

desire. She knew that no place could ever be to him as that home where his father lived and died, and his father's father before him. Still it was a pity that in a mind like Mary's, with a morbid bias, there should remain this secret aversion, especially when all that was best in her nature was struggling to unfold into long belated blossoming.

They lingered on the shore that warm July afternoon; John, while watching the deep green hollow of incoming waves, was thinking of the tints and motion of the lake which he knew so well, while Mary was watching him instead of the ocean.

"Are you ever low-spirited, John?"

"Do you think me high-spirited?"

"Oh, perhaps not quite in the way of fun-making, but you seem to take hold of things heartily."

"Well, somebody told me once that the use of a low state of mind was to get out of it," said John evasively, "and in order to get out of it I always have to get a firm grip on something—truth—or person."

"Does everybody in Cairnes know that I am coming back?"

She had asked that in various ways so often that he delayed answering until she added fretfully, "I don't want to see people. Excitement is not good for me, and they will surely excite me. I don't mean to begin by going to visit or to church or anywhere. I want to be let alone."

"But, Mary, is that the best way? Don't you know that if you are engaged in what is going on around, you will be much less likely to be despondent? I am out of the house in the daytime, so you will be often alone. If Polly Huggins does most of the work, you would have too monotonous a life in that great, quiet house, having no intercourse at all with your neighbours."

"But I am not like—that is, your friends are like strangers to me. For a while, anyway, I want to stay at home, and you must let me."

There was a set look about her lips that recalled to John her obstinacy long ago. Guessing his thoughts, she added with a mixture of sincerity and artfulness: "If you let me do this without opposition, I shall keep much calmer and more contented."

John was silent. The last injunction of the asylum physician was not to give Mrs. Ferris time for solitary brooding over her troubles, real or fancied.

"I know," she continued, "that be-

fore I went from home I was a trial to everybody's patience. I never mean to be that again. It will be easier—if I live away from other people, and alone with you."

Rightly reasoning that as time went by she would retire more into herself and make rare or impossible any confidences like the present, John resolved to commit her now to the wisest course of conduct. Smoothing her hair, tossed by the sea breezes, he said, "Well then, Mary, won't you trust to my guidance just for a few weeks at the outset? I will promise you that after a while, if you insist, you may be as secluded as you like, and I will do my best to make you happy in that way. But at first, Mary, yield to me. It is so long since I have had a wife that I want to show her, now that I can take a downright pretty one into public places."

She watched a distant sail with too evident an attempt at indifference, but he made her smile when he went on:

"Then, besides the fact that you have grown ever so much better looking than you used to be, you must remember that your trunk is full of new-fashioned finery. You are uncommonly strong-minded if you want only to display yourself to Polly Huggins and me. No, you will go to church with me. Think of the years that I have sat alone in that old pew. I know that you will want to see Hannah Goddard's home, and you can't keep her and Mrs. Ostrander away from yours, unless you fairly turn them out of doors. We are not old, Mary. Why should we retire from the world like a couple of hermits?"

"You do not need to do it. People like you. That I have ceased to be a lunatic is not going to be any particular reason why they will enjoy my society. My clothes are fine enough, but long before I have worn them out Mrs. Ostrander will be telling Miss Goddard that it is a pity John Ferris' wife does not know anything. It will be very true. You say Mrs. Ostrander is wonderfully capable. Polly Huggins has to keep my house for me. Miss Goddard is literary, isn't she? I have not read a book through in ten years."

The old bitterness was creeping into her tones. Argument had always failed with her. John was going to be powerless, if his newly acquired personal influence failed at the first test.

"Mary, do you really care more for the opinions of a person whom you scarcely know, like Miss Goddard, or your fancies of one whom you never saw,