One Way of Love

SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Richard Derring, returning from a winter in the woods to his mother's farm home, is overtaken by his uncle, accompanied by his eccentric wife, coming to pay a visit at the farm.

CHAPTER II.—Aunt Jerusha's questions about Emily Hutton, supposed to be Richard's sweetheart, bring out the fact that she is to marry a merchant, Edwards.

CHAPTER III.—Derring's disappointment stimulates his ambition and under the advice of Seth Kinney, a hermit of the woods, he resolves to fit himself for college. Kinney promises to teach him Greek.

CHAPTER IV.—Derring tells his mother his resolve, and in his grandfather's old laboratory begins the study of Greek.

CHAPTER V.—Seth Kinney hears Richard's Greek recitation in the woods while he and Tom Bishop ply the cross-cut saw.

CHAPTER VI.—Derring learns that he can look indifferently upon the loss of Emily. He visits Aunt Jerusha, who volunteers to help him through college, making him a gift of $100.

CHAPTER VII.

"Who's the farmer?" whispered the boy on the back seat to his neighbor.

It was the examination in Greek. Richard's ears reddened to the tips. He sat two seats away. But the ears accustomed to note the falling of a leaf were keen, and the whisper was loud. He would have it out with the fellow at noon. Now he merely shrugged his shoulders a little and devoted himself anew to his verb. He had chosen it first to conjugate, as being the easiest thing on the paper. But it was unexpectedly difficult. He was confused. Emily's saucy eyes were coming between him and the page, snatching away its meaning. "I have loved—you have loved," his pen scratched desperately on. How pretty she had looked that morning. And he had thought he was over it! He shook himself. "I shall love—" He glanced despairingly at the clock. The time was nearly up. It must be the coming away from home that had upset him. She was not worth a thought. He gathered himself for a fresh start and wrote rapidly.

"Farmer's getting rattled," whispered the boy on the back seat.

Richard made another mental note and plunged on.

"Time." It was the voice of the assistant.

Richard dropped his pen and gathered up his scattered notes, running his eyes hastily over them. They were enough to flunk him. He could see that at a glance. He handed them in with sullen face.

"In half an hour the oral examination will be held in this room," announced the assistant in a stereotyped voice.

The boys plunged into the open. Richard sought out the boy of the back seat and salved his wounded feelings by hand-to-hand measures. The fellow got up, puffing and grinning a little sheepishly.

"You've got muscle," he said enviously.

Two upper-classmen, passing, had stopped for a moment to watch the contest. "He'll have a try for the team," said one.

They strolled on.

"It's the shoulders that count."

"Partly—and muscle."

"And grit. Did you see his face? Looked as if he was chewing iron."

Richard and the boy shook hands and went back to the classroom. The professor was on the platform. He had mild brown hair and a large nose, surmounted by spectacles. He glared through them at the hapless youth. He had a sensitive ear for Greek accents and the entrance examinations wore on it. The assistant had been showing him the written work. It was very poor. His face was prepared for the worst. The oral examination would consist of reading in the original Greek.

The boys subsided beneath his glare and there was ominous silence.

"Next," growled the professor. He surveyed Richard—his heavy shoulders and big hands—and groaned inwardly. He resigned himself to his fate.

Richard struggled to his feet. His face was red and his throat dry. The words came with rasping hoarseness. Then the swing of the rhythm caught him. His voice opened and deepened and he was off on the lines. The silence of the woods was about him, and the sound of the cross-cut saw rose upon it. He swayed to its tune, the words rolling out—rising and falling to a kind of heavy chant. The professor on the platform started a little. He pushed his spectacles high on his forehead and rubbed his great nose. The wrinkles smoothed from his brow and the peace of days settled upon his face. The boy on the back seat nudged his neighbor. "Farmer's getting there," he whispered.

"H-s-h!" growled the professor.

Richard came to a stop, looking up blinkingly. He had forgotten the class and the professor. He and Tom had been swaying back and forth to the sound of the cross-cut saw, chanting the deep, monotonous sounds.

The professor beamed on him. A faint, half-scared cheer went up from the class. The spectacles descended and glared at them. "Time to cheer when you are out of the woods," he said. "Next."

The next youth rose and blundered on. The hour wore away and the class escaped, but bruised and sore.

The professor detained Richard by a gesture. "Where did you fit?" he asked brusquely.

"At home."

"Where?"

"In Ashton."

"Massachusetts?"

"Yes."

"There's no school there."

"No, sir; I studied by myself and with an old man."

"Umph!" The spectacles regarded him.

"And did he read Greek the way you do?"

The boy's face reddened. "Not exactly. We did it that way, sawing logs—I got into the swing of it and forgot."

The professor leaned forward, tapping the Odyssey with his spectacles. "You recited Greek in the woods?"

"Yes, sir."

The professor's face grew light. He chuckled. "And we think we can teach them indoors!"

"Is it all right, sir?"

"All right?" growled the professor.

Professor on the Platform Started a Little.

"It's the way they did it in Greece—3,000 years ago. Go home and thank your lucky stars you had something besides boards over your head while you learned it."

CHAPTER VIII.

A crowd of boys were waiting about the door. The boy of the back seat linked his arm in Richard's. "What'd old Four-Eyes want?" he demanded.

"Got a leather medal anywhere?"

"What'd he say, anyhow?"

The fact that Richard was their senior by several years did not seem to impress them. They gathered about him, chaffing and questioning. They disregarded his stern look as he tried to shoulder his way through the crowd.

"Oh, hold on."

"Tell us what he said."

In the end Richard complied, half resentfully.

"Liked it, did he? My eye!"

They danced about him.

"For he liked it, don't you know, don't you know?" they chanted. "For he liked it, don't you know—o-oh!"

"Then Aurora, rosy-fingered daughter of the morn," wailed in the Greek a small, chubby lad with pink cheeks.

It was the seesaw chant of the woods.

The group took it up with a shout of joy. They sent the burlesque jigging across the campus.

Heads were thrust out above. "Hey, you freshies! Haw-haw-haw! Keep quiet, down there!"

A shout of defiance went up from the group. They were drunk with too much Greek and with release from oppression.

A deep voice underran the chant and snatched it from them and made it beautiful, hurling it out with force. The group looked at him a moment doubtingly. Then they gave way and followed his lead. The burlesque had become a march of triumph. Breathless they landed him at his own door.

"Say, you fellows, what do you bet old Four-Eyes don't let us all off easy on account of the farmer?"

"Three cheers for farmer!"

"Hip—hip!"

"Three cheers for Four-Eyes!"

Heads were thrust out again above. "Yah—yah—yah! Dry up, down there. Yah—yah!"

The group broke up and d..... ..... with a final yell. Windows descended with a slam, and quiet reigned.

The Greek professor, crossing the campus five minutes later, heard only the twittering of English sparrows and the quiet rustle of the leaves. Underneath the quiet, for the professor's ears, ran sonorous epic lines, chanted to a deep measure. The professor held his head high and stepped to a mighty tune.

The whole class was entered without condition in Greek—a thing unprecedented. The faculty gasped when they heard the news. The students grinned. News of the Greek prodigy got about college. Poor Richard found his path a thorny one. He could not appear on the campus but a chant in Greek would spring up of itself in the distance—swelling or dying away to an echo, according to the number of students on hand, and ending always with the mocking refrain: "For he liked it, don't you know—o-oh!"

The situation gave him enough to think about. He forgot to remember Emily, or even to remember that he had expected to remember her and be miserable. She rested in the background of memory, a faint blur, brushed out of existence by a grinning yell of derision.

He learned to set his teeth and grin back; and in the end he found his unwelcome distinction an advantage. It might not be comfortable to be recognized and pointed out in every new class he attended as the learned woodchopper; but at least he was recognized. No professor forgot his name or fumbled up and down the class-list trying to place him. And the fact that he was older than the majority of the class, added to the uncanny Greek distinction, gave him an assured place.

When it was known that he was working his way through college numberless opportunities sprang up. The faculty gave him tutoring and secretary work to do. The student body put him on the football team. Emily's image grew so faint that Cupid must have wrung his infant hands in despair.

The four years went by with undignified haste. Richard was conscious of leaving undone half that he meant to do. He groaned in spirit over vast tracts of literature—of which he knew not even the name—that he could get no time to explore. Nevertheless, he found himself, at the end of the course, taking honors in English. He gasped a little. Then he hunted up the professor of English and laid before him his secret desire.

"Want to be a journalist?" said the professor with a smile. "I thought it was Greek."

Richard made a hasty gesture—"Never!"

The professor laughed out. He was a trim, slight man. "Had enough in college?"

Richard nodded.

The professor drummed with his fingers on the table for a moment. "Had you thought of trying for a college position—English assistant, or something?" He watched Richard's face.

It flushed a little. "I want something that will take me into life. I've never known anything but the woods—and this."

The professor winced a little. "Well, journalism will take you into life, all right." He remained thoughtful a moment. "Have you ever done anything at it?"

"I've done the college news for two papers and sent specials now and then. But that stands for nothing permanent."

"It will do more for you than I can," said the professor. He had drawn a sheet of paper towards him. "How would you like Chicago?"

"All right."

"You might as well have plenty of life while you're about it. I hear they hustle things out there. You won't think you're in the woods—or in college." He had taken up his pen. "I have a friend on one of the dailies. I'll drop him a line."

"Thank you, sir." Richard stood up to go.

The professor held out his hand. "That's all right. Bring around some of the letters you've done on the col-

Heads Were Thrust Out Again Above. "Yah—Yah—Yah! Dry Up, Down There, Yah—Yah!"

lege. They'll help you more than anything I can say. I'll put them in when I write."

CHAPTER IX.

She was dressed in a long cloak, grayish-brown, with gray hat and veil. Her tall figure loomed duskily in the back of the elevator. She was speaking to the elevator boy, who stood with his hand on the rope and slid-to the door as Derring entered.

"This is my reception afternoon, Tom. If visitors ask for me, you can show them directly to the studio."

"Yes, Miss Gordon," returned the boy.

"Third, please," said Derring. His newspaper life was teaching him to think and act quickly. He must give her time to get at work. He stepped out at the third floor and the door was slammed behind him.

He could spend half an hour looking over the things on this floor. It would all work in some time—if he were promoted, as he hoped to be. His position at present included a variety of work. He was liable to be called on to write a column on any subject—from bacteria and the lake water, to art and its outlook in Chicago. His column to-day was "The Private Studios Connected with the Art Institute."

As he had turned the corner at Michigan avenue he had caught sight of a roll of paper whirling lightly across the open space in front of the institute. A woman in a gray cloak was battling with the wind and looking despairingly after the hurrying roll. It was the work of a moment for him to dart through the crowd of teams, rescue it, and receive murmured thanks from the gray veil.

Now, by the moment's chance in the elevator, he had learned that she was one of the artists he had come to interview. He would wait half an hour. Then he would look her up. She would at least be civil to him. It was a lucky chance.

She was seated with her back to the door, in the light of the north window. She turned her head from her work with a look of inquiry. The face was older than he had fancied through the folds of the veil.

She half rose from her seat, her hands full of brushes and color-tubes.

"Pray do not rise," he said. "If you

Asked Permission to Look About the Studio and Take Notes.

will kindly go on working I shall feel less that I am intruding."

He explained his errand and asked permission to look about the studio and take notes. He asked the permission very humbly. He had not accustomed himself to the idea that the public likes to be interviewed and written up. The slight hesitation with which she gave the permission seemed to him natural and fitting.

"In fact," she said, smiling, "I suppose I ought to be glad to have you; it will advertise my work."

She went on with her work and they carried on a desultory conversation. Derring wandered about the studio, taking notes and pausing here and there. A sudden exclamation caused her to look up. He had turned a water-color sketch to the light and was examining it.

"It is Ashton Pond?" he said.

"Yes. Do you know it?"

"My home is there. It seems strange to see it here—out of place."

"I like to have it. It makes summer and the east nearer."

He looked at her in surprise. "Do you go there?"

"I have spent the last three summers there," she replied.

"And I have not been home for the last four. I've spent the vacations away."

They fell to talking of mutual acquaintances and places of interest. She had heard of Seth Kinney and she knew the wood-road. The studio became to Derring a very home-like place. They two were shut in, alone, in the midst of the quiet. The great, practical city roared outside, but they did not hear it. He did not realize that she showed the tact of a woman of the world in guiding the conversation. It seemed to him spontaneous and natural.

When she fell silent he started in dismay, looking at his watch. "I am keeping you—and the article must be in by two."

She gave him her hand at parting with the cordiality of an old friend.

As he hurried up Wabash avenue pictures of the wood-road flitted before him. He heard the rustle of the leaves and saw the green moss and the trailing lines of partridge-berry. And in and out of the picture moved the figure of the artist—in its soft grays and browns. She fitted the scene; she was a part of it; yet when he tried to remember how she looked, he could not recall even the color of her eyes. She eluded his search, and in her stead he saw the sun shining through the swaying leaves and falling on the vines and berries.

"Look out there!" The voice was loud and important.

Derring felt himself drawn swiftly back from the advancing cable car. He pulled himself together, with a word of thanks to the incensed policeman, and devoted himself in earnest to the dangers of the Madison and State street crossing.

CHAPTER X.

Richard's promotion came sooner than he had dared hope. The art critic was to take a trip to Europe, and Derring was offered the position. Something in the quality of his articles had attracted attention; and he had even handed in several specials on his own account, that were accepted with some show of interest.

He owed his rapid advancement partly, too, to something that, for want of a better name, we call personality. Those who came near him felt its influence. The office boy approved of him; the managing editor stood ready to help him. That he gave no return to the liking he inspired seemed to make no difference. His unsatisfied heart was a magnet, drawing to itself the particles of humanity and holding them.

His new work took him to the Art Institute and into the world of artists, and he saw his new friend often. Sometimes they stopped for a word in the halls; sometimes he sought her studio in the intervals of work. Their relation had become that of good-comradeship. Derring supposed that he felt towards her as he would have felt towards a man—if there were such a man. He turned to her with each new interest. They discussed every subject in the range of art, literature and life. But their intercourse was free from even a hint of love-making. She had only the grays and browns of her apparel.

With his promotion and increase of salary Derring had changed his boarding place to a pleasanter part of the city. He had not thought to ask her where she lived. It had not occurred to him that he might happen on the same place until the first night at dinner when he raised his eyes from his plate and found her on the opposite side of the table, smiling quietly at his surprise.

That she saw the surprise was evident. But that she divined the accompanying vexation could be guessed only from the care she took to put him at ease. It was like her. She would not be so stupid as to misunderstand him any more than a man would have done.

It was three months after the beginning of their acquaintance that he hurried into the studio one morning to ask her to lend him a book he had seen in her book-case. He was short of material, he explained. He wanted to work up the Arundel collection. If she would lend him that book it would save him a trip to the library.

In his haste he did not notice—though he remembered afterwards—the slight hesitation with which she took the book from the case and handed it to him. It was a small, leather-bound pocket edition, such as tourists carry, and bore in gilt, on the side, "The Masterpieces of Europe and England."

"Yes, that is it." He opened it at random, running the leaves through his fingers. "I will bring it back soon."

With the book still open in his hand he hurried from the room.

Five minutes later he appeared again in the doorway.

"I shall have to go to the library after all," he said, abruptly. "I have brought back your book."

"I am sorry you did not find what you wanted." She did not look up from her work. She could not have seen the color in his face and she may not have noticed the slight tremor in his voice as he replied:

"It's no matter. I can find it at the library.

It had become a matter of course that he should come and go in this easy way, with no ceremony; but it had not become a matter of course that he should leave the studio with his pulses thundering in his ears. Yet nothing had happened. He had turned the leaves carelessly in his hand as he went down the stairs.

It had stared at him from the white page: "To John Dalton, with love. Helen Gordon."

It rang in his ears as he hurried on hat and coat and hastened to the library. It danced before his eyes between the pages of books. "With love." That meant a history. And she had the book now. There had been either a parting or a death. Stupid! He had not guessed or dreamed. The restful quiet of her life covered a dead secret.

He found himself, through the day and as he walked home at night, repeating over and over, as if it were a refrain: "The ashes of a dead love." Yes, that was what it was like—that restfulness of hers—passion burned to ashes. Why had he never guessed? And was it dead? Would she love again?

The question stung him. He quickened his pace. He had not thought of her before as a woman. And yet it was strange that he had not. It came to him now that her womanliness was her chief charm. But it was so a part of her that he had never separated it from her. That she should be thoughtful of others, that her voice should be low and sweet, that she should be graceful in every motion—all this was—Helen. He said the name half under his breath. He stood bewildered before his own consciousness. He loved her!

During his college years Derring had come to know that in love he was an idealist. Love in its true sense could not exist on the earth. It was a vision of poets—impossible of realization. Long since he had come to know that his boyhood love was such a vision, and that its realization would have been a kind of tragic comedy. But always the ideal fitted before him, making him fancy that he was in love, now here, now there, and each time he had wakened to the knowledge that he was in love with an ideal. When he had been invited to the homes of his classmates he had fancied that he should find in one of these homes the fulfillment of his dreams. But the sisters who met him with cordial welcome, who danced, flirted, and played golf and tennis with him, had seemed to him too young to understand even the alphabet of love as he would read it. He had felt very old and experienced and out of place. The love that he might perhaps have won from them seemed to him pale and insipid. He wrote poems, but he dedicated them to the ideal. She was a glowing presence—more real to him than any woman. Now this ideal had paled and faded and a quiet figure in grays and browns filled its place.

He was passing a florist's, and he stopped to purchase a bunch of violets. He did not tell himself they were for her. He was not quite steady yet from the shock that had come to him. He could hardly have been more startled if the quiet wood-road at home had suddenly assumed a woman's face and form and claimed his love. But deep in his heart was a longing to make her reparation. He had invaded her secret. He could not undo that. But he could let her know that he was sorry. Sorry! Was he?

She was not home from the studio. But the door of her room, which was warmed from the hall, stood open. Without crossing the threshold he laid the violets on a chair inside the door. Would she understand? Yesterday he would have said yes. To-day he could not tell. She might not understand, or she might understand too well.

She greeted him as quietly as usual when she came in to dinner that night. She wore the violets tucked carelessly into the lace that filled her dress. One that had fallen apart from the others rested lightly against her throat. His heart stopped for a second, and then leaped forward with a bound.

Not till they were leaving the dining room, when he held the curtain aside for her to pass, scanning her face, did her glance meet his. The next moment he could not have told what he saw in her eyes, but he no longer questioned their color. Blue—blue and deep—slumbering fire. Fool! Had he expected her to wear her heart on her sleeve for daws to peck at?

He had not intended to see her again that night, but he found that he could not rest. It would make no comment, even in this gossipy boarding house, if he stopped at her door a minute. But he found that he had suddenly grown careful, only conscious of remark. He would put on his hat and coat and go for a walk. He might see her as he passed her door.

She was seated in a low chair by the table, sewing, the light falling

Held the Curtain Aside for Her to Pass.

softly across her brown hair and on the work in her hands. His violets were still in her dress. She was the embodiment of home, he thought, as he stood for a minute across the threshold. She looked up quietly—not as if she were startled to see him there.

"You have brought me the paper?" she said, catching sight of the newspaper in his hand. "You are very good." She laid down her sewing and came to take it.

A sudden daring seized him. "Will you not be good, too?" He lifted his hand to the violet at her throat and drew it from its place—watching her face, to obey its lightest wish. She did not stay him. She stood with her hands clasped, her figure swaying a little forward and her eyes following the flower as he placed it in his coat. In another minute she might have raised her eyes to his. A door opened below—a step sounded on the stair.

"You are not angry?" he pleaded.

"No." It was half-breathed, half-spoken, hardly audible, but it set his pulses thrilling. He passed into the cool night air with new joy in his heart. She had understood. It was to be, not only comradeship, but love. He raised his flushed face to the quiet stars. They stretched away into infinite space. But only love could make life worth the living.

(To be Continued)