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A LOVE STORY.

BY AMELIA E. BARR.

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CHAPTER VII.

CONTINUED.

Then they were both aware of Katherine's wide-open eyes and the intelligence in them. She glanced at her confederates and then took her mother aside.

"Darling mamma, kiss me! Bless me! I am going, mamma; oh, bless me, mamma, and kiss me again! And, mamma dear, if you can play some thing, and get Jamie to sing—Jamie makes everybody listen to him."

A tight, clinging clasp of her child's hand, a gaze full of mother love and blessing, and then Mrs. Brathous, trembling, almost fainting, put aside, with a strong heart, her own sorrow, and called, cheerfully:

"Come here, Jamie Winton, and sing a song."

Without purpose or intention, she opened the book at "Jock of Hazel-dean," and Jamie smiling at the appropriate sentiment, sang with charming spirit how the lovely lads of the clod of Errington went for "Jock of Hazel-dean."

Some one was looking for Katherine as the first words of the song rang through the parlors. Some one said they had seen her go into the green-house. She was called, but answered not. Then Jessie was missed.

"They are doubtless together," said Mrs. Brathous, between verses.

The little girl of wonder grew, and, finally, dancing stopped in the hall, and the tidies were quiet, and everyone was asking:

"Where is Katherine Jamie?"

Mrs. Brathous prolonged the pauses and intervals, and Jamie sang the third verse twice over, and the sense of "something wrong" faded like thought from mind to mind.

The music began to sound strange. Jamie sang as if he had to sing, and Mrs. Brathous played with strained restlessness. But the terrors were now at their height, on, while guests waited, and the uneasy feeling spread to the smoking-room and brought the Laird out to a kiss and in flurry. And when he entered the parlor, Jamie's voice had a telling falter, as if, as he caught his uncle's glance, he involuntarily sent to his ears and consciousness the last singularly prophetic words of the song:

"They said her birth in bower and ha

"She died not—she died and awa'

"We're to be dead."

Brathous went angrily to his wife.

"Where is Katherine?" he asked. "She is not to be found. I hear what nonsense this, mamma!"

"She is with Jessie, I suppose. Both are missing for a while. They have a good reason, no doubt."

"I don't believe it."

Then he saw the servants flying through every room of the house. He entered the garden himself, the hedges and the greenhouses. The two girls were not to be found. Winton was questioned and cross-questioned. He knew nothing. He had been singing. Katherine was present when he began, that was all he knew. Mrs. Brathous led her son to avoid the sympathy and pitiess of the anxious, At length Brathous said passionately:

"My wife has evidently run away,

gentlemen, and I make no doubt it is with the Englishman, Mowbray. I must reach the railway lines as soon as possible. Winton will take the south-bound trains. I will take the north. Harkness, Canfield, Scott, Hays, you all three daughters of your own, as noble homewards I will ask you to look out for the wicked tress."

Then there was mounting and riding and racing in every direction from Leavenworth, and the ball was at an end, and the girls and youths went home in a deplorable state of excitement, and no one had the least expectation or even the least desire that Katherine should be overtaken. Indeed, it was but a half-hearted race, for every one but the Laird. Gradually his companions left him as they reached roads leading them to their parish houses. For all were sure that Katherine had taken a train either north or south, and what use was there in running after a steam engine?

At the railroad stations no one would acknowledge that they had seen the young ladies, and though the strange minister was in the very act of marrying Katherine and Mowbray as the Laird and his friends passed Winton House, no one had a suspicion of what was going on with it, for the windows of the lighted saloon were dimmed and draped, and the whole building had a dark and deserted appearance.

Then he went to the mause, and was told that Dr. Telfair was in Stirling. He would not believe it. Winton said: "You are unreasonable, uncle," and was called a lover, "a poor, miserable laggard of a lover," a few words which gave the young man the excuse he desired for retiring to his own house.

By midnight the search had been practically abandoned. The Laird was staggering at every one. He had seen nothing that gave an insight to him. None of his friends had shown the least interest in the recovery of the two young ladies. Hays and Canfield had

home half an hour ago. Is it any of your business?"

"Yes, it is." Then her glance directed him to Katherine and Mowbray. They were in the sunny garden standing together with clasped hands and uncovered heads under a large laburnum tree. His golden ring of yellow blossoms made a glory on their faces. They were talking happily and heart was answering heart, and eyes answering eyes in love and laughter.

"How happy they are, Alexander! Are you not glad they ran away to be so happy?" asked Mrs. Brathous.

"It is an extraordinary exception, Helen. Extraordinary! I hope it may last!" answered Brathous. "For in all my sixty years I never yet knew a happy runaway marriage. Never one! And I have always seen that the girl who goes for her husband without her parents' blessings goes for dead and sorry and shuns enough."

"But Katherine had her parents' blessing. I gave her my blessing from the first hour. And I give her Charlie Jaufarie's blessing also. I trust that Charlie would approve Richard Mowbray. They are both Tories and Church of England men—at least, Charlie was and Richard is. Charlie liked fishing and fox-hunting as much as Richard does; and as for the classics and literature of all kinds, the lad lifted up her white-dimpled head to express the admiration that she had for Mowbray's and the deceased Jamie's intellects."

The Laird was not much dasher. He continued:

"I know Charlie Jaufarie as well as you do. He was a nice ordinary, young man. I dare say Mowbray would be about his level. I look a little above that neck. I stand by Helen to bring in politics for your sake, Helen, my own opinions are a good deal mixed, but I stand by her. And to my influence she would be likely to be exposed to the world of politics, and to the classes and literature of all kinds." The lad lifted up her white-dimpled head to express the admiration that she had for Mowbray's and the deceased Jamie's intellects.

"Do you hear me, master? I will not have it. I will put you under bonds, Jamie Winton. I will! I will!"

"Keep your temper, Laird. You will bring on an apoplectic, setting yourself in such a blare of senseless passion. Winton, good morning. Good morning, Laird. It is not every day that man marries his daughter, and I have friends to hasten to the wedding, Jessie, my dearest, you come with me."

But when he had taken her to his study he looked at her with anger, and said:

"You have done very wrong, Jessie, and you have caused me to do wrong and to make a foolish promise that I might regret, you the Laird's and other people's eyes. And I will tell you now how I will bring his thumbs over his profitable elections bills. Yes—yes, he went on my shoulders to the Hall of Commons, and that nobly as well as you did. He was a nice ordinary, young man. I dare say Mowbray would be about his level. I look a little above that neck. I stand by Helen to bring in politics for your sake, Helen, my own opinions are a good deal mixed, but I stand by her. And to my influence she would be likely to be exposed to the world of politics, and to the classes and literature of all kinds." The lad lifted up her white-dimpled head to express the admiration that she had for Mowbray's and the deceased Jamie's intellects.

"Except three men—three foolish men, father—Jamie and I, who are the minister from Innerleithen."

Then Doctor Telfair straightened his shoulders and freed his newspaper about, but finally he kissed Jessie, though he shook his head reproachfully as he did so.

As the Laird had foreseen, the story of Gala Water in a communication to the local firms in the Morristown Hills northward to Dalkeith, and southward through all the homes of Teviotdale. There is a time and a place for the classes, and the Laird of Lochechephe knows better than to march his farming up with Hays and Vincas. I am about two thousand yards above them, Helen. Charlie-Jaufarie was my friend. He has his daughter in my care."

"You mean he left her money to you?"

"Charlie thought a deal of you, Helen, and I thought a deal of Charlie's good, easy temper. For his sake I hope Katherine may be happier than I likely."

"She is happy. She is very happy."

"At the present, Helen, at the present."

"The future," said Mrs. Brathous, interrupting him sharply, "the future is in your keeping, Alexander. Look at Helen. They love God and each other, they have youth, beauty, health and wealth, and surely I need not suffer anything."

"I ought to have been told."

"To what purpose? I would have told you if you had been a reasonable man. But to say 'No' to you? Yes, it would have been as wiseable as to shake a red rag in the face of a tiger."

"I do not care so much about Katherine. She has ayre been a thorn in my flesh. But Jamie! Jamie Winton to marry Jessie Telfair! It is beyond bearing. And it is you and that ungodly minister's basiss that have been teaching Jamie lately to set him off against me in everything—yes, even about such a small matter as this, was the case. Brathous made a merit of forgiving Jamie."

"He is my nephew, after all," Helen said, "and I cannot give him the back of my hand, though he will deserve it."

"What had you to do with the half-brother? You were too old to be useful. No one can stand you. I do not blame Jamie for meeting himself of you. He has chosen a clever wife, and you may make your mind up to Jamie's affairs alone for the future."

"You have deceived me, mamma! You have deceived me! The whole country-side shall know of it!"

"The white country-side will take you for their laughing stock. Now, Alexander, you have said enough and too much. If you do not believe yourself, you may not say sorry, though I will not be unkind to you ever more."

"Mowbray expects to go into Parliament, and he is bringing home the election. I think of going to Morristown Hall next week."

"I will go with you. I know about election business. I can give you some valuable advice. And I hope I am a good Christian, Helen, and know how to forgive a wrong. It will be a pity for the two young ones to feel my anger through it was just anger—a shadow in their home."

"There was no shadow in Morristown Hall when the Laird and Mrs. Best house reached it. There is no shadow likely to be there, for love made a constant glory in the old mansion. And Katherine was so happy and so busy, and Mowbray Hall was so much larger and grander than Leavenworth, that Brathous felt subdued to a most commanding spirit."

"All he could be, though he was very helpful to Mowbray in his electioneering. The young man was disposed to rely on an innocent man and prestige and his rights as a Laird. But these things had lost much of their influence even with the lairds and sheepherds on the estate, and it was the Laird's Scotch simplicity and dictatorial manner which discredited all objections. And when the victory was won the Laird did not fail to take all the credit due him."

"Mowbray may thank his stars and Alexander Brathous that he can write M.P. after his name," he said complacently. "That is so, is it not Helen?"

"You are just a wonder, Alexander and doubtless if you had come sooner the harvest would have been a month beforehand."

"Hush! I—And when did you get home, sir? Or were you lying last night from me?"

She was standing at the window with a beaming face and Brathous went to her side.

"I think from my man, Laird. I got

"You are very jesting at me, Helen," he said. "What are you looking at so pleased like?"

Then her glance directed him to Katherine and Mowbray. They were in the sunny garden standing together with clasped hands and uncovered heads under a large laburnum tree. His golden ring of yellow blossoms made a glory on their faces. They were talking happily and heart was answering heart, and eyes answering eyes in love and laughter.

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