



Meaning of Love, by Helen Keler

[Helen Keller tells how, as a deaf and dumb child, she learned the meaning of love from her teacher, Anne Sullivan.] I remember the morning that I first asked about the meaning of the word, 'love'. This was before I knew many words. I had found a few early violets in the garden and brought them to my teacher. She tried to kiss me; but at that time I did not like to have anyone kiss me except my mother. Miss Sullivan put her arm gently around me and spelled in my hand, 'I love Helen.' "What is love?" I asked. She drew me closer to her and said, "It is here," pointing to my heart. Her words puzzled me very much because I did not then understand anything unless I touched it. I smelled the violets in her hand and asked, half in word, half in signs, a question which meant, "Is love the sweetness of flowers?" "No," said my teacher. Again, I thought. The warm sun was shining on us. "Is this not love?" I asked, pointing in the direction from which the heat came. A day or two afterwards, the sun had been under a cloud all day, and there had been brief showers, but suddenly the sun broke forth in all its souther splendor. Again I asked my teacher, "Is this not love?" "Love is something like the clouds that were the sky before the sun came out," she replied. Then in simpler words than these, which at that time I could not have understood, she explained: "You cannot touch the clouds, you know; but you feel the rain and know how glad the flowers and the thirsty earth are to have it after a hot day. You cannot touch love either; buy you feel the sweetness that pours into everything. Without love you would not be happy or want to play." The beautiful truth burst upon my mind -- I felt that these were invisible lines stretched between my spirit and the spirit of others. --Helen Keller, "The Story of My Life"

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