

ERAS IN WOMAN'S LOVE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF ZCHOEKE.

My father formed at the University an intimate friendship with a young and very gifted man named Waldern. When they left the high school, the night before their separation, with tearful eyes they pledged each other over a glass of punch, and swore to remain true to each other even to their last moments; and whatever might be their future lot, if it were in any manner possible, they agreed to see each other every year. There have been many friendships sworn, and faith often pledged over a glass of punch or wine, but people return to a more quiet state of mind,—they look back upon youthful enthusiasm, and smile at it,—they forget themselves. The times change, and men change with them.

Yet it was different with my father and young Waldern. They kept their word and faith. They grew sober, but their hearts beat warmly, even in ripe years. Their paths in life were very distant, but their souls always turned toward each other, notwithstanding the distance which separated them. They married, but never forgot their brotherlike tenderness. Once every year they visited each other, notwithstanding they were separated by a three days' journey. And even when they each had the engagements of an office, and a family of children, they devoted two or three weeks to their annual visit.

For several years, at first, the visits took place alternately at their different homes. Afterwards, it was usually my father who made the journey and was entertained by his friends. I do not know how this happened; but Waldern was rich by marriage and inheritance, dwelt in the city, and held an office at court, which gave him a great deal of occupation; these reasons might have kept him at home. My father held the office of head forester in a village; his house had no superfluous room for guests accustomed to luxury; perhaps it was more pleasant to him to see, once a year, the varied bustle of the city, than for the courtier to, inspect the woodcutting in a forest, or the table in a village; for some reason, however, it came at last to be the custom for my father, every summer, to take a journey and visit his friend.

I might have been a boy of ten years old, when my mother dressed me in new clothes from head to foot, and my father said:

"Gustavus, you shall go with me to the city, this time. My brother Waldern has long desired to see you."

Who was so gay as I! The mamma travelled with us this time. For a quarter of a year we looked forward to the journey. I was the only child remaining to my parents; they enjoyed my childish anticipation of the wonders of the city.

In fact, there was enough for me to see and hear in the city. It seemed to me like life in a fairy tale, every day something new. Waldern was an exceedingly agreeable man, but he had an only daughter, just as old as I was, named Augustina, who seemed to me much more agreeable even than he was. She jumped and danced incessantly before me, and her first question was: "Gustavus, have you seen my new doll?" Then she seized me by the arm, and I was obliged to admire the doll, whose splendid dresses, of which she had at least a dozen, were changed every day. I was also called to express my delight at the sight of the doll's furniture, her tables and chairs. The second day, however, Augustina let the doll repose, and rambled with me about the grounds. She taught me to dance, and I taught her to play soldier in the garden, with flower stalks for guns. We were never separated, and from morning till evening in an incessant frolic and play.

"Listen, old friend," said Waldern, one evening at supper, to my father: "we have charming children."

At these words I looked at Augustina, for I had not yet thought whether she were pretty or not. And to be sure her dark locks, confined only by a simple rose-colored band,—the delicate oval of her fine face,—the black, animated, roguish, good humored eyes,—her red, plump lips,—the graceful motions of her whole body,—all appeared to me to be really pretty.

"Papa," cried Augustina, with a face wonderfully between sour and sweet, "if I only had such pretty hair and eyes as Gustavus, you would certainly think I should do very well."

"Old friend," continued Waldern, without suf-