

his confused apology with such a sweet voice and pleasant smile, that he had paused to speak with her. And finding her so crudely quaint, so honest, so tenderly innocent, so very different from all the other girls whom he had ever known, he was curious to know more of her. And so he had exerted himself to please her. And she had seemed so delighted with his attention, that someway after that, his idle wanderings always led him to the selfsame spot—her favorite resort—a little clump of gnarled old weeping-willow trees that stood beside the lake.

She was a lonely, motherless child, with great solemn eyes, a sadly sweet face, and, as he soon found, the heart of a poet and an inexpressible yearning for affection. She had so little to make her life pleasant—only a few books, and the pleasant dreams they brought her. Girls did not like her. She was not volatile enough. She loved the still moonlight, the woods at twilight, the sheen of the lake with a shadow in it. They appealed to her. There was an undertone of loneliness, of unspeakable desolation in and under them all that touched her heart with a wild unrest, an unutterable longing, a something akin to pain, and yet a sorrow that she loved.

She was in truth a child of Nature, finding pleasure in seclusion and delight in solitude. And yet she longed for friendship, for the companionship of a kindred nature, for someone to whom she could appeal for sympathy. What wonder then that the tense-strung little girl thrilled beneath his carelessly grave words. For the grace of his companionship burst upon her starved soul like sunshine, and the charm of his personality made life strangely beautiful.

And as for him, he was so thoroughly tired of the gay society girls, who had such stationary pink and white complexions, and were always so sure of themselves and yet so changeable and fickle, that the society of this child of Nature was a pleasant relief, a new found source of happiness which he was not loath to enjoy. For he, too, loved Nature and