

after went to join her lover in that land where they neither suffer nor die any more nor marry nor are given in marriage.

Sally Ambrose's Basket.

(Harold Farrington, in 'The Wellspring'.)

Amanda Ferguson, who lived in the old colonial brick mansion with the massive white pillars in front, had ways of her own. Some people called her notional; others spoke of her as eccentric, and when she established the free scholarship at Kendall College, in memory of her father, Judge Amos Ferguson, there was aroused more than a passing degree of curiosity as to the method she had decided on for its disposal.

Of course it was to go to a girl—that was a foregone conclusion, for if anyone more than another believed in the higher education of woman, that one was Amanda Ferguson. Yet the exact interpretation she put upon 'higher education' was a matter little known outside her own household.

'Who ever gets it will work for it; the Fergusons were never known to give things away outright—'tisn't in them,' prophesied old Mrs. Thurston, who lived within a stone's throw of the stately brick mansion, and had known the Ferguson family going on three generations. 'And, too, whoever gets the scholarship will deserve it—'twon't be given hit-or-miss or because of favoritism.'

'No; I presume not,' commented one of the neighbors, leaning over the low garden fence. 'Amanda Ferguson's got judgment if she is odd. 'Twill do good, that scholarship—but I'd kind of like to know how she'll award it.'

'I have my suspicions that'—Mrs. Thurston suddenly checked herself. 'Now hear me—when I know absolutely nothing more about it than an utter stranger—not in the least!'

'I heard 'twas to go to a Brocton girl; don't remember who told me.'

'Yes,' resumed Mrs. Thurston, 'she believes in helping her own townspeople the first. And one of this year's high-school graduates will get it—it's to become available in the fall.'

On Tuesday afternoon, the second week in July, each girl who had been a member of the recent graduating class at Brocton received a concisely written note in Miss Ferguson's prim delicate hand.

'If you care to become a candidate for the free scholarship at Kendall College, covering all expenses for the full four years' course, beginning with the opening of the next college year, present yourselves with something you have made—without any help from others—at my home, Thursday, at 2.30 o'clock.'

Perhaps nothing had ever caused more excitement and eager comment among all the young people of the said New England village, than these peculiarly worded notes from Amanda Ferguson.

'What she wants us to bring something for I can't see,' and Helen Hartzell assumed her 'solution pucker.' 'Can you?' turning to the three mystified girls, who had run in that afternoon to talk over their 'scholarship summons,' as Ethel Mason aptly characterised it.

'Not unless'—Estelle Robinson looked puzzled.

'Unless what?' expectantly pressed Helen.

'Oh, I don't know; but she has some purpose in it!'

'Undoubtedly,' and Helen slowly re-read her 'summons,' whose contents she had already learned by heart. 'Perhaps it's just to get better acquainted with her and to talk matters over.'

'But the things—those we've made!' suggested Sally Ambrose from the 'quiet corner,' for there was where the homelike little body was usually found.

'It may be she wants to see if we can do anything,' and Helen looked meaningfully at the fancy articles that here and there adorned the Hartzell sitting room. 'But I don't know; I guess we'll have to wait and see. I wish she hadn't put it off till Thursday—it's such a long time to be held in suspense. I shall take some pieces of my Mexican drawn work.'

'I have a beautiful centrepiece—embroidered with American Beauty roses; that will please her. It took me weeks to do it,' and Estelle changed her seat to the sofa.

'I wonder how she'd be impressed with burnt leather; there's the necktie case I made for father,' thought Ethel. 'I never could do embroidery—I haven't the patience!'

'Sally, your offering now on the scholarship altar,' and Helen raised the curtain a trifle to admit more light.

'Mine? Nothing—you know, girls, I've no talent! I can study, but that's nothing to my credit—I was born so. I'm afraid I shall have to give up the idea of college and the scholarship. But I would so like—you all can go anyway!'

'But there's something you can take—that you've made! And this doesn't settle the scholarship, little pessimist; it's only a peace offering,' encouraged Estelle.

'It has more to do with it than you may think—or she wouldn't have made such a request. And I've nothing to take; it would be foolish for me to go there with a gingham apron. That's about all I've had time to make out of school hours—such things as we've absolutely had to have!'

It was true Sally Ambrose had no great knack for fancy work; nor since her father's death, leaving the family dependant upon the exertions of his wife and oldest daughter, had she time for such occupation. 'Twas a wonder to the neighborhood how Sally had managed to keep along with the high-school work, to say nothing of the fact of her leading her class.

She was naturally quick; pluck and determination, with no thought of giving up, did the rest. But a college course away from home, the added expense of board and travel, and the numerous incidentals, seemed to her practical nature—well, 'twas in the indefinite future.

'If I could only get the scholarship! But then, there are other girls, no doubt, who would make better use of it,' unselfishly.

'Tut, tut! I never hear unchallenged any disparaging remarks concerning my daughter,' cautioned Mrs. Ambrose, very playfully; yet with that half-concealed wistful tone in her voice. She, too, had hoped—but then, no one could tell what Amanda Ferguson would do!

'I don't think I'll go, mother!' It was

after the council at Helen Hartzell's had broken up. 'I've never done anything but patch and hem—just plain sewing. The other girls have beautiful things to take. I'm afraid, mother, the scholarship's out of my reach.'

Mrs. Ambrose sat thinking.

'Don't you?' after a moment's silence.

'She didn't say 'twould have to be fancy work, dear; the only restriction was that it must be made without any help from others. Can't you think of anything that somebody I know can make better than anyone else in the world?'

'You don't mean me!'

'Whom else could I mean!' fondly.

'Why—I—'

'You remember what Aunt Sarah said when she took dinner here on her way to California?'

'You don't suppose Miss Ferguson would—'

'It's a hint, dear,' interrupted Mrs. Ambrose, with her fond mother look.

'I never thought I could do that—that she might intend one to bring things of that sort!'

'I'm sure Miss Ferguson—while she may not have thought of it—would wish my daughter to take what she can do best; I've no doubt of it!'

On Thursday afternoon, eleven girls were ushered, one after another, into the richly furnished east parlor of the old Ferguson mansion. It was a beautiful day, with now and then a roguish breeze stealing softly through the open windows.

'This your handiwork?' and their hostess took the carefully done up package, as each girl was received, and carried it to a table in the room beyond.

'I wonder where—if Sally isn't coming?' inquired Helen, anxiously, after nearly all the girls had arrived. 'She said she'd changed her mind; I hope she hasn't re-changed it!'

'As you may have surmised from the notes you received,' said Miss Ferguson, smiling pleasantly, 'I have decided to make the award of the Ferguson scholarship on a competitive basis. By consulting the school records I have learned that you all are able to enter college in the fall without condition—a splendid record.'

Every girl was listening intently.

'While this is greatly to one's credit, I regard other things in a girl's education equally important; it is the combination of the practical with the mental that I consider the best preparation for the duties that await every young woman. Consequently I have asked each one of you to bring me something you have done—absolutely your own work—that I may judge something of the practical side of my girls—for may I not call you so?'

Miss Ferguson stooped to pick up her handkerchief that had dropped to the floor.

'I will keep the articles you have brought for a few days, and then return them with a note to the one whose work best stands the test of my examination, awarding her the free scholarship at Kendall College. I have some light refreshments in the dining room, if you will be pleased to come out.'

'I thought 'twould be that—something of the sort,' whispered Ethel.

'So did I!'

'And I!'

'I surmised it from the first!'