

deep with dust; the green fields and shady lanes, in spite of fences to be climbed by the way, were infinitely preferable, so I put on my widest hat, took my parasol, and having received instructions from Mrs. Godfrey, sallied forth well pleased with the prospect of my walk, every inch of the way being as familiar to me as though I had never gone away from Upland at all. But, to be sure, one does not forget such things in three years. I reached the town about half-past four, and having matched the wools and made a small purchase on my own account, I started for home again by the same way as I had come.

The farmers, through whose fields I was passing, were all known to me of old, and I stopped frequently to speak to them as they respectfully touched their hats to me.

The six o'clock bell clanged out as I entered a shady winding lane which led me to the park gates. Turning a curve I suddenly perceived a man coming toward me; my heart gave a great thump and then beat almost painfully as I recognized the tall, square form of Douglas Rathburn!

He looked up and saw me, and a moment more he was by my side, my hand lying passive in his strong clasp, his blue eyes looking pleadingly, earnestly down upon me.

Recovering my self-possession somewhat, I drew my hand away and confusedly expressed my surprise at seeing him there.

"I am going up to London to-night and merely stopped here on my way through."

"Have you been at the Manor? Have you seen Helen?" I enquired.

"Yes," he murmured, moodily, and I saw the sudden darkening of his eyes at the mention of Helen's name.

"Is she not looking much better in health than she was?" I asked, led on by some curious impulse to speak of her.

"Yes," was again his answer, but he turned his face away from me and whipped off the head of an unoffending shrub with his cane.

"You seem very fond of your cousin," he said, abruptly.

"I am; I love her dearly; though I came here prejudiced against her. She is without exception the most lovable girl I have ever known."

"Good heavens! Why will you talk to me of her?" he exclaimed, roughly; "I wish to God I had never seen her! Enis, I love you; my queen!"

He had seized both my hands, and held them so firmly that I could not withdraw them.

"Dr. Rathburn, you forget yourself," I cried, angrily; "release my hands instantly; you have no right to speak of love to me, in doing so you insult both me and your betrothed wife. Ah!" I cried, my indignation increasing at the thought of my cousin—"how could you wrong poor Helen so? She loves you devotedly, and though you are doubtless marrying her for the sake of her wealth, you might at least be true to her."

As I spoke, his face became crimson and then turned deadly pale; he made a step toward me.

"You wrong me," he said, sternly.

"Wrong you! How? By your own admission you do not love Helen; why then did you ask her to marry you?"

"I repeat, you wrong me; oh, Enis, Enis!" he cried, suddenly, "you at least might know me better than that; I declare to you I do not want her money; I would to heaven all this were your father's again and that Helen had nothing,"

"And yet you do not love her, Dr. Rathburn; how very singular," I answered, sarcastically.

"Listen," he cried fiercely, "and I will tell you; but no—no I cannot," he said, with a despairing sob in his strong, deep voice that melted my heart as nothing else would have done.

"Douglas, I will try to think that you had some more worthy motive than the one which I have imputed to you. Knowing that you did not love her, I could imagine no other motive than a mercenary one on your part; I cannot tell what may be your reason for marrying my cousin, nor do I wish for any explanation; I will trust to your word that you seek her with no unworthy motive; but oh, Douglas, for the sake of our old friendship be kind, be true to Helen; you asked me just now if I was fond of her, and once more I tell you I love her dearly; and so—so Douglas, if you would win back my old affection for you, if you would have me honor you and be proud of you, make my Cousin Helen a happy,

contented woman, be true as steel to her, and—and love her if you can, Douglas."

"Can a man give his heart to two women at the same time?" he cried, passionately; "oh, Enis! do not scorn me, do not be angry, it is the last time I shall speak of my love to you; tell me, dear heart, if things had been different—if I were free—would you have cared for me—loved me?"

"Yes," I answered, softly.

"Heaven bless you for that assurance," he took my hand in his again, and when I looked into his face I saw tears in his eyes.

"Though your love can never be mine, Enis, yet I will try to be worthy of your friendship; the respect and esteem of a good woman are worth striving for."

"Oh, hush!" I cried, with a painful consciousness of how little I deserved his praise. "I am not such a good woman as you think; you don't know how wicked I am sometimes, Douglas."

"You are good enough for me, dear one," he said, gently; and then with a few more words on either side we said goodbye, and I watched till a turn in the lane hid him from my tear-dimmed eyes. Slowly then I continued my way home, battling with the sick despair that swayed my soul like a tempest. "Oh! Douglas, whether you be true or not, God knows; but this I do know, that I love you with all my heart and soul and strength."

Ah, me! for the days that are gone when no shadow of stern duty stood between us; when he was free to love me and I to receive his love!

"Dear as remembered kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feigned
On lips that are for others, deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret.
Oh! death in life, the days that are no more!"

To be Continued.

My Own Girl.

Fifteen shillings—no more, sir—

The wages I weekly touch,

For labor steady and sore, sir,

It isn't a deal too much;

Your money has wings in the city,

And vanishes left and right,

But I hand a crown to Kitty

As sure as Saturday night.

Bless her, my own, my wee,

She's better than gold to me!

She lives in a reeking court, sir,

With roguery, drink and woe;

But Kitty has never a thought, sir,

That isn't as white as snow—

She hasn't a thought or feeling

An angel would blush to meet;

I love to think of her kneeling

And praying for me so sweet.

Bless her, my own, my wee,

She's better than gold to me!

I must be honest and simple,

I must be manly and true,

Or how could I pinch her dimple,

Or gaze in her frank eyes, blue?

I feel not anger, but pity,

When workmates go to the bad;

I say, "They've never a Kitty—

They'd all keep square if they had."

Bless her, my own, my wee,

She's better than gold to me!

One day she will stand at the altar,

Modest, and white, and still,

And forth from her lips will falter

The beautiful, low "I will."

Our home shall be bright and pretty

As ever a poor man's may,

And my soft little dove, my Kitty,

Shall nest in my heart for aye.

Bless her, my own, my wee,

She's better than gold to me!

—Frederick Langbridge.