

mere from his belt—both were made from beautiful green-stone, skilfully worked, valuable, and delightful to look upon. He hung them on the end of his long wooden staff and reached them towards the elves, laying them on the ground before them. They were delighted. They turned them about, looked at them this way and that. They poised the mere, the beautiful club, one pretending to strike another and falling with the weight of the weapon, whilst his companions laughed merrily. They quite forgot Kanawa.

Whilst the elves thus admired the treasures, Kanawa noted that the white moon grew paler; streaks of light appeared through the trees; the stars faded; day was breaking! Kanawa was overjoyed. The elves, too, saw the daylight appear, and hurried away, singing cheerily, and carrying with them, as Kanawa thought, the tiki and the mere. Soon they were lost to sight and hearing, and he arose, stiff from having sat so long, and still trembling a little with fear. Now the jangle of the birds began; and all his fears left him. The kaka screamed loudly, "Get up! Get up!" but Kanawa was up before them.

He stepped out from the tree, and lo! upon the ground lay his treasures. Had he not seen them carried off by the elves? But no, there they lay. He touched them—they were real; he lifted them—they were his very weapon and tiki. But, strange to say, though he held them in the sunlight, they cast no shadow—it was their shadows only that the wood-elves had carried away.

Kanawa hurried off, and soon reached his village; and when his friends disbelieved his story of the elves, he lifted up his mere, and lo! it cast no shadow; so who could doubt his word?

Dorothy Wilding.

1.

HOME-BUILDING.

TO him the time had come that comes to many a young man of the Canterbury lands; the time of the calling of the North. Canterbury, the land of broad plains lying between tumbling verges of sea and the tumbled ranges of snowy mountains, is a land where wheat and wool signify milk and honey. Most of its broad acres are occupied; so that the young man, disinclined for restricted and already subjugated areas, turns to the North, where land may still be had in larger blocks, and more cheaply, than in Canterbury; more cheaply at the outset, but calling for more labour in subduing its wildness. Labour has no terrors for the young; and therefore to the North went Evan, though not without regrets at parting from the level lands of home.

But the call had not been the cheapness of the land only; its beauty too had called him;—the beauty of the bush, that must in large part be destroyed to make room for the more sympathetic beauty of human occupation. The area he leased was Government land, half downs, half mountainous, and almost entirely bush covered. The mountainous back portion was broken by deep and rugged gullies, and in these no attempt was made to disturb the bush, so that they remained as haunts of the native birds, and reservoirs of singing waters.

He employed labour to assist him in the felling of the bush, in the burning; and in the summer nights when the glow of the fires lay over the hills, he thought of the burning in the South; the burning of the tussock. That had not seemed so destructive as the burning of the bush: the tussock sprang up again, and even where it died out its place was taken by luxuriant English grasses. But here, whilst a second growth of smaller timber was ever ready to cover the burnt areas, it was not wanted; still less was the fern that in places seemed ever ready, waiting to take possession of the untimbered lands. Blackened stumps and logs lay for years before they could be removed from the grassy hills and downs where

sheep and cattle fattened; blackened logs that lay, a mute reproach to man and his destruction. But he strove to remove the reproach, not merely by removing the logs, but by creating new beauty in the place of the old.

Here and there he planted clumps of kowhai and ribbon-wood; kowhai, the earliest tree to catch fire of flower from the coming warmth of spring, and ribbonwood, whose petals in late summer and autumn anticipate the snows of coming winter. Snows!—in this northern land only the tops of the highest hills bore their powdering of snow, whilst in his southern home the snow-kings of the Alps invaded the plains with their white tempestuous hosts in the sou'westery winters. And because he laboured for a home that was to be, he chose the most beautiful site on the forelands for the house when it should be built, near the mouth of one of the larger valleys that thrust a rugged rift through the down lands; a bushed valley that formed a ferny shaded avenue where birds passed up and down, gladdening with their beauty and the cheerfulness of their liquid song. He planted titoki, whose scarlet, blackseeded berry is as the rowan, with a difference; also nectar-bearing trees, and giant flax, that the tui might never lack invitation. He planted silver birches and limes, and on the flats a clump or two of Lombardy poplars, for the sake of their slender beauty, and for their holding in their arms the golden autumns of the South; and hawthorn he planted, with its memories of childhood.

On different parts of the block he built rough comfortable huts, sleeping in whichever was nearest the work on which he was then engaged; and the years passed quickly in felling, in burning, in clearing; grasses grew luxuriantly, and his flocks yielded freely. Thoughts of his home came more clearly, yet undefined, for all was not ready, either in his heart or on his chosen acres.

He who would see a young land in beautiful making, let him come to these outset islands of the Southern Pacific. Are its folk blamed for not cherishing or encouraging the arts, let him who blames visit the growing homes, and see if the very birthplace of the arts is not preparing; and the birthplace must come before the place of abiding: if the folk have not yet the leisure, they are making it surely possible for those who follow them to enjoy such leisure. Without the arts?—but they are loosening and enriching the soil where they shall flourish in the days soon to come.

Nor was the heart of Evan our home-maker insensible to the calls of that part of the soul which is said to express itself in the arts; that part of the soul that calls for beauty

as the body calls for bread. He gave it expression in the very shaping of his home; in the leaving of untouched areas here and there, in the replanting of parts, in the blending of natural beauty with usefulness. His buildings, his fences, were strong and neat; his paddocks clean. His labour was in itself a joy, and the joy and health of his labour shewed in his browned clean-cut face, his brown and sinewy limbs. And in these Isles there are hundreds like him; thousands.

It is usual, however, that the young man marries after a year or two spent on his area; as soon as he is able to clear a home block and build a house of a kind that may be added to from time to time. Two together are able to subdue this wild and beautiful nature more quickly than one alone;—at least, the two think so, and that in itself is a great step forward. But some are so taken with their labour that the thought of a mate takes definite shape only now and again; and when they have gone far from their kin and their acquaintance, they are less likely to choose in the neighbourhood where they settle.

2.

DOROTHY.

And now twelve years had passed, and Evan was growing wealthy before his time. Each year, as surely as the summer brought the cuckoos, Christmas time brought him home to the South for a few weeks; for Christmas time has become the summer of home affections, and all then feel the call to gather at the old hearth. Other relatives and friends came up from the North at the same time, for others had, like him, been tempted away from the South to win their fortunes from the North. The South should look to its young men,—and the North to its virgin lands. But the marriage is a happy one; vigour and youth with beauty and fertility.

It was a joyous reunion; and it happened that at his home two girls were visiting whom he had not seen since he went away twelve years ago; for when he went north their family went south, and had but lately returned to their old home. Until he was told their names he would hardly have known them; for when he last saw them they were wild-haired, bare-footed little things that he had thought of for their mischievousness when he thought of them at all. And now they were apparently demure young women;—apparently; for a certain smiling of the lips and sparkling of the eyes made this deliciously doubtful.

So, at least, he thought of the younger, Dorothy, who had been no more than seven or eight years old when he had last seen her, twelve years ago, when he himself was one and twenty. She was two persons in one; the one he remembered, and the one she had become; and her laughing eyes often caught his regarding her, half in conscious perplexity, and half in unconscious admiration.

Oh yes, she had heard of him, from his mother and sisters,—living away in the wilds there all alone; quite enough to make a wild man of him, too;—and he supposed there might be some truth in that. They had dances in the evenings, and none did he remember so well as those with her; on none did he dwell in thought so constantly;—and her vitality affected him as did the vitality of the wild beauties amongst which he had lived and worked so heartily during the past years.

“She has the animation of the wild things,” he thought; and a shadow of regret passed through him; “and those wild things would never come near enough to be really loved;—they came almost within touch,—but who would touch them lost them altogether:”—and his heart throbbed as he caught a glance from her like the bright glance he had often caught from a robin or a tit as he sat in the quiet bush of his new home. “All the wild things do not live in the North,” he thought; “yet I have at least touched her.” And as she smiled he saw the bare-footed girl again; and he felt as though he had touched a child, and therefore as to a child he spoke laughingly, inducing her to tell of her memories, her escapades, in the past. “If the mischievousness of the child still lives in the woman,” he thought—and in the thought there was no shadow of unpleasantness.

He saw her many times; sometimes alone, more often with others; and he could never be sure if in nature she were a girl or a woman. Her laughter seemed to melt the years from her; and as she was nearly always in laughing moods, it was as a girl that she most often appeared to him, and as a girl came to him in his thoughts.

“Dorothy,” he said, “I cannot think of you as grown up.”

“I am not grown up,” she answered; “and I have no wish to grow up;—I am not sure that it would be as pleasant as staying just as I am.”

“To see you, one would have little doubt that you found it pleasant,” said he with a smile.

Whether it was her lips, that ever seemed to curve into merry pouting; whether it was her brown light-brimming

eyes; or whether it was her restlessness and quickness of movement, he could not tell;—but he found it more and more a pleasure to watch her, and a greater pleasure to be with her;—found, to his own surprise, that he began to look for her coming, to regret her going. Once he even caught himself thinking of her as roaming in the wild places of his home in the North;—finding her there once it seemed to him her rightful home;—and this thought awoke in him a strange, disconcerting, but not unwelcome uneasiness.

He found that he singled her out from all who came; felt a growing desire to be more with her;—yet was aware of a consciousness that it was only when she willed it that he was able to be with her at all. It perplexed him, too, that when he thought of her as a girl he felt care-free and unembarrassed, as she herself seemed to be; but when he thought of her as a woman, whilst she remained unchanged, embarrassment filled him with strangeness and hesitancy.

One calm starlit night, following an afternoon when her bright changing moods had filled him with tumultuous indefinable feelings, he walked with her to her nearby home. As they walked side by side, he touched her arm with his fingers; and as she did not draw away, he let his fingers rest there lightly. It even seemed to him that she leaned nearer, ever so little, but nearer; and now and again he tingled to the lightest touch of her head against his shoulder. Nor, feeling the touch, could he resist leaning his head towards her, till his cheek touched her hair, and there rested, lightly as a leaf on moss;—nor did she remonstrate, in action or in word.

A new thought awakened in his heart, opening under the starlight, petal by petal, like a flower; and the thought tingled till his heart quivered. He loved this wild thing. Not as he loved the wild things of his home in the North, but with a love that, once open, seemed to fill his being with the fragrance of emotion. Almost he whispered, as his cheek pressed her hair more caressingly, “I love you, Dorothy,”—when he thought with a pang, “Is this the girl or the woman at my side?”—and he raised his head suddenly.

“I was thinking of the day, years ago,” said she as she looked up with a quick smile, “when we girls were on the haystack, and pushed a great heap of the new hay down on you below.”

He laughed, and joined in her reminiscences. But another pang touched his heart like a cold wind, as if to close up, or to shrivel, the flower that had opened too soon. She was in her girl mood; her actions were in girlish confidence;—how different had been his thoughts.

"Dorothy," he said.

She looked up; and he could see her elvish smile in the starlight, and the elvish light in her lovely brown eyes.

"A penny?" she said, as he paused.

"Not for millions," he answered, shaking himself free from his mood with a sigh, and speaking of other things.

But she said little; and soon they were silent again.

They came to the hawthorn hedge; and as they reached the gate his heart surged up.—

"I—" he began.

"Want to say Good-night;" she interrupted; "see you soon again?—Good-night."

She gave her hand as he held out his, withdrawing it again before he could seize it;—yet surely there was the slightest pressure?—She turned and ran off; but after a step or two she looked back, again called "Good-night" softly, and was gone.

But the loveliness of her face as she turned it towards him thus for a moment; the loveliness of her flower-face in the quiet night. Was it girlishness?—was it womanliness?—"It was all humankindliness," he thought, as for a minute he stood there; "and I love her."

This was towards the close of his stay; and now he regretted that he must leave so soon. Not that there was any real necessity for his going, only he had so arranged it.

"Time is short," he thought; "yet much may chance in a short time—all being willing."

It may be perceived by the proviso that he was a wise youth in some respects, if unwise in others. And all, apparently, were not willing. Dorothy did not appear the next day; nor did he see her though he loitered in the places where she was likely to be. Will o' wisp that she was, however, one place was almost as likely as any other. A second day came, but not until the late afternoon came Dorothy, more vivacious, more merry, more elusive than ever. Where had she been?—oh, out riding on her favourite pony. "But you knew I was going in a day or two?" asked Evan. "Yes, I knew," she answered, with no hesitation in her voice, and no abatement of her light-heartedness, as she left him.

"She does not care," he thought, and his heart was heavy: "she does not care."

"What kind of a girl has Dorothy grown up to be?" he had asked his people one day.

"Oh, she's a heartless, selfish little thing," a sister had answered; "you know, her mother—" and there followed a

story of happenings of years ago, to which he listened with little relish.

He asked no more questions; but remarked, as he went out, "Well, her mother has an uncommonly happy little daughter."

"That's just like Evan, and as if she had only the one," said his sister; "he puts all his faith in a smile or a pleasant word. To trouble about that little coquette," she added as her brother left the room.

Coquette?—was it coquetry and not girlishness? He would not believe it, though the words troubled him. Yet all his people did not share that sister's opinion of Dorothy, as he knew by his mother's ways with her.

On his coming to accompany her as she left in the evening, "You need not come, you know," she said; "I'm used to the dark, and to being alone; so there's no need,—unless you want to," she added.

"I should like to come," said he; and after Good-nights they went off.

Again there was silence between them. He could not at all understand why she was so overflowing with life and chatter when with others, and often when with him, and at times so quiet as to have no word at all to answer him. Nor could he understand when now and again he caught swift glances that she threw up to him sideways;—he was almost sure that she was laughing inwardly, as if enjoying his discomfort; and that helped him little.

Yet in one moment she could atone for all; for as he said "Good-night," and was despondently about to move away, her upturned face was transformed; her eyes half closed, looked past him under the stars. "If I knew what stirred behind those eyes," he thought. She did not move; she did not resist when he drew her towards him; he felt her light touch against his body; her cheek was against his breast. He looked down towards her;—she looked straight before her into the night, and never had her eyes seemed so big, so brown, so glowing. "If I could see what they see," he thought, as he watched them, steadily fixed on the distance. One hand was in his; his other hand was round her shoulders. He hardly dared breathe.

"Dorothy," he whispered.

She did not move, nor speak, nor raise her eyes. His own breath was deeper, and came faster. He could not speak. If they might become statues, to stand so,—and to feel so,—for ever.

"Dorothy," he whispered again.

NEW ZEALAND TALES.

A faintest smile touched her lips, and her eyes flickered towards his for an instant.

"Surely she knows," he thought, as he bent and kissed her hair, her cheek, her throat; but when he would kiss her lips, "No; no;" she said quickly, in little above a whisper, and turned her head away; and both trembled.

Her eyes were hidden; her cheek no longer pressed his breast; her hand felt lifeless. The moment was past. "She is angry," he thought; and his hands left her.

"Good-night," she said, but did not lift her eyes as she turned slowly away.

"Good-night," he answered; "I—I—am sorry—"

But quickly she was gone.

She was gone. And now he knew how desperately he wanted her. And in a day or two came the day of his leaving.

She did not come; and in the evening of the next day, having mooded through its hours, he could not stay himself from seeking her. He found her in a coppice by the brawling stream near her home; but how different a person she appeared. The brown of the eyes that for a moment met his had new lights; new unfathomed depths. She almost seemed a stranger.

She gave short answers; estrangement seemed greater, and darker; till in desperation he asked,—

"Dorothy, are you angry because I tried to kiss you?"

"No," she answered quickly; "but because you so readily gave up trying."

An entirely perplexing reply.

"But you would not be angry if you cared for me?"

"What right have you to suppose I care for you?" she asked, with a harder light breaking in her eyes; "have I ever said anything to give you that right?"

In a moment, the recollection of every time he had seen her, had been with her, passed through his mind. She had said nothing; had not even called him by his name; and he answered reluctantly,—

"No, you have said nothing."

"No; for there was nothing to say," and with these words she turned away. It was as if, whilst meeting the girl in her with the spirit she shewed, both girl and woman had slipped away from him.

Voices fell on their ears; and before he could speak again she joined the others who came across the field; and he was amazed at the swift return of her laughter and vivacity. But they were not for him.

DOROTHY WILDING.

"She is as the other beautiful wild things after all," he thought; "those who love them, lose them."

A day passed, and another, and many times he attempted to see her alone; for though the heart knows it will suffer hurt, it yet will seek the one it loves, even though the later memory of cruel unkindnesses will dim the memory of earlier blisses.

3.

FORGETTING.

Again he was away in the North; but the North how changed. His heart was all in his work before; and the land on which he laboured had responded,—one beauty, in dying, giving birth to another. Now neither beauty had the same appeal; for his heart was drawn elsewhere. His energy flagged; of what use was it all?—what was its object?—True, the object had before been of the dimmest, but it seemed that it had been on the point of realization, and had suddenly faded quite away.

No doubt he would forget; in forgetting is the frailty, or the strength, of the human heart;—but though he tried to forget, he did not wish to do so;—no, rather the memory of her unkindness than the loss of all. He worked harder, but spasmodically; days of strenuousness alternated with days of depression and idleness.

His workmen noticed it. "He is woman-bitten," said Jens; "and to forget he will soon maybe go to the young women of the Township; and then he may be worse bitten; but he will not forget."

Jens was a philosopher; a young Dane who had been with Evan since coming to the district some eight years ago. Quiet and industrious he was; and one day he and Evan sat at the midday spell in a wild part of the block, where they had been fencing to keep the cattle off the broken cliffs.

Evan lay deep in thought, and his thoughts were in the South. He lay back in a clump of fern, but after some minutes started up,— "Surely I can forget," he said, speaking to himself—

But Jens heard, and he said quietly, without looking up, "No, boss, you will not forget; but the hurt will grow easier."

Evan started, as if a stranger had read his thought; forgetting that he had spoken aloud.

"What do you know?" he asked, almost harshly.

"Nothing; but I think," answered Jens.

There was a silence. Evan liked the young man, but he looked at him moodily.

"I will tell you," said Jens at last, "what I have told nobody; you will maybe understand." Again there was a pause, and Evan again lay back in the fern. "I came away from Denmark eight years ago, because—because the sun has gone out there. It was my betrothed that died; and though the cornflowers she loved were still blue, they too had lost their light. I did not like the dark, and I came right far away. But my betrothed she come with me when I do not know it. . . . And I find at first that there is not much more sun here. And then I know that it was in the face of my betrothed that the sun was. But how can she stay here where there are no beech forests; and no nut-woods; and no field-flowers? Her face grow dim that is so sweet; and I know that she go away to old Denmark again; where all these things are because Denmark is good. And I want to follow then and go too. But I know I will not find her, so I stay. . . . I sit in the woods here, and I feel lonely. There are in the summer no swallows in the day; and no nightingale in the night; they too are in old Denmark with my betrothed. And there is here no stork longlegs. And when I think of the stork, and say to myself, 'But where is my long-nebbed old friend?' then I think, 'Ah Jens, it do not matter about the stork longlegs; for he will never bring you now the little baby.' And then it is that I feel the arms of my betrothed tight about me, boss, and. . . . But I work hard, and soon I like the new trees, and the new birds, and the new peoples;—and a good girl she become my wife, though she know I do not forget my betrothed.—No boss, you will not forget, if you like the girl true,—and it is not to forget that you will wish;—but it will not hurt so deep."

Evan knew the story of how the good girl had become his wife. He had stopped a runaway horse and saved her life; had helped her home; had visited her people afterwards, more and more often; had told her of his reason for leaving Denmark,—and had asked her to become his wife. She had consented; nor had she ever had cause for regret. "A man who can be so faithful to a dead love can be as faithful to a living one,—or she doesn't deserve it," said she. And if the stork had not brought the baby, yet the baby had come.

It disquieted him to suppose that the time might come when he could think of Dorothy without a deep pang; it disquieted him more to think that he might even marry another, as Jens had done. He rebelled against the forgetfulness he

desired; so unreasonable is this wayward human heart of ours.

There followed some weeks of quiet energy, but the depression would not be thrown off. Every time he passed the honeysuckle rioting near his whare, its scent in summer filled him with wakened memories, and it was as though the flower had grown thorns. He had learned it was one of her favourite flowers, and more than once had he given her sprays of it, and carnations, another favourite. First he thought to root it out,—but could no more do that than he could root out the memory of her. So it remained, with its perpetual reminder. It called her name from him when flowerless; but when the white blossom scented the summer air the memories surged up, the joy of them turning to pain, as the whiteness of the flower turned to amber on its honeyed marriage with the sun. And it seemed to him that his heart was as one of the boiling springs in near Rotorua; his emotions seemed sleeping until the scent of the flower caused an upwelling, a surging, that clouded all his serenity, and shattered all his peace.

He sat in a little open dingle under a Maori may-tree, a punaweta, whose nutty scented flowers fell in flaky creamy petals as the light wind breathed along the valley deeps, mingling a sigh with the broken murmur of the hurrying water. A tui sat high in a totara near by, singing one of those exquisite songs that come from its throat like bubbling whispers of melody, so faint as to be barely audible.

He thought, as he watched the bird, "And to her I could not even speak and say I loved her,—she seemed too much a child; too much a child. There was liking and loving; I was urged and dissuaded.—And she was angry, not because I tried to kiss her, but because I so readily gave up trying;—gave up readily!—Did she mean that had I really, and sincerely wanted it, I would have tried again, and again?—and would she have allowed me?—or if I had first told her I loved her, not merely left her to infer it?"—He began to understand actions that had appeared simply swift unreasonable and incomprehensible changes of mood.—Coquette? indeed, it was rather she who might with reason think that of him.

"But then," he thought, "her question, — 'What right have you to suppose I care for you?—have I ever said anything to give you that right?' 'No,' he had answered with his lips. There was no word to which hope could fasten; no, not one." But at the thought his heart rebelled. No word?—oh, but so many little actions, — swift looks, — almost

caresses,—but could he remind her of these?—even did she remember them, no and again no; and had she forgotten them, a thousand times no. Forgotten them!—had she perhaps regarded them as nothing?—were they so without meaning that she had in truth already forgotten them when she asked her question?—Forgotten them!—and in him they had created a whole new world;—from them had sprung the sunlight of which Jens had spoken. “Have I said anything to give you that right?”—“No,” his lips had answered,—but “yes, and yes, and yes,” his heart cried.—If only he had told her he loved her.—And another thought came. He had said nothing, though he had touched her, and caressed her, and kissed her;—she in turn had said nothing, and would not allow him to interpret her actions in words, since no words had given expression to his own? If only he had told her; then when her head rested against his breast; when her brown eyes looked out into the night; when her hair touched his cheek and his lips, and her presence filled and thrilled his heart.

“Oh Dorothy, Dorothy,” he cried; “you know I love you.”

—And lo, and lo, and lo,—a gracious form approaching. Along the ferny track beneath the trees, this fern and that waving to the touch of her dress as she passed; her hand touching now a great tree bole of pine, of totara, now a slender sapling of coprosma, whose mist of leaves quivered to the touch, as his heart quivered. The brown of her eyes seemed almost black as, glancing brightly to left and right, like an enquiring bird, she came along the narrow winding track lightly, unhesitatingly.—Did she see him?—her glance never rested upon him, nor indeed upon anything for more than a moment at a time. She was almost at his side, her lips smiling as if some delightful unspoken thought were about to spring to birth in speech. His heart sang, but out of tune through uncertainty. Was she about to pass him by?—But no; she paused at his side, and he saw the gentle rise and fall of her breast under the embroidered whiteness; her eyes pausing in their wandering, rested on his, gently as a bird on its nest. He started to his feet, and stepped towards her with arms outstretched.

“Dorothy!”

But quietly, swiftly, she drew away, and there was still a space between them, though her eyes were no less gentle, her lips no less smiling.

“You called me, and I came,” she said.

“But how did you know the way?”

“I wonder,” she replied.

It was as though her very kindness removed the bond that had prisoned his speech; his words were free, and he told her all, as he should have told her long since; as he should have told her before he tried to touch those lips that were so inviting.

“I know now I should have spoken, instead of leaving you to guess,” said he.

“It would have made everything easier.”

“Do you love me, then, as I love you?—do you love me?”

“I am here, Evan.”

It was the first time she had spoken his name; the very first. It was like the opening of a door; like a sweet beginning of confidences.

“Why did you not come before, Dorothy?”

“Why did you not say you wanted me to come?”

“Wanted you!—”

Again he stepped towards her; but again she retreated;—and lo, and lo,—as she stood she faded like a mist dispersed by the sun;—she was there no longer.

“Dorothy; Dorothy;” he cried as she dimmed and disappeared;—but she was gone, though her look, her smile, her words, lingered with him and thrilled him.

The tui above him still sang; but there was harshness in its sound; there was coldness in the sunlight.

“Yes;” he muttered to himself; “imagination; that creates, and deceives;—as if she would come here, even if she could.”

He sank on the earth again, but only for a moment; he sprang to his feet;—“Imagination?—yes, and madness,” he cried; “why should she do this?—why pursue and torment me?—why does she promise with her looks and deny with her lips?—*she* do it?—no; it is my own stupid self;—I will not forget,—I cannot forget,—I curse the day when first I saw her—”

He strode away in angry mood. He left the gully, and climbed away to the hill. He worked fiercely. Never had the men known him so uncertain in mood, so quick in temper. But even heavy work was unable to abate the passionate upwelling. He left the men, going swiftly down the slopes as if hoping that quickness of motion might bring the calm that exertion failed to bring. He came to his whare, and as he passed the honeysuckle its heavy scent calmed him and took him in a flood of tenderness;—“Oh Dorothy, Dorothy,” he breathed. But tenderness was lost in a resurgence of anger;—“Dorothy!” he muttered tearing roughly at the climbing

blossoms. But he failed to tear down the flowery trails, and he failed to tear the thought of her from his heart.

But even from the dark despair that followed, the bright vision, hope, drew nourishment and put out new buds, and quickened; and as water to its roots came a single sentence in a letter from his mother. She wrote of the home; of the people; but Dorothy she mentioned only once. "As for little Dorothy," she said, in the midst of unconnected matter, "do not be heavy of heart because of her." That was all; for then she wrote of other things, not mentioning Dorothy again.

"So you too counsel forgetfulness, like my own thought, mother mine," he said, smiling. But hope read the words otherwise; and "Little Dorothy, Little Dorothy," became as it were the lilt of a song deep down in his heart.

His way of living changed; he became what people called more sociable; he was welcomed in the homes, unreservedly in most, but in some the mothers had the anxious thought that he might do to many as one had apparently done to him.

And Jens remarked to his wife, "They had best take care; for a man may run *baresaerk* and still bear the smiling face; and it is steel, not gold, that he has in the hand now."

4.

THE BLOWING OF THE BUGLES.

Of course there was great unreasonableness in the way Evan looked at things, and in the way he behaved; any sensible person must be aware of that;—and perhaps unreasonableness is too forbearing a word.

It is not to be supposed that Dorothy was his first liking. He had taken more girls than one, with friends for company, to see his pleasant valleys, his hills; and as they had moved here and there he had watched them jealously, noting one thing in their behaviour with approval, another with disapproval; but always it had been "No; she will not fit here as mistress;" and there had been no heart-burnings, if some little regrets. But with Dorothy he felt at once that here was her home;—at once, that is, as soon as he discovered up there in the South that he was charmed with the girl and loved the woman in her. The nodding bluebell graced the slopes no better than would she, nor the bell-bird the gladed valleys. No;—as he walked here and there, it was "This is Dorothy's dell;" and "This is Dorothy's fall;" and "This is Dorothy's knoll;"—till all the beautiful and favourite places were peopled with Dorothy, as the forest of Arden was peopled with Rosalind by Orlando. Nor did his melancholy unpeople

them,—so he avoided them, since their everlasting reminder became at last intolerable.

As things went wrong with Evan, so things went wrong with mankind. Suddenly the militant Germans, thinking the day had come, made a cruel step to seize the world. Their people had penetrated to every land,—dwelt there respected and honoured,—yet now they clamoured for a place in the sun. Their ships had been free to come and go in all ports of the world, their merchants had created great establishments in all lands,—yet now they clamoured for the freedom of the seas. They had crossed all frontiers unhindered, they had made their homes in every country, they had been welcomed and treated as good subjects and sincere friends, they had been given positions of honour and positions of trust,—yet now they cried that those who had so treated them were enemies surrounding the fatherland and seeking its destruction. Was it not again the fable of the wolf and the lamb?—Ah; they wanted a place in the sun, — for Germans and no others; the seas must be free, — for Germans and no others; the fatherland must have peace, —but no nation else.—It was like the *rata*, raising itself to greatness on the shoulders of others; and now feeling its supports firm, it would crush to death those to whom it owed its greatness. The Germans must have control of all. Freedom they desired, and for freedom they would fight;—freedom they would have,—though the rest of the world should dwell in slavery.

But in one stroke they had lost the gains of years, and had lost both respect and honour. And like the poison-vomiting fire-breathing dragons of old, so the dragon of the German army sought to destroy lands and peoples; but it was being penned in its own foul den, and brave men were sacrificing themselves that it might be destroyed.

Oh the land of England, which poets have loved and for which heroes have died; fain would the dragon ravage its loveliness. Under one mailed foot writhed Belgium, whilst another foot reached out, seized and crushed the gracious lilies of France, and the lashing tail reddened the snows of a maddened Russia. Oh the land of England, whose children, sailing far, had gemmed the oceans with other Englands, girl replicas of their mother. And from these girl-lands had sprung manly sons, that now in Europe with unsubduable hearts and unvanquishable courage prisoned the dragon within its own fens and mountains, pressing on to its destruction.

Now in every young man the warrior blood of his forefathers barked up; they too were prepared to fight for British freedom,—the freedom that made all men free. Evan at once

had joined the young knights of Empire; and arranging his affairs, leaving Jens in charge of his block, he went into camp with other young men from the district. He made a fine soldier; — but indeed, as for that, the uniform of a soldier makes any man look more a man.

He had not told the home people; and the news came to them when he himself appeared among them in khaki. And there are no brighter tears than those that are lit by mingled pride and joy and sorrow. A few friends were there, and they chatted of war and warriors. There was jesting and laughing, — yes, and a little crying.

After a few minutes his mother spoke aside to a younger daughter, who left the room, and soon there was a sound of approaching chatter;—other friends had been in the garden, and these were coming for the further discomfiture of the soldier.

Evidently the sister had not told them the reason for their being brought in, for cries of surprise, and sudden congratulations filled him with more apprehension than he would have felt in the face of an enemy. But it must be borne!—And among them was Dorothy; still the same, or nearly;—still the wild thing, so desirable, so elusive. Whilst answering others, he saw hardly any but her; he noted that her quick glance rested on him twice, and twice left him without recognition, and the hope that had again risen in his heart died away; “for surely she would have recognized me if she cared,” he thought, forgetful of the change that uniform and training had made in him, as they make in every man. But when her glance rested on him a third time,—her eyes widened; the brightness of her face was clouded; her lips quivered;—and unnoticed by others than him, she turned, and disappeared.

All his heart cried on him to follow, and his effusive friends bade him stay; so he stayed, laughing and speaking as in a dream, till his mother called him to the door. He came, with many and vexatious delays,—and when out of earshot, “Hurry then and find her,” said his mother; “be quick,—be quick—”

Mother and son embraced in a look, and he was gone.

Gone, where but to places that flashed to his memory as paradises of a moment in the past? From one place, to another, and in the third he found her; at the honeysuckle he found her, seated alone in the arbour, her face averted. At the sound of footsteps she stood up and faced about with a care-free smile,—but seeing him, the smile vanished.

“Dorothy!” he cried; “don’t look wintry again because you see me; for indeed I love you.” And the breast he had

seen rising and falling to her placid breathing in the dell in the North, he now saw heaving with suppressed emotion.

—“Don’t, don’t,” he cried; “surely my love is no thing to hurt you so, though it has hurt and hurt me this many a day.”

She struggled against her tears, but dared not raise her head. He took her in his arms;—she pushed at his breast, pushing herself from him.

“Let me go; oh, let me go,” she said brokenly; “I want to go home.”

But he held her more tightly, saying, as he bent his head towards her, “Come home then, dear; come home; — come where you have so long been, both day and night.”

Slowly she seemed to yield, and lay quietly against him, but now crying quietly and sobbing.

“Don’t you care for me, Dorothy?” he asked.

She did not answer.

“Dorothy?”

She put her hands on his breast again for answer, but no longer pushing herself away.

“Did you care—then?”

He felt as it were the lightest nestling of her body towards him.

“Did you?”

“Yes,” the answer came, softly and hesitantly.

“Then I wonder why you spoke as you did?” he asked as his lips touched her hair.

Again there was no answer.

“m?” he said.

“I wanted to be sure,” said she, very slowly, “I wanted to be sure,—not only that you wanted me, but—that I wanted you.”

“And are you sure now?”

There was a pause; then she shook her head,—and said. —“I can’t be sure—that you want me,—but—I am sure that I want you.”

“Dorothy; Dorothy;” he whispered, and held her close; and kissed her hair; — “Oh,” he said, “it is no longer *if* I come back;—Dorothy;—will you marry me *when* I come back?”

She raised her face,—and looking at him with a smile, half elvish, half tearful, again she shook her head; and as she answered, her voice trembled, though the light of her tear-washed eyes was steady and clear; “No; I will not marry you when you come back, Evan;—I—I want you to marry me before you go away.”