

way of showing him that there was no hope for him. Else why did she now always laughingly coax one or more of the others to accompany them whenever Mr. Standfield asked her to walk or drive or row with him?

"I am a fool to be so set on that girl!" he told himself, savagely—"I might have known her early preference for me was but a girl's foolish fancy, which would vanish like magic before the smiles and soft speeches of a young fellow like Littleworth. But God! how blank my life will be when all hope of winning her is gone! It will be a strange freak of fate indeed if a second disappointment of this nature should come to me through Dorothy's sister. Dorothy! Ah, how different my life might have been had only Dorothy been true! Poor girl! from all accounts, her life has not been much happier than mine." Mr. Standfield frowned slightly, as these thoughts passed through his brain.

It was maddening to him to see Jack's attentions received by Judith with, what he considered, such evident pleasure. Frequently on coming to Bonny Dale after office hours in the afternoons, he would find these two together in the orchard, laughing and talking away like a pair of happy children; a novel or a volume of poems lying open on the grass, showing that Jack had been reading to her. So, it was no uncommon occurrence now for Mr. Standfield to be told on his arrival at the farm, that Judith and Mr. Littleworth had gone for a drive and would not be back till tea time; upon which occasions he would turn and moodily retrace his steps to the village, in spite of Miss Laurie's pretty pleadings that he would stay and chat with her for a little while, because she was feeling so lonely.

As for Mr. Littleworth, he was in the seventh heaven of delight at Judith's extreme graciousness to him. But in spite of his many advantages, of which he was scarcely as conscious as many another young man might have been, he did not feel at all assured that she loved him, though he fervently hoped that she did. He remembered the tight he had given her in the orchard that morning, when he came so near a declaration; and resolved to be cautious—to wait till he felt more sure of his ground. While he rejoiced at the new graciousness in her manner to himself, he was yet rather distrustful of her coldness to Standfield.

"Women are such confoundedly many-sided creatures. one never can tell how to take them. I have seen women in society cold as ice and hard as flint to the men they love, and all warmth and melting softness to fellows who are mere acquaintances to them. But pshaw! what am I dreaming about? little Judy is not a fashionable belle, God bless her! My little love, my fresh, dainty rosbud, what an altogether lucky fellow I'll be if I win you!" The young fellow's heart swelled and there was a suspicious moisture in his eyes at the thought of the joy that would be his through all the years to come, if only he could win for his wife this pearl among girls.

If Judith, in her anxiety to avoid Standfield, and in her feverish effort to conquer that keen anguish that seemed to be eating her heart out, and sometimes fought against her resolute will so as almost to overwhelm her—if she heedlessly and somewhat cruelly gave encouragement to a man whom she did not love and never meant to marry. Who shall altogether blame her? Though she has been called by courtesy the heroine of this tale, I never pretended that she by nature was stronger, more heroic, than the majority of young women. In this particular crisis of her life she suffered as keenly as it is possible for any mortal to suffer, mentally. All the more, too, because she had one of those extremely sensitive natures, which bend to the slightest breath of an adverse wind. God knows, it is a truth that life has no more bitter source of human suffering than a disappointment in love, where the love is real and has grown to be indeed a part of one's life. Though this subject is daily being made a subject of jest, and scoffed at by fools, old and young. I again give it as my opinion that more hearts have been broken, more lives wrecked from this cause than from any other, although the world may be ignorant of the reason that made this man a misanthrope, that one a rash speculator and the other a drunkard—why this girl should refuse advantageous offers, preferring a colorless life of single-blessedness, or why another young woman should put an end to her own life without any adequate reason. All this mischief and

more may be traced to Cupid. A sorrow like this is augmented by the fact that it must be suffered in secret, while the conventional, outward life goes on as usual. No mortal eye must witness the bitter tears wrung from the anguished heart in the solitude of night; no ear listen to words of hopeless love—blank despair. None but the Almighty hears the passionate prayer for guidance, for strength to endure! Fortunately, sorrows like this do not always endure for a lifetime, or for many years even; else what a broken-hearted world this would be! But while it lasts there is no more poignant anguish. So it was with Judith Brown; but pride came to her aid; come what may, she must maintain her dignity; so she forced herself to smile and talk, and take an interest in each day's occupations and pleasures, hoping that none knew her sorrow. If this may be called heroism what countless numbers of women are heroines!

Meanwhile, the month of August drew near, and with it Augusta's wedding day; quite a number of handsome presents from friends far and near, had arrived for the bride-elect, among them some exceedingly handsome and expensive things, and Miss Laurie regarded them complacently; she intended to surround herself with beautiful and costly things when she was married and mistress of her own house. She was comparatively wealthy and would be quite able to indulge all her luxurious tastes; so she resolved she would have nothing tawdry about her; all should be simple elegance, such as would excite the envy of her husband's less fortunate lady friends. Augusta had very few friends of her own in Toronto, but she calculated upon outshining the wives and sisters and other female relatives of her husband's friends.

Such were Miss Laurie's pre-nuptial anticipations. Well, each individual has his or her idea of earthly bliss, and Miss Laurie's is by no means an uncommon one.

About ten days previous to the wedding, an event happened which afforded extreme satisfaction to Augusta. This was nothing less than the announcement of Judith's engagement to Mr. Littleworth. Certainly no one was more surprised than Judy herself. She had no premonition when she wandered off by herself to Bonny Woods that sunny afternoon at the end of July, that when she returned to the farm she would return as the betrothed wife of Jack Littleworth. She would have indignantly scouted any such notion, had anyone suggested it to her. She had made her way to her old favorite seat on the mossy log beside the noisy little fall and was sitting there in sad, dreamy idleness, a fair picture in a lovely setting—when Jack found her. And there—perhaps under the soft influence of the stillness and beauty of that woodland scene, or perhaps because his love could be held under restraint no longer, he told her how dearly and truly he loved her; pleading his cause in a manly, straightforward way, that was not without effect on the girl, in the end; for she had always had a sincere liking and esteem for Jack. But what are mere liking and esteem compared to the love which poor Jack pleaded for so eloquently.

"I cannot be your wife, Mr. Littleworth; for I do not care for you at all in that way," was her gentle but plain-spoken reply. But Jack, whose pride had completely vanished in the dark depths of despair which tortured his honest heart at the thought of failing to win the priceless treasure he coveted above all else on earth, continued his pleading even more earnestly, if less eloquently than before.

"Would you marry a woman who did not love you?" she asked him coldly at length.

He turned slightly pale at the cold directness of the question, and clenched his hands as though it hurt him.

"I love you so madly; life without you seems such a miserable blank to look forward to, that I think I would marry you if you hated me," he said bitterly.

"I do not hate you," she answered, her voice growing hard and cold, as she began to waver.

"Then be my wife," he cried huskily, his bronzed cheek paling with emotion.

"I will be so patient with you, darling; only give me the right to win your love. To achieve that I will do all that a man can do. Marry me and I will make your life like a beautiful dream; no wish of yours shall be disregarded. I love you so well that I surely will not fail to win your heart at last. Only be my wife."