

gwine look fer her. I want taste er de new sugah real pow'fur bad. *Guess she's dah.*" But Dorothy was not there! and Joe knew it very well, the convenient fiction of the east chimney notwithstanding. Let me show you where she was on that fair April morning, down where the greatest of the Madam's four great barns swung its doors wide open, with her fair brow wrinkled in frowns and her lips pouting in earnest thought, her rough sun hat resting on an oat bin full of the freshest and creamiest fruit of Black Biddy and her sisterhood. Something unusual surely had fallen in the way, that could keep her busy feet as if spellbound, and her face clouded so. On the smooth bin-cover before her lay a little litter of apparent rubbish, an old ribbon, a discarded purse, a few little scraps of paper, orders for this and that from the town shops, written by her for the servant, all the contents of a coarse red handkerchief, which she had discovered in a corner of the loft in her scramble after Biddy's stolen nest, and on the red handkerchief was a name clumsily scrawled in ink, the name of the Madam's chief serving man, big, bony, John Strong. He had come tramping to the gates of Whitehall two years ago, and asked Dorothy for a drink of water; she had silently handed him the calabash and pointed to the spring. The Madam, worried by the unharvested hay, sick workmen, and threatened rain, had, in her short decisive way, hired the stranger off-hand, and had lived to rejoice in her bargain. It had all been done in a twinkling, and John Strong had become her right hand in a very short time. She consulted him, and took his sage advice, and everything he tried prospered. But Dorothy still stood staring at her "find" in puzzled amazement, until her mother's sharp cry, "*Dorothee*," came sounding through the house place, past the elms, the gables, and the servant's quarters, and started her into red-checked recollection. She would have gathered up her hatful of eggs and fled, only that a quiet voice came out of the dark shadows of the mows, saying only, "So you've found them!" and the tallest of tall men, with quaint cut garments and horny hands came slowly towards her.

"Why, *John*!" she gasped, "Isn't this yours?" and she handed him the handkerchief. "It is, indeed!" he said, with a comical look at it. "And so you've found it! Well?"

"What does it mean—these old things," she said quickly, "that you hide them away like a magpie, John?"

"When one can't have new things, old are better than nothing; think what that means," and tall John strode away, leaving Dorothy gaping and afraid even to touch the old relics, and yet scarce liking to leave them. Finally she swept them to the floor, and folding up the handkerchief, took her way demurely to the kitchen, where the Madam received her and her creamy burden. Dorothy sat late that evening in the darkness beside her chamber window, where a box of all bright blossoms slyly bloomed, out of sight of the Madam's keen eyes. She

thought and thought "what that meant," and sometimes she smiled, and sometimes she crimsoned, all alone in the dark; and when she went to rest, or rather to bed, she tossed from side to side, pondering with gradually wakening perceptions and panting breath. Perhaps the full awfulness of her discovery did not dawn upon her until she sat before her mother at breakfast, and could not meet her cold blue eyes with her conscious grey ones. John Strong! Alack! She could not eat, and for a day or two she was like a culprit; full of nervous fears and sudden terrors every time the Madam spoke to her, and at last in her wretchedness she hid herself among the hay and wept. When she crawled down from her nook, feeling better for her tears, John Strong stood waiting for her, a great pity and regret on his homely features, and a drawn, stern "set" to his wide mouth.

"Miss Dorothy, I am sorry," he began. Then suddenly, "I am going away. I've given warning to Mr. John and the Madam. I could not help loving thee, lass!" This latter sentence in a strong, bitter cry, that made Dorothy turn suddenly to him.

"Don't!" she said.

"Nay, I'll not grieve thee, Miss, and when I'm gone I will soon be forgotten. But if ever—" John Strong paused, strangled by a sob he had not counted on.

It was Dorothy who sobbed, and who stammered, "Oh, no! No, no!" and who caught his horny hand in sudden grasp and then slyly let it fall, and then turned a heaving shoulder to him.

"Don't weep, my lass," said the quiet voice, "'tis not worth a tear of thine, and no one knows of it. I was mad, dear mad,—fair mad; and I could not bide here longer. But thou'lt forget it soon, and no harm done; so good-bye, Dorothy."

Dorothy wheeled about and faced him, "Don't go and leave me!" she sighed, all the joy of being loved, and the contrast of her life without it, impelling her.

John Strong gasped, "Dorothy, Dorothy, is it *true*? Wilt come *with me*, lass?" But Dorothy was gone, horrified at the strange new rebellious pain and joy that tugged at her heart and blanched her cheek, trembling with the wild, reckless hardihood of it, dashing past the Madam, cowering on her white bed behind locked doors, scarce daring to think of her own wild words—a thoroughly scared and demoralized maiden. And John went about his work with a puzzled and rueful smile and a shake of the head. "No use! She'd never dare; the dear, dear lass!" he said, as he gave an extra handful of oats to Dorothy's white pony. "Ah me! the Madam 'd be fain to kill me if she knew. But I'm dinged if I don't stick to it. The lass won't be happy, not now. I saw love in her sweet eyes and heard it in her voice. 'Don't leave me,' says she. I'll go, but I'll not leave thee, if it's my say," and John stamped determinately on the way to his dinner and ate with a good appetite, for he did not nourish his Herculean proportions on dreams or regrets,