

THE PORTRAIT OF A FAMILY.

ANNIE L. MILLER.

The home was soon to be given up. Now that the mistress was gone my friend had not the heart to keep it open. We stood on the veranda gazing over the lower terrace, out upon the water where the ships passed to and fro from New York harbor. The ferry-boat couched the landing at the foot of the street.

My friend turned with a sigh, "Of course it will be hard to leave this spot; and then it is difficult to dispose of the accumulated possessions of a lifetime. There is that portrait of Great-uncle John, what to do with it I do not know. Come in till I show it to you."

Packing boxes stood about the room and excelsior was carelessly thrown in a corner. We stood before the portrait of a gray haired handsome man of a by-gone generation. The piercing blue eyes had the alertness of life and seemed to question our intentions. A soft gray mustache could not hide the determination of the mouth, or its thin upper lip, and the gray side whiskers were the fashion of an earlier age.

"How remarkably like your Grandmother Davis, as I recall her," I said.

My friend smiled. "Then you do not know the story? If you are interested, I will tell it to you. The portrait might be called a composite. I wrote to Annie Fairchilds in the west offering to send it there; but she replied that her family preferred to own nothing to remind them of grandmother, and the Perkins in Ohio, have an inherited antipathy to Uncle John. Poor old fellow, I am afraid he must end his existence in a museum, or a home for cast-off family portraits.

He cleared some chairs and offered me a cigar.

Grandmother's family was probably no worse tempered than others, but the children added a stubborn determination to extreme wilfulness. There was only grandmother, whose name was Matilda Fletcher, and her brothers John and Tom. As little children at school, Matilda and Tom could not agree, and later, when the latter married, he chose for his wife the object of his sister's most extreme aversion. I am told that Aunt Julia was quite able to protect herself, and formed no mean antagonist for her domineering sister-in-law. Both sides loved Uncle John. His lovable disposition—the mouth here is firmer than it was, enabled him to retain the friendship through life of brother and sister. Matilda and Julia only met on ceremonious occasions, and if a battle existed, it was of the wits, not of words. After grandmother's widowhood she made her home for a time with an old friend, Mrs. Steele—you may remember her—and it was at this period that Uncle John died. His illness had been short, and the end unexpected. Grandmother had regretted to a friend that no picture existed of her dear brother, when she accidentally learned that Aunt Julia had unveiled with much solemnity a fine portrait of him.

It was taken shortly before his death, but for whom intended, or how it reached the hands of Aunt Julia, no one discovered.

"Grandmother prepared for a call upon her sister-in-law, and was received with affected cordiality in that gloomy parlor, my boyish impression of is so strong. Stiff haircloth chairs and a sofa stood about the walls, the seats so slippery and smooth and round that I was constantly sliding off.

"It was most kind of you to come to me," said Aunt Julia on the occasion. "Perhaps you would like to see the portrait of dear Brother John?" Both ladies smilingly turned to it, the one devoured by envy and hatred, the other filled with inward triumph. These feelings were carefully concealed. Grand-

mother said carelessly that it seemed a good portrait, and she would not mind having a copy; but Aunt Julia replied that anything connected with Brother John was too precious to trust out of her sight, and as this was the only portrait of her dear brother the loss would be irreparable should anything happen to it.

Grandmother returned home determined not to be outwitted. Almost before removing her bonnet a plan was maturing in her brain. In the hall she met little Matilda Stub, a child about ten years of age. "You may come now and read a chapter in the Bible," Mrs. Steele and Grandmother Davis were very intimate and dear friends, but in spite of the affection, the former feared the unexpected moods of her friend. If grandmother went to the dinner table and saw nothing to her liking prepared for the meal, she would sometimes rise and return to her room without assigning a reason and would refuse to have the supper brought to her on a tray by a servant. Then Mrs. Steele would go herself, "My dear Mrs. Davis, do eat something. You will be ill," but the sufferer would only groan, "I am ill and no one cares what becomes of me."

"Now, dearest, could you eat a little spring chicken if I get it for you?"

"I want nothing."

Under much persuasion, a little wine and a few tears, grandmother finally consented to eat the repast of dainties especially provided for her, and Mrs. Steele would leave her friend, forgiven for the lack of sympathy. If this had been the only side of grandmother's character, the friendship could not have continued. But at other times she was so affectionate and warm hearted that her unreasonable demands were forgotten.

Each day she expected little Martha to read to her. The child now followed her to her room.

"You may find proverbs 16 while I put away my bonnet."

She picked up her knitting and rocked briskly. The words of the Bible were not the only ones passing through her busy brain.

"You don't read as well as Lucy Smith," she remarked at the close. The child heard this each day. Now she rebelled. "If you don't mind, Mrs. Davis, why not get Lucy Smith to read instead of me?"

Grandmother stopped knitting, adjusted her gold spectacles and steadily gazed at her small opponent. She respected courage, and Martha met her eyes unflinchingly.

"That will do for today, my dear; come again tomorrow. You will improve in your reading." This was an unusual concession for her to make and showed her admiration.

"Learn by heart the verse, 'Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall.' It may be a comfort to you in after days. That has soothed me in many a trouble." A grim smile flitted across her features, then seeing the gray eyes of the child still intent on her face, she waved her away with, "Go, now, and play."

Martha went directly to her mother. "What did Mrs. Davis mean by telling me the proverb in the 16th chapter would be a comfort to me if I learned it?"

"How do I know, child? Probably it is one she likes. What was it about?"

"Pride goeth before destruction."

Mrs. Steele was embroidering, but her thimble slipped unheeded from her hand to the floor. Startled, she exclaimed, "Mercy, child, I hope she did not mean me." And she did not.

For several successive days grandmother was out all morning on business, returning with the best of spirits and appetite.

One day she announced that she was

Burlington Route

THE SURVEYORS CHAIN

Makes THE BURLINGTON the shortest line from Lincoln to Denver.

The Heavy Steel Rails, well ballasted Track and

NEW POWERFUL ENGINES

Makes this line the quicker by 3 hours and 5 minutes than any other Lincoln Denver line —MAKE A NOTE OF THIS. "Time is Money" and you will save it.

City Ticket Office
Cor. 10 and O sts
Telephone 235

OR

Burlington Depot
7th bet. P. & Q.
Telephone 25.

THE AMERICAN MONTHLY REVIEW OF REVIEWS

THE "NECESSARY" MAGAZINE

The best-informed men and women in the world use the AMERICAN MONTHLY REVIEW OF REVIEWS to keep well informed, and call it the "necessary" and "indispensable" magazine. In the busy rush of to-day ambitious men and women must know about the important questions of the month, and not only this, they want to know about them at the right time. When the whole country is puzzled over the gigantic combination of trusts, a well-informed article is printed in the AMERICAN MONTHLY, giving the facts, and its editor discusses the theory; when the Dreyfus affair is in everyone's mouth, the best story of Dreyfus and the great case comes out in this magazine.

Every month, in "The Progress of the World," Dr. Albert Shaw gives a comprehensive picture of the world's history during the previous thirty days. In the departments, the valuable articles and books that have been published during the past month are reviewed and quoted from, so that the readers of the AMERICAN MONTHLY can get the gist of them. In every issue nearly a hundred pictures are printed, including the portraits of the men and women who are making the history of the month.

To be thoroughly well informed helps any man or woman in his or her work. A subscription to the AMERICAN MONTHLY REVIEW OF REVIEWS represents an investment for the best kind of profit, as well as entertainment. One subscriber has just written: "Count me a life subscriber, and when you send me a number beyond the limit of my subscription and secure no renewal from me, consider it a notice of my death."

Price 25 cents per number, \$2.50 a year. A sample copy will be sent on receipt of ten cents in stamps.

THE REVIEW OF REVIEWS COMPANY

13 Astor Place

New York

WEBSTER'S

INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY

Hon. D. J. Brewer, Justice of U.S. Supreme Court, says: "I commend it to all as the one great standard authority."

It excels in the ease with which the eye finds the word sought; in accuracy of definition; in effective methods of indicating pronunciation; in terse and comprehensive statements of facts and in practical use as a working dictionary. Specimen pages, etc., sent on application.

G. & C. Merriam Co., Publishers, Springfield, Mass., U. S. A.

INTERNATIONAL DICTIONARY