

eyes until the long lashes rested on her cheek.

Philip's brow cleared. He had gained his point, and he made himself so pleasant for the remainder of the evening that Hannah could not help becoming happy and hopeful.

'After all,' she thought, 'Ted may take a turn for the better; it is no use in meeting trouble half-way.'

Ted came home earlier that night than usual, and seemed in good spirits, which cheered her up still more, and she went to bed to dream of Philip, and of wandering with him on golden sands with the waves lapping at their feet.

CHAPTER II

Philip's mother and sister lived in the last cottage in the village, and he had shared their home until he had obtained his present appointment—a year ago. He had not asked them to move to the school-house with him, as it was to have a permanent mistress; neither had his mother wished to do so. She was still in the prime of life, a strong, vigorous, independent woman, able to hold her own and to earn her living as the village dressmaker, in which calling she was assisted by her daughter Grace.

Grace had the softest voice and the sweetest brown eyes in the village. Her manner was gentle and engaging, and it was her taste in trimming and finishing off the dresses which brought in most of the custom.

She had reached the age of three and twenty without having kept company with any young man, in spite of her pretty face, and she was hardly aware herself that she had a secret fancy for a certain wild lad with a pair of bright blue eyes which would sometimes look pleadingly into hers.

Grace was compassionate by nature, and all maimed, hurt creatures—wild or tame—seemed to come to her by instinct to be petted and tended. Philip and her mother were alike in character, strictly just and upright, but inclined to be severe on the failings of others, whereas she was always more ready to pity than to blame.

When haymaking began that summer Ted gave up his evening visits to the town and went to have a bit of fun in the hay, on the plea of helping the farmers. Grace was there also, glad to exchange her toil at the needle for the more pleasant task of tossing the fragrant grass. Somehow or another Ted found himself always at her side, and gradually the knowledge came to him that he loved her and would be willing to give up all his bad habits and to steady down for good if she would only care for him in return.

True, she was two years older than himself, but that went for nothing in the village, where it was quite a usual thing for girls to marry men several years younger than themselves.

Hannah rejoiced to see the improvement in her brother and his more affectionate manner to herself; and one evening when he came home with his young face all flushed with joy, and told her that Grace cared for him, and that he was going to be quite steady, and have done with Brown and his set for evermore.

Hannah kissed him warmly, and wished him joy with all her heart, for she knew that to love a girl like Grace might be the saving of him. Her only doubt was whether Mrs. Day and Philip would look with favor on the match.

'What does Mrs. Day say to it?' asked she presently.

'Oh, I am to be put on a month's trial before anything is said to her about it, or to Philip, either. Grace is not going to walk out with me until then. She said it would give her more confidence in me if she saw

that I had quite broken myself of going with those fellows, and also it would prevent her people from having anything to say against me. Of course, I shan't go to live with the Browns after you're married, as I thought of doing; I shall go to old widow Smith, who always shuts up her house at half-past nine. I shall be safe enough there.'

During the next few weeks Hannah's heart was lighter than it had been for years. Ted stayed at home every evening except when he was in the lanes plotting for a meeting with Grace, and all the neighbors remarked on the change in him, and said how fortunate it was that he had steadied down so that his sister could marry and leave him with an easy mind.

There was only one thing about Ted which his sister could not understand. When pay-night came he would always seem wretched and uncomfortable. He would still hand her the money for his board as though he were loath to part with it, and he never seemed to have a penny to spare all the week through. She could only suppose that he had some old debt to pay off and was discharging it by degrees, but she saw that he would not allow her to question him upon the subject.

The wedding-day was fast approaching, and one Friday afternoon Hannah went to the town and took her money out of the Post-Office Savings Bank. It amounted to ten pounds, just enough to furnish the parlor, and it was to be devoted to that purpose. On the following afternoon she and Philip were going by rail to a larger place where the shops were better and cheaper. Philip had saved sufficient to furnish the other two rooms, and they were looking forward to buying everything together. When Hannah returned from the Post-Office she locked the money in a box and had just sat down to her needlework when a tap came at the door.

She opened it, and was surprised to see Ted's former companion, Jack Brown.

'Has Ted come home yet?' asked he.

'No, it want's half an hour to his time.'

'Then I must come back again,' said he, doggedly, 'or may-be I'll hang about and catch him, for see him I must.'

Hannah's heart sank within her. The sullen, hovering look on the young man's evil face seemed to bode some harm to her brother.

'You can wait here, if you like,' said she, feeling that if trouble were coming to Ted she would at least be there to share it.

'I don't mind if I do, then I'll be sure of him,' returned he, 'and I'd as lief as not you should hear what I have got to say to him.'

Hannah gave him a chair and handed him an old comic paper which someone had lent to Ted. She could not bring herself to talk to him, so the half-hour passed in silence.

At last Ted's step was heard outside, his hand was on the latch, he burst gaily in whistling a tune, and then stopped short when Brown stood up and confronted him.

'What do you want?' asked Ted, while the healthy color faded out of his cheeks.

'My money,' growled the other. 'I'm in a fix, and you've got to help me out of it.'

'But you promised to take it weekly.'

'I did say so, but that fellow Green has come down upon me for five pounds, so there's nothing for it but to get it out of you.'

'Five pounds! I don't owe you as much as that!' exclaimed Ted.

'Oh, don't you though? Well, I say you do, so it's my word against yours. You've borrowed from me over and over again, and that with the interest, and one thing and another, it's run up to five pounds, and that's the sum I mean to stick to.'

'But how can I give you five pounds; I'm

not worth five shillings at the present moment; you know that as well as I do.'

'You'll have to give it to me, all the same,' said Brown. 'You shouldn't have gone in for gambling and betting if you could not pay your debts like a gentleman. I'll have that money, or the whole village shall hear that you owe it to me—and why you owe it, too. You've thrown over all your old friends, Master Ted, and have turned saint for some sneaking reason of your own; but you're not going to get out of paying your debts, I can tell you.'

'Don't I pay you every Saturday, though it leaves me without a farthing?' exclaimed Ted, with flashing eyes.

'Yes, but I want the money in a lump, and I'll have it by to-morrow evening or someone at the end of the village will hear something not to your advantage. If you haven't got it yourself, there's them that has,' and Brown shot a meaning glance at Hannah as he rose to go.

'Come back in an hour's time,' said she breathlessly, 'and I will let you know what we can do.'

He nodded assent, opened the door and was gone.

'Hannah, I'm done for,' gasped Ted, sinking into a chair; 'they'll be dead against me now—Mrs. Day and Philip will; they'll not let her have anything more to do with me. She won't go against them, I know. She's too loving and gentle to make any words in the family; she'd break her heart rather, and I shall break mine.'

'My poor boy!' said Hannah, gently.

'I must bear it—it's my punishment,' continued he, hiding his face in his hands, 'and I will try to play the man and go on just the same; but, oh, I shall never, never be happy again.'

'Dear Ted,' said Hannah, with a sob, 'do you think that I'd let my only brother break his heart if I could help it? I've got ten pounds in that box. You shall have half—'

'What! Me take your money as you've saved up for your house? I couldn't. Besides, you'd have to tell Philip what you'd done with it, so it would all come out just the same.'

'I shall give it to you,' said Hannah, firmly, 'and I shall not tell Philip what I have done with it.'

'Then he'll be angry and break off the match. Oh, Hannah,' and Ted rose from his chair and threw his arms round his sister, 'I've been a bad, wild lad, but I'm not mean enough to let you give up your happiness for me. You deserve to be happy and I don't. I've learned to know myself since last Sunday night. Did you notice that when when we came home from the church I went upstairs?'

Hannah nodded, and looked at him anxiously.

'There was something in the sermon that brought all my sins home to me and made me feel that I must confess everything to God, and ask him to forgive me and make me different. I have felt much lighter and happier ever since, but, all the same, I know I deserve my punishment, and I'm not going to let my sister bear it for me.'

The tears flowed from Hannah's eyes. 'To hear you speak like that makes me feel happy in spite of all the trouble,' she said, 'and I would do anything rather than that you should lose Grace. Mother's last wish was that you should marry some good, nice girl who would be the making of you, and that I believe Grace to be. I don't think that Philip will turn against me; he must surely have learned to trust me by this time.'

Ted kissed his sister with all the warmth of his boyish days, and just as he was doing so Brown's tap was heard at the door. They started asunder, Ted opened the door, and