

The lady paused in the hall and kissed Dolly. "What are you doing here, dear? Have not the others gone upstairs? I thought I heard them."

"Wilfred was going to take me to see Molly," answered Dolly, glancing timidly up at Mrs. Lennox.

"Oh, very well. Molly will enjoy having a little visitor, I am sure. Wilfred, show Dorothy the way."

And then Mrs. Lennox moved past them to the drawing-room, and Wilfred walked slowly down a rather narrow passage which branched off from the hall, and Dolly followed in silence. He opened a door at the end, and the little girl found herself in a square, pleasant room with large windows opening down to the ground, and flowers blooming in pots on almost every available place in the room.

A little girl of about her own age lay flat on her back, upon a couch placed so as to enable her to look out of the window, and her eyes were fixed with an intent gaze upon the sun-lit garden without.

She did not seem to notice the opening of the door, and Dolly had a moment or two in which to look at her before she turned her head.

It was rather a curious face, not round and childlike like Dolly's, but pinched and sallow, and short curls of jet black hair clustered closely round it. The great dark eyes generally roved restlessly from one object to another, and were filled with impatient, unsatisfied longing. There were lines on the brow of suffering and of temper both, and like Wilfred's, the expression of the little face was often anything but amiable.

Dolly had just time to note these things before Molly turned her head and saw that she was not alone. Wilfred had shut the door, and now stood rather gloomily beside it, not making any attempt to introduce the little stranger, or to help her to feel at home.

Dolly advanced slowly, with a shy smile, and came and stood beside the couch. Molly did not speak, but looked steadily at her, as if wondering what she would say or do, when to her surprise the little stranger suddenly bent down and kissed her.

The touch of the little warm, soft lips seemed to startle her.

"Why did you do that?" she asked, quickly. "Because you haven't any sisters, and I haven't any sisters, and I feel as if we ought to be friends," explained Dolly seriously.

Molly looked intently at her, but she did not seem to resent the familiarity.

"I have a sister," she said, "but she is married and gone away. I don't care for her either. I'd rather you were my sister."

"We cannot really be sisters, you know," said Dolly; "but we can be fond of each other, and that will do almost as well."

"Will it?" questioned Molly. "I must think about it. I don't quite know if I mean to be fond of you yet. Sit down and let me look at you. Wilfred, what are you sulking in the corner for?" she asked this question with such sudden sharpness that Dolly nearly jumped.

"I'm not sulking," returned Wilfred, sullenly, as he slowly advanced.

"Yes, you are. Don't tell stories. What makes him cross?" she asked, turning to Dolly.

"I don't think he is cross," answered Dolly, trying to soften things down. "The other boys vexed him a little at tea time, that's all."

"He's always being vexed at something," remarked Molly severely. "I think he's got a very bad temper. If I could only run about and play, I shouldn't mind anything."

"And if I could only lie still and keep out of the way, I shouldn't mind anything," retorted Wilfred.

"You don't know what you're saying," said Molly, with a quick darkening of her whole face.

Wilfred's sullen frown vanished, and a more gentle expression crossed his face. Although they often spoke sharply to each other, the twin sister and brother loved each other more than many people suspected; and Wilfred was always repentant for any word of his which should needlessly remind Molly of her crippled state.

Dolly looked on and listened in her quiet, comprehending way, and said nothing, though she thought a good deal. She watched Molly's expressive face and restless, melancholy eyes with a childlike interest and compassion, and wished she could do something to bring some

happiness and satisfaction into that troubled life.

Molly's wandering glance suddenly met hers. "What are you thinking about?" she asked sharply.

"I was thinking about you." "You were thinking that I was ugly and cross."

"Indeed I wasn't." "Are you sure?"

"Quite sure." "Because," said Molly gravely, "I know that I am, but I don't like people to think so."

Dolly hardly knew what to say to this statement, so she sat silent.

"What am I to call you?" Molly asked next minute, in her sudden way.

"Call her Dolly," said Wilfred, before the little girl had time to answer, "we all call her Dolly."

"I shan't though," said Molly decisively. "Dolly's a silly sort of name—like a doll. Besides, Dolly and Molly sound so ridiculous. What's your real proper name?"

"Dorothy—Dorothy Temple."

"I shall call you Dorothy then—its much prettier. Does any one call you Dorothy?"

"Nobody used to in India," answered Dolly, "but they do here—grandmother does; and the servants all say 'Miss Dorothy.'"

"Do you like it?" "I don't mind now. At first it sounded as if they were all vexed with me."

"And you don't mind my calling you Dorothy?"

"Oh, no!" "Do you like your grandmother?"

This question, like most of Molly's, came abruptly, and Dolly's face flushed a little, for it was not a very easy one to answer.

"I have not seen her often enough to be able to get very fond of her so far," answered the child simply and truthfully. "But I mean to try and love her very much if I can."

"Why should you try? The boys all say she is a nasty, cross old woman." "So she is," said Wilfred. "Duke says so too."

(To be continued.)

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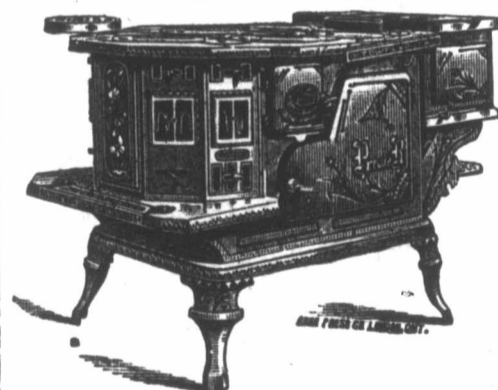
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