

PRINCESS.

...between,  
...tree  
...green;  
...princess  
...there.  
...surely,  
...hair.

...twilight chill:  
...find me never,  
...will!"

...chirped a blackbird;  
...by this very spot;  
...Princess!

...branches  
...fell slow-  
...Princess!

—Longman's Magazine.

NOW SHE CAUGHT FISH.

"I don't care if Freddy Colby is coming," said Aunt Frances, "I'm going fishing with you. Why shouldn't I, pray? I don't know your paragon of perfection, but I don't wish to know him. If father and mother would persist in promising me to look after when we were nothing but babies, that does not go to show that we have got to keep to the promise. We had no voice in the matter and we were the ones to consult. For my part I don't intend to keep it. Fred Colby is coming to see you and I am going fishing with Tom. I don't know when we'll get back, either."

And Minnie Jones tied on her big red sun bonnet with a little air of bravado as she vanished out of the wide open door of the farm house kitchen, while Aunt Frances looked after her over her spectacles with an air of one who knew something which she did not care to tell. "We will wait and see," she said.

While Minnie, entirely forgetting her aunt's expected guest, went with her cousin Tom out to the river and sat on the bank under big, shadowing trees by the waterfall, the farther side of the wood from Grey's farm, watching red headed Tom patiently waiting the pleasure of the perch snugly hidden in the quiet pool below. Her huge sun bonnet lay on the grass beside her as she leaned forward, her hands clasped round her knees, her dark face raised toward the sunlight that flickered through the leaves overhead.

"They were city people—the Joneses, but Minnie was spending the summer with Aunt Frances Grey, her mother's only sister, who cared for her as though she were her own, but whom Minnie thought unkind for siding with her parents in regard to the son of her father's old friend.

"Tom," said Minnie suddenly, unslipping her hands from around her knees, "I'm tired watching you fish; you catch nothing. Let me try."

"Just as though a girl could catch a fish," retorted Tom, disrespectfully, snapping a black beetle into the water.

"Don't," said Minnie. "You cruel boy! The bug wasn't hurting you."

"No," replied Tom, calmly, leaning his chin in the hollow of his hand, "but it's lots of fun to see him sprawlin' round in the water. Look at his legs fly! You bet they never went so fast on dry land. Hi, there he goes," as a fish came to the surface and the bug went down. "Good for you, finny. Come and try my hook," and he dabbled the bait temptingly over the spot.

"Let me try," said Minnie. "I'll catch him."

"You can't," said Tom, though he slowly handed her the slender pole. "You do know how to catch fish. They make me a fuss over it."

"Do they?" queried his cousin, with an air of superior wisdom. "There," with a little scream, "I've got him—I've got him, Tom. What do you say now to your catching fish?" And she whirled the poor little harmless sunfish up out of the water with enough power to land a fish round-up through the soft air and around under the shadowy, fluttering leaves, just as a gentleman emerged from the thick undergrowth in time to catch the flopping, sloppy fish in his face.

"Tch!" he exclaimed indignantly. "You must have heard me coming. You ought to have been more careful."

"Then of a sudden he broke into such a merry laugh that Minnie had all she could do to refrain from joining him; but after such a blunder she would have done much to keep her frigid dignity, and Tom had no such scruples. He sat on his face, kicking his feet over his back, his chin deep in the hair of his hands, as he burst out with a laugh.

"You live, Min, you did catch him," she scolded Minnie sat helplessly staring at the flopping fish, as she saw Tom kicking his heels.

"I don't know," said the stranger, "but as a twitching fish in the woods, it was a catching when I thought there was a chance of your catching me."

"You might not enjoy it as much as you think if you had to live here," said Minnie, wickedly. "We often find it so."

"Yes, and yet somehow we city people don't give our country cousins half credit for what they are."

at all uncomfortable." "Might be cause for alarm." This unfortunate remark did not help to cool Minnie's anger. She could have lunged poor Tom with a good grace.

"Let me get him off for you." He stooped and grasped the wriggling fish in one hand and struggled with the hook with the other without a blush, though even unpracticed Minnie had a suspicion that so much force was not necessary.

"This part of the world looks to me as though there might be trout. Have you ever tried to catch them? They are the fish to give some fine maneuvering."

"It wouldn't be any use for her to try," broke in Tom; "she makes too big a fuss about it."

Minnie scorned to offer reply to this disparaging remark, but the angry fire in her eyes was not missed by the observing eyes of the stranger.

"I wish I could sketch you just as you are now," he said, impulsively, regretting the words as soon as they were uttered, for Minnie rose hurriedly to her feet, an indignant flush on her face. So, he not only laughed at her, but actually insulted her. Meeting Fred Colby were not as bad as this. Why did she come out here with Tom at all? She might have known something would happen.

"I beg your pardon," he said again, this time quite humbly. "I seem quite unfortunate today."

Minnie made no answer; she merely bowed coldly as she turned away toward home. She had forgotten the fish save as the cause of this unpleasantness, and it had wriggled back into the water.

"Min," this in an aside from Tom, "ain't yer glad Fred Colby didn't see yer?"

This was quite too much. Minnie lost her temper at once.

"Tom," she said, with stern dignity, "I shall tell Aunt Frances of your behavior. It is too much for any one to bear. That I should be insulted by a stranger is bad enough. I'll not have such rudeness from you."

"I wonder," the stranger said, not noticing the reference to insult, "if by your Aunt Frances you mean Mrs. Grey?"

"What possible difference could that make to him?" Minnie wondered; and she made him no reply. But here, as before, Tom's perfect unconcernness came to the front.

"You bet," he said, with more emphasis than elegance, "Mrs. Grey is my mother, an' if yer have got anything to say 'gainst her, let me know. Wot do yer want ter know fer? Min's on her dignity just now, but I tell yer she's as curious as the rest o' us ter know what yer want ter know fer."

The stranger laughed.

"I wonder if I was such a terror when I was a boy?" he said. "But if you're really so anxious to know, I'll tell you. I have come up here to spend the summer, and have letters of introduction to Mrs. Frances Grey. Can you tell me if I will be welcome? And where does she live?"

"At home, of course," said Tom, impolitely. "As ter bein' welcome, I can't say. Yer see we're expectin' a feller on here ter see Min, an' she mightn't like ter have yer 'round. Gals is funny things, yer know."

"And boys are worse," said the stranger, with another laugh.

Here Minnie interposed. "She would not let her own personal feelings stand in the way of politeness."

"If you wish to see Mrs. Grey," she said, "you can come with us now. We are going home, and you will then have no difficulty in finding it."

"Thank you," was the reply. "I will accept your kind invitation."

"It is no invitation at all," Minnie said, not wishing him to think she was relenting. "I merely thought if you were going it would save trouble for you to go with us now."

"Thank you, nevertheless," said the other, understanding her meaning and thinking none the less of her for it. "I think your town is very pretty, and expect to enjoy every moment of my stay here. After the city it is so refreshing. Have you ever been in a large city for any length of time—particularly in the summer, Miss Grey?"

There was a chance for more fun, and Tom, like a regular war horse, smelled the battle from afar. Not a muscle of Minnie's face moved as she made reply.

"I have been to the city sometimes," she said, "but the country suits me well enough."

"Min ain't special particular," said Tom, with a mischievous grin on his sunburned face. And Minnie knew that he would keep up the deceit as long as she wished.

"Well, I don't wonder," said the gentleman; "country life suits me best, too. I sometimes think I will live here myself."

"You might not enjoy it as much as you think if you had to live here," said Minnie, wickedly. "We often find it so."

"Yes, and yet somehow we city people don't give our country cousins half credit for what they are."

"In what particular?" queried Minnie, demurely.

"Why, so many of them are so well educated and really fine people. But then they do have more time and are not so cramped."

"And did you think," asked Minnie, as indignantly as though she had lived all her life in a country town and resented any possible slur upon the life, "that country folks are not as good in every way as city people? For my part I think them much better in every way. There are so many wicked people in the cities."

The other laughed. "We are a wicked set," he said, "but we're not half so bad as you're painted. There are so many crowded into small space, and so many, good and bad together, one scarcely dares to judge any. In the country it is different. You need not associate with such people. You are given a chance to find out what a person is and need not accept them as friends unless you wish. This life is broad and deeper. You don't know how I envy you."

He talked well; Minnie rather liked him in spite of the unpleasantness of their meeting.

When they reached the house Aunt Frances gave the stranger the welcome she accorded every one from her warm, motherly heart. She acknowledged that she liked him; more than that she would not say. She was a wise woman, was Aunt Frances.

"But I'd like to tell yer," said Tom, going with him to the gate, "that Min's got another feller a-comin' ter see her, and marm mightn't like anyone else ter come. D'yer understand?"

And the newcomer smiled to himself, and acknowledged that he understood perfectly.

"Minnie," Aunt Frances was saying, "while you were out I had a letter from Fred, which says that he cannot be with us today, and it depends much upon circumstances whether he comes at all this summer. I am sorry, dear, but I feel quite sure he would not defer the visit purposely. You do not mind, I know, otherwise I would regret it much more than I do."

Minnie laughed gayly. "Well, you needn't mind it at all, auntie. I rather think we all can live through the summer without his lordship."

"I know how you feel, dear," Aunt Frances said, with a fender glance at her niece. "Perhaps if I were a girl I would resent much that my life has shown me is best as it is."

"And you see how impossible it is for me to love this man whom I have never seen, don't you, Auntie?"

"An' o' course Min don't mind," said Tom, thrusting his head in at the door at this inopportune moment. "She made out at first that she didn't like that chap, but I know beans when I sees 'em."

So Mr. Frederick Rogers spent much of his time at the quiet farmhouse and impressed himself favorably with Aunt Frances; and the summer passed and no one else came to disturb the pleasant days.

One day in late September Minnie again stood with Mr. Rogers beside the cool, dark pool at the edge of the wood where she took her first lesson in "fisherman's luck," but Tom was invisible. Minnie was looking particularly chaffing that day. Her face was flushed, her eyes bright as the sparkles on the surface of the water below them.

Mr. Rogers had been painting the scene, and in a few swift strokes he had her there, too; her warm, sweet face, her merry lips and all. Her arms were full of late flowers, and one spray of golden rod swept her face as though to caress her.

"How did you manage to get me in so well?" queried Minnie, with a swift, laughing glance up at him. "And this spray of golden rod is quite perfect."

"I got you in because it was your said Mr. Rogers, with a forced laugh. "I have something to say to you, Minnie. Will you listen?"

"How can I help it?" queried Minnie, but there was a deepened color in her face that spoke well for his success.

After a while Minnie looked up, a shadow of sadness on her face. "I ought to confess a little, Mr. Rogers. Somehow things have come of themselves and given me no chance to right. I'm not a country girl; I'm not Miss Grey; I'm altogether a fraud. I'm not worthy of your love—of your pardon."

"I can best judge of that, Minnie."

"And then the way I treated you that first day—my dreadful rudeness—my hatefulness!"

"It was against me, you know."

"Yes."

"And if I am willing to forgive you?"

"But you couldn't forgive me," she cried; "it was too much for anyone to forgive."

"Not for love," he said, and there was silence for a moment.

Then, from behind the hedge, came a shrill boyish voice quivering with laughter: "Hi, hi, Min, you've got him—see? you caught 'um," and the voice broke off into a peal of anothered laughter, dying away into the distance with the muffled sound of footsteps on the rustling leaves.

While Aunt Frances sat, Aunt

Frances was a wise woman and said little, only wishing her niece all happiness which Minnie understood when, at her wedding, she learned that she had married Frederick Rogers Colby—J. H. Ladium in Springfield Housestead.

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