

## CHAPTER XVIII

SALLY

"Now, where's Sally Kittridge! There's the clock striking five, and nobody to set the table. Sally, I say! Sally!"

"Why, Mis' Kittridge," said the Captain, "Sally's gone out more'n an hour ago, and I expect she's gone down to Pennel's to see Mara; 'cause, you know, she come home from Portland to-day."

"Well, if she's come home, I s'pose I may as well give up havin' any good of Sally, for that girl fairly bows down to Mara Lincoln and worships her."

"Well, good reason," said the Captain. "There ain't a puttier creature breathin'. I'm a'most a mind to worship her myself."

"Captain Kittridge, you ought to be ashamed of yourself, at your age, talking as you do."

"Why, laws, mother, I don't feel my age," said the frisky Captain, giving a sort of skip. "It don't seem more'n yesterday since you and I was a-courtin', Polly. What a life you did lead me in them days! I think you kep' me on the anxious seat a pretty middlin' spell."

"I do wish you wouldn't talk so. You ought to be ashamed to be triflin' round as you do. Come, now, can't you jest tramp over to Pennel's and tell Sally I want her?"

"Not I, mother. There ain't but two gals in two miles square here, and I ain't a-goin' to be the feller to shoo 'em apart. What's the use of bein' gals, and young, and putty, if they can't get together and talk about their new gownds and the fellers? That ar's what gals is for."

"I do wish you wouldn't talk in that way before Sally, father, for her head is full of all sorts of vanity now; and as to Mara, I never did see a more slack-twisted, flimsy thing than she's grown up to be. Now Sally's learnt to do something, thanks to me. She can brew, and she can make bread and cake and pickles, and spin, and cut, and make. But as to Mara, what does she do? Why, she paints pictur's. Mis' Pennel was a-showin' on me a blue-jay she painted, and I was a-thinkin' whether she could brile a bird fit to be eat if she tried; and she don't know the price of nothin'," continued Mrs. Kittridge, with wasteful profusion of negatives.

"Well," said the Captain, "the Lord makes some things jist to be looked at. Their work is to be putty, and that ar's Mara's sphere. It never seemed to me she was cut out for hard work; but she's got sweet ways and kind words for everybody, and it's as good as a psalm to look at her."

"And what sort of a wife'll she make, Captain Kittridge?"

"A real sweet, putty one," said the Captain, persistently.

"Well, as to beauty, I'd rather have our Sally any day," said Mrs. Kittridge; "and she looks strong and hearty, and seems to be good for use."

"So she is, so she is," said the Captain, with fatherly pride. "Sally's the very image of her ma at her age--black eyes, black hair, tall and trim as a spruce-tree, and steps off as if she had springs in her heels. I tell you, the feller'll have to be spry that catches her. There's two or three of 'em at it, I see; but Sally won't have nothin' to say to 'em. I hope she won't, yet awhile."

"Sally is a girl that has as good an eddication as money can give," said Mrs. Kittridge. "If I'd a-had her advantages at her age, I should a-been a great deal more'n I am. But we ha'n't spared nothin' for Sally; and when nothin' would do but Mara must be sent to Miss Plucher's school over in Portland, why, I sent Sally too--for all she's our seventh child, and Pennel hasn't but the one."

"You forget Moses," said the Captain.

"Well, he's settin' up on his own account, I guess. They did talk o' giving him college eddication; but he was so unsteady, there weren't no

use in trying. A real wild ass's colt he was."

"Wal', wal', Moses was in the right on't. He took the cross-lot track into life," said the Captain. "Colleges is well enough for your smooth, straight-grained lumber, for gen'ral buildin'; but come to fellers that's got knots, and streaks, and cross-grains, like Moses Pennel, and the best way is to let 'em eddicate 'emselves, as he's a-doin'. He's cut out for the sea, plain enough, and he'd better be up to Umbagog, cuttin' timber for his ship, than havin' rows with tutors, and blowin' the roof off the colleges, as one o' them 'ere kind o' fellers is apt to when he don't have work to use up his steam. Why, mother, there's more gas got up in them Brunswick buildin's, from young men that are spilin' for hard work, than you could shake a stick at! But Mis' Pennel told me yesterday she was 'spectin' Moses home to-day."

"Oho! that's at the bottom of Sally's bein' up there," said Mrs. Kittridge.

"Mis' Kittridge," said the Captain, "I take it you ain't the woman as would expect a daughter of your bringin' up to be a-runnin' after any young chap, be he who he may," said the Captain.

Mrs. Kittridge for once was fairly silenced by this home-thrust; nevertheless, she did not the less think it quite possible, from all that she knew of Sally; for although that young lady professed great hardness of heart and contempt for all the young male generation of her

acquaintance, yet she had evidently a turn for observing their ways--probably purely in the way of philosophical inquiry.