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A RECONSTRUCTED MARRIAGE

BY
AMELIA E. BARR

FRONTISPIECE BY
Z. P. NIKOLAKI



NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY
1910

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**TO
MY DEAR FRIEND
MRS. HARRY LEE
THIS BOOK
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED**



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A RECONSTRUCTED MARRIAGE

CHAPTER I

A PROSPECTIVE MOTHER-IN-LAW

As it was Saturday morning, Mrs. Traquair Campbell was examining her weekly accounts and clearing off her week's correspondence; for she found it necessary to her enjoyment of the Sabbath Day that her mind should be free from all worldly obligations. This was one of the inviolable laws of Traquair House, enunciated so frequently and so positively by its mistress, that it was seldom violated in any way.

It was therefore with fear and uncertainty that Miss Campbell ventured to break this rule, and to open softly the door of her mother's room. No notice was taken of the intruder for a few moments, but her presence proving disastrous to the total of a line of figures which Mrs. Campbell was adding, she looked up with visible annoyance and asked:

"What do you want, Isabel? You are disturbing me very much, and you know it."

"I beg pardon, mother, but I think the occasion will excuse me."

"What is the occasion?"

"There is something in my brother's room that I feel sure you ought to see."

"Could you not have waited until I had finished my work here?"

"No, mother. It is Saturday, and Robert may be home by an early train. I think he will, for he is apparently going to England."

"Going to England, so near the Sabbath? Impossible! What set your thoughts on that track?"

"His valise is packed, and directed to Sheffield; but I think he will stop at a town called Kendal. He may go to Sheffield afterwards, of course."

"Kendal! Where is Kendal? I never heard of the place. What do you know about it?"

"Nothing at all. But in going over the mail, I noticed that four letters with the Kendal post-office stamp came to Robert this week. They were all addressed in the same handwriting—a woman's."

"Isabel Campbell!"

"It is the truth, mother."

"Why did you not name this singular circumstance before?"

"It was not my affair. Robert would likely have been angry at my noticing his letters. I have no right to interfere in his life. You have—if it seems best to do so."

"Have you told me all?"

"No, mother."

"What else?"

"There is on his dressing table, loosely folded in tissue paper, an exquisite Bible."

"Very good. Robert cannot have The Word too exquisitely bound."

"I do not think Robert intends this copy of the Word for his own use. No, indeed!"

"Why should you think different?"

"It is bound in purple velvet. The corner pieces are of gold, and a little gold plate on the cover has engraved upon it the word *Theodora*. Can you imagine Robert Traquair Campbell using a Bible like that? It would be remarked by every one in the church. I am sure of it."

Mrs. Campbell had dropped her pencil and had quite forgotten her accounts and letters. Her hard, handsome face was flushed with anger, her tawny-colored eyes full of calculating mischief, as she demanded with scornful passion:

"What is your opinion, Isabel?"

"I can only have one opinion, mother. You know on what occasion a young man gives such a Bible. I am compelled to believe that Robert is engaged to marry some woman called *Theodora*, who lives probably at Kendal."

"He can not! He shall not! He must marry Jane Dalkeith,—Jane, and no other woman. I will not permit him to bring a stranger here, and an Englishwoman is out of all consideration. *Theodora, indeed! Theodora!*" and she flung the three words from her with a scorn no language could transcribe.

"It is not a Scotch name, mother. I never knew any one called *Theodora*."

"Scotch? the idea! Does it sound like Scotch? No, not a letter of it. There were never any *Theodoras* among the Traquairs, or the Campbells, and I will not have any. Robert will find that out very quickly. Why, Isabel, Honor is before Love, and Honor compels Robert to marry Jane Dalkeith. Her father saved Robert's father from utter ruin, and I believe Jane holds some claim yet upon the Campbell furnaces. It has always been understood that Robert and Jane would marry, and I am sure the poor, dear girl loves Robert."

"I do not believe, mother, that Jane could love any one but herself; and I feel sure that if the Campbells owed her money, she would have collected it long ago. Why do you not ask Robert about the money? He will know if anything is owing."

"Because Scotch men resent women asking questions about their business. They will not answer them truly; often they will not answer them at all."

"Ask Jane Dalkeith herself."

"Indeed, I will not. When you are as old as I am, you will have learned to let sleeping dogs lie."

"Will you go and look at the Bible?"

"It is not likely I will be so foolish. Surely you do not require to be told that Robert left it there for that purpose. He has his defence ready on the supposition that I will ask him about this *Theodora*. On the contrary, he shall bring the whole tale to me, beginning and end, and I shall make the telling of it as difficult and disagreeable as possible."

"I am afraid I have interfered with your Saturday's duties, mother; but I thought you ought to know."

"As mother and mistress I ought to know all that concerns either the family or Traquair House. I will now finish my examinations and correspondence. And Isabel, when Robert comes home, ask him no questions, and give him no hint as to what has been discovered. I am very angry at him. He ought to have told me about the woman at the very beginning of the affair; and I should have put a stop to it at once. It might have been more easily managed then than it will be now."

"Can you put a stop to it at all, mother?"

"Can I put a stop to it?" she cried scornfully. "I can, and I will!"

"Robert is a very determined man."

"And I am a very positive woman. At the last and the long, in any dispute, the woman wins."

"Sometimes the man wins."

"Nonsense! If he does win now and then, it is always a barren victory. He loses more than he gains."

"I don't wish to discourage you, mother, but Robert is gey stubborn, and I feel sure that in this case he will take his own way, and no other person's way."

"I desire you not to contradict me, Isabel." She turned to her papers, lifted her pencil, and to all appearance was entirely occupied by her bills and letters. Isabel gave her one strange, inexplicable look ere she left the room, shutting the door this time without regard to noise and with something very like temper.

In the corridor she hesitated, standing with one foot ready to descend the stairs, but urged by a variety of feelings to take the upward flight which led to her own and her sister Christina's rooms. At present she was "out" with Christina, and they had not spoken to each other, when alone, for three days. But now the pleasure of having something new and unusual to tell, the desire to talk it over, and perhaps also a modest little wish to be friends with her sister, who was

her chief confidant and ally, induced her to seek Christina in her room.

She knocked gently at the door, and Christina said in an imperative voice, "Come in." She thought it was one of the maids, and Christina wasted no politeness on any one, unless manifestly to her own interest or pleasure. But Isabel understood the curt permission was not intended for her, and, opening the door, went into the room. Christina, who was reading, lifted her eyes and then dropped them again to the book. For she was amazed at her sister's visit, and knew not what to say, priority of birth being in English and Scotch families of some consequence. In their numerous disagreements Christina had never expected Isabel to make the first advances towards reconciliation. Almost without exception she had been the one to apologize, and she had been thinking about ending their present trouble when Isabel visited her.

For a few minutes she was undecided, but as Isabel took a comfortable chair and was evidently going to remain, Christina realized that her elder sister had made a silent advance, and that she was expected to speak first. So she laid down her book, and pushing a stool under Isabel's feet, said in a fretful, worried voice:

"I am so glad to see you, sister. I have been very unhappy without your company. You know I have no friend but you. I am sorry I spoke rudely to you. Forgive me!"

"Christina, we are the world to each other. No one else seems to care anything about us, and it is foolish to quarrel."

"It was my fault, Isabel. I ought to have known you were not wearing my collar intentionally."

"Why should I? I have plenty of collars of my own. But we will not go into explanations. It is better to agree to forget the circumstance."

"Life is so lonely without you, and our little chats with each other are the only pleasure I have. I wonder if there is, in all Glasgow, a house so dull as this house is."

"It will soon be busy and gay enough. Things are going to be very different in Traquair House. They may not effect our lives much—it is too late for that, Christina—but we shall have the fun of watching the rows there are sure to be with mother. Bring your chair near to me. I have a great secret to tell you."

As they sat down together it was impossible to avoid noticing how much they resembled each other personally. Nature had intended both of them to be beautiful, but their obtuse, grieved faces had been marred in early years by the disappointments, sorrows, and tragic mistakes of the children of long ago; and later by their pathetic acquiescence in their ill-assorted fates, and the cruel certainty of youth gone forever, without the knowledge of youth's delights. Isabel was now thirty-three years old, and Christina twenty-eight, and on their dark faces, and in their sombre, black eyes, there was a resentful gloom; the shadow of lives that felt themselves to be blighted beyond the power of any good fortune to redeem.

The two sisters had lost hope early, and for this weakness they were partly excusable, since they had the most crushing and unsympathetic of mothers. Mrs. Campbell was a woman of iron constitution, iron nerves, and principles of steel. She was never sick, and she was angry if her children were sick; she met every trouble with fight, she was contemptuous to those who wept; she was never weary, but she made life a burden to all under her sway.

In another way their father had been still more unfortunate to them. Intensely vain and arrogant, he had inherited a large business which he had not had the ability or the intelligence to manage. When he had nearly ruined it, the generosity of a distant relative—jealous for the honor of the name—came to the rescue; but he placed over all other authority a manager who knew what he was doing, and who was amenable to advice. Then Traquair Campbell, unwilling to acknowledge any superior, became a semi-invalid; and retired to a seclusion which had no other duty than the indulgence of his every whim and desire, making his two daughters the handmaids of his idle, self-centred hours. Year after year this slavery continued, and their youth, beauty, and education, their hopes, pleasures, and even their friends, were all demanded in sacrifice to that dreadful incarnation of Self, who made filial duty his claim on them. It was scarcely two years since they had been emancipated by his death, and the terror of the past and the shadow of it was yet over them.

Such treatment would have soured even good dispositions, but the nature of both these girls was as awry by inheritance, as their destiny in regard to parental influence and environment had been tragically unfortunate. Only the loftiest or the sweetest of spirits could have dominated the evil influences by which they were surrounded, and turned them into healthy and happy ones. And neither Isabel nor Christina knew the uplifting of a lofty ideal, nor yet the gentle power of the soft word and the loving smile.

Sitting close together and moved by the same feelings, their physical resemblance was remarkable. As before said, Nature had intended them to be beautiful. Their features were regular, their hair abundant, their eyes dark and well formed, their figures tall and slender, but they lacked those small accessories to beauty without which it appears crude and undeveloped. Their faces were dull and uninteresting for want of that interior light of the soul and intellect without which "the human face divine" is not divine—is indeed only flesh and blood. Their abundant hair was badly cared for, and not becomingly arranged; their figures, in spite of tight lacing, badly managed and ungracefully clothed; their eyes, though dark and long-lashed, carried

no illumination and were only expressive of evil or bitter emotions; they knew not either the languors or the sweet lights of love or pity. Isabel and Christina had slipped about sick rooms too much; and they had been too little in the busy world to estimate themselves by comparison with others, and so find out their deficiencies.

This morning their likeness to each other was accentuated by the fact that they were dressed exactly alike in dark brown merino, with a narrow band of white linen round their throats. Each had fastened the linen band with a gold brooch of the same pattern, and both wore a small Swiss watch pinned on her plain, tight waist.

Isabel reclined in her chair, and as she knew all there was to know at present, a faint smile of satisfaction was on her face. Christina sat upright, with an almost childish expression of expectation.

"What do you know, Isabel?" she asked impatiently. "How, or why, are things going to be different in Traquair House?"

"Because there is to be a marriage in the family."

"A marriage! Is it mother? Old lawyer Galt has been very attentive lately."

"No, it is not mother."

"Then it is Robert?"

Isabel nodded assent.

Christina's eyes filled with a dull, angry glow, and there were tears in her voice, as she cried:

"If that is so, Isabel, I will leave Traquair House. I will not live with Jane Dalkeith. She is worse than mother. She would count every mouthful we ate, and make remarks as nasty as herself."

"Exactly. That would be Jane's way; but I am led to believe Robert will never marry Jane Dalkeith."

"Who then is he going to marry? I never heard of Robert paying attention to any girl."

"I have found out the person he is paying attention to."

"Who is it, Isabel? Tell me. I will never mention the circumstance."

"Her name is Theodora."

"What a queer name—Miss Theodora. Do you know, it sounds like a Christian name; it surely can not be a surname."

"You are right. I do not know her surname."

"How did you find it out—I mean Robert's love affair?"

Isabel described the discovery of the velvet-bound Bible while Christina listened with greedy interest. "You know, Christina," she added, "that a young man on his engagement always gives the girl a Bible."

"Yes, I know; even servant girls get a Bible when they are engaged. Our Maggie and Kitty did; they showed them to me. Do the men swear their love and promises on them?"

"I should not wonder. If so, a great many are soon forsworn!"

"Is that all you know, Isabel?"

"Four times this week she has written to Robert. I saw the letters in the mail."

"Love letters, I suppose?"

"No doubt of it."

"How immodest! Do you know where she lives?"

"At a town called Kendal."

"I never heard of the place. Is it near Motherwell? Robert often goes to Motherwell."

"It is in England."

"Oh, Isabel, you frighten me! An Englishwoman! Whatever will mother say? How could Robert think of such a dreadful thing! What shall we do?"

"I see no occasion for us either to say or to do. There will be some grand set-tos between mother and Robert. We may get some amusement out of them."

"Mother will insist on Robert giving up the Englishwoman. She will make him do it."

"I do not think she will be able. Mind what I say."

"Robert has been under mother all his life."

"That is so, but he will make a stand about this Theodora, and mother will have to give in. He is now master of the works, and you will see that he will be master of the house also. He will take possession of himself, and everything else. I fancy we shall all find more changes than we can imagine."

"I don't care if we do! Anything for a change. I am almost weary of my life. Nothing ever happens in it."

"Plenty will happen soon. Robert has a way of his own, and that will be seen and heard tell of."

"He will not dare to counter mother very much. She will talk strict and positive, and hold her head as high as a hen drinking water. You know how she talks and acts."

"I know also how Robert will take her talking. I have seen Robert's way twice lately."

"What is his way?"

"A dour, cold silence, worse than any words—a silence that minds you of a black frost."

Having finished her story Isabel looked at her watch, and said: "I'll be going now, Christina, and you can think over what is coming. We be to consider ourselves in any change. I am almost sure Robert will be home to-day at one o'clock, for if I am not mistaken, it will be the Caledonian Railway Station at three o'clock. That train will land him in Kendal about eight o'clock, just in time to drink a cup of tea with Theodora, and have a stroll after it. There is a full moon to-night."

"How did you find out about Kendal?"

"Bradshaw; I suppose he knows."

"Of course, but it will be late Saturday night when Robert arrives, and surely he will not think of making love so near the Sabbath Day. I would not believe that of him, however much he likes Theodora."

"A handsome young Master of Iron Works can make love any day he pleases; even Scotchwomen would listen gladly to what he had to say. I think I would myself."

"I would, but it might be wrong, Isabel."

"I don't believe it would; anyway I would risk it."

"So would I; but neither of us will be led into the temptation."

"I fear not. Now I will be stepping downstairs. I have no more to say at present and I should not like to miss Robert."

"We are friends again, Isabel?"

"We are aye friends, Christina. Whiles, there is a shadow between us, but it is only a shadow—nothing to it but what a word puts right. There is the lunch bell."

"I had no idea it was so late."

"Let us go down together. I hate the servants to be whispering and snickering anent our little terriveses."

They had scarcely seated themselves at the table when Robert entered the room. He was a typical Scot of his order—tall, blonde, and very erect. His eyes were his most noticeable feature; they were modern eyes with that steely point of electric light in them never seen in the older time. The lids, drawn horizontally over them, spoke for the man's acuteness and dexterity of mind, and perhaps also for his superior cunning. He was arrogant in manner, a trait either inherited or assumed from his mother. In disposition he was kindly disposed to all who had claims on him, but these claims required to be brought to his notice, for he did not voluntarily seek after them. He certainly had humanity of feeling, but of the delicacies and small considerations of life he was very ignorant.

As yet he was commonplace, because nothing had happened to him. He had neither lost money, nor broken down in health, nor been unfairly treated or unjustly blamed. He had never known the want of money, nor the necessity for work; he had lost nothing by death and was only beginning to gain by loving. In the eyes of all who knew him his conduct was blameless. He was very righteous, and a great stickler for morality and all respectable conventions; so much so, that even if he should sin, it would be done with a certain decorum. But spiritually his soul lived in a lane—the narrow lane of a bigoted Calvinism.

This morning he was in high spirits, and inclined to be unusually talkative. But it was not until the meal was nearly over that he said: "There will be a new preacher in our church to-morrow morning. I am sorry I shall not be able to hear him. Dr. Robertson says he has a wonderful gift in expounding the Word."

"When did you see the doctor?" asked Mrs. Campbell.

"This morning. He called at my office on a little matter of business."

"And why will you not hear the new preacher?"

"I am going to England by the three o'clock train, mother."

At this answer Isabel looked at Christina, and Mrs. Campbell said: "I suppose you are going to Sheffield?"

"Yes, I shall go to Sheffield."

"You go there a great deal."

"It belongs to my duty to go there."

With these words he suddenly became—not exactly cross—but reserved and ungracious. His mother's words had betrayed her. As soon as she remarked on the frequency of his visits to Sheffield, he knew that she was aware of the facts that she had positively asserted she would not name, and he divined her intention to put him in the position of one who confesses a fault or acknowledges a weakness. He retired immediately into the fortress of his manly superiority. He was not going to be put to catechism by a cabal of women, so he hastily finished his lunch and rose from the table.

"When will you return, Robert?" asked his mother.

"In a few days. You had better give liberally to the church collection to-morrow—paper or gold—silver from you will be remarked on." He opened the door to these words, and, turning a moment, said "good-bye" with a glance which included every one in the room.

Silence followed his exit. Mrs. Campbell cut her veal chop into minute strips, which she did not intend to eat; Isabel crumbled her bread on her plate, lifted her scornful eyes a moment, and then began to fold her napkin; Christina took the opportunity to help herself to another tartlet. It was an uncomfortable pause, not to be relieved until Mrs. Campbell chose to speak or rise. She continued the purposeless cutting of her food, until Isabel's patience was worn out, and she asked: "Shall I ring the bell, mother?"

"No, I have not finished my lunch; you can safely bide my time. Christina, pass me a tart."

"Take two, mother. McNab makes them smaller every day. There is only a mouthful in two of them."

Mrs. Campbell took no notice of the criticism.

"Isabel," she said, "what do you think of Robert's behavior?"

"Do you mean the sudden change in his manner?"

"Yes."

"He had his own 'because' for it. I do not rightly comprehend what it could be, unless he suspected from your remark that you had seen the Bible, and were trying to lure him on to talk of Theodora."

"That is uncommonly likely, but I'm not caring if he did."

"Robert is very shrewd, and he sees through people as if they were made of glass."

"If he is going to marry the girl, why should he object to tell us about her? Is she too good to talk about? Such perfect unreasonableness!"

"He wished to tell us in his own time, and way, and thought a plot had been laid to force his confidence. Robert Campbell is a very suspicious man. He has a bad temper too. It is always near at hand, and short as a cat's hair. And he hates a scene."

"So do I. Goodness knows, I have always lifted myself above the ordinary of quarrelling and disputing. Not so, Robert. He investigates the outs and the ins of everything, and argues and argues about the most trifling matter; but I must say, he is always in the wrong. And he can keep his confidence as long as he wants to—the longer the better. I shall never give him another opportunity."

"It is a pity you offered him one this morning, mother."

"I do not require to be reminded, Isabel. The whole affair, as it stands, is an utterly unspeakable business. We will let it alone until we have more facts, and more light given us."

"Just so," answered Isabel.

"Mother," interrupted Christina, "what do you say about the new preacher and the collection?"

"I know nothing about the new preacher. Dr. Robertson has aye got some wonderfully gifted tongue in his pulpit, and all just to beguile the silver out o' your purse."

"Robert said we were not to give silver."

"You will each of you give a silver crown piece; that, and not a bawbee over it. As for myself, I am not going to church at all to-morrow. I am o'erfull of my own thoughts and trouble. God will excuse me, I have no doubt, for He knows the heart of a wounded mother."

"Do you know what the collection is for, mother?"

"The Foreign Missionary Fund. I have always been opposed to Foreign Missions. The conversion of the heathen is in God's wise foreknowledge, and He will accomplish it in His own way and time. It is not clear to me that we have any right to interfere with His plans."

"The world will come to an end when the heathen are converted," said Christina. "Dr. Robertson read us prophecies to prove it, and then will occur the Millennium, and the second coming of—"

"Hush, Christina!" cried Mrs. Campbell impatiently. "The world is a very good world, and suits me well enough in spite of Theodora, and the like of her. I hope the world will not come to an end while I live. As to the collection, you might each of you, as I said before, give a silver crown piece. It is enough. Young people are not expected to give extravagantly."

"We are not young people, mother."

"You are not married people. Women without husbands are not supposed to have money to give away; women with husbands don't often have it either, poor things!"

"The greatest of all calamities is to be born a woman," said Isabel, bitterly.

"Especially a Scotchwoman," added Mrs. Campbell. "I have heard that in the United States of America women are very honorably treated. Mrs. Oliphant, who is from New York, told me a respectable man always consulted his wife about his business, and his pleasure, and all that concerns him, 'and in consequence,' she added, 'they are happy and prosperous.'"

"I did not know Mrs. Oliphant was an American," said Isabel. "Mr. Oliphant comes from Inverness."

"Inverness men are *too far north* to be fools; and Tom Oliphant soon found out that his wife's judgment and good sense more than doubled his working capital. People say, 'Tom Oliphant has been lucky,' and so he has, because he had intelligence enough to take his wife's advice. But this is not a profitable or improving conversation, so near the Sabbath. I will go to my room for an hour or two, girls. I have much to think about."

She left them with an air of despondency, but her daughters knew she was not really unhappy. Some opposition to her supremacy she foresaw, but the impending struggle interested her. She was not afraid of it nor yet doubtful of its result.

"I know my own son, I hope," she whispered to herself, "and as for Theodora—*that* for Theodora!" And she snapped her fingers scornfully and defiantly.

Isabel and Christina followed their mother, taking the long, broad stairway with much slower steps. Their dull faces, listless tread, and monotonous speech were in remarkable contrast to the passionate eagerness of the elder woman, whose whole body radiated scorn and anger. As they began the ascent, the clock struck three, and Isabel looked at Christina, who answered her with a slight movement of the head.

"He is just leaving the Caledonian Station," she said.

"For Theodora," replied Christina bitterly.

"How I hate that name already!"

"And the girl also, Isabel?"

"Yes, the girl also. What has she to do in our family? The Campbells can live without her—fine!"

"I wonder if Mrs. Robertson will ask us to meet this new minister."

"I hope not. He will just be one of her 'divinity lads,' with his license to preach fresh in his pocket. They are all of them poor and sickeningly young. No man is fit to marry until he is forty years old, unless you want the discipline of training him."

"That is some of Mrs. Oliphant's talk, Isabel."

"Mrs. Oliphant knows what she is talking about, Christina."

"I wonder what you see in that American!"

"Everything I would like to be—if I dared."

"Why do you not call on her, then?"

"Mother does not approve either of her conversation, or her dress, Christina."

"Her dress is lovely. I wish I could dress like her."

"Christina Campbell! Her neck is shockingly uncovered, and her trains half fill a small room. Mother says her modesty begins at her feet—and stops there; but she is certainly very clever, and her husband waits on her like a lover. The men look at him as if they thought him a fool, but very likely he is the only wise man among them. What are you going to do this afternoon?"

"Dress and then unpick the work I did yesterday. It is all wrong."

"How interesting!"

"As much so as anything else. I should like to practise a little, but the piano is closed on Saturdays."

"That's all right. You always had a knack of playing unsuitable music on Saturdays."

"Mother makes two Sundays in a week. It isn't fair."

By this time they were on the corridor of the floor on which their rooms were situated, and as they stood at the door of Isabel's room, Christina said: "At eight o'clock to-night, I wish you would make a remark about Robert being with Theodora."

"Make it yourself, Christina."

"You know mother pays no attention to anything I say. You are the eldest."

But at dinner time Mrs. Campbell was in a mood so gloomy, that even Isabel did not care to remind her of her son's delinquency. She did not speak during dinner, and when tea was served she rose from the sofa with a sigh so portentous, it caused the footman to stand still in the middle of the drawing-room with the little silver kettle steaming in his hand. She took her own cup with a sigh, and every time she lifted it or put it down, she sighed deeply. Very soon Isabel began to sigh also, and Christina ventured timidly to express her feelings in the same miserable manner. But there was no spoken explanation of these mournful symptoms, unless they typified disapproval and sorrow beyond the reach of words.

As they sat thus with their teacups in their hands, a little clock on the mantel struck eight. Mrs. Campbell cast reproachful eyes upon it. "It reminds me, Isabel," she sighed; "you said eight o'clock, I think. My poor son! He is now entering the gates of temptation."

"I should not worry, mother. Robert is quite able to take care of himself."

Judging from the happy alacrity with which Robert left the train at Kendal Station, Isabel's opinion was well founded. He had no doubts about the road he was taking. He leaped into a cab, left his valise at the Crown Inn, and then rode rapidly down the long antique street to a pretty cottage standing with a church, or chapel, in a green croft surrounded by poplar trees.

The moon was full in the east, and the twilight still lingered in the west, and in that heavenly gloaming a woman walked lightly towards the little gate to welcome him. She had a tall, elastic, slender figure, and moved with swift, graceful steps; her white dress, in that shadowy mysterious light, giving her an ethereal beauty beyond description.

Robert took both her hands, kissed them passionately, and led her to a little rustic bench under the poplars. For a few moments they sat there, and he filled his eyes and heart with her loveliness. Then they went into the cottage and he found—as Isabel had predicted—that tea was waiting for him. Theodora's mother, a woman of scrupulous neatness, simple and unadorned, was sitting at the table; she smiled and gave him her hand, and he sat down beside her.

"How is Mr. Newton?" asked Robert.

"He is in his study," she answered. "He will be here in a few minutes. He does not wish us to wait for him."

Theodora was at Robert's right hand, and never before had he thought her beauty so bewildering. It had the magic of a countenance where the intellect was of a high order, and the perfect features were the portrait of a pure, translucent soul such as God loves. Her eyes transfigured her, but the process was not intentional. Her sensitive lips, her bright soft smile, her joyful heart, the fulness of her health and life, all these things were entrancing, and made still more so, by an unconsciousness sincere and natural as that of a bird, or a flower. Robert Campbell might well feel his unworthiness, and tremble lest so great a blessing should escape him.

In a short time Mr. Newton entered. He had a tall, intellectual figure, with the stoop forward and piercing glance of one straining after things invisible. A singular unearthliness pervaded the whole man, and his spare form appeared to be the suitable apparel for a pure and exalted spirit. Prayer was his native air. He prayed even in his dreams.

After some inquiries about the journey, the conversation turned naturally to the subject of preaching. Robert Campbell remarked that, "Sunday newspapers, Sunday magazines, and above all Sunday trips down the river, had in Glasgow greatly injured Sabbath observance and weakened the influence of the pulpit."

"No, no, sir!" cried the preacher; "books, papers, amusements, nothing, can take the place of sermons. The *face to face* element is indispensable. It is *the Word made Flesh* that prevails. As soon as a real preacher appears, what crowds follow him! Not to go back to the preachers of old, consider only Farrar, Liddon, Spurgeon, Hyacinthe, Lacordaire, and the great American Beecher. Think of Spurgeon for thirty years preaching twice every Sunday to six thousand souls!"

"Then you believe, sir, the influence of the pulpit depends on the preacher?"

"Yes. If there is a good intelligent man in the pulpit, there will be good intelligent men in the pews."

"Then you would have only highly-cultured, up-to-date men in the pulpit?"

"I would not have men in the pulpit whom no one would think of listening to, out of the pulpit. The people want sermons that bring the pulpit near to the hearth, the table, and the counter; sermons of homely fertility, local allusions, and personal application, such as Christ gave them. Remember for a moment His everyday similes and parables: the lighting of a candle, the seeking of a piece of lost silver, the search for the lost sheep. That is one kind of sermon that always draws hearers. There is another kind that is irresistible to a very large number—sermons full of the spirit of Paul, reaching out to the Heavenly Church with its invisible rites and the splendor and music in the soul of the saints."

There was a silence, for the preacher was pursuing his thoughts, leaning forward with a burning look, drinking in the joy of his own spiritual vision.

Robert broke the pause by saying: "We Scots are used to logical and argumentative discourses," but he spoke in a much lower tone than was usual to him.

"Then your preachers must talk to their congregations in the pulpit, as they never would think of talking to them out of it."

"Well, we are not in favor of mingling sacred and material things; we believe it might have a tendency to bring preaching into contempt."

"Mr. Campbell," said Newton, "preaching is a great example of the survival of the fittest. If it could have been killed by contempt, or inefficiency, or ignorance, or too much book learning, or by any other cause, the imbecile sermons preached every Sunday through the length and breadth of the land would have killed it long ago."

"Do you then consider oratorical power a necessity to preaching, sir?"

"No. Other power can take its place, such as great piety, great sincerity, the simplicity of the Gospel, or the personal character of the preacher. I once heard Newman preach. He was far from what we are accustomed to call eloquent. One long sentence was followed by another equally long, separated by a sharp fracture like the utterance of a primitive saint or martyr; but also like a direct message from heaven. And never, while I live, shall I forget the ecstasy of love and longing with which he cried out: 'Oh that I knew where to find Him! that I might come into His presence!' The church of St. Mary was crowded with young men, and I believe the heart of every one present burned within him, and he longed as I did, to fall down and kiss the feet of Christ."

Conversation akin to this sweetened the simple meal, and after it Robert and Theodora walked up and down the pretty lane running past the Chapel Croft. It had a hedge of sweet-briar which perfumed the warm, still air, and the full moon made everything beautiful, and Theodora loveliest of all. And though it was near the Sabbath, Robert did not hold his sisters' creed regarding love-making at that time. He could no more help telling Theodora how beautiful she was, and how he loved her excellencies and her beauty, than he could help breathing.

It was no new tale. He had told it to her ever since they first met. But this night he felt he must venture all, to win all. The light on her face, the sweet gentleness of her voice, the touch of her hand on his arm, all these things urged him to ask that question, which if asked from the heart, is never forgotten. Theodora answered it with a shy but loving honesty. The little word which made all things sure was softly spoken, and then the purple Bible was given, and clasping it between their hands, they made over it their solemnly happy promises of eternal love and faithfulness. And what conversation followed is not to be written down; it was every word of it in the delicious, stumbling patois of love.

The next morning Robert went to the Methodist Chapel with Theodora, but his Calvinism was in no degree prejudiced by the Arminian sermon, for he did not hear a word of it. He was listening to the tale of love in his heart, Theodora sat at his side, and he would not have changed places with the king on his throne. Love had thrown the gates of life wide open for the Queen of Love to enter in, and for the first time in all his thirty years of existence, he knew what it was to be joyful.

He left Kendal on Monday afternoon and went to Sheffield, and did much profitable business there. And he was so gay and good-natured that many thought they had misjudged him on former occasions, and that after all he was really a fine fellow. Others wondered if he had been drinking, and no one but a woman, the wife of one of his business friends with whom he dined, had the wit to see, and to say:

"The man is in love, and the girl has accepted him—poor thing!"

"Why 'poor thing,' Louise?"

"Because he will get out of love some day, and then——"

"Then, what?"

"He will be the old Robert Campbell, a little older, a little more selfish, a little more sure of his own infallibility, and a great deal worse-tempered."

"That will depend on the girl, Louise."

"And on circumstances! Generally speaking, women may write themselves circumstances' 'most obedient servants.' They can't help it."

In spite, however, of the disagreeable journey between Sheffield and Glasgow, Campbell reached

home in very good spirits. It was then four o'clock in the afternoon, and he resolved to sleep a couple of hours before seeing any one. He thought after dinner would be as good a time as any for the communication he had to make to his family. Something of a blusterer among men, he feared the woman he called mother. His sisters he had never taken seriously, but he remembered they would come close to Theodora, and that it might be prudent to have their good will. They certainly could make things unpleasant if they wished to do so.

He had always been able to sleep, on his own order to sleep, and was proud of the circumstance; but this afternoon he had somehow lost this control. Sleep would not obey his demand, yet he lay still, because he had resolved to spend two hours in bed; nevertheless he rose unrested, and decidedly anxious.

Dinner was served at seven, and he entered the dining-room precisely at that hour. His place was prepared for him, but the women knew better than to fret him with exclamations, or with inquiries of any kind. He was permitted to take his chair as silently as if he had never missed a meal with them. And though this behavior was in exact accord with his own desires, it did not suit him that night. He had seen a different kind of family life at the Newtons', and no man is so self-reliant as to find kind inquiries effusive and tiresome, if the kindness and interest is lavished on himself.

He was, however, good-tempered enough to praise the dinner, and to say "Scotch broth and good Scotch collops were pleasant changes from the roast beef of old England, her Yorkshire pudding and cherry pies." Mrs. Campbell smiled graciously at this compliment, and answered:

"I consider collops, Robert, as the most nutritive and delicious of all the ways in which beef is cooked. I attribute my good health to eating them so regularly, and though Jepson is constantly complaining of McNab's extravagance and ill-temper, I always say, 'I don't care, Jepson, what faults McNab has, she can cook collops.' Very few can make a good dish of collops, so I think I am right."

"Tell Jepson I say he is to let McNab alone. How did you like Dr. Robertson's last *protégé*?"

"I did not go to church. I was not well. The girls were there."

"What is your opinion, Isabel?"

"That he is very like the lave of the doctor's wonderfuls. Mrs. Robertson told us, he had astonished his college by the tenderness of his conscience and his spirituality; and when I asked her the particulars, she said he had utterly refused to study the Latin Grammar because it contained nothing spiritual. Greek and Hebrew, of course, for they were necessary to a right reading of the Scriptures; but the Latin Grammar had no spiritual relations with literature of any kind—far from it. From what he had been told it was both idolatrous and immoral in its outcome. I suppose he is from Argyle, for when there was talk of expelling him for not conforming to rules, he wrote to the Duke, and the great Duke stood by the lad, and complimented him on his tender conscience, and the like, and took him under his own protection—and so on. Mrs. Robertson is of the opinion, he may come to be the Moderator of the Assembly with such backing."

"And what do you think?"

"I would not wonder if he did. He has the conceit for anything, and he is a black Celt, and very likely has their covetous eye and greedy heart. He will get on, no doubt of it. Why not? The great Duke at his back, and himself always pushing to the front."

"I thought he was nice-looking," said Christina timidly. "His fine black eyes were fairly ablaze when he was preaching."

"He is a ferocious Calvinist," added Isabel.

"Well, he had fine eyes and was good-looking," persisted Christina.

"Good looks are nothing, Christina," said Robert severely. "Beauty is not a moral quality."

"People who are good-looking get on in this world. I notice that. I wish I was bonnie."

"You are well enough, Christina," said Mrs. Campbell. "If you cannot talk more sensibly, keep quiet."

Christina with a wronged, grieved look subsided, and Mrs. Robertson's reception for the conscientious youth, under the Argyle protection, furnished the conversation until the cloth was drawn, and the ladies had trifled awhile with their walnuts and raisins. Then Campbell rose, drank the glass of wine that had been standing before him, and said:

"I am going to the library to smoke half-an-hour. Then, mother, you and the girls will join me there. I have something important to tell you."

He did not wait for an answer, and his mother was furious at the request. "Did you notice his tone, Isabel?" she inquired. "His words sounded more like a command than a request. It is adding insult to injury to summon me to his room—for nobody goes to the library but himself—to hear the thing he has to tell. I shall go to my own room, and he can come there and tell me his important news."

"Mother, why not send for him to return here in half-an-hour?"

This proposal was acceptable, and in half-an-hour Jepson was sent with "Mrs. Campbell's compliments, and she hopes Mr. Campbell will return to the dining-room, as she feels unable to bear the smell of tobacco to-night."

Mr. Campbell uttered two words in a low voice which sounded like "Confound it!" but he bid Jepson tell Mrs. Campbell "he would return to the dining-room immediately." Upon hearing which, Mrs. Campbell took a reclining position on the sofa, and on her face there was the satisfied, close-mouthed smile of one who compliments herself on winning the first move.

CHAPTER II

PREPARING FOR THE BRIDE

Campbell returned to the dining-room pleasantly enough. He placed his chair at his mother's side, and asked: "Are you feeling ill, mother?"

"Rather, Robert, and the library is objectionable to me, since you began to smoke there. In fact, I have long been prejudiced against the room, for your father had a trick of sending for me to come there, whenever he was compelled to tell me of some misfortune. Consequently, I have associated the library with calamity, and I did not wish to hear your important news there."

"Calamity? No, no! My news is altogether happy and delightful. Mother, I am going to be married in October, to the loveliest woman in the world, and she is as good and clever as she is beautiful."

"Married! May I ask after the lady's name?"

"Theodora Newton. Her father is the Methodist preacher at Kendal, a town in Westmoreland."

"England?"

"Yes."

"She is an Englishwoman?"

"Of course!"

"I might have known it. I never knew a Scotchwoman called Theodora."

"It is a good name and suits her to perfection. Her father belongs to the Northumberland Newtons, a fine old family."

"It may be. I never heard of them. You say he is a Methodist preacher?"

"A remarkable preacher. I heard him last Sunday."

"Robert Campbell! Have you fairly forgotten yourself? Methodists are Arminians, and Arminians I hold in utter abomination, as every good Calvinist should."

"I know nothing about such subjects. This generation, mother, is getting hold of more tolerant ideas. But it makes no matter to me what creed Theodora believes in. I should love her just the same even if she were a Roman Catholic."

"A man in love, Robert, suffers from a temporary collapse o' good sense. But when I hear you say things like that, I think you are mad entirely."

"No, mother. I never was so happy in all my five senses as I am now. The world was never so beautiful, and life never so desirable, as since I loved Theodora."

"Doubtless you think she is a nonsuch, but I call your case one of lamentable self-pleasing. To the lures of what you consider a beautiful woman, you are sacrificing your noblest feelings and traditions. Don't deceive yourself. Was there not in all Scotland a girl of your own race and faith, good enough for you to marry?"

"I never saw one I wanted to marry."

"I might mention Jane Dalkeith."

"You need not. I would not marry Jane if she was the only woman in the world!"

"You prefer above all others an Englishwoman and a Methodist?"

"Decidedly."

"You have made up your mind to marry this doubly objectionable woman?"

"Positively, some time next October."

"And what is to become of me, and your sisters?"

"That is what I wish to understand."

"I have my dower-house in Saltcoats, but it is small and uncomfortable. If I go there, I shall have

to leave the Kirk I have sat in for thirty-seven years, the minister who is dear and profitable to me, all the friends I have in the world, and the numerous——"

"Mother, I wish you to do none of these things. This house is large enough for us all. The south half, which you now occupy, you can retain for yourself and my sisters. I shall refurnish, as Theodora desires, the northern half, and if you will continue the management of the house and table, we can all surely eat in our present dining-room. There will only be one more to cater for, and I will allow liberally for that in the weekly sum for your expenditure. Theodora is no housekeeper and does not pretend to be. She is immensely clever and intellectual, and has been a professor in a large Methodist College for girls."

"You will be a speculation to all who know you."

"I am not caring a penny piece. They can speculate all they choose to. I shall meanwhile be extremely indifferent. I have come at last, mother, to understand that in a great love there is great happiness. The whole soul can take shelter there."

"The soul takes shelter in nothing and in no one related to this earth. That is some of last Sabbath's teaching, I suppose."

"Yes," he answered. "I was at Theodora's side all last Sunday and I learned this lesson in the sweetest way imaginable."

"I wish you to talk modestly before your sisters, and I do not like to hear the Sabbath called Sunday."

Robert laughed and answered: "Well, mother, we have so little sunshine in Scotland, we really cannot speak of any day as Sunday."

"You may laugh, Robert, but such things are related to spiritual ordinances, and are not joking matters."

"You are right, mother. Let us get back to business. Will you accept my proposal, or do you prefer to go to your own home?"

"I have been used to consider this house my own home, for thirty-seven years, and if I leave it, I wonder what kind of housekeeping will go on in it, with a college woman to superintend things? You would be left to the servant lasses, and their doings and not-doings would be enough to turn my hair gray."

"Then, mother, you will stay here, as I propose?"

"I cannot do my duty, and leave."

"I thank you, mother." Then, turning to his sisters, he said: "I hope you are satisfied, girls."

"There is no other course for us," answered Isabel. "We must stay where mother stays. It would be unkind to leave her now—when you are practically leaving her."

"I hope Theodora will be nice," said Christina. "If she is, we may be happy."

"Do your best, Christina, to make all pleasant, and you will please me very much," said Robert. "And, Isabel, I am not leaving any of you. Marriage will not alter me in regard to my relationship to mother, yourself, and Christina. I promise you that."

"If you intend to make many alterations in the house, you will have to see about them at once," said Mrs. Campbell.

"To-morrow I shall send men to remove all the old furniture from the rooms I intend to decorate."

"To remove it! Where to?"

"To Bailey's auction rooms."

"Robert Campbell! Your poor, dear father's rooms, and he not gone two years yet!"

"To-morrow will be nine days short of the two years. Do you wish his rooms to remain untouched for nine days longer, mother?"

"It is no matter. Let his lounge, and his chair and his bagatelle board go—let all go! The dead, as well as the living, must make way for Theodora."

"And, mother, as the hall will be entirely changed, and there will be much traffic through it, you had better remove early in the morning those huge glass cases of impaled insects and butterflies. If you wish to keep them, take them to your rooms; if not, let them go to Bailey's."

"They may as well go with the rest. Your father valued them highly in this life, but——"

"They are the most lugubrious, sorrowful objects. They make me shudder. How could any one imagine they were ornamental?"

"Your father thought them to be very curious and instructive, and they cost a great deal of money."

"If during the night you remember any changes you would like to make, we can discuss them in

the morning," said Robert.

He went out gaily, and as he closed the door, began to sing:

*"My love is like a red, red rose,
That's newly blown in June;
My Love is like a melody,
That's sweetly played in tune."*

Then the library shut in the singer and the song, and all was silence.

Mrs. Campbell did not speak, and Isabel looked at her with a kind of contemptuous pity. She thought her mother had but lamely defended her position, and was sure she could have done it more effectively. Christina was simply interested. There was really something going to happen, and as far as she could see, the change in the house would bring other changes still more important. She was satisfied, and she looked at her silent mother and sister impatiently. Why did they not say something?

At length Mrs. Campbell rose from the sofa, and began to walk slowly up and down the room, and with motion came speech.

"I think, Isabel," she said, "I signified my opinions and desires plainly enough to your brother."

"You spoke with your usual wisdom and clearness, mother."

"Do you think Robert understood that I consider this house my house, and that I intend to be mistress in it? Why, girls, your father made me mistress here more than thirty-seven years ago. That ought to be enough for Robert."

"Robert is now in father's place," said Christina.

"Robert cannot take from me what your father gave me. This house is morally mine, and always will be, while I choose to urge my claim. I am not going to be put to the wall by two lovesick fools. No, indeed!"

"I think Robert showed himself very wise for his own—and Theodora's interests; and he would refute your moral claim, I assure you, mother, without one qualm of conscience."

"Refute me! He might as well try to refute the Bass rock. A mother is irrefutable, Isabel! But his conduct will necessitate us all using a deal of diplomacy. You do not require to be told why, or how, at the present time. I have a forecasting mind, and I can see how things are going to happen, but just now, we must keep a calm sound in all our observes, for the man is in the burning fever of an uncontrollable love, and clean off his reason—on the subject of that Englishwoman, he is mad entirely."

"I wonder what Dr. Robertson, and the Kirk, and people in general, will say?"

"What they will say to our faces is untelling, Isabel; what they will say when we are not bodily present, it is easy to surmise. Every one will consider Robert Campbell totally beyond his senses. He is. That creature in a place called Kendal, has bewitched him. As you well know, the prime and notable quality of Robert Campbell was, that he could make money, and especially save money. He always, in this respect, reminded me of his grandfather, whom every one called 'Old Economy.' Now, what is he doing? Squandering money on every hand! Expensive journeys for the sole end of love-making, expensive presents no doubt, half of Traquair House redecorated and refurnished, wedding expenses coming on, honeymoon expenses; goodness only knows what else will be emptying the purse. And for whom? An Englishwoman, a Methodist, a poor school-teacher. She will neither be to hold nor to bind in her own expenses; for coming to Traquair House will be to her like entering a superior state of existence, and she won't know how to carry herself in it. We may take that to be a certainty. But I think I can teach her! Yes, I think I can teach her!"

"How will you do it, mother?"

"I cannot exactly specify now. She will give me the points, and opportunities; and correcting, and advising, come most effectively from the passing events of daily life. As I said, she will give me plenty of occasions or I'm no judge of women—especially brides."

"You might be flustered if you were in a hurry and unprepared, mother, and miss points of advantage, or get more than you gave, but if you had a plan thought out——"

"No, no, Isabel! I have lived long enough to learn the wisdom of building my wall with the stones I find at the foot of it."

"Many a sore heart the poor thing will get!" said Christina, with an air of mock pity.

"We cannot say too much or go too far, while Robert is as daft in love as he is at present," continued Mrs. Campbell. "We must be cautious, and that is the good way—the bit-by-bitness is what tells; now a look, now a word, now a hint, there a suspicion, there a worriment, there a hesitation or a doubt. It is the bit-by-bitness tells! This is a forgetful world, so I mention this fact again. And remember also, that men are the most uncertain part of creation. I have known Robert Campbell thirty years and I have just found him out. He is a curious creature, is Robert. He thinks himself steady as the hills, but in reality he is just as unstable as water. Good-night,

girls! We will go for our sleep now, though I'm doubting if we get any."

"Theodora won't keep *me* awake," said Christina. Isabel did not speak then, but as they stood a moment at their bedroom doors, she said: "Mother is not to be trifled with. She is going to make Theodora trouble enough. I'm telling you."

"I don't care if she does! Anything for a change. Good-night!"

"Good-night! I do not expect to sleep."

"Perfect nonsense! Why should you keep awake for a woman in Kendal? Shut your eyes and forget her. Or dream that she brings you a husband."

"I'll do no such thing. That's a likely story!" and the two doors shut softly to the denial, and Christina's low laugh at it.

When the three women came down to breakfast in the morning, they found a dozen men at work dismantling the hall and the rooms on the north side of the house. The glass cases of insects and butterflies, and the old-fashioned engravings of Sir Robert Peel, Lord Derby, the Duke of Wellington, and Queen Victoria's marriage ceremony were just leaving the house. Mrs. Campbell, walking in her most stately manner, approached the foreman and began to give him some orders. He listened impatiently a few moments, and then answered with small courtesy:

"I have my written directions, ma'am, from the master, and I shall follow them to the letter. There is no use in you bothering and interfering," and with the last word on his lips, he turned from her to address some of his workmen.

She looked at him in utter amazement and speechless anger; then with an apparent haughty indifference, turned into the breakfast-room bringing the word "interfering" with her, and flavoring every remark she made with it. She was in a white heat of passion, and really felt herself to have been insulted beyond all pacification. Isabel had been a little in advance, and had not seen and heard the affront, but she was in thorough sympathy with her mother. Christina was differently affected. The idea of a workman telling her mother not to interfere in her own house was so flagrantly impudent, that it was to Christina flagrantly funny. Every time Mrs. Campbell imitated the man, she felt that she must give way, and at length the strain was uncontrollable, and she burst into a screaming passion of laughter.

"Forgive me, mother!" she said as soon as speech was possible. "That man's impertinence to you has made me hysterical, for I never saw you treated so disrespectfully before. I was very nervous when I rose this morning."

"You must conquer such absurd feelings, Christina. Observe your sister and myself. We should be ashamed to exhibit such a total collapse of will power."

"Excuse me, mother. I will go to my room until I feel better."

"Very well, Christina. You had better take a drink of water. Remember, you must learn to meet annoyance like a sensible woman."

"I will, mother."

But after breakfast when Isabel came to her, she went off into peals of laughter again, burying her face in the pillows, and only lifting it to ejaculate: "It was too delicious, Isabel—too deliciously funny for anything! If you had seen that man stare mother in the face—and tell her not to interfere! I wondered how he dared, but I admired him for it; he was a big, handsome fellow. Oh, how I wished I was like him! What privileges men do have?"

"Do you mean to call it a privilege to tell mother not to interfere?"

"Many a time I would like to have done it; yes, many a time. I know it is wicked, but mother does interfere too much. It is her specialty!" and Christina appeared ready for another fit of laughter.

"If you laugh any more, Christina, I shall feel it my duty to throw cold water in your face. Mother told me to do so."

"Such advice comes from her interfering temper. That handsome fellow was right."

"Behave yourself, Christina. What is the matter with you?"

"It is the change, Isabel. To see lots of men in the hall, and that heavy black furniture and the poor beetles and butterflies, and the great men's pictures going away——"

"Can't you speak correctly? Are you sick?"

"I must be!"

"Go back to bed, and I will get mother to give you a sleeping powder."

"That will be better than cold water. If you could only have seen mother's face, Isabel, when that man told her not to interfere. As for him, he had a wink in his eyes, I know. I hope I shall never see him again. If I do——"

"I trust you will behave decently, as Christina Campbell ought to do."

"If he winks, I shall laugh. I know I shall."

"Then you ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"I am, but what good does that do?"

"See here, Christina, there are going to be many changes in this house, and if you intend to meet them with this idiotic laughter, what pleasure can you expect? Be sensible, Christina."

Poor Christina! The keenest of all her faculties was her sense of the ridiculous. On this side of her nature, her intellect could have been highly developed, but instead it had been ruthlessly depressed and ignored. The comic page of the newspapers, the only page she cared for, was generally removed; she could tell a funny story delightfully, but no one smiled if she did so; she saw the comical attributes of every one, and everything, but it was a grave misdemeanor to point them out; and thus snubbed and chided for the one thing she could do, she feared to attempt others which she knew only in a mediocre manner.

At the dinner table she was able to take her place in a placid, sensible mood. She found the family deep in the discussion of an immediate removal to the seashore. It was at any rate about the usual time of their summer migration, and Robert was advising his mother to go to the Isle of Arran. But Mrs. Campbell had resolved to go to Campbelton, where she had many relations. "We can stay at the *Argyle Arms*," she said, "and then neither the Lairds nor the Crawfords will have the face to be dropping in for a few days' change, at my expense."

Christina looked distressed, and touched Isabel's foot to excite her to rebellion. "Mother," said Isabel dolorously, "Christina and I hate Campbelton! It smells of whiskey and fish, and not even the great sea winds can make the place clean and sweet."

"It makes me ill," ventured Christina.

"My family have lived there for generations, Christina, and it never made them ill. They are, indeed, very robust and healthy."

"There is nothing to see, mother."

"I am ashamed of you, Christina. It is a town of the greatest antiquity, and was, as you ought to know, the capital of the Dalriadan kingdom in the sixth and seventh century."

"I know all about its antiquities, mother. I wish I didn't."

"Christina, what is the matter with you to-day?"

"I am tired of living, mother."

"Robert, do you hear your sister?"

"Why are you tired of living, Christina?" asked Robert, not unkindly.

"We do not live, brother; that is the reason."

"What do you mean?"

"Life is variety. To us every day is the same, except the Sabbath, and that is the worst day of all. I don't blame you, brother, for a desperate effort to change your life. If I were a man I should run away."

"What do you mean by a desperate effort, Christina?"

"I mean marriage. Sometimes I feel that I would run away with any man that would marry me."

"*Hush!* Such a feeling is shameful. What do you wish instead of Campbelton?"

The courage of the desperate possessed Christina and she answered: "I should like to travel. I want to see Edinburgh and London and Paris like other girls whose families have money, and Isabel feels as badly at our restrictions as I do."

"What do you say, mother? Will you go with the girls to Edinburgh and London? Paris is out of the question. I will pay all expenses."

"I will do nothing of the kind. I am going to Campbelton. I suppose the girls can go by themselves."

"You know better, mother."

"English girls go all over the world by themselves, and some kinds of Scotch girls are beginning to think mothers an unnecessary institution."

Robert looked at Isabel, and she said: "We might have a courier. I mean a lady courier."

"I will not permit my daughters to go stravaiging round the world with any strange woman. Robert, I think you have behaved most imprudently to propose any such thing."

"In *your* company, mother, was my suggestion. I do think an entire change of people and surroundings would do both you and my sisters a great deal of good."

"Changes are plentiful; too many are now in progress."

So the subject died in bad temper, and Robert felt his proffered kindness to have been very ungraciously received. But when he rose from the table, Christina touched his arm as he passed her chair. "Thank you, brother," she said. "You wished to give us a little pleasure. It is not your fault we are deprived of it."

He saw that her eyes were full of tears, and her weary, plaintive voice touched his heart, so he turned to his mother and said:

"Think of what I have proposed. I will not stint you in expenses. Give the girls and yourself a little pleasure—do."

"Your own expenses are going to be tremendous, Robert, furnishing, travelling and what not. I can't conscientiously increase them."

At these words Christina left the room. Robert did not answer his mother's remark, but he looked at Isabel, and she understood the look as entrusting the further prosecution of the subject to her.

Mrs. Campbell, however, refused to give up Campbelton. "I heard," she said, "that Mrs. Walter Galbraith was going to France and Italy. Perhaps she will allow you to travel with her."

Isabel looked at her mother with something like reproach. "You know well, mother, that Mrs. Galbraith dresses and travels in the most extravagant fashion. She would not be seen with two old maids in plain brown merino suits. We should look like her servants. Even if we got stylish travelling gowns, we should want dinner dresses, and opera dresses, and cloaks and changes, and small necessities innumerable. It would cost a thousand pounds, if not more, to clothe us both for a three months' travel with Mrs. Galbraith."

"Then be sensible women and go to Campbelton. You can take your wheels and on the firm sands of Macrihanish Bay have a five miles' unbroken spin. There are boating and fishing and very interesting walks."

"And Christina will find company for her wheel and walks, mother. The last time we were in Campbelton, the schoolmaster, James Rathey, was constantly with her. He was in love, and Christina liked him. After we came home he wrote to her, and I had hard work to prevent her answering his letters."

"You ought to have told me this before."

"I was sorry for her. Poor girl, he was the only lover she ever had!"

"Such folly! I shall watch the schoolmaster myself this summer. I have influence enough to get him dismissed. He shall not teach in Campbelton another year."

"Oh, mother, how cruel and unjust that would be! I am sorry I told you." And Isabel felt the case to be hopeless, and did not make another plea.

She went straight to her sister's room. "Mother is not to be moved, Christina," she said. "We shall have to go to Campbelton."

"So be it. Jamie Rathey will be having his vacation now, and he can play the fiddle and sing '*The Laird o' Cockpen*' worth listening to. He promised to buy a wheel before I came again, and then we will away to Macrihanish sands for a race. I won't be cheated out of that pleasure, Isabel, and you need not say a word about it."

"You cannot hide it. Every one but mother knew about you and James Rathey last year, and Aunt Laird would have told mother, but I begged her not. If you begin that foolishness again, I must attend to the matter."

"You mean you will tell mother?"

"Yes, decidedly."

"Then you will be an ill-natured sister."

A little later Mrs. Campbell appeared and told them to pack their trunks, and lock up the clothing they did not intend to take with them. "The paperers and painters are coming into the house to-morrow morning," she said. "We shall take the boat for Campbelton directly after an early breakfast."

As neither Isabel nor Christina made any protest, she added: "You may go at once and buy yourselves a couple of suits, one for church, and a white one that will be easily laundered. I suppose hats, gloves, shoes, and some other things will be necessary. You can each of you spend forty pounds. This is a gift, I shall not take it from your allowance."

"I cannot see through mother," observed Christina as they were on their shopping expedition.

"Can you see through anything, Christina? I cannot."

"She had a great fit of the liberalities this morning. What for?"

"She was buying us. One way or another, she has us all under her feet."

"Poor Theodora!"

"Keep your pity for poor Christina. If Theodora has been a schoolmistress she knows fine how to hold her own."

"With schoolgirls—perhaps. Mother is different."

"The difference is not worth counting. Women, old and young, are very much alike."

"Do you believe the paperers and painters begin work to-morrow?"

"Mother said so. It is one of her virtues to tell the truth. You know how often she declares she would not lie even to the devil."

"Yes—but was that the truth?"

"It is not right to criticise and question what your mother says, Christina."

In the morning the arrival of a number of men with pails, and brushes, and paint-pots, justified Mrs. Campbell's assertion, and the three women were glad to escape the dirt, noise, and confusion in Traquair House, even for the *Argyle Arms* in Campbelton. Robert went with them to the boat, and Isabel's pathetic acceptance of what she disliked, and the tears in Christina's eyes made him a little unhappy. He slipped some gold into their hands, as he bid them good-bye, and their silent looks of pleasure at his remembrance, soothed the uncertain sense of some unkindness or unfairness which had troubled him since Christina's rebellious outbreak. He was glad he had gone with them to the boat, and glad that he had given them a parting token of his brotherly care, and he felt that he could now turn cheerfully to his own pressing but delightful affairs.

He was singularly happy in them, and really glad to be rid of all advice and interference. Men who had known him for many years, wondered at his boyish joyfulness. He was a different Robert Campbell, but then it was generally known he was in love, and all the world loves a lover. No one was cruel or malicious enough to warn, or advise, or shadow the glory of his expectations by any doubt of their full accomplishment. The initiated gossiped among themselves, and some said: "Campbell is a fool to be making such a fuss about any woman;" and others spoke of Mrs. Traquair Campbell, and "wondered how the English girl would manage her."

"The poor lassie will be at her mercy," said one old man.

"She will," answered his companion, "for the Traquair Campbells' ways will be dark to a stranger. It takes a Scotchwoman to match a Scotchwoman."

"Yet I have heard that the old lady is a wonder o' good sense and prudence. Her husband was a useless body, but she managed him fine, and was one o' those women that are a crown to their husbands."

The first speaker laughed peculiarly. "Man, David!" he said, "little you ken, if you take King Solomon's ideas of a comfortable wife to live wi'. The women who are a crown to a poor man are generally a crown o' thorns, I'm thinking."

But no doubts or fears troubled Robert Campbell. He thought only of his marvellous fortune in winning a woman so lovely and so good. He was not unmindful of either her intellect or her education, but he did not talk of these excellencies, even to his chief friend Archie St. Claire. He had a feeling that intellect and learning were masculine attributes, and he preferred to dwell entirely on the sweet feminine virtues of his beloved. But this, or that, there was no other woman in the world but Theodora to Robert Campbell, for lovers are selfish creatures, and Lord Beaconsfield says truly: "To a man in love, all other women are uninteresting, if not repulsive."

So the days and the weeks went happily past, in preparing a home for Theodora. He went over and over very frequently the last few words—"a home for Theodora!" and they sung, and swung, and shone in his heart, and made his life a fairy story. "I never knew what it was to be happy before," he said repeatedly; and it was the truth, for up to this time he had never felt the joy of that mystical blending of two souls, when self is lost and found again in the being of another.

Twice he took a trip to Campbelton, and found all to his satisfaction. His mother was surrounded by her kindred, a situation a Scotch man or woman tolerates with an equanimity that is astonishing; and Isabel and Christina wore their usual air of placid indifference to everything. They were all desirous to know what had been done in the house, but he refused to enter into explanations. "It is ill praising or banning half-done work," he said in excuse, "but I promise on my next visit to take you home with me, and then you will see the work finished."

"And then you will go and get married?" asked Christina, and he answered with a smile, "Then I shall go and get married."

"When you bring Theodora home she will give us a little pleasure, I hope."

"I am sure she will. Theodora is fond of company and entertainments, and she will wish you to share them with us, and that will add to my pleasure also."

"We shall see."

"Do you doubt what I say?"

"My dreams never come true, Robert."

"Theodora will make them come true."

Then Christina laughed a little, and Isabel looked at her mother's dour, scornful face and copied it.

Robert noticed the expression, and he asked pleasantly: "What kind of summer have you had, Isabel?"

"Exactly the summer we expected. Sometimes the minister called, and talked in an exciting manner about Calvinism, and the smallpox; and we have been surrounded by a crowd of relatives. Mother has enjoyed them very much; she had not seen some of her fourth and fifth cousins for nearly seven years; they had increased in number considerably during that interval, and their names, and dispositions, the sicknesses they had been through, the various talents they showed, have all been to talk over a great many times. Oh, mother has enjoyed it much! It makes no matter about Christina and myself."

"It does make matter, Isabel. This coming winter I intend to see you go out as much as you desire."

"Thank you, brother. Christina will enjoy the opportunities. I have outlived the desire for amusements. I would rather travel, and see places and famous things. People no longer interest me."

"I think with a little inquiry that can be managed. I am so happy, Isabel, I wish every one else to be happy."

She looked at her brother wonderingly, and at night as the sisters sat doing their hair in Christina's room she said: "Love must be an amazing thing, Christina, to change any one the way it has changed Robert Campbell. The man has been in a sense converted—he has found grace, whether it be the grace of God, or the grace of Love, I know not, no, nor anybody else just yet."

"St. John says, 'God is love.' I have often wondered about those words."

"Then keep your wonder. If you ask for explanations about things, all the wonder and the beauty goes out of them. When I was at school, and had to pull a rose to pieces and write down all the Latin names of its structure, its beauty was gone. The rose was explained to us, but it wasn't a rose any longer. God is Love. We will thank St. John for telling us that beautiful truth, but we will not ask for explanations. Maybe you may find out some day all that Love means. You are not too old, and would be handsome if you were dressed becomingly, and were happy."

"Happy?"

"Yes. Happiness makes people beautiful. Look at Robert. He was rather good-looking before he was in love, he is now a very handsome man. Theodora has worked wonders in his appearance."

"He takes more pains with his dress."

"That helps, of course."

"My hair is very good yet, Isabel."

"You have splendid hair, and fine eyes. Properly dressed you would not look over twenty-two years old."

"You think so, because you love me a little."

"I love you better than I love anything else. We have suffered a great deal together. I do not mean afflictions and big troubles, but a lifelong, never-lifted repression and depression, and a perfect starvation of heart and soul."

"Not soul, Isabel. We could always go to the Kirk, and we had our Bible and good books, and the like."

"It was all dead comfort. There was no life, no love in it."

"Maybe it was our fault, perhaps we ought to have stood up for our rights. Girls have begun to do so now."

"We may be to blame, who knows? Good-night."

Three weeks after this conversation, Robert came to Campbelton for his mother and sisters. He was in the same glad mood, and what was still more remarkable, patient and cheerful with all the small worries and explanations and contradictory directions of Mrs. Campbell. She was carrying back to Glasgow two Skye terriers, a tortoise-shell cat, presents of kippered herring and cheeses, and, above all, a tiny marmoset monkey given her by a third cousin, who was master of a sailing vessel trading to South American ports. She was immoderately fond and proud of this gift, and no one but Robert was allowed to carry the basket in which it was cradled in soft wool.

But encumbered on every hand and charged continually about this, that, and the other, Robert kept his temper better than his sisters; and at length, with the help of two or three vehicles, brought all safely to Traquair House. Now, if Mrs. Campbell had thus loaded and impeded herself and her whole family for the very purpose of making their entry into the renovated home a scene of confusion, in which it was impossible to observe things, she could not have succeeded better.

Christina, indeed, uttered an exclamation of delight, but the great interest of all parties was to get rid of their various impediments. Each of the girls had a Skye terrier, Mrs. Campbell had the cat, Robert the marmoset, and there were bundles, bonnet boxes, parcels, umbrellas, parasols, rugs, etc., all to be carried in, counted, and checked off Mrs. Campbell's list of her belongings.

But in an hour the confusion had settled, and by the time the travellers had removed their hats and wraps and washed and dressed, a good dinner was on the table. It put every one in a more agreeable temper, and when they had eaten it, there was still light enough to examine the changes that had been made. Mrs. Campbell declared she was tired, but she could not resist the offer of Robert's arm and the way in which he said: "Come, mother, I shall not be happy without your approval; I never knew you to be tired with any day's work, no matter how it might tire others."

The compliment won her. She rose instantly, and leaning on her son's arm passed into the hall. It had been dark and gloomy, though fairly handsome. It was now finished in the palest shades, was light and airy and looked much larger. Where the cases of impaled beetles and crucified butterflies had stood, there were pots of ferns and flowers, and the special furniture necessary was of light woods and modern designs. All the rooms leading from this hall were richly and elegantly furnished; the same idea of lightness and gracefulness being admirably carried out. Nothing had been forgotten, even the most trivial toilet articles were present in their most beautiful form. Isabel lifted some of these, and asked: "How did you know about such things, Robert?"

"I did not know, Isabel," he answered, "but I went to a place where such things are sold, and told them to fit a lady's toilet perfectly, with all that ladies use and desire. Theodora may not like the perfumes; indeed, I do not think she uses perfume of any kind, but they can be sent back, or changed."

"Well, Robert," said Mrs. Campbell, when all apartments had been examined, "these rooms are fit for a queen, and many a poor queen never had anything half so splendid and comfortable. Theodora will be confounded by their richness and beauty. I should say she never saw anything like them."

"Indeed, you are mistaken, mother. I met her first at John Priestley's, Member of Parliament for Sheffield, where she was the guest of his daughter, and in their mansion the rooms are much handsomer than anything we have here. Theodora has been a guest in some of the finest manor houses in England. These rooms are quite modest compared with some she has occupied."

"I think, then, she will be too fine for this family. But Robert, I can not, and I will not, change my ways at my time of life. I may be plain and common—perhaps—I may be vulgar in Theodora's eyes, but—"

"My dear mother, you are all a woman and a mother should be. You represent the finest ladies of your generation. Theodora is the fruit and flower of a later one, different, but no better than your own. You are everything I want. I would not have you changed in any respect." He looked into her face with eyes full of love, and gently pressed her arm against his side.

Such appreciative words as these were most unusual, and Mrs. Campbell felt them thrill her heart with pleasure. She even half-resolved to try to like Robert's wife, and spoke enthusiastically about the taste her son had displayed. In the morning she was still more delighted, for then she discovered that her own drawing-room had been redecorated, a new light carpet laid, and many beautiful pieces of furniture added to brighten its usual gloom. Nor had Isabel's and Christina's rooms been forgotten; in many ways they had been beautified, and only the family dining-room had been left in the gloom of its dark, though handsome furniture. But Robert hoped by the following summer his mother would be willing to have it totally changed, for he remembered hearing Theodora say that the room in which people eat ought to be, above all other rooms in the house, bright, and light, and cheerful. Indeed, she thought it a matter of well-being to eat under the happiest circumstances possible.

In the height of the women's delight and gratitude, Robert set off on his wedding journey. His joy infected the whole house. Even the cross McNab and the mournful Jepson were heard laughing, and Christina spoke of this as among the wonderfals of her existence. Perhaps the one most pleased was Mrs. Campbell. She had been surrounded by the same depressing furniture and upholstery for thirty-seven years, and she had almost a childish pleasure in the new white lace curtains which had been hung in her rooms. They gave her a sense of youth, of something unusually happy and hopeful. Many times in a day, she went, unknown to any one, into the drawing-room and took the fine lace drapery in her fingers, to examine and admire its beauty. The girls also were more cheerful. Indeed, the tone of the house had been uplifted and changed, and all through the influence of more light, some graceful modern furniture, and a little—alas, that it was so little!—good will and gratitude.

On the fifth of October Robert Campbell was married, and about a week afterwards, Archie St. Claire called one evening upon his family.

"I have just returned from Kendal," he said, "and I thought you would like to hear about the wedding. You were none of you there."

"We had satisfactory reasons for not going," answered Mrs. Campbell.

"I was Robert's best man."

"I supposed so. Robert said very little about his arrangements. What do you think of the bride?"

"She is a most beautiful woman, fine-natured and sweet-tempered, and loved by all who come near her. Robert has found a jewel."

"How was she dressed?" asked Isabel.

"Perfectly. White satin and lace, of course, but what I liked was the simplicity of the gown. I heard some one call it a Princess shape. It fit her beautiful form without a crease, and fell in long soft folds to her white shoes."

"White shoes? Nonsense!" ejaculated Mrs. Campbell.

"White shoes with diamond buckles."

"Paste buckles more likely."

"They looked like diamonds. Her veil fell backward and touched the bottom of her dress."

"Backward! Then of what use was it? I thought brides wore a veil to cover their faces."

"It would have been a sin and a shame to have covered her face. She looked like an angel. She wore no jewels, and she carried instead of flowers a small Bible bound in purple velvet and gold."

"Were there many present?"

"The streets were crowded, and the church was crowded. The Blue Coat Boys—a large old school in Kendal—scattered flowers before her as she walked from the church gates to the altar; and the old rector who had married her father and mother was quite affected by the ceremony. He kissed and blessed her at the altar-rail, after it was over."

"Kissed Robert Campbell's bride. Surely you are joking, Mr. St. Claire."

"No, it is a common thing in English churches after the bridal ceremony if the minister is a friend. It was a solemn and affecting sight."

"Then her father did not marry her?"

"He gave her away. He could not have performed the ceremony in the parish church."

"Do you mean that she was not married in her father's church?"

"She was married in the parish church, one of the most beautiful places of worship I was ever in—a grand old edifice."

"Do you mean that my son was married in an Episcopal church, at the very horns of an Episcopal altar?" asked Mrs. Campbell indignantly.

"It was the most beautiful marriage service I ever saw. And the sweet old bells chimed so joyously, I can never forget them."

"Was there a wedding breakfast?" asked Isabel.

"About twenty guests sat down to a very prettily decorated breakfast table, and after the meal, Robert and his bride began their journey through life together. I have brought you some bride cake," and he took from a box in his hand three smaller white boxes, tied with white ribbon, and presented them. Mrs. Campbell laid hers unopened on the table without a word of thanks or courtesy, and Isabel and Christina followed her example.

"There was a crowd at the railway station," continued Mr. St. Claire, "and the Blue Coat Boys met the bride singing a wedding-hymn. Robert gave them a noble check for their school."

"I'll warrant he did. The more fool he!"

"And the last thing they heard as they left Kendal must have been the church bells chiming joyfully—'Hail, Happy Morn'!"

"Do you know where they went? Robert was not sure when he left Scotland."

"I think I do, Mrs. Campbell. They had intended going through the Fife towns, and by old St. Andrews to Wick, and so to the Orkneys and Shetlands. But it was late in the season for this trip, so they went to Paris and the Mediterranean. I think they were right."

"Paris, of course. All the fools go there!"

"Well, Mrs. Campbell, Scotland is a bleak place for a honeymoon."

"Mr. St. Claire, if it does for a man's home, it may do to honeymoon in. That is my opinion."

"I don't agree with you, Mrs. Campbell. A honeymoon is a sort of transcendental existence, and a man naturally wants to spend it as nearly in Paradise as possible. There's no place like the Mediterranean for sunshine, and it is poetical and picturesque, and just the place for lovers."

Failing, with all his willing good nature, to rouse any apparent interest in a subject he considered

highly interesting, he felt a little offended, and rose to depart. But ere he reached the parlor door he turned and said: "I had nearly forgotten one very remarkable thing about the bride."

"Let us hear it, by all means," said Mrs. Campbell.

"I stayed a few days after the marriage, in order to visit Windermere and Keswick Lake with Mr. Newton—by-the-by, wonderfully beautiful spots, nothing like them in Scotland—and one day while waiting in his study, I picked up a book. Imagine my astonishment, when I saw it had been written by the bride."

At this information Mrs. Campbell threw up her hands with a laugh that terminated in something like a shriek. Isabel laid her hand on her mother's arm, and asked: "Are you ill, mother?"

"No," she answered promptly. "I am only like Mr. St. Claire, astonished. I need not have been. Every girl scribbles a little now. Poetry, of course."

"You mean Mrs. Campbell's book?"

"Yes."

"On the contrary, it was a most learned and interesting study of ancient and sacred geography."

"A schoolbook!" and the words were scoffed out with utter contempt.

"Then a most fascinating one. It gave the Latin and Saxon names of our own old cities, and all the historical and biographical incidents connected with them. It treated the names in the Bible and ancient history in the same way. The preacher was very modest about it, but said it was now in all the best schools, and that his daughter had quite a good income from the royalty on its sale. And he added: 'Since you have discovered her secret, I may tell you that she has written two novels, and a volume of——'"

"Plays, I dare say."

"No, ma'am, of Social Essays."

"Really, Mr. St. Claire, we can stand no more revelations concerning the bride's perfections! Robert Campbell is only a master of iron workers and coal miners, and I fear he will feel painfully his inferiority to such a marvellously beautiful and intellectual woman. As for myself, and my poor girls, I can only say—grant us patience!"

St. Claire bowed, and made a hurried exit. "Ill-natured and envious creatures as ever I met," he mused. "I'm sorry for Mrs. Robert! She will have troubles great and small with those women under her roof, and I wonder if Robert will have the gumption to stand by her. He was always extraordinarily afraid of his mother. I should be afraid of her myself. I am thankful my mother isn't the least like her! My mother is made of love and sweet-temper, and she is more of a lady in her winsey skirt and linen short gown than Mrs. Traquair Campbell is in all her silk and lace and jewelry. Thank God for His mercies! The Book says a good wife is from the Lord. I know, by personal experience, that a good mother is even more so. I'll just write mother a letter this very night, and tell her all about the wedding. She will enjoy every word of it, and at the end say: 'God bless the young things! With His blessing they'll do weel enough, whatever comes.'"

There was no blessing in Mrs. Campbell's heart. She looked at her girls in silence until she heard the closing of the front door, then she asked: "What do you say to Mr. St. Claire's story?" and Isabel answered: "I say what you said, mother—grant us patience!"

"Tut, Isabel! Patience? Nonsense! I think little of that grace. Theodora may be a beauty, a school-teacher, and an authoress, but we three women can match her."

"Whatever made Robert marry her?"

"That is past speculating about! But she is the man's choice—such as it is. Doubtless he thinks her without a fault, but, as I told you before, the bit-by-bitness can soon change that opinion—a little mustard seed of suspicion or difference of any kind, can grow to a great tree. I'm telling you! Do not forget what I say. I am just distracted as yet with the situation. This world is a hard place."

"I think so too, mother," said Christina, "and it is small comfort to be told the next is probably worse."

"I have had lots of trouble in my life, girls, but the worst of all comes with what your father called 'the lad and lass business.' It was that drove your brother David beyond seas, and I have not heard a word from him since he went away one day in a passion. But this or that, mind you, I have always come out of every tribulation victorious—and there is now three of us—we shall be hard enough to beat."

"Theodora has a good many points in her favor," said Christina.

"Count them up, then; count them up! She is a beauty, a genius, an Englishwoman, a Methodist, a teacher of women, a writer of books, and no doubt she will try to set up the golden image of her manifold perfections in Traquair House—but which of us three will bow down before it? Tell me! Tell me that, Christina!"

"Not I, mother."

"Nor I," added Isabel.

"Nor I, you may take an oath on that," said Mrs. Campbell. "And what says the Good Book, 'a threefold cord is not easily broken?' Now you may give me Dr. Chalmer's last sermons, and I'll take a few words from him to settle my mind and put me to sleep; for I am fairly distracted with the prospect of such a monumental woman among us. But I'll say nothing about her, one way or the other, and then I cannot be blamed. I would advise you both to be equally prudent."

But Isabel and Christina were not of their mother's mind. Such a delightful bit of gossip had never before come into their lives, and they went to Isabel's room to talk it all over again, for Isabel being the eldest had the largest and the best furnished room. Isabel made a social event of it, by placing a little table between them, set with the special dainties she kept for her private refreshment. And they felt it to be a friendly and cheerful thing, to have this special woman to season the rich cates and fruit provided. So it had struck twelve before Christina rose and remarked:

"You told me, Isabel, there were going to be changes, and you are right. The next one will be the home-coming, and I dare say Robert will descend on us in the most unexpected time and way."

"You are much mistaken, Christina. I am sure Robert will be telegraphing Jepson from every station on the road. The most trivial things will be directed by him. Let us go to bed now; I am sleepy."

"So am I. Thank you for the good things. They sweetened a disagreeable subject."

"Perhaps she may be better than we expect. One can never tell what the unknown may turn out to be. Mother is inclined to be suspicious of all strangers," said Isabel.

"If mother's eyes were out, she would see faults in any one."

"Perhaps, if they were coming into Traquair House. She does not trouble herself about people who leave the Campbells alone."

"She spoke of poor brother David to-night. Did you notice it?"

"Yes."

"It was the first time I have heard her mention him since he left us."

"She has spoken of him to me, three or four times—a word or two—no more."

"Do you know where he is?"

"No."

"Does mother know?"

"No."

"Does any one know?"

"No. Mother is sure he is dead. I think so myself. He would have written to Robert if he was alive. He was gey fond of Robert."

"I was at school when he went away. I never heard why he went, for when I came home I was forbidden to name him. Did he do anything wrong?"

"No, no! You must not suppose such a thing. He was the most loving and honorable of men."

"Then why did he go away? Do you know?"

"Yes, I know all about it."

"Tell me, Isabel. I will never name the subject again. What did he do?"

"Just what Robert has done—married a girl not wanted in the family."

"Who was the girl? Why was she not wanted?"

"Her name was Agnes Symington. She was a minister's daughter."

"Was she pretty?"

"Very pretty, and good and sweet as a woman could be."

"Pretty, and good, and sweet, and a minister's daughter! What more did mother want?"

"Money."

"Was she poor?"

"Yes. Her father was dead, and she had learned dressmaking to support her mother and herself. She came to make our winter dresses, and David saw her and loved her. Though she was a minister's daughter, mother had always sent her to the servants' table, and she was nearly mad to think David had married a girl from the servants' table. It was disgraceful—in a way. The servants talked, and so did every one that knew us. But David loved her, and when he went he

took both Agnes and her mother with him."

"What did father say?"

"He took David's part. He took it angrily. He amazed us. He sold David's share in the works for him, and so let strangers into the company, and he sent him away with his blessing, and plenty of money. David was crying when he bid father good-bye; and father was never the same after David left. We always believed that father knew where he went, and that he heard from him, through Mr. Oliphant or Dr. Robertson. But mother could get no words from him about David, except 'The boy did right. God pity the man whose wife is chosen for him!' I think father had to marry mother to save the works. I think so; I was not told it as a fact. Do not breathe a word of what I have told you. It is a dead story. David and father are both gone, and I dare say David's wife is married again."

"Thank you for telling me the story, Isabel. I will keep your confidence. Do not doubt it. I do not blame David. I think he did right. I wish I could do the same thing. I——"

"Good-night!"

"I would run away to-morrow."

CHAPTER III

THE BRIDE'S HOME-COMING

Robert Campbell's home-coming was after the fashion Isabel had supposed it would be. On the eighth of November, Jepson received a telegram from him before nine in the morning, ordering fires to be kept burning brightly all day in his rooms. At eleven there was another telegram, directing Jepson to have the ferns and plants in the hall renewed, and flowers in vases put in the parlor and Mrs. Campbell's dressing-room. At two o'clock Jepson's message contained the information that Mr. and Mrs. Campbell would be at the Caledonian Railway Station at half-past three o'clock, and they would expect the carriage there for them.

So when Theodora arrived at Traquair House, she was met by Jepson with obsequious attentions, the door was wide open to receive her, and the rooms were shining and glowing with light and warmth and beauty. Thus far, all her expectations were realized, but she missed the human welcome which ought to have vitalized its material symbols. Robert was evidently annoyed at the absence of his mother and sisters, and he asked sharply after them.

"They went to their rooms after lunch, sir, before I had time to inform them of the train you specified," Jepson answered.

Campbell seemed glad of so reasonable an excuse, and, turning to Theodora, said: "You must have a cup of tea, dear, and then rest for a couple of hours. I dare say we shall see no one before dinner. I suppose dinner is at seven, Jepson?"

"Yes, sir. Seven o'clock exactly, sir."

After her cup of tea Theodora went through their rooms with her husband and was charmed with everything that had been done for her comfort. "Robert," she said, "there is nothing wanting in these rooms. Everything I could desire is here, except the smile and the kind words of welcome to them from your family."

"Those will come later, my sweet Dora. The Scotch are slow and undemonstrative. My mother and sisters always retire to their rooms after lunch, and it is extremely difficult for them to break a habit. That is their way."

"If habits are kind and good, it is a very good way—in its way. But do you not think, Robert, that a little spontaneity is sometimes a refreshing and comforting thing?"

"It may be, but our temperaments are not spontaneous. Now, try and sleep before you dress. I will come for you at two minutes before seven. Be sure you are ready! Mother waits for no one, not even myself."

But in spite of all the thoughtful care which her husband had taken for her comfort, Theodora was invaded by a feeling of melancholy. Her heart sank fathoms deep, and she could not follow his advice to sleep. She felt chilled and depressed by the atmosphere she was breathing—an atmosphere impregnated with the personalities of people inimical to her. Being conscious of this hostility, she began to reason about it, a thing in itself unwise; for happiness should never be analyzed.

Very soon she became aware of the futility of her thoughts. "They lead me to no certain end, for I am reasoning from premises unknown to me," she said to herself. "I have heard of these three women, but I have not seen them. I will wait until we look at each other face to face."

Then she called her maid, a fresh, honest-hearted girl from the Westmoreland fells, whom she had hired in Kendal. "Ducie," she said, "have you been in the kitchen yet?"

"Oh yes, ma'am. They are a queer lot there. Only one old man had a good word for any of the family. They were asking me if you knew that the Crawfords of Campbelton had been occupying your rooms for two weeks. 'Plenty of hurrying and scurrying,' they said, 'to get them away and put the rooms in order, and the old lady beside herself with anger, at Mr. Campbell not giving a longer notice of his coming.'"

"Mr. Campbell gave plenty of time, if the rooms had not been occupied."

"And, if you please, ma'am, the trunks sent here from Kendal just after your marriage have all been opened, and I may say, ma'am—ransacked. Every thing in them is pell-mell, and the dresses not folded straight, and the neckwear and such like, topsy-turvy. And, ma'am, your beautiful ermine furs have been worn, for they are soiled; other things look likewise. I don't know what to make of such ways, I'm sure."

To this information Theodora listened in dismay and anger. It seemed to her such an incredible outrage on decency, honor, and even honesty. She rose instantly and went to look at her trunks. Ducie had made a very moderate complaint. It was only necessary to lift the lids to convince herself that the accusation was a just one. For a moment or two she stood looking at the disarranged garments; her face flushed, she locked her fingers together, and was speechless. Then she sat down to consider the circumstance, and her lovely face had on it an expression half-pleading and half-defiant. It was the face of a woman you could hurt, but could not move.

In half-an-hour she called Ducie. "Do not touch the four trunks that were sent here from Kendal," she said. "Open the one we had with us, and take from it my steel-blue silk costume, and my set of pearls."

"Will you wear the silk waist, ma'am?"

"No, the lace waist of the same color. And, Ducie, keep silence concerning all you see and hear in these rooms. I know you will do so, but it does no harm to remind you, for you are not used to living among a crowd of servants, and might fall into some trap set for you. Just remember, Ducie, that every word you say will likely be repeated, for we are in a strange country and in a way among strangers."

"I know, ma'am. New relations are not like old ones. The old ones feel comfortable like old clothes; the new ones, like new clothes, need a deal of taking in and letting out to make them fit."

"That is so, Ducie. I am a little annoyed about the open trunks, but—but, I must dress now, or I will be late."

"I wouldn't be annoyed, ma'am, for brooding over annoyances just hatches more; and I will have little to say to any one. You may trust me. I will be as good as my word."

Theodora dressed carefully, and when Robert came for her he was charmed with the quiet beauty of her costume. "It is just right, Dora," he said, "perhaps the pearls are a little too much."

"Oh no, Robert. The dress requires them. They are like moonlight on it, and make each other lovelier."

"Come, then, we have not a moment to lose. It will strike seven immediately."

They entered the dining-room as it struck the hour. Mrs. Traquair Campbell had taken her seat at the foot of the table, and Robert with his bride on his arm walked to her side and said:

"Mother, this is Theodora. I hope you will give her your love and welcome."

Mrs. Campbell did not rise, but, looking into Theodora's face, asked: "Had you a pleasant journey? Are you tired? Railroads are fatiguing kind of travel."

That was all. She did not say one kind word of welcome, nor did she offer her hand. In fact, she had lifted the carving knife as they entered the room, and she kept it in her grasp. Then Robert took her to his sisters, and as Isabel sat on one side of the table, and Christina on the other, the introduction had to be made three times. In each case it was about the same, for the girls copied both their mother's attitude and her words.

But all were frank and friendly with Robert, asking him many questions about the places they had visited, and as he invariably referred some part of these queries to Theodora, she was drawn unavoidably into the conversation. Very soon the desire to conquer these women by the force and magnetism of love came into her heart, and she smiled into their dark, cold faces, and discoursed with such charming grace and social sympathy, that the frost presently began to thaw, and Isabel found herself asking the unwelcome bride all kinds of questions about their travel, and saying at last with a sigh: "How much I should have liked to have been with you!"

"I am sorry you were not with us," answered Theodora, "but we shall go again to the Mediterranean—for we only got glimpses of places and things, and must know them better. We shall go again, shall we not, Robert?"

Then Robert denied all his promises and said: "I fear not, for a long time. Business must be attended to."

"I am glad you are regaining your senses, Robert," said his mother. "Your business has been dreadfully neglected for more than half-a-year."

"It has taken no harm, mother, and I shall double my attention now."

"I hope you will—but I doubt it."

"Dora," said Christina, "may I call you Dora?"

"Dora, certainly," interrupted Mrs. Traquair Campbell. "Theodora is too long a name for conversation. Do you wish any more ice? Do you, Isabel?"

Theodora was confounded by such rude and positive ignoring. The question had been addressed to her, and referred to her Christian name—the most personal of all belongings. Yet it had been peremptorily decided for her without any regard to her right or wish. Her cheeks flushed hotly, and she looked at her husband. Surely he would spare her the distressing position of denying her mother-in-law's decision, or affirming her own. But Robert Campbell was as one that heard not. His eyes were upon his plate, and he was embarrassed even in the simple act of eating. At that moment she had almost a contempt for him. But seeing that he did not intend to interfere, she smiled at Christina, and said:

"You will call me Dora, I suppose, as you are bid to do so, and when I feel like it, I shall answer to that name. When I do not feel disposed to answer to Dora, I shall be silent. That is, you know, my privilege." She spoke with a smile and charming manner, and then, looking at her husband, rose from the table. Robert sauntered after her, making some remark about tea to his mother as he passed her.

She could not answer him. This leave-taking, unauthorized by her example, stupefied the elder woman. "Do you see, Isabel," she cried, "what I shall have to endure?"

"Dinner was really finished, mother."

"That makes no difference! No one has a right to leave the table until I rise. I consider Dora's behavior a piece of impertinence."

"I do not think she intended it to be impertinent."

"Her intention makes no difference. No one has a right to leave my table until I set the example. And if Dora's behavior was not impertinent, then it was stupid ignorance, and I shall instruct her in the decencies of respectable life. And I tell you both to remember that her name is Dora. I will have no Theodoras here. Fancy people going about the house calling 'The-o-do-ra.' Ridiculous!"

"Well, mother, I ask leave to say that I should not like any one without my permission to call me Bell, nor do I believe Christina would care to be called Kirsty. And I really think Robert's wife wished to be agreeable, and even friendly, if we had encouraged her. Why not give her a fair trial? I think she could teach Christina and myself many things."

"I think you are bewitched as well as your brother. I never knew you, Isabel, to make any exceptions to my opinions—or to see me insulted without feeling a proper indignation with me."

"Oh, dear mother, you are mistaken! The day will never come when your daughter Isabel will not stand shoulder to shoulder with you."

"I am sure of that. I wish Christina had not asked such an obtrusive question. I had to answer it as I did, in order to show that woman that we—in our own home here—would call her just what we preferred to call her, without let or hindrance; yet I wish that Christina had kept her foolish question for a little longer. I was hardly ready for active opposition. It is premature. Christina always interferes at the wrong moment." So Christina, snubbed and blamed for her malapropos question, subsided into sullen indifference externally, while inwardly passing on the blame for her correction to Theodora, who, she decided, was going to be unlucky to her.

In the meantime Robert had walked with his wife to the parlor door of their own apartments, but he did not enter with her. "I am going to leave you half-an-hour, Dora," he said. "I wish to smoke a cigar in the library."

"I should like to go with you, Robert, as I have always done. I enjoy good tobacco."

"Walking on some lovely balcony, overlooking the Mediterranean, it was pleasant; but here it is not the thing. If you went with me, I might have the whole family, as the library, like the dining-room, is common ground. Circumstances alter cases, Dora. You know that, my dear! I will return in half-an-hour."

She had a slight struggle with herself to answer pleasantly, but that free and loving thing, the human soul, was in Theodora's case under kind but positive control, so she replied with a smile:

"As you wish, dear Robert—yet I shall miss you."

She was alone in her splendid rooms, and her heart fell. The day had been a hard one. From the moment they left Kendal, Robert had been disagreeably silent. He knew that he was going home to a struggle with his family, and he dreaded the experience. Had it been a struggle with business difficulties he would have risen bravely to its demands. A dispute with women irritated him. In his thoughts he called it "trivial." But had he known all that such a dispute generally involves, he would have sought out for it the most portentous and distracting word in all the languages of earth.

So Theodora left to herself sat down with a sinking heart. The change in her husband's temper troubled her; the total absence of all human welcome to her new home troubled her still more. The occupation of her rooms by strangers, the rifling of her trunks, the half-quarrelsome dinner, the despotic changing of her name might be—as compared with death, accident, or ruin—"trivial" troubles, but she was poignantly wounded in her feelings by them. And their crowning grief was one she hardly dared to remember—her husband's failure to defend the name he had so often passionately sworn he loved better than all other names. True, she had permitted him to call her Dora, but that was a secret, sacred, pet name, to be used between themselves, and by that very understanding denied to all others.

She could not but admit to herself that she was bitterly disappointed in her home-coming. She had thought Robert's mother and sisters would meet her on the threshold with kisses and words of welcome. She had yet to learn the paucity of kisses and tender words in a Scotch household. The fact is general, but the causes for this familiar repression are various, and may be either good or evil. Theodora felt them in her case to be altogether unkind. What could she do about it? There was the perilous luxury of complaint to her husband and there was her father's lifelong advice: "Shut up a trouble in your heart, and you will soon sing over it." Which course should she take? She was waiting for a true instinct, a clear, lawful perception, when Robert entered the room.

She looked up with a smile that brought him swiftly to her side, and when he spoke kindly, all her fearing discontent slipped away. Very soon their conversation turned naturally to their apartments. Robert was proud of them, not so much for the money lavished on their adornment, as for the taste he thought himself to have shown. Going here and there in them, he happened to find, on a beautiful cabinet, an old curl paper and a couple of bent hairpins.

"Look here, Dora," he said, and his voice was so full of displeasure, that she rose hastily and went to him.

"What kind of maid have you hired? She ought to know better than to leave these things in your parlor."

"And you ought to know better, Robert," was the indignant answer, "than to suppose these things belong to me. Do I ever put my hair in newspaper twists? Do I ever fasten it with dirty, rusty, wire pins like these?"

"Then tell Ducie to keep her pins and curl papers in her own room."

"They are not Ducie's. She would not put such dreadful things in her pretty hair."

"How do they come here, then?"

"I suppose the people who have been occupying these rooms left them."

"No one has occupied these rooms since they were redecorated and refurnished."

"You are mistaken, Robert. They have been fully occupied for the last three weeks."

"Dora, what are you saying?"

"The truth! Call any of your servants, and they will tell you so."

Without further words he rang the bell, and Ducie appeared. "Ducie," he asked, "who told you there had been people staying in these rooms?"

"The kitchen, sir; that is, the men and women in the kitchen. I was taken all aback, for my lady had told me——"

"Do you know who the people were?"

"Mrs. and Miss Crawford, Mrs. Laird and her granddaughter, Miss Greenhill."

"Oh, they were relations, Dora," he said in a voice which indicated they had a right there, and that he was neither grieved nor astonished at their invasion of his apartments.

"If you please, sir," interposed Ducie, "my lady's trunks were all opened by Mrs. Crawford and the rest. It gave me such a turn!"

"The rest? Who do you mean?"

"Miss Crawford, Mrs. Laird, and Miss Greenhill."

"Then give the ladies their proper names."

"Yes, sir, Mrs. and Miss Crawford, Mrs. Laird, and Miss Greenhill have opened and ransacked all the four trunks belonging to my lady, which were sent on here directly after her marriage. She had given me the keys of them, and when I saw them open it fairly took my breath away. I am afraid many things are destroyed, and some things that cost no end of money stolen. Not liking to be blamed for the same, I wish the matter looked into."

"Stolen! You should be careful how you use such a word."

"Sir, excuse me, but people who open locked trunks, and use and destroy what is not theirs are just as likely as not to carry off what they want. My character is in danger, sir. I wish the trunks

examined."

"I suppose you have been through them."

"No, indeed, sir. When my lady went to her dinner, I called in one of the kitchen girls. I wanted a witness that I had never touched them."

"How dare you make such charges, then?"

"Ask my lady."

"Dora, is there any truth in this girl's words?"

"I fear she speaks too truly, Robert. I have only looked cursorily through one trunk, but I found much fine clothing spoiled, and I fear some jewelry gone. The ruby and sapphire ring given me by my college history class as a wedding gift is not in the jewel case it was packed in, and my turquoise necklace was scattered among my neckwear. It ought to have been in the jewel box."

"Perhaps you forgot in the hurry of packing where you put it."

"I was not hurried. Those four trunks were all leisurely and carefully packed, and the day we left Kendal for Paris——"

"You mean our wedding-day?"

"Yes."

"Then why do you avoid saying so!"

"I do not, but on that same day these four trunks were forwarded here. If you remember, I only took one trunk on our—wedding journey. I supposed these four would be quite safe in this house. But look here, Robert," she continued, lifting a set of valuable ermine furs, "these were given me by Mrs. Priestley. They were of the most exquisite purity, but they look now as if they had been dipped in a light solution of Indian ink."

"The Glasgow rain," he answered carelessly. "Ducie, I do not think we shall blame you."

"Sir, I will take no blame, either about things spoiled, or stolen."

"There is no question of theft. If the ladies using these rooms for a day or two——"

"For three weeks, sir."

"Used also some clothing found in the rooms——"

"Not found, sir, I beg pardon, but locked trunks were opened for them, which the men in the kitchen say is clear burglary—perhaps wishing to frighten me, sir. But this way, or that way, sir, things have been ruined that cost no end of money, and when I saw my lady's spoiled gowns and furs, and broken jewelry, they fairly took my breath away! Yes, sir, they did."

"You may go now, Ducie."

"I cannot and will not be blamed, sir, and I want that fact clear."

"You may go, now. I have told you that once before. If I have to tell you again, you can leave the house altogether."

"Ducie," said Theodora, "I wish you would look after clean linen for the beds and dressing tables."

"What is the matter with the linen, Dora?"

"It is not clean. It looks as if it had been used for two or three weeks."

"Are you sure?"

"Look at it! I can do without many things, Robert, but I cannot do without clean linen."

"Of course not! It is awfully provoking. I tried so hard to have everything spotlessly clean and comfortable, but——" He turned away with an air of angry disappointment.

Dora went to his side and praised again all he had done. She said she would forget all that was spoiled, or broken, or stolen for his sake, and for sweet love's sake, and she emphasized all her tender words with kisses and endearing names.

And she found, as many women find, that the more she renounced her just displeasure and chagrin the harder it was to conciliate her husband's. Whether he enjoyed Dora's efforts to comfort him, or was really of that childish temper which gets more and more injured, as it is more and more consoled, it was at this stage of her married life impossible for Theodora to decide. However, in a little while he condescended to forgive Theodora for the annoyances others had caused him, and said: "It is later than I thought it. We have forgotten tea."

"I do not want any."

"I am going to speak to mother. Shall I send you a cup?"

"No, thank you. Do not stop long, Robert."

She went to the window and looked out into the dreary night. A heavy rain was falling, and not a star was visible in that muffled atmosphere. Sorrowful feelings pervaded all her thoughts, and she asked her soul eagerly for some password out of the tangle of small trials, which like brambles made her path difficult and painful. For the circumstances in which she so suddenly found herself, confounded and troubled her. Had Robert deceived her? Had she been deceived in Robert?

It was, however, a consciousness of having fallen below herself, which hurt her worst of all. She had made concessions, where concession was wrong; she had made apologies for her husband, whereas he ought to have made them to her.

"I have been weak," she whispered to her Inner Woman, and that truthful monitor replied:

"To be weak is to be wicked."

"I have resigned my just rights and my just anger."

"And so have encouraged others to be unjust and unkind, and to sin against you."

"And I have gained nothing by my cowardly self-sacrifice."

"Nothing but humiliation and suffering, which you deserve."

"What can I do?"

"Retrace your first wrong step, in order to take your first right step."

Ere this mental catechism was finished, Ducie entered the rooms with her arms full of clean linen, and Theodora said: "I see you have got the linen, Ducie. Make up my bed first."

"Got it! Yes, ma'am, after a fight for it. The chambermaid was willing enough, but madame held the keys, and madame said the beds had been changed four days ago, and she would not have them changed but once a week. I refused to go away, and the girl went back to her, and was ordered to leave the room. Then I went, and told her that whether she was willing or unwilling I had to have clean linen, as the beds had been stripped, and Mr. Campbell wanted to go to sleep, and Mrs. Campbell had a headache. Then she flew into a passion, and I do not think I durst have stayed in her presence longer, but Mr. Campbell was heard coming, so she flung the keys to one of the young ladies, and told her to 'see to it.' Then I had a fresh fight for pillow-cases, and covers for the dressing tables, and I was told to remember that I would get no more linen for a week. 'Fresh linen once a week is the rule in this house,' the young lady said, 'and no rules will be broken for Mrs. Robert. You can tell her Miss Campbell said so.'"

"Well, Ducie, we must look out for ourselves. I will buy linen to-morrow, and then we can change every day in the week, if we want to."

Robert had been requested not to stay long, but his interview with his mother proved to be both long and stormy. The old lady had felt the irritation of the dinner table, and though she herself was wholly to blame for its quarrelsome atmosphere, she was not influenced by a truth she chose to ignore. Ever since dinner she had been talking to her daughters of Theodora, and her smouldering dislike was now a flaming one. The application for clean linen had made her furious, and she was scolding about it when Robert entered the room. But he knew before he opened the door of his mother's parlor what he had to meet, and the dormant demon of his own temper roused itself for the encounter. He went into her presence with a face like a thundercloud, and asked angrily:

"Why did you let any one—I say any one—into my rooms, mother? I think their occupancy without my permission a scandalous piece of business."

"Keep your temper, Robert Campbell, for your wife. She will need it, I warrant."

"Answer my question, if you please!"

"Well, then, if it is scandalous to entertain your kindred, it would have been much more scandalous to have turned them out of the house."

"Kindred! It is a far cry to call kindred with that Crawford and Laird crowd. I will not have them here! Take notice of that."

"They will come here when they come to Glasgow."

"Then I shall turn them out."

"Then I shall go out with them."

"My rooms——"

"Preserve us! No harm has been done to your rooms."

"They have been defiled in every way—old curl papers, dirty hairpins, stains on the carpets and covers. I burn with shame when I think of my wife seeing their vulgar remains."

"Your wife? Your wife, indeed! She is——"

"I don't want your opinion of my wife."

"You born idiot! What do you want?"

"I want you to write to the women who opened my wife's trunks, and ruined her clothing, and stole her jewelry, or I——"

"Don't you dare to throw 'or' at me. I can say 'or' as big as you. What before earth and heaven are you saying!"

"That my rooms have been entered, my wife's trunks broken open——"

"You have said that once already! I had the Dalkeiths in my spare rooms. Was I to turn the Crawfords and the Lairds on to the sidewalk because your rooms had been refurnished for Dora Newton?"

"Campbell is my wife's name."

"I thank God your kindred had the first use of your rooms! You ought to be glad of the circumstance. And pray, what harm is there in opening a bride's trunks?"

"Only burglary."

"Don't be a tenfold fool. A bride's costumes are always examined by her women kin and friends. My trunks were all opened by the Campbells before your father brought me home. Every Scotch bride expects it, and if you have married a poor, silly English girl, who knows nothing of the ways and manners of your native country, I am not to blame."

"Let me tell you——"

"Let me finish, sir. I wish to say there was nothing in Dora Newton's trunks worth looking at—home-made gowns, and the like."

"Yet two of them have been worn and ruined."

"Jean Crawford and Bell Greenhill wore them a few times. They wanted to go to the theatre or somewhere, and had not brought evening gowns with them. I told them to wear some of Dora's things. Why not? She is in the family now, more's the pity."

"They had no right to touch them."

"I'm sure I wish they had not worn them. Jean and Bell are stylish-looking girls in their own gowns. Dora's made them look dowdy and common. I was fairly sorry for them."

"Which of them wore Theodora's ring? That ring must come back—*must*, I say. Understand me, mother, it must come back."

"If it is lost——"

"It will be a case for the police—sure as death!"

The oath frightened her. "You have lost your senses, Robert," she cried; "you are fairly bewitched. And oh, what a miserable woman I am! Both my lads!" and she covered her face with her handkerchief, and began to sigh and sob bitterly.

Then Isabel went to her mother's side, and as she did so said with scornful anger:

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Robert Campbell. You have nearly broken your mother's heart by your disgraceful marriage. Can you not make Dora behave decently, and not turn the old home and our poor simple lives upside down, with all she requires?"

"Isabel, do you think it was right to put people in the rooms I had spent so much time and money in furnishing?"

"Quite right, seeing the people were our own kindred. It was not right to spend all the time and money you spent on those rooms for a stranger. You ought to be glad some of your own family got a little pleasure in them first of all."

"They did not know how to use them. Both the Crawfords and Lairds are vulgar, common, and uneducated women. They know nothing of the decencies of life."

"That may be true, but they are mother's kin, and blood is thicker than water. The Crawfords and Lairds are blood-kin; Dora is only water."

"Theodora is my wife. I see that mother will no longer listen to me. Try and convince her that I am in earnest. My rooms are *my* rooms, and no one comes into them unless they are invited by Theodora or myself. My wife's clothing and ornaments of all kinds belong to my wife, and not to the whole family. Write to Jean Crawford, and Bell Greenhill, and tell them to return all they have taken, or I shall make them do so."

"I suppose, Robert, they have only borrowed whatever they have. They often borrow my rings and brooches and even my dresses."

"Isabel, when people borrow even a ring, without the knowledge and consent of the owner, the law calls it stealing; and the person who has so borrowed it, the law calls a thief. I hope you understand me."

He was leaving the room when his mother sobbed out: "Oh, Robert, Robert!"

For a moment he hesitated; then he went to her side and asked: "What is it you wish, mother?"

"I did not mean—to hurt you—I was brought up so different. I thought it would be all right—with you—that you, at least—would understand. I expected you knew—all about the marriage customs—you are Scotch. Oh, dear, dear! My poor heart—will break!"

He touched her hand kindly and answered: "Well, do not cry, mother, I will say no more about it. Good-night."

"Good (sob) night (sob), Robert!"

But as soon as the door closed, the furious woman flung down her handkerchief in a rage, saying in low, passionate tones: "You see, girls! When you can't reason with a man, can't touch his brain, you may try crying about him, for perhaps he has something he calls a heart."

Returning to his own apartments Robert found that the lights had been lowered and that Theodora was apparently asleep. He stood looking at her a few minutes, but decided not to awaken her. She would, he thought, want to know all that had been said and he was tired of the subject. His mother's tears had washed all color and vitality out of it. She believed herself to be right and from her point of view he admitted she was. He told himself that Theodora did not comprehend the wonderful complexity of the Scotch character—he must try and teach her. And as for her destroyed, or lost adornments, they could be replaced. Of course money would be, as it were, lost in such replacement, but it would be a good lesson, and lessons of all kinds take money. Thus, by a new road, he had come back to the usual Campbell appreciation of the Campbells, for though he was keenly alive to the individual defects of that large family he was at the same time conscious of their superiority to the rest of the world.

In the morning he began to give Theodora the lesson he had himself absorbed. He told her that it was some of their own relatives who had occupied the rooms, and then explained the wonderful strength of the family tie in Scotch families. "I think," he added, "that under the circumstances, mother did the only possible thing."

"And the opening of my trunks, Robert dear, and the use of my clothing, is that also a result of the Scotch family tie?"

"Yes-s," he answered with easy composure, "they looked on you as one of us and supposed you would gladly loan what they needed. Isabel says they often borrow her brooches and rings and gowns. Moreover, mother informed me, that it is the common custom to open a bride's trunks, and examine her belongings."

"A very rude and barbarous custom, I think, Robert, and it makes no excuse for an infringement of manifest courtesy and kindness. And I am sure that every one can forgive an injury, easier than an infringement of their rights."

"You must try and look at the matter reasonably, dear Dora."

"You mean unreasonably, Robert, but if you do not care, why should I?" Robert made no reply, but went on examining his fingernails, apparently without noticing the look of pained surprise in his wife's eyes, nor yet the far deeper sign of distress—that dumb lip-biting which indicates an intensity of outraged feeling.

This was Theodora's first lesson in the complexities of the Scotch character, and it was a dear one. It cost her many illusions, many hopes, and some secret tears. And the gain was doubtful. Nature knows how to profit from every shower of rain, every glint of sunshine, every drop of dew; but which of us ever learn from any past experience, how to prepare a future that will give us what we desire?

During the night she had plumbed the depths of depression, but in a short deep morning sleep, she had found the strength to possess her soul, not in patience, but in a sweet, firm resistance. She would accept cheerfully the lot she had chosen, for to bear dumbly and passively the many petty wrongs which ill-temper and dislike must bring her would only tempt those who hated her to a continuance and enlargement of their sin. Every one, even her husband, would despise her, and she suddenly remembered how God, when He would reason with Job, bid him rise from his dunghill, stand upon his feet, and answer Him like a man. So, she would submit to no injustice, nor suffer without contradiction any lying accusation, yet her weapons of defence should be kind and clean, and her victory won by love and truth and honor—for in this way she herself would rise by

—"*the things put under her feet,*
By what she mastered of good and gain,
By the pride deposed, by the passion slain,
And the vanquished ills she would hourly meet."

The prospect of such a victory made her heart swell with a noble joy, for thus she would be creating her spiritual self, and so being God-like be also loved of God.

Her first effort was to compel herself to go to the breakfast table. She wished to have Ducie bring her a cup of coffee and a couple of rolls to her room, but that would only be shirking the

inevitable. So she went to the family table smiling, and almost radiant in a pretty pink gown, and beautiful white muslin neckwear. Her manner was cheerful and conciliatory, but it utterly failed, because the old lady believed it to be the result of orders from her son. She was sure Robert had seen the reasonableness of her conduct, and told Theodora to accept the circumstances as unavoidable, and perhaps even excusable.

So in spite of her smiles and efforts at conversation, the meal was silent and unhappy and towards the end really distressing. It had begun with oatmeal porridge served on large dinner plates, and she had accepted her share without remark, though unable to eat it. But later, when a dish of boiled salt herring appeared, its peculiar odor made her so sick that it was with painful difficulty she sat through the meal. Robert noticed her white face and general air of distress, and slightly hurried his own meal in consequence.

"Are you ill, Dora?" he asked, when she fell nauseated and limp among the sofa cushions.

"It was the smell of the salt fish, Robert. I could not conquer it."

"But you must try. We have boiled salt herring every morning. I do not remember a breakfast without them."

"Then, dear Robert, I must have a cup of coffee in my dressing-room."

"You might learn to bear the smell."

"The ordeal would be too wasteful of life."

"I don't see——"

"No one can afford a disagreeable breakfast, Robert. It spoils the whole day. And I might waste weeks and months trying to like the odor of boiled salt herring, and never succeed—it is sickening to me."

"It does not make me sick. I have had a boiled salt herring to breakfast ever since I was seven years old."

"You have learned to bear them."

"I like them."

"Did you like them at first?"

"No, but I was made to eat them until at last I learned to relish them. Mother believed them to be good for me. Now, I do not think my breakfast perfect without a boiled salt herring."

"We can force nature to take, and even enjoy poisons like whiskey and opium, but I think such an education sinful and unclean."

"Dora, you are too fastidious."

"No, because a wronged body means something to a sensitive soul."

"If you look at such a small thing in a light so important, you had better take your breakfast alone. Good-morning!"

CHAPTER IV

FOES IN THE HOUSEHOLD

She was ill for some hours, and all day much troubled at the circumstance. In her proposed fight against the hatred of her husband's family she had lost the first move, for she could well imagine the triumphant mockery of her mother-in-law over her weakness and squeamishness. In the afternoon she asked for the carriage, as she wished to do some shopping, and was told Mrs. Campbell was intending to use it. Then she sent for a cab and while she was dressing, Christina came into her room wearing her street costume.

"Isabel is going out with mother," she said. "Can I go with you, Theodora?"

The proposal was not welcome, but without hesitation Theodora answered: "I shall be obliged if you will. I have some shopping to do, and you can tell me the best places to go to."

"I certainly can; I know all the best shops. I always do the shopping. I like to shop; Isabel hates it. She says the shopmen are not civil to her. Isabel is so particular about her dignity."

"That is rather a good quality, is it not?"

"I don't know—with that kind of people—shopmen and the like—it is rather a daft thing to do."

"Daft?"

"Silly, I mean. They have to wait on you, why should you care how they do it? I don't."

"I am ready. Shall we go now?"

"I am ready. What will you buy first?"

"Linen—sheets, pillow-cases, table-cloths, napkins, etc. We shall want a linen draper."

"Then tell cabby to drive us to Smith and McDonald's. It is perfectly lovely to be with you, and without mother and Isabel to snub me. I feel as if I were having a holiday."

"Perhaps I might snub you."

"I am sure you will not. I believe I am going to have a happy afternoon."

And she really had a few hours that perfectly delighted her. Theodora asked her advice, and frequently took it. Theodora bought her gloves and lace, and after the shopping was finished, they went into McLeod's confectionery and had ices and cakes, lemonade and caramels. For once in her life, Christina had felt herself to be well-informed and important. She had told several funny stories also, and Theodora had laughed and enjoyed them; indeed, she felt as if Theodora considered her quite clever.

"I have had such a jolly afternoon," she said as they parted. "Thank you for taking me with you! I cannot tell you how happy I have been."

But to Isabel's queries, she answered with an air of ennui: "You know well, Isabel, what shopping means. We went here and there, and bought linen of all kinds, and wine and cakes, and then we went to the large furniture store, and selected a bookcase; for it seems that Robert, with all his carefulness, forgot one."

"Did you like her?"

"She is good-natured enough. Everywhere we went the shopmen fell over each other to wait on her. My! but it is a grand thing to be beautiful."

"Do you really think her beautiful?"

"Every one else does. It matters little what the Traquair Campbells think. She is rather saucy, but she is so pleasant about it you can't take offence."

"Was she saucy to you?"

"Yes."

"What did she say?"

"She said she would be much obliged if I would tap at the door before entering her room."

"The idea!"

"Oh, she is nice enough! I wish mother was not so set against her. I know she plays and sings, and I adore good music."

"You will be adoring her next."

"No, I will not, but I intend to use her when I can."

"What for?"

"To give me a little pleasure—to show me how to dress—to lend me books and music, and take me with her when she goes calling and shopping."

"I would not receive such favors from a person mother disliked so much."

"Mother never finds any one she likes, except the Campbelton people—frowsy, vulgar things, all of them; and I do think it was a shame to use Dora's dresses and furs and jewelry the way they did."

"Mother said it was right, and Robert seemed to think so also—that is, after mother had explained the subject to him."

"Whatever mother thinks, Robert finally thinks the same. He is more afraid of mother than we are. I despise a man who can't stick to his own opinion."

"But if his opinion is wrong?"

"All the same, he ought to stick to it; I should. I think Dora is a lovely woman, and good, and clever. Mother ought to be proud of her new daughter."

"Mother had a high ideal for Robert's wife."

"One that nobody but a Traquair Campbell—or a Jane Dalkeith could fill."

"Jane might have pleased her."

"No one pleases mother! If you gave her the whites of your eyes, she would not be pleased."

"You must not forget, Christina, that she is our mother, and that the Scriptures command us to honor her."

"Sometimes, and in some cases, Isabel, that command is a gey hard one—I might say an impossible one."

"Perhaps, but the Holy Word makes no exceptions—good or bad, wise or foolish, they are to be honored. Dr. Robertson said so, in his last sermon to the Sunday School."

"Dr. Robertson isna infallible, and 'wi' his ten romping, rampaging sons and daughters, he be to lay down a strict law.' That was Jenny McDonald's commentary on his sermon. I heard her say so, and I thought to myself 'Jenny McDonald, you are a vera discerning woman.' I have respected her ever since, and I shall see she gets a pair of blankets at the Christmas fair."

"Well, Christina, I shall not quarrel with you about Dora. I can live without Dora, but you are essential."

The evening proved to be as pleasant, as the morning had been disagreeable. Robert had doubtless suffered some qualms of conscience regarding his wife's treatment, and resolved to make it up to her by his own attention. For he believed so firmly in himself, and in Theodora's love for him, that he really thought a few kind words would atone for every wrong and unkindness she had suffered.

He found Theodora in the mood he expected. She was beautifully gowned, and radiant with welcoming smiles. He forgot to name her morning indisposition, but asked what she had been doing all day, and was much pleased when she answered:

"Christina and I have been shopping this afternoon. She was of great assistance to me, and we had a delightful time." Then she told him what she had bought, and made some very merry comments on the strange shops and polite shopmen.

Two things in her recital were particularly satisfactory—one of his own family had shared her pleasure, and he had not been asked for money to contribute to it. For his wedding expenses had begun to give him a sense of poverty, and his naturally economical nature was shocked at their total. But if Theodora liked to buy more linen and furniture, and treat his sister and herself he had no objections. He supposed she had plenty of money, he thought of what Mr. Newton called her "royalties," and felt he might—at least for a few weeks—throw his responsibilities upon them.

On the whole, sitting by Theodora's side and listening to her pleasant conversation, he felt life to be decidedly worth living. Her moderated dress was also in consonance with his desires. For she had felt her costume on the previous night to be out of tone with her surroundings, and had therefore made a much simpler toilet. She had even wondered if the rich silk and lace, and pearls, were to blame for the unkindness of her reception; if so, she resolved not to err in that respect again. So she wore a light gray liberty silk gown of walking length, with a pretty white muslin waist, and an Eton jacket. A short sash of the same silk tied at the left side was the only trimming, and her wedding ring with its diamond guard her only jewelry. Its simplicity elicited her husband's ardent admiration, and she hoped it would be satisfactory to all. But who can please jealousy, envy, and hatred? An angel from heaven would fail, then how should a mortal woman succeed?

"Last night," said her mother-in-law scornfully, "my lady came sweeping into the room like a very butterfly of a woman. She thought she would astonish us. Did she imagine the Traquair Campbells could be snubbed by a silk dress and a string of pearls? And to-night she comes smiling in as modest as a Quakeress. I am led to believe, Robert has been giving her a few words. I know right well she deserved them."

"Mother," said Isabel, "I dare say she wanted us to believe that she had been used to full dress dinners."

"A likely thing in a Methodist preacher's house, or a girl's school either."

"College, you mean, mother," corrected Christina. "Or perhaps she thought if she was dressed very fine, we would like her better. Dress does make a deal of difference. None of us like our cousins Kerr, because they dress so shabby."

"Speak for your own feelings, Christina. Your sister Isabel and I always treat the Kerr girls with respect."

"Respect is a gey cold welcome. I would not take it twice."

"I think you are forgetting yourself, Christina," said Isabel.

"She has been in bad company all afternoon, Isabel. What can you expect? I heard her tee-heeing and laughing with Dora, almost until dinner time."

And even as the old woman spoke, Robert entered and asked his sisters to come and spend the evening with Dora and himself. "Dora is going to sing," he said, "and it will be a great treat for you to hear her."

"Thank you, brother," said Isabel. "I prefer to stay with mother."

"Perhaps mother will also come."

"No, Robert, I do not care for worldly music, and if I did, Christina sings and plays very well."

"Robert, I shall be delighted to come," said Christina. "You know I love music."

"You will remain with your sister and myself, Christina."

"Please, mother, let me go! Robert, please!" and she looked so entreatingly at her brother, that he sat down by his mother, and taking her hand said: "You must humor me in this matter, dear mother. I want some of you with me, and I am sure Christina can learn a great deal from Dora. It will cost her nothing, and she ought to take advantage of Dora's skill."

The last argument prevailed. If Christina could get any advantage for nothing, and especially from Theodora, Mrs. Campbell approved the project.

"You may go with your brother, Christina, for an hour, and make the most of your opportunities. One thing is sure, the woman ought to do something for the family, for goodness knows, we have been put to extraordinary expense and trouble for her pleasure."

A few minutes after the departure of Robert and his sister, Mrs. Campbell said: "Open the parlor door, Isabel, and let us hear the 'treat' if we can."

But the songs Theodora sang were quite unknown to the two listeners and Mrs. Campbell indulged herself in much scornful criticism. "Who ever heard the like? Do you call that music? It is just skirling. I would rather hear Christina sing '*The Bush Aboon Traquair*,' or '*The Lass o' Patie's Mill*,' or a good rattling Jacobite song like '*Highland Laddie*,' or '*Over the Water to Charlie*.' There is music in the like o' them, but there isn't a note o' it in Dora's caterwauling."

"Listen, mother! She is singing merrily enough now. I wonder what it is? Robert and Christina are both laughing."

"Something wicked and theatrical, no doubt. Shut the door, Isabel, and give me my *Practice of Piety*. Then you may leave me, and go to your room, unless you wish to join your sister."

"Mother, do not be unjust."

"In an hour remind Christina. You are a good daughter, Isabel. You are my greatest comfort."

"Good-night, mother; you are always first with me."

When Christina's hour was nearly at its close, Isabel went to her brother's parlor door. Theodora was singing the sweetest little melody and her voice was so charming that Isabel could not tap at the door—as Christina had been instructed to do—until it ceased. And for many a day the words haunted her, though she always told herself there was neither sense nor reason in them.

*"If there were dreams to sell
What would you buy?
Some cost a passing bell,
Some a light sigh,
That shakes from Life's fresh crown
Only a rose leaf down.
If there were dreams to sell,
Merry and sad to tell,
And the crier rang the bell,
What would you buy?"*

After this question had rung itself into her heart and memory, she tapped at the door and Robert rose and opened it. And when Isabel spoke they brought her in, willing or unwilling, and made so much of her visit that she could not deny their kindness. Besides, as Robert told her, they wanted a game of whist so much, and she made it possible. "You shall be my partner," he added, "and we are sure to win." He was holding her hand as he spoke, and ere he ceased, he had led her to the table and got her a seat. Christina threw down a pack of cards, and Isabel found it impossible to resist the temptation, for she loved a game of whist and played a clever hand. Then the hours slipped happily away, and it was near midnight when the sisters stepped softly to their rooms.

"I have had such a good time," whispered Christina.

"It was a good game," answered Isabel.

"Don't you think she is nice?"

"Dora?"

"Yes."

"She puts on plenty of nice airs."

"I hope Robert will ask us to-morrow night."

"I shall not go again. I could not help to-night's visit. There is no need to say anything to mother. It would only worry her."

"In the morning she will tell us the precise moment that we came upstairs. No doubt she was watching and listening, and if we had the feet of a mouse she would hear us."

But if Mrs. Campbell heard she made no remark on the situation. She knew well that if Isabel was

brought face to face with her frailty, she would defend it, and defend all concerned in it, and also make a point of repeating the fault in order to prove the propriety of her position. That would be giving Theodora too great an advantage. On the contrary, she was in her pleasantest mood, and as Theodora had her coffee in her own parlor there was no incident to mar the even temper of the breakfast table.

When Robert left it, he was followed so quickly by Christina that she had an opportunity of speaking to him as he was putting on his overcoat and gloves, and thus to thank him for his invitation of the previous evening. "I never had such a happy time in all my life, Robert," she said, "and Theodora does play and sing wonderfully. It is a joy to listen to her."

"Is it not?" he queried with a beaming face. "You were a good girl to call on her, and go out with her; and I will remember you at the New Year handsomely if you make things pleasant for Theodora."

"I would do so to please you, Robert. I do not want to be paid for that," replied Christina. Robert smiled and went away in such a happy temper, that Jepson said as he took his place at the head of the kitchen breakfast table: "The master is off in high spirits this morning. The bride is winning her way, I suppose. She seems rather an attractive woman."

"You suppose! And pray what will your supposing be worth, Mr. Jepson?" Mrs. McNab asked this question scornfully from the foot of the table. "Attractive, indeed! She's charming, she's captivating, she's enchanting, she's bewitching; and if she was only Highland Scotch, she would soon be teaching thae sour old women the meaning o' them powerful words. She would that! But she's o'er good, and o'er good-tempered for the like o' them."

"You are talking of the mistress, McNab."

"I am weel acquaint wi' that fact, and I'll just remind you that my name is Mistress McNab, when you find sense enough to give me my right. And if it isna lawfu' to talk o' Mistress Traquair Campbell, there's no law forbidding me to talk o' them Lairds and Crawfords. If they ever come here again, the smoke will get through their porridge, and they'll wonder what the de'il is the matter wi' Mistress McNab's cookery."

"The guests of the house, McNab, ought to have a kind of consideration."

"Consider them yoursel', then."

"The Crawfords and Lairds both are the most respect——"

"Ill-bred, and forwardsome o' mortals. I could say much worse——"

"Better not."

"Bouncing, swaggering, nasty, beggarly creatures! They turn up their lang noses, and the palms o' their greedy hands at the like o' you and me, but there isna a lady or a gentleman at this table, that wouldna scorn the dirty things they did here."

"They gave none o' us a sixpence when they went awa," said Thomas, the second man.

"Sixpence! They couldna imagine a bawbee or a kind word to anybody but themsel's. They wouldna gie the smoke aff their porridge—but I'll tell you the differ o' them. The young mistress, God bless her, sends her maid to me last night, and the girl—a civil spoken creature—says: 'Mrs. McNab, my mistress would like her coffee and rolls in her own parlor, and there will be due you half-a-crown a week for your trouble, and thank you.' That's the way a lady puts things. And mind you, if there's the like o' a fresh kidney, or a few mushrooms coming Mrs. McNab's way, they will go to my lovely lady in her own parlor—and Jepson, you can just tell the auld woman I made that remark."

"What is said at this table goes no further, Mrs. McNab, and that you know."

"Then the auld woman has the far-hearing, that's a'——" and being by this time at the end of her temper and her English speech, she plunged into Gaelic. It was her sure and unconquered resort, for no one could answer unpronounceable and untranslatable words. All her companions knew was, that she rose from the table with an air of victory.

The next week was very wet. Day after day it was rain only interrupted by more rain, and Robert seemed to take a kind of pride in its abundance. "Few countries are so well watered as Scotland," he said complacently:

*"The West wind always brings wet weather,
The East wind wet and cold together,
The South wind surely brings us rain,
The North wind blows it back again."*

This storm included Sunday, and every one went to church except Theodora. She had a headache, and having been told by Christina that the Kirk would size her up the first Sabbath she appeared, she resolved to put off the ordeal. The pleasure of being quite alone for a few hours was a temptation, for she needed solitude more than service, bewildered as she was by the strange household ideas and customs which had suddenly encompassed her life.

She had thought that religion, or some point of nationality, would be the most likely rocks of

offence, but as yet all her trials had come from some trivial circumstance of daily life. She had been embarrassed by such small differences, that she hardly knew in the hasty decisions they compelled, what to defend and what to abandon.

It was also a wearisome experience to be constantly exchanging suspicious courtesies with her husband's family, and by no effort of love or patience could she get beyond these. Their want of response made her sad, and checked her affectionate and spontaneous advances, but she knew that in the trials of domestic life all plans must come at last to the give and take, bear and forbear theory. So after some reflection, she said softly to herself: "These women are the samples of humanity given me with my husband, and I must make the best of them. I can choose my friends, but I must take my relations as I find them. They are not what I wish, not what I expected, but I fear nothing comes up to our expectations. The real thing always lacks the color of the thing hoped for."

Such despondent musings, however, were not natural to her hopeful temper. "There must be a bright side to the situation," she continued, "and I must try and find it." So she roused herself from the recumbent position she had taken. "Stand up on thy feet, and look for the bright side, Theodora." As she did so, her eyes fell upon the small book in her hand, and she read these words:

"Take a good heart, O Jerusalem, for he that gave thee that name will comfort thee."
With a joyful smile she read it again, and this time aloud:

"Take a good heart, O Theodora, for he that gave thee that name will comfort thee!"^[1]
The glorious promise inspired her at once with strength and joy; she felt her soul singing within her, and her first impulse was to open the piano and pour out her thanksgiving.

"O come let us sing unto the Lord, let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation."

[1] Baruch. Chap. 4, v. 30.

At this point McNab rushed into the room crying: "For goodness sake, my lady, stop! You'll be having the police in, and the de'il to pay all round, disturbing the Sunday saints and the like o' it. Excuse me, ma'am, but you don't know what you're up to."

"I am singing a psalm, McNab. Is there anything wrong in that?"

"You've put your finger on the wrong, ma'am. Singing a psalm isna a thing fit to be done in your ain parlor on the Sunday. It is a' right in the Kirk, but it is a' wrang in the parlor."

"How is that?"

"You be to ask wiser folk than I am what's the differ. If you were singing the psalm o' the blessed Virgin itsel' and folk heard you, there would be no end o' the matter. You can sing without the piano, ma'am, it's the piano that's the blackguard on a Sunday."

"Thank you, McNab, for warning me. I have not learned the ways of the country yet."

"You'll never learn them, ma'am. They must be borned in ye, sucked in wi' your mither's milk, and thrashed into ye wi' your school lessons. Just gie them their ways, and stick to your ain. You can do that, McNab does. They are easy satisfied if it suits their convenience. Every soul in this house is at church but mysel', for I hae made collops the regular Sunday dinner, and no one but McNab can cook collops to suit Mrs. Traquair Campbell."

"I am sure she would not keep you from church to make collops."

"I am a Catholic, and she keeps me at home to make collops, to prevent me going to my ain church. God save us! she thinks she is keeping me from serving the devil."

"So you are a Catholic?"

"Glory be to God, I am a Catholic! Did you ever taste collops, ma'am?"

"I never heard of them."

"Weel, they arena bad, and when McNab makes them, they are vera good. I shall put a few mushrooms in them to-day for your sake."

"Thank you!"

"And you can sing twice as much the morn. I'm sure it is a thanksgiving to listen to you."

Then the door closed, and Theodora closed the piano, put away her music, and went upstairs to dress for dinner. The thanksgiving was still in her heart, and she sang it with her soul joyfully, as she put on one of her most cheerful and beautiful costumes. It seemed natural and proper to do so, and without reasoning on the subject, she felt it to be in fit sympathy with her mood.

Even when the churchgoers came home drabbled and dripping, and as cross and gloomy as if they had been to hear a Gospel that was bad news, instead of good news, she did not feel its incongruity with her environment, until her mother-in-law said:

"You are very much over-dressed for the day, Dora."

"It is God's day, and I dressed in honor of the day."

"Then you should have gone to church to honor Him."

Before his wife could reply, Robert made a diversion: "What did you think of the sermon, mother?" he asked.

"It was a very strong sermon."

"Who was the preacher?" asked Isabel.

"Dr. Fraser of Stirling," said Robert.

"Well, brother, I do not believe Dr. Robertson would have approved the sermon. It is not like his preaching."

"It was an excellent sermon," reiterated Mrs. Campbell. "I hope all the uncovenanted present felt its weighty solemnity." She muttered, twice over, its awful text: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

"There is a better word for them than that," said Theodora, her face alight with spiritual promise. "'The Lord is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance.' That is what Saint Peter says, and Timothy, 'God our Saviour will have all men to be saved,' a great *all* that, and the Testament is full of such glad hope."

"Those passages do not apply to the lost, Dora."

"But as your great Scotch preacher, Thomas Erskine, said, we are lost *here* as much as there, and Christ came to seek and to save the lost."

Mrs. Campbell looked with sorrowful anger at her son, and Robert said: "My dear Dora, you argue like a woman. Women should listen, and never argue."

"Women are told to search the Scriptures, Robert. I search and understand them, but I do not often understand the men who profess to explain them."

"Your father——"

"Oh, my father! *He* has come unto Bethlehem. Those who can believe God has any pleasure in punishing sinners, are still at Sinai."

"God must punish sinners," said Isabel.

"God can reform and forgive them, just as easily; and it would be far more in accord with His nature, for 'God is Love.'"

"If we are to have a theological discussion by young women, I shall retire," said Robert, and with these words he rose from the table.

"Sit down, Robert. You have had no pudding."

"The collops were very fine to-day, mother, and I am satisfied."

As he left the room Theodora rose and went with him, but he did not appear to notice her. When they were in their parlor he said: "You ought to have sat still and finished your argument with my sister."

"Have I done something wrong, Robert?"

"I think if you cannot assent to mother's statements, it would be more becoming not to contradict them."

"If it had been a matter of no importance, I would have kept silence, but I must always testify in any company, the absolute perfection of Jesus Christ's sacrifice."

"Nobody challenged it."

"But if it does not save *all* it is imperfect. And surely John the Beloved knew his Master's heart, and he says 'Jesus Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.' How can any one dare to narrow that zone of mercy?"

"You argue like a woman, Dora."

"I am not arguing. I am only quoting what the greatest of men have said."

Then Robert lifted the *Sunday Magazine* and answered all her further efforts at conversation in polite monosyllables, and finding the position she had been relegated to both embarrassing and humiliating, she finally went to her room upstairs, and shut herself in with God. Her eyes were full of unshed tears, as she turned the key, for she felt that something in her life had lost its foothold. Was it her faith? Oh, no! She trusted God implicitly. She could not think any ill of Him, she had loved Him from her cradle. Was it her love? Oh, how reluctant she was, to even ask this question. But there was a great change in Robert, or was it that she now saw the real Robert Campbell, while the man who had wooed and won her had been but a man playing a lover's rôle?

For even during the few days they had been at home, it was evident that both he and his family were resolved on her surrendering her faith, and her individuality. She was to be made over by the Campbells in their own image and likeness. Robert had loved and married Theodora Newton; was she to change her character with her name? She had made no such promise, and, without the slightest egotism, she could see that such a denial of herself would compel from her mental and spiritual nature a downward, backward movement, so deep and wide she dared not contemplate it.

Her duty to her husband was plain as the Bible, and she promised herself to fulfil it to the last tittle, but while doing this, she must find the courage to be true to herself, as well as to others. And as nothing can be done in the heart by halves, it would be no fitful or uncertain struggle. The whole soul, the whole heart, the whole mind, the whole life, would be demanded. She was troubled at the prospect before her. Would she find strength and wisdom for it? Or would it prove to be another of the lost fights of Virtue?

"No, no!" she cried. "I shall not fight alone. God and Theodora are a multitude."

She had certainly that doleful afternoon gone back in piteous memory to her teaching and writing, and her own peaceful, loving home, and thought that if trouble was necessary for her higher development it could have been better borne in either environment. But she acknowledged also that

*"Where our Captain bids us go,
'Tis not ours to murmur 'No.'
He that gives us sword and shield,
Chooses too the battlefield."*

So if God had chosen this gloomy house, full of jealousy, envy, hatred, and apparently dying love, for her battlefield, it was not her place to murmur "No," nor even her desire, since He that

*"chose the battlefield,
Would give her also sword and shield."*

CHAPTER V

BAD AT BEST

If there had been a little diversity in the Campbell family it would have been a more bearable household. But they had the same prejudices and the same likes and dislikes, differing only in the intensity with which they held them. Mrs. Campbell and her son Robert were the most positive, Isabel was but little behind them, and Christina was easily bent as the others desired. Under present circumstances she could only be true to her family; under any other circumstances, it was doubtful if she could be false. This monotony of feeling pressed like a weight on Theodora, who felt that she could have borne opposition and unkindness better if there had been more variety in their exhibition; for then Life might have had some interesting fluctuations.

But Mrs. Campbell did precisely the same things every day, and to go to the works at the same moment every morning was the sum-total of Robert's life. The girls had certain dresses for the morning, and certain other dresses for the afternoon, and their employments were quite as uniform. There were even certain menus for every day's dinner in the week, and these were repeated with little or no change year in and year out. For Mrs. Campbell hated the unexpected; she tried to order her life so that there should be no surprises in it. On the contrary Theodora delighted in the unforeseen. She would have wished that even in heaven she might have happy surprises—the sudden meeting with an old friend, or good news from the dear earth still loved and remembered.

However, she had that hopefulness and virginity of spirit that makes the best of what cannot be changed, and as the weeks went on she learned to ignore the ill-will she could not conquer and to bear in silence the wrongs not to be put right by any explanations. And she soon made many acquaintances, and a few sincere friends. Among the latter were Dr. Robertson and his wife, and Mrs. Oliphant, the American. The former had called on Theodora about ten days after her homecoming and had been heartily attracted by her intelligence and beauty. The doctor was passionately fond of good music, and when he noticed the open piano and the name Mendelssohn on the music above it, he asked in an eager voice: "You will play for me?"

"Yes," Theodora answered, "very gladly! My piano is my great friend and companion. It feels with me in every mood. What shall I play?"

"The song before you. Mendelssohn can get very near to a musical soul."

She rose at once, and after a short prelude played in a manner so masterful as to cause the minister to look at his wife in wonder as her magnificent voice lifted that pathetic prayer, which has spoken for the sorrowful and suffering in all ages:

"O that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest."

Every note and every word was full of passionate spiritual desire and tender aspiration, and the music was as if her guardian angel joined her in it. The doctor was entranced, and Mrs. Robertson rose and was standing by the singer's side when she ceased.

"O, my dear, my dear!" she said, "you have gone straight to my heart."

A long and delightful conversation followed; then Ducie set an exquisite little service, and gave the company tea and cake and sweetmeats, and the visit did not terminate for nearly another hour.

Mrs. Campbell was in a transport of anger. "I was never even asked after," she complained to her son, "and Dora kept them all of two hours—such ignorance of social customs—and I could hear them talking and singing like a crowd of daffing young people."

"You ought to have joined them, mother."

"I ought to have been asked to do so, but I was quite neglected."

A few minutes later Robert said to his wife: "Why did you not send for mother when the minister called?"

"Mother was not asked for, and whenever I do send for her she makes a point of refusing, often very rudely, and I did not wish Dr. Robertson to be refused in our parlor."

"Who was mother rude to? It is not her way."

"To Mrs. Oliphant for one, and there were others."

"She does not approve of Mrs. Oliphant."

"I did not know whether she approved of Dr. and Mrs. Robertson. I like them very much. The doctor was very happy, and Mrs. Robertson told me 'I had gone straight to her heart.'"

"Such extravagance of speech! But she is Irish, and the Irish must exaggerate. They are a most untruthful race."

"They are an affectionate race, and what is the good of loving people, if you do not tell them so? They might as well be without such love."

"Do not be foolish, Dora."

"Is that foolishness?"

"Yes."

"Then once you were very foolish. I have not forgotten the time, when you continually told me how dearly you loved me. I was very happy then."

He turned and looked at her, and her beauty conquered him. He took her to his heart, and said: "I do love you, Dora. Yes, I do love you!" And then she grew radiant, and joy transfigured her face, and they went in to dinner together like lovers.

A little later when Dr. Robertson and his wife were sitting alone they began to talk of Theodora. "She has a great heart," said Mrs. Robertson, "and more's the pity."

"Yes, Kate, more's the pity, if she loves Robert Campbell; for it's small love she will get in return. Like ivy on a stone wall, she will obtain only a rigid and niggardly support, and even for that must go searching all round with humble embraces."

"You may take back your last two words, Angus. Yonder woman will stand level with her husband, or not stand with him at all. She would scorn your humble embraces."

"I fear she is in trouble already. There were tears in her voice as she sang."

"It would have melted the heart of a stone. Trouble? Certainly. How can she live with those three amazing women, and be out of trouble?"

"Well, Kate, the key of life which opens all its doors, and answers all its questions, is not 'how' or 'why' or even 'I wish' or 'I will.' It is *I must*. She must live with them. She must, she must, she must; and she'll do it."

"She will not do it long. Mind what I say. She will strive till she is weary, and then she must leave him—or else drift on a sorrowful sea like a dismasted ship."

"She believes in God—a believer in God never does that."

"Then she will have to leave him. Who could stand the ill-natured nagging of those women, and his sullen, masterful ways? No one."

"She must! The tooth often bites the tongue, but they keep together."

"Poor woman! It is a hard road for her to walk on."

"It is the ground that we do *not* walk on, that supports us. Faith treads on the void, and finds the rock beneath. She has found that rock, or I am greatly mistaken."

"I feel sure she has found it. Angus, if you could get her to sing that prayer, 'O For the Wings of a Dove' in church, say, while the Elders went round with the collection boxes, it would do a deal of good. It would touch every heart—they wouldn't mind their pennies, they might even give a crown where they have given a shilling."

"That is a capital idea, but I should have to ask Campbell for his consent."

"He does not own her voice."

"He thinks he does, and he must have his say-so. But if she could touch every heart as she touched ours what a gracious gift of song it would be!"

"I believe she could. Ask Robert Campbell."

"I will."

Under all circumstances Robert would have received the minister with extreme courtesy, for a Scotchman can no more afford to quarrel with the dominie of his Kirk than a Catholic in Rome can afford to quarrel with the Pope in Rome. Also, he had a great respect for Dr. Robertson, and when he was told of the sermon he intended to preach on the following Sabbath he was very proud of the confidence, and still prouder to be of service in promoting its effectiveness.

"Of course," he said, "Mrs. Campbell would sing. Why not? Was he not always happy to oblige the doctor and benefit the church?" And it never struck him that he was assuming an absolute right in Theodora's voice, and in her use of it; because he actually felt what he assumed. Nor did he see that in giving her voice to benefit the church he was thinking solely of the church as a religious society, and the souls composing it were never for a moment in his calculation. Both of these facts were clear to the minister, and he hoped that when Campbell saw and felt the effects of his concession he would be disposed to give some thanks to Theodora, and so get a glimpse of what he owed to a wife so good, so clever, and so lovely.

It was remarkable that he never named the subject to his mother, and to Theodora he only spoke of the minister's visit, and asked if he had called on her.

"Yes," she answered, "I made all arrangements with him." She did not dare to express her pleasure, for in that case she knew by experience he would probably cancel his concession. She permitted him to think she was willing to oblige the doctor, because he wished it, and then he felt it necessary to say that it was for "the good of the church, and that he had only consented to her singing for that reason."

Two days afterwards Mrs. Robertson called on Theodora and they went out together, nor did Theodora return until after ten o'clock. At that hour Mrs. Campbell sent for her son to discuss Dora's absence with him. She found him satisfied, instead of angry, as she supposed he would be.

"It is quite right, mother," he said. "Dora is dining with the Robertsons. I was invited, but I preferred to remain at home."

"You did the proper thing. Neither I nor your sisters were invited. I consider our neglect a great insult."

"No insult was intended, mother. They are infatuated with Dora, and I dare say have invited some of the congregation to meet her. Why, there she is now!" he exclaimed, "and I wonder who is with her?"

"I advise you to find out."

He followed the advice, and went to the open door. Theodora was in the embrace of Mrs. Oliphant. "You darling," she was saying, "I can hardly wait for Sunday. O, how are you, Mr. Campbell? You ought to have been with us. We have had the loveliest evening with your adorable wife—but we have brought her safe home."

Then Mr. Oliphant laughed: "You ought to keep at her side, Campbell. Every man o' us would like to run awa' with her."

He said the words jokingly, but Robert was very angry, and Theodora felt that his permission for the Sunday singing wavered in the balance. But the danger passed in his criticisms of the offender, whom he stigmatized as "the most uxorious and foolish of husbands."

Except to Theodora, he did not name the subject of her singing on the coming Sabbath, and as neither Mrs. Campbell nor her daughters spoke of it, Theodora followed the example set her and kept silence. When Sunday arrived, she went quietly out of the house while the rest were dressing, and at the last moment Robert joined his family, saying: "I will go to church with you this morning, mother." He gave no reason for his conduct, nor did Mrs. Campbell ask for one. She concluded that Theodora was sick, or that more likely she had had a dispute with her husband about the service, and in consequence had refused to attend it.

As it happened Mrs. Campbell had only heard Theodora sing from a distance, or behind closed doors, and Isabel was very near in the same ignorance of her voice and its ability. Christina was more likely to recognize the singer, for she had frequently heard her, but she did not, or at least only in a vague and uncertain manner. She wished Theodora had been present, that she might learn her deficiencies, and she wondered that two people should have voices so similar; but she reflected, that her own voice was so like Isabel's that her mother frequently mistook them. But

Robert knew, and his heart melted to the passionate stress and longing of her cry: "O that I had wings like a dove," and thrilled to the joy and triumph of the rest hoped for.

The whole church was moved as if it had been one spirit and one heart. The place seemed to be on fire with feeling, and as the marvellous voice died away in peace and rest a strange but mighty influence swept over the usually cold and stolid congregation. Some wept silently, some bowed their heads, and a few stood and looked upward, while the soft, rolling notes of the organ died away in the benediction. Very quietly and speechlessly the congregation dispersed. All went home with the song in their hearts, but not until they sat down in their homes did they begin to talk together of the psalm and the singer. Even Mrs. Campbell was touched and pleased, and she took a great delight in praising the singer, as they sat at lunch.

"That *was* singing," she said, "and the finest singing I ever heard. Many people pretend to sing who know nothing about it and have no voice to sing with—but, thank God, for once in my life, I have heard singing."

"It sounded very like Dora's voice," said Christina.

"You are mistaken," replied Isabel, "besides, the voice we heard this morning is a finely trained voice—I mean, as voices are trained for oratorio and public singing. It was a soprano, and soprano voices are very much alike."

No one cared to dispute Isabel's explanation and the conversation drifted to the sermon from the same psalm. "It was a good sermon," said Mrs. Campbell, "but people will forget it in the song."

"The song was the sermon to-day," said Isabel.

"The sermon was water, the song was wine," said Robert.

"I wish you would get the music, Dora. I am sure you could learn to sing it very well," said Christina; and Theodora smiled and answered, "I will try and get the music, if you wish, Christina."

"No, no!" cried Mrs. Campbell. "I would not have the memory of this morning's song spoiled for a great deal."

"Nor I, mother," added Isabel. "Would you, Robert?"

The better man had possession of Robert at that hour and he replied with a strong fervor:

"No, not for anything. It is one memory I shall hope to keep green as long as I live." He looked at Theodora, and if any there had had eyes to see, they might have read the secret in their beaming faces.

In their own parlor Robert was more enthusiastic than Theodora had seen him for a long time. "You have often gone to my heart, Dora," he said, "but this morning you touched my soul." And they were very happy together. This was the man Theodora loved. This was the man to whom she had given her heart and hand. Oh, how was she to keep this Robert Campbell always to the fore?

To do any great thing with the heart of another, you must vivisection your own, and this truth Theodora had to practise continually. Her life was one of such painful self-denial as left all its little pleasant places bare and barren; but she knew that in this way only could peace be bought, and she paid the price, excepting always, when it struck at her self-respect or violated her conscience. For she had constant opportunities of seeing that the spirit of submission carried too far was responsible for most of the misery and wrongs of the household; since despotism is never the sin of one, but comes from the servility of those around the despot. And as Robert was not always indifferent, but had frequent visitings from his better self, she made the most of these happy times, and took the envy and hatred of the rest as she took wet weather, or wind, or snow, or any other exhibition of the Higher Powers. For if training and education had made Theodora self-respectful, it had also made her avoid everything like self-indulgence.

*"To her there never came the thought,
That this her life was meant to be
A pleasure house, where peace unbought
Should minister to pride and glee.*

*"Sublimely she endured each ill
As a plain fact, whose right or wrong
She questioned not; confiding still
That it would last—not over long.*

*"Willing from first to last to take
The mysteries of her life as given,
Leaving her time-worn soul to slake
Its thirst, in an undoubted heaven."*

So the weeks passed on in a kind of armed truce with short intervals of satisfying happiness, whenever Robert chose to make her happy. She still took her breakfast alone, and now and then Robert, allured by the pretty appetizing table on the cheerful hearth, drank his coffee and ate a rasher of bacon beside her. Then how gay and delighted she was, and as on such occasions he

gave up his porridge and salt herring, McNab, in order to pleasure the mistress whom she loved, always found him some dainty to atone for his deprivation. And the meal was so good and cheerful, that it was a wonderful thing he did not join his wife constantly.

It was now getting near to Christmas, but none of the family had yet ventured to tell Mrs. Campbell the truth concerning the singing in the church although she frequently spoke of it. In fact, ever since that Sabbath she had made a point of sending a note to Theodora whenever she heard the piano. "I know practising from music," she said in every note, "and I do not like practising." Only Christina being present at the practising interfered with the message, and many times it had been sent when it was the caller who was doing the practising. The order was always obeyed, lest it should be more offensively repeated, and to no one but Mrs. Oliphant did Theodora confide her reason for closing the instrument so promptly. The message elicited from Mrs. Oliphant scornful laughter, and the three women listening for the manner of its reception were not surprised.

"They are laughing at my order," said Mrs. Campbell, "what dreadful manners Americans do have!"

"Dora's manners are equally bad. She had no business to show her the note," said Isabel.

"Dora is English; what can you expect?"

"Dora ought to send for me when she has company," said Christina, "then she would be allowed to practise, would she not, mother?"

"Christina, I am always willing to sacrifice myself for my children, and you profess to learn something from her playing."

"I do, and I love to hear her play and sing. Dora has been kind to me, she isn't half bad."

"Well, Christina, in all proper things I consult my children's pleasure, rather than my own comfort."

Isabel said nothing, and yet Theodora had made many whist parties for her pleasure, persuading Robert to invite to them such unmarried men as would be suitable partners for his sisters in life, as well as at the whist table. These parties had always terminated with supper and music, Christina being the principal, and generally the only performer. She had taken both of the sisters out with her, dressed them for entertainments, shown them how to dress themselves, and taught them those little tricks of the toilet, which are to women at once so innocent and so indispensable. Many times these services had been rendered cheerfully when she was sick or depressed, but neither of the girls had any conception of a kindness, except as it related to themselves—how it benefited their looks or their feelings, and what results would accrue to them from it. Never once had they expressed a sense of obligation for any favor done them. They took every kindness as their right, for they heard their mother constantly assert: "Dora could never do enough for them."

"She has forced herself into our family without our desire or permission," she would say, "and if she could only understand it she is a great wrong and annoyance to us. If she *does* teach Christina music and singing and French, and entertain you both now and then, it is her bounden duty to do that, and more. She is a born schoolmistress anyway, and no doubt feels quite at home teaching you any little thing she can."

This was not a happy life for Theodora, but she had chosen it, and our choices are our destiny. It was now her duty to make the best of it, and if Robert was only a little loving and just, her fine spirits and hopeful temper made her gay as a bird in spring. Her enthusiasms were incomprehensible to the three women, they were even repulsive; for neither the selfish, ill-tempered mother, nor the selfish, servile daughters, could understand that joy, which, coming from the inner life, is illimitably glad and hopeful, "something afar from the sphere of our sorrow."

But even Robert was now ashamed of his enthusiasms as a lover, as a married man he considered them quite out of place. They had served their purpose and ought to be retired from the sensible atmosphere of daily life. So he allowed the noblest and tenderest symbols of love to die of cruel neglect, and his occasional breakfasts with Theodora were the only remnant of his once passionate personal love. He was quite willing to consider Dora as belonging to the whole family, and he smiled grimly if he remembered the days in which he was intensely jealous even of her own father and mother's claim on her affection.

One great reason for Theodora's life being so troubled by dislike and unrest was doubtless because her angel was not, and could not, be friends with the angels of her new connections. They had no business to be in the same house. They got in each other's way and provoked friction. And though physical crowding is bad, spiritual crowding is much worse. Theodora had been well aware of the antagonism of her angel to her marriage with Robert Campbell. By intuitions, presentiments, omens, dreams, and even by clairaudient words, she had been warned of matrimonial troubles.

But she had an invincible faith in her influence over her intended husband, and as for a fight with others, or with circumstances, of neither was she afraid. She had always won her way triumphantly. She believed in God, she believed in herself, and she believed in humanity. The calibre of a Scotch family composed of three-fourths women, was a combination she had never

seen, never heard of, never read of, and could not possibly imagine.

Yes, she had been abundantly counselled, and she remembered especially the last warning that she received before her marriage. She was at the Salutation Hotel on Lake Windermere, standing at the window of her room looking over the lovely scene. All Nature was calm as a resting wheel, the sky full of stars; all the mystery and majesty of earth, the lake, the woods, the mountains encompassed her. And as she stood there musing on the past, and on the future as connected with Robert Campbell, the voice she knew so well pleaded with her for the last time.

"*Are you able?*" it asked.

"Yes," she answered softly but audibly.

"*The fight will be hard.*"

"I shall win it."

"*Though as by fire!*"

Then she was alone, and she felt strangely desolate and afraid.

For though one come from the dead, the soul self-centred and confident in its own wisdom will not believe. Then it can only learn its life's lesson by those cruel experiences from which its good angel would so gladly have saved it.

"*Though as by fire! Though as by fire!*" Often she had thought of that prophecy since her marriage, when she had been forced day after day to say with David:

"They have spoken against me with a lying tongue.

"They compassed me about with words of hatred, and fought against me without cause.

"For my love they are my adversaries, and they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love."

She was sitting alone one afternoon, and very weary and disconsolate after a morning of petty slights, and unkind words, when Robert entered. He was earlier than usual and more responsive to her smile of welcome.

"I am so glad to see you, Robert, so glad! I did not expect you for an hour."

"The minister called on me this afternoon, and I returned to the city with him. He wants you to sing, Dora, at the New Year's service. He is going to preach from the first verse of the fourteenth of Job: 'Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.' He says the sermon will necessarily be solemn and warning, so he wishes you to sing something that lifts up the heart and looks hopefully forward."

"Are you willing that I should sing, Robert?"

"Yes, I should like you to do so."

"Then what could be better than Job's triumphant confession, '*I know that my Redeemer liveth*'?"

"That is the very thing! You sung it once in Sheffield. I have never forgotten it."

"Has your mother been told about my singing, '*O that I had wings like a dove*'?"

"No. I have never found a good opportunity to tell her. I knew she would feel it much. As soon as you have settled the matter with the doctor, I will tell her of both together."

The next morning Dr. Robertson called to see Theodora, and was delighted with her selection. He did not stay long, but Mrs. Campbell was deeply offended because she was neither personally visited by him, nor yet invited by Theodora to meet him in her parlor. The lunch table was made a fiery furnace for her, and she had not the physical power to resist the evil. Assailed by a sudden faintness, she was obliged to leave the room.

"Dora looks ill," said Christina.

"She is always complaining lately. She had Dr. Fleming in the house twice last week, had she not, Isabel?" Isabel sighed deeply, and Christina absently nodded assent. She was counting the custard cups and considering the best way to appropriate the one intended for Theodora.

Jepson, however, had noticed the white face and unsteady steps of the sick woman and assisted her to her own apartments. On his return he was confronted by the angry face of his mistress. She laid down her knife and fork with a clash and asked:

"How dared you leave the room, Jepson? I hired you to wait on the Miss Campbells and myself."

"I thought Mrs. Campbell looked very ill, ma'am."

"You are here to obey orders, not to think. And *I* am Mrs. Campbell, the other is Mrs. Robert. Do you understand?"

"Yes, ma'am."

For some hours Theodora lay on the sofa in deep sleep, or in some other form of oblivion. She

came back to consciousness with the feeling of one shipwrecked on a dark, desolate land, and after a little sobbing cry, went upstairs to try and dress for dinner. A depressing anxiety, a horror of the great darkness from which she had just returned was on her, and as soon as her exhausting toilet was over, she went back to the parlor, and lifting a book sat down at a small table with it in her hand.

Isabel, who was with her mother, heard both the ascent and descent, and directed her attention to it. "Dora has been dressing for dinner," she said. "Her sickness has not lasted long."

"There was nothing the matter with her."

"You are looking very well, mother, but I must change my gown. Why not go and question Dora about the minister's visit? She ought to tell you the why and the wherefore of it."

"She *shall* tell me. I will make the inquiry at once."

Theodora was sitting with her elbows on the small table, her head in her hands and the open pages of the book below her heavy eyes, when the door was imperiously opened and Mrs. Campbell entered.

"You have got over your impromptu attack, I see, very readily."

"I feel better than I did a few hours ago."

"Why did Dr. Robertson call on you this morning?"

"He called on business—not socially."

"Money as usual, I suppose."

"He did not name money."

"Then what did he name?"

"His business."

"And what was his business?"

"I cannot tell you—yet."

"So you are the doctor's confidant! You are the doctor's adviser! You are set up before me, about the doctor's business. You! You, indeed! Have you argued the matter out with the devil, as to how far you can go with a minister?"

"I never argue with the devil. 'Get thee behind me' is enough for him."

"I perfectly think scorn of you and your pretensions. I suppose the doctor is trying to save your soul!"

"My soul is saved."

"You are an impertinent huzzy!"

"I do not intend to be impertinent—and I do not deserve such a contemptuous word as huzzy."

"You are a fifty-fold huzzy! You are not reading. Lift your eyes and look at me!"

"I would rather not."

"I say, look at me. Why do you keep your eyes dropped? Do you think yourself beautiful in that attitude? You are full of tricks."

Then Theodora lifted her eyes and looked steadily at her tormentor. They were pleading and reproachful, and full of tears. "I should like to be alone," she said slowly, "I am not well."

"I wish to know the minister's business."

"I must tell Robert first."

"I must tell Robert first," cried Mrs. Campbell with mocking mimicry. "Let me tell you, Robert would rather you never spoke to him! He wishes you far away—he is sick of you, as I am—he is sorry he ever saw your face."

"I do not believe these things. Will you leave me? You are very cruel—I have not deserved such abuse." Once more she dropped her eyes on her book, but the letters were blurred and the solid earth seemed reeling.

"Give me that book and listen to what I say!"

There was no answer.

"Do you hear me? Give me that book."

Theodora neither spoke nor moved, and in a tragic frenzy of passion Mrs. Campbell seized the book and flung it to the other end of the room.

With a shriek, shrill yet weak, Theodora tottered to where it lay with its pages crumpled against

the floor, and in the effort to lift the volume she fell like one dead beside it.

Then Ducie screamed for McNab and Jepson, and the two came hurrying in.

"She flung the Bible across the room! She flung the Bible!"

"Stop talking, Ducie, and help me get the dress of the poor lady slackened. Jepson, run for Dr. Fleming."

"I will if you say so, McNab."

"Run awa', and don't stand there like a born idiot, then."

"I will not have a doctor brought here," said Mrs. Campbell in passionate tones. "I will not have one! There is no necessity for a doctor. I say——"

"Say nothing at all, ma'am. Do you ken it was the Bible you flung across the room? What devil put it into your heart and hand to do the like o' that unforgiveable sin? I'm feared to be in the room wi' you, mistress. You'll never dare to pray again, you meeserable woman, you!"

For a few minutes Mrs. Campbell was really shocked. She went to the book, straightened out its leaves, and laid it on the table. "I did not know it was the Bible, McNab," she said. "No one respects the Holy Scriptures more than I do. I regret——"

"The deed is done. There's nae good in respecting and regretting now. Come here and help us to do what we can, till the doctor comes."

"I will not. It is her fault. She would make an angel sin. I am innocent, perfectly innocent. My God, what a tribulation the creature is!"

"I wouldna name God, if I was you," said McNab scornfully. "Maybe He'll forget you, if you dinna remind Him o' your sinfu' self."

"McNab, I give you notice to leave my house at once."

"That is more like you, Mistress Campbell, but I'm not going out o' this house till the master says so. I am his hired woman, not yours, thank God! and I am not feared to speak the Holy Name, as you may well be. Here's the doctor—thank God again for that mercy! You had better leave the room, or you'll be getting the words you're well deserving, mistress."

"I shall stay just where I am."

"You're a dour woman; you are that."

Dr. Fleming entered as the last words were spoken. He brought with him an atmosphere of help and strength, and barely glancing at Mrs. Campbell he knelt down beside the sick woman. In a few moments he rose, and calling Jepson, ordered him to "go to No. 400 Renfrew Street, and bring back with him Jean Malcolm."

"I cannot spare Jepson, doctor," said Mrs. Campbell. "It is nearly time to serve dinner."

"Do as I tell you, man, and be off at once. Don't waste a moment. Take a cab."

"Doctor——"

"Mrs. Campbell, this is a serious case. We have no time to think of dinners. I fear there is a slight concussion of the brain."

Then turning to McNab, he said: "There must be a mattress brought down here, and I shall want two men to carry the patient upstairs. Have you men in the house?"

"No, sir, none worth the name o' men. I'll step over to the hotel and get a couple o' their porters."

"That will do."

"Doctor, if there are any extraordinary arrangements to make, I am Mrs. Traquair Campbell."

"I know you, Mrs. Campbell. I have a very true knowledge of you."

"Then, sir, give your orders to me. What do you wish?"

"I wish you to leave the room. If your dinner is ready, you had better eat it. I may want your man for some time."

"Sir, you are rude. Will you remember this is my house?"

"It is not your house. It is your son's house, and this lady, I take it, is his wife. So then, it is her house."

"Yes, she is my son's wife, more's the pity, more's the shame, more's the sorrow——"

"My God, woman! Have you no heart, no pity, no sense of duty to a sick woman?" As he spoke he rose, and with an angry face and long strides walked to the door and threw it wide open, uttering only one fierce word: "Go!"

A better and a more powerful spirit than her own gave this order, and she perforce obeyed it; but

when she reached the dining-room, she threw herself on the sofa in a frantic passion.

"I have been insulted," she cried. "I have been insulted shamefully. Oh, Isabel! that woman will be the death of me!"

"Perhaps she will die herself, mother. Ducie says she has hurt her brain in falling—a concussion, she said."

"Not a bad concussion, though——"

"No, a slight one, but one never knows, and she is so excitable——"

Thus they comforted each other until the porters arrived, and went upstairs for the mattress. Their rough voices and heavy feet, and the natural confusion attending their business roused Mrs. Campbell and her daughters to a pitch of distraction, only to be relieved by motion and loud talking. Walking up and down the room, and striking her large cruel hands together, Mrs. Campbell was heard above all the confusion attending the removal of Theodora; and in the midst of this confusion, Robert came home.

"Whatever is the matter, Jepson?" he asked in an angry voice.

"The doctor will tell you, sir. I fear my young mistress is dying."

He did not answer, but went rapidly to his rooms. They were in the utmost disorder, the windows open and the rooms empty. He rushed upstairs then, and Dr. Fleming met him at the door of Theodora's room.

"Doctor, where is my wife? What is wrong?"

"She had a long fainting fit, fell heavily, and has, I fear, slight concussion of the brain."

"What cause, what reason was there?"

"Her maid will tell you. I will send her."

"But I must see my wife first!"

"You cannot. I shall stay here until I judge it safe to leave her. I have sent for a competent nurse, and expect her every moment."

"Surely, doctor—there is no fear—of death."

"I should not like another lapse of consciousness."

Robert did not speak. He steadied himself by grasping the baluster, and the doctor left him, and sent out Ducie.

"How did this happen, Ducie?" he asked.

Then Ducie told him everything. She described the way her mistress was sitting, and the entrance of Mrs. Campbell. She remembered the words, and the tones in which the conversation had taken place, and the inability of her mistress to answer the last two questions—the snatching of the book from the table, and the flinging of it to the end of the room, and after an emphatic pause she added: "The book was the Bible, sir."

Campbell had not spoken a word during Ducie's recital, but at her last remark he started as if shocked, and then said: "You have told me the truth, Ducie?"

"Nothing but the truth. Ask Jepson."

"I believe you. Go back to your mistress, and as soon as it is possible tell her I was at the door but not allowed to enter."

Then he went slowly downstairs, and the talking and exclamations ceased sharply and suddenly when he entered the dining-room, for his face, and his intentional silence, was like that which Isabel had not inaptly compared to a black frost.

After a short interval, during which he had frozen every one dumb, he looked steadily at Mrs. Campbell and said:

"Mother, I am amazed at what I hear."

"You may well be amazed, Robert," was the answer. "I myself am nearly distracted," and then she told her story, with much skill and all the picturesque idioms she fell naturally into when under great emotion. Her son listened to her as he had listened to Ducie, without question or comment. He was trying to weigh everything justly, for justice was in his opinion the cardinal virtue.

"The dispute arose, then, concerning Dr. Robertson's visit to Theodora?" he asked.

"Yes. I had a right to know *why* he called, and she would not tell me."

"Theodora had no right to tell you. Out of kindness the reason for his visit had been kept from you. I will tell you now. He wished Theodora to sing at the New Year's service, and he called to see what her selection would be."

"The organist ought to select the music, not Dora Campbell."

"Allow me to finish. She chose *'I know that my Redeemer liveth.'*"

He ceased speaking and took his place at the dinner table. "Order dinner, Isabel," he added, in a quiet voice.

Mrs. Campbell was speechless. She was stunned by anger and amazement. Her lips trembled and her eyes filled with tears—a most extraordinary exhibition of feeling in her. Isabel with a piteous look directed his attention to her mother, and he said:

"Take your chair, mother. I want my dinner. I have had a hard day. The men at the works are quarrelling and going to strike. I did not require extra quarrelling at home."

"I cannot eat, Robert. I will not eat again in this house. I can laugh at insults from strangers, but when my son connives with his English wife to deceive me and make me humble myself before her, it is time I went away—I don't care where to."

"You have your own house at Saltcoats."

"It is rented."

Robert made no remark and the dinner went silently on. Just as it was finished the doctor asked for Robert, and he left the room to see him. "Your wife has fallen asleep," he said, "and, Campbell, you must see to it that she is not awakened for anything less than a fire or an earthquake." A short conversation followed, and after it Robert went directly to the library.

Greatly to his astonishment, his mother followed him there. He laid aside his cigar, and placed a chair for her. She had now assumed the only temper likely to influence him, and he was prepared to be amenable to her plea before she made it.

"I am sorry, Robert, that you have to bear this trouble. If it was only me, I would not care. Are you going to turn me and your sisters out of your house for that strange woman?"

"That strange woman is my wife. God has told me to leave father and mother, and cleave unto my wife."

"It is very hard."

"Let her alone, and she will not interfere with you."

"Isabel and Christina know——"

"Excuse me, she has been very kind and helpful to my sisters. She would love you all if you would let her."

"Her singing in the church——"

"Was a great delight, even to you. We were silent about it, out of kindness. I will not discuss that subject."

"Where would you advise us to go?"

"I do not advise you to go at all."

"I could not live with your wife if she is going to faint every time she quarrels with me."

"Mother, I know all about your quarrel with Theodora. I have heard it from Jepson and Ducie, and I know what the doctor thinks of it. Allow me to say your conduct was inexcusable. I would not blame you before the girls, but that is my opinion."

"Her silence was so provoking, you don't know, Robert——"

"I know that no provocation ought to have caused you to make the Bible the missile of your temper. It was an impious act. I shudder at it."

"I did not know it was the Bible."

"Mother, a Bible is known on sight. No other book looks like it. No form, no shape no color, can hide the Bible. There is a kind of divinity in this personality of the Book. I have often thought so."

"I shall sorrow for that act as long as I live, Robert. She made me do it. Yes, she did!"

"No, she did not."

"Why was she reading the Bible at that hour of the day? If it had been morning or night, I might have thought of it."

"Theodora reads the Bible at all hours."

"She does nothing like any one else."

"Theodora is my wife. I love her. She suits me exactly."

"And I and your sisters no longer suit you."

"You are, as I said before, my mother and my sisters. You are Campbells. That is enough."

"And, blessed be our ancestors, we are a' pure Campbells! Your father was o' the Argyle clan, and

I was o' the Cawdor clan, but whether Argyle, Cawdor, Breadalbane, or Laudon, we are a' Campbells. We a' wear the wild myrtle and we hae a' the same battle-cry, '*Wild Cruachan!*' and we a' hae hated and loved the same folk and the same things, and even if I had nae ither claim on yen, I would only require to say, 'Robert Campbell, Margaret Campbell is needing ye.'"

"You are my mother. That claim includes all claims."

"Doubly dear for being a Campbell mother."

"Yes. I am glad and proud of that fact."

Then she stretched out her hand, and he clasped and held it firmly, as he walked with her to the door.

"Good-night, mother!" he said. "I must go to Dora now. We will drop this day out of our memories."

Stepping proudly to the lilt of her Campbell eulogy, she went to her daughters with flashing eyes and a kindling face, and after a few moments of thrilling silence said:

"I hae got my way, girls, by the name o' the Campbells. *Dod!* but it's the great name! It unlocked his heart like a pass-key—yet I had to stoop a wee. I had to stoop in order to conquer."

"Mother, you always manage Robert."

"I ne'er saw the man I couldna manage, that is, if he was a sober man; but I'll tak' the management out o' her—see if I don't. I'll mak' her eat the humble pie she baked for me—I'll hae the better o' the English huzzy yet—I'll sort her, when I get the right time. I can do naething o' an extreme nature just yet. It has been a calamitous day, girls, morning and night. Now, go awa' to your ain rooms, I be to think the circumstances weel over."

"Mother, you are a wonderful woman," said Christina.

"Also a very discreet woman," added Isabel.

And the old lady walked to the sideboard, filled a glass with wine, lifted it upwards, and nodding to her daughters, said in a low but triumphant voice:

"*Here's to the Campbells! Wha's like us?*"

At the same moment Robert Campbell was stepping proudly upstairs with a heart full of racial pride. He had forgotten the ironworks. He was a Campbell of the Argyle clan, he was kin to all the Breadalbanes, and Cawdors, and Loudons. He was a Campbell, and all the glory of the large and powerful family was his glory. At that moment he heard the dirl of the bagpipes and felt the rough beauty of the thistle, and knew in his heart of hearts, that he was a son of Scotland, an inheritor of all her passions and traditions, her loves and her hatreds, and glad and proud to be so favored.

But even at this critical hour of his wife's life, he could not be much blamed, for *all is race*. There is no other truth, because it includes all others.

CHAPTER VI

THE NAMING OF THE CHILD

It was four weeks before Theodora could leave her room, and for long afterwards she was an invalid. But in her sickness she had peace, and the solacing company of her friends, Mrs. Robertson and Mrs. Oliphant; and as the winter passed her health and strength and beauty returned to her. This renewed vitality was indeed so certain that the announcement of the Easter services contained a promise that Mrs. Campbell would sing some suitable solo.

At the breakfast table on Easter Sunday, Robert Campbell spoke of this event to his family.

"Theodora will sing at this morning's service, mother," he said.

"The minister has already made fuss enough about the circumstance. There is no necessity for you to go over the news."

"I think you had better not go to church this morning."

"I assure you I intend to go—for your sake. And am I to be denied the comfort of my Easter sermon, because of a song which I shall not listen to?"

"Please yourself. This time you have been warned."

"I shall do my duty, that always pleases me. And I need no warnings. I am not a creature made of nerves and fancies. I am afraid of no woman."

"Christina, as you are so fond of music, Theodora will take you with her to the organ-loft if you wish."

"O, brother, how happy I shall be!"

"Christina Campbell, you will sit decently in our own pew with your sister and myself."

"Poor Christina!" said Robert, and he laid his hand kindly on her shoulder as he passed.

"Poor Robert! Say that, and you say the truth," answered Mrs. Campbell.

It was a glorious day, the church and even the aisles were crowded and the doctor preached the finest sermon of his long pastorate. His tall, stately form, his piercing eyes, his thin face—austere but tender—were never so immediate and so solemnly authoritative, and every heart thrilled as in a grand resonant voice he cried:

"Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."

His preaching was usually logical, invasive, not to be forgotten, but this morning all he said was vitalized by his own lively, living faith. He had caught the very spirit of Paul, and was carried by it far beyond, and above all arguments and sequences, until his glowing climax could find no grander words than:

"Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."

To these words he emphatically closed the Testament, and there were a few moments of profound, sensitive silence. Then, like a lark mounting heaven-ward, Theodora burst into the triumphant melody:

"I know that my Redeemer liveth!"

It was an angelic "Amen" to that old sanguine assurance, which possesses so immovably the heart of humanity. The ecstasy of hope, the surety of faith, the glory of man's destiny filled with unspeakable joy the whole building, and many of the reverent souls in it had momentary experience of

*"That freer step, that fuller breath,
That wide horizon's grander view,
That sense of life that knows no death,
That life that maketh all things new."*

For the singer had filled every note of the immortal music with her own beautiful, happy soul, and the congregation—old and young—went to their homes loving her.

Robert's heart burned within him, for while sharing the enthusiasm of the crowd he had also his personal delight in the knowledge that this dear, clever woman was his wife, and that she loved him. He went to the foot of the gallery stairs and waited there for her. He clasped her hand and looked into her face with beaming eyes as the elders and deacons gathered round her with eloquent thanks, and all the way home he forgot every one but Theodora.

A few days after Easter Sunday, Robert came home earlier than usual, but he entered his wife's presence with such a pleasant countenance, that she rose smiling and went to meet him.

"I have come to tell you something I hope will please you, Dora," he said. "Mr. Oliphant has taken a furnished villa at Inverkip, and there is another to let a few hundred yards distant. Inverkip is so near Glasgow, I could run down to you frequently—always on Friday or Saturday until Monday. What do you say, if I take the vacant villa?"

"O, Robert, I should be delighted!"

"Then I will hire it for the season, and you can have your piano and books and what other things you wish easily shipped there. Consult Mrs. Oliphant, she will advise you just what to do."

"Dear Robert, you make me more happy than I can tell."

"And the Oliphants will be delighted you are going to be near them. There may be some nice families there, and it is not unlikely Dr. Robertson will be of the number."

All came to pass like a wish, and early in April Theodora was comfortably settled at Inverkip, and the Oliphants and Dr. Robertson soon followed her. Inverkip was hardly a fashionable summer resort, but it was pleasant and secluded, and also beautifully situated—facing Inellen, and the slopes of Cowal, with a fine background of mountains.

After a winter in dark, wet, bitter Glasgow, the country in April was like Paradise. Robert went down with her one lovely Friday, Ducie and two other servants, with such furniture and ornaments as they thought necessary, having preceded them nearly a week. So the villa was in comparative order and a perfect little dinner awaited them. Theodora experienced a child's enchantment; her simple, eager surprise, her deep sense of the wonder and beauty of the brooding spring, and her delightful expression of it, went to Robert's heart. For her tender eyes were laughing with boundless good humor, her lips parted as if forced to speak by the inner fulness of her happy heart, and he saw in her

—*"a soul
Joying to find itself alive,
Lord over Nature, lord of the visible earth,*

Lord of the senses five."

"There is even a taste of green things in the air, Robert," she said; "and look at the trees! They are misty with buds and plumes, and tufts and tassels; and the larches and pines are whispering like a thousand girls. O, it is heavenly! And listen to the waters running and leaping down the mountains! It is a tongue of life in the lonely places," and as she passed the open piano, she stood still, touched a few notes, and sang in a captivating, simple manner:

*"O the springtime! the springtime!
Who does not know it well?
When the little birds begin to build,
And the buds begin to swell,

When the sun and the clouds play hide and seek,
And the lambs are softly bleating;
And the color mounts to the maiden's cheek,
At her lover's tender greeting,—
In the springtime, in the joyous springtime."*

Then Robert stayed her simple song, saying: "Let us go and walk in the garden while I smoke my cigar." And she went gladly, and they walked and talked together until the soft gray afternoon was verging to purple and red on the horizon.

That night her heart was too full of hope and sweet content to let her sleep. She had not been as happy for many months. She had not been as hopeful. She told herself this detached life was all that was required to secure Robert's affection, and that six months of it would make him impatient of any intrusion into the sacredness of his home. And she was full of sweet, innocent plans to increase and settle certainly and firmly the treasure of his love. They kept her waking, so she rose long before morning, and, opening a casement, looked out into the dusky night full of stars. She sat there, watching Nature in those ineffable moments when she is dreaming, until the cold white light of the dawning showed her the waning moon blue in the west.

The next day Robert went fishing, and Theodora put in order the china, crystal, and fine damask, and the books and ornaments she had brought down to Inverkip. Robert praised what she had done, vowing she would make the best of housekeepers; and the evening and the next day were altogether full of love and sweet content.

Then Robert went back to Glasgow and business, and Mr. and Mrs. Oliphant and Dr. Robertson's family arrived. The young wife visited and helped her friends, and they spent long, pleasant evenings at each other's houses. Theodora said to herself: "Things are not going as badly with me as I thought, and I wonder if we ever know if bad is bad, or good is good."

Many happy weeks followed this initial one and Theodora was grateful for every pleasant hour, for she was facing the trial and the glory of maternity and she wished her child's prenatal influences to be favorable on every side. The social life of Inverkip could not in its present conditions be called fashionable, and that was a good thing, for few women can go into fashionable society without catching its fashionable insanity, whatever it may be at the time. Theodora spent many quiet, delightful hours with her friends the Oliphants and Robertsons, but her chief pleasure she took from the hand of Nature.

Every fine day she was up among the great hills, and it is a bad heart that is not purified by walking on them. She was passionately fond of birds, and had the power to attract them to her. Morning and evening she fed at her dining-room window

*"The bird that man loves best,
The pious bird with scarlet breast,
The little English robin."*

They crowded the sweet briar bush that grew beside the window, and praised and thanked her in the sweetest songs mortal ever heard. The blue cushat's "croodle" and its mournful love monologue moved her to sympathetic tears. She was sure the pretty faithful creature had a forgetful, or unkind mate. The swallows cradling themselves in the air, and chattering so amiably; the tiny wren's quick, short song; the fond and faithful bullfinch couples; the honest, respectable thrushes; the pilfering blackbirds; the nightingale's solemn music in the night; the lark's velvety, supple, indefatigable song in the early morning—these, and many more of the winged voices of the firmament, she understood; but to the humble, poorly-clad lark, she gave an ardent affection. To her it was a bird of heaven, living on love and light, singing for half-an-hour without a second's pause, rising vertically a thousand yards as she sang, without losing a note, and sending earthward exquisite waterfalls of song.

In this sane and peaceful life, month after month went onward delightfully, while she waited in the fulness of health and hope for the child which God would give her. During these months Robert also had been happy. Now and then there had been invasions of the lower man, but in the main he was joyous and amiable, thoughtful for her comfort, and delighted to share all her hopes and pleasures. He had insisted on his mother and sisters going to the Bridge of Allan for the summer months, had given Jepson and Mrs. McNab holiday, and practically closed the Glasgow house until September. And he had found Inverkip so pleasant, that he was even more with Theodora than his promise demanded.

One day near the end of July Mrs. McNab came to Inverkip and called on Theodora, who was delighted to see her. In a few minutes she began to take off her bonnet and shawl. "I hae been thinking things o'er," she said, "and I hae made up my mind to stay wi' you the next four weeks—for there's nane that I can see about this house fit to take my place—a when lilting lasses, tee-heeing and giggling as if life was a dance-hall."

"They are nice, good girls, McNab."

"They may be, but they are flighty and nervous, and they hae no experience. I am going to take care o' you and the house mysel'. When you are sick—"

"McNab, I am in splendid health."

"That's a' right. Splendid health you have, and splendid health you will require, and some one to keep people out o' the house that arena wanted near it. I am not going awa', so you needna speak the word. Is your ain mother coming to you?"

"She cannot. They will have to move next month."

"Weel, then, you arena to be fretted wi' any other mother, and it will take an extraordinar' woman—like mysel'—to be all you want, and to fend off all you don't want. I am gey fond o' newborn babies—poor wee things, shipwrecked on a cold, bad world—and if there isna some sensible kind-hearted body wi' your bairn, they will be trying their auld world tricks wi' it. I shall stay here and see the bonnie wee thing isna left to their mercy."

"What do you mean? You frighten me, McNab."

"I mean, that if the bairn is left to any auld-farrant nurse, she will wash it in whiskey as soon as it comes into the world, and there is nae doubt in my mind, that the spirit isna pleasant to the tender skin o' the poor wean."

"Oh, McNab! what a dreadful custom!"

"Weel, it is an auld, auld custom, and though some are giving it up, there are mair that stick to it. If Mrs. Traquair Campbell should be here, I'm feared the whiskey bottle would be gey close to the washbowl. And you wouldna like it."

"I would not permit it."

"How would you help it? Tell me that. The only time you managed that woman you had to nearly die to do it, and I'm not clear that you got the better o' her then."

"She will not be here, McNab. She will not be asked."

McNab snapped her fingers. "'Asked,' is it? She will walk into this house as if it was her ain. 'It is my son's house,' she will say, and then she'll proceed to use her son's house as if the de'il had sent her to destroy everything that belongs to other folk; and day and night she'll make quarrelling and misery. That's Mrs. Traquair Campbell's way, and the hale o' her brood is like her."

"Now, McNab, you know Mr. Robert Campbell is very different. You must not speak ill of my husband."

"No, ma'am. There's two Robert Campbells. Ane o' them is weel worth the love you're giving him; the other is like the auld man that tormented the Saints themsel's. He'll get kicked out some day, nae doubt o' it."

"Mr. Campbell told me he had given you a holiday until the first of September. He spoke very well of you."

"I have had mair holiday than I want now."

"Where were you?"

"I was in Edinburgh, seeing the world and the ways o' it."

"What did you think of the world and its ways?"

"I dinna think them fit to talk about. I'll go now, and give things a bit sort up. I'll warrant them requiring the same."

So McNab got—or rather took—her way, and soon after appeared in the kitchen in her large white mutch and apron. "Now, lasses," she said in her most commanding manner, "I am come here on a special invite to keep you and the house in order during the tribulation o' the mistress. But you'll find me a pleasant body to live wi', if you behave yoursel's and let the lads alane. If you don't, you will find you have got to do wi' the Mischief."

"The lads, ma'am?" said a smart young lassie; "the lads! We have not a particle o' use for them—auld or young."

"What's your name?"

"Maggie."

"Weel, Maggie, you are a sensible lass, and you may now make Mistress McNab—that's mysel'—a

cup o' tea, and if there's a slice o' cold beef or a bit o' meat pie in the house——"

"There's neither meat nor pie in the house."

"Then, Maggie, gie me a rizzard haddie wi' my tea. I'm easy pleased except wi' dinner. A good dinner is a fixed fact wi' me, and when I've had a cup o' tea I'll feel mair like Flora McNab. At the present hour, I'm fagged and wastered, and requiring a refreshment. That's sure!"

At first Theodora did not feel satisfied with McNab's gratuitous offer of service, but Robert quickly made her so. "I am delighted," he said. "I have known the woman ever since I can remember. She stood by my father in his long sickness as faithfully as she stands by you. I can never be uneasy about my wife if McNab is with her."

So McNab took the place she had chosen, and the house was soon aware of her presence. There were more economy, better meals, perfect discipline, and a refreshing sense of peace and order. For she had a rare power of ruling, and also of making those ruled pleased to be so. Thus, for two weeks, Theodora had a sense of pause and rest that was strengthening both to the inner and outer woman. Then in the secret silence of the midnight, her fear was turned into joy, for McNab laid her first-born son in her arms and Robert knelt at her side, his heart brimming with love and thanksgiving. And had he fully realized the blessing given, he would have known it was, Thy Kingdom come, from the cradle.

Surely this great event would make all things new! This was Theodora's constant thought and hope, and for a while it seemed to do so. But the readiness with which we come to accept rare and great blessings as customary is one of the most common and ungrateful of our blasphemies against the Father from whom all blessings flow. And very soon the beautiful babe became as usual as the other everyday incidents of life, to all excepting his mother and McNab. Robert, indeed, was fond and proud of him, and as long as they remained in Inverkip the little fellow was something new that belonged to himself in a manner wonderful and satisfying.

But with the return of the family to Glasgow, the child lost the charm of the Inverkip environment. In Traquair House he received even from his father only the Campbell affection, which had no enthusiasms, no baby talk, no petting, no foolish admirations. It was almost impossible for the mother to accept this change of attitude with nonchalance, or even cheerfulness. She could not withstand the influence of the dull, gray house, and the toiling, moiling, money-grabbing city, though she felt intuitively that the influence of both was inimical to her domestic happiness. For the house was impregnated with the Campbell personality, so much so that the very apparatus of their daily life had become eloquent of the moods of those they ministered to; and Theodora often felt as if the sofas and chairs in their rooms resented her use of them.

A prepossession of this kind was an unhappy one, and easily affiliated itself with the spirit of the house, which was markedly a quarrelsome spirit. Nurtured and indulged for more than two generations, it had become an inflexible, almost an invincible one. All Theodora's smiling efforts, all her charms and entreaties had failed to conciliate, or even appease its grudging resentment. It was a piteous thing that the first trouble after her return to Glasgow, should be concerning the child. Robert had been pleased by the assurance of his friends in Inverkip that his son resembled him in an extraordinary manner. He was himself sure of this resemblance, though Theodora could only see "that difference in sameness" often enough pronounced between fathers and sons.

Mrs. Campbell scouted the idea. She said: "The child had not a single Campbell feature or trait. He did not even suck his tongue, a trick all the Campbell babies had, as McNab knew right well. And she understood there had not been a single Campbell in the room when he was born—an important and significant mistake that never could be rectified. She could only say, and she always would say, that the boy was Theodora's child."

"I hope he is," answered Robert, who was nettled by the criticism. "He cannot do better than take after his mother in every way."

"And I am fairly shocked, Robert," she continued, "that the child—who's ever it is—hasna yet been baptized. Seven weeks old and not baptized! I never heard the like. My children were covenanted Christians before they were two weeks old. It was my first thought for them."

"Well, mother, we wanted to be quite sure of the name. A boy's name means much to him when he becomes a man."

"There is but one name proper for the child, that is his grandfather's."

"Do you mean Traquair?" asked Robert.

"Yes, Traquair—a fine family name."

Theodora looked entreatingly at Robert, and he understood her dissent and shared it.

"Mother," he answered, "I have a great objection to Traquair."

"Objection! Pray, why?"

"It was not a fortunate name for my father. It is not a good business name."

"My father was a Traquair, and he made a great deal of money."

"Your father was called Donald Traquair. That is different. Traquair is a good family name, but it is not a good Christian name."

"We could call him Donald," said Theodora. "Donald is a good name, though I think Robert likes David best of all."

"David!" ejaculated Mrs. Campbell with anger. "I will have no David Campbells in this house! I will not suffer my grandson to be called David. It was like you to propose it."

"I thought it would please you. I am quite willing my son should be called David."

"I think David is a very good name," said Robert, but his opinion was given with that overdecision which cowardice assumes when it forces itself to assertion.

"To have a David Campbell in the house will be a great annoyance to me," continued Mrs. Campbell. "It will be enough to make me hate the child."

Then Theodora left the room. She felt that the argument had gone as far as it was likely to be reasonable. In a short time Robert followed her and his face wore a look of vexation and perplexity.

"Have you decided on the name yet, Robert?" she asked.

"No."

"Why not call him after yourself?"

"Because in the course of time I should likely be compelled to write 'senior' after my own name. I do not care to look forward to that. Mother has set her mind on Traquair."

"It is the only Scotch name I object to. It has not one noble association. If you say Robert, you think of Robert Bruce, and Robert Burns, and a score of other great men. Call him Donald, or Dugald, or Duncan, or Angus, or Hector, or Alexander, they are all Christian names and will not subject the little lad when he goes among the boys and men, to mockery. Traquair will give them two objectionable nicknames—Tray, which is a dog's name, and Quair will easily slip into queer. Think of it—Tray Campbell, or Queer Campbell. It will not do, Robert."

"No. Traquair will not do. It will not do."

"There is one good reason for not calling the child Robert, not the 'senior' reason at all. I want you to keep and make famous your own name. You are really a good natural orator. I noticed your speech, and its delivery at Dr. Robertson's dinner, when we were at Inverkip. It was the best speech made. It was finely delivered. You are rich and going to be richer; why not cultivate your gift, and run for Parliament? No one can put political views into a more sensible and eloquent speech than Robert Campbell."

"I think you overrate my abilities, Dora," replied Robert, but he spoke with a kind of musing satisfaction.

"No, you could become a good speaker, and if you wish, I am sure you may write M. P. after your name. Why not decide on David? You love your big brother yet. You never speak of him without emotion. He will come back to you, I am sure. And how proud you will be to say: 'I never forgot you, David. I called my first-born son after you.'"

"You are right, Dora, you are right. The boy's name is David. I have said it and it shall be so. Mother must give way. She must remember for once, that we have some feelings and prejudices as well as herself."

At that moment Ducie entered with the child, and Theodora took him in her arms and said: "Ducie, the baby is to be called David." Then she kissed the name on his lips and he opened his blue eyes and smiled at her.

The next Sabbath the child was solemnly baptized David, and Robert entered his name in the large family Bible, which had been the first purchase he made for his home after Theodora had accepted him.

But in neither ceremony did Mrs. Traquair Campbell take any part. She did not go to church, and when Robert asked her to come into his parlor and see the entry of her grandson's name in the Book, she refused. All of the household were present but the infant's grandmother and aunts; and all blessed the child as Theodora put him a moment into the arms of the women present. McNab kissed him, and made a kind of apology for the act, saying she "never could help kissing a boy baby, since she was a baby herself", and even if it were a girl baby a bit bonnie, she whiles fell easy into the same infirmity."

In this case Theodora gained her desire, and some will say she gained it by flattering her husband. It would be fairer to say by *admiring* her husband. A wise wife knows that in domestic diplomacies, admiration is a puissant weapon. In a great many cases it is better than love. Men are not always in the mood to be loved, their minds may be busy with things naturally antagonistic to love; and to show a warmth that is not shared is a grave mistake. But all men are responsive to admiration. It succeeds where reasoning and arguing and endearments fail. For the person admired feels that he is believed in, and trusted. He has nothing to explain and nothing to justify, and this attitude makes the wheels of the household run smoothly.

Is then Theodora to be blamed? If so, there are an unaccountable number of women, yesterday, to-day, and forever, in the same fault. It would be safe to say there is not a happy household in the land where the wives and mothers do not use many such small hypocrisies. Is there any wife reading this sentence, who has not often made a pleasant evening for her whole family, by a few admiring or sympathizing words? For though a woman will go through hard work and distracting events without praise or sympathy, a man cannot. If admiration and kindness fail him, he flies to the black door of oblivion by drink, or drugs, or a pistol shot. A man with a wife whose sympathy and admiration can be relied on, is never guilty of that sin. Is there a good wife living who has not pretended interest in subjects she really cares nothing about; who has not listened to the same stories a hundred times, and laughed every time; who does not in some way or other, violate her own likes or dislikes, tastes or opinions every day in the week in order to induce a household atmosphere which it will be pleasant to live in?

This is not the place to discuss the ethics of this universal custom. Women, with reckless waste have always flung themselves into the domestic gulf. They choose to throw away their own happiness in order to make others happy, forgetting too often that *they who injure themselves shall not be counted innocent.*

CHAPTER VII

THE NEW CHRISTINA

Home is not ruined in a day, and it is wonderful what rack and strain and tugging the marriage tie will bear ere it snaps asunder. For three years and a half after the birth of the child, Theodora was subjected to an unwearying hostility, always finding fresh reasons for complaint and injustice. And it was a cruel symptom of this intentional malice, that it took as its usual vehicle, little David. He could do nothing right. Baby as he was, his grandmother found him to be a child of many sinful proclivities. She was never weary of pointing out his faults. "He looked so vulgarly English, he had no Scotch burr in his speech; he walked wrong, he made her peaceful home a Bedlam of crying and shouting. He was naturally rude, he would scarcely answer his aunts if they spoke to him; and if she herself but came near him, he ran away and hid himself in his mother's arms. He was also shockingly fond of low company. He could not be coaxed into her room, but was never out of the kitchen; and one day she had found him sitting on the pastry table, watching McNab make the tarts." At this charge Robert smiled and asked:

"Why does not Ducie keep him out of the kitchen? She ought to do so."

"She likes to be there herself. I think it would be well to send her back to Kendal at once. There is no necessity for a nurse now, and the boy ought to be learning how to care for himself—you did so before you were his age. And really, Robert, keeping a maid for Dora is a most unnecessary expense; it also makes a great deal of trouble among the house-servants. The girl is always quarrelling with them about her mistress, and pitying them about their mistress. I fancy Dora makes an equal of her."

"That is not Dora's way, mother. And the girl is not only a nurse, she attends to our rooms also."

"The house chambermaid could do that."

"Could she do it the first thing in the morning?"

"Do you think Dora's rooms ought to be attended to before mine?"

"Dora likes them to be put in order early, and I am willing to pay for her wish."

"More fool you! I dare be bound, she cleaned her own room before you married her."

"If she had married Lord Thurson, instead of me, he would have given her a dozen maids had she wished them."

"Do you think I believe that romancing about Lord Thurson? I am not such a born idiot. You cannot persuade me, that two men in the world wanted to marry Dora Newton. *Hout, tout!* Men are feckless enough, but not that crazy."

Such conversations as this occurred usually in the library after dinner where Mrs. Campbell now made a point of visiting her son. For this end, she had conquered her dislike both of the room and his tobacco, and there she carried all the small gossip and worries of the household. And Robert soon began to enjoy this visit, and the tale-bearing suspicions and arguments that enlivened it. It pleased him to feel that he knew all that was going on in the house, and he also liked to know whether Theodora had been out or not, whether she had dressed for calling or walking, and, if she had not left the house, how she had been occupied, what callers she had had, and how many letters she had received. He was not even averse to knowing the post-office stamps of these letters.

And when men indulge this petty weakness, they soon learn to enjoy its humbling cruelties and its mean triumphs, hardly considering that under such a disintegrating process all domestic happiness crumbles inwardly away. Thus Robert grew indifferent to the woman he so pitilessly

analyzed, and fell gradually into the godless, thankless quiescence of getting used to happiness. It was then easy to regard what had once been a miraculous blessing as a thing monotonous and commonplace.

With Theodora, he had now little companionship. He had ceased to consult her about anything, they neither wept nor rejoiced together, they did not even quarrel, and no legal bill of divorce could have more effectually separated them than did this moral divorce, in which there was neither disputing nor forgiveness. But though Theodora consented to this evil condition outwardly, as a form of sacrifice for David's sake, inwardly she knew it to be overcome. She bore it cheerfully, despised its power, and ignored as much as possible its presence.

Had she been left to herself she must have broken down under the unceasing tension, but constantly visited by the *not herself*, she lifted up her head, and when urged too fiercely, walked her lonely room with God, and dared to tell Him all the sorrow in her heart. Her disappointment had been dreadful, but God's pity had touched the great mistake, and she was now waiting as patiently and cheerfully as possible for the finality sure to come.

So far she had hid her wrongs and her disillusionings in her heart; not even to her parents had she complained. The heart-breaking cruelties from which she suffered were not recognized by the law, and they were screened from the world by the closed doors of domestic life. So she had bowed both her heart and her head, and was dumb to every one but her Maker. He alone knew her in those days of utter desolation, when her wronged and wounded soul retired from all earthly affections to that Eternal Love always waiting our hour of need.

At this time it was the once snubbed and depressed Christina who dominated Traquair House. From her first interview with Theodora, she had resolved to become like her. With patient zeal she had studied and acquired whatever Theodora had recommended. And quickly divining the bent of her intellectual faculties, Theodora had educated that bent to perfection. The correct technique of the piano was already known to Christina, but Theodora directed it into its proper channel of expression, and showed her how to put a soul into her playing and singing. She found for her the most delicate and humorous portions of literature, and taught her how to recite them. She made her free of all the secrets of beautiful dressing, and urged her to do justice to her person; until very gradually the commonplace Christina had flowered into an attractive woman.

In the third year of Theodora's married life Christina had begun to dress herself with a rich and almost fastidious elegance, and, as frequently happens, she put on with her fine clothing a certain amount of genius and authority. No one snubbed her now, for she had made a distinct place for herself in the special set the Traquair Campbells affected—the rich religious set—and her definite and agreeable accomplishments caused her to be eagerly sought for every entertainment in that set. She had begun to have admirers, flowers were sent to her and gentlemen called upon her, and she received invitations from them to concerts, lectures, and such national and therefore correct plays, as *Rob Roy* and *Macbeth*. This social admiration developed her self-appreciation and self-reliance to a wonderful extent. She was no longer afraid of any member of her family, and they were secretly very proud of her.

Mrs. Campbell talked of her daughter's social triumphs constantly. "Your sister is the belle of every occasion, Robert," she said to her son. "She has as many as five and six callers every day; she has been named in the papers as 'the lovely and accomplished Miss Christina Campbell'; she has numerous lovers to tak' her choice o', and tell me, my lad, whaur's your Theodora now!" She tossed her head triumphantly to the scornful laugh with which she asked the question.

"Mother, you know that Dora has made Christina all she is. Be honest, and confess that."

"Deed I will not. The beauty and the talents were a' in the lassie. Dora may have said a word now and then, and showed her a thing or two, here and there, but the gifts were Christina's, and the lassie's ain patient wark has brought them to their perfection. That's a crowned truth and I'll suffer no contradiction to it. We shall have to order her wedding feast vera soon. I have not a doubt o' that."

"I hope she will have the sense not to overlook the baronet in her train of admirers."

"You're meaning Sir Thomas Wynton?"

"Yes. He is quite in the mind to buy a handsome share in the works, and his name and money would be a great thing for us. I intend to bring him here to dinner to-morrow. Tell Christina I am looking to her to bring him into the family, and into the works."

"I'll be no such fool, Robert Campbell. I shall say nothing anent Sir Thomas, save the particular fact of his coming here to dinner. Little you know o' women, if you think any lassie can be counselled to marry the man she ought to marry."

"Take your own way with her, mother, but mind this—the securing of Sir Thomas Wynton will be a special providence for the Campbells. He has one hundred thousand pounds to invest, and I cannot bear to think of him carrying all that capital anywhere but to the Campbell furnaces."

"I'll manage it. Never fear, Robert, Christina shall be my lady Christina and you shall have the Wynton siller to trade with. It will be a righteous undertaking for me, for it is fairly sinful in Sir Thomas, hiding his hundred thousand talents—as it were—in a napkin. A bank is no better than a napkin; money is just folded away in it; and money is made round that it may roll. The Campbell works will set the hundred thousand pieces rolling and gathering more, and more, and still more."

Losh! it makes me tremble to think of them going out o' the Campbell road. That would be an unthinkable calamity."

"If you can manage it, mother, it——"

"If—there's no 'if' in the matter." She smiled and nodded, and seemed so sure of success, that Robert found it difficult to refrain himself from making certain calculations, dependent upon a larger capital.

The next day at noon Mrs. Campbell remarked in a tone of inconvenience, or household discomfort: "I believe, girls, your brother is going to bring Sir Thomas Wynton home with him to-night. I am fairly wearied of the man's name."

"He is a very fine gentleman, mother," said Christina.

"He is auld, and auld-farrant."

"He is not over forty-five, and he is far from being old-fashioned. He is up to the nick of the times in everything."

"Your brother never thinks of any manly quality but money. He says Sir Thomas is rich. I wouldn't wonder if he has only the name o' riches. But, rich or poor, he is coming to dinner, and I be to see McNab anent the eatables. A very moderate dinner will do, I should say."

"Make the finest dinner you can, mother, and it will be only a pot-luck affair to Sir Thomas," answered Christina. "He is rich, and he is powerful in politics, and he has one of the finest castles in Midlothian. He is well worth a good dinner, mother, and Robert will like to see he has one."

"What do you say, Isabel?"

"I say Robert is worth pleasing, mother. The other man is a problem, perhaps it may be worth while to please him, perhaps not. The negatives generally win, I've noticed that."

"Well, well! The dinner is all we can cater for—there's accidentals anent every affair, and they are beyont us, as a rule. Are either of you going out this afternoon?"

"There is nothing to take me out," said Isabel.

"I was out late last night," said Christina. "I shall rest this afternoon. Sir Thomas is rather a weariness. We shall all be thankful when he makes his court bow and says, 'Good-night, ladies! I have had a perfectly delightful evening.'" She boldly mimicked the baronet's broad Scotch speech and courtly debonair manner, without any fear of the cold silence, or cutting reproofs her mimicry used to provoke.

No more was said, and the girls did not take Sir Thomas Wynton into their conversation. He appeared to be a person of no importance to them. As they were parting Isabel asked: "What will you wear to-night, Christina?" and Christina answered: "I have not thought of my dress yet—what will you wear?"

"My gray silk, trimmed with black lace."

"Put on white laces; they are more becoming."

"The dress is ready for the Social Club at the church, Friday. Why should I alter it for a couple of hours to-night? I wish you would wear your rose satin. You look so bonnie in it."

"I'll not don it for Sir Thomas Wynton! I wish to wear it at Mrs. Bannerman's dinner Thursday, and Wynton is sure to be there. I don't want him to think I wore my best dress for him only. It would set him up too high."

But if she did not wish to wear her rose satin for Sir Thomas, she appeared in a far more effective costume—a black Maltese lace gown, trimmed with bright rose-colored bows of satin ribbon. Her really fine arms were bare from the elbows, her square-cut neck showed a beautifully white, firm throat, and the glow of the ribbons was over her neck and arms, and touched the dress here and there charmingly. A bright red rose showed among the manifold braids of her black hair, and she had in her hand a rose-colored fan, with which she coquetted very prettily.

Robert was charmed with her appearance, and told her so. "I want you to charm Sir Thomas Wynton for me," he added. "It is desirable that I should have him for a business partner. Do you understand?"

She laughed, and putting her fan before her face asked in a whisper: "What will you give me, Robert, if I win him for you?"

"Five hundred pounds," he said promptly.

"Done!" she replied, and then, hearing the door open, she turned to see Sir Thomas Wynton entering. She went to meet him with a laughing welcome and with both hands extended. She sat at his side during dinner and kept him laughing, and when she left the dining-room ordered him with a pretty authority to be in the drawing-room for tea, in forty-five minutes. And he took out his watch, noted the time, and promised all she asked.

In forty-five minutes exactly, he appeared in the drawing-room. Jepson was serving tea, and

Christina's cup stood on the piano, for as Robert and Sir Thomas entered the room she was playing with lively, racy spirit, the prelude to the inimitably humorous song of "*The Laird o' Cockpen*." Sir Thomas went at once to her side, and when he spoke to her, she answered him with the musical, mocking words:

*"The laird of Cockpen he's proud, and he's great,
His mind is taen up wi' the things o' the State,"* etc.

Sir Thomas listened with peals of laughter, and Robert and Mrs. Campbell joined in the merriment. Even Isabel was unable to preserve the usual stillness of her face, though she was far more interested in the singer than the song. Where had all these charming coquetries, this mirth and melody been hidden in the old Christina? This was not the Christina she had known all her life. "It is Theodora's doing," she thought, "and not one of us have given her one word of thanks. It is too bad! And I am sure she stayed in her own room to-night, to give Christina a fair field, and no rival. She is a good woman. I wish mother could like her."

The whole evening was a triumph for Christina. She sang "*Sir John Cope*" with irresistible raillery, and roused every Scotch feeling in her audience with "*Bannocks o' Barley Meal*," and "*The Kail Brose of Auld Scotland*." She told her most amusing stories, and finally induced Sir Thomas Wynton and her brother, mother, and sister to join her in the parting song of "*Auld Lang Syne*." Then, with evident reluctance, Sir Thomas went away, "thoroughly bewitched in a' his five senses," as he confessed later. Christina knew it, for ere she bid her brother good-night, she found an opportunity to whisper:

"You will owe me five hundred pounds very soon."

"I will pay it," he answered, and she looked backward at him with a laugh. Then he turned to his mother and said: "Who would have believed that Christina had all this fun and mischief in her?"

"Ah, well, Robert," answered Mrs. Campbell, "Scotch girls don't put all their goods in the window. They hold a deal in reserve and there's none but the one man can ever bring it out o' them. I'm thinking Sir Thomas is the one man, in Christina's mind."

"I hope so."

"I have not such a thing as a doubt left."

"Do you tell me that, mother?"

"Yes, I took good notice, and she seemed to be on a very easy footing with him. I'll give him a week to think things o'er, but the marriage o' Christina Campbell and Sir Thomas Wynton is certain."

"We will not go quite that far yet, mother, but I think this evening's events warrant that presumption."

While this conversation was in progress, Christina was going upstairs, and her quick, strong steps were in singular contrast to the slow, inert movements of the Christina of a few years previous. At Theodora's bedroom door she paused irresolutely for a few moments, but finally tapped at it. Theodora herself answered the summons. She was in a long, white gown, and her face was white as the linen.

"Are you ill, Dora?" Christina asked.

"No, I am sleepy. Have you had a pleasant evening?"

"Yes. All went to my wish. Every honor was in my hand, but if you had been present honors would have been easy, if not entirely in your hand. It was kind of you to give me this free opportunity, and I feel sure I have won the game. Good-night."

"Good-night. You are looking unusually handsome."

"This dress is becoming. Good-night," and she went gaily away, timing her steps to the music of the last line of her conquering song:

"And the late Mistress Jean, is my Lady Cockpen,"

laughing softly to herself as she closed her door. For she knew that she had won Sir Thomas Wynton, and her sharp little bit of a soul had already caught a keen sight of the further triumphs awaiting her. She would travel, she would be presented at many courts, she would entertain splendidly at Wynton Castle, she would be kind to Theodora, and patronize and protect her and she would make the hearts of the Campbellton set sick with envy. So she went to sleep planning a future for herself, of the most stupendous self-pleasing.

But within one week her most unlikely plans had assumed an air of certainty. Sir Thomas Wynton had formally asked Mrs. Campbell for her daughter's hand, and Miss Christina Campbell been recognized as the future Lady Wynton. Then her world was at her feet, every one did her homage, and brought her presents, and praised her for having done so well to herself. And she took the place in the household accorded her without dissent and without apologies, and ordered her outgoings and incomings as she desired.

At first the middle of June had been named for the marriage, but before long the date was forwarded to the eighteenth of April, for Sir Thomas was an ardent lover and would hear of no delaying. Then the house was in a kind of joyful hurry from morning to night, and Christina spent her days between the shops and her dressmaker, and not even Sir Thomas could get a glimpse of her until the day's pleasant labor was over. At first Mrs. Campbell went with her daughter on these shopping expeditions, and sometimes Isabel accompanied them, but soon the various demands of the coming event gave the elder ladies abundant cares, and Christina was permitted to manage her shopping and fitting as she thought best. So then she gained daily in self-assertion, and soon submitted to no dictation even from her brother. But Sir Thomas was a lover sure to make any woman authoritative, for he submitted gladly to all his mistress's whims, obeyed all her orders, and grew every hour more and more infatuated with his charming Christina. The most expensive flowers and fruits were sent to her daily, the Wynton jewels were being reset for her use, and Wynton Castle elaborately decorated and furnished for its new mistress. Christina, indeed, was now drinking a full cup of long-delayed happiness, and late as it was, finding the dew of her long-lost youth.

Mrs. Campbell shared her daughter's triumphant satisfaction. To all her kinfolk, married and unmarried, male and female, she wrote little notes brimming with pride and false humility, and expatiating on Sir Thomas Wynton's rank, wealth and power, his handsome person, and his deep devotion to her daughter; piously trusting that "her dear child might not be lured from the narrow path of godliness, in which she had been so carefully trained."

So in these days Christina was busy and happy, and mistress of all she desired. Yet as the wedding-day approached, she became nervous and irritable; she said she was weary to death, and wanted to sleep for a month. No one cared to cross her in the smallest matter, though her family devotion never deserted her. This feeling was strongly exemplified about two weeks before the wedding-day, in a few words said to her brother one evening when they were alone in the dining-room.

"Robert," she asked, "how near are you to the hundred thousand you expected? You have paid me the five hundred pounds promised. I should like to know if I have earned it. How near are you to your desire?"

"Near enough."

"Has he signed the papers yet?"

"No."

"Why?"

"I have not pressed the matter."

"You are foolish. It will be easier to get his signature before we are married, than after."

"You suspicious woman! Men keep their word about money matters, Christina. Don't you know that?"

"No."

"Well, of course you don't. You know nothing about men."

"You are satisfied, are you?"

"I am perfectly satisfied."

"And sure?"

"And positively sure."

A week later she asked again, though in a joking manner, "if he had secured that signature?" and Robert answered in a tone of annoyance:

"Do not trouble yourself anent my money matters, Christina."

Then she laughed and said: "When I am Lady Wynton, I may find many other ways for the spending of that hundred thousand of lying siller."

"I can trust you," replied Robert. "When you are Lady Wynton, you will not cease to be Christina Campbell, and Campbells stand shoulder to shoulder all the world over."

At these words she gave him her hand, and he clasped it tightly between his own. No further words were necessary. Robert knew assuredly that his sister's influence would always be in his favor, never against him.

As she left her brother, Mrs. Campbell called her, and with a slight reluctance she went into the familiar room.

"What is it you want with me, mother?" she asked, quickly adding, "I am very busy to-day."

"I want to tell you, Christina, that I have had the small room behind this room prepared for your trunks. They ought to have been here yesterday. Are your dresses not finished? It is high time they were."

"Some are finished, others are not."

"Those that are finished had better be sent here at once."

There was a moment's pause, and then Christina said decidedly: "None of my bride things are coming here, mother. When they are all in perfect order they will be sent to my future home."

"To Wynton Castle?"

"Of course. They will be quite safe there."

"Safe! What do you mean, miss? And pray, why are your bride clothes sent to Wynton Castle, instead of to Traquair House? I insist on knowing that."

"Because Traquair House is notoriously unlucky to bride clothes. Poor Theodora's pretty things were all ruined by those dreadful Campbelton people. You said your bride things were treated in the same way. Very well, I am determined that none of my trunks shall be broken open and rifled, and so I am sending them to where they will be guarded and respected."

"You are acting in a shameful, and most unusual manner, and I command you to send your trunks here. I will be responsible for their safety."

"Thank you, mother, but I have already made excellent arrangements for their security."

"I consider your behavior abominable. It is an outrage on your mother's love and honor."

"Theodora trusted you, and you allowed a lot of vulgar, unscrupulous women to ransack her trunks, wear her new dresses dirty, and spoil all they touched, and carry away with them neckwear and jewelry they had no right to touch. I will not give them so much opportunity to injure me. You ought not to wish me to do so."

"Christina Campbell, your behavior is beyond all excuse, it is almost beyond all forgiveness. Isabel, tell your sister her duty."

Then Isabel said in a slow, positive voice: "I think Christina is right. You know, mother, the Campbelton people will come to the marriage, and after Christina has gone, who will be able to restrain them? Not you. It is quite certain that they ruined poor Dora's home-coming, and made her begin her life here, at sixes and sevens."

"Poor Dora! What do you mean?"

"I mean, mother, that the opening of her trunks, and the use of her clothing was a shameful thing. I have often said so, and I will always say so."

"Do not dare to say it to me again. I will not listen to such nonsense, and as for you, Christina Campbell, you are an ungrateful child, and you are cocking your head too high, and somewhat too early. Wait until you are Lady Wynton, before you put on ladyship airs."

"Look you, mother, once and for all time, my trunks are not coming near Traquair House. I am as good as married, and I will not be ordered about like a child; it is out of the question."

"*Dod!* but you are full of bouncing, swaggering words. And what good girl ever sent her bridal clothes away, without letting her mother see them? What in heaven and earth will you do next?"

"I shall be delighted, if you will come with me to Madame Bernard's rooms this morning. I have asked you frequently to do so. You always refuse."

"I intended to examine them here, at my leisure."

"And as to what I shall do next, you will see that very shortly. I am very sorry, mother, to disappoint you, but after I am married you can see me wearing the dresses, and——"

"I do not wish to see them at all now."

"Very well."

"All your life, until lately, you have been a good obedient daughter; the change in you is the work of that wicked, wicked woman Dora Newton."

"All my life until lately, I was kept in a state of nothingness—but I am no longer a nonentity. I have come into a human existence, and you are right, it is Dora Campbell's doing, and I wish I knew how to thank her."

"It would be thanking the devil, for teaching you to sin."

"Mother, you are spoiling my day, and I have a great deal to do. Good-morning, or will you come with me?"

"I will not come one footstep with you. How can you expect it?"

At these words Christina left the room, and Mrs. Campbell began a complaint illustrated by sobs, and sighs, and intermittent tears. She told Isabel that all the pleasure she expected from her child's marriage had been taken from her. She confessed that she had spoken a little to many people of the rich and beautiful presents Christina had received, and now she would not be able to show one of them; and no one would believe what she had said—and she could not blame

people if they did not. "Oh, Isabel!" she cried, "for my sake, and for all our sakes, Christina must send her trunks here for a week or two. Do try and persuade her. She always listens to you."

"It is quite useless, mother; she has made up her mind to send them to her new home. I rather think some have gone there already, for two weeks ago there were eight trunks at madame's, and last week I only saw three."

"Why did you not tell me? Oh, why did you not give me a chance to persuade the cruel, selfish girl? So wrong! So wicked! So ungrateful! You know, Isabel, I gave her five hundred pounds to buy that very clothing—I had a right to see it—yes, I had—I had—and it is shameful!"

"Mother, you could have gone with Christina to her dressmaker's. You could not expect her to bring all her things here, they would certainly have been shown and handled—they might have been ill-used as Dora's pretty clothes were. Oh, mother, I do not blame Christina at all! I think she acted for the best."

"So you also are joining the enemy—getting Newtonized like Christina. Do you also hope to become a beauty, and a belle, and marry a baronet?"

"Mother, you are throwing sarcasm away. I have no hopes left for myself. It is too late for me to develop in any direction."

"Whose fault is that?"

"Destiny's fault, I suppose. I was nursing the sick, when I ought to have been in school and in society."

Mrs. Campbell did not answer this reproach. Destiny was a good enough apology. No one could thwart Destiny. She at least was not to blame for the wrongs of Destiny. She sat dourly still and silent, the very image of resentful disappointment. The silence was indeed so profound, that one could hear the passage of Isabel's needle through the silk she was sewing, and for ten minutes both women maintained the attitude they had taken.

Then Isabel—holding her needle poised ready for the next stitch—looked at her mother. Her expression of hopeless defeat was pathetic, and her silent, motionless endurance of it, touched Isabel's heart as tears and complaints never could have done. She rose and, taking her mother's dropped hand, said:

"Never mind, mother. You will often see Christina wearing her fineries in her grand new home. That will be far better than taking them out of a trunk to look at."

"Isabel, I care nothing about seeing them. I wanted to show them. People will never believe she got all I said she did."

"Why should you care whether they believe it or not? And why not pay the newspapers to make a notice of them. They will send some youngster here to item them, and you can give him a sovereign, and a glass of wine, and then you can give Christina all the wonderfals you like—even to the half, or the whole, of Sir Thomas Wynton's estate."

"That is the plan, Isabel. I'm glad you thought of it."

"Robert is gey fond of a newspaper notice. He'll pay the sovereign without a grumble."

"I'm sure you are an extraordinary comfort, Isabel."

"And I thought you were going to order the wedding cake this morning. There is really no time to lose, mother."

"You are right, Isabel, and I must just put back my own sair heartache and look after the ungrateful, thwart woman's wedding cake. It's untelling what I have done for Christina, and the upsetting ways o' her this morning and the words she said, I'll never forget. I shall come o'er them in my mind as long as I live; and I'll tell her what I think of her behavior, whenever I find a proper opportunity."

"Very well, mother. Tell her flatly your last thought; it will be the best way."

"I will."

"But do go about the cake at once. It is important, and there's none but yourself will be heeded."

Then with a long, deep sigh, she went slowly out of the room, and Isabel watched her affected weakness and indifference with a kind of scornful pity. For women see through women, know intuitively their little tricks and make-beliefs, and for this very reason a daughter's love for her mother—however devoted and self-sacrificing—lacks that something of mystical worship which a son feels for his mother. The daughter knows she wears false hair and false teeth and pink and white powder; the son simply takes her as she looks and thinks "what a lovely mother I have!" The daughter has watched her mother's little schemes for happy household management, and probably helped her in them; the son knows only their completed comfort and their personal pleasure. He never dreams of any policy or management in his mother's words and deeds, and hence he believes in her just as he sees and hears her. And her wisdom and love seem to him so great and so unusual, that an element of reverence—the highest feeling of which man is capable—blends itself with all his conceptions of mother. And the wonder is, that a daughter's love exists,

and persists, without it. Knowing all her mother's feminine weaknesses, she loves her devotedly in spite of them—nay, perhaps loves her the more profoundly because of them. And if she is not capable of this affection she does not love her at all.

Isabel watched her mother leave the house on the wedding cake business and then she went to her sister's room. She found her dressing to go out. "I have an appointment at eleven, Isabel," she said, "and I am so glad you have come to sit beside me while I dress. The days are going so fast, and very soon now you will come to my room, and Christina will not be here, any more in this life."

"You will surely come back to your own home sometimes, Christina?"

"No. I shall never enter Traquair House again, unless you are sick and need me—then I would come. I have just been going through my top drawer, Isabel; it was full of old gifts and keepsakes, and I declare they brought tears to my eyes."

"Why? I dare say the givers have forgotten you—they were mostly school friends, and the Campbelton crowd."

"Do you think I had a tear for any of them? No, no! I was nearly crying for myself, for it was really piteous to see the trash a woman of my age thought worth preserving. I sent the whole contents of the drawer to the kitchen—the servant lasses may quarrel about them."

"Was there nothing worth taking to your new home? No single thing that had a loving, or a pleasant memory?"

"Not one. The whole mess of needlework, and painted cards, toilet toys, and sham trinkets represented my existence until Dora came. It was just as useless and unsatisfying as the trash flung into the kitchen. Dora opened the gates of life for me. Poor Dora!"

"Why do you say 'poor Dora'?"

"She is unhappy, disappointed, I have sometimes thought almost frightened. She is much changed. Robert is not kind to her, and he ought to be ashamed of himself. I wonder if my intended husband will act as Robert has done?"

"Sir Thomas is much in love with you."

"Robert was much in love with Dora. See how it ends. He sits reading, or he lies asleep on the sofa the evenings he is with her—and he used to feel as if the day was not long enough to tell her how lovely and how dear she was. I suppose Sir Thomas will act in the same way."

"I do not think he will."

"He had better not."

"Oh, Christina, do not talk—do not even think of such contingencies. Women should never threaten."

"Pray, why not?"

"Because it is dangerous to themselves to show their teeth if they cannot bite, and they cannot. Women in this country are helpless as babies."

"Then there are other countries."

"*Hush!* This is uncanny talk. What a pretty suit! Are you going to wear it to-day?"

"Yes, it is a spring suit, and this is a lovely spring morning. I heard the robins singing as you came upstairs."

"Mother has gone to order the wedding cake—you ought to be a happy woman, Christina."

"I am—and yet, Isabel, life will be bare without you. All my life long you have been my comfort, and I love you, yes, I love you dearly, Isabel."

"And I love you, Christina. I shall miss you every hour of the day."

Then they were both silent, they had said all they could say, and much more than was usual. Christina finished her toilet, and Isabel sat watching her, then they clasped hands and walked downstairs together, and so to the front door, which Jepson opened as Christina approached it. For a few moments Isabel stood there and watched her sister enter the waiting carriage, and felt well repaid when Christina, as the horses moved, fluttered her white handkerchief in a parting salute.

Mrs. Campbell returned in time for lunch. She had quite recovered her dignity, and was indeed more than usually vaunting and exultant. "I have ordered a cake twice the ordinary size," she said, "and the small boxes, and the narrow white ribbon, in which to send friends not present at the ceremony a portion. It will be a labor to tie them up, and direct them, but there will be a house full to help you. When will your dress be done, Isabel?"

"To-night, mother."

"And Christina's comes to-morrow night. Mine is finished. I called at Dalmeny's to examine it. The

lace is particularly effective, and it fits—which is a wonder. Will Sir Thomas be here to dinner?"

"He has gone to Edinburgh for the Wynton diamonds. He has set his heart on Christina wearing them at the marriage ceremony."

"I do not approve his determination. A bride, in my opinion, ought to be dressed with great simplicity. I was. A few orange blossoms, or the like of them, are enough."

"Not always. A young girl looks well enough with a few flowers, but a woman in the prime of life, like Christina, can wear diamonds even on her wedding-day, and look grander and lovelier for them."

"Well, well! Your way be it. I do not expect my opinions to be regarded, but can tell you one thing—if Sir Thomas goes on giving her gems at the rate he has done, the Wynton baronage will be in a state of perfect beggary, before the end of their lives. I was just telling Mrs. Malcolm that I verily believed the sum-total o' Sir Thomas Wynton's gifts to my daughter might reach all o' a ten thousand pounds, and she was that astonished, she could barely keep her composure."

"That is just like yourself, mother. I do wish you would not boast so much about Sir Thomas. He is not any kind of a miraculous godsend, for Christina is quite as good as he is."

"Isabel, if my family has been honored with extraordinar' mercies, I am not the woman to deny them, or even hide them in a napkin, as it were. I am going to be thankful for them and speak well of them to all and sundry. I am going to rejoice day and night over the circumstance. I think it just and right to testify my gratitude so far; and I would think shame o' myself if I did not do it."

"Very well, mother. Christina had a new spring suit on to-day. She looked exceedingly handsome in it."

"Baillie Littlejohn remarked to me lately, that my daughter Christina was the very picture o' myself, when I was about her age. And he remembered me ever since we were in the dancing class together—that is forty years—maybe forty-one, or two, or perhaps as many as forty—"

"Never mind the years, mother. It is very nice of the Bailie to remember so long."

"I always made long—I may say lasting impressions, Isabel. It was my way—or gift—a kind of power I had. People who once know me, never forget me. It is rather a peculiar power, I think."

"Christina seems very happy, mother."

"Of course she is happy! It would be a black, burning shame if she were not. Sir Thomas is all she deserves, and more too, yet I am glad he has withdrawn himself to-night, for I am fairly fagged out with fine dinners, and I shall tell McNab to give us some mutton broth and collops to-night. It will be a thanksgiving to have the plainest dinner she can cook."

"Christina may not like it."

"Then she can dislike it. I am not fearing Christina. I wish you would ask Dora what she is going to wear."

"Tell Robert to do so."

"I have heard tell of no new dress, and it would be just like her to wear her own wedding dress."

"Is there anything against her doing so?"

"Is there anything against it? Certainly there is. We do not want any one in white satin but Christina."

"Oh! I see. Robert must explain that to her. Tell him so to-night. You had better take a sleep this afternoon, mother. You look tired."

"I will rest until seven. What time will Christina be home?"

"She did not tell me."

"Where was she going?"

"To Marion Brodie's. She spoke of Flora McLeod being with Marion to-day, and of the necessity of making each of them understand their duties."

"Duties?"

"As chief bride-maidens."

"Yes, yes, of course! But she will be home to dinner?"

"Oh, certainly; and Marion may come back with her. If so, how will the plain dinner do?"

"Well enough! Marion's mother was brought up on mutton broth and haggis; and the wealth o' the Brodies is o'er young to be in the fashions yet awhile. I will be down at seven, and meanwhile you may speak to Christina anent her duty. I do think her wedding dress ought to be home even the now."

"Mother, it will not come until the day before the marriage. She is afraid of it being handled."

"Preserve us! Why shouldn't it be handled? It is pure selfishness. She is against sharing her pleasure with any other soul. That is the because of her ill-natured conduct. See that dinner is ready punctual. Your brother was in one of his north-easter tempers this morning, and the day's work isn't likely to have sorted him any better."

Then half-reluctantly she went upstairs. She would rather have remained with Isabel and talked affairs over again; but Isabel was depressed and not inclined to conversation. The old lady wondered, as she slowly climbed the stairs, "What the young people of this generation were made of?" She felt that she had more enthusiasm than either of her daughters, and then sighed deeply, because it received so little sympathy.

CHAPTER VIII

A RUNAWAY BRIDE

At seven precisely Mrs. Campbell re-entered the dining-room. Isabel was already there, and Jepson was bringing in the broth. Neither Robert nor Christina was present, and she wondered a little, but asked no questions. In a few moments Theodora took her place, and without remark permitted Jepson to serve her. But she was evidently in trouble, and she did not touch the food before her. At length Mrs. Campbell asked:

"Where is Robert? Is he not ready for dinner?"

"He is asleep. I suppose he is not ready for dinner."

"What time did he return home?"

"Very early. He said he was sleepy. He is always sleepy. I fear he is ill, a healthy man cannot always be needing sleep."

"The Campbells, all of them, are famous for their ability to sleep. They can sleep at all hours, and in any place—a four-inch-wide plank would suffice them for a sofa. They can order a sleep whenever they desire, and it comes. It is very remarkable."

"Very," answered Theodora, in a tone of unavoidable contempt.

"I have heard people say it was a great gift, and it is quite a family gift."

"I hope my little David will not inherit it," said Theodora.

"There is nothing of the Campbell family about the boy," replied Mrs. Campbell.

Theodora did not say she was glad, but she looked the words, and her expression of satisfaction was annoying to both Isabel and her mother. The former said with petulant decision:

"I can sleep at any time I wish. I think this family trait is a great and peculiar blessing."

"Circumstances may sometimes make it so, Isabel," answered Theodora, "but I would rather wake and suffer, than sink into animal unconsciousness half my life. Robert has slept, or pretended to sleep, twelve hours out of the last twenty-four, and he does not even dream."

"Dream!" cried Mrs. Campbell in disgust, "dream, I hope not! Only fools dream. My children go to bed for the purpose of sleeping. Dream indeed! The Campbells have good sense, and they don't lose it when they sleep."

"Oh, but I think dreaming is one of the most sensible things we do. The soul is comforted by dreaming, instructed and warned by dreaming. I should feel spiritually dead, if the blessed, prophesying dreams failed to visit me."

"I wonder where Christina is taking dinner," said Mrs. Campbell. She refused to continue a conversation so senseless and disagreeable, and her way of doing so, was not only to ignore Theodora's topic, but also to introduce a subject which she considered important and interesting. And of course Christina's dinner was a matter that put dreaming out of court and question.

Isabel thought she was dining with the Brodies, and Mrs. Campbell said, "In that case she ought to have sent a message to her family."

"She is so occupied, mother, she forgets. We must make some allowances at this time."

"Of course, Isabel. I expect to do so."

Then the door was suddenly thrown open and Robert entered. His face was dark, he was biting his thumbnail, and his eyes were full of a dull fire. He had not a word for any one but Jepson, whom he ordered to remove the broth. "The house smells of it," he said with an air of disgust. He ate what dinner he took without speaking, an act Gothic, almost brutal, when it can be avoided, but none of the three women cared to break the silence, lest they might turn silence into visible, audible anger.

Theodora made a pretence of eating, but it was only a pretence and she left the room as soon as

the cloth was drawn. Robert did not in any way notice her departure, but he began a grumbling kind of conversation with his mother, as soon as the three Campbells were alone. He said he was worn out with the expense and rioting anent Christina's marriage. It had been fine dinners, and suppers, and fooleries of all kinds for weeks, and more weeks, and money wasting away like water running into sand. He saw no good coming of it. He was glad the end was in sight, etc., etc. —grumble, grumble, grumble, his voice never lifted above a deep, sulky monotone, his face dark with frowns and discontent.

He was so ill-tempered Mrs. Campbell thought it best to leave him alone with his cigar. It seemed better to worry out her anxieties with Isabel, who, however, was not in a mood to talk them away. "I am so depressed, mother," she complained. "I hardly know what I am saying. I feel as if I had a great sorrow. The room is dark, the air heavy, the whole house feels full of trouble. It is crowded, too. With a little effort I feel that I could see the crowd. Do you understand?"

"My God! Isabel, control yourself. We want no Second Sight here. The Argyle Campbells are great seers, and you must close your ears to their whisperings, and whatever sights are under your eye-balls, deny them vision. You must, you must! For, as your grandfather, Ivan Campbell, used to say, 'the Second Sight, children, isna a blessing, it is aye dool and sorrow, or ill chance it shows you.'"

"Mother, I must tell you the truth. I am unhappy about Christina."

"So am I."

"She ought to have sent us a message. She would, had it been possible. Oh, mother, what or who prevented her?"

"Perhaps she did. Have you asked Scot?"

"No, but if any message had been sent by him he would have told Jepson at once, and Jepson heard our conversation about her absence at the dinner table, yet he made no remark."

"What do you fear?"

"My fear has no form. That is what frightens me. If I knew——"

"You are nervous, Isabel, very nervous. She left home well, and in good spirits."

"I never saw her in better health, or finer spirits."

"Do you not remember, that she once stayed at Colonel Allison's till near midnight, without sending us any message? We were in a fright about her at that time."

"But you commanded her never to do the like again."

"Christina has not obeyed my commands very particularly of late. They do not seem important to her."

"She has had so much to do, and she knew Sir Thomas would not be in Glasgow to-night. If I knew she was well and safe, I should be glad she was not here, for this is an unhappy house with Robert in the devil's own temper, and Dora looking like the grave."

"Dora makes Robert ill-tempered. It is all her fault, and we have to suffer for it."

"She evidently suffers also."

"She deserves to suffer."

"Suppose we send for Scot. He must be in the stable yet."

"As you like."

In a quarter of an hour Scot stood within the dining-room door respectfully indignant at the summons and the delay it would cause him. He was rather glad the ladies were anxious and quite in the mood to tell anything he thought might be disagreeable.

"Where did you take Miss Christina first of all this morning, Scot?" asked Mrs. Campbell.

"To the florist's shop on Buchanan Street. She bought a posy of daffy-down-dillys and came out with them in her hand."

"Where next?"

"To Madame Barnard's. She didna stop five minutes there, but Madame cam' to the doorstep wi' her, and bid Miss Christina good-bye and wished her a' the good luck in the round world itsel'."

"Then?"

"She told me then to go back to the stable, but to be sure and come for her at four o'clock. I asked where I was to come, and she laughed pleasantly and said, 'Come to Bailie Brodie's,' and gave me the Crescent, and the number o' the house forbye."

"Did you go to Bailie Brodie's at four o'clock?"

"I did that same thing, ma'am."

"Well?"

"A servant lass told me Miss Campbell hadna been there that day, nor that week. So I drove home again, and at half after five I went to the train for Mr. Campbell, but I missed him. He had come by an early train, while I was at Brodies'."

"Did you notice any one speak to Miss Campbell?"

"No one."

"Did she take the right way to Brodies'?"

"She took the best way—up Sauchiehall Street."

"That will do, Scot."

Scot shut the door, and the two women looked with troubled eyes into each other's faces. Mrs. Campbell then turned to the clock and said, "It is on the stroke of nine, Isabel. We will wait until ten; then I shall speak to your brother."

The hour went miserably, almost silently away, and then Mrs. Campbell went to her son. He treated her fears with contemptuous indifference. "It is like you women," he said, "you always make a mountain out of a molehill. If any one of the women in this house knows how to take care of herself, it is Christina Campbell! Go to your beds, and tell Jepson to sit up for her."

"Robert, do you understand that she said she was going to the Brodies', and then did not go?"

"Who said she was not there?"

"One of the Brodie servant lasses."

"*Tush!* She went there, no doubt, but did not stay long enough to acquaint that particular servant with her visit. I have no doubt Marion Brodie and Christina went off somewhere together, and they are likely together at this hour."

"I never thought of that, Robert. Indeed it is very likely they went to Netta Galbraith, who is to be second bridesmaid."

"Of course, and they are having a mock marriage in order to practise their parts. I hope we shall have no more marriages in the family, they are ruinously expensive, and make nothing but misery and anxiety."

Mrs. Campbell sighed, and lifted her eyes heaven-ward, but she did not remain with her son. She was really afraid to leave Isabel, for she looked almost distracted, and on the point of vision. "And I will not have it," she whispered to herself, "no, I will not. There shall be no prophecy of calamity in this house, whether from the dead or the living—not if mortal woman can help it."

She opened the dining-room door to this thought, and Isabel stayed her rapid walk and asked anxiously, "Well, mother?"

"Your brother says there is no occasion to worry. He made out a very clear case of the circumstance," and she explained his supposition concerning Christina's and Marion Brodie's visit together to Netta Galbraith.

Isabel shook her head. "That is not it," she answered positively.

"He advised us to go to bed."

"I will not until Christina returns, or Robert does something to clear up her failure to come."

"How do you feel?"

"Unquiet and unhappy. Mother, something extraordinary has happened."

"I hope you are not seeing things."

"No. The 'visiting' is past—but it will come again."

"It must not! It must not! Deny it every time! Oh, Isabel—if anything should happen to put off the marriage, whatever should we do?"

"Bear it."

"The talk of it! The wonder of it! The mortification of it!"

"Mother, why are you fearing such a misfortune? Robert says all is right. You have always believed Robert's word."

"Yes, yes! Robert knows, Robert feels, when he is in the right mood, but to-night he is in a bad mood—cross and evil as Satan."

Dismally they talked together for another hour, and then Robert joined them. He had caught fear from some source, and he asked for a list of such places as Christina was likely to visit. Then he called a cab and went first to Glover's Theatre. He was just in time to see the exit of the Box crowd, but Christina was not among them. Suddenly the consequences of a delayed marriage struck him like a buffet in his face. The loss of money—the loss of prestige—the talk—the

newspapers! Oh, the thing was impossible, and he tried to put the apprehension of it away with a stamp of his foot. He was equally unsuccessful wherever he called. No one had seen Christina that day, and he finally went home puzzled, and even anxious, but sure that her unaccountable absence was the result of some misunderstanding that would be cleared up when morning came. He insisted on the family retiring, but told Jepson to leave the gas burning, and be ready to open the door if called upon to do so. Then he also went upstairs, but sleep was far from him. Theodora appeared to be asleep, but though her eyes were closed, her heart was waking. One kind word would have brought him all the comfort love could give. He was touched, however, by the sweetness and peace that brooded over her, and by the calm and restful atmosphere pervading her room. He stood a moment at the side of the apparently sleeping woman, but was reluctant—perhaps ashamed—to awaken her. David slept in her dressing-room and he went to the child's cot and looked at the beautiful boy. When he was asleep, the likeness to his father was very evident, and Robert noticed it.

"I was once as innocent and as fair as he is. I must have looked just like him," and sitting down by a table he held his head in his hands, and thought of them, and of Christina's delay, listening always for the carriage, the step, the ring at the door, that never came.

The next morning the whole family were late and unrested. Jepson was sorting the mail as Isabel came downstairs, and she asked anxiously, "What time is it, Jepson?"

"Nine o'clock, miss. Here is a letter for you, miss."

She saw at once it was from Christina, and she took it eagerly, and ran back to her own room with it. Trembling from head to feet, she broke the seal and read:

MY DEAR SISTER:

I was married to-day at half-past eleven to Jamie Rathey. I met him twelve days ago, and we went into the picture gallery, and sat there all day talking, and I found out that I loved Jamie, and did not love Sir Thomas. I promised to marry him, and we rented a nice floor and furnished it very prettily, and hired two servants, and so after the marriage ceremony, went to our own home for lunch. Do not blame me, Isabel. I have never been happy in all my life, and I want to be happy, and I shall be happy with Jamie. I have sent all the gifts Sir Thomas gave me back, and written him a letter. He will forgive me, and I know you will. Mother will forbid you to mention me, and she will never forgive. I know Robert will feel hurt, but he has no cause. I begged him to secure the fish that was on the hook for him, and he would not. I thought all well over, and I did not see why I should any longer sacrifice myself for the Campbells. For twenty-eight years I was miserable—child and woman. Nobody loved me but Jamie. I had nothing other girls and women had. But I am happy at last! Happy at last! Oh, Isabel, be glad for me. I will write to you every month, but you need not try to find me out. You could not. You might as well look for a needle in a hay-stack. Dear Isabel, do not forget me. Your loving sister,

CHRISTINA RATHEY.

And Isabel cried and wrung her hands and said softly, but from her very heart, "I am glad, I am glad! You did right, Christina! Yes, you did! You did! And Isabel will stand by you till the last. She will! She will!"

With tears still on her white cheeks, she went down to the dining-room. Robert and his mother were at the table, and evidently not on agreeable terms. "Jepson thought you had a letter from Christina," said Mrs. Campbell, "and I am astonished you did not bring it to us, at once."

"I thought it would be better, to see first what news it contained."

"Well? Can you not speak?"

Then Isabel put the letter into her mother's hand.

And in a few minutes there was a cry like that of a woman wounded and crushed to death. With frantic passion Mrs. Campbell threw the letter at her son, and then with bitter execrations assailed the child she accused of killing her.

"Mother, mother! Do be quiet!" pleaded Isabel.

"She has killed me! I shall die of shame! I shall die! She has broken my heart!"

Robert read the letter through, his face growing darker and darker as he read. When he had finished, he threw it on the fire, and Isabel rushed to the grate and rescued it, though it was smoked, and browned, and mostly illegible. But she clasped its tinder and ashes in her hands, cried over them, and finally left the room with the precious relics clasped to her heart.

"Have you gone crazy too?" called her mother.

"Let her alone!" said Robert.

"And pray what is the matter with you?"

"I am ashamed of the way you are behaving."

"It is your sister of whom you must be ashamed. Her disgraceful marriage will kill me."

"It is the result of your own doing, and withholding."

"I am to bear the blame, of course. Poor mother!"

"You never gave her any happiness, and when she got the opportunity she gave it to herself. That was natural."

"She had all the happiness I had."

"You had your husband, your family, your house, your servants, and your social duties. You were quite happy, but none of these things made happiness for your daughters. They wanted the pleasures of youth—gay company, gay clothing, travel and lovers, and none of these things you gave them. I was often very sorry for them."

"Then why did you not help them yourself?"

"Do you remember the year I begged you to take your daughters to Edinburgh and London, and offered to pay all expenses, and you would not do it?"

"I did not wish to go to Edinburgh and London."

"No, you wanted to go to Campbelton, and so you made your daughters go with you, though they hated the place. There Christina met this low fellow whom she married. She had no other lover. To the Campbelton rabble you sacrificed my sisters from their babyhood."

"Robert Campbell! How dare you call my kindred 'rabble'?"

"The name is good enough. Do you think I have forgotten how they treated my wife's clothing, and our rooms?"

"What are you bringing up that old story for?"

"It comes in naturally to-day, and I have not forgotten it. For your cruelty at that time, you are rightly served. Christina has avenged Theodora."

He flung the last words at her over his shoulder as he left the room. She had no opportunity to answer them, indeed she was not able to do so. It seemed to her as if she had been stricken dumb from head to feet; as if her world was being swept away from her, and she could not protest against it. Isabel had left her in anger and opposition. Robert in reproach. As for Christina, she had smitten her on every side, and gone away without contrition and without reproof. And Robert's few words had been keener than a sword, for they were edged with Truth, and Truth drove them to her very soul.

But she had no thought of surrendering any foothold of her position. She only wanted time to consider herself, for this solid defection of son and daughters had come like a cataclysm out of a clear sky, unforeseen, entire, and apparently complete in its misery. Her first resolve was to go to Theodora, and have the circumstance "out" with her. But her limbs were as heavy as her heart, and when with difficulty she reached the door of the room, she heard her son talking to his wife. And it had been brought home to her that morning that Robert could not be depended on, therefore she must risk no more uncertain encounters. Theodora alone, she did not fear; but Theodora and Robert in alliance meant certain defeat.

So she stumbled back to the sofa and sat down. Nature ordered her to lie down, but she flatly refused. "This is a critical time," she said to herself, "and Margaret Campbell, there is to be no lying down. You be to keep on the defensive." But she rang for Jepson, and told him to tell Miss Campbell her mother wanted her. In a few minutes Isabel answered the summons, and as soon as she entered the room she cried out, "Oh, mother, mother, mother! what is the matter? You are ill."

"Ay, Isabel, I am ill, and it would be a miracle if I were not ill." The words came slowly and with effort, and Isabel was terrified by her mother's face, for it was gray as ashes, and had on it an expression of terror, as if she had looked on Death as he passed her by.

"Lie down, mother. You ought to lie down."

"Get me a glass—a big glass—of red Burgundy."

Isabel obeyed, and when she had drunk it, she said in something of her natural voice and manner, "Burgundy is the strong wine. It is full of iron, and we require plenty of iron in our blood. In the common crowd, it goes to their hands, and helps them to work hard, but in the Campbell clans, it goes to the hearts of both men and women."

"And makes them hard-hearted."

"Hard to their own, and worse to their foes—and to strangers. Oh, Isabel, Isabel, this is the blackest day I have ever seen! What shall we do?"

"Bear it. Others have borne the like. We can."

"I can never look my friends in the face again."

"Never mind either friends or foes. In nine days they will have said their say. Let them."

"Yesterday at this hour, I was the proudest and happiest woman in Glasgow. To-day I am——"

"The bravest woman in Glasgow. Defy your trouble, as you always do. Christina's conduct is most unusual, and few will understand it—they can't. But, oh mother, stand by your daughter! Tell every one, that when she found out she loved Mr. Rathey better than Sir Thomas Wynton, she did what was honorable and womanly, and that you admire her truth and sincerity, though of course, somewhat disappointed. Such words as these will silence the ill-natured, and satisfy the friendly. You will say them, mother?"

"Something like them, no doubt."

"And we must find Christina, and you will forgive her, and protect her?"

"I will do no such things."

"It would stop people's tongues."

"Their tongues may clash till doomsday, ere I will stop them that gate. Never name the wicked woman to me again. I do not know her any more, and I do not want to know, whether she is living or dead, in plenty or poverty, sick or well, happy or miserable. She is out o' this world, as far as I am concerned. *Sure!*"

"What did Robert say?"

"Threw the whole blame on mysel'—evil be to him!"

"Mother!"

"Yes, evil be to the son who condemns his mother, whether she be right or wrong."

"He will not get Sir Thomas to invest money in the works now, I fear. That will trouble him."

"Weel! The Campbell furnaces have kept blazing so far, without Wynton siller to help them, and their fires willna go out for the want o' it."

"I wonder how Sir Thomas will take his disappointment."

"It is untelling how any man will take anything. You couldna speculate as to how Robert Campbell would take a plate o' parritch; he might like them, and he might send them to the Back o' Beyond. All men are made that way, and we poor women can only put up wi' their tempers and tantrums. God help us!"

At this moment Jepson entered with a basket filled with moss and purple pansies. A card was attached bearing the following message:

"Sir Thomas Wynton sends sincere sympathy, and kind regards to Mrs. and Miss Campbell. He will not intrude on their grief at present, but will call in a few days."

Isabel laid her face against the flowers, Mrs. Campbell read the card with pleasure, and a slight flush of color came back to her cheeks.

"This bit of card will give me the upper hand of a' the clashing jades, who come here wondering and sighing, and doubting and fearing. I shall shake it in their faces, and bid them tak' notice that Sir Thomas Wynton is still in the family as it were. And I shall make one other observe anent the marriage failure, that Sir Thomas will take as personal, any and all unpleasant remarks concerning the Campbells."

"When Sir Thomas pays his visit——"

"You be to see that Dora is present. The creature has a wonderful way o' saying consoling words. I hae noticed that all men find her pleasant and satisfactory. She has the trick o' speaking just what they want to hear—the jade!"

"Do speak decently of Dora, mother. She is Robert's wife."

"More's the pity. God help the poor man! Little pleasure he has wi' her."

"It is not her fault."

"I see how it is—she will lead you wrong next."

"No one can lead me wrong. I wonder if Sir Thomas went to see Robert to-day."

"I think Robert would go and see him. We may wonder all day, but we will know, when Robert comes home; that is, if his temper will let him talk. *Dod!* but he is a true Campbell—flesh, blood, and bone."

"When Robert was in love with Dora, love made him a kind, good-tempered man."

"Kind men are not profitable in a house; they give where they ought to grip; and it is a sma' share o' this world you will get wi' good temper. You be to threep, and threaten for what you want, and the fires in the furnaces would soon burn low, if there was a kind, good-tempered man watching o'er them."

"Now you are talking like yourself, mother. You will soon put your trouble under your feet."

"Weel, I am not going to sit down on the ash-heap wi' it, as the perfect man o' Uz did—if there ever was such a man—which I am doubting; all the mair, because nobody I ever heard of could tell me in what country on the face o' the globe a place called Uz might be found. If there isna a place called Uz, it is mair than likely there never was a man called Job."

"The Bible says there was."

"Ay, in a parable. The Bible is aye ready to drop into a parable."

"Mother, if you would try and sleep now."

"I will not. I would get sick if I did. I am on watch at present, for I am not up to mark, and I will not gie sickness the fine opportunity o' sleep. If Robert comes hame reasonable, I'll have my talk out wi' him. I am not going to suffer his contradictions, not if I know it."

Fortunately Robert came home early, and was in a civil and communicative mood. He said "he had been to see Sir Thomas, and had been treated in the most considerate manner."

"What did he say about Christina?" asked Isabel timidly.

"He would hear no wrong of her. He said she had written him a beautiful letter, a most honorable letter, a letter he would prize to his dying hour. He thought she had done right, both for herself and him. He told me she had returned all his gifts, and he had directed the jeweler to hold them for her further orders. He thinks she will be sure to call there, in order to find out if they have been given to him, and he has left a note with the jewels, begging her to keep them as a sign of their friendship, and a reminder of the pleasant hours they have spent together. A most unusual and gentlemanly way of looking at things, I must say."

"Will he take a share in the works now?" asked Mrs. Campbell.

"I do not know. He is going abroad as soon as he has rearranged his affairs. He said he would call on you in a few days."

"He sent us some lovely flowers," said Isabel.

"He is a most wasteful man."

"He sent mother and me pansies in a lovely basket lined with moss; they were to say for him he would 'remember' us. And he sent Dora the same basket, filled with white hyacinths. Oh, how sweet they were!"

"And what did they say?"

"I looked for their meaning, and found it was 'unobtrusive loveliness.' You see Dora rarely came into the parlor, when he called."

"That may be so, but he had no business to notice her absence. 'Unobtrusive' indeed, and 'loveliness.' Some men don't know when they go too far."

"He meant all in kindness," said Mrs. Campbell, "and I hope he will call."

Sir Thomas kept his promise. Three days after Christina had so mercilessly jilted him, he called on her mother and sister. But by this time he had taken a still more exalted view of his false love's conduct. He told Mrs. Campbell, that it was not sympathy, but congratulations, that were due her. Was she not the proud mother of a noble daughter, whom neither rank nor wealth could lure from the paths of truth and honor? Of a daughter who held love as beyond price, and who would not wrong either his or her own heart. He waxed eloquent on this subject, and was tearful over the lost treasure of her noble daughter's affection. And Mrs. Campbell smiled grimly, and wondered "if he really thought she was silly enough to believe he believed in any such balderdash."

Isabel certainly believed in him with all her heart, and was never weary of his chivalrous, exalted platitudes; and like all men in love trouble, Sir Thomas was never weary of talking of his wounded heart, and lost bride. So Isabel quickly became his favorite confidant. She listened patiently and with evident interest; she helped him to praise Christina, and when he got to wiping his eyes, Isabel was ready to weep with him.

In a couple of weeks he began to talk of his intended travel, and on this subject Isabel was sincerely inquisitive and enthusiastic. The strongest desire of her heart was to travel in strange countries, and she asked so many questions about the trip Sir Thomas proposed taking, that he brought his maps and guidebooks, and showed her his route down the Mediterranean to Greece, up the Adriatic to Montenegro and Herzegovina, over the Dalmatian mountains, through Austria and Hungary to Buda-Pesth, northward to Prague, Berlin, and Hamburg, into the Baltic, and so by Zealand and the Skager Rack across the North Sea to England again. Oh, what a heaven it opened up to the reserved, solitary woman!

It was impossible for Isabel to hide her delight, and so when this trip had been thoroughly talked over, he came one wet afternoon with the books and maps explanatory of his last journey, which had been altogether on the American continent. He showed her where he had hunted big game in the forests of the Hudson Bay Company, and he described to her the old cities of French Canada. Many afternoons were spent in talking about New York, Chicago, St. Louis, San Francisco, and the wonders of California, Alaska, and Texas. Finally, he carried her to Brazil and Cuba, to the

West Indies and to the beautiful Bermudas.

In these parlor wanderings, she lived a life far, far apart from the wet, dull streets of Glasgow, and the monotonous ennui and strife of Traquair House; besides which advantage, both Sir Thomas and herself lost in such pleasant loiterings the first sore pangs of their bereaved hearts. For obvious reasons, both Robert and Mrs. Campbell tolerated these—to them—tiresome recollections. Robert considered the baronet yet as a possible business contingent; and Mrs. Campbell silenced all doubtful sympathizers with remarks about his friendship, and his constant visits. One Sabbath she managed affairs so cleverly, that he even went to Dr. Robertson's church, sat in their pew, and returned home to dine with them. The next day he started on his two years' travel, promising to write Isabel descriptions of all the wonderfuls he saw.

On the night of the same day, Robert called together the women of his household and in the bluntest words told them the strictest economy was hence-forward to be observed. He said the wastrie of the past three or four months was unbelievable, and it had to be made up by a steady curtailment of all household expenses. Then turning to his mother he asked, "in what direction she thought it best to begin?"

She answered promptly: "You are right, Robert. The expenses of the house have been very extravagant, and retrenchment is both wise and necessary. I think in the first place we ought to reduce the number of servants. One man can be spared from the stable, and the second man in the house is not a necessity. McNab must do with one kitchen girl, instead of two; and your son no longer needs a nurse. A boy of his age ought to wait on himself."

"David has not needed a nurse for a long time."

"*Who* did you say?"

"David."

"I ordered you not to call the boy by that name, in my presence."

"It is his baptismal name. He has no other name."

"Call him Nebuchadnezzar, or Satan, or any name you like in your own room, but in my presence ___"

"His name is always David. I was going to remind you that Ducie has been a general servant in the house for many months. She has assisted your chambermaid, helped McNab in the kitchen, and Jepson about the table. I think she has been the most effective maid in the house."

"She may have been chambermaid, cook, and butler rolled into one, but she is not wanted here, and the sooner she finds her way back to Kendal the better every one will like it."

Then Theodora quietly gathered the silks with which she was working, and without noise or hurry left the room. She heard her mother-in-law's scornful laugh, and her husband's angry voice as she closed the door, but she allowed neither to detain her in an atmosphere so highly charged with hatred and opposition.

In about an hour Robert strode into her parlor, and with a lowering face and peevish voice asked: "Why did you go away?"

"There was no further reason for my presence, and more than one reason why it was better for me to go away."

"It is evident you feel no interest in the curtailment of my expenses."

"I am sure that curtailment is not necessary. You gave your shareholders a dividend of ten-per-cent a short time ago, and you are always complaining that the business is too large for you to carry alone. And I do not see that there is the smallest curtailment in your personal expenses."

"Pray what have you to do with my personal expenses?"

"I speak of them because I personally have no expenses from which to draw conclusions."

"I suppose you have as many personal expenses as any other woman. My mother thinks you have more."

"Your mother grudges me the little food I eat. How much money have you given me during the six years I have been your wife?"

"I have paid all your bills."

"What kind of bills?"

"All kinds."

"No. You have paid for a physician when I was sick—nothing else. I have bought little new clothing, and what I have bought I paid for."

"You did not require new clothing."

"When it was to renew and alter, I paid all expenses with my own money."

"*You! You have no money!* All the money you have is mine. I have allowed you to use it for your

personal expenses. Many husbands would not have done so."

"It was my money, Robert. I made it before I even knew your name."

"It was all my money the moment you were my wife."

"It is all gone now. I had to borrow a sovereign from Ducie."

"Good gracious! What an absurdity! What did you want with a sovereign? You have credit in half-a-dozen shops."

"I wanted money, not credit. I cannot buy stamps, stationery, music, medicine, and many other things with credit. And the church wants cash always. I cannot pay church dues with credit. When I borrowed a sovereign from Ducie I wanted a prescription of Dr. Fleming's made up."

"You have credit at Starkie's."

"Starkie does not make up prescriptions. I had to send to Fraser's and I have no credit at Fraser's."

Then he threw a sovereign on the table and said: "Pay Ducie at once. I do not want her chattering all over Glasgow and Kendal."

"So you have decided to send Ducie away?"

"Yes."

"She is all that is left me of my old happy life. Oh, Robert, Robert! have some pity on me."

"My mother and sister are giving up three servants. Surely you can relinquish one."

"It is Scot in the stable, who gives up his helper. It is Jepson in the house, it is McNab in the kitchen. None of these three servants affect your mother's and sister's comfort in the least. Ducie is everything to David and myself. She keeps our rooms clean and comfortable, brings my breakfast, waits on me when I am sick, walks out with David when I am not able to do so, and in many other ways makes things more bearable. I beg you, Robert, not to send her away."

"Then the other three servants must also remain."

"You are not poor, you only feel poor because you spent so much on Christina."

"Who was a wicked failure, and mother says you were the prompter of her sinful conduct."

"Me! I had no more to do with her final choice than your mother had. I did not even know the name of the man she married."

"But you talked sentiment, poetry, honor, and such stuff to her."

"Never. She would not have understood me if I had."

"What do you mean?"

"What I say, Christina turned sentiment, poetry, honor, and such stuff, into laughter. She saw only one side of any person or thing—the comic side. If she could mimic you, she partly understood you; if she could not mimic you, then you were uninteresting and unknowable. But Christina was as kind to me as she could be to any one. She is gone, and I have no friend left here."

"Am I not your friend?"

"You are my husband. I have had many friends, none of them were the least like you."

"A poor man between his mother and his wife is in a desperate fix."

"He is, because he has no business to be in such a position. It is an unnatural one—a forbidden one. Until a man is willing to give up his mother, he has no right to take a wife. Under all conditions it must be one or the other; the two existing happily together are so rare, that they are merely exceptions that prove the rule."

"It would have been very hard on my mother, had I given her up for a wife."

"Yet your mother took her husband away from his mother, and so backward goes it, to the Eden days of every race. And you also made the same mistake that Rebekah told Isaac she was weary of her life for—you married a stranger, and because of this, she is continually asking, as Rebekah did, What good is my life to me with this daughter of Heth under my roof? And also she has made our lives of no good to us!"

"Is it not my duty to love and honor my mother? Is it not right?"

"It is your duty, and your right also, to love and honor the wife whom you have persuaded to leave her father and mother, her home and friends."

"Then the right of the mother, and the right of the wife, are both positive?"

"So positive that both cannot be served in the same place, and at the same time; for the one right will be broken to pieces against the other right, since there is no community of feeling between

the family claim of the mother and the moral and natural claim of the wife."

"Then what is a man to do?"

"A man shall leave father and mother, and cleave unto his wife.' That is the imperative, and ultimate decision of the God and Father of us all. And if it were not the nearly universal rule, what miserable, loveless children would be born, and how the jealous, quarrelling families of the earth would have become hateful in God's sight. We have only to consider our own case. Until your mother came between us, we loved each other truly, and were very happy."

"A man with a big business, Dora, has something else to think of than love."

"In his hours of business, yes; but in his hours of relaxation, his love ought to rest and refresh him." There was a movement in the next room, and Theodora went there with light, swift steps. Robert was walking moodily up and down, and through the open door he saw her kneeling by a large chair, and David's arms were round her neck, and she was telling him he must now go to bed. "Were you tired, that you fell asleep here?" she asked, and he answered: "I was waiting for you, mother, to hear my prayer, and kiss me good-night; and the sleep came to me."

Then she sat down, and David knelt at her knees, and said the Lord's prayer, adding to it a petition for blessing on his father, his grandmother Campbell, his aunts Isabel and Christina, his grandfather and grandmother Newton, and his dear mother, with a final petition that God would love David and make him a good boy. It was a scene so sweet and natural that Robert stood still in respect to the simple rite, vaguely wondering in what forgotten life he had spoken words like them.

Then Theodora called Ducie, and gave the child into her care, but as he was leaving the room he saw his father, and running to him, he said: "Father, kiss David too." Robert's heart stirred to the eager request, and he lifted the little lad in his arms, and actually did kiss him. In that moment the pretty face with its glances so free, so bright, so seeking, without guile or misgiving, impressed itself on Robert's memory forever. Even after the child had gone away, he felt as if he still held him, and the consciousness of the soft, rosy cheek against his own was so vivid that he put his hand up and stroked his cheek until the sensation left him.

He was really in a great strait of feeling, and, if he could not do right of himself, was in a strait, out of which there was no other decent way. He looked longingly at Theodora, who had resumed her work, and her pale, passionless face touched him by its complete contrast to the face he had just left—the hard, gossipy, pitiless, scornful face of his mother. He could not forget his son's prayer. He knew it well, he himself was never one to prompt, nor to correct, so it was certain that Theodora had taught the boy to pray for those who constantly spoke evil of her. He resolved to tell his mother of this incident, and again he tried to read the feeling on his wife's face. It was not depression, it was not sorrow, it was far from anger, there was nothing of indifference in it, and nothing restless or uncertain. He did not understand it. How could such a man as Robert understand a life of pure piety and intelligence, working its way upward through love and pain.

He sat down by her and touched her hand, but said only one word: "Theodora!" She lifted her sad, lovely eyes to his. "Theodora!" he said again, and she laid her hand in his, and whispered "Robert!" Then his kiss brought back the color to her cheeks and the light to her eyes, and when he vowed that he loved her and David more dearly than any other mortals, she believed him; and found sweet words to excuse all his faults, and to tell him he was "loved with all her heart."

Was she a foolish woman to forgive so easily, and so much? It was because she loved so much that she could forgive so much, and of such loving, foolish hearts is the Kingdom of Heaven. For no love is so swift and welcome as returning love. Even the angels desire to witness the reunion of hearts that have been kept apart by fault, or fate, and as for Theodora, she had the courage to be happy in this promise of better days, knowing that she came not to this house by accident, but that it was the very place God had chosen for her. Besides which, the heart has its arguments as well as the head, and at this hour she was judging Robert by her love, and not by her understanding.

CHAPTER IX

THE LAST STRAW

For a few days Theodora clung tenaciously to her hope, but it had only told her a flattering tale. Robert had gradually fallen below the plane—moral and intellectual—on which his wife lived; and it was only by a painful endeavor, that he returned to the Robert of six years previously. His wife's conversation, though bright and clever, was not as pleasant to him as his mother's biting gossip about the house and the callers; and he could assume a slippered, careless toilet in her presence, that made him uncomfortable when at the side of the always prettily gowned Theodora. For when such a circumstance happened, he involuntarily felt compelled to apologize, and he did not think apologies belonged to his position as master of the house. He had lost his taste for music, unless there was some stranger present whom he desired to make envious or astonished; in fact he had descended to that commonplace stage of love, which values a wife or a mistress only according to the value set upon her by outsiders—by their envy and jealousy of himself, as

the clever winner of such an extraordinary artist, or beauty. Consequently, in a time of economy, forbidding the entertainment of strangers, Theodora's hours of supremacy were likely to be few and far between.

But this fact did not trouble Robert. He came home from the works tired of the business world, and the household chatter of his mother was a relief that cost him no surrender of any kind. Yet had Theodora attempted the same rôle, he would have seen and felt at once its malice and injustice, and despised her for destroying his ideals and illusions. Thus, even her excellencies were against her. Again, Mrs. Campbell disguised much of the real character of her abuse, in the picturesqueness of the Scotch patois; nothing she said in this form sounded as wicked and cruel as it would have done in plain English. But this disguise would have been a ridiculous effort in Theodora, and could only have subjected her to scorn and laughter; while it was native to her enemy, and a vivid and graphic vehicle both for her malice and her mockery.

Thus, when Robert was rising to go to his own parlor, she would say: "Smoke another cigar, Robert, or light your pipe, boy. I dinna dislike a pipe, I may say freely, I rather fancy it. It doesna remind me o' the stable, and I have no nerves to be shocked by its vulgarity. God be thankit, I was born before nerves were in fashion! And He knows that one nervous woman in a house is mair than enou'. I am sorry for ye, my lad!"

"It is not Dora's nerves, mother; it is her refined taste. She thinks a pipe low, common, plebeian, you know, and for the same reason she hates me to wear a cap—she thinks it makes me look like a workingman. Dora is quite aristocratic, you know," and he mimicked the English accent and idioms, and saw nothing repellent in an old woman giggling at him.

"It is nerves, my lad," she answered, "pure nerves, and nerves are a' imagination. Whenever did I, or your sisters, or any o' our flesh and blood have an attack o' the nerves? Whenever did a decent pipe o' tobacco, or the smell o' a good salt herring mak' any o' us sick at the stomach? Was there ever a Campbell made vulgar, or low, by a cap on his head? 'Deed they are pretty men always, but prettiest of a' when they are wearing the Glengary wi' a sprig o' myrtle in the front o' it. *Dod!* it makes me scunner at some folks' aristocracy. I trow, I am as weel born as any Methodist preacher's daughter, and I have kin behind me and around me to show it; but you can smoke a pipe, or cap your head, or slipper your feet, and my fine feelings willna suffer for a moment."

"You are mother—you understand."

"To be sure I do. Poor lad, ye hae lots to fret ye, and nane need a pipe o' tobacco, or an easy *déshabille* mair than you do; if you are understanding what I mean by *déshabille*—I'm not vera sure mysel', but I'm thinking it means easy fitting clothes on ye; that is my meaning o' the word anyhow, and I don't care a bawbee, whether it is the French meaning or not."

"You are all right, mother. You generally are all right."

"I am always all right, Robert; and that you find out in the long run, don't ye, my lad?"

Her conversation was constantly of this vulgar, commonplace type, but it carried home veiled doubts and innuendos, as no other form could have done; and it was homelike and familiar to Robert. With it as the vehicle for her flattery and her iron will, she managed her son as no sensitive, truthful, honorable woman could have done, unless she flung delicacy, truth, and honor aside, and went down into moral slums to find her ways and weapons.

On the fourth evening after the promising reconciliation, Robert said: "I want a whiff of strong tobacco, Dora. I have been fretted all day, so I will go into the library to smoke to-night."

"I will go with you, Robert. I do not believe the tobacco will make me sick. You know when it did so, there were reasons why——"

"You must do nothing of the kind, Dora. I cannot have you made ill, and the fear of it doing so would take away all the comfort I might derive from it."

"But, Robert——"

"No, no! I shall come to the parlor, and smoke a cigar, if you insist."

"I shall not insist. You will not stay long away from me, dear?"

"When my smoke is finished, I will come."

Then he went to the library, and in a few minutes his mother followed him there. As housekeeper, she had formulated less extravagant menus for the table, and some other small economies, and their discussion was her excellent excuse—if she needed an excuse, which she rarely did. Among these economies, the dismissal of Ducie came to question again, and Robert said he "thought Ducie would have to remain. Dora had set her heart on keeping her," he continued, "and I think it will also be more comfortable for me, mother."

"Nonsense! It will not affect you in any way."

"There is Dora's breakfast, who is to carry it upstairs to her?"

"It is quite time that nonsense was stopped! Let the high-stomached English 'my lady' come to the family breakfast table. It is good enou' for the like o' her. But I'll tell you how it is. McNab has the habit o' humoring her wi' dainties—mushrooms on toast, a few chicken livers, and the like;

and our decent oatmeal, and bread and feesh, arena as delicate as food should be, for this daughter o' a poor Methodist preacher."

"Come, mother, her father at least is a servant of God, one of His messengers, and there is no nobility like to that in this world. You know well, that Scotland has always paid more honor to God's servants, than to the servants of earthly princes."

"Scotsmen arena infallible in their religious views. I ken one thing sure, and that is ministers' daughters hae been the deil's daughters to me, and to my sons—vera Eves o' temptation wi' the apple o' sin and misery in their hands for my two bonnie lads."

"I wonder, mother, where my brother is."

"He is dead. I comfort mysel' wi' that thought. Death was the best thing that could happen him. The poor lad, not long out o' his teens, and tied to a wife, and to the wife's mother likewise. Never was a finer lad flung to the mischief than your brother Da—nay, my tongue willna speak his name. Now then, remember your brother, and don't let your wife ruin you, Robert."

"There is no mother-in-law in my case—it is my wife that has the mother-in-law," and he laughed in a grim, self-satisfied way.

The mother-in-law in question was not offended, far from it; she laughed too, and then answered: "Ay, the poor lass has the mother-in-law, but you hae the mother, and be thankfu' for the gift and the grace o' her. Your mother willna see you wronged, nor put upon. She'll back you up in a' that is for your authority and welfare. She will that!"

"Well, well! We were talking of Ducie."

"Ducie is the backer-up against you, and she be to go to her ain folks to-morrow. That is what I intend."

"I do not believe you will succeed in getting rid of her."

"If you will leave the matter entirely to me, I will rid the house o' her."

With this question unsettled between them, it was easy to make trouble, and Robert was cowardly enough to leave it to the women, though he knew well that a few decisive words from himself would put an end to the dispute. Mrs. Campbell was glad he did not say them. She enjoyed the thought of the probable fray, and only waited until Robert had gone to business the next day to begin it.

"Jepson," she then said, "you will tell Ducie to come to my parlor at once."

Ducie was expecting this call, and she was in the mood to stand upon her rights, which released her from all obligations to obey Mrs. Traquair Campbell's orders. So she loitered in her room putting curls over her brow, in the way they were peculiarly offensive to Mrs. Campbell, adding to this saucy misdemeanor earrings, and two pink bows, a ring on her engagement finger, an embroidered apron, and slippers with rosettes holding a small imitation diamond buckle. Before these preparations were quite complete there was another very peremptory message for her, and she laughingly told Jepson to inform his mistress, that she "hadn't made up her mind yet, whether she would call on her, or not."

Jepson toned down this message to a respectful apology for delay, and Mrs. Campbell was on the point of sending another order, when Ducie entered her room.

"I sent for you to come *at once*. Why didn't you?"

"I was busy."

"What were you doing?"

"Dressing myself."

"You have dressed yourself like a fool."

"Please, ma'am, that is something you have nought to do with. My mistress told me how to dress. I am going out with her and Master David to dinner."

"Where are you going to dinner?"

"I was not bid to say where."

"You were bid *not* to tell me."

"My mistress did not name you."

"You cannot go out. You will help McNab in the kitchen until two o'clock."

"I am not forced to do anything you tell me, ma'am, and I don't know as I ever will again."

"You are a lazy, impudent baggage."

"Now then, that will do, ma'am. You are the last that ought to speak of my laziness, for I've been working for you three months, and never got a sixpence, or a penny piece, for all I did. Thanks, I never expected; for it's only black words you keep by you; and as for black looks, if you could sell

them by the yard, you might start an undertaking business."

"Do you know who you are talking to?"

"Yes, but I don't know as ever I talked with a worse woman."

"I will make you suffer for your impertinence."

"That's likely, for you hurt people out of pure wickedness."

"Your month is up to-day at five o'clock. You will help McNab until two. Then you will pack your trunk, and come to me for your wage. There is a train for Kendal at four o'clock. You will take it. You will leave this house at half-past three."

"It caps all to listen to you. But the outside of this house is the *right* side for anybody who expects decent treatment. I am going with my mistress at half-past eleven, and I shall come back here with her, when she returns. And thanks be, ma'am, I am not going to Kendal. I am going to be married, and teach one Glasgow man how to treat a wife."

"You will come to me at three o'clock for your month's wage."

"You did not hire me, ma'am, and I don't take my pay from you. My mistress is now waiting for me," and with these words she turned to leave the room.

"Ducie! Ducie! Come here instantly!"

But Ducie had closed the door, and did not hear, at least she did not answer. Then Mrs. Campbell followed her, and in something of a passion assailed Theodora.

"That impudent wench of yours has been behaving most rudely to me, Dora. I want her until two o'clock, can you not make her obey me?"

"I am going out to dinner, and need her very much. She has to take charge of David."

"Leave the boy at home."

"I cannot."

"Where are you going?"

"To Mrs. Oliphant's. They are dining early to-day, and I shall be home before dark."

"That will be too late. I must have her now."

"I cannot make her work for you, if she does not wish." Then turning to Ducie she asked, "if she would not obey Mrs. Campbell's desire?"

"No, ma'am," was the straight answer. "I would not lift a finger for Mrs. Campbell."

"You hear what she says."

"She has talked in the most shameful way to me. I think Jepson must have left the whiskey bottle around."

"Oh, no! Ducie hates whiskey. She would not touch it."

"Pay her what you owe her, and send her off."

"I have no money to pay anything."

"I will lend you the money."

"I do not wish to discharge her. She satisfies me thoroughly. I see no reason to send her away."

"You have the best of all reasons—my order to do so."

"I will ask Robert to-night."

"You will ask Robert, will you? So shall I."

Then Theodora called David, and the little lad came running to her. He was wearing a kilt of the Campbell tartan, a small philabeg, a black velvet jacket trimmed with gilt buttons, and a Glengary ornamented with an eagle's feather. His frank, beautiful face, his strong vitality, and his pretty manners were instantly notable, for when he saw his grandmother was present, he lifted his cap and said: "Good-morning, grandmother." She did not answer, though she regarded him a moment with a pride she could not conceal, and as she left the room she told herself: "The boy is a Scot, in spite of his English dam. He is a Scot, even if he is not a Campbell, and please God we will mak' him a Campbell yet."

That day Theodora met at Mrs. Oliphant's a gentleman whom she had seen there not unfrequently during the winter, an American called Kennedy, and a very sincere friendship had grown up between them. After an early dinner he asked permission to take David to a circus then in Glasgow, and the boy's entreaties being added, Theodora could not resist them. They went off in a hurry of delight, and finding herself alone with Mrs. Oliphant, the long, carefully hidden sorrows of her heart burst forth in a flood that bore away all pride, all restraint, and all the jealously kept barriers of a long reticence and concealment.

How it happened she never knew, but with passionate weeping she told her friend all the miseries of her daily life, and the greater dread that blackened and haunted her future—the terror lest David should be taken from her, and sent to some severe, disciplinary boarding-school. Weeping in each other's arms, the confession and consolation went on, until Margaret Oliphant dared to say the words Theodora feared to utter.

"You must take your child, and go where Robert Campbell will never find you, until David is a man, and able to defend himself."

"Thank you, Margaret. I have been longing to tell you that I see no other conclusion. But where shall I go? India, Australia, Canada, are all governed by English laws, and so then, anywhere in these countries, David could be taken from me, and my husband could force me to return to his home. So much I have learned, from similar cases to mine, reported in the newspapers."

"You must go to the United States. There, you may work and enjoy the money you earn; no husband can take it from you. There, you cannot be forced to live with a husband who treats you cruelly, and I am sure no court would allow a child of tender age to be taken from a mother so properly fitted to bring him up. You must have a talk with Mr. Kennedy. He can help you. He will be glad to help you."

"I thought he had business here."

"He has business he thinks of great importance. His wife is dead, and he brought her two daughters to a school she remembered in Edinburgh, but not being sure his children would be happy there, he is staying to watch over them."

"Are they happy?"

"No. He is going to take them home again, when the school closes in June—perhaps before."

"Then, Margaret?"

"Then you could go with him?"

They went over and over this plan, constantly evolving new fears and new advantages, and were yet in the fever of the discussion, when Mr. Kennedy and David returned. It was both David's and Ducie's first visit to a circus, and after a few minutes' rapturous description, they were permitted to go to another room and talk over the enchanting scenes.

Then Mrs. Oliphant said: "Come now, David Campbell, and tell your sister Theodora how heartily you are at her service." And the supposed Mr. Kennedy took Theodora's hands, and said: "My dear sister. I have known all your sad life for the last half-year. I am here to help you."

But Theodora looked amazed and even troubled, and he sat down at her side and continued: "I am really David Campbell, your husband's elder brother. I am also the foster-son of Mrs. McNab, and I have heard all from her, and have been waiting here, knowing that the end to a life so unhappy must come, and wondering that you have borne it so long."

Then Theodora remembered that she had heard from Ducie, that McNab had a son come home from foreign parts, and that he took her out frequently, and gave her many presents. And she looked into her brother-in-law's face for some trace of his relationship, but could find none. David Campbell was more Celt than Gael, he was tall and slender, had a gentle voice and a manner that could only come from a good heart. His whole appearance was aquiline and American, and he was dressed in the loose, easy style of a citizen of the great Western Republic. After a most critical survey, Theodora was ready to confess, that his visits to McNab were perfectly safe from detection.

"I have sat with the servants in the kitchen, have eaten with them, and heard all they could tell me of your life, Theodora; and now I am at your service with all my heart."

"Then tell me what to do."

"First, let me go and see your father and mother. Your father will give us good advice, and we will not move till we get it—unless some desperate cause intervenes."

"Thank you. That is what I wish."

"Give me their address."

"I am sorry——"

"Say nothing, I entreat you! I have no other duty in Glasgow, but to look after you, and my splendid little namesake. And I assure you, if I saw any other way of bringing my dear brother to his senses, I would try it first. But not until Robert has lost you, will he find out what you really are to him."

"Have you seen your brother?"

"Many a time. I have even spoken to him, but he has no recollection of me. He cannot, for he seldom saw me. I should not have known him if I had met him anywhere but in the Campbell iron works. He is a hard master to his men."

"But there is another Robert, I assure you, a Robert I only know—or used to know. He was a

noble, generous man, a man I loved with all my soul."

"I believe you, and that lost Robert only wants proper surroundings to give him a chance. See! We are going to educate that other Robert. I love my brother, Theodora, and we will work together to make him happy in spite of himself, and the other evil powers that now hold him in thrall."

"O, thank you! Thank you, David! I never had a brother, but have often longed for one. You are a true Godsend to me."

"With God's help I will be! Your father's home is in Bradford?"

"Yes, he lives in Hanover Square, Bradford. Any one will tell you where the Rev. John Newton lives."

"I will leave by to-night's train. I will tell them all—for McNab has told me all—and your father will send his advice back by me."

With this comfort in her heart Theodora did not feel afraid, though she had stayed until the night had fallen. Mr. Oliphant took her home in his carriage, and Robert was compelled to thank him for his courtesy; but he followed his wife into their parlor with a dark countenance, and asked her angrily, "why she put herself under obligations to people like the Oliphants?"

"Are there any objections to the Oliphants?" she asked.

"My mother has never trusted them, never. And you know this."

"Your mother trusts no one."

"Where is Ducie?"

"She is attending to David's supper."

"Call her!"

"Will not a little later do?"

"No, I want her now."

"Ring the bell, then."

He looked astonished at the order, but he obeyed it. Theodora had sat down. Her face was sad and stern, and her eyes flashed so angrily he did not care to encounter them.

In a few minutes Ducie appeared. She came in smiling and curtsied to her master when he said:

"Ducie?"

"Yes, sir."

"You were told to leave this house forever, at half-past three this afternoon. Why have you not done so?"

"The party who told me was not my mistress."

"Am I your master?"

"I suppose so."

"Then listen to me. Here is your quarter's wage. As you are a young girl, I will not send you to the street now that it is dark. You may stay until eight o'clock to-morrow morning. Then you will go."

"I shall go to-night, sir. I will not take a favor from you, though I have done this house many favors."

"Robert, Robert!" cried Theodora, "consider what you are doing. Ducie, do not go away yet—for David's sake—let me keep Ducie, Robert."

"David will go to school in the autumn. He wants no nurse."

"Then let her stop until autumn. Robert, dear Robert, I entreat you that I may keep Ducie."

"After her impertinence to my mother, it is impossible. You ought to feel that."

"*Oh dear, oh dear!*" Theodora covered her face with her hands, and burst into passionate weeping.

Immediately Ducie was at her side comforting her. "Don't, ma'am. Please don't cry. Ducie knows it is not your fault."

Then Theodora unfastened the brooch at her throat and drew a ring from her finger.

"Take them, dear," she said. "We ought to pay you for three months' extra work, but I have no money. You know that, Ducie. Take these instead. Keep them for my sake, dear. Oh Ducie, Ducie! you are my only friend here, and they are sending you away. My God, my dear God, have pity on me!"

She spoke rapidly in a transport of sorrowful feeling; she forced the trinkets into Ducie's hand, and walking with her to the door, kissed her there; then sobbing like a little child, she fell upon the sofa in hopeless distress.

"What folly!" cried Robert. "Who would believe all this fuss was about a common servant girl—a disobedient, insolent servant girl. Why did she not obey my mother's order?"

Then Theodora rose to her feet. She put tears away, and answered proudly: "Because I was her mistress, and I told her to come with me."

"You told her to disobey my mother?"

"Yes. Your mother dismissed her without my permission. Suppose I had called your mother's chambermaid, and ordered her to leave the house—the cases are precisely the same."

"Not at all; mother is mistress and housekeeper. When she ordered Ducie to leave, that was quite sufficient."

"Do you expect me to obey your mother's orders?"

"I obey her orders."

"If they were kind and just orders, I would do all I could to meet them; when they are unjust and tyrannical, I will not obey them. I will be a partner in none of her sins and cruelties; I know a better way, if she does not. And I must have a maid, Robert."

"I will tell mother to hire one for you. But we shall have no more English girls, so do not expect what you will not get."

"Would any English girl want to come to Glasgow, for the sake of Glasgow? That is a difficult thing to imagine."

"And I do not approve of you giving valuable jewelry away."

"It was my very own. I had it long before I saw you."

"It was scandalous of Ducie to accept it. She ought not to be allowed to carry it away. You were not responsible when you gave it."

"And if it is scandalous for Ducie, my friend, to take a gift of my jewelry from my hands, what about the Campbelton women, who broke open my trunk, and took out of its case my class ring of diamonds and sapphires, worth eighty pounds; a ring my class paid for, and gave me. You promised me it should be returned. It never has been. Do you pretend that ring was yours? And is everything I possess yours? And do you permit your kindred to help themselves to whatever of mine they choose to appropriate?"

"You possess nothing—the hair on your head is mine. I can sell it if I choose. Your wedding ring is mine."

"I believe nothing of the kind. It is incredible."

"It is the law of England."

"You ought to have told me those things before I was married. I was beguiled into slavery. Why are girls in school not taught such things, if, indeed, they are true?"

"It is the law of England. Any lawyer will tell you so."

"Then it is contrary to the law of the Holy and Just One, and I will never acknowledge its right. I say, and shall always say, my class ring was stolen; and that the person who took it was, and is, a thief. The law may give you my clothing and ornaments, and your mother, assuming your things to be hers, may give them away; and you may call it lawful, but justice and equity would soon dispose of that legal fiction. I shall always deny it. To falter in doing so, would be sin."

In uttering these words she became a Theodora he had never before seen. Her beauty was triumphant over both her anger and her sorrow. Her splendid eyes stabbed him with their scornful glances; her air and attitude was regal as that of Justice herself, and her words went home like javelins. Mentally and spiritually, he cowered before her.

So he took out his watch and said: "Dinner is served."

"I want no dinner."

He answered, "Very well," but there was the look in his eyes of a man who knows he is defrauding his own soul. And though at that moment he understood his mother's hatred of her, and believed that he himself hated her, yet even then, at the root of his hate, there lay a secret, ardent thirst for her love.

CHAPTER X

THEODORA MAKES A NEW LIFE

It is not by grand or romantic events, that life is usually shaped; the most trivial things are the ministers of Destiny, but no matter how insignificant they may appear, they bring with them a sense of fatality not to be put away. When the great dramatist would make Othello murder Desdemona, he did not choose as a cause the loss of some priceless necklace, or a diamond ornament, he knew intuitively that such a simple thing as a pocket handkerchief would be more natural.

So in Theodora's case, the everyday occurrence of a quarrel with a servant girl was the culmination of years full of far more cogent reasons, for her final decision to abandon a life which she was unable to manage. But when Robert went to his dinner, and left her alone to struggle with a defeat and a loss she felt so keenly she came to this positive conclusion. In that hour her life was brought to the fine point of a single word. "Yes" or "No," which was it to be? Would she accept for herself and her child the wretched life she had unknowingly chosen? Or, would she abandon it, and seek some happier environment? And after half-an-hour's intense thought and feeling, she stood erect, and, clasping her hands, uttered an emphatic "Yes!" Even at that hour, her messenger was on his way to consult her parents, and she had little doubt as to their decision. She believed they would bid her "Go in God's name"; and fortified by that order, she would follow the advice David Campbell gave her. He knew the United States well, and it was a wonderful thing, he should have come home in this time of her trouble. Surely he had been sent for her help and direction.

She expected no word from her parents for about four days, but a ray of hope had penetrated the gloom of her surroundings; and wrong and unkindness took on a transient character. They were now merely passing annoyances, she would have gone beyond their power in a few weeks at the most. She resolved to make no more efforts to obtain justice, no more efforts to win a man whom neither love nor entreaties could prevent acting after his kind. She would now permit him to lay up grievances, with which to wound himself when he could no longer wound her. A sense of peace, coming from her acceptance of destiny, gave to her a singular calmness of manner and countenance, and a renewed alertness of mind, and mental lucidity.

In the morning Ducie, wearing her hat and cloak, served her late mistress and little David with their breakfast; then the three parted forever. David cried bitterly; the women had no tears left. In half-an-hour McNab came to remove the tray.

"I would leave your room as it is, ma'am," she said. "It will be seen to. Tak' my advice, and dinna lift a finger to it. Yoursel' and Master David will be getting your breakfast ten minutes earlier, for I am going to look after that bit business mysel'. You needna fret a moment anent the matter. It's settled."

"I do not intend to fret about anything, McNab."

"That's right. It is a lang lane that has no turning. You are coming to the turning, I think."

"I think so."

"But I wouldn't let on I saw it."

"Neither by look, nor word."

"That's right, too. If wanted, call McNab, but be sparing o' calls—there is both watcher and listener. I'm telling you."

"I know."

Theodora smiled understandingly, and McNab left the room, but left behind her a strong sense of guardianship and love. Yet just then McNab was rather in the dark, for her foster-son had not had time to tell her of his journey to Yorkshire. But uncertainty did not dash McNab, she had one of those blessed dispositions that are always sure no news is good news; and who always expect the "something" that may have happened, to be something wonderfully auspicious.

"Perhaps my lad had a word with her yesterday," she thought, "and perhaps he is making a move—for he wouldn't move without her word. I dare say that is just what has happened." She satisfied herself with this belief, and to the hopeful and cheerful, good angels send their heart's desire.

So Theodora sat still and let the house go on. Not until she was dressing for dinner did a maid come to attend to her rooms, but she made no remark. A short time afterwards, the girl returned with a letter and the information, that it had been opened by Mrs. Campbell through mistake. It was from Theodora's publisher, and purported to contain a check for seventy pounds and fifteen shillings for royalties due her. But the check was not in the letter. Her heart beat wildly, her cheeks burned, she rose as if to go and inquire for it; but on second thoughts she sat down and waited until Robert came into the room. Then she showed him the letter. He barely glanced at it, then threw it on the table.

"Will you ask your mother for my money, Robert? I want to buy David and myself some necessary clothing."

"I have the check."

"Give it to me, Robert. I need it so much."

"I put it in my pocket-book, because it is mine. I give it to you, because I choose to give it to you. Most husbands would not do so."

"You need not at every opportunity tell me that I have no rights, and no money, even if I myself have earned the money. One telling of such awful injustice is enough. I wish to know if my letters are also yours?"

"If I choose to claim them, they are mine."

"Are they also free to your mother?"

"If I choose to make them so."

"Then I will do without letters."

"You can please yourself."

She did not answer, and he went into the dining-room. In a short time she steadied herself sufficiently to follow him, but no one but Isabel took the slightest notice of her. Mrs. Campbell was in high spirits, and talked with her son in a jocular way about some event of which Theodora was ignorant. Jepson watched her plate and saw that she was attended to, and Isabel showed her disapproval of her mother's and brother's behavior by a sullen silence. For she was slow-minded, and could think of no way to express her sympathy with Theodora, except sulking at those who were annoying her. But she rose from the table when Theodora rose, and when Theodora said "Good-night, Isabel," she answered: "I should like to come into your parlor for a few minutes—if agreeable."

"You are very welcome, Isabel."

"Thank you. I only wanted to say, that I had nothing to do with the opening of your letter. I would no more open your letter, than I would pick your pocket."

"I am sure of that, Isabel. I wish you were my friend. I am very lonely since Christina went away. Have you heard from her?"

"Not one word. I am very lonely too. Good-night."

And Theodora thought until sleep came of the girl's sad face, and pitied her more than she pitied herself. For hope was building a new life in her heart, and she looked forward to a future, that in its freedom, beauty, and usefulness would atone for the present, and the past years of her married life; but, oh the sameness, and ennui, and moral and mental death of a life without aim or purpose, without love or expectations, or sensible work to do.

Early on the fourth day Mrs. Oliphant called, and brought Theodora a letter. She professedly came to ask Theodora to drive with her, and when her invitation was declined, did not remain many minutes. But Mrs. Campbell watched her coming and going, and made plenty of sarcastic remarks about both the lady and her dress, her carriage and her horses and servants. Isabel was scarcely conscious of them. Since the loss of her sister she had become still more severe, intense, and reticent; besides which, though no one suspected the movement, Isabel was considering a break in social custom, undreamed of by the severely proper maidens of her set.

It related to Sir Thomas Wynton. She had had a letter from him describing his journey to Paris, and his present life in that city, and he had asked Isabel to write him "all the news she could gather about Wynton village, and their friends in Glasgow, and to add also anything social, political, or religious she thought would interest him." And this request had opened up a pleasant prospect of collecting and arranging all the news she could glean from people, or from newspapers, and then writing the result to Sir Thomas. It was a wild, a daring thing for Isabel Campbell to attempt, but she had resolved to ask no one's advice about the right or the wrong of it. She would decide the matter for herself, and she was trying to do so while her mother was mocking at Mrs. Oliphant's dress and general appearance.

Meantime Theodora watched her friend away, and then went into her parlor, locking the door after closing it. David was busy with his slate and pencil in the music room, and she locked the door of that room also. Then she sat down with her letter in her hand, and after a moment's uplifting of her heart, she opened it and read the following words:

"MY DEAR THEODORA:—Your mother and I have thoroughly considered all your good brother-in-law has told us. I will not dwell on our surprise and sorrow. I will but say, that you ought to put an end at once to a life which is dwarfing you on every side, and must be fast ruining your husband's better nature. For the cruelty and injustice done at first reluctantly has evidently become to him a necessary alternative to the dreariness of his business life. As some men find amusement in badgering and baiting animals, he apparently satisfies the same brutal instinct by baiting a wife whom our cruel laws has placed in his absolute power. I counsel you to leave him before conditions are worse, and some tragedy results. Take David Campbell's advice as to the locality where you may dwell in peace and safety. I approve what he has proposed to us so entirely, that whenever you are ready to move, your mother and I will go with you, though it should be to the ends of the earth. Think a moment, and you will understand that you must go with us, and not with your brother-in-law. I shall write to the Chairman of Conference

to-day and resign my pastorate, and you know a Methodist preacher and his wife can move almost at a day's notice. Our clothing is all we personally own. My future is prepared for. There is nothing to fear. The Great Companion will go with us. Wherever your new home is made, our home will be made, and we will pray together for the man you still love. He will return to you "clothed and in his right mind." Do not doubt. Go away and rest your aching heart. Has the sun of your love set? Some blessing lies in the night; do not fear the darkness. Rest, and the sun of love will rise again. I append a few reasons why you should at this crisis leave your husband. If you are fully satisfied in your own mind, you can neglect them.

"1st. Habit reconciles us to much suffering, but a miserable marriage is a trial no one has any business to have. It is without excuse, and therefore without comfort. Submission to evils God ordains is the height of energy and nobility; submission to the mistakes we ourselves make is the climax of weakness and cowardice. If two cannot live together in peace, they had better separate than cause each other to sin every day.

"2d. If you know you are on a wrong road, leave it; a wrong road cannot lead you right.

"3d. If you are sick, and the surgeon's knife is necessary, do not waste time with drugs and sedatives. Accept the knife as restorative.

"4th. If you make a mistake of any kind, it is your manifest duty to rectify it, or to spring out of its shadow; and an unhappy marriage is the most pathetic of all mistakes. If, however, you have made an unhappy marriage, why should you give permanency to wrong, and finality to suffering? There are no elements of reformation in the irrevocable, it is a hell without hope and without energy.

"5th. You must not judge your position near the twentieth century by the laws of Moses. The Church has gone back to them for authority to burn witches, and buy and sell slaves, and collect tithes, etc. We are come unto Bethlehem, and are not under the laws of Sinai. The laws of England are cruel enough to wives; there is no need to go back to Leviticus.

"6th. Christ truly said, 'What God has joined together, let no man put asunder.' What *God* joins together, no man can put asunder. Poverty, sorrow, care, shame, helplessness only draw the bond tighter. They go to the grave together, and with a noble constancy look across the grave to an immortal companionship.

"I dare say, my dear daughter, you have thought of all these things; think now of what good you can do each other by separation:

"1st. Robert is under wrong influences, while you are present to provoke them. Day by day he is learning to be more and more cruel. But when he has lost you, he will remember your sweetness and goodness, and long for you,

*'For we never know the worth of a thing,
Until we have thrown it away.'*

"2d. That evil old woman is growing constantly in all malice, cruelty, and sin. Be no longer an occasion for her wickedness.

"3d. You yourself are wasting your life in Doubting Castle. Hopeful found the key of it in his breast. Do likewise. You ought to be in the very height and glory of your existence. You are doing nothing, learning nothing, losing everything. Make a change; you cannot make it too quickly. It will probably ploughshare and harrow your heart, as the farmer ploughshares and harrows the field; but after this preparation, you can sow the seeds of your future happiness. Now all seed sowing is a mystery, whether in the heart, or in the field, but sow in love and in faith, and the harvest will truly better all your expectations. Think well over your movements, but do not think till you cannot act. Begin at once to prepare for what must be done, keeping in mind the good motto of the Eighty-seventh Regiment: '*Clear the Way!*' sweep every fear and doubt out of it, all encumbrances of body or mind. Carry no old grudges or offences with you, no sad memories. Step out into the new way with a trusting, cheerful, childlike spirit, and be sure and take the Great Companion with you. Mother will write you to-morrow.

Your loving parents,

"JOHN AND MARY NEWTON."

This letter "cleared the way," for Theodora, and with the daring decision of fresh young faculties, she grasped the whole position confidently. She saw that she must, for the present, give up her husband—it was absolutely necessary and remedial. But she also saw a future with him that should redeem the whole unhappy past. She saw it, because from her long trial she had brought a three-edged spirit, tempered and polished by the fires of many afflictions; and an Inner Woman perfect—no member wanting, none sick or disabled, an Inner Woman full-grown, ready for any emergency, with time for everything human. She had also been much encouraged and strengthened by her father's prompt preparation, and she told herself, as she carefully destroyed the letter, that as the thing was to do, it were well to do it as soon as possible.

As if to urge her to this finality, her home became still more uncomfortable after Ducie's departure. Day after day passed, but no girl was hired in Ducie's place, and Mrs. Campbell's chambermaid never reached Theodora's rooms, until it was time for her to dress for dinner. Indeed, it appeared as if the girl had been ordered to wait until her presence would be the most annoying. And in a few days, the question of breakfast became a serious one. One morning Mrs. Campbell met McNab on the stairway with the tray containing Theodora's and David's breakfast in her hands. She looked angrily at the woman, and said in slow, positive words:

"Take that tray back to the kitchen!"

"It is Mrs. Campbell's and Master David's breakfast."

"Mrs. Robert can come to the breakfast table, as well as I can."

"And whar will Master David eat his mouthful? You hae said peremptor, he shallna eat at your board."

"He can eat with you—he can eat anywhere—or nowhere, for aught I care."

"Na, na! He will be Campbell o' the Campbell Iron Works yet, and he is beyond eating wi' serving-men and lasses. I will just tak' the tray up this morning, for my arms are aching wi' the weight o' it."

"You will just take the tray to the kitchen."

"That is the last order you will gie Flora McNab, ma'am."

"Your threat is an old one, McNab; I'm not fearing it."

"Nor me expecting you to be feared. When you dinna fear God Almighty, why would you be fearing the like o' me? Out o' the way then, and let me by you wi' the tray."

Very uncomfortable was the family breakfast that morning. Something was the matter with Jepson. Every dish was cold, and is there any food nastier than cold porridge and cold boiled fish? Robert grumbled over his plates, and Mrs. Campbell was equally cross, and still more explanatory of her temper. About the middle of the meal, McNab entered the room in her church bonnet, and her double Paisley shawl, pinned with its large Cairngorm brooch. Robert looked at her in amazement, and with a laugh that was not a pleasant one, asked:

"Where are you going, McNab, so early in the morning?"

"Back to the Hielands, sir. Pay me my wage, and I'll be awa' in time for the Perth train."

"You are not going to leave us?"

"That is just what I am going to do."

"Nonsense!"

"I'm not going to stop in this house, and see your wife and bonnie bairn starved for food. The poor bit laddie is crying the now, for his bread and milk, and your mother—wi' the hard heart o' her—willna let me gie either the bairn, or his mother a mouthfu'; so I am going back to the Hielands whar folks hae hearts—and Jepson is going likewise, and the twa lasses are going. Pay me my honest wages, Maister Campbell, for I'm in a hurry to get out o' hearing o' the starving baby, crying for his bowl o' milk."

"That will do, McNab. The Perth train does not leave until eleven o'clock. Go into the library, I want to speak to you, and take Jepson and the two girls there. I will come in a few minutes." He was obeyed without a word, for he spoke with that tone and manner which compelled even the leather-dressed, leather-masked men who fed his furnaces to cower before him.

When McNab and Jepson had left the room he turned to his mother and asked: "Am I to pay them, and send them away?"

"That would be unspeakable foolishness. I can not possibly do without McNab and Jepson. The two other hizzies can go if they want to."

"Then why do you meddle with McNab?"

"It is not her business to wait on your wife and child."

"Then whose business is it?"

"No one's, at present."

"Then see you find some one to-day whose business it will be to wait on them. If you do not, I will take my wife and child myself to the Victoria Hotel."

"I am fairly worn out with the quarrelling and trouble your wife and child make in the house. There is no pleasuring either of them. I have sent two girls to her, and she wouldn't give house-room to one, nor the other—decent girls, as I could find."

"One of them was drunk when she called, and the other had never cleaned a parlor, or made a bed in her life. It was kitchen work she wanted; and she spoke Gaelic better than English. See that a proper girl is hired to-day. It is an outrageous thing, to set me to sorting your servant girls'

wrongs. I shall tell McNab to serve my wife and child, until a proper maid is found for them."

But such disputes as this, common as they were on every household subject, did not trouble Theodora, as they did when she had to face a permanence of them. She knew now they would soon be over. They were passing away with every hour. Besides this consideration, a great event in life takes all importance out of small events, and she was so occupied with the total change approaching her, that the trifle of Mrs. Campbell's temper, or injustice did not seem to be much worth minding. Her cheerfulness and good temper was an amazing thing to Mrs. Campbell, who not understanding its reason, set it down to "Dora's aggravating ways."

"She thinks it annoys me," she said to Isabel, "she thinks it annoys me to appear so indifferent to my just anger, but she has to thole it anyway, and I'll wager, she likes it no better for all her smiling and singing to herself."

But Mrs. Campbell's just anger had now lost all its importance to Theodora, for every one was practically ready for the change, though the end of April was the date fixed unless some good or evil event sanctioned an earlier movement.

This event came unexpectedly, and in a different direction from any anticipated. Robert left home one morning about the twenty-second of April very uncomfortably. His mother had been complaining bitterly of David's restlessness at night. She said he must be removed to the upper floor. She was astonished that a boy of his age should want to sleep near his mother. He must sleep beside Dora's maid for the future. She could not have her sleep broken, at her time of life it meant serious illness—and so on.

After breakfast Robert spoke to his wife on the subject, and he was amazed at the spirit she displayed. She said "David was sick last night. I was fighting croup from midnight until dawn, and you know, Robert, how alarmingly subject to this terrible disease he is. How could he be left to a tired girl's care? She would not have heard that first hoarse cry last night, and we might have found him dead this morning—strangled all alone in the darkness. No! he shall not leave me, or if you say he must go to the servants' floor, then I will go too."

With this subject still in abeyance Robert left her. Then Mrs. Campbell sent servants to remove the boy's cot to the maid's room, and Theodora positively refused to allow its removal, sending the men away, and then locking her doors. She was quivering with fear and feeling, when Robert unexpectedly returned home. He said the mail had brought him bad news. He had been informed that Sykes and Company of Sheffield—who were heavily indebted to him—had failed, and he must go to Sheffield at once. He told Theodora to pack his valise for a two weeks' stay, while he went into the city for a certain accountant, whom he proposed to take with him, in order to examine the books of the delinquent firm.

"Pack my valise for a two weeks' stay." The poor wife trembled through all her being. It was the order for her own departure. The packing of his valise would be the last act of the sorrowful drama of her marriage. It was the last time she would ever do him the service. *The last time!* Every garment had a tragic look. She touched them tenderly. Her unchecked tears dropped upon them. If it was not for David's sake, she doubted whether she could carry out her intentions—but her child, her child! They wanted even now to separate them in their home, in a few weeks they might take him entirely away from her. His old enemy Croup would find him alone in the dark and some dreadful night strangle him. He would be punished for faults he did not even understand, flogged, deprived of food and companionship, tormented by cruel boys older than himself—oh, she could not bear to continue her reflections, for the boy's sake she must leave his father. And then a kind of anger at the father followed in the steps of her grief. If she could have trusted his father to defend him in all cases, it need not have been; but she could see, even in the dispute concerning his sleeping-place, his father was inclined to stand by the cruel wish of the grandmother.

Oh, but the packing of that valise was a hard task! And when it was strapped and locked, it seemed almost to reproach her. She was sitting gazing at it, when Robert entered the room and caught the look of love and despair which filled her eyes, and saddened her face and her attitude. In spite of himself it flattered him. He was astonished at her devotion, but it comforted him. His mother had been angry when she heard of Sykes and Company's failure. She had reminded him of her advice to have nothing to do with them—had told him "Sykes looked shifty and rascally, and her words had come true, and perhaps he would believe her next time she gave him good advice." But Theodora had been full of sympathy, and had given him only kind and encouraging words.

His manner was so unusually gentle, that she ventured to say: "I am afraid to be left here without you, Robert. They will take David from me, or I shall have a fight to keep him. It hurts me so, dear, what am I to do? Will you tell mother to let David's sleeping-place alone until you come back?"

He was silent for a moment, then he answered: "Take David and go and see your own father and mother. You could stay ten or twelve days. When I am ready to come home, I will telegraph you to meet me at Crewe Station, then we can make the journey back together."

"Oh, Robert, Robert! Oh, you dear Robert! What a joy that will be to David and myself! How shall I thank you?"

"Never mind the thanks. Now I must go. I have not a minute to spare."

"Davie is in the next room."

He went to the child's cot, and stood a moment looking at him. He was not yet recovered from the night's awful struggle, but he opened his eyes and stretched upward his arms, and Robert could not resist the silent appeal. Thank God, O thank God, he stooped and kissed him, and felt the little arms around his neck in a way that amazed him! Then he looked at Theodora and lifted his valise. The carriage was at the door, his mother was hurrying him, he said: "Good-bye, Dora. I will telegraph you about Crewe."

"Thank you, Robert. Please say so before mother, or she may try to prevent my going." Her eyes were fixed on him. There was a piteous entreaty in them—would he not kiss and embrace her also? Oh, if he knew it was the last time! If he only knew it! The thought was full of passionate longing. He could not but feel it. He was just going to take her hand, when Mrs. Campbell opened the door and said fretfully:

"You will miss your train, Robert—delaying and delaying for nothing at all."

"I was telling Dora to go home on Friday, and see her parents for twelve days or more. I will meet her at Crewe, and we shall come home together."

"Very well. I'll be gey and thankful to have the house to ourselves for a few days—or forever."

Robert was hastening to the carriage and did not hear her reply, but when it was about to move, he bent forward and looked at the door he was leaving. Theodora stood on the steps. Her heart was in her eyes, her hands clasped above her breast. She saw him bend forward, and leaned towards him smiling. Never throughout all his life days did he forget that last glimpse of the beautiful woman who that morning watched him out of her sight. When he was quite gone she turned into the house with that sense of completeness so essential even to the sorrowful. She had seen the last of her husband. The bitterness of the separation was over. She went to Davie and let him comfort her, then she dressed the boy, and left him in the care of McNab; for she knew that she must go to Mrs. Oliphant's without delay. The door had been set wide open for them, and they must make the best of the opportunity; or perhaps lose their lucky hour forever.

Fortunately David Campbell was at Mrs. Oliphant's, having returned from Edinburgh not ten minutes previously. He heard Theodora's tidings with a calm pleasure. "We are ready," he said. "Your father and mother have been in Glasgow for a week. They are boarding at a house in Monteith Row, a pretty locality on Glasgow Green."

"Oh, David, were you not afraid?"

"Not at all," he answered, "the Campbells are exclusive West-Enders. They would be as likely to go near Monteith Row as to go to Ashantee. Your parents are known as Mr. and Mrs. Bell. You must not try to see them until you meet on the steamer."

"Very well. When shall we sail?"

"This is Tuesday. The Anchor Line have a good boat sailing at noon, Saturday. Can you be ready?"

"Easily. About your daughters?"

"They are ready. They will be here Friday, or perhaps Thursday. Now I will go and secure the four best staterooms possible. I shall take them in the name of Kennedy—and that will be our name, until we reach New York."

Theodora remained with Mrs. Oliphant until David returned with the tickets for the four staterooms. She felt then, that there was no reprieve, and that her first duty now was to be as cheerful and brave as she ought to be. On reaching home, she found that David's cot had been carried to the maid's room, but she made no complaint. The fact swept away all doubts and misgivings; it was the last injustice, the last cruelty that could be inflicted, and it was a vain one, for David could sleep with her, until the end came.

On the following morning, she asked Jepson to send to her room the smallest of her trunks, and she put into it a few things belonging to her girlhood's life—her music, her textbooks, a novel she had nearly finished writing, and the beautiful linen she had made and embroidered with her own hands for her marriage outfit. Two dresses were all that remained of the gowns bought at this date. These she took with her. In her hand she would carry a Gladstone bag with toilet necessities, and plenty of clean white waists and collars for David and herself. Their suits, bought with reference to this necessity, were of dark blue cloth; David's made into his first breeches and jacket, and Theodora's in the simplest manner possible, but as Mrs. Campbell said to Isabel:

"Plain, of course. But look at the lines and the make o' it! Menzie's cutting and fitting no doubt. It cost five guineas to make that dress and the cloak with it. She's a wasteful creature."

"Robert said she bought it herself, and——"

"So she ought, so she ought! And the boy dressed up in broadcloth and linen waists! A few yards of lindsey would be more fitting."

"Mother, he is a beautiful boy."

"Is he? I cannot see myself where his beauty comes in."

During the next two days Theodora employed herself in folding carefully away all her clothing, and locking it up in its proper drawers. Her jewels she packed separately, and with a letter, put into McNab's charge, requesting her to give them to Mr. Campbell, if she did not return with him. When Friday morning came, she rose early, dressed herself and David, and was ready for the train that left just about the time the Campbell breakfast was served. In this way, she hoped to escape the presence of Jepson, whom she feared might be told to accompany her. On the contrary, Mrs. Campbell grumbled at Jepson for helping the coachman with her trunk, and the only question she asked was: "What road did she take, Jepson?"

"The Caledonian, ma'am," was the answer.

"Hum-m-m! I thought so."

"Has she gone?" said Isabel.

"Yes, and a good riddance of her."

"Oh, mother, and none of us bid her good-bye, or wished her a pleasant time. I intended to go to the train with her—now I have missed—"

"Making a fool of yourself. That is all you have missed."

"What train would Mrs. Campbell take, Jepson?"

"The nine o'clock train, I suppose, miss."

But Theodora did not take the nine o'clock train. She gave a porter a shilling to care for her trunk, and watched an hour in a waiting-room. No one suspicious appearing, she requested the porter to call a cab, and put her trunk upon it, and then without fear or hurry, she drove to a certain store, where David Campbell was waiting. He went with her at once to the pier of the Anchor Line, where they left her trunk to be placed with the rest of the Kennedy luggage in the hold. "And now, where will you hide yourself until to-morrow morning, Theodora?" he asked kindly.

"Mrs. Oliphant—"

"No. She wants you, but I told her it could not be. Her servants will be closely questioned, no doubt."

"I see."

"The steamer touches at Greenock. Get a room in the Tontine Inn. Have your food served in your room, and keep quiet until you walk down to meet the steamer."

"I will do so. It is the best plan."

So they went to the railway station, and David Campbell put them into a comfortable carriage for Greenock. "You will see your father and mother to-morrow," he said. "They are as happy as two little children over the journey. It is a great event for them, and they are talking of their little grandson continually. They long to see him."

Theodora hardly knew what was being said to her. She was in a kind of dreamlike state—a state, however, in which no mistakes are ever made. The Inner Woman had control, and she had quite resigned herself to its leading. "David and I will meet the steamer in the morning. Be on the watch for us, brother," she said.

"I will. You will go to the Tontine?"

"Certainly."

"And if they should not have room for you there, then go to the—"

"I will go to the Tontine. There is a room ready for me there."

He looked at her kindly and understood. Those who have watched long, solemn nights away with the Beloved One, slowly dying, know something beyond the lines of science, or the teachings of creeds. He said good-bye to her, without a fear of any mistake.

At Greenock she found the prepared room in the Tontine, and she made herself and little Davie comfortable, and then ordered their dinner to be brought to them. She was glad of this pause in her affairs, and long after Davie was asleep, she sat pondering the past and the future. At first she was dazed and half-unbelieving of the great event that had taken place in her life. In the darkness of the room, she fell into short sleeps, and kept feeling around in the darkness of her mind to learn what troubled her, until suddenly, in cruel starts from sleep, her sorrow found her out.

But this is the depth in our nature, where the divine and human are one. Here, in our weakness and weariness, we are visited by the Upholder of the tranquil soul, and words wonderful and secret, cheer the weary and heavy-laden; for God has royal compassions for the broken in heart. Theodora awoke in the morning full of hope, and in one of her most cheerful moods. The road no longer frightened her, the ocean no longer separated her. She had wings now for all the chasms of life, and when she opened a little book for a word to clear the way, and the day, she cried out joyfully, for this was her message:

"*The Lord is with me, hastening me forward.*"^[2]

[2] 1st Esdras 1, 27.

At the time appointed the steamer reached Greenock, she was there to meet it, and David Campbell was at the gangway watching for her. There was a crowd of incomers and outgoers, and David was glad of it, for Theodora with her child reached their stateroom without notice from any one. There she found her father and mother, and the joy and wonder of that meeting may well be left to the imagination.

It had been decided, that until David found out whether any of the passengers were sitters in Dr. Robertson's church, or people from any circumstance likely to know Theodora, she should remain in seclusion; but in a couple of days, David had clearly established the safety of her appearance; and after that assurance, she was constantly on deck with the rest of the party. All the way across the Atlantic they had a blue sky, a blue sea, sunshine, and good company; and one morning they were awakened by some one calling "Land! Land in sight!" and hastening on deck they stood together watching their approach to the low-lying shores of that New World which held for them the promise of a happy home and a prosperous future.

CHAPTER XI

CHRISTINA AND ISABEL

Just about the time Theodora's party were sitting down to a happy dinner in the Astor House, New York, Robert reached his home in Glasgow. He had confidently expected to see his wife waiting for him at Crewe Junction, and been disappointed and angry at her failure to do so. "Women are all alike," he muttered to himself, "they never keep an appointment, and they never catch a train." He wandered round the waiting-rooms looking for her, and so missed his own train, and had to wait two hours at one of the most depressing stations in England. For though the traffic is immense there, the stony, prison-like order, the silent, hurrying passengers, and the despondent-looking porters, fill the heart with a restless passion to escape from the place. Without analyzing this feeling, Robert was conscious of it, and it intensified the annoyance of his detention.

All the way to Glasgow he pondered on the singular circumstance of Theodora's failure to obey the telegram he had sent her. She had always been so prompt and glad to meet him, there must have been some mistake made in the message. He tried to remember its exact words, but could not, and as he neared his own city a certain fear assailed him. He began to wonder if his wife or child was sick—or if any accident had happened on their journey from Bradford to Crewe. But this solution he quickly dismissed as incredible. Theodora would have managed under any circumstances to send him word. She would not have kept him waiting and wondering. It was utterly unlike her. At length the anxious journey was over, but in hurrying from the train to his carriage, he noticed that the coachman spoke in an easy, nonchalant way, and that there was no sign about him of anything unusual or unhappy. When he reached Traquair House his mother and Isabel met him at the door, and Jepson unlocked his apartments, and began to turn on the light in the parlors.

"We shall have dinner in twenty minutes, Robert," said Mrs. Campbell, and Jepson added:

"Your rooms upstairs are prepared for you, sir."

No one had named Theodora, and he had not done so either. Why? He could not tell "why"; for her name beat at his lips, and inquiry about her was the great demand of his nature. He looked into her rooms, and the sense of emptiness and desertion about them was like a blow. David's cot had been removed, he saw that at once, and felt angry about it. And the perfect order of things shocked something in his feelings never before recognized. He missed sorely those pretty bits of disorder, that seemed to him now almost a part of his wife and child—the bow of ribbon, the little shawl or scarf over a chair-back, the small book of daily texts, and the thin parchment copy of "*The Imitation*" on her table; David's puzzle on the window seat, or his tiny handkerchief on the floor beside it.

Restless and unhappy he went down to the dining-room. His mother was in high spirits; Isabel still and indifferent. But it was Isabel who asked: "How much longer is Dora going to stay? The house is so lonely without her."

"The house has been peaceful and restful without her, and the noisy child. I am sure it has been a great relief," corrected Mrs. Campbell.

"I am anxious about Dora," said Robert with a touch of his most sullen temper, "she ought to have met me at Crewe, and did not do so. It was not like her."

"It was very like her. She is the most unreliable of women. I dare say we shall see her by the next train—perhaps we—"

"Mother, you are mistaken both about Dora and the train. Dora can always be depended on, and I

waited for the next train, but she was not on it. After dinner I must telegraph to Bradford and elsewhere."

"Perfect nonsense! Let her alone, and she'll come home—no fear of it. She was, however, keen enough to get away—off before we had breakfast—and without a word to any one."

"Mother," corrected Isabel, "that was our fault. She came to bid us good-bye, but we neither of us spoke to her."

"Drop the subject," said Robert in a manner too positive to be disobeyed.

He himself dropped every subject, and finished his meal in a silence so eloquent, that no one had the spirit to break it. His mother looked at him indignantly, his sister kept her eyes on her plate, and ate with a noiseless deliberation, that was almost provoking. It was a most wretched meal.

"And all because that creature missed meeting him at Crewe," snorted the angry mother as her son left the room.

"You had better go to the library, mother, and find out what is the matter. I dare say it is business—and not Dora at all."

"I will go as soon as he has had a ten minutes' smoke. He is as touchy as tinder yet, Isabel."

But Robert did not go to the library. As he came out of the dining-room McNab walked up to him, and he spoke more pleasantly to her than he had yet done to any one since his return. "Good-evening, McNab," he replied to her greeting, "I hope you are well."

"As well as I ever expect to be in this house, sir. My dear young mistress left these jewels in my care—fearing what happened once before, sir—and I promised to keep them safe till you came home; the same I've done. And she left this letter likewise for you, and I hope there is no bad news in it, sir, for she was breaking her heart the day she was writing it."

"Breaking her heart? What about, McNab?"

"They were going to take the bit bonnie bairn from her—and him every night, as like as not, having a black life-and-death-fight wi' what they ca' croup. You know, sir?"

"I know, McNab. Thank you!" and instead of going to the library, he went into his own parlor, and locked both doors leading into it. Then he sat down with the letter in his hand. He looked at the neatness with which it was folded, addressed, and sealed, and he had a sudden memory of the joy and expectation with which he had once been used to receive such letters. He had no fear of bad news. He expected only Theodora's usual pleading for little David, and he thought it likely the removal of the boy's cot typified a more than common dispute concerning the child.

When he finally opened the letter, a small parcel fell out of it, which he laid aside. Then he read without pause or faltering, the following words:

"MY DEAR ROBERT:—A little while ago, you told me all that I possessed, that even my wedding ring, belonged to you. To-day I restore you all that you have given me, and with my raiment and ornaments, the dearest ornament of all—my wedding ring. You have broken every pledge it promised. You have treated me, and permitted others to treat me, with a sustained, deliberate neglect and cruelty that is almost incredible. To-day I make you free from all obligations to me, and my child. Do not try to find us. You cannot. We shall disappear as completely as a stone thrown into mid-ocean. But you know well, that I may be fully trusted to do all my duty to David. Oh, Robert, Robert, I cannot bear to reproach you! I love you, though I am leaving you forever. My father and mother go with me, and God and they are a multitude. I shall want for nothing but your love, and that was taken from me long ago. My love, my love! Farewell forever.

"THEODORA."

Then he unfolded the bit of tissue paper which the letter contained, and out of it fell the wedding ring. He laid it in the hollow of his hand and looked at it. And as he looked, the storm in his heart gathered and gathered, until all its waves and billows went over him.

"*Gone! Gone forever!*" he said in an awful whisper—a whisper that came from a depth of his nature never plumbed before; an abyss that only despair and death know of. He rose and walked about, he sat down, he re-read the letter, he tried to think, and could not. He threw off his coat and vest, his collar and neckerchief; they lay at his feet, and he kicked them out of his way. "I am choking—dying!" he murmured. "Dora! Dora! Dora! Where are—you?"

The unfortunate man was torn with the most contrary feelings. He loved the adorable woman who had cast him off; and he hated her. Remorse for his own neglect and cruelty alternated with anger at his wife for the pain she was giving him. And she had robbed him of his child also, *his child!* Oh, he would have the child back, if he moved heaven and earth to compass it. There was no order, no method in his grief, one dreadful accusation followed another like actual blows, from a hand he could neither stay, nor entreat, nor reason with.

In hoarse mutterings, and fierce imprecations, he gave voice to a passion of grief and anger so furious, that ordinary speech utterly failed it. Frequently he struck the table or the piano frenzied blows with his hand—or he kicked out of his path chairs, stools, or whatever came in his raging

way. Even Theodora's embroidery frame was thus treated, and then tenderly lifted and straightened, and put in its place. His restless feet and hands, his distracted walk, his mad motions, his distorted face and inflamed eyes, all indicated a tumult of suffering and despair, rendered all the more terrible by the shrill strain of half-religious oaths, which like flashes of hell-fire made the blackness of darkness in which he suffered all the more lurid and awful.

At length his physical nature refused to express any longer his mad sorrow by motion. He fell prone upon the sofa, and clasping his hands over his heart, he sobbed as only strong men in the very exhaustion of all other expression of feeling can sob. By this time it was late, the house was dark and still, and only the miserable man's mother was awake and watching. She felt that there was sorrow in the house, and when midnight came she went softly downstairs and stood at her son's door, listening to the soul in agony, moaning, sobbing, accusing, blaming, entreating, defying. She feared to let him know she was there and she feared to leave him. She was at a loss to account for a passion so amazing and uncontrolled. Stepping softly back to her room she reconsidered herself. In a couple of hours there was the crash of china falling, and her temper got the better of her fear. She went hastily and without attempt at secrecy, to her son's door.

"Robert!" she called, but there was no answer.

"Robert, Robert Campbell, open this door!" and she shook the handle violently.

He rose with an oath, flung the door wide, and stood glaring at her from eyes red and swollen and fierce with anger. "What do you want?" he asked. "Can you not let me alone, even at midnight?"

"What is the matter with you? Are you ill?"

"No."

"Then what for are you sobbing and crying? I'm fairly ashamed for you. Do you know it's two o'clock in the morning?"

"I don't care what time it is. Go away."

"I will not go. You are demented—or you are wicked beyond believing."

"Go away!"

"I will not. What, in God's name, is the matter?"

"Theodora!" he shrieked, as he flung his arms upward.

"O, it is Theodora, is it? I thought so."

"She has left me, left me forever! She has gone, and taken my little Davie with her."

"Just what I expected."

"Just what you drove her to."

"Has that black-a-visored dandy staying at the Oliphants' gone with her?"

"Damnation, no! Her father and mother went with her."

"She says so, no doubt. Do you believe her?"

"Yes."

"Weel, I'm glad she's off and awa'. We'll hae a bit o' peace now."

"My heart is bleeding, bursting; I cannot listen to you."

"Such perfect nonsense! You ought to be thanksgiving. Who broke that vase to smithereens?"

"I did."

"It cost twenty guineas."

"I don't care a tinker's curse, if it cost a hundred guineas." He walked to the mantelpiece and flung down on the marble hearth a valuable piece of Worcester.

"My God, Robert! Have you lost your senses?"

"I have lost my wife and child."

"Good riddance of baith o' them."

"How dare you?"

"Dinna say 'dare' to me."

"Go away! Go instanter!"

"You will go first. I'll not leave you alane."

"If you don't go, I will call McNab and Jepson, and they will help you to your own room. Do you hear me?"

"Robert Campbell, go to your decent bed and sleep, and behave yourself."

"My God, woman!"

"I am your mother."

"God pity me! I can't throw you down, but——" then he lifted a white marble clock, and let it crash among the broken china. "Out of here!" he screamed. His usually deep, strong voice had been rising with every word he spoke, and his last order was given in a mad *alto* which terrified the woman browbeating him. It was not Robert's voice; its shrill shriek was the cry of extremity or insanity. She fled upstairs to McNab's room.

"Waken! waken! McNab," she cried. "Your master has lost his senses. Run for Dr. Fleming. Make him come back wi' you."

"What hae ye been doing to the poor man?" she asked sleepily as she put on her shoes.

"Nothing, nothing at all. Just advising him. It is that English cutty—she——"

"Meaning Mrs. Robert Campbell?"

"Call her what you like. It is her, it is her! She has taken the bairn and gone."

"Gone?"

"Left her husband forever. Be in a hurry, woman. Don't you hear the man raving like a wild beast?"

He was not raving when McNab looked at him in passing. He was lying on the sofa perfectly still, with his hands clasped above his head. So the doctor found him a quarter-of-an-hour later. "You have had a great shock, Campbell," he said.

"A shot in the backbone, doctor. My wife has left me, and taken my son with her."

"I know! But were you not expecting her to do so?"

"No, no! Why should I?"

"How much longer did you think your wife could bear—what she had to bear? Come, come, you must look at this trial like a sensible man! I suppose you want to find her?"

"It is all I shall live for."

"Then you must sleep. I will go with you to your room, and give you a sedative. You must sleep, and get yourself together. Then you will have to make your face iron and brass, for all you will have to meet—advice and pity, blame and sympathy, but you will carry your cup of sorrow without spilling it o'er everybody you meet—or I don't know you. What made you lose your grip to-night?"

"Necessity, doctor. I had to, or——"

"I know."

"One towering rage was better than daily and hourly disputing. The subject is buried now, between my family and myself. It was a necessity."

"Ay, ay, and when Necessity calls, none shall dare 'bring to *her* feet excuse or prayer.' Your wife's flight was a necessity also. Keep that in your mind. You are sleepy, I see; don't look at the newspapers till the wonder is over."

The newspapers easily got hold of the story, and each related the circumstance in its own way. Some plainly said domestic misery had driven the ill-used lady to flight; others spoke of her great beauty and wonderful voice, and made suspicious allusions to the temptations always ready to assail beauty and genius. None of them omitted the world-weary taunt of the mother-in-law, and some very broad aspersions were made on Mrs. Campbell's well-known impossible temper, and her hatred of all matrimonial intrusions into her family. The story of her eldest son's unsatisfactory marriage was recalled, his banishment and exile and supposed death. Christina's flight from her rich, titled lover to the poor man she preferred added a romantic touch; and the final tragedy of the disappearance of Robert Campbell's wife and son seemed to the majority proof positive that the trouble-making element was in the Campbell family, and rested in the hard, proud, scornful disposition of the mother, and mother-in-law. There was not a single paper that did not take a special delight in blaming Mrs. Traquair Campbell, but all, without exception, praised extravagantly the beauty, the sweet nature, and the genius of her wronged and terrorized daughter-in-law.

Robert Campbell took no notice of anything, that either the newspapers or his mother said. One day Isabel showed him a remark concerning "the unhappy life of that unfortunate gentleman, the late amiable Traquair Campbell, Esq." "You ought to stop such shameful allusions, Robert," she said, "they make mother furious."

He looked at her with eyes sad and suffering, and answered: "Neither you nor I, Isabel, can gainsay those words. They describe only too truly our father's position. He was amiable, and he was unhappy."

"But, Robert, the insinuation is, that mother was to blame for our father's unhappiness."

"She was. Such accusations are best unanswered. If we do not talk life into them, they will die in a few days."

To those who did not know Robert Campbell, he seemed at this time indifferent and unfeeling. In reality he was consumed by the two passions that had taken possession of him—the finding of his wife and son, and the making of money to keep up the search for them. He spent his days at the works, his evenings were devoted to interviewing his detectives, writing them instructions, or reading their reports. Shabby-looking men, in various disguises, haunted the hall and library of Traquair House, and every single one of them gave Mrs. Campbell a fresh and separate attack of anger. They were naturally against her, they believed everything wrong said of her, they talked slyly to the servants, and would scarcely answer her questions; they trespassed on her rights, and disobeyed her orders; and if she made a complaint of their behavior to her son, he looked at her indignantly and walked silently away. Speech, which had been her great weapon, and her great enjoyment, lost its power against the smouldering anger in her son's heart, and the speechless insolence of his "spying men."

Very soon after his sorrow had found him out he locked every drawer and closet in the rooms that had been Theodora's. It was a necessary action, but he had a bitter heartache in its performance. The carefully folded garments, with their faint scent of lavender, held so many memories of the woman he longed to see. The knots of pale ribbons, the neckwear of soft lace! Oh, how could such things hurt him so cruelly? In one drawer of her desk he found the stationery she had begged her own money to buy. She had not even taken the postage stamps. That circumstance set him thinking. She was leaving England, or she would have taken the stamps—perhaps not—they might have been left for the very purpose of inducing this belief. Who could tell?

Meantime nothing in the life of Traquair House changed or stopped, because Robert Campbell's life had been snapped into two parts. Mrs. Campbell soon recovered her pride and self-confidence. She told all her callers she "had received measureless sympathy, and as for her enemies, and what they said, she just washed her hands of them—poor, beggarly scribblers, and such like."

Isabel's behavior was a nearer and more constant annoyance. She spent the most of her time in her own room with maps and guidebooks and writing, and the pleasure she derived from these sources was a pleasure inconceivable to her mother. "You are past reckoning with, Isabel," she said fretfully one day, "what on earth are you busy about?"

"I am planning routes of travel, mother, putting down every place to stop at, what hotel to go to, what is worth seeing, and so on. I have four routes laid out already. I am hoping some day, when I have made all clear, you will go with me."

"Me! Me go with you! Not while I have one of my five senses left me."

"I shall surely go some day. I might have been travelling ere now, but I disliked to leave you alone, after this trouble about Dora."

"There is no trouble about Dora, none at all. The running away o' the creature is a great satisfaction to me. I hate both her and her child."

"Robert is breaking his heart about them."

"And neglecting his business, and spending more money than he is making, looking for them. I might break my heart, too, but thanks be! I have more sense. Did I tell you the Crawford girls are coming to stay a week or two? I thought they would be a bit company to you. I suppose they can have the room next yours."

"Christina's room! Oh, mother, I wish you would put them somewhere else. You have a spare room."

"It is o'er near my own room. And they are apt to come home at night full o' chat and giggle, and get me wakened up and maybe put by all sleep for that night. What is wrong with the room next yours?"

"I don't like any one using Christina's room—and they will keep me awake."

"Nobody takes the least thought for my comfort."

"Why did you ask the Crawfords? You know Robert hates them."

"Robert is forgetting how to behave decently. He will at least have to be civil to the Crawfords, and that is a thing he has ceased to be either to you or me."

"Robert and I understand each other. He gives me a look, and I give him one. We do not require to speak."

"I wonder how I ever came to breed such unfeeling, unsocial children. If I get 'yes' or 'no' from your brother now, it is the whole of his conversation; and as for yourself, Isabel, you are at that wearisome reading or writing the livelong day. I'll need the Crawfords, or some one, to talk to me, or I'll forget how to speak. Now where will I sleep them?"

"I suppose in poor Christina's room."

"Poor Christina! Yes, indeed! I have no manner o' doubt it is 'poor Christina' by this time."

"Mother! mother! do not spae sorrow to your own child. I can't bear it. I think she is very happy indeed. If she was not, she would have sent me word. It is poor Isabel, and it is happy Christina."

"Your way be it."

The next day the Crawfords came, and were installed in Christina's room. Mrs. Campbell was in one of her gayest moods, and she said to Isabel: "I am not going to live in a Trappist monastery, because Robert is too sulky to open his mouth to me. I'll be glad to hear the girls clacking and chattering, and whiles laughing a bit. God knows, we need not make life any gloomier than it is."

For two or three days, the Crawfords had the run of the house. Robert went away, "on another wild goose chase" his mother said, just before they arrived; and his mother's words were evidently true, for he came home with every sign of disappointment about him. He looked so unhappy, that Isabel, meeting him in the hall, said: "I am sorry, brother, very sorry."

"I know you are," he answered. "It was a false hope—nothing in it."

"I would stop looking."

"You are right. I will give it up."

He went into the dining-room with Isabel, said good-evening to his mother, and bowed civilly to her guests. The dinner proceeded in a polite, noiseless manner, until the end of the second course. Then Robert lifted his eyes, and they fell upon Jean Crawford's hand. The next moment he had risen and was at her side.

"Give me the ring upon your right hand," he said in a voice that held as much passion as a voice could hold and be intelligible.

"Why, Cousin Robert!"

"I want that ring!"

"Aunt Margaret said——"

"Give me the ring. It is not yours. How dare you wear it?"

"I was bringing it back! Oh, Aunt Margaret!"

"Robert, I am ashamed of you!"

"Mother, I want Theodora's ring—the ring stolen from my wife years ago. I must have it—I must, I must!"

"Don't cry, Jean. Give him his ring. I'll give you a far handsomer one."

Then the woman threw it down on the table, and Robert lifted it and left the room.

Isabel sat until the tearful, protesting meal was over, and then she did the most remarkable thing—she went to her brother. He was sitting looking at the ring, recalling its history. He remembered going into Kendal one Saturday night, just after its receipt, and memory showed him again Theodora's delight and excitement, her wonder over its beauty, and her pride in her pupils' affection. He could see her lovely face, her shining eyes, he could feel her soft kiss, and the caress of her hand in his. Oh, what a miracle of love and beauty she was to him that night! He told Isabel all about it, and then he spoke of its theft, and of his frequent promises and failures to recover it for her.

"But, brother," said Isabel, "you have now quite unexpectedly got it back. It is a good omen. Some day, when you are not looking for such a thing, you will get its owner back, you will put it on her finger. I feel sure of it."

"I was a brute, Isabel."

"You were a coward. You were afraid of mother."

"No man ever had so many opportunities for happiness as Theodora offered me. I scorned them all. Why was I so blind, so unjust, so cruel? I am miserable, and deserve to be miserable. We can go to hell before we die, Isabel."

"Yes, we can, but we send ourselves there. 'If I make my bed in hell,' said the great seer and singer. It is always *I* that makes that bed, never God, never any other human being." And it was Robert Campbell, he himself, and no other, who had made his bed in that forlorn circle of hell, where men who have lost their Great Opportunity, weep and wail over their forfeited happiness. Poor Isabel, she remembered, and longed to remind her brother, that even there God was with him, waiting to be gracious, ready to help! But she was too cowardly, she did not like to give religious advice; she was only a woman—he would wonder at her. So she went away, and did not deliver the gracious message, and felt poor and mean because of her fear and her faithlessness.

This conversation, however, made a decided change in Robert Campbell's life. It had always been believed by the family, that Isabel, unknown to herself, had a certain occult, prophesying power; frequently she had proved that with her insight was foresight. So, though Robert said nothing to her when she told him the getting back of the ring was a good omen, he believed her and derived

a singular peace and confidence from the prediction. At that very hour, he virtually put a stop to all inquiries, and to all search; he resolved to leave to those behind him the bringing back of his wife, and their reconciliation.

Carrying out this resolve compelled him to take account of the money he had spent in the quest for Theodora and his son, and the total gave him a shock. It had been an absolutely fruitless waste of money, and he had a fiery impetuous determination to restore to his estate the full amount. To this object he devoted himself, and if a man is willing to lose his heart and soul in money-making, he is sure to succeed.

So the weeks and the months passed, and he turned himself, body and soul, into gold and tried to forget. The loss of his wife and child became a something that had happened long ago—an event sorrowful, and far off. For there was nothing to keep their memory alive. No one mentioned their names, and the very rooms they had inhabited, had lost all remembrance of them. They were simply empty rooms now, for every particle of the lovely and loving lives that had once informed them, had been withdrawn.

Nearly two years had passed since Christina married, nearly as long since Theodora and David disappeared, and the big, silent Traquair House was a desolate place. Mrs. Campbell had no one but her servants to dispute with, for though Isabel's seclusion was constantly more marked, Robert would not listen to a word against his sister. She had been sorry for him, and forespoken good for him; he stood staunchly by all she did.

"Do you know that she is going away this spring, into all sorts of wild and savage countries, and among pagans and papists, and worse—if there is worse; with nothing but a woman nearly as old as myself to lean on. I wonder at your allowing such nonsense."

"Isabel knows what she is doing. She is going with Lady Mary Grafton. They will have their maids, and a first-class courier. I think she is doing right."

"And I shall be left here, all alone?"

"Do you count me a nonentity?"

"You are very near it, as far as I am concerned."

"I am alone, too. Will you remember that? You know whose fault it is." Then he rose and left her, and Mrs. Campbell was conscious of a secret wish that the good old quarrelsome days would come back, even though it were Theodora and David who brought them.

A few days after this conversation Robert had business in the city, and after it was finished, he walked leisurely down Buchanan Street. It was a fine spring morning, and there was a glint of sunshine tempering the fresh west breeze. Passing McLaren's, he saw a lady get out of a cab, and go into the shop. He followed her, and gently laid his hand on her shoulder, saying:

"Christina, sister!"

"Oh, Robert, Robert!" and she laughed, and cried, and clasped his hands.

"Come with me to my club," he said, "and we will have lunch and a good talk. You must have a deal to tell me."

"I have, I have! My cab is at the door. Will it do for you? You used to hate cabs." She laughed again and her laugh went to his heart, so he petted her hand, and said she was looking white and thin, and what was the matter?

"I had a little daughter only six weeks ago, the sweetest darling you ever saw, Robert. And I have a beautiful wee laddie, called Robert—called after you—he is nearly a year old."

"Then I must go with you and see my namesake."

"Do you really mean that?"

"I intend to give you this afternoon."

"I am so glad—so happy."

Then they were at the Club House, and Robert took her to a pleasant parlor and ordered a royal lunch, and a bottle of wine.

"We must drink the little chap's health," he said. "And now tell me, Christina, are you happy?"

"Yes, I am happy. I have some little anxieties about Jamie, but love makes all easy—and Jamie loves me and the children, and does his best for us. A man cannot do more than that, can he?"

"Have you ever regretted your treatment of Sir Thomas Wynton?"

"Never once! Wynton treated me handsomely, but you see, *I loved Jamie*. You understand, Robert?"

"Yes."

"I heard about Theodora, of course. It was hard on you, but I do not blame Theodora. Since I was a mother, I have wondered she bore David's treatment as long as she did. I would not."

When lunch was over, they drove to Christina's home, and Robert laughed at its location. "Why, you are barely a mile from Traquair House," he said. "How was it we never found you out?"

"Perhaps you did not care about finding me out."

"Perhaps. Yet I know Isabel never went out without looking for you, and she has put many advertisements in the papers."

"Well, I was neither lost nor stolen, Robert, so I never read advertisements." She laughed in her old mocking way. "But I longed for Isabel, and have hard work to keep away from her."

There was just time for Robert to see his namesake, and give him a gold token, and admire the baby in its mother's arms, and the mother with the baby in her arms, when there was the sound of a latch-key in the door, and then a gay whistle. "Here comes Jamie," cried Christina, all her face aglow with love and expectation. Jamie was a personality you felt as soon as he entered the house. Robert looked anxiously for his appearance; but he was not prepared for the young man who entered. He was so handsome. Not Robert Burns himself had a more winning face, or more charming manners. He came into the room laughing, and when he saw Robert, went straight to him with outstretched hand. "Glad to see you, Campbell," he said heartily, and Robert felt he was glad. "You will take dinner with us?" he asked, and Robert said he would. Then he brought cigars, and began to discuss with Robert a subject which was at that time very interesting to the city. Robert found him clever and amusing, and he had a way of illustrating all his points with stories so apt, and so amusing, you felt sure he invented them as needed.

They had a modest, cheerful dinner, after which Jamie played the fiddle and sang as Robert had never dreamed it was possible to fiddle and sing; and he fell completely under the man's charm. For he made fiddle strings of Robert's heart strings, with his wild Gathering Calls, his National Songs, and Strathspeys. It was impossible not to love the man, and whatever liking and admiration Robert Campbell had to give, he gave unresistingly that night to James Rathey. He went away reluctantly, though he had stayed some time after dinner, and when he clasped the beautiful hand of the violinist he held it a moment, and said: "You have made me happy for a few hours. I thank you! I shall not forget."

All the way home he was revolving a plan in his mind, which he was resolved to bring to perfection. With this object in view, he looked into the dining-room when he reached home, hoping to find Isabel there. But Mrs. Campbell was sitting alone with a newspaper in her hand. She looked bored and forsaken, and he was sorry for her. "Where is Isabel?" he asked.

"Where she always is, except at eating-times—in her room."

"I want to see her."

"Will not your mother do?"

"Not just yet. I may want you in a short time."

"And then I may not come. You are going to ask Isabel, whether it is prudent to tell me something, or not."

"Will you let Isabel know, or shall I send McNab?"

"I will tell her myself."

Then Robert went to his own parlor, and in a few minutes Isabel came to him. He took her hand, and seated her at his side. "Isabel," he said, "I have found Christina. I have had lunch and dinner with her. I have met James Rathey."

"Oh, Robert!"

"He is the most delightful of men. They are as happy as they can be."

Then Isabel began to cry softly. "Oh, Robert, Robert! Such good news! Tell me all about them!" she exclaimed. And Robert told her all that Christina had said, and all that Jamie had said. He described Christina's and Rathey's appearance, he told her about the babies, he even made a few remarks about the floor and the furniture.

"I must go and see her the first thing in the morning, Robert."

"How soon will you start on your travels, Isabel?"

"In ten days, if Lady Mary is better."

"Is she sick?"

"I heard this morning she had an attack of measles—very peculiar in a woman of her age."

"I don't know, I'm sure. What I want is, that Christina should come into my rooms. I am going to give her all the furniture in them—everything—everything except some clothing. While you are away, she will be company for mother, who seems pitifully lonely."

"That is mother's fault, Robert. These empty rooms ought to be——"

"I know. There is no use speaking of it. All that hope is over. Do you think you can persuade Christina to come home?"

"She would have some submissions to make to mother—will she make them?"

"I think so. Go and ask her."

"I will see her in the morning."

In the morning there was a joyful meeting between the sisters, and Christina was delighted with Robert's plan. She had often longed for the large rooms, the wide stairways and corridors of Traquair House. She hated small rooms, and common stairs, and cabs, and remembered longingly the days when the Campbell carriage was at her beck and call. She liked plenty of servants, and her own maid and nurse would be added to the staff in Traquair House. She would be relieved of all housekeeping cares, and of the oversight of the table, a duty she particularly disliked. Besides these considerations, she could again take her proper place in society. Robert would be certain to do something for Jamie, and then she would have her income for dress and social demands.

"It will be delightful, Isabel," she said. "Just what I wish, and Jamie will win round mother directly—he has that way with all women."

"Then come home about five this afternoon, and bring the babies with you, especially Margaret."

"Isabel, you mean?"

"No, no! You must call her Margaret. As Margaret she will open mother's heart to you."

About five that afternoon, Mrs. Campbell came into the big, empty dining-room. She was dressed for dinner, but there were no signs of the meal. She looked cross and forlorn, and began to grumble to herself, as she impatiently stirred the fire into a blaze. "It is too bad of Isabel," she muttered; "she cares for nothing but her own way. I am left to look after everything—house, callers, what not—and there is a ring at the door now! I hope Jepson heard it."

The next moment the room door was thrown open, and Christina, in a flurry of beautiful silk and fur, fell on her knees by her mother's side. She clasped her mother's hands in her own, and said softly: "Forgive Christina, mother. I have brought my little Margaret for your blessing. Oh, yes, you will bless her. And Christina is really sorry, and longs so much for her mother and her home—dear mother, forgive me?"

At the beginning of her entreaty, Mrs. Campbell had tried to take her hands from between her daughter's, but at the close they lay passive until she raised one, stroked Christina's face, and bid her rise. Then Christina took the little child, and laid it in its grandmother's arms, saying:

"Little Margaret asks you to forgive and love us, mother,"—and little Margaret won the day.

"May I stay dinner, mother, and talk to you?"

"Go up to your own room, and take off your hat and wrapping. You may leave the bairns with me. Yon is a bonnie wee lad, what is his name?"

"Robert Traquair."

"A wise like name! Bring him here, lassie—and what is your name?"

"Janet, ma'am."

"Weel, Janet, you may now take the boy-bairn to the kitchen, and show him to Mistress McNab, and tell her she will hae company to provide for. I'll keep the bit lassie mysel', till her mother is ready for her."

At six o'clock, as arranged, Robert came home and joined his mother and sisters, and they were all talking happily together, when Jamie Rathey entered. Robert met him with a hearty welcome, and Jepson coming in at that moment, to superintend the setting of the table, was told by Robert to lay service for two extra. And as Christina predicted, when the evening was over Jamie had fairly conquered the usually impossible Mrs. Campbell. He had waited on his mother-in-law as if he was her lover, he had told pleasant stories, and sang merry songs, and above all assured her, she was "the only mother he knew, who could bring up daughters able to make the state of marriage an earthly Paradise"; and with a charming smile he wished "that she had fifty daughters, so that Glasgow might boast of fifty perfect wives, and happy husbands."

Robert watched him, and listened to him, and wondered that a man of his tact and social genius, did not get on in the world; and after the Ratheys and their children had departed he said: "Christina has not done as badly as we believed, mother. What do you think of James?"

"The man is well enough—as a man," she answered with a sudden cooling of heart temperature, "but what about his capacities? Is he a good provider? Can he get hold of the wherewithal for a family's necessities?"

"He is on the Roll of Attorneys now, but it is hard for a young man to get a law business—it takes time. He is sure to make his mark, but I do not suppose he makes his office rent yet."

"I thought so."

"He is clever."

"Very. And if he is as clever with his fiddle as his tongue, I would be astonished if he made office rent."

"Why?"

"Because God has given to some men wisdom and understanding, and to other men He has given the art o' playing on the fiddle. But if a man is wanting law, he does not want a song, and he is naturally suspicious of the lawyer who mixes the two."

"I shall get him installed as attorney on some of the civic boards, and that will give him an opportunity to show himself as a lawyer. And, mother, I have given Christina the use of my rooms, and the furniture is hers now. I have given her it just as it stands—everything, except some clothing. When Isabel goes away, I thought you would be very lonely, and Christina and the babies will make things more cheerful for you."

"I might have been asked, if it would be agreeable?"

"I only met Christina yesterday. I went home with her, and I want her to have a better home—her old home, and you to look after her."

"Well, a mother's duty never ends, and I was never one to shirk duty. The rooms are all right—but as for the cooking and the kitchen——"

"*Tut, tut*, mother! You will look after the table as you have always done."

"There will be four more adults to provide for, not to speak o' the bairns' feeding and washing."

"James is able to pay whatever you think right. I will insure that to you. And, mother, it will be a joy to see you busy about the house again, ordering the meals, and keeping the servant girls up to mark."

"I always was a busy woman, Robert, and I will be thankful to have my hands full again. I am sure the thought o' Christina's playing and singing, and her goings out and in, and the visitors she will have, and the news coming with them, and the children, special the bit lassie wi' her soft black een, and her wonderfu' resemblance to mysel'—all these things, sure enough, will make the old house a deal more pleasant. But where will you keep yourself?"

"At my club. I have a room there anyway, and I shall always take my breakfast in it. Sometimes, I will come here for dinner, but Jamie will be the man of the house, and a better master than I have ever been—he will have more time to help you, mother."

These conditions, carefully considered and elaborated, were carried out with all the haste possible. But haste is not in a Scotchwoman's faculty. She can do many things well, but she must carefully prepare for their doing, and then move with care and caution.

A few days after this arrangement, Mrs. Campbell and Christina went out together to do some shopping found necessary for it. Isabel remained at home to answer a letter from the Grafton family. This letter gave her great anxiety; it said: "Lady Mary's illness had become more serious than was at first anticipated, and there was almost a certainty that she would not be able to travel at the time fixed; consequently, they would leave to Miss Campbell the option of changing the date, or of cancelling the engagement, as seemed best for her own pleasure and interest."

Poor Isabel was much troubled at this disappointment. She feared all was going wrong with her plans, and the thought of the coming invasion with the noise of the children, and the joyous hilarity of Christina and her husband, and her mother's renewed importance, was not, in her present mood of disappointment and uncertainty, a pleasant anticipation. She sat silent and motionless, her eyes fixed on the neatly folded routes she had prepared. And her heart sank low, and a few tears gathered slowly and remained unshed. "All my desires are doomed," she thought sorrowfully. "Nothing I plan comes to pass. How unfortunate I am!"

Then there was a tap at her door, and a maid told her there was a visitor. She rose despondingly, took the card, threw it on the table, and went slowly to the drawing-room. Before she had quite opened the door, she heard hurrying steps coming to meet her, and the next moment Sir Thomas Wynton was holding her hands, and trying to tell her how happy he was to see her again.

She had an instantaneous sense of hope and relief, and they were soon heart and soul in the conversation they both enjoyed. Very soon she went for the routes she had prepared, and showed them to the baronet, who was amazed and delighted:

"I never saw anything so beautifully and carefully done," he exclaimed, "and when do you start on Route No. 1.? I see it takes in Russia, Sweden, and Norway, and home by the Netherlands and Orkneys. Why, I never thought of that! How good, how excellent an idea."

"I intended leaving Glasgow in nine days, but Lady Mary Grafton, whose party I was to join, is ill with measles."

"Good gracious! Measles! I never heard of such a thing, what is the woman up to? She is not a baby or a schoolgirl, is she?"

"She is forty-four years old."

"Oh! And measles? How absurd! What will you do?"

"I was trying to decide, when you came. Can you help me? If you can, I shall be grateful. If I can find no one to go with me, I shall go alone."

"Nonsense, impossible! May I call early to-morrow morning?"

"Ten o'clock if you wish."

Then he thanked her for the sensible, interesting letters she had written him. They were "a kind of little newspaper," he said, "and I counted those days happy and fortunate on which I received one. I have brought you some laces. I noticed that you always wore pretty lace, and so whenever I was at a place where lace was made, I got a little for you."

"Oh, Sir Thomas!"

"And to-morrow morning, I hope I will be able to tell you something about a companion for your journey. Do you know Mrs. Foster?"

"No. I have heard of her only."

He seemed on the point of going, but did not go until Mrs. Campbell came home. Then he stayed to lunch, and sat chatting with the two ladies until three o'clock. Even then he seemed reluctant to go away.

"Why should he come here at ten o'clock in the morning?" asked Mrs. Campbell, when Sir Thomas had finally gone away.

"Lady Mary is too ill to travel. Sir Thomas thinks he can get me a proper companion. If not, mother, I shall go alone. I will not let anything disappoint me again."

"You will be talked of from Dan to Beersheba."

"I shall be doing nothing wrong, and I shall be happy. Let them talk."

In the morning Sir Thomas was in the drawing-room at ten o'clock, and Isabel, in a pretty lavender lawn gown, went with a smile to meet him. He looked at her with delight, and said: "I have found you a companion—one that will take the greatest care of you. It is myself. I will trust you with no one else."

"But, Sir Thomas," and she attempted to draw her hand out of his.

"No, no," he said, clasping it still tighter. "Sit here by my side, and listen to what I say. I love you dearly, wisely, with all my heart. I will make you Lady Wynton to-morrow, if you desire it, and you and I—you and I—will take all those excellently planned journeys together. We will travel slowly and comfortably, luxuriously when we can; we will see everything worth seeing. We will take a long, long honeymoon trip, all over the world. Say 'yes,' Isabel. May I call you Isabel?"

"Yes."

"My Isabel."

"I am your sincere friend."

"My wife! I want you for my wife."

"A wedding means a great deal of trouble. It would keep me back."

"Not an hour. We will meet in Dr. Robertson's parlor, each with a friend or two. My carriage will be at his door, and as soon as the ceremony is over, we will drive to the railway station, and take a train for London, be in London for dinner, and ready next day to start Tour No. 1, first landing-place St. Petersburg; eh, dear? Say yes, say yes, Isabel. *Do!*"

And how could Isabel say anything but "yes"? It was the dream of her life coming true.

"This is Wednesday," he continued joyfully, "what do you say to next Monday? Can you be ready for Monday?"

"I can be ready by Monday, Sir Thomas."

"We will drop the 'Sir,' my dear, forever. Now, I will go and arrange with Dr. Robertson for the ceremony at nine o'clock, Monday morning, and in the meantime, see your brother about the necessary business matters, and put all right at Wynton village for at least a year's stay. For after London, we will follow the route you laid out—nothing could be better."

And as this was one of those destined marriages, that may be delayed but cannot be prevented, every particular relating to it went as desired. Isabel in a pretty travelling suit, with her mother and brother, was at Dr. Robertson's at nine o'clock on the set Monday morning, and found Sir Thomas Wynton and his brother-in-law and sister, Lord and Lady Morpeth, waiting for them. It was a momentous interval for two of the party, but soon passed; for in twenty minutes, Isabel received the congratulations due to her as Lady Wynton, and then amid smiles and good wishes she began with her husband their long wedding trip, of all over the world.

"It is the last of my Isabel," said Mrs. Campbell between smiles and tears.

"No," answered Robert, "it is the beginning of Isabel. When she comes back we shall hardly know her. It is a real marriage; they will improve each other," and he turned away with a sigh.

Mrs. Campbell had really no occasion for tears. She was not inclined to weep, even when weeping would have been in order, and Isabel had not lately been notable, either as a help or a comfort, so that her mother felt it no trial to exchange her presence, for the pleasure of talking of her dear daughter, Lady Wynton, her journeyings and her experiences. There was also the returning home of Christina, the rearranging of Robert's rooms for her and her family, their moving into them and settlement, and these things engaged her warmest interest. She felt indeed that as regarded Robert's rooms falling to Christina's lot, she owed Providence a handsome acknowledgment. They had been prepared at an extravagant cost for an Englishwoman and a stranger, but had come, as it were, naturally, to her own daughter. But then she said: "Providence had always looked after the Campbells, and it was not likely that in this flagrant case Providence would forget its duty."

She was busy from morning to night until she had the new family under the same roof with her, and Robert also appeared to take a great interest in the change. He was very generous to his sister, and gave her freely all the beautiful furniture and ornaments he had bought for Theodora, even the piano would know her touch no more. All the books, music, and pretty ornaments and embroideries she had accumulated during her miserable six years of married life, she left behind her; and all were given to Christina. Christina had no reluctance in appropriating them. She began her new tenure in Traquair House by taking everything she could get, likely to add to her comfort or pleasure.

Robert was a great deal about the house while the change was in progress, afterward his visits decreased, until they settled into the Sunday dinner with his family. No one complained of his absence. Christina and Rathey introduced a new life—a life of constant visiting, gaiety, and entertaining; and Mrs. Campbell accepted it without dissent. Jamie Rathey indeed ruled her more absolutely than he ruled his wife. And she petted him, as she had never petted her own sons—ordered luxuries for his eating, gave him presents, paid his bills, and excused all his extravagances.

"Between Jamie and little Margaret, I am not my own woman at all," she admitted, and as time went on, it was difficult to say which of these two treated her with the most tyrannical affection.

Two erroneous conclusions are likely to be formed concerning Robert Campbell on this unlooked for transformation of life in Traquair House—one, that he had suddenly developed a most unusual generosity, and the other, that he had forgotten his wife, and become resigned to her loss. Neither of these conclusions would be correct. Few, indeed, of our actions ring true through all their depths, and Robert's generosity to his sister arose from a desire to make his own life more bearable. Those lonely, lifeless, deserted rooms, over which he had spent so much love and gold filled him with a terror he hated to face. If Christina would bring into them life and song, and the voices of children, perhaps their haunting misery might die out of his heart. He could not prevent Isabel leaving home, but he did dread the house with no one but his mother and himself in it. So when Christina stepped into both dilemmas, with a comfortable solution, he felt grateful to her, and it was pleasant to give her things, and pleasant to help Jamie Rathey, and to see the dark, silent house alive with mirth and company, and the prattle of little children.

But there was another Robert that none of these things touched, who in fact would neither see them, nor listen to them. This Robert sat hours motionless and speechless, dreaming of the woman he still loved—longing for her with heart-breaking accusations and remorse. *Oh, to hear from her! Oh, to see her*, if but for a moment! Would the hour for their reconciliation never, never come? This was the faithful, bitter cry of his best nature, as raking in the ashes of memory, he made of his lost wife a thousand lovely and sorrowful pictures. And this Robert Campbell, no one but Robert's angels, and Robert's God knew.

To the world in general he seemed to be harder than ever, indifferent to all interests but money-making, stripped even of his old time gloss and politeness, yielding only when necessary to get his own way. His kindness to Christina had been in the main kindness to himself, and the ready help given to Jamie Rathey was the result of several selfish reasons, united with that singular liking which men occasionally feel for some other man gifted as they never can be—an affection doubtless dating from some life anterior to this life. With these exceptions, Robert Campbell was the old Robert Campbell, a little older, and a little rougher, and the national emblem of the repellent *Thistle*, with its churlish command, "*Hands off!*" represented him very fairly.

CHAPTER XII

ROBERT CAMPBELL GOES WOOING

It will not now be difficult for any one to construct in their imagination the life in Traquair House for the next two years. But at the end of that time, a great change was approaching, and the bringer of it was Isabel, Lady Wynton. She was sitting at her husband's side one afternoon, in the office or foyer of a large hotel in San Francisco. Sir Thomas was smoking and watching with her the constant kaleidoscope of humanity passing in and out. They were not talking, but there was a thorough, though silent sympathy between them. Sometimes Sir Thomas looked at her with an admiring glance, which she answered with a smile, or a move of her chair closer to him; but her

attitude was that of a woman silently interested and satisfied. It was the old Isabel in a repose, informed, vigilant, and conscious of a perfect communion of feeling.

Suddenly her whole appearance changed. She became eager and watchful, and her personality appeared to be on the tiptoe of expectation. With her eyes she followed every movement of a beautiful young woman attended by a scholarly-looking man, nearing sixty years of age. The couple were quickly joined by a much younger man, they walked with him to the main entrance, stood talking a few minutes, and then bid him farewell. The woman and older man then turned back into the hotel, and Lady Wynton had a full leisurely look at them. She did not recognize the man at all, but she was perfectly satisfied as to the identity of the woman, and she stepped hastily forward, crying softly:

"Theodora, Theodora! I know it is you. I have found you at last. Oh, how glad I am, how glad I am!"

"Isabel!"

"And here is my husband, Dora."

"I need no introduction, Mrs. Campbell," said Sir Thomas, with smiling courtesy. "I remember you perfectly, though you have been growing younger, instead of older."

Theodora quickly introduced her father, leaving him with Sir Thomas while she and Lady Wynton went to the Wyntons' parlor for conversation. "I must write Robert at once," said Lady Wynton. "It will be such a wonderful thing to him, for I am sure he has given up all hope of ever seeing you again, Dora. Two years ago he left Traquair House; he could not endure his empty lonely rooms any longer."

"Poor, dark, sad rooms! I try to forget them also."

"They are not dark and empty now, Christina and her husband and babies are living in them, and they make them lively enough, I have no doubt."

A shadow passed over Theodora's face, and she did not speak for a few moments. Then she asked: "What was done with the furniture and the things I used to believe were mine?"

"Christina wrote me that Robert had given everything in the rooms to her."

"How kind of him!" There was a little scorn in her voice, and she asked, "What about my piano, and my music?"

"Oh, Theodora, you must not feel hurt. Poor Robert! He was nearly broken-hearted. He never expected to see you. He had spent a fortune on detectives, who looked all over Europe for you. One night I sat with him, and I really thought he was insane. He acted like it."

"But he gave my piano and music away."

"I suppose he could not bear to see them—and you had left them, you know."

"Isabel, he gave me that piano as a birthday gift, one week before we were married; but then, of course, he took it back after the ceremony. He told me once my wedding ring was his property, and that he could sell the very hair off my head if he chose to do so."

"He must have been in a vile temper to say such things. Legally, I suppose he was right, but no good man ever does such things."

"But if a woman has the ill-fortune to marry a bad man? and many women innocently do this, then —"

"Then what?"

"If she has any self-respect, she emancipates herself from such a condition of slavery."

"Are you still angry at Robert?"

"I never was angry at him. He was only the rock on which my love bark struck, and went down."

"How is David?"

"Come home with me, and see him. We shall be home for supper, and it is about time we were leaving."

"Both Sir Thomas and I will come with you gladly."

For nearly ten miles their road lay through a delightful country, and just at the darkening ended in a plateau among some foothills. A number of white houses were scattered over it, and towards one of these Theodora drove her carriage. They entered an inclosure studded with forest trees, and kept in fine order; and as they neared the dwelling, came into a lovely garden full of all kinds of flowers and fruits. The house was square and large, surrounded by deep piazzas, and covered to the chimney-tops with flowering vines, chiefly with jasmine and passion flowers. On either side of the wide hall there were cool, large parlors, and from its centre rose the white stairway leading to the upper rooms—and everywhere there was an indefinable sense of peace and comfort.

"What a beautiful home! What a heavenly place!" cried Isabel, and Theodora answered:

"My father bought it when we first came. We have lived here ever since. It is beautiful. The sun shines on it, the winds blow through it, in every room there is happiness and peace. You were asking about David," she said in a tone of exultation, "here he comes!" and they went to the window and watched his approach. He was riding a fine, spirited horse, and riding like Jehu the son of Nimshi, who doubtless rode—as well as drove—furiously.

"How wonderfully he rides, Dora."

"David can do anything with a horse, or a rifle, and he is so strong, and tall, you would think him much older than he is. Come, we will go down and have supper, and let unpleasant memories die."

For two weeks the Wyntons stayed with Mr. Newton—two weeks of perfect delight to them. They visited various lovely towns along the coast, they hunted, and fished, and talked, the women of household things, and family affairs—the two men of their college days, and sports, and poetry; Sir Thomas quoting the Greek poets, and Mr. Newton the English, old and new. In the evenings, Theodora played and sang, and David recited stirring lines from "The Lady of the Lake" and other works. Night and day followed each other so happily and so quickly, that the week promised became two weeks, without notice or protest.

No letter during this time had been sent to Robert. Theodora insisted on this point. "I do not like letters, Isabel," she said. "They say too much, or too little. When you see Robert, tell him what your eyes have seen, and your ears heard—just the plain truth—and leave him to act on it, as he wishes."

"Then remember, Dora, that we are not intending to hurry home. We shall remain a few days at Salt Lake City, Denver, St. Louis, Chicago, and of course visit Niagara. It may be a month before we reach New York. You must give us five or six weeks before we reach Liverpool, and so do not lay the blame of our loitering to Robert's indifference. Be patient."

"I have been four years without a word. You see that I am neither impatient nor unhappy."

"Tell me, Dora, who was that dark, handsome man you seemed so much at home with in the hotel? I am curious about him. He appeared to be so familiar with your father and yourself."

"He is a neighbor. His house is about two miles from ours. The two eldest girls you saw reading and singing with me are his daughters. I am educating them with the three younger girls, who are the only children of a neighbor in another direction."

"He seemed very fond of you—I mean the man at the hotel."

"He is a good friend. He spends much time with my father. When he bid us good-bye, he was going to his mining property. That is the reason you have not seen him. Had he been at home, he would have made your visit here much pleasanter."

"Then I think we should never have got away. What a book full I shall have to tell Robert? I wish I was home. It will be good to see the light come into his sad face, when I say, 'Robert, I have found Theodora!'"

"Say nothing to influence him, one way or the other. His own heart must urge him to seek me, or he will never find me. It is a long journey to take, for a disappointment."

"He will doubtless write to you at once."

"I should take no notice of a letter."

"Why?"

"I have learned that a woman who lets slip the slightest respect which is due her, invites, and perhaps deserves the contempt she gets."

"Sir Thomas is very respectful to me, Dora."

"And very kind and loving. And you must know that you are much handsomer than you were before your marriage. You converse better, your manner is dignified yet gracious, your dress is rich, and in fine taste, and the touch of gray in your abundant black hair is exceedingly becoming to you. You are a fortunate woman."

"But, Dora, remember how long I waited for good fortune. I am in real living only two years old; all the years before my marriage were blank and dreary. I am forty years of age according to my birth date, and I have lived two, out of the forty."

"Thank God for the two years!"

"I do. We both do. Sir Thomas is very religious."

At length the Wyntons departed, and when Theodora had made her last adieu, and watched their carriage out of sight, she turned to her mother, who stood pale and depressed at her side.

"I am glad the visit is over. It has been something of a trial to you, mother—and to me also."

"The last week I was a little weary. But father and David enjoyed it, so it does not matter."

"Yes, it does matter. The men in a house should not be made happy at the cost of the women's exhaustion."

"How soon do you expect your husband?"

"Not for eight weeks—it may be longer, and it may be never."

"Do you love him at all now?"

"I love the Robert who wooed and married me, as much as ever I did; the Robert of the last five or six years, I do not wish to see again. I have been away from him four years, and I cannot hope that his manner of life has improved him."

"How has he lived?"

"From what Isabel told me, I should say his family had full dominion over him for two years; the result being the tearing to pieces of the home he made for me, and the handing over to his sister everything that was mine. The last two years he has lived a solitary life at his club, no doubt self-indulgent, self-centred, and self-sufficient."

"Theodora, no one but God knows anything about Robert. He would show himself to no one—I mean his real self. Do not judge him on the partial evidence of his sister. She would look no further than his words and actions."

"I wish I had heard nothing about him. I thought he was out of my life forever."

"Do not let the matter disturb you, until you are compelled to. *Grace for the need* is sure. Nowhere have I seen, *grace before the need* promised."

"You are right, mother, we will go on with our lives just as if this visit had never happened. I will neither hope nor doubt. I will do my day's work, and leave all with God."

So the Newton House went back to its calm routine, and Theodora taught and wrote, and helped her mother with her housekeeping, and her father with copying his manuscripts, and her boy with his lessons, and the days passed into weeks, and the weeks into months, and the promise of Robert's coming became as a dream when one awakeneth.

Yet all was proceeding surely, if leisurely, to the appointed end. In about eight weeks, the Wyntons arrived in London, and following their usual habit delayed and delayed there, for a whole week before starting for Scotland. But once at Wynton Castle, Isabel felt freed from her promise of silence, and she wrote to Robert a few days after her return home, the following note:

"DEAR ROBERT:—We reached home four days ago, and found everything in perfect order. I hope mother and Christina and you yourself are well. I am in fine health, never was better. When we were in California I came unexpectedly upon Theodora. We stayed two weeks with her, very pleasant weeks, and if you will come to Wynton as soon as convenient, we shall be glad to see you and tell you all about your wife and child. You need have no anxiety about them. They could not be happier. Give my love and duty to mother, and tell Christina I have a few pretty things for her.

"Your loving sister,

"ISABEL."

Robert found this letter beside his dinner plate, and after he had taken his soup he deliberately opened it. He knew it was Isabel's writing, and the post-marks showed him she was at home again. He knew also that it would contain an invitation to Wynton, and before he was sure of it, he made a vow to himself that he would not go.

"Sir Thomas will prose about the persons and places he has seen, and Isabel will smile and admire him, and I shall have to be congratulatory and say a hundred things I do not want to say. I do not care a farthing for Sir Thomas and his partnership now, and I will not have his patronage." Thus he talked to himself, as he opened the letter, and gave his order for boiled mutton and caper sauce.

When the mutton came he could not taste it. He looked dazed and shocked, and the waiter asked: "Are you ill, sir?"

"Yes," was the answer. "Give me a glass of wine."

The wine did not help him, and he lifted the letter and went to his room. There he threw himself upon the bed and lay motionless for an hour. He was not thinking, he could not think; he was gathering his forces physical and mental together, to enable him to overcome the shock of Isabel's news, and decide on his future course.

For the information which Isabel had given him in a very prosaic way had shaken the foundations of his life, though he could not for awhile tell whether he regarded it as welcome, or unwelcome. But as he began to recognize its import, and its consequences, his feelings were certainly not those of pleasure, nor even of satisfaction. He had rid himself of all the encumbrances Theodora had left behind her. He had given his home away and reduced the obligations to his kindred to a minimum, for a visit once a week satisfied his mother and Christina; and if he missed a week, no one complained or asked for the reason. At his club he was well served, all his likes and dislikes

were studied and pandered to. There was no quarrelling at the club, no injured wife, no sick child, no troublesome servants. He was leading a life that suited him, why should he change it for Theodora?

If Theodora had been in poverty and suffering, he felt sure he would have had no hesitation, he would have hurried to her side, but a Theodora happy, handsome, and prosperous, was a different problem. Why had she not sent him a letter by Isabel? She must have known, that Isabel would certainly reveal her residence, why then did she not do it herself? "She ought to have written to me," he muttered, "it was her duty, and until she does, I will not take any notice of Isabel's information."

With this determination he fell into an uneasy sleep, and lo, when he awoke, he was in quite a different mood! Theodora, in her most bewitching and pathetic moods, was stirring his memory, and he said softly, yet with an eager passion: "I must go where Dora is! I must go to her! I cannot go too quickly! I will see Isabel to-day, and get all necessary information from her."

He found Isabel enthusiastically ready to hasten him. She described the Newton home—its beauty, comfort, peace, and happiness. She went into italics about David—he was a young prince among boys of his age. He rode wondrously, he could do anything with a rifle that a rifle was made for, he was a good English scholar for his age, and was learning Latin and German. She said his grandfather was his tutor, and that the two were hardly ever apart.

At this point Robert had a qualm of jealousy. The boy was *his* boy, and he ought to be with him, and not with his grandfather. He was defrauded on every side. He said passionately, he would go for the boy, and bring him home at any rate; and Isabel told him plainly it could not be done. "And as for Theodora," she continued, "she looks younger and lovelier than when you married her. You should see her in white lawn with flowers on her breast, or in her wonderful hair; or still better, on horseback, with David riding at her side. Oh, Robert! You never knew the lovely Theodora of to-day."

"If she had any lover," he said slowly, "if she had any lover, you would have discovered that fact, Isabel?"

"Lover! That is nonsense. Her time and interests are taken up with her teaching, writing, and her care of her child. She is educating five girls, daughters of wealthy men living near, and she has published one novel, and is writing another; and she helps Mr. Newton with his manuscripts, and Mrs. Newton with her house. She is as busy as she is happy. We stayed two weeks with her, and I saw no one like a lover. I do remember at the hotel where I first saw her, there was a very handsome dark man, who seemed to be on the most friendly, even familiar terms with both Theodora and Mr. Newton. I asked her once who the man was, and she said he was a neighbor, and that she was educating his two daughters. Then I asked if he was likely to call and she told me he had gone to his mine, and that was the reason we had not seen him every day. She said she was sorry it had so happened, because he would have made our visit much pleasanter."

"No doubt," he answered. "Much pleasanter, of course. Thank you, Isabel. I owe you more than I can ever pay. I shall go to San Francisco, and see with my own eyes how things are."

"You will see nothing wrong, Robert. Be sure of that. Dora is as good as she is beautiful. I did not love her when I thought her an intruder into my home, but in her own home, she is adorable. Every one loves her."

"I object to every one loving her. She is mine. I am going to bring her to her own home—where she ought to be."

He would not remain to dinner. He was in haste to reach a solitude in which he could commune with his own heart. For Isabel's words had roused a fiery jealousy of his wife, and he had suddenly remembered his mother's first question when she heard of Theodora's flight: "Has she gone with that black-a-visored dandy staying at the Oliphants'?" He had then scornfully denied the supposition—had felt as if it was hardly worth denying. But at this hour, it assumed an importance that tortured him. His mother had called him black-a-visored, and Isabel had called him dark. The two were the same man, and this conviction came with that infallible assurance, that turns a suspicion into a truth, beyond inquiry or doubt.

He got back to Glasgow—he hardly knew how. He was a little astonished to find himself there. But something, held in abeyance while he was out of the city, returned to him the moment he felt his feet on the wet pavements, and breathed the foggy atmosphere. He knew himself again as Robert Campbell, and with an accented display of his personality went into the discreet, non-observant refuge of his club. He was hungry, and he ate; in a whirl of intense feeling, and he drank to steady himself. Then he went to see his mother. He wanted a few words with her, about "the black-a-visored dandy."

He found Traquair House topsy-turvy. Christina was giving a dance and there was no privacy anywhere, but in his mother's room. She was dressed for the occasion, and wearing her pearl and diamond ornaments, and he had a moment's surprise and pleasure in her appearance.

"Christina is giving a bit dance," she said apologetically, "and the house is at sixes and sevens. It is the way o' young things. They must turn everything upside down. You look badly, Robert. What's wrong wi' you?"

"I have found Theodora."

"No wonder you look miserable. Where is she?"

"In California."

"Just the place for the like o' her. It is not past my memory, Robert, when the scum o' the whole earth was running there. She did right to go where she belongs."

"*Hush*, mother! The Wyntons have been staying with her for two weeks—and they were well entertained. She has a beautiful home, Isabel says."

"Have you seen Isabel?"

"For an hour or two. She sent her love to you."

"She can keep it. If it isn't worth bringing, it isn't worth having."

"Mother, you once spoke to me of a dark man staying at the Oliphants', and asked if Theodora had gone away with him. What made you ask that question?"

"Weel, Robert, she was always flitting quiet-like between this house and the Oliphants'; and twice he walked with her to the top o' the street, and they were a gey long time in holding hands, and saying good-bye."

"Why did you not tell me then?"

"I wanted to let the cutty tak' her run, and to see how far she would go. I had my een on her."

"I feel sure he is living near her, in California."

"Very close, indeed, no doubt o' that—pitying and comforting her. Why don't you do your own pitying?" she asked scornfully.

"I am going to California to-morrow."

"Don't! You'll get yoursel' shot, or tarred and feathered, or maybe lynched. Those West Americans are an unbidable lot; they are a law to themselves, and a very bad law, generally speaking. Bide at hame, and save your life. What for will you go seeking sorrow?"

"I want my son. Isabel says he is a very prince among boys of his age."

"No doubt o' it. There's enough Campbell in him to set him head and shoulders over ordinary lads. But you send men now, that you know where to send them, and let them get the lad away. They'll either coax or carry him."

"I want to see Theodora."

"If you have a thimbleful o' sense, let her alone. Old love is a dangerous thing to touch. She'll gie you the heartache o' the world again, and you'll be down at her feet for comfort."

"Did I ever down at her feet for anything?"

"If you are tired o' freedom, and easy days, tak' yoursel' to California. And what about the works, while you are seeking dool and sorrow?"

"I shall only be gone about six weeks."

"Fiddlesticks! You are going into captivity—settle your business before you go, and see that you don't forget your mother and sisters' bed and board is in it."

"I shall be back in six weeks. Good-bye, mother. Give my love to Christina and Jamie, I will not trouble them now."

"They are full o' their ain to-do at the present. I'll gie them your message. Good-bye, and see you are home, ere I send after you."

He went hastily downstairs, and could hardly believe he was walking through Traquair House. Pretty girls in dancing dresses were constantly passing him, young men were standing about in groups laughing and talking, and there was the sound of fiddles tuning up in the distance. It was all so unnatural that it affected him like the phantasmal background of a dream. And he was suffering as he had never before suffered in all his life, for jealousy, that brutal, overwhelming passion, had seized him, and he was in a fire constantly growing fiercer. Every thought he now had of Theodora fed it, and he hastened to his club and locked himself in his room. It was clear to him, that he must reach San Francisco by the swiftest means possible. In his condition, he felt delay might mean severe illness, if not insanity.

On the third morning after this determination, when he awoke he was out of sight of land. The wind was high, and the sea rough, but he was not sick, and the tumult of the elements suited his mood very well. He made no friends, and his trouble had such a strong personality, that many divined its reason.

"He looks as if he was after a runaway wife," said one man, and his companion answered: "I do not envy the fellow who has run away with her, he will get no mercy from yonder husband, and as for the wife!"

"God help her!"

"It is Campbell of the Campbell Iron Works near Glasgow," said a third. "I never heard that he had a wife. I shouldn't think he would care for one. He lives only for those black, blasted furnaces. He is happy enough among their slag and cinders, and smoke and flame. The country round them is like Gehenna, but it suits him better than green pastures and still waters. He isn't such a big man physically, but when he is marching round among his workers, ordering this, and abusing that, you would think he was ten feet high, and the men are sure of it. But Campbell isn't a bad fellow take him by and long; he goes to Kirk regular, and when he feels like giving, gives with both hands."

"We might ask him to join us in a game of whist."

"Nay, we had better let him alone. I think some American has maybe stolen one o' his patents, or got ahead o' him in some way or other; and he is going to have it out with him face to face—that would be like Robert Campbell. He is in a fighting mood anyway, and he wouldn't help our pleasure; far from it."

This opinion seemed the general one, so on the voyage he made no acquaintances, and when the steamer reached New York, he went directly from her to the railway station, and bought a ticket for San Francisco. His train was nearly ready, and in half-an-hour he was speeding westwards. For a few days he noticed nothing, but after he had passed St. Louis, he began to be astonished, and even slightly terrified at the immense space separating him from all he knew and loved. Often he had an urgent feeling that he must at once turn back, and he might have done so, if a still stronger feeling had not urged him forward. A journey from London to Edinburgh had always appeared to him a long one, and he had even felt Sheffield very far from Scotland; but the vastness of the present journey stupefied him. Before he reached San Francisco, he was subject to attacks of sentiment about his native city and country. He felt that he might never see them again.

But the end came at last, and San Francisco itself was the climax to all his wanderings. What could induce men to travel to the extremity of creation, and then build there a city so large and so splendid? How could they live and trade and make money so far from London and Paris and the centre of the civilized world? He went to the hotel at which his sister had stayed, and was obliged to admit that neither Glasgow, London, nor Paris had anything to rival its luxury and splendor. He began to be interested. He thought it might be worth while to dress a little for dinner.

For to a man as insular in mind as Robert Campbell, the scene was amazing. He could have gone every day for fifty years to Glasgow Exchange, and never witnessed anything like its cosmopolitan variety. There did not seem to be two persons alike in nationality, caste, or occupation. Even the Americans present were as diverse as the states from which they came. For the first time in his life it struck Robert Campbell, that Scotchmen might not possibly be the dominant race in all the world's great business thoroughfares.

He forgot his absorbing trouble for awhile, or at least it blended itself with elements that diluted and even changed its character. Thus, he began to fancy Theodora in her loveliest, proudest mood walking through this motley crowd. How would she regard him in it? How would the crowd regard her? He was busy with this question, when his attention was attracted by a man who reminded him of something known and familiar. "He at least has the look of a Scotchman," he mused. "I must have seen him before somewhere." If he had kept any memory of his own face and figure, perhaps he might have traced the resemblance home. But often as we look in our mirrors, who does not straightway forget what manner of man, or woman, they are?

For the stranger who had been able to interest Robert Campbell was his brother David. He was talking earnestly to two men whom Robert could not classify. They wore no coats, or vests, and the wide, strong leather belts with which they were girdled had somehow a formidable look; for though quite innocent of offensive weapons, they appeared to promise or threaten them. David was evidently their superior, perhaps their employer, but there was a kind of equality unconsciously exhibited which Robert wondered at, and did not approve. He felt that under no circumstances would he have been seen talking familiarly to men so manifestly of the lower classes.

But when they went away, David shook hands with them and then stood still a moment as if undecided about his next movement; and Robert watched him so fixedly, that he probably compelled his brother's attention. For he suddenly lifted his eyes, and they met Robert's eyes, and his face brightened, and he walked rapidly forward, till he placed his hands on Robert's shoulders, and with a glad smile cried:

"Robert, Robert Campbell! Don't you know me, Robert? Don't you know me?"

And Robert gazing into his eager face answered slowly: "Are you David—my brother? Are you David Campbell, my brother David?"

"Sit down, dear lad! I am David Campbell. Sure as death, I am your brother David. Get yourself together, and we will go and have dinner. You look as if you were going to faint—why, Robert!"

"I forgot dinner. I have had nothing to-day but a cup of coffee. Oh, David, David! what a Providence you are! How did you happen in here?"

"I came to watch for you. I have been coming every day for three weeks. Can you walk a few

steps now? You are requiring food. What made you forget to eat?"

"Trouble, great trouble—crazy love, and crazy jealousy. My wife and my child have left me!"

"I know."

"How do you know?"

"They are my dearest neighbors."

"Then you saw Isabel?"

"I did not. I was at the mine, but Theodora told me all about her visit, and as I knew Isabel would tell you where your wife and child were living, I have been watching for your arrival. Come now, and let us have something to eat. Afterwards we will talk."

"What a splendid dining-room!"

"Isn't it? And you will get a splendid meal!" He called a negro and said: "Tobin, bring us the best dinner you can serve."

The order was promptly and amply obeyed, and before dinner was half over Robert's irritability and faintness had vanished, and he was the usual assertive, domineering Robert Campbell. But not until they had finished eating, and were sitting in the shady court with their cigars would David allow their personal conversation to be renewed. He began it by saying:

"You will wish to see Theodora to-morrow, I suppose?"

"I wish to see her at once—to-night."

"That will not do! You want a good sleep, you want a bath and a barber, and some decent clothes on you."

"I am not going courting, David."

"Then you need not go at all. You will require to do the best courting you ever did, or ever can do, if you hope to get a hearing from Theodora."

"She is my wife, David, and she——"

"Will be far harder to win, than ever Miss Newton was."

"Win! She was won long ago."

"Won—and lost. You will not find this second winning an easy one."

"How do you know so much about her?"

"I knew all about her miserable life, before I knew her; but I finally met her at my friend Oliphant's."

"And it was the Oliphants who told you all her complainings. Mother never trusted them. It seems she was right—as usual."

"The Oliphants told me nothing. I heard all her life with you from my foster-mother, McNab."

"McNab, your foster-mother, David?"

"McNab nursed, and mothered me. She was the only mother I ever had."

"McNab! McNab! Now I begin to understand—and the Oliphants are your friends? And you stayed with them when in Glasgow?"

"Always. John Oliphant and I have been acquainted since we were lads together."

Then Robert burst into uncanny laughter and answered: "You are the man, David, I have been wanting to kill all the way across the Atlantic and across the continent." David looked at his brother full in the eyes, as men look at a wild animal, and asked slowly: "Why did you want to kill me, Robert? What harm had I done you?"

"When I told mother Theodora had gone away from me, her first words were: 'Has that black-avisoed dandy, staying at the Oliphants', gone with her?' She added, that she had 'seen you with Theodora and that at parting you held her hand—and seemed very loth to leave her.'"

"Mother was altogether wrong. I never was on any street in Glasgow with your wife. I was never seen in public with her anywhere. I respected your honor, as well as my own, and never by word, deed, or even thought wronged it."

"Why should mother have told such a—lie?"

"Because it is her nature to make all the trouble she can."

"But you advised Theodora to leave me?"

"Never. She acted entirely on her father's and mother's advice. But when I saw they had resolved to come to the United States, and knew nothing of the country, I told Mr. Newton about California, and advised him to make a home here. And as I and my daughters were travelling the

same road, I did do all I could, to make the long journey as easy as possible. Could any man seeing a party like the inexperienced minister, and his invalid wife, daughter, and her child, do less than help them all he could? You owe me some thanks, Robert, when you get sane enough to pay your debt."

"I do thank you, David, and what other debt do I owe you? Theodora had no money."

"Her father gave me money to buy two of the best staterooms for them. He paid all their expenses of every kind, and he bought the house in which they are now living, and paid for it. Since then he has preached, and lectured, and written, and made a very good living. He has had no necessity to be indebted to any one. Yet if he had needed money, I would have gladly loaned him all he required."

"Oh, David, David! Forgive me. I am in a fever. I do not know what I am saying. Ever since my wife left me, and wronged me——"

"Stop, Robert. Your wife never wronged you. She allowed you to wrong her six years too long. If she had not left you, she would have been dead long ago. To-morrow, you will see what love, and peace, and this splendid climate have done for her."

"And what has her desertion done for me?"

"If it has not taught you the priceless worth of the loving woman you were torturing daily, it has done nothing. Wait till you see your son, and then try and imagine the wretched child he would have been, if his mother had not braved everything for his sake and taken him beyond the power of the unnatural woman who hated him."

"She hated him because he was called David."

"And she hated me because she wronged me. If she had nursed me, she would have loved me. She sent me to Lugar Hill School because she hated me, and she would have sent your David there for the same reason. Theodora did well, did right to take any means to save the child from such a terrible life. If she had not done so, she would have been as cruel as his grandmother—and father."

"My head burns, and my heart aches! I can say no more now, David."

"Poor lad! My heart aches for you. But there is a happy future for Robert Campbell yet. I am sure of it. Put all thought and feeling away until the morning, and sleep, and sleep, as long as you can."

"I want to see Theodora early in the day."

"You cannot. As I told you before, the bath and the barber and the tailor are necessary. Have you forgotten the spotless neatness and delicacy of Theodora's toilet? You are going a-wooing, and you must be more careful in dressing for Theodora Campbell than you were in dressing for Theodora Newton."

"I cannot think any longer. I will consider what you say in the morning."

"You will be a new man, and begin a new life to-morrow."

"I want the old life."

"You do not. And you will never get it. The old life has gone forever."

In the morning he did not even want it. He he had slept profoundly, and when he had made all preparations for his visit to Theodora, he was quite pleased with his renovated appearance. David spoke of sending a message to her, but Robert thought a surprise visit would be best for himself. He would not give his wife an opportunity to sit down and recall all his past offences, and arrange the mood in which she would meet him, and the words she would say.

"We do not require to hurry," said David. "She is dismissing her classes for the summer holidays to-day, and will not be at liberty until near three o'clock. So we will eat lunch here, and then drive leisurely over to Newton Place."

Robert shrugged his shoulders impatiently. He thought his brother was much too leisurely, but when they were rolling pleasantly along through the beautiful land, he was not disposed to complain. It was indeed a New World to him. Half-a-mile from the Newton dwelling, they heard voices and laughter, and the clatter of horses' feet going at full speed, and immediately there came into view three young riders—two girls, and a tall, gallant-looking lad as their escort.

"*Look, Robert, look!*" cried David, much excited. "Here come my two girls, and your own little lad. They are racing, and will not stop. Be ready to give them a '*bravo!*' in passing." He had hardly finished speaking, ere the gay, laughing party were behind them. They were all in white linen, and the girls' long bright hair was flowing freely, and had pink ribbons in it; and the boy had a black ribbon at his knees, and on his shoes, and an eagle's feather in his cap. And their bright faces were full of light and mirth, and their voices a living tongue of gladness, as they passed crying joyously, "Uncle David! Papa! Papa!"

"My God!" ejaculated Robert. "Is it possible? Can that be my little David?"

"It is your David." Then both men were silent, until Robert heard his brother say, "This is Newton

Place," and he looked in astonishment at the house they were approaching. "It is a lovely spot," he said, "and there is a great deal of land round it."

"Yes, Newton made a good investment. The land has increased in value steadily ever since he bought it. You had better get out at this turning. I will take the buggy to the stable, and you can go to the door and ring for admittance." Robert did not like to object, and he did as directed. The door was standing wide open, but he rang the bell. A Japanese boy answered the summons, and opening a parlor he told Robert to take a seat. "Your card, sir," he asked, holding out the little tray to receive it.

Robert grew red and angry, but he took a card from his pocket-book, and threw it upon the tray, and when the boy had left the room he laughed bitterly, and muttered: "It is a fine thing for Robert Campbell to send his visiting card to his wife." He would not sit down, but stood glaring around the cool, dusky room, so comforting after the heat and sunshine. "I suppose I shall be kept waiting while my wife considers whether to see me or not; but she may consider too long. I will not be snubbed by any woman living."

As he made this resolution, Theodora entered. She came forward with both hands extended, and her face was radiant, and her voice full of happy tones. He would have taken her in his arms, but she kept his hands in hers and led him to a seat. Then Mr. Newton came in with David, and he threw open the windows, and let in the sunshine, and Theodora was revealed in all her splendid beauty. In a long white dress, with a white rose in her hair, she lacked nothing that rich materials or vivid colors could have given her. Her beautiful hair, her sparkling eyes, her exquisite complexion, the potent sense of health and vitality which was her atmosphere, commanded instant delight and admiration; and Robert could only gaze and wonder. How had this brilliant woman been evolved from the pale, frail, perishing Theodora he had last seen?

In a short time the three men went out together to look at the fruit trees and the wonderful flowers, and Theodora assisted her mother to prepare such a meal as she knew Robert enjoyed; and when they sat down to it, she placed Robert at her right hand. They were still at the table when David came galloping home, and in a few minutes he entered the room. Every eye was turned on the boy, but he saw at first no one but his uncle.

"Cousin Agnes won!" he cried, "won by two lengths, uncle. Isn't she great?" Then he noticed his father, and for a few moments seemed puzzled. There was not a word, not a movement as the boy gazed. Theodora held her breath in suspense. But it was only for a few moments; joyfully he exclaimed: "I know! I know!" and the next instant his arms were round his father's neck, and he was crying, "It is father! Father, father! Let me sit beside him, mother." And Theodora made room for the boy's chair between them.

The evening was a revelation to the discarded husband. Theodora sang wonderfully some American songs that Robert had never before heard—music with a charm entirely fresh and new; and David recited an English and Latin lesson, and then at his uncle's request, spoke in good broad Scotch Robert Burns' grand lyric, "*A Man's a Man for a' That*." Robert said little, but he drew the lad between his knees, and whispered something to him which transfigured the child's face. He trusted his father implicitly, he always had done, and his father had a heartache that night, when he thought of the wrong that might have been done to the helpless child.

Soon after nine o'clock, David Campbell said: "Come, brother, we have a short ride before us, and I like to close my house at ten; also I am sure you are weary."

Robert said he was, but he rose more like a man that had received a blow, than one simply tired. He could scarcely speak his adieus—and he could not answer Theodora's invitation to "call early on the following day" except in single words. "Yes—no—perhaps."

They were outside the Newton grounds before he spoke to his brother, then he said: "David, it is too hard. I don't understand. She never asked me to stay—the Wyntons were asked. I feel as if I had no business here. I had better go back to Glasgow. I will go back to-morrow."

"It is not her house. She rents her classroom, and pays her own and her child's board and lodging there. That is all. She had no right to ask you to remain. It is Mr. Newton's house, and he received you in a Christian and gentlemanly spirit. I do not care to say how I would have received a man who had treated my Agnes, or Flora, in the way Theodora was treated."

"I will go back to Glasgow to-morrow."

"You will do so at the peril of all your future happiness and prosperity."

Then they were silent until they reached a great white house standing in green depths of sweet foliage. Robert wondered and admired. Its vast hall, and the spacious room, so splendidly furnished, into which his brother led him, filled him with astonishment. Two pretty girls were sitting at a table drawing embroidery patterns, and they nearly threw the table over in their delight when their father entered.

"Here is your Uncle Robert Campbell!" he cried joyously. "Give him some of your noisy welcome, and then run away, you little cherubs, or you will miss your beauty sleep."

They were soon alone, and David turned out some of the lights and placed a box of cigars on the table, and the two men smoked in silence for a little while. Then Robert said: "You are very rich, I suppose, David."

"Yes, I am tolerably well off."

"And very happy?"

"As happy as a man can be, who has lost the dearest and sweetest of wives."

"But you will marry again?"

"Not until my daughters are married! I will never give them a stepmother; she might make me a stepfather. But when they are settled, I may marry again."

"Do you know any one likely to take the place of your dead wife?"

"No one can ever take her place. There is a very noble woman who may make her own place in my heart and home. I think it would be a very strong, sweet place."

"Is she Scotch?"

"No."

"English?"

"No."

"American?"

"Spanish-American."

"Beautiful?"

"Very—and of lovely disposition and great attainments. She is also rich, but that I do not count."

"What is her name?"

"Mercedes Morena. She is a Roman Catholic, a woman of fervent piety."

"Spanish. And a Papist. What will mother say?"

"All kinds of hard things—no doubt—though money makes a good deal of difference in mother's conclusions. But I care nothing for her opinion; a wife is a man's most sacred and personal relation. No one has a right to object to the woman he chooses. It is no one's business but his own."

"When I married Theodora, she looked as she looked to-night, only to-night she is far more lovely. Oh, David, I cannot give her up! She is tied to me by my heart-strings. I shall cease to live, if she refuses me."

"And, Robert, she is good as she is lovely. I marvel that you could live six years at her side, and not grow into her spiritual and mental likeness."

"The Campbells have a strong individuality, David."

"I tell you frankly, she has lifted me upward almost unconsciously. I would not do the things to-day I did without uneasiness four years ago. For instance, I would not to-day go into my mother's home and presence unknown to her. I would not to-day visit you and your works as a stranger. I enjoyed the incognito four years ago. It appears to me now dishonorable and vulgar. No one has told me so, or corrected me for it—the knowledge came with the gradual and general uplift of my ideals, through companionship and conversation with your wife. How did you escape her sweet influences?"

"I kept out of their way."

"Did you never make any effort to find your wife and child?"

"I spent four thousand pounds looking for her. Then Isabel advised me to give the search up, and leave the whole affair to Destiny. I did not mind the money—much, but I did mind terribly the talk and the newspapers. I felt it to be a great trial to face even my workmen."

"How did mother take the event?"

"She defied it—laughed at it—defended her cruelty—said she would do it all over again."

"I have no doubt of it."

"Dr. Robertson—who heard the whole story from Mrs. Oliphant—came out to the works to see me, and he said some awful things. He even told me, that until I repented of my sinful conduct, and acknowledged it before a session of the Kirk officers, he would refuse the Holy Communion."

"He did right, Robert, and I am glad to hear that Scotch dominies are still brave enough to reprove sin in the rich places of the Kirk."

"Then he went to mother, and told her the same thing."

"Well?"

"He could do nothing with mother. She ordered him to 'attend to his Kirk and his bit sermons, and leave her household alone.' I will not repeat their conversation—you would not believe any

one would dare to browbeat a minister as she did. He forbid her the sacramental occasion, and she ordered him out of her house. It made a great scandal. It made me wretched."

"What did you do about the Sabbath Day?"

"There was a new church very near to us, and they were a struggling congregation, with a boyish kind of minister. Mother was gladly received there. She rented the most extravagant pew, gave one hundred pounds to the church fund, and took the minister into her personal care and protection. Christina and her husband went with her. Mother owns the Kirk and the minister, and the elders and the deacons, and all the congregation now. Every one praises her orthodoxy and her generosity, and she does as she thinks right in Free St. Jude's."

David laughed heartily, and Robert continued: "All the ladies' societies meet in Traquair House, and all of them are prosperous. She is president of some, treasurer of others, and she entertains all of them with a splendid hospitality. And Christina tells me, she never fails to speak with pitying scorn of Dr. Robertson and his Kirk. I heard her myself one day tell them, 'that he was clean behind the times in Christian work. What is a Kirk worth?' she asked, 'without plenty of Ladies' Auxiliary Societies? The women in a Kirk must work, God knows the men won't! They spin a sovereign into the collection box, and think they have done their full share. Poor things, it is maybe all they can do! The women of Free St. Jude's must be an example to the Robertson Kirk, and the like o' it.'"

"She is a great woman, is mother, in some ways," said David, and he laughed disdainfully.

"She is," answered Robert. "I think I will go home to-morrow. Theodora no longer loves me, and yet, David, I love her a million times more than ever. No, I can not give her up; I can not, I will not! I will win her over again—if I stay a year to do it."

"You would be unworthy of love, or even life, if you gave her up. But you are worn out and not able to arrange yourself. Come, I will take you to your room, and to-morrow go and ask her plainly, if she still loves you."

"I will."

CHAPTER XIII

THE RECONSTRUCTED MARRIAGE

During the following three weeks, Robert lived in an earthly paradise. His brother drew him with cords of strong wisdom and affection always into the ways of pleasantness and peace. Theodora grew every day more lovely and more familiar; her little coolnesses vanished in the warmth of Robert's smiles, her shy pride was conquered by his persistent and passionate wooing; and the days went by in a glory of innocent amusements. Theodora and little David were clever and fearless riders, and they soon made the accomplishment easy to Robert, who was delighted with its joyful mastery, and greatly disappointed if bad weather, or any other event, prevented their morning gallop.

Very frequently he accompanied his brother into San Francisco, met many of her great financiers and merchants, and was their guest at such elaborate lunches and dinners as he had never dreamed possible. Or, he went with Mr. Newton to his vineyard and watched the process of raisin-making. And Theodora had a dance for him, and the lovely young girls present taught him the American steps, and made him wonder over their beauty, their brightness, their perfect ease of manner, and their manifest superiority and authority over male adorers, who appeared to be perfectly delighted with their own subjugation. A full course at the greatest university in the world would not have given him such a civilizing social education as the pretty girls of San Francisco did in a month.

But all things come to an end, and one day Robert received two letters which compelled a pause in this pleasant life. They were from his mother and his head manager. His mother wrote: "You be to come home, Robert Campbell; everything is going to the mischief wanting you! I am hearing that the men are on strike at the works, and that the fires have been banked, and the gates locked. Jamie Rathey is drinking too much wine and neglecting his business, and Christina is whimpering and scolding, for she knows well he will not behave himself until he gets the word from you. As for myself, I am barely holding up against the great strain, for there's none to help me, Christina having trouble enough in her own shoes, and My Lady Wynton having almost forgotten the way to her own home, since she was promoted to a residence in Wynton Castle. So, Robert, my lad, come back as quick as you can, for your mother is sorely needing you."

He showed this letter to his brother, and David only smiled. "Let me see your manager's letter, Robert," he asked, and when he had read it, he smiled still more significantly.

"I do not think your letters need give you any anxiety, Robert," he said. "The letter from Andrew Starkie, your manager, is dated two days later than mother's, and he does not even name a strike among your workers. He seems troubled only because the orders are so large he is afraid that the cash left at his command will not be sufficient to carry them out. We can send more money to-

day. I see no necessity for you to hurry. I want you to take a sail up to Vancouver, and another sail down to the Isthmus. You have given me no time yet. And what about your position with Theodora?"

"I must find that out immediately. The day after I came, I gave her a ring she valued highly—a ring that her pupils presented to her. It had been stolen, and I recovered it, and she was delighted when I put it on her finger. But when I offered her the wedding ring she returned it to me, she shook her head, closed her eyes, and would not look at it."

"Try her again. She has changed since then. I am sure she loves you now."

"I am just going to her," and he turned away with such a mournful look that his brother called him back.

"Look here, Robert," he said, "faint heart never won fair lady, or anything else for that matter. Your face is enough to frighten any woman. Women do not fancy despairers."

"David, you don't know what a hopeless task it is to court your wife. She knows all your weak points, and just how most cruelly to snub you."

"That is not Theodora's way! Speak to her kindly, but bravely. Be straight in all you say, for I declare to you she *feels* a lie."

"Great heavens! I should think I know that, David. I was often forced to break my promises to her, or in the stress of business I forgot them; and at last, she never noticed any promise I made. It used to make me angry."

"What made you angry?"

"O, the change in her face, when I said I would do anything. She never contradicted me in words, but I knew she was mentally throwing my promise over her shoulder. It was not pleasant."

"Very unpleasant—to her."

"I meant to myself."

"Well, Robert, when you are going to ask a woman to do you a miraculous favor, do not think of yourself, think of her. Forget yourself, this morning."

"O, I think constantly of Theodora."

David looked queerly at his brother, and seemed on the point of asking him a question, but he likely thought it useless. Robert went off trying to look hopeful and brave, but inwardly in a muddle of anxious uncertainty, because of his mother's letter. He found Theodora in a shady corner of the piazza; she was reclining in a Morris chair, and thinking of him. Her loving smile, her happy leisure, her morning freshness and beauty, her outstretched hand, made an entrancing picture. He placed a chair at her side, and sat down, and Theodora after a glance into his face asked:

"O, knight of the rueful countenance, what troubles you this beautiful morning?"

"I have had letters from home," he answered; "not pleasant letters."

"From your mother, then?"

"One of them is from mother."

"She could not write a pleasant letter, and if she could, she would not."

"Will you read it?"

"I would not cast my eyes upon anything her eyes have looked on."

"She says enough to make it necessary for me to go home."

"Home?"

"It is the only home I have. You——"

"Do not include me, in any remark about your home."

"Once you made my home your home."

"Never! There was no such thing as home, in Traquair House."

"But, my darling Dora—my darling wife——"

"I am not your wife. When I sent you the wedding ring back—that you said was yours, not mine—I divorced myself from all a wife's duties, pains, and penalties."

"You are my wife, and nothing but my death can make you free."

"Oh, but you are mistaken! You made a solemn contract with me, and you broke every condition of that contract."

"Suppose I did, that——"

"Your faithlessness made the contract null and void——"

"The law of England——"

"I care nothing about the law of England. I am now an American citizen."

"But, Dora, my dear, dear love, you will surely go back to Glasgow with me?"

"Not for all creation! I would rather die."

"Am I to go back alone? That is too cruel."

"Why do you wish to go back?"

"Have you considered my business, Dora?"

"No, I have thought only of you."

"But you must think of my business. How can you expect me to give it up? Why, the 'Campbell Iron Works' are almost historic. They were founded by my great-grandfather. They are making more money under my management than ever they did before."

"If you put your historic iron works before me, you are not worthy of me."

"My mother's, and my sister's livelihoods are in the works. They look to me to protect them."

"If you put your mother, and your sisters before me, you are not worthy of me."

"They love me, Dora."

"Your mother has many investments. She is rich. Your sisters are well married. Neither of them would put you before their husbands, why should you put them before your wife and son? If they had loved you, they would not have broken up your home, and driven your wife and child away from you. You were a provider of cash, a giver of social prestige to them—no more."

"Then you expect me to give up my family, my business, my country—everything."

"I will have everything, or nothing."

She rose as she said these words, and stood looking into his face with eyes full of love and trouble.

"Then God help me, Theodora," he faltered, "for this hour I die to every hope of happiness in this life!" He lifted her hand, and his tears dropped on it as he kissed it. "Farewell! Farewell!"

He was standing before her the image of despairing Love, and she lifted her eyes, and they met the passionate grief in his. She could not bear it. "Oh, Robert!" she sobbed, "Oh, Robert, I do love you. I have loved none but you. I never shall love any other." She laid her head against his shoulder, and he silently kissed her many times, and then went slowly away.

He went straight to his brother with his sorrow, and David listened in grave silence, until the story of the interview was over. Then he said softly:

"*Poor Theodora!*"

Robert was astonished, even hurt by the exclamation. "Why do you pity Theodora?" he asked. "It is I you ought to pity."

"You ought to have had pity on yourself, Robert. Of course, you are miserable, and you will be far more miserable. How could you bear to give your wife such a cowardly disappointment; how could you do it?"

"I do not understand you, David—cowardly——"

"Yes, that is the word for it. You have been persuading her for a month, that you loved her before, and above, all earthly things. As you noticed, she did not at first believe this, but I am sure the last two weeks she has taken all your protestations into her heart."

"I told her nothing but the truth."

"And as soon as you think she loves you——"

"She does love me—she says so."

"You take advantage of her love, and ask her to go back to a life that almost killed her, before she fled from it. Poor Theodora! And I call your act a selfish, cowardly one."

"What did you expect me to do?"

"To give up everything for her."

"To give up the works—the Campbell Iron Works! To give them up! Sell them perhaps at a loss! Did you expect I would do this?"

"I did. I supposed you wished her to be again your wife."

"You know I wished it."

"I do not believe you. I think as your holiday was over, you wished to back out of your promise, and you knew the easiest way to do so was to require her to go back to Glasgow."

"Back out! What do you mean, David?"

"Your mother orders you home, and rather than offend her, or meet her sarcasms, you ask Theodora to do what you well know she will never do. Having taught her to love you again, you make her an offer that it is impossible for her to accept; then you leave her to suffer once more the pang of wrong and despairing love. Cowardly is too mild a word; your conduct is that of a scoundrel."

"My God, David, are you turning against me?"

"Robert, Robert! I am ashamed of you. Suppose Theodora went back to Glasgow with you, what would be her position, and what would people—especially women—say about it? She would be a wife who ran away from her husband, but whom her husband discovered, and brought back to her duties. Upon this text, what cutting, cruel speeches mother and all the women in your set would make. The position would be a triumph for you—some men would envy and admire you, all would praise you for standing up so persistently for the authority of the male. But poor Theodora, who would stand by her?"

"I would."

"And your defence of your wife would be counted as a thing chivalrous and magnanimous in you, but it would be disgraceful in her to require it. She, the poor innocent one, would get all the blame and the shame, you, the guilty one——"

"Stop, David! I never thought of her return in this light."

"I can imagine mother and the rest of the women chortling and glorying over the runaway wife brought back."

"I tell you, I would stand by her through thick and thin."

"But you could not prevent the women hounding her, and upon my honor, Robert, she would deserve it."

"No, David. She would not deserve it."

"I say she would."

"What for?"

"For coming back with you. Every woman with a particle of self-respect would feel that she had betrayed her sex, and dishonored her wifehood, and they would despise, and speak ill of her for doing so. And she would deserve it."

"Then all this month you have been expecting me to come here to live?"

"There was no other manly and gentlemanly way out of your dilemma; and your coming at all authorized the expectation."

"The iron works are not all, David. Do you think I care nothing for my family, and my country?"

"Do you think you are the only person who cares for their family? What about Theodora's feelings? Her father gave up his ministry, and taking his wife and the savings of his whole life, he came here to the ends of the earth with his child, because you had treated her and her son cruelly. Now you ask her to leave them here, in a new country, where they have not one relative—in their old age——"

"I forgot their claim. I will pay all their expenses back to England."

"Mrs. Newton could not bear the journey back. Mr. Newton has lost all his interests in England; what money they have is invested here. Oh, if you do not instantly see their pitiful condition without their daughter, it is useless to explain it to you. Then there is their grandchild. He is the light of their life. If their grandchild was taken away, they would be bereft indeed."

"Their grandchild is my son. My claim is paramount. I must have my boy at all hazards. I want him educated in Scotland, and brought up a Scotchman, not an American. He will be heir to the works, and must understand the people, and the conditions he has to live with, and work with."

"You will never make a Scotchman of Davie. You will never get him out of this country, or this state. You will never make an iron-worker of David, he loves too well the free, and open-air life; and the blue skies, and sunshine."

"He is under authority, and must come."

"Under his mother's authority yet, and mind this, Robert, *you will not be permitted* to take him from her; *not be permitted*, I say."

"My God, what am I to do?"

"Do right. There is no other way to be happy."

"There are two rights here, my mother and my sisters have claims as well as my wife and my

son."

"Then for God's sake go to your mother and your sisters! Why did you come to me for advice, when you are still tied to your mother's apron-strings."

"Now, you are angry at me."

"Yes, and justly so. But if you are bent on Glasgow, the sooner you start for the dismal city, the better."

"I will go at once. Will you let some one drive me to San Francisco?"

"I will tell Saki to bring a buggy to the door in half-an-hour."

"Don't go away from me, David—don't do that! I am miserable enough without your desertion."

"I am disappointed in you, Robert—sorely, sorely disappointed. I have had a dream about our future lives together, and it is, it seems, only a dream. Good-bye, Robert! I do not feel able to watch the ending of all my hopes, so Saki will drive you to the city. And you, too, will be better alone. Good-bye, good-bye!"

So they parted, and Robert was driven into the city and took his ticket for the next train bound for New York. He had some hours to wait, and he went to the hotel he had frequented with his brother, and sat down in the office. Undoubtedly there was a secret hope in his heart, that David would follow him, and he watched with anxiety every newcomer. But David did not follow him, and when he could wait no longer, he went to his train. Bitter disquiet and uncertainty wrung his heart, and he was glad when the moving train permitted him to isolate himself in a dismal, sullen stillness.

He had also a violent nervous headache, and physical pain was a thing he knew so little about, that he was astonished at his suffering, and resented it. "And this is the end of everything!" he muttered to himself, "the end of everything! It was brutal to expect me to give up my business, my family, and my country," and then he ceased, for something reminded him that Theodora had once made that same sacrifice for him. In any crisis the "set" of the life will count, and the "set" of Robert's life was selfishness. This passion now boldly combated all dissent from his personal satisfaction, denied any supremacy but his will, drowned the voice of Honor, the pleadings of Love, and insisted on his own pleasure and interest, at all costs.

Sorrow, if it be possible, takes refuge in sleep; but sleep was far from Robert Campbell. His body was racked with physical suffering that he knew not how to alleviate; his soul was aching in all its senses. He was assailed by memories, every one of which he would like to have met with a shriek. All he loved was behind him, every moment he was leaving them further behind. And his God dwelt—or visited—only in sacred buildings. He never thought of Him as in a railway car, never supposed Him to be observant of the trouble between his wife and himself, would not have believed that there was present an Omniscient Eye, looking with ancient kindness on all his pain, and ready to relieve it. And oh, the terror of those long nights, when suffering, sorrow, and remorse were riotous, and where to him, *God was not!*

On the second day, the conductor began to watch Campbell. He induced him to take a cup of strong coffee and lie down, and then went among the passengers seeking a physician. "I am a physician," said a young man whose seat was not far from Robert's. "I am Dr. Stuart of San Francisco. I have been watching the man you mean; he is either insane or ill. I will not neglect him."

Robert was really ill; he grew better and worse, better and worse constantly, until they were near Denver. Then Dr. Stuart went to his side and made another effort to induce him to converse. "You are ill," he said. "I am a physician and know it. You must stop travelling for a few days. Get off at Denver. Where is your home?"

"In Scotland. I am going there."

"Impossible—as you now are. Get off at Denver. Go to an hotel, and send for this physician," and he handed him a slip of paper on which the name was written. Robert glanced at it, and held it in his hand.

"Put it in your vest pocket."

He did so, but his hands trembled so violently, and he looked into the man's face with eyes so full of unspeakable suffering and sorrow, that the stranger's heart was touched. He resolved to get off at Denver with him, and see that he was properly attended to.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"I am Robert Campbell."

"Brother of David Campbell of San Francisco?"

"Yes."

"He is as good a man as ever lived. I know him well."

"Write and tell him his brother is dying—he will come to me."

"Oh, no! you are not dying. We will not bring him such a long journey. I will stay with you, until you are better—but off the train you must get."

"Thank you! I will do as you say. I will pay you well."

"I am not thinking of 'pay.' I know your brother, it is pay enough to serve him, by helping you."

Robert nodded and tried to smile. He put his hand into the doctor's hand, went with him to a carriage, and they were driven to an hotel. During the change, he did not speak, he had all that he could manage, to keep himself erect and preserve his consciousness. But there are mystically in our faces, certain characters, which carry in them the motto of our souls; and the motto the doctor read on Robert's face was—*No Surrender*. He told himself this, when he had got his patient into bed, and surrounded him with darkness and stillness and given him a sedative. "Some men would proceed to have brain fever," he mused, "but not this man. He will fight off sickness, resent it, deny it, and rise above it in a few days. I'll give him a week—but he will not succumb. There's no surrender in that face, though it is white and thin with suffering."

For four days, however, Robert wavered between better and worse, as the gusts of frantic remorse and despair assailed him. Then he forgot everything but the irreparable mistake that had ruined his life, and during the paroxysms whispered continually: "Oh, God! oh, God! that it were possible to undo things done!" a whisper that could hardly be heard by mortal ears, but which passed beyond the constellations, and reached the ear and the heart of Him, who dwelleth in the Heaven of Heavens.

It was in one of those awful encounters of the soul with itself, that he reached the depth of suffering in which we see clearly; for there is no such revealer as sorrow. Suddenly and swift as a flash of light, he knew his past life, as he would know it in eternity—its selfishness, its cruelty, its injustice. Then he heard words which pealed through his soul, with heavenly-sweet convincingness, and left their echo forever there. For awhile he remained motionless and speechless, and let the comforting revelation fill him with adoring love and gratitude. And those few minutes of pause and praise were not only sacrificial and sacramental, they were strong with absolution. He knew what he must do; he had not a doubt, not a reservation of any kind. In a space of time so short that we have no measure for it, he had surrendered everything, and been made worthy to receive everything.

O, Mystery of Life, from what a depth proceed thy comforts and thy lessons! Even the chance acquaintance had had his meaning, and had done his work. Robert had some wonderful confidences with him, as he lay for a week free of pain, and quietly gathering strength for the journey he must take the moment he was able for it. He had no hesitation as to this journey. He knew that he must go back to Theodora—back to the same goal he had turned away from. Peradventure the blessing he had rejected might yet be waiting there.

In ten days Dr. Stuart permitted him to travel, and without pause or regret he reached San Francisco, refreshed himself, and taking a carriage drove out to the Newtons'. It was afternoon when he reached the place, and it had the drowsy afternoon look and feeling. He sent the carriage to the stable, and told the driver to wait there for further orders—and then walked up to the house. As he passed Mr. Newton's study he saw him sitting reading, and he opened the door and went in. The preacher looked up in astonishment, rose and walked towards him.

"Robert," he said softly, "is that you?"

"Yes, father. I have been very ill. I have come back to ask your forgiveness—and *hers*—if she will listen to me."

"I am glad to see you. Sit down. You look ill—what can I do for you?"

"Listen to me! I will tell you all."

Then he opened his heart freely to the preacher, who listened with intense sympathy and understanding—sometimes speaking a word of encouragement, sometimes only touching his hand, or whispering, "Go on, Robert." And perhaps there was not another man in California, so able to comprehend the marvellous story of Robert's return unto his better self. For he had in a large measure that penetrative insight into spiritualities, which connect man with the unseen world; and that mystical, incommunicable sense of a life, that is not this life. He knew its voices, intuitions, and celestial intimations—things, which no one knoweth, save they who receive them. And when Robert had finished his confession, he said:

"I also, Robert, have stood on that shining table-land which lies on the frontier of our consciousness; and there received that blessed *certainty of God* which can never again leave the soul. And you must not wonder at the suddenness and rapidity of the vision. Every experience of this kind *must* be sharply sudden. That chasm dividing the seen from the unseen, must be taken at one swift bound, or not at all. You cannot break that leap. Thank God, you have taken it! This remembrance, and the power it has left behind, can never depart from you; for

*'Whoso has felt the Spirit of the Highest,
Cannot confound, nor doubt Him, nor deny.'*

The whole world may deny, but what is the voice of the whole world to those, who have *seen* and *heard* and *known*

*'A deep below the deep,
And a height beyond the height,
Where our hearing is not hearing,
And our seeing is not sight'?*

What you have told me, Robert, also goes to confirm what I have before noticed—that this great favor of vision is usually the cup of strength, given to us in some great agony or strait."

"Now, father, may I see Theodora?"

"She went to her room to rest after our early dinner. She also has suffered."

"She is in the parlor. I hear her singing. Let us go to her."

At the parlor door they stood a minute and listened to the music. It was strong and clear, and her voice held both the sorrow and the hope that was in her heart:

*"My heart is dashed with cares and fears,
My song comes fluttering and is gone,
But high above this home of tears
Eternal Joy sings on—sings on!"*

The last strain was a triumphant one, and to its joy they entered. Then Theodora's face was transfigured, she came swiftly towards them, and Mr. Newton laid her hand in Robert's hand, and so left them. And into the love and wonder and thanksgiving of that conversation we cannot enter; no, not even with the sweetest and clearest imagination.

In a couple of hours David came, and Robert joined his father and brother, and Theodora went to assist her mother in preparing the evening meal. She found her standing by an open window, wringing her thin, small hands, and silently weeping.

"Mother, mother!" cried Theodora, clasping her in her strong arms; "why are you weeping?"

"It is that man here again," Mrs. Newton faltered. "I thought that trouble was over. I can bear no more of it, dear."

"He will never give you another moment's grief, dear mother. He is totally changed. He has had an experience; he has been what we call—converted—mother."

"Do you believe that?"

"With all my soul! He has given up everything that made sin and trouble."

"Then all is well. I am satisfied."

"Robert will not be happy until you have welcomed him."

"Then I will go and do so."

That evening as they sat together David said: "Father and mother, I wish to speak for my brother and myself. We are going into a business partnership, as soon as Robert has been to Glasgow, and turned all his property into cash. Whatever he is worth, I will double, and 'Campbell Brothers, Bankers,' I believe, will soon become an important factor in the financial world of San Francisco."

"It is a good thing, David. You two working as one will be a multitude. No one knows the financial conditions here better than you do, David, and as an investor, I do not believe you have ever made a mistake."

"I think not, father. Well, then, we will all go into San Francisco as soon as Robert has rested a little, and select a home for him. I know of two houses for sale, either of which would be suitable."

"And when the house is chosen," said Robert, "I hope, mother, you will assist Theodora in furnishing it just as she wishes, keeping her in mind, however, that she must be quite extravagant. Simplicity and economy are out of place in a banker's home, for entertaining on a large scale will have to be done."

It was arranged that David should go East with Robert, and see him safely on board a good liner, and the details of these projects occupied the family happily for three days; at the end of which they went to San Francisco. When Theodora's future home had been selected, David and Robert took the train for New York; the whole family sending them off with smiles and blessings. And Robert thought of his previous leaving, and was unspeakably happy and grateful.

On their journey to New York, the brothers settled every detail of their banking business, and Robert was amazed at his brother's financial instinct and business enterprise. "We shall make a great deal of money, Robert," he said, "and we must do a great deal of good with it. I have some ideas on that subject which we will talk over at the proper time."

So the journey was not tiresome, and when it was over, both were a little sorry. But work was to do, and Robert knew that he would be restless until he had finished his preparations for his new life, and got rid of all encumbrances of the past.

The sea journey was short and pleasant, and it removed the most evident traces of his illness. His face was thinner, but that was an improvement; and his figure, if more slender was more active, and there was about him the light and aura of one who is thoroughly happy, and at peace with God and man.

As soon as he arrived in Glasgow, he went to his club, and looked over the accumulation of letters waiting him. It was raining steadily—that summer rain which we feel to be so particularly unwanted. The streets were sloppy, the air damp, the sky dull, and not brightened by the occasional glints of pale sunshine; but when he had relieved his mind of its most pressing business, he went to Traquair House. Jepson opened the door for him, but the man looked ill, and said he was on the point of leaving Glasgow. Robert could now sympathize with him, for he had learned the agony of constant headache, and he said so. The man looked at him in amazement, and he told McNab of the circumstance, adding: "The master was never so kind to me in all his life, as he was to-day." McNab answered curtly:

"No wonder! He has been living wi' decent folk lately, and decency tells. Them Californians are the civilest o' mortals. You'll mind my ain lad, that was here about four years syne?"

"I'll never forget him, Mistress McNab. A perfect gentleman."

"Weel, he was, in a way, a Californian—born, of course, in Scotland, but knocked about among the Californians, until he learned how to behave himsel' to rich and poor and auld and young, and special to women and bairns."

While this conversation was going on Robert sat in the old dining-room. It was dismal enough at all times, especially so in rainy weather, and more specially so when it was summer rain, and no blazing fire brightened the dark mahogany and the crimson draperies.

His mother was at home, but he was told Christina was occupying the little villa he had bought at Inverkip. He had not been asked for its use, and it contained a good deal of Theodora's needlework, and much summer clothing. For a few minutes he was angry, but he quickly reasoned his anger away. "There are no happy memories about any of the things. It is better they should not come into our future life," he said to himself. He wondered his mother did not come, and asked Jepson if she had been told. "Yes, she had been told, and had sent word 'she would be down as soon as dressed.'"

It was an hour before she was dressed, and Robert felt the gloom and chill of waiting. Indeed, he was so uncomfortably cold, that he asked for a fire, and was standing before it enjoying its blaze and warmth when Mrs. Campbell entered.

"Good gracious, Robert!" she cried, "a fire in August! I never heard tell of such a thing."

"I am just from a warm, sunny country, mother, and I have also been ill, and so I feel the cold."

"Well, well! Put a screen between me and the blaze. I am not auld enou' yet, to require a blaze in August."

"To-morrow, it will be the first of September. How are you, mother?"

"Fine. That foolish fellow you left over the works came here—came special, mind ye—to tell me you were vera ill. He said he had received a letter from a Dr. Stuart, living in a place called Denver, saying you were at Death's door, or words to that effect; but I sent him back to his proper business wi' a solid rebuke for leaving it. I'm not the woman to thank any one for bringing me bad news—lies, too, very likely."

"No, I was very ill."

"Say so, where was there any necessity for the man to be sending word o' it half round the world? Nobody here could help. It was just making discomfort for no good at all."

"I suppose he thought, if I died, my friends might possibly like to know what had become of me."

"I wasna feared for you dying. Not I! I knew Robert Campbell had mair sense than to die among strangers. Then there was the works left to themselves, as it were, and that weary woman you've been seeking mair than four years, just found out, and I said to myself, if I know Robert Campbell, he won't be stravaganting to another world, whilst his affairs in this world are all helter-skelter."

"I have come here to put my affairs as I desire them. Then I am going back to California."

"I do not believe you. You are just leeing to me."

"Mother, I am going to sell the works. I want to live in California."

"To please Theodora," she said scornfully.

"To please Theodora and myself. I like the country; it is sunny and delightful, and the people are wonderfully gracious and kind."

"Of course, they have to be more than ordinary civil, or what decent people would live among the crowd that went there?"

"That element has disappeared. There are no finer men and women in the world than the

Californians. I shall ask for citizenship among them."

Then the temper she had been trying to control broke loose, and carried all before it. "You base fellow!" she cried, "you traitor to all good! You are unworthy of the country, the home, and the business you desert. I am ashamed to have brought you into the world. To surrender everything for a creature like your runaway wife is monstrously wicked—is incredibly shameful!"

"If I could surrender more for Theodora, I would gladly do it, so that I might atone for what I, and you, made her suffer. And she has not taken me to California—you drove her there."

"I'm gey glad I did."

"And as she will not come back here, I must go to her there. Your own work, mother."

"Very good. I accept it. I'm proud o' it."

"My dear mother——"

"Stop palavering! You can cut out 'dear.'"

"Let us talk reasonably. I came here to ask whether you will remain a shareholder in the works, or withdraw your money?"

"I'll withdraw every bawbee out o' them. Your sisters can do as they like. And may I ask, what you are going to do? Become a miner, and carry a pick and a dinner-pail? That would be a proper ending for Robert Campbell."

"I am going to join my brother David in a banking business in San Francisco."

"Your brother David! Your brother David! So he is in California, too? *Dod!* I might have known it—the very place for the like o' him."

"He is one of the princes of Californian finance. He dwells in a palace. He is worth many millions of dollars."

"*Dollars!*" and she spit the word out of her mouth with inexpressible scorn—"dollars! what kind o' money is that? I wouldn't gie you a copper half-penny for your dollar."

"A dollar is worth just one hundred half-pennies."

"I'm not believing you. Why should I? And pray how did you foregather wi' your runawa' brother?"

"He is Theodora's neighbor, and she is educating his daughters."

"And pray how did Dora happen on your brother? It is a vera singular coincidence, and I am no believer in coincidences. If the truth were known, they have all o' them been carefully planned, and weel arranged."

"She met my brother here in Glasgow."

"She did nothing o' the kind."

"She met him at the Oliphants'."

"Oh, oh! I see, I see! The dark man so often riding about wi' Mistress Oliphant was your brother?"

"He was my brother David, and he was also McNab's foster-son."

"Great heavens! What a fool Margaret Campbell has been for once! To think o' Flora McNab making a mock o' me. She told me he was her son."

"So he was, in a way. McNab suckled him, and mothered him, as well as she could. She was the only mother he had."

"You lie, Robert Campbell. I was his mother."

"You ought to be proud of it."

"Is his wife alive or dead?"

"She is dead. He will marry again soon."

"Some of the Oliphant kin, I suppose?"

"No. She is not a Scotchwoman."

"I hope to goodness she isn't English."

"She is Spanish-American, a great beauty, and almost as rich as David himself."

"*Humph!* I am believing no such fairy-tale. Why would a rich beauty be wanting David Campbell?"

"David is a very handsome man."

"Mrs. Oliphant seemed to think so!"

"Every one thinks so."

"I hope she is not a Methodist."

"She is a Roman Catholic."

"A Roman Catholic! A Campbell can get no further downward than that. Your forefathers fought—and, thank God, mostly killed—a Roman Catholic on sight. Ah weel, I suppose it is the money."

"Oh, no! David would not marry for money."

"He didn't anyhow. He married a poor, plain, beggarly sewing-girl."

"She was a minister's daughter, and he loved her."

"Weel, Robert Campbell, I hope you have emptied your creel o' bad news. If you have any more tak' it back to where it came from. I'll not listen to another word from you."

"I must ask you, what you wish about this house? If you desire to remain here, I will not sell it."

"I'll not stop in it, any longer than it takes me to move out o' it. You are no kin to me now, and thank God, I am not come to a dependence on a Scotch turncoat, or even an American citizen!"

"Do you think Christina would like the use o' it?"

"Christina is doing better. Rathey is going to be man-of-law and private secretary to Sir Thomas, and they are to have the Wynton Dower House to live in, a handsome place in a big garden."

"Will you go with her, mother?"

"It is none of your business where I go. I would not ask a shelter from you, if I were going to the poor-house. I am going where I'll be rid of whimpering wives, and whining bairns, and fleeching, flattering folk, who want siller for their fine words. I'm done with the old, unhappy house. Sell it as soon as you like. It was an ill day when I stepped o'er its threshold."

"Then good-bye, mother. Say a kind word to me. We may meet no more in this world." He advanced towards her and put out his hand.

She rose and lifted her solitaire pack of cards—which was lying on the table by which she stood—and began shuffling them in her hands. "You ungrateful son of your mother Scotland and your mother Campbell!" she cried. "You traitor to every obligation due your family! You slave to a Methodist wife, go to your Papist-loving brother. California is a proper home for you. *Dod!* I am sick of the whole lot o' you—lads and lassies baith—Isabel is o'er much 'my lady' for any sensible body to thole; and Christina is aye sniffing and worrying about her bairns, or her silly, fiddling husband. I am sick, tired—heart and soul tired—o' the serpent brood o' you Campbells; and you may scatter yoursel's o'er the face o' the whole earth, for aught I care," and with these words she flung the cards in her hand far and wide, over the large room. She was in an incredible passion, and Robert put his hand on her arms, crying in terror and amazement:

"Mother! Mother! Mother! For God's sake I entreat——"

"Out o' my sight instanter!" she answered. "Scotland and Margaret Campbell is weel rid o' the like o' you." She shook off his restraining hands, and clasping her own behind her back, she went to a window and stood there looking far over the dull, wet street to some vision conjured up by her raging, scornful passion.

Robert again approached her. "I am going, mother," he said. "God forgive us both! Farewell!" and he once more offered her a pleading hand. She looked at it a moment, but kept her own resolutely clasped behind her, and finally with an imperative motion uttered one fierce word:

"*Go!*"

She was still at the window when he reached the sidewalk, and he raised his hat, and looked at her as he passed. But her gaze was intentionally far off, and if she saw this last act of entreaty, she was beyond the wish, or even the ability to notice it.

Robert was very miserable, so much so that he forgot to write to Theodora, and when he awoke after a restless night and remembered the omission he said with a sigh: "Theodora is right. It must be everything or nothing. If I could get her to come back here, it would be the old trouble over again—and worse."

That day he went to the Wyntons', and talked with Sir Thomas about the sale of the works. He was in hopes that he could form a syndicate, buy the works, and make himself president. And at first the baronet was enthusiastic about the scheme, but day after day, and week after week went on, and nothing definite was arrived at. Isabel had strong family feeling, and she was sullenly silent about the sale of the furnaces, and her brother's settlement in America. The works had done so well under Robert's direction, that her income had been nearly doubled, and she thought that he ought to continue his labor, where Providence had enabled him to do so well for the family. Finally, Robert abandoned the Wynton scheme, and went to Sheffield to see his old business friend Priestley. The visit was destined and propitious, and in three weeks the transfer of the Campbell Iron Works to a Yorkshire iron company was completed, and Robert was ready to return home.

He was glad of it. His visit had been a painful and separating one. His sisters had disappointed him. He was sure Isabel had prevented her husband's desire to buy the works, and she had let

him feel, in her cold, silent way, that she disapproved of his selling them, and still more disapproved of his settlement in America. And the selfish little soul of Christina complained constantly of Robert leaving her money in strange hands. She thought it was his duty to stay in Glasgow and manage the works for his mother's and sisters' benefit; and when the sisters talked of the matter together, they expressed themselves very plainly about that "Englishwoman who had been so unfortunate to their house."

Robert went from Sheffield to Liverpool, and did not return to Glasgow. He was glad and grateful to set his face westward and homeward. Nothing of importance happened on the journey, and when he reached San Francisco his brother David was waiting at the railway depot to welcome him. They clasped hands and looked into each other's eyes, and everything was well said that words would have said clumsily. It was then nearly dark, and they went to the hotel for the night. Far into the midnight hours they sat discussing their business future, and David was astonished at the fortune which Robert had made out of the old works. And Robert was still more astonished at the fortune which his brother had made out of his relatively small capital, and his own business sagacity and native industry and prudence.

In the early morning David wished his brother to go and look over the new home which Theodora had been preparing, but Robert said he wanted to see Theodora above all things, and would go at once out to the Newtons'.

"Very good," replied David, "then you will go alone, for I am to bring Mercedes with me, and I cannot call for her before ten. It is a charming thing, Robert, that Mercedes and Theodora love each other dearly. They have worked together constantly over your new home, and made it a lovely place. I suppose you will be married this afternoon."

"Married! Married! Does Theodora expect it?"

"I think all preparations are made for the little ceremony. I would not disapprove, if I were you, Robert."

"Disapprove! What do you mean? I shall be the most joyful man in the world."

Breakfast was scarcely over when Robert reached Newton Place; and Theodora came running to meet him with a large apron over her pretty white dress. But oh, how beautiful was her beaming, smiling face, how tender her embrace, how sweet the loving words with which she welcomed him. He was paid, and overpaid, for all he had suffered, and all he had resigned.

"We shall be married this afternoon, eh darling?" he asked.

"All shall be as you wish, my love. I am ready," she answered.

Such a delightful morning! Such a happy hurry in the house! Such sweet laughter, and pleasant calling of each other's names! Such enthusiasm over Mercedes' beauty in her pink satin costume! Such an enjoyable little lunch at one o'clock! Such a bewildering number of pleasant events crowded into a few hours. If ever there was in any earthly home a sense of heavenly love and joy, it was in the Newton house that day. Angels might—and probably did—rest in the flower-scented atmosphere of its spotless rooms, for if angels rejoice with the sinner forgiven and accepted, surely still more will they rejoice in the fruition of tried and accepted love, and in the unselfish affection of those who rejoice, because others rejoice.

Just before three o'clock Mr. and Mrs. Newton went together to the parlor and sat down by a small table covered with a white cloth, on which there lay a Bible and a Book of Common Prayer. A few minutes later David and Robert came in, and stood talking to them, until the door opened and Theodora and Mercedes entered. Then Mr. Newton stood up, and Robert and Theodora stood before him, and renewed their marriage vows in the most solemn and simple manner. There were no decorations, no music, no attendants, no company, nothing but a prayer, and the old, old ritual of a thousand years. But after it Mr. Newton told them in a few sentences, how supremely important love is to the soul.

"It perishes without love," he said. "To the soul love is blessing, love is salvation, love is the guardian angel, and without love the centrifugal law easily overpowers and sweeps it far out from its divine source, towards the cold frontiers of the material and the manifold."

Then there was a tender and cheerful good-bye, and Robert and Theodora went to their new home. They wandered hand in hand through all its beautiful rooms, and through the scented walks of its fair garden, and Robert said: "It is a palace in Paradise, darling."

"And I am so happy! So proud, and so happy, dear Robert!" she answered.

After a perfect dinner at their own table, Robert went to his wife's parlor to smoke his cigar, and then he told her all about his last unhappy visit to his family, and his native land.

It was the necessary minor note in their joyful wedding song, but it soon returned to its triumphant dominant, since they must needs rejoice in that loving Power which had so surely "tempered all things well,"

*"Had worked their pleasure out of pain,
And out of ruin golden gain."*

And as they talked in the splendid room, with its sweet odors and dim light, their voices grew

lower, and they were content to whisper each other's names, and fall into sweet silences, thrilled with such soft stir, as angels in their cloud-girt wayfarings know, when they "feel the breath of kindred plumes." And thus,

*"The tumult of the time disconsolate,
To inarticulate murmurs died away."*

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JAN VEDDER'S WIFE
THE BOW OF ORANGE RIBBON
REMEMBER THE ALAMO
FRIEND OLIVIA
A ROSE OF A HUNDRED LEAVES
THE LION'S WHELP
THE BLACK SHILLING
THE BELLE OF BOWLING GREEN
CECILIA'S LOVERS
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