

"But, Wilfred, if I were you," said Dolly, gravely, "I would try to be so nice and pleasant to them all that they should like me, even if I were not strong like them."

Wilfred scowled, and only said again—

"I don't care that they should love me. I don't care to be nice to them."

"I think you would like it if you only tried," continued Dolly; and then she paused and added rather wistfully, "I like people to love me."

"I should think everybody did," remarked Wilfred; but Dolly shook her little head and answered slowly—

"I'm afraid everybody doesn't, but I should like them to."

"You don't want Bruce and Edgar to like you? you don't want to be friends with them?" questioned Wilfred quickly and eagerly; "because you won't find them at all nice friends."

"Why not?"

"Because they're not nice at all, and they always quarrel so with everybody."

"I shouldn't like to quarrel," said Dolly, thoughtfully.

"Everybody quarrels more or less," remarked Wilfred, with gravity; "nobody can help it; but some people are worse than others."

"But why should everyone quarrel?" asked Dolly, with surprise in both face and voice.

"I don't know why they should, but they do," asserted Wilfred, with the confidence of experience. "Do you and Duke never quarrel?"

"No."

"Never?" with some incredulity.

"I don't think so. I am so very fond of Duke; and mamma always taught us to love each other. She couldn't bear children to quarrel, especially little brothers and sisters."

"My mamma doesn't care how much we quarrel," replied Wilfred; "she doesn't mind what we do, so long as she doesn't hear any noise downstairs."

Dolly's face was growing more and more perplexed and unsatisfied. She did not understand such a loveless household.

"Well, Wilfred," she said slowly, "I'm sure you would be much happier if you did love one another better."

"I don't see what difference it would make," he persisted.

Dolly paused awhile, feeling unequal to the task of explaining anything so very simple, then she said—

"But you love Molly?"

"Molly—yes. Molly's a girl. That makes it different. When Molly isn't cross I am very fond of her. I think I always love her in a sort of way, though she isn't at all nice very often."

"Shall I go and see her? Would she like it?" asked Dolly, who had expected Wilfred to be anxious for her to pay this visit.

"Yes, but not till after tea. She will be asleep now perhaps, and we shall have no time. I think she would like you to come after tea, but she was cross this morning. I hope you won't mind that."

"I don't think I shall mind very much; and perhaps she won't be cross to me."

Next moment a bell rang, and the children trooped downstairs to tea in a noisy fashion. Bruce took one of Dolly's hands, and Edgar, forestalling his brother by a rapid movement, seized the other. A girl was rather a rarity in the Lennox nursery, and the boys were all inclined to be friendly.

"Go away!" cried Wilfred, pushing his brother angrily; "Dolly's my friend, I'm going to sit by her at tea."

"Oh, are you? We'll see about that."

"Get away! She's my friend, I tell you,"

"Hold your tongue, you ill-tempered young brat," cried Bruce angrily. "She's all of our friend. Don't talk such nonsense."

"I tell you she's my friend, and not yours a bit. She said she would be my special friend; I mean to sit by her at tea-time."

"So do Edgar and I," returned Bruce scornfully. "You've been sitting by her all the afternoon. You always want the best of everything for yourself, you little toad. Dolly will be very glad to be rid of you for a bit, I know."

"Please don't quarrel about it," broke in Dolly's soft little voice. "I can't sit by everybody, but it doesn't matter. It isn't worth quarrelling over. And please," she added timidly, with a glance at her little brother, who

was chattering to Hubert, "don't let Duke hear you say things like that, Mamma would be so sorry if he learned to be quarrelsome and to use ugly words. She could not bear it."

This speech silenced the boys, and made Bruce look a little abashed for a moment; but neither he nor Edgar gave up their claim to sit beside her, as she half hoped they would; and as Wilfred had no chance against them, he had to go elsewhere, and sat in sulky silence, hardly condescending to eat his tea, and avoiding all the pleading little glances which Dolly cast across the table at him.

Poor Dolly felt that this first children's tea-party at which she had been present was anything but unmixed pleasure.

(To be continued.)

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