

Had it not been for a new great joy which had lately come into her life, Judith would probably have been very miserable indeed at the farm.

So as we watch her happy face on this May day, we are prompted to ask what has wrought the change we see there. There is nothing in the letter she is reading to cause it. No, it is just one of Dolly's rambling weekly letters, full of her own doings with scraps of news from Reggio's letters and her own comments thereon.

"What a nice long letter the dear old Dorothy writes, doesn't she?" she said smiling, and patting Trap's brown head. That faithful animal had been lying beside his young mistress for the last three-quarters of an hour, presumably asleep, but with one eye wide open and fixed upon her face. Now, at her question, he sagaciously winked and thumped his stumpy tail on the ground by way of answer.

Then, after a pause, the letter lying unheeded in her lap—"I wonder if he is coming this afternoon, Trap."

A whole series of violent thumps followed, after which Trap dozed off with one eye; and Judith, tilting her straw hat over her face, lay back on the grass and waited for—Donald Standfield.

At last he came. Trap's quick ear first caught the sound of approaching footsteps, and his short bark of delight warned his young mistress, who sat up and smoothed the pretty brown hair that had got a wee bit tumbled.

"Good afternoon, Miss Judith, how comfortable you look," said he, taking off his hat and smiling at the pretty picture before him.

"Yes, is it not lovely here; won't you sit down?"

He sat down on the grass, and Trap sat bolt upright between them with a knowing look on his ugly face.

"I must ask your pardon for keeping you waiting so long, but I could not get away from the office a moment sooner."

"I enjoyed waiting here, it is so delicious; but if you do not mind, I think I shall not go for a walk to-day. I sprained my ankle a little while ago, it is not much, but it pains me a little when I walk."

"I am very sorry to hear it," said Standfield, looking tenderly at the little foot. "It ought to be bandaged."

"Oh! never mind being sorry," answered she, laughing merrily at the deep commiseration in his face. "It is so slight as hardly to be worth mentioning."

"But you must take great care of it; sprains are apt to develop into something more serious, if not treated properly."

"I shall take care of it; but Mr. Standfield I hope you will not mind my not going to Murchison's with you, after promising?" This was a dog-fancier, who kept a large number of trained dogs of all kinds, sizes and colors, which were the wonder of the country round. Standfield had asked Judith to go with him to see them; but her unfortunate sprain had made the walk there out of the question.

"You are sure you will not mind?"

"Quite sure, of course it is out of the question for you to walk with a sprained ankle, child. And really nothing could be more enjoyable than this," looking around him contentedly and inhaling a long breath of fragrant air.

"Yes, is it not lovely?" acquiesced the girl in dreamy tones, leaning back against the trunk of the pear tree.

"Mr. Standfield, does the wind ever whisper to you?"

"Whisper to me!" exclaimed Standfield, a little bit surprised; "No, I don't think it ever does; but perhaps if I were to listen patiently it might tell me something."

It must be when you are alone," answered she dreamily, and without a shadow of consciousness in voice or face. It did not occur to her that such an idea might seem too romantic, except to poets and such like folk.

"What does the wind tell you when you are alone?" asked the young man smiling.

"I could not tell you."

He looked surprised and amused.

"Ah! I see, they are secrets."

"No," gravely—"but what I mean is that I cannot put it into words; just listen yourself next time you are alone, and the wind is sighing and whispering around you."

"I will do so," he assured her solemnly. But somehow this new phase of character just opened out to him, far from making her appear silly and romantic in his eyes, invested her with a new interest, as evidence of a hidden depth in her

character which it would be his pleasure to discover. Hitherto he had regarded her as a dear little girl, with the promise of a tender, true-hearted woman in her. He had seen something and guessed a great deal more, of the loveless life she led at the farm, and the petty snubs and fault-finding she endured from her cousin. So he had come to pity her from the bottom of his generous heart; perhaps too, the fact that she was Dorothy's sister and had Dorothy's look in her eyes contributed largely to his desire to brighten, somewhat, the dull life of that "poor little girl" as he called her.

"That idea of yours rather reminds me of two lines of Byron," he said presently, "perhaps you know them:

"Not a breath crept through the rosy air,
And yet the forest leaves seemed stirred with prayer."

"I have never read much of Byron; these are very pretty lines; why! I can almost see the great silent forest with its green glades, its deep shadows and here and there a gleam of sunlight; the old moss-grown trunks of fallen trees and the living giants towering over them in their mighty strength, and there is no sound but the whispering of the wind among the leaves."

Standfield looked at her half wondering; what quaint, pretty ideas she had; what other young girl would have painted such a picture from two lines of poetry?

"Now I see that idea of yours about the wind was not original," he said quizzically.

"No," she answered simply—"how could it be when almost every poet for ages past has said something about it; the idea is essentially poetic you see."

"I see," he replied, smiling at her evident unconsciousness of the poetic element in her own nature. "And that reminds me, I have brought the book I promised you."

"Tennyson?"

"Yes; what shall I read to you? Elaine?"

"Yes, please; I have read it before and like most of it; but I think Elaine was rather silly; don't you?"

"You do not believe in broken hearts, then?" he asked, very much amused; she was such a child to Standfield.

"Oh! yes I do; at least, in a comparative sense; for don't you think there must be always something good and beautiful in life to make it worth while living, however crushed and bruised one's heart may be; no one who is brave will die of a broken heart; the brave live on and endure," she added, a little flush of enthusiasm tinging her cheeks.

"But suppose a case where every hope has been crushed out, every resource cut off, where life is a blank, which nothing can ever fill up?"

"I cannot imagine any life so hopeless as that," she returned, half incredulously.—She was so very young and inexperienced.

"Homeless, friendless, despised, with none to love or cheer him, perhaps broken down in health; what does life hold for such a one?"

"I never thought that in a world so beautiful there could be misery such as that," murmured the girl pitifully.

"Ah child! it is a trite saying that one-half of the world does not know what the other half is doing; only the all-seeing God and those who suffer it know what depths of misery some poor human creatures are plunged into and through which they drag out the miserable remnant of their days."

"Why does God permit such suffering?"

"Who can tell? For countless ages that cry has been wrung from lips pale with suffering, from hearts crushed with woe."

"Oh! I do not think I shall ever feel perfectly happy again!"

"Then I am sorry I have talked to you like this, if it is going to make you unhappy."

"I am glad you did; it will make me think of something else now besides my own happiness."

And Standfield thought that if this girl were selfish what must some other people be.

"We are becoming too serious; let us go back to poor Elaine. Tell me why you think her silly."

"She could not help falling in love with Lancelot, I suppose; but it was weak of her to tell him so, and foolish to fret and make herself ill about him, after he had refused her love and left her. Oh! I would have been too proud"