the boy said 'I was going to the park anyway to tell Mrs. Tracy that

grandma is sick and can't go there to-night.'

'Cannot go! Sick! What is the matter?' Mr. Tracy asked, in some dismay, feeling that here was a fresh cause of trouble and worry for Dolly, as he designated his wife when off his guard and not on show before his fashionable friends, to whom she was Dora, or Mrs. Tracy.

'She catched cold yesterday fixing up mother's grave,' the boy replied; and, as if the mention of that grave had sent Mr. Tracy's thoughts straying backward to the past, he looked thoughtfully at the child a moment, and then said:

'How old are you, Harold?'

'Ten, last August,' was the reply; and Mr. Tracy continued:

'You do not remember your mother?'

'No, sir, only a great crowd, and grandma crying so hard,' was Harold's reply.

'You look like her,' Mr. Tracy said.

'Yes, sir,' Harold answered, while into his frank, open face there came an expression of regret for the mother who had died when he was three years old, and whose life had been so short and sad.

'Now, hurry off with the telegram, and mind you don't lose it. It is from my brother. He is coming to-night.'

'Mr. Arthur Tracy, who sent the monument for my mother—is he coming home? Oh, I am so glad!' Harold exclaimed, and his handsome face lighted up with childish joy, as he put the telegram in his pocket and started For Tracy Park, wondering if he should encounter Tom, and thinking that if he did, and Tom gave him any chaff, he should lick him, or try to.

'Darn him!' he said to himself, as he recalled the many times when Tom Tracy, a boy of his own age, had laughed at him for his poverty and coarse clothes. 'Darn him! he ain't any better than I am, if he does wear velvet trousers and live in a big house. 'Taint his'n; it's Mr. Arthur's, and I'm glad he is coming home. I wonder if he will bring grandma anything. I wish he'd I bring me a pyramid. He's seen 'em, they say.'

Meantime, Mr. Frank Tracy had resumed his seat, and, with his hands clasped together over his head, was wondering what effect his brother's return would have upon him. Would he be obliged to leave the park, and the luxury he had enjoyed so long, and go back to the old life which he hated so much.

'No; Arthur will never be so mean,' he said. 'He has always shown himself generous, and will continue to do so. Besides that, he will want somebody to keep his house for him, unless—' and here the perspiration started from every pore, as Frank Tracy thought: 'What if he is married, and the *us* in his telegram means a wife, instead of a friend or servant, as I imagined!'

This would indeed be a calamity, for then his own and Dolly's reign was over at Tracy Park, and the party they were to give that night to at least three hundred people would be their last grand blow-out.

'Confound the party!' he thought, as he arose from his chair and began to pace the room. 'Arthur won't like that as a greeting after eleven years' absence. He never fancied being cheek by jowl with Tom, Dick and Harry; and that is just what the smash is to-night. Dolly wants to please

everybody, thinking to get me votes for Congress, and so she has invited all creation and his wife. There's old Peterkin, the roughest kind of a canal bummer when Arthur went away. Think of my fastidious brother shaking hands with him and Widow Shipley, who kept a low tavern on the tow-path! She'll be there; in her silks and long gold chain, for she has four boys, all voters, who call me *Frank* and slap me on the shoulder. Ugh! even I hate it all; and in a most perturbed state of mind, the Hon. Frank and would-be Congressman continued to walk the room lamenting the party which must be, and wondering what his aristocratic brother would say to such a crowd in his house on the night of his return.

And if there should be a Mrs. Arthur Tracy, with possibly some little Tracys! But that idea was too horrible to contemplate, and so he tried to put it from his mind, and to be as calm and quiet as possible until lunch-time, when, with no very great amount of alacrity and cheerfulness, he started for home, where, as he had been warned by his wife when he left her in the morning, 'he was to lunch standing up or anyhow, as she had no time for parade that day.'

CHAPTER II.

ARTHUR TRACY.

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Although it was a morning in October, the grass in the park was as green as in early June, while the flowers in the beds and borders, the geraniums, the phlox, the stocks, and verbenas were handsomer, if possible, than they had been in the summer-time: for the rain, which had fallen almost continually during the month of September, had kept them fresh and bright. Here and there the scarlet and golden tints of autumn were beginning to show on the trees; but this only added a new charm to a place which was noted for its beauty, and was the pride and admiration of the town.

And yet Mrs. Frank Tracy, who stood on the wide piazza, looking after a carriage which was moving down the avenue which led through the park to the highway, did not seem as happy as the mistress of that house ought to have been, standing there in the clear, crisp morning, with a silken wrapper trailing behind her, a coquettish French cap on her head, and costly jewels on her short, fat hands, which once were not as white and soft as they were now. For Mrs. Frank Tracy, as Dorothy Smith, had known what hard labor and poverty meant, and slights, too, because of the poverty and labor. Her mother was a widow, sickly and lame, and Dorothy in her girlhood had worked in the cotton mills at Langley, and bound shoes for the firm of Newell & Brothers, and had taught a district school, 'by way of elevating herself,' but the elevation did not pay, and she went back to

the mills in the day-time and her shoes at night, and rebelled at the fate which had made her so poor and seemed likely to keep her so.

But there was something better in store for her than binding shoes, or even teaching a district school, and, from the time when young Frank Tracy came to Langley as clerk in the Newell firm, Dorothy's life was changed and her star began to rise. They both sang in the choir, standing side by side, and sometimes using the same book, and once or twice their hands met as both tried to turn the leaves together. Dorothy's were red and rough, and not nearly as delicate as those of Frank, who had been in a store all his life: and still there was a magnetism in their touch which sent a thrill through the young man's veins, and made him for the first time look critically at his companion.

She was very pretty, he thought, with bright black eyes, a healthful bloom, and a smile and blush which went straight to his heart and made him her slave at once. In three months' time they were married and commenced housekeeping in a very unostentatious way, for Frank had nothing but his salary to depend upon. But he was well connected, and boasted some blue blood, which, in Dorothy's estimation, made amends for lack of money. The Tracys of Boston were his distant relatives, and he had a rich bachelor uncle who spent his winters in New Orleans and his summers in Shannondale, at Tracy Park, on which he had lavished fabulous sums of money. From this uncle Frank had expectations, though naturally the greater part of his fortune would go to his god-son and name-sake, Arthur

Tracy, who was Frank's elder brother, and as unlike him as one brother could well be unlike another.

Arthur was scholarly in his tastes, quiet and gentlemanly in his manners, with a musical voice which won him friends at once, while in his soft black eyes there was a peculiar look of sadness, as if he were brooding over something which filled him with regret. Frank was very proud of his brother, and with Dorothy felt that he was honored when, six months after their marriage, he came for a day or so to visit them, and with him his intimate friend Harold Hastings, an Englishman by birth, but so thoroughly Americanized as to pass unchallenged for a native. There was a band of crape on Arthur's hat, and his manner was like one trying to be sorry, while conscious of a great inward feeling of resignation, if not content. The rich uncle was dead. He had died suddenly in Paris, where he had gone on business, and the whole of his vast fortune was left to his nephew Arthur—not a farthing to Frank, not even the mention of his name in the will: and when Dorothy heard it she put her white apron over her face, and cried as if her heart would break. They were so poor, she and Frank, and they wanted so many things, and the man who could have helped them was dead and had left them nothing. It was hard, and she might not have made the young heir very welcome if he had not ensured her that he should do something for her husband. And he kept his word, and in course of time bought out a grocery in Langley and put Frank in it, and paid the mortgage on his house, and gave him a thousand dollars, and invited them for a few days to visit him; and then it would seem as if he forgot them entirely; for with his friend

Harold he settled himself at Tracy Park, and played the role of the grand gentleman to perfection.

Dinner parties and card parties, where it was said the play was for money, and where Arthur always allowed himself to lose and his friends to win; races and hunts were of frequent occurrence at Tracy Park, where matters generally were managed on a magnificent scale, and created a great deal of talk among the plain folks of Shannondale, whose only dissipation then was going to church twice on Sunday and to the cattle show once each year.

Few ladies ever graced these festivities, for Arthur was very aristocratic in his feelings, and with two or three exceptions, held himself aloof from the people of Shannondale. It was said, however, that sometimes, when he and his friend were alone, there was the sweep of a white dress and the gleam of golden hair in the parlor, where sweet Amy Crawford, daughter of the housekeeper, played and sang her simple ballads to the two gentlemen, who always treated her with as much deference as if she had been a queen, instead of a poor young girl dependent for her bread upon her own and her mother's exertions. But beyond the singing in the twilight Amy never advanced, and so far as her mother knew she had never for a single instant been alone with either of the gentlemen. How, then, was the household electrified one morning when it was found that Amy had fled, and that Harold Hastings was the companion of her flight?

'I wanted to tell you,' Amy wrote to her mother in the note left on her dressing table. 'I wanted to tell you and be

married at home, but Mr. Hastings would not allow it. It would create trouble, he said, between himself and Mr. Tracy, who I may confess to you in confidence, asked me twice to be his wife, and when I refused, without giving him a reason, for I dared not tell him of my love for his friend, he was so angry and behaved so strangely, and there was such a look in his eyes, that I was afraid of him, and it was this fear, I think, which made me willing to go away secretly with Harold and be married in New York. We are going to Europe; shall sail to-morrow morning at nine o'clock in the Scotia. The marriage ceremony will be performed before we go on board. I shall write as soon as we reach Liverpool. You must forgive me, mother, and I am sure you would not blame me, if you knew how much I love Mr. Hastings. I know he is poor, and that I might be mistress of Tracy Park, but I love Harold best. It is ten o'clock, and the train, you know, passes at eleven; so I must say good-bye.

'Yours lovingly,

'Amy Crawford, now, but when you read this,

'Amy Hastings.'

This was Amy's letter which her mother found upon entering her room after waiting more than an hour for her daughter's appearance at the breakfast, which they always took by themselves. To say that she was shocked and astonished would but faintly portray the state of her mind as she read that her beautiful young daughter had gone with Harold Hastings, whom she had never liked, for though he was handsome, and agreeable, and gentlemanly as a rule, she knew him to be thoroughly selfish and indolent, and she trembled for her daughter's happiness when a little time

had quenched the ardor of his passion. Added to this was another thought which made her brain reel for a moment an she thought what might have been. Arthur Tracy had wished to make Amy his wife, and mistress of Tracy Park, which she would have graced so well, for in all the town there was not a fairer, sweeter girl than Amy Crawford, or one better beloved.

It did not matter that she was poor, and her mother was only a housekeeper. She had never felt a slight on that account, and had been reared as carefully and tenderly as the daughters of the rich, and if away down, in her mother's heart there had been a half defined hope that some time the master of Tracy Park might turn his attention to her, it had been hidden so closely that Mrs. Crawford scarcely knew of it herself until she learned what her daughter was and what she might have been. But it was too late now. There was no turning back the wheels of fate.

Forcing herself to be as calm as possible, she took the note to Arthur, who had breakfasted alone, and was waiting impatiently in the library for the appearance of his friend.

'Lazy dog!' Mrs. Crawford heard him say, as she approached the open door. 'Does he think he has nothing to do but to sleep? We were to start by this time, and he in bed yet!'

'Are you speaking of Mr. Hastings?' Mrs. Crawford asked, as she stepped into the room.

'Yes,' was his crisp and haughty reply, as if he resented the question, and her presence there.

He could be very proud and stern when he felt like it, and one of these moods was on him now, but Mrs. Crawford did

not heed it, and sinking into a chair, for she felt that she could not stand and face him, she began:

'I came to tell you of Mr. Hastings and—Amy. She did not come to breakfast, and I found this note in her room. She has gone to New York with him. They took the eleven o'clock train last night. They are to be married this morning, and sail in the Scotia for Europe.'

She had told her story, and paused for the result, which was worse than she had expected.

For a moment Arthur Tracy stood staring at her, while his face grew white as ashes, and into his dark eyes, usually so soft and mild, there came a fiery gleam like that of a madman, as he seemed for a time to be.

'Amy gone with Harold, my friend!' he said at last. 'Gone to New York! Gone to be married! Traitors! Vipers! Both of them. Curse them! If he were here I'd shoot him like a dog; and she—I believe I would kill her.'

He was walking the floor rapidly, and to Mrs. Crawford it seemed as if he really were unsettled in his mind, he talked so incoherently and acted so strangely.

'What else did she say?' he asked, suddenly, stopping and confronting her. 'You have not told me all. Did she speak of me? Let me see the note,' and he held his hand for it.

For a moment Mrs. Crawford hesitated, but as he grew more and more persistent she suffered him to take it, and then watched him as he read it, white the veins on his forehead began to swell until they stood out like a dark blue net-work against his otherwise pallid face.

'Yes,' he snapped between his white teeth. 'I did ask her to be my wife, and she refused, and with her soft, kittenish

ways made me more in love with her than ever, and more her dupe. I never suspected Harold, and when I told him of my disappointment, for I never kept a thing from him—traitor that he was—he laughed at me for losing my heart to my housekeeper's daughter! I, who, he said, might marry the greatest lady in the land. I could have knocked him down for his sneer at Amy, and I wish now I had, the wretch! He will not marry your daughter, madam; and if he does not I will kill him!'

He was certainly mad, and Mrs. Crawford shrank away from him an from something dangerous, and going to her room took her bed in a fit of frightful hysterics. This was followed by a state of nervous prostration, and for a few days she neither saw, nor heard of, nor inquired for Mr. Tracy. At the end of the fourth day, however, she was told by the house-maid that he had that morning packed his valise and, without a word to any one, had taken the train for New York. A week went by, and then there came a letter from him, which ran as follows:

'New York, May ——, 18—.

'Mrs. Crawford:—I am off for Europe to-morrow, and when I shall return is a matter of uncertainty. They are married; or at least I suppose so, for I found a list of the passengers who sailed in the Scotia, and the names, Mr. and Mrs. Hastings, were in it. So that saves me from breaking the sixth commandment, as I should have done if he hid played Amy false. I may not make myself known to them, but I shall follow them, and if he harms a hair of her head I shall shoot him yet. My brother Frank is to live at Tracy Park. That will suit his wife, and as you will not care to stay with her, I send

you a deed of that cottage in the lane by the wood where the gardener now lives. It is a pretty little place, and Amy liked it well. We used to meet there sometimes, and more than once I have sat with her on that seat under the elm tree, and it was there I asked her to be my wife. Alas! I loved her so much, and I love her still as I can never love another woman, and I could have made her so happy; but that is past, and I can only watch her at a distance. When I have anything to communicate, I will write again.

'Yours truly, 'Arthur Tracy.'

'P.S.—Take all the furniture in your room and Amy's, and whatever else is needful for your house. I shall tell Colvin to give you a thousand dollars, and when you want more let him know, I shall never forget that you are Amy's mother.

This was Arthur's letter to Mrs. Crawford, while to his brother he wrote:

'Dear Frank:—I am going to Europe for an indefinite length of time. Why I go it matters not to you or any one. I go to suit myself, and I want you to sell out your business at Langley and live at Tracy Park, where you can see to things as if they were your own. You will find everything straight and square, for Colvin is honest and methodical. He knows all about the bonds, and mortgages, and stocks, so you cannot do better than to retain him in your service, overseeing matters yourself, of course, and drawing for your salary what you think right and necessary for your support and for keeping up the place as it ought to be kept up. I enclose a power of attorney. When I want money I shall call upon Colvin. I may be gone for years and perhaps forever.

'I shall never marry, and when I die, what I have will naturally go to you. We have not been to each other much like brothers for the past few years, but I do not forget the old home in the mountains where we were boys together, and played, and quarreled, and slept up under the roof, where the blankets were hung to keep the snow from sifting through the rafters upon our bed.

'And, Frank, do you remember the bitter mornings, when the thermometer was below zero, and we performed our ablutions in the wood-shed, and the black-eye you gave me once for telling mother that you had not washed yourself at all, it was so cold? She sent you from the table, and made you go without your breakfast, and we had ham and johnny-cake toast that morning, too. That was long ago, and our lives are different now. There are marble basins, with silver chains and stoppers, at Tracy Pack, and you can have a hot bath every day if you like, in a room which would not shame Caracalla himself. And I know you will like it all, and Dolly, too; but don't make fools of yourselves. Nothing stamps a person as a *come-up* from the scum so soon as airs and ostentation. Be quiet and modest, as if you had always lived at Tracy Park. Imitate Squire Harrington and Mr. St. Claire. They are the true gentlemen, and were to the manner born. Be kind to Mrs. Crawford. She is a lady in every sense of the word, for she comes of good New England stock.

'And now, good-bye. I shall write sometimes, but not often.

'Your brother,

'Arthur Tracy.'

CHAPTER III.

MR. AND MRS. FRANK TRACY.

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Mr. Frank, in his small grocery store at Langley, was weighing out a pound of butter for the Widow Simpson, who was haggling with him about the price, when his brother's letter was brought to him by the boy who swept his store and did errands for him. But Frank was too busy just then to read it. There was a circus in the village that day, and it brought the country people into the town in larger numbers than usual. Naturally, many of them paid Frank a visit in the course of the morning, so that it was not until he went home to his dinner that be even thought of the letter, which was finally brought to his mind by his wife's asking if there was any news.

Mrs. Frank was always inquiring for and expecting news, but she was not prepared for what this day brought her. Neither was her husband, and when he read his brother's letter, which he did twice to assure himself that he was not mistaken, he sat for a moment perfectly bewildered, and staring at his wife, who was putting his dinner upon the table.

'Dolly,' he gasped at last, when he could speak at all —'Dolly, what do you think? Just listen. Arthur is going to Europe, to stay forever, perhaps, and has left us Tracy Park. We are going there to live, and you will be as grand a lady as Mrs. Atherton, of Brier Hill; or that young girl at Collingwood.'

Dolly had a platter of ham and eggs in her hand, and she never could tell, though she often tried to do so, what prevented her from dropping the whole upon the floor. She did spill some of the fat upon her clean tablecloth, she put the dish down so suddenly, and sinking into a chair, demanded what her husband meant. Was he crazy, or what?

'Not a bit of it,' he replied, recovering himself and beginning to realize the good fortune which had come to him. 'We are rich people, Dolly. Read for yourself;' and he passed her the letter, which she seemed to understand better than he had done.

'Why, yes,' she said. 'We are going to Tracy Park to live; but that doesn't make us rich. It is not ours.'

'I know that,' her husband replied. 'But we shall enjoy it all the same, and hold our heads with the best of them. Besides, don't you see, Arthur gives me *carte blanche* as to pay for my services, and, though I shall do right, it is not in human nature that I should not feather my nest when I have a chance. Some of that money ought to have been mine. I shall sell out at once if I can find a purchaser, and if I cannot, I shall rent the grocery and move out of this hole double quick.'

His ideas were growing faster than those of his wife, who was attached to Langley and its people, and shrank a little from the grander opening before her. She had once spent a few days at Tracy Park, as Arthur's guest, and had felt great restraint even in the presence of Mrs. Crawford and Amy, whom she recognized as ladies notwithstanding their position in the house. On that occasion she had, with her brother-in-law, been invited to dine at Brier Hill, the country-

seat of Mrs. Grace Atherton, a gay widow, whose dash and style had completely overawed the plain, matter-of-fact Dolly, who did not know what half the dishes were, or what she was expected to do. But, by watching Arthur, and declining some things which she felt sure were beyond her comprehension, she managed tolerably well, though when the dinner was over, and she could breathe freely again, she found that the back of her new silk gown was wet with perspiration, which had oozed from every pore during the hour and a half she had sat at the table. And even then her troubles were not ended, for coffee was served in the drawing-room, and as Arthur took his clear, she did not know whether she was expected to do the same or not, but finally ventured to say she would have hers with 'trimmin's.' There was a mischievous twinkle in Mrs. Atherton's eyes which disconcerted her so much that she spilled her coffee in her lap, and felt, as she afterward told a friend to whom she was describing the dinner, as if she could have been knocked down with a feather.

'Such folderol!' she said. 'Changing your plates all the time—eating peas in the winter greener than grass, with nothing under the sun with them, and drinking coffee out of a cup about as big as a thimble. Give me the good old-fashioned way, I say, with peas and potatoes, and meat, and things, and cups that will hold half a pint and have some thickness that you can feel in your mouth.'

And now she was to exchange the good, old-fashioned way for what she termed 'folderol,' and for a time she did not like it. But her husband was so delighted and eager that he succeeded in impressing her with some of his

enthusiasm, and after he had returned to his grocery, and her dishes were washed, she removed her large kitchen apron, and pulling down the sleeves of her dress, went and stood before the mirror, where she examined herself critically and not without some degree of complacency.

Her hair was black and glossy, or would be if she had time to care for it as it ought to be cared for; her eyes were bright, and perhaps in time she might learn to use them as Mrs. Atherton used hers.

Mrs. Atherton stood as the criterion for everything elegant and fashionable, and naturally it was with her that she compared herself.

'She is older than I am,' she said to herself; 'there are crow-tracks around her eyes, and her complexion is not a bit better than mine was before I spoiled it with soap-suds, and stove heat, and everything else.'

Then she looked at her hands, but they were red and rough, and the nails were broken and not at all like the nails which an expert has polished for an hour or more. Mrs. Atherton's diamond rings would be sadly out of place on Dolly's fingers, but time and abstinence from work would do much for them, she reflected, and after all it would be nice to live in a grand house, ride in a handsome carriage, and keep a hired girl to do the heavy work. So, on the whole, she began to feel quite reconciled to her change of situation, and to wonder how she ought to conduct herself in view of her future position. She had intended going to the circus that night, but she gave that up, telling her husband that it was a second-class amusement any way, and she did not believe that either Mrs. Atherton or the young lady at

Collingwood patronized such places. So they staid at home and talked together of what they should do at Tracy Park, and wondered if it was their duty to ask all their Langley friends to visit them. Mrs. Frank, as the more democratic of the two, decided that it was. She was not going to begin by being *stuck up*, she said, and when at last she left Langley four weeks later, every man, woman, and child of her familiar acquaintance in town had been heartily invited to call upon her at Tracy Park if ever they came that way.

Frank had disposed of his business at a reasonable price, and had rented his house with all the furniture, except such articles as his wife insisted upon taking with her. The bureau, and bedstead, and chairs which she and Frank had bought together in Springfield just before their marriage, the Boston rocker her mother had given her, and in which the old mother had sat until the day she died, the cradle in which she had rocked her first baby boy who was lying in the Langley grave-yard, were dear to the wife and mother, and though her husband told her she could have no use for them at Tracy Park, where the furniture was of the costliest kind, and that she would probably put them in the servants' rooms or attic, there was enough of sentiment in her nature to make her cling to them as something of the past, and so they were boxed up and forwarded by freight to Tracy Park, whither Mr. and Mrs. Tracy followed them a week later.

The best dressmaker in Langley had been employed upon the wardrobe of Mrs. Frank, who, in her travelling dress of some stuff goods of a plaided pattern, too large and too bright to be quite in good taste, felt herself perfectly *au fait* as the mistress of Tracy Park, until she reached

Springfield, where Mrs. Grace Atherton, accompanied by a tall, elegant looking young lady, entered the car and took a seat in front of her. Neither of the ladies noticed her, but she recognized Mrs. Atherton at once and guessed that her companion was the young lady from Collingwood, who, rumor said, was soon to marry her guardian, Mr. Richard Harrington, although he was old enough to be her father.

Dolly scanned both the ladies very closely, noting every article of their costumes from their plain linen collars and cuffs to their quiet dresses of gray, which seemed so much more in keeping with the dusty cars than her buff and purple plaid.

'I ain't like them, and never shall be,' she said to herself, with a bitter sense of her inferiority pressing upon her. 'I ain't like them, and never shall be, if I live to be a hundred. I wish we were not going to be grand. I shall never get used to it,' and the hot tears sprang to her eyes as she longed to be back in the kitchen where she had worked so hard.

But Dolly did not know then how readily people can forget the life of toil behind them and adapt themselves to one of luxury and ease; and with her the adaptability commenced in some degree the moment Shannondale station was reached, and she saw the handsome carriage waiting for them. A carriage finer far and more modern than the one from Collingwood, in which Mrs. Atherton and the young lady took their seats, laughing and chatting so gayly that they did not see the woman in the big plaid who stood watching them with a rising feeling of jealousy and resentment as she thought of Mrs. Atherton, 'She does not even notice me.'

But when the Tracy carriage drew up, Grace Atherton saw and recognized her, and whispered, in an aside to her companion:

'For goodness' sake, Edith, look! There are the Tracys, our new neighbors.' Then she bowed to Mrs. Tracy, and said: 'Ah, I did not know you were on the train.'

'I sat right behind you,' was Mrs. Tracy's rather ungracious reply: and then, not knowing whether she ought to do it or not, she introduced her husband.

'Yes, Mr. Tracy—how do you do?' was Mrs. Atherton's response; but she did not in return introduce the young girl, whose dark eyes were scanning the strangers so curiously, and this Dolly took as a slight and inwardly resented it.

But Mrs. Atherton had spoken to her and that was something, and helped to keep her spirits up as she was driven along the turnpike to the entrance of the park.

On the occasion of Mrs. Frank's first and only visit to her brother-in-law it was winter, and everything was covered with snow. But it was summer now, the month of roses, and fragrance, and beauty, and as the carriage passed up the broad, smooth avenue which led to the house, Dolly's eyes wandered over the well-kept lawn, sweet with the scent of newly-mown grass, the parteries of flowers and shrubs, the winding walks and clumps of evergreens here and there formed into fancy rooms, with rustic seats and tables under the over-hanging boughs; and when she reflected that all this was hers to enjoy for many years, and perhaps for her life-time, she felt the first stirring of that pride, and satisfaction, and self-assertion which was to grow upon her so rapidly and transform her from the plain, unpretentious

woman who had washed, and ironed, and baked, and mended in the small house in Langley into the arrogant, haughty lady of fashion, who courted only the rich and looked down upon her less fortunate neighbors. Now, however, she was very meek and humble, and trembled as she alighted from the carriage before the great stone house which was to be her home.

'Isn't this grand, Dolly?' her husband said, rubbing his hands together and looking about him complacently.

'Yes, very grand,' Dolly answered him; but somehow it makes me feel weaker than water. I suppose, though, I shall get accustomed to it.'

CHAPTER IV.

GETTING ACCUSTOMED TO IT.

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In the absence of Mrs. Crawford, who for a week or more had been domesticated in the cottage in the lane, as the house was designated which Arthur had given her, there was no one to receive the strangers except the cook and the house-maid, and as Mrs. Tracy entered the hall the two came forward, bristling with criticism, and ready to resent anything like interference in the new-comers.

The servants at the park had not been pleased with the change of administration. That Mr. Arthur was a gentleman whom it was an honor to serve, they all conceded; but with regard to the new master and mistress, they had grave doubts. Although none of them had been at the park on the occasion of Mrs. Tracy's first visit there, many rumors concerning her had reached them, and she would scarcely have recognized herself could she have heard the remarks of which she was the subject. That she had worked in a factory—which was true—was her least offence, for it was whispered that once, when the winter was unusually severe, and work scarce, she had gone to a soup-house, and even asked and procured coal from the poor-master for herself and her mother.

This was not true, and would have argued nothing against her as a woman if it had been, but the cook and the house-maid believed it, and passed sundry jokes together