

safely give up his clerkship now, and depend on his writing until he had finished studying medicine. He said he had even been laying by a little money lately for a plan he had for Helen: he wanted to furnish the library with pretty new furniture, and make it into a bedroom for her, for a Christmas present, and then, he said, the door into the parlor could be left open whenever she was well enough, and it would be a great deal more cheerful for her, for he did not think her room got enough sunshine. The sweet sister was delighted, and still more so when Mr. Rob told her that he was going to send for her just before Christmas to spend a day or two in Richmond and help him choose the things; and he asked her if she thought it would be possible to have the room all arranged without Helen's finding out anything about it. She said she thought it would, and that they had better tell Madame and Master and May and Roland about it, but not the children, for fear they would say something to Helen.

"Don't you think she is looking a little better, Lou?" said Mr. Rob when they had everything settled and were nearly at home again. "It strikes me that she is, and she tells me that she very rarely has any pain now."

"Yes," said Lou, "she seems to me to be much more comfortable, if she were only not so dreadfully weak. She is very cheerful, but I can see, by all sorts of little things, that she does not expect to live much longer. Oh, Rob, what should we do without her?" and the sweet sister began to cry.