THE SUCCESS OF PATRICK DESMOND

MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN

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BY

MAURICE FRANCIS EGAN.

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TO

PATRICK O'BRIEN, ESQ.,

OF

SOUTH BEND, INDIANA,

WITH THE

RESPECT OF THE AUTHOR,

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THE SUCCESS OF PATRICK DESMOND.

I.

And I am sick at heart. — *Francisco in Hamlet.*

In the little town of Redwood, in a State which is almost happy enough to have its boundary line touch the sacred soil of New York, there were two very unhappy people. One was a man of twenty-three; the other was a young gentlewoman of the same age.

For fear of disappointment, it is as well to say that there was no cause like that which made all the woes of Romeo and Juliet to make them suffer. Patrick Desmond was neither a Capulet nor a Montague, and the only person he really loved in the world was his mother. As to Eleanor Redwood, she was of a ruling family of the town — it having been named after her father, the Judge, — but as yet this had nothing to do with any affair of the heart. She was in that happy and healthy period of life when she was unconscious of possessing a heart. She had not begun to think or talk about it at all; and she loved with all her unconscious heart the old Judge, her father.

And it was this love that made her wretched. Eleanor was, in appearance, a beautiful girl. The people of Redwood did not know it; but there were many more important things they did not know. It was their opinion that Eleanor would have been "passable" if her eyes "matched" her hair. At Redwood, taste required that everything should "match." She had light hair with a tinge of red in it, and large brown eyes. In fact, her face was like Lely's picture of Mary Stuart in her youth. There was a freckle or two on her cheek, and she was very tall. Unlike most tall girls, she did not make the mistake of stooping forward to conceal her height. When she was interested, her face brightened; but, as a rule, it was rather sad in repose. She had a great capacity for enjoyment, and the social amusements of the town satisfied her. She did not long for anything better or wider, for she had never known anything else. It was the impression of the town that she dressed badly; and the members of the first families, as well as the factory girls, could not tolerate that. The idea of Eleanor Redwood wearing plain frocks and simple hats, when, as everybody knew, she might have had the finest possible things from New York or Paris! Consequently she attracted no attention whatever in church.

She was held to be peculiar and haughty. Some people thought that she was clever; but as she had never been away from home, and had not "finished" her education in one of the large cities or in Europe, there was a division of opinion on this point. Still she was envied. Was she not Judge Redwood's daughter? And, though there were richer people than Judge Redwood in the town, there was nobody so distinguished. He held advanced opinions; he was not an Ingersollian — he said there were no Ingersollians, and that Ingersoll was a thing of shreds and patches. He believed, he said, "in sixteen ounces to the pound." Further than that he did not know. He was good-humored and cynical at the same time. He was tall, florid, and his white side whiskers would have been a perfect guarantee of his respectability anywhere in America — where white side whiskers and a high, bald forehead are almost as impressive as a bank account. The main resemblance between him and his daughter was in the eyes — large, brown, expressive.

Judge Redwood was a quiet man; he lived among his books when people would let him. He had, in early days, been a member of Congress. Beyond that he had not gone into political life. He was a judge in one of the local courts. As a lawyer his earnings had not been large. His income came from happy — or unhappy, according to Eleanor's secret thoughts — investments in real estate.

The Judge was not always cheerful; at times he was preoccupied and irritable. He would sit at his study window in the twilight, lost in thought; and when Eleanor would come to call him to have his tea, she could not help seeing that he made an effort to be cheerful. She thought she knew the reason why; and, looking across the tea-table, with the pretty appointments which Eleanor loved to perfect, she felt that there was an abyss between her father and her. Why did he not speak? If he only knew her — if he could only realize how little all the smoothness of life meant to her! With joy in her heart she would walk out of this comfortable and even luxurious house, take her simplest dresses, and go, poor and unfriended, to the end of the world with him. She thought of Wilhelm Meister and Mignon. She thought of a dreary city, with narrow streets; and she imagined herself walled in by a room without beauty, without associations. She looked over the soft, green lawn, dotted with golden crocuses and scarlet tulips; she felt the gentle warmth of the grate fire, not disagreeable in the early spring; her eyes fell on the picture of her mother above the mahogany cabinet of old china.

Yes, she could give all these up; and Mignon's song rose in her mind:

> "There, there, with thee,
> O, father, would I dwell!"

She saw that her father's Oolong was just as he liked it; and that he had the large, solid, old-fashioned cup he preferred, with its cup-plate, and its picture in blue of a scene in Canton. The Judge, having poured out his tea into his saucer, and carefully adjusted his precious cup on the little plate which the provident matrons of the past designed out of regard for the table-cloths, looked up at his daughter with a smile.

"You are just a little like your mother now," he said. "Hold your head a little to one side. Now! The firelight on your forehead makes me go back twenty years, and I fancy that Clarissa is here. Time, after all, has only one conqueror — memory. But your mother was a little woman, and you are tall."

"Why, when I was sixteen I could almost lift her up and carry her like a doll. And to think that she has been dead since I was seventeen."

"I miss her more than you, Eleanor — more than you," the Judge said. "If it hadn't been for the streak of queerness your mother inherited from her family, she would have been the most perfect creature on earth. The Waldrons were all queer. The fact is, they had that peculiar hallucination that affects Americans more than other people. They believed in their own inventions. The first Waldron came over in the early part of the eighteenth century, and it ruined all his descendants. They imagined that they were an 'old family'; and when I proposed to your mother, the whole kit and kin of them exclaimed against it, because I had never thought of asking my father when *he* came. As if it made any difference!"

Eleanor felt that it would be unkind to deprive her father of the luxury of finding fault with his wife's relatives, but this last remark touched her prejudices. She could not permit the claims of "blood" to be sneered at.

"It is something to be a Waldron," she said; "something not to be of yesterday; something not to be of the mass of railroad laborers and emigrants who make up the bulk of our population. Surely, papa, you are not sorry that I have Waldron blood in me; are you?"

The Judge looked at her curiously for a moment. "Your mother was a very lovely woman, but she had the Waldron streak in her," he added, with a sigh. "Don't imagine that I dislike your little airs of aristocracy, Eleanor. They become you; they are like brandy sauce to a plum-pudding. But if you love me, don't ask me to regard them seriously. A man in this country must be his own ancestor; a woman can borrow, invent, idealize as many ancestors as she likes. It amused me to see you pin a big bow of orange ribbon on the old spinning-wheel on which my dear old mother spun her husband's coats and waistcoats, and exhibit it in the parlor. There was no harm in it. It showed that you had a grandmother who worked with her own hands, which is just what these emigrants do. The only difference between her and them is that — thank God! — she loved books, and the taste remains with me. That, and not 'blood,' gave me whatever grip I have on the world. But I don't object to your 'fads.' A woman to be quite charming needs a certain amount of foolishness."

The Judge laughed. Eleanor made an impatient movement with her head and the thin Waldron teaspoon.

"Connect the Waldrons, if you wish, with Richard Cœur de Lion or anybody you like; but don't ask me to believe in them. A man's a man; and Americans, in spite of their longing to be better than their neighbors, know that and act up to it. Nobody really believes in this ancestral nonsense, except man milliners and the ladies. Just look at the sons of our great men — another cup of tea, my dear. — Inherited ability is the essence of a real aristocracy; nothing else. And until we can entail ability, great names will not really count in the second generation — another cup of tea, dear. Grandma always said that I would be a great man like Dr. Johnson, because I was so fond of tea.— Oh! by the way, Rena Eastwood gave me a note for you as I was passing her house. It was a message first; but, as I told her I'd forget it, she reduced — or elaborated — it into a note."

Eleanor showed no anxiety; she went on pinning a scarlet tulip to her white cloth gown, while the Judge searched his pockets for the note. She knew well that the process would take time; besides, she was not particularly anxious to read one of Rena Eastwood's epistles.

The Judge was proverbially absent-minded. He laid envelope after envelope on the table, and finally found a little three-cornered note.

"I wish," he said irritably, "that people would not bother me in this way." But as Eleanor took the note, he relapsed into serenity and the contemplation of a piece of his daughter's cake.

Eleanor opened the note. It was written in the prevailing angular hand — Rena had been a pupil of a fashionable New York school. Eleanor ran her eyes over the contents; her face flushed a little.

"Rena does such stupid things!" she said. "I must really drop all church work, if this sort of thing goes on. One is brought into contact with all sorts of people."

The Judge laughed. "It strikes me that you object to the principle of church work. I thought that it was the object of church work to bring all Christians together."

"But what has the Minuet of Nations to do with Christianity?"

The Judge laughed again.

"Oh! you know what I mean, papa. Our church work is merely social; and of course we are all Christians; and of course we all try to do good to the poor and all that kind of thing; but we don't want to mix the *strata.* It will ruin all our usefulness, if things are made too miscellaneous."

The Judge, who had the reprehensible habit of tucking his napkin under his chin, lay back and laughed louder than ever. He made a very jolly picture.

Eleanor was irritated; her father would not understand.

"Rena," she said, with perceptible frost in a voice that was usually low and sweet, "announces that Howard Sykes has been called away, and that there is nobody tall enough to lead the minuet with me at the Charity Festival, except a young man her brother knows and nobody else seems to know. His name is Desmond, and he lives over the river, among the factory hands."

"Desmond!"

The Judge's face changed; the laugh died on his lips. Eleanor raised her eyes in time to see the light go out of his eyes. He dropped them before hers.

"Ah," he repeated, "Desmond! Do they live here still?"

His voice was quiet, but he could not conceal from eyes that had studied him many times that he was agitated. A quick pang pierced Eleanor's heart at last. She had gained another clue to the secret of her father's life. If he would only speak.

"Rena says," she went on, "that she must ask him just to fill up. He's not in our set — in fact, he's not in any of the church sets: he's a Catholic. And she wants me to be nice to him 'for this occasion only,' as she puts it. She says that I must ask him to my Coffee, as that sort of people are *so* sensitive."

The Judge smiled again. "I thought that the Coffee was an instrument of torture for the use of women only."

"I shall have mine in the evening and have men, too," said Eleanor. "I intend to pay off all my indebtedness to the mob at once."

The Judge grinned, and recovered his equanimity. "A pleasant thing it is when sociability becomes a debt, and you speaking of showing it as if you were paying a bill."

"Well, never mind, papa. I suppose I shall have to ask this young Desmond. I hope he will not be too vulgar."

Eleanor watched her father almost unconsciously while she said this. He looked up quickly.

"You will nót find him vulgar," he remarked. "I don't happen to know him," he added; "but I have heard of him."

Eleanor's heart sank. She rose quickly, as her father took up a newspaper and made for the lounge in the bay-window. She went slowly up to her room, which glowed in the red sunlight — all its pretty adornments steeped in what seemed to her to be an ominous crimson glow. She knelt down by the window that looked toward the river. A low, level plain stretched down to its banks, dotted with pretty houses. Points of light shone across the water, where the crowded houses of the factory hands stood. The freshness and scent of spring filled the air; she thought of life over there, among coarse people, where at this hour the smell of frying beefsteak mingled with the scent of onions, and the yells of untaught children rang through the thin partitions.

"He," she said, "should be here and I there. He should have all the pleasant things I enjoy; but I could never live over there, never, never! I should die!"

She covered her face with her hands. As the twilight deepened she lit a lamp and took out a pretty blue and gold writing outfit. As she did so she caught sight of the face of the Sistine Madonna. It was the only thing in the room that gave her comfort, for she was wretched. At her age wretchedness is intermittent. Human nature, unless it is insane, cannot remain wretched very long at any age.

"I wish you were a live woman and that I could talk to you," she said to the picture. "I am in such doubt, and you could explain things to God better than I can."

She sat down and wrote a note, in her father's name, to Mr. Patrick Desmond, East Redwood, asking him to be present at the social function, which was to pay off so much of her "indebtedness."

At this same hour of twilight, on the next evening, Patrick Desmond was in revolt. He had just made his toilet in the little room he called his own. It was a plain, scantily furnished room, but scrupulously kept with all a mother's care. His curly, auburn hair flowed away from a high, white brow, that, over-arching, shadowed his dark blue eyes. He was unusually tall, and he made the little front room of his mother's house seem smaller when he was in it. He wore a loose sack coat, which was always kept for the house, much to the surprise of the neighbors, who thought their shirt sleeves good enough.

The front room was a model of neatness. The floor was white from frequent scrubbing; in its centre was a brilliant piece of carpet. A marble-topped table stood near the window, on which were a large, gilt-lettered volume, "The Lives of the Popes," and an equally large "Holy Bible." A large chromo of St. Patrick driving the snakes out of Ireland filled the space over the mantelpiece. The window was curtained with white and filled with pots of flowers, the geraniums and a purple hyacinth being in bloom. On the air was borne, not the odor of beefsteak and onions, as the fastidious Miss Redwood had imagined, but that of broiling fish, for it was Friday. And after a time a soft voice called out from the inner room:

"Come, boy. You must be hungry."

He did not move at once. How could he go into the light with that frown on his brow, and that spirit of bitterness in his face? He hated Redwood. He hated all the surroundings of his life. To think of living as he did, among people who had no higher ambition in life than "not to be out of work," and to save a little money, was madness. He appreciated the loving care his mother gave him; but he detested the circumstances that forced her to do all her kindly work with her own hands. Benson Eastwood, his fellow-clerk in the factory, had asked him a dozen times to visit him. How could he? Benson lived on the hill, in the very centre of all that was reputable and elegant in Redwood. How would it do to have Benson come across the river to return his visit now? Desmond felt the blood rush to his face. Why was life so artificial? Why could not people be valued for themselves, without regard to their surroundings? Why was he pinioned for life under a crowd of inferior people, simply because his father and mother had been poor and remained poor? He was as clever as anybody in Redwood; his manners were as good; for refinement he would compare his mother with all the *parvenus* in the town, rich as they were. But an artificial standard had been made; he was not only poor — which would not have made all the difference, but he was quite out of all the ways of advancement. Jeff Goodsloe was a clerk like him, so was Benson Eastwood; but they had been brought up on the other side of the river; they were in the "church circles"; they were not of the "Irish Catholic" set; they belonged to "old families." It will be seen that Patrick Desmond took his provincial town very seriously. But he had never lived anywhere else; it was his world.

"Come, boy!"

He tightened his fists in the dark. He felt like dashing away the encroaching walls which kept him where he was. The smell of the fish and of the kerosene lamp sickened him. He went into the little dining-room, papered in white and red, with a mirror in a veneered frame as its central ornament. His mother hovered around him like a happy bird over her nest. A smile came to his face as the little woman pressed him to eat. Her hair was as white as snow, smoothly drawn back from her forehead, and puffed out with hidden combs in the old-fashioned way. Her skin, delicately tinted with the red of a lady-apple, was covered with a network of wrinkles. Her eyes were as blue and as bright as her son's. She wore a dark gown, which hung in ample folds, and a wide lace collar. No matter how hard her work during the day had been, she was always dressed in this manner when her boy came home.

Mrs. Desmond told him that the children next door were recovering from the measles; that the white hyacinth had bloomed; that the flour mills in Eureka threatened to close, and that she hoped he would find a place for Tommy Hogan if he should come home out of work. She asked him if he had heard anything new about the great Charity Festival for the Hospital. Tommy Hogan's father had been flooring the interior of the Music Hall for it; it was going to be magnificent. Her son sighed. His mother paused and looked at him. She read his thoughts; but she went on talking, as if his mind were a closed book to her. She trembled a little; and when he spoke in a resolute tone, she was not surprised.

"Mother," he said, "we must leave this place. I want to be the equal of any man, and I intend to be. To-day when Miss Redwood passed me, and smiled at Benson and met me with a cold stare of superiority, I made up my mind that I would not stand it. I will have power; I will teach her —" He stopped. He felt that he was talking too loud, and frightening his mother. "I will be rich. It is the only thing that gives a man power. Don't talk religion, mother. That was what kept father down —"

"No, no," cried his mother, raising her hands, as if averting a curse; "it saved him! Patrick, don't say that. We did the best we could for you, boy. And I'm sure," she said, a sob breaking her voice, as she thought of their long years of toil and of all her care, — "and I'm sure we have a very pleasant home."

"Oh! I know, mother — I know. I am not complaining, but I want more. I want to be rich, powerful, respected; and to make the people here at Redwood feel it. I am sure the Judge looks down on us as if we were beneath him."

"You ought not to think so," said his mother, in that soft voice which had the inflection of her native place in it. "He is kind. He never forgets that I attended his wife in her last sickness, and many times before that. You know that he always sends a gift on her birthday."

Patrick's lip curled. "And I suppose Eleanor, his daughter, is taught to believe that you were her mother's hired nurse?"

Mrs. Desmond smiled a little. "In those days Mrs. Redwood could not have afforded such a luxury. She was always very proud of being a Waldron. We were just neighbors, that was all. There were no factories here then; it was before the Judge sold his lots and became rich."

Patrick rose from the table, and stretched out his arms as if the place were too small for him.

"I must go away, mother," he said.

His mother looked at him anxiously. "Sure, it was good enough for your father."

"I want to be better than my father."

Mrs. Desmond shook her head. "That would be hard — God rest his soul!" she said.

"Oh, I don't mean that way. He was full of Old-World traditions and prejudices. He believed in the work of one's hands; I believe in the work of one's head."

"He worked to save his soul," said Mrs. Desmond, reverently.

"Well, why can't I save my soul and be

somebody, too?" he demanded, impatiently. "I'm an American; I'm as good as anybody. I tell you, mother, I'll not live over here among these factories. I'll meet Judge Redwood and his daughter face to face. Success succeeds; I want success, at any cost."

Mrs. Desmond did not answer at once; she said a prayer in the meantime. After that she spoke with a serene and sweet dignity:

"Nothing is too good for you in my esteem. You've been educated as well as your father and I could do it, and it was a hard struggle sometimes. And our only hope was that you should be a good man. We never asked honor or riches for you, but only goodness. I know," she said, with a slight trembling in her voice, "that things are poor and old-fashioned here, and that I am old-fashioned myself; but, Patrick, your old mother and all that's around her were good enough for him that's gone —"

Her voice broke. Her son put his arm around her neck, but he was not moved. He thought impatiently that she never could understand him.

"Surely," she continued, happy now, "you'll gain most by working on and minding your business and watching your chances. And there's much good to be done here among our own people. We weren't put here to worry ourselves about riches. Let us be content."

Patrick ground his teeth to keep back impatient words. His mother suddenly remembered that a note had been left by a messenger in the morning. In a large envelope was Judge Redwood's card; and, in a smaller one, his invitation, written in Eleanor's handwriting, to the assembly on Wednesday night. Patrick read it aloud.

Mrs. Desmond uttered an exclamation of alarm. "Sure you'll never be going over there among all the quality and you not used to it."

Her son's eyes blazed. "I will go," he said. And after a pause, during which he suppressed his anger: "I wonder what Judge Redwood wants? He is probably about to run for Congress again. I'll go, mother," he repeated; "though I hate them all."

"God help us," murmured his mother. "It's hard for us when our children grow up. Whatever we do is wrong." She removed the dishes, while her son went into the dim parlor to dream; but at intervals she continued to say plaintively, "God help us."

II.

A woman varying as the thistledown;
A wife, a mother; but—alas! alas!—
Without the anchor Hope, the lily
Peace,—a light thing of the breezes.
—"*The Wayside.*"

HAVING sent away her special invitation to Patrick Desmond, Eleanor Redwood began to have regrets and doubts. "Why had she been foolish enough to do it?" she asked herself. It was true that she had a particular reason for wanting to meet him. If she did not like him after meeting him, there was no reason why she should permit herself to walk with him in the Minuet of all Nations. She thought with a pang of the alacrity with which her father had conveyed the note to him. How could her father bear to do it? And yet Eleanor had too much respect for her father not to believe that his intentions were good. Perhaps this invitation would be the means by which the great anxiety of her life should be removed. Her heart leaped at the thought. Her father had said that he had never met Desmond. Did this alacrity in giving the invitation mean that he was anxious to see the young man in surroundings which might enable him to form a judgment of his character?

For several years Eleanor had lived under a cloud, as it were, — a cloud which bore this resemblance to an April cloud, that it passed and repassed in intervals of sunshine. Her trouble, judged from the sentimental point of view of people who do not know human nature, ought to have made her unhappy all the time. Perhaps she had become used to it; perhaps it was because she was young; perhaps it was that, like the lady in Browning's "My Last Duchess," every pleasant thing cheered her up and made her forget her sorrow. At any rate, she was sad only by fits and starts; and still there was generally an undercurrent of anxiety in her mind. Many times, sitting opposite to the Judge, she had resolved to ask him what her mother had meant. And as many times, when the Judge had smiled frankly at her, or raised his head from his newspaper with the air of one coming up from another world, the words had been stilled on her lips. Her father was a good man — the best of men. She asserted this to herself over and over again fiercely. There was no man like him in all the world. Some day he would have the courage to tell all, and then the father and daughter would walk out into the world happier than they ever had been.

It was a lovely morning. The pink blossoms of the peach floated softly through the air, the purple haze, that hid from view the stems of the distant young oaks, gave a softness to the landscape, which was made almost too brilliant by the dazzling green of the prairie and the warm tones of the peach blossoms. Eleanor looked from the sitting-room window, and forgot her sadness at sight of the scarlet tulip patch on the lawn; she said to herself that the sun had never gilded so splendid a scene, arched over as it was by a sky of the bluest of blues. It cheered her, and doubts and perplexities rolled away.

Belinda, the servant of the family, entered to gossip a while. She was a short woman, of an age which was beyond forty; she had sharp features, a dyspeptic look, and an air of command acquired by her rule in families where she was indispensable.

"Ain't you goin' out?" she demanded, entering the room without knocking. "You may as well; I ain't got nothin' for you to do. But I want to say one thing, Miss Redwood. I ain't goin' to have any more broiled beefsteak in this house. It's flyin' in the face of Providence to broil what the Lord made to be fried. And I ought to know; for I lived in a minister's family six years, and I sat down at the table with 'em every day. There was nothin' stuck-up about them,— not but what the Judge is all right."

Eleanor received this shot at herself meekly. She and Belinda were not entirely congenial. Belinda believed in the old democratic conditions of Redwood, when everybody had been as good as anybody else. Belinda felt that she could not be displaced from the Redwood household. The factories swallowed up all the young women who might have entered households as "helps"—nobody in Redwood ever spoke of servants; and a "girl," like Belinda, was eagerly competed for.

Eleanor had, in her youthful zeal, endeavored to make a place for Belinda, and to keep her in it, much to the Judge's amusement. She tried to induce Belinda to wear a cap in the morning and a white apron occasionally. She tried to banish the fried beefsteak and the constant bilious-looking pie which appeared every day in the week. She politely requested Belinda not to laugh out loud when the Judge made a joke at the table, and by no means to contradict guests. The Judge liked to have Belinda laugh at his jokes, and therefore that reform was not possible. When Mrs. Montressor-Montague, an old Redwoodian who had married in New York, came to luncheon — as Eleanor chose to call dinner for one occasion only — Belinda cut in and shocked that great lady by boldly combating one of her statements just as the soup came in. This brought things to a crisis. Eleanor remonstrated with Belinda. That valiant woman rose in her wrath.

"I ain't a Polander," she said; "nor yet a

Swede, nor yet any kind of a furriner. And when that painted hussy from a Dimycratic State laughed at Mrs. Hayes for keeping the serpent's cup out of the White House, I wasn't goin' to stand it. If you want a dummy or a mummy, you've got to get a furriner; I'm an American citizen and a hard-shell Baptist, and my tongue's my own. Not but what I might have stood it, if she hadn't said that when she was here Mrs. Eastwood was a good housekeeper. That riled me. You ought to see Mrs. Eastwood's kitchen. I lived with her three months. I ought to know."

The result of this was that Belinda's wages were raised, and Eleanor could only hope that in future visitors would not "rile" her.

Belinda came in this morning to make a declaration of war. "I wanted to say, Miss Redwood, that if you're goin' to have refreshments handed around before nine o'clock at your Coffee, I can't be there. We've a church sociable at half-past seven, and I can't miss it."

Eleanor sank into her chair; the world became dark. What could she do without Belinda? "Couldn't you stay at home to-morrow night — just this once?"

Belinda tightened her lips. "Duty's duty and principle's principle. We young ladies of the church are raising funds to establish a Kindergarten for the South African tribes. Mr. Stokes says the African children are fearfully neglected; though I don't doubt that there are some here in Redwood that neglect their children just as bad."

"Oh! dear," said Eleanor, "what shall I do?"

Belinda's face relaxed, and she gently fingered the curl papers in her thin hair. Eleanor's abjectness was delightful to her. There was silence. At last Eleanor announced that she was going out.

"Where to?" demanded Belinda.

"To the Howard House, to see Mrs. Bayard," the young girl replied, never dreaming of refusing to answer.

"Umph!" said Belinda, disapprovingly. "She ain't no housekeeper. I lived with her a month."

Eleanor put on her hat and wrap, with an air of dejection, while Belinda quietly watched her from the doorway.

"There ain't no style about her," she murmured to herself. "If she'd just put her hair in papers and put on more frills, she wouldn't be so bad."

"Tell father I shall not be home to dinner. I'll have to look for somebody to help me."

"I just wanted to ask whether you're goin' to have tables or a lap supper. Of course folks will be askin' me. Mrs. Jobson sent her husband over to ask this morning. Folks don't want to wear their best dresses if it's a lap supper — accidents sometimes happen."

"Oh! I don't know," Eleanor replied, wearily. "I'll ask Laura Bayard."

Belinda straightened herself up. "Laura Bayard ain't worth her salt. I went to school with her mother, and a more shiftless creature never existed. Why! she couldn't make soft-soap. If Laura Bayard is to be brought in with her interferin', I'll stay at home just for the Judge's credit, though I don't know what Mr. Stokes will say. Still, he knows how sacrificin' I am — I've told him often enough." She wiped away an imaginary tear, and sniffed.

"Oh! thank you, Belinda," exclaimed Eleanor, brightening up. "I really can't do without you. If you think we'd better have little tables, you can tell the man to send them. Mrs. Montressor-Montague admired that way so much —"

Belinda's face clouded, and Eleanor hastened to pass over the delicate subject.

"I must go to order the flowers. It's very kind of you, Belinda. And I'll ask father to let you have the buggy on Sunday afternoon."

Belinda smiled. "I guess the Africans will have to do without a Kindergarten for a week or so," she said; "and I'll just pitch in. And I don't mind how tired I am when there's a duty before me; and I think professors of religion ought to feel that way. You just go out and tell that Laura Bayard that you've got somebody in this house that can make the fur fly."

Eleanor found Mrs. Bayard reading a novel in a room on the third floor of the Howard House. The Howard House was the one hotel in Redwood, for Redwood did not much need a hotel. There was, it is true, an ebb and flow of commercial travellers. Other visitors to the town generally stayed with friends; for the Redwoodians were very hospitable, and visits were a large part of their routine of existence. Eleanor had gone into a narrow door, labelled "Ladies' Entrance," and ascended an oil-cloth-covered staircase, permeated with the smell of the hot cakes of the past winter. The landing on which she paused before knocking at her friend's room was covered with a green and red carpet. A stove, which had been partly dismantled of its pipe, rested against the wall, which was painted a dark brown, — a more cheerless place can hardly be imagined as the entrance to a "home." Who could take his ease in such an inn?

Mrs. Bayard's sitting-room was painted brown; the furniture was of a dingy walnut color; some photographs in a pretty case, a water-color or two, and red curtains on the windows, rather redeemed the dinginess of all the appointments. Eleanor could not help pitying her friend, since these two rooms, bereft of all homeliness, were her home.

Laura Bayard was attired in some flimsy material arranged in the Japanese manner, and glowing with pink and green. She was not older than Eleanor. Her eyes were small and blue, her light-colored skin was wrinkled and dry from the use of much powder, and her hair was of that tint produced by the bleaching process. She was a very pronounced blonde, and she was considered a great beauty in Redwood.

"O, Nora!" she cried, kissing her friend rapturously, "I am so glad to see you. This book is stupid. I begin to hate Ibsen."

"I should think you would," said Eleanor. "Papa read one of his plays to me. They teach a very bad lesson."

"Oh! my dear," rejoined Laura, patting her friend gently on the cheek, with a superior air, "lessons have gone out of fashion. Everything has changed. Ibsen has discovered that life is nothing, as Schopenhauer did before him; and that the main thing is to die beautifully."

"O, Laura!" said Eleanor, really alarmed, "how can you talk this way? Where did you learn all this?"

"I've been reading a great deal lately. I haven't had much to do since the baby died, and we've dropped housekeeping. Poor, dear little baby."

Eleanor looked away; she saw the tears coming into Laura Bayard's eyes.

"And to think that old Mrs. Desmond seemed to understand the little thing better than I did —"

"Desmond!" said Eleanor, unconsciously.

"Why, do you know her?"

Eleanor flushed slightly. "Oh, no! — that is, papa has asked her son to my Coffee."

Laura looked at Eleanor contemplatively. "It's not a bad idea. Pat Desmond is a clever fellow, they say. What made him do it — politics?"

"No!" replied Eleanor indignantly. "Papa is above that."

Mrs. Bayard laughed cynically. "Are you interested in this young Desmond? Come, tell me. Let us have a good talk."

For a moment Eleanor felt very unhappy. The situation jarred on her womanly sensibility. She felt from that time less affection, less respect for Laura. "Was she interested in this young Desmond?" Yes, she was; but how could Laura imagine she was interested in that way? It was a shock to think that Laura could suspect her of consenting to invite a man to her father's house under the circumstances which were evidently assigned for it by Laura.

Laura Bayard misconstrued her pause. Eleanor made a point of never telling the smallest untruth, and she was utterly unskilled in the diplomatic art of evasion.

"Ah, my dear," she said, laughing, "I am afraid you've lost your heart to that good-looking young Irishman. It is queer how such things happen. And, of course, if you take him up socially here in Redwood, everybody else will follow. But the idea of Judge Redwood's daughter marrying an unknown young man, brought up among the factory hands. His mother is a good woman. How she loved that little baby of mine! She baptized it, you know. I couldn't refuse her, — it seemed such a small thing to grant after all her kindness."

Eleanor was silent. She felt as if she had been insulted. Her cheeks were pale now. "What kind of a world was it," she asked herself, "where such interpretations could be put on the simplest action?" She was indignant at her father. Why had he permitted her to invite this Mr. Desmond? He ought to have protected her against such misconceptions. Then she remembered that the Judge would have no more dreamed of interfering with any social suggestions of hers than of asking to be sent as minister to France. Still, she said to herself, very unreasonably, that somebody ought to have protected her.

"I can recall the invitation," she said.

"And why recall it, if you are interested in Mr. Desmond?"

"I am interested in the Desmonds — yes. I can't tell you why," Eleanor said, frightened that so much of her secret had escaped.

Laura looked at her doubtfully. "And why shouldn't you marry him if you like him? He is a Catholic, to be sure; but religion doesn't make much difference now. We are all just what our environment makes us. The main thing is culture and the intellectual life. But American husbands are out of that; they haven't any time for the intellectual life. So if young Desmond isn't too ignorant, you'd not be worse off than other women in Redwood. Besides, Eleanor, it is a good thing for a man to have religion; it keeps him straight," added Laura, with a sigh. "If you marry this Desmond, make him live up to his religion. But marriage is a failure, anyhow."

Eleanor flushed and paled by turns. Living much with her father — when she was not actively engaged in the social amusements and business of the town, — she was not accustomed to this frank discussion of her possibilities. She had thought of marriage in a distant way, as something very beautiful and sacred. She shrank, she knew not why, from Laura Bayard's tone.

"I should think it would be a failure," she said, in a low voice, "when there is no home — and you feed on such books as Ibsen's."

Laura laughed and kissed her. "Preach more," she said. "I wish Harry were here to hear you. How can we have a home? There is not a hired girl to be had in all Redwood. I shouldn't have a moment for culture or social duty, if I kept house. A woman can't be a drudge."

"I should think that we might do what our mothers did."

"Impossible! What would you do without Belinda?"

This was a home thrust; but Eleanor recovered from it. "I shouldn't give Coffees."

Laura laughed. "We should have to return to the quilting festival and the corn husking; but the *Zeitgeist* will not let us. There goes the bell! Come to dinner with me. I'm lonely. Harry is away — ten miles up the railroad."

Laura smoothed her hair, and taking Eleanor's arm, led her down to the dining-room of the hotel. It was an oblong room, dotted with tables. A caster and several bottles — among which those containing ketchup and Worcestershire sauce were most conspicuous — stood in the centre of each table, which was ornamented with a bunch of celery.

Mrs. Bayard assumed a haughty manner as she entered the room, as if unconscious of her pink and green splendor, and of the glances of two or three men who were waiting for the dinner at various tables. A young woman, with a large, black "bang" over her brow, gracefully approached her and said, in a staccato voice:

"Roast beef — giblets — fried pork — potatoes — squash — tomatoes — rutabaga — mince-pie—apple-pie—tea or coffee—cabinet pudding?"

The orders were soon given, and the ladies were confronted with a bewildering array of very little dishes, with a dab of something in each. Eleanor went back mentally to the table at home — from which she was seldom absent, — and thought with a shudder of people condemned to this semi-public life.

"There he is," said Laura suddenly. "There's Patrick Desmond."

She raised her eyes involuntarily, and saw a tall young man neatly attired in a gray suit. He had just taken off his hat and was about to seat himself at a table. He had an easy and graceful air, and his face had a very pleasant expression as he smiled in the direction of the clerk near the door. His eyes met Eleanor's; and in hers he saw a flash of what seemed to him such scorn and contempt that he lowered his.

Laura had watched the pantomime with the acute interest of an idle woman. "A mystery," she thought. "I must find out all about it."

Eleanor had averted her eyes coldly; and Desmond, boiling with rage, was obliged to listen to the voice of the siren, who said:

"Roast beef — giblets — fried pork — "

III.

"Who knows most waits until he knows."
—*Italian Provero.*

WHEN Patrick Desmond left the Howard House after he had exchanged defiant glances with Eleanor Redwood, he felt as some citizen of Paris might have felt in 1790, if the Princesse de Lambelle had glanced down upon him with scorn from her aristocratic height.

Somebody has said: "I have occasionally met with humility among the rich, never among the poor." Taking this saying for what it is worth — and it seems rather harsh, — we may premise that, as a rule, the poor man is prouder than his rich brother. And no doubt the wretched Parisian who caught the head of the Princesse de Lambelle on his pike could be really more insolent and arrogant than she had ever dreamed of being.

Eleanor Redwood was no princess; she was not even an aristocrat, though, like most American girls who have read many imported novels, she would have been if she knew how. She was neither arrogant nor insolent. But Desmond read both these hateful attributes in her eyes. And in his, too, which had only been amazed at first by her flash of defiance, she read haughtiness and contempt. His eyes said to her: "I know how false you are. Go, leave your comfort and luxury, and give me the place that is mine. Go, if you are not utterly worthless, since I refrain from forcing you to."

"Oh! I hate him," Eleanor murmured, half-aloud. For a second she had forgotten the presence of Laura Bayard.

"Hate whom?" demanded Mrs. Bayard, who had been watching her intently.

"Oh! was I speaking? — it was nothing," replied Eleanor, nervously. "I am absent-minded, — that is, the responsibility of this Coffee, you know. And Belinda is so *queer*."

Mrs. Bayard smiled. "You hate Belinda? — I understand. So do I. But what do you think of Mr. Desmond?"

Eleanor, unaccustomed to hide her feelings, started, and then looked away from her companion. "I don't think of Mr. Desmond at all. I don't see why I should."

Mrs. Bayard was silent. She watched the color subsiding from Desmond's face. He gulped a cup of coffee, took a small piece of bread, and left the room.

"He looks as if he had been hit hard," she said to herself. "But what can it mean? I *must* find out."

A look at Eleanor's face was enough to tell her that questions would be useless. Eleanor said nothing for some time, she played with the contents of all the little dishes, and wished with all her heart that she were home, in her own room. She suddenly realized that Laura Bayard was not congenial to her. The dingy room with its mingled odors, Laura's pearl-powder sown in the wrinkles of her old-young face, her garish dress, her cynical prattle, sickened Eleanor. That glance from Desmond's clear eyes had made her feel mean and commonplace. And the amiable disbelief insinuated in half a dozen ways by Laura as to her indifference to Desmond irritated her extremely.

At last the dinner was over and Eleanor was heartily thankful. Mrs. Bayard bustled upstairs, chattering all the way. Eleanor was silent; she felt very much alone. On her way up to Mrs. Bayard's room she asked herself whether anybody in the world was so much alone. Where on earth was there one to whom she could go for direction, — one in whom she could entirely confide? Laura Bayard had been a school friend of hers, a gay, flippant girl, with a habit of gushing, and also a habit of flirting. Still, Eleanor, probably because Laura had always expressed intense affection for herself, had looked on her as "good-hearted." But marriage had brought Laura's character out; she had married Harry Bayard, who was employed in the clerical department of the great New York

Midland. Laura had been brought up to amuse herself. In Redwood she was described by that horrible phrase "society girl." And as her parents were of limited means, and her husband of limited means, she, with her entire inability to keep house and her love for society, had found marriage a failure. What he found it was shown by his constant absence from home.

Just at this time there was probably no one whom Laura envied more than Eleanor. Under all her careless prattle there was hidden a dreadful perplexity.

"This is the first day I have dined at the hotel this week," she said. "I have been out at luncheon, Tea or Coffee every day."

"And your husband?" said Eleanor, awakening from her own thoughts.

Laura shrugged her shoulders. "Oh! he gets on."

Eleanor was silent. No, she could not trust so sacred a secret with this woman.

"Does your father give you a large allowance?" asked Laura, with apparent aimlessness.

"As much as I like," answered Eleanor; "but I don't want much. I always give him an account of everything I spend."

Laura's heart sank. How could she ask such an absurdly honest girl as Eleanor to give her a loan and to conceal it from her father? And yet this was what Laura Bayard most wanted at that moment. A long bill for the costumes in which she had dazzled Redwood during the past winter had just come; and, what was worse, she could not secure certain fascinating articles of spring garb until it was paid. Her husband had quarrelled about it in the morning. He had declared that he could not pay it, and accused her of caring for nothing but dress and novels. She had retorted by a charge that he drank; and then, infuriated, he had said that it was well their child had died; if he had lived he would have neither a home nor a mother. This had cut her to the quick; for she felt that in her rage for social dissipation she had neglected the child. She would pay this bill herself or die. She would attire herself in all possible splendor for the spring campaign and secure an invitation to New York, where her sister Elaine lived. She would amuse herself; she would live a broader life. She would let Harry shift for himself; he deserved it; she was disappointed in him.

She ran all this over in her mind while Eleanor sat looking out the window. In the old days the two girls had often sat silent, holding speech at times unnecessary. As the clock struck one Eleanor made a movement to go; she must see about the flowers for the decoration of her rooms. The thought of the flowers brought a little smile to her face at once. She enjoyed by anticipation the pleasure of choosing them.

"You will come early, Laura. You may need to amend my taste."

"I shall come as soon as Harry gets home. I'd go without him if I wasn't afraid that people would talk. And so you will not tell me your secret about Mr. Desmond?"

"No," Eleanor said, startled. The instant she had uttered the word she saw a look of triumph in Laura's face.

"Ah, there *is* a secret, then," Laura said to herself. "Good-by!" and she kissed Eleanor effusively.

Desmond spent a bad afternoon over his books in the office of the great factory in which he was employed. He declared that he would not go to Judge Redwood's to be sneered at; he would leave the place,—he would *not* leave the place; he pictured several scenes in which Eleanor Redwood figured as a suppliant at his feet; he saw himself granting her a wonderful favor,—saving her father's life, and then saying, "This is the man you scorned; he scorns *you* now." But there was not much satisfaction in this. When the clock struck six he had determined to go, and, if occasion arose, overwhelm everybody by his insolence.

"I will make her cower before me," he said to himself. "I will teach them to look down on me, I who am of purer and stronger brain than any of them."

In the meantime Mrs. Bayard sent a card of regret to one of those daily afternoon Teas, which she was sure would bore her. She went to placate Belinda, stung to this action by a feverish desire to escape her own thoughts and a determination to find out Eleanor's secret if possible.

"Eleanor is in love with young Desmond and her father objects. If I get at the details I may frighten some money out of her. I am desperate. I am done with friendship and love — even with Heaven," she said, bitterly. "What a hypocrite Eleanor is," she added. "But she can't deceive me. She'll marry this Desmond before the year is out."

It is remarkable that shallow-minded people never get below the surface indications of their friends' characters. Mrs. Bayard knew that Eleanor was very truthful on all ordinary occasions, but she firmly believed that there was some vein of deceit in her; she could not imagine that there was anybody in existence with nothing to conceal. She was sure now that Eleanor had become engaged to Patrick Desmond, and that the old Judge, and everybody even remotely concerned, were to be kept in the dark. She was certain that Eleanor would never get her father's consent to a marriage with Desmond. Now if, through the testimony of Belinda, she could frighten Eleanor, she felt that her deliverance from debt would be secure. Eleanor would not dare to refuse any demand for a reasonable amount she might make. She had few scruples about this; she said to herself, when her conscience gave her a last expiring sting, that "preservation was the first law of nature." The worst of her condition of mind was, that frivolity had so gradually produced it that she did not know how low she had sunk.

Belinda was in the act of obtaining a great deal of enjoyment out of her household troubles, when Mrs. Bayard arrived at Judge Redwood's. She had sent for two temporary "helps," and their stupidity and blundering were giving her exquisite delight, though she was apparently suffering tortures. In answer to Mrs. Bayard's ring she went to the door, a green veil tied over her head and under her chin, and a most elaborate expression of woe on her features.

"Oh! it's you," she said, holding to the knob.

Mrs. Bayard took no notice of her tone. "Is Eleanor in?" she asked.

"You ought to know where she is better than I do. She's off gallivanting somewhere, while I am wearing out my life with those two jades, that are not worth their salt. They ought to be in the factories, — they are only fit for that kind of slipshod work."

"I don't see how you manage to do all you have to do, Belinda," said Mrs. Bayard, diplomatically. "I thought while I was here that you might give me some ideas about helping the Kindergarten for the little Africans."

Belinda disliked Mrs. Bayard, and she was quite willing to express her dislike; but not if it might damage the prospects of the little Africans. She smiled a grim smile. "Laura might be deceitful," she said to herself, "but she could help the Kindergarten, if she wanted to, all the same."

"Come in a few minutes — do," she said. "I'll let those two creatures in the kitchen idle away their time for a few minutes, while I tell you about dear Mr. Stokes' plans. You have so much influence," she added, "that you could just put the Kindergarten on its feet, if you would."

Mrs. Bayard smiled and accepted Belinda's invitation. The two entered the sitting-room, and Mrs. Bayard congratulated herself on having struck at Belinda's weak point; another of her weak points was, she knew, an intense curiosity about the affairs of those immediately around her.

"Very well, Belinda; I shall not apologize for interrupting you. A housekeeper like you is never so hurried but that she can take a little time; that's the beauty of order. But first, Belinda, before we talk of the Kindergarten, who are these Desmonds?"

"Nobody!" said Belinda, emphatically. "Not that Mrs. Desmond ain't a good woman, but she never had no education; and, besides, she's Irish."

Mrs. Bayard shook her head sadly. "Things are changing, — the Irish are coming to the top. I know, Belinda, that you've said things about my housekeeping, and even about my mother's; they've been repeated to me; but —"

"I did say that your mother was rather slack," answered Belinda, tightening her lips; "and I'm sure she must have been, or she'd have taught you how to make decent bread. Why, Miss Jenks says that your husband said —"

"Never mind; I forgive it all," said Mrs. Bayard. "What do you know about the Desmonds?"

"Why, I know that Mrs. Desmond took care of Mrs. Redwood many a time before they could afford to hire me; and I know that Mrs. Desmond often kept the peace between Mrs. Redwood and the Judge. She was queer, was Mrs. Redwood; she was a Waldron, you know. Look here, Laury!" cried Belinda, aflame with interest, "jest you wait until I come downstairs, and you will see the curiousest letter."

Belinda ran upstairs. When she returned she bore a small tin box in her hand; from it she took a page of letter-paper, yellow and creased.

"Read that," she said. "Mrs. Desmond dropped it one day, and I picked it up. That's about all that's strange I know about the Desmonds, — I could tell you more about other folks. But I don't mind showing you this, for the sake of dear Mr. Stokes' Kindergarten."

Mrs. Bayard languidly took the piece of yellow paper. She would encourage Belinda in this nonsense; it might lead to something. But when she had read the note three times, she looked up at Belinda and said in a cool, hard voice:

"I'll keep this. Count on me to form a ladies' committee for the Kindergarten."

"Oh! keep it," said Belinda, delighted. "But don't say I give it to you. It is only some of Clarissa Waldron's foolishness — I hear them hussies breaking something in the kitchen. I'll be back."

Belinda flew off. Mrs. Bayard, with a sparkle in her eye, read the yellowed note again:

> MRS. DESMOND: — Guard my son as you will guard your life, and I will cherish your child until I can speak out to tell of the wickedness of the man who hates me because I am what I am. Some day the truth will out, and my boy will have his own.
>
> CLARISSA REDWOOD.

Mrs. Bayard laughed softly to herself. "Ah," she said, "I shall get all the money I want from the Judge, without bothering Eleanor. Here's a mystery! I love Belinda!"

IV.

The life that does not rise must lower go;
  Above its level, so the doctors say,
A stream of water cannot higher flow,
  Nor make its way.

—"*The Rose of Ghent.*"

Mrs. Bayard could make nothing of the note that lay in her hand, and yet she felt glad to have it. Between its lines was concealed, she was sure, something which the Judge would probably wish to keep secret. There was a mystery here, and a mystery which might be coined into money; and at this time money was the one thing Laura Bayard desired. She did not consider herself bad: she believed in her heart that she was as good as most people. She was not inclined to do evil for the love of it, but she had never been taught restraint; and as she had naturally no nobility of character, she became, without any resistance, mean and treacherous under temptation. If she had the cultivated conscience which the Catholic has, even when he is not naturally good, and which supplies the place of natural high-mindedness, she would have hesitated before the spectacle of her own baseness.

For noble aims, she had the "society" standards of her town; for the confessional, the gossip and scandal of a circle of women who were as petty as they were unrefined; for great literature, the popular novel. Eleanor's example had brought out the best of her for a time; she was rather afraid of Eleanor, and she had hidden the worst. It must be admitted that her husband had not elevated her; she might have improved him: he was perhaps capable of it. To be well dressed, to outshine their neighbors, to be amused, were the only aims they had; and Laura did not care for anything higher.

Marriage, in her case, had proved a delusion. She had expected ease, and even luxury, and the avoidance of all irksome duties; besides, she had no idea of the value of money, by which these things are bought. The future life had no attraction for her; it was too far off; she was not sure whether she believed in it or not; at any rate, she realized that she must have money to enjoy this. She was the product of a false and systemless education. There were many women like her in Redwood, and she was not the worst of them. In her earlier life her ideals had been sentimental; now she had no ideals at all. If she had been taught to believe in the existence of hell, it might have kept her from many sins she committed. As it was, the vague religion of sweetness and light which she heard occasionally preached had no effect on her life. She had the desire to appear young as long as possible, and to be, as she phrased it, in the social swim.

After a time Belinda came back, flushed with triumph. "I tell you," she said, "I shall have things in ship-shape by to-morrow night. There ain't a woman in town that won't envy my supper. Not but what I feel my sacrifice — for I've got to give up Mr. Stokes' meeting for it; but then, I know that if anything went wrong in this house I'd be blamed for it. And now, Mrs. Bayard, what will you do for the Kindergarten?"

Mrs. Bayard smiled. "Come, Belinda, let us understand each other. You know I can't excite much interest in a Kindergarten for the Africans. People might give them Bibles or clothes, but a Kindergarten seems quite too luxurious."

"You want to back out?" cried Belinda, grimly. "Give me that letter, then."

"Not at all," said Mrs. Bayard; "I want you to be reasonable. There was a time when Baptists and Methodists would send money anywhere and for anything, if the name of the heathen were mentioned; but times have changed. And, besides, what's the use of converting the heathen? The Andover people say they'll get to heaven anyhow, and nobody believes in hell. The truth is, Mr. Stokes can't make much headway with any such absurd idea as a Kindergarten for Africans."

"Why not?" asked Belinda. "If people will give money for sending Bibles to Eye-talians that can't read, why won't they help the poor African child?"

"My dear Belinda, they will help the African child, but not the Kindergartens. Mr. Stokes made a mistake in starting that movement. Why, we haven't even a Kindergarten for white children in Redwood."

Belinda eyed Mrs. Bayard doubtfully. The truth was that she had accepted the Kindergarten scheme on the authority of her director, Mr. Stokes. Mr. Stokes was studying for the ministry, and he was a great authority among the people of Belinda's church.

"We've got to do something," she said. "The Methodists are ahead of us now in church work, and we've got to do something."

"The Kindergarten will not work. Besides, people are rather tired of the heathen, particularly as the ministers are all saying that everybody will be saved anyhow."

"Well, they won't," snapped Belinda.

"I don't know, — I haven't any infallible Mr. Stokes to tell me; but it is bad business for people interested in foreign missions to say so. I remember a time when Africa was all the rage, and any entertainment for any kind of a pagan was sure to succeed. Now, as you have been so kind as to give me this letter, I tell you what I will do. I'll start a concert as soon as the Minuet of the Nations is over, to help Mr. Stokes through his last two years at college. He can't go on, simply because he hasn't the money."

Belinda's eyes brightened. "He is a good young man. And if you think we can't manage the Kindergarten, that will do just as well. I don't care what we do, so Mr. Stokes is in it."

"We'll talk of that later. And now, how did you get this note?"

"Didn't I tell you? Mrs. Desmond let it fall one day, and I picked it up. I didn't trouble much about it. I thought it was only one of the Waldron ways, — Clarissa was full of 'ways.' I believe she read too many novels. And now, Laury, I never said much against you, and I want you to stick to your promise. If you and some more ladies of Redwood take up Mr. Stokes, he's made, — I know that. I want you to promise now, for the Judge will be in soon; he is writing a paper for some law magazine, and he always comes home at half-past two o'clock. I don't know that I was right to give you that note, but I didn't think it made much difference. And you seemed to want to know about the Desmonds; and every scrap counts, you know, sometimes."

"How would you like young Desmond to marry Eleanor?"

"Law sakes! How foolish you do talk. The Judge would never consent to it. Why, he is the most prominent man in Redwood, and Patrick Desmond is nobody. The idea!"

Laura made no reply. Eleanor, then, must know of some mysterious relationship of her mother with the Desmonds. There was nothing in the supposition that Eleanor was sentimentally interested in Desmond; she must dismiss that. The question now was how to use this note to the best advantage. She wanted time to think.

"I'll wait for Eleanor. Count on me in the Stokes matter," she said to Belinda.

"I do say," Belinda remarked, leaving the room, "that Eleanor Redwood has her faults; but if a match could be made between her and Mr. Stokes, *I* wouldn't object. She has the money and he has the brains; though I must say she's too high-flown for a minister's wife."

Mrs. Bayard did not hear her. She went to the window and looked out at the lawn, splendid in the just departing glory of noonday. The scene did not refresh her as it had refreshed Eleanor. In fact, she did not see it. The tulips glowed in vain for her, and the soft green turf might have been snowed under for all she cared, A viciously selfish habit of mind, never resisted, had gradually blinded her to all in the world that did not directly concern herself.

She twirled the note in her fingers, and asked herself over and over again what it meant. Had the Redwoods and the Desmonds exchanged children, as the custom of the melodramatic stage often demands? Laura shrugged her shoulders at this;

and yet, she said to herself, nothing was more probable in real life than the improbable. At her age and with her opportunities, there was no scandal in Redwood for many years back of which she did not know. She had never heard of any quarrel in the Judge's household, although Mrs. Redwood had been generally pronounced "queer." She knit her brows. What could it mean? Anything? Yes, there must be something behind it all; for there was Eleanor's evident interest in Patrick Desmond.

Again she applied herself to the consideration of the worn, yellow piece of paper, written in a nervous, undecided hand. It could only mean that somebody had forced Mrs. Redwood to exchange her child for the child of another. She could not avoid feeling how preposterous such a supposition was. And the conclusion that Eleanor Redwood was really Mrs. Desmond's daughter, and Patrick Desmond the son of Judge Redwood, seemed even more preposterous. Again and again she read the letter. Again and again she asked herself what could be the motive for such an exchange. How could it have been accomplished, and who could have forced Mrs. Redwood to make it? The Judge? But why?

The more Mrs. Bayard thought of the complication, the more unreal it seemed to become. At any rate, here were the words written by Judge Redwood's late wife. The question was, How could they be profitably utilized? The Judge would not want such a note to remain in the hands of a person outside of his own family. Would he buy the letter?

At this question a gleam of her better self played over Laura's mind. Vanity, frivolity, scepticism, the outcome of the false philosophy of her social life, had not entirely destroyed all her womanliness. The Judge had been her hero when she was a little girl. He had petted her, he had told her stories; in fact, he had made her share all the amusements of his daughter, — amusements which had been more costly than her own people could afford. She had no memories of him but pleasant memories. How could she dare to attempt to bargain with him for a letter which, as an honorable woman, even if unbound by the ties of gratitude, she ought gladly restore to him?

The vision of her hopeless debts, and the future which depended on the payment of those debts, arose before her. She *must* have money. "Everybody for himself." How often had she heard that quoted in a society where business meant a pagan disregard of every right except that of getting a certain amount of money from every human being with whom a man had "business relations." She said to herself that she would in a few minutes be in business relations with

Judge Redwood. She called to her mind all the similar situations in the novels she had read; she walked over to the long mirror between the back windows and tried to assume the attitude of a glittering adventuress. She took off her glove to show the half a dozen rings on her fingers, with that theatrical taste which had been cultivated in her by much reading of the current novels. There was such a mixture of falseness and reality in her mind that she could not divide one from the other. She flashed her hand before the glass, with the diamonds glittering in her rings and the note held between her thumb and fingers. She felt for the moment like a bold, bad adventuress of the popular romances.

A key turned in the lock; the Judge crossed the hall and entered the room. He was as genial and pleasant-looking as usual.

"Ah! Laura," he said, shaking hands. "How young you look. And I am sure you were just saying so to yourself. Before the glass, — eh? I shouldn't have come in here, but I wanted to find Eleanor. I must leave for Eaglescliff at 2:50. Is she at home?"

"I am waiting for her," Mrs. Bayard answered.

"I wish you would tell her to have my bag packed and to send it up by the 4:30. I haven't time to wait for it now. You young people will not miss me at Eleanor's party to-morrow night.

Tell her I'll be back the day after to-morrow. Important case."

"Judge," said Mrs. Bayard, nervously, "you can spare five minutes. I want to talk to you about this — this note."

The Judge raised his eyes in surprise to Mrs. Bayard's face. He took the note from her extended hand. His face became grave.

"Where did you get this? — not from Mrs. Desmond?"

"No," she stammered; "I found it in an old box of letters."

"You are a good girl, Laura," he said. All the buoyancy had left his face. "You are a good girl, — you always were; though I have thought of late that your way of life was spoiling you. Ah, my dear," he added, with a sigh, as he laid the little piece of paper, which he tenderly smoothed with his hand, within the leaves of his note-book, "if after the death of one we love we could not go back to the best in that dear one's life, and forget the worst, what consolation could be left us." Then moved, perhaps, by a look in Mrs. Bayard's eyes, the Judge continued: "Clarissa was the best of wives and mothers. She was as good and truthful as her daughter, and you know and love her daughter. I am glad this fell into *your* hands; I am sure that you, the dear friend of our family, will not ask for an explanation that would be very painful."

Mrs. Bayard did not speak. Now was her time to declare that she was poor; that her husband would not pay her debts, that she needed money. But the simple dignity of the Judge moved her. She murmured something; she heard the front door open; there was a little rustle in the hall, and Eleanor, flushed and hurried, entered.

"O papa," she said, "they told me at the office that you had gone. And you will miss my Coffee. Oh! *do* stay, dear."

"I can't, Eleanor. There — kiss me. The buggy is waiting. Good-by."

He was off.

"Why, what is the matter with papa? He doesn't look like himself."

Laura gave no answer. Eleanor stood at the window for an instant, a vague feeling of alarm possessing her. She caught sight of the note-book he had forgotten to put in his pocket. The buggy passed the window, her father waving his hand at her; she held up the book to him, and as she did so the faded note in her mother's writing fluttered to the carpet. She had caught it before Mrs. Bayard could move toward it. The buggy had gone. Eleanor glanced at the paper.

"I wonder if this book is important to papa —" The words died on her lips. She saw the signature, "Clarissa Redwood," and read the words in the writing she loved to see.

Laura watched her eagerly. Mortification at her failure at the critical moment in the *rôle* of adventuress had been merged into curiosity. Eleanor stood with her face to the window. She did not speak until Mrs. Bayard had broken the silence.

"I fancy I had better go, Nora. I came to see Belinda about her church work."

"If you must go —" Eleanor did not finish the sentence. She turned toward Laura, her eyes full of tears. "Oh! I am so unhappy, Laura."

Mrs. Bayard took her hand tenderly and kissed it. "Tell me all."

"No," Eleanor answered, — "no — I have nothing to tell. Perhaps I had better go to my room and rest."

On this hint, Mrs. Bayard went. She knew that there had gradually widened a gulf between her and her friend. She saw now that the gulf could be bridged only by a heart, and she felt that she was heartless.

V.

A daffodil upon his breast,
And hope within his heart,
He felt the world was at its best,
And bade dark care depart.
— *Old Ballad.*

In spite of her anxiety and unhappiness, Eleanor contrived to neglect none of the details of her coming social function. At her age it requires very immediate pain to make one fail to get any possible pleasure out of the present. And Eleanor was of a temperament which could concentrate itself on the present very intensely.

Belinda was too intent on the task of making the lives of her assistants a burden, to think much about the note she had given Mrs. Bayard in her impulsive wish to win that young woman over to an interest in the Kindergarten. Nevertheless, she had a vague uneasiness about it; she had meant it as a sop to Mrs. Bayard's evident curiosity about the Desmonds — nothing more. Belinda had no desire to give her employer trouble; she had acted on an impulse, which she afterward regretted. It had not occurred to her that Mrs. Redwood's "nonsense" could make more than a passing ripple of mischief.

Eleanor began to be somewhat nervous as the hour for the assembly drew near. In Redwood chaperons were unheard of. Young girls roved everywhere at will; and the young girl who did not take the most prominent part in all the social functions in which her family was concerned was looked on as a poor sort of a creature. Eleanor had a natural delicacy which prevented her from taking all the privileges which the etiquette of Redwood permitted her; still she thought it entirely proper that she should do the honors of her father's house without the help of any older woman. But, as she waited for the guests, she heartily wished that her father were at home. This would have seemed very absurd to most of the Redwood young people in "society," to whom fathers and mothers were social encumbrances when amusement was in question. But the Judge was Eleanor's all, and she loved him so much that a day's absence from him was a great trial to her. Besides, this Coffee had been really put back until the evening in order that it might not be what the Judge called a "hen party."

Eleanor could have conducted this without a tremor, but the prospect of entertaining the men bothered her. Would they want to smoke in the parlor? Should she hand them cigars? Would they stand in the doorways and talk among themselves? Would they dance, if it were proposed? Would Deacon Krembs and the other church members leave the house if a dance were begun? She was sure of the Episcopalians; their minister did not object to taking a turn himself; but she was afraid that the elder Methodists and Baptists might not like it; she was quite sure the younger ones would. But if she did not have a dance, what *could* she do with them all? Dancing was the only substitute for conversation she could think of. Cards were, of course, impossible.

"Why can't you have kissing games? Church members are used to them. Mr. Stokes mightn't like dancing — I do think it's improper myself; but I am sure Copenhagen needn't offend the most God-fearin'," Belinda said, as she pulled Eleanor about in an ecstasy of fussiness, by way of assisting at her toilet.

"They're vulgar," said Eleanor.

Belinda sniffed. "But they're not sinful, like dancin'," she said. "Sin ain't nothin' to some people, providing they are in the fashion. And I hear there is a Romanist coming. A fine time he'll have, laughing over the whole thing with his priests in the confession boxes. He'll think that we're as bad as he is. I declare if I was quite sure that the jelly in my feather-cake was all right, I'd leave the house this minute."

"Oh! do be quiet, Belinda," Eleanor said, pinning a little pearl brooch in the high neck of her white silk gown. "Oh! *what* shall I do with them all? If there were only somebody to call the figures."

The gas was lit all over the house. Eleanor grew very nervous between anxiety and timidity. And then the thought that Patrick Desmond was to be among her guests was a constant undercurrent to her other thoughts. It was a deep and ominous bass below the light treble of discordant anxieties.

The musicians had come; they were stationed at the top of the staircase. Eleanor's heart almost stopped beating as she drew on her gloves. In a moment more she would have to decide everything that was not yet decided. Oh! why did not Laura Bayard come? She would know all about the cigars. Eleanor went downstairs, and the *frou-frou* of the soft silk of her gown gave her courage. After all, there was pleasure in being well dressed. She stood before the tall mirror in the back parlor, and looked at the reflected rooms with satisfaction. Smilax was wreathed everywhere with carnations, and there were great vases of red tulips. The dining-room and sitting-room on the other side of the hall, had been arranged for the possible dance. Eleanor examined them: they were satisfactory.

Suddenly a pang shot through her heart. These were not hers, but Patrick Desmond's; and she was not in her own home at all, but in his. The thought was too hideous; she felt that she could almost laugh at it. There must be some explanation of her mother's note,—some explanation of the mysterious words her mother had once spoken to her. How well she remembered those words—"You are enjoying the birthright of another. Nothing here is really yours." These words had saddened her life for the last few years. And yet, with the singular reticence that keeps words that should be spoken back from the lips of those nearest to each other, she had never dared to ask her mother the meaning of them. And her mother had added: "Young Desmond should be in your place." This all came back to her now; but she cast it away. Well, the hour was hers; she would enjoy it. The smilax and flowers, the music, the new gown,—they at least were hers for a time. She would be Eleanor Redwood for one night at least, even if to-morrow she were cast out a beggar.

Patrick Desmond was much more agitated in mind than he was willing to admit. His mother irritated him by frankly announcing that she considered that Miss Redwood's Coffee was a veritable epoch in his life. Desmond resented it—perhaps because he himself, in his secret heart, regarded it as something of an epoch. Mrs. Desmond, not knowing that the Judge scarcely recollected that she still lived in Redwood, was loud in praises of the fact that he remembered her birthday every year. Last year he had sent her the hyacinths, the year before a beautiful Maltese cat,—Mrs. Desmond went on, not knowing that these things had been done by Eleanor, because her father had once told her to remember Mrs. Desmond on a certain day in each year, and then forgotten all about it himself.

Patrick hated all this; he was full of resentment against the Redwoods; and, to escape his mother's talk, he went up to his room. He had come home early; he had some hours before him, and various questions began to trouble him. He was too proud to ask Benson Eastwood about the etiquette of Redwood society; and now, alone in his room, with the great function appallingly near him, he wished he had secured a few points. Among some ancient books in the attic was the "Gentleman's Own Book of Deportment," printed at London in 1815. Into this stained and dog-eared little volume Patrick plunged. The compendium was founded on Lord Chesterfield's letters, with notes doubtless by Beau Brummel. "A gentleman," Patrick was informed, "always takes an ice at twelve o'clock, particularly in Paris, where the ices are particularly good." After this he turned the leaves disconsolately, until he learned that "gentlemen in England never plunge their knives into their mouths. One should remember the remark of the lady of quality on Dr. Johnson's (the great lexicographer) putting a knife between his lips. 'I thought,' she exclaimed, 'that the wretch would cut his head in two!'" He learned also that buff waistcoats were no longer the *mode* for evening wear in London. Benson Eastwood, as a monitor of fashion, was entirely out of the question. Benson was a good fellow; but he had a habit of laughing, and he might possibly get some amusement from the bewilderment of a novice about to enter society.

He thought of Mr. Stokes, with whom he was slightly acquainted; but, on consideration, he came to the conclusion that Mr. Stokes, who wore a straw hat and a linen dust-coat for nine months of the year, was hardly the person to modernize Beau Brummel's maxims. There was Jack Conlon. Jack was an ecclesiastical student, who had come back from the seminary in New York to remain with his father, who was slowly dying of consumption. And there was old Dr. Talbot. But Dr. Talbot lived too far away. Desmond resolved to consult Jack. He took his hat, and calling out to his mother that he would be back in five minutes, went down to the river. Almost on the very brink, in a green oasis not yet invaded by factories, the Conlons lived.

Desmond found Jack in the garden, smoking a long pipe. He had a clerical look already. He was tall, rather lank, with close-cut hair, a long black coat. His face, well shaven, was good-humored and kindly; yet with a slight twinkle in the eyes that betrayed a sense of humor.

"Halloo, Pat!" he said. "Smoke?"

"No time," Desmond answered. "I wish I had," he added, with a groan. "I've got to go through a terrible ordeal to-night, and I want you to give me a point or two about it."

"What ordeal?" asked Jack Conlon. "And what points?"

"Oh! I am going into society; Judge Redwood is having a party, and he has asked me."

"And you don't show a proper degree of elation," said Jack, smiling and drawing at his pipe. "Just look at the opaline in that sunset. Do you know, I think I'd take to poetry, if I were sure the authorities at the seminary wouldn't find it out. They can't endure poetry in a priest, unless he disguises it as prose. See how that opaline color changes to pale blue, —

'The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober coloring from an eye —'"

"O Jack, stop! What kind of clothes ought I to wear?"

"All you have," said Jack, pushing some new tobacco into his pipe; "that's the rule in Redwood. A red flannel shirt will not do. You might let a suspicion of one show below your coat sleeves, just to let people know you are rich enough to have such a garment; but too much display is considered vulgar."

Desmond made a gesture of impatience. "I haven't much time."

"I don't know why you come to me, then."

"You've been in New York, and you ought to know about these things better than I do."

"Of course," said Jack, "we always dressed for dinner at the seminary, and wore dressing-gowns all the morning. But really, Pat," he said, changing his tone, "I don't know what you ought to wear. It wouldn't do to lounge into Judge Redwood's in a light-colored coat. I know that, though some of these barbarians will probably do it. I honestly think," he said, with a sudden inspiration, "you ought to get yourself up as if you were going to a funeral."

Desmond was silent. The wisdom of this advice gradually became apparent to him.

"Do you know whether they dance at these things or not? And shall I have to wear gloves? And — I wish I could back out."

"Don't back out," said Jack, gravely. "Clothe yourself in your right mind, and be as nice as you can. Doubtless these people mean to be kind; and as you are probably the first specimen of the Irish-American — if there be any such creature — who has penetrated into the sanctity of Redwood society, go forth and show your blood. Don't worry about your clothes. You may rest assured that half Redwood, which is just beginning to be civilized, will be as uneasy as you are."

"Where did you learn all this?" asked Patrick, somewhat comforted.

"From books on Moral Philosophy," laughed his companion.

In the meantime the postman, who had two "deliveries" in Redwood, had left a letter for Mrs. Desmond. It was postmarked "New York." It was enclosed in a large Nile-green envelope, heavily scented with heliotrope, and ornamented with a monogram in red and gold. It was in answer to one written the week before by Mrs. Desmond. The mother had seen for some time that her son needed a change; every day she feared that he would announce an intention of leaving Redwood. She had a friend in New York, her sister's own daughter, who had made a great match, and to her Mrs. Desmond had applied. And indeed this niece of hers had every reason to be grateful; for never had Mrs. Desmond refused an application for help from this sister when her children were small and their needs many. The Nile-green envelope and the gorgeous monogram, which symbolized "N. G.," marvellously entwisted, lay beside Desmond's plate when he returned from his visit to Jack Conlon. There was a look of mild triumph in Mrs. Desmond's eyes as she called his attention to it. If Patrick must leave her, it would be well that he should go to "his own." The letter ran as follows:

THE GRAND WINDSOR, HARLEM,
April 6, 18—.

DEAR AUNT: — I hasten to answer your epistle of the 30th, hoping to find you in good health. My husband, the Hon. Miles Galligan, will soon need a secretary, and when I received your letter I at once recommended Patrick. As we move in the best society, we shall expect him to be up to the mark in every way. I shall leave New York with my nurse and child, on June 1, for a tour in the country, ending at Saratoga, where many of my husband's friends meet every summer. If Patrick could be here by the first of May, it would suit us very well. The salary will depend very much on a bill which my husband is trying to have passed. This bill will give each overworked member an extra clerk. And if you could see how they work at their committees, — sometimes up all night. Little Miley is a fine boy, and I am sure he will take to his cousin, though he is only two years old. The Longworthys — stuck-up creatures, I always hated that Esther! — are in Europe. I wrote to you about them once; at any rate you have seen their names in the New York papers. If Patrick drinks, you needn't send him.

Yours to command,
NELLIE GALLIGAN.

Desmond laughed scornfully. "What does she take me for? 'If Patrick drinks —'"

"It may be a great chance," said his mother, nervously. "And Nellie's made a great match entirely. She says her husband is one of the greatest statesmen of the day."

"And so you want me to go away, mother?" he said, with a touch of tenderness in his voice.

"God knows I don't, dear," she answered, tremulously; "but if you must go, I hope you'll go among your own flesh and blood. I haven't seen my sister for many years — not since she made a trip down here with little Nellie. We separated at Castle Garden; she stayed in New York and married; and I came here, a young girl, with a family that was going farther West."

"I don't like this letter," said Patrick, sniffing at the musk-laden envelope. "The woman writes like an upstart."

"Oh, no — don't be too severe!" said Mrs. Desmond, anxious to defend "her own." "She has a good heart and she means to be kind."

Patrick made no answer; it was time to prepare for the "epoch." He took a candle and went upstairs. His mother fluttered about the foot of the staircase, anxious to see the young Apollo reappear. She had provided a pair of white kid gloves, and a nosegay for his buttonhole. At last he came, his rather long hair very much brushed, and the ends of his mustache curled upward. His frock-coat was open in front, revealing a white satin tie, a black waistcoat, and black broadcloth trousers. The white gloves made his hands appear large, and he felt uncomfortable. Three large hothouse daffodils and a spray of fern adorned the left lapel of his coat. He carried in his hand a Derby hat, and he said to his mother:

"Am I all right?"

The high collar almost cut his chin in two, the gloves were obnoxiously tight, and the bunch of daffodils made him feel foolish, — but he forgot all these things as he saw the tears in his mother's eyes.

"Ah, dear," she said in her soft voice, "you're the image of your father at your age."

He kissed her, and passed out; she looked after him, standing at the door. It was a happy moment in Mrs. Desmond's life.

VI.

. . . They freeze, they petrify me. They may talk of a burning mountain, or some such *bagatelle.* But to me a modest woman dressed out in all her finery is the most tremendous object in the whole creation. — *Marlow, in "She Stoops to Conquer."*

Desmond paused a moment before entering Judge Redwood's house. It was a large, rambling structure of wood, built after no particular plan. It was so thoroughly lighted within that every window stood out of the darkness with startling distinctness. A row of Chinese lanterns hung from the roof of the porch. The house was set back somewhat from the street; and on the lawn, among the tulip beds, white lanterns made an odd effect, giving an air of unreality to the commonplace surroundings. A buggy drove up to the garden gate, and then a cab. Desmond saw a flutter of white dresses, and then one of the dark shadows that accompanied the party in the cab came toward him.

"How do you do, Desmond?" said the voice of the shadow. "I was afraid I should miss you. Come in."

It was Benson Eastwood. Desmond followed him up the pathway between the two lines of nodding tulips. The hall reached, Benson Eastwood presented him to one of the hooded and cloaked ladies in white.

"Mr. Desmond, my sister Rena."

Desmond bowed. The young lady murmured something, and disappeared upstairs. Desmond caught sight of moving colors in the parlor and the wreaths of smilax. Belinda, almost covered by a long white apron, led the way to the Judge's study, at the end of the hall. There was a great assemblage of hats and coats. A dressing-case had been moved into this apartment, on which was placed a large ivory-backed brush and a silver comb. These articles reposed on a large red plush cushion. Patrick felt a thrill of disgust when Benson Eastwood passed these sacred implements over his head. It was wrong to use things evidently intended for show. Benson was short, stout, blond, with florid cheeks, and a Prince Albert coat that had evidently been made for him before he had come to weigh over one hundred and ninety. His necktie was a different red from his cheeks, but still very red. A red coral pin in the necktie further emphasized the redness of his complexion. He turned to examine Patrick critically.

"You'll do," he said, adjusting a red rose in the button of his coat. "But you must take off those gloves; nobody wears gloves in Redwood."

Patrick gladly complied with this advice, sighing with relief in the thought that he was at last in the hands of somebody that "knew." Benson took another glance at him; but he made no further suggestions, for several friends came into the room. Nearly all these gentlemen wore black coats of various shapes; but they seemed to have devoted immense thought to their neckties, which were all of the flamboyant order; and in the centre of each there was a diamond, large or small, — mostly large.

When Benson and his friends had exchanged greetings and talked a little "shop," Patrick was led upstairs, to be given in charge of the fair Rena.

"You'll look after my sister, you know," the brother said, with an engaging wink. "I've got to look after some other fellow's."

Desmond was expected to laugh at this, but he was too nervous to speak. He found himself in the centre of a group of ladies, attired in pink and blue and black, who stood chatting in the corridor; he felt as if he had dropped into a kaleidoscope. He began to understand Goldsmith's hero's opinion, that the most impressive and oppressive thing on earth was a gentlewoman attired in her best.

After a while Rena Eastwood, florid and blond like her brother, but not so stout, and with a knowledge of the application of grammatical rules which he did not possess, fluttered out of the room reserved for the ladies. She was a vision of white lace and ribbons.

"Mr. Desmond, I believe?" she said, putting a white-gloved hand softly on Patrick's arm. "Didn't you say that I was to take Mr. Desmond down, Benson?"

"That's the ticket," cried Benson, as a tall girl in yellow and black moved toward him.

Miss Eastwood's voice was dovelike; she spoke with a most fascinating drawl. She never said "Yes"; she always said "Ya-as," with the most dulcet accent on the last syllable. And Desmond was not happy. He began to ask himself how he should get rid of her when he wanted to go. They descended the stairs slowly, while the orchestra played "The Sweet By and By,"—Belinda having ordered this as a kind of atonement for the dance music which she was told was to follow.

"Isn't it funny how fond short men are of tall girls?" Rena warbled, as Patrick put his soul into trying to avoid stepping on a long pink train in front of him. "Isn't it funny?"

Patrick did not know; and, not being accustomed to the small dishonesties of society, he could not give an opinion without having any.

"Now, our Ben is positively *infatuated* with that Carrie Redfield. *Isn't* she awful?"

Patrick blushed; how could he tell?

"Oh, I do hope they have olives to-night! I *love* olives!"

Patrick could not see his way clear either to the hating of Miss Redfield or the loving of olives. He wished the stairs were not so long, and that the pink train would move faster. Miss Eastwood prattled away, quite conscious of her pretty gown, and anxious that everybody should see her leading captive the handsomest man in the room.

At last Desmond and she stepped in front of the group in which their hostess stood. Eleanor had stationed herself in front of the great mirror, the frame of which was entirely covered with smilax. Beside her was Laura Bayard, attired in a bewildering arrangement of green and rose-color; and not far off was Mr. Bayard, a pale, black-whiskered man, with a weak chin and a narrow forehead.

Eleanor towered above everybody about her, — but "towered" is a bad word; for a young birch or pine hardly towers, and she had all the grace of a young tree. Desmond's native taste chose her out of all present as the most distinguished woman. Her simple white gown and her pearl pin, in which had been caught a spray of arbutus, made all the reds and blues and diamonds and bunches of roses in the room seem vulgar. Miss Eastwood presented Desmond to her and the Bayards. She held out her hand and looked at him with a strange interest in her eyes. Mrs.

Bayard was effusive, — she was *so* happy, and used the dovelike accent which was so great a part of Miss Eastwood's social charm. Desmond shook hands with her husband very coolly. He had heard of that gentleman.

Desmond forgot his defiance as he looked at Eleanor. She was a very stately creature and he acknowledged to himself that it would be an honor to pick up her glove, or to throw a cloak in the mud before her, after the fashion of Sir Walter Raleigh. Standing before her, Desmond felt a sense of inferiority.

"I am sorry papa is not here to tell you how glad he — happy to see you, Mr. Eastwood. How sweet of you to come, Miss Redfield!"

A hot flush came to his cheek as he felt that he had been pushed aside. He looked at Miss Eastwood to see how she took it; but the young girl seemed relieved.

"I do hate to stand that way thinking of things to say," she said. "If that is a bowl of lemonade over there, do take me to it. Some people have claret punch at parties, but I think it is wicked. Do you think that hard cider is wicked? Some people do."

He almost wished he could drown the sweet young creature in the bowl of lemonade; he wanted to hide himself in a corner where he could watch Eleanor Redwood, and get away as soon as possible. So this was amusement, — this walking about and trying to find something to say. He wished he were back at home reading "The Parnell Movement" to his dear old mother. While Miss Eastwood drank a glass of iced lemonade and chatted to two or three men near her, Patrick felt, with a pang, that he had no right where he was. He was in his real place in the little house over the river, with the rag carpet and the cook stove, and all the other homely surroundings. His mother could have no place here, how could he? The flowers, the gay frocks, the light, the music, made a new world for him, in which he had no right. A little later he lost this mood, which was at once one of exaltation and abasement. But to-night Eleanor was a princess of a finer mould than he, of another race, as it were. "Let it be so," he said bitterly; "let it be so." He would go to New York, away from all this brilliance, and remain with his own people.

The clerk at the Howard House, who had the largest diamond pin in the room, passed him with a condescending nod. Dr. Talbot smiled benignantly, and Mrs. Talbot waved her black gloves — which she never wore, — and asked him how his mother's throat was. The keeper of the livery stable told Miss Eastwood just to give him "the wink" when she wanted to go home; he'd change his coat and drive her out in a jiffy. "And don't forget, Rena," he added, "to keep a dance for me."

Several people came to speak to Patrick, but there was a general air of stiffness. Mr. and Mrs. Bayard, who were usually seen apart, clung together until some of the men, encouraged by Benson Eastwood, who had a way of making himself at home, went into the Judge's study to smoke. Patrick would have liked to follow them, but Miss Eastwood held to him with a firm grasp. He felt tongue-tied. It seemed to him that her talk was too absurd to take literally, and yet impossible to be considered metaphorically unless she were a chattering idiot. Inexperienced as he was, he did not allow for the poor girl's society manner. In ordinary life Miss Eastwood was sensible enough.

After a time that young woman grew tired of so unresponsive a partner and she excused herself to take the arm of another amiable chatterer, who had stood near her elbow for ten minutes, bent on making Desmond feel that he was very much "out" of social "swim," as he did not understand any of the allusions made.

"Good-looking fellow," the second chatterer said, as he passed Desmond.

"Oh, yes! but so stupid," answered Miss Eastwood. "And I never could forgive his horrid name — 'Patrick.' It's just awfully vulgar."

Desmond felt as if a flame had passed by him.

"I will make you respect it," he said, half-aloud, with involuntary anger. Turning, the anger still in his eyes, he saw Eleanor Redwood near him. He saw at once that she had heard the speech and his *sotto-voce* answer. There was sympathy in her eyes — not sympathy *for* him, he had sense enough to see that; but the only sympathy — sympathy *with* him.

"Do you find it very dull, Mr. Desmond?" she said. "I couldn't come to talk to you before, because a hostess has duties; and as I am not certain what they are, I've been obliged to be very careful. But there will be a dance after a while. Ben Eastwood has agreed to call the figures. It will come soon, too, for the Methodist minister, dear Mr. Jamison, has just gone, and his people don't mind dancing when he is out of the way."

Eleanor spoke clearly and directly, without a particle of affectation.

"Why, they have begun already," she added, as the fiddlers struck up the Lanciers. "As the hostess, I suppose I may ask you to dance?"

Patrick felt the charm of her manner and the kindliness of her intention. Like most proud people, he was sensitive; and, in this instance, the sensitiveness corrected the pride. Generally it sets pride afire.

"But I don't dance," he said, with a smile. "This is my first party."

"And you haven't enjoyed it."

"I am beginning to enjoy it," he answered, smiling again; and then, remembering that this was rather an indifferent compliment to Miss Eastwood, he stammered out: "That is, I enjoy it just as much as anybody can enjoy, — that is — "

"It *is* a warm night," said Eleanor, apparently not attending to what he said. "I am sure you know many people here. I should like to have smaller assemblies, but one must pay off one's indebtedness. I have positively *everybody* here. And in Redwood one must ask the town. If one tried to draw a line one would soon be left alone."

Patrick, recalling his experience with Miss Eastwood, thought that this might be a good thing to do; he, however, enjoyed the flattery of being placed by implication among those who could draw the line.

"Oh! I almost forgot to speak about the Minuet of the Nations. The night has been fixed. It will be the 5th of May. Mr. Eastwood spoke about it, I think."

"Yes, but you know I can't dance; and, besides, I shall have to leave Redwood about the 1st. I am going to New York."

The prospect of the Minuet of the Nations decided him; he would be the Hon. Miles Galligan's secretary.

"And must you really go? I am afraid it will spoil our plans."

"I am sorry," he said; and for the moment he was sorry. A little persuasion and he would have thrown over the "Honorable Miles." Eleanor was not at all insolent and arrogant, and how could he take on the haughty tone he had been assuming all day in his thoughts? Desmond had a clear-cut, honest look, such as Perdita probably noticed in Prince Florizel. Eleanor scrutinized him with one of those quick glances in which women are adept, while he turned his profile toward her, as he made room for some guests to pass. What did he know of the mystery? Or did he know it at all? He had not the air of proprietorship he might have assumed under the circumstances.

"And so this is your first party — or Coffee, as we have come to call these assemblies in Redwood? It's a very absurd name, I think; though you shall really have some coffee as soon as the Lanciers is over. Do you think you will ever go to another?"

"If you ask me," Patrick answered, recovering his spirits.

"But you will be in New York. Tell me, how does my party impress you?"

"Everybody has an air of being very rich, very contented and — very stiff."

"The last must be my fault; I am a poor hostess. But if you think they are content, I am somewhat relieved. I fancy they are not all very rich; but, on the whole, Redwood is a very prosperous place."

"I did not think so, Miss Redwood," Patrick said, "until I read a new book by John Longworthy, on 'Poverty and Sin.' Of course I know my own side of the river best, and some of us are very poor there; but no one is so wretched as thousands are in New York or London."

"So you have read Longworthy's 'Poverty and Sin'?" said Eleanor, eagerly. "Papa had it, and he told me that the author had studied the subject by living in the slums of New York. I can hardly believe that the awful things he says are true."

"I am afraid they are," Patrick said, much interested; "and if they are, we in Redwood don't know what poverty is. I have been poor all my life," he went on, reddening slightly; "but I have never suffered as the children of the poor suffer in New York."

Eleanor looked at him with a startled glance. "What would you do if somebody kept you poor by enjoying what was rightly yours?"

Patrick laughed. "I should claim it at once; for, above all things, I long to be rich."

"And does your mother long to be rich, too?"

"My mother? O, my mother is content. She is very religious, you know; she is a saint. To make me happy, she would rejoice in the direst poverty. She is pious — but of course you don't understand that."

"I don't?" asked Eleanor, with a shade of annoyance on her face. "I suppose Benson Eastwood told you that I am impious."

"Good gracious, no!" cried Patrick, wishing that he had learned by heart what he ought to say before he entered society. "But you are not a Catholic, as my mother is."

Eleanor made no reply. "Well," she said to herself, "Catholics *are* bigoted and rude." Nevertheless Desmond's admiration for his mother above all other women impressed her.

"I shall go to see your mother sometime," she said.

It was Desmond's turn to start. He contrasted what seemed to him the luxury around him with the bareness of his own home. No, Eleanor Redwood must not have the opportunity of making such a comparison.

A voice broke the short silence that succeeded Eleanor's speech.

"I don't intend that you shall monopolize Mr. Desmond," said Laura Bayard, in that affected tone he had noticed in Miss Eastwood. "A lot of people are asking for refreshments, Nora."

Eleanor exclaimed, "O Laura, I forgot!" and disappeared.

"Come, sit down," Mrs. Bayard said. "I want to talk to you. I heard you say a moment ago that this was your first party. It seems to me that you bear the strain with a great deal of assurance. You seem to have got on famously."

Patrick took a chair near Mrs. Bayard. "It must be my Irish blood,—it carries me with diffidence and timidity." His spirits were rising, and he began to think that a Coffee was rather pleasant.

"They are bringing in the little tables for the refreshments, and I'll have to look for my husband; so I have just time to ask you whether you would not like to be the owner of this house and all that Judge Redwood has?"

Mrs. Bayard did not notice that Belinda was in the act of placing a little table about a foot behind her chair.

"I do not know what you mean," began Patrick, evidently embarrassed.

"Well, *I* know," she went on. "Everything here can be yours if you want it. In fact, it is yours by right already."

"You don't mean that—" Patrick reddened to the roots of his hair, and in his heart objurgated for the thousandth time his habit of blushing.

"It's absurd, Mrs. Bayard. You must think I am a fool—"

"Here comes Harry. Come to luncheon to-morrow at the Howard House as usual, and I can tell you what I mean."

She snapped her tinseled fan at him, and, turning, fairly ran into the arms of Belinda, who pinched her arm viciously.

"Laury," she whispered, "if I knew what I know now, you'd not have got hold of that letter. Why, I thought you knew what it meant, — your mother did. And I just gave you that to satisfy your curiosity. I heard what you said to young Desmond, and you've made a big mistake. Laury, as sure as I live, you're a *viper!*"

VII.

"A touch of Nature—"

DESMOND said good-by to Eleanor with a group of other people who were taking their leave. She scarcely noticed him, so occupied was she with her duties as hostess. He was rather glad of this: he wanted time to think; and he felt that he could not have spoken to her, after Mrs. Bayard's hint, without embarrassment.

He walked hastily home. There was a light in the parlor, and as he entered a slight rustle on the stairs told him that his mother had been waiting for him. He did not sleep as well as usual. He was excited, restless. How pretty the scene had been. How easy it was to change everyday life into something beautiful, with money. If he only had money, he said to himself, he could do anything. He was elated; after all, he had held his own. His manners were as good and his manner as acceptable as those of any man present; he felt that he had kept his self-respect and held the respect of the others. The people on the Hill were really not so arrogant as he had imagined them to be. There was only one woman in the crowd who had been insolent. He reddened again as he recalled snatches of talk he had overheard.

"Eleanor seems to be mixing people up," Mrs. Howard Sykes had said. "I see that Desmond young man from the Chair Factory here. The Irish Catholics are really not *all* so low. We can stand some of the men, but I do hope Eleanor will not try to force their women on us."

Patrick bit his lip as he thought of this. The remembrance of it obscured the pleasure he had a moment before. What made the difference between him and the people on the Hill, between his mother and Mrs. Howard Sykes? Only money; so far as he could see, there was no other power really recognized in Redwood. Why had he feared that Eleanor Redwood would patronize him? It was not that he had felt she was more intellectual or better in any way than he was. It was because she had been surrounded by the externals of comparative riches for some time. Even the Bayards, whom he disliked involuntarily, had a certain advantage over him in this respect. He ground his teeth as he thought of it. What was money, after all? Every fool seemed to be able to make it. And yet when he stretched out his empty hands into the darkness, he exclaimed with shame that he was not one of these fools.

Then his thoughts returned to Judge Redwood's softly lighted rooms, and he contrasted them with the interior of his mother's home. No, he said to himself, Eleanor should not visit his mother until he had provided a better place. He knew that only a short time ago nearly all the people on the Hill had been glad to shelter themselves under roofs even less pretentious than that which sheltered him and his mother. But times had changed; Redwood soon forgot what it did not see and what it preferred not to remember.

As the night wore on he still sat in the darkness, thinking, thinking, trying to solve the social problem that refused to be solved. Yes; the Hill people were more amiable than he had expected. In spite of Rena Eastwood and Mrs. Howard Sykes' speech, he had not felt like an outsider, though the splendor and perfection of the assembly had filled him with awe, notwithstanding his effort to appear entirely unimpressed.

Mrs. Bayard's words came back to him with startling distinctness. What could they mean? Did they mean anything? Desmond was not more conceited than most young men of his age, and for a moment it seemed to him that Eleanor Redwood might have become interested in him, and that Mrs. Bayard had meant to encourage him. But he cast this flitting thought aside, as unworthy of him. He decided, however, not to go to the Howard House for his dinner the next day. He knew that Mrs. Bayard bore the reputation in Redwood of having a delicate talent for making mischief; his instinct told him that it would not be proper for him to be seen in earnest conversation with her, as all Redwood knew that he had met her only the night before. He would wait. If his acquaintance with Eleanor Redwood should progress, he would probably learn what Mrs. Bayard meant. At any rate, he would never stoop to discover the secret by underhand means. Who would have believed that Eleanor Redwood, whom some people laughed at for her pride and aristocratic airs, was really so amiable and womanly? What a sincere and truthful face. What a graceful air —

When morning broke, his watchful mother found Desmond asleep on a chair near the window, with the daffodils, drooping now, still in his coat buttonhole. She shook her head over it, and did not awaken him.

Judge Redwood's house had a changed aspect on the morning after the Coffee. The smilax and roses did not seem as graceful or as appropriate in the morning sunlight as they had seemed under the gas of the night before. Bits of tissue-paper, parts of the German favors, and various shreds and patches of the women's costume strewed the floors. A careless driver had crossed the lawn by mistake, and destroyed one of the most gorgeous of the tulip beds, leaving great ruts in the soft, green expanse. Besides, he had knocked down a large vase at the corner of the drive. Belinda was cross and nervous. The truth is, Belinda's conscience troubled her, and she felt obliged to "take it out" of everybody that came in her way.

Eleanor awoke in a very depressed condition of mind, with a consciousness of a heavy weight at her heart, which she could not explain at first. What was the use of all the trouble she had taken the night before? The dazzling morning sun only intensified her gloom. And now that the excitement of her preparations for the entertainment had died away, the question of the mystery came into her mind with new exigency. She took the faded note in her mother's handwriting and read it again and again. What could it mean? Belinda came upstairs and deposited a cup of coffee on her table.

"You can come down when you like, of course," that amiable person said; "but if I drop dead in a state of exhaustion from overwork, the coroner won't hold you irresponsible."

Eleanor turned wearily. What did it matter what Belinda said? Nothing could make her more wretched than she was. Belinda now looked at her with a gleam of kindliness in her eyes. If she had not such a strong sense of dignity, she would have spoken then and there. She felt relieved as she saw the note which had fallen on Eleanor's toilet table. It was out of Mrs. Bayard's hands, at least.

She hesitated a moment. Should she speak or not? It would have been a sacrifice of her dignity to do so; and, besides, Mr. Stokes might advise her to keep silence, — she had great confidence in Mr. Stokes. Another consideration moved her to keep her lips closed: what would Judge Redwood say if she meddled in this matter? Belinda, in the course of her domestic service, had lived with nearly every family in Redwood. In addition to this, her reputation as a person of experience in the arrangement of funerals was very great; consequently she had been brought into contact with all the gossip of the town, and she knew that Judge Redwood's secret had been well kept. And now that she was sure that Laura's mother had never told her daughter, and that Patrick Desmond was ignorant of it, she was amazed at this. She left the room somewhat reluctantly. She realized that Eleanor must be unhappy, and she wished with all her heart that, in her desire to bind Mrs. Bayard to the cause of the African Kindergarten, she had not been so impulsive; it was only a few days before Mrs. Bayard's unfortunate visit that she had unluckily found the forgotten letter in an old box of odds and ends. Mrs. Bayard's words to Desmond had opened her eyes to the possible extent of the injury she had done.

Eleanor thanked Belinda for the coffee, and after she had gone read the letter again:

"MRS. DESMOND : — Guard my son as you will guard your life, and I will cherish your child until I can speak out, to tell of the wickedness of the man who hates me because I am what I am. Some day the truth will out, and my boy will have his own.

CLARISSA REDWOOD."

There was no doubt in Eleanor's mind about the meaning of this: she was enjoying what belonged to another. Was that other Patrick Desmond? She almost hoped it was. It would be very easy to give all her fortune to him. She thought of his clear, earnest look with a feeling of consolation. There, at least, was truth.

The reaction from the excitement of the last few days had set in, — Eleanor was of that elastic temperament which, while it readily yields to the call of common-sense, is easily exalted or depressed. The morning wore on; she tried in vain to content herself with the work that lay near her hands. She thought with dislike of the prospect of half a dozen friends coming in the afternoon to "talk things over." As soon as her father should come home, she would certainly ask him — though it would be a great trial — what the letter meant. A fear, which she cast back every time it oppressed her, haunted her. Could it be possible that she was not Eleanor Redwood? — that there was another who could claim her father's name, as well as the rights that went with it? She laughed at the surmise. Such a thing could not occur outside of a sensational story-book. An exchange of children — it certainly was absurd. And the absurdity of it made her for the moment lose her gloom. The very idea of her father's being connected with such a melodramatic affair was absolutely humorous. And yet *there* was the terrible letter.

Eleanor wondered how she could have enjoyed, even endured, the entertainment of the preceding night. She clasped her hands, and, to Belinda's consternation, dropped her dust-brush and burst into tears. At that moment one of the temporary "helps" brought in a card; and Belinda, having read the name on it, announced, "Mrs. Howard Sykes."

Eleanor dried her eyes, put on her hat and jacket, and, flinging a hasty "not at home" after her, made for the gate of the back garden. She stood for a moment looking at the river. A shrill whistle blew; it was twelve o'clock, and this was a signal for the men in the mills to quit work. She resolved to go over the river to Patrick Desmond's mother. Mrs. Bayard had carelessly said that Desmond did not dine at home, and that she noticed him every noonday at the Howard House. Eleanor could see Mrs. Desmond alone and ask her. This was her chance.

With that somewhat unreasonable sense of relief which a resolution, however desperate, often brings, Eleanor crossed the bridge just in time to meet a great crowd of the factory "hands" on their way to dinner. The younger ones were as gay and frisky as possible ; the older men and women were more sedate. They were mostly Swedes and Poles, with an Irishman here and there. What a dreadful thing it must be to be obliged to follow the sound of a bell; to have to go and come at the command of others; to work and work, and begin work again. Still, the girls and women were not unhappy-looking. They laughed and exchanged jokes, and were extremely vivacious, — that is, the Poles were; the Swedes, blond-haired and blue-gowned, were more silent.

Eleanor did not find it hard to reach Mrs. Desmond's house. A question or two to the nearest child set her right. The house was a dazzlingly white frame dwelling, with a veranda in front, well-curtained with vines, budding almost visibly in the spring sunshine. It stood back a little from the street. Eleanor was agreeably surprised at the air of comfort and the neatness that reigned in this part of the town. She had expected to see signs of deep poverty and depression. She knocked at the white door timidly. At that moment she asked herself whether Mrs. Desmond might not confront her as an intruder.

The door opened, and a rose-tinted, wrinkled face, full of sweetness and gentleness, beneath a white cap-frill, met Eleanor's gaze. Patrick's mother was a little woman, and she had to turn up her eyes to see Eleanor's countenance. She was dressed in the dark gown, with lace collar, she always wore when she expected Patrick or "company." If Eleanor had known what the collar meant, she would have postponed her entrance until another day. Mrs. Desmond smiled, and begged her visitor to excuse her just one minute: she had something "on the stove." Eleanor drew out one of the horsehair chairs — Mrs. Desmond's pride — and sat down, following her hostess' invitation.

The odor of the hyacinth and the mignonette on the window-shelf filled the room. Eleanor admired its extreme neatness, and wondered at the flamboyant and stunning greens and reds in the picture of St. Patrick over the mantelpiece — colors which "swore at" the other reds and greens in the brilliant piece of carpet in the centre of the room. Eleanor looked at the narrow room, and said to herself that this was no place for a man like Patrick Desmond. A man like him ought to be set in a palace.

At this moment Mrs. Desmond came in. She was rather heated from too close contact with the stove, and perhaps a little flurried by the presence of a visitor. She smiled a welcome, nevertheless, although it was her private opinion that Miss Redwood was a very good-looking book agent.

"I thought I might come to see you," began Eleanor, drawing her mother's letter from her purse; "but I'm almost afraid — "

"Oh! I'm very sorry, dear, that I can't subscribe to-day. We've just finished taking 'The Parnell Movement' in fifty-four parts, and it is not ended yet; and we've had 'The Lives of the Popes' coming for the last two years — but you look tired; let me get you a cup of tea?"

"No — oh, no," said Eleanor, somewhat taken aback by this information. "I am afraid you take me for somebody else." At another time all Eleanor's carefully cultivated aristocratic prejudices would have been aroused by Mrs. Desmond's mistake; but to-day she felt very humble. "I am not selling books. If I were," she added, with one of those perceptions of the humorous which were apt to strike her at incongruous times, "I should have called you 'the lady of the house.' I fancy you remember my mother, Mrs. Desmond? I am Eleanor Redwood."

"Dear, dear!" said Mrs. Desmond, putting on her spectacles. "Ah, yes. You have the look of Clarissa Waldron. I knew her well."

Mrs. Desmond, under other circumstances, would have made a dozen apologies; as it was, she forgot them, and took both Eleanor's hands in hers. Her voice was so soft — with the pathos of intonation so charming in many Irish voices, as in many Irish melodies, — that Eleanor felt a new sense of peace.

"Oh! Mrs. Desmond," she said, beginning to cry, "you knew my mother. Tell me all."

She held Mrs. Desmond's hands now with a nervous clasp. The latter, starting at her question, had almost withdrawn them; but Eleanor held them fast. The color left Mrs. Desmond's face for an instant; she gently disengaged herself: she wanted to gain time to think.

"Wait, dear, till I get you a cup of tea."

Before Eleanor could protest, the elder woman had left the room. When she returned with the tea, she had regained her calmness. She made Eleanor drink it, while she fixed her own eyes on a little card picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel which stood on the mantel-shelf.

"You *must* tell me all," Eleanor said, drawing Mrs. Desmond toward her. "Oh! you don't know how unhappy I am. I can bear *anything* better than suspense."

Mrs. Desmond drew a chair beside Eleanor's, and was silent; Eleanor could see that she was praying.

"I ought to know the truth. Read this, my mother's own letter."

Slowly and carefully Mrs. Desmond — who seldom read anything but her prayer-book now — mastered the contents of the note.

"Where did you get this?" she asked, gravely.

"I found it in one of my father's note-books, — it dropped out," Eleanor answered.

"But it was intended for me, though I had no right to receive it, — poor Clarissa!" Mrs. Desmond murmured these last words to herself.

"Dear Mrs. Desmond," said Eleanor, putting her arms about the old woman's neck, "tell me the truth. I shall die if I have to wait until my father comes home. Whom can I trust?"

"You can trust your father," said Mrs. Desmond, with a dignity which, gentle and unassertive as it was, gave Eleanor some comfort. The worst fear of all had been that a time might come when she could not trust her father.

"Give him this note," continued Mrs. Desmond. "He will tell you to trust him and ask no questions. It means nothing to you and nothing to me. It should have been destroyed."

"It means nothing?" asked Eleanor doubtfully. She looked into Mrs. Desmond's eyes, and read truth there; she threw her arms around the old woman's neck. "I believe you," she said; "I believe you. I will ask my father, and abide by what he says. But, oh! why should I not know why my mother wrote this?"

A pained look crossed Mrs. Desmond's face; she put her wrinkled hand on Eleanor's head as if in blessing. The door softly opened, and Patrick entered without ceremony. His mother, for almost the first time in her life, had forgotten him.

VIII.

"The root of all evil."

PATRICK stood at the door in amazement. His mother's hand rested on Eleanor's head caressingly, and the girl's eyes were turned lovingly to the face of the older woman. He recognized Eleanor Redwood at once, though the room was darker than the sun-illumined street. He stood with one hand on the knob, irresolute. It seemed as if he were in a dream. He had been thinking of Eleanor all the way from the factory, and here she was in his own house. Pygmalion could not have been more startled when the statue came to life.

Mrs. Desmond looked up, with tenderness in her eyes. Her whole heart had gone out to the girl at her side. But when she saw her son, her expression changed; and she drew her hand away from Eleanor's forehead, as she noticed that

Eleanor raised her face toward Patrick with a new interest in it.

It is a great mistake to imagine that words are the most potent expressions of feeling: they are only after-thoughts; they are to looks what the mail is to the telegraph — only more swift.

In an instant Mrs. Desmond's fear and perhaps a little jealousy, was aroused. If it takes a superior woman to make an old maid, it takes a more superior woman to make a perfect mother-in-law. And even Mrs. Desmond, who was very gentle and very true, felt a pang of jealousy as she saw the young people look at each other. To her there was no man on earth like Patrick. He was a child still — a child and a man; or, rather, a child in a man, — her protector and her ward at once. Her thoughts, as quick and as keen as arrows, went forward into the future. Here, perhaps, was the woman who would some day be the dearest in her son's heart; and for an instant she almost wished that her son were a cripple instead of the handsome youth he was. Then she might at least have him all to herself.

After the first amazement had passed, Desmond stepped forward and shook hands with Eleanor. The room suddenly became sordid in his eyes. What would she think of him for not giving his mother a better place, full of those little modern touches of refinement which Eleanor knew so well? That thing which he most wished to avoid had happened. She saw his poverty; she saw him, not at his best, but at his worst. No doubt, in spite of her gracious manner, she was wondering at the great green and red daub of a chromo on the mantelpiece, and hating the smell of the dinner which came from the kitchen. In truth, Eleanor was thinking of none of these things. Mrs. Desmond's motherly sympathy had taken a great load from her heart, and the coming of Patrick had elated her for the moment. Whether the scent from the kitchen suggested beefsteak or orange blossoms was to her at that time a matter of indifference.

Mrs. Desmond hesitated for a moment and slipped away. After all, the momentous affair of the hour was Patrick's dinner. She was hospitable to the inner fibres of her heart: Eleanor must not leave the house without having partaken of her salt. She hastily made such changes in the arrangements of her table as befitted a new guest.

In the meantime the young people had not said much. Eleanor had thanked Patrick again for coming to her Coffee, and he had responded that he had enjoyed it extremely. Much as he felt the charm of her presence, he wished that she would go. How would his mother's homely ways strike her? She noticed the flowers in the window, and spoke of them; and all the time he was fiercely wishing that he had money — *money*, that he might stand as the equal of this woman, whom in his heart he now accused of being proud and scornful, because her manner was so entirely simple and kind. This accusation was the result of his own pride, but he did not realize it. He felt that he could not endure the presence of Eleanor Redwood until he could be her equal in every respect.

It was strange how all his manhood seemed to shrink before the fetich which he had raised, and whose importance his education in the atmosphere of Redwood had caused him to exaggerate. All Eleanor's charm, the atmosphere of truth and purity, seemed to him to be the outcome of money; and his present embarrassment, his diffidence, his mortification, was the result of his own lack of money. And the worst of it was that he did not even know how vulgar and despicable he was for allowing these impressions to dominate him; for one might as well attribute the God-given distinction of a wild rose to money as to fancy that money could have made Eleanor Redwood what she was.

Eleanor politely refused Mrs. Desmond's invitation to have a cup of tea. Patrick hoped that she might persist in it; but his mother's hospitality was aflame, and denial was impossible. She almost laid violent hands on Eleanor's jacket and hat. Patrick ran upstairs and hastily improved his toilet. In a little while he was seated opposite to Eleanor, in the small apartment which served both as kitchen and dressing-room. He was mortified, rebellious. Why could his mother not see how incongruous Eleanor's presence was? He forgot that, brought in close contact with Miss Redwood, his mother saw, not one of the "quality" on the Hill, but the daughter of an old friend. Eleanor, understanding how much care was necessary to produce the exquisite neatness visible in Mrs. Desmond's arrangements, was silently admiring, while Patrick fancied she was silently scornful.

Mrs. Desmond waited on the two, with no sense of the unfitness of it felt by her son. Eleanor insisted upon helping her, and Patrick's mortification was somewhat mitigated by her grace and tact. Nevertheless, it was a bad hour for him.

At last Eleanor rose to go, and Patrick followed her; it was nearly time for him to start back to the office. Eleanor, having put on her hat and jacket, took Mrs. Desmond's hand and then kissed her with a deprecatory "May I?" In spite of his desire to stay with his mother in order to find out the cause of Eleanor's visit, politeness obliged Patrick to accompany her.

"Don't forget to stop at the church, dear," his mother said, "and make your visit. It's the Forty Hours' Devotion, you know."

He promised. Eleanor, with another good-by to his mother, walked down the street by his side. Mrs. Desmond watched them from the porch.

" A good-looking pair," she murmured. " But I hope to Heaven that the boy will leave this place soon. I'd rather see him dead than marry her."

Eleanor looked very fresh and bright. She was almost at peace with herself. She kept pace with Patrick's elastic tread; for, unlike most of the Redwood ladies, she was a constant walker. Patrick, in his mind, compared her to a graceful yacht at sea on a clear day.

" Do we pass the church?" she asked, — " that is, I mean is the church on my way home, too?"

" Oh, yes. We reach it before we come to the bridge," he answered.

" I have never been in a Catholic church," she said. " What do you call this one?"

" The Church of the Holy Innocents. I am afraid you would be disappointed if you entered it. It is a little wooden church; for we Catholics are not rich — yet."

" And do you think that makes so much difference?" she asked, with rather a wistful look in her eyes.

" All the difference in the world," he answered, promptly. " My mother would have me believe that religion makes a man happy whether he is rich or poor. Nothing but money can make a poor man happy."

Eleanor stopped for a second and gave him a startled look from her soft, clear eyes. "If I believed that —" she began; then she paused. "I would rather die than believe that."

"You *do* believe it," he remarked, with a harsh note in his voice. "And everybody in Redwood believes it."

"My father does not," said Eleanor, decidedly.

"I don't know him, — he is probably an exception. But I know, Miss Redwood, that nothing counts so much in our life as money. Don't we see it every day? There is that Mrs. Sykes — I met her at your house last night. Why do people court her? Because she is rich."

"She has a good heart, she is kind to the poor, she is an old friend of my mother's —"

"And her husband is the richest man in Redwood."

Eleanor's eyes flashed; she looked straight at Patrick. "You don't seem to know what you are saying, — or implying, rather. Riches may count here, but there are other qualities that count more. A rich man or woman without those qualities has a better chance than if he or she were poor. But if a poor man or woman is good and clever, I fancy there is just as much chance for them socially in Redwood as anywhere else."

"*Just* as much," said Patrick, bitterly.

Eleanor's spirit was aroused. "Why do people love my father? Not because he is rich, but because he is clever and kind. It adds something to it, of course, that he has a house into which he can invite people, and that he is not poor. But were he poor to-morrow — were I obliged to work in the factory, — our people here in Redwood would not be less kind."

"You would not be asked to Coffees," said Patrick, laughing, yet with a trace of bitterness.

"I should not go. But I imagine that people would ask me until they felt sure that I preferred not to be asked. I don't know the large cities in America, but in our city many things count more than money."

"Nothing counts as much as money. It is power. Look at me. See what I have suffered for the lack of a little money. I have been obliged to wear clothes I was ashamed of. I went to a wretched school, where nothing was taught except the rudiments and the catechism; we poor people over the river couldn't afford anything better. I sold papers, I dug gardens, I burned with heat in summer and froze in winter, in order to buy books. I was determined *not* to be kept down; and I have an ambitious mother, though she would be different from what she is if she were not poor."

"Why should you want her to be different from what she is?" asked Eleanor, indignantly. At this moment she felt contempt for Desmond, —

a contempt as unjustifiable as it was intense. She would have liked to speak her mind to him, but she felt that her acquaintance with him was too short for that.

They had reached the church. It was a weatherbeaten frame structure, punctured by white-sashed windows. Desmond paused at the door and said: "I suppose I must say good-by."

"Why can't I go in?" Eleanor asked.

"Oh! you may if you wish," he answered. "But you'll find everything poor and cheap," he added, apologetically.

Eleanor followed him into the little church. The shades of the windows were down, and the body of the church was in gloom. The only points of light were the candles on the altar; and in the centre of them was the radiant Host, surrounded by flowers.

To Eleanor, coming in from the brilliancy of the noonday sun, the darkness of the church and the splendor of the altar were exaggerated. Desmond showed her to a pew. When her eyes became accustomed to the gloom, she saw that there were several people in the church. There was Jack Conlon, whom she knew by sight, kneeling with a rapt devotion. She was surprised, for she had never noticed him with a long face, — and a "long face" was an outward sign of religion; in fact, he was known as "Laughing

Jack." Not far from him was Ellie Reardon, one of Belinda's "helps," with her eyes fixed on the altar in breathless ecstasy. Next to her was Felix Brent, the exclusive lawyer from New Orleans, whom Redwood society had striven in vain to capture, and who was looked on with a certain respect very rare in democratic Redwood. Desmond knelt, too; and then there was such silence that the delicious scents from the flowers on the altar seemed to break it. The street was quiet at this hour, and no sound from anywhere marred the stillness.

Eleanor was awed and peaceful. She did not understand it all. She knew that it meant prayer; and the sight of Desmond on his knees raised her respect for him. She knew well no really religious man except Mr. Stokes and one or two of the ministers; and it seemed to be part of their business to be religious. It was refreshing to know a man who was sure of his belief and publicly professed it, and who was not a minister. She longed to know what it all meant. The shutter of one of the windows had a chink in it; and, as she was thinking, a ray of light fell upon the face of the statue of the Mother of God on one of the little side altars. It was not a great statue, but it had a beautiful face, and the light suddenly thrown on it made it lifelike. Eleanor was startled by the appearance of the lovely face through the gloom. "Mary!" she said, almost involuntarily; and, burying her face in her hands, she repeated the "Our Father." A "strange, celestial brightness" seemed to fill her heart after this. Desmond went out, and she followed him into the sunlight.

"I suppose you think this is all very child-like?" he said, apologetically, as they walked toward the bridge.

"Not at all!" she answered, indignantly.

"Your ministers think that it is worse than childish, and are constantly saying so."

"But that has nothing to do with *my* impressions," said Eleanor. "Besides, our clever ministers do not say that any more; and Protestants are becoming too enlightened to endure the stupid ones, who try to frighten us from the consideration of our shortcomings by abusing Popery." Eleanor laughed. "That's a quotation from papa, I must admit."

Desmond asked himself whether she was saying this merely to please him or not. She, who was accustomed to the beautiful temples which the Baptists and Presbyterians had raised in Redwood, must be contemptuous in her heart at the remembrance of the poor little Catholic church.

"Some day, when I have become rich, I shall return to Redwood and build a church for our people that nobody will sneer at," he said, with a touch of offence in his tone.

"How heroic, how noble!" she answered, giving her tongue its freedom. "You will build a church, not to please God, but to outshine other churches. How worthy of your belief you are! I can tell you, Mr. Desmond, that we — my father and I, and I imagine we are fair representatives of American non-Catholics — might sneer at *your* bedizened, mock-splendid, rich church, but that we would never sneer at the church I was in to-day. Faith was there and God was there. I don't know much about the Catholic Church; I do know that, if you represent it, it is infinitely better than its people. Good-by, Mr. Desmond."

Patrick stood and watched her. A hot flush mounted his cheek. She had insulted him without provocation, and he could not find words to answer her. He was intensely angry; and yet, down in his heart, he felt that her manner and words could not sting him so if he was sure that he did not deserve the rebuke. How graceful and stately she was, — how admirable in face and expression. And yet how insolent, how insulting. He would make her change her manner. And then suddenly he remembered that he was only a clerk in a chair factory on his way to work.

"I will make her respect me," he said. "I will be rich and powerful, and then —"

But she had seemed to disdain riches and power. He went toward the factory in a turbulent state of mind.

Eleanor, crossing the bridge, became utterly depressed. She had, unconsciously, idealized Desmond; he seemed so good, so honest, so true, so high-minded. She realized that she had spent more thought in creating a halo for him than she had imagined. He was a — she could not find an epithet for him until she struck the English word "cad"; he was a cad, to apologize for his mother and for his religion. And the worst of it all was that the apology was not directed to Eleanor Redwood, the woman of culture who read Browning twice a week, or to Eleanor Redwood, who had managed to connect her pedigree with that of King Harold the conquered; but to Eleanor Redwood the rich. She could have cried. If Desmond could have known this, it might have soothed the turmoil of his feelings.

On his desk he found a note from Mrs. Bayard:

DEAR MR. DESMOND, — As you did not come to dinner at the Howard House, I take the liberty of informing you that you will find it to your advantage to insist on your mother's telling you *why* Judge Redwood retains your property. I may say, for fear that a wicked world might misunderstand me, that my interest in you is pecuniary. And, if you succeed in obtaining your own, a check for an amount commensurate with my service would be agreeable. Please tear up this letter, as I am not sure whether 'succeed' is spelled with two c's or one.

Yours sincerely,

LAURA BAYARD.

Patrick plunged into work, for he had great power of concentration. But when the day was done he went like a whirlwind homeward. He wanted to know two things: the meaning of this note, and why Eleanor had called on his mother.

Mrs. Desmond, without hesitation, answered his questions. She was indignant with Laura Bayard.

"She's a bad woman," Mrs. Desmond said, warmly; "and it's hard to think that the like of her can be a friend of Miss Redwood's. And now, Patrick, you understand it all; and if you want to know anything more about it, ask Dr. Talbot; he's kept the secret well. And isn't Eleanor Redwood the fine girl. Not that I'd want you to be thinking of her at all; for I'd rather see you dead than married to her — "

"Mother," interrupted Patrick, impatiently, "I don't like her; but if I wanted to make a mixed marriage, I would — "

"God forbid," said his mother, making the Sign of the Cross.

"A man can't be bound by such old-fashioned opinions. Religion is a good thing, at any rate — " he broke off, seeing the look of pain on his mother's face, "Eleanor Redwood will never think of me in that way, nor," he added, bitterly, "will I of her."

"God keep you to that, boy," said Mrs. Desmond; "for didn't you understand me a moment ago when I told you that Eleanor's mother was insane?"

"And what difference would that make in the matter of marriage?" asked the young man, quite willing for the moment to put Eleanor away from him, but not willing that circumstances should do that office.

Mrs. Desmond threw up her hands in despair.

A sharp knock sounded at the door. Patrick opened it; a blue-coated boy handed him a yellow envelope; it was a telegram for his mother; and he read:

"Miles is not well. Send Patrick at once, if he does not drink.

NELLIE GALLIGAN."

IX.

"Love is without reason."
— *Coventry Patmore.*

DESMOND concluded to obey the mandate of Mrs. Miles Galligan. His mother was almost feverishly eager that he should go. His very protestation that he would never think of Eleanor Redwood with any warmer feeling than a kind of passive dislike alarmed her. Her experience told her that the fact of Eleanor's seeming beyond his reach would most probably bring about a marriage she was anxious to avoid. She had not the slightest doubt that Eleanor would consent; in fact, she was sure the young girl's visit to her had been made with a view of improving the acquaintance of Patrick.

She did not find fault with Eleanor for this. In her mind, it was as natural that every human being should seek to be friendly with her son as for the bees to buzz around the maple buds. It was better that Patrick should be out of danger. Eleanor Redwood was certainly a nice girl, but there was insanity in the family; besides, she was not a Catholic. Mrs. Desmond looked on a mixed marriage with almost as much aversion as insanity. If the day's events had been different, she would have dropped many a tear as she packed her son's trunk; but as it was, she examined the fastenings of buttons and rubbed at slight spots with a calm philosophy which nothing but the appearance on the scene of a suspected rival for a place in Patrick's heart could have induced her to acquire.

Her son, who was entirely ignorant of the art of packing a trunk, went down to the river to meet Jack Conlon. Jack was smoking as usual; he stood at his father's gate in the green oasis, which was brilliantly green with all the freshness of spring. The frogs had begun their chorus in the shallow places of the river; and a twittering, a lilting, a mixture of melody and harmony from nestward-bound birds, filled the air. The large maple at the gate, among whose buds the bees had added the tones of a bass-viol to the orchestra of the spring all the day, showed red against the pale sky.

Jack nodded as Patrick stepped up to him. "I have good news," he said; "my father is better. If he continues to improve, I shall return to the seminary in a few days."

"I am glad of that,—heartily glad. I have something to tell you, too. Come, take a walk."

"Can't. I must stay in this secluded spot because I want to smoke, and a pipe should not be seen publicly with a Roman collar."

Patrick admitted the justice of this; but, on consideration, he outlined a route by which all critical observers could be avoided. And certainly the prospect of a walk through the balmy air was tempting enough. Having warned his father's nurse to show a light in the west window in case he should be needed, Jack consented to accompany his friend.

They strolled through a thicket of young oaks, crossed the river at its narrowest part by means of a series of stepping-stones, and reached a slight elevation on the opposite side of the river, immediately behind Judge Redwood's house. From this point the view of the river and the town was very picturesque. The increasing twilight hid all the sordid evidences of man's daily work in the factories. The chimneys had ceased to smoke. One by one pale lights appeared in the windows of the homes on the river bank, and were reflected in the water. Two boys sitting on the wharf began to sing in high-pitched voices, and when they ceased, all sound was gone, except the splash of the water and the distant croaking of the frogs.

Patrick had told his friend of his coming departure. Jack had seemed concerned. He did not say much until they reached the knoll; then, stretching his length along the slope of rock, he took his pipe from his mouth and said: "And how about your place at the factory?"

"Oh! they know that I intend to better myself. I spoke about this some time ago; they'll have no difficulty in finding a substitute. Of course if it's inconvenient to them I'll not go."

"What do you mean by 'bettering' yourself?"

"Getting out of Redwood," answered Desmond, with a slight laugh.

Conlon shook his head. "You are bright; you are better educated than most of the young men about us here in Redwood; why don't you stay and help to 'better' them?"

"Why don't *you?*" asked Desmond, surprised. Jack Conlon seldom spoke in such a grave tone.

"I pray to God that the Bishop will send me here when I shall be ordained," he said, with an intensity that astonished Desmond. "I want to be of use to my own people. When I see so many of our young people losing their grip on all that made their fathers and mothers good, and fancying themselves so much better, it makes me long to be at work. But there's a limit to what a priest can do. We need laymen like you to supplement us, — I mean laymen such as you might be if you were true to yourself."

Desmond was too much interested to be offended. "Well, go on," he said, as Jack paused.

"Look at our young men over on the other side of the river, — most of them with sound bodies and sound minds, born of a pure race. What becomes of the minds and the bodies? The former are discontented, wasted in trivial or vulgar thought — thought is too high a name, — and the latter, five times out of ten, diseased by drink. Or, if they happen to be like you, they are devoured by a thirst for money —"

"They are poor," interrupted Desmond, defiantly. "And figs do not grow from thistles."

"They are *not* poor," said Jack, warmly. "No man is poor in this country who can own his own house and lot in a few years. Poor! There is no poverty, to speak of, in American country towns. Go to New York, if you want to see what real poverty is. It is a curse there. They seem to be poor, if you will, in all that makes a man great. — Oh! the girls are all right," continued Jack, as if answering a question. "The Sisters give them a taste for better things. They read; they even study; they improve themselves in every possible way. But the young men! — they are divided between the meanest talk of the most squalid local politics and playing pool for drinks. Heaven above!" cried Jack, rising, and breaking the stem of his clay pipe in his violence, "what kind of men are we, when it is only necessary to mention an Irish name here, in order to provoke the question, 'Does he drink?'"

Jack flung his arms about "like a windmill in a cyclone," as Patrick suggested. It relieved him, he said.

Sitting there in the semi-darkness, Patrick felt a strange sense of responsibility for the friends and companions he was about to leave. It was new and uncomfortable. He tried to shake it off.

"What would you do to amend all this, Jack?"

"Try to make men of them," said Jack, promptly. "Give them interests and tastes above the bar-room and the street corner and the local news. Everybody notices that our young women are superior to our men. It isn't money does that, is it? — Well, you are going away?" Jack's voice trembled a little; and it was all the more impressive to his friend, because he was generally rather humorous and satirical; and, like most humorous people, he had never had much credit for deep feeling. "And you'll not help us; and no doubt you'll grow rich, and, when I'm a gray-headed old priest, come back here and build an asylum for inebriates whom your example and work might have saved. Oh!" said Jack, impatiently, "money will *not* do everything. It will not give us another St. Francis of Assisi —"

At this moment a light appeared in the west window of the house on the opposite bank.

"My father wants me," cried Jack, hurriedly. "Good-by, old boy! Here, take this." And he threw him a rosary. "You will need it; and if you do not, give it to somebody that does; I can't wait." And away he strode, leaving Desmond alone in the gathering gloom.

The hour was serene; there was no outward discord, and Patrick's thoughts grouped and regrouped themselves like figures to the sound of slow music. Strange that both Eleanor Redwood and Jack Conlon, people so widely different, had rebuked him for what seemed to them his worldliness. He admired Jack Conlon with all his heart; and as he thought over Eleanor's words, something like a similar feeling of admiration crept into his mind. He tried to drive it out. She might talk, but a girl like her must naturally despise a poor man. He would succeed, and teach her that by his own strength he could be more than her equal.

If Mrs. Desmond could have *heard* his thoughts, she would have known that her presentiment in regard to Eleanor Redwood was in process of realization; for the mother, like Job's war-horse, scents danger from afar.

As the twilight melted into darkness, Patrick's thoughts kept turning around the centre of Jack Conlon's words. It would be untrue to say that he was not flattered by the implication that he might be looked on as a leader of his own people in Redwood. He asked himself what they needed most; drunkenness was the one vice prominent among them. All their other faults turned on this one. He had often heard his friend, the pastor of the Holy Innocents', say this. At the same time

Patrick felt that he would have knocked down anybody on the "aristocratic" side of the river who would repeat it. It was the vice that kept his people down. When he compared them with the inhabitants of the opposite side of the town, he felt that they were at a disadvantage.

The men on his side had health, strength; they were clever. And there were certainly no more brilliant or prettier girls anywhere. They were, perhaps, a little narrow-minded, because Redwood was so small; their manners, he imagined, were good enough. They were superior to the young men, for they had been controlled by the Sisters; they were more ambitious than the young men, and they had more self-respect. He wondered what had become of the old Irish fondness for learning among these young Irish-Americans. Most of their fathers, in spite of poverty at home and drudgery in this country, had been better read in the solider literature than these young men, whose studies were confined to the local news of their town. On second thoughts he came to the conclusion that, while the natural advantages were on the side of his own people, they neither knew how nor cared to make the best of them. They lacked self-respect; they lacked ambition; they, as a rule, had no interests beyond questions of everyday work and local politics.

Patrick said to himself that he had been saved from all this by his mother's unconquerable self-respect and ambition. According to his limited experience, men did not become drunkards because they wanted to do wrong, or even — except in cases where a diseased appetite already existed — from a passionate thirst for drink; but because they had no stimulus to improve themselves. Again, in the old part of Redwood, public opinion held intemperance in abhorrence; while in his part it was looked on as an amiable weakness. He was striving with all his might to discover the secret of all that he hated in Redwood, but it never occurred to him to take Jack Conlon's words seriously as a lesson to himself. For himself, there must now be only one end in life — to make money.

He heard the gate in the wall behind him open. He rose quickly. Perhaps this part of the river-bank might be of Judge Redwood's private grounds.

As he moved, a figure, coming out of the garden gate, screamed slightly, drew back, and then came forward. It was Belinda. She recognized Desmond, for the moon and the electric lights were in full white floods along the bank. Belinda seemed very serious. She advanced toward Patrick.

"Mr. Desmond," she said, "will you go into the house for a minute? I must go for Dr. Talbot. She's had bad news, and the telephone is out of order, so that I can't reach him. Go in, go in!" continued Belinda, hastily. "I'm afraid she'll be ravin' in a minute, like her mother, if somebody doesn't go to her." And Belinda hurried off, wishing that she had met Mr. Stokes instead of Patrick Desmond.

He entered the gate, walked up the path, bordered by box and budding privet. Several broad steps led up to the back porch. There, on the rustic bench, sat Eleanor Redwood, pale but tearless. Her hands were clasped. Desmond knew nothing of the anxiety which was preying on her heart, but she seemed to him very pathetic in her loneliness. All the unconscious regality of her air and manner was gone. The moonlight gave her face a softness and gentleness that it did not always possess. At that moment he forgot all his prejudices against her.

She did not notice his presence until he stood near her; and then she said, without turning her head: "Dr. Talbot!"

"Not Dr. Talbot," he answered, greatly embarrassed; "but —"

"O! Mr Desmond," she exclaimed, rising.

"Can I be of use?"

"Thank you. You are very kind," she said in a low voice. "I am glad to see you. My father —" and her voice was stifled by tears —"has had a fit of apoplexy. They will bring him home to-night.

Oh! why has God been so hard to him? He did not deserve this. And I — I do not know where to turn. God seems so far away. Mr. Desmond, *you* are a Catholic; you can perhaps bring Him nearer — oh! I am so utterly wretched."

Desmond was silent. How could he answer her? She buried her face in her hands. To him she was no longer Eleanor Redwood, the stately woman; but Eleanor Redwood, a helpless girl, looking to him for help. And from that instant she was photographed, as it were, in his heart. She might again taunt him; again she might wound his vanity; but she would always be there now in her gentlest beauty, in her suffering, worthy of love and pity.

Mrs. Desmond's presentiment had not been an hallucination.

"Oh, say something," cried Eleanor, "that will bring God nearer! My father may die,—he may be dead!"

He approached her and put Jack Conlon's rosary into her hand. The silver crucifix stood out clear in the white light. There seemed to be a sympathy of expression between it and the sorrow in Eleanor's face.

Desmond heard voices approaching. Belinda and Dr. Talbot were coming. The young man turned down the path, leaving the rosary in Eleanor's hand.

X.

"Love and Sorrow are twins."
—*Henri Bayle.*

DR. TALBOT and Belinda scarcely noticed Patrick as he passed them. He paused after they had gone, wondering at the impulse which had induced him to steal away so suddenly. He was constantly regretting his impulses, and just as constantly acting on them again. He asked himself whether it would not be well to go back. But what could he do? A stranger, as he was, would certainly be in the way. And yet he stood for half an hour by the river's bank, debating with himself whether he should return or not. He saw a cab, with lamps lighted, pass along the front street, slowly, carefully driven. He heard it stop. Then he went away, forgetting everything but sympathy for Eleanor Redwood.

His mother was waiting for him. His trunk was ready. On the afternoon of the next day, providing no opposition was made at the factory, he would speed away from Redwood. Mrs. Desmond, now that the excitement of the packing was over, began to give way to the sentiment of the occasion. It was an epoch for her. The ship in which were all her earthly hopes was about to put out to sea. It had grown under her hand; she had fashioned it tenderly; her life had gone into it. Hopes and fears — fears black as night — crossed Mrs. Desmond's heart as she waited. And when Patrick entered, she was ready to weep over him, to beg him not to leave her, or to take her with him, to make him understand all that this parting meant to her. All thought of Eleanor Redwood had left her mind for the time being; her son was about to go forth into battle, and the greater fear as to what might be the result of that battle had swallowed up all minor fears.

When the young man opened the door, Mrs. Desmond was sitting, trembling and pale, with her rosary in her hand. Patrick was preoccupied.

"Well, mother," he said, with his usual smile. He sat down beside the marble-topped table and drew the lamp toward him. She looked at his face, and read with lightning-like rapidity that his thoughts were not with her. It was a painful discovery; her heart sank; life, she thought, is indeed hard for a mother.

"Miss Redwood is in great trouble," he remarked, carelessly; "and I never wished more to help anybody in my life."

Mrs. Desmond became stony at once. What trouble could this young thing have in comparison with hers?

"The Judge has been stricken with apoplexy, nd they have just brought him home."

"How is he?" asked Mrs. Desmond, with a show of interest.

Patrick looked embarrassed. "I really don't know, — I didn't wait to ask. I was sitting with Jack Conlon on the knoll behind Judge Redwood's house for a while, and Belinda came out to tell me. I ought to have asked about the Judge. The truth is, Miss Redwood looked so unhappy that I didn't think of anything else."

Mrs. Desmond understood it all. *Her* sorrow, her fears were nothing in comparison to the afflictions of Eleanor Redwood.

"I shall go over to ask before I go to-morrow. It is too bad to think of her being entirely alone, and in such sad circumstances."

"*I* shall be alone after to-morrow," Mrs. Desmond said, with a touch of bitterness in her tone.

Patrick looked up. The light from the lamp was full on his mother's face. He saw a tear on her cheek.

"Why — what's the matter, mother? I thought you wanted me to go."

The genuine surprise in his tone made her realize how far they were apart at that moment. She wiped away the tears. He was a dutiful son, a kind son, — the kindest son in the world; but he could never understand. If she was jealous, it was because she loved him; if she was in sorrow, it was because she loved him; nothing could take away from her the joy of having brought such a man-child into the world. But from the beginning — from the hour he had seen the light — sorrow and pain had been the shadows of her love and joy. He could not understand,— he could never understand. After all, there was One who could understand; and her fingers clasped more closely the beads of her rosary. "There is a Mother who has especial pity for all mothers," she thought.

"Yes — yes, you had better go," she said, hastily. "Oh, yes, but it is hard."

"It will be only a little while, mother," he said, cheerfully. "I shall be back. And — who knows? — in less than a year you may be in New York yourself, in a cosy nest. Though I confess, mother, that Redwood begins to look so lovely just now that I think I should like to stay a little longer."

The eager manner of his mother, as she answered him quickly, surprised him.

"Sure I don't ask you to stay. I wouldn't have you stay for anything in the world."

"Then what do you want me to do, mother?" asked Patrick, puzzled. "I propose to go, and you say, Stay; I propose to stay —"

"I know why you want to stay, Patrick. You're thinking of Eleanor Redwood."

Mrs. Desmond regretted this the moment she had spoken; her son's face turned crimson.

"Patrick," his mother said, pleadingly, "don't think of her. I suppose the time will come when you'll think of marriage, and then I'll be willing to sit alone here, with a quiet heart, and pray for your happiness. But I couldn't think of you as being happy with her. She is no fit mate for you; she has been used to a different kind of people since her father has become what he is. She's above us, dear, and her ways are not ours. I'm sure you're good enough for a princess, but her people won't think so, and —"

The color had left Desmond's cheeks, and while his mother was speaking a frown became more and more indented on his forehead. Mrs. Desmond stopped; she saw that she had made a mistake.

"I had not thought of marriage at all, mother," he said; "but I have thought that if I ever married any girl it should be Eleanor Redwood."

His mother covered her face with her hands and rocked to and fro.

"I am tired of hearing of the superiority of the people on the Hill,— tired and sick of it!" he continued, vehemently. "I have always been told that I, having Irish blood in my veins, came of a race of saints and heroes. Why are we here, mother? Why were you and my father obliged to come here? Because *your* father and mother and grandfather and grandmother loved the Cross of Christ above all, and their country next. Am I sprung from such blood — the blood of men and women who preferred poverty to apostasy,— inferior to these people on the Hill? It can't be; if it is, then all the pride of birth and respect for the past you have instilled into me are worse than a lie. How could I feel in me the love of all that is true and beautiful, if you were not the truest of gentlewomen, mother? As your son, if for no other reason, I am Eleanor Redwood's equal, mother."

Mrs. Desmond's heart glowed with pleasure and contracted with pain. The praise of herself, her boy's pride, delighted her; but between the words of his speech she read the truth, that she had no longer the first place in his heart.

"No," he said, firmly, "do not say again that I am not as well-born as any of her friends. And, when the time comes, I shall not hesitate to claim her as my wife — if I ever become less detestably poor. Oh! how I hate poverty. To be an American and to be poor is to be only half a man."

"You must not think of Eleanor Redwood, Patrick,— promise me that you will not," his mother said, rising and taking his hand.

He did not answer at once. "How can you ask such a thing, mother? In fact," he added, "I have not any reason to believe that she would think of me — in that way."

"Her mother was insane, Patrick; and just before she was born, she was worse than usual. She was as proud as Lucifer of being a Waldron; and when Eleanor came, she was terribly disappointed. She wanted Eleanor to be a boy. How she envied me — for you were born about the same time. After a while it became her settled notion that her husband — she got it into her head that he hated the Waldrons — had deprived her of her own child and substituted Eleanor in its place. She imagined — poor woman! — that you were her son, and that the Judge had the power to force me to keep her child."

"Poor woman!" Desmond exclaimed. "And was she always mad?"

"Only at times."

"How Eleanor must have suffered."

"She never knew it; Mrs. Redwood was sane enough for many years after her birth. But the Waldrons were always more or less queer. The letter Eleanor brought me the other day was written to me in one of her mother's crazy moods. If you have never spoken to Eleanor Redwood in any way that would raise her hopes, don't do it; she will go mad some day."

"I would take the risk," answered her son, firmly. "From the moment I saw her, something told me that she should be my wife — if I should ever marry."

Mrs. Desmond sunk to her knees beside him; he felt her tears on his hand. It was a bitter moment for her.

"But it's all nonsense to talk of it,—all nonsense," he said, smoothing her hair. "Come, dear," he added, lifting her lightly to the sofa, "let us be cheerful."

"O, Patrick!" she sobbed, "you don't know what you are saying. You will break my heart if you marry her—and she a Protestant."

"It has been done before," said Patrick; "and in America we're getting over such prejudices."

"But a moment ago you said that it was all nonsense to talk of your marrying her at all."

"So it is," returned Patrick, in a low voice.

Mrs. Desmond looked anxiously into his face. "Ah," she said solemnly, "your face denies your words. If I were on my dying bed I could only say what I say now. Listen to your old mother's words, boy, before it is too late. A few steps more and it will be too late, and you will have marred her life and yours."

Mrs. Desmond stood erect, her little figure taking a new dignity, and her face becoming very pale and earnest. Her speech, in ordinary conversation somewhat slow and hesitating, became easy and flowing. She spoke from her heart, and for the time she entirely dominated her son.

"You don't know what marriage is," she continued, "where there is a division between those who are married. It is not easy; it means self-sacrifice at the best. But if in the greatest of all things there is a difference, then marriage is bitter — death is better. I have seen it many times in Redwood. Think what your religion is to you. I hope to God that you would die for it, and yet you would think of making yourself one with a woman who, no matter how good she may be, must look on your Church and its practices as foolish; who may despise them if she does not hate them."

"Eleanor Redwood —" began the young man, in protest.

"She is divided from you by a great gulf. If she is sincere in her own belief the trouble will be all the greater. If she is not sincere in her own belief, how can she look on your sincerity with any sympathy? If you had given your word to her, I should say nothing. But it is not too late. Promise me, Patrick, that you will not think of her —"

"Why should I make such a foolish promise, mother?" interrupted Patrick, with a show of irritation. "I am going away, she will remain here. I shall probably never see her again. I'm tired of all this bigotry about mixed marriages. I've heard of it until I am sick."

"I pray to God that you may never regret those words. I tell you, Patrick, that Judge Redwood would rather see Eleanor dead than married to you," Mrs. Desmond said, vehemently.

"He is a bigot, — a would-be aristocrat!" exclaimed her son, coloring with anger. "I will teach him that I am as good as he is."

"No, don't say that," said Mrs. Desmond. "The Judge is not what you think. But he learned a lesson which I hope you may never learn. Clarissa Waldron became a Catholic in early life, — this was the secret bond that kept us together for years. But the Judge thought her conversion a disadvantage —"

"Politically?" asked Patrick, with more interest than he cared to show.

"He laughed and joked and jeered and sneered. He wouldn't do it now, if he had his life to go over again. He couldn't understand why one church wasn't as good as another. At election times, people threw his wife's religion into his face. It made trouble between the two, until finally she gave it up, just after Eleanor was born. And she was never a happy woman afterward nor he a happy man. If she had held out, he'd have come to her way of thinking, perhaps; but it would only have been after a lifetime of contention. Judge Redwood has had his own experience of what a mixed marriage means. I'm sure he'd give the world to have to live his life over again. My boy," Mrs. Desmond went on, passionately, "you don't know what life is. Suppose *you* should lose your Faith" — and she shuddered. "Suppose, for the sake of peace, you should do as Clarissa Waldron did! I should rather see you dead here now!"

Patrick, though he was much moved, tried to smile. "It would be impossible," he said.

"Clarissa Waldron thought so, too. You don't know what power a wife has over a husband. Oh! my boy."

She said no more; her voice broke, and Patrick raised her up from the floor — for she had fallen on her knees, — kissed her forehead, and said with a sigh: "I promise, mother, never to rush into the danger you speak of."

There was silence after this, until they said good-night.

. . . .

Over at the Redwood house, Eleanor stood beside her father's bedside. The Judge had not spoken since he had been brought home from the railway station. Eleanor and Dr. Talbot and Belinda kept watch. The stertorous breathing of the man apparently so vigorous was appalling to his daughter; it seemed to crush through her nerves and brain and to wound her very heart. She was inconsolable.

Dr. Talbot could give her little hope. The physician who had accompanied the Judge from Eaglescliff could only say that he had prescribed for him early in the day, and that he complained of overwork. On his way to the Eaglescliff station he had fallen suddenly.

About midnight he opened his eyes. Eleanor bent over him, and the crucifix of the rosary she still held in her hands touched his face. With an effort he grasped it.

"Clarissa," he murmured, looking at Eleanor, "forgive me. I did not know your belief meant so much. Let us begin over again."

Before Eleanor could speak, he became insensible again, with the crucifix tight in his grasp.

XI.

"Show me the Father's face, O Lord!" — *Faber.*

ELEANOR, in charge of Belinda, was hurried to her room. She never thought of disobeying Dr. Talbot. The Judge had brought her up in the salutary doctrine that a physician was to be obeyed with military precision. He assured the young girl that her father was not dying, and that was enough.

It was after midnight. The soft promise of the evening had not been kept. A storm of frosty rain was pelting against the north side of the house, much to Belinda's disgust. She was divided between her fear for the crops — for Belinda always read the agricultural column in the Redwood *Herald*, — and a vague uneasiness lest her conduct in the matter of the letter might have had something to do with the present catastrophe. Belinda was high tempered and impulsive, and she had a conscience.

"I never felt so much in need of spiritooal consolation," she said, having kindly told Eleanor that she guessed the doctor would have to draw a good deal of blood before the Judge "came to." Eleanor, too, felt much in need of consolation; but Belinda was not given to excessive sympathy. Death and sickness made more or less "work" for her; she had become so familiar with them that they had become commonplace.

"I read a good deal in the papers about Columbus, and I haven't much against him, except I think he might have been more enlightened in religious matters. But why did he go and discover a climate like this? He might have done better. Just think of the thousands of apple blossoms that hail is nipping off. It makes a body sick."

Eleanor felt that if Belinda went on with her prattle she must go mad. And yet she did not dare to "dismiss" her. Belinda went and came as she listed. She, however, did not expect a reply to her last remark, which was only a grotesque expression of her discontent with herself.

"Dr. Talbot's all for bleeding. He's of the old school. And I must say that I'm in favor of bleeding myself. I have no patience with a doctor that doesn't bleed. Simeon Stokes, Mr. Stokes' father, would never have been the man he was if he hadn't been bled repeatedly when he was young. Leeches are good enough in their way, but I don't hold much to leeches — "

"Belinda," interrupted Eleanor, faintly, "I fancy Dr. Talbot may need you. I'll rest in the easy-chair here until he asks for me."

"He'll not ask for you," said Belinda, confidently. "You mean well, but you couldn't stand the sight of bleeding. *I* was brought up different."

Belinda turned down the night-lamp and went out. Eleanor locked the door. She was relieved. At least her father would not die. Her heart went up in a glad burst of thankfulness. Let him live, she cried out in her heart, and she would endure anything.. All misfortunes seemed small to her now. When he should recover sufficiently, she would ask him the meaning of the letter she had shown to Mrs. Desmond; she felt sure that he could clear it up. She would never doubt that dear, dear father again; it gave her a strange, inexplicable pleasure to remember that he had touched the crucifix so tenderly.

Now if he should die she would not feel so wretched about it. He had never scoffed at religion; he had laughed at a great many things which he called Calvinistic, but he had never mocked at Christianity. Eleanor had never been anxious about her father's spiritual welfare, but she had been anxious about his health; she had been anxious that he should not worry himself about his "investments"; she had wished that he would go oftener to church with her, because it "looked so queer" for him to stay at home; and she had prayed that he might restore to Patrick Desmond anything that might be his. She had not thought seriously of his possible death; it seemed to her that all her trials were over when her mother had died. It was only a few days before her mother's death that the words had been spoken which had filled her mind with those questions concerning her father, — questions which arose all the more strongly in her mind because the Judge seemed unconscious of them. Her mother had said to her one day, after a long silence:

"I have sacrificed my conscience to your father, Nora. When the time comes, do you prefer your conscience to everything else in the world. A great wrong has been done, — a great wrong."

And then Eleanor had caught her mother in her arms and said eagerly:

"Let the wrong be repaired, mother."

"It is too late." And she had added, wearily: "Too late — too late." Then a sudden flush had crossed her face, as it often did during her sickness, and she had whispered in Eleanor's ear: "See that Patrick Desmond has his rights: your father must give back what he has taken."

That was all. An interruption had occurred; and Mrs. Redwood sank rapidly after that. It had been enough. Like the three pomegranate seeds which, eaten by Proserpine, made all the difference to her between darkness and light, those few words had made Eleanor's life anxious when it might have been serene. She went over all this now, — or, rather, it passed through her mind; and she said to herself that there must be some mistake. At any rate, all her doubts, once so important to her, seemed mere trifles in the face of this awfully real calamity. After all, her father would not die, — the doctor had said it.

Yet the doctor might be wrong; and if he were! — Eleanor shuddered. Death took a new aspect. Her mother had passed away by degrees; there had been mounds of flowers, singing by a quartette, a few eloquent words, and a still more eloquent prayer. Death had been hard and sad enough, but Eleanor had endured it. Now she felt that she could not endure it again. She stretched out her hands in the gloom; the words from "In Memoriam" came to her; she was an infant crying in the night,

> "And with no language but a cry."

What would become of her father if he were to pass away? Where would he go? Should she ever meet him again? He was good, — he had been the best father in the world to her. But he did not believe — or, at least, he said he "did not know.' Still, he had almost kissed the crucifix. Had he begun to believe? He was not good enough for heaven. She knew that Mr. Stokes, who was fresh from his seminary, would say that the mere tenderness to a crucifix would not admit a man to heaven; and Mr. Stokes would say, too, that there was only one other place. Oh! if her father should die that night, — there *must* be some way out. If she had only asked Patrick Desmond; *he* might know. In the dull glow of the lamp shone the face of the Madonna. Somehow it seemed to take the young girl nearer to God. After all, He must be a friend, — He who had come down to earth and been cradled by such a Mother. A slight hope — unreasonable, some people would have called it — kindled in her heart. After a time her tired mind lost itself in sleep; and through her dreams, like a recurrent theme in a symphony, shone the face of the Madonna.

On the next day Judge Redwood was better. Dr. Talbot's assistant and a nurse were with him. Dr. Talbot said that he had evidently had some great shock; he was not the sort of man to go to pieces unless there was some mental trouble. He recommended quiet.

The doctor had said that Eleanor must stay away from her father. She was sitting in her room, feeling very thankful that there was a prospect of her father's recovery, when she heard Desmond's voice at the door. Her heart bounded. If she could only see him for a moment. Belinda answered his inquiry, and he was gone.

"Young Desmond was here," Belinda said, "asking about your pa. He seemed real anxious. I gave him the string of beads with the cross to it. I didn't like the looks of that thing with strangers comin' in and out — "

"You had no right, Belinda — " began Eleanor.

"You needn't be so sharp about it," answered Belinda, in an injured tone. "I said I guess you hadn't much need for them, and he said he meant you to keep 'em; so I took 'em back, and put 'em under Baxter's 'Saint's Rest,' in the parlor. He is going to New York this evening."

"To New York!" exclaimed Eleanor.

"Why not? I guess he ain't tied to Redwood," returned Belinda.

Why not, indeed? What right had Eleanor to feel disappointed? Nevertheless it was with a sense of bitter disappointment that she turned her face toward the window to hide it from Belinda.

"Will he stay?" she asked. "I suppose he is going to visit friends."

"He's going for good," said Belinda, watching the young girl with interest. "I don't suppose his friends live in Fifth Avenue — though they may," she added, with a sniff. "The Irish bob up everywhere. You can never tell."

After a time Eleanor became ashamed of the interest she could not help manifesting in Desmond. She tried to laugh at herself. A month ago she almost despised his very name, and never heard it without irritation. She recalled her conversation about him over the tea table. How all the affectations of "society" fell away before realities. She was no longer thoughtlessly trying to escape from the monotonous life around her, by grasping at everything that could bring her nearer to a more sophisticated civilization. She had a glimpse into the reality of life; she shuddered, as if a presentiment had come to her. Desmond did not seem to her to be the ideal man; but he believed firmly, and in spiritual things he was stronger than she was. In this her father, her ideal man, failed. What, after all, was life but a burden that must be carried? If she could only have known Desmond a little longer he might have helped her. And she had been unkind to him.

Belinda fluttered in at this moment, and announced Mr. Stokes.

"He doesn't look well, poor dear young man. I was that flustered I went to the door with my kitchen apron on. Do keep him talkin' till I finish a batch of crullers, and I'll bring a nice mess into the parlor."

And Belinda hurried away.

If Eleanor had been a belle of society — one of those Psyches of modern times who are analytical in the study of mankind, — one would easily conclude that she had found a new specimen. She was plainly anxious to meet Mr. Stokes, — so anxious that she did not even stop to adjust the bow of ribbon at her throat; but Eleanor had none of the qualities of the young women of society.

Mr. Stokes, who had called in form, sat on the edge of a chair, with his hat in one hand and his card in the other. He had carefully written "Ripley J. Stokes" on a large card; but as Belinda had ignored it, he now held it rather awkwardly in his hand. As Eleanor entered, he was inspired to drop it on the floor and to press it under his boot-heel. This gave him great relief.

He had read in a book of etiquette — he and Patrick Desmond had often spoken about it — that a man making a formal call should hold on to his hat. Eleanor had probably read a different book; for she seized his hat gently but firmly, and an amiable struggle ensued. Eleanor put the hat on the piano, and the ice was broken.

Mr. Ripley J. Stokes was slight and delicate-looking, with an expression of great kindliness. His large brown eyes were very pleasant to most people, because they had a respectfully-listening expression. He would have been more interesting to people in general if he had not limited the care of his dress to a large half-moon of glossy brown hair, which he trained gracefully over his forehead; and to the no less careful cultivation of light-blue neckties. Nevertheless, Mr. Stokes was "nice," and everybody in Redwood liked him.

The "waterfall" and the necktie might repel, but who is too fastidious to resist good feeling for a man who listens to everything with a pair of soft, respectful eyes?

Eleanor felt the consolation and the flattery of those eyes — although it did occur to her that he had put on his summer coat too early.

"I thought I'd drop in," Mr. Stokes said, gently. "Belinda asked me to come; though I feared you would not see me, as I saw Mr. Partridge going away."

Mr. Partridge was the Presbyterian minister, whom the artful Belinda had sent away.

"I am very glad to see you. My father is somewhat better. I was afraid he would die."

"'The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away,'" observed Mr. Stokes. "If your father had died you would, I am sure, have cast your burden on the Lord."

The interest faded out of Eleanor's eyes. "It would have been very hard," she said. "Do you think my father could have gone to Heaven if — "

The listening eyes did not help her out.

"If," she went on, — "if the worst had happened?"

"Death is not the worst," answered the young man, evasively.

"But would the worst have happened to my father? You know my father, and you are *almost* a minister. Surely you can tell me."

Mr. Stokes dropped his eyes. "The wind is coming up, — I am afraid the apple crop will be a failure this year."

"No, no!" cried Eleanor; "you cannot avoid my question. Do you think my father would have gone to Heaven? Do you think he could have gone to Heaven at once, just as he was?"

"Not just as he was," said Mr. Stokes, after an embarrassing pause. "Your father was somewhat liberal in his religious opinions."

"I know — I know!" exclaimed Eleanor, eagerly. "But last night he almost kissed the crucifix I happened to have; and he looked for a moment almost as if he were a Christian."

"The crucifix!" cried Mr. Stokes, in alarm; and then he calmed down, and recalled some of his lectures in the seminary. "Ah, Miss Redwood," he said, "symbols are nothing. Did he say in his heart, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth'? Did he cast his sins on Jesus?"

"I don't know — I don't know," Eleanor said, rising from her chair and walking toward the window. "But I thought that there might be a chance for him after his look at the crucifix last night; I believe there *will* be a chance for him — if he should die to-night."

Mr. Stokes sympathized deeply with her agitation. She was both beautiful and graceful, and she was in trouble. Mr. Stokes had every temptation to promise Heaven for her father, but his principles were too strong for him. Agnosticism was bad; and he felt that the crucifix was not only bad, but un-American; it seemed to threaten the public schools in some way.

"There must be some place for good men like my father, who want to believe, but who don't know how; who have unconsciously begun to believe, and who at the last do as my father has done. There *must* be."

Eleanor's voice became passionate. Mr. Stokes looked at his hat longingly.

"Andover has been saying something to that effect, but we haven't taken it up yet."

There was silence. A newsboy's voice was heard crying out loudly: "Water in the Fly-Away Mine! Extra — extra! Fly-Away Mine filled with water! Extra edition!"

"Why, that's papa's mine!" said the young girl, listening.

"Yes."

After all, the calamity had its value, in the emergency: it might divert Eleanor's attention from the other world.

"It may make him poor?" she said, interrogatively. "Ah! well, I don't care," she continued, "as long as I have my hands."

And as she stretched out her taper fingers, the grace and pathos of the action overcame Mr. Stokes' prejudices.

"I am sure," he said, "that the Andover people are right."

Belinda came in with the crullers and a benignant smile. As she was showing Mr. Stokes to the door, she said: "You will be able to go back to college soon. Mrs. Bayard is going to manage about the money; it's to go to you, not to the Kindergarten —"

Mr. Stokes frowned. "Belinda," he said, softly, "I can't go back to college. It's not money I most need: it's to know what I ought to believe."

Belinda raised her hands in amazement. "Sich words!" she said. "*Sich* words! Why, if *you* talk that way, where am I to look for spiritooal consolation?"

XII.

"Fresh woods and pastures new."

PATRICK DESMOND'S journey to New York was apparently uneventful; but to him — he had never travelled more than thirty miles outside of Redwood — it was full of events. He observed much, he learned much. Ever and anon a pang shot through his heart. There was still a great deal of the boy in Desmond, and his eyes became hazy more than once as he thought of the kind, cheerful face of the dear old mother. At times another and a younger face arose before him, and he sighed as he thought of it.

It was half-past five o'clock in the afternoon when he reached the Grand Central station, in New York. Its gloom oppressed him and its bustle pleased him. He said to himself that, after all, it was a noble thing to be even a small part of such a great city. He carefully enquired the way to Harlem, purchased a large package of dubious candy for little Miley from an Italian at the corner, and gave himself up to the pleasure of his first ride in a car of the elevated railway.

After he had reached his street in Harlem, he began his search for the Grand Windsor. He expected to find a hotel: he found a ten-story building, of red brick and brown stone, with a massive door, over which was carved ornately the name "Grand Windsor." The heavy glass door was opened by a small page covered with diagonal lines of brass buttons.

"What yer want?" asked the page, with a bullying air, that struck Desmond as inappropriate.

"Does Mr. Galligan live here?"

"Galligan de Assembly man? You bet he does — when he's at home. Just you ring de fift bell on de right side."

Desmond obeyed meekly. There was an air about the little creature that impressed him; and the little creature knew how to make the most of his buttons and his Bowery accent.

The bell tinkled. Desmond heard a voice whisper, "Who's there?" He hesitated a moment, and then, seeing the mouth of a speaking-tube, called, "Patrick Desmond." A door opened with a click, and he ascended a thickly-carpeted, musty-smelling stairway. The page kindly called after him:

"Fift floor — and don't you forget it."

He reached a little door, on which he read, "Hon. M. Galligan," and was saluted by a burst of melody.

. . . .

Mrs. Miles Galligan had been in a state of expectancy all day. She had never seen Mrs. Desmond; but, as she knew that her aunt had frequently helped her mother in special seasons of adversity, she was particularly anxious to impress Patrick with her present splendor, and to insinuate that this splendor was not of recent origin. Patrick Desmond had the blood of the Mulligans in his veins: that was sufficient to make her anxious to defend him against the world, — but it would take her a long time to forget the irritation occasioned by the remembrance of the kindness of his mother.

When Nellie married Miles Galligan, and had left Lacy's shop to take her place, as she fondly hoped, in regions where the diamond scintillates by day and night, she had been a very sprightly young person. Her giggle was perpetual, her bang redundant, and no picnic or assembly had been complete without the most indefatigable dancer in her district. But Nellie had grown stout and a little fretful. Her manner had been toned down by the cares of housekeeping and the demands of little Miley, — a fat and combative child, with his father's face in miniature. And Miles himself was a care. Nellie had fondly believed that she could coerce Miles out of the selfishness which had made the lives of his sisters miserable. She believed in her power to force him to work, and at the same time to allow him that liberty — particularly in the matter of drinking — which his sisters had tried to restrict.

At first it was very well. Miles was proud of Nellie. His brother-in-law, John Longworthy, gave him an allowance, which had been continued; and she was enabled to dress in a way that dazzled her old acquaintances and made her sisters-in-law unspeakably indignant. True, the flaming Gainsborough hat and the flamboyant redingote disappeared; but Nellie's new dressmakers, who were famous among the gayest people of the East Side, entered madly into her desire to fill Lize Brown and some of her old friends with envy. They succeeded, and Miles often declared his admiration of Nellie's "style."

But even the Longworthy allowance and Miles' salary as a member of the Assembly could not stand the strain of so much champagne at little suppers given in the flat, and Nellie's careless manner of housekeeping. Besides, Miles began to miss many little comforts. He felt the want of that ceaseless care which his sister Mary had lavished on him. And when little Miley came, he was neglected altogether; and his temper was not improved. Nellie, whose manners varied very much according to her mood, had a temper too, and a greater command of words than her husband. Miles soon discovered that the fascinating dancer, the belle of all the picnics, and the "best dresser" in his district, was not exactly the wife for a man of his temperament. He was somewhat afraid of her; but he had his remedy when she lost her temper — he could go out, and he did.

There were times when he bitterly accused his sisters of having deserted him, and his mind was in a chronic state of disgust at their ingratitude. John Longworthy and Esther were in Europe, amusing themselves; yet he and his family were wearing life away in a small flat in Harlem. Arthur Fitzgerald and Mary had a pleasant house down town, and all they had done for him and Nellie was to invite them to dinner occasionally; and, when the Fitzgerald baby died, to send Nellie a lot of little clothes, which Nellie, of course, gave away. He hated such upstarts. True, Mary did sometimes come around and talk to Nellie; but he couldn't see why she couldn't take little Miley for a month or so at a time; or, better still, have his family live with her. She and Arthur had no cares and a very large house. Although Miles had his opinion of Nellie, which he often expressed, he felt that she was his own, and he resented anything that could be made to seem a slight to her; and her imagination was capable of cultivating "slights" perennially, where his sisters were concerned.

Nellie was quick and plastic. At Lacy's she had not been dissatisfied with her surroundings, and even now she looked back at the period of the Lady Rosebuds' ball with gentle regret. She had enjoyed herself, and she had not thought of the future. The atmosphere of the Grand Windsor was very different from that of The Anchor. Everything breathed of gentility and even fashion. The caps of the nurse-girls were higher and their aprons longer than on Fifth Avenue; and Nellie, who could not get a French maid, felt obliged to force hers to speak Polish Hebrew to little Miley when he took his airings. She soon learned that a nurse who spoke English was impossible in the best society of the Grand Windsor; she had also learned many other disturbing things. Among these, to a limited extent, was the art of music. Nellie had spent some time in cultivation of her voice and in acquiring several "pieces," under the direction of Professor Fortescue, who prepared "gents and ladies for the stage," in the Bowery, two doors from the *atelier* for a time occupied by Mr. Bastien, the photographer.

Nellie, in fact, had aspirations. These aspirations would have made her a very useful woman, had they not been so hopelessly misdirected. The social surroundings of the tenement house had dragged down the best that was in her, and yet it was continually struggling to the surface. If she had loved the gayety of the picnic and the assembly, it was only natural. What other amusements had she? It is the nature of young people to long for amusement. Her home in the tenement house was no home at all: it was a sleeping place. Patrick Desmond's mother was no doubt of stronger fibre than Nellie's mother; but the immeasurable difference that now separated Desmond from his cousin was in the fact that he had a home. There is a great deal in blood: the strain will out some time or other; but both Desmond and his mother would have suffered greatly had they been forced to dwell in the squalor of The Anchor — the tenement house in which Nellie had lived and had her being.

Transplanted to that pretentious flat, the Grand Windsor, Nellie had determined to make herself worthy of her new environment; and, unluckily, the new environment was not much healthier for her than the old tenement-house surroundings. If she had lavished a month's savings on some piece of finery in the old days, in order to crush an envious rival of the glove department at Lacy's, she was under similar temptations now to keep beyond her neighbors in the flat, who, like herself, were people who were creeping upward socially. They were mostly in politics — the contractor who built the Grand Windsor having had special reasons for lowering the rent to gentlemen with "pulls" in the political world, — and mostly, too, in that stage of progress when the ladies wear diamond earrings in the morning with a *négligé* costume, and the gentlemen tell how many bottles of "wine" — meaning champagne — they have drunk or are about to drink.

Even little Miley's perambulator became a subject of rivalry. That precious little creature had been content with a plain carriage at first, but now he drove in a gilded wicker-work shell, containing old rose-colored cushions, and shaded by multitudinous lace ruffles. This gorgeous equipage had been purchased on the instalment plan; and the knowledge that the neighbors had become aware of it, through an altercation her servant had with the collector, had helped to indent the two upright lines which were showing themselves on Nellie's forehead.

Miles and his family were supposed to be living temporarily in the Grand Windsor; he kept rooms down town, to which they resorted at certain periods of the year, when electioneering was absolutely necessary.

Beneath all Nellie's giggles and frills and frivolity there was a strong desire to do right. Since her First Communion she had no regular religious instructions; an occasional sermon — she never had time on Sunday for the High Mass, except on some special occasion,— and the less frequent reading of a good book from the parochial library, made the sum of her religious exercises. But she had never missed Mass in her life, and she went to her "duty" with great regularity. She was not singular in this: all the Catholic girls in The Anchor did the same; and the most inveterate dancer and picnic-goer among them, knowing much of evil through contact with it in her daily life, was possessed of a purity of thought and act to an extent which only the angels knew; for men are too apt to judge from appearances.

Nellie was ambitious; she did not suffer from Miles' selfishness after her marriage, as one would who had been disappointed in the discovery of it. She knew what to expect: selfishness was not uncommon in the male sex. Sometimes she felt how grateful she ought to be for not having to earn a living for Miles. Had not Lize Brown married Jim Smith, the gay, the *débonnair;* and did she not still occupy her place at Lacy's, while Jim settled local politics on the corners? And little Katie Grogan, — wasn't she playing in "Cinderella" at a dime museum, that her better half might attend the races at Sheepshead Bay, when he was not too "tired" to go out?

Nellie was not disappointed in Miles: she was disappointed in herself. She had intended to reform Miles, to "mould" him; and he was undoubtedly afraid of her. Selfish, turbulent, sheltered from all rude shocks by his sister Mary, idle, selfish, too cowardly to be quite brutal, Miles learned to be somewhat afraid of Nellie. But familiarity bred a certain callousness; and then, he could always avoid a storm by keeping away.

Miles had changed in two years. He had grown stout and round, and had cultivated a heavy mustache. His cheeks had almost closed up over his eyes, and when he laughed nothing of them could be seen. His face was ruddy at all times; on the cheeks there was a dark red tint, which complaisant people took for health. Miles himself was always "complaining"; and when he "complained" he found, as he often said to admiring constituents, that whiskey was cheaper than a doctor.

Nellie was disgusted with herself because she could not control Miles. She was quick to see possibilities. She measured herself with the people she met, and felt that she was clever. "I could learn anything," she said to herself, "if somebody would only teach me *how*." But when on one occasion Mary Fitzgerald, Miles' sister, had gently proposed to help her in certain branches of knowledge, culinary and otherwise, Nellie had told her that "she must know that she was as good as the Galligans any time, and that anybody that took her for an ignoramus would be left."

Mary had retired, sighing. She was still full of solicitude for Miles,—that dear Miles whom her mother had left to her care. There were times even when she reproached herself for having married, and, in so doing, deserted that sweet little brother, to whom she ought to be a guardian.

Arthur Fitzgerald at first laughed at this; finally he resigned himself to it. After all, her devotion to Miles, most unreasonable and foolish as it seemed, was his wife's only fault.

Nellie, too proud to admit her ignorance, read anxiously all the advice to women printed in the various Sunday papers. She managed to acquire a knowledge of the usual etiquette of life, but her housekeeping was so atrocious that Miles got into the habit of often alluding to the superior charms of Mary's housekeeping. A day came when Nellie felt that she could almost stab Miles every time he uttered his sister's name.

Nellie had become rather good-looking, according to the opinion of Miles' friends. She was stouter: she had what people called "a presence"; her bang was as glossy as ever. Her "society" manner was rather pompous, as she had studied it from the stage,— altogether, she was a mixture of pretension, vulgarity, boldness, sensitiveness, ambition, good sense, and good intentions.

She was keenly alive to the necessity of impressing Patrick Desmond with her present position in life. Mrs. Desmond had apprized her of the date of her son's coming. At exactly five o'clock Miley was brought into the little parlor. He was a bald-headed child, with chubby fists, and a tendency to scowl. He was attired in a bluish-white lace frock, adorned with an enormous sash of pink ribbon, with a spot here and there, which Nellie knew nobody would notice.

The parlor was a wilderness of crimson plush: the chairs and sofa were blazing with the stuff; the lambrequin was heavy with roses and sunflowers embroidered on it; and mats and tidies of red, all showing lumps of fruit and flowers, were everywhere. A crayon of Miles hung in a big gilded frame over the piano, which was also heavily draped with crimson plush. Nellie had attired herself in what she called a "watteau pleat." It had a long train; it was pink and green, and, except for a grease spot here and there, which helped it to match little Miley's sash, it was doubtless a thing of beauty. Diamond earrings and rings flashed whenever Nellie moved.

Miles lounged in at five o'clock; he put his tall white hat on the floor, took out a fat cigar, and threw himself at full-length on the sofa.

"Get up," said Nellie, sharply. "I'm expecting my cousin."

"Can't help it," answered Miles, in a drowsy tone. "I don't want any dinner. Lunched at the Astor; ate a lot—"

"And drank a lot," said Nellie, more sharply.

"See here, Nell,' began Miles, jumping up, while little Miley bowled preparatory to the uttering of a howl, "if you're going to talk that way before this cousin of yours —"

The bell tinkled.

"There he is!" cried Nellie; "there he is!"

She plumped down on the piano-stool, raised her eyes soulfully to Miles' picture, and, while picking out an accompaniment with her right hand, raised her voice:

> "Only a violet, dawling,—
>   Only a violet bloo-oo;
> Only a violet, dawling,
>   Shall I give to you-oo.
> Only a flower, dearest,—
>   Only a flower, swee-ee-eet,—
> The earliest bloom, the rarest,
>   To lay at your fee-ee-eet.
> Only a violet, dawling,—
>   Only a violet, dear;
> On-lee a violet, sweetest,—
>   Onlee-ee a vi-o-o-o-let fair!"

This was the music Patrick Desmond heard as he entered.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Nellie, shaking her ear-rings in the most modest confusion. "*How* you startled us! Miley, my love, as he didn't send up a card, I suppose this is Patrick Desmond."

Desmond's face flushed. To be in the presence of so much style was embarrassing enough; but at that moment he caught little Miley's eye, and the infant scowled and burst into a malevolent howl, that made him wish that he were back in Redwood.

"*How* you startled us," said Nellie, sweetly. "I'll hardly have time to change my dress for dinner, — but I forget everything when I sing."

"Have a drink?" asked Miles, shaking hands. "Never mind the old woman: come right into the bosom of the family."

"My cousin doesn't drink," said Nellie, with a sharpness that startled Desmond. Then she gave little Miley a frosty slap, that seemed to congeal the sound in the throat of that beautiful and precious child.

XIII.

> **Jasper.** — Who are most easily deceived?
> **Joyce.** — The true; but the false are deceived the longest.
> — *Old Play.*

Desmond's first evening with his relatives was not gay. Miles drank a great deal of beer at dinner, which was very ceremonious, but very bad. Nellie kept up a series of remarks in an undertone to the maid, who seemed to resent them; and Miles winked occasionally at Patrick when Nellie's "society manner" became too oppressive. As the beer went down Miles' spirits rose, and he even dared to joke about the finger-bowls. Nellie darted fiery glances at him, and her manner and conversation became more and more elegant. She watched eagerly for some expression of surprise or admiration on the face of her cousin from the country; and she began to be bitterly disappointed as all her best china passed in review before him.

The truth was that Desmond was hungry, and Nellie's new soup plates and decorated *entrée* dishes did not compensate for burned soup and what seemed to be codfish on toast. If Nellie had known that he was impressed with the idea that she was immensely rich, she would have been satisfied. To Patrick's mind, the maid in the white cap and apron bringing in a variety of pretty dishes, the silver on the sideboard, the flowers and thin glasses, meant riches. He did think that the little coffee-cups were very pretty, and he would have been glad to say something pleasant in order to make his cousin feel that her efforts had not been in vain; but he had learned the first lesson in the provincial code of etiquette — never to praise anything. In Redwood a compliment meant that the utterer of it was either rustically unacquainted with the things he admired, or that he was lying for some fell purpose.

Although the serving of ice cream in a lace frill struck Patrick with fear at first — for it looked like soap, — and afterward with admiration — for, on a second examination, it seemed very dainty, — he made no remark. It was in vain that Nellie loudly regretted, while the maid smiled cynically, that she had no time "to prepare. If she had really expected him, she would not have put before him an ordinary family dinner; it must seem so inferior to his mother's. But," Nellie added, with a glance at little Miley, who had painted himself and his high-chair red with tomato sauce, "it is hard when one has a baby to look after." Patrick looked at Miley, whose aspect was ferocious and repellent, and agreed heartily that it must be hard.

Nellie bit her lip; what a stupid idiot this cousin of hers was. And her feelings were not soothed when she heard giggles in the kitchen, and observed that Miles seemed to be choking with laughter.

"You really will not tell your mother that I am a bad housekeeper, or criticise the way we poor New Yorkers serve a dinner; now, will you? O dear! that dreadful girl has actually given you a spoon for your cream, instead of a fork."

Miles burst into a vacant laugh, and then said he couldn't help it. Patrick's face reddened. In the first place, he was thinking that he would tell his mother how much better her cooking was than the food prepared for the table even of the richest statesman, and served with awful solemnity on beautiful china. And Nellie's speech had caught him red-handed in the thought. His embarrassed silence and Miles' laugh set the match to Nellie's temper.

"What do you mean, Miley Galligan?" demanded Nellie. "You ought to have better sense than to grin at nothing. You've no more gumption than a flea. It's not your impudence to me I mind, but it's your example to little Miley. You're not fit to have a child that will fill a proper station in life."

Miles made no answer; life, after all, is short, and a bad dinner is not better for a verbal battle. But suddenly Nellie recovered herself. The dinner was nearly over; there might be a chance yet of impressing her cousin.

"Did you go out much at — at — Beachwood, I think you call it?" said Nellie, with her best, artificial smile, learned partly from her observations at Lacy's counter, and partly by visits to the theatre.

"Redwood," said Patrick. "Oh! yes, I took a walk every night."

"Oh! I mean socially," observed Nellie. "I suppose you were in the swim, — your mother made a very elegant marriage, I have heard said."

This was intended as a hint that Patrick should try to impress Miles. The New York Mulligans could not be made impressive; but, by judicious manipulation, the Redwood Mulligans might be exhibited through a vista of splendor. Patrick reddened again and did not answer; the allusion to swimming puzzled him. Miles winked triumphantly at Nellie, and made the mental note that the Redwood Mulligans couldn't be "much"; he wouldn't let her throw them in his face, any way.

In despair, Nellie rubbed little Miley to a semblance of whiteness, while he howled, and led the way to the parlor. Here Patrick made a redeeming step by presenting the paper of candy to the amiable child, who showed his teeth, with an expression that was less turbulent than usual.

Nellie took a low wicker-work chair and put her arm on the back of the sofa, on which Miles assumed his usual reclining position. Nellie intended that Patrick should take this to be a picture of true domestic harmony, and so report it to his mother. But the young man was struggling with one of Miles' fat cigars, the pores of which seemed to be stopped up.

"I may as well have an understanding with you to-night," Miles said, making himself vague through a cloud of smoke. "I can hardly afford to keep a secretary, because there is no appropriation for it at Albany. There's always a lot of talk about economy, — just as if the American people, more especially the people of New York, didn't hate meanness. But there's always a way of beating the devil around the stump, you'd better believe; and I won't have to go down deep in my pocket to pay *your* salary."

Here Miles laughed, and little Miley, startled, began to howl. "Oh! choke the kid," said his father, amiably. "He's a voice like his mother. I say, Nell, will you sing something for us after a while?" he added, noticing a frown on her brow.

"If you stick to your work," he went on, addressing Desmond, "and if you're quick about it, I'll put you in the way of having a home of your own," — Miles waved his hands complacently at the red plush, which the flaring gas-light made redder; "and a good one, too. There's money to be had, my boy, if you know where to find it."

Desmond's eyes brightened; he ceased to pump at the congested cigar. He had no desire to be like these people, prosperous as they seemed to be; but he was most anxious to attain the same degree of prosperity.

"You'll not have much hard work," said Nellie, encouragingly; "and you'll be introduced to all our friends as my relative. And that'll help you very much, because a stranger in New York ain't of much account unless he is properly —"

"Oh! bother, Nell," interrupted Miles. "A young fellow will find plenty of friends, if he wants to go into politics. Now, I've got to have my letters written," continued Miles, knocking the ashes from his cigar with fingers that shook a great deal. "I never was much of a penman, and they pile up. Nell's seen some of your writing, and she says you have a good fist."

"He has," remarked Nellie, emphatically. "His letters written for his mother in answer to mine are as clear as print."

"Well, I must hurry up this talk," said Miles. "I've an engagement with a few friends. Question of centralization of supplies, — important combination for the best interests of the people, — Hoffman House at eight. Now, I'll tell you what you must do. Can you write a little speech for me occasionally?"

Desmond hesitated.

"A little thing for a picnic, you know? Or just a trifle at a ratification meeting — with a funny bit in it?"

"I'll try," said Desmond, doubtfully. And as he thought of the possibilities held out by Miles, some words he had learned by heart out of a book ran through his mind: "Do that which is assigned thee, and thou canst not hope too much or dare too much." He rebuked himself with a certain shame, for applying them to the making of Miles' speeches.

"I like a little style about the after-dinner speeches: a touch of Latin, — I have forgotten it all myself. You can't do that?" said Miles, as Desmond shook his head. "Ah, well, I'll remember enough. At any rate, you can always get something appropriate at the back of the dictionary. There are some other little things you need to do, but I'll think of them later. The letters will not be much trouble. You can begin with a big bundle of them to-morrow; and take the afternoon off, to see the town."

"What kind of letters?" asked Desmond, doubtfully. "Do they need special knowledge?"

"Of course they do," answered Miles. "But I'll put you on to that. Say, Nell, did you see that one from Mr. Markenstein?"

"Of course I did," said Nellie, reproachfully. "He's a good friend of yours, and he hasn't been answered yet."

"Oh! well," returned Miles, jocosely, "Pat here will fix that all right —"

He stopped and stared at Desmond; Nellie opened her eyes in amazement, too. Patrick's face had assumed an expression of disgust; he put his hand very firmly on Miles' arm.

"I am in the habit," he said, quietly, "of — of — *reasoning* with people who call me 'Pat.'"

Miles looked startled and then angry. Nellie said to herself that such independence would not do. After all, it would be better to hire some poor creature that didn't have any backing. Another glance at Patrick's face made Miles conclude rapidly that he had better be amiable; and, besides, a man with a grip like that might be all the more valuable.

"Oh! well, Mr. Desmond; no offence," he said. "Suppose you write Mr. Markenstein's letter? He is one of my most prominent constituents, and he sent Nell here a batch of Passover bread, — 'twas like hard-tack, but he meant well. All you have to do is to write: 'Morris Markenstein, Esq.,' and begin: 'Dear Mark, — The Passover bread you sent to Mrs. Galligan has been a real treat to me and my family. Indeed my little boy cries for it constantly.' That's pleasant and familiar. And then you might add: 'Although not of your religious belief, I revere tenets which have produced men like you.' That's neat?"

Patrick said it was.

"You can write that, can't you? Or there's one to Giuseppe Galuppi, a great worker among the Italians. You don't happen to know Italian? I often wish I had married an Italian woman," said Miles, regretfully. "If I had an Italian wife, I could sweep the district without trouble."

"I wish you had," interposed Nellie, scornfully. "You'd suit an Eyetalian better than me."

"Well, you may say it in this way: 'The bottle of Chianti you sent to Mrs. Galligan has been a real treat to me. My little boy will drink nothing but it.' Work in the child when you can; the men don't care, but their wives always read those letters. You've always got to put in some taffy for the women. And at the end you may say: 'Although not of the race that produced Columbo, I should desire above all things to be a native of that beautiful Naples that produced you.' It always fetches them to speak of their towns; for they're as jealous of one another as the Tips and the Far-downs used to be when the Irish hadn't been Americanized. Ain't it easy?"

Desmond said it was, but his heart was heavy; there was something about Miles and the whole business that repelled him. And yet he must tread this road to the success he longed for.

Miles jumped up, and threw his cigar stump into a spittoon that stood in the corner. "I must go," he said. "You'll sleep in the hall room to-night, and to-morrow I'll take you to the Tivoli House, where you are to board."

He kissed little Miley, threw him up in the air, and was about to go, when Nellie suddenly asked him whether he had forgotten that to-morrow night was "engaged, — Lize Smith's party, — Jim's got work, and they are going to have a few friends, and if you don't go, they'll say you're stuck up, and you'll lose votes. I could have killed that Lize this afternoon; she called, 'Nellie, Nellie!' at the speaking-tube, just as if we were in the same positions. I don't know what the neighbors thought."

"I can't go," replied Miles, with a yawn. "I must go to a card-party. Political talk, you know, at the Mayor's." And he winked at Desmond.

"But you must," said Nellie, imperatively. "Lize will raise the neighborhood against you."

"Well, take Desmond and go yourself. He may like it, and you can keep my end up. But don't put on too many airs, Nell, — they don't like it."

Nellie frowned and followed Miles to the door. Patrick could hear the murmur of a subdued dialogue, in which her voice became almost pleading. When she came in again, her face was turned away. She took up little Miley, in spite of his struggles.

"I must take this child to bed," she said, still averting her face. "And, as you must be tired, you can go into your room. Just open the door near the piano. You'll find the gas lit and your satchel there."

But another struggle with the cherub seemed to restore her; she raised her face, with her artificial smile on it, and went on: "You have been made a member of our family from the first, Mr. Desmond — or Patrick, as I guess *I* may call you. Make yourself at home, and don't be bashful."

And she went on humming,

> "Only a violet, dawling,—
> Only a violet bloo-o!"

Patrick entered a room which to him, accustomed to the larger rooms of the country, seemed a mere box. Its white walls were unadorned save by a colored print of Murillo's "Immaculate Conception." The sense of loneliness left him when he saw this; for it is a picture which has raised more hearts to heaven than perhaps any other. Raphael's pictures are easily vulgarized; but neither bad paper, bad printing, nor crude color seems able to spoil Murillo's loveliest creation.

Patrick drew the one chair in the room over to the window. The street was crowded with people; the crash of the elevated railroad trains sounded in his ears: there appeared to be voices everywhere. A pianist, seemingly very near him, though really in the next flat, was drumming a popular waltz. The electric light flooded part of the street with a white glow; the rest it left in greater gloom than that of night. He remembered a print in Dore's "Paradise Lost" which was like the street, in its exaggerated light and shade. How could any man sleep, he asked himself, in such a place? This flat was like a crevice in the wall of a great rock, where birds built nests, one above the other. He could not imagine this as a home, although he was impressed by the wealth of its inhabitants. Patrick Desmond had not yet learned that appearances are exceedingly deceptive. He was like that small country boy in the old-fashioned children's book, who took the gilding on the mirror frames for real gold.

Miles repelled him, but no doubt Miles was the typical man of power; and Nellie's elegance amazed and impressed him. She was a finer lady evidently than Eleanor Redwood; she had more airs and graces; and Eleanor had never worn diamonds. There was no doubt about it that, as a woman of the world, Nellie was the more elegant of the two. He imagined that Nellie, at Washington, in a great assembly of American statesmen, would have everybody at her feet, while Eleanor would probably be entirely neglected. But, he said to himself, that Eleanor would be to him, in such an assembly, the most radiant star of all, — only to him perhaps, but *all* to him. And then he reminded himself of the absurdity of thinking of Eleanor Redwood at all; he would probably never see her again. He thought of his own comparative poverty, and wondered when he should be able to surround his mother with all the luxuries which formed part of the lives of Miles and Nellie.

He leaned out of the window, at a dizzy height above the crowd, and caught the exhilaration of the new atmosphere. The bustle and lights and noises affected him as champagne affects some men. Oh! if he only had money, — if by some chance he could be placed through its possession, through its power, as much above the world as he was now in reality. For an instant a temptation to envy his relatives crossed his mind; and then he laughed a little when he thought of the helplessness of his mother among all that red plush and velvet; and he wondered how she would like her ice cream in a paper frill. Eleanor — she *would* come into his mind — would not seem in place among all this frippery; he could only imagine her under the maple buds, with fresh breezes around her, and the birds of spring fluttering about.

The night went on, and Patrick mused: he could not sleep; for, although the noise of the crowd grew vaguer, the crash of the railroad trains almost stunned him at intervals. He turned down the gas about midnight, and shortly afterward he heard steps on the stairs. The parlor door opened: there was a sound of impatient words and of a man stumbling. After that he heard Nellie's voice in expostulation, then an imprecation from Miles. A flash through the cracks of his door told him that the gas in the parlor had been turned up. There followed another series of stumbles. Nellie's voice was raised shrilly and then softened; there came the sound of a blow, and then another.

Patrick started to his feet and tried to pull open the door, it was locked. He heard Nellie whisper, "Don't, Miles." He did not unlock the door, for the thought rushed upon him that she might be able to endure her husband's blows, but not the knowledge that a stranger knew she had suffered from them. He could hear Miles swear, and a suppressed sob from his cousin. He put his hand on the door and stood, heartsick and disenchanted. If this went on, he must throw all scruples to the wind and interfere. No sound came after this; he opened the door softly. Miles lay in a drunken stupor, his clenched fist extended toward his wife; while she, in her gay dress, knelt with her head on the piano-stool, her form shaken with suppressed sobs. Patrick softly closed the door, and knelt down to say his prayers. That night he did not sleep.

XIV.

"Let me make the songs of the people. . . ."

DESMOND seemed to have awakened from a nightmare when the full light of the sun shone into his room. His heart sank as he thought of meeting his relative and assuming the duties of the day. What a horrible thing life in a great city was,—so heartless, so turbulent, so full of all evil. After all, "to stay at home" was best. And, still, perhaps his coming to New York would be the beginning of the success he coveted with all his heart; and perhaps, too, he might be the means of standing between his cousin and the brutality of her husband. "Her husband!" He shuddered as he thought of it. If marriage were what his mother had said it was—requiring virtue, and respect, and harmony, and these still to mean sacrifice,—what a purgatory it must be to this unfortunate woman.

He said to himself that it would be very hard for him to assume an air of unconcern after what he had witnessed; and he practised several speeches, in his imagination, to show that he was entirely at ease.

A knock at his door was followed by a voice announcing that breakfast was ready. In ten minutes Patrick entered the parlor, and was taken through two small bedrooms into the dining-room. Nellie and little Miley were there. Miley looked at the guest with a curved lip and battle in his eyes; but probably the remembrance of the candy of the night before tended to soften him. He did not add to the terrors of Patrick's position by making any hostile demonstration. The guest took the seat pointed out to him. With an effort he raised his eyes to Nellie's face. He was shocked to find that she seemed entirely unconcerned; her "bang" was as much frizzled as ever, she wore an artificial smile, and her morning-gown was brilliant in color. She cut open a large grape fruit and gave him half of it.

"You will find this a good appetizer, though I guess you people from the country generally have good appetites. Mr. Galligan is not up yet; he was out last night so late that I hated to disturb him this morning; he often sleeps until twelve o'clock. There is nothing like responsibility to make a man sleep, and my poor husband is so worried by politics. I often wonder how he lives."

Desmond asked himself if he could be dreaming. Was it possible that any woman could so conceal her feelings? Was she callous? Or was it an overmastering desire to save her husband from reproach that made her talk in this way? He could not understand it. She could not avoid thinking that he might have heard the disturbance of the night before. Later, when he understood better the conditions under which she had spent her earlier days, he was able to gauge her feelings very accurately.

Desmond had neither the tact nor the experience necessary to the carrying on of a conversation with anybody who seemed to him to be playing a part. In fact, the state of mind of the woman who *could* play a part was a great puzzle to him. In truth, if the success he longed for should depend on dissimulation, he could never gain it. He was incapable of appearing even for a moment what he was not; and when Nellie broke into praise of Miles and his admirable qualities both as a statesman and a private citizen, Patrick was obstinately silent. But Nellie did not mind this much; it convinced her that he probably suspected that Miles was not in a fit condition to appear at breakfast; so she changed the subject, wisely considering that in a short time—after he had attained greater knowledge of political and social life at the Grand Windsor—there would be no necessity for subterfuges on her part. But at present, as she admitted to herself, Patrick was "green" and needed to be treated as a tender plant in the early stage of its existence. As for him, his heart was bursting with pity for her. Even little Miley, coated with bread and milk, had a halo of pathos about him, in Patrick's eyes.

If Nellie could have guessed what was in her cousin's mind, she would have been both astonished and offended. If Miles the elder had dared to strike Miles the younger Nellie would have behaved like a tigress; and, therefore, she would have keenly resented any pity bestowed on the child; *she* could take care of him. She would have as keenly resented any sympathy for herself; she had lived too long in the atmosphere of The Anchor not to have come to believe that a blow or two from a husband was one of the risks of matrimony. To her it did not mean degradation; it meant unpleasantness and pain for the moment. According to Nellie's code—the code of The Anchor,—a wife might hit back at her husband if he struck her when he was sober; but to strike a drunken man was a cruelty unheard of. And to Nellie, who, from observation, had known that the matrimonial state was full of risks, the horror, the contempt, the despondency, which the scene of the night before had aroused in Desmond, would have been incomprehensible. During the night he had half-resolved to flee from the place; but Miles' promise had occurred to him, and he said to himself that perhaps he had been specially called to New York to act as his cousin's champion. Nellie's artificial smile, and her brisk, self-satisfied manner put the champion suggestion to flight at once. Desmond looked at little Miley, and thought of the child's fate, with his father's example before him. He had no appetite. Nellie urged him to eat, but he could not.

"My husband," she said, confidentially, "seldom has time to write a letter, and I guess you'll find a great bundle; but you need not answer them all. To-night you will go down town with me, to Lize Smith's party. I have to go for Miles' sake, and you'll have to be polite to everybody; but it's not the sphere in which I generally move. I am much more at home at my sister-in-law's—Mrs. Arthur Fitzgerald's,—where you really meet the best people. In politics, a woman has to do a great deal she doesn't want to do; and if I don't go to Lize Smith's, folks will say that I am 'stuck up,' and that will lose Miles some votes, you know."

Desmond did *not* know, and he did not care. How could this woman prattle on in this way, after the tragedy of the night before?

"Of course, it's part of your duty to go with me, or else I shouldn't ask you. I must say that Lize is a good sort of girl—a little bad tempered, but good-hearted. We were formerly very intimate—we met very often in one of the largest drygoods shops in this city,—and sometimes she presumes a little on her former acquaintance with me. I have gone up in the world, Patrick Desmond, and I ain't ashamed of it."

She dropped her artificial smile as she uttered these words, and spoke in a tone of offence. Desmond looked at her in surprise.

"I say I ain't ashamed of it; and when you have the same advantages and social standing as we have, I hope you won't be ashamed of it."

Desmond promised that he would not be ashamed of it,—not, however, knowing very well what "it" referred to.

"You'll see something of city life," said Nellie, patronizingly; "and that will be an advantage, even if it's not the *bong-tong* or the four hundred. There are many nice people who are not of the four hundred," continued Nellie, aggressively; "although you country people get the idea that the four hundred are the best people in New York. It's nonsense! There's a gent and lady on the first floor that wear diamonds larger than anybody in the four hundred ever wore."

"If you don't mind," said Desmond, "I'll begin work."

But Nellie was in the mood for talking. It was not often that she had the pleasure of patronizing a rustic from the provinces.

"You'll see how people live in the tenement houses. My brother-in-law, John Longworthy, has written a book called 'Poverty and Sin,' or some such trash; and it has turned everybody against him."

"Do you know *him?*" asked Patrick, interested.

"Of course I do. He married Miley's sister; and a more stuck-up and putting-on-airs kind of people *I* don't want to see than he and his wife are. That Esther—Miley's sister—can say things that would make your blood run cold; and she's the kind that makes you so mad that you can't think of anything nasty to say until it is too late. Now Mary—that's Arthur Fitzgerald's wife—is different. She's a soft kind of a fool, with no style about her,"—Nellie assumed her artificial smile to show the difference. "But she's fond of Miles, who was always the best of brothers to her, —though sometimes her husband makes her forget that, and then she's ungrateful. But we must expect it in this world," she added with a sigh.

Again Desmond did not attempt to search for the antecedent of the "it;" he was interested in John Longworthy's book, with which the press of the whole country had been busy.

"And you really know John Longworthy?" said Patrick, with the innocent enthusiasm—alas, so short-lived!—of the hero-worshipper. "What a terrible book he has written about tenement-house life in New York. Is it true?"

"True!" exclaimed Nellie, becoming suddenly very indignant and natural. "It's true enough that there is a mixed crowd in tenement houses. And I am not going to deny that there is a good deal of beer-drinking going on, and that the girls *do* care a great deal for picnics and speelin' and good clothes; but who doesn't? Why, I was born in a tenement house," she said, clinching the argument, "and I am none the worse for it. I am a lady in every sense, I hope. And there is as much fun and enjoyment in tenement houses as you'd find anywhere. And why shouldn't girls like to dance? I could die speelin' myself."

After a pause the young man humbly asked what "speelin' " was.

"Oh!" Nellie answered, pitying, "it's a kind of waltz; but John Longworthy talks about it in his book as if it were murder. When I read about the book in *The Sun,* I says to Miles, 'The man's an upstart.' And I says, 'If it gets out that he's your brother-in-law, you'll lose votes among the people you depend on.' And so we never speak of him. It's hard to be ashamed of your own brother-in-law. He lived in the Bowery under an assumed name, and got the material for his book under false pretenses. It's a painful subject,—we never speak of it."

Patrick, anxious to avoid further reference to so painful a subject, proposed to go to work, and Nellie showed him a desk in the corner of the parlor. With some assistance from her, he answered several letters. It was not a hard task, for Nellie enjoyed dictating to him; and he could not help being impressed by her common-sense, and even a certain tact, which was not, however, embarrassed by a great reverence for the truth.

The morning wore on. Patrick wrote quickly, annoyed by the noise of the street, and yet curious about it. He was sometimes amused, sometimes depressed by Nellie's directions; and he stopped once and remonstrated, when she made Miles promise, by letter, to grant the same favor to two different persons.

"Go on," she said, "you're paid to write letters, not to think. It has to be done; it's politics."

At noon Miles appeared with a swollen face and sullen eyes. He gradually became good-humored, and signified his approval of Patrick's handwriting.

"I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll put you behind a pair of the best-up bays on the road—Jeff Rowley at the livery-stable rents them to me,—and drive you out the Mount St. Vincent's road."

Patrick thanked him, and said he had not much interest in fast driving; but that he would take a stroll on Broadway in the afternoon, if Miles would tell him how to get there. However, it turned out that there were so many letters to answer that a stroll was out of the question.

Late in the afternoon Miles disappeared. At dinner Nellie wore a splendid heliotrope-colored dress, with a very high collar and a long train

"I usually wear a low neck when I go into society, but the people at Lize Smith's wouldn't understand it," she said. And Patrick was just as much puzzled by the "low neck" as he had been by many other allusions during the day, so he let it pass. It tired him to ask questions and to receive unintelligible answers in Bowery slang.

Later, when little Miley had been tucked away,—Patrick was called to see how pretty he looked when asleep,—it was time to go to the Smith assembly. Nellie was very thoughtful on her way down town. She carried a roll of music and a large purple fan. She spoke little; occasionally she hummed a tune, and when she observed that Desmond noticed it she said: "Excuse me, I may be asked to sing tonight, and I'm afraid I'll forget the key."

In reality, she was considering how best to crush Lize Smith with magnificent condescension. She knew that she would be the observed of all observers; she expected that veiled sarcasms would be directed at her. She felt that Lize Smith could not but compare the two positions in life; and that the elegance of her heliotrope gown, and the cultivated accents in which Professor Fortescue had taught her to warble, would fill Lize with uncontrollable envy. Still, she sighed as she thought of the old life. Miles was in the Assembly, and all that; and yet—but after all, she said to herself, he was better than Jim Smith, whom she might have married if she had wanted to. She had some doubts about the propriety of taking Desmond with her; she reflected, however, that he must meet her mother sooner or later in the tenement house called The Anchor; and no doubt the Smiths' way of living was as fine as anything he had known at home.

When they descended from the elevated railway car, Nellie seized her train with a grace that extorted an admiring whistle from the newsboy at the bottom of the steps, and asked Patrick to hold the fan and the roll of music. Thus burdened, he followed her through various streets, dark, dirty and bordered with empty carts. The sidewalks were crowded with children of all ages, jumping up on the carts, rushing hither and thither, screaming, yelling, crying, laughing.

The houses were so high and the space seemed so narrow between them, that Desmond's lungs refused to do their work. His chest was oppressed, and he fancied for a moment that he should stifle. He looked up at the fire escapes, loaded with fluttering carpets and odds and ends of all kind, above which showed an occasional human head. How soft, how sweet, how full of fresh odors, was the twilight on the river bank at Redwood at this hour. How sordid, how wretched, how appalling, it was here.

The figures on the doorsteps—carelessly clad women nursing their babies, old women with pipes in their mouths, the Polish-Jewish widow with her dingy wig,—the Chinese, gliding along on his cork soles, the children going in and out with their tin cans of beer, the oaths, the outcries, the swarming life everywhere, opened a new vista to Patrick Desmond. It was only a glimpse, but it horrified him more than all his later knowledge of this life had power to horrify him. They went through many streets. Nellie's fine wrap and gown attracted no attention; for in these districts finery was not unusual, but it was generally reserved for Sundays.

"Do these poor children live here *always?*" asked Desmond, as they passed through a group of little ones of all sizes and nationalities, some so pretty that the dust and stain of a long day had not spoiled them.

"Why not?" asked Nellie, sharply. "Better people than you live here."

"But the children," said Patrick,—"but the children! O God!"

Nellie turned abruptly. "I want you to know, Mr. Desmond, that I'm a lady,—I don't permit swearing in my presence."

Patrick did not hear; she seemed very trivial in the presence of this phase of life. He shuddered, and an almost intolerable feeling of homesickness came upon him.

After a time, varied by several slight collisions, in which Nellie raised her voice in tones that commanded respect, they reached the front of the tenement house occupied by the Smiths. The third story of this house was brilliantly illuminated; the doorstep and the sidewalk were fringed by groups of children.

"Oh! my," they cried in chorus, as Nellie approached; and one shrill voice called out, "Ain't she a dandy?"

An old woman, with a pipe in her mouth, leaning against the inevitable cart, exclaimed: "'Tis Nellie Mulligan, as I live!"

Upon this several urchins, who were perched on the cart behind the old lady, struck up the Mulligan Guards, an ancient but still popular song in the district.

Desmond preceded Nellie up the dark staircase. He was told to knock at a door which seemed to hide much hilarity from the outer world; for the tuning of fiddles and snatches of laughter came from between the cracks.

Lize Smith, *nee* Brown, opened the door. Time had further indented her brow and made her fretful expression more distinct. Nevertheless, she wore a Psyche knot, large puffed sleeves, and half a dozen jingling bangles at her wrists. She clasped Nellie to her heart in rapture.

"Only a few friends," she said, taking in Nellie's costume with an eagle eye; "only a few friends to celebrate our good luck." And she kissed Nellie rapturously. "Jim's uncle died the other day, and left him the best grocery store at far Rockaway."

"How lucky!" exclaimed Nellie. "I was afraid he'd never get anything to do. A few friends?" she said, turning gracefully. "A great many friends I should say. Now," she whispered, giving way to her fatal propensity to patronage, "don't introduce me to *every*body; we must draw the line—"

"You know everybody already," snapped Lize. "There's Birdie Branagan—don't you remember him? He took my white satin shoes to you the night you went to the Lady Rosebuds with Miley. Birdie, here's Nellie Mulligan that was."

There was a titter from the row of chairs around the walls. Birdie, who was a youth of six feet at least, with square shoulders, a cropped head, a mouth as hard as flint, and like a straight line drawn above an equally hard, square chin, raised himself, accordion in hand, and said:

"Halloo, Nell! When's Miley goin' to give de May picnic?"

Birdie, as he stood up, was a turbulent-looking creature. His pilot-jacket was drawn in wrinkles about his waist; he wore a blue shirt, and his legs were encased in very light trousers, with a large swelling on each knee. Nellie turned to the other guest, and Birdie sat down.

"See!" he said, "I'm de champeen accordeen player on Cherry Hill, and de crow won't notice me. See!

"Birdie recites beautiful now," Lize whispered. "He takes lesons from Professor Macgeoghegan; he thinks Professor Fortescue too common."

Nellie tosed her head and presented Desmond, who took, as soon as he could, a chair in the remotest corner. The room was filled with young men and women; the young men wearing very high collars or no collars at all, all with cropped heads and a general air of swagger. The young women were dressed in gowns made in imitation of the reigning fashion, except Katie Grogan, who, owing to financial difficulties, was attired in a very light summer gown and an old fur cape. The truth was, that her husband, who was the life of the company, full of the most delicious jokes, had spent her earnings for several weeks at the races. Katie, who had a bright face, but a hectic color, was determined to enjoy herself, and had secured a night off from the arduous task of playing in a dime museum.

Desmond, from his corner, viewed the assembly with a heavy heart. He had not much sense of humor, and he could see only the squalid side of these people's lives. He knew little about them as yet; but the commonness of their atmosphere depressed him. What shrill laughter, what curious slang, what coarseness of manner. And these — he judged from their names — had sprung from the same race as his father and mother. The best quality he saw in any of these men seemed to be a certain animal good nature. But in all Redwood there was no brute like the champion player of the accordion; he seemed to be as near to a bulldog as any human creature could be. What had brought these people to this depth, and how was it to be remedied? He himself was no richer, not much better educated perhaps than these fellows; but he shuddered at the thought of being of them.

Nellie passed through the two rooms, took off her bonnet, and made greetings with graceful condescension. Amid applause, Jim Smith rolled a keg of beer through the two rooms into the kitchen; the three Italians in the back-room tuned their musical instruments. Lize Smith announced, with a giggle, that Mrs. Miles Galligan would sing. Mrs. Miles refused; Lize insisted; Birdie Branagan, in his playful way, tried to lift her from her chair, while Patrick grew hot with indignation.

Nellie yielded at last. She borrowed a lemon drop and coughed several times. Then she took her position in the middle of the room, unrolled the sheet of music with much crackling, and said sweetly to the accordion champion: "Give me a minor key." The champion dashed into "Annie Rooney." There was a general protest: it was low. "Maggie Murphy's Home" or "Comrades" might do, but nothing common. Again Nellie demanded a minor key, with a look of haughty reproach; then she kicked her train with her left foot, adjusted a hairpin, and, as the accordion uttered a squeak, began:

"Only a violet, dawling."

It was a triumph; she ended with her hand on her heart, and these words:

"Only a violet, dawling,—
On-lee thy pickchewer true;
Only a photograph, swee-e-e-e-test,
Is ahl I have of you-oo-oo!"

Called out a second time, she borrowed a photograph from Lize's album, and pressed it to her heart with pathos. One could have heard a pin drop as her voice rose high on the "oo"— if one could have heard anything; and Jim Smith said sternly that there ought not to be a dry eye in the room.

XV.

What teaching have I had? What did my mother tell me? That one must be rich to be happy. What did the world teach me? That one must be rich to be respected. — *Les Lionnes Pauvres.*

THE Fly-Away Mines were known to have paid good dividends on the money invested, and Judge Redwood was a large stockholder in them. Eleanor had often sighed over the Judge's connection with them. Her mother's words, rankling in her soul, had made her see all her father's business doings through a lurid atmosphere. It was not easy for a girl like Eleanor Redwood to realize what poverty meant, and every day of her life she wished that she and her father were absolutely poor, so that the shadow of the mystery at which her mother had hinted might lift itself. To Eleanor's mind, a straight line was not only the shortest distance from one point to another, but the easiest to find and to keep.

Judge Redwood had recently mortgaged all his property in Redwood to augment his interest in the mines. These mines were small, easily worked and near Eaglescliff. They made a dark stain in a very pretty country. They were surrounded by a chain of small lakes. There were experts who declared that the Fly-Away Mines were in constant danger of being flooded; but Judge Redwood laughed, and said he was willing to take the risk. He had as much confidence in those mines as any British magnate has in the Bank of England. What had the chain of lakes to do with the mines? Lakes were one thing and a coal deposit another. It was only in worn-out mines that an accidental mistake ever brought a flood of water in upon the precious black diamonds; and these Fly-Away Mines had as yet been scarcely worked at all. Harry Bayard, who had the reputation of being something of an expert, said disparaging things about the mines; but, then, Bayard was a notorious snarler.

Judge Redwood had not received his summons to Eaglescliff as a really unpleasant thing. He had a case in court there, or he would probably have refused to take much notice of the message: "Trouble in the mines."

"Trouble!" he said to himself. "Of course there will always be trouble in any great undertaking." And so, as he went to Eaglescliff, his real annoyance centred around the discovery that Mrs. Bayard had seen that unfortunate letter of his dead wife. "Ah! well," he said, "I am glad that Eleanor will never see it. She would not understand; it would upset her. It would be a terrible thing for me to tell her that her mother was insane at any time."

A little later he met an acquaintance, and he did not find out that in his haste he had forgotten the unhappy slip of paper; if he had suspected that it was already in his daughter's possession, he would have written to her before transacting any business whatever.

The Judge found Harry Bayard on the ground. He had been sent for by some of the other stockholders.

"A little trouble, Bayard?" he said.

"A great deal, Judge," Bayard had answered. "The rats are leaving the mines, and the miners are leaving with them. There's going to be a cave in somewhere."

The Judge laughed. "What superstitious creatures these miners are! What have rats to do with a 'cave in'?"

"The miners think they have a great deal. No miner will stay where a rat will not stay," said Bayard. "I have been sent for to look into the thing. I am afraid there is going to be trouble."

The Judge shook his head, still smiling. "If you found your opinion on the rats, Mr. Bayard," he observed, "I hardly think I shall annoy myself. And, besides, I fancy we had better send to New York for an expert, so that these silly rumors may be dissipated at once."

Bayard's face assumed a hue which made its sallowness look green. "The old man is a fool!"

he said to himself; and then aloud: "But you can see for yourself that the miners will not work."

This was true: the miners were all on the surface of the earth, and neither threats nor persuasions would induce them to descend again. Every rat in the mines seemed to have gone, too; and the miners, who had no other reason for their panic than the disappearance of the rodents, stubbornly resisted the threats and entreaties of the Judge.

"I hate the sight of a rat when I am in daylight, Judge," said an old miner; "but a rat down below is the miner's best friend. And, if you wait, you'll see that there is no mistake about it."

The Judge was in despair; everybody seemed possessed of a mania, and he lost his temper when Bayard's report confirmed the general opinion. Late in the night an ominous rumbling was heard; and it became evident that the rats were right, and that the miners had not pinned their faith to them in vain. The partition of rock between the mines and the largest lake had given way. The flood rushed, and Judge Redwood was obliged to face the truth: he was ruined.

Sitting alone in his hotel, after an interview with Bayard, he acknowledged to himself that he was not only ruined, but irretrievably ruined. At his time of life there was no going upward; a man might make a new start at forty, but at sixty it was impossible. And the worst of it was the fear that Eleanor would accept the fact bravely only because she could not realize what it meant. It is an easy thing for a king, with crown and sceptre, to wish that he were of the crowd beneath him, unfettered by etiquette and ceremonies; but a hard thing when the crown and sceptre are taken, and he finds himself struggling for life among the masses whose freedom he pensively envied. The princess is willing enough to become a pauper, because, in her case, she does not see why the paupers cannot eat cakes if they have no bread. The Judge, as he sat in his room in the Eaglescliff hotel, could not help feeling that this would be Eleanor's state of mind. He had no fear that she would complain: he felt that she would be delighted at the prospect of sharing poverty with him. She would throw her arms around his neck and say, in the words of Mignon's song, of which she was so fond:

> "There, there, with thee,
> O father, would I dwell!"

His heart sank when he thought of what might come after. He had shielded her from every wind; she had been as happy as he could make her; she had never been extravagant in her demands: had she been, he, like most American fathers with an only daughter, would probably have granted them. And now she would have to meet the cold, stern world; he could protect her but little from it, and a time might soon come when he could not protect her at all. He shuddered at the thought. What could be more terrible than the position of a girl, absolutely dependent on the work of her own hands, left alone in the world? His heart became sick at the prospect. At sixty he could not strive for her as he could once have striven. Younger men had taken his place. He had imagined that his road to the grave would be a smooth one; he had trusted in himself, and he found that he was only a poor, mistaken fool, after all. What had he to live for now? In Redwood he would soon be the "poor old Judge." He knew his affairs well; he was aware that, to carry on this experiment with the mines — which had not appeared to him in the light of an experiment until it failed, — he had put it in the power of his creditors to seize on the very roof that sheltered Eleanor.

His memory, his sense of the present, seemed to fail him at this thought. He dozed or swooned, he could not tell which, and then came to his senses with a dull pain in his head. The streets of the little town were full of people, though it was late at night. The Judge could hear their tramp on the sidewalk and the sound of talking.

The disaster to the mines had stirred all the surrounding country. The Judge wondered whether there were anybody in that crowd who was sixty years old and a failure. And what would Eleanor say? Ah! he knew very well how she would hold up her head and cry out, "We have our name, father." He smiled involuntarily, — ah! the dear little girl. And then again came the crushing sense of hopelessness. What a wretched future stretched before this beloved Eleanor of his.

He was ruined; the time would perhaps come when he would be a burden on her. He knew how lightly and cheerfully and happily parents carry the burden of their children. But he had seen the position reversed; and he had noticed that even those who had received the fruit of the severest sacrifices from their fathers and mothers, bore with mere resignation the care of those parents when the time for making sacrifices was past. The time might come when Eleanor would — no, no! he cast the thought away. Eleanor was not like other people.

He had often said that to live was happiness enough, and that the thought of death as a return to beneficent Mother Nature was consolation; he had many times said that the philosophy of the "Thanatopsis" of Bryant was better to him than the doctrine of any Christian church. To lie down with high thoughts, and to become in time part of the beautiful earth; to glow in the red of the rose and in the purple of the violet for those that were loved on earth ; to be part of the invisible choir that sings of health and hope in the woods, — this, the Judge had said, was enough for him. He expected no more, he wanted no more.

The test had come. He had suddenly become old and broken ; the altruistic prospect of forming part of the rose or the violet did not satisfy him now : he wanted rest and hope and life. His heart cried out against the dictum he had made for himself : "Thou shall not live after death !" He wanted to live after death, since life on earth was a failure. Surely he could not have been placed on earth or been evolved from protoplasm merely to return at last to protoplasm or something similar. He was made for better things than that. To fail on earth and then to perish, — no, it could not be ! there must be a God somewhere, this poor creature said, because he needed a God. He felt that he must go mad if some hope did not arise for him. He threw himself on his knees in front of his chair. Memories of words his wife had said in the days of their courtship, coupled with bits out of the books she had made him read, floated into his mind. If he had thought more, if he had been less wrapt up in the world of Redwood ! If she had been firmer in her faith.

"I believe," he groaned, — "I believe! O God, give me hope, give me consolation."

It suddenly became plain to him that he who had talked so much of the beauty of high thought and high living and of ideal aims, had been one of the grossest of materialists. During the rest of his stay at Eaglescliff he suffered much, and on his way to the station he fell before a stroke of the *avant-courier* of death.

On the day after this disaster, Laura Bayard and her husband were sitting on the balcony of the Howard House, — a balcony which jutted out from the windows of their room. Laura was sulky; her husband was moody and dissatisfied.

"Don't blow your cigar smoke into my face," she said.

"I can't help the wind," he replied, — "I can't help the wind any more than I can pay your bills."

"You ought not to have married me, then," she said, bitterly. "You know that I must hold my own in society here; if I can't, what is there to live for? If I had the money, I'd leave you this very day. I'm tired of this wretched, pinched kind of life. If I can't dress like other people, I don't want to live, that's all."

"There's no question of duty, I suppose?" he said, sarcastically.

"I haven't anything to do with duty. I want to live while I am young. Duty! I'd like to know where *your* idea of duty comes in? A woman has just as much right to freedom and enjoyment as a man; and if I can't be happy here, I'll go where I can. There's nothing in this world worth considering but money; it's the beginning and the end. You can't be happy without luxuries; I'm sure you've often said so yourself."

Bayard sighed and frowned. He believed this himself. He would have sold his soul for an income which would have enabled him to keep a pair of high-stepping bays like Mrs. Howard Sykes'; but he knew no way of doing so which would not mean a departure from respectability, and perhaps a visitation in the penitentiary. Nevertheless, Bayard did not like to hear his wife shamelessly utter words he himself had often spoken.

"If Laura were different," he thought, "*I* might be different. If we had a home perhaps — "

"What are you thinking of?" asked Laura, sharply. "There is no hypocrisy about me. Everybody really believes just what I say out frankly. Who thinks of anything but money here? I was never taught to respect anything else. If we were rich, I am sure even you and I, Harry, could get on. What *are* you thinking of?"

"Oh! nothing," he said, sullenly, throwing his cigar away. "The world's a snare and a delusion.

How does Eleanor Redwood take *her* downfall?"

"Is it really as bad as people say? Are the mines absolutely ruined? Eleanor will learn now to sympathize with people who go wrong for want of money. She'll have to take a lower step herself, if things are as bad as people say."

"They are not so bad," Bayard answered; "but the Judge does not know it. The stock has gone down to nothing; all work in the mines has been stopped. If I had money enough — if I had *any* money, or could raise any, — I'd buy up the Fly-Away shares, and *wait*. It would pay; the damage done by the flood is only slight and temporary. But I am afraid to tell anybody; because if I can't take advantage of it nobody else shall."

Mrs. Bayard was silent. "Is it hopeless to think of raising money?"

"Hopeless!" he repeated, watching her. She did not speak for some time. He whistled with apparent unconcern.

"The Judge will die," she said, "probably without regaining his senses. Eleanor believes that her property really belongs to a young man called Patrick Desmond. You know him?"

Bayard nodded.

"As far as I can make out, Desmond is a fool: religious and inexperienced, honest, thinks fair-dealing can be carried on in business. He is as great a fool as Eleanor. She can be brought to take over her interest to him; and *you*, Harry, can manipulate him — become his partner. The stock goes up, through your exertions; a half interest for you, at least."

"The fellow is in New York," said Bayard. "Why not manage Eleanor, if her father dies?"

"Eleanor has too many acquaintances, who would suspect something wrong the moment you, an expert in these mining affairs — "

"I understand," he said. "You've a good head, Laura."

"And no conscience you would say, too. Well, I am what the world has made me."

He turned away uneasily. "But the fellow is in New York."

Mrs. Bayard thought for a moment. "Elaine is there," she said. "Why not marry him to my sister? He is a good-natured fool, and she can twist him about her finger. In that way we can keep all the spoil in the family."

"You have too much imagination, Laura," he said; still he considered her suggestion. "Elaine Mrs. Desmond," he went on; "you and I rich — but what becomes of your friend Eleanor?"

"I don't care," Mrs. Bayard answered, in a hard voice. "Let her learn whether the goodness and virtue everybody — including even *you* — admires will carry her through the world."

Bayard did not answer. His wife was clever, he knew; he knew, too, that she had no scruples, but he wished that she had.

"I have too much imagination, have I?" she asked, bitterly. "But I am practical enough. Fortunately, we are not hampered by any absurd Romanist prejudices. If we do not succeed in making some money, I must get a divorce and marry a richer man."

He rose from his seat and swore. "I wish you had a few Romanist prejudices," he said; "the baby might have not been so often neglected."

She turned red and bit her lip. "If you say that again —" she began, with a look of anger in her eyes.

"I shall not say it again, since harmony is necessary in order to carry out our plan. But I find you still too imaginative."

"Why?" she asked.

"In fancying that any other man would marry you."

They had begun to hate each other and the bonds that bound them; theirs was a fair example of a modern marriage without religion. Later they elaborated their plan for the management of Patrick Desmond.

XVI.

At the dawning of light it is grayest,
  And the dawning of Love is in fear;
By a whisper thy heart thou betrayest,
  A mist — and an angel is near!
A touch — and the clash of a cymbal!
A cross — and Love dawns through Love's symbol!
— "*Les Fleurs de la Bonté.*"

ELEANOR REDWOOD was in possession of all the details of the disaster at the Fly-Away Mines. Belinda served them up to her in every form for a few days. But, after the first shock, they did not worry her; when she had realized the fact that she was poor, and that the future support of herself and her father must depend on herself, a desire to take her part in the struggle for life took possession of her. She had always wanted to have her father to herself: she had always been a little jealous of his clients and of his political friends. She wanted to be with him a great deal; for, after all, he was all she had in the world.

She pictured to herself a little room somewhere, in which she should sit sewing or painting, while he should read his paper in peace, — a modest and happy interior. It would be away from Redwood somewhere, — somewhere far away, so that people would not talk about their poverty or know that Judge Redwood and his daughter had ever been different. The young girl felt that she could not stand the thought that her comings-in and goings-out would be observed by curious eyes.

The Judge was eagerly watched by Dr. Talbot; he still seemed to be only half-conscious. One day, while Eleanor was in his room, he looked about him and held out his right hand for something. For a moment Eleanor was perplexed; then she ran downstairs and took the beads from under the copy of Baxter's "Saint's Rest," where Belinda had hidden them. She looked into his eyes, holding up the crucifix. She saw by the twitching of his fingers that this was what he wanted. He tried to speak.

"Things are clearer," he murmured. "I see better, — Clarissa, — atonement." Then, with a great effort, he added, "I trust you, Eleanor."

Eleanor pondered on these words. It was a great delight to her to hear him speak even so inarticulately. What did he mean by atonement? Did he mean that something of Patrick Desmond's had been kept from him? Mrs. Desmond's words had temporarily relieved her mind; but as yet she had not been able to corroborate those words by an explanation from her father. If, she said to herself. there had been some mistake — for it could not have been more than a mistake or a miscalculation, — there was no remedying it; for the Judge was poorer than Patrick Desmond. All she could do, perhaps, would be to ask the injured man's forgiveness for her father; and in time — Eleanor glowed with ambition at the thought — she would pay all the lost money back by the labor of her hands.

The Judge improved much. Finally Dr. Talbot recommended change of air. The patient could walk about a little now, but he could not speak articulately. The watchers could make out the words, "Away from this place"; or thought they could. Dr. Talbot was compelled to admit that the Judge might never be any better. The time came for Eleanor to face the realities of life. Dr. Talbot and one of her father's legal friends came one day, and asked her if they might have a talk with her in her father's study. The result of this talk was that she found that her father had just one thousand dollars in the bank (he had deposited this subject to her order), and that she possessed a roll of shares in the Fly-Away Mines,— nominal value, two hundred thousand dollars; real value with the mines flooded, almost nothing. The shares were in her name; her father had entered into this speculation for her sake.

It was now that Redwood showed its real kindness of heart. Homes for a year, for an indefinite time, were offered to the Judge and Eleanor. Dr. Talbot was first and most fervent in his offer.

And Mrs. Howard Sykes, whose tongue was as bitter as her mind was narrow, drove over in her Victoria, full of soft cushions added for the Judge's benefit, and insisted that he and Eleanor should live with her. Eleanor shuddered at the thought, but she was none the less grateful. Mrs. Howard Sykes commanded and stormed and threatened. Mrs. Bayard, who had come in at the same time, added the weight of her arguments. Eleanor flushed, and paled, and wept, but remained unmoved; while Belinda, torn by the conflicting feelings of desire to know how it would end, and fear lest her bread should burn, listened at the door.

Mrs. Howard Sykes had always been fond of Eleanor. It is a great mistake to imagine — as some young people do until they find out to the contrary — that goodness does not "pay," even in the worldly sense. Eleanor, who had her little affectations and pretensions, was, after all, very simple and sincere. She was under the impression that Mrs. Howard Sykes disliked her, simply because some bitter speeches of that lady had been carried to her. But Eleanor's good qualities had not escaped Mrs. Sykes; besides, the Judge had been kind to her in earlier days. Eleanor was firm in her refusal to accept hospitality.

"What will you do?" Mrs. Sykes asked, thoroughly disgusted by Eleanor's obstinacy.

"Work," said Eleanor.

Mrs. Sykes looked at her — from the soft hair, carefully dressed, to the white ruffles on her gown. Then she took one of Eleanor's hands, and said, derisively:

"I shouldn't expect much work from these hands in the factory."

Eleanor colored. Mrs. Howard Sykes meant well, but it was hard to bear the coarseness of her tone. And Laura Bayard laughed at the vision of Eleanor Redwood in a factory; and yet there was a certain pleasure in the laugh. De la Rochefoucauld had natures like hers in his mind when he said that we rejoice in the misfortunes of our friends.

"But, my dear Eleanor, things may improve. In our part of the world, everybody is poor some time in their lives. Look how poor I was onct" — Mrs. Howard Sykes always said *onct*, — "and now I keep my own carriages. The Fly-Away Mines may come out all right in the end. You just hold on to the shares."

"The mines are ruined, Harry says," put in Mrs. Bayard, in alarm. She said no more. If she represented the mines as worthless, Eleanor might retain the shares as of no use to Desmond. But Mrs. Sykes. who was deaf, made her repeat her speech.

"Your husband is not the only expert in the country. I should have other opinions, if I were Eleanor's adviser."

Mrs. Bayard looked daggers. "I am sure," she went on, "that Harry, as Eleanor's friend, would be only too glad to give a favorable opinion, if he could."

"Umph!" muttered Mrs. Sykes, "'Harry' may not know everything. It is simply a question as to how much capital it would take to get the water out."

"But we have nothing," said Eleanor, with a sigh. "And the shares"—she hesitated.

Laura Bayard read her thoughts. She knew at that moment that she might save herself some diplomacy; those shares would go to Patrick Desmond. She uttered a sigh of relief. She had clear sailing before her. What simple-minded, selfish, vain creature — all men in her opinion were selfish and vain, but few simple-minded — could resist the influence of her sister Elaine? A light compunction entered her breast as she looked at Eleanor; but she immediately repressed it. Nonsense! This was business. She was justified in taking any advantage that would bring her what she most desired, and that was money. Money meant happiness; the lack of it, despair.

"What will you work at?" demanded Mrs. Sykes, uncompromisingly.

"I will find something to do," answered Eleanor. "My father shall never want for anything as long as I have my two hands."

Mrs. Howard Sykes looked at her pityingly. "If you were a Swede or a Pole, with strong hands used to hard work, you might find employment; but you ain't fit for anything. You can preside at a luncheon or a Coffee, or something of that kind; but what else can you do? And the work of receiving people don't pay."

The door creaked violently. "The idear," muttered Belinda, "of that hag putting on airs. She couldn't make a *méringue* pie like Eleanor Redwood to save her life. I never could abide the Sykeses. They're sly."

"I shall go to New York and learn to paint pictures," said Eleanor, shyly. "I always wanted to be able to paint, but papa laughed at it. I think I might learn, if I studied hard under a good master. My panels have been praised, you know."

Mrs. Howard Sykes did not know much about art. The Redwood local papers had said some fine things, on various occasions, about Eleanor's panels; but she had never looked at them from the bread-and-butter point of view.

"I'm sure," the good lady said, dubiously, "that them geraniums you painted on my birthday cup were very natural — "

"Wild roses," corrected Eleanor.

"Whatever they were," continued Mrs. Sykes, "they were good enough for me; but, then, I ain't no judge. I never knew any kind of painting to pay except sign-painting. If you mean that, it would be awkward for a young lady to be getting up and down off scaffolds, though women are taking to all kinds of work nowaday. But, if your mind is set on it, I think you could learn to do that just as well here as in New York, and maybe better."

Laura laughed. Eleanor looked helpless. She was spared further reply by the sudden entrance of Belinda.

"I can't wait and hear no more such talk, and my bread burning down in the oven. Miss Redwood ain't an object of charity, ladies; and she needn't take to climbing no scaffolds while I'm alive," cried Belinda, flourishing her apron. "And I wonder, Mrs. Howard Sykes, that a woman of your age should think of such a thing. *I'm* going to stick to Eleanor and the Judge, so you needn't come here with any of your charity."

By some occult means, Belinda suddenly became aware that she could stay no longer, and she fled defiantly. Mrs. Howard Skyes felt subdued; Belinda had too many revenges in her grasp to be reprimanded even by a woman who drove to the Judge's in the smartest Victoria in Redwood. Belinda's meteor-like appearance broke off the conversation. Mrs. Sykes, finding argument and entreaty and threat all useless, drove back home with her cushions. Mrs. Bayard waited to deliver a parting shot, in the hope that her young friend might be deterred from putting her hastily-formed plan of going to New York into execution.

"Ah, dear Nora," she said, kissing her good-by, "you will meet Mr. Desmond in New York. How nice!"

"Shall I?" asked Eleanor, looking at her quite frankly. "Do you think I shall? I hope so,—but I am afraid not, New York is so large. But do you know, Laura, he is just the kind of man to help one in trouble. He is so strong in his religious belief. I wish I could have a talk with him."

Mrs. Bayard went away with the feeling that Eleanor was a consummate actress. She ought to have known her better. Eleanor had never learned to conceal her feelings, and this was the finest art that Mrs. Bayard possessed.

Eleanor spent the rest of the afternoon with her father. She did not dare to rebuke Belinda for her outburst. What would be the use of it? Besides, Belinda had shown a great deal of heart, and Eleanor felt grateful for it. In truth, she felt grateful to everybody. Who would have thought that Mrs. Howard Sykes was really so kind?

She tried to finish one of her half-finished panels—a wreath of pansies and clover blossoms. People had praised her work so often, surely there must be some good in it. She looked up several back numbers of the Redwood *Herald*.

"Miss Eleanor Redwood, the only daughter of our respected townsman, Judge Redwood, exhibited at the fancy fair an exquisite panel of forget-me-nots and roses on a black ground. Miss Redwood's *tout ensemble* is characterized by lightness of *chiaro-oscuro* and perspective. Miss Redwood has only to compete with the artists of the Old World to take the crown. *Væ victis!*"

Eleanor admitted to herself that this was not very clear or very well written, but it was evident that the writer admired her style. There was comfort in it. Another scrap likewise consoled her. This was from a rival sheet:

"Miss Redwood's beautiful panel of morning-glories entwining a Corinthian Column excited much admiration in the window of Mr. Crombie's art store. It is a thing of beauty and a joy forever. We may differ from the Judge in politics, but we are one in art. We cannot express this in the hog Latin of our esteemed contemporary, the ***Herald***, but we know a good thing when we see it."

Mrs. Howard Sykes might mistake her wild roses for geraniums; but, then, poor Mrs. Sykes knew very little about art. Eleanor was consoled. Her father slept, with the beads in his fingers. How like a child he looked — how calm, how peaceful. She kissed his forehead. Suppose — suppose she should fail to help him! — her heart good still. Oh! no. *She* might fail, but God would not. The crucifix held fast in his hands did not seem strange to her, though all her life she had been taught to look on it with distrust. He loved it and she loved it now. How absurd it was for all Christians not to love it. It suddenly dawned on her that Christianity must be a very real thing to those who loved the crucifix and lived at the feet of the figure of Our Saviour. She could not get over the wonder of her father's turning to it at last. He had smiled at texts from the Scriptures, and had often said that if there was anything idolatrous in the Roman Church it was the outward reverence paid to the Bible. The Bible had failed, and the crucifix had conquered. It was not strange; it seemed natural enough; but it was so sudden.

Protestants, she knew — had not Mr. Stokes told her so?—would not believe that the crucifix would do her father any good. Mrs. Desmond was the only one who would sympathize with her. After awhile, when Dr. Talbot should come, she would run over to Mrs. Desmond's, leave the shares in the Fly-Away Mines to be sent to Patrick — who, at least, would understand that she meant atonement, — and perhaps hear a word of consolation from her.

After a time Belinda made her appearance. She looked grimmer than usual, but her eyes were red and swollen.

"Your tea is ready downstairs," she said, aggressively. "But the bread's like a cinder, owing to a lot of women gossiping and chattering. If they had stayed home and minded their business I could have attended to mine."

"What is the difference, Belinda?" remarked Eleanor. "There's only you and me to think of now. If the bread isn't so nice, who cares? Papa can have rolls."

"I have a conscience," Belinda went on, grimly; "and it's a tormentin' conscience. I sometimes think it's a devil in disguise — God forgive me! It's always a-botherin' me and askin' questions. I am a-worrying this minute to death whether I'll be damned in hell-fire for shutting the door in Mr. Partridge's face and saying you were not at home that day."

"I was not at home to *him*."

"Oh! what do you know about it? Mr. Stokes would say it was a lie. If it was a lie, I'm damned, and that's all about it; so what's the use of trying to be good? But Mr. Stokes ain't no kind of a spiritooal consoler. He doesn't know what he believes. — You go down and get your tea, and don't be talking here. Go! And then take a run in the fresh air."

Eleanor paused, standing, and looked at Belinda with wistful kindness.

"Go!" repeated the latter. "When you find out the great wrong I've done you through my wish to help the heathen — and the worst of it is I believe Mr. Stokes is a heathen himself, — you'll hate me. Go! I'll sit with your pa. To think of what I did for the heathen, and to know that they're to be saved after all the missionary money that's been spent for nothing! Oh! go, — don't mind *me*."

Eleanor went, after a tender look at her father. She knew that there was no use in asking questions of Belinda. Her business was to go.

XVII.

Who can say where impulse will lead the wisest; or how deep intuition may lead the pure to see? — *Cecco di Napoli.*

THE Fly-Away Mines disaster had its time — its day, as it were, — and then other matters occupied attention. Bayard knew very well that, if the Judge were in good health, his opinion as to the condition of the mines would not have stood alone. As it was, he doubted whether Dr. Talbot or some of the Judge's friends would not take the matter in hand. The mines were small, and the Judge had been the largest stockholder, the others depending very much on him.

It must be admitted that, on second thoughts, his wife's plan for marrying Desmond to her sister, in order that the stock might be concentrated in the family, seemed somewhat absurd. But he was desperate, and his wife was even more desperate; they both longed and thirsted for money, and there was no possible way of getting it except by some bold movement. Laura's scheme was impulsive and too imaginative. And yet he had known that her expedients — some of them as illogical — had often succeeded. He laughed sardonically when he thought of it. There were too many "ifs" in the arrangement. *If* nobody discovered that the condition of the mines was not hopeless; *if* Eleanor should be silly enough to give the shares to Desmond; *if* he should let Mrs. Bayard's sister marry him. Bayard laughed again. It was like a woman to have the whole scheme turn on a possible marriage.

It was true that Laura knew Eleanor, and the minor premise of the plan might count for something. It was true, too, that Elaine was a very clever widow, poor, anxious for money, and capable of marrying anybody who could give it to her; but, after all, Desmond was the unknown quantity. He might be dazzled by Elaine or he might not; he might be ambitious in other directions, and quite impervious to the social advantages which a marriage with Elaine would give him. In fact, after some consideration, Bayard felt disgusted with Laura's scheme. But was there a better one possible? To whisper to anybody that the Fly-Away Mines were not utterly ruined would be fatal; he could trust nobody except Laura, and he trusted her only because her interest was his. Eleanor was a fool in business matters; it would not be necessary to tell her much. If he could have borrowed money enough to make Eleanor a tempting offer for the shares, he might have done so; but he was hopelessly in debt. If the shares passed to Patrick Desmond, he might buy them from him — if he had the money; but, then, if Desmond were clever, the fact that he had an offer for them would make him suspect that they were not as worthless as they seemed. Laura's scheme was ridiculous, he admitted, and yet it fascinated him.

Elaine, his wife's sister, was now the Baroness von Homburg. She lived in a flat up town in New York, and taught music. She had been sent abroad when she was twenty for tne cultivation of her voice; she even sang a minor part in one of Wagner's operas at Baireuth, and then starved in various Italian and German cities, as many American girls with great ambitions and small voices do. She had met in Dresden a young German student, the Baron von Homburg. He had married her; and when he died the "beautiful American," as she was called, was left almost penniless,—his parents, believing very little in their daughter-in-law, having withdrawn the small pension they allowed him. The Baroness tried the operatic stage again (she had made her entrance in the first Minuet of Nations, done at Redwood, in 1860), and failed. She came then to New York and began to teach vocal music. Her title helped her; but, as the value of her method was not great, she was obliged to go through much drudgery for small returns. To get away from this wretched life was her one idea, her one hope. She was no longer the "beautiful American." Pearl-powder, blonde dye, and

Indian ink, gave her a complexion, golden hair, and expression. She was a faded, hopeless woman, without faith, and with only one desire — to live luxuriously, as those enviable beings of the "leisure classes" lived.

On Saturday evenings, at eight o'clock, a score of people went up to her little flat. She was "at home"; and then, with her most fascinating airs and graces, she served tea from a Russian *samovar*, and forgot the wild shrieks of her pupils and their dreadful pounding on the piano. At eight on Saturday she became the Baroness, and kept that character until Monday morning. Then she became again the music mistress, and the scales pierced her ears. She hated her life; submission to the will of God was out of the question in a woman who never thought of God, except to call down maledictions on the Baron's family for their selfishness. The necessity of petty economies, the bitterness of hearing of the profusion of the rich — for in her social set this profusion was the theme of constant conversation,— the wretchedness of walking while others drove, the cold "cut" given by some woman who had met the Baroness casually and who did not care to keep up the acquaintance, — all the many miseries entailed by pretentiousness and the sense of failure were this woman's. How little her title amounted to among the people who crowded Delmonico's after the opera, or who were the centres of some of those large parties to which she was sometimes invited to sing. In New York an English title is omnipotent; and any other foreign title, if a man wear it, is not without power. But with a woman it is different: a German Baroness or a French Marquise or an Italian Countess knocks at the gates of society in vain, unless she be rich.

There were certain poets and "poetesses" of passion, singers at the theatres, editors of unknown papers, and "cranks," who drank tea regularly at the Baroness's "Saturdays." They wrote about themselves in the papers, and Nellie Galligan, up in Harlem, read of them with awe; but, then, Nellie had not yet learned to discriminate. And the day when the Baroness's card was brought up by the janitor's son — the little boy in buttons who had so greatly impressed Patrick Desmond — was an epoch in the career of the wife of the Hon. Miles Galligan.

Laura Bayard had lost no time in explaining her plan to the Baroness; and the Baroness, who had lived on novels until no scheme seemed impractical, determined at least to put the ball in motion. Laura had not found it difficult to get Desmond's address; and although he was now at the Tivoli Hotel, the people at the office had given her the name of the Grand Windsor.

Nellie was very thankful that she had not begun her preparations for moving down town; for the hour was near when the family would have to consider Miles' constituents. For some time she had been living in the Grand Windsor "for change of air"; she could not endure the atmosphere of the district in which Miles' constituents lived. But Miles was compelled by circumstances to live down town — in order to retain his votes, as well as his right to be elected; and in a very short time it would be necessary for him to reassume his place of residence in his own district, previous to Nellie's flight to Saratoga. How grateful she was that she was still among her red velvet draperies when the Baroness called She was sadly disappointed, however, when she found that the great lady had merely sent up her card and disappeared. The next day she was relieved when she was informed, in the best style of engraving, that the Baroness would be at home, in East 40th Street, on Saturday at eight o'clock. At that moment Nellie felt at peace with all the world.

In the meantime Bayard had received satisfactory evidence that the first of Laura's "ifs" was out of the way. Eleanor stopped on the way to Mrs. Desmond's to consult him about the mines. It had occurred to her that some legal transfer might be necessary in order to make them validly the property of Desmond. They were probably worth nothing, Eleanor reasoned; but, at least, Desmond should see that she meant to acknowledge his right to them. They would be a sort of pledge, which, in time, she might redeem. She said to herself that it was foolish to give him worthless papers — but she wanted to do it; and, besides, he was a man and might make them valuable in time.

Bayard explained to her that the transfer could be made the next day; he would attend to it, if she would come to his office. She went away relieved — delighted, too, that Bayard did not ask her questions.

"The girl's a Quixotic fool," he said to his wife, after Eleanor had left the parlor of the Howard House.

"No," returned Laura, "she's not a fool; she is only a woman with all the impulsiveness of a woman who has ideals —"

"Without ideas," sneered Bayard.

"Oh! I don't know about that. Half the foolish things in the world are done on impulse; and half the evil and treacherous things, to conceal the real motive of the first action. When Eleanor realizes that this cheap act of restitution, which she does because she is in love with Patrick Desmond, has made her father poor, she'll move the earth to undo it." Laura laughed cynically. "If she knew the world better, she would wait and trust no one. But let her go on."

Eleanor found that Mrs. Desmond was not alone in the little house. She had two visitors — Mr. Stokes and Jack Conlon. Jack had come to say good-by; and Mr. Stokes, who missed Patrick, had called to ask for news. Mr. Stokes' listening eyes brightened as Eleanor entered, and he gently adjusted his blue necktie. Jack looked at her with interest. Miss Redwood in distress was a much more sympathetic personality in his eyes than the haughty Miss Redwood of prosperity.

Eleanor was a little paler than usual. When she entered the room, which was lighted by the soft after-glow of sunset, the faint perfume of the lilies of the valley in her belt came with her. Mrs. Desmond breathed a prayer of gratitude that Patrick was not at home. He might have kept his promise to avoid Eleanor, if she were rich and courted; but Eleanor poor and neglected would conquer with a glance. To Mrs. Desmond's consternation Eleanor asked for Patrick's address. This the old lady gave, flattering herself that her son was safe out of the way.

Eleanor hoped that Jack Conlon and Mr. Stokes would go; she longed for a talk with Mrs. Desmond. Mrs. Desmond had known her mother; she had learned the secret of living peacefully and patiently. As Eleanor looked at the cheerful old face, she thought of the "celestial brightness" which, Longfellow tells us, made Evangeline's face more beautiful after confession.

Surrounded by people, Eleanor had always been alone. She had followed the customs of the world around her, but she had always secretly longed for a better one. She had often dreamed of some Forest of Arden, to which she could go with her father and find something that her life lacked. Unpractical and unspoiled, she valued love above all things; and it seemed sad to her that the heart that loved her so much — her father's — should be filled by so many mere earthly things. In Mrs. Desmond she saw love personified: her son, after God, filled her life. And in this simple old woman, with toil-hardened hands and uncultivated talk — whom most of Eleanor's friends looked on from their heights as an ignorant drudge,— she saw a beautiful soul, which must enshrine a treasure as rich as a ruby and as soft as an opal. It was this treasure that Eleanor coveted; for the pure in heart have intuitions that later, when they receive the light, are known as "instincts of faith." And Eleanor was pure in heart and full of these rare intuitions.

Jack Conlon, happy in his own father's partial recovery, was most solicitous about the Judge. Mr. Stokes regretted that the Minuet of Nations, which Eleanor had quite forgotten, must go on without her. Mrs. Desmond, glad that Patrick was out of the way, expressed real pleasure in Eleanor's visit, and offered her a cup of tea.

"I thought perhaps you might be going to church, Mrs. Desmond," Eleanor said; "and, if you are, I should like to walk that far with you."

"The church is not open to-night, dear," Mrs. Desmond answered, in surprise at Eleanor's request. "Indeed I wish it was; I should be glad to go with you."

"I have been anxious all day, and I had an idea that a visit to your church would be nice. It is so restful there."

Mr. Stokes looked surprised, Jack Conlon, amused, — "restful" seemed to him to be so characteristic of the non-Catholic idea of the Church.

"You'll be turning Catholic before you know it, Miss Redwood," Mr. Stokes said, smiling. "To young people of your tendencies the Church of Rome has a fatal attraction."

"Why 'fatal'?" demanded Jack, promptly.

Eleanor, with equal promptness, saved Mr. Stokes. "I *am* attracted toward the Catholic Church," she said; "I must admit that, because it is so much more liberal than other churches."

Conlon smiled, and Mr. Stokes fanned himself with his early strawhat. This was amazing.

"Yes," said Eleanor, stirring her tea; "Mr. Stokes could give me no comfort the other day when papa seemed to be dying; at least, he didn't seem to think there was any comfort for me in our church. Of course, I knew papa had not read much in the Bible of late years — he was never a professor of religion, you know, Mrs. Desmond, — and he had often laughed at revivals and other things. But I know he always believed in a God, though not the strict, Presbyterian God whom he had learned to dislike when he was a boy — "

Jack Conlon laughed; Mr. Stokes looked shocked; Eleanor stopped, blushing.

"I hope I don't seem irreverent," she explained, in a low voice; "I merely want to tell you how my father felt. And when I thought he was dying, and I saw that he seemed to think so much of the figure of Christ on the cross, I hoped that there might be a chance for him. But Mr. Stokes seemed to believe that he could not go to Heaven; and of course, as there is no middle place, he must be lost."

"But there *is* a middle place, Miss Redwood," observed Jack Conlon: "there is Purgatory."

"Oh! indeed, I hope so," said Eleanor. "And it is because you have this middle place for poor people who are not fit to live forever with demons, and yet not good enough to be with God all at once, that I think your Church is so liberal — "

"I said," interrupted Mr. Stokes, solemnly, "that a liking for a symbol, a mere piece of metal, did not show a change of heart, — that was all."

Jack did not speak; he was thinking. Here was a new evidence that all roads lead to Rome. He had never contemplated the possibility of a Protestant admiring the Church because of "liberality."

"Sure, who can tell what Judge Redwood's thoughts were when he stood face to face with death?" asked Mrs. Desmond. "God is very good and very merciful. And surely the soul that looked its last in love and penitence on the face of the thorn-crowned Lord couldn't be fit company for devils for ever and ever."

"Thank you!" cried Eleanor, thinking that she had never heard sweeter poetry than came from the lips of this uneducated woman.

"Don't thank *me*, dear," said Mrs. Desmond, rising from her seat and finding her prayer-book in a closet near the mantelpiece. She took a little printed slip from between its leaves. "Here's something that will help you; 'tis the *Memorare*. Say that every day with all your heart, and everything will come right."

Eleanor took the slip with an eagerness that scandalized Mr. Stokes. "Indeed I will, Mrs. Desmond," she answered.

"Symbols," he suggested, gently, "do not make for salvation. I distrust the use of symbols: they obscure the real."

"And what *do* you believe, Mr. Stokes?"

Jack Conlon demanded, suddenly. "Do you believe that Christ is God?"

Mr. Stokes' face became painful to look at; he was a truthful man, and felt obliged to answer:

"I hardly know. Emerson's belief in the potentiality of all noble men — of Socrates, of Plato, of Marcus Aurelius — "

"Don't go any further," said Jack, with a look at Mrs. Desmond's frightened face. "I presume, then," he added, with a touch of unwarrantable sarcasm, "that if you do pray to the Son of God, you look upon Him merely as a Unitarian saint, like Marcus Aurelius and the rest."

Mr. Stokes seemed startled. This assertion had a sting in it for him; he did not know how to answer it; he wished he had held his tongue.

"Just as I am," he said, after a pause, "I put my burden on the Rock of Ages, without one plea."

"Ah! Mr. Stokes," murmured Jack, gently, "you *know* that does not satisfy you."

Mr. Stokes sighed; he knew that he was at sea, yet he hated to think of Eleanor Redwood's finding comfort in the Roman Catholic Church.

As the young men did not go, Eleanor took her leave. "I am about to send Mr. Desmond some papers, which he must not think of returning: they are his," she said, clasping Mrs. Desmond's extended hand cordially. The old lady returned the pressure warmly; Patrick was safe, and now she could like Eleanor unreservedly.

"Your Church may yet get a convert in Eleanor Redwood," said Mr. Stokes, with a touch of bitterness, as he and Jack Conlon walked homeward. "It won't be prayer, as the old lady thinks, but Desmond, that will bring her into the fold."

"You do her injustice, Stokes," the other answered. "You don't understand; you see only the human side of life. She is not thinking of Desmond at all — in that way."

Jack Conlon, too, had his intuitions.

XVIII.

Love with anxiety is a living death. — *Conrad von Bolanden.*

In a row of brown stone houses, all alike, with heavy balusters and deeply encased basement doors, almost in the centre of the city of New York, lived Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Fitzgerald. Mrs. Arthur Fitzgerald, who had been Mary Galligan, had changed somewhat since her marriage. She was handsomer than when she had taught school, and worried about Miles, and managed the household expenses, and kept her lively sister Esther — now Mrs. John Longworthy — in order. She did not seem so careworn as she had been; she was like a half-closed flower that gradually expands in the sun. And there were times when she was as entirely contented as any earthly being could be; yet no day dawned without a dark fear coming with it. She had no fear for her husband: he was good and manly and true. Together every morning he and she went to an early Mass, and then said good-by until the evening; but she had no fear for Arthur: love, respect and gratitude made a perfume about the very thought of his name. She was not anxious about material things: Arthur's practice at the law was good, and his patrimony had increased in value; he was enabled to live well without anxiety. And she no longer turned her old silk frocks, or indulged in those economies which had formerly excited Esther to rebellion.

But her brother Miles was never absent from her mind. She knew that he seldom went to Mass, that he avoided the confessional; she knew that he was growing more and more careless — Esther had once said "brutal," and Mary had felt as if a dagger had pierced her heart. No, Miles could never be brutal; whatever were his faults, he could never deserve that epithet. "Brutal!" — how could Esther have used it? Did she realize that he had the pure Irish blood of a pious father and mother in his veins? And Mary had begged her sister to take it back, but Esther had not done so.

"Miles was made selfish by his education," she had said; "he was indulged and pampered, and all the weeds of his nature brought to the surface. He was bad enough when he was with us; he was only selfish then, now he is brutalized. Do I pity him? No! But I do pity his wife and child. If I can ever help them I will — although his wife is Nellie Mulligan, — but I don't care to live in the same city with him or her."

And so Esther had gone off to London and Paris, glad to get away from the sad look that came into Mary's face whenever Miles' name was mentioned, — glad to live her own life, and to study new problems with that delightful John, whose existence induced her to tolerate the rest of the male sex.

Mary was lonely without her at first, and Arthur's long day at the office seemed doubly long. But she was a woman of many charities; she haunted the tenement house called The Anchor, and did much to improve the condition of the poor in that structure. She had read John Longworthy's "Poverty and Sin" with deep interest. He held that poverty in city life was a terrible curse, because it resulted in degradation and temptation to sin. And, as it was not in her power to apply the remedies he suggested, she went about in the old-fashioned way, directed when in doubt by the priests of the parish,—encouraging, teaching, giving; and among the younger people she had already produced certain results. But among the older women, devotion to beer and gossip was so intense that she believed nothing but death could change them.

She had no theories; she accepted facts as they were. She did not believe that poverty could be ever extirpated from the earth, or its consequences abolished; but she did believe that it was a greater curse in the crowded tenement houses in New York than anywhere else within her knowledge. She did not raise her voice in condemning the gayety and frivolity of the younger people. She sometimes compared her own carefully guarded youth with that of these young girls, who flaunted at picnics and assemblies, and whose life was divided between drudgery and what they called pleasure; and she prayed for them all with a shudder. She understood them, — she understood how deceitful were appearances; and she understood, too, that the cause of their dangerous gayety and frivolity lay in the fact that they had no homes.

Mary tried to dedicate herself to the task of making the homes in The Anchor more homelike. It was not an easy one, for habit had to be contended against. But Mary never lost sight of the truth that love is the secret of success; she loved these people, and her suffering on Miles' account had made her tolerant. It was very difficult for these young girls, after a day's hard labor in a wretchedly ventilated warehouse or factory, to resist the temptation of a dance, in summer on the sea-breeze swept docks, in winter in one of the assembly halls. All this led to many evils; but the evils, so far as Mary could understand, were not much greater than those developed through excessive love of amusement in any position of life. She had read Mr. Ward McAllister's book as well as John Longworthy's; and it seemed to her that the life as depicted in one was not less vulgar than that shown to exist by the other.

There was the difference that beer was cheaper than champagne; but surely it was as bad for a young woman to partake publicly of one as of the other.

Mary, through her love and tolerance, got very near to many of the young women of The Anchor. Give them home amusements, teach them the household arts, tread down the weed envy, make them understand the meaning of the *Magnificat*, and the most difficult points of the social problem, over which so many throughout the world were puzzling, would be met. The question, in Mary's opinion, was of mothers and homes. But what homes could be made in The Anchor, with drunken ravings and habitual blasphemy filling the air, — where there might be innocence of evil, but no ignorance of it? And how were good mothers to be graduated from a domestic atmosphere of such malarious properties?

There were many true homes and true mothers in the tenement houses of New York. Mary knew this, but her principal concern was with The Anchor, where tenement-house life was almost at its worst. Longworthy, in his book, had presented the evils of the overcrowded tenements; but he had offered no remedy, except that the city should look more carefully after their sanitary qualities. Thanks to him, the families in The Anchor were provided, in the summer, with good vegetables, milk and ice at moderate rates, through the usual dealers in those commodities; and he had established a system which did away with the ruinous price they paid for their coal in winter. But this was not enough, — and yet John Longworthy, assisted by large wealth and all Esther's capability, had not gone any farther. Extravagance, envy, drunkenness, domestic quarrels, laziness among the young men, and a feverish desire for amusement on the part of the young women, were rampant. So far as Mary could see, the only remedy lay in inducing each individual in The Anchor to believe firmly that he had certain duties to perform beyond the mere act of living.

Religion had a strong hold on the young women; it, and not public opinion, kept them from those great sins of which the unthinking might accuse them, judging only from appearances. The annual "mission" at the Catholic church in whose parish The Anchor was, had great force with the young men. Whatever reactionary power against debasement they possessed was due to the confessional. But while religion could keep most of them from becoming entirely degraded, — while it lifted them up after they had fallen, — while they caught at it as men climbing up a mountain side catch at a stout branch as they fall, and save themselves in the very act of falling, — it had little effect in making the habitual "loafer" see that he ought not to live on the earnings of his mother, the washerwoman; or in causing young Grogan, for instance, to support his wife. Nobody in The Anchor believed that poverty could be a blessing. And yet Mary saw that they must come to regard it as a blessing — to regard it as a means of grace — before it could be possible to make it endurable. Neither John Longworthy nor anybody else writing on the social problem had shown how this might be done. Mary did not know herself, but she wanted very much to find out.

Arthur Fitzgerald did not bother himself with such questions. He had his law business and John Longworthy's real estate to look after. It was his opinion that the city of New York would one day become a place for business and warehouses exclusively. He had read a paper before a Catholic club in which he had said that the rich ought to be kind to the poor, and that the poor ought not to envy the rich; and he had expressed the opinion that a return to Christian feudalism would be the desirable thing. But he never dreamed of explaining how the people in The Anchor were to be made the contented subjects of his ideal feudalism.

The real cross in his life was Miles. Miles stood between his wife's heart and his; she never forgot her brother: he would come up in her thoughts just as Arthur had made her almost happy. Again, Miles was an unscrupulous politician, and the tool of more unscrupulous politicians; to take a bribe was a legitimate thing in his eyes, — to be caught was the illegitimate thing. Politics meant business and Miles did not hesitate to say so. To Arthur, trained by the Jesuits to a delicate sense of honor in all the relations of life, the necessity of associating with such a man was deplorable.

Esther, in their talks, had sometimes made bitter comparisons between Arthur and her brother. "Why is it," she had asked, "that Arthur, with the same education at school as Miles, is so different? And I am sure Miles wasn't born bad."

There was never any answer made to this, but it was Arthur's private opinion that Miles had been ruined by the over-indulgence of his mother and the ease of taking the lowest standard of his companions. But he did not care to ask questions; it was enough to know that Miles existed. It was pain enough to fear that at any moment the name of his brother-in-law might be seen in the lurid heading of a newspaper, weighted with charges that would be irrefutable. When that would happen — and Arthur felt that it was only a question of time — it would be necessary for him to stand by this hateful relative; for he knew that if all the crimes forbidden by the Decalogue were proven against Miles, Mary would strive to hold him innocent; not only that, but she would insist on *his* holding him innocent. The Longworthys had, he often said to himself, done well to flee from a country that contained Miles.

Nellie was bad enough; she was vulgar, yet she must be socially recognized. And she had a way of sending all sorts of people to him with letters of introduction, beginning, "Dear Brother." It was awkward.

It was absolutely necessary that the Fitzgeralds should give a dinner party at least every six months to these obnoxious relatives; and the time had approached shortly after Patrick Desmond's arrival in New York. Nellie had hinted several times that it ought to be an affair of great splendor on this special occasion, because of Miles' additional prestige in the political world. Nellie did not explain why Miles ought to be considered as more splendid than usual, but it was plainly her fixed opinion that he was the most brilliant of political stars.

"I will have nobody to meet them, Mary," Arthur said, firmly; "because there is nobody that will understand them. Make the table groan with flowers and ornaments, if you like, but don't ask other people."

Mary's countenance fell. "Nellie will feel slighted."

"Nellie is in a chronic state of 'slightedness.'"

"But, after all, Arthur, they are my relatives," said Mary, with a touch of reproach in her voice.

"Nobody would suspect it if you didn't tell; and I'm sure I don't see why we should be anxious — come," he added, seeing tears in Mary's eyes; "come, don't cry. Ask everybody you like; but if that woman attempts to bring little Miley, and to keep him on her lap during dinner, as she did the last time, I will not endure it."

"Poor little Miley!" said the other, with a sigh. "Why have you such a grudge against little Miley?"

"I love him," answered Arthur, politely, "when he doesn't paddle in the soup."

Mary turned away; this was levity. Why could Arthur see no good in Miles? she asked in her heart. Why, he asked in his, should she forgive all Miles' sins, and treat his lightest remark as if it were a crime?

"I suppose I may ask Father Jackson?"

"Oh! yes," said Arthur. "*He* will understand, — but nobody else. If you do, Mary, I'll go out of town. I must go to a place called Eaglescliff, to look into the condition of a mine there belonging to a client. Now, if you ask a crowd to meet Nellie and Miles, I'll go on Wednesday instead of Thursday; I will indeed."

Mary made no answer; she looked down at a note she held. "Nellie says Wednesday would suit her; and she wants to bring her cousin, Mr. Desmond —"

"A nice young fellow," interrupted Arthur, approvingly. "Miles calls him his secretary, but he is out of place in that position. He was at my office yesterday with a message."

Mary's face brightened and then clouded a little. "She proposes to bring the Baroness von Homburg."

"The Baroness von *Humbug*, my dear. You'd better say no to that."

"How can I?"

"Well, let her come; but it is awful."

"O, Arthur! it's such a little thing to do for Miles," said Mary, piteously.

Arthur shook his head. After all, Miles, at his worst, could not deprive him of his cigar and book.

XIX.

The heart judges finally; the head merely argues.
— "*Paradoxes of a Philosopher.*"

On second thoughts, Mary Fitzgerald felt somewhat doubtful about the Baroness von Homburg. She might be — but Mary, with her habitual charitableness, dismissed the thought — an adventuress, who had attached herself to Nellie with interested motives. To refuse to ask her to dinner would be to add another grievance to those which Nellie already cherished against her sister-in-law. Mary copied the Baroness' address on an envelope, which Nellie had enclosed in her note to Mary, with a broad hint that a dinner-party on Wednesday would be acceptable. Mary debated whether she should call on this Baroness or not. She had little time to spare from her household and her poor, so she solved the doubt by sending her card with the invitation to dinner. A dinner to the Galligans was no easy task. Miles had been surfeited with all kinds of banquets; Nellie had become more and more critical, and she considered it a mark of high breeding to appear to underrate any new thing or any old thing she had never seen; consequently, a hostess as anxious to please as Mary, was at a great disadvantage.

Mary sighed as she thought of the trouble she would have to take in order to give her sister-in-law no pretence for feeling "slighted." A simple dinner might do for the Longworthys, but never for the Galligans. For them every inch of silver in the house had to be brought out, and the table loaded with flowers. Besides, Nellie knew the price of every flower in its hothouse season; and she was as likely to feel "hurt" because there were no jonquils on the table in February, as to have her sensitive heart lacerated by seeing common field daisies in July. Once she had been led away from the dining-room by Miles because there was only one soup, when — as she had heard on the best authority (that of the cook) — there had been two soups served on the day before for the Longworthys. Miles insisted on champagne of a good brand, and he had been known to insinuate that the Fitzgeralds were capable of putting him off with "American stuff." Arthur's last words to Mary on the Monday before the dinner party had been on this subject.

"I must ask as a favor, my dear, that you'll let your brother have all the champagne he wants. I don't like to hear that his wife makes remarks on our stinginess."

"Oh! I am sure poor Nellie has been misrepresented," Mary began.

"Perhaps. Don't give them any cause to complain. If the fel — if Miles drinks too much, it is his own affair."

Mary changed color. "I think, Arthur, that we might not have any wine for this once. It might be a lesson to Miles."

Arthur Fitzgerald stared at his wife. "A dinner without even a glass of claret. Impossible!"

"Couldn't we have mineral water, or something, instead?"

Arthur laughed. "Ginger-beer with the oysters, lemon soda with the roast, and Hunyadi with the dessert — hey, my dear? Really, it's almost asking too much that one should commit such absurdities just to keep Miles from drinking to excess."

Mary sighed. If Arthur would only understand.

"Has he grown worse of late?" Arthur asked, more serenely.

"I am afraid, from what Nellie says, that he is not the same as he was," Mary answered; and her imagination suddenly lent beauty and tenderness to the past.

"He can't be much worse," murmured Arthur, half-smiling, half-sighing, as he interpreted his wife's thought. "If you will have it so, Mary, I'll order no champagne. It's vulgar stuff, anyhow. But I can't banish a little claret."

Mary asked no more. She felt that this was a concession costing Arthur much; but she found men very difficult to understand. Why wouldn't mineral water and ginger-beer have done just as well? She had sickened with horror on several occasions to see Miles' face grow redder and redder, and his speech thicker and thicker, as he gulped glass after glass of his favorite wine, and added copious draughts of whiskey to it later. Nellie, at these times, had not been entirely comfortable; and yet there was a certain triumph in the sight of Miles drinking unlimited champagne. In Nellie's eyes, champagne and diamonds were the palms awarded to the highest earthly merit.

Nellie and the Baroness von Homburg had become very friendly in a few days. The Baroness had made a low courtesy when Patrick Desmond was presented to her, and had filled Nellie's ears with rapturous exclamations on his personal appearance. In her heart the Baroness named him a pleasant, honest young man, who might be easily twisted around her finger. If he were rich he would do very well as a husband; she said to herself that she was past the time of sentiment: her one desire was to get away from poverty and the pupils in vocal music. If Nellie faithfully delivered to Desmond all the complimentary speeches she had made, she felt sure that he would respond with tender interest. There was one male quality in which the Baroness implicitly believed, and that was vanity. The woman, she held, who offered incense to the vanity of men, might marry anybody she choose.

Desmond's openly expressed horror of the condition of social life as illustrated by Lize Smith's party — which had ended with a great flow of beer and several black eyes, — had nettled his cousin. The idea of a rustic coming from the country criticising New Yorkers. Lize Smith was only Lize Smith, of course, — she hadn't had advantages; but the life that had been good enough for Nellie Galligan ought to be good enough for Patrick Desmond. Still Patrick would talk about it; the whole scene had shocked him beyond measure, and it had set him to reading John Longworthy's book, and puzzling about means of remedy. Desmond loved money, because, in his experience, money seemed to be the only natural power that could accomplish anything in the world. After that he desired the advancement of men of his own blood; he was none the less an American that he wished his own people — people of his own religion and race — not to dominate especially, but to stand in the van of progress. Strange to say, he never gave the suffering of people of other blood than his own a thought. His sympathy and horror were drawn out by the degradation of the Grogans, the Smiths, and others of Irish descent. This was partially due to the fact that his mother had imbued him with a chivalric and romantic idea of the Irish past. This had something to do with his revolt against the condition of affairs in Redwood. Every Irishman is a natural aristocrat; and, in Desmond's case, the tendency had assumed its best form. He did not look down on others: the nobleness of his blood obliged him to keep himself up.

At Redwood, money had appeared to him to be the great object of life; in New York, it did not seem to him so powerful, unless connected with other things. He had not been ten days in Miles' employ when he began to feel that poverty was better than money earned as Miles was earning it.

Miles' next election was very doubtful. Nellie's tact had been useful in some ways, but her desire to get out of Miles' own district had not had a good effect on the voters. Of course Miles had kept a technical residence there, and Nellie had come and gone — living in Harlem only a while for her health and Miley's; but there was a rumor, growing in volume, that the Galligans were "stuck up." This did not affect the men much, but the ladies made it the subject of much bitter comment. Again, though Miles thought it no shame to pick up dollars wherever he could in the lobby, he had not been so generous as he might have been. Several of his constituents had been allowed to go to the Tombs and the Island without the proper influence being exerted in their behalf. He lied with ease and a certain grace; but there comes a time when the man who has swallowed the light and airy and palatable confection looks for something more solid. But the fact was that Miles had been so much occupied in taking care of himself that he had not given the proper degree of attention to his constituents.

Desmond, let into the secrets of Miles' politics, had become sick at heart; for he was both honest and honorable.

"What a bird you are," Miles said, jocosely, after he had unveiled a scheme of securing a check from a gas company under false pretences. "Money makes things go; nobody considers it wrong to get what he can. Business is business, and politics is the tallest kind of business."

"But how can you —" Patrick paused, and then went on — "how can you go to confession?"

Miles frowned; his little eyes gleamed ominously. "Just you mind your business, young fellow. Don't preach to me. I've got to make a living."

Desmond's blood was up. "Well, I've not got to help you make a living in a dishonest way," he said, turning very red; "and after this week you must find somebody else to do your work."

Miles recovered his temper. Desmond wrote good letters, and took a great deal of work off his hands; it would not do to break with him. He only said: "You'll die in an almshouse yet."

"I'll die honest, at any rate," Patrick had answered.

Desmond brooded over this conversation; he determined to resign his office as private secretary. The artificiality, the falsity of the Galligans' life, affected him as the air of a crowded street-car affects the skater who has just been careering over clear ice on a bracing winter day. He would take his chances in New York; he *would* succeed honestly, and never return to Redwood until he had succeeded.

Nellie was determined to do away with the impression that Lize Smith's party had made on Desmond's mind. Before taking him to the abode of her mother in The Anchor — a presentation which must soon be accomplished, — she determined to introduce him to the Fitzgerald interior. This would show him that the social surroundings of the Hon. Miles were not entirely of the Lize Smith kind. She was irritated against Desmond. She believed that he was sarcastic; he seldom admired anything and never expressed surprise; he was too independent. At the same time she respected him; she would have liked him much better had he grovelled before the red velvet *portières*, and admitted that he had never seen a finger-bowl before.

On the day before Mary Fitzgerald's dinner party, Patrick received the packet of the Fly-Away Mines shares from Eleanor. A little note. very formally written, accompanied it. It ran:

DEAR SIR, — I am under the impression that these shares belong to you. My father cannot speak yet, nor can he write; and the chances are that he never will do either. Later, a clearer explanation of the *unconscious* wrong my father has done you may be forthcoming. At present I can only return to you the mere symbols of what was yours. I have retained some money — which, they tell me, belonged to my mother — until I can begin to repay you in earnest. In sending you the packet, I merely want to show you that I have a desire to undo what has been inadvertently done.

Yours sincerely,
ELEANOR REDWOOD.

Desmond looked at the packet and read and re-read the note. At first he did not understand the meaning of it. And then his mother's words came back to him, — the words uttered in explanation of the unfortunate letter which had outlived Mrs. Redwood, and which was responsible for Eleanor's present action. Patrick examined the shares, representing over two hundred thousand dollars, transferred to him with every necessary and unnecessary legal precaution. He had read with intense interest all the newspaper accounts of the Fly-Away Mines disaster; he knew that those shares of stock were worth almost nothing, but this did not lessen in his eyes the nobility of Eleanor's action. Smaller-minded people might have called it a cheap kind of restitution, but Desmond understood it better than such minds could. He looked long at the few words she had written; they were very precious to him. How gracious, how dignified, how noble she was, — how much more gracious and noble now in her poverty than when she had been the comparatively rich Miss Redwood, of Redwood. His heart melted at the thought of her, perhaps deserted by her friends, perhaps in agony of spirit over the future. His mother must absolve him from his promise; his mother would see now that Eleanor had no champion but him against the world. He compared the life around him with the ideal life of love-lightened poverty he might lead with Eleanor Redwood as his wife. She was not a Catholic, it was true; but she was one of those who slip into the Church, and find they are almost naturally part of it. She would be a Catholic, and never remember that she had been anything else.

He stood at twilight in the little room of the hotel — a very carelessly kept and cheap one, — where the Galligans had placed him; he stood in the twilight, and lost himself in this dream. Suddenly a thought passed through his mind, like a flash revealing the unreality of it all. It was borne in upon him that his mother would say only a few words when he should tell her of Eleanor's act, but these words would cut him as a sword. She would say that Eleanor was insane, as her mother had been. He realized that, for the first time in his life, he was not sure of his mother's sympathy. He lit the gas with a sigh, and examined the certificates carefully; and he realized that if the Fly-Away Mines had not been flooded, he would now be in legal possession of two hundred thousand dollars. He drew a deep breath and his color came and went. What strength, what power would have been his. The hopes, the desires, of his later life were in his grasp; but these were as worthless as withered leaves, —yet not as worthless, since truth and honor were represented by them.

XX.

A trifle? there are no trifles in life. Do you call the pebble that lames the horse and makes the difference between life and death a trifle? — MARKSTEIN.

WITH all her tolerance, Mary Fitzgerald did her sister-in-law injustice in her thoughts. It seemed to her that if Miles had married a higher type of woman, he might have developed all those good qualities which she believed existed in him. But the truth was the reverse of this. If Nellie had married a man who was her superior, she would not only have kept pace with him, but doubtless gone before him in time. Nevertheless, Mary, in her thoughts, was prone to throw the burden of Miles' sins on the temperament and lack of training of his wife.

Women, as a rule, are not only better but cleverer than men; and Nellie, though she was not at all shocked by Miles' smaller dishonesties, would have shrunk with horror from anything she believed to be a great sin. She had the wonderful adaptability of her race, with that tendency toward the acquirement of good taste which is a peculiar quality of American women. She was inclined to laugh or to sneer at any new thing adopted by people whom she regarded as in her own station of life; but let her once see this new thing, in manners, or speech, or ornament, in the possession of those whom she in her heart regarded as above her, and she immediately adopted it as her own. She might recall the days when Mary Fitzgerald was "only a school teacher"; but still she held Mary in high respect as a social luminary, and she was very willing to imitate her, provided that Mary should not know it.

The days preceding the Fitzgerald dinner party were very delightful to Nellie. She made a pilgrimage down to Lize Smith's, in order to talk about the Baroness. She kept her unfortunate dressmaker on the rack, and the occupants of the adjoining flats wished that "Comrades," and "Only a Violet," had never been invented; for, we must remember, she had the courage of a sincere conviction of the greatness of her vocal abilities and the perfection of Professor Fortescue's method.

It seems hard to understand how deeply a very simple social function can be made to agitate many people not immediately concerned in it. Lize Smith and all the Smith connections were deeply moved by the entrance of Nellie into society as the chaperon of a baroness. And young Grogan actually composed a song on the subject, which was warbled with great effect in Miles' district, to the accompaniment of the accordion.

The Bayards at Redwood were anxious about the outcome of the dinner; for was not the Baroness to have her chance of capturing the susceptible and simple Desmond and the mining stock? Miles was somewhat agitated, too; for, though he disliked Arthur Fitzgerald, he knew that he was gaining influence in important places; and, as he was not too sure of his political "pull" for the next session, he felt that it would be well to arrange something pleasant into which he might fall, — something to which a man might be nominated by influence, not elected by votes.

Desmond was seriously unhappy during these days. In the first place, he was homesick; in the second, he was horrified by the cynical dishonesty of Miles and most of his associates; he felt that he must cut loose from an employment which was likely to make him an accessory in what seemed to Miles "legitimate" dishonesty. In the third place, he wanted very much to see Eleanor Redwood. She was in affliction; she had lately performed an act of restitution which made him regard her as the most noble of women; and yet he could not go near her without his mother's permission, for he had given his word. In the fourth place, Nellie was badgering him about the Fitzgerald dinner party; she gave him lessons in etiquette in season and out of season; she declared that he must have an evening suit. Patrick rebelled at this; he said that he could not afford such a luxury.

"My coat was good enough at Judge Redwood's — the best house in our town," he said; "and it will have to do."

"Good gracious!" cried Nellie. "How can you compare a country party with a dinner at my brother-in-law's? And what will the Baroness think of you?"

"I don't care," Patrick said. "Scarcely anybody at home wears those old-fashioned, claw-hammer coats in the evening, and I don't think Redwood is much behind in the fashion."

Nellie raised her hands in horror. "You'll spoil the looks of the table, that's all; and make me ashamed to tell people that you are my cousin."

"I can't help it, — I'll stay at home, then," he replied, obstinately. "Besides, I can't afford it."

"Miles will get it for you on credit," Nellie went on, brightening; "and you can't imagine how well you'll look in it."

But Patrick was obdurate. The thought of getting anything on credit — a very familiar one to Nellie — filled him with disgust. Like a wise woman, she discovered that the inevitable must be accepted. Her cousin would have to go as the young man from the country; and Nellie rehearsed in her mind the half-sympathetic, half-amused attitude she would take toward him. He heartily wished it were over. It is probable that he would have refused to go, had he not been drawn to Arthur Fitzgerald at his first meeting, and anxious to find out whether New York was entirely made up of political cormorants, pretentious vulgarians, and folk of the Jim Smith and Grogan types.

The Fitzgeralds had not escaped a slight domestic ripple over the question of wine. Mary, after some thought, had again timidly suggested that, in view of Miles' habits, perhaps it would be well not to have any wine at the table. But Arthur, who was tractable on all other subjects, almost lost his temper.

"I am obliged to receive Miles as cordially as possible, because he is your brother; but you know, Mary, I can't be expected to inconvenience myself and all my guests simply because he is inclined to make a hog of himself."

He regretted these words the moment he had uttered them; he knew that he was somewhat jealous of Miles, and this knowledge made it all the more difficult for him to admit that he had been rude about him. It would have exasperated any man to see a woman like Mary overlooking his perfections, or taking them as a matter of course, in order to burn incense and drop tears before a hideous idol like Miles. And, to make things worse, Mary actually cried. For almost the first time in their married life Arthur had been unpleasant, and about such a little thing.

Why, when so much was at stake, should he insist on such a trifle? Lemonade was an eminently respectable and safe drink; and if there were only lemonade on the table, or some nice mineral water, Miles would be safe for one evening at least. The consequence of this was that Arthur went down to his office in a discontented mood; and Mary, who could condone the gravest of Miles' offences, felt that her husband had failed her at a supreme moment.

Probably the only person who looked forward to the dinner party with real satisfaction was the Baroness. She had come to that time of life when a good dinner, with all the luxuries of lights and flowers, is a matter for rejoicing; and good dinners were not common now in her experience, although she was a baroness. And so she mended her fripperies and made her train more imposing, with a certain feeling of pleasant expectation.

Mary had spared no pains to make Nellie feel that the dinner was better than anything hitherto done in the Fitzgerald household. And when Mr. and Mrs. Miles Galligan, the Baroness von Homburg, and Patrick Desmond arrived, they found the drawing-room decorated with palms and glowing with the light of a dozen red-shaded lamps. Mary, clothed in soft gray, with a few red roses at her belt, welcomed the obnoxious guests with a gentle warmth that caused Arthur to wish that he had made the dinner table a lagoon of mineral water and lemonade. After all, who could be so gentle and tender as Mary? Her every movement had a grace and distinction which the highest breeding could not give; it came from habitual kindness and courtesy of thought. And Arthur, appreciating this, resolved to make amends for his rejection of the eminently respectable lemonade by being as polite to Miles as he possibly could. He found it easy enough to receive Desmond cordially; there was a frankness and lucidity about the latter that attracted other good men.

While Nellie was apologizing in whispers to the Baroness for the absence of the dress suit which Desmond ought to have worn, and fancying that it was the subject of everybody's thoughts, Mary was looking at him and making up her mind that he had a good mother; Arthur was thinking of his evident honesty, and the Baroness concluding that he was handsome, but too ignorant to know that a title was worth anything. Nellie, if Patrick's frock-coat could have been blotted from her mind, would have been satisfied for the moment. Her red velvet gown, with a pink and silver front, and a train to match, was much finer than the Baroness' blue brocade; and Miles, in a new evening suit, with a large red rose in his lapel, and a cluster of diamonds on a much-embroidered shirt front, contented her æsthetic sense. His face was somewhat redder than an artist would have considered natural, and he certainly was growing stout, — so stout that he had acquired a "presence"; and his eyes, according to some of his brilliant friends, had "a double chin" around them. Looking at him, Nellie felt that the Galligans were on the crest of the wave.

When Father Jackson came in, Nellie suddenly elevated her fan and blushed. Her frock was not nearly so low in the neck as that of the Baroness, who was entirely unembarrassed. Father Jackson looked somewhat surprised, as Nellie was compelled to lower her fan in order to shake hands with him. He was not prudish by any means; but he asked Mary Fitzgerald in an audible voice, which made Nellie furious, whether the ladies were Catholics. Nellie afterward said that priests ought to be taught in seminaries something about the customs of fashionable society. Since she had become a politician Nellie was very critical about priests.

Father Jackson was young and clever, at once intelligent and sympathetic, with an air of detachment from the world, and yet with an evident knowledge of its dangers. He was tall and slight, with a suspicion of delicacy in his looks that forced everybody to wonder at his energy. Earnestness and enthusiasm seemed to supply the place of physical strength. His qualities and manner were typical of the younger priests of New York; and Arthur often thanked God in his heart that there were many priests in his native city of the metal that made his friend, Father Jackson, so attractive and valuable.

Desmond's heart warmed toward Father Jackson at once; and he felt a subtle sympathy with Arthur Fitzgerald, too, — a sympathy which only the pure in heart feel for one another, and which is very different from that which arises from a coincidence of intellectual tastes. Desmond felt that, knowing Jack Conlon as he did, he had the key to Father Jackson's character.

XXI.

> **Into all our lives comes every year some event which, put into a novel, would seem utterly improbable.**
>
> — "*Paradoxes of a Philosopher.*"

THE atmosphere of the Fitzgeralds' dinner was different from that of Eleanor Redwood's Coffee; but, in spite of all those pretty devices with which a careful hostess makes a dinner both stately and graceful — or, rather, because of them — Patrick enjoyed himself. The Baroness, who sat next to him, annoyed him a little at first; he soon understood, however, that she intended to be amiable, although her "society" jargon was without much meaning to him. He thought it was very kind of her to insist on pinning the rosebud he found in his napkin to the lapel of his coat. This little manœuvre did not escape Miles, who winked at Nellie; and Patrick, catching this telegraphic signal, felt that he had made some mistake. The possibility of having made a mistake in a matter of form did not seem such an awful thing in New York as it had seemed at Redwood. Mary's gentle face was a guarantee of tolerance; and during all the various courses Desmond was entirely at ease; for nobody could fail to understand that her main object was that everybody should be happy for the moment, and that the lights and the flowers and all the accessories which civilization has invented in order to elevate eating into an art, were merely second to this object.

The Baroness herself, who was a direct contrast to Desmond in most things, lost for the time her cynicism; and, as she glanced from the Fitzgeralds to Father Jackson, she began to be almost persuaded that there were good people in the world. She said to herself that if she had four or five thousand a year, she, too, could exercise all the virtues; but as she looked at the priest again and heard him speak, she recognized that the goodness that shone in his face was not dependent on so many thousand a year. Still, she was different from these people; their goodness must be in the blood. As the dinner proceeded she became more and more amiable to Desmond. After all, the Bayards were clever; and no doubt the best way of getting rid of the music pupils would be to follow their lead. To the delight of Nellie, she took a leading part in the conversation, and related the most brilliant anecdotes about everybody in society.

"I find it so difficult to found a *salon* in New York. One can find brilliant men, but the women are *so* difficult," she observed, with a sigh.

"What's that, ma'am?" asked Miles, awakening from a sulky reverie, occasioned by the evident intention of his brother-in-law not to serve champagne. Both Miles and Nellie considered this a new "slight," and were determined to make Mary suffer for it. The Baroness repeated her remark. Miles laughed.

"Saloons!" he said. "There are more saloons in New York now than you can shake a stick at. If you want to start a saloon, ma'am — and you might do worse, — you've only to pay your license and go in."

The Baroness put her napkin to her mouth. And Nellie, feeling that Miles had gone wrong somehow, looked Arthur Fitzgerald full in the eyes with the intention of promptly avenging the ghost of a smile. There was none, however; and Mary, on whose heart Miles' sixth glass of claret was making a scar, did not notice the lapse. The Baroness, later, made a capital story out of it. Nellie's face flushed as she caught that lady's giggle behind her napkin, and she resolved that this impudence should not go unpunished; and Nellie seldom made a vain resolution.

Mary was pleased with Desmond from the first; to Arthur's disgust he actually drank water through the dinner, but this only raised him in her estimation. In answer to Father Jackson Arthur announced his intention of going to Eaglescliff.

"Eaglescliff?" asked Desmond. "That is near Redwood."

"So I believe," said Fitzgerald. "I don't care to undertake the journey, but a client of mine is interested in the Fly-Away stock."

The Baroness raised her head.

"The Fly-Away Mines!" exclaimed Desmond, speaking with an energy which was accentuated by his previous silence. "I, too, am interested, Mr. Fitzgerald, — exceedingly interested; and if you will permit me to say a few words to you on business —"

"Certainly. In the study, when we have our cigars," answered Fitzgerald, wondering at the young man's earnestness.

Desmond thanked him.

"Redwood?" repeated Mary. "Did not somebody mention the name of Redwood?"

"I did," observed Desmond.

"I met a young woman of that name yesterday," said Mary; "a very nice person."

"Was it Eleanor?" cried Desmond. "But it could not have been Eleanor — I mean Miss Redwood," he added, letting his voice fall.

"Mrs. Fitzgerald met Miss Redwood at our house," said Father Jackson. "And if you know her, you will be glad to hear that, although a stranger in the city and a Protestant, she came first to St. Anselm's. The rector sent me down to see her, and Mrs. Fitzgerald happened to be in the parlor."

Desmond's eyes shone like stars. "Miss Redwood here — *here* in New York."

Then the light went out of them: he remembered his promise to his mother. The meaning of his thoughts seemed plain to everybody present, and the Baroness concluded that she need not trouble herself to be agreeable to him; henceforth she gave all her attention to a very delicious ice. A little later she heard Nellie ask Desmond if he did not find the "dear Baroness" very sweet.

"Yes — of course," Patrick answered, absent-mindedly. "She has a kind, motherly way."

Nellie had her revenge, for the Baroness was informed by that remark that her little arts had failed; and Nellie let her know by a peculiarly artificial smile that she, too, was aware of it.

When the ladies had gone, Arthur asked Desmond: "To what extent are you interested in the Fly-Away Mines?"

"I have a lot of the stock, — that is —"

Arthur interrupted him excitedly. "Then you are fortunate! This telegram came just before dinner."

Patrick read the words on the yellow slip with dazzled eyes:

> "Fly-Away Mines in good condition. Examiners have found a new and immense bed of coal. Come."

"What does it mean?" he asked.

"Mean!" exclaimed Arthur. "You had better go down to Eaglescliff and find out. It means that every share in the Fly-Away Mines is worth a hundred per cent. more than before the flood."

Desmond's brain seemed to turn. His dream was realized; he had succeeded by no effort of his own; he was wealthy.

There was music in the drawing-room. Arthur smoked his cigar in silence, watching Desmond's face. The sound of the piano above mingled with the gentle snore from the corner of the table, where Miles had fallen asleep. Nellie's voice could be heard in the inevitable

"Only a violet, dawling,
Only a violet blu-oo."

Arthur looked from Desmond's face to Miles', and he was struck by the contrast between the two. Desmond's was clear, healthy, capable of nobility, although a dark cloud rested on it at this moment; Miles', stupid, narrow, animalized, — a very different face from that of the young Miles whom Arthur had known at school. Arthur looked at the lines traced on the brow and around the eyes, and shuddered. It was a relief to turn his eyes to Desmond; he asked whether this frank, bright face could ever come to be as terrible an index of selfishness and sin, as Miles' face was. And yet, in Arthur's remembrance, Miles' face had been as frank and as honest, if not as handsome, as Desmond's.

The voice above became louder. Desmond did not speak; his social education had not reached that point where a man speaks often principally because he has nothing to say. His brain was in a whirl. Arthur, whose cigar always consoled him for silence on the part of other people, hoped that Nellie would soon cease her screams. The last refrain of "Only a Violet" died away. It was succeeded by a rattling Wagnerian march by the Baroness, and still Desmond did not speak.

Arthur wished Mary had not insisted on carrying Father Jackson into the drawing-room. He was anxious not to appear curious about Desmond's connection with the Fly-Away Mines; he could not think of anything else appropriate to the occasion; and Miles' snore irritated him almost as much as Nellie's singing. Father Jackson knew how to enliven people; things always went well when he was about. Arthur's cigar was not as great a comfort as usual. The flowers on the table had begun to droop, and the candles to flare. Arthur turned his eyes toward Miles, with the intention of shaking him if he did not awake in a few minutes. For the first time he noticed a dark flush on his brother-in-law's cheeks; it was not a natural color. He tapped Desmond on the shoulder and asked: "Is he well?"

The young man gazed at Fitzgerald as if he had been awakened from sleep. "Well? Who?"

"Oh! Miles Galligan, of course," Arthur said, impatiently. "He looks bad to-night. His wife would do better if she would take him home, instead of bawling upstairs."

Desmond looked at him in surprise; this was not the elegant manner he had expected, from Nellie's description of Arthur.

"I suppose I seem rude," Arthur went on, apologetically. "You must pardon me. But the look on that man's face startled me. The blood is all in his head. He has drunk too much."

"But I saw you offering him wine very often," said Desmond, with a frankness that startled Arthur, but gave him no offence.

"I didn't think the fellow was a brute. He'll die of apoplexy or something. Listen to that snore. He must have been drinking before he came here."

"Probably," said Desmond. "People in politics *must* drink. Shall I awaken him?"

Miles was awakened with some difficulty. He asked for a little whiskey, and got it; for Fitzgerald was one of those hosts who would allow a man to have delirium tremens at his table rather than appear inhospitable.

Just at this moment Father Jackson appeared, sent by Mrs. Fitzgerald for the men. Miles grasped the decanter and was about to refuse to go; but Father Jackson, with a smile that gilded a great deal of firmness, took his arm and led him up to the drawing-room.

"I'm afraid the ladies will not excuse us longer," Fitzgerald said to Desmond; "and we shall have to postpone our talk in the study until another time. Can I be of any use to you?"

Desmond stopped him at the foot of the stairs. "Did you really mean what you said about the Fly-Away Mines being much more valuable than they were before the accident to them?"

"Yes," replied Fitzgerald.

"Will you let me go to Eaglescliff with you?"

"Certainly — if you can get Mr. Galligan's permission."

"Oh! Mr. Galligan and I are out. His kind of politics is not in my line," said Desmond. "It may be all right, but I couldn't go about feeling that I could not respect myself — even for money."

Fitzgerald looked at him curiously, and then spoke, with a feeling of confidence in the frank young man:

"Although Galligan is my brother-in-law, I am glad that you will cut loose from him. But let me tell you that politics are made bad by the men that follow them for money. A good man who does not make money a god may be a politician. People who say that a man in politics must be bad lie for their own purposes."

"You are probably right," observed Desmond. "But a man that resists the power of money in our day must be both great and good; and to resist it means to accomplish more good than money can do."

"Halloo!" said Arthur, with new interest. "You evidently believe, with Cardinal Manning, that it is better to choose poverty and faith rather than money and error. But have you been tempted?"

"Oh! yes," said Desmond, flushing.

"And have you resisted?"

"I don't know. I am just thinking about it now."

Mary's voice was heard at the top of the stairs; and Arthur and Patrick, adjured by it to delay no longer, ascended. Desmond went to a sofa in the corner, where, at the end of another musical fusillade by the Baroness, he was joined by Father Jackson.

"You spoke about Miss Redwood," he said to the priest. "I am astonished to hear that she is in the city. I inferred from a letter I had from her yesterday that she was still at Redwood."

"She came in for a day or two. It seems she is about to settle in New York with her father."

Desmond started. How strange it seemed. How could he ever amagine her as apart from her old surroundings?

"It seems that she found Father Rodnor's address among her mother's papers — Father Rodnor has been the pastor of St. Anselm's ever since it was built, back in the fifties — and, knowing nobody else, she came to him for information about the city. I found her very interesting; and she delighted me by saying that she had come because she believed that she could trust priests more than other people in a large city, because the priest at Redwood seemed to have only one object — to make his people good. She must have known some exemplary Catholics," added Father Jackson, looking at Desmond with a smile.

"I am so glad you like her," said Desmond, not noticing the smile. "I wish she would become a Catholic."

"For your sake or her own?" asked Father Jackson, with a touch of malice. Desmond was silent, and Father Jackson went on: "Father Rodnor was ill when she came, and he sent me down. But he has a wonderful memory for names; and I had not been talking to her for five minutes when he sent a letter to me written by Miss Redwood's mother, from which it appeared that, after years of carelessness, she had come to New York and been reconciled to the Church. In this letter she asked Father Rodnor to tell her how best to go about making the fact of her return to the Church public. The young lady looked at the date, and said, weeping: 'My mother died the day after this was written. Oh! I wish I knew more about *her* Church.'"

Desmond listened with all his ears and heart. Every circumstance seemed to be bringing him nearer Eleanor. Nobody but a man accustomed to the most direct intercourse with his fellows would have asked the next question.

"Was Mrs. Redwood insane at any time? Did Father Rodnor know? Excuse the question," he said, as he noticed Father Jackson's hesitation; "but it is a vital one."

Father Jackson still hesitated. Before he could reply, Nellie called to him not to talk: she was about to sing "Comrades." And she assumed the proper attitude taught her by Prof. Fortescue, with a photograph of little Miley held pathetically to her heart.

XXII.

A flash of lightning may kill, but it reveals.
— "*Paradoxes of a Philosopher.*"

Desmond had no chance to follow up his question. Father Jackson left shortly after Nellie had finished her dramatic recitative; and then the Baroness, who had now no reason for propitiating the Fitzgeralds, began to yawn behind her fan. Miles looked at his watch and said it was time to go. Arthur asked Desmond to call at his office early the next day, and Mary shook hands with him very cordially.

Once in his little room in the hotel, Desmond thought the situation over. How wonderful it was. His life up to the time he had met Eleanor Redwood had been level, like a prairie; but from that moment the breath of mountains and the sound of rushing waters had come into it. He had longed with all his heart for riches; he had dreamed of them. Success to him meant the possession of money and nothing more; he had planned over and over again the means by which he should attain this success, — and it had come. He had sometimes an uncomfortable impression that his aims were not sufficiently high, but his self-respect had been restored by disgust he felt at the sight of the machinery by which Miles attained what he imagined to be success; and his opinion of himself had been entirely reëstablished. After all, his experience in New York had taught him that he would shrink with all his heart from ill-gotten gains; and that, much as he valued money, it had no charms for him unless it were clean. He had a higher opinion of himself when he discovered beyond doubt that he need fear no temptation to be dishonest; he might be hard and even avaricious, he said to himself, but not dishonest.

The sudden news about the shares in the Fly-Away Mines had changed the whole aspect of life. If it were true, he was rich beyond his most hopeful expectations. He sat up late, in the sickly light of the unshaded gas jet, in his little room at the Tivoli Hotel, arranging what he would do. He had no intention of taking advantage of Eleanor's action in transferring the shares to him until the whole matter had been thoroughly sifted. He made up his mind to act at once with Arthur Fitzgerald, and to assume the proprietorship of the stock until the question of its real ownership could be decided.

He knew very well that his mother would insist on his returning the shares to Eleanor, as she would look on the transaction as based entirely on an insane freak of Mrs. Redwood's, not understood by Eleanor. He smiled as he thought that it would make no difference in the end; for he now felt sure that he should marry Eleanor Redwood. And what was hers would be his. Was he overconfident? He thought not; he did not rebuke himself for egotism or conceit. She had certainly showed an interest in him, and he had not the slightest doubt of his interest in her. But the promise to his mother? He must be absolved from that; there was too much at stake to let that stand in the way. Rich, and with Eleanor Redwood for his wife, — what more had the world to offer? He would be great; he would be powerful; he would make some of those insolent people at home bite the dust; he would repay them for their arrogance. In possession of the mightiest of all weapons, he would conquer. If Miles and Nellie only knew, how they would grovel at his feet. He laughed aloud at the thought. It would make a difference to everybody, except, indeed, to his mother, to Jack Conlon, and to Eleanor. He could not imagine Mrs. Fitzgerald or Father Jackson giving him adulation after he became rich, but he saw a large part of the world at his feet.

His mother should ride in a carriage and have servants. Here an uncomfortable thought intruded itself. It occurred to him as probable that his mother would insist on staying just as she was. After all, what could money do for her? Her desires and her mission would be fulfilled if her son were only true to the teachings of his childhood. He felt a keen pang as he realized that wealth could in no way add to her happiness.

A new question presented itself: was it generous and manly to consider marriage with Eleanor from a mercenary point of view? He admired, he respected her, — yes, he could say that he loved her; and yet, in spite of this affection, it was the restoration of the Fly-Away Mines which had decided him to propose to her as soon as possible. He answered this by remembering that he would never have dared to speak of marriage to Eleanor until he had an assured income; and if these shares were really his own, the income was his. She could be, as his wife, the first woman in Redwood. What power, what strength would be his!

The plans Desmond had entertained of helping to drive off the wolves of degradation and despair from the poor in New York seemed vague and Quixotic now. He thought only of his increased power and consequence in the world, and how he would use them to abase the proud, not to raise up the humble. He was rich, — he was rich. He looked out into the street, empty and dimly lit, and said to himself that he was at last happy. Millions all over the world would willingly make terrible sacrifices to be in his place; hundreds would commit murder to feel as he felt. That imposing building across the street, which had before seemed to him such an overpowering symbol of wealth, could be his if he wanted it. All the celebrated people of whom the Baroness had spoken that night would bow down to him if they knew. He was a god, and he believed that all Redwood would greet him as a god. Even Eleanor, who might, in spite of all her good sense, be inclined to look down on Patrick Desmond from her social height, would forget all in the glitter — but here his better judgment saved him. He acknowledged to himself that Eleanor Redwood was above the influence of money. At last, weary and distracted, he went to sleep and dreamed of gold.

He made the journey to Eaglescliff on the next day with Arthur Fitzgerald, Miles having given a reluctant permission. Arthur found him somewhat stupid, for his mind busied itself with all sorts of plans. They did not get off at Redwood, though the train stopped a few minutes, and Desmond recognized Bayard's face on the platform of the station.

At this time Arthur Fitzgerald was in the smoking-car, having left his silent companion alone. Bayard boarded the train and took the seat beside Desmond, who shook hands with Bayard rather coldly. Bayard's name was not untarnished, but this had not prevented him from patronizing

Patrick in days past. Desmond, conscious of his new power, assumed an air of reserve. The time would come, he thought, when Bayard would toady to him.

"Going to Eaglescliff?" Bayard asked, with seeming indifference.

"Yes."

"I suppose you met my sister-in-law, Madame von Homburg, in New York."

"Yes."

"An interesting woman?"

"No doubt."

Bayard looked eagerly at Desmond; his expression did not change. The Baroness had evidently failed in any attempt she might have made to capture Desmond. As the knowledge of this grew in his mind, Bayard became angry against his wife; she was a fool to imagine that her romantic scheme could succeed. After all, it was a scheme of desperation, — a forlorn hope.

"You are interested in the Fly-Away Mine shares, I believe?" Bayard went on.

Desmond turned his face to the window, and was silent.

"I know you are," said Bayard, quietly. "I know that Miss Redwood transferred a big block of the stock to you."

Desmond reddened.

"I know more about the Mines than you do, and," he said, getting close to Desmond, "if you will make it worth my while, I will give you a point or two which will make you rich."

"I *am* rich," replied Desmond, quietly.

"You think so?" said Bayard. "Can we make an arrangement?"

"No," Desmond answered, looking full into Bayard's face.

Bayard tore up a telegram he held in his hand. "That," he said, throwing the fragments on the floor, "was a telegram to my sister-in-law, containing an important message for you. If you will agree to make it worth my while, I will give you the message in words."

"I hold the shares of stock in the Fly-Away Mines in trust," said Desmond; "and I cannot make any arrangement."

"In trust?" repeated Bayard. "In trust for Eleanor Redwood, I suppose," he added, with a sneer. "And yet you say that you are rich, which means, I presume, that you intend to marry Miss Redwood, and acquire the 'trust,'— dear, guileless young man!"

Desmond turned toward him angrily. Bayard picked up the fragments of the telegraphic messages and threw them out the window. The wind drove them back into the next seat. Desmond, angry as he was, noticed this; Bayard did not.

"I can help you immensely, if you will let me," Bayard said. "I think myself that the best way to acquire a sound legal and moral title to those shares would be to marry Miss Redwood. There's no harm in that, after all; but I didn't think you were so smart."

Desmond seemed odious to himself, as Bayard made this sketch of his intentions.

"They're yours, of course," Bayard continued; "I helped to transfer them. But if you think that you hold them in trust, it's a different matter. If Eleanor Redwood should not be willing to marry an Irish papist, you will be in a difficult position. In that case you'll transfer the shares to her."

Desmond half-rose from his seat, but Bayard went away quickly. It was well he did, for Desmond's wrath was great; the truth in the sneer had struck home. In a few words this scheming creature seemed to have pulled him down to his own level. He could not deny the truth: he did not consider the shares his own, and he *was* calculating on his marriage with Eleanor Redwood to make them his own. His mother had bade him look on marriage as pure and holy, and his religion taught him that it was a sacrament. His mother, through all her trials, had preserved the memory of her married life with a tender sentiment, which affected the views of her son in regard to marriage. She lived only that she might make her son serve God, and that she might rejoin in Heaven the beloved husband of her youth. His mother's ideal of marriage was her son's, and he suddenly felt like an outcast when he saw his picture as Bayard's few words had drawn it.

Arthur Fitzgerald joined him, having been refreshed by a nap and several cigars. He found Desmond more uncompanionable than ever; and, looking around for occupation, he picked up the shreds of the telegram Bayard had torn up. He untwisted them mechanically.

"Halloo!" he said. "What's this?" He smoothed out the bits of yellow paper carefully, and read:

"If interested in Desmond, have him sell Fly-Away Mine.

H. BAYARD."

There was no address. Patrick knew to whom it had been directed. To Fitzgerald's surprise, he wakened up suddenly and told him the story of the transfer of the shares and his interview with Bayard.

Fitzgerald looked grave. "Bayard is considered to be an expert in these matters. We must look into this. My duty to my client requires it."

"And my duty to Miss Redwood. I am convinced that I hold her shares only in trust."

"No doubt," assented Arthur. "The transfer was the work of an impetuous young woman in —" he checked himself; but added, with a smile: "I see now why you resisted the fascinations of the Baroness."

Desmond's lips closed tightly. Fitzgerald said to himself that he had been mistaken in this frank-looking young man; he was a "crank"; bits of "airy *persiflage*" were entirely lost on him.

Bayard passed them as they stepped on the platform of the Eaglescliff station. He whispered to Desmond: "Can we make an arrangement? It's your last chance."

"We have concluded to sell — if your advice is corroborated," Fitzgerald said, quickly. He put the fragments of the telegram into Bayard's hand and passed on.

Bayard turned, aghast; he had nothing to sell Desmond now. He and Laura must look out for another investment for their wits. And at that moment he regretted sincerely, though he hated Desmond, that he could not look out into the world with his honest eyes.

It was too late for business in Eaglescliff. All the offices were closed. There were only a few sleepy loungers about the hotel; and Fitzgerald, though wildly impatient, could not pick up any points about the Mines.

Desmond went to his room. Bayard had opened his eyes. He despised himself; he resolved that he would make Eleanor rich if possible, but that he would never ask her to marry him. How could he, even for a moment, have built hopes on wealth that never could be his, except at the cost of his self-respect.

XXIII.

We expect wisdom of God, sympathy of humanity, and direction from God in man.—*"Golden Words."*

In spite of all her counsellors at Redwood, Eleanor had clung to her determination to go to New York. It seemed to her that any change would be for the better. She and her father would be away from pitying eyes; and at this time Eleanor felt that she could endure anything better than pity. She had splendid but vague hopes of attaining a mastery of the art she loved, and of being independent, through the work of her own hands, of all the world. She had explained all the circumstances to Belinda, and a stormy scene had ensued. Belinda could not imagine the Judge or Eleanor in any atmosphere but that of Redwood. It was not until Eleanor had made a flying trip to New York and returned that Belinda reached the conclusion that her duty lay among the outside barbarians. She had consulted Mr. Stokes, and he had little to say, except that it was a question for her conscience to settle.

"Conscience!" cried Belinda. "What's the use of talking about a conscience that wabbles? My conscience is like quicksilver,—now I think I have a grip on it, and then I haven't. I wish somebody would catch it for me. And the more

I search the Scriptures, the less I know what I ought to do. I know Eleanor Redwood's making a foolish journey to New York; and I sometimes think that it ain't right for me to aid or abet her going, by letting her know I'd go under any circumstances. But I hate to think of those two perishing just for want of gumption in the modern Babylon, in need of somebody like me."

Mr. Stokes adjusted his blue necktie and sighed. The conversation took place in the parlor of the Baptist church, after the morning service. Mr. Stokes was feeling rather disconsolate; he had given up all thoughts of the ministry, and he was waiting to give his decision to the minister. This was on the Sunday after Eleanor's return from New York, and while Arthur Fitzgerald and Desmond were at Eaglescliff, working hard to dissipate the various obscurities which hung around the condition of the Fly-Away Mines.

Mr. Stokes was as unhappy as Belinda, and as greatly in doubt. He knew very well that, after the confession he had made to her, his opinion on any subject would not be worth much. Mr. Stokes had represented religion to Belinda for some time, and a form of religion which she could patronize and encourage, and feed with all the triumphs of her cookery. To have helped to make a minister would have given a halo to all her years, and she resented Mr. Stokes' weakness in declining to let her have this great privilege. But her own experience in the last few days had made her feel that there might really be conscientious scruples which could add new burdens to life. And the powerlessness of Mr. Stokes to help her solve her problem added to her resentment. She understood, to a limited degree, his hesitation to accept the Baptist religious opinions; and yet she felt irritated against him because, with all his theological learning, he could not help her. Her duty was not plain. She did not want to go to New York. She admired the Judge, and she had a certain regard for Eleanor; but Redwood was her home, her paradise; and her feelings for the Judge and his daughter were slight compared to the dread she had of uprooting herself from Redwood.

If her conscience were not in the way, Belinda would joyfully have done her best for the Redwoods, and stayed at home, after their departure, with a joyful heart. But an awful fear oppressed her; and, as the minister had gone home before Mr. Stokes could buttonhole him, she walked through the streets with that young man, trying to make up her mind to unfold it to him. She felt that she must speak or die. In all her travail of soul, however, she did not fail to scent with tender sentiment, the aroma of the Sunday dinners, which came from various houses they passed. A primrose by the river's brim had no special associations for Belinda; a wild rose from the haunts of her childhood would not have drawn a tear from her under any circumstances; but the sweetness of roast beef, with the accompanying vision of baked potatoes, brought a lump into her throat,—it might be the last day on which this dulcet odor, so characteristic of a well-ordered Sunday at Redwood, would greet her nostrils.

"I just know how papists feel when they want to confess to their priests," she said almost viciously. "I've got something on my mind, and I'd like to get rid of it; but I don't know as it would do any good to tell you, seeing that you haven't either been called or chosen."

Mr. Stokes sighed. "There's a great deal to be said on the Romanist side," he observed. "In fact, there's a great deal to be said on *every* side, —that's the trouble."

"Oh! of course," sneered Belinda, who having discovered that her idol was clay, now felt a certain pleasure in jumping on its toes. "You haven't backbone enough to take the Bible and the good old doctrine just as it is. You can't be satisfied unless you have a lot of pagans in heaven with you. For my part, *I* can do without 'em. But, then," she added, with sudden humility, "I'm only a woman; *I* don't count."

Mr. Stokes said nothing. They walked slowly under the elms that lined the streets, past the homelike houses, big and little. Belinda's grimness was accented by her gloomy state of mind, a stately black bonnet adorned with a bunch of large green grapes, a black bombazine gown, and a purple parasol which she carried as if it were a sceptre. Mr. Stokes seemed more limp than usual; he looked as if the only objects on earth of interest were his blue necktie and the hyacinthine curl trained upon his brow. It would have been unkind to form such a conclusion, however; for Mr. Stokes was really engaged in trying to feel like a man before Belinda's sneer.

"I suppose I may as well tell you," Belinda said, disarmed by his silence. "I am not needed at home just now,—there's a cold dinner; and if you have leisure to listen to a story of crime, I'll tell it to you."

"Crime!" exclaimed Mr. Stokes, in consternation. "Crime!"

"Yes, crime," said Belinda, with a groan. "I'm doomed—I'm a child of hell—I'm unregenerate. Excuse me a minute—did you ever! Them shiftless Sewards are all at the front window, commenting on the passers-by, while their roast beef's burning to a crisp. Don't you smell it? I'll go and ring the door-bell, and just let 'em know."

But before Belinda could interfere to save this sinful waste of good meat, the Sewards took the alarm themselves and disappeared from the window.

"Such dooless people," commented Belinda. "They're worse than heathens. As I was saying," she continued, "I know you can't help me, and I know the minister can't help me; but I *must* tell somebody. I wouldn't satisfy *him* by letting him know my private feelings, for he'd just up and tell his wife; and there ain't been any good feeling between me and the minister's wife since I laid out her aunt Matilda. I *would* have my way; but she's an upstart—the Lord forgive me, here I am backbiting people when my soul's wading in the waters of tribulation, and drinking the wine of bitterness. I am a criminal."

They had reached the bridge. Mr. Stokes took off his hat and rearranged the semicircle of glossy hair on his forehead. The cross of the Catholic church gleamed not far from them. They turned to the opposite bank, where the unfashionable people, including Mrs. Desmond, lived.

"We're all criminals, more or less," said Mr. Stokes. "No doubt there are men whose hands are red with human blood less guiltless than we who sin against light. Marcus Aurelius and Emerson—"

"I don't care for the opinions of any heathen," interrupted Belinda. "I want to say what I've got to say, and that's all about it. I feel that I *must* go with Eleanor Redwood on a wild-goose chase to New York, because I have wronged her greatly."

Belinda assumed, unconsciously, real dignity as she said this; she spoke with conviction. She stopped a moment to dig up a weed that was making its way through the soil at the end of the bridge.

"It's one of them nasty Canada thistles," she said. "I can never let one of 'em be whenever I see them, they're such a pest. I may as well tell you the whole thing while I am about it. You know what a great society woman Laury Bayard is. Well, I just wanted her to help along the mission in Africa you were talking about; so I thought I'd satisfy her longing for gossip by giving her a little paper I happened to have, with a family secret in it. It wasn't much of a secret, but I thought it would be a great find for her, because she is always mousing to find out things she has no business with; and so, without thinking, I gave her the paper because I thought she knew something about what was in it. I was full of the Africans when I did it, and I knew she could help the mission if she wanted to,—but it's all turned out bad. I've put this and that together since, and I have reason to believe that the Judge's sickness, and all the troubles that have come to the Redwoods, are due to that act of mine. And I've got to make up for it,—that's all."

"How could any secret in your possession have done much harm?" asked Mr. Stokes. "It's all imagination, Belinda."

"You shut up," replied Belinda, fiercely. "I know better than that. The Judge and his wife were never of one mind. Some say they had religious differences. She was an awful proud woman. And she was mad because Eleanor wasn't a boy, and couldn't be called after her family. At any rate, her troubles preyed on her mind; she was crazy by fits and starts, and this paper was written in one of her crazy fits. She got it into her head that the Judge, just to spite her, had sent away her son to Mr. and Mrs. Desmond, and put a little girl in his place. These crazy spells did not last long, but they were bad while they did last. It was always kept from Eleanor."

"I should hope so," said Mr. Stokes.

"Oh! yes, you should *hope* so," cried Belinda, with asperity. "But what's the good of your hoping? You ain't a Christian. I don't want your hopes: I just want you to listen."

Mr. Stokes sighed again. Belinda was no doubt right.

"Laury Bayard ain't safe. She's a contriver.

How do I know that she won't up and tell Eleanor all about it for her own purpose? And that will blight Eleanor's life, as no doubt it has blighted the Judge's. And," continued Belinda, with tears in her eyes, "I ain't in the blighting business. I only blighted one life before, and I am sure the Lord won't hold that against me; and that was when your father, Theo Stokes, wanted to marry me. He wasn't my style, so I just sent him about his business. But he wasn't the same man after that, and he just turned around in despair and married your mother,—poor Theo! That's the reason I've always taken such an interest in you."

Mr. Stokes looked uneasy; he knew it was best to be silent.

"I know I'm unregenerate; I know I'm in danger of hell-fire, and I've no peace night or day; but I'd walk over hot iron ploughshares to undo what I've done. I didn't mean to be wicked, and I didn't think it would do much harm to give that note to Laury Bayard. But I've always been taught that it's just as big a sin to steal a pin as to steal a man's money; and there's no spiritooal consolation for me now. I'm looking into an abyss, and I've got to stick to the Judge and Eleanor though I'd rather walk on ploughshares than go to New York, because I must make up for the wrong I've done. I'm done for," added Belinda, with a groan. "There's no mercy for a sinner like me—

but if we're to get any dinner, we'd better turn back," she said, with great suddenness.

A slight figure, clothed in black, turned the corner. Belinda at once recognized Mrs. Desmond, who carried a prayer-book ornamented with a large gilt cross; she was coming from High Mass.

Mrs. Desmond's rosy color had faded a little; her walk was not so elastic, and there was a wistful look in her eyes. The truth was that the light had gone out of her life when her son left her. Before that, she needed no effort to get through the day; since that she gladly welcomed the twilight, for it meant that another day of his absence had passed. She had not dreamed what it would cost her to part with him. She realized that her household duties derived all their pleasure from the fact that he was the object of them

She greeted Mr. Stokes cordially; he reminded her of Patrick. She and Belinda exchanged cool bows; they had met before. Mrs. Desmond felt so lonely that she determined to offer hospitality to Belinda for the sake of having a talk with Mr. Stokes about Patrick.

"You must be tired," she said. "It's seldom you come on this side of the river. You'll not mind having a cup of tea with me, I hope?"

Belinda *was* tired; and, besides, there might be a chance of getting some consolation from Mrs. Desmond on the matter which lay heavy on her mind.

"They've cold victuals at home to-day," replied Belinda; "and Eleanor Redwood won't need me, —yes, I'll come."

Mr. Stokes assented, too; and in a few moments the three were seated at Mrs. Desmond's table.

Mrs. Desmond welcomed Mr. Stokes and Belinda as a relief from the loneliness of having nobody to wait upon; and the latter gave a helping hand in the arrangement of the little repast, which had some of the special Sunday touches particularly admired by Patrick.

"He's at Eaglescliff," said Mrs. Desmond. "I expected him here to-day, but his business keeps him even on Sunday."

"So near," said Belinda. "I thought he was in New York."

"He's helping a lawyer named Fitzgerald in the affairs of the Fly-Away Mines," answered Mrs. Desmond, proudly. "Patrick is smart."

"Smart enough not to run after Eleanor Redwood, now that she's poor," Belinda said to herself. "It's too bad that the Mines have gone to nothing," she remarked, aloud.

"If anybody can stop the mischief, Patrick can," said the mother, confidently. "And Mr. Fitzgerald is the best lawyer in New York, they say."

"It will take quite a mighty good lawyer to make anything of a mine after the rats leave it," ventured Belinda, grimly. "I say, Mrs. Desmond, what would you do if you had a great load on your mind?"

It was Belinda's way to go directly to the point. Mr. Stokes put his coffee-cup down, and prepared to listen. Mrs. Desmond either did not hear or did not heed the abrupt question; she was thinking of her son.

"The Mines are all right again, I hear," said Mrs. Desmond. "They will bring more money than ever,—that's what Patrick said in his letter."

"They will!" cried Belinda. "Well, I'm glad of it. If that's so I shall not have to go and be a slave of duty in New York; for the Judge will be rich again. But, oh! dear," she added, "I'm just the same miserable sinner. I've done the deed, and I don't know what will blot it out."

Mr. Stokes did not speak, although Belinda directed her speech toward him.

"And I want to know now, Mrs. Desmond —meaning no offence to you as a Romanist— what you would really do if you felt as I do."

"My heart is heavy enough sometimes. I shall never be the same so long as that boy is away."

"It's natural enough for sons to go out in the world, and the Scriptures are not against it; but I want to know what you Romanists do when you've got a crime on your mind and need to get rid of it."

Mrs. Desmond looked startled. "We go to confession, of course, and get absolution; and if we are sorry from our heart—"

"Oh! I'm sorry enough," interrupted Belinda. "If it were only down in the Bible, I'd go myself,—though it sounds awfully un-American."

"It *is* in the Bible," said Mrs. Desmond; "and you ought to know it, Belinda. 'Whose sins you shall forgive—' "

"What do you say to that, Mr. Stokes? Do you call that Scriptural?" demanded Belinda.

"I have no opinion," answered Mr. Stokes. "I can't have until somebody shows me what the Scriptures mean; so don't ask me."

"Mr. Stokes," said Belinda, solemnly, "I don't want to hurt your feelings, but I'm convinced that you're a weak-minded creature. I am determined to have spiritooal consolation; and I'll go to a Romanist priest, even if he is Irish. There now!"

Mrs. Desmond was discreet enough not to ask questions; she understood that under Belinda's grimness there were unrest and fear. She said a quiet prayer for her.

After dinner was over, Mr. Stokes took his leave very gladly, and Belinda drifted to the congenial subject of the late Mrs. Redwood's state of mind.

"Some say it was religion," Belinda began, rocking herself in the big chair.

"The poor woman gave hers up, and it preyed on her mind. The Judge was a little hard at times and she had one or two really mad fits."

"Pshaw!" said Belinda, "she was no more an insane woman than you or I. It was the neuralgia that did it; and Dr. Talbot said that if she could get rid of her neuralgia and have her mind calm, she'd never have a fit. There was no insanity in the Waldrons,—I am sure of that. Mrs. Redwood just had her queerness. I'll be queer myself if I don't get spiritooal consolation pretty soon."

Mrs. Desmond made her give her impressions over again with some satisfaction. It was a comfort—which she resolved, however, to keep to herself—to know that Eleanor Redwood was not likely, by inheritance, to become a raving maniac.

When Belinda reached home she found that Eleanor was in better spirits than usual. She was seated on the porch, in one of those soft white dresses she preferred. She wore some early roses at her belt, and Belinda was cheered up by this; for Eleanor had not worn flowers since her father's illness.

"O, Belinda!" Eleanor exclaimed, as she ascended the steps, "I have good news! Papa has said a few words, and he seems to hear remarkably well to-day."

"Thank the Lord," said Belinda, with fervor. "I've good news, too. If what I've heard is correct, you're rich again. The Fly-Away Mines are worth their weight in gold."

"I am glad," replied Eleanor, smiling a little; "but papa and I can get on without them. Mr. Desmond has his own again; I gave the shares to him."

Belinda dropped her parasol. "You did!"

"I found out they were his, and I gave them up."

"You found out! Oh! I wish I had torn Laury Bayard's eyes out before I gave her that note," stammered Belinda, becoming as purple as her parasol. "I must have spiritooal consolation, or I'll choke. Oh! never mind me," she continued, as Eleanor rose, with eyes full of wonder. "But I want to tell you that this Patrick Desmond has no more right to those shares than the man in the moon. And I want to say, besides, that the only way to get 'em back again is to marry him, though he ain't no kind of a match for you."

Eleanor made a proud gesture toward Belinda, and said coldly: "Go into the house."

Belinda, in a whirlwind of indignation, disappeared; the next moment she made an attack on the pans in the kitchen which startled the Sunday atmosphere.

Eleanor, hoping that her father would sleep through this dreadful racket, remained on the porch, and resolved to discover what Belinda meant. And when Belinda had cooled a little they talked and cried late into the night. After that Eleanor prayed that she might be shown the way out; and she prayed, too, that it might not be wrong to pray for her mother.

XXIV.

For as much as each one is in Thy eyes, so much is he, and no more, saith the humble St. Francis.—*"Following of Christ."*

ELEANOR continued her preparations for leaving Redwood, but with a decrease of elation. She was young enough and inexperienced enough to believe that any change must be for the better; at the same time she enjoyed a certain feeling of heroism in facing the world. But even the evident improvement in her father's condition could not soothe the effect of the doubts raised by Belinda's words. Had she done wrong to surrender to Patrick Desmond the shares of stock in the Fly-Away Mines? Had it been a desire to be just that prompted her, or only a certain pride in showing that she was just?

On Monday Belinda repentantly told Eleanor the story of the note she had found, and of her misuse of it. Eleanor had no words of reproach for Belinda. The only thought that absorbed her mind was the question, "Have I done right?" Belinda indignantly said, "No"; and, accustomed as she was to speak out plainly, went on: "Of course the money's gone, and there's no help for it. And I must say, Eleanor Redwood, that if I've been a criminal, you've been a fool."

Eleanor did not answer to this. Belinda's position in the family and in Redwood gave her privileges even beyond those large ones taken by the ordinary domestic assistants.

"Mr. Desmond will keep nothing that does not belong to him," Eleanor remarked. "Suppose we change the subject?"

"I'd bring a suit at law for the money. Money is money, and business is business."

"Oh! how can you talk that way, Belinda. How *can* you! My father would rather die in an almshouse than drag his private affairs into court."

"He would, would he?" said Belinda, with a sneer. "Then he ain't like most of us. If you've got any gumption, Eleanor Redwood, you'll lay your pipes so that you can marry this Desmond man. He is a papist and Irish, but money is—"

Eleanor, her face crimson, had left her. Belinda shrugged her shoulder, and muttered to herself: "I guess I've done *more* damage. As I'm doomed anyhow, it won't make much difference."

After this Eleanor was unusually quiet. She went about her duties the same as before, but said little; she saw no visitors. Mrs. Howard Sykes, who sent flowers and fruit every day, made her way to Eleanor's room, and lectured her with a mixture of kindness and vulgarity. The Judge could never afterwards complain that the people of Redwood had deserted him in his poverty.

Dr. Talbot had said that the Judge was able to travel. There was a large group of old friends at the station; among them was Mrs. Bayard, who began to cultivate a new affection for Eleanor, now that she was down in the world. As the train moved from the station, Eleanor caught sight of Mrs. Desmond and kissed her hand to her.

Belinda stood on the platform in a tragic attitude; and she felt tragical. To her the leaving Redwood was a terrible step into the unknown; but the Puritan instinct in her, inherited and cultivated—for Belinda's "forebears" had been New England Congregationalists,—made her willing to flay herself rather than not suffer for the wrong she had done. Belinda felt that henceforth there could be no joy for her in this world. Her spiritual child, Mr. Stokes, had failed her, and now she was an exile for injustice' sake. There was no compensation in this life or the next for her. Her idea of God was that of a being waiting anxiously to cast her into perdition. She had given this creature of her imagination—a creature resulting from an ignorant reading of the Old Testament—his chance, and she was sure that he had taken it. She was not going to complain; but nevertheless she was determined to do her duty to the bitter end. But this duty would deprive her of all the little ameliorations of her lot. If Mrs. Howard Sykes' preserved pineapple—put up by that odious female in opposition to Belinda's own receipt—

turned out bad, she could never know it now; and who would tell her every detail of the funeral of Sara Jane Smalltweed, who had just died?

Judge Redwood seemed to grow brighter for the change of scene; he spoke several times in a whisper, and delighted Eleanor by calling attention to the various objects they passed. A small house in the middle of a wheat field, with a bright red barn behind it, made him smile,—the barn towering in size, and its striking color making the house seem insignificant. His pleasure in the open country awakened in his daughter's mind some doubts as to his feelings when he should see the little dwelling-place she had, with Mrs. Fitzgerald's help, found for him. Mary Fitzgerald had been kinder than she admitted at the dinner party, and had piloted Eleanor to "a jewel of a flat," according to the New York point of view. The New York point of view was not Belinda's, and she began to fear her father would have no sympathy with it.

The railroad journey was uneventful, and Belinda's impressions of New York were mercifully softened by darkness. If Mary Fitzgerald had not saved Eleanor from the horrors of house-hunting, she would probably have gone back to Redwood in despair. It was bad enough to behold a chaos of unsettled furniture in the six small rooms of the flat, only one of which was in order.

This was the one intended for the Judge, and it had been arranged by Mary. A very small portion of the furniture from the Redwood house could be got into the flat, which was fortunately a first floor.

Belinda's first thought on entering the house was of the kitchen. She declared she couldn't work in such a place, and wept. "You couldn't swing a cat in it," she said, as if one of the chief uses of kitchens was for the swinging of cats. The door-opener—an arrangement by which she could open the door without leaving the kitchen—gave her some consolation; but she went to bed much depressed. She was willing to bear her burden; but what a punishment had fallen upon her. She had never dreamed of being obliged to live in "a hole in the wall."

Mary Fitzgerald, kindly as usual, came the next day to help to set things to rights. The Judge took a fancy to her; she was so gentle, so gracious, so like one who knew from experience what sorrow was. Belinda, at first so sullen and silent, relaxed her grimness a little, and even listened to Mary's apologies for the flat.

"It's nothing but living in rooms," Belinda said.

"But, you know, half New York lives in rooms," answered Mary. "A flat has advantages. What would you do with a big New York house?"

"I don't know, and I don't want to know," snapped Belinda. "But I do know that if them folks upstairs don't stop creaking the ropes of that dumb-waiter at all hours in the day, they'll get a piece of my mind."

Mary did not reply to this outburst. Belinda seemed to be a new and strange type, but she understood Eleanor at once. She admired her frankness, her directness, even the quixotic ideas that flashed out unconsciously in her talk. Mary never distrusted her own instinct about strangers; she never feared and she was never deceived. Her chance meeting with Eleanor had interested her.

The Judge slept much after his railway journey; and Belinda, seated by the kitchen window, spent most of her time in looking out on the side street. Her observations only convinced her more and more, that New York was Babylonian and accursed.

When the flat was put in order—Mary gave a great deal of time to it, as Arthur had not yet returned from Eaglescliff,—the young women had a long talk. It was in the time of twilight. The little parlor had been made bright with the prettiest spoil from the Redwood house. Two of Eleanor's panels hung above the fireplace. There was a slight chill in the air, not enough to justify a fire; but Mary had made one in the grate, as an aid to cheerfulness. The wood cracked merrily, flashing on the brass tea-kettle and tiny cups on the table; a vague perfume came from a few roses Mary had brought, and Eleanor sank into her father's big chair, with a feeling of contentment in the presence of a friend. The Judge was resting, in a succession of dozes, in the next room. Belinda had received permission to go to the wondrous Broadway with the maid above, with whom she had formed a transient friendship. This left the place clear for a comfortable talk,—for confidences are not confidences in a flat, if the acoustic quality is at all good.

"And now you must tell me your plans," Mary said, giving Eleanor a cup of tea.

"Indeed I shall, with pleasure," returned Eleanor. "It is so lovely to have somebody to talk freely to, and you seem like somebody I have been looking for. I have always wished for a brother, —it seems to me I miss the brother I might have had less when I am with you."

Mary's smile faded. "Brothers are sometimes a great care," she said. "Ah! my dear, God gives us what is best. We are just what we are in His eyes, and no more. It is foolish to imagine that He will give earthly happiness—I mean the things that seem to make earthly happiness—because we love Him. His kingdom is not of this world, and we cannot expect ours to be."

Eleanor opened her eyes; she looked on Mary as a happy woman. "Why, He has given you happiness!" she exclaimed,—"that is, in thinking much about you since I have met you, it seems to me that He has."

"He has given me my dear husband—for a time; but He has taken my child, and—" Mary paused; she could not speak of Miles. "I once thought," she added, "that if we tried to love God, He would make earth a path of roses. But, my dear, it is a great mistake; we must cover many a sharp thorn with the roses of patience and resignation."

"I like to hear your words," said Eleanor, eagerly. "I have always longed to get nearer to God. I am afraid I never understood what religion meant at Redwood. I have found myself stupid about many things. But I never found satisfaction in sermons and hymns that expressed merely a longing for a God who seemed so far off. I often think that I should not have been so proud—so proud of the Waldron ancestry, I mean,—so interested in the petty gaieties at home, if I could have been nearer to God."

"I am sure you were never very frivolous," said Mary, looking into the young girl's clear, earnest eyes, and pressing her hand. "But it seems you want *me* to talk. I thought you were to tell me about your plans."

"So I shall, and yet I think the question of religion is more important to me than my plans. I never knew any Catholic well—that is, any Catholic who could explain things to me, and who *acted* as if he believed in his religion—except Mr. Desmond."

"I have met him." Mary, who had a woman's fondness for a bit of romance, scanned Eleanor's face closely.

"I was much attracted by him, exceedingly interested in him," Eleanor went on, without a blush or a tremor in her voice. "I had heard of him (though he wasn't in our social circle), and of his devotion to his mother, and his manliness. When I met him I liked him, and I wanted to know what made him so much better than other men. You know how girls say that all men are bad. Laura Bayard—"

"I don't know what girls say about men," interrupted her companion; "for I have never known any girl well but my own dear Esther."

"Oh! *I* don't think so," exclaimed Eleanor, anxious that Mary, who had a husband, might not think that she intended to brand all men. "Of course Laura Bayard, an old friend of mine, was prejudiced. But there are some men who are not nice, and one knows them by instinct; don't you think so? Mr. Desmond isn't one of these, though I am sure he is too fond of money: he would do any honest thing in the world to be rich. I know that—and he *is* rich." Her countenance fell; she remembered suddenly how he had become rich. Then she rushed into the episode of the mine shares.

Mary listened attentively. "Do you really think you had a right to do that?" she asked, gravely.

"Of course," said the young girl, half-offended. "The shares were mine, to do as I pleased with."

Mary shook her head and was silent for a moment. "Whom did you consult?" she asked, after Eleanor had watched her, anxiety in her eyes.

"Nobody. I know what a business man would have said—'Hold on to them; and if they are worth anything, the real owner will *make* you give them up.' I did not want to be *made,* if the shares ever became valuable. I wanted to show Mr. Desmond that the moment I knew that my father had unconsciously wronged him, I was willing to make amends. No business man could have settled the matter for me: I had to settle it for myself. It was a question of conscience,—a moral question. I stood alone before God."

"And you acted on an impulse?"

Eleanor flushed. "I thought it was a right impulse."

Mary set down her teacup and laid her hand on

Eleanor's shoulder. "Do you want plain talk, dear?"

"Yes, I do," answered Eleanor, with tears in her eyes. "That is, I am anxious to want it. You don't know how unhappy I am—and yet I am glad, too. I have given up what might have made my father safe from want, in case I should die; while I live I am not afraid," she added, her eyes sparkling. "I have given it away; and my father, when he recovers, may look on me as having made him poor, as having dragged him down. So you see his recovery has a certain bitterness in its joy—it is great, great joy. Suppose my father should insist on my telling Mr. Desmond all the circumstances: of my dear mother's fits of—aberration? O, Mrs. Fitzgerald! I should rather be poor all my life than have to tell anybody but you—for you seem near to me, and God knows I need a friend,—the story of my poor mother's troubled life, as Belinda has hinted it to me."

"Had you no minister to advise you in your doubt?"

"I never thought of such a thing!" exclaimed Eleanor. "It was a question of conscience; I did not need that any man should come between God and me."

"It is hard to find out the right all by one's self sometimes," said Mary. "And impulse is a bad guide where others are concerned."

"What would *you* have done? Surely, in a case of conscience, you would let nobody stand between God and you."

"Not in the sense in which you use the phrase,—no, but I should ask the advice of one consecrated to mediate between God and me. I should have gone to a priest, educated to solve moral questions and to look on them conservatively. He would have helped me."

"And you would have trusted him?"

"Trusted him! Why not? The laws which govern his decision were made, not by himself, but by great doctors of moral law; and he is wise in them."

Eleanor was silent. "How safe you must feel in your Church. O, Mrs. Fitzgerald! I long to be guided—to be nearer God!"

Mary kissed Eleanor's forehead. "We will talk of that. But first tell me how you intend to earn a living."

Eleanor did not answer; she heard the rustle of a paper in her father's room; she parted the curtains and looked in, on tiptoe. She returned to Mary, radiant. "He is reading!—he is reading!" she exclaimed. "I left him the evening paper, and he is reading. Oh! thank God."

After a time she answered Mary's question. She lit all the gas burners and drew Mary to the chimney-piece. "See!" she said, proudly displaying the panels. "I am sure that if I do better than that I shall be an artist. Everybody has praised my work."

Mary looked in dismay at the garlands of poppies and the bunches of other flowers,—well-drawn, well-colored, but entirely commonplace.

"You don't like them?" asked the young girl, anxiously.

Mary turned away. Should she tell the truth or be merely polite? Her duty seemed plain; it would be cruel to deceive this candid young creature, who was so much of a child and yet so true a woman. "They are pretty, but a thousand girls here in New York make better things of the kind. You cannot—"

"I know, I understand; and you are a judge," said Eleanor, growing white with pain. "People have meant to be kind—"

"Eleanor!" said a weak voice from the Judge's room. "Come here, Eleanor! We are safe again. This paper quotes the Fly-Away Mines at par. I shall get well again now."

Eleanor put her arms around Mary's neck; her hands grew cold. "Oh, how shall I tell him?" she whispered,—"how shall I tell him?"

And Mary, looking at her eyes, tearless and agonized, obeyed an impulse which had become a habit. "Go to him, my dear; and when the time comes, I will tell him."

XXV.

Man's heart is either of feathers or of lead.
—*Turkish Proverb.*

THERE was much reason for Eleanor's agitation. It was a terrible thing for her to discover that she had risked her father's future because of a false idea of her own, and because of a too exalted belief of her own powers. For the moment the most cruel part of it all was that, in order to explain the condition of things to her father, she would have to admit that she had suspected him of injustice to Patrick Desmond. There was no palliation in the knowledge that this rash judgment of hers had been founded on her mother's words, uttered in a moment of hallucination. Her respect for her father was so deep that it seemed like a physical wound to her heart to acknowledge to him that for a long time she had doubted his probity, or, at best, his courage to do right. She felt, too, a great terror of touching on the difficulties between her father and mother. Any allusion to them might seem like an accusation. And Eleanor knew that her father was weak, depressed, between life and death; he needed, above all, an atmosphere of love and trust. And this she should procure for him.

The humiliation of her position in regard to Desmond struck her. In a fit of mock heroism she had made restitution to him of valueless shares; these shares rising in value, she would be obliged perhaps, in justice to her father, to ask for them again. She covered her face with her hands, and blushed to the roots of her hair, as she thought of the mortification of this. She believed very firmly in Desmond's honesty. Of late she had learned many things about Catholic practices; he must be honest, she said to herself, or he could not be a practical Catholic. But, then, he might feel obliged to defend his right to the shares for the sake of his mother. He would have to know the whole wretched story; and she, after a talk with her father, must tell it to him. No, she would not ask Mary Fitzgerald to bear her burdens; she would take them up herself, and bear them bravely. This was her resolution.

The physician to whose care Dr. Talbot had consigned Judge Redwood looked grave when he came on the day after the Judge's burst of words. It was his private opinion that Dr. Talbot had carried his pet practice of bleeding too far; he himself believed that the old-fashioned practice had not enough value in it to warrant its revival; and, although Dr. Talbot had undoubtedly saved the Judge's life, the stringent regimen had left him weak in body. The new physician sent for a trained nurse, and recommended quiet. Even Eleanor was forbidden to enter his room.

On learning this, the young girl was more unhappy than she had ever been in her life; she hated the exclusion from her father's presence, and she feared to be alone with him. In spite of her resolution to bear her own burdens, she went over to Mary Fitzgerald's as soon as she could in decency make a call. The inner light of Mary's life shone on her face; it shone for other people; it had been fed and kept trimmed before the altar of "the idol of Miles," as Esther occasionally named the object of her sister's devotion; and, notwithstanding the fact that the object of the flame had been unworthy, the fire grew purer and purer every day.

Eleanor had a guilty feeling of selfishness as she rang the Fitzgerald bell. She knew that she was about to cast part of her burden on Mary; but, then, did not Mary's goodness invite it? And was she not a Catholic and bound to bear other people's burdens? "It is easy for Catholics to be good," Eleanor said mentally. "They have so many ways of getting nearer to God, while we poor Protestants have to struggle and struggle, and depend on ourselves."

Eleanor was asked up to Mary's room at once. Mary was engaged in making an elaborate frock for little Miley—all bows and lace and color. Eleanor admired the room. There was a lovely statue of Our Lady of Victories, sent from abroad by Esther; there was Esther's own picture, with the black silk frock she had worn at Mr. Bastien's concert; and there was Miles, the little boy in a short jacket. This was heavily framed with white velvet, and the Brown Scapulars hung above it. There were a hundred little souvenirs that Mary loved. The room was exquisitely simple in its appointments, but there were flowers everywhere.

Mary rose and extended both hands to her visitor. She noticed Eleanor's eye resting on the work in her hands.

"This is a gala frock for my little nephew. It's very ornamental, is it not? But the little boy's mother loves him so, that nothing is too fine."

Eleanor silently commented on the foolishness of any mother who would put a small child into such an array. She began to be happy in Mary's presence, which affected her as a genial grate fire affects one who has been out in a cold wind.

"Has your husband come home yet?" Eleanor asked, fearing that there might be an interruption.

"No; but I have a letter from him. His business is more complicated than he expected."

"I am afraid I'm glad," said Eleanor, smiling. "I shall be able to talk for a time with you. Oh, I want your advice so much! Do you think I might become a Catholic?"

Mary started. Her face brightened, and gradually became grave. "It is an important step. I hope you will forgive me for asking a most impertinent question,—most impertinent."

"I will answer any question you ask,—I will indeed!" said Eleanor, rising and standing before Mary. "Oh! don't think I am bigoted or prejudiced or superstitious about your Church, as Protestants sometimes are. I *know* that your religion makes you good."

Mary sighed. "You may well believe that if it does not make us good nothing can. But my question is not about the Inquisition," with a little smile, "or anything of that kind. Are you drawn to the Catholic Church simply because somebody who wants to marry you expects you to be a Catholic?"

The young girl looked amazed, and then laughed. "Nobody wants to marry me. What an idea!"

Mary, who had watched Desmond at the dinner party, was somewhat disconcerted. It had been her private opinion that any possible difficulty about the mine shares would be settled by matrimony.

"I must beg your pardon, Miss Redwood—"

"Call me Eleanor."

"Well, I will,—but it requires a pure motive to help us to enter the Church of God. And I have seen some converts—I have always feared that any words of mine—but, my dear, Father Jackson will talk to you about it. I will arrange an interview."

"Thank you," replied Eleanor. "I may say that I want to be a Catholic because I want to be safe. I feel that I must get nearer God or die. And of late I have thought of it a great deal, because I have met such good Catholics."

"Mr. Desmond?" asked Mary, with a touch of malice.

"Yes—and *you.*"

The maid came up with a card.

Mary rose. "Let us go downstairs," she said. "It's my sister-in-law. She is rather formal in some ways, and she does not like to be received in my room."

Nellie was seated on a divan in the large drawing-room, darkened and uninviting, as most New York drawing-rooms are in the daytime. The maid opened the shutters, and the soft June sunlight came in. Nellie was glad to meet Miss Redwood. She had taken the liberty to examine a small diary which Desmond, filled with rustic trust in human nature, had left in his room. There she had read of Eleanor several times. Nellie thanked her stars that she had on her purple velvet, and made a most dramatic lurch toward Eleanor, in order to draw out the full length of her train. "Gracious!" she said to herself, "the idea of his liking this slip of a girl better than the Baroness, after all the attention she paid him."

Nellie had learned some things which had not improved her appearance or conversation. She had put large patches of black under her eyelashes, and pencilled her eyebrows—not with the firmest hand; besides, she had acquired several French phrases superficially, without having had a chance to corroborate them. She saw with delight this chance of playing the lady of fashion with this provincial.

"O, my dear!" she said, "I'm *so* glad to meet you. I *must* kiss you again. A young friend of mine—a sort of dependent, my cousin in fact, my husband's secretary—has often spoken of you—"

Mary Fitzgerald interfered nervously, with an allusion to Miley's new frock.

"Why did you interrupt me," whispered Nellie. "I was just going to say that he considered her his intended."

Mary shuddered. "Miss Redwood is slightly acquainted with Mr. Desmond," she remarked.

"Only slightly?" said Nellie archly. "Oh! I know how it was myself."

Mary was sincerely grateful that the young girl did not see the wink which Nellie directed at her, —a wink being Nellie's social telephone.

"I must say," Nellie continued, "that I'm not pleased with Patrick Desmond. Though Miles and I have done *everything* for him—set him up both socially and financially—he has left us. I hear, by the way, that he is rich. Of course he'll turn on us now, like the viper on horseback. We've a new young man in his place, who can't be independent and talk about conscientious scruples; for we got him off the Island. People off the Island can't have consciences; they's got to take pot-luck, like the rest of us."

Eleanor looked at Nellie, observing her paint, her overtrimmed velvet gown, and hat overloaded with flowers; and thought she was the most odious female she had ever met.

"We must see you at our place, dear," Nellie went on, while Mary bent her head over her work. "My husband is only in politics, to be sure; he's not a professional man, like Mr. Arthur Fitzgerald—oh! my, no. He only makes his bread by coining the sweat of his brow for the welfare of the Empire State. But he goes, all the same, though he *is* only a statesman. Perhaps you think this is sarcasm. Oh! no." And Nellie giggled toward her sister-in-law. "Goodness, my dear, where did you come from?"

"From Redwood."

"Redwood?" said Nellie, in a far-away tone. "Iowa, Ohio—somewhere in the West, I suppose? You must let me do your hair for you; it's not *chick* at all. If you want to look smart and *rekerky,* you—"

Mary interrupted once more. "How is Miles?"

"Miles is sick. A bad attack of nervous depression."

"O Nellie, why didn't you tell me?" asked Mary, dropping her work. "Is it serious?"

"It's always serious," said Nellie, with evident satisfaction. "You don't know when a man with a brain like that is going to go off. Never marry a successful man, Miss Redwood. You can't imagine what they are; they're generous to a fault. I hadn't been married five months when Miley give me this pair of diamond earrings. Giants, ain't they?"

Eleanor admired them; she rose to go, but Mary made an appealing motion.

"I ought to see Miles at once."

"Not at all," said Nellie. "I can take care of him. And I must say, though it is in the presence of a stranger, that your talk about religion is not agreeable to him. A man of the world can't be hanging about a church all the time. He doesn't like to hear about confession and all that. You just let Miles alone, and he'll come around all right one of these days."

"How can you talk in that way, Nellie?" asked Mary, in real distress.

"He's no worse than other men," retorted Nellie. "You had the bringing up of him, and I've had to undertake the job after you've spoiled—" and then, remembering Eleanor, she graciously said good-by, took Miley's little frock, which she had come for, and sailed out, tinkling various bangles and metal ornaments.

"You will pardon me for keeping you," Mary said to Eleanor. "You have trusted me so much that I do not hesitate to trust you. I wanted you to stay, that I might have a chance of preventing you from misjudging my sister-in-law. She is not as she seems. She has a good heart and an honest nature, but she has never had good home influence about her. Her husband, my brother, is a busy man,—one of the truest souls in the world, groping in the dark somewhat now. But you should have seen what a lovely little baby and what a sweet boy he was. We will go to my room again—"

The doorbell rang, and the two women stood still, instead of moving. A voice and a quick step sounded in the hall, and Patrick Desmond entered.

He bowed—his face flushed and he started as he saw Eleanor.

"Mr. Fitzgerald sent me for a paper which is in the right-hand drawer of his desk; this is a copy of the indorsement," he said, standing, although Mrs. Fitzgerald asked him to take a chair. "I am to go back to-night, and I am entirely at your service."

Mary took the note. "Excuse me," she said, "I will find the paper."

She went out of the room, looking on this opportunity as admirable for the acceleration of match-making. She said to herself that it would be strange if, after this interview, Eleanor did not understand her own mind.

Eleanor could scarcely restrain herself from grasping Mary's departing gown with both hands. Mr. Desmond was handsomer than ever, probably because he was better dressed; she felt cheered by his presence, but she would have given much to get away from him at that moment. As to him, he was happy. Of all persons in the world, he wanted most to see her, and to see her without breaking his promise to his mother.

"I have come from Redwood," said Desmond, taking the seat nearest him, which happened to be the piano-stool.

"Dear old Redwood!" answered Eleanor, softly.

"And I have important news for you, Miss Redwood. The Fly-Away is going up; and Dr. Talbot, whom I saw at Redwood, has told me *all.*"

Eleanor looked pained.

"I was obliged to ask, in justice to myself and to you," he said apologetically. "I have found that I have not the slightest right to the shares. Your father never wronged me."

Eleanor turned her face away. What could she say to this?

"Dr. Talbot," he went on, "behaved with great delicacy and kindness. You need not fear that he told me anything which I ought not to know. He merely explained to me the nature of your mother's malady, brought on by neuralgia; and he said—"

"Never mind!" Eleanor raised her hand; she hated to hear the subject of her mother's malady alluded to even by a man she regarded with respect. "Don't say any more. I have probably done you some injury by my rash action about the shares. You will forgive me, I hope, and let me make any pecuniary amends—" she stopped, seeing a frown on Desmond's brow. "But let me say frankly that had you been less honorable—had you concluded to keep these shares, you might have done so. Nothing on earth would have forced me to make a contest in court. I might have known, however, that you, religious as you are—and how I admire your religion!—would have been as anxious to return the shares as I was to give them to you."

"I hardly deserve praise; I could not keep what did not belong to me. Thanks to my mother, I am an honest man," Desmond said, gravely.

"I know that," answered Eleanor, with a slight bitterness in her tone. "I have seen something of life in Redwood, and heard men talk; and I know of no business man there who would have given up these shares without a struggle. Honesty in business is not the kind of honesty you have learned. Honesty, according to the business code, means to hold all you have, whether it is your own or not, until the law takes it from you."

Eleanor's eyes flashed and her cheeks reddened. Desmond thought he had never seen anybody so beautiful; and the knowledge that she admired him was delightful. How easy it was, under the circumstances, to be honest.

"And," she continued, "grant me a favor. Act as my agent in the management of the stock until my father recovers. You will, will you not?"

Desmond promised with effusion.

"Thank you," she said, with a grateful smile.

"And now I will tell you something that will please you and your mother. I am thinking of becoming a member of your Church."

He stepped forward and took her hand in his; she did not withdraw it at once, but looked up at him with the frankness of a child.

"Yes; I will be a Catholic, if God wills it."

"Thank God!" said Desmond, fervently.

"I knew it would please you," she replied, withdrawing her hand.

At this moment Mary entered with the paper. She paused on the threshold, smiling a little, and saying to herself that, after all, the mining stock was not likely to change hands.

When Desmond started for the train for Eaglescliff, he seemed to tread on air. He was happy. What could he not dare and do for this exquisite creature, who had smiled on him and made clear a hope that had been vague before? He blushed while he admitted to himself that, if he chose to overcome his pride, Eleanor Redwood might be his wife. Somehow or other, his objection to marrying a woman with Fly-Away stock at par had dwindled in an hour. He had never before felt how really sinful pride is.

XXVI.

A whole heaven is contained in a drop of dew; a whole soul in a tear.—*Abbe Roux.*

Eleanor was preoccupied with many things during the first days of her life in the flat. It was delightful to think that she should be spared the dreadful necessity of telling her father of her quixotic action in regard to the mine shares, and to feel that he was not dependent on the result of her art work. She accepted Mary Fitzgerald's verdict on the worthlessness of her painting with a sigh, but she did not revolt against it. After all, Mary Fitzgerald must know about such things. It was a disappointment to her, and something of a humiliation. And after Mary had carefully pointed out the defects in the unfortunate panels, Eleanor never looked at them without a shudder; for it was on those trivial efforts she had proposed to hang her father's future. Now, through Desmond's honesty, that was assured, thank God! And if health would only come again to that dear father, life might bring any trial to her. She could bear it. She asked herself, too, if her father should be brought back to health, whether she would be satisfied were he the Judge Redwood of old—acute, kindly, doubting. And something within her answered that she would not. She awoke to the truth that she could not be happy unless he ceased to doubt.

During these days Eleanor had little to do. Belinda was in a bad humor and would not permit her to interfere in the household arrangements. The trained nurse was with her father, and, by the doctor's orders, she was allowed to see him only at short intervals. The doctor said little about his patient's condition. Eleanor hoped, and so far she was not told to fear. Having some time on her hands, she made timid explorations into the whirl of New York. It pleased and terrified her. The color and glitter of Broadway delighted her artistic spirit; the motion and tumult shocked her. Surely, she said to herself, there could be no homes in such a place. It seemed to her that the crowd in Broadway was only a great procession moving onward forever. The little children, who seemed caught in this perpetual movement, filled her with pity. What did they know of fresh woods and pastures new,—of all the world of country sights and sounds? They seemed to her like flies caught in the big web-wheel of a relentless spider, and turned unceasingly around and around. She wished she could take them to the beautiful orchard behind her father's house, near the river bank at Redwood.

A great deal of her time was spent in the church, to which she had found her way on the first day she came to New York. She did not pray much,—her religious training had given her few forms of prayer, and she was not quick at putting prayers into her own words. The stillness of the church satisfied her. She loved its very gloom; but, above all, she loved intuitively the ever-watchful light before the tabernacle. She never felt lonely when alone before that light. Somehow, there her burdens seemed to grow lighter. One day she took courage to go into the sacristy and ask Father Jackson what the lamp meant. After that she loved the sacred place more than ever. At last the whole desire of her life seemed within her grasp; she was nearer to God.

One day—she afterward remembered it well—two Sisters of Charity passed her, as she stood for a moment in the vestibule before entering. Eleanor had never seen the garb of a Sister at Redwood. She knew the costumes of religious only from an occasional picture in an illustrated paper and the pictures in her father's copy of "Marmion." The two that she now met represented dreariness and sacrifice to her; she shrank from them instinctively, and then, catching sight of the face of one of them, felt repentant. Surely that face, so clear, so serene, must be near to God.

A vague disquiet filled her after this, as she knelt in her old place before the tabernacle. She was restless; she said the "Our Father" over and over again; she looked up into the benignant face of the Mother of God, the Mystical Rose; but she had no words for her.

Her restlessness passed away after a time, and a fresh breeze seemed to blow through her heart. She arose, and, as she neared the confessional at the end of the church—she always passed it with a certain sinking of the heart,—she was amazed to see Belinda examining it intently. Belinda did not see her; she lifted the green baize curtain with the air of one looking into a rattlesnake's den.

"'Taint very comfortable," she murmured, softly. "There ain't much luxury *there*,—but a person with a load on her mind ain't thinking much of Brussels carpet and *brocatelle* furniture."

Poor Belinda sighed loudly, and, turning, saw Eleanor approaching. They went out into the vestibule.

"I suppose you think it's queer to find me in a Romish Church," said Belinda; "and I never thought I'd come to it myself. But sorrow makes strange companions. Your father's all right. That trained nurse puts on a lot of airs; and, as she has the doctor on her side, I just thought I'd leave that poky little flat to her, and do a little exploring on my own account. I tell you what, Eleanor Redwood—and you may give me notice when you hear it, but I'll not leave, all the same, —I am going to confession."

Belinda stopped and clutched Eleanor's arm, as if she expected her to faint at once.

"Did you hear what I said, Eleanor Redwood?"

Eleanor was astonished and slightly frightened. She had an uneasy feeling that Belinda had gone mad. After reflecting a moment, her first impulse was to coax her home and put her to bed.

"Belinda," she said, soothingly, "don't talk that way. Let us go home. What would Mr. Stokes say? What do *you* know about confession?"

"Mr. Stokes!" said Belinda, with contempt. "Why, he's the weak-mindedest creature I know. It's my belief that when people have sons they think will be a burden on the country, they try to make ministers of them. I have pumped the girl in the other flat about confession—she's Irish, but she can't be blamed for that—and she's told me all about it. And it's my belief it's Scriptural. And though I couldn't accept all the things the Papists swallow—such as the worship of graven images—I'm going to confession."

Eleanor could think of no answer to this. Happily, she was saved from her embarrassment by the appearance of Father Jackson. He entered hastily from the street, gave a quick glance at the two figures in the vestibule, and smilingly held out his hand to Eleanor.

"Miss Redwood," he said, "I have some work for you. I have been on a sick call, and I have just left a family that needs your help. They haven't much to eat, I'm afraid; and the mother is ill. Will you help them?"

"I'm opposed to beggars," snapped Belinda; "and I don't believe in encouraging laziness. Nobody need starve in America that wants to work."

Father Jackson looked with a smile at Belinda's rugged, honest and determined countenance; he saw something good beyond the angularities.

"It's only Belinda," observed Eleanor, apologetically. "She always says what she thinks."

"A bad habit," said Father Jackson, smiling in a way that disarmed Belinda. "But she may say anything she chooses after she has done something to assist the poor little children in Cherry Street."

It was a hot day,—one of those hot days in early summer which burn and enervate the more because the human race is unprepared for them. Father Jackson took out his handkerchief and wiped the perspiration from his forehead. Belinda's heart was further touched by the sight of a small hole in the corner of the handkerchief.

"Poor young man!" she said to herself. "I don't know what the Romish Church can be thinking about to let its ministers go around in that fashion. The Romish Church may despise and downtread the female sex, but you can't have whole pocket-handkerchiefs without 'em."

Father Jackson waited for her to say something, with a humorous gleam in his eyes. As she was silent, he turned to Eleanor.

"Will you see my poor people?"

"Certainly, Father," she answered.

He scribbled an address on his card and gave it to her. Then he began, with a smile: "And I trust Miss Belinda — "

"I've never refused to do my duty, I hope," said Belinda; "not even when my conscience didn't altogether approve. And if Eleanor Redwood trusts herself in the slums after pampered paupers, I'm not going to leave her in the lurch."

"Thank you," said Father Jackson, relieved to have these two interested in his charges; for he felt that he could trust them both. "And if I can do anything for you — "

"Yes, you can," snapped Belinda; "you can hear my confession."

Father Jackson stepped back, amazed. "I didn't know that you were a Catholic."

"No more I am. And I suppose what I'm saying will make my poor father and mother turn in their graves, but I can't help it; I've got to have some comfort; and if the Protestant religion had provided it I wouldn't be traipesin' after Romish priests at my age. It's all Martin Luther's fault, anyhow; and if I'm doing wrong, he'll suffer for it."

Father Jackson drew down the corners of his mouth to prevent a smile. The mixture of seriousness and grotesqueness in Belinda's attitude toward religion had a certain element of humor in it which he found hard to resist.

"If you will come into the parlor," he said, "I shall be glad to talk to you a while on the most important subject in this world or the next. I have a spare half hour. And, Miss Redwood, as you seem interested in the Church, I shall be glad to give you some books. Come, my child," he said to Belinda; "I can see that you are suffering."

Belinda looked embarrassed. To be called "child" by one so much younger than herself would have excited her indignation at any other time; but there was something in Father Jackson's tone that made her feel very humble and meek.

"Indeed I *am* suffering, Mr. Jackson — "

"Father," he said.

She hesitated, and then, in a low voice not usual with her, she went on: "Yes, I am suffering, Father. But mind," she said, raising her voice, "I don't want to be a Romanist; I just want to tell my sins and get rid of them."

"You want to get nearer to God, don't you — "

"Oh, yes, oh, yes, *I* do!" exclaimed Eleanor, involuntarily.

"Then," answered the priest, with tender gravity, "you want to be Catholics — both of you."

Father Jackson led the way in silence through the sacristy into the parlor of the rectory; then he disappeared for a few moments, leaving Eleanor and Belinda seated on a sofa opposite an expressive copy of Murillo's "Immaculate Conception." Eleanor felt a strange timidity, a trembling, almost a fear; until he came she fixed her eyes on the upturned face of the Mother of God and prayed without words,— for she had never been taught those words, fraught with all consolation, with which the universal Church salutes the Mother of God and asks her all-powerful intercession. Father Jackson began very simply and gently to teach Belinda that she could not go to confession without becoming a Catholic.

When Eleanor and Belinda left the rectory, they had made their first step toward the Light. It was remarkable — and Eleanor often thought it so afterward — that she and Belinda, each so utterly different from the other, should become one in hope and faith, drawn together by entirely opposite motives. They went back to the flat in silence, but Belinda had an air of cheerfulness which for many years she had lacked.

"That priest," she said, "knows I'm a Martha. He doesn't expect me to be flopping down on my knees and singing hymns all day, when I've got the pots and pans to look after. I'll just do what he says. God must have the heart of a good man like that. I wish Mr. Stokes could hear *him* talk."

The Judge was still resting when they reached home. The nurse permitted Eleanor to kiss her father's forehead in silence, but no word was allowed to be spoken.

After a rather hasty dinner, Eleanor and Belinda, with the guidance of the servant upstairs, with whom Belinda had formed an acquaintanceship, started toward Cherry Street. Eleanor provided herself with a bottle of cordial, some fruit, and a number of clean towels; and Belinda filled a basket with an enormous currant cake baked in the shape of a turban, around and in which she arranged a number of her justly famous cookies. It had been understood that Father Jackson's clients in Cherry Street were ill, and it was Belinda's private opinion that no child could be ill enough not to be restored by her cake.

It was a hot evening. The heat had descended suddenly, as if a great cone had enclosed the earth and shut off all ventilation. Had it been the middle of August, the temperature would have been more seasonable. As it was — coming suddenly as it had,— it was almost intolerable to the people in the better parts of the city. Dinner parties were postponed because of it, and dancing assemblies for that night were declared out of the question. Belinda almost suffocated in her best garments, in spite of the big palm-leaf fan, elaborately trimmed around the border with purple ribbon.

Their companion, the servant — a young girl recently "out" over whom Belinda had gained an amazing influence in a short time,— sat meekly on the edge of the car seat, while the autocrat of the kitchen explained in a loud voice her method of making batter pudding without eggs. The tired and heated faces in the car took on grins and smiles as she proceeded solemnly and dogmatically, as if she were giving her experience in "meeting"; and Eleanor was startled when the newsboy who passed through the car paused a moment and chanted admiringly, with the indescribable Bowery accent: "My! isn't she a corker."

It happened that the young servant, Ann Ruxton, had relatives in Cherry Street, and she led the way to it easily. Eleanor felt that it would be a relief to leave the crowded car and to breathe in the open air; but the open air was stifling, and the front of the tenement house — the place indicated by Father Jackson's address — appalled her.

"Do these poor people live here *always?*" she asked of Ann Ruxton.

"Sure they do. Where else can they live?" asked the Irish girl. "I often do be wondering why they don't starve at home in the fresh air."

Belinda made no remark. The street, now in twilight, actually swarmed with men, women and children, in all positions. The children were in all conditions of undress. The street was dark, dirty, hot. The heat seemed to radiate from the sidewalks and the murky bricks of the houses. The steps of this special tenement were filled with women and children. One poor woman with a little child at her breast, lay with her back against the sill of the open door, fairly gasping for breath. The child was wailing in a way that went to Eleanor's heart. The doorsteps along the row of houses were crowded with human beings gasping for air. Here were two women sociably sharing the contents of a beer can and trying to drown their discomfort with shrill laughter and slang.

Another woman, broom in hand, was cursing a brood of children, half-dressed, who had rushed out of the house, dripping with water, from a bath in the sink. The fire-escapes were filled with gasping people, whose only consolation seemed to be the beer can, which circulated in all directions. The cries of babies were heard on every side ; not the cries of healthy children, but the long, low wails — continual, ceaseless — of suffering.

Up the dark and dirty stairs Ann Ruxton led the way, after several enquiries, very civilly answered. At last they found themselves in a room on the fourth floor, lit by a kerosene lamp, whose light was much obscured by a dirty glass. At first Eleanor did not discern who were in the room; as her eyes became habituated to the gloom, she saw a woman of middle age, with her head on her hand, seated near a mattress on the floor. The room was without carpet; one chair, a table, a stove, and a large clothes-basket, near which stood a tub and washboard, made its equipment. In a corner crouched two young girls, not over ten years of age. Near them on the floor lay a young man, in the striped "jumper" of a laborer of the warehouses. He breathed heavily; and Eleanor, answering the greeting of the prematurely aged woman, asked: "Is he — sick?"

"Sick?" echoed the woman, bitterly. "Yes, sick in his soul,— sick with the drink. He was a fine boy when I brought him to this country — God forgive me! — five years ago; but you see what he is now. Though he's my own son, I sincerely wish Almighty God would take him before he commits more sin."

Eleanor started, shocked by the mother's tone. Belinda, with a glance of contempt at the prostrate man, approached the mattress on which a small object lay. The mother caught the glance and resented it.

"He was once a good boy," she said; "and maybe God will turn him against the drink yet, for 'tis his only fault."

The object on the bed was a little child. Belinda raised the dingy lamp to look at it. It was of a waxy paleness, fragile, attenuated; and the only sign of life it showed was the gasps it made for air.

"Father Jackson sent us," Eleanor said.

"God bless him!" answered the woman. "If it hadn't been for him, I don't know how we'd have got through the winter, with Jim out of work most of the time, and the father's funeral expenses to pay. The little girls there got their shoes at the parochial school. We managed to drag along somehow; but now little Bride is sick, and I've no strength left."

Eleanor gently raised the child's head. "A week in the cool country air would bring the little thing back to life. It must have air!" she exclaimed.

The mother shook her head despairingly. Eleanor opened the window-shutters, and the babel of noises in the street made its way into the room. There were curses and outcries and drunken laughter.

"I'm no worse off than the rest of us here. If it's not heat it's cold," said the mother; "though more children die of the heat."

Eleanor, standing in the semi-gloom, in the still, ill-smelling atmosphere of the room, felt that she must stifle if she remained there. She spoke to the little girls, who were half-asleep, but restless. Belinda elbowed the mother aside, and sent her out for water. The towels were very useful now, and soon the little child ceased to moan so piteously; for Belinda's strong arms gently held and fanned it.

"Thank you," said the mother, gratefully. "I'd like to do what you have done, but what with washing all day, and with the sorrow of Jim's coming home, the life's just worn out of me."

Eleanor and Belinda did what they could, and left Mrs. Green with a promise to return the next day. And as they passed out through the streets, hot, dirty, gloomy, reeking with misery, they were silent. How little they in their quiet country town had known of real wretchedness.

Eleanor did not return the next day. When she reached home, the doctor met her at the door.

"Prepare yourself, Miss Redwood, for a great change. Your father cannot live through the night."

Eleanor did not answer. She had hoped and feared, but she felt now that she had never feared the worst.

"We hoped that one chance —" the doctor continued. She motioned him not to speak; a great sob burst from her. Death had come so many times in the world, but it was as new and awful as if it had come for the first time.

"Father Jackson is with him," the doctor added, after a while. "He asked for a priest, and seemed to prefer him."

Eleanor went into the parlor, and stood near the window. There was a murmuring in her father's room, and she could see the light of a candle through the crack of the sliding doors. Belinda and her friend the servant were mercifully silent.

After a time Father Jackson came out of the room, and led Eleanor to her father's bedside. The Judge looked very white and peaceful; he tried to smile as Eleanor entered. Then he looked toward the crucifix; and Eleanor, in a sudden inspiration, took it from the table, and held it before him. She kissed his hand, and he raised it for a moment as if in blessing. Eleanor fixed her eyes on the dear face. A tear — the first she had seen her father shed — rolled down his cheek, as he looked, with all his heart in his eyes, at the figure of our Blessed Redeemer.

"I wish I had known," he murmured. "Mother of God, pray —"

The glitter of the tear in the light of the candle seemed to absorb all the life of his eyes. He turned toward Eleanor — and was gone; she was alone.

XXVII.

The thoughts of the youth are the actions of the man. And he who gives way to the counsels of the world many times in small things, finds it hard to resist the counsels of the devil in great things. — *St. Maur.*

While Mrs. Desmond led her lonely life at Redwood, living from day to day in the knowledge that her son was not far from her, and thankful that he was safe from the temptations of a great city, at least for a time, Patrick was absorbed in the excitement of watching Eleanor's interests at the mines of Eaglescliff. He had not heard from Eleanor since the brief line, written by Mary Fitzgerald at her request, had announced her father's death. He had cut loose entirely from Miles; and Nellie constantly bewailed the ingratitude of the serpent she had nourished in her flat, as she pathetically put it, on all the luxuries of the season. The truth was that Miles scarcely needed a secretary, so idle and careless had he become of late; and Nellie was very glad to explain the "falling through" of her visit to Saratoga by declaring that Patrick's defection had thrown so much work on her hands, that she was actually prevented from entering the fashionable whirl. She had become more and more devoted to her friend the Baroness; and Miles had been presented to the ingenuous Mr. Bayard, who, with his wife, had made a flying visit to New York.

Miles had a feverish period of activity during Bayard's visit. Bayard had managed, by means known only to himself at this time, to acquire a major interest in a large number of Fly-Away Mine shares; and these he had sold to Miles, and for them the latter had given all the money he could beg or borrow. His borrowings were generally in small sums from comparatively poor constituents; they had gone into the coal-mine stock, sold by Bayard because he needed the money. Bayard sold all he could get, though the stock was steadily going up.

Arthur Fitzgerald, who had gone back to New York, was bitten by the craze for speculation. He bought in the small interest his client had in the mines, and, after the Judge's death, made Desmond an offer for Eleanor's shares, — an offer which would have meant ruin for him and for several of his friends had the mines failed. But Desmond refused. He had begun to look on the shares as his own. Arthur, inspired perhaps by Mary, who had a womanly taste for match-making, had hinted more than once to Desmond that he had only to ask to be accepted. All men at Desmond's age have a fair share of vanity, more or less tempered by good sense; and so earnest was Arthur's assurance, and so successful was Patrick in the management of affairs at Eaglescliff, that the latter felt justified in believing that Eleanor would not refuse. And now there was no obstacle. Eleanor was about to enter the Church, and Dr. Talbot had thoroughly dissipated the fear of his mother that there was insanity in her blood. He now felt strong enough to overcome his mother's opposition.

Several weeks of exciting work, mental and physical, passed at Eaglescliff. There was only one opinion in the place — Patrick Desmond had developed into a shrewd man of business; his opportunity had come, and he had seized it with no uncertain grasp. It was generally said that he would be a successful man. The lessons he had learned during his apprenticeship at Redwood were useful to him now, and he put them into practice. As yet he had not found out the meaning of Bayard's telegram advising him to sell, — that telegram which he had read by accident. In fact, he had forgotten it in the multitude of anxieties.

Desmond was immersed in business thoughts; he had no time for anything else. The thought even of Eleanor was not what it had been at first. It was not like a breeze over a field of fresh flowers, calm and cool. It was not of reverence, of doubt of his own worthiness, of the sweet unreason of the love which Coventry Patmore describes. There was reason enough in his mind now. His marriage to Eleanor Redwood — he felt that he had a right to ask her, since he had helped to save her property — would realize all his dreams.

After his day's work he betook himself to his room at the hotel, and built castles in the air. And these castles were not without foundation; for the Fly-Away Mines were gaining gradually in public favor on the stock exchanges. Desmond's dreams were not of the kind of which Jack Conlon would have approved. He planned no great church now; he never thought of the problems which John Longworthy had touched on in his book; the condition of the Grogans and the other people whom he had seen in New York occupied him no more; he had one object in his mind, one question occupied him; and this question was: How to make money? He read with interest of the doings of the millionnaires as chronicled in the New York and Chicago papers. Some day *he* would be a millionnaire and become all-powerful. He recalled some of Miles' cynical sayings about the power of money, and gave assent to them. Shylock's cry, in which he mingled his daughter and his ducats, was not altogether foreign to Desmond's thoughts, though he was no Shylock. Nevertheless, the question of money had come to hold in his mind a place beside the question of love. If Eleanor had been poor, he would have worked for her all his life without the thought of sacrifice; he would have waited for her with the patience of Jacob, and worked the while; he would have grown purer and manlier for the discipline of patience and of labor.

As it was, Patrick Desmond was not the Patrick Desmond of his mother's thoughts or of Jack Conlon's hopes. He was neither mean nor sordid, and yet the example of the Redwood practices — which meant that anything short of legal robbery was fair — had its effect on him. He smiled a little at Jack Conlon's ideals when the thought of them crossed his mind. How little Jack knew of the trials and temptations of real life. How little he knew of the tricks and evasions and sharp turns by which a man, hand to hand against the world, was obliged to resort to if he would grow rich. Desmond found that, by the careful use of a little money of his own, he could do things that surprised him. He could not buy a single share of the Fly-Away stock; for nobody, except Bayard's friends and Fitzgerald's client, had sold out, and that had been done very quietly. But he had quadrupled his money; and Arthur Fitzgerald had, by Eleanor's direction, allowed him a liberal salary. Desmond looked into a golden future, — a future in which he beheld Self glorified.

His mother noticed a difference in him when he came back to Redwood. He was impatient of her simplicity; she had come to love the poverty he despised. Its shifts and ingenuities meant independence to her. She loved the scarlet sage which made a hedge between her yard and the back street, the crab-apple tree which gave her the famous preserve whose flavor she improved every year, her old stove, and the rag carpet. Desmond found all these badges of the poverty of his youth intolerable. He was preoccupied; he listened to her half-impatiently; he sneered at Mrs. Howard Sykes' brilliant turnout as it scattered the dust; he criticised the houses of the great, and kept very much to himself. His mother was jealous; she attributed this change to Eleanor, until she found, when he had gone, after a long, dull Sunday, during which he had not disguised his impatience to get away, many scraps of paper covered with lead-pencilled figures. She shook her head, but felt relieved that the magnet which was attracting her boy was not the love of Eleanor Redwood.

Bayard had returned to Redwood, leaving his wife in New York. He hated Desmond, principally because he felt sure that he and Laura might control Eleanor, now that the Judge was dead, if Desmond did not stand in the way. Besides, Desmond was associated in his mind with defeat. It was his opinion that Desmond would marry

Eleanor, not for love, but for money; and he disliked bitterly the thought of a possible triumph on Desmond's part. Again, he was ashamed of his part in his wife's absurd plan for the marriage of the Baroness and Desmond. Had it succeeded, he would have had more shares to sell; he regretted the shares, but he felt a sincere pleasure in knowing that Desmond had not as yet concluded to sell. Bayard feared that he might, — feared that he was only holding on for a grand stroke, which would carry him aloft to fortune.

Desmond's manner to Bayard, when they happened to meet, was exasperatingly cold; and one day when Bayard had played a very clever and shabby business trick, and boasted of it, Desmond remembered the crumpled telegram which had blown into the car window. He coolly alluded to it; he felt that he could afford to be insolent. The other changed color; he had trusted that it had entirely escaped Desmond's memory.

"You will act on it, of course?" he said. "It was good advice *then*."

"And why not *now?*" Desmond asked, mockingly.

Bayard's face, always pale, became green; he made a sudden resolution, and that day he sold the few remaining shares he held. Having paid back the money he had borrowed, he was comfortably well off. He said to himself that now he could afford to be honest — if it paid. The men who had, under an unusual temptation to do so, trusted him with their money, pocketed their portion of the profits and felt no qualms of conscience. They had completed a sharp business transaction. When the truth came out, who would condemn them? Not public opinion. Public opinion had long ago settled that morality in business was merely a matter of law, — not Christian law, but a different thing. There were several men in Eaglescliff — prominent men, leading citizens, members of churches — who held that Desmond was either a most daring young man or a fool. But most people believed, as the Fly-Away stock went steadily up, that Desmond would be a millionnaire. That was his own belief, too.

It was Bayard's opinion that Desmond would sell out the shares when they had reached the highest possible value. He cursed the ill-luck by which Desmond had got hold of his telegram to the Baroness. Bayard was safe enough himself financially: Laura could enjoy herself in New York for a time in her own way, and all her Redwood bills had been paid; but he hated to think that Desmond should profit by the new facts brought out about the mines. Against Eleanor he had no feeling, but he could not endure the vision of Desmond's supremacy. He knew better than any man the weakness of the mines; he had learned that, in spite of the recent discovery of new beds of coal, the water surrounding the mines was a constant menace. The oldest miners shook their heads, and were careful not to strike too deep into the walls on the water side. But Desmond, clever as he was, was not a miner; and the surface indications, the reports of those interested in keeping the mines going, had weight with him. The old miners did their work and said little; as long as the rats stayed they could stay.

In the meantime Desmond enjoyed immensely the adulation he received. It seemed very easy to rule the world; and his manner took an importance which made Bayard wild with rage when he met him. Patrick copied successfully — and perhaps unconsciously — the manner of the rich men of Redwood. People found no fault with him for the assumption of a manner befitting his station in life, but some privately bewailed the blindness of Judge Redwood's daughter in giving such an opportunity to one of the Irish from "over the river."

Desmond had in his desk a standing offer for all the shares he had, at the ruling price. All he would have to do would be to send the message "Sell" to Arthur Fitzgerald or his representative in New York, and the shares would change hands in less than half an hour. But Desmond had no intention of accepting this offer. He knew that Arthur Fitzgerald wanted the shares badly; but he was determined to make them the first round in a golden ladder which, mounted adroitly, would make him the envy of all the men who had once looked down on him. If Eleanor had alone been concerned, he would probably have sold out the shares, and put her money — with Fitzgerald's concurrence — into property whose value would fluctuate less. As it was, he had argued himself into the belief that the stock would always be his to manipulate — he preferred to hold it.

Immediately after the Judge's death, Mary Fitzgerald had obliged Eleanor and Belinda to come to her. And in an atmosphere of the deepest sympathy Eleanor spent the earliest days of her mourning. At first she did not realize what had taken place; her father was gone — she knew that, — but she could not yet understand that he was gone forever. The days of her childhood came back to her again; she lived in them; a hundred details of her father's tender love recurred to her. A figure passed the window, a footstep sounded. Surely it was he! And then came the great sense of loss. In consoling Eleanor, Mary almost forgot her solicitude for Miles; nobody could have done the work more effectually, as far as it could be done; but there was a point to which no human consolation could reach.

"At least I can pray for him!" Eleanor exclaimed one day. And when she had realized this, Father Jackson needed to argue with her no more: she glided, as it were, into the Church.

When Eleanor had begun again to take an interest in ordinary affairs, she heard one day, by chance, at the table, that Desmond had refused to sell Arthur Fitzgerald the shares he coveted; and Arthur congratulated her on having such a careful agent. Later she asked Mary if her husband would be made very happy if she sold him all or a part of the shares. Mary had not answered at once. Then she had said:

"It is better to leave these matters to the men, my dear. Mr. Desmond knows best what is for your interest."

"And *his*," she added in her mind, but she did not speak it.

Eleanor thought it over; and on the day before the great storm that swept over the Atlantic coast and made an epoch from which many people date events, she came to the conclusion to instruct Desmond to sell the shares. She was not a woman of business, but a woman of gratitude. What difference did it make to her now whether she were rich or not? And surely Mary Fitzgerald's husband deserved all the kindness she could show him. In the afternoon, just as she was about to go to the telegraph office with her message to Desmond, Laura Bayard sent up her card.

Mrs. Bayard was a new woman. The rather loud and gushing Redwood manner had been replaced by a reserve which went well with a careful manner of dress, free from the colors in which she had delighted at home. The blackened eyebrows and the too-golden hair were there, but Eleanor saw a look of true sympathy in her eyes; and there was silence. Eleanor could not speak; for this woman had been a little girl with her and shared her dear father's care. Laura wiped a tear hastily under her veil.

"I come to ask you a favor," Laura said. "But first I must ask you to keep the nature of my errand a secret — don't be afraid: it concerns only yourself."

Eleanor, softened by the sight of her old friend, easily promised.

"I want you, Eleanor, to sell your stock in the Fly-Away Mines as soon as possible; Harry has sold his. He is in possession of information — exclusive information, — and he knows that in a short time they will be worthless. I have always liked you, Eleanor, and your father — dear old Judge! — was always good to me. For old friendship's sake I have come to you, though if Harry knew it he would almost kill me. He thinks — but never mind what he thinks. Take my word, Eleanor, and get all you can for the stock at once."

Eleanor was silent for a time. "You have done me a great kindness, Laura," she said, in the quiet, low tone which had become habitual to her of late. "But are you sure — "

"Sure!" exclaimed Laura. "I am certain and positive of the truth of what I say. To save you, I have betrayed Harry's confidence in me. He has no grudge against you, but he absolutely hates Mr. Desmond."

"But how can it affect Mr. Desmond?"

Mrs. Bayard smiled. How demure these quiet people could be, she thought. Eleanor was too greatly occupied to notice the smile.

"I advise you to sell; that is all," Laura said.

Eleanor thanked her. The talk drifted to the old days; and when Laura Bayard left, she congratulated herself on having done a good action and made sure of Eleanor's gratitude, should her husband's present prosperity prove fleeting.

Eleanor did not send the telegram; a little later in the day she went to the rectory with Belinda, who was temporarily subdued, for the usual instruction from Father Jackson. She determined to ask him what she should do, as the case stood. But he was summoned to a sick call. She made her third visit to the Blessed Sacrament, and stopped at the telegraph office on her way home. There she wrote:—

To PATRICK DESMOND, Eaglescliff.
Whatever happens, do not sell shares.
ELEANOR REDWOOD.

"A night message?" the clerk asked.

Belinda interposed. "Of course!" she snapped. "It's twenty cents cheaper. Do you want to rob people with your day messages?"

"It will not reach him until eight o'clock to-morrow morning."

"That will be time enough," responded Belinda. Eleanor did not think so.

It was the last message that went to Eaglescliff that night. An hour later the storm burst, and every telegraph wire around Eaglescliff was down. An hour before, Arthur Fitzgerald had telegraphed to Desmond his highest offer.

XXVIII.

Success means not what a man gets, but the attainment of what he wants to get.—*Paradoxes of a Philosopher.*

THE sunset was magnificent and the air was still and clear. The weather had been dry for many days; the leaves rustled, but the keen ear could detect in their rustle a different sound from that of early summer: it was sharper; they rasped rather than rustled. Perhaps the extreme dryness of the soil and the trees and the hedges—the appearance of anxious waiting which nature puts on in times of drought—had something to do with the restless anxiety of Patrick's mind on the evening before the great storm.

He had returned from supper, which he had enjoyed in company with Mr. Stokes, who had come over to Eaglescliff on a short visit to his uncle, one of the merchants of the town. This uncle was a leading member of the Baptist Church, and he had argued forcibly with his nephew on the absurdity of his giving up the ministry.

Patrick, reasonably content (if it were not for this strange restlessness which seemed to be in the air), well dressed, handsome, made a marked contrast to the dispirited Mr. Stokes, whose "waterfall," as schoolboys used to call the glossy circle of hair on his forehead, was unkempt and straggling, and whose lank duster and soiled blue tie reflected the struggles of his mind. Patrick caught the glance of his soft, appealing eyes as he passed him in the street, and he invited his limp friend to share his frugal hotel supper, which consisted of a number of dabs of various indigestible compounds set out on little saucers.

The repast was not inspiring, nor were the hotel surroundings. The dim kerosene lamps, the paper of the day before yesterday, the fly-blown advertisements on the walls, and the rickety tables with horrible pens with which no man could write, seemed calculated to drive the low-spirited guest to drink. Desmond asked Mr. Stokes to his little office, which was more comfortable than the common room of the khan.

Desmond's office was furnished with three chairs, a desk, a telephone, and a pile of pamphlets and newspapers on the window-sill. It would be dreary enough in the light of the usual kerosene lamp; but the sunset, marvellous in luminous colors, and tints of dark-purple flashed with red gold, in a lake of the palest green, illuminated the place and filled the large window. All the ragged edges of daily life were concealed by the illusion; even the particles of metallic dust on the pamphlets in the window-sill shot out little gleams of radiance.

Mr. Stokes, who had taken one of the chairs, sighed, while Desmond went to the window to read Eleanor's telegram, which had just arrived.

"It's all right," he remarked, dismissing the boy who had brought the message. "Sell!" he said to himself, with a little chuckle. "I have no intention of selling. It would be suicide to sell shares in Fly-Away just now. But women like to give advice, and I suppose one must pretend to take it."

And he folded the telegram tenderly and put it into his waistcoat pocket, forgetting for the moment that Eleanor herself had not written that precious signature with her own hands.

Mr. Stokes sighed again.

"Why, what's the matter?" Desmond asked, turning from the sunset.

"Oh! I am wretched," he answered. "I'm in what they call a no-thoroughfare. My uncle says I am a fool, and that I ought to go in and be a minister. He wouldn't help toward my college expenses before, but he says that he'll see me through now, because I'm not fit for anything else."

Desmond laughed. "I don't think he means it, Stokes. I'm sure he wouldn't have you be a hypocrite."

"He says I'm not practical, and that the ministry is the only place open to a man that's not practical. He says I needn't expect to make money in the ministry, — that's out of the question, unless I develop a great gift for preaching. He says that religion is a matter of sixteen ounces to the pound, and that nobody believes much more than that nowadays — "

"And most of them don't believe that," interrupted Desmond, with another laugh. "If a man doesn't believe in heaven or hell, he'll find it much easier to give twelve ounces to the pound, provided he can keep out of the penitentiary."

"Dogmas have got to go," said Mr. Stokes; "and yet I don't see how morality can be kept up without them. But my uncle says that if a Baptist believes in immersion, people are not likely to ask questions about his other beliefs, and by and by he'll work into the respectable beliefs. 'Believe,' my uncle said, 'that you've got to hold your head up in the town you live in, and don't bother yourself about the Presbyterians or the Revised Version, or Probation. But,' he added, 'if I had my way, I'd go in for Probation after death, and the salvation of *all* the heathen, because I don't like to see money going out of the country.' "

"He is a practical man," Desmond remarked, with a smile. "But I say, Stokes, why don't you examine the doctrines of the Catholic Church?"

"I never thought of it," answered Mr. Stokes;

"and I should not like to. You see, if I became a Catholic, nobody would speak to me except yourself. And it would give our college a bad name to have turned out a Catholic."

Desmond looked at him in amazement. "But you are on the road to infidelity now. Isn't that worse?"

"Not infidelity," said Mr. Stokes, drawing his limp duster about him, and stretching himself out, so that his feet rested comfortably on the other chair. "I'm a little broad in my opinions, but it takes a great deal of breadth to be considered an infidel by Protestants nowadays. We are more tolerant than you are in these matters. I am much attracted by Buddhism; there's so much color in it. And, then, the *nirvâna*, and the golden lotus, — it's very sweet. Mrs. Bayard has a sister, the Baroness Something or Other, who is about to adopt Buddhism, and preach it in New York with musical accompaniments. Mrs. Bayard, to whom I spoke of my doubts, said I might make a very good living by assisting as a neophyte at her sister's *sêances*, if I could get myself to believe in the *nirvâna* and metempsychosis."

"Stokes," returned Desmond, "you're a fool. You refuse to accept the divine beliefs of Christianity — I mean such as your mutilated religion has preserved for you, — and yet propose to swallow the absurdities of an outworn, selfish and barbarous religion."

"I am not any more of a fool than you are," said Mr. Stokes, in his meek voice, but with a certain decision. "Buddhism attracts me; New York attracts me; I can accept Buddhism with as much faith as I have in anything, as I am assured that I can earn a living without those exertions which my education has made me incapable of. I am honest so far, I can say honestly, too, that I think I would examine the doctrines of your Church — whether I should have the courage to accept them or not, — had I not watched you closely of late."

"Me!" asked his companion, with a start. "And what —"

"Yes, *you*," said Mr. Stokes, rising, and deftly lighting the kerosene lamp, for the sunset had disappeared. "You profess to believe *everything* that the Bible teaches — you are a more literal believer in the Bible than any Protestant I know, — and you make pretentions of self-sacrifice and charity, and you are supposed to live up to your belief. I know what you believe. I've gotten beyond the old frauds about Popish ignorance and that sort of thing. Now, I've watched you and heard about you of late very much; and I see plainly that your religion, supposed to be so spiritual, has very little to do with your daily life.

Patrick's hands trembled as he drew down the shade. Was this true? Was he, who, above all, prided himself on being the staunchest of Catholics, falling below himself? Nevertheless, he was angry with Mr. Stokes, and he did not speak.

"You live to make money — only to make money," — went on Mr. Stokes. "You dream of making money; you think of making money. You are one man on Saturday, another on Sunday. You would beggar a man, according to your business principles, on Saturday, and toss him a dollar, according to your religious principles, on Sunday. You will take something for nothing by a business trick, and defend it on business principles. Everybody praises you because you are making the most of your talents; you will grow rich on business principles, which to my mind are not those which your priest preaches and reads from the pulpit. I watched you," said Mr. Stokes, with a break in his voice, "for a long time. The Patrick Desmond of Redwood, so upright, so sincere, so firmly practical in applying his religion, almost made me desire to be of the faith which had made him such as he was, and to be like him. I would have braved public opinion. I see now, by your example, that dogmas are inadequate to influence men, when they have so failed in your case."

"You do not judge me fairly," said Desmond, in a low voice, having lost all his anger. "I act according to the lessons I have been taught in business; I act as other men who desire to be rich — "

"I know you do. But if men who hold dearest a religion with such claims as yours act merely as other men, you cannot blame us, who are not so supported, for turning from it."

Patrick's anger rose again. "I am not my brother's keeper. Your convictions should not hinge on my actions."

"No," returned Mr. Stokes, wearily; "perhaps not. But example in your case has had much to do with mine. I shall go to New York and put money in my purse, as you are doing. But don't take such a high ground. If you were offered a thousand dollars for a thing you knew was useless, you would sell it, and do a good stroke of business. Come — we will not quarrel; here is Bayard."

The door opened and Harry Bayard entered.

Mr. Bayard looked close at Desmond. The former's face was as white as usual and his eyes as furtive, but there was the complacent expression of prosperity about him.

"May I use your telephone, Mr. Desmond?" he asked. "You are lucky enough to have the only one in town, and I want to speak to the baggage-master at Redwood."

"Certainly," Desmond said, picking up a pamphlet to avoid looking at Bayard; he had an involuntary antipathy to the sight of this pale, smooth-talking, furtive creature; and, besides, like most people in Redwood, he had heard rumors.

Bayard telephoned to the baggage-master a message about a piano which was to go to New York as freight; but he took a long time about it, and there was much ringing of bells.

"You may not be your brother's keeper," whispered Mr. Stokes, "and religion may not be a matter of example — " he paused, for Bayard's hallooing and ringing had ceased for a moment. He went on when Bayard had begun to ring again, and there was a touch of bitterness in his tone, "But I can tell you that even if Eleanor Redwood was attracted by the sincerity of the Desmond of the spring, she will not admire the clever business Desmond of the summer."

A glint of humor shone in Desmond's eyes. "Oh! that's it, — is it, Stokes?" he said. "I see."

Mr. Stokes smarted under the glance and turned pale; his secret was revealed. He said nothing, but at that moment he hated Desmond.

"It will be a nasty night," said Bayard, coming from the telephone box and trying to light his cigar over the blackened glass of the lamp; while he watched Desmond's face, on which Mr. Stokes' words had left a trace of dejection. "He has heard bad news;" said Bayard to himself, "he will sell as soon as he can. I had better hurry up matters. — Listen to that!" he remarked aloud. The wind was sweeping around the house like some huge winged being fleeing from an enemy. "Good-night!" he said.

Mr. Stokes said good-night too; he thought he would go to the hotel before the storm broke. Bayard took his arm, and they walked toward the chain of lakes, the first of which lashed the shore furiously.

"Come, take a walk, Stokes," Bayard said; "this wind is exhilarating, and the rain will not come for some time."

Mr. Stokes' duster flapped and floated about him, and he had to hold his hat on. The wind *was* exhilarating; it seemed to blow his thoughts away.

"Desmond is in a bad humor to-night," observed Bayard.

"Yes," said Stokes, on his guard.

"Bad news; stocks and investments trouble him since he has got into business. Put a beggar on horseback, you know —" and Bayard laughed in his high treble.

"Perhaps so," said Stokes. "I don't know anything about business."

They had reached one of the entrances to the Fly-Away Mines, — one near the lake, and seldom used except by the inspectors and owners.

"There's nothing wrong with the mines," Bayard went on. "Does he think there is?"

"I don't know," answered Mr. Stokes.

Bayard took a key from his pocket and opened the rickety wooden door of the frame structure, that covered a rather primitive windlass. Mr. Stokes followed him with a certain curiosity.

"Since Mr. Desmond is anxious about the mine, I'd better drop down to the first gallery and see that everything is right on this side. Will you manage the windlass?"

Mr. Stokes had no objections; just then he had no objection to anything. He took the rough wooden handle in his grip. Bayard took a pick-axe and a miner's hat and lamp, and entered the primitive cage, used only for this short distance trip.

"Lower!"

Down he went, the thick wire rope creaking and Mr. Stokes' arms aching. Nevertheless, the exercise did him good: it eased his restlessness; it would be easier to draw Bayard up, since he could help himself by using another rope, hand over hand, he reflected.

Having reached the first gallery in the new part of the mine, Bayard sounded the black wall with his pick. "In three days the lake will be in," he said; "but he may sell before that. A few strokes, and, with the help of the storm, it will be in to-night."

One could hear the lake, aroused and strong, palpitating against the wall. The rays from the lamp in his hat fell on the glossy black lumps around him. He raised the pick and tapped the wall. The sound in one place satisfied him; he gave half a dozen strong strokes at the wall. Then he pulled the rope; the windlass creaked, and in five minutes he stood beside Mr. Stokes. He was paler than usual, and sweat poured from his forehead.

"Everything is right," he said. "Desmond need have no fear. They distrusted my report of the first disaster, though I know these mines like a book — better than the owners do," he added, with a short laugh. "Go up and congratulate Desmond."

"I will," replied Stokes, anxious to be alone with his thoughts, "when it stops raining."

"Do," Bayard went on, smiling in the darkness. "Tell him I said that there's no danger; or, better, say you've been here and seen that there's no danger in the mines, — and this one is the weakest."

"I will," said Stokes, "after a while."

Bayard grinning to himself at this delicate stroke, said good-night. He would not lock the door: Mr. Stokes might stay in the shed as long as he liked.

The wind and the rain rushed together, like opposing armies; the uproar was deafening. Mr.

Stokes closed the door after Bayard had gone. The tempest without soothed him; it was delightful to his weak nature to know that there was such strength in the world. He closed the door tight, and in his idleness let down the cage into the depths; he pulled it up easily. As he did so slimy, soft bodies brushed against his knees and dropped upon his feet. There seemed to be many of them. He lowered the lamp. Rats, squealing with fright as the light struck them, were rushing against the wooden walls as if for refuge. They had come up from the mine; he knew what that meant, and listened. There was a rush of waters beneath; he could hear the roar. He felt the cage with his hand: it was wet. He looked out into the night: all nature seemed in anarchy. Never mind, he would have the satisfaction of telling Patrick Desmond that his hopes were vain, — that he was a beggar again, no better cff in the world's eyes than "the fool," Stokes.

He rushed through the storm to Desmond's office. It was warm and light; for Desmond had built a fire in the rusty grate, not caring to face the rain and wind outside. What a storm it was. The world seemed tottering.

Mr. Stokes rushed into the room, his linen coat clinging to him and his straw hat drooping over his face. Patrick lay on the three chairs, dozing. Mr. Stokes touched his elbow, and he jumped to his feet. Then Stokes, not with eagerness now, but with a certain regret, told him the truth. Desmond, in his light coat, ran with the wind to the entrance of the mine near the lake. He saw the waters meant ruin; what could be done on such a night? What could be done at any time, with the lake galloping into the mines? He ran back to his office, battling with the wind. He telephoned to the telegraph office; the answer came: all the wires to New York were down.

"I am ruined," he said, grimly, to Mr. Stokes. "Eleanor Redwood is no longer a rich woman. The wires are all down and I cannot sell the stock. If I could only reach the Hoffmann House, New York, I need not sell to Fitzgerald, for he is a friend; there's a man at the Hoffmann House who would buy at once, if I could reach him."

He spoke as if to himself, and mumbled incoherently. He tried to ring up the telephone operator at Redwood. Yes; all was lost. His castles in Spain were down; no riches, no power for him; Eleanor and he would both be beggars.

"Do not sell," she had wired. What difference did that make? He must sell those shares before daylight or perish.

The telephone bell sounded. Mr. Stokes watched Desmond with an odd smile on his wet face, as he stood dripping in the middle of a pool of rain-water. The operator at Redwood announced that one wire from that town to New York was safe. He had a message for Desmond. The broker at the Hoffmann House could sell the shares at once, at one per cent. increase on his offer of the morning.

"Thank God!" Desmond exclaimed.

Then like a flash came the question (the result, at this crisis in his life, of years of good training and pure thoughts): For what was he thanking God — the God of charity? His conscience answered at once: He was thanking God for a victim whom he would ruin, to whom he would sell something for nothing, save himself from poverty, and keep Eleanor rich against her will. His mother rose before his mind. Would she exchange her worn shawl and her poor little house for riches won in this way? Would she not call his thanking God a horrible blasphemy? But success, power, money, a great house, luxury, everything that the men around him valued, were in his grasp. And would not Eleanor thank him for it later? She was a woman, after all; and fond of diamonds and rich dresses, as all women, except his mother, were.

"The wire is waiting. Will take your message. Broker waiting," telephoned the operator at Redwood.

"O, Mother of God!" Desmond cried, between his teeth. Perhaps the mines could be saved; he did not *know* they were utterly ruined, a voice said. But he flung it back; he *did* know that they were ruined, for the lake mine was the key of the rest. Mr. Stokes, forgetting his drenched condition, gazed at Desmond with intense eyes; he understood the struggle as well as if he saw it.

"No message to-night," Desmond said, grimly; and he rang the bell.

The bell was rung furiously from Redwood again. "Did you say no message?" asked the operator.

"None," Patrick answered, as firmly as before.

A quarter of an hour passed. Desmond had forgotten Mr. Stokes who had sat down near the fire. The bell rang again. Desmond answered: "I told you I had no message."

"It wouldn't make much difference if you had *now*;" was the reply, "the New York wire is down."

"I am glad of it," said the young man, half-aloud.

Mr. Stokes went up and took his right hand: "I take back what I said. Your religion is the strongest thing in life, — stronger than life; it works miracles."

Patrick was white, and dark circles had come beneath his eyes. "Yes, I know," he answered, speaking more to himself than to Mr. Stokes.

"But I am a failure, all the same. No;" he added, with a gleam of light in his eyes, "I have succeeded, because I am what I wanted most of all to be — an honest man."

Mr. Stokes stole away. And in the morning, when Patrick awoke, the Fly-Away Mine stock was a drug in the market. But he said his prayers with a clean heart, and he felt that no glance of his mother or of Eleanor could ever reproach him now; he could look the world in the face, even though it might call him a failure.

XXIX.

"A ministering angel?"

The New York papers on the morning after the storm, were filled with telegrams from all over the country. Great had been the damage, great was the suffering brought about by this war of the elements; and Mary Fitzgerald felt almost ashamed of her own grief over certain double-headed paragraphs as she read the record of loss by wind and wave. Eleanor had not come back from early Mass. She and Belinda were to be received into the Church in a week's time. Belinda was clattering about in the kitchen. *She* couldn't get used to going to church on week days. "It seems a waste of time," she said. Arthur gave Mary *The Sun* from his bundle of papers, and there she read of the disaster to the Fly-Away Mines,

"Poor Miles! Poor Eleanor!" she said. "O, Arthur, Miles is ruined!"

"Miles?" repeated Arthur. "Oh! is he? I believe I did hear that he had shares in that confounded swindle,—mines so near a lot of lakes are nothing but a swindle. Mary," he added, changing his tone, "If Patrick Desmond had sold me all the shares I wanted, I should be a beggar this morning."

Mary looked at him with tears in her eyes.

"But Miles is worse than a beggar: he owes everybody. We could endure being poor," she said, "we have so much to make us happy. But poor Miles!"

Arthur jingled his spoon on his saucer impatiently. He was, as a rule, silent when Mary lamented over Miles.

"I don't know what will become of him now. He has been accustomed to money, too; poverty is always harder on people of that sort. What can he do?"

"Go to Canada, I suppose. He will, at least, be out of the way and out of politics," murmured Arthur. "It is strange, Mary, that you have no word of gratitude for my — for *our* escape; for it is clear from the telegrams that the disaster is irretrievable. And think of poor Miss Redwood and Desmond."

"It *is* sad," answered Mary; "and I am glad, too, Arthur, on our account. But Mr. Desmond and Eleanor are young and hopeful; they have not been taken care of all their lives as Miles has. He," she went on, seeing a frown on her husband's brow, "has a peculiar temperament; he always had from his boyhood."

Arthur hid his face in a huge mustache cup, in which his coffee was generally served.

"I must go to see him immediately after breakfast. I hope you will come with me; it might encourage Miles, and we might think of some way to help him.

"No," replied Arthur, briefly, putting down his cup.

Mary looked at him in amazement; he was not in the habit of saying "No" to her in that tone.

"And we can cable to the Longworthys. They are in Munich."

"No," repeated Arthur. "I shall wash my hands of Miles, Mary. Let him live his own life."

Mary turned her face from her husband and rested her head on her hand. It was a very pathetic action, habitual to her in moments of keen distress. It went to Arthur's heart, but he was silent; he could not forgive at once Mary's lack of sympathy with him in his joy at having escaped from ruin.

"If I could help Desmond, I would — and I will," he went on, with some bitterness in his tone. "He has worked hard and faithfully."

Mary tried to restrain her tears. "If you had brothers and sisters, Arthur," she said, "you would understand what I mean — how I feel. I rejoice with you, of course; but it breaks my heart to think of poor Miles, after all his struggles. And dear little Miley."

"And poor Nellie," added Arthur with a touch of malice.

"Nellie has been used to the hardships of life; she has not Miles' temperament."

"Oh!" said Arthur, rising from the table, "I must go."

And off he went, leaving Mary divided between regret that she had not said good-by more affectionately, and grief over the misfortunes of her brother. Arthur Fitzgerald was a dissatisfied man during that day, although his friends congratulated him on his "level-headedness" in keeping clear of the Fly-Away stock; and said pleasant things about his being a young Hannibal of finance.

As for Mary, she cried and waited for Eleanor. When Eleanor came, rosy from her walk, and more cheerful than she had been for many days, Mary broke the news to her.

"It's too bad! Oh! it reconciles me to dear papa's death to know that this did not happen before," she said, looking brightly into Mary's face. "As for me, I have enough for the present, though you — you wicked woman, — have destroyed all my hopes of earning anything by *my* art."

Mary was astonished at this coolness. If dear Miles could only feel the same way. "And Mr. Desmond," she said, with a little hesitation.

"He will not like it, he has worked so hard. I suppose he will come to talk it over. I have had a talk with Father Jackson this morning, and made a resolution; or rather, a resolution came to me," she went on. "But I'll not speak of it now — something is worrying you, dear."

"Yes," Mary said, giving Eleanor her coffee. "I am Miles' only friend — all he has in the world."

"There is — his wife," suggested Eleanor.

"His wife!" said Mary, with more scorn than one would have thought her gentle nature capable of. "His wife! What does she know about the peculiarities of his nature? How can she understand him? Why, Eleanor Redwood, *I* brought him up — he was my mother's legacy to me. *She* let him go into this foolish mining business — "

"And you would have 'let' Arthur do it," observed Eleanor, gravely and directly.

"Oh! Arthur is able to take care of himself," said Mary; "Miles never was. I am his only friend. I must see him this morning. Will you come?"

"With pleasure," Eleanor answered. "But wait till I put on an older dress. It's raining; and now that I am poor again, I can't wear my clothes so extravagantly."

During the interval Mary forgot Miles and wondered at Eleanor's coolness; for she had read to her friend every detail about the flooding of the mines, and Eleanor had not exclaimed against her misfortune. "I never cared much for money, and I don't care for it at all since papa died," she said. And yet, in Mary's thoughts, this disaster meant a fearful loss for Eleanor. Patrick Desmond could not marry her now; he was too poor, and she must earn her own living by some everyday drudgery. "School-teaching, perhaps," Mary said to herself, and shuddered at the thought of her own long days behind the desk.

The Galligan flat, in the Grand Windsor, was in disorder. Nellie sat at the breakfast table, with a *Herald* in her hand. Little Miley was in his high chair, solemnly painting his face with maple syrup. Miles lay on the lounge; his face was flushed with that perennial flush which ought to warn the hard drinker that he had better stop or die. He lay on a pile of the morning papers, and two telegrams had fallen from his hands and were on the floor.

"It's all up, Nell," he began. "Bayard's message says so, and Desmond says so, too. I ain't worth a cent, and I can never pay what I borrowed."

We have *got* to pay our debts, Miles, no matter what happens," answered Nellie. Nellie had red eyes; her bang stood out like bristles, partly put up in papers, when the awful news had interrupted her toilet. Her tea-gown of pink and green suggested misfortunes by the number of spots scattered over it, and the pieces of cheap lace which little Miley had torn, and which draped the front of it.

"Pay!" broke out Miles, with irritation.

"Pay! I can never pay; and in that I'll be no worse off than a lot of my friends, who are living on the interest of their debts. If I catch hold of that Desmond, I'll —"

"No; you won't!" said Nellie, firmly, giving Miley another hot cake. "You'll let my cousin alone; he's an honest man, like all his family. You ought to go gunning for Bayard, if you are mad at anybody. I never liked him. Did you hear him try to sing with me the night he came here with the Baroness? *He* sing!" said the pupil of Prof. Fortescue, with indignation. "If I had my way, there would be singing in his house and he wouldn't hear it. And the Baroness — I always had my opinion of *her*. But I made up my mind she wasn't respectable when she tried to make me pay ten dollars for a course of her lectures on Buddha or some heathen. I can stand powder and paint and airs," said Nellie, virtuously, "but I can't stand irreligion, — I can't, Miles, and nobody need ask me to."

"It was your being so thick with the Baroness that got me in with Bayard," observed Miles. "I'm done for, that's all! I might give two picnics a year, as I promised to the crowd that I would; but my name would be Dennis, all the same. Coming up here to live for your health and some other little things have made me unpopular with the voters; but, since I've touched their money, they won't touch me. I've been too good-natured, — that's my misfortune. I've neither money nor credit now; and the landlord can seize everything we have, if he wants to. I got him to go into Fly-Away, too."

Nellie looked around her with some regret, and then out of the window. The sight of roofs glistening with rain, and of the distant spires, stimulated her. After all, it was a great thing to be alive in New York, she thought, even if the landlord did seize her red-plush hangings and the piano. He would have to settle with the instalment man, at any rate; this gave her some comfort. Poverty had no terrors for Nellie; it had too many ameliorations in her eyes to be horrible. Besides, she had been thinking a great deal of life, and she had come to the conclusion that red plush and all her imitations of elegance did not compensate for the gradual brutalizing of Miles. She did not expect much of Miles; she had no ideals for him or for herself beyond display, diamonds, and a rather low standard of respectability. She did not expect him to keep sober always, but she was resolved that he should not drink himself to death; she knew that nothing would keep him from this finality except want of money and separation from his companions.

"Will Longworthy help us?" asked Miles, re-reading the telegrams.

"You know he won't!" snapped Nellie. "That viper of an Esther won't let him."

"That girl hated me from the moment I was born," remarked Miles pathetically. "Arthur Fitzgerald may do something."

Nellie's brow darkened. "What do you want, Miley?" she asked, turning her attention to that precious child, who was stretching toward the hot cakes again.

Miley screwed up his lips, and then spoke one of the few words he had been laboriously taught. "Boodle," he said, quite distinctly.

Miles threw himself back and laughed uproariously. Nellie joined him. "It's the cutest thing out!" she said, delighted.

"I'd give a case of champagne to have some of the crowd hear him say that,—but there'll be no boodle for your poor daddy from this out," said Miles, sadly. "Nell, you must send for some whiskey."

Nellie did not answer. Miles watched her from under his eyelashes. When sober, he had been a little afraid of Nellie, of late.

The servant called from the kitchen: "There are two ladies at the speaking-tube — Mrs. Fitzgerald and Miss Redwood,—wanting to come up."

"Let 'em come," answered Nellie.

"Let them come into the midst of our poverty and sorrow," said Miles. "There's no knowing but that Mary has some information saying things are not so bad as they seem. Mary has never been so hard on me as the other one — "

"She has *only* slighted your wife whenever she could," interrupted Nellie, with a resolved look.

Mary and Eleanor entered the dining-room. Little Miley held out his hands to his aunt; and his mother took occasion to slap them, on the pretence that they were sticky. Miles did not move from the lounge. Eleanor stood near the door, wishing she had not come. Mary threw her arms about Miles' neck, kneeling beside him.

"O Miles," she said, "are you well? Can you bear it?"

Miles took the precaution to cover his mouth with his hand, and murmured something to the effect that he still lived. Nellie administered another slap to the unoffending Miley, and asked Eleanor to sit down; she had a great respect for Eleanor.

"What are you and your husband going to do for us in our trouble?" Nellie asked, coolly, turning to Mary.

Mary rose and looked at her helplessly. Nellie repeated the question. It sounded brutal to Eleanor, who saw her friend's face grow paler and paler.

"Arthur — " began Mary; she stopped and

began again, "I am afraid — oh! I hope Miles is not ruined."

"Sit down," said Nellie, motioning her sister-in-law to a chair. Mary obeyed, sick at heart. What could she do for them, unless Arthur relented? Nellie stood at the head of the table, and, in spite of her frizzled hair and her tawdry gown, the dignity of her manner impressed Eleanor; for there was much that was impressive about Nellie when she succeeded in losing her self-consciousness. "Ruined!" she repeated. "No, he is not *quite* ruined, but almost — thanks to you."

Eleanor started up to protest in behalf of her friend, but Nellie would not listen.

"You pampered him; you made a fool of him; you babied him; and then you are down on me because I can't undo all the mischief you've made since he was a boy. I'd rather see my little Miles dead, Mary Fitzgerald, than brought up the way Miles was brought up. You and your mother — "

Mary raised her hands imploringly.

"You and your mother made him what he is — a selfish drunkard."

Miles started up. "I won't stand this, Nell!" he said. But she looked at him with fire in her eye. Well had her old friends of the Lady Rosebuds often said that Nellie Mulligan was afraid of no man. Miles subsided to his lounge again.

"A selfish drunkard! I repeat it, Mary. *You* are not bound to live with him, but I am. You could spoil him as much as you wanted to — doing the devoted sister act, of course, — and I've got to take the consequences, and the world has got to take the consequences. Maybe you fancied that I never thought of all this, but I have. And if I had had your education and a real *home*, I'd have thought it out long ago and been a different girl. Oh! I know that you look down on me. But Miles, bad as he is, is *mine* anyhow, and you can't take him away."

Nellie paused and began to cry. Little Miley, believing that there was an intention to tear him from the bosom of the family, shook his spoon at his aunt. Absurd as it may seem, this bit of pantomime was an additional sting to Nellie's words; for, in her heart, Mary had felt a special proprietorship in her brother's child, and had believed in her heart that little Miley would have been an angel were it not for his mother.

"I am his only friend," sobbed Nellie. "You gave him money to drink and kept him in idleness until he was no good, and then I had to take him — and, what's more, I'll keep him," she added, fiercely. "And I'll try a new way with him."

Miles groaned; the prospect was bad. But he admired Nellie's cleverness; Mary always was too much of an old maid, he said to himself.

"I suppose I have to go back to the glove counter to support the man that you taught not to work for himself. But I don't care; it's better than living in a way you can't afford. Or, if Lacy won't have me, I may sing," added Nellie, regaining her complacency. "Prof. Fortescue says that they are worse voices than mine."

Miles groaned again. Mary did not move. Were these terrible words true? Had she helped to ruin her brother's character and life? She could not say. She had meant to be true to her dead mother, and Miles was the only boy. No one spoke for a time. Miles was reflecting on the chances of Mary's going out for whiskey if he fainted, when Nellie spoke again:

"I shall manage Miles in my own way. I don't expect to make much out of him, but I am not going to have him drag little Miley and me into the dirt. He'll work or starve, — he'll work or starve; and he'll work at something honest. I've seen fashionable life, — I've met some of the Four Hundred, and I don't like them. The Lady Rosebuds are a great deal better, only they haven't got the style. I'm going to have my own way in future, Miles Galligan, as I did before I was married."

"Take care, Nell!" spoke up Miles, with a weak effort to assert himself.

"Take care!" repeated Nellie, scornfully.

"*You* take care, or there will be singing in this house and you won't hear it."

Miles sank back on the lounge again.

"And now, Miss Redwood," said Nellie, turning to Eleanor, "I want to ask your opinion."

"Why not go to the country?" asked the young girl, eagerly. "Take your husband and the little boy to a place in the country. I am sure I could get you a nice house at Redwood, and your husband would be away from temptation —"

"My husband is no worse than other men," said Nellie, shortly. "Do I look like a girl that could bury herself in the country? No: give me New York, if I *am* poor. I didn't intend to ask your opinion about the country; but I've always heard that you had common-sense. Who ought a man to stick to — his wife or his sister? Who is his best friend?"

"His wife," said Eleanor, with a pitying glance at Mary's white face.

"Well, Miles, what do you say?"

"I'm with you, Nell," Miles answered. "You're right about Mary. If she had kept a curb on me, and not pretended to believe my lies — some of 'em were whoppers! — when I wanted money, I'd not be in this fix to-day."

"Now!" said Nellie, looking at Mary with sparkling eyes.

Mary rose, kissed little Miles on the forehead, and went out, without looking at her brother. Had she deserved this? Her heart was very sore. After all the patient watching, all the sacrifices, all the love, it had come to this. She went back, past Eleanor who was at the door, and put her hand on the child's head; she looked at Nellie appealingly, and said in a low voice:

"If this little child ever needs —"

"A mother?" said Nellie, mockingly. "He'll have one as long as I live, and I'm not of the dying kind. I'd rather have him go to an asylum than have your kind of bringing up."

When the two women reached the vestibule, Mary turned her tear-filled eyes to Eleanor. "Was she right?"

Eleanor hesitated. "I don't exactly know;" and then, with more courage, "but I am afraid it sounded as if she was."

Mary was silent; she had learned her lesson at last.

XXX.

> Not fear
> Can bow when all looks drear,
> Nor hope — when skies are clear —
> Can buoy
> The heart that reigns sedate.
> Only to trust and wait,
> Through early days and late. . . .
>
> — *R. Howley.*

ELEANOR glided, as it were, into the Church. She found herself one day, with the rosary in her hand, before the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and it seemed to her as if the prayers she said had been breathed to her in some long-forgotten time. The "Hail Mary" was not new to her, though she had never said it before in her life. For the last week before her conditional baptism, she had been much with Sister Raphael, who managed the girls' school in the parish; and, under her guidance, Eleanor serenely drew near her "home," as she called it. Besides, she had a glimpse into the inner life of some of those people whom she had pitied so greatly on the night of her visit to Father Jackson's clients. At first it had seemed to her that the Sisters were not doing enough; and so fervent was her interest that, during the week after she had been received into the Church, she spent nearly all her time with the Sisters in their school. She was sure that she could teach little children, even if she could not paint good pictures.

"And I think," said Sister Raphael smiling, "that St. Charles Borromeo, when he began his Sunday-school, did a greater work in the world than Raphael, — not *my* Raphael the angel, but Raphael the artist."

This rather shocked Eleanor at first, but after a time she saw what the Sister meant.

Belinda took her conversion with great tearing up of the soul; she was inclined to be rigorous, and her general confession produced an agony of mind which frightened Eleanor. This once over, Belinda found, as she said, that her new "religion fitted her like a glove." She longed for controversial contests, and hoped daily that she might meet Mr. Stokes or Mrs. Howard Sykes in a New York street, and give him or her battle. She never quite got over her distrust for the Sisters. Maria Monk's revelations, which she had read in early youth, clung to her mind, and she shook her head sadly when Eleanor talked of the admirable work of the Sisters.

"There are some things I can't understand in the Church, and I suppose I never shall; and these are why she approves of nuns, and why she lets her priests go about with holes in their handkerchiefs, like that poor Father Jackson," she said, in moments of confidence. She had not made up her mind as to her future yet, although the people in Mary Fitzgerald's kitchen wished she would; for the traditional Redwood ways of housekeeping were not theirs.

The Judge's death had changed Eleanor, not outwardly, but in heart and mind. She often wondered that she could smile at all, and yet many things gave her pleasure. But she never forgot her sorrow for an hour; still her feeling could hardly be called sorrow. There seemed to be a wound in her heart, which ached at times with a dull, physical aching. She would not have brought her father back again if she could; but if she could only see him, only look into his eyes for a moment, the pain, she thought, would grow less. There is some special link that binds father and daughter together; and Eleanor had been so near her father always, that in her case the bond was even closer. She felt that she had much to regret; she felt that she had taken his love too much as a matter of course, and had not been grateful enough for it. But she could make up for it now: she could stretch her hands out to him; she could pray for him; she could clasp on this side "the golden chain which binds the whole round world about the feet of God." Her grief did not paralyze her: it gave her new motive for good works; since each, offered to God, could help the soul of the departed.

Mary was not at all jealous of Eleanor's attention to Sister Raphael; she was glad to be left alone for a time, for the last interview with Miles and Nellie had cut her to the heart. She had passed out of Miles' life; he was done with her. Nellie would have it so, and she had a right to make it so. Mary bore her punishment in silence and without an appeal for sympathy. She knew what Esther would say; she knew what to expect from Arthur; and Father Jackson was sternly practical. It was his opinion that the Galligans could and would take care of themselves, if they were let alone. About Eleanor's opinion she could conjecture from the few words she had dropped after the interview. Suddenly Mary awakened to the truth that she was sacrificing her happiness to the caprices of a thoroughly selfish man, — a man whom she had helped to make selfish. This latter revelation shocked her. She flew to the Jesuits at St. Francis', and sought out a priest who had often helped her. She told her trouble to him in the parlor. How could she make reparation for the harm she had done? A twinkle came into the old priest's eyes; he knew the family history.

"I know that the dear boy's faults have been brought about in some measure by my injudicious kindness. How can I repair the evil, Father?"

"By letting him alone," the priest answered;

"and by giving your whole thoughts to your husband, and not letting him have only one-fourth of them."

Mary felt that she did not deserve this. "By letting him alone!" she said in horror.

"Yes; my child. You have chosen your path; he has his."

Mary felt that her punishment was very hard but she resolved to bear it. And later, when she had boys of her own, she wisely applied the lesson she had learned to them. It was the best way, Arthur said, of making reparation to the human race for the existence of Miles, — but he did not say this aloud.

Sister Raphael was not only practical, but very spiritual-minded. It was this union of qualities that fascinated Eleanor; she had never met anything like it in her experience. It was a revelation to her to hear the Sister explain the meaning of the word "vocation."

"It is more beautiful than anything Emerson has said!" exclaimed Eleanor. "And have I, too, a vocation? Do you know, Sister, that I always looked on work as work to be done because it had to be done? But you glorify it. It seemed to me that my vocation was simply to be Eleanor Redwood. I never thought of living for the greater glory of God. Your talk is very serious, very consoling; to think as you think puts sunshine into the darkest days."

The Sister, who was walking up and down the long corridor of the school with Eleanor, during a a short recreation, smiled.

"You are growing more and more of a Catholic every day. It is a matter of evolution, though some converts seem to think they must find out all the beauty and strength and consolation of the Church at the outset. You are discovering new flowers every day."

Eleanor did not answer at once. "Of late," she said, "I have regretted the loss of fortune almost with passion, — only of late, — since I have understood how far John Longworthy's book falls short of showing how miserable the poor people in your tenement-houses are."

"All tenement-houses are not like those you have seen," remarked the Sister, pleased with the earnest look in Eleanor's eyes. "But some of them are blots on the civilization of the most civilized city in this land. You have lately helped us to teach the little children who come here; you have lived among them; you see how wretched some of them are; how neglected by beer-drinking mothers, how familiar with the worst side of life. Lilies, by a miracle, many of them are; but how terrible the condition of others."

"It is now," said Eleanor passionately, "that I *long* to be rich."

The Sister looked at her gravely, and paused to pluck a dead leaf from the pot of geranium that stood before the statue of Our Lady of Victory, at the end of the corridor.

"Oh! yes, Sister, I *long* to be rich."

"Do you think that money would make a man as devoted as Father Jackson, or pay women to do the work our Sisters do? Or that money will change the slipshod, drinking and gossiping woman into a careful housewife, making the most of what she has, and careful of the example she gives her children? Suppose you gave this woman a fine house and handsome appointments, do you think they would make her different? We must begin, my dear, with the children. But so long as the children remain with the parents in some of these slums, our progress is slow. We begin with the children, and sometimes the children change the parents. Money is useful, — it would be useful if there were enough of it to make some of these tenement houses habitable, and to keep outcasts of society — Chinese pagans and criminals — from mingling in daily intercourse with the virtuous and self-respecting. Money is not what we need most; we can give more than that to the service of God, as St. Francis of Assisi did: we can give ourselves. Could St. Francis have done what he did with money?"

The young girl felt for a moment that she was an outsider. Who was this St. Francis, of whom the Sister spoke as of a cherished friend?

"I don't know what St. Francis did," Eleanor said. "I wish I knew about him. But I think I understand what you mean. It is noble!"

To know more about this St. Francis became a great desire of Eleanor's. Sister Raphael gave her a little picture of the saint, — a brown-tinted little picture, in which the whole life of the emaciated and spiritual face was in the eyes, upturned towards the seraphic vision. Underneath was the ejaculation in German, "Hail! St. Francis of Assisi," and the verse, "Happy are thy clients when they learn to love poverty and the will of God!"

The saints seemed at first to Eleanor like far-off people. It was strange to hear Sister Raphael talk as if St. Joseph were at her elbow, and to see Mary Fitzgerald stop her occupation and beg St. Antony to help her find some lost article. Even Arthur, when in a serious mood, spoke of his favorite, St. Paul, as if he were living in the next house. It was a habit which these Catholics had from their earliest childhood; it had been part of their earliest education to live in the communion of saints. To a woman trained in a school in which the "communion of saints" is a mere phrase, this was the strangest thing of all.

Sister Raphael told Eleanor of St. Francis, and lent her the "Fioretti." Then she found Mrs. Oliphant's Life of her beloved Saint in the Mercantile Library; she devoured it but it did not quite satisfy her. She read every scrap she could find, in order to know more about this new friend of hers.

"There is nothing in English that satisfies me," she said to Sister Raphael. "I must learn Italian."

"Pray for his spirit, my dear," the Sister answered. "That will be better."

Like everybody in the little circle of which Father Jackson was the centre, Sister Raphael believed that Eleanor would marry Patrick Desmond, whose praises Arthur and Mary had so often sung. Sister Raphael was not of the world, but she lived in it unavoidably, and she did not disapprove of the match. She smiled a little to herself at Eleanor's fervor; she had known converts before who had been quite as exalted; it was her opinion that they needed gentle restraint and frequent dashes of cold water in the beginning. Eleanor, however, was so persistent and persevering that Sister Raphael caught herself wishing that the girl had a vocation for the religious life, though she said no word to influence her.

"I understand what St. Francis did *now*," said Eleanor one day, after a morning of prayer and meditation. "He gave himself entirely to God and God's poor. I could not fathom his mystical mission, but at the Offertory I asked for his spirit with all my heart; and, Sister Raphael, a new understanding came to me. Oh! I could never go back to my old life. I am cut off from it by a flood of light. Help me, Sister, to be like St. Francis: let me give myself to the poor, and be of the poor."

Sister Raphael looked at the upturned, earnest face, framed by the black veil of mourning, and said:

"Eleanor, are you free?"

"Free?" asked Eleanor, surprised. "I have no father to keep me bound in love."

"But is there no other?" pursued Sister Raphael. And, seeing Eleanor's puzzled look, she resolved to be entirely frank. "I have heard the name of Mr. Desmond mentioned—"

Eleanor smiled, much relieved. "He is a good man,—the best in the world, I think. But I never thought of him in the way you mean; and I am sure it was just his goodness that made him so kind to me."

Sister Raphael looked into her clear eyes; it was her turn to be puzzled. She kissed Eleanor on the forehead and bade her go to Father Jackson.

Somewhat later she returned to Sister Raphael, and waited for her until it was time to dismiss her class. The sister found her pale and grave, changed somewhat by the strain upon her mind;

and, as she looked up when the Sister entered, all the life in her face seemed to be in her eyes. Sister Raphael took Eleanor's hand in hers, and they had a long talk.

Somehow Eleanor disliked to break the news to the Fitzgeralds. She felt that Mary would, in her heart reproach her with cold-heartedness, and with too much enthusiasm, or with both. She faced them at dinner, looking with a certain tremor at Mary, over the bunch of mignonette in the centre of the table.

After dinner, while Arthur Fitzgerald dozed over his newspaper by the cheerful grate, and Mary played the "Traumerai" very softly, Eleanor thought over what Sister Raphael had said; and a strange, new gladness came into her heart.

"Mary!" she whispered.

Her companion looked at her, but did not stop her music.

"I want to tell you something. I am beginning to find my vocation."

Mary smiled and stopped abruptly. "I thought so. Had you a letter to-day? Oh! my dear, I hope you will be happy. But I am afraid there will be a long waiting."

"Do they make one wait long?" said Eleanor. "I did not ask Sister Raphael about details, but I have spoken to Father Jackson."

"Sister Raphael!"

"Yes; she told me about vocations. It was lovely; it was satisfying. If they will let me, Mary, I will become a Sister."

Mary looked at the young girl in astonishment. Then she smiled and began the "Traumerai" again.

"This music is appropriate, — dreams, my dear; dreams. You converts are always at fever heat."

"I am sure I am not dreaming," said Eleanor, seriously. Mary, noticing the expression of her face, ceased playing again, and waited with anxiety. "It may be presumption on my part, but it is not a dream; at least, it is a hope."

"And what is to become of Mr. Desmond?" asked Mary, with a tinge of censure in her voice. "Eleanor, I thought you liked him."

"Of course I liked him, — of course I like him; he is a good and brave man; and whenever I have met him I have felt there was more goodness and bravery in him than he shows. He was the first really religious man I ever met. I believe that it was the unconscious influence of his sincerity that caused me to begin to think, and to throw away a lot of nonsense."

"And you will give him up?" demanded Mary.

"Give him up!" repeated Eleanor, in some doubt. "Oh!" she continued, with a slight laugh, "I see what you mean. How can I give him up? "He never —" and the girl laughed again, — "he never *asked* me. I don't believe he ever thought of such a thing."

Arthur raised his head from his paper to look toward the corner from which the ripple of laughter came.

"Ah! Miss Redwood," he said, "you are lighthearted, and yet here I see that the Fly-Away stock is out of the market. I can understand it; for Desmond writes that capitalists refuse to risk anything in the reclaiming of the mines. And yet you laugh. If I were in your place — if Desmond had sold me the shares — I should not laugh, I assure you."

Arthur buried himself in his paper.

"I thought Mr. Desmond spoke to you the other day in the parlor," said Mary, in a low tone.

"He did, but not in that way. I'm sure he never thought of me. How can you be so foolish? I declare, I think all married people are inveterate matchmakers."

Mary looked at her reproachfully. "I *know* Patrick Desmond is in love with you."

Eleanor's color rose. "It is impossible! You like me, and you fancy everybody else does. I admit that I like him; but," she said, in a graver voice, "I like him because of the goodness religion has fostered in him."

"I hope that he has *some* natural virtues," observed Mary sarcastically.

"Don't let us talk about him," Eleanor said. "If he did like me in the way you mean, I should not marry him. I see the shining of a great Light in him: why should not I choose the great Light itself? Why should I espouse the servant when the higher Spouse, Our Lord, awaits me?"

"Sister Raphael has been talking to you. Really, my dear Eleanor, you are very selfish," said Mary.

Eleanor smiled, and no reproaches could induce her to continue the conversation.

XXXI.

"Without fear and without reproach."

DESMOND, at Eaglescliff, had struggled against all probabilities to interest capitalists in the restoration of the mines. He spared neither time nor pains. It was useless: the mines were dead — for a long time at least. The lake, on the night of the storm, had done its work thoroughly, and restless water filled their innermost recesses. Experts, who had been hopeful after the first flood, gave opinions that seemed ultra-conservative to Desmond. For three weeks he worked harder than he had ever worked in his life. People said that he was a "trump"; hard-headed speculators admired his pluck. The new traction car company, whose president had some stock in the Fly-Away, offered him a good place, which seemed to promise a future. This gave him hope. He accepted it; ran over to Redwood — where he would henceforth be stationed — to greet his mother, and then started for New York. His mother parted with him sadly. She kissed him wistfully over and over again. Why must mothers love their sons, and yet they see them go farther and farther away as each day brings their boys greater strength? It was right, of course, that her son should seek a wife; and yet, in spite of reason and right, Mrs. Desmond's heart was sore.

Patrick's ride to New York did not occupy many hours. It seemed to him as if it took him through a century, as thickly studded with hopes and fears as a Northern forest with pine trees. He knew he had little to offer Eleanor Redwood; he felt utterly unworthy of her. How dared he think of her as sharing his struggles? How dared he offer her — a princess among women — a humble home? He became timid and brave in a breath. He had been dreaming; he had been living in a fool's paradise; he had built a bridge of rainbows, simply because his hopes were rainbow tinted. He would get out at the next station and turn back, — but still he kept on.

The Fitzgeralds were in their cheerful sitting-room, which he could see between the curtains, as he was shown into the drawing-room. The light of the reading-lamp was tempered by a soft, glowing shade; the sound of music struck his ear, and Mary's laugh, as Arthur tried to reach a high note. Was Eleanor there? Would he soon see her? Desmond's heart beat fast. In a moment the curtains would part, and he would behold her whom he acknowledged as the most worthy woman of all the world.

The curtains parted: Mary Fitzgerald entered with his card in her hand. The gas was rather low. Mary gave his face a quick glance, and turned the key of the gas-fixture; the light blazed. Patrick saw that she was embarassed. A fear seized him.

"Is anything the matter? Has anything happened to — to —"

He became aware that his question was more frank than conventional; he hesitated.

"I am sorry, Mr. Desmond," Mary said, nervously; "but Miss Redwood is not here. She left yesterday for the mother-house of the Sisters of Charity; she will become a postulant there."

Desmond did not move or speak. Mary clasped her hands. She afterwards said she had never seen a man in such distress.

"O, Mr. Desmond!" she cried, searching for some consolation, "she may change her mind, — girls often do."

"No, *she* never will; she is a woman — please let me go, replied Desmond, in a voice that sounded broken. "Excuse me to your husband; I must be alone for a time," he said, with a gesture toward the other room. "To-morrow I will see him."

He rose. Mary, with tears in her eyes, followed him to the door. He waved his hand slightly, and, without speaking, went out into the darkness.

"O, Arthur," said Mary, returning bathed in tears, "how hard-hearted she is. I could never have treated *you* that way."

"It wasn't your vocation," answered Arthur. "Halloo! why didn't Desmond wait? Never mind. Come play this accompaniment for me. Believe me, my dear, he'll get over it; and, between ourselves, I think they are both too self-willed and Quixotic to have been happy together. Now, *we* are different."

But Mary sat down and had a good cry before she played the accompaniment. How could Arthur be so heartless? And Eleanor? If Mary had only known it, Eleanor had almost forgotten Patrick Desmond, having, as she thought, satisfied her obligations to him when she had written him a cordial note of thanks, and sent him her father's gold-headed walking-stick.

Desmond went back to Redwood, after he had a long business talk with Fitzgerald. Arthur begged him to remain in New York; he might study law with him; there was a career open for him; he was honorable, he was energetic, he was clever; and Arthur liked him and would help him all he could. Desmond said that he must go; while his mother lived he must stay at Redwood. At least he could make *her* happy.

Later, when Jack Conlon was ordained, and through unusual good fortune, put in the place of the old pastor at Redwood, who was sent abroad for a rest, Desmond found his career at home. His own people, at Redwood, wanted a disinterested leader, who could keep them out of the political mire, and teach them their own strength and how to respect it. They found this leader in Patrick Desmond.

And his mother? Is she happy? Her boy is safe with her; but he is not the same; he is sadder and he has left his youth somewhere, He is not the impetuous, hot-tempered, outspoken boy of a year ago; and she regrets this. She has him back at home, but she cannot think, without a certain bitterness, of Eleanor Redwood. She does not know the circumstances of the case; he has never spoken about it; for, after all, he has nothing to tell. He had hoped — that was all.

Father Conlon was delighted to hear that Belinda was not permanently engaged when he entered the rather dilapidated pastoral house at Redwood. To the amazement of that town, and afterward to the terror of the insolent, she took her place as housekeeper for him. In this position she arose far above her own level; and even the haughty Mrs. Howard Sykes saluted her meekly, after having offered her a tract — once, only once! Belinda was never particularly fond of Patrick Desmond; but she looks on him as an injured man, and repents of her impulsive betrayal of the Redwood family secret to Laura Bayard; the more that she somehow fancies that Eleanor would have married Patrick if she had not done that wrong, — which the honest old soul makes satisfaction for as well as she can. She often declares that if she had not learned to do penance, she should have gone mad with remorse.

Nellie Galligan, with some assistance from Esther Longworthy, who was appealed to in the name of little Miley, opened a cigar shop in the Bowery, next to Bastien's old place. She prospers and grows rich. Miles wears old clothes and does such work as his wife requires him to do. He has neither money nor credit; and Nellie keeps him in that condition as a guarantee that he will not drink too much. She speaks of the past with regret; of her "reverses" with a sigh; of the Longworthys and Fitzgeralds with charity and resignation. She now leads a life that suits her — a bustling, managing life. And she will make a man of little Miles, for there is a great deal of good in Nellie, and her energy is tempered by experience.

The Baroness von Homburg and Mr. Stokes have become theosophists. The latter is too limp to think seriously; a belief in the *nirvâna* pays him. So he is looked on as inspired by the frequenters of the Baroness' esoteric circle, and he wears the robes of a Brahmin as he once wore his dust-coat. But he feels his degradation: he has never forgotten the night of the great storm, and the great sacrifice Desmond's religion obliged him to make. Sometimes when he passes the cathedral he longs to go in and find the secret of the awful grace that saved his former friend, under the greatest stress, from sin,—and yet he only longs,— he lacks courage.

One day, as Desmond and Father Conlon were standing by the road that led to the bridge at Redwood, a carriage with a blazing coat of arms passed them. The women in it, who were gorgeously attired, bowed to Desmond; the man in the front seat involuntarily took off his hat, and then, replacing it, scowled. These people were the Baroness and Mr. and Mrs. Bayard.

"The Bayards have bought the Judge's house, and will cut a wide swath here in Redwood," remarked Father Conlon. "They have grown wealthy in a short time. Those are fine horses, and how the whole thing glitters and shines."

Patrick Desmond flipped some dust off his coat, cast by the wheels of the Bayard carriage. His face changed for a moment, and then took on a pleasant expression. There was his mother on the other side, on her way home from a visit to the Blessed Sacrament; he lifted his hat and waved his hand to her.

The Bayard carriage turned again, with a glitter of silver and a jingle of chains; its occupants looked the other way as they passed.

"Is that success?" Desmond asked, smiling.

"You'll have to look in the dictionary," answered Father Conlon, laughing. "It is not what you or I call success. My boy, you are, in the sight of God, the most successful man I know."

As they strolled by the river bank, back of the Judge's house, as in the old days, Desmond recalled with a sudden pain the night he had seen Eleanor waiting in fear of ill news, and had given her a rosary. He wondered whether she had kept it or not. Certainly she must have prayed for him, since he had come to rejoice that she had found the highest vocation. He had heard of her profession, and after that no more; and he had asked of God that she might find all the joy of the spouse of Christ. His dream was gone. He wondered now how he could have built up his hope on such a slight foundation. He blushed when he thought of his presumption, and felt ashamed that Mary and Arthur, and even Belinda, had guessed his secret. After all, he thought it was only just that the noblest woman in this world should have chosen "the better part;" and he thanked heaven that he had never disturbed the serenity of that pure soul by a word of love.

Eleanor became to Desmond what Beatrice was to Dante — a creature above the world, endowed with all virtues; a mentor, a guide, the companion of his thoughts and the censor of them. He led an inner life, of which only his friend, Father Conlon caught glimpses. He rose step by step in the estimation of his fellow-men; his words carried weight, his name was synonymous with the most scrupulous honesty. And each step he took upward was a step for all the young men of his blood in Redwood, until it was the ambition of those he influenced, not to be rich at all hazards, but to be honest at all hazards. He accomplished this at the cost of many sacrifices, and some people declared he was a fool. Desmond knew what is said of every man with a purpose, and it did not trouble him. If he had followed the ethics of business, common in Redwood, he might have had a carriage like Harry Bayard; — there, for instance, was that contract for the sewers, when Desmond was in the Redwood town council, — but that is a long story.

Sometimes the old craving for wealth came back, and for a moment he saw himself at the telephone on the night of the great storm, with the terrible alternative of that occasion before him. The vision cured him. If he had succumbed he would now be the greatest failure on earth — a man who had sold his conscience and his soul.

His disappointment, bitter while it lasted, had made him grave, and men took his reserve for pride in his immaculate reputation. But there was too much fear in his heart for pride to find a lodging place. However, this reserve, tempered by a tolerance, which the memory of his keen temptation led him to extend to others who had fallen, was a great part of the influence he wielded.

There came a time when all Father Conlon's hopes concerning his people in Redwood were realized. Self-respect had forced out the idleness and thriftlessness which self-indulgence had fostered. Saturday night was no longer a *saturnalia* by the riverside, when the whiskey shops consumed the week's earnings. Father Conlon's people had learned that they were bound to let their light shine clear before men; and that a stain on them meant, in the eyes of their unbelieving neighbors, a stain on the Church they loved more than life. They did not indulge in polemics, but tried to live so that the glow of faith shone in their acts. Many times Father Conlon thanked Desmond, with tears in his eyes, for having helped by his example to make this possible.

Desmond never attained what the world calls success: he never became rich; he always lived in the little town that gave him birth. And yet, when he looked at his dear old mother, and felt in his heart he could say that her earliest prayers over his cradle had been answered, he knew that he had succeeded; for the first prayer of every good mother is that her son may be an honest man.

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