

on the prairie, and life was so hard, and bare, and unlovely; and she would never have a chance to wear her pretty dresses. She would get old and wrinkled and homely, in a little while, and her hands wouldn't be pretty, and after a while he would tire of her, as all the men did out there. She would be lonely and unlovely. And maybe she'd grow not to care for him,—nor to care what she looked like. Oh, she couldn't, she couldn't. He must forgive her, it had been very wrong of her, but they could be still—friends. She scarcely breathed the last word, it was insulting in its insipidity.

He sat quiet a long time,—so long that she looked up,—and then it was that she saw his eyes. He spoke quietly, kindly, pityingly—told her he knew how it would hurt her mother, that perhaps she belonged back there; and he didn't,—he didn't blame her. Then his voice stopped. He spoke again. He asked her to think well before she chose the other way; he knew she loved him as she could never love anybody else. That love was everything,—a love like theirs. It forced things to come right. If she did the one dominantly right thing, the others would fit in somehow. He had always seen it so. His voice stopped quickly.

When he spoke again it was strong, and full, and free.

"You will never forget, girl, never. When you hear the wind sweep you will remember our ride of wild gladness; when the little breeze freshens at night you will remember the sweet madness of it. You cannot forget when the sun shines and the birds sing. You will remember when all is still, and greying—when the day closes with long shadows. Ah, you will remember always how we rode together."

She came home, just the same old Isa, and entered on the happy, busy, exciting rush of college life—dances, teas, calls, meetings, flirtations, brightness, and gay conventional adventures. She enjoyed them all. People's hearts don't break nowadays with the uncomfortable finality they once displayed. The twentieth century girl's heart is a well-ordered and properly regulated mechanism, and responds with pleasing alacrity to whatever new emotions are imposed upon it. Isa had been a little tardy in training hers, but it was a fairly decent heart, and the frazzled edges didn't hurt much—at least in public. Taken altogether, she played a good game, and nobody knew,—sometimes she didn't know herself.

She had always been popular. A healthy, happy, wholesome comrade,—skated well, danced well, sang a little, played fairly,—with a great capacity for absolute enjoyment of what the world offers. Now, there was another charm. She flirted with a little whimsical sadness; used a little quiet wistfulness. If you looked a little, and stopped to wonder, she was all quick smiles and mockery.

Directly in proportion to her increase in popularity was the sweet "cattiness" of her dear girl friends. And,—sometimes she fought with the weapon nearest at hand. At first she hated herself for it, and strove still to be big-hearted and strong. But little by little she changed into the charming society product,—clever, even brilliant, armed at all points, a little heartless, and a great deal scornful. And she forgot her crude, strong honesty; forgot even