

pointing to the very darkest clouu amongst those that had gathered overhead. Surely that was enough to convince Susan if anything would.

But Susan Fowler did not always see things in the same light, or rather darkness, as Andrew did, and she replied, "I don't think it will rain, after all. It is very early yet, and I've noticed these several mornings that it has looked cloudy to begin with, but we've had grand days later on. Let's hope it will be the same to-day."

Susan's tone was cheery, and had a right pleasant ring with it, but Andrew was not convinced. He shook his head in worse than doubtful fashion, and trudged away as though he had no faith in her prophecy that things might change for the better, and sunshine take the place of gloo.

The wife watched her husband's re-treating figure for a few moments, and until a bend of the road hid him from view, then went back into the cottage. A faint sigh escaped her as she closed the door, for Susan always felt troubled when Andrew went off to his work with a foreboding grumble on his tongue.

There was a wonderful resemblance, and yet a great unlikeness, between these two of whom marriage had made one. Both were steady, sober, trustworthy, honest, and industrious. Of Andrew it might be said that at his own kind of work, he was "bad to beat." He had been used to husbandry nearly all his life. He had started as a little blue-eyed, flax-haired, Saxon-faced lad in a pinafore, as a crownter; or, as our Lincolnshire folk would express it, "He tented craws when he was only six year owd." By dint of sturdy lungs and a pair of wooden clappers he drove away those hoarse-voiced plunderers from the ripening corn.

At eleven years old Andrew wore a smock frock suited to his size, and was trusted to take horse and cart to a town five miles away, and bring back a load of coal. That same year "he let himself as indoor servant from May-day to May-day," according to Lincolnshire custom, and his new master was the farmer in whose fields he earned his first penny.

Step by step Andrew gained in skill until, whether at ploughing, sowing, harrowing, or mowing, whether using spade, scythe, reaping-hook, or hedging-bill, he had few equals and no superiors

in Swallowdale and its neighbourhood.

With so many good qualities it is not to be wondered at, that whenever there was work to do, Andrew was certain of being employed, and consequently, his days at home were few and far between. Yet there are times when the most skilful and industrious labourer has nothing to do. Just between seasons there may be a few slack days, or the weather may render outdoor work impossible, and then even Andrew would know what it was to be without a job. He had less to complain of than most of his neighbours, but he had a way of considering himself as an ill-used man, and grumbled as much over a very little trouble as if it were a great one.

Andrew's disposition was the very opposite of Susan's in that he persistently looked at the dark side. "No good meeting sorrow halfway, dear lad," Susan would say. "We only double our trials, and often suffer about things that never happen. I get ever so much more pleasure out of my life by looking for good instead of evil. Do you remember when your brother James was bad; and you got no sleep all night because you made sure you would get a letter in the morning telling you he was dead? And you worried ever so, because you knew we couldn't go into black for him without getting into debt."

Ay, Andrew remembered that time well enough, and the self-reproach that followed when good news came in the morning. James was better, and still living and life-like for the matter of that.

Andrew remembered, too, that Susan had slept peacefully, and he had thought her a bit unfeeling to rest contented when his brother was lying at death's door. He had said as much to her, and Susan's answer had been kind as could be, but all the same it was a reminder of his own want of faith.

"I'd thought about James all day," she said, "and wished I could help him. I could not go to him, but I took him in my heart and my prayers to God, and I left him with Our Father. And after I got up from my knees last thing at night, I bethought myself of a little text. I daresay it was put in my head as a bit of comfort and a sort of answer to prayer. It was this, and it is about a 'man that feareth the Lord'; 'He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.'