

gathered that morning. How pretty she looked, and as Keith paused and watched her a pained feeling stole into his heart. She would leave on the steamer to-morrow, and what would the place be like without her? He was going, too, but how could he come back and carry on his work without her helpful presence? Would she return, too? The thought had often entered his mind. But how could he expect such a thing? How could he ask her to leave the comforts of civilization and dwell far off in the wilderness among a rude people? An involuntary groan escaped his lips, which caused Constance to start and to look suddenly up from her work.

"Oh, it is you, Mr. Steadman!" she remarked with a smile. "I didn't know any one was near."

"Miss Radhurst," said Keith suddenly, "will you please walk with me along this bank? I want to show you a very pretty scene."

"Yes, only let me finish my task. There, that is better, but oh, how soon the flowers fade! Now I am ready."

Side by side they wended their way along the bank, then down into a little valley close by the river, where a small stream purred through a grove of fir and cottonwood trees. Birds were fitting here and there, while a noisy squirrel, sitting on a high branch, chattered and scolded incessantly at the intruders into its domain.