

have little doubt. The thorough and scientific methods of the present day are so infinitely superior to the superficial training of the past that she who teaches must be for ever learning, and to one who loves study as you do this will be no difficulty. When you have taken your degree there is nothing I should like better than to have you as one of my teachers here. I do sincerely trust," and she regarded her a little severely, "that you will not be turned from the path you have chosen by the first—by any fancies. But you are too sensible. Well, good-bye, my dear, and, well done."

Then Beattie was left alone with her. The head-mistress had been standing hitherto. "Now she sat down."

"And you, Beattie?" she said.

Beattie was silent.

"The others are leaving with some aim in life. What are you going to do?"

"I don't know, Miss Williams," said Beattie. "I suppose I shall get married."

"My dear!" and Miss Williams held up her hands in horror. "But even if in the future you should contract a suitable alliance, it ought not to be for eight or ten years, and in the meanwhile!"

"Eight or ten years," said Beattie laughing. "Why, I should be quite old. Aunt Ella will be very angry with me if I am not married till I am in the middle of my twenties. I am coming out next year, you know. She was married at nineteen."

"But we know better than that nowadays," said Miss Williams. "If only you could have continued your studies! Why, you have not even been up for the senior Cambridge, and you would have done very well, I am sure. And then I should have wished you to go on to Girton."

"Well, it can't be helped," said Beattie philosophically. "I am sorry you are disappointed, Miss Williams. And I must say I should have liked to go to Girton myself. I have heard the girls have great fun there. But Aunt Ella would not hear of such a thing. She is very much afraid I shall be too clever as it is."

"I don't think there is much fear of that," said Miss Williams quietly.

"Well, it is good-bye, then."

"Yes," said Beattie. "But I shall come to the distribution, Miss Williams, and I shall look forward to seeing you and all the girls again. I have enjoyed being at school so much. I am sorry I haven't been good and steady and got a lot of prizes, and that you can't say things to me like you did to the others, but if I am ignorant, I won't let anybody blame the school for it."

She looked up at Miss Williams wistfully. A tear was shining on her eyelashes, her mouth trembled. She was sorry to say good-bye to the stern school-mistress. There was something more final in it than her farewells to the girls with the promise of future meetings and many letters, and the consciousness of Miss Williams' disapprobation made her realise that she could not meet her

with confidence later on as Edith and Margaret would.

She held out her little hand doubtfully to receive the handshake which had been vouchsafed to her fellows.

To her utter astonishment Miss Williams took her in her arms and fairly hugged her.

"Good-bye, you dear child," she said, "I wish we could have kept you with us."

And then, as if ashamed of this unwonted demonstration, she opened the door herself to hasten Beattie's departure.

Beattie ran down the stairs with flushed cheeks, and a beating heart. The others were waiting for her, for part of their homeward way lay together.

"I hope Miss Williams hasn't said anything sarcastic," said Margaret to Edith, noticing that Beattie was tearful.

Beattie heard her.

"Oh, no, she was very nice," she said. But neither to them nor to anyone else did she say that Miss Williams had kissed her.

They were just leaving the school when Beattie remembered she had not said good-bye to Mrs. Pate, the house-keeper, and accordingly she ran down the flights of stone stairs to the kitchen. Mrs. Pate was giving her husband, the only man on the premises, his dinner, and was engaged in emptying something with a most appetising smell into a soup-plate when Beattie's knock was followed by her entrance, to the delight of five little yellow-haired Pates who had often tasted peppermint drops at her expense, and to the confusion of their father, who was never supposed to see the young ladies. Mrs. Pate emptied her hands as soon as possible and curtsied.

"I have come to say good-bye," said Beattie. "I am not coming back next term, you know. You have been so kind to me. Do you remember the day you got all that ink out of my dress? I don't believe I ever thanked you properly. Good-bye, Jane and Susie. Please, Mrs. Pate, will you buy them something with this to remember me by. Now I must go. Miss Winter is waiting."

She shook hands with them all, Mrs. Pate apologising for the black off the saucepan which adhered to her hands, and Mr. Pate reddening as if he had already partaken of all the hot soup, and then she picked up her satchel and hastened after the others, who had strolled on.

Beattie and Margaret went all the way with Edith, who lived furthest from the school and was the most anxious of the three to get home, then Beattie walked back with Margaret. The two had more in common than either of them had with Edith. While Edith lived a life of puritanical strictness and simplicity, the others were used to a certain amount of luxury and to the pleasures which society gives to girls of their age. Mrs. Winter was very particular as to what her daughter read and where she went, but Mrs. Raven fostered the natural independence of Margaret and allowed her more liberty

than is usual even in these days. She herself was unconventional and irritated by the restrictions of correct English society, and her daughter inherited her Bohemian tendencies together with the somewhat stern independence of her Scotch father. Margaret was very upright and sensible, she was not at all pretty, and she looked older than her years. It was possible for her to take her own line without the dangers which would have beset a more volatile or more attractive girl. When people remonstrated with Mrs. Raven she laughed. "If you had known my dear husband," she would say, "you would understand why I do not thwart Margaret. She has an unerring instinct for what is best for herself, and can be safely trusted to follow it." And the mothers who did not consider their self-willed daughters' instincts "unerring," and whose duties were consequently harder than Mrs. Raven's, spoke of her "dangerous experiment" with mingled envy and sorrow.

Margaret had no real friend but Beattie Margaretson, and to her she was devoted. There was something chivalrous in her affection, as if she had been a man. She was more like a boy than a girl in some ways. She liked carpentering better than needlework, and cricket better than tennis, though she excelled in all games which required strength. She always wore severe manly hats and tailor-made dresses and boots which were square-toed and thick-soled. But she loved in Beattie her daintiness and beauty, her clear voice (her own was deep and strong), and the pretty, clinging, affectionate ways which were so impossible to herself. She would have liked to shelter and protect her, and woe be to the being who said anything disparaging of Beattie in her presence. She was always drawing her and designing dresses for her, and picturing her in different attitudes. Leaving school meant to her leaving Beattie.

So when they got to Margaret's house she turned round and said she would take Beattie home to hers. In the holidays they would see little of each other if anything, as Mrs. Raven and Margaret were going to some relations in Scotland, and Beattie's aunt was going to take her to the seaside. Beattie's father and mother were both dead, and Aunt Ella was the wife of her mother's brother.

"I wish you were going to be with me in Paris," said Margaret for the twentieth time in the last few weeks. "If your aunt would trust you to me I would take such care of you and it would be so good for your French. But I suppose I must give up thinking about it."

"We must for the present. You see, Aunt Ella doesn't know anything of Madame Duclot that you are going to. But perhaps some day we can manage it, and it would be fun. I don't know however I shall fill up my time. I rather wish I was going to do something like you and Edith."

"Oh, you're different from us. I can't somehow fancy you earning your