

calm enough to return to her mother, she was met by querulous complaining, "where have you been so long, I have called and called you, what were you about?" Writing love-letters perhaps, I suppose you will be leaving me altogether next, that's as much as we can expect of our children now-a-days, after all our trouble raising them." This abrupt address shook for one instant Amanda's determination. If her mother had such an opinion of her, why not let it be as she had said; let her brothers look to it, let her have a hired nurse, why should her happiness be wrecked, when one little, written word would change her whole life. But it was only for an instant. "Am I doing this that I may receive praise of men, or for approbation," she asked herself sternly, "or is it from love and duty?" So the letter remained unanswered, but all that week with a heavy heart, she thought constantly of his sickening suspense as he waited in vain for what never would come.

CHAPTER VI.

DAY AFTER DAY.

"Daily striving though unloved and lonely
Every day a rich reward will give
Thou shalt learn by hearty striving only
And truly loving, thou canst truly live."

It will be seen by the events just recorded that poor Mrs. Barr was in a sad state of mind as well as body. Always accustomed to an active life, it came very hard to be so helpless, not to speak of the pain and languor which well-nigh wore out her strength. Not for long years did she find peace, guided thereto by her loving child. Till she found at last that the only way to be at rest was to be able to say "Thy will not mine," it was no pleasant task to be her constant companion. How Amanda kept so cheerful was a wonder to many. She had felt a need of constant employment to keep down sad thought, and for that reason and to have fresh young natures about her which she might mould by kindness and hearts which she might win by love to give love in return, as well as to increase their small income, she opened a school in a spare room of the cottage. She found it did not materially interfere with her care of her mother and her mother even liked at times to have some of the pupils with her for a short time after school hours, and was amused by their lively, childish prattle, or beguiled into pleasant memories of her own childhood. She was glad when she heard that Dr. Atherton had gone; and subsequently from a cousin a resident of Chicago, that he was settled there and doing well. He will suffer less amid new scenes, she thought. Time, the great healer, brought to her as to us all a gradual softening of her sorrow, so that her feeling for her lost lover, was like that we feel toward a dearly loved one whom God has taken. Some twelve years later she heard from her cousin in Chicago of Dr. Atherton's marriage, and she felt "such love as I cherish towards him is no wrong to his wife, I need not change even though he is married." So she found as Dr. J. G. Holland has beautifully expressed it "that the sweetest realm of love is untainted by any breath of passion." "Do you remember Dr. Atherton?" her cousin wrote, "He is now at the top of his profession, was married about a year ago. It was quite a romantic story. He was attending a poor sewing-woman, dying of consumption; she had seen better days, and dreaded leaving her children, a son of five and daughter of twenty, to the tender mercies of strangers. Dr. Atherton proposed to marry the daughter and adopt the son which proposal was gratefully accepted and after seeing it carried out, the mother died happy. I do not think there was love on either side, but pity and tenderness on one side, gratitude on the other and respect on both are no bad foundations for wedded happiness. The doctor is a zealous worker and devoted to his profession."

CHAPTER VII.

MOSTLY CHANGES.

"Let us go forth and resolutely dare,
With sweat of brow to toil life's little day,
And if a tear fall on the task of care
In memory of those spring hours passed away
Brush it not by—
Our hearts to God, to brother-men,
To labor, blessing, prayer, and then
To these a sigh."

EIGHT years more of this quiet uneventful life, and the weary sufferer (after twenty years of illness of which not more than two years had been blessed with anything like ease of body or power to move about the room), was taken to her rest. Her last years had been made beautiful by patient, cheerful submission and forgetfulness of self. Amanda missed her mother sorely after all those years of constant, close companionship though she rejoiced that the tried spirit was free from pain, she felt alone in the world and without any especial interest. But work is the best medicine for grief, loneliness or depression and she soon found there is no lack of work for willing hands. She went to nurse her brother's wife through an illness that ended fatally and remained to keep his house and care for his children, till three years later he married again. Just before this event, she received a letter and parcel from her Chicago correspondent, informing her of Dr. Atherton's death after only a week's illness, inflammation of the lungs. In looking over the contents of a desk in which he had kept his most valuable papers, his wife had found a parcel of letters carefully tied up, and seeing by the head-line from whence they had come, brought them unread to this cousin who was a native of that place as she knew, to ask if the writer was yet living and finding she was, directed them to be returned. Enclosed in them Amanda found a picture of herself taken for him in the long-gone-by days which she compared, with a mournful pleasure, with the reflection in her mirror; and a photograph of Dr. Atherton taken shortly before his death, sent by her cousin, which she compared with the one she had of him as she had known him, seeking to find how well the promise of his youth had been fulfilled in his riper years. Many things in the letters brought back vividly forgotten scenes and incidents, but

"Alas! our memories may retrace
Each circumstance of time and place,
Season and scene come back again
And outward things unchanged remain.
The rest we cannot reinstate
Ourselves we cannot recreate,
Nor set our souls to the same key
Of the remembered harmony."

About this time, our heroine had an offer of marriage. She had had several while her mother lived from some who believed that so good a daughter would make a good wife. But she would not leave her mother, nor had she loved again and would not marry for a home for herself and mother. But now the case was different. A playmate of her childhood had lost his wife a year previous and was left with six children the eldest some twelve years of age. He did not ask for love, only for respect and esteem, pleaded his children's need, and for their sakes and with a full understanding between them she accepted him. Now reader if you choose to criticise I have nothing to say. I do not believe in any motive except love, influencing to marriage. Let him who is without fault cast the first stone; she loved children and wanted some new, absorbing interests to make life worth living, so at the age of forty-three she became Mrs. George Clark.

Her marriage was not an unhappy one, and she speedily won the love of the children, though some kind neighbors, as is usual in such cases, had poisoned the mind of the elder boy against her. Yet she conquered at last and was content with her work and the many opportunities she found for doing good among the poor families about her. So passed twelve years away.

The two eldest boys have left home to do for themselves, one girl is married and the next away teaching, only Baby Mamie now a girl of fourteen with winning, playful ways, which endear her to all, and George aged sixteen, his father's help and hope for the future, remain at home. One evening when she and Mamie were alone she told her, at her earnest request, this story of her life, and Mamie after protesting with sobs and tears that, her dear, good mother had deserved to have so much happiness and her life had been all sorrow, suddenly declared it was worthy to be put in a book and when she got old enough it should be, and now she has kept her promise. Sad as you may deem my story can you think of none more sad?

THE END.