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A Lost Letter.

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PART I.

MHOA! Gee! Gee!! Gee-ee-ec, Dick!" shouted Tom Scott as he raised his long rope plow-line to emphasize his words along the heaving side of his nigh horse.

But the stroke fell lightly, and the furrow was finished with a curve to the left, for there not ten rods away, was Mary Frazer, walking rapidly along the road. The sight of her slender figure dressed in black, always threw Tom off his balance, and when she stood opposite him and was saying, "Good-day, Tom, a pleasant afternoon," he could only reply confusedly,

"Yes, a very nice day."

"Splendid," exclaimed Mary. "Too lovely to stay in the house. Papa was away, so I thought I'd take a run out to see Nellie. Is she at home?" Tom's self-control was fast returning, and he replied:

"Yes, she's alone. Are you going to spend the afternoon with her?"

"I must return her this music. I've had it months too long," said Mary, "and besides, I want to have a chat with her, I haven't seen her since ——"

"Since the day before yesterday," interrupted Tom, banteringly, "a long, long time."

"Well, I didn't say anything to her, at least nothing ——"

"Nothing in three hours and a half. Two hundred and ten minutes at the rate of ——"

"Oh! now don't wrack your brain with exaggerated calculations," interjected Mary, laughing. "I didn't see her alone for ten minutes. We'd company

all the afternoon." For reply, Tom leaned over the fence and said in an eager undertone,

"You won't go home till after tea, will you? Then I'll drive you over, may I not?" Mary did not reply but gaily greeted Tom's brother, Will, who had brought his horses to a stand-still close behind Tom.

"Are you going to cheer the lonely hours of our only sister!" asked Will, with a rather teasing inflection.

"I am only going to offer the consolation which she so much needs," retorted Mary. "I can only think of her with pain, left to the mercies—mercies did I say—of four—four—language fails me." Then moving away, she added,

"I mustn't keep you boys from your work. Good-bye."

"Tell Nellie we'll finish the field early, and will come home hungry as bears," called Will. "We'll see you at tea?"



TOM LEANED OVER THE FENCE AND SAID IN AN EAGER UNDERTONE,