

THE BEND IN THE ROAD

lay before her in a dreamlike afterlight — “a haunt of ancient peace.” There was a freshness in the air as of a wind that had blown over honey-sweet fields of clover. Home lights twinkled out here and there among the homestead trees. Beyond lay the sea, misty and purple, with its haunting, unceasing murmur. The west was a glory of soft mingled hues, and the pond reflected them all in still softer shadings. The beauty of it all thrilled Anne’s heart, and she gratefully opened the gates of her soul to it.

“Dear old world,” she murmured, “you are very lovely, and I am glad to be alive in you.”

Half-way down the hill a tall lad came whistling out of a gate before the Blythe homestead. It was Gilbert, and the whistle died on his lips as he recognized Anne. He lifted his cap courteously, but he would have passed on in silence, if Anne had not stopped and held out her hand.

“Gilbert,” she said, with scarlet cheeks, “I want to thank you for giving up the school for me. It was very good of you — and I want you to know that I appreciate it.”

Gilbert took the offered hand eagerly.

“It wasn’t particularly good of me at all, Anne. I was pleased to be able to do you some small service. Are we going to be friends after this? Have you really forgiven me my old fault?”

Anne laughed and tried unsuccessfully to withdraw her hand.

“I forgave you that day by the pond landing,