

knight of the house of Blakesley?" asked Netta, almost mockingly. "My little sister is a sad coquette," and she looked up innocently at the returned hero. He was so very handsome, that she did not relish resigning him into the hands of her sister, especially as all that afternoon he had seemed lost in admiration of her lovely self. Poor Dolly, Netta seemed like a female Mephistopheles that evening.

"You know I have not seen him for months," Dorothy retorted, and she turned her brown eyes upon her sister with a flash. "Haven't you, dear," answered the Beauty, and going to the piano she ran her fingers over the keys. "I think I shall come home and practice two or three times a week," she said; "grandpapa does not like the sound of a piano now that he is ill."

"Why don't you sing something, Netta dear?" Mrs. Woodward said, eager to show off her daughter—she was so proud of her.

"No," she said, hesitatingly, looking across at Adrian Fuller and Dorothy talking together in the window-seat. What could they have to say to each other? she wondered. It so annoyed her to see any one else getting attention which she considered she had a right to monopolize. He had heard Mrs. Woodward's request, however, and came towards her.

"Oh, do sing, Miss Woodward!" he said, and so she suffered herself to be persuaded, and sat down, and sang "Joek o' Hazel-dean" as hardly any one, perhaps, but Netta Woodward could sing it, for she had a voice such as but few women possess—wonderfully sweet and sympathetic, and so carefully modulated, it thrilled and enchanted her listeners.

Adrian Fuller went to her side, and hung upon her tones, and forgot poor Dorothy altogether.

"Oh, do go on!" he said, entreatingly, when she stopped; and so she began again, and sang song after song to them as they sat listening in the twilight, till, almost unnoticed, the night had come, and the brougham was at the door to take the Beauty back to grandfather's.

"One more," pleaded Adrian Fuller, but she rose from the piano with a laugh.

"No, I have finished. Dolly!" she called, looking towards the corner where her sister was crouching in the dark, forgetting the singer in her delight at the music. "Come and sing something, dear." Netta was always very affectionate to her sister before people.

"I!" said Dorothy, in surprise. "Why you know I can't."

"Yes you can," she answered, sweetly; "come and try."

"But you know I can't," she said, in amazement.

"Of course she does," said Tom, who would not learn to be polite, "that's why she asks you."

"How can you be such a bear, Tom?" laughed Netta, unruffled as ever, wrapping her delicate shawl around her, and as she passed him she stroked Tom's hair with her fingers, and subdued him. "Why didn't you get yourself up?" she whispered, as she passed Dorothy, "you had plenty of time, and I never saw you look such a guy."

"I never even thought of such a thing," she answered.

"You won't forget your promise," Adrian Fuller said, as she gave him her hand to say good-bye.

"Was it a promise?" she said. "I did not know that, but I never break one. Mr. Fuller wants me to sit to him, Dorothy, dear, and mamma does not object. Do you know he was foolish enough to draw my face from memory, he says; he saw me,

you know, the evening he left, when in my vanity I came to show myself."

"I lost the book, unfortunately, the next day—a pocket sketch-book I carried about with me," he said.

"Why, that was the book in which you put Dolly's rose," said Tom; "did you lose that too?"

"No," he answered, "I took care of that," and so the Beauty was not altogether triumphant, and as she drove away she saw that Adrian Fuller, with the privilege of an old friend, had drawn Dorothy's hand through his arm.

#### CHAPTER XIII.—ROBINSON CRUSOE AND HIS MAN FRIDAY.

"No, Dorothy, you foolish little maid, I never forget you," he said, "though it was a long time before I wrote;" and they walked on through the summer fields.

They were such happy days for her, those in which, for a little while, she lived within her dream-castle. She had forgotten her disappointment in not meeting him first, her half-unconscious jealousy of Netta, and her longings for beauty—forgotten everything save that Adrian Fuller had come home, and that he was her friend and companion again, just as in the happy days of old.

He was a handsome man, tall and fair, and well made, with all the tone and color which George Blakesley had lacked. Yes, decidedly a handsome man, an artist by profession, and full of vague ideas and indolent dreams. A man who was capable, and felt his capability, and so was satisfied. He could not rouse himself to do more than feel this; he so delighted in the summer and the long days of sunshine, and the evenings of shadow and twilight, and it was so pleasant to stroll about with Dorothy leaning on his arm, ready to talk or be silent, to walk long miles through the tall grass and flowery green lanes, or to sit under a tree, or linger about in the picturesque old garden, dreamily talking of books (poets and love stories usually) and trees, and all that appealed to his artist nature and the girl's love of beauty.

She never forgot those first days of his return, the days in which her father was at the office all day, for he was worried about matters there, and had little time for home; and Mrs. Woodward was away, for Colonel Wade was very ill, dangerously so, and had sent for her daughter at last; and Netta was a close prisoner to her grandfather's house. Tom went to his work, and Will and Sally to their lessons, so Dorothy had it all her own way. Adrian Fuller had finished his two years' work, and wanted a rest, he said, and was glad to return to his old haunt at Hampstead, and spend his days with his former playmate. No one interfered or considered for a single moment how dangerous it was for this girl, who could hardly be called a woman yet, to pass hour after hour with a handsome fascinating man, who found time hang upon his hands. The end of all, or that there would be anything to end, was a thing no one troubled about. Dorothy was always hanging about, reading books or sitting under trees, her mother said, and she saw no harm whatever in her doing so when in company with Adrian Fuller; they had known each other for years, and he was like one of the family; besides, she was hardly aware, much less concerned, about the state of things, for she was at her father's house. As for Mr. Woodward, he was only too glad that there was some one who could talk to his daughter and direct her reading, and be there to discuss the affairs of the nation with him when he returned home of an evening.

"I thought you had forgotten me," she said, and added, half laughingly, for her

jealousy had half vanished, "you know I am not pretty like Netta, and you never drew my portrait."

"But I shall some day, when I want a womanly little face and a broad low brow like Dorothy's," he answered, looking into the clear brown eyes.

She was so happy as she walked beside him, swinging her hat, upon his arm, along the lonely picturesque paths that may even yet be found beyond Hampstead, that the expression upon her face made it one that might almost be called beautiful. He wondered at it, little realizing how much he had to do with it.

"And if I did draw Netta's portrait, I have lost it, remember, but I took care of the rose. I, too, never let any one take Dorothy's place, remember, and she let Blakesley, or whatever his name was, take my place."

"Oh, I never did!" she answered, and her eyes filled with tears; "I never, never did, indeed, Mr. Fuller!" She had never called him by his Christian name in her whole life.

He sat lazily down under a tree, and motioned her to do the same, laughing the while at her vehemence. "I was only teasing you," he said. "Now sit here and tell me about him."

"No, not now," she pleaded; "let us read a little while."

He threw off his cap, and opened his book, and she hers, and so they sat silent, but contented and happy in the way they liked. He, because he was enjoying the summer and the sun and the freedom from work, which he had not known for two years past; yes, and he liked being with his old friends again, and to tease Dorothy—he was fond of Dorothy in his way, she was such a nice child, he thought, and such a pleasant companion, and he was so thoroughly at home with her. She was happy because Adrian Fuller was there; and the summer, and the sun, and the trees she loved, and the books she read, and all else that appealed to her were simply as the setting of a jewel, or the frame of a picture, or the land marks of a garden in which those sweet June days were passed.

"Now tell me what the hero Blakesley was like," he said. This was in the evening time, when they were in the garden. Mr. Woodward was still at the office, but Tom was home, and sat trying to remember how many locks there were on the river between Oxford and London. Will and Sally were together, the former learning his lessons, the latter drawing grotesque figures, as usual.

"First, what did he look like?"

"Washed out," said Tom, looking up.

"He didn't!" said Dorothy, indignantly.

She had a feeling of gratitude towards her old admirer; for had he not been the one person in the world who had told her in spoken words that he loved her?

"Yes, he did," persisted Tom, who had never cared about the interloper, in spite of what he had done for him. "He had a faded-looking beard, dull yellow hair, and a washed-out complexion."

"He was very clever, though," began Dorothy.

"That's right, Dorothy, stand up for him!" laughed Adam Fuller, amused at the scene, but she moved away offended, and going to the end of the garden, stood looking over the fence at the hazy distance, as she had one night long ago. He soon followed her. "I like you for standing up for him, you silly child," he said; "you needn't get angry. Now tell me about him yourself."

"He was very clever."

"More so than I am?" he said.

"Oh, no," she said, looking up quickly;