

at them afterward with a pleased smile on his broad face.

Miss Azubah Milward was down first, and made tea gloomily, her appearance becoming even more depressed when her brother came in, sat down at the head of the table and stared absently at the snowy cloth.

"Where is she?" he asked, at length; but the words had hardly passed his lips when the door opened, and Emily glided in and took the chair placed in readiness for her.

As she passed her a cup of tea, Miss Milward looked critically at her niece, the result being anything but satisfactory. The curly, rough halo of golden hair displeased her, as did also the clinging, close-fitting, soft, black dress, with its puffs at the elbows and shoulders; but the pale, tired face appealed to her heart, and she said kindly—

"You've had a long journey, child; I expect you want your tea. You must go to bed early."

"Yes," answered her niece indifferently, just raising her heavy eyes for a minute, but dropping them again directly.

The meal passed off almost in silence, in spite of Milward's efforts to carry on a conversation. When it was over he went out; Miss Azubah helped her servant to remove the things, and the new arrival looked sadly from the window.

She felt very strange and lonely, and pitied herself a good deal for the way in which fate had dealt with her—a train of thought dangerous to indulge. The smooth, green lawn and bright patches of old-fashioned flowers became indistinct, and she was shutting her eyes to force back the troublesome drops that were gathering, when an abrupt "Well?" put an end to her meditation.

"Well?" said her aunt, "what do you think of your new home?"

"It is too soon to ask me," she said, without moving. "I am tired and can't think yet."

Miss Milward brought some knitting out of her pocket, and turned her attention to that. Looking up presently, she saw something splash on the window sill.

"Good gracious, child!" she said with a start, "what is the matter?"

The girl would not trust herself to speak, but made a slight motion of her hand toward the crape she wore. The elder woman patted her shoulder to show her sympathy.

"There, there, dear, don't grieve. These griefs are all for our good. Beside, though you have lost one parent, you have found another."

"Yes, but it is so different. No one—no one can be like a mother."

Then burying her face in her hands she gave way to a fit of desolate weeping. Miss Milward remonstrated kindly, tried to soothe her, and finally went on with her knitting.

II.

The little congregation was just leaving church one glowing Sunday in August. Amongst the foremost were Emily Milward and the minister's nephew, a pale young man, rather below the medium height, with a face that was stamped with the unmistakable impress of the city.

"We have both been down here a month," he was saying, "and I have only seen you three times! And I am going back to town soon. You must let me walk home with you this morning."

"I am not alone, Mr. Burnet, My father and aunt are following."

"Are you really going to stay here? I don't believe it. The place does not suit you. You look ill and bored."

"Of course I am to stay here—where else should I go?" she answered with a sigh.

"It's a horribly dull hole for you. Will you introduce me to your father?"

As the farmer was close behind, she did so, and the trio walked on together for a little distance, the two men exchanging a few commonplaces.

"I must turn back now, or my uncle will be waiting dinner for me," said the young man, stopping suddenly, and giving a keen look from the girl to her father and back again. "Good morning, Miss Milward. Good morning, Mr. Milward."

He shook hands with both, but contrived to put so much meaning into that simple action, as far as regarded Emily, that he left her blushing and greatly confused.

"Where is aunt?" she asked, when they were alone.

"Just behind, with Tom Blakely, Emily, my child, I don't like that chap."

"Who?" she asked, surprised.

"That Burnet."

"Why, you have scarcely seen him."

"I know something about him, all the same. He has been down here before. I don't care to see you two together."

"We were acquainted in New York," said Emily, stiffly, and turned away.

"That don't make any better of it," Milward continued. "Take my advice, my girl, and see as little of him as you can. Thank goodness he won't stop here long!"

Emily was silent, and they slackened their pace to allow Miss Azubah and her companion to join them. The latter, a manly, bronzed young fellow of five and twenty years, immediately fell into the place by Emily's side.

"Glorious weather, isn't it?" he said, giving a side glance at the golden hair that almost blazed in the sunshine.

"Very—I mean, yes, it is."

"I suppose you are becoming quite used to country life?"