

awakened to the fact that her eldest niece needed watching.

Miss Annie had remarked a moment before, that she thought she might as well run up to the gate and see if Jerry Patterson, the mailman, was at the post-office yet; and besides, it was time Malcolm and Jean were home from the store, and she might help to carry their parcels; and, anyway, she had nothing to do, because it wasn't time to get the tea ready yet.

Miss Gordon would not have stooped to quote Shakespeare, considering him very irreligious and sometimes quite indelicate, and having forbidden the reading of him in the Gordon family. Nevertheless the unspoken thought of her mind was his—that the lady did protest too much.

Of the eight, Annie was her aunt's favorite. She was pretty and gentle and had caused Miss Gordon less trouble during the four years she had been head of her brother's house, than John or Elizabeth had frequently contributed in one day. But lately it seemed as though her greatest comfort bade fair to become her greatest anxiety. For Annie had suddenly grown up. The fact had been startlingly revealed by the strange actions of young Mr. Coulson, the school-teacher, who was probably at this moment walking across the fields towards the big gate between the willows.

At the thought, Miss Gordon closed her lips tightly and looked severe. To be sure, Annie must