

THE LOST SILVER OF BRIFFAULT.

BY AMELIA E. BARR.

CHAPTER VI.—RAY'S LEGACY.

It is safe to say that no life is exactly the same after an interval of more than three years. Outsiders may not observe it, but those who pass behind the doors know the difference. Gloria had dropped completely out of the life at Briffault; her name, if not forgotten, was never spoken—not even by madam. At first she looked anxiously for some word from her ungrateful grandchild, and, if it had come, she was inclined to pardon her freely. But Gloria, in the first triumph of her new position, never thought of her past life. Nothing in it, at that time, was necessary to her happiness, and she was not of that noble order of souls who double their pleasures by sharing them. The selfish girl knew well what a delight her letters, full of descriptions of Washington or New York life, would be to madam; but it would have cost her an effort and an hour or two of time to write them.

Madam felt her desertion so keenly that at first she was fain to seek some comfort from Cassia's excuses; but one morning, about six weeks after Gloria's flight, some trifling circumstance led her to her jewel drawers. Then she discovered her loss, and it may be justly said the gems were the poorest part of it. She lifted the little note with trembling fingers, and read its few words very slowly:

"DEAR GRANDMA: I know you will not be angry at my taking what you have so often and so kindly given me. Denis joins his 'farewell' with mine. We shall always remember you.

GLORIA."

It was carelessly written; there was even a tone of patronage about it. Madam felt that the small courtesy had been a bore. Her lips set firmly and her eyes darkened. She had often shed a few tears about her favourite; she thought that she would never do so again. With an angry deliberation she tore the note into small fragments and threw the white strips, one by one, upon the blazing logs. She looked up at Burke Briffault's picture, and an unspeakable sadness was on her face.

"O, the mistakes of life!" she murmured. "O, the bitter mistakes we make! O, if time could run back again!"

Up and down her room she wandered, implacably removing every trifling memento of her treacherous grandchild.

But she was a woman of strong affections, and all her life she had lavished them upon some one object she had made