

"Well, I must be going home now," said Adair, as she picked up her cloak. "Mother sent her love to you, dear Mrs. Fletcher, and she will come and see you to-morrow. And you are to do as you are bid, do you hear?"

Mary's smile was very sweet as she rose to bid her dear young friend good-bye.

"You'll spoil me, and make me lazy among you," she said, and a bright tear started in her eye.

"No fear, only you are precious to us, and we always take care of precious things, don't we? Good-night. No, you must not come with me, John. It's only a step, and I am not in the least afraid. I shall be inside our gate in a few minutes."

John put on his cap, and walked only as far as the gate of his own garden. He loved Adair Bremner as if she had been his own child. She had come about the cottage since the days when she was a little vision in a white sun-bonnet, toddling at her nurse's side, and during all these years the love between the fair daughter of Halliwell and the little rose-covered cottage of the poet had never faltered or grown cold.

"Mrs. Fletcher wants taking great care of, John," she said, as she paused at the gate, "and we shall have to insist on getting our own way about the little maid. I know of a girl in my Sunday class who would just suit her. But I'll send my mother down to-morrow to talk to her about it."

"Ay, but ye mak' sunshine wherever ye go, Miss Adair," said John, simply, "and the man that gets ye a king might envy."

"You spoil me, John," said Adair, and left him with a smile.

The sun had now set, and the sweet spring dusk

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