

to be alone in the world. She lived by herself in the little white house where we saw her, and "didn't seem to take no notice of no one." She avoided the neighbours, shut herself up in dark rooms, never went to "meetin'," or "sewin' s'ciety," or any such gathering, and refused to admit the minister or other friendly visitors. But there was a sudden change. One summer day she was seen in a field near her house "chasin' a yellow butterfly," and after that she was a different being.

"She took to all kinds o' live flyin' an' crawlin' an' hoppin' creeters," the story went on. "She'd spend a hull day runnin' after butterflies and millers, and huntin' for bugs an' caterpillars an' spiders an' hoppergrasses. An' nights she'd be scootin' round with a lantern to ketch them big hairy things like bats that flop into lights. An' she'd keep her winder open every evenin', and start up an' kite 'round the room with that kinder fish-net, an' ketch every thing that come in. An' she begun to take notice o' people—children fust; an' she'd ask the boys an' girls to come in an' see her live things, an' she'd talk real nice to 'em—good's a book. An' somehow she's different every way, pleasanter-spoken and contented like. Some folks thinks she's crazy; an' she does act drefle queer sometimes. But there's crazier people outside the 'sylums than Aunt Randy."

"Is she married? Has she a family?"

"Well, folks say she's a widder, an' her husband was a bad lot. She never says nothin' about him, an' she don't think no great o' men folks. Her name's Mis' Gates, an' Randy's short for Mirandy; but I tell folks she's so independent, an' sot on not belongin' to no man, she won't let any one call her My anything, so she's left it off o' Randy."

It was not long before I made the acquaintance of the odd entomologist. I think she recognized in me a kindred spirit, saw that I too liked "flyin' an' crawlin' an' hoppin' creeters," and so met my advances more readily.

Strange as it may appear, Aunt Randy had not only never seen a book about insects, but she had never even known, until she met me, that such books existed. She had never met an entomologist or any one interested in the study of her favourites, and all her information was derived from her own experience. So her talk was fresh and delightful, and quite free from polysyllabic terms and the ever-changing nomenclature of the study as we find it in books. I remember that the first thing I ever carried to her for identification was a butterfly. It was the large dark chocolate one with pale yellow borders, known as the *Antiope*. Now I confess I knew its name and something of its habits, but I wished to test Aunt Randy's knowledge. As she saw it her rugged face lighted up with a smile of recognition, and taking it gently from my hands, as though she were touching a baby, she said:

"Ah, you pert little fellow! Held out to this time, did ye? If you ain't hardy an' full o' pluck, I don't know who is. Ye see"—looking up at me—"this kind stands the winter right through."