

The very day she settled the question for herself, Frank, walking up the garden path to his home, overtook his little brother, and immediately hoisting him upon his shoulder, continued his way to the door. The child held a bunch of crumpled violets in his dirty little fist; and as he clasped his tiny arms about his brother's neck, Frank inhaled their delicious perfume. He was a noble, strong-minded lad, and not apt to give way to sentiment, yet he immediately set the innocent child upon its feet, and sat down on the doorstep.

Perhaps, as he sat there, he recalled the past, and chided himself for having been so rash and boyish upon the day he wore Lena's violets, months before; but if those were some of his thoughts, there were others to keep them company. He would not try to win one whom he could not make happy. If Lena considered herself above accepting the love that ennobled his every-day life,—if the woman of his choice could not bestow as much love and respect as she gained,—then he preferred to live alone.

When Frank arose and sauntered around the house toward the well, one would conclude that he had been cultivating the acquaintance of his sister's library, had they heard him repeat:

"And what are words? How little these the silence of the soul express!  
Mere froth,—the foam and flower of seas whose hungering waters heave and press  
Against the planets and the sides of night,—mute, yearning, mystic tides!"

Fortunately for Frank, his sister, who was carefully clipping from her pansy-bed as he turned the second corner, heard only the last word,—and even that was suddenly lost in a bar of "Afton Waters."

It was nearly September, and it was nearly noon. Lena walked slowly across the common, and was about to pass up the steps, when Frank appeared around one end of the bow-window upon her right. It was quite apparent he was after