

temper becomes worse and worse every day; and then my mother!—what a home is mine! I am very miserable,—but it must come to an end. Did he not, this very day, threaten to set me adrift in the world? Well, be it so. And who will be the loser by that?" And he laughed bitterly.

"Philip, Philip!" said a low sweet voice near him, and a young girl, apparently about seventeen years of age, stepped lightly along the open timbers, and across a pile of slanting boards, and in another minute was at his side. "Is your father here, Philip," she said, casting a furtive glance round.

"He left the mill just now, Alice, and is gone up to the house, not in the most amiable of moods."

The girl looked at Philip; a shade of sorrow was in her fair sweet face, but she sighed and was silent; perhaps she read the trace of discontent and sorrow in the expressive face of her companion, and was grieved. After a silence of a few minutes, she looked up, and said,—“Philip, will you come over to the cottage, to-day? My father has gone out for a ride, but said he would be glad to find you when he returned. He said,” and she dropped her blue eyes towards the ground, “that if you found it dull, you could get the key of the book-case, where you would find some of your sort of books, you know,—those dull books, full of lines, and triangles, and circles.”

Philip half smiled as he replied—“Thank you, Alice, I may be glad of the books, which I find everything but dull.”

There was a half-checked smile on Alice Sackville's little rosy mouth, but it was unheeded by Philip, who added, “but I cannot come yet. I have the cattle to look to, and the books—that is the account of lumber sold to-day—to post up.”

“Philip, I can feed the cattle for you,” said Alice.

“Nonsense, I can do it myself,” he replied, a smile curving his red lip as he stole a half glance at the young girl from beneath his long black lashes.

“I could post the books for you, I am sure. I can write very nicely, better than you can; for your's is a stiff black hand, and takes up a great deal of room, and mine is neat and small, besides I can cast up sums quite well; only just try me for once.”

“You know nothing about book-keeping, or measurements of timber. A pretty rage my father would be in if he saw your little scribbling hand in his books.”

“It is a sad pity your father is so cross,” said Alice. “I wish he were as kind to you, Philip, as mine is to me.”

“Or as your father is to me, Alice,” said Philip, sighing, “but gossiping with you will not do my work.”

“Philip, shall you be soon done? I can

wait half an hour,” and Alice seated herself on the butt end of a saw log.

“You had better not wait for me, Alice. I may be detained more than half an hour, and I know my way to Woodlands, I should think without a guide,” was the ungallant reply; “besides, I must speak to Sarah. Do you know, Alice, that this is my birth-day?”

“Your birth-day, Philip! Then I should not have asked you to come to see my father. Your mother will be vexed if you go out this evening.”

“Not she! She never notices my birth-day. You are quite mistaken if you think she cares where I spend my birth day. She never notices it, or even mentions it. Sarah is the only one who speaks of it to me.”

“How old is Sarah?” asked Alice.

“I do not know her exact age, but I think she is only just turned of thirty. She says she was only a girl of twelve years of age when we left England. I was a babe of a year old.”

“I do not like that woman, Sarah, Philip; she is a strange creature, but she is very fond of you, I believe.”

“Indeed she is,” said Philip, laughing; “she is as jealous of me as if she were my wife. She would not speak civilly to you, Alice, if she saw you here with me, or knew how often you came through the glen in search of your cow.”

There was something that jarred on the ears of Alice strangely at this, to her, disagreeable remark: she felt the warm blood mount to her cheek. “Did she come too often through the glen?”—and did Philip think so as well as Sarah! Alice started from the end of the log, and bidding Philip a hasty good-bye, in a few minutes was hidden among the shrubs that skirted the winding path that led among the hills towards her father's cottage.

Why did Philip linger on the entrance of the mill, to watch the waving of Alice's dress, as she passed among the bushes, and the fluttering of the ribbons that floated loosely from her wide coarse straw hat on the light summer breeze? Perhaps my readers can guess: we will not try. Nor why he felt his spirit calmed and soothed since the young girl had been talking with him; for there was nothing in what she had said to drive away the angry brooding spirit. Perhaps it was the frank, confiding manner, and the bright sunny smile, that had stolen over him. At any rate, it was pleasant to know there was one house into which he could enter, and feel that he was cared for and welcomed with cordial good-will, and that was the cottage at Woodlands. At home his father was irritable, or sunk in gloomy silence; his mother was old and forbidding; and Sarah, of late, was ever ready to blow the coals of dissension, and now, more than ever, lost no opportunity of advising him