

With the laudable desire of furthering this aim, Reginald, when bidding good-bye to his sister, obtained a promise from her, that she would do what she could to amuse Jack and make the time pass pleasantly to him.

"He will find it dull, you know, when I am gone; of course, Mr. Standfield and Mr. Thorpe are too busy during the day to be with him at all."

"I wonder why he stays if he expects to find it dull," said she, indifferently.

"Ah!—oh! well, you see," blundered Reggie—"he—the air agrees with him here."

"Oh! I did not know Mr. Littleworth was delicate," laughed Judy. "Are his lungs affected?"—mischievously.

"No, it is his heart," retorted Rex, brilliantly.

Certainly, Jack had no cause to complain during the next week or two, of lack of opportunity to prosecute his wooing; for Judith, totally unconscious of the nature of his feelings for her, faithfully endeavored to fulfil her promise to Rex, and was always ready to accompany Mr. Littleworth on whatever expedition was proposed; sometimes it was to Dale River to fish, and under Jack's tuition she had become quite an expert angler; or they would take the boat and row up the pretty winding river, and on their return there was the walk home through Bonny Woods; and I must not forget to mention the pleasant drives in the high buggy behind Mr. Laurie's fast-stepping brown mare. It occurred to Judith two or three times, to wonder at the complacency with which Augusta viewed this waste of time in idle pleasures. Formerly she had exacted so many duties from her as to leave to Judith but few hours of leisure; now she not only encouraged but seemed to approve of walks and drives, and fishing expeditions during the busy morning hours. There was one, however, who did not approve; who fretted and chafed at the sight of the young Englishman's attentions to Judith. Standfield, bound to his desk during the greater part of the day, suffered keenly from the sense of powerlessness to win the prize he coveted, which was creeping gradually over him. It seemed to him that he was daily losing ground, which the other gained as rapidly. He asked himself bitterly what chance had he against this young man, who had everything in his favor? But these were his moments of despondency; when, free from the claims of business, he turned his steps in the direction of Bonny Dale, hope and determination sprang up strong within him, and come what might he would run the race with Littleworth, and the best would win. Ah! if he had only known that in Judith's heart there was no thought of love for the handsome stranger—if he had only known the truth he might have won so easily.

Jack was keener sighted. Though he appreciated the customs of the country, by which he was free at all hours of the day to pursue his courtship unembarrassed by the presence of a chaperon, yet he was fain to acknowledge to himself that he made little or no progress. She liked him, in a friendly, sisterly way; he did not doubt this; but as for love, no! she did not dream of loving him. But, like his rival, he was determined to run the race; for by this time he knew that Standfield was his rival. Nevertheless, the two men were friends, outwardly, and though, perhaps not exactly liking one another as, under other circumstances they might have done, each felt for the other a hearty respect.

One day early in July, Judith put on her sun hat and set out by herself to spend a pleasant, dreamy hour or two by the falls in Bonny Woods. Not idle hours, though dreamy;

for on her arm hung a small, red leather work-bag containing her needles and scissors and thimble, and some delicate, filmy lace which she was making for a wedding present for Augusta, whose marriage was to take place early in August instead of in September. Mr. Thorpe had entered into partnership with two lawyers in Toronto; and as his presence was required by the firm about the middle of August, the marriage had been hastened, and arrangements entered into for giving up his practice in Eastville.

At the farm it was pretty evident that some important event was impending, for everyone was busy; even Mrs. Laurie muddled her poor old brains over a set of gorgeous toilet mats, which were intended to decorate Augusta's spare bedroom; but which, sad to relate, formed the first contribution to Mrs. Thorpe's rag-bag.

There was a tremendous amount of sewing to be got through with; for Miss Laurie's industry prompted her to make the greater part of her trousseau herself. So Judy was kept busy tacking endless seams of white linen, stitching innumerable button-holes and sewing on buttons till she fairly sickened of it, though good-naturedly persevering; while Miss Laurie herself ran the sewing machine, whose busy hum was almost the only sound to be heard in the quiet farm house from morning till evening. But on the afternoon I have mentioned, Augusta had gone to pay some visits in the village; so Judy, being at leisure, started for Bonny Woods, well pleased at the prospect of a little solitude, I must mention that Jack had gone away on business, but had announced his intention of returning in the course of a week.

Judy loved to get away by herself like this, and to sit for hours in the cool quiet of the woods, until, lulled by the monotonous sound of falling water, the soft rustling of the leaves and the twitter of bird-voices, her senses became steeped in a dreamy ecstasy that filled her soul to overflowing, and lifted her, for the time being, out of this world of facts into an ideal region whither it were impossible for us to follow her. On this particular afternoon she made her way to her favorite seat on the moss-grown log close by the falls, and was soon busily occupied with her lace-work, her slender brown fingers deftly handling the exquisite lace which she was so wonderfully clever in making. But her solitude was soon to be disturbed: she had not been sitting there very long when the crackling of dry twigs and the sound of heavy footsteps approaching, made the color come and go on her face as she looked up expectantly. Who was it she expected to see? Certainly, not the person who presently emerged from behind a clump of cedars and rapidly approached her; for the pretty mouth drooped, and I am pretty sure if she had raised her eyes for a moment from her work, there would have been visible annoyance in their blue depths.

"Miss Judith!" exclaimed Thorpe, advancing to her side, "I am indeed fortunate in finding you here; I imagined you had gone to the village with Augusta,—Susannah told me, you know, that you were both out."

A convenient fiction; as Mr. Thorpe had seen Augusta alone in the village and had cleverly escaped her observation, by diving into a shop, where he made an unnecessary purchase; and then, having ascertained that the coast was clear, set off for Bonny Dale.

"Did you?" said Judith, indifferently.

"And indeed I think you proved your wisdom by coming here instead of walking through the hot village streets." To this she made no reply whatever, and he continued: