

senses, you will not weary of hearing how those elysian fields have looked to others and why they too had to wander forth to life's hard realities of suffering and sorrow. To my thinking one who had a true, unselfish love for another is thereby rendered, reverently be it spoken, like to Him who is love. To those who have loved and lost by perfidy or stress of circumstances through no fault of their own let me, in passing, offer one word of comfort. Nothing comes by chance, there is a purpose, a plan under it all, being wrought out in beauty and harmony by and through each life, and the "darker life's tangled thread the higher the grand design."

Yes, I may as well own it—Dr. Atherton and Miss Barr were in love with each other, as the saying goes. What was there strange about it? Given two agreeable young persons with common interests thrown often into company together, and what could be expected? Would it not have been a stranger thing if there had been no love-story to tell?

One lovely August evening when the heat of the day began to be tempered by the approach of evening, Amanda had started for a walk to the top of a hill in the vicinity, from which there was a fine view of the sunset. Ardently loving the beauties of nature she gazed long upon the scene spread out before her, nor turned her steps homeward till the mellow light had paled and the gorgeous purple, gold and crimson of the clouds had faded away. Then the fast-gathering darkness reminded her how far she had wandered, and she started at a quick pace for home. Turning a corner into the high-road she met Dr. Atherton who, returning from a visit to a patient, was sauntering slowly homeward, enjoying the refreshing coolness. With a very evident look of pleasure at the encounter, he turned and walked by her side. Their conversation was probably more interesting to themselves than to outsiders, so we will play eavesdroppers to the latter part only.

"And you have only three weeks more of school, I believe. How you will be missed! Do you think of teaching the winter term?" he inquired.

"I think so. I like the place and the people."

"Do you like them well enough to wish to hear of them when you are absent?"

"Most assuredly," was the emphatic answer.

"May I then have the pleasure of being the scribe to convey information?"

"If you would like the position," she replied, demurely.

"And you—may I hope to hear from you also?"

"I will answer any letters you send me," but they had reached the gate, and were conscious of being observed from the piazza, so he answered only by a silent pressure of the hand she had extended. That was all, but it spoke his thanks more eloquently than words could have done, and as she passed the group on the verandah on her way into the house she was thankful that the dusk hid the tell-tale blush it had brought to her cheeks, and she passed directly to her own room that she might be alone to try to still the fluttering of her heart, and failing that to recall every word and tone of the previous conversation.

CHAPTER II.

AT HOME.

MISS Barr's father had died some years previously. Her two brothers were married and living in the neighborhood. Sister, she had none, and her home was with her mother in a small, neat cottage not far from the white church on the hill in the town of Westleigh. She was only at home for vacations, and there was consequently no lack of employment at such times. Sewing, repairing, remodelling, making, knitting, and such like duties claimed consideration, while it was a pleasure as well as a duty to relieve her mother of a share of the housework, and she took a pride in acquiring a skill in baking, preserving, etc., etc. (N. B.—These convenient abbreviations are meant to comprise sweeping, dusting, scrubbing and all the multifarious duties of a housekeeper). Then, too, there were visits to old friends to be made, visitors to receive, the fruits and vegetables to be housed and to fill up spare moments, ferns and autumn leaves to gather, press and dry, and finally arrange into bouquets, wreaths, festoons and what-not, a thousand and one fanciful designs

understood only by those with a true artistic spirit and a desire to make home beautiful.

One lovely day in October she sat by the window sewing when she started suddenly and exclaimed with genuine surprise and pleasure, "Why, mamma, if there isn't Dr. Atherton from Bradford, he is coming in, too!" and rising, went to open the door for him."

"He was returning from a neighboring town" where he had business and thought he would call in passing, he explained.

"Oh, why are pleasant hours so short,

And why are gloomy ones so long;

They fly like swallows when we sport,

They stand like mules when all goes wrong."

Need I say both our friends proved the poet's song that afternoon. There were so many questions to ask, so much to tell and discuss that the time went all too soon. Yet, when the Doctor sat watching that graceful form flit about the room preparing the evening meal, is it any wonder if he thought it almost best of all and had bright visions of a possible home, with just such a wife making tea ready. But all earthly things have an end, and this was no exception. Amanda walked out with him to the gate at parting, and he said with a quizzical smile, "Do you know, the folks in Bradford say I have mistaken my calling, I should have studied for the bar?" "Why—," she began, with a puzzled look, but in a moment his meaning flashed upon her, and laughing lightly to hide her confusion, she answered carefully,

"There are some strange people in Bradford. Mrs. Randall, for instance, who has a passion for genealogy, and wonders now if you are related to those Barrs in Melville, my mother's brother's son married a Barr, perhaps you are of the same family, and Mr. Baker who 'calculated that so much book larnin' is all nonsense, now look at me, never went to school six months in my life, and I am what you call forehanded, now ain't I? and there's cousin Jim with his college education can barely make a living."

"The Doctor laughed heartily, "I never knew you were such a mimic; I almost thought Mrs. Randall had come, and Mr. Baker's nasal twang was perfect. But I can tell you of some strange Bradford people, too. There is Mrs. Morrison who thinks you do not know how to teach grammar, for you can't speak it, and Mary Wheeler says Mrs. Morrison is a judge for she would not know a grammar from a history if she picked one up in the road."

Amanda had a hearty laugh, and said lightly, "and you did not know I was a mimic, eh! Ah, Sir Knight, you have only had acquaintance with Miss Barr, this is Amanda, so far from a school-room."

"There is a great deal in a name," he replied, "seriously, Amanda, if I may call you so, do you know the meaning of your name?"

"No; nothing dreadful, I hope; you look so grave."

"Quite the contrary. It is from a Latin participle of the verb *amare*, to love, and signifies deserving or requiring to be loved. Is it appropriate?" he asked, mischievously. But the brown eyes were fixed resolutely on the distant hills, conscious that they were not to be trusted not to betray secrets, and the answer was only from the lips and very low, "The latter part is; I do not know about the first."

"I will answer for the first," he whispered; then taking her unresisting hand, continued, "if, as you say, the latter part is true, would my love satisfy that requirement, for never was woman loved more truly than I love you? May I continue to love you, will you try to love me?"

But the eyes were not to be kept hidden longer, and the glance they gave him was answer enough even without the words.

"I do not need to try, I could not help loving you if I tried."

"The favored reader who has been an actor in a similar part in life's drama needs no further description, and those who have not would only criticize, so we will conceal from them all but the last words of the interview.

"May I go back now, and we will ask your mother's consent together?"

"No, James, it is better not; a long time must elapse before our union, and why should mother have the prospect of