

for that meal. She vaguely wondered if Augusta really cared for this rather coarse young man, who did not seem possessed of any very fine instincts. But whatever that astute young woman felt, she made no sign.

Not a little of Judith's dislike for the young man was caused by the assiduous attentions which he persisted in paying her; and for a while he deceived himself into thinking that they were agreeable to her, though she endeavored as courteously and gently as possible to convince him to the contrary. Judith was too young and inexperienced, besides having too little egotism to understand precisely why it was his attentions annoyed her; she only knew that the feeling of shrinking and dislike came strongly upon her whenever he approached her. An incident which happened one day, served however to considerably lessen his belief in his own attractiveness.

It was a warm, sunny day in April. Augusta and Mr. Thorpe had just returned from an afternoon walk and were standing by the steps in front of the house. Judith was sitting in her favorite seat, on the window-sill, the window being wide open.

She was working at some delicate embroidery, but ever and anon her eyes wandered to the couple outside. Presently Trap, the house dog, a shaggy, snub-nosed retriever, bounded up to Augusta and began to jump about her, barking joyously, being evidently under the impression that she was just going out for a walk, and desiring to accompany her; finally he raised himself on his hind legs and laid his fore-paws on Augusta's shoulders, or as near them as he could reach.

"Get down you brute!" cried Miss Laurie angrily, not relishing the idea of having her new spring dress spattered with mud; but Trap evidently did not take into consideration this view of the matter, and refused to budge, while his great honest eyes gazed entreatingly into her face and his short tail wagged to and fro with alarming rapidity. At this point Mr. Thorpe interfered in his lady love's behalf, raising his heavily-booted foot, he bestowed upon the unsuspecting Trap, a savage kick, which elicited a howl of agony from the poor brute, who crouched at his mistress' feet and raised his big eyes appealingly to Thorpe's face.

In an instant, Judith who had witnessed this little scene, sprang from the low window and bent over the dog with a crimson face and quivering lips.

"Poor Trap! dear old fellow!" she said, caressing him; and then rising, confronted Thorpe and her cousin indignantly:

"You big coward!" she exclaimed, her eyes flashing disdain upon the discomfited young man.

But Augusta was enraged that anyone should dare to hurl such an epithet at her lover.

"Judith," she said coldly—"I think you forget yourself, you are not in your own home remember, neither does the dog belong to you; but in any case, there was no occasion for such an absurd display of temper—or—affectation on your part."

"I forget nothing Augusta, but Mr. Thorpe must surely have forgotten his manhood, when he showed such needless cruelty to a dumb animal!" and with her small head thrown haughtily back, the girl walked past them into the house, the grateful Trap following close at her heels.

Augusta looked after her with a sneer on her lips.

"Judith enjoys going into heroics when any of your sex are near enough to appreciate her efforts," she said with a laugh in which her lover joined somewhat uneasily.

"Well you know, perhaps after all I was cruel to the brute."

"Perhaps so," responded Miss Laurie, "but that was no excuse for her impertinence; a chit like that indeed! I think she owes you an apology."

"I do not think so at all," was Mr. Thorpe's valiant and unlooked-for reply—"On the contrary I intend to apologize to her."

Augusta's eyes opened wide at this assertion.

"Oh! well if you choose to make a fool of yourself, it is none of my business," said she turning into the house whither he followed her.

Judith busied herself helping old Susannah to prepare tea so Clarence had no opportunity to speak to her for the present. When Mr. Laurie came in they took their seats at

the well-spread board. But Judith, though seated opposite Mr. Thorpe, never glanced at him, nor condescended to speak a word to him, and he lacked courage to address her; for there was a certain grave dignity about Judith Brown, young as she was, which inspired him with more respect and admiration than he had ever dreamed of according to Augusta Laurie.

The conversation during the meal languished, for the three who usually did all the talking, were occupied with their own thoughts. Augusta was annoyed with Clarence, and that faithless young man was revolving in his mind, the question, how to reinstate himself in the good opinion of the girl who, an hour before had disdainfully called him a "coward," while Miss Brown, with beautiful unconcern, was enjoying her tea with an appetite unimpaired by recent events.

Mr. Laurie was a man of few words; he would sit in grim silence, listening to the talk going on around him, giving a grunt of assent or dissent occasionally, and glaring at the talkers from beneath the shaggy grey eyebrows which gave a rather ferocious look to his lean face. A tyrant in his own household was Hugh Laurie; and woe betide the unlucky wight who incurred his wrath. His wife had sunk, crushed to the earth, years ago beneath his iron hand; and Augusta, with all her bravado and undaunted spirit, was more in awe of her father than she would have cared to confess. Toward one person only, did his manner soften, and that person was Judith; this had not escaped his daughter's keen eyes and she disliked her cousin all the more for it.

On the evening in question, Mr. Laurie volunteered a piece of information to the company at large which was not without effect upon one person at least.

Pushing away his plate he said briefly:—

"Standfield is back; saw him this afternoon."

"Is he! why I had no idea he was expected back here, but then one never does know when Donald Standfield is coming or when going," exclaimed Augusta, a sudden flush coming into her cheeks, while the animated look that leapt into her eyes, showed that the news was not displeasing to her. Clarence, apparently, did not observe the change in her face, but Judith did and wondered who this Standfield was, and why her cousin should take so much interest in his coming.

"Well he can scarcely help that," said Thorpe. "He is not his own master, but at the same time he must put in rather a jolly time, travelling about from one place to another, and all his expenses paid."

"Is Mr. Standfield a commercial traveller?" inquired Judith.

"No; he is a Bank Inspector; he goes about inspecting all the different agencies of the Bank of—. Frequently he acts as manager of an agency himself; he has been manager of the Eastville branch twice. I wonder if he has come down now only to inspect, or if he is going to remain; I saw Mr. Lewis yesterday and he did not mention that there was to be any change."

"He is to remain, Lewis leaves to-morrow" answered her father gruffly and hid himself behind his paper.

Later on in the evening Standfield came. Mr. Laurie had gone out and Mrs. Laurie and the three young people were sitting in the parlor, Judith bending quietly over some fancy work, while her cousin and Mr. Thorpe were talking and laughing rather noisily, at the piano.

Augusta came eagerly forward to welcome the new comer.

"Father told us you were in Eastville; it was such a pleasant surprise; I hope you intend remaining?" she said with a brilliant smile.

"For a few months, Miss Laurie, I cannot answer for longer than that" with a rather cold smile—thought Judith.

When he had shaken hands with Mrs. Laurie and Thorpe, Augusta introduced him to Judith—

"Mr. Standfield—my cousin, Miss Judith Brown."

The young girl bowed and blushed faintly beneath the eager, interested look with which he regarded her. After exchanging a few common place remarks with her, he followed Miss Laurie to the sofa at the other side of the room where she had requested him to seat himself, although he would infinitely have preferred taking the vacant chair beside Judith.

Perhaps Augusta guessed this to be the case, for she frowned slightly when Standfield's gaze wandered every now