

characterized both manner and speech formerly, under trying times.

Nettie had married while visiting at Helen's and returned upon a short visit, bringing Una with her. She could not understand her father, in his new character, and to her mother confided her misgivings:

"I don't believe he's going to live long; he's so changed," she said. "He never snaps nor snarls at me now."

"Well, he was pesky hard to get along with, and no mistake," said her mother, pluming her cap-strings, "but now, I just take solid comfort, only Laura, poor girl! she is sometimes so sad! She's devoted to Una. We never talk much about Robert, she seems to avoid the subject; it's the best way."

"I don't think she's sad all the time," argued Nettie. "Sometimes I have seen her with a look of expectation, that's what I call it, in her eyes, but she always grows sad and silent again as though disappointed."

"Nettie, while there's life there's hope. I believe she expects Allan some time," said her mother, confidentially, "I never ask her about him: I'm waiting for her to tell me. I do suppose she tells her father, though."

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The summer had come and gone again. The autumn had followed in her wake and had been succeeded by winter. The ice king's breath had melted upon the window-panes in that old home in Toronto under the genial rays of April sun, and May had brought blossom and leaf in forest and garden.

Again the 4th of May dawned bright, one of those heavenly days which Wordsworth assures us cannot die. The morning papers told Laura that it was the