

last time we were there together—the day he bade me good-bye when he went away to Edinburgh. So now, after long years we had met again—met almost as strangers, and as usual under such circumstances we found nothing to say to one another at first but of the most common-place subjects.

After discoursing for a few minutes on the familiar beauties of Upfield, he inquired for papa and mamma and my numerous brothers and sisters.

"They are all pretty well, thank you, except mamma; city life does not agree with her; she pines for the purer air of the country."

"I am grieved indeed to hear of Mrs. Godfrey's ill health," he answered, "I hope she is not seriously ill?"

"She is almost a confirmed invalid, but I have hopes that ere long she will remove to the country, and then I have no doubt she will be almost her old self again."

"I hope so indeed. Enis, I cannot express to you the sorrow I felt for you all when I heard that you had been compelled to leave your old home. It must have been a terrible wrench for the squire especially; he was so attached to the old place."

"Yes; my father felt it deeply," I answered coldly, somehow, I did not care to discuss our altered fortunes with Douglas.

"How do you like Winchester, Dr. Rathburn? by the bye, I must congratulate you upon having attained to such success in your profession."

"Dr. Rathburn! Enis, why do you speak to me as though I were a mere casual acquaintance? it is very unkind of you. Is our old friendship quite forgotten?"

Before I could reply to this embarrassing question Helen came up to us, a small button-hole bouquet in one hand and a magnificent crimson rose in the other. Holding the former up to Dr. Rathburn, she said gaily: "This is for you, Douglas; it is the very first bouquet I have ever given you, so recollect, sir, you must not throw it away when 'tis withered, but put it away carefully and keep it as a memento of this evening."

"I will do so," said Douglas, gravely, and though she had but spoken in jest, I knew from his tone that he would do as he said.

"Now let me fasten it in your button-hole, if I can reach up so far, that is to say," and with a gay little laugh, she threw down the rose she held and stood on tip-toe while he bent slightly toward her.

It was as pretty a picture as one would wish to see.

He so tall and strong, bending his grave, kindly face toward the laughing one of the delicate girl whose soft fingers showed so white and fragile against the blackness of his coat as she pinned the bouquet of flowers in his button-hole. The surroundings too were so perfectly in keeping with the scene. The golden rays of the setting sun lingered lovingly on the time-browned face of the old manor, and played coyly at hide and seek among the ancient trees in the park, while one golden shaft of light fell lovingly across the brow of my little cousin, encircling her fair head like a halo of glory. At that moment I thought she looked angelic, for the light of love was shining in her blue eyes and the perfect lips were parted in a supremely happy smile.

Ah! my little Helen I will not grudge you this love which makes you so happy. You are at best but a fragile hot-house plant and would droop and die, bereft of the warmth and support it affords you; while I am a strong young sapling, able to stand erect without support or artificial warmth.

"This rose is for you, Enis; isn't it a beauty? and, oh! it looks so lovely in your dark hair, dear. Does it not?" turning to Douglas while she held the crimson rose against the braid of my hair.

I looked up at him, waiting with assumed indifference for his reply, and caught his gaze fixed upon my face with an expression in his eyes that startled and fluttered me with a curious mixture of displeasure and secret joy.

"Very beautiful," he said simply, in answer to Helen, and then when she had fastened the rose in my hair, we all three walked slowly back to the house and—to dinner—most prosaic ending to a romantic half-hour.

To my intense relief I learned that Douglas' visit would not extend over a week, and during that time I resolved to avoid him as much as possible; above all to avoid being left tete-a-tete with him, for—in all humility let me say it—I

had seen in the expression of his eyes, as they rested upon me that night, that it needed but an effort on my part to awaken that old love which was not dead, as I had fancied, but slumbered still in his heart; but thank heaven! I was loyal enough to Helen to put temptation away from me. As day followed day and I saw, with eyes rendered keen by love, how very small a share of Douglas' heart Helen possessed, I blamed him more and more bitterly for his mercenary motives in asking her to marry him.

It was a long, dreary week to me, that of Douglas' visit to the Manor. Relieved, for the greater part of the day from my attendance upon Helen, I spent my leisure in my own apartment and there brooded over the troubles of my position as well as over the state of affairs at home, for things did not seem to be going on altogether favorably there, and mamma wrote, expressing her desire that I should return in the autumn.

I rarely saw Douglas save at meal-time, and in the evenings when we all gathered together in the library or on the lawn.

And during those evenings I learned to see more and more clearly that Douglas did not love Helen Godfrey, save as a brother might love a dear sister. I half fancied too that a shadow had crept into my darling's sunny eyes, that the sweet mouth smiled more pathetically than usual. Had she already found a flaw in her idol?—as I had done—poor child! But she was one of these fragile, gentle women whose hearts are strong as oak, faithful, tender, forgiving; in whom a man will always—in the sunshine of prosperity or in the darkest hour of his bitter need—find comfort, rest and peace.

I pitied her, and out of my pity arose anger toward Douglas Rathburn, and so I infused more and more coldness and stiffness into my manner, whenever I had occasion to address him or when he came, as he always did, and leaned over the piano or stood beside me and turned my music when I played or sang, until at length when he saw, it really annoyed me he ceased to do so, holding moodily aloof, apparently disinclined for conversation either with his betrothed or his prospective mother-in-law.

And then, though I was glad for Helen's sake, I felt a swift pang of regret. For oh! I loved him still, and it was pleasant above all things to feel him near me. When at the end of the week he went back to Winchester, we three, Mrs. Godfrey, Helen and myself, fell into the old routine of life at the Manor, not a pleasant life for me by any means, for the breach between my aunt and me widened daily, and her dislike manifested itself in numerous gratuitous insults which galled me to have to endure in silence. But I simply bided my time, strong in the belief of ultimate success.

And Helen; my poor little Helen! This feud between her mother and me troubled her gentle heart greatly, and I often in her presence, for her sake, bore good-naturedly the petty snubs which were Mrs. Godfrey's daily offering to me.

One thing astonished me much. Why my aunt should permit me to stay on at the Manor, disliking me as she did; and I came to the conclusion that it was because Helen desired it.

Oh, Helen, little one! your gentle goodness, your pure, patient life have not been quite in vain, for surely I am a better woman for having loved you and been loved by you.

One day, toward the end of August, I suddenly made up my mind to resume my search for the will that night. Mrs. Godfrey had never by word or sign signified that she suspected anything, and I began to think that it must have been Mrs. Griswold, the old house-keeper, who had so nearly come upon me in the library that night—or rather morning, so that my fears on that point were almost entirely laid to rest. As on the previous occasion, I felt restless all day in anticipation of what the night would bring me; and I rejoiced, therefore, when Mrs. Godfrey requested me to walk to Upton in the afternoon to match some wool for her. It was a good three miles to the village, but I did not think anything of that, being a good walker; and besides I had walked from the Manor to Upton more times than I could count when I lived at Upfield in the old days. There were two ways to the town, I could either go by the highway or through the fields. I chose the latter as being the more pleasant, for it was an intensely warm day and the road was sure to be ankle-