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A Romance In A Flat.

It was Christmas Eve, and very cold. Mrs. Warden had been out all day, shopping and calling, and yet day long a north easter—bitter enough to make one "with a nose to see and a heart to feel"—had blown into her round the corners of the street into people's faces, and upset the contents of her pocketbook. Mrs. Warden had ventured to the window once or twice to see whether the sky ever intended to clear, but finding nothing but a leaden sky and the same bitter gusty blast, she had contented herself with the comfortable shelter of her room, and secure the services of the lively dough-boy who ministered to her wants, had ordered a bright fire to be kindled and lighted by the fire, and a bright brass lamp to be placed upon the mantelpiece, and had set her pretty feet belonging to her two pretty ankles upon the fender, and was now lying back in a deep easy chair in the comfortable appearance of the "inner woman."

"Well," said Mrs. Warden, as she drained off up the teacup and put the kettle on to boil, "I wish my mother could look up and see me living everything for myself! I am sure she would be pleased with me."

"Why, what's the matter now?" said Mrs. Warden, as she saw the tears in her eyes.

"The song came from the hawker over the way, and it made me think of my mother's home. Before the vitriolic had fed an exciting voice from outside came through the window.

"Mary, Mary, quite contrary, how does your garden grow?"

Mrs. Warden's feelings preventing her from speaking, she only shook her head, and the voice, from the wind again called out:

"Cockle shells and silver bells and pretty maids in a row."

"Yes," said Mrs. Warden, as she dashed at it (which she always did when she was in a hurry),