

A TALE OF TWO LIVES.

I.

The summer sun was shining and blessing all the land with its kindly warmth. The country was fair to look upon; green were the fields and laden the trees with blossoms. Surely work of hand ne'er looked so wondrous fair as the tiny village of Arden in that early summer time.

A few houses clustered on the hill-side showed the taste and refinement of the owners; trees and flowers in rich profusion testified that nature was beloved. In a hollow below these dwellings stretched out a clear calm lake when all the beautiful village was mirrored in the sunlight. Such was the prospect which greeted Ralph Arden, as he entered the home of his boyhood. The Arden homestead occupied the most sightly spot in the little village to which it gave its name.

Young Arden looked forward to this home-coming with feverish delight, for three years had passed since last he went away,—away to seek success in his chosen profession. He had the advantages of a superior education, so he carried a mind well equipped to the chair of English in a college hundreds of miles from his home. He threw his whole soul into his work, and was making for himself an enviable reputation as a teacher and scholar, when his constitution, never very strong, broke under the strain. Perfect rest and quiet were ordered, so he turned toward his old home. Thirty years had passed lightly o'er his head, and he seemed to the home friends still a boy; and as such they greeted him.

Restful days were those first ones at home to the tried teacher; he wandered out among the trees or sailed on the lovely lake, all the time drinking deep draughts of the pure, life-giving air around him. Slowly strength returned and with it a desire to work, but this he was not allowed to do until he had been resting about three months. Then it was that he accepted an invitation to lecture before the students of the University in a neighboring town.

Now, in that college was the only girl who had ever caused Ralph Arden's heart to flutter more than was its wont. For two years he had known her, and they had been corresponding in a friendly fashion, but now he felt a great desire to have that friendship changed into a stronger feeling.

The lecture won the hearty applause of all the students, and at its close, one of the first to speak kind words of praise to the young professor was his lady friend in the college. He thanked her for her friendly words, and gazed into her eyes as if he would see a secret hidden there. Never before had he so felt the charm