

and uncouth love develop and form a tie to bind the homely lives together, and warm and brighten them? It may have been that his own mental condition at this time was such as would tend to soften his heart, for an innocent passion, long cherished in its bud, had burst into its full blooming during the months he had spent amid the novel beauty and loneliness, and perhaps his new bliss subdued him somewhat. Always ready with a kindly word, he was specially ready with it where Seth was concerned. He never passed him without one, and frequently reined in his horse to speak to him at greater length. Now and then, on his way home at night, he stopped at the shanty door, and summoning the lad detained him for a few minutes chatting in the odorous evening air. It was thoroughly in accordance with the impulses of his frank and generous nature that he should endeavour to win upon him and gain his confidence. "We are both Deepden men," he would say, "and that we should be friends. We are both alone and a long way from home."

But the lad was always timid and slow of speech. His gratitude showed itself in ways enough, but it rarely took the form of words. Only, one night as the horse moved away, he laid his hand upon the bridle and held it a moment, some powerful emotion showing itself in his face, and lowering his voice until it was almost a whisper. "Mester," he said, "if theer's ivver owt to be done as is hard an' loike to bring pain an' danger, yo'll—yo'll not forget me?"

Langley looked down at him with a mingled feeling of warm pity and deep bewilderment. "Forget you?" he echoed.

The dullness seemed to have dropped away from the commonplace face as if it had been a veil; the eyes were burning with a hungry pathos and fire and passion; they were raised to his and held him with the power of an indescribable anguish. "Dunnot forget as I'm here," the voice growing sharp and intense, "ready an' eager an' waitin' fur th' toime to come. Let me do summat or brave summat or suffer summat, for God's sake!"

When the young man rode away it was with a sense of weight and pain upon him. He was mystified. People were often grateful to him, but their gratitude was not such as this; this oppressed and disturbed him. It was suggestive of a mental condition whose existence seemed almost impossible. What a life this poor fellow must have led, since the simplest kindness aroused within him such emotions as this! "It is hard to understand," he murmured; "it is even a little horrible. One fancies these duller natures do not reach our heights and depths of happiness and pain,

and yet—Caithie, Caithie, my dear," breaking off suddenly, and turning his face upward to the broad free blue of the sky, as he quickened his horse's pace, "let me think of you; this hurts me."

But he was drawn nearer to the boy, and did his best to cheer and help him. His interest in him grew as he saw him oftener, and there was not only the old interest, but a new one. Something in the lad's face—a something which had struck him as familiar even at first—began to haunt him constantly. He could not rid himself of the impression it left upon him, and yet he never found himself a shade nearer the solution of the mystery.

"Raynor," he said to him on one of the evenings when he had stopped before the shanty, "I wish I knew why your face troubles me so."

"Does it trouble you, mester?"

"Yes," with a half laugh, "I think I may say it troubles me. I have tried to recollect every lad in Deepden, and I have no remembrance of you."

"Happen not, mester," meekly. "I niver wur much noticed, yo' see; I'm one o' them as foak is more loike to pass by."

An early train arriving next morning brought visitors to the Creek—a business-like elderly gentleman and his daughter, a pretty girl, with large bright eyes and an innocent rosy face, which became rosier and prettier than ever when Mr. Edward Langley advanced from the depot shed with uncovered head and extended hand. "Caithie!" he said, when the first greetings had been interchanged, "what a delight this is to me! I did not hope for such happiness as this."

"Father wanted to see the mines," answered Caithie, sweetly demure, "and I—I wanted to see Black Creek; your letters were so enthusiastic."

"A day will suffice, I suppose?" her paternal parent was wandering on amiably. "A man should always investigate such matters for himself. I can see enough to satisfy me between now and the time for the return train."

"I cannot," whispered Langley to Caithie; "a century would not suffice. If the sun would but stand still!"

The lad Seth was late for dinner that day, and when he entered the house Bess turned from her dish-washing to give him a sharp, troubled look. "Are you in again?" she asked.

"Nay," he answered, "not bnt a bit tired an' heavy-loike."

He sat down upon the door-step with heavily clasped hands, and eyes wandering towards the mountain, whose pine-crowned

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