

His was a strong passionate nature, and with such love is not a garment that can be thrown aside at will. No; it became part of his very being, and inseparably entwined with his life. Yet some thought him cold and hard; but this—if it were true at all, and it was not—was simply the result of his trying to be self-controlled and self-contained. In reality the fault—for some consider it a fault—was that his love was too intense. His affections could not be divided: with him it was one or none.

It is true that during his college course and more so now that he was attaining eminence as an author and preacher, not a few young ladies sought his acquaintance. Some of these were most estimable; some were mere flirts. But his heart was no longer his to bestow. And so for the former he felt sorry; for the latter—well, it is enough to say that for flirts he had no respect whatever. Neither has any man of worth. Why? Because flirts too often make the wives who prove unfaithful to their husbands.

And so during all these years he had been true to Ethel. And her memory had kept him pure, and helped him to struggle along ambition's uphill path.

"Leonard," said Harold again, "I would not ask you such a question only you know that she is my cousin and that I was your friend, and will be now if you will let me."

Then, as the clergyman's dark sad eyes looked earnestly into his companion's came the answer:

"Yes, Harold, I do remember her."

"And have you forgiven the past?"

"I have—many years ago; and thought that Ethel had, perhaps, forgiven me,—and—and—forgotten me."

"Forgotten you," repeated Harold, taking his hand. "No, that I fear can never be. Leonard, it was she who suggested my calling upon you during my visit to Brooklyn, saying as I bade her good-bye: 'Ask him to forgive me, and tell him I am the same as on that happy day when we both confessed our love.' And so I have come to you, Leonard."

Then for a while both were silent again.

"And now," he continued, "may I ask one question more."

"Yes, Harold, for her sake," was the reply.