

was something to see!" When a Scarlet Admiral fluttered over the nettles in the ditch, Mary was pleased, and tried to catch it; but she could not make out why little Katie called out "Please don't!" and to see Katie watching the flies, and the little burnished beetles crawling on the dock and plantain leaves, and "nasty weeds with *nothing* on them," and a "stupid old dusty donkey," that was standing stock-still—except when it whisked its tail or twitched its ears to get rid of the flies,—with its head down and a clog on, leaning against the gate of the cornfield: watching things like these "as if there was anything worth looking at" in them—to see this angered sturdy little Mary, good-natured though she was.

"Oh, do come along, Katie," she said.—"what fun is there sitting down here, doing nothing?"

Katie could not tell her sister; she could only say she "liked it."

"No, of course you can't tell me," answered Mary, triumphantly. "You're only making pretence, because you think it's fine. I heard Aunt Annie tell Mamma that if she didn't take care, she'd let you grow up into a sentimental silly. She *did*—that's just what she said—I heard her. It made Mamma cry. Mamma said perhaps you'd never—but I wasn't to tell you that. Big girls hear things they mustn't tell little girls. But Aunt Annie said, 'Stuff and nonsense!'—so come along, you little goose!"

Katie wanted to sit down again in a place where the hedgerow trees met overhead. Some sheep that had got out of a meadow through a gap in the fence were lying panting on the chequered roadside turf. Another sheep was standing in the gap motionless, as if it had gone to sleep whilst trying to make up its mind as to whether or not it should play truant too. A clear little roadside runnel made cool music as it ran over its smooth stones and between its trembling grass-tufts. "Don't they look pretty?" cried little Katie, meaning the sheep.

"They've no business out here," answered practical Mary; and she began to drive them back into the meadow, but soon desisted, saying, "It's no use—they'd get out again as soon as we were gone. If I were a farmer, I wouldn't have holes in my hedges." The sleepy sheep, however, had run back out of the gap, and the others had run up the lane, jostling one another in huddled bewilderment, as startled sheep generally do.

"Oh, Mary, you've spoilt it," said Katie, reproachfully. "They did look so comfortable—I was just thinking I should like to be a sheep like that."

"What nonsense you do talk, Katie! I really believe you're growing silly. If you were a sheep, the butcher would kill you, and perhaps you'd be put into those greasy mutton pies. Wouldn't that be nice? Little girls should be seen and not heard. You should think before you speak. You're too fond of talking, Katie."

It wasn't fair of Mary to say so, for she talked twenty times as much as Katie; and if Katie did not exactly think, she dreamt a good deal before she spoke. One reason why she spoke so little was because she did not know how to talk about the things she was always thinking about in her way.

Mary's lecture made Katie's lips twitch and great tears come into her great eyes. "Don't talk about putting me into mutton pies as if you didn't care—I thought you'd be sorrier to get rid of me than that, Mary," sobbed poor little Katie, and she threw her arms round her sister and hugged her hard. Mary was vexed that she should have made Katie cry, and so she gave *her* a hug; but Mary was so utterly puzzled to guess *how* it was that she had made her sister cry that she was as much annoyed at Katie as she was at herself. "Now, do give over, Katie. It isn't nice to be always crying, and for nothing too—it seems so silly."

So on they went, between the tall white windmill, that was taking a holiday, on a mound on one side of the road, and the low, brown, old watermill, that was still at work, but in a very sleepy sort of fashion, on the other side of the road. On the top of the windmill steps sat a miller's man half asleep. In the willow-fringed pond behind the watermill floated a pair of white swans, lazily drifting or paddling to and fro.

"Don't you like the country better than the streets?" asked Katie.

"Oh, it's all very well for a change, but I should soon get precious tired of the country—everything's so quiet."

"That's why it seems nice to me—there's no need to hurry. At home, sometimes, it makes me feel as if I'd walked ever so many miles, and had ever so many more to walk, when I sit at the window and see the people rushing along the streets."

"There, you're talking nonsense again, Katie. You can't feel tired sitting still, because other people are running about. But if you feel tired now, we'll go in here and sit down."

They had come to the churchyard just outside the village, and easily climbed over the low mossy wall. Mary seated herself on one of the graves, but Katie sat down in the grass beside it.