

her head at him, she discovered him in the act of making one of his favourite faces at the back of the unconscious governess.

Her shocked "Rudel!" brought his puckered features into order at once; he put his hands into his pocket and executed a prolonged whistle.

"I say, missus," he observed, when he had sufficiently relieved his feelings, "have you told Alison about her room?"

"No, not yet, Rudel," returned the much-enduring Miss Leigh.

"Then, I shall. I call it a nasty trick of Missie's; no one but a girl would do such a thing; here she has been and taken your room, Alison, with mother's things in it; and nothing the missus can say will get her to give it up. Missus is awfully wild about it, ain't you, missus?"

"Oh, Rudel! do be quiet," remonstrated Miss Leigh, in the old worried voice Alison knew so well. "What a tiresome boy you are! and I wanted to tell your sister quietly. Alison, my dear, I am very sorry, but Mabel has appropriated your room, and most improperly refuses to give it up. I spoke to your father about it last night, but he only said it did not signify, that he expected you would not mind, as your visit to us might not be a very lengthened one. I think you had better speak to him yourself."

"I will see about it," returned Alison quickly, anxious to stem the governess's nervous flow of words. "Am I to sleep here to-night?" as Miss Leigh opened the door of a back room.

"I have made it as nice as I can," returned Miss Leigh, apologetically, "but I am afraid you will think it an ugly room; it wants re-papering, and the carpet is dreadfully old."

"Oh, it will do very well," observed Alison, quietly; but she looked round her with a sinking heart, nevertheless. It was Mabel's old room, and very shabbily furnished, and looked over the kitchen garden and the saw-mills. A perfect forest of timber in neat piles stretched as far as she could see; in front were the hideous pulleys and cranes. For one moment a very different prospect seemed to rise before Alison's aching eyes; a little room with soft green walls and covered with Indian matting; a snowy tent bed in one corner, a dainty couch, with a low table and a vase of crimson and yellow roses on it; outside a shadowy lawn, and a gleam of water shining between the willows; but, with a vast effort, she shut out the bitter sweet recollection.

She listened with well-assumed patience as Miss Leigh pointed out the various little improvements she had effected. Though Alison did not know it, the easy chair and little round table were taken from Miss Leigh's own room; the fuchsias and geraniums in the blue vase were Roger's gift; and even Rudel had contributed the big green fern that stood on the window ledge.

"Now, I will send you up your tea," observed Miss Leigh at last, when the boxes had arrived, and Rudel had assisted to unstrap them; "there is no

hurry, my dear; you will have nearly two hours to yourself to unpack and rest."

Alison tried to answer cheerfully, but her head was aching in earnest now; the tears were very near the surface again, but she battled with them bravely.

"I will have my tea and then rest a little; the unpacking can wait for tomorrow," she thought. "Oh, Aunt Di," laying her head against the frilled cover of the easy chair, "are you thinking of your little pilgrim now?" And then she took out the dear letter and read it over again.

(To be continued.)

"LORDS AND LADIES."

EARLY in May, while fresh flowers greet us continually, and the hedge-rose grows richer as the sweet spring days lengthen, quickly unfolding their treasures, you will find beds of broad shining leaves among the brambles and young nettles, where you have looked in vain for primroses, and thought to find hidden violets. But these beds of shining leaves will soon hide some treasures of their own—a "lord" or a "lady" shall give us some message from among them to-day. These arrow-shaped leaves grow straight out of the ground without the help of branches; they are often spotted with purplish black, and are so glossy that they reflect the spring sunshine by hundreds as the leaves lie packed together on the hedge bank.

Presently we see among them a pale, leaf-like sheath, sometimes spotted like the leaves, protecting and hiding the strangest flower; for that crimson or violet-coloured, or still green column is a flower, or at least the flower is on it. In botanical language, the hood or covering is a *spathe*, and the curious collection of bodies within form the *spadix*. *Stamens* and *pistils* surround the coloured columns, and by the end of August the delicate rows of pink and white beading will have disappeared, and there will be large scarlet and orange-coloured berries in a dense cluster, standing half a foot high. Leaves and flowers will have passed away, and only the roots and fruit of this beautiful plant will remain.

This arum, or cuckoo-pint, is an irritant poison; and there have been many fatal cases known from children eating the berries, and even the leaves.

The root is a tuber, which with great care can be so prepared that it will make a wholesome food, very much like sago. In Portland Island this preparation formed quite a little trade, but it is less carried on now than formerly. In Queen Elizabeth's time the arum was called "starch plant," because starch was made from its roots for stiffening lawn, which was then just becoming fashionable, and being so thin, needed strong starch to stiffen it. The Dutchwomen, it is said, who came over to teach the English ladies how to starch their linen, made them such proficient that the ruffs soon grew to be more than a yard deep! True "lords and ladies" to be so useful in their generation!

Let us gather a handful of these green hoods, and sit down and sort them over, as we used to do when we were children, and put the dark "lords" on one side, and the fair "ladies" on the other. Quickly discern at a glance, that is just what the true "lady" will be—"fair," because fair words and fair deeds will be always hers; delicate in colour, because true refinement and outward show are never found together; seen best in its green

protecting hood, because the true "lady's" home is the place where she shines, where her beauty and fairness, and gentle life is quietly ripening to its full usefulness.

But our wild arum lady is full of poison. Ay! so is our gentle young lady too, by nature. And just as the poison can be overcome by various processes, so must the real lady's nature be changed; and much will have to be tried by fire, and much ground to powder, and much cast aside. When all the purifying is over, there will be nothing but the good and wholesome left. You see the good and the bad were always there, side by side; but the bad overcame the good always, while it was left to itself, and there was much hard work to get rid of it. If our life is to be the true life, it will have to be the same with us. Good and bad are side by side, and God only knows the strength of the bad in the very best of us. Till we learn it in some measure ourselves, and in His strength fight against it and conquer it, we can not be said to be leading the noble life, we are neither blessing others nor lessing ourselves. It is no easy thing to be always fighting and struggling against the besetting sin, it is no pleasant picture of life, the struggle of good and evil; but it is a true one, and one the young must learn if they would be conquerors in the strife. The happiest side of the picture lies in the thought of "One who can turn all hearts as the rivers in the south." We shall never be able to rest on the blessedness of that thought till we have utterly given up ourselves, our own resolution, our own struggles, as being of the least use alone, and taken our hearts to Him and given them up utterly to Him to change for us. Then the time life begins—the noble life of the true lady that has known self-restraint and mortification, and much patient endurance, before it gained its full beauty. Girls! if you would attain to this, begin now, now this very day, take some of the poison that is in you and fight against it bravely; lives never will be lovely with poison lurking in them; you know its signs—pride, envy, vanity, selfishness, slothfulness—ah! we will not go on with the ugly list, you know it for yourselves!

There are a few words in the beginning of this paper that we may fitly take for its close. The metaphor will not hold good if we think of the arum as a poisonous plant, as it is to man; but rather let us consider it as the birds' dainty autumn fare, who feed on its brilliant berries and suffer no harm. "By the end of August, leaves and flowers will have passed away, and only the roots and fruit of this beautiful plant will remain." So may it be with us! The leaves and flowers of youth, the beauty and gaiety must pass and be no more. In the time of our autumn may there be a firm root of faith hidden, and the fruits of a holy life visible.

The leaves and flowers have helped to attain this blessed end. This is your leaf and flower-time, see that it lead to the fruit time by-and-by. All nature teaches us "patient continuance in well-doing!"

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MISCELLANEOUS

FEARFUL (C. Y.).—You are by no means called upon to reprove those older than yourself. We can feel a love for goodness and truth to begin with, and that will bring love to God and Christ.

JENNY'S BAWBEE.—Snowdrops are propagated by bulbs, not seeds. Perhaps you mean bulbs when you say seeds, and in that case if they failed to come up you probably planted them too deeply in the soil. SELKIE.—We think you have been misinformed about our competitions. You will find the full announcement at page 64, vol. vi.