At the commencement of the nineteenth century there still lived at Ostend the descendants of Finn. Their arms consist of an imperial eagle and two barques proper, on a field gules.

Vanessa.

It was a small country town. Country towns are usually small, but this one was particularly so, not only as to extent and population, but the moral atmosphere seemed to hedge and bind one in as completely as if actual bars intervened. Revanho was literary,—the seat of a college, which, if not famous, yet had sent out sons into the world who had reflected a glorious light upon the pages of its history, which its worshipers loved to linger over and talk about. Everything radiated from the college; church, state, and fashion were bound up within her folds. Outside, all was heretical, and the blackness of darkness. Those intimately connected with the institution, and their families, formed the inner set, and around them, in gradually widening circles, came the lawyer, doctor, and gentleman of leisure; then the larger shop-keepers, smaller traders, and so on to the day-laborer. Everything was conducted in a sort of "Village of Cramford" way, which savored of an age apart from the busy world, that turned so quickly on its axis in the great beyond; which lay before each Revanhoite as wicked and forbidding as Dahomey, and almost as unknown. Once a month the heathen were discussed, and that rich pamphlet of thought, the Missionary Herald, ransacked for news from Micronesia to Trebizond. The districts under cultivation were divided among the professors, and each one was supposed to take charge of his field, and to represent its condition at each monthly concert.

Small literary entertainments revolved around the grim old building of learning, and once in awhile a state supper, conducted with Chesterfieldian politeness, created a stir. Love's affairs did occur, but generally were nipped in the bud, being looked upon as a sort of legalized immorality. Among the dwellers of this quiet neighborhood there had drifted, many years before the commencement of this history, a lady of uncertain years, who, after figuring in the outside world as a beauty, had fled as soon as she saw her charms disappearing, one after another, to the quiet of Revanho. There, upon a small annuity, she lived in genteel poverty, and endeavored to make up, by the sprightliness of her manner, for the loss that the heavy hand of Time had inflicted on her person. Her form was slight and girlish, and the vivacity of her manner would lead one to imagine that the years had passed her over after reaching sixteen, were it not for the wrinkled lineaments that spoke of baffled art, care, trial, and vexation of spirit. A wig of yellow hair, with cork-screw curls that nodded and bobbed about on each side of her face, adorned her head, and seemed a sort of accompaniment to her voice. Her naturally artistic mind had educated eye and hand, and both had been brought to bear in the matter of dress. The arrangement of each particular ribbon was a study; every fold a thought; and the tout ensemble the subject of long contemplation. But when once achieved, there was no further need for thought; it was complete in every line and detail, from throat to hem,—all, except the rippling laughter of girlhood and the short blonde curls.

Miss Van Ecbur was very proud of the distinctive van that set her so completely apart from the clay of common mould, and was forever talking of the old Patroon families, with long, unpronounceable names, who from time immemorial had lived at their ease, and watched the spinning and delving of the lower stratum. History does not speak of any conspicuous ancestral mental attainments, but leaves one to infer that they were broad-shouldered, short-figured, abdominally prominent, lethargic individuals, who probably had a purpose to serve in coming into the world, but the interpretation of which rested only with the Giver of all things.

How it came to pass that the lithe form and effervescing brain of Miss Van E. could ever