

nursery upstairs, and give me a chair, and ask after my health, and say how glad she was to see me, just as mamma used to do when ladies came to have tea with her. And then I used to shake out my pocket-handkerchief, and fan myself, and use a smelling-bottle, which I had taken out of mamma's dressing-case, and begin to talk about the weather, and the fashions, and the new curate, and the difficulty of getting good servants, and the extravagant price of lace, and the best shops for jewelry and millinery, and various other topics which ladies are generally supposed to enlarge upon when they go out to tea. I never talked scandal, though, because I didn't know what it meant, then. Aunt Mary looked as grave as could be, although sometimes she made rather a funny noise behind her pocket-handkerchief, but she never laughed, for that would have spoiled all the fun.

Then came tea, which was always arranged ready on the little table by the window. I enjoyed the cake and bread and butter and strawberry preserve so much, though I often had just the same things in the nursery upstairs. It was