

others moved off in a group, leaving them stranded. Mrs Baldwin beckoned them to her table with her fan.

"Well, twinnies, yours was the noisiest table in the room," she laughed. "I was quite ashamed of you! When these quiet girls get going—!" she added expressively to her group. The twins flushed, standing with shamed eyes averted. In the rooms above, the music had started, and the bright procession moved up the stairs with laughter and the shine of lights on white shoulders: they all seemed to belong together, to be glad of one another. "Well, run along

"My dears," she said, "these two good friends were going to run away just because they do not dance the cotillion. We can't allow that. Suppose you take them to the library and make them wholly comfortable. Indeed, they have danced enough, Mr. White; I am thankful to have them stop. I will take the blame if their partners are angry."

She nodded a smiling dismissal. Disconcerted, wholly ill at ease, the four went obediently to the library, deserted now that the cotillion was beginning. The two men struggled valiantly with the conversation, but the twins sat

sleepily. "Mayn't we go to bed?"

"Oh, for pity's sake—go!" was the exasperated answer.

In the morning the twins appeared braced for revolution. When a reception for that afternoon was mentioned, they announced firmly that they were not going.

"I think you are wise," said Mrs. Baldwin, amiably. "You both look tired."

They were conscious of disappointment as well as relief; it was the establishment of a principle they wanted, not coddling. Three weeks went by in the same debilitating peace. The twins were smiled on and left worldly free. They had almost come to believe in a bloodless victory, when Mrs. Baldwin struck—a masterly attack where they were weakest. Her weapon was—not welcome temper, but restrained pathos.

"A mere fourteen at dinner and a few coming in to dance afterward, and I do want you twinnies to be there. Now, I have not asked one thing of you for three weeks; don't you think you owe Mother some little return?"

"But—!" began the twins, with a rush of the well-known arguments. Mrs. Baldwin would not combat.

"I ask it as a favour, dear girls," she said, gently. They clung to their refusal, but were obviously weakening when she rose to her climax: "Mr. White and Mr. Morton have accepted!" She left them with that, confident and humming to herself.

The twins stared at each other in open misery. Reappear now, after the solemn declaration they had made to those two! Their cheeks burned at the thought. They mounted to their room to formulate their resistance, and found two exquisite new gowns, suitable for fairy princesses, spread out like snares. "To please Mother" seemed to be written on every artful fold. And Mrs. Baldwin was not a rich woman, for her way of life; such gowns meant self-denial somewhere. The twins had tears in their eyes.

"But if we give in now, we're lost!" they cried.

Nothing more was said about the dinner. Mrs. Baldwin gaily assuming success, but avoiding the topic. The twins wore a depressed and furtive air. On the fatal day they had a long interview with Miss Browne, of the Browne School, and came away solemn with excitement, to shut themselves in their room for the rest of the afternoon.

A few minutes before the dinner-hour, Mrs. Baldwin, triumphant in satin and lace, paused at their door.

"Ready, twinnies?" she began, then stared as though disbelieving her eyes. In the glow of the student-lamp sat the twins, books in their hands and piled high on the table beside them; their smooth, dark hair was unpompadoured, their shoulders were lost in the dark blouses of every day.

"What does this mean?" Mrs. Baldwin asked shortly, fire in her eyes.

"Mother, we told you we could not go to any more parties, and why," Cora answered, a note of pleading in her voice.

"We begin teaching on Monday in Miss Browne's school," added Cora, more stoutly. "We have tried your way for years and years, mother. Now we want to try ours."

Mrs. Baldwin's face bertha rose and fell sharply.

"Indeed. I am sorry to disappoint you, but so long as you live under my

roof, you will have to conform to the ways of my household."

"Then, mother, we cannot stay under your roof."

"As you please! I leave the choice entirely to you." She swept out, leaving them breathless but resolute.

"I am glad of it!" said Dora with trembling lips.

In explaining their absence at dinner, Mrs. Baldwin was slightly humorous about the twins' devotion; one could not weather a headache without the other. Mr. White and Mr. Morton exchanged glances, and showed interest in the topic, as if they were on the track of some new sociological fact.

Later in the evening the twins, their spirits restored, stole to the top of the stairs and peered down at the whirling couples, exultant not to be among them. Mr. White was standing just below, and he glanced up, as if he might have been listening. His face brightened.

"May I come up?" he signalled, and mounted two steps at a time, keen interest in his thin, intellectual face.

"Is it really headache, or is it revolution?" he asked without preface. "Morton and I have been longing to know all the evening."

"Revolution," said the twins.

"How very interesting! Do you know, we came to-night just to see if you would be there. You—you staggered us, the other evening. We were glad when you didn't appear—if you won't understand. It is so unexpected, in this environment. I shall be curious to see how far you can carry it out." He was leaning against the banister, looking at them as if they were abstract propositions rather than young girls, and they felt unwontedly at ease.

"To the very end!" Dora asserted. "We begin teaching Monday, and—and we have to find a place to board!" Her colour rose a little, but she smiled.

"That is pluck," he commented. "We can help you there; I know a number of places. When do you want to move?"

"To-morrow," they answered in unison.

He consulted an engagement book, reflected a few moments, then made a note.

"Morton or I will call for you to-morrow at three," he answered with business-like brevity. "I think I know just the place, but we will give you a choice. If you really wish to move in at once, you could have your things packed, ready to be sent for."

"Oh, we do!" said Cora. He glanced meditatively at their fine and glowing faces.

"Of course you won't be comfortable, luxurious as you are here," he warned them, with a nod toward the great panelled hall. Mrs. Baldwin passed the drawing-room door below with the stately tread of a reviewing officer.

"Oh, we don't care!" they exclaimed eagerly.

The next day their mother treated the twins as if they were not. She spoke no word to them and did not seem to hear their husky little efforts at reconciliation. They found it hard to remember persistently that they were revolutionists rather than children in disgrace. She was unapproachable in her own room when Mr. White and Mr. Morton came for them.

"Well, we can't help it," they said, sadly, as they looked their two trunks and went down the stairs.

Three hours later the twins had entered a new world and were rapturously



"After you've worked through the family, you can have a ripping old time," Cora heard one youth explain to another.

and dance your little feet off," said Mrs Baldwin hurriedly.

They hurried away, and without a word mounted by the back stairs to their own room. When their eyes met, a flash of anger kindled, grew to a blaze.

"Oh, I won't stand it, I won't!" exclaimed Dora, jerking the wreath of forget-me-nots out of her hair and throwing it on the dressing-table. "We have been humiliated long enough. Cora, we're twenty-four; it is time we had our own way."

Cora was breathing hard. "Dora, I will never go to another party as long as I live," she said.

"Nor I," declared Dora.

They sat down side by side on the couch to discuss ways and means. A wright seemed to be lifted off their lives. In the midst of their eager planning the door opened, and Mrs Baldwin looked in at them with a displeased frown.

"Girls, what does this mean?" she exclaimed. "Come down at once. What are you thinking of, to leave your guests like this?"

The twins felt that the moment had come, and instinctively clasped hands as they rose to meet it.

"Mother," said Dora firmly, "we have done with parties forever and ever. No one likes us nor wants to dance with us, and we can't stand it any more."

"Miss Browne still wants us to come there and teach," Cora added, her voice husky but her eyes bright. "So we can be self-supporting, if—if you don't approve. We are twenty-four, and we have to live our own lives."

They stood bravely for annihilation. Mrs. Baldwin laughed.

"You foolish twinnies! I know—some one has been hurting your feelings. Believe me my dears, even I did not always get just the partner my heart was set on! And I cried over it in secret, just like any other little girl. That is life, you know—we can't give up before it. Now smooth yourselves and come down, for some of them are leaving."

She blew them a kiss and went off smiling. After a dejected silence Dora took up the forget-me-not wreath and replaced it.

"I suppose we might as well finish out this evening," she said. "But the revolution has begun, Cora!"

"The revolution has begun," Cora echoed.

In the drawing-room they found Mrs. Tait in talking with Mr. Morton and Mr. White. They were evidently trying to say good night, but she was holding them, as inexorably as if she had hid hands on their coats; or so it seemed to the troubled twins. She summoned her daughters with her bright, amused glance.

stricken to shamed dumbness: no topic could thrive in the face of their mute rigidity. Silences stalked the failing efforts. Mr. White's eyes clung to the clock while his throat dilated with secret yawns; Mr. Morton twisted restlessly and finally let a nervous sigh escape. Dora suddenly clasped her hands tightly together.

"We hate it just as much as you do," she said distinctly.

They turned startled faces toward her. Cora paled, but flew to her sister's aid.

"We knew you didn't want to come," she added with tremulous frankness. "We would have let you off if we could. If you want to go now, we won't be hurt."

They rose, and so did the bewildered visitors.

"I am afraid you have—misunderstood," began Mr. White.

"No; we have always understood everybody," said Dora, "but we pretended not to, because mother— But now we have done with society. It is a revolution, and this is our last party. Good-night!" She held out her hand.

"Good-night," repeated Cora, offering hers. The guests took them with the air of culprits; relief was evidently drowned in astonishment.

"Well, good night—if we must," they said awkwardly.

Mrs. Baldwin, looking into the library half an hour later, found the twins sitting there alone.

"Where are your cavaliers?" she demanded.

"They left long ago," Dora explained,



"The men have no mercy—they never let them rest an instant."