

drink again would satisfy me but the water from that spring. All other is flat, beside it. Do you remember, Orin, how it used to splash over the big stone basin sometimes, out in the yard, when we were youngsters, all over the hot bricks, and we'd pad around on them in our bare feet?"

"I remember, Amsey," said she, with half sorrow in her proud old voice, "but we won't dwell upon it now. Did there seem any signs of a break in the drouth as you rode along? We are so shut in here with trees that I scarcely can observe the conditions."

"Not a break, far as I could see. The mill pond has shrunk to small pools, and the sedge grass showing all along the creek bed. A hot wind, too, that was raising the dust in clouds and whipping the leaves to ribbons, along about noon, but it has died down now; and there's that old sun, blurred-red, and like a ball of fire even as late on in the afternoon as this is. Rain! Why, there's not a rain cloud in sight as big as a fly's eye!"

"O, well, we must take the saying Lisbeth got from Jane, the Skipper, 'To-morrow will be a new day,' Amsey, and we have fresh buttermilk in the dairy, so we'll not fare so badly. I hear Lisbeth moving about inside. We are better off than Garret is in his great house, with his crystal spring, for we have no remorse in our hearts nor fancied wrongs to brood upon. I fear these days ahead will be grey ones for him, while he fights out his battle about acknowledging her."

They were indeed grey days for the Master of Halfway, and the props seemed to be dropping out from beneath him as he dwelt upon all else that must come to pass with his acknowledgment of the girl's relationship. Restless, he changed from reading, to writing, or to overlooking of his crowded desk; talked sometimes with Joan; but for the most part bade her and Phoebe go about their own pursuits, leaving him alone with his thoughts. It had graven its mark already upon the stern old face, a careworn weary look,