The Mystery of Miss Cissy Lister.

SA Y, Roger,” exclaimed I, softly, but with earnestness, as I hastened into my friend’s room (then I looked carefully to see if the door was securely closed), “will you believe it? The fair neighbor is from Mundsport!"

“From Mundsport!” cried Roger, with as much surprise as I myself felt.

“And her name is Miss Cissy Lister,” I added, both to revive his memory and to gratify my own taste for alliteration; “I saw it upon a letter for her on the hat-tree.”

“Miss Cissy Lister, from Mundsport,” repeated Roger, cogitating; “there’s no family of Listers in Mundsport.”

“Strange, is it not?” I asked; “and yet—”

“And yet, as you say,” interrupted Roger, who is always taking the words out of my mouth and turning what might have been bright coming from me, into what is utterly commonplace coming from him,—“and yet, as you say, it is hard to believe that these rooms have fallen into the hands of any but Mundsport people. Half a dozen years is a long time for three rooms in a lodging-house to remain in the possession of one set whose individuals are constantly changing. Do you recollect how bitterly we wept when we discovered that a stranger, as we thought, was actually about to invade our sacred precincts? But now those tears were all in vain.” And Roger shed a few pearly drops at the thought of all the tears that had been wasted through a mistake.

“But remember,” said I,—for I am always inclined to the bright side of affairs,—“remember, too, our joy in finding that the new comer, though, as we then thought, not from Mundsport, was, nevertheless, a lovely creature of feminine flesh and blood, instead of the intolerable ogre we had but too good reason to expect.”

“Ah, yes!” replied Roger, when he had recovered from the first poignancy of his grief; “how beautiful she is, how graceful, how—how modest, how angelic. Oh, but to think of the insuperable obstacles that separate us from her!” And the poor fellow again gave way to overpowering emotions.

“Insuperable! No! Mehereule!” cried I; “you shall hear, Roger, and you will rejoice as I do that the obstacles are no longer insuperable. This afternoon, as I was sitting in my room with the door into the hall open as usual so that I might see her when she passed out, I heard a loud and interesting rustling in her room. Presently her door opened, and, with that indescribable noise which women make when they move,—a sound like that of the breath of the morning stirring the poplar leaves,—she came forth. Involuntarily I started from my place. The motion was reflex, unintended, unknown, until I perceived that I had startled the nymph, the fairy, the goddess,—call her what you will, so that she be divine. For a moment she bent her limpid eyes upon me; then, with a rising blush, she turned to go her way. But fate would not permit that this encounter should be productive of no more ultimate relationship. Before she reached the stairs her dainty mouchoir was wafted from her unconscious grasp upon the eddying breeze of her advance. Quicker than thought,—yes, swifter than the lightnings of Jove,—I sprang to return the perfumed fabric to its owner. Pain would I have preserved it as incense to be offered to my heart; but the faint scent did but salute my nostrils, then went to soothe her fairer ones. One instant I breathed the perfume of her presence; one instant looked at the thought of all the tears that had been wasted through a mistake.

“Two amatory doves that perched and billed in effigy upon her bonnet’s brim, two silver clasps that bound her cloak about her breast, two threads that drew her gloves with greater closeness to her wrists, two lowly buckles that fastened her dainty arctics,—not one of them felt for the other such yearning as then arose, within my heart, for her.