

she and young Standfield paired off together; they did it so naturally, too. They seemed made for one another; everyone but Augusta thought that they would make a match of it; indeed some people said they were engaged; but Augusta said she thought he was only flirting—"

Here Judith uttered a slight exclamation that brought the garrulous old dame to a full stop.

"Oh? my dear, did you speak?" It did not occur to her that Judith's sisterly love and pride might be wounded by this exposition of Augusta's view of the matter.

"No, go on please, Mrs. Laurie," she answered in a smothered voice; she had partly turned her back to Mrs. Laurie, who could not see the white, quivering lips and eyes full of dull pain.

"Augusta said he flirted with all women; perhaps she was right; but I really do not think the young man meant to flirt; anyway I am sure he never wilfully caused pain to any woman; it was his manner; he has changed since then; grown silent and stern; but I remember well he had a caressing, tender manner to all women; and perhaps a great many fell in love with him without his knowing or desiring it. Anyway nothing ever came of his attentions to your sister; he went away suddenly, and no letter ever came from him to Dorothy, though Augusta—who is very clever at finding out things—said that she was certain Dorothy was watching for a letter day after day. However that may be, I know that Dolly—poor girl—drooped and lost all her pretty color before she went back to the city. I remember thinking to myself that they must have had a lover's quarrel, and hoping that it would all come right; but you see in all these years they have never met again. Perhaps she refused him and regretted it afterwards; everyone in Eastville had something to say about it; Mr. Standfield was so stern and cold when he came here again that I never liked to speak about it to him."

"And dear Mrs. Laurie, I hope you never will speak to him about it. I do not think Dorothy would like you to do so; and do not speak about it again to anyone, not even to Augusta. Will you promise me, dear Mrs. Laurie?"

"Oh! no my dear, I'm not given to gossiping, and I think this is the first time in several years that I have mentioned the matter to anyone."

"I am going up stairs to lie down, Mrs. Laurie; my head aches so badly. Please ask Augusta to excuse me at dinner time; I do not care for anything to eat."

"Go without your dinner, my dear?" exclaimed Mrs. Laurie, who could not understand how anyone could voluntarily forego that luxury for any lesser consideration than a death, or some equally solemn event.

"I could not eat if I tried," responded poor Judy, whose pride was for the time being utterly routed by the heart-sickness that was almost more than she could bear. Let Augusta sneer as she would. For a few hours at least, Judith felt she must be alone, to fight that battle with her own heart which she knew must be fought, ere she met Donald Standfield again. Even we, reader, will forbear to intrude upon her solitude; such griefs are sacred, for even death could have caused no greater desolation in this young life than did the knowledge of her lover's falseness.

About five o'clock Susannah knocked at her door; Judy answered the knock and there stood the old woman with a dainty, white-covered tray in her hand, on which was a cup of fragrant tea and some thin bread and butter. Not wishing to hurt the kind old heart, she allowed Susannah to place the tray on her dressing table, and promised to eat and drink.

"Poor dearie, you do look sick; get you to bed altogether, that's the best place for you. Come, I'll help you undress."

"Thanks, Susannah, but I do not care to go to bed; I am going down to tea—that is if there are no strangers to be here. Do you know if—any of the gentlemen are coming?"

"Well, I couldn't answer for Mr. Littleworth or Mr. Thorpe, but Mr. Standfield ain't comin'; and bless me! I was near forgettin' the book; I left it on the hall chair when I knocked at your door; Mr. Standfield left it for you and said how sorry he was to hear you were ill. He'll be here to-morrow afternoon; he's kind to you, dearie, ain't he? and you like him? Well, I am glad of that, for you would have a lonely life here if it wasn't for him and Mr. Littleworth. Ah, I remember when your sister, Miss Dorothy was here, Mr.

Standfield was a handsome young man then, and he seemed to think there was no one in all the world like Miss Dorothy. I've seen the love shinin' in his eyes when he looked at her. But I suppose she did not care enough for him to marry him. I must say she was the sweetest and prettiest young lady I ever saw. Most like he's thinkin' of Miss Dorothy when he is so kind and attentive to you, and you're like her too, Miss Judy; for I do believe it's all along of his love for Miss Dolly that he has never married; he must be gettin' on to forty, now. I hope you're not angry with me for talking like this, Miss Judy?"

"Oh no Susannah! There, I can eat no more; if you will leave me now, I will lie down again for awhile before dressing."

She took up the book, when Susannah was gone and with a passionate gesture flung it from her.

"Cruel, unmanly!" she muttered; not content with having broken poor Dolly's heart, he must break her tool! At this time my little heroine, who is not at all heroic in her conduct, did really think that her heart was broken: she walked up and down her little room with clenched hands, trying to stifle the sobs that would have relieved her so much if she had given way to them. But she must go down to tea and face Augusta, and of course it would never do to allow her the satisfaction of seeing her with red, swollen eyes and woe-begone aspect. No indeed!

So she bit her lip with her sharp little teeth till the blood came, and clenched her hands till the marks of the nails were visible on their palms, all the while pacing to and fro like one demented. Indeed, it was very real suffering; perhaps the most intense she would ever know. It must be true! There could be scarcely any doubt now that three persons—two of them disinterested—had given similar evidence. But oh, what would she not give to be with Dorothy! It would not be very difficult to get the very truth of the matter from her by delicate speech, but to put any questions on so sacred a subject in writing was altogether too cold-blooded a proceeding.

What if Mrs. Laurie were right in her surmises, and he had really proposed to Dorothy and she had rejected him and repented afterwards? As this thought passed through her mind, Judy stooped and took up the book that bore Standfield's name in his own firm handwriting; she had seen his writing and knew it well. She pressed her lips to the name and held the book against her flushed cheek—flushed with feverish agitation.

"My love, my love! how can I doubt you?"

Then came crowding back to her mind the impressions of her childhood respecting that faithless lover of Dolly's, and the vague whispers she had heard concerning the matter; and everything seemed to point to Donald Standfield as "the man."

Bowing her head so that her face rested on his book, she cried piteously:

"Dolly, Dolly, forgive me! I vowed to hate him for his cruelty to you; but I love him, I love him!"

CHAPTER IX.

FAREWELL!

THOUGH there had arisen a barrier which would last for all time, between Judith and Mr. Standfield, a chance observer would have noticed no change in her demeanor when they met again. The storm which had swept over her soul had left no traces outwardly; save, perhaps, an increased pallor, and a frequent pathetic quiver of the lips when she thought herself unnoticed and was off guard.

But as it happened, three of her constant companions were not chance observers, and the subtle change in the girl was perceived and accounted for by each in a different way. Augusta, of course, was the only one who guessed the true explanation of it, and she exulted in the success which had crowned her efforts.

Though Judith made no apparent effort to avoid him, Mr. Standfield instinctively divined that she shrank from being left tete-a-tete with him. His ear, quick to analyze every tone of her voice, soon detected the faint coldness that crept into it whenever she addressed him. Perhaps she had guessed his intention of declaring his love for her and was taking this