

Mr. Foster will let her go with him, or will they have to wait?"

This was going too far, Magdalen thought.

"The question has not been discussed yet," she replied distantly; and, awed by her manner, the young lady subsided into silence.

Magdalen went up to her room, when the party was over, in a very miserable frame of mind. As she cast a retrospect over her life of late, it seemed to her that her success at Wellesley had cost her everything she most cared about. She did not know how much her three years at Wellesley had done for her. She was not in a position to realize the all-important difference between her habit of mind and that of Nora's, between her unworldliness and Nora's worldliness.

The twilight deepened, and at last Will could delay the inevitable leaving no longer. Magdalen kept out of the room. Will's going was the most terrible thing that had ever happened to her, and she would rather not say good-bye at all, than have to do it carelessly before them all.

"Where is Magdalen?" asked Will presently.

"She was looking out something in Herodotus for me just now, Will," said Mr. Foster. "Eva, go and call her; tell her that Will is waiting to say good-bye."

Poor Will! It was a bitter thought that she could not leave her Greek of her own accord, even to bid him farewell.

"Magdalen is not in the study, papa," said the child, returning. "Jane says she saw her go down the garden into the shrubbery."

"I will go to her there," said Will hastily.

The place referred to was a small preserve just outside of Mr. Foster's garden, and it was not many minutes before Will found Magdalen. She was lying on the ground in the dusk, her face buried in her hands, and her whole frame shaken by violent sobs. In a moment he was kneeling by her side.

"Magdalen," he exclaimed anxiously, "what is it?"

At the sound of his voice Magdalen rose, and checked her tears. "Nothing, Will," she said, with quivering lips.

"Don't say nothing when you mean something," said Will. "Maggie, tell me what is the matter?"

He was the only person that ever called her Maggie, and now the old pet name, used for the first time this visit, renewed the confidence that had existed between them as children.

"I'm so unhappy," said Magdalen, "so dull, and blue and stupid. I am no good to anyone, and nobody cares for me."

"Now, Maggie," said Will, "you have told at least half a dozen fibs. You are not dull, you are not stupid and you are not blue—at least, if you are blue, blueness is particularly charming; you are good for a great deal, and everybody cares for you."

Magdalen shook her head.

"Don't be unreasonable," remonstrated Will—"what about me? Don't I care for you?"

His voice was full of a tenderness which Magdalen shyly ignored.

"You used to," she said.

It was all over with Will; no power on earth could have held him back from pouring out his confession to her.

"Magdalen," he said, "if I tell you I love you, worship you, think of you night and day, could you answer anything but that you don't care whether I do or not?"

It was out now. Magdalen stood and gazed, as if she could not believe her ears, at the hand that had grasped hers. At last a smile of wonderful happiness stole about her lips.

"Why, Will," she said raising her eyes to his; "it was just you that I minded most of all about; but you don't—you can't really mean—"

Will did not find it very difficult to satisfy her that he could and did mean all and more than he had said. Great was the amazement of the Fosters when presently they re-entered the sitting-room together, and Will announced that he never meant to say good-bye to Magdalen at all.

Mr. Foster's consent given, he changed his plans, invested all his capital in the east after all, and eventually settled down on a large farm near the Fosters, as happy a husband, with as happy a wife, as was to be found in the United States.

Is this possible? Could they live for long together without a difference between them becoming a discord? Yes; for the wise "Professor at the Breakfast-Table" points out to us, "It takes a very true man to be a fitting companion for a woman of genius, but not a very great one."