

MISUNDERSTANDINGS.

Scene.—New York drawing-room, 1:30 a. m. I clasped her hand, and I held it fast. While I gazed in her dreamy eyes, And a far-off look o'er her features passed, Like the twilight of vesper skies, While, like one too happy or shy to speak, With a thro' I could understand, She turned from my raptures her glowing cheek, And veiled it with faltering hand; And the gentle tremor which thrilled her frame, And leaped from her pulse to mine, To my thirsting soul with its message came, Like the magic of cordial wine.

VIOLA; Thrice Lost in a Struggle for a Name.

BY MRS. R. B. EDSON.

CHAPTER IV.

The hours slipped away, and it was noon, and, though search had been made in every direction by the police, as well as by Mr. Anderson and Bradlee, who could not stay in the house and wait, though they could do little good, strangers as they were, still not the slightest trace of the missing girl could be found. The landlord of the hotel, Mr. Gordon, had thought at first there was no cause for serious alarm, as the child might have run into the street, thinking to meet her adopted father, and getting bewildered, had been unable to find her way back to the house. But as the hours slipped away, and a systematic search of every street in the city was made, and nothing was heard of her, he came to the conclusion that she had got down to the wharf in her wanderings, and, in some way, fallen into the water and got drowned. It was not very probable that a child like that had been abducted in a city where scores of children swarmed in the streets unmolested every hour in the day. A foundling, too, like this, coming from an Eastern country town so far away, perfectly unknown to a single soul in the city—why, it was the height of absurdity to fancy she had been abducted, and so he told the half-distracted Andersons, though his hypothesis was not particularly comforting, and poor Myra Anderson only grew whiter and more scare-looking when he broached it.

"Viola is accustomed to the water, and I hardly think she would venture where there was danger," Mr. Anderson said, thoughtfully; "still it is not impossible but she might have attempted crossing the plank to the steamer, and fallen off, somehow."

"But some one would have seen her, it's likely," interposed Ralph. "and rescued her. I don't believe she went near the water—everything is always laid to the water!"

"You like it, I reckon, my lad," Gordon said, smiling at his earnestness. "You should plow the sea, instead of the prairie."

"I intend to some day, sir," was the quick reply, a sudden glow lighting his face.

Through all the grief and alarm of the present, a wild fear for the future struck a sudden deadly chill to Mrs. Anderson's heart. It would kill her to have Ralph go to sea! But he would forget and outgrow this love for the sea when he was once fairly away from it, she comforted herself by saying.

"Perhaps we had better go down to the shore," Mr. Anderson said, "though I have little idea that it will be of any avail."

At that moment Ned Bradlee opened the door and looked in.

"Any news?" asked Anderson, anxiously.

"Wall, no, not really," he replied, slowly. "One of them fresh-water sailor chaps says he see a girl run down the wharf to the side of the 'Caspian'—that's the name of the boat we come in—quite early this mornin'. But he didn't notice whether she went back, or not, and in fact he didn't seem to notice much of anything, and I don't believe he could tell whether she was two year old or twenty-five. I don't."

"But why didn't you go on board the boat? May be she is there," interposed Ralph.

"Didn't I? Though I knowed aforehand that a bright little critter like her wouldn't be likely to stay there all this time. Lord! wouldn't she make 'em walk back with her double-quick?" "But what did they say?" asked Gordon.

"O, they didn't know nothin', of course! There wasn't anybody there only four or five nigger gals, and of all the stupid cattie I ever see, was the best. I'm afraid I might ha' sworn at them if I'd staid there two minutes longer—I couldn't say for certain. I didn't as it was," he added, thoughtfully.

"I think we had better go down there," Mr. Anderson said, putting on his hat.

"It won't do any good, Ben, but however, I don't blame you for wantin' to go," Bradlee replied. "Poor little Hummin' Bird!" and he turned suddenly and walked away to the window, and stood a moment looking out into the busy, hurrying street, but seeing absolutely nothing—not even the great

blocks of buildings, or the blue sky, or the soft spring sunshine.

Slowly and wearily the long afternoon hours dragged on to Myra Anderson. The first excitement of wonder and alarm had given place to dreadful sinking, dread and fear. People came and went, but she sat by the window, gazing steadily into the street, and starting nervously at every sudden bustle or stir she saw, fancying it was some one coming to bring home a little limp, drenched form, the bright color all washed out of the dear little face and the soft lips that had wakened her only that morning with kisses. Only that morning! She said it over drearily to herself, like one talking in her sleep. Could it be that all these long, dreadful hours were only one day? How many and many the weeks she could remember that had not seemed one-half as long! Sometimes some one, thinking to comfort or rouse her, suggested that "it was not as though it was her own child," and perhaps it was not; but remembering the little grave in the green shadow of the Plymouth hills, and the little face that faded so early from earth, she said soberly that "there could be no difference—she knew by experience." But she did not remember what it was that softened the first sorrow, and made it, looking back through the sanctifying vista of years, seem so much less bitter than this. Viola was lost; her baby God had taken, and she was safe. This was the secret—the secret that makes a living sorrow so much harder to bear than a dead one, always. He had done it.

One, two, three days, and so up to a week, and the mystery that shrouded the child's disappearance remained still unsolved. The shores of the river had been dragged, but nothing had been discovered. The police had taken the usual measures, but all their search had been utterly and entirely fruitless. No such child had been seen, either alone or in company, on any train, boat or vessel leaving Detroit that morning. See seemed to have disappeared as completely as if the earth had opened and swallowed her up, as in their amazement the Andersons almost believed it had.

"We cannot wait here much longer, Myra," Mr. Anderson said, uneasily, to his wife; "these hotel bills run up terribly, and you know we've got barely enough money now to buy the farm Tom has bargained for. I never did get in debt, and I don't like to begin by doing so in a strange place."

"But, Ben, it seems terrible to go on without knowing something about her," she said sadly.

"I wish we never had started," interrupted Ralph, impetuously. "I am sure I shall never like it out there, and I don't want to go now she isn't to be with us," the frank, boyish face growing grave and troubled.

"It's my opinion that it's no use a-waitin' here. It's a hard thing to say, neighbors, but I don't believe she's anywhere, alive, now," Bradlee said, his jovial face graver than it ever was before. "Still, if you say so, why we'll wait, if it's all summer. I wouldn't vally every dollar I have got—which ain't many, to be sure—goin' into Gordon's pocket, if only there was the slightest chance of her comin' back, or our findin' out anything about her, poor little Hummin' Bird!"

There was two or three days more of dreary waiting and suspense, and then the journey was resumed, Mr. Gordon promising to inform them immediately if anything whatever concerning the lost child came to light.

The "beautiful West," of which Tom Arnold had written in such glowing terms to his sister, seemed now to that sister like some dreadful *Ignis fatuus*, growing wilder and more fitful as they shot away from the city where it still seemed to her that the bright little face, which had crept so into her heart, was yet somewhere hidden. Ah, how desolate and gloomy looked the half-broken forest farms, scattered here and there along the way! What curious, squalid-looking huts, with four small panes of glass doing duty for windows, and never a shingle or clapboard, or bit of white paint anywhere about them. And how solemn and lonely looked the great shadowy forests, in their dead, unbroken level; so little like the airy hills of the East, where the leaves toyed with the clouds, and caught the sunshine in their green palms. But now and then there glimmered through the trees pretty white villages, as they hurried on, and at last Chicago was reached—Chicago, the Wicked, if all the newspapers say can be relied on. But I am not inclined to believe all its traducers say of it. I remember some very pleasant things of it, and I believe there could be quite a respectable remnant found who have not bowed the knee unto Baal," even in these degenerate days.

Tom Arnold, a little older, a little stouter, but still the old, genial, true-hearted Tom, grasped their hands the instant their feet touched the platform. "Oh, Ben!" grasping his hand, "and Ned Bradlee, as I live! Well, if this isn't jolly! And Myra, my dear girl," holding her in his strong arms and kissing her fondly, "and this is your boy?—this great fellow?" holding Ralph's arm and looking admiringly at him. "Aren't you delighted to see your worthy uncle, whom, it is said, you are so fortunate to resemble in certain fine traits of character?" he cried, with a laugh. "But where is the wonderful little exotic you wrote me such an extravagant account of, Myra?" he asked, looking round, and pausing to take breath.

"She is lost, Tom," Mrs. Anderson answered, gravely, the smile fading from her lips.

"Not dead!" he exclaimed, his face sobering.

"We do not know," and as they went into the station she told him the story of Viola's strange disappearance.

"And that is why you are so far behind? I have been here a week, waiting for you, and yesterday I wrote to find out if you had left Massachusetts. I believe I was getting rather nervous. But this is an odd affair! Don't you believe the child ran away on purpose? You say she didn't like the idea of coming?"

"Ran away!—our Viola!" cried Ralph, indignantly.

"I beg your pardon, my boy, but I hope so, and I do not think it so very improbable, either. It's not very likely the child is dead. She would have been found if she had been. I suppose you were quite attached to her?" he asked, carelessly.

"O, Tom, I loved her as if she had been my own!" Myra Anderson cried, catching her breath sharply.

"Ah! I'm very sorry, girlie," he said, gently, holding her hand in a firm, warm grasp. "But I am so glad to see you again that I can't look very sorry, I am afraid. Why, it's twelve years; do you know it? Have I changed very much? Don't be afraid of hurting my vanity, but tell me if I look older and different from what you expected."

"No, you have not changed as much as I feared. O, Tom, I could never have come, it was so hard at the last, if you had not been here."

"You're the best sister in the world, Myra, and we will be as happy as clams—see, I've not forgotten my native similes!—and we will never be separated again while God lets us live, my girl," he said, earnestly.

The new home in the West! How can I make you who are natives understand the alien's heart? How can I make you realize the faint homesickness that will come, even amid the fairest scenes and in the most attractive land? The new may be a score of times more lovely, and you may know that it is much the best for your interests, but it lacks that indefinable something which the old held, and it will lack it forevermore! You may fancy you have outgrown and forgotten it, perhaps; but sometime it will start suddenly to life, and mock your fancied dream of content with its old, vanished sweetness, and the bleakest and most common-place spot, seen through the lens of years and love, will be touched with an indescribable glory. It is the old clinging love for one's native land which all feel more or less.

The pleasant rolling prairies of the new farm contrasted sharply with the little wooded, sand-girdled homestead in the East. It was a score of times more fertile, and twice a score of times more profitable, but, alas! the sea never came tumbling to its edge, nor never a ledge of rock and pine lifted its dun-green summit against the blue of its bending skies. But it was very pleasant, nevertheless, and the Andersons knew they had gained by coming, and resolved to be content—all but Ralph; he grew more and more restless all the long summer through, and longed more and more for the sea as the days of absence increased, and not even the charms of his beautiful young cousin could make him forget for a day.

Tom Arnold had, indeed, grown rich in the West. He owned a large stock farm, but he lived less than two miles out of Rockford, in a beautiful cottage-mansion, built on a fine elevation overlooking the pleasant waters of Rock River and the pretty, picturesque city. Long, sloping offsets of velvety sward swept in slow curves to the river and the road. A few trees and shrubs carefully disposed, and a narrow line of gray-colored flowers edging the entire length of the first offset, gave an air of elegance and brightness to the whole. Altogether, it was as lovely a place as you could ask for, and Tom was not to blame for feeling just the least bit in the world proud of it. But his special pride was his daughter Blanche. Stop a moment while I describe her to you as she was the first summer that we made her acquaintance.

You are to remember that she is but fourteen—still a child, but easy and graceful as a woman. Slender, tall and fair might describe her, but I wish to be a little more explicit. First, then, she had rare, clear, gray eyes, full of shifting lights and shadows, fringed with heavy dark brown lashes, which had a trick of drooping suddenly and veiling the light or shadows in her eye. Her brown hair, soft and faintly waved, fell over her shoulders in luxurious abundance, and set off the clear, creamy whiteness of her complexion charmingly. Sometimes exercise or excitement brought a faint tinge of pale rose to her cheek, but ordinarily the vivid crimson in her lips was the only color in her face.

Tom Arnold's assertion that she "managed both the house and himself" was strictly correct. Indeed, it would be very hard to live in the house with Miss Blanche and not be managed by her. The girl was a born diplomat, and it seemed rather a mistake that she had not been born to royalty, where her talents might have made her famous. Yet she never gave loud orders, or issued any particular commands, or seemed to rule, but everybody about the house, from its master (by courtesy) down to Billy Doane, the chore boy, knew that she did.

I think there are some persons, both men and women, who have the power of casting a glamour over the eyes of others, and then of leading them whither-soever they will, without any apparent effort. Beauty is a powerful ally, but it is not an indispensable one. There is a subtle power of fascination more mighty than the handsomest face, but when both are united in the same person, especially if it happens to be a woman, the spell is complete. I say "especially a woman," because everybody knows the "superior" weakness of men, and the ease with which a beautiful or po-

lite woman can hoodwink them, when she really sets herself to the task.

All through the summer and autumn the Andersons entertained faint hopes of hearing in some way from their lost Viola. The little hair trunk, studded with brass nails, with the solitary M. on the lid, was put carefully away up stairs, and more than once had Myra Anderson knelt down before it, and lifted the dainty little dresses—so like the bright little creature who had worn them—and pressed the senseless things to her heart and her lips, in a wild passion of sobs and tears.

But the soft haze of autumn faded from the faintly-rounded hills and the silvery river, and winter came—cold, cruel and stern—and no word from Gordon had yet come. There had, then, nothing ever been heard from her, or he would have written, and the spark of hope burned lower and lower as the days went by, and they came after a while to speak of her in the tender, awed way we speak of the dead.

And so the days came and went; and by-and-by brightened and lengthened, and the river slipped off its silver chain, and the prairies grew faintly green in the sunshine, and April, flushing and weeping, came shyly over the threshold of Time.

CHAPTER V.

It was, perhaps, the middle of April when Tom Arnold stopped at his sister's one night on his way home from a little trip he had been making South to buy cattle.

"Rather an odd thing happened today—or rather I should say, yesterday," he said, drawing a letter from his pocket. "I expect you would call it a special Providence, Ben, but I prefer to wait till I know what it's about before I decide. I am not a very religious man, but I have a little theory of my own that forbids the idea of saddling all the miseries of mankind on 'Providence.' When anything comes along that's unmistakably good, I am willing to admit that He had a hand in it, but I don't hardly believe He ordains evil. But here is the letter," tossing a greased, blotted, and sadly soiled envelope on the table.

Mr. Anderson took it up and carried it to the west window where the sunset light could fall on it—his eyes were getting to be a little treacherous. The original post-mark was altogether indistinguishable from being crossed and recrossed with other post-marks, and the envelope was fretted and worn on the edges.

"I don't know how I happened to go into the Rock Island Post-office, unless 'twas because H— always has glorious cigars with which to regale his friends, of whom I have the happiness to be one," Arnold continued, as Ben Anderson drew the letter from the envelope. "Well, what should be the first thing my eyes fell on but your name heading a list of advertised letters. I asked H. for the letter immediately, and he gave it to me very gladly, saying that it had been to the Dead Letter Office and been sent back again; had been sent down to Rockdale and returned; and he had an impression it had been to Rockford, but he might be mistaken. He thought it must be nearly a year since it first came there. The last time it came back he put it in a drawer, and hadn't thought of it since, and the 'List' which it headed was an old one, which he had neglected to take down."

"Myra," broke in Ben Anderson, sharply, "come here."

She came and took the letter from his hand, glanced at it, and gave a little quick cry.

"O Ben—it is from Gordon!" and she sank into a chair, white and trembling, the letter falling from her nerveless fingers.

Ralph sprang forward and caught it before it scarcely touched the floor.

"Read it," she said, with an eager gesture, but he had begun almost before she spoke.

"MR. ANDERSON—Dear Sir: I feel as if I must write a word to congratulate you on the safety of the little girl whose disappearance caused us all so much uneasiness and alarm, and you so much pain. She came back the third day after your departure, and I put her on board the train for Michigan City the next morning; and I trust she reached you in safety several days ago. I desired to write for you to come back for her, but she declared she wouldn't wait. By the way, I'll trust her to make her way through the world. She is the most indomitable little thing I ever saw—a little compressed tornado. There is a mystery about the way she was spirited off, and as to where she has been kept all this time, and more than all, the reason of the abduction, I think she has been dragged heavily, for there are dark lines under the flashing eyes which it is not natural to see in a child. She seems, too, to think she has been away but a day or two. But she has doubtless told you all about it, as well as the way she escaped, and found her way back here, and so I will only add that it gives me more satisfaction than I can tell, this happy solution of your trouble.

Very truly and sincerely yours,
CHAS. GORDON."

"And this was a year ago—O my poor darling!" Mrs. Anderson cried, sharply. "Who could be cruel enough to wish to harm her? O Ben, what shall we do—is there no way to find out anything about her?"

"If this Gordon was as careless about the child as he was about the direction of his letter, she might have been forwarded to New Zealand!" exclaimed Arnold, impatiently.

"But Viola knew where we were coming, and she would tell that, herself," Mrs. Anderson said, quickly.

"Yes, I suppose so. But I don't see what you are going to do at this late day. It's my opinion that somebody has an interest in the child, and I think you had better let the whole thing drop."

"O Tom! And never know whether she is living or dead?" Mrs. Anderson cried, in a distressed voice.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

—The common beetle has eyes 2,500 times sharper than those of a man, and yet the old hen gulps him down sooner or later.—*Detroit Free Press.*

RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL.

—There are sixty Methodist churches in New York City.

—Instruction in field and garden work is to be given in the rural schools of Russia.

—Fifty out of the seventy-three students in Jaffra College, Ceylon, have renounced paganism for Christianity.—*Christian Union.*

—If your son has no brains, do not send him to college. You cannot make a balloon out of a shanty by treating it to a French roof.—*Whitcomb Times.*

—A religious paper makes the statement that one in every five persons in the United States is a member of some evangelical church, and one in every fifty-six is a Sabbath-school teacher.

—The English Church has established a Christian mission at Gaza, a town which reaches further back than the call of Abraham. It was on the way to Gaza that Philip baptized the eunuch of Ethiopia.

—The will of the late Rev. Dr. George Musgrave bequeaths \$30,000 to Princeton College, \$12,000 to the Presbyterian Hospital of Philadelphia, and \$4,000 to the Theological Seminary of Princeton.

The authorities of Cornell University have negotiated the sale of a large part of the institution's Western lands, by which about \$2,000,000 will be realized. A few months ago sales were made to the amount of \$500,000. The land undisposed of belonging to the University are 130,000 acres of pine lands and 50,000 or 60,000 acres of farming lands.—*N. Y. Times.*

—The Baptists are extending their mission in India and Burmah. Recently the following missionaries sailed from New York: Rev. D. K. Ray and wife and Rev. E. Clute and wife, who are to reside in Ongoi, India. Rev. B. P. Cross and wife, Rev. J. J. Denchfield and wife, Rev. J. E. Case, Mrs. M. C. Douglass, Mrs. F. H. Eveleth and Miss Bunn go to Burmah.—*Christian Union.*

Some of the Beliefs that Pertain to Table Accidents.

"If care were not the waiter behind a fellow's chair, When easy going sinners Sit down to Richmond dinners, By Jove, it would be rare! If care were not the waiter Behind a fellow's chair."

Care may not be an agreeable waiter behind one's chair or elsewhere, but he will not spill hot soup down your back nor leave the print of his thumb on your glass, nor put his elbows in your eyes or in any way disturb the natural repose of your outward being.

There is only one thing can make a person wretched in both mind and body at once. That is a pair of tight boots! Then let the waiter be care, if he wants to, but don't drag in any death's heads at our feast. Let us eat, drink and be merry, for at a feast where friends are assembled and the viands are good every sense is gratified, and it is wise to forget the past and take no thought for the morrow during the brief hours it will last. Given that rare and sonorous atmosphere filled with the heavenly breath of exotic flowers, the odor of dainty cooking, bright with the sparkle of light reflected from burnished glass and gleaming china, the blended sweetness of patchouli and jockey club and white rose, the admiring glances of well dressed men, the flashing jewels and smiles of beautiful women, the sympathetic glances of social happiness, and the pride of strength and enjoyment, and he would be worse than a cynic who could find no pleasure in such a picture! But there will be a death's head at the feast. It is inevitable. Some one will recall the fact that it is the anniversary of the death of some friend or acquaintance; or a careless guest will spill the salt and make an allusion to its being unlucky; or another will discover that there are thirteen at table and wonder which one will be dead before the year is out. Bad luck to such malapropos people. Is it likely that thirteen would sit down together anywhere without there being a possibility that one of the company might die in the course of a year? Table superstitions are as strong in the best society as among the ignorant and unrefined. If one chanced to catch a glimpse of his face in a mirror when he is eating he must at once leave the table or he will be unlucky all the year. If two forks are taken up instead of a knife and a fork it denotes a wedding; two spoons, you will be lucky in love. A guest at a dinner was once so much disturbed at some discovery he made in a slice of bread that he excused himself, went home and took to his bed. An examination of the bread which he had regarded with so much alarm developed the fact that it had the ominous words "Rest in peace" plainly imprinted on the crust. It was learned that the baker had a brother who was a tombstone cutter, and he had paved his oven with some work that had not been called for, and so got the impression of part of an epitaph on his loaves. No doubt the guest recovered when he learned the facts.

There is a guarded decorum at a fashionable dinner which usually prevents guests from making themselves either conspicuous or disagreeable if they have a faculty for being either; but at a home dinner, where there are only a few invited guests present, many absurdities occur. An elderly maiden lady who was dining out was asked by her host what part of the fowl she preferred. "The bosom, if you please," she replied with much dignity.

A little girl hearing all the girls say they would be helped to some small piece of some delicacy, carried out the honest conviction of her nature by asking for "a very large piece, if you please."—*Detroit Post and Tribune.*