

"I shall like that. Are you very clever?" said the child turning to me. "I don't think you look so."

"Clara for shame!" said her mother. "What do you mean?"

"She is too pale and gentle to be clever," replied the little girl. "Mrs. Knight was clever, and see how cross she was! do you know a great deal, Miss Norton?"

"I have been many years learning," I answered. "I have profited but little if I do not know something. Will you not come to me too, my dear?" and I held out my hand to the other child.

She came slowly, looking up into my face. "Will you love me?" she said. "I do not want to be clever. You are not pretty, so perhaps you will care for me a little. I do so wish to be loved, but I think it is only pretty people that any body cares for."

There was a whole volume of meaning in the words, and in the sad tone in which they were uttered. I thought Mrs. Knollys looked confused, as she said languidly, "What nonsense children talk sometimes! now go, like good girls, and one of you tell Phœbe to come and show Miss Norton her room."

Thus dismissed, I rose and departed. Outside the door, as Clara was leaving me, I said, "Cannot you show me my room, dear? I should like you to come with me and make friends. We must be very fond of one another."

The younger child slid her hand into mine, and with Clara leading the way, we traversed several long galleries and corridors, some filled with old pictures and others lined with faded tapestry, till we reached a pleasant set of rooms looking to the west. "These are our rooms, Miss Norton. Your sitting-room and bed-room, our school-room, play-room, and nursery. You see they are all close together; I hope you like them?"

It would have been hard not to do so, for all the arrangements were perfect. The rooms were on the second floor, and the windows opened on a balcony that overlooked the Park. I was much pleased, and said so; which pleased the children in their turn.

"I wish the Park belonged to papa," said Emily. "It would be so pleasant to have it our own."

"You would not care to have it now, would you?" said Clara.

"Money would buy it now, as Lord C——bought it. You could never make it an old possession, like Thornhaugh."

It was amusing to see the family pride coming out in so young a child; and it gave me an idea of the deep root it must have, to have spread so widely.

"Don't you want to see Fanny, Miss Norton?" asked Emily. "She is so pretty—every one admires her."