

about to depart, but the next instant clasped the little hand, resting upon his arm, tightly within his own.

"Nellie," said he, as if loth to leave without making at least one more effort to win, "tell me as frankly as you have told me of my faults whether you love me. You do love me a little, don't you?"

"I hope that I may be your friend, Howard, but do not ask for more than friendship, or our acquaintance with each other must be as nothing henceforth."

"Then, farewell, Nellie!"

"Good night, Howard! But stay! why do you say farewell? Shall I not see you again before you start for Europe?"

"I shall be engaged to-morrow and may not have an opportunity to see you, and day after to-morrow I shall leave this town and endeavor in foreign climes to forget my too presumptuous hopes," said he with tones now as cool and careless as they had been ardent and impetuous a moment before.

"But, Howard, you will still be my friend, will you not?" inquired Miss Nellie with some eagerness.

"Love is more easily consigned to oblivion than transformed into common friendship," he replied. Then, after vouchsafing a bow as cool as his words, he turned away and strode down the gravel walk.

Nellie Raymond watched his receding form for a moment and then ran up the steps into the house. Repairing at once to her room, she seated herself in a low rocking chair before the window, and there, with nothing but darkness and solitude around her, vented her bitter feelings in unrestrained tears.

Two years previous to this time Mr. Raymond, a respectable dry goods merchant, thinking that he might be able to do better in some smaller place than the city of Pittsburg, had established himself in a large retail business at the lively town of D—. D—, although not a large place, is of considerable note on account of its excellent academy and

the college which was established here about a half century ago by the Methodist church. Mr. Raymond's family was small, consisting only of his wife and a daughter Nellie, a sweet-faced, gentle-natured girl of some sixteen summers, and possessing withal no ordinary amount of common sense and unostentatious accomplishments. Her hair was dark, and generally combed smoothly back from her full, intellectual forehead, and then fell over her shoulders in some half dozen long glossy curls. Her eyes were dark hazel. But better than her outward graces and beauty was her warm, sympathetic heart within,

"That merry heart that could not lie
Within its warm nest quietly;
But ever from that full dark eye
Was looking kindly night and morn."

Now I would not have you presume from this short sketch of my heroine that Miss Nellie was by any means angelic. I suppose she had her little faults the same as other young ladies. But as I look back to this early period of her life, when I first became acquainted with her, I cannot help thinking that she was a little better than most other young ladies of my acquaintance: though I will grant that this admiration may result from prejudice in the matter, since I find in this Miss Nellie a model of feminality just in accordance with my own notion and after my own heart.

Soon after the Raymonds had become settled in their new home, Miss Nellie had become acquainted with Howard McKee, a young senior of D— college, ambitious, bold, high-spirited, even reckless. He was of tall and wiry build, had light auburn hair, and large brilliant blue eyes. He was a most invincible debater, a champion boxer, and could outrun and outvault any man in town. His noble, manly physique and cultured accomplishments gave him everywhere a ready passport into good society, while his ardent, sympathetic nature won friends as fast as his keen sarcasm and cutting repartees made enemies.