

An evil light flashed into Augusta's eyes; but presently she frowned and impatiently turned from the window, as though troubled by her own thoughts.

"Yet, why should I care, why should I worry?" her heart cried passionately, "whether he marries her or not, seeing that I myself am to marry Clarence Thorpe in two months; and even if it were not so, I know all too well I should never be Donald Standfield's wife; and yet, to hear of his marriage with another would madden me—aye, if I were ten times married."

Does this phase of Augusta's character surprise and offend you, reader? And yet this dog-in-the-manger element is a very common failing of poor human nature, dormant in most natures, active in a great many. It requires a very liberal-minded man to look on with equanimity whilst another plucks the fruit which he ardently desired but may not have.

Now, how shall I describe Bonny Woods? I fear I am but a poor hand at word-painting; but let me attempt it, at any rate. Entering the wood after a long walk in the hot glare of the sun, the heated and weary pedestrian draws a sigh of deep content as he gazes upward at the noble trees of the forest, which tower above him in mighty strength, rejoicing in the beauty and richness of their luxuriant foliage,—beech, maple, elm and cedar, and here and there a stately pine, mourning over the ancient form of a fallen comrade. His gaze descending, he sees before him sylvan glades, and grassy slopes, where the sunbeams, struggling through the boughs, rest in patches of gold; or flicker and dance up and down with the quivering of the leaves. There is silence, save for the twittering and singing of birds, and the low chirp or the chipmunk and squirrels as they chase one another up and down, and play at hide and seek among the leaves; and one other sound—a murmuring, rhythmic sound, like the rippling and splashing of water. And such it is; becoming louder and more distinct as he approaches the beautiful ravine, which is shaped like an amphitheatre; one segment of the circle towering up a hundred feet, is of solid rock, over the top of which the waters of the creek fall, dashing into spray on a projecting table-rock half way down, from which again they rush downward into the whirling, eddying pool beneath, from which the little stream goes flashing along the bed of the ravine, the banks of which slope downward as we follow the watercourse, until only a low bank bounds the creek on either side, where the fairy ferns grow in wild luxuriance and the mossy turf is studded with wild flowers—lilies, daisies and the modest violets, besides others which I cannot name.

"Bonny Woods deserves its name," said Jack, gazing with pleasure on the beautiful woodland scene, as they stood near the little water-fall.

"I suppose you come here often, Miss Brown?"

"I have only been here twice before to-day; but I intend to come as often as possible; is it not beautiful?" cried the girl, looking around with shining eyes. She had seated herself on a mossy log, and Jack stood near leaning against a tree.

"Aye!" said Jack, admiringly.

"It's a place to dream in; to build airy castles and weave golden romances."

"It is very jolly," interrupted Reginald; "so I am going to explore, and you two romantic young things can stay here and dream if you don't care to accompany me."

"Shall we avail ourselves of your brother's kind permission and remain, or shall we also explore?"

But Reggie had already departed, whistling as he went, and followed by Trap with a large stone in his mouth.

"It is very delightful here; suppose we rest awhile and then follow Reggie? unless you prefer going on," said Jack, glancing down at the girl's dreamy face with glowing admiration.

"Let us rest by all means; will you not sit down? there is plenty of room."

Throwing his hat on the ground beside him, Jack stretched himself on the grass at Judy's feet.

"I leave you in full possession of your moss-grown log," he said, laughingly,

"I always like to sit opposite a person with whom I am conversing; do not you, Miss Brown?"

"No, because I have never had any such fancy; why do you?"

"It is one of the most interesting of studies to watch the ever-varying expression of the human countenance; I find infinite amusement in observing the many different types of faces I meet with in journeying to and fro; on railway and boat, on the street and in the street cars; why, I remember faces I have seen years ago, without even knowing their owners' names."

"You must be an adept in reading the human face; but you should not have told me of this habit of yours; I shall feel embarrassed whenever you take a seat opposite me; I think I shall try and assume a vacant look when I talk with you," said Judith, with a dimpling smile.

"You will find it impossible," was the gallant retort.

"But, Miss Brown, I hope you do not imagine that I am in the habit of staring rudely at people?"

"Oh no! I understood what you meant, Mr. Littleworth."

After this a silence fell between the two. She was thinking dreamily of that day, hardly more than a week ago, when she had first visited Bonny Woods in company with Donald Standfield; and he had lounged on the grass at her feet, just as Jack was now; and she sat on this same mossy log. She wished that he was here now; she felt a sort of resentment against the fate which bound him to his desk in the hot, close office, while this young man before her was free to roam where he liked; to waste the morning hours in this wilderness of sweets! Happy, careless Jack! She sighed for Donald's sake.

Mr. Littleworth noted both the sigh and the wistful look in her dark blue eyes; but his acquaintance with her was of too recent a date to warrant his making any comments thereon; so he too sighed, a sigh of huge content, and said:

"Certainly, it is very jolly here. Rex was right. Just look at that stately old pine, yonder; he is king of the woods, surely!"

"I wonder how old it is," said she, musingly.

"Well, you know it takes a pine one hundred and fifty years to reach maturity, so I should take that old fellow to be somewhere between that and two hundred years old."

"Mr. Littleworth, would you like to live to be over a hundred?"

"If I could, by any possibility, renew my youth every fifty years, I should like to live a good many centuries. So far, I have found life a very pleasant affair, indeed, Miss Brown."

"Oh!" returned Judy, with the wise air of a little grandmother, "you have been very fortunate in your experience; to most people life is very disappointing."

"You, surely, have not found it so already?" asked Jack, gently.