



Maria Ruiz de Burton

WHO
WOULD
HAVE
THOUGHT
IT?

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Who Would Have Thought It?

My Story of the American Civil War (Autobiographical Novel)

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CHAPTER I. THE ARRIVAL.

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"What would the good and proper people of this world do if there were no rogues in it,—no social delinquents? The good and proper, I fear, would perish of sheer inanity,—of hypochondriac lassitude, or, to say the least, would grow very dull for want of convenient whetstones to sharpen their wits. Rogues are useful."

So saying, the Rev. Mr. Hackwell scrambled up the steep side of a crazy buggy, which was tilting ominously under the pressure of the Rev. Mr. Hammerhard's weight, and sat by him. Then the Rev. Hackwell spread over the long legs of his friend Hammerhard a well-worn buffalo-robe, and tucked the other end carefully under his own graceful limbs, as if his wise aphorism upon rogues had suggested to him the great necessity of taking good care of himself and friend, all for the sake of the good and dull of this world.

May I inquire whether present company suggested the philosophical query and highly moral aphorism? and if so, whether I am to be classed with the dull good, or the useful whetstones?" asked Mr. Hammerhard the reverend.

Mr. Hackwell smiled a smile which seemed to say, "Ah, my boy! you know full well where we ought to be classed;" but he answered,

"I was thinking of Dr. Norval."

"Of Dr. Norval! And in what category?"

"In that of a whetstone, of course."

Mr. Hammerhard looked at his friend, and waited for him to explain his abstruse theory more clearly.

"I was thinking," Mr. Hackwell continued, "how, in default of real rogues (there being none such in our community, eh, Ham? ahem!), our good and proper people have made a temporary whetstone of Dr. Norval's back. Which fact goes to prove that a social delinquent—real or supposed—is a necessity to good people. As for the charity of the thing, why should people who have all the other virtues care to have charity?"

"An excellent text for next Sunday," said Mr. Hammerhard, laughing. Mr. Hackwell joined in the laugh, and with a series of pulls and jerks to the reins, he began to turn slowly the big head of a yellow horse of a Gothic build and slow motion, in the direction of the railroad depot, for the two divines were going to meet Dr. Norval, who was expected to arrive from California in the six P.M. train from New York that evening.

The yellow beast hung down his big head, put out his tongue, shut tight his left eye, and started, looking intently at the road with the right eye opened wide, as if he had been in the habit of wearing an eyeglass, which he had just dropped as he started.

Hi! hi! hi! went the crazy buggy, as if following the big-headed beast just to laugh at him, but in reality only squeaking for want of oiling and from great old age.

"Confound the brute! He squints and lolls his tongue out worse than ever!" exclaimed Mr. Hackwell. "And the rickety vehicle fairly laughs at us! Hear it!"

Hi! hi! creaked the buggy very opportunely.

"Look here, Ham, it is your turn to grease the wheels now. I greased them last time," added Hackwell.

"Greasing the wheels won't prevent the crazy, dilapidated concern from squeaking and going to pieces, any more than your sermons prevent some members of your congregation from gossiping and going to the devil," answered Mr. Hammerhard, sententiously.

"I wish I could send them there in this wagon, all, all, the palsied beast, and the rotten wagon, and the penurious Yankees, that won't give us a decent conveyance," said Mr. Hackwell.

"All the rich people of our town belong to your congregation,--all the rich and the good. Make them shell out, Hack; you are the fashion," Hammerhard observed.

"Yes, that is the reason I drive this fashionable turn-out. No, they won't give except it is squeezed out of them. They are *so good*, you know. My only hope is in Dr. Norval."

"Because he is a whetstone?" asked Ham.

"Exactly. Because he is the only man who don't pretend to be a saint. Because he is the only one in this village who has a soul, but makes no parade of the trouble it gives him to save it."

His virtuous wife and Mrs. Cackle will save his soul for him. You would think so if you had heard Mrs. Cackle's conversation to-day with my wife.

"The old lady gave us a hash of it well spiced. We went over the vast field of Mrs. Norval's virtues, and the vaster one of the doctor's errors, all of which have their root in the doctor's most unnatural liking for foreigners. That liking was the cause of the doctor's sending his only son Julian to be

educated in Europe,-as if the best schools on earth were not in New England, -and Heaven knows what might have become of Julian if his heroic mother had not sent for him. He might have been a Roman Catholic, for all we know. That liking was also the cause of the doctor's sending Isaac to be a good-for-nothing clerk in sinful Washington, among foreigners, when he could have remained in virtuous New England to be a useful farmer. And finally, impelled by that liking, the doctor betook himself to California, which is yet full of *natives*.' And as a just retribution for such perverse liking, the doctor was wellnigh 'roasted by the natives,' said the old lady. Whereupon, in behalf of truth, I said, 'Not by the natives, madam. The people called "*the natives*" are mostly of Spanish descent, and are not cannibals. The wild Indians of the Colorado River were doubtless the ones who captured the doctor and tried to make a meal of him.' 'Perhaps so,' said the old lady, visibly disappointed. "To me they are all alike,-Indians, Mexicans, or Californians,—they are all horrid. But my son Beau says that our just laws and smart lawyers will soon "*freeze them out*." That as soon as we take their lands from them they will never be heard of any more, and then the Americans, with God's help, will have all the land that was so righteously, acquired through a just war and a most liberal payment in money.' 'Ain't that patriotism and Christian faith for you?" added Mr. Hackwell.

"For yourself, since it comes from one of the pillars of your congregation," answered Mr. Hammerhard, laughing, Mr. Hackwell too joining in the laugh, and touching up the horse, which tripped as he always did when pretending to trot, and the quickened motion caused the crazy vehicle to

join in also with a series of squeaks, which made Mr. Hackwell's blood curdle, and set his teeth on edge, although a philosopher.

Whilst the two divines thus beguiled their way to the depot, the subject of their conversation-Mrs. Cackle-made hers laboriously towards home, thinking what pretext she could invent to be at Dr. Norval's when he arrived.

"I would give worlds to know his version of his conduct. Maybe - like Mr. Hackwell — he won't admit that the native Californians are savages; of course not, being foreigners. Mrs. Norval, though, will soon show him we ain't to be fooled."

Hi! hi! hi! she heard; and the squint and the lolling tongue of the parson's horse passed by her, as if in derisive triumph.

"The aggravating beast!" exclaimed Mrs. Cackle, - meaning the horse,-just as Mr. Hackwell bowed to her most politely. "Going for the doctor?" said she to the divines, as if she thought the turn-out needed physic; but the answer was lost in the squeaking of the wagon. "I know they are. I'll go and let Mrs. Norval know it," said the old lady, and walked briskly on.

Jack Sprig—Miss Lavinia Sprig's poodle-sat bolt upright upon Mrs. Norval's front doorsteps, watching the shadows of coming events whilst supper was cooking, as Mrs. Cackle came sneaking by the picket-fence. Jack was happy, sporting a new blue ribbon around his white neck, and the fragrance of broiled chicken and roasted turkey came gratefully to his nostrils, whilst to his memory came the triumphant recollection that he had helped to catch that

turkey who was now roasting, and who had been his bitter enemy, pecking at him unmercifully whenever he dared venture into the chicken-yard. Jack wagged his tail, thinking the turkey could peck never more, when lo! the round face of Mrs. Cackle, like a red full moon in heated atmosphere, peered over the picketfence. Jack's tail dropped. Then a growl arose to his swelling throat. Would that he could put Mrs. Cackle beside the turkey! And who has not felt like Jack? He was a good hater, and ever since he could remember there had existed between himself and Mrs. Cackle a "magnetism of repulsion," of such peculiar strength that, after going to the very extreme, it curled back on itself, and from a repulsion came out an attraction, which made Mrs. Cackle's feet almost dance with longing to kick Jack, and made Jack's mouth water to bite the well-fed calves of Mrs. Cackle.

"There is that miserable poodle, with his wool all washed up white, adorned with a new ribbon!" exclaimed Mrs. Cackle, holding to the pickets to catch breath, for she had walked fast. That old maid Lavvy Sprig, I suppose, has decked her thousand cats and her million canary-birds all with ribbons, like her odious poodle." And Mrs. Cackle looked towards the house; but she saw no decked cats there, though the hall-door and all the windows were open. In a few moments, however, she espied Ruth Norval — eldest daughter of Dr. Norvalsitting by one of the parlor windows, rocking herself in a chair, reading a fashion magazine.

"There is Ruth, as usual, studying the fashions. If her father's funeral was coming, she would do the same," said

Mrs. Cackle, and peered at the other window. "Who is there?" said she, putting her fat chin over the pickets to take a better view. She then distinguished a face so flattened against the window-pane that it had lost all human shape. But she rightly conjectured that the face belonged to Mattie Norval, -youngest daughter of Dr. Norval, inasmuch as Mrs. Norval was too dignified to go and mash her face against the window-glass, and Lavinia's high nose would have presented the same obstruction as her sister's dignity. Mrs. Cackle saluted the flattened mass, but it "gave no token," only it looked more flattened than ever, as now Mattie riveted her gaze more intently in the direction of the railroad depot, saying to her sister Ruth,

"Don't look up, Rooty; study the fashions. There is old Cackler's moon-face on the pickets saluting, but I don't see it. 'Deed I don't. I am looking down the road."

"Tell your mother I heard the whistle bawled out the old lady, holding to the pickets.

"I wish she had heard the last trumpet," said Ruth. "Don't answer her, Mattie; she wants to be invited in. Why don't she go home? I see all the young Cacklers in their '*setting-room*,'—as she very properly calls it,—all watching for papa's coming, to begin their cackling."

"Ruth, I have told you not to make puns on Mrs. Cackle's name. It is very unkind to do so, and in very bad taste," said Mrs. Norval, from the corner.

"In bad taste!" replied Ruth. "La, ma! the exquisite Mr. Hackwell makes puns all the time. I asked him why he kept 'The Comic Blackstone' among his theological books, and he answered, 'In abjuring all that pertains to the worldly

profession of the law, I permitted myself the privilege of keeping this innocent punster. And the 'innocent punster' Mr. Hackwell the divine keeps between Kant and Calvin,- above Martin Luther, ma!"

"Here he is!" screamed Mattie, interrupting her sister, and all flocked to the window. A light wagon, followed by another so heavily loaded that four strong horses could hardly pull it up, approached the gate.

"What upon earth is he bringing now?" exclaimed Mrs. Norval, looking at the light wagon in alarm.

"More rocks and pebbles, of course; but I don't know where he is to put them: the garret is full now," said Ruth, looking at the large wagon.

"He will store them away in the barn-loft, where he keeps his bones and petrified woods. He brings quite a load. It is a government wagon," added Lavinia, also looking at the large wagon.

"I don't mean the boxes in the large wagon. I mean the-the-that-the red shawl," stammered Mrs. Norval. And now the three other ladies noticed for the first time a figure wrapped in a bright plaid shawl, leaning on the doctor's breast, and around which he tenderly encircled his arm.

CHAPTER II. THE LITTLE BLACK GIRL.

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So astonished were the ladies at the sight of that red shawl, that not one of them—not even Mattie, who was more impulsive than the others, and had looked for her father's coming with more affectionate impatience—thought of answering the doctor's nods and salutations which he began to send them, full of smiles, as he approached the gate.

The light wagon stopped in front of the gate; the large one behind it. The Rev. Mr. Hackwell alighted, then the Rev. Mr. Hammerhard: the divines, in consideration for the doctor's feelings, had left their own carriage at the depot and ridden with him. The doctor alighted next, and then the mysterious figure in the bright-red shawl, which was handed carefully to the doctor by the driver from the wagon. Then all proceeded towards the gate, the doctor again tenderly throwing his arm around the female in the shawl,—for it was a female: this fact Mrs. Norval had discovered plainly enough.

The meeting with his family, after an absence of four years, would have been cold and restrained enough for the doctor, who had felt nothing but misgivings since he passed Springfield, fearing, like a runaway boy, that even the fact of his return might not get him a pardon. Not a single smile of welcome did he see in the scared faces of his daughters or the stern features of his stately wife. But a happy and unexpected agency broke the spell of that ominous gloom

and scattered the gathering storm. And this potent agency, this mighty wizard, waving no wand, only wagging his woolly tail, was no other than Jack Sprig, who, unable to contain himself any longer in the midst of so much excitement, ran out as Mrs. Norval's champion to bark at the red shawl. The female screamed, frightened, and clung to the doctor for protection; in her fright she dropped the obnoxious shawl, and then all the ladies saw that what Mrs. Norval's eyes had magnified into a very tall woman was a little girl very black indeed.

Goodness! what a specimen! A nigger girl!" exclaimed Mattie; whereupon all the ladies laughed and went out to the hall to meet the doctor.

When the first salutations were over, and the first cross-very cross-questioning done by Mrs. Norval, the doctor ran out to see about bringing in his big boxes from the large wagon. They proved to be so heavy that besides the drivers of the two wagons, and Dandy Jim,—the doctor's body-servant,—it was found necessary to call in Bingham, the gardener; and the doctor himself lent the aid of his muscular arms to roll the boxes into the hall. Mrs. Norval came out to remonstrate against such heavy boxes full of stones being brought into the hall to scratch the oilcloth, which was nearly new; but the doctor would have them in the hall, so that Mrs. Norval was obliged to desist, and the work of rolling in the boxes continued.

Mrs. Norval asked the two reverend gentlemen to stay to tea. Mr. Hackwell accepted readily, but Mr. Hammerhard declined, as Mrs. Hammerhard's baby was only three weeks old, and she felt lonely without him.

Whilst Dr. Norval was busy rolling in his heavy boxes, the ladies and the Rev. Mr. Hackwell turned their attention to the little black girl, upon whom the doctor evidently had bestowed great care, making now and then occasional remarks upon the wellknown idiosyncrasy of the doctor for collecting all sorts of rocks.

"The doctor is not content with bringing four boxes more, full of stones; but now he, I fear, having exhausted the mineral kingdom, is about to begin with the animal, and this is our first specimen," said Mrs. Norval, pointing at the boxes in the hall and at the little girl, who was looking at her with a steady, thoughtful gaze.

"The next specimen will be a baboon," added Ruth; "for papa's samples don't improve."

"I have been looking at this one, and I think it is rather pretty, only very black," the Rev. Hackwell observed.

"Of course she is pretty," put in Mattie. "Look what magnificent eyes she has, and what red and prettily-cut lips!"

"How could she have such lips?-negroes' lips are not like those. What is your name?" cried out Miss Lavinia, as if the child were deaf.

The girl did not answer: she only turned her lustrous eyes on her, then again riveted her gaze upon Mrs. Norval, who seemed to fascinate her.

"How black she is!" uttered Mrs. Norval, with a slight shiver of disgust.

"I don't think she is so black," said Mattie, taking one of the child's hands and turning it to see the palm of it. "See,

the palm of her hand is as white as mine,-and a prettier white; for it has such a pretty pink shade to it."

"Drop her hand, Mattie! you don't know what disease she might have," said Mrs. Norval, imperiously.

"Nonsense! As if papa would bring any one with a contagious disease to his house!" said Mattie, still holding the child's hand. "How pretty her little hand is, and all her features are certainly lovely! See how well cut her nose and lips are; and as for her eyes, I wish / had them: they are perfectly superb!"

"Isn't she pretty?" exclaimed the doctor, bringing in the last box. "And her disposition is so lovely and affectionate, and she is so grateful and thoughtful for one so young!"

"How old is she? Her face is so black that, truly, it baffles all my efforts to guess her age," said Mrs. Norval, dryly, interrupting the doctor.

"She is only ten years old; but her history is already more romantic than that of half of the heroines of your trashy novels," answered the doctor.

"She is a prodigy, then,- a true emanation of the black art!" said Mrs. Norval, smiling derisively, "if so much is to be told of a child so young."

"Not of her personally, but of her birth and the history of her parents,—that is to say, so far as I know it."

"Who were her parents, papa?" asked Mattie.

"Indians or negroes, or both," Ruth said. "Any one can see that much of her history."

"And those who saw that much would be mistaken or fools," retorted the doctor, warmly.

"Well, well, even if she be a Princess Sheba, let us not have a discussion about it the minute you return home. Suppose we change the subject to a more agreeable one," said Mrs. Norval.

"I am perfectly willing," the doctor replied, drawing to his side the little girl, who had stood silently listening to the conversation, looking wistfully from one face to the other.

"I suppose you got my letter telling you I had sent for Julian?—and now he is in Boston, where every New Englander should be educated," Mrs. Norval said, boldly.

"But where not every New Englander is willing to be educated. Julian writes to me that he doesn't like his college," the doctor replied.

"Julian is perfectly ruined by his unfortunate trip to Europe," said Mrs. Norval, addressing Mr. Hackwell, "and, like Isaac, he will never get over his fondness for foreigners."

Happily, Hannah, the waiter-girl, came to interrupt the conversation by announcing that tea was ready.

"Take this child to the kitchen," said Mrs. Norval to Hannah, pointing to the little girl.

"What for? She is very well here," the doctor said, putting his arms around the child's waist.

Doctor, you certainly do not mean that we are to keep this creature always near us,-you can't mean it!" exclaimed Mrs. Norval, half interrogatively and half deprecatingly.

"And why not?" was the doctor's rejoinder.

Mrs. Norval was too astounded to say why not. She silently led the way to the tea-table.

"I beg you to remember, Mr. Hackwell," said the doctor, following his wife and holding the poor little girl by the hand, "and to draw from that fact a moral for a sermon, that my wife is a lady of the strictest Garrisonian school, a devout follower of Wendell Phillips's teachings, and a most enthusiastic admirer of Mr. Sumner. Compare these facts with the reception she gives this poor little orphan because her skin is dark; whilst I, - a good-for-nothing Democrat, who don't believe in Sambo, but believe in Christian charity and human mercy,-I feel pity for the little thing."

CHAPTER III. THE MYSTERIOUS BIG BOXES.

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"WHERE is the child to eat her supper?" asked Mrs. Norval of her husband, without making any answer to his last remarks.

"Here by my side, of course," the doctor replied.

"I am glad you have abjured your old prejudices against the African race," said Mr. Hackwell, without making allusion to Mrs. Norval's sentiments upon the subject.

"Yes; but the evil spirit has not left our house, for it has only jumped out of me to take possession of my better half," said the doctor, laughing. "Since when have you changed, wife, that a dark skin has become so objectionable to you?"

"As for that, you are mistaken. I do not object to her dark skin, only I wish to know what position she is to occupy in my family. Which wish I consider quite reasonable, since I am the one to regulate my household," said Mrs. Norval, taking hold of the teapot to serve tea, but with a look that suggested a wish on her part to welcome her husband by throwing it at his devoted head.

"Her position in our family will be that of an adopted child," said the doctor.

Mrs. Norval's hand shook so violently on hearing this that she poured the tea all over the tray, but little of it falling in the cup where she meant to pour it. With assumed calmness, however, she said,

"In that case your daughters and myself will have to wait upon your adopted child; for I am sure we will not find in all New England a white girl willing to do it."

"And that, of course, speaks very highly for New England,-abolitionist New England, mind you. But I'll warrant, madam, that you shall have plenty of servants."

Mrs. Norval was too angry to speak. There was an awkward pause, which happily Mattie interrupted, saying, "Has she got any name, papa?"

"I suppose her name is Rabbit, or Hare, or Squirrel; that is, if she is an Indian," said Ruth, laughing.

"You ask her," the doctor said.

"What is your name?" asked Ruth.

The child looked at her, then at the doctor, and went on eating her supper silently.

"She doesn't understand," said Ruth.

"Yes, she does; but, not liking your manner, she disdains to answer your question," replied the doctor.

Mrs. Norval suppressed a groan. She could not swallow a single mouthful.

"Indians are as proud and surly as they are treacherous," observed Lavinia. "I suppose she is a mixture of Indian and negro."

"Your supposition, being very sagacious and kind, does honor to your head and heart; but it happens that this child has no more Indian or negro blood than you or I have," said the doctor, testily, evidently losing patience.

"I thought she might be Aztec," said Lavinia, apologetically; but the doctor did not answer her, and there was another awkward silence.

Mr. Hackwell was sorry he had stayed to tea. He had anticipated a very pleasant conversation, and amusing accounts from the doctor, who was very witty and told a story charmingly. But instead of this there had been nothing but sparring about the little black child. Mrs. Norval had utterly lost patience, and the doctor seemed in a fair way to the same point. Mr. Hackwell stirred his second cup of tea slowly, thinking what he should do to change the conversation. He would first propitiate the doctor by showing some kindness to the child. How should he begin? He took a slice of bread and buttered it nicely; then he took some jelly, and spread it on the butter, and presented it to the child with a smile.

"Thank you, sir," said the little girl, in very good English.

"Why, the little 'possum! She speaks English, and very likely has understood what has been said," Mattie exclaimed.

"She has understood every word," the doctor answered, "and doubtless is impressed with your kindness."

"That is a pity," said Mr. Hackwell; and, addressing the child in his blandest manner, he asked, "What is your name, my little girl? Won't you tell me?"

"My name is Maria Dolores Medina; but I have been always called Lola or Lolita," she answered, in the plainest English.

"And have you understood all we said since you arrived?" asked Mattie.

Lola nodded her head in the affirmative, and stole a furtive look toward Mrs. Norval, which was very piquant. The doctor and Mr. Hackwell laughed, and so did Mattie; but, as

Mrs. Norval colored with vexation, Lavinia did not dare to join in the laugh, whilst Ruth was too deeply absorbed in thinking how she could fix her old grenadine dress to give it a new look for the christening of Mrs. Hammerhard's baby.

As soon as tea was over, the doctor called Bingham, the gardener, and asked him if he had found the men to help with the boxes, to which Bingham answered in the affirmative. The doctor then told him to go and fetch them.

"What is the matter now?" exclaimed Mrs. Norval, seeing seven men enter the hall, preceded by Bingham, and followed by the doctor's body-servant, Dandy Jim.

"The matter is, that these men have come to take my boxes up-stairs," said the doctor. "Put them in Master Julian's room, Jim."

"Why not take them at once to the garret? In Julian's room they will tear the carpet to pieces," Mrs. Norval remonstrated.

"We'll risk that. I don't want to take my specimens to the garret until I assort them. Besides, the boxes are too broad to go up the narrow staircase of the garret-rooms."

"Then why not leave them where they are? Afterwards you can assort your specimens down here."

"Because I propose to do that up-stairs."

Mrs. Norval bit her lip. She could almost have cried with vexation. The doctor was more persistent than ever in foolish whims. What a miserable wife she was! But now Mr. Hackwell said some kind words to her, praising her great forbearance and amiability under so many exasperating trials, then, pressing her hand to bid her good-night, took leave of the doctor in the hall, where he was superintending

the moving of his boxes, bowed good-night to the young ladies, and left.

Lavinia sighed, watching his retreating form, and Ruth smiled contemptuously, whilst Miss Mattie stood up and made a motion with her foot as if giving a kick to some imaginary object before her.

"For shame! you are no longer a child, miss, to indulge in such unlady-like antics!" said Mrs. Norval, sternly. But the doctor laughed, and patted Mattie on the back; and Mattie hung on her father's neck and whispered something which made him laugh more.

After all the boxes were safely deposited in Julian's room-which adjoined Mrs. Norval's bed-chamberthere was one more discussion to get through, and that was the most difficult to dispose of. The question as to where Lola was to sleep, had to be decided.

The doctor said she should have a room to herself, and, as there was none ready for her, she should occupy either Julian's room or share that of the girls with them: Lavinia's being too small to admit another bed.

But Mrs. Norval was so shocked at this that the doctor, tired as he was in body by his journey, and in mind by all the harassing little incidents and disputes which had occurred since his arrival, left the matter for that night to his wife's discretion. The child, then, was sent with Hannah to share her room for the night.

The doctor kissed Lola several times and embraced her to bid her good-night, and she, sobbing as if her heart would break, and looking back several times as she left the room,

went away to sleep the sleep of the orphan under that inhospitable roof.

CHAPTER IV. WHAT THE MYSTERIOUS BOXES CONTAINED.

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"Don't you know, doctor, that you kissed that Indian child more affectionately than you kissed your own daughters?" said Mrs. Norval to her husband, fiercely, when they had closed their bedroom door to the outer world.

"Maybe I did; for I pity the poor orphan. My daughters, thank God, have yet their parents to take care of them; but this poor little waif has no one in the world, perhaps, to protect her and care for her but myself."

"As for that, she'll get along well enough. She is not so timid as to need anybody's particular protection. Her eyes are bold enough. She will learn to work, -I'll see to that, -and a good worker is sure of a home in New England. Mrs. Hammerhard will want just such a girl as this, I hope, to mind the baby, and she will give her some of her cast-off clothes and her victuals."

"Cast-off clothes and victuals!" the doctor repeated, as if he could not believe that his ears had heard rightly.

"Why, yes. We certainly couldn't expect Mrs. Hammerhard would give more to a girl ten years old, to mind a little baby in the cradle."

"And how is she to go to school, if she is to mind Mrs. Hammerhard's baby for old clothes and cold victuals?"

"Doctor," said Mrs. Norval, tying her night-cap with deliberation, "I said nothing about *cold* victuals. She can eat

her victuals cold or warm, just as she likes: this is a free country. But I do say this, that this is the first day I have laid eyes on you for four years (you left in '53, and now we are in '57), and I think it is very hard that this first day we should have so many disagreeables about a stranger, and that an Indian child. I'll do the best I can for her: I shall do *my duty as a Christian woman*; but she can't expect to grow up in idleness and be a burden to us.

She must learn to work and earn her living. In the winters, perhaps, she might go to school at nights; I'll see what I can do about that. She will go to our Sunday-school, of course; but-

"She will go to Sunday-school if any one will teach her the Catholic Catechism, but certainly not the Presbyterian," said the doctor, pulling his coat off, as if making ready to fight on that point; "and as for her learning to work, she will learn to do what ladies learn, and she will suit herself in that, when she has finished her education."

"Finish her education! A Catholic Catechism!" faintly echoed Mrs. Norval, letting her cap-strings go, and sinking into her arm-chair.

The doctor, in his shirt-sleeves, crossed his arms over his breast, and, standing before his wife, also repeated,

"Finish her education, Mrs. Norval; yes, and a Catholic Catechism. I said those words, Mrs. Norval; and I mean them, too, madam."

A contemptuous smile played around the pale lips of the agitated Mrs. Norval, as she said,

"And pray who is to teach her that abominable idolatry here? and who is to pay for her magnificent education? for I

suppose she must have several *masters* to teach her foreign languages, and music, and painting."

The doctor nodded his head in the affirmative, entirely disregarding his wife's sarcasm, and, taking a bunch of keys from his pocket, said,

"If you will follow me, madam, I'll show you with what Lola's education is to be paid." And the doctor, taking a candle, led the way to Julian's room. Mrs. Norval followed her husband, not knowing but that he had gone crazy and meant to set the house on fire with the lighted candle he carried.

The doctor set the candle on the bureau, and Mrs. Norval seated herself on a chair, silently waiting to see what he would do next.

The doctor selected a key from the bunch he held in his hand, and opened a trunk, from which he took a screw-driver. Then he went to one of the heavy boxes, brought with so much labor, and began to unscrew from the lid several large screws, saying,—

"Arthur Sinclair is to blame for these boxes taking this trip up to New England. I told him distinctly that I wished them to be left at his brother's in New York; and he must, of course, go to work and ship them by express all the way here. When I went to William Sinclair's office to see if the boxes were there, he told me they had been shipped that morning. I went to the depot to stop their coming up; but only two boxes had not been put into the baggage-car, and those I sent back to Sinclair's. The other four came up; and now I shall have to take them back."

"So you were bringing six boxes full of rocks?" "But only to New York."

Now the doctor took out the last screw, opened the box with the key, and began by taking out some articles of clothing. Mrs. Norval smiled. Then he came to some specimens of ores, very rough-looking stones. He lifted a piece of canvas, on which these rough stones were laid, and said to his wife,

"This is what will pay for Lola's education."

Mrs. Norval stood up, uttering a cry of delighted surprise; then, clasping her hands, remained silent, with open mouth and staring eyes, transfixed by her amazement and joy.

"But is it *real* gold?" she whispered, hoarsely, after some moments of bewildered silence.

"All is not gold that glitters," the doctor replied, smiling; "but *this* is."

"And whose is it? Ours? Yours? Whose?"

"Don't you guess? If I say it will pay for Lolita's education, it is because it belongs to her."

What?" ejaculated Mrs. Norval, falling back in her chair. "You are jesting; you can't mean that. No, no! I can't believe that this horrible little negro girl

"Once for all, let me tell you that the blood of that child is as good as, or better than, yours or mine; that she is neither an Indian nor a negro child, and that, unless you wish to doubt my word, my veracity, you will not permit yourself or anybody else to think her such."

Mrs. Norval was incapable of controversy now; her soul was floating over those yellow, shining lumps of cold, unfeeling metal. She made no reply to her husband; but, as

if obeying a natural impulse, she knelt by the chest, and, with childlike simplicity, began to take pieces of gold and examine them attentively and toss them up playfully; then she took a handful, then two handfuls, trying to see how many pieces she could lift up. The sedate, severe, sober, serious lady of forty was a playful, laughing child again.

The doctor watched her and smiled, but his smile was sad. He had not seen that expression on her face since they were gathering apples and he asked her to marry him, twenty-one years ago!

"I think that Lola, instead of being *a burden* to us, will be a great acquisition. Don't you think so?" said the doctor, after his wife had toyed with the gold for some time.

"How much is it?" asked Mrs. Norval, in a scarcely audible voice, tremulous with emotion,

"I really can't tell how much is in this one box, but, according to our calculation in San Francisco, there must be about a million dollars in the six boxes."

"A million!" screamed Mrs. Norval.

"Hush, wife! If you indulge in such loud exclamations, some one will hear you; and I don't want it to be known that there is so much gold in my house. I shall certainly send it back to New York as soon as possible."

"But what will you do with so much gold? Won't they steal it from you?"

"I'll look out for that. William Sinclair is an honest man, and he will take charge of it. I arranged all that with him. He is to have the gold coined immediately, and will take it for three years at six per cent. interest, giving me good securities on real estate."