

was with strain and grief, she persisted in disregarding the advice of everybody. ("So headstrong in a girl! But Doctor Coombe, her father, was always that.") Apparently she intended to go on exactly as if nothing had happened and to all arguments she said nothing save, "I think it will be best," or, "I am used to strange scenes just now," or something equally evasive. Coombe was quite annoyed with Esther—so stupid.

Only to Miss Annabel did the girl attempt to explain her attitude when that kind soul had exhausted all persuasion and was inclined to feel both worried and angry.

"Don't you see," she explained haltingly, "I must go away. I don't want to. I can't make the others go. Here every one understands and will make allowance. I want to be quiet, to rest, to think. I want to go to where I was before—if I can."

"Before what, my dear?"

"Before—everything! I can't explain. But I know it is the only way I shall ever be content. I will take my school again and to go on working and looking after Jane and Aunt Amy. Although," with a smile, "it is really Auntie who looks after Jane and Amy. Won't you help me, dear Miss Annabel? I am sure that this is the only thing to do."

"You are a strange girl, Esther. One would think you would be crazy to get away. Look at Angus going. He has suddenly found out that a trip to the Holy Land is necessary if one is to speak intelligently upon many portions of the Bible. Absurd! I will never let him dream that I know that isn't his business. And I hope you won't. It is all over now and the sooner he forgets the better. But I think even he is convinced, now, that I was right about—you know what I refer!"