

## A LITERARY WOMAN.

MY DEAR MOTHER:

YOU are anxious by this time, I am sure, to know whether I have succeeded in finding a place. I didn't write to you sooner, for I thought that you would not be home from Exeter yet.

It was difficult to find a situation as private teacher, and I couldn't find work in an office—but, truly, I didn't want to very badly. Whenever I applied I was refused on the grounds that the times were too hard for them to engage extra help. I was just about to despair when I saw this advertisement:

"WANTED:—A young lady intellectually inclined to act as companion to a woman of literary talents. For further information call at 283 Park street.

Mrs. CATHERINE D. VANHOUSEN."

It was bold, I know, to think for a moment that I, with only a moderate education, might be intellectual enough to secure this position; but you know how very fond of books I am, and how I have always longed even to see an authoress—but to be the companion of one. The offer was indeed tempting.

Mrs. Catherine D. VanHousen, however, was such an imposing name, and one so full of ambiguous suggestions, that even after I had fully decided to seek further information, I was doubtful as to the advisability of my boldness.

Number 283 also increased my feeling of uncertainty. It was the middle one of three brown, massive faced, brick tenements.

An oddly dressed foreign-looking porter answered my timid ring. What did Madam—ah, pardon—Mademoiselle—wish? I said that I should like very much to see Mrs. Catherine D. VanHousen. I gave the whole name. He thought seriously for several minutes, then said he would ascertain his lady's pleasure. He disappeared gradually into the darkness of the long hall. He soon returned. "My lady will see you," he said, bowing most wonderfully low. I

felt that he was making fun of me. Then he motioned me to follow him. We stopped at the furthest door in the passage. The porter left me suddenly; indeed, I did not see him go. I supposed that this was the lady's room, so I knocked.

"Enter, maiden," was the answer.

I stepped in. Although it was bright daylight outdoors, the room was darkened and was lighted by a study lamp. A woman was sitting near a table, piled high with books and papers.

"Did you come in answer to my advertisement?" she asked.

"Yes," I said, somewhat nervously.

"Advance then, my child, I will consider your capability."

I came quite close to her and stood still. I was afraid that I would not impress her favorably—I was dressed so simple in my dull grey suit.

She gazed at me steadily for some time, and then clapping her hands she burst out with, "Oh, how divine you are, the perfect intellectual embodiment, even to the classic gown—what a noble brow!"

Think of anyone calling my brow noble. I had always hated my high forehead.

"But we must see further," she continued, "Have you read much? Are you acquainted with all the best authors?"

Fortunately, I could answer that I had a modern acquaintance with the best literature.

Could I quote a passage from Browning, her favorite poet?

Yes, I could quote several and explain them too, quite to her satisfaction.

Now, could I give an outline of the Duchess' last story?

I blushed when she asked this, for I had read the book by chance and not because I am accustomed to read such works. But I outlined the story.

"Very well," I think that I shall keep you," she said.

And so I am here, mother. I wish that you could see Mrs. VanHousen. She is