

to go west, among the mining and re-duction camps. The salary is good, and it will be increased if I remain in their employ. They may want to establish a branch office at Helena or Butte City, and let me have it. Then, there are always golden opportunities for investing a little out there. And just as soon as I know what to depend upon, we'll be married. Would you come out to me, Laura, if it seemed best?"

Laura had listened without comment, but now she raised a startled face to his:

"Oh, Hugh! you know I would do anything you wish; but isn't it very wild and rough? And what a long journey!"

"Yes, a long journey, but all by rail, in luxurious cars. As to the rough—well, I am assured, by those who know, that all the comforts and luxuries are obtainable there—at a somewhat higher price than here."

He arose, and added, "We will talk more of this. The best thing about it is, the change of climate and travel will be apt to benefit my health—probably make a new man of me, physically—and morally, too, perhaps."

As they walked slowly toward the house, Laura told Hugh of the domesticated stranger.

"Guess he admires Louise," she added, innocently unconscious of the real attraction.

When they reached the house, Hugh was cordially received by Mrs. Linton and Louise, and he was introduced to Mr. Carroll. They spent a very pleasant evening. Hugh gave an outline of his plans, and, for some reason, all, except Laura, were pleased and congratulated him upon his chances. The truth was, Mrs. Linton thought absence would cool the affection between Hugh and Laura, and Clarence thought it would be strange if he could not win Laura from the absent lover, whom he called, mentally, "soft." Hugh was poetic and

not practical, and even the artist discovered it in a single evening.

Time flew the few days before Hugh must start west, and Laura busied herself devising little comforts for him. The lovers had many long and confidential talks, and learned to understand each other better than ever before. At last, the day came for the parting, and Laura found it even harder than she had anticipated. She had no sympathy from either mother or sister, who had tried, so far, in vain, to induce her to give Hugh up, feeling that she was worthy a man who promised more. In addition to the pain of separation, and lack of sympathy, Laura was conscious of an indefinable presentiment of evil, and, in spite of her efforts to be cheerful, she could not shake off the gloom. So it was a very sad face, with tearful eyes, that Hugh took between his hands at parting, down at the end of the lane. He kissed, again and again, the trembling lips from which the rich color had fled, and put on his bravest, sunniest smile; but Laura could not be brave, and he was obliged to leave her, pale, and trembling like an aspen leaf, with eyes blinded with tears. Long after the coach had rumbled away, Laura sat on a moss-covered stone, mechanically stirring the rustling oak and maple leaves, as her thoughts traveled swiftly forward into the cheerless months ahead. Finally, alarmed at her lengthy absence, Mr. Carroll and Louise came to seek her. Without a word, she arose, and, joining them, walked to the cottage. That night, in the solitude of her room, she took herself to task, for her childish weakness, and asking help of the all-knowing Father, she felt better strengthened to bear her loneliness, and determined to be her own, sunny self. She succeeded so well the next day, that Mrs. Linton and Louise were agreeably surprised. Two weeks passed, and then Laura re-