

## Part II Chapter 48 Living with the Dalys

In September, Mrs. Daly sent for Lena to return earlier than usual. Since her divorce, Mrs. Daly had found herself even more in sympathy with the causes of women reformers. She had their movement to thank for her economic independence, since the New York legislature had enacted a law restoring a woman's right to her own property in response to pressure from the women's movement. She had now assumed leadership responsibilities and planned to attend the annual National Women's Rights Convention to be held this year in Syracuse, on September 8-10.

Could Lena possibly live in while Mrs. Daly was gone? Mrs. Jones found her an acceptable companion and the children liked and obeyed her. Will would not be at home as his father had insisted that he stay with him, at least until Christmas. "Mr. Daly has moved into the Metropolitan Hotel on Broadway. Perhaps it will be easier for Will, living closer to the college." Lena could see that she did not approve.

Lena resumed her role in the family as companion-care giver, with enlarged responsibilities and comparably enhanced wages. She was given a room on the third floor where Cook and the housekeeper lived.

Mrs. Jones, claiming she had benefited greatly by summering at the shore, had made a remarkable recovery. She was now able to get out of bed, dress herself, and go up and down stairs, slowly, with Lena at her elbow for support. Now that she knew her place was secure at the Dalys, she no longer needed to remain helpless.

Once Lena began living full time with the Dalys, she had an opportunity to observe the life that the family lived, and she was surprised at how narrow it seemed. Her own life held daily surprises, emergencies, sudden calls for help. She was constantly needed, but at the Dalys, there were no surprises; the routine was almost deadening. The household was run on an unvarying schedule, mostly to suit Mrs. Jones, who liked to know exactly when she was expected at meals, so that she could "be there on time." In the O'Shaughnessy family, there wasn't a time set for anyone to appear; everyone was already there.

At the Dalys' dinner was a ritual. Lena helped Mrs. Jones down the stairs early enough so that by six she was seated and waiting for the children to appear. Molly and Charlie knew enough not to draw a disapproving look by arriving a few minutes late. After grace, the meals were conducted almost in silence, as Mrs. Jones believed children were to be seen not heard. Mrs. Jones' conversation was limited to calling Cook with a request or commenting on the children's behavior at table. Lena would have liked to have heard the children report about their day, but she was conscious that as a servant in the household, it was

not her place to be chatty. Mrs. Daly had a lively way with the children, but in her absence, dinner was somber and the children rushed through, while Mrs. Jones ate little. After dinner Mrs. Jones might play cards with the others, or doze in her armchair. Games went on until Mrs. Jones looked at the clock, commented that it was getting late and the children should be going to bed, and asking Lena to help her up to bed. The children went off to their rooms to prepare school work.

At fourteen, Molly was still attending school, but didn't seem to be as involved as Lena remembered being. She seldom spoke of her teachers or brought home work or books to read. Her time at home was spent playing games or cards with her grandmother, or doing fancy needlework, for no apparent purpose. She had studied piano but with no one to play for, she seldom played. She was blossoming into a lovely young woman but with no exposure to society, who would appreciate her? She seemed accepting of a life with no surprises or expectations. Lena was sorry to see her acquiescing to those limitations. Affectionate and curious, she should be joining society, but her mother's aversion to "society" as a waste of time, and her preoccupations with reforms meant that she was not pushing Molly forward or introducing her at social gatherings.

## Books

Determined to help Molly, Lena asked her to play something, and stood beside her and praised her performance of several Chopin waltzes. She took her into the library to find books she might enjoy. Will must have brought home two new books by Mr. Dickens.

"Shall we start with *David Copperfield*?"

Molly found David's life with his stepfather Mr. Murdstone, his villainous headmaster Mr. Creakle, and his ingratiating co-worker Uriah Heap upsetting. When David's mother died and he had no one in London to care for him, she wept. When he walked all the way from London to Dover to find his only relative, she was so distressed that she had to stop reading. Lena had to read ahead before she would consent to continue reading. "Things begin to improve immediately, Molly, once he finds Aunt Betsey," she reassured her.

Lena realized even more how sheltered the girl was, far more isolated than she herself. She had met real-life counterparts of Mr. and Mrs. Murdstone, and Mr. Creakle. When she returned on the weekends and retold David's story to her family, they were not so easily upset. After hearing about Uriah Heep, the boys went about bumping into each other in order to say, "Beggin' your pardon, Sir. I'm so 'umble."

Moving between the two worlds of the Daly's and her home, Lena realized that while it was a pleasure to be able to spend quiet hours with the Daly's, she missed the busy world of her noisy family. She especially missed the boys, their

laughing and teasing. She was glad she had six brothers. Poor Molly didn't even enjoy the two she had.

After *David Copperfield*, Mrs. Daly gave them a book she had just finished—"Everyone at the Convention was talking about it." So Lena and Molly began reading aloud from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Mrs. Jones and Charlie were obliged to listen as well.

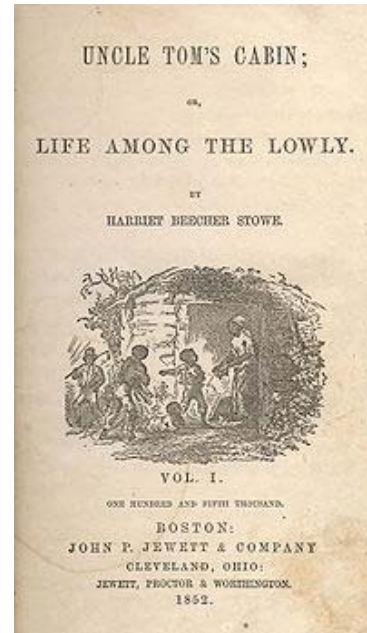
From the moment that Mr. Shelby decides to sell Tom to pay his debts, everyone, even Lena was shocked.. By comparison, David had led a charmed life. Although she had heard about slavery from Mr. Newman and Mr. Reynolds and others at the boarding house, she couldn't believe that any of them had suffered as Tom and Eliza did. Fortunately for Molly there were some good people in this book as well—the kind Mr. St. Clare who bought Tom when he rescued little Eva St. Clare.

Even Mrs. Jones was in tears when Little Eva was dying two years later and Lena were in tears and had to stop reading. Lena pointed out to Molly and Charlie how easily a slave could be sold, when Mr. St. Clare's wife sold Tom to the fiendish Simon Legree. When they realized that, as a result of the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law in 1850, Tom and Eliza would be safe *only in Canada*, because in the United States they would be sent back if captured, they understood why Mrs. Daly and her friends were so passionate about abolition. She thanked Mrs. Daly for telling them to read this book.

When she went home for supper on the weekends, she retold the story to her family, who couldn't wait for the next installment. When she described the treatment that Tom received at the hands of Simon Legree, everyone was in tears.

"We Irish don't have it that bad," Tom said. "Although the English can make us run away like Tom, at least once we get away, they don't come looking for us."

Lena kept hoping Will would show up at the Daly's other than on the weekends, when she was home with her family. She had many things to say to him. Over the summer she had often thought of their talk in the park. She wanted to tell him how much the Rhodora had reassured her that she was more than a recipient of family charity. She especially wanted to speak to him about Molly, to raise the issue of Molly's sheltered existence. Molly may have been to Europe



and to the shore every summer, but she had lived a life secluded by privilege and neglect. She had never experienced anything distressing. Even her father's infidelity had apparently been kept from her. She knew only that her father was very busy and had to live in the city. She knew nothing about the separation, and nothing of the mistress. Such trusting innocence and naivete were appealing in a young girl, but wouldn't they be a disadvantage as she grew older? Shouldn't a girl of her social class be gaining experience by going out to parties, meeting people, learning the ways of the world she would eventually marry into? Shouldn't having an amusing and handsome older brother like Will, who could introduce her to his friends and escort her to parties, be to her advantage?

The opportunity came one afternoon when Will burst into his grandmother's room greeting Lena with a broad smile and giving his grandmother a kiss.

"Not playing whist?" he asked them.

Lena was caught off guard. "We need another player," was all she could think to say. All her planned questions had vanished. "We're learning bezique, though. Only two players are necessary."

"My father likes to play that game too," he noted. "Not with me; I don't have time in the evenings, but with Fanny."

"Fanny?"

"Fanny the actress. I was wrong about her. She's teaching me a lot. I'll tell you about her when I have more time." He changed the subject. "Molly says that you and she have been reading together."

Just as she was remembering that she wanted to speak to him about Molly, he was reminded by a servant that a carriage was waiting. "I'm only here to collect some books and clothes. Father needs his carriage this evening."

Lena wondered at his remark about Fanny. He had expressed such disdain for the actress that she was puzzled by his remark. What could he be learning from her? Lena was ashamed to admit that she envied an actress who could interest son as well as father.

On the following Monday, Molly showed Lena two books Will had left for them to read--the 1851 edition of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales* and *The Scarlet Letter*. "He said they are very popular, and that learned ladies like us should certainly read them," Molly giggled. But Mrs. Daly decided that she would prefer to read the latter book herself first to see if it would be appropriate.

## **The Sights of New York**

In late October when the colors were changing, Mrs. Jones decided that she was spending too much time indoors. She needed to get out in the fresh air, or she feared a relapse. Carriage rides were prescribed by her physician. Perhaps if her daughter was not using her carriage, she might have the use of a carriage to drive about viewing the fall foliage? Mrs. Daly thought it a splendid idea and suggested a few places they should see—starting with City Hall Park.

Mrs. Jones took a proprietary interest in New York, Lena realized. “Our family has lived here for generations. We’re among the founders, I believe.”

She directed the carriage to drive down Lafayette Street, where she pointed out La Grange Terrace, saying that she remembered when the Vauxhall Gardens were there. “I came here as a child to hear outdoor concerts and see live theater. It was quite a treat. But Mr. Astor owned the land and when the lease was up, made another fortune selling off the lots. “Now there are those Greek Revival style homes. Quite impressive, are they not, Helena?”

She told Lena she could trace her family lineage back to Cornelius and Abigail Jones in the eighteenth century. Did Lena know any of her ancestors? Lena had never heard her parents mention any but their immediate families. She wondered if the Irish lost their memories when they crossed the ocean.

At City Hall Park, Mrs. Jones managed a short stroll about the grounds to admire the fountain, proud that her city could put on such a grand display. “This is as fine a tonic as being at the shore, Helena.”

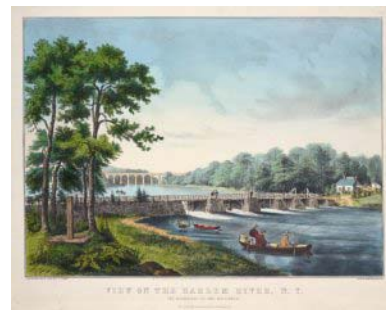


When Lena told her parents that Mrs. Jones was taking her to see the sights of New York, Tom suggested that they see the High Bridge, which had been completed in 1848. “Tell her that your father helped build it.”



The High Bridge

Mrs. Jones thought that was an excellent idea and asked the driver to stop on the banks of the Harlem River, so that she could enjoy the view of the High Bridge. “I was born here in New York, and am proud of what our city has



accomplished.”

“My father worked on the aqueduct, along with many Irish immigrants,” Lena ventured. .

“Oh, did he, dear? That’s nice. Wasn’t he fortunate to come to New York where he could work on a project like this. He must be very grateful.”

Mrs. Jones seemed very excited the next Monday. “When I told Will that I wanted to see the sights of New York before I die, he promised me a sight beyond anything we have seen. And what do you think he has done? He’s arranged for us to visit Barnum’s American Museum. Here’s the brochure. See for yourself.”

Lena looked at the brochure. Barnum’s American Museum, down on Broadway was a cabinet of wonders and curiosities--a combination natural history museum, wax museum, portrait gallery, theatre, and collections of geology, ethnography, archaeology.



Dioramas, panoramas, “cosmoramas,” scientific instruments, modern appliances, a flea circus, a loom run by a dog, the trunk of a tree under which Jesus’ disciples sat, a hat worn by [Ulysses S. Grant](#), an oyster bar, a rifle range, waxworks, glass blowers, taxidermists, phrenologists, pretty-baby contests, Ned the learned seal, the Feejee Mermaid (a mummified monkey’s torso with a fish’s tail), a menagerie of exotic animals that included beluga whales in an aquarium, giants, midgets, Siamese twins, Grizzly Adams’s trained bears, and performances ranging from magicians, ventriloquists and blackface minstrels to adaptations of biblical tales and “Uncle Tom’s Cabin.”

“Its main attraction, of course, is General Tom Thumb-- his clothes, carriage, pictures with---,” Mrs. Jones trembled as she said the words, “Queen Victoria.” .

There were six tickets--enough tickets for their family. Will had not thought to include Lena. Fortunately Mrs. Daly decided that she did not want to go—she could see it later, and asked Lena to assist her mother “Walking through all the rooms and up the stairs will be strenuous.”

Will was waiting for them at the Metropolitan Hotel on Broadway where he was living with his father.. He greeted them dressed like a man of the world, with his fashionable clothes, frock coat, top hat and a new moustache. Lena laughed and shook her head as he hopped into the carriage.



He directed the driver to pass by his college so that they could see Columbia university for themselves He imitated Professor Charles



Anthon, the classics professor whom all the students feared

“Read!” Professor Anthon commands. The scholar obeys.

‘Badly read, Daly.. Now scan!’ The scholar complies.

‘Shabby as usual, Daly. Now translate.’ Again, the scholar obeys.

‘Worth about two’ --a generous assessment, which, if the scholar is lucky, will be followed by a swift ‘You may go!’”

### **The American Museum**

After passing through the entrance on Broadway they made their way up the museum stairs to a **waxworks museum** where they paused to see the Chinese lady.

“They look so funny,” Charlie said. “Their eyes are slanted. Their hair and clothes are so different.”

Lena couldn’t see how the displays were arranged. Busts of the presidents stood alongside those of the ancients. The Drunkard’s Family grouping was near the giant and giantess, and next to that was a depiction of the birth and trial of Christ.

“Odder and odder,” she remarked as they moved into a room filled with various curiosities such as a huge rock crystal, an autograph of queen Victoria, and a letter written by George Washington dated 1779.

Another gallery was devoted to portraits. A painting of Jenny Lind the opera singer, Queen Victoria, David Garrick as Macbeth, Shakespeare and his monument in Avon, and of course, Tom Thumb with his sponsor Barnum. Mrs. Jones smiled happily at the one of Tom Thumb with Queen Victoria

“Wasn’t Barnum enterprising to have collected all this?” Lena asked.

Another room had shells and birds, but they passed these by, preferring instead the natural history section where they saw specimens of the animals not seen in America-- a sea turtle, an elephant, a lion, a leopard, a kangaroo, a longhaired sheep, a bear, an ostrich and a giraffe. Charlie, who had been bored in the picture gallery, begged to stay on in that room, but Molly pulled him away.

“Don’t you want to see Tom Thumb, Charlie?”



There he was in all his miniature splendor, gloriously arrayed in his uniform—General Tom Thumb. He was about two and a half feet tall and about fourteen years old, the same age as Daniel, Lena realized. Daniel was already tall, looking almost like a man. Indifferent to the crowds, the General was having his tea in a little cup and saucer, playing solitaire with tiny cards, carrying on as if no one were there.

Molly was ecstatic and thanked Will, who looked pleased with himself for the pleasure he was giving them all, especially Molly. Lena realized that he was perhaps aware that his sister needed outings such as this without her prompting..

Mrs. Jones eventually tired of watching TomThumb's antics, and was ready to leave. The others wanted to see the Carriage Room. "I've seen enough carriages in my life." Will tried to explain that these were English carriages belonging to English royalty, but managed only to get her to take a look at Tom Thumb's tiny carriage.

"Will, please take us home. We have seen enough for one day." Mrs. Jones leaned on Lena.

"Hang on a bit longer, Gran. You must see the lecture hall." He led them up to the third floor and into a large theater with an elaborate stage.

"This is where Tom Thumb performs. He sings and dances and imitates famous people. And speakers on many different subjects like abolition and temperance and women's rights take the stage here. Women feel free to come unescorted to listen to them. "

"How do you know so much about this place, Will," Lena quizzed.

"Friends in high places." Will winked at her. "Father's become a fan of Tom Thumb since Fanny introduced them."

"At last," Mrs. Jones sighed, as she into the cushions of their carriage.

During the carriage ride home, while Molly and Charlie chattered on about their favorite exhibits, Lena wondered how she could arrange to take her family to see the museum--John especially would enjoy it. Maybe she could plant a hint for Mrs. Jones's Christmas present to her.