

eralizations when the heart is wounded.

They were at home at last. Marion shivered as she looked at the cottage with its closed doors and shutters.

Nettie sprang lightly from the carriage, tied the horse and looked for the key under the door mat. Marion watched her dully as she unlocked the door and threw up the windows. In a minute she was back again. "You look pale still," she said as she helped Marion to alight. "I've moved the couch up by the window, where you can get all the breeze there is."

"Oh, Tommy, take the horse, will you, and drive him over to Joe Fuller's and tell Mrs. Fuller that Joe is coming in the bus with the others?"

Marion came to life suddenly. "Why, Nettie Porter, you're going back."

"Going back!" cried Nettie, "and leave you like this? I hardly think so."

"But I want you to go. I can get along. You mustn't lose your good time for me."

"And you think I'd have a good time, knowing that you were all alone and sick?" Nettie cried. "You must have lots of confidence in my friendship! Just comfort yourself by thinking that I'd rather be here with you than anywhere else."

When the clock on the mantel struck five, Nettie looked up at it reproachfully. "I really must go," she said. "Mother will be frightened if I don't come back when the rest do."

Marion caught her hands impulsively. "Oh, Nettie, there's so much I ought to say to you!"

"Don't!" Nettie begged. "I can't endure explanations."

"But I haven't treated you right," choked Marion, and with the confession the tears came and brought relief.

There was a moment of silence, then Nettie spoke almost in a whisper. "I've always thought, dear, that friendship didn't mean much unless it could forgive something."

The two girls looked into each other's eyes, and then they kissed each other. Nettie put on her hat and went away, a gladness on her face that made it almost luminous. Marion's head dropped to the table. A scent of roses came in through the window and the notes of a bird's song floated through the stillness.

There was pain in her heart still, the pain of wounded pride and of misplaced trust, but there was something more. If she had proved the worthlessness of one friend, she had proved the sincerity of another. The tears that ran so freely were more of gratitude than of suffering.

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