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**PLAYING WITH FIRE**

**BY AMELIA E. BARR**

**AUTHOR OF "ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE," "THE BOW OF ORANGE RIBBON," ETC.**

*"Truth is like water; the moment it stands it stagnates; creeds are merely stagnant truth."*

**ILLUSTRATED BY  
HOWARD HEATH**

**WILLIAM BRIGGS  
TORONTO  
1914**

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**WITH SINCERE RESPECT AND EVERY GOOD WISH  
I INSCRIBE THIS NOVEL  
TO  
WILLIAM JOHN MATHESON, ESQ.  
OF HUNTINGTON, LONG ISLAND**

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**""Good-bye, Richard!' she cried. 'Good-bye, dearest of all!""]**

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## **CONTENTS**

[CHAPTER I. THE MINISTER'S FAMILY](#)  
[CHAPTER II. LORD RICHARD CRAMER](#)  
[CHAPTER III. DONALD PLEASURES HIS FATHER](#)  
[CHAPTER IV. THE GREAT TEMPTATION](#)  
[CHAPTER V. THE MINISTER IN LOVE](#)  
[CHAPTER VI. DONALD TAKES HIS OWN WAY](#)  
[CHAPTER VII. MARION DECIDES](#)  
[CHAPTER VIII. MACRAE LEARNS A HARD LESSON](#)  
[CHAPTER IX. WHEN WILL THE NIGHT BE PAST?](#)  
[CHAPTER X. A DREAM](#)  
[CHAPTER XI. LOVE IS THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW](#)  
[CHAPTER XII. AFTERWARD](#)

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## **LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS**

[""Good-bye, Richard!' she cried. 'Good-bye, dearest of all!""](#)  
["There came again to her that singular sense of a past familiarity"](#)  
["She smiled and laid her jeweled white hand confidingly on his"](#)  
["The descent seemed steep and dark"](#)

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## **PLAYING WITH FIRE**

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### **CHAPTER I**

#### **THE MINISTER'S FAMILY**

Glasgow is the city of Human Power. It is not a beautiful city, but the gray granite of which it is built gives it a natural nobility. There is nothing romantic about its situation, and its streets are too often steeped in wet, gray mist, or wrapped in yellowish vapor. But there are no loungers in them. The crowd is a busy, hard-working crowd, whose civic motto is Enterprise and Perseverance. They made the river that made the city, and then established on its banks those immense shipbuilding yards, whose fleets take the river to the ocean, and the ocean to every known port of the world.

It is also a very religious city. Its inhabitants do not forget that they are mortals, though no doubt mortals of a superior order, and the number of churches they have built is amazing. It is impossible to walk far in any direction without coming face to face with one. I am writing of the midway years of the nineteenth century, when there was one church among the many that all strangers were advised to visit. It was not the Cathedral, nor the old Ram's Horn Kirk; it was a large, plain building, called the Church of the Disciples. No one could find it to-day, for it stood upon a corner that became necessary to the trade of a certain great street. Then the Church of the Disciples disappeared, and handsome shops devoted to business of many kinds rose in its place.

This church derived its fame from its minister, a very handsome man, of great scholarly attainments and a preponderance of that quality we call "presence." Even when at twenty-three years of age he stepped from the halls of St. Andrew's into the pulpit of the Church of the Disciples, elders, deacons, and the whole congregation succumbed to his influence. And when, after twenty-one years of service, he made his dramatic exit from that pulpit he still held his congregation in the hollow of his hand.

He was a Highlander of the once powerful house of Macrae; tall among his brethren as was Saul among his people. His face was darkly handsome, and made doubly attractive by a shadowy Celtic pathos. His eyes were piercing but sad, his voice grand and resonant, suiting well the wrathful, impassioned Calvinism of his sermons. For he was a Pharisee of Pharisees touching every tittle of the law laid down by that troubler of mankind called John Calvin.

One evening in the beginning of June he went to his home after a rather unimportant session with his elders. He had taken his own way as usual, and was not in the least moved by the slight opposition he had been compelled to silence. With a slow, stately step he walked up the wide spaces of Bath Street until he came to the handsome residence in which he dwelt. He had no time to open the door; it was gently set wide by a girl who stood just within its shelter. A tinge of pleasure came into the minister's face, and when she said in a low, sweet voice:

"*Father!*" he answered her in one word full of tenderness:

"*Marion!*"

They went into the parlor together. It was the ordinary parlor of its day, inartistic and comfortably ugly, but withal suitable and pleasant to the generation, who found in it their ideal of "home." A Brussels carpet covered the floor, the furniture was of mahogany upholstered in black horse-hair cloth. There were crimson damask curtains at the windows, a crimson cloth on the large center table, and a soft large rug before the bright steel grate, which held a handful of fire, though it was a fine day in the early part of June. The chimneypiece was of dark marble; on it there were two bronze figures and a handsome clock, above it a very large picture of Queen Victoria's coronation. It was a parlor duplicated in every respectable residence. Such rooms were comfortable and serviceable and very suitable to the big men who occupied them.

The minister felt its pleasant "use and wont," and with a sigh of relief took the easy-chair his daughter drew to the fireside. Then she brought him a glass of water and his slippers, went for the mail which had come during his absence, lit the gas, and in many other ways fluttered so lovingly about him that it was amazing he hardly seemed to notice her affectionate service. An American father would have drawn the girl to his side, given her sweet words and tender kisses, and doubtless Dr. Macrae felt all the affection necessary for this result, but he had never seen fathers pet their daughters, never been told to do so, had no precedents to go by, and, on the contrary, had been constantly instructed both by precept and example that women were not "to be put too much forward, or given too much praise." Service was the duty of the women in any household, and men were born with the expectation of it in their blood. So Dr. Macrae watched and felt and admired and loved, but made no attempt to express his feelings, and Marion did not expect it.

Dr. Macrae had lifted a paper, but he soon laid it down, and asked impatiently: "Marion, where is Aunt Jessy?"

"She will be here anon, Father—here she comes!" and at the words a little woman wearing a gray dress, a white lace tippet, and a small white lace cap, set with pink bows, entered. She was rather pretty, and sweet and homely as honey. A maid carrying the simple supper of the family accompanied her. Dr. Macrae looked at her pleasantly, and she said:

"Well, Ian!"

That was all, until the boiled oatmeal and milk, and the toasted cakes and cheese were spread upon the table. But as soon as the minister had his plate of boiled oatmeal and his glass of milk before him, she continued:

"You are a bit late home to-night, Ian. I was wondering about it."

"There was a useless kind of session—much talking about nothing."

"Men must talk, especially when they are in session for that purpose. What were they talking about?"

"Many usual things, rather unusually, about the Bible."

"What for were they meddling with the Book? They were hearing it, or reading it, all day yesterday."

"They were discussing the buying of a new Bible for the Church. Deacon Laird proposed it. He said he had been noticing for a long time that the pulpit Bible was frizzled and worn, and the cushion much faded; both of them looking as they should not look in the Church of the Disciples."

"And what words did you give them?"

"I let them talk among themselves, until Elder Black said he knew a place where a large Bible could be got at a very cheap figure, likewise the cushion, and he would take time to ask the selling price of the same this week."

"Well?"

"I said then: 'Elder, you will keep your silence concerning a cheap Bible. I'll have no cheap Bible in my pulpit. You are grudging nothing of the best for all your private necessities, and you will buy the House of God what is fitting for it.'"

"You spoke well. Now they will be looking for the best Bible in Scotland. But what for did Deacon Laird raise that question, when the congregation, in its most respectable part, is going down the water for the summer months?"

"He is young, and only just elected, and he was trying to do something that none of the other deacons had thought of. That is my surmise. If I wrong the man, I ask pardon."

"He will have to pay for his bit of forwardness. The others will see to it that he backs his proposal with his money."

Dr. Macrae made no further remark on the subject. He took from his pocket a letter and said: "I had a few lines from Lady Cramer, and she tells me that the Little House will be unoccupied this summer. Some unforeseen circumstances preventing Lady Kitty Baird's family visiting her, she offers it to me for four or five months. If you could pack your clothes to-morrow, you might remove there on Wednesday or Thursday, and, by taking the train from Edinburgh, you would reach Cramer early in the afternoon."

"Do you mean that Marion and I are to go there?"

"I do."

"O Father, how very delightful! I am so happy!"

"It is a pretty place. I saw it when I was last at Cramer. Also, it is near the sea. You will like that, Marion."

"We will both of us like it, Ian. I shall be glad to be near the hills and the sea, and Marion is needing a change. But, Ian, you will have to consider that, if we are going—in a manner—as Lady Cramer's friends or guests, Marion will be asked—at odd times—to the Hall, and she must have one or two frocks, and other things in accordance."

"Marion can go to Stuart and McDonald's and get whatever she wants."

Then Marion lifted her eyes and met her father's eyes, and she smiled and nodded; and, though no word was spoken, both were well satisfied.

"Now," continued Dr. Macrae, "I am going to my study to read. You will have plenty to talk about. I should only be in your way."

"Bide a minute, Ian; what about the servant lasses? You cannot shut up this house. Donald—poor lad—must have some place to lay his head, and eat his bread."

"I suppose there are servants in the Little House. Lady Cramer said you would require to bring nothing but your clothing. All else was provided."

"I will have my own servant girls, or none at all."

"Will you be requiring more than one? You might take Aileen, and leave Janet here to look after myself and Donald."

"If that pleases you, I'll make it suit me."

"Think, and talk over the matter. You will know your wish better in the morning. Good night."

The salutation was general, but he looked at Marion, and she answered the look in a way he understood and approved. Then Mistress Caird disappeared for half an hour, and when she returned to the parlor Marion had completed her shopping list.

"Aunt," she said, as she fluttered the bit of paper, "I have made out my list. I want so many things, I fear the bill will be very large."

"You need take no thought about the bill, dear. It will be a means of grace for your father to pay it. It is very seldom he has a fit of the liberalities. Teach him to open his hand now and then. A shut hand is a shut heart."

"But he was so prompt and kind about it. He never curtailed me in any way. It is mean to take advantage of his trust and generosity."

"You have to be mean to make men generous. You must keep your father's hand open. Let me see your list."

She read it with a smile, and then, laughing gaily, said: "Well, Marion, if this is your idea of fine dressing, it is a very primitive one. You must have at least one silk dress, and what about gloves and satin slippers and silk stockings to wear with them? And you will require a spangled fan, and satin sashes, and bits of lace, and there's no mention of hats or parasols. It is a fragmentary document, Marion, and I am sure you had better begin it over again, with Jessy Caird to help you."

When this revision had been made, Marion was still more disturbed. "It does seem too much, Aunt," she said. "I cannot treat Father in this way. It is mean."

"Now I will tell you something. I maybe ought to have told you before. Listen! You are spending your own money, not his. Your mother left you all she had, and got your father's promise to give you the interest of it for your private spending, as soon as your school days were over. She knew you would then be wanting this and that, and perhaps not be liking to ask for it. Your father is just giving you your own. Spend it wisely, and I have no doubt he will continue to give it to you at regular periods."

"That makes things different. My mother! Did I ever see her?"

"She died when you were two days old. She saw you. From her breast I took you to my heart, and I have loved you, Marion, as my own child."

"I am your own child, Aunt. I love you with all my heart. Why did you never talk to me of my mother before?"

"Because it is always wise to let the Past alone. Give all your heart and sense to the Priceless Present. You have nothing to do with the unborn To-morrow or the dead Yesterday."

"But my mother——"

"Some day I'll tell you all about her. Did you notice how unconcerned your father was regarding the house, and the servant girls—and your brother, also?"

"He advised us to take one girl and leave the other here. You said 'Yes' to that proposal, Aunt."

"He took me unawares. I shall say 'No' to it to-morrow. Men have an idea that a house takes care of itself, that servants work naturally, and that dinners are bought ready cooked. He knew enough, however, to choose the best of the two girls to stay here. I am going to take both of them with me. I will not be beholden to my Lady for servants, not I! I shall send for old Maggie in the morning; she can look after the house and the two men in it—fine!"

"I wish Donald could go with us."

"If he could, your father would not let him. He is very angry with Donald, these six months past."

"Why?"

"He wanted him to go to St. Andrews to prepare for the ministry, and the lad, who usually keeps his own good sense to the fore, forgot himself and told his father—his father, mind you!—that he would 'not preach Calvinism' if he got 'the city of Glasgow for doing it.' And the minister was angry, and Donald got dour and then said a few words he should not have said to anybody in a Calvinist minister's presence."

"What did he say?"

"He said he did not believe in Election. He said every soul was elect; that even in hell Dives held fast to the fatherhood of God, and God called Dives 'son.' He said Religion was not a creed, it was a Life, and moreover, he said, Calvinism was a wall between the soul and God, and what use was there in hewing out roads to a wall?"

"Poor Father! Donald should not have said such things in his presence. No, he should not! I am angry at Donald for doing so."

"Well, the Macrae was aboon the Reverend that day. He was white angry. He could not, he did not dare to, open his mouth. He just set the door wide, and ordered Donald out with a wave of his hand."

"Poor Donald! That was hard, too."

"Yes, the Macraes are always

—'hard to themselves  
And worse to their foes.'

Donald just came to my room, and I left him alone to cry his young heart out. But my heart was, and is, with Donald. He is man grown, and he has a right to have his own opinions."

"Maybe so, Aunt. But he should not throw his opinions like a stone in Father's face."

"Perhaps you'll do the same some day."

"Me! Never! Never!"

"I'm glad to hear that."

"How came Donald to go to Reed and McBryne's shipping office?"

"He spent the next few days miserably. He did not see his father save at meal times, and the two of them never opened their mouths. So I said one morning, 'A new housekeeper will be necessary here, for I will not eat my bread like a dumb beast a day longer.' Then the mail brought the news of the break-up in your school, and your father said to me as soon as we were by ourselves, 'Jessy, you must see that Marion's room is made pretty. She is a young lady now, and, if anything is needing, get it.'"

"That was like Father's thoughtfulness."

"The thought was not all for you. There were other serious considerations, and he was keeping them in mind. I looked straight in his face and asked, 'What are you going to do about Donald's future?' He said, 'I do not know'; and I answered, 'You must find out, for, if I stay here, something must be done for Donald this day, and I will not require to tell you this again, Ian.'"

"O Aunt! how could you speak, or even think, of leaving us? What would I do here, wanting you?"

"You did not have to want me, child, and I knew that. At the dinner hour your father laid down his knife and fork in the middle of the dessert, and said, 'Donald, you will go in the morning to Reed and McBryne's shipping office. I have got you a clerkship there. The salary is small, but your home will be here, and you will have few and trifling expenses.'"

"What answer did Donald make?"

"He was red with passion when his father finished speaking, and he answered quickly, 'I will not be a shipping clerk. No, sir! I will take the Queen's shilling and go to the army. Macraes have ever been fighters. I want no pen. I will have a sword. How can you ask me to be a clerk, Father? It is cruel! Too cruel!'"

"Poor Donald!"

"I think his father felt as much as he did. He could not speak until he saw the lad move his chair from the table. Then, in a very moderate voice, he said, 'Stay, Donald, and listen to me. Honor as well as prudence forbids you the army. You are the last male of our family, except your aged uncle and myself. Its continuation rests with you. It is a duty you would be a kind of traitor to ignore. After me, you are *the* Macrae. I know the world thinks little of the dead Highland clans, but we think none the less of ourselves because of the world's indifference. You will be *the* Macrae; you must marry, and raise up sons to keep the name alive. You cannot go to the army. You cannot put your life constantly in jeopardy. Until something more to your liking turns up, go to Reed and McBryne's. It is better than moping idly about the house.'"

"I think Father was right, Aunt."

"Donald did not think so. He left the table without a word, but I could see his father had fathomed him, and found out one weak spot. For as soon as he said, 'You will be *the* Macrae,' I saw the light that flashed into Donald's eyes, and the way in which he straightened himself to his full height. Then, bowing, he left the room without a yea or nay in his mouth. Immediately afterward he left the house, but he did not stay long, and then I had a straight talk with him. I knew where he had been in the interval."

"Where could he go but to you?"

"He has a friend."

"Matthew Ballantyne."

"Just so. The lads love each other, and they are both daft about the same thing—a violin. He went to Matthew, and Matthew told him to humor his father and bide his time, and he would get his own way in the long run."

"Did that please you, Aunt?"

"Yes, it makes my work easy. And I am going to be good to the lads. I am going to tell Maggie to make them nice little suppers, and let them play till midnight, while we are at Cramer Brae. That

night you were at the Lindseys' and your father at Stirling, I had them to supper. There was three of them, one being a violinist in Menzie's orchestra. He was a few years older than Donald and Matthew, but just as foolish as they were. And after their merry meal they played the heart out of me."

"O Aunt! Aunt! I shall have to stop at home and watch you. The idea of you standing for Donald behind Father's back in this way. I would not have believed it. You must love Donald."

"What for wouldn't I love him? He is most entirely lovable, and when I love I like to show it—to do foolish things to show it—ordinary things are not worth as much."

"I would not have thought it. You, so proper and respectable, making a feast for three young men, who played the heart out of you with their violins!"

"Poor Donald has not a violin of his own, yet he plays better than Matthew or the orchestra lad. How it comes I cannot tell, but he does, and there's no 'ifs' or 'ands' about it."

"Are violins dear things, Aunt?"

"Too dear for Donald to buy, and he dare not ask his father for money to buy a violin. Yes, Marion, violins cost a lot of money."

"You say I have some money of my own."

"What by that? You shall not ware it on a violin. Donald's violin will come its own road, and that will not be out of your purse. There's the clock striking twelve. Whatever are we doing here? I must have lost my senses to be keeping you."

"Don't mind an hour or two, Aunt. This has been the most wonderful night to me. You have spoken of my mother. I have had an invitation to Lady Cramer's. I have heard that I am, in a small way, an heiress. I have learned all about the trouble between Father and Donald. I have made out the list for a far finer wardrobe than I ever expected to own. I am sorry this wonderful day is over."

"But it is over, and it is now Tuesday. It will be Saturday before we can be ready for Cramer Brae. You must stay here until your new frocks are fitted, and that will make us Saturday. Now sleep well, for I shall have you called at seven sharp."

As Mrs. Caird anticipated, it was Saturday afternoon when they arrived at Cramer Brae. The Cramer carriage was waiting to take them to the Little House, which was more than a mile inland. It stood on the Brae at the foot of the hills, and was shielded on the east and west by large beech trees. The hills were behind, the sea in front of it, and when the wind was lulled, or from the south, the roar and the beat of its waves were distinctly heard.

It was a long, low house. The leaded, diamond-shaped windows opened like doors on their hinges, and flower boxes, drooping vines and blooms were on every sill. Gardens and lawns, with a little paddock for the ponies to run in, covered the six acres of land surrounding it. Marion was delighted. "Here we shall be so happy, Aunt," she cried in a voice full of sweet inflections, for she was thanking God in her heart for bringing her to such a beautiful spot.

Aileen and Kitty met them at the door and tea was waiting in the small dining-room. There was a low bowl of pansies in the center of the table, which was set with cream Wedgwood and silver of the date of Queen Anne. Every necessity and every luxury for the hour were there, and a wonderful peace brooded over all things.

Marion was enchanted. "This place must be like Heaven," she said; and Mrs. Caird answered, "I hope you are right. I cannot imagine any circumstances much pleasanter. We may thank God even for this cup of young Pekoe and thick cream, and delicate bread and fresh butter. They are just a part of the whole blessing. I have heard of a great English writer who thought that among many higher pleasures we should not miss the homely delicacies of our earthly table. I hope we shall not. I would like a little of earth in heaven; it might be as good to us as is a little of heaven on earth. Why not? All God's gifts are blessed, if we bless Him for them."

"I wonder if Father and Donald will have a good tea?"

"I'll warrant you. Maggie knows all your father's ways and likings—queer and otherwise. He would want a bit of broiled fish, or the like of it. I don't think you or I would care for hot meat now."

"What could be nicer than this cold, tender chicken?"

"Nothing, but men are keen for something hot. They don't feel as if they were fed, wanting the taste and smell of fresh-cooked flesh—of one kind or another."

"Donald promised me he would keep straight with Father, if possible."

"Whiles it is not possible to do that—but he made me the same promise, and he'll keep it, if his father will let him."

"Father is not at all quarrelsome, Aunt."

"Isn't he, dear? I'm very glad to hear it."

"You ought to know, Aunt; you have lived with him for—"

"Nearly eighteen years, and I am not settled in my mind yet on that subject."

"If people attack Father's creed, it is right for him to be angry. Donald ought to have kept his opinions to himself."

"That is the hardest kind of work, Marion. I know, for I've been trying to do it ever since you were born. Yes, Marion, I have, and it is hard work to-day."

"What makes you try it, Aunt?"

"The same reason as stirs Donald up."

"Calvinism?"

"Just Calvinism."

"But you are a Calvinist?"

"Not I! No, indeed! But when I came here to take care of Donald and yourself I promised Jessie Caird never to bring that subject to dispute. I knew, if I did, I would have to leave you, and I thought more of you two children than of any creed in Christendom."

"What creed do you like, Aunt?"

"I was christened and confirmed in the English Church and I love it with a great love; but I'm loving Donald and you far better—and *her that's gone*—and, if the Syrian was to be forgiven for worshiping out of his own temple for his Master's sake, I think Mother Church will forgive me for loving two motherless children more than her liturgy."

"Did Father never ask you if you would like to go to St. Mary's and hear your own prayers? They are very fine prayers. I have heard them, for when I was at school Miss Lamont took us sometimes on Sunday afternoons to the English Church."

"You are right, but I would not name Miss Lamont's freedom before your father. I never talk on this subject to him; if I did, we would be passing disagreeable words in ten minutes. For your sakes, I go cheerfully to the Calvinistic kirk every Sabbath, and nobody but your father and myself has known that my soul was Armenian, and hated a Calvinist even in its most charitable hours."

"What is an Armenian?"

"St. Paul was an Armenian, and St. Augustine, and Luther, and John Wesley, and all the millions that follow their teaching. I am not ashamed of my faith. I am going to heaven in the best of good company. But what for are we talking this happy hour of Calvinism? We ought to let weary dogs lie, and there are few wearier ones than Calvinism."

"I like to talk of it, Aunt. I want to know all about it."

"Then talk to the Minister. Here are mountains and trees and flowers of every kind. Here are birds singing as if they never would grow old, and winds streaming out of the hills cool as living waters, and wafting into us scents that tell the soul they come from heaven. Oh, my dear Marion, let us enjoy God's good gifts and be thankful."

"Are you going to unpack the trunks to-night, Aunt?"

"No. Aileen and Kitty would have a conscience ache if we did anything not necessary so near the Sabbath Day. We must respect their feelings. Aileen is very strict in her religion. I am tired, and am going to lie down for an hour, and you can wander about and please yourself. Go into the garden. I wouldn't wonder if you had a few pleasant surprises."

So Marion went into the garden, leaving the old house until she had a whole day to give it. She went among the rose trellises first. The roses were just budding—gold and pink and white. What a wonder of roses there would be in a week or two! The pansy beds were another marvel. Such pansies she had never before seen, for they represented all that the highest culture could do for size and coloring. Sweet old-fashioned flowers and flowering shrubs like lad's love were everywhere, and a little green carpet of camomile was spread in the center of the place for the fairies. Not far from it was a great bed of lavender and thyme, a special gift to the honeybees, who lived in the pretty antique straw skeps near it. Heavily laden with honey, hundreds of bees were flying slowly home to them, and the misty air was full of an odor from the hives that stirred something at the very roots of her being. She stood lost in thought before the skeps and the returning bees, and as she drew great breaths of the scented air she whispered to herself, "Where and when have I seen this very picture before?"

Until the twilight deepened and a gray mist from the sea blended with it she sat thinking of many things. Life had been so vivid to her during the past week. She felt as if she had never lived before, and it was not until all was shadowy and indistinct that she remembered her aunt had warned her to come into the house before the dew fell and the sea mist rolled inland.

Turning hurriedly, she was about to obey this order when she heard footsteps on the flagged sidewalk running along the front of the house. She stood still and listened. Perhaps it was Donald. No, the steps were not like Donald's, they were firmer and faster, and had a military ring



in them. She was standing under a large silver-leaved birch tree, and not visible from the sidewalk, yet, by stepping a little further into its shadow, she thought she could satisfy her curiosity. However, she could see nothing but a tall figure, hastening through the gathering gloom and looking neither to the right nor to the left. But for the footsteps, the figure passed silently and swiftly as a bird through the gray mist. Its sudden appearance and disappearance impressed her powerfully, and then there came again to her that singular sense of a past familiarity. "I have stood in a garden watching that figure before. Where was it? Who is he?"

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**"There came again to her that singular sense of a past familiarity"**

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She was disturbed by the recurrence of the influence, and she went with rapid steps into the house. Mrs. Caird was coming to meet her. "Marion," she said, "I have slept past my intentions. Where have you been? It is too late for you to be outside. Come into the house and shut the door."

"I was walking in the garden. You told me to do so."

"Go now to the parlor and sit down. I will be with you directly."

But Marion knew that her aunt's "directly" had an elastic quality. It might be half an hour, it might be much more. So she took a book of poems from a bookcase hanging against the wall, saying to herself as she did so: "Miss Lamont told me to commit to memory as much good poetry as I could, because there came hours in every life when a verse learned, perhaps twenty years before, would have its message and come back to us. I suppose just as the bees and the man came back to me. I don't remember where from."

In less than an hour Mrs. Caird came into the parlor with a glass of milk in her hand. "Drink it, Marion," she said, "and then go to your sleep. You have surely worn the day threadbare by this time."

"I was learning a few lines until you came to me. I want to tell you something. When it was nearly dark, and I was coming to the house, a man passed here."

"I shouldn't wonder."

"I thought at first it might be Donald."

"You need not look for Donald. I have told you that before."

"He was very tall. He walked like a soldier, and passed through the mist like a darker shadow. He gave me a queer feeling."

"Which way did he go?"

"Straight past the house. When his feet touched the brae I lost his footsteps. I saw him but a moment or two. He passed so quickly. It was like a dream. I wonder who he was?"

"Most likely the young Lord. Your father told me he might be at Cramer Hall. He hoped not, but thought it more than possible. It will be the right thing for him to keep shadowy and dreamlike. From what I have heard of the young Lord, he is not proper company for any nice girl. The old Lord—God rest his soul—was a very saint in his religion and a wonderful scholar. Your father thought much of him, and he was never weary of your father's company, and he left him, also, a good testimony of his friendship in his will."

"Then Father should not infer ill of his son."

"Marion, men may be perfectly fit and proper for each other's company, and very unfit for a nice girl to talk with. The young man has been six or seven years in a regiment, but now that he has come to the estate and title I dare say he will resign. He has to look after his stepmother and the land, for I judge that she is but a young, canary-headed, thoughtless creature."

"Who said he wasn't good company for a nice girl?"

"The Minister himself said it, and to me he said it. So, Marion, if you should meet him, which I'm thinking is particularly likely, you must act according to my report. 'He isn't proper company for a good girl,' that is what the Minister said."

"Perhaps he is not a Calvinist," and Marion smiled, and Mrs. Caird tried not to smile.

"I don't want any complications," she continued, "so don't dream of him, don't think of him, and don't have any queer feelings about him. Your father will not have things go contrary to his plans, if he can help it, and Lord Richard Cramer is not in his plans."

"I know who is, Aunt, but he is not in my plans."

"What are you talking about?"

"About Allan Reid. Oh, I know Father's plan. Allan is making love to me whenever he can get a chance. And, if I go down town, I'm meeting him round every corner. I know how Donald came to get into Reid and McBryne's office."

"If you know so much, why were you keeping so quiet about things?"

"You were always telling me to keep my own counsel and share secrets with nobody."

"I was not including myself in that order."

"Father cannot bend either Donald's or my life to his wish."

"It is your life-long happiness and welfare he is planning for."

"God will order my life. That will content me. And God would not want me to marry Allan Reid, with his long neck and weak eyes, because I could never love him, and I suppose you ought to love the man you marry."

"I believe it is thought necessary by some people. Allan will have lots of money, and in good time walk to the head of the biggest shipping business in Glasgow. He is a religious young man, always in kirk when kirktime comes, and I hear that he is also the cleverest of men in a matter of business. He'll be the richest shipper in Glasgow some day."

"I shall never marry for money. Never! Never!"

"You'll never marry for money, won't you? Let me tell you, it is a far better way of marrying, in general, than comes of vows and kisses and all such gentle shepherding."

"For all that, 'I will marry my own true love.'"

"When he comes, young lady."

"When he comes! I think he will not be long in coming now."

"Go away to your sleep. You're just dreaming with your eyes open. Good night, dear."

"Good night; and 'I will marry my own true love,'" and, with the lilt on her lips, she went singing to her room.

Mrs. Caird sat down, completely perplexed. "Here's a nice state of affairs!" she mused. "I said but a few words about the young Lord, and, out of a woman's pure contradiction, she instantly made a graven image of him, and set him up in her mind to worship. She was ready, though she never saw him, to defend him against her father's judgment. I could see that plainly. What kind of a girl is this? Never a thought of love did I give Andrew Caird until he said in so many words, 'Jessy, will you be my wife?' Time enough then to begin the worshipping. Well, Ian is going to have his hands and heart full with these two children, and I'll be getting the blame of it. And, of course, I shall stand by both of them. I kissed that promise on my dying sister's lips, and I wouldn't break it for Lords, nor Commons, nor the General Assembly of the Kirk added to them. I shall stand by both! There's no harm in Donald's opinions. I hold the same myself, and, what's more, I always shall hold them. Fire couldn't burn them out of me. As for Marion, if she wants to build her a little romance, why should I hinder? The girl shall have her dream, if it pleases her." Then she slowly

went upstairs to her room, and the Little House was still as a resting wheel.

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## CHAPTER II

### LORD RICHARD CRAMER

"Souls see each other at a glance, as two drops of rain might look into each other, if they had life."

"The cause of love can never be assigned,  
It is not in the face, but in the mind."

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It was the Sabbath, and all its surroundings were steeped in that wonderful Sabbath stillness that not even great cities are without. The servants had put on with their kirk gowns the quiet movements they kept for this day, and, as they noiselessly prepared the breakfast, they talked softly to each other in monosyllables. Marion was used to this formality, and indeed was herself involuntarily affected by it. She stood hesitating on the doorsteps about a walk in the garden. Her feet longed for the soft lawns and the flowery paths, but she had not escaped the Sabbath thralldom of her house and native city.

"It might be wrong," she mused, "perhaps I ought to go to God's house and honor Him before all else. I must ask Aunt Jessy."

In a few minutes she heard her aunt coming downstairs. Evidently Mrs. Caird had forgotten that it was the Sabbath; she took the steps quickly, with some noise, too, and her face was happy; indeed, she looked ready to laugh.

"This is a heavenly place!" she said cheerfully, "and here comes Kitty with breakfast. There's no wonder you stand at the open door, Marion. Look at that little summerhouse. It is covered with jasmine stars. If you saw an angel resting in it, you would not be astonished."

"I was longing to walk in the garden."

"And why not?"

"It is the Sabbath."

"All days are Sabbath to the grateful heart."

"Yes, but this is the Kirk Day, and I was wondering how we were to get there. Aileen says it is near two miles away. I can walk two miles, but you——"

"I can walk as well as you can, but I'm not going to try it. I'm not going to the Kirk at all to-day—walking or riding."

"Not going to Kirk, Aunt!"

"No. I have made up my mind to have one long, sweet, quiet day, and to keep it with none present but God. As soon as I opened my eyes this morning I heard larks singing up to the very gate of heaven. I saw one rise from the brae just outside. I'll warrant you his nest was there. Marion, he was worshiping before any of our Glasgow burghers were out of their beds. I sent a prayer up with his song. God bless the bird!"

"What will Father say?"

"Just what he wants to say. I'll not hinder him. When you have eaten your breakfast go into the garden and say a prayer among the flowers. You'll be in one of God's own kirks. Open all your heart to Him."

"And you?"

"I'll be mostly in my room. It is long, long years since I had a Sunday that rested me. I have made up my soul and my heart to have one this day."

"And Aileen and Kitty?"

"They can walk to the Kirk. It will do them good. A mile or two is nothing."

"I heard Aileen say there was a Victoria and a light wagon in the carriage house, and she supposed the wagon would be for the servants."

"It may be so and it may not. I heard nothing about vehicles, and I am not going to discuss them in any kind or manner. The girls can walk to Kirk if they want to go; if not, they can bide in their place here. And I'll tell them that plainly, as soon as I have finished my breakfast."

It is likely Mrs. Caird kept her word; for Sunday's dinner, always prepared on Saturday, was laid

on the table immediately after breakfast and then the girls disappeared, and were not seen until it was time to prepare supper. They looked dissatisfied and disappointed, and Aileen admitted they were so.

"Cramer Kirk is a poor little place," she said, "and the Minister no better than the Kirk. Master always makes a great gulf between the good and the wicked, and his sermons hae some pith in them—the good get encouragement, and the wicked are plainly told what kind o' a future they are earning for themselves. But, with this man, it was just 'Love God! Love God!' as if there was any use in loving God if you didna serve Him. It was a poor sermon, Ma'am. Master would not like such doctrine, and I came hungry away from it. So did Kitty. Kitty was saying you were not in the Kirk. Were you sick, Ma'am?"

"Oh, no, Aileen! I was just loving God at home."

Aileen was amazed at the avowal. She looked at her mistress with wondering eyes, and, though she did not venture to blame, there was distinct disapproval in her attitude.

Mrs. Caird had spent the day in her room and in the summerhouse in the garden, and this day the wonderful garden paid for its making; for in the evening, as she was walking there with Marion she pointed to an inscription above the entrance to the jasmine-shaded bower, and said, "Read it to me, Marion." And Marion read slowly, as if she was tasting the sweet flavor of the words:

*"Christ hath took in this piece of ground,  
And made a garden there, for those  
Who want herbs for their wounds."*

The two women looked at each other. Their eyes were shining, but they did not speak. There was no need. That day Jessy Caird had found herbs in the sweet shadowy place for all her unsatisfied longings, her fears and anxieties, and received full payment for her long, unselfish love and service.

The next afternoon the Minister joined his daughter and sister-in-law. He was very cheerful and happy as he sat drinking a cup of tea. His daughter was at his side, and Mrs. Caird's presence added that sense of oversight and of "all things in order" which was so essential to his satisfaction. However, Mrs. Caird had a way of asking questions which he would rather not answer, and he felt this touch of earth when she said:

"How is Donald? And how is he faring altogether, Ian?"

The question was unanswered for a moment or two, then he said with distinct anger, "I did not see Donald. The Minister's pew was empty yesterday."

"Did you ask Maggie where he was?"

"Why should I do that? Donald ought to have told me where he was going on the Sabbath. It will be a black day when I have to go to servants for information about my son."

"Poor Donald! he cannot do right whatever he does. I dare say he only went with Matthew Ballantyne to his father's place near Rothesay. You will be getting a letter from him in the morning."

"I would rather have seen him where he ought to have been."

"In the *Church of the Disciples*?"

"Even so."

"You are all wrong. The boys would be on the water or climbing the mountains. They were in God's holiest temple. I hope you don't even the *Church of the Disciples* with it!"

"This, or that, Jessy, Donald ought to have been in the Kirk."

"Maybe he was at Matthew's Kirk. Dr. Ward is preaching there now, and both Matthew and Donald think a deal of him."

"I dare say. Donald's father is always last. He would rather hear any one preach than his father."

"There's a reason for that. He does not see the others in their daily life. They don't thwart his wishes and scorn his hopes and set him to work that he hates. He sees them only in the pulpit, where they have pulpit grace and pulpit manners."

"I have always treated Donald with loving kindness."

"To be sure, when Donald walked the narrow chalk line you made for him. You had your own will. You wanted to be a minister and no one hindered you."

"How do you know, Jessy, that I wanted to be a minister?"

"Because you could not be happy unless you had power, and spiritual power was all you could lay your hands on. Donald was willing to go either to the sea or the army. What for wouldn't you give him his desire?"

"I have told you his life is all the Macraes have to build upon."

"You yourself were in the same position before Donald was born."

"Yes, and so I chose the salvation of the ministry."

"You had the 'call' thereto. You liked the salvation of the ministry. Donald could not take it, so you tied him to a counting desk. It was like harnessing a stag to a plough. But you'll take your own way, no matter where it leads you. So I'll say no more."

"Thank you, Jessy. If you would consider the subject closed, I——"

"I will do no such thing. I shall speak for Donald whenever I can, in season or out of season. There is a letter for you from Lady Cramer. It came this morning."

Dr. Macrae took it with a touch of respect, and read it twice over before he spoke of its contents, though Mrs. Caird and Marion had their part in its message. Finally, he laid it down and, handing his cup to be refilled, he said:

"Jessy, at six o'clock this evening, Lady Cramer will send a carriage for me. She wishes me to stay until Wednesday afternoon, then she intends coming to pay her call of welcome to you and Marion, and I will return with her."

"So she is wanting you for the most part of two days. What for? She has her lawyers, and councillors, and her stepson."

"The business she wants me to talk over with her is beyond lawyers and councillors. It is of a literary and religious nature."

"Oh! You may keep it to yourself, Ian."

"I do not suppose you would understand it. The late Lord left some papers on scientific and theological subjects. Lady Cramer wishes me to prepare them for publication."

"Lord Angus Cramer was not a very competent man, if all is true I have heard about him. I think Marion and myself could understand anything he could write."

"Jessy, we all know that the mental qualities of men differ from those of women. The inequalities of sex——"

"Have nothing whatever to do with mental qualities. Inequalities of sex, indeed! They do not exist! They are a fiction that no sane man can argue about."

"Jessy, I say——"

"Look at your own fireside, Minister. Donald is well fitted to go to the army, take orders, and carry them out. Marion would be giving the orders. Donald has an average quantity of brains. Marion can double yours, and, if given fitting education and opportunity, would preach and write you out of all remembrance. And where would you be, I wonder, without Jessy Caird to guide and look after all your outgoings and incomings? Who criticizes your sermons and tells you where they are right, and where wrong, and who gives you 'the look' when you have said enough, and are going to pass your climax?"

"My dear sister, you are my right hand in everything. I do nothing without your advice. I admit that I should be a lost man physically without you."

"Mentally, likewise. Give me all the credit I ought to have."

"Yes, my sermons owe a great deal to you. And you have kept me socially right, also. I would have had many enemies, wanting your counseling."

"That's enough. I have been your faithful friend; and a faithful friend likes, now and then, to have the fact acknowledged. You had better go to your room now and put on the handsomest suit in your keeping. You'll find linen there white as snow, and pack a fresh wearing of it for to-morrow. By the grace of God you are a handsome man and you ought to show forth God's physical gifts, as well as His spiritual ones."

Doubtless the compliment was balm to the little pricks and pinches of her previous remarks; for Dr. Macrae went with cheerful, rapid steps to his toilet, and Mrs. Caird looked after him smiling and rubbing her lips complacently, as if she was complimenting them on their courage and moderation.

Tall, stately, aristocratic in appearance, Dr. Macrae stepped into the Cramer carriage with an air and manner that elicited the utmost respect, almost the servility, of the coachman and footman. Marion looked at her aunt with a face glowing with pride, and Mrs. Caird answered the look.

"You are right, Marion. In some ways there is none like him. If he would be patient and considerate with your brother, I would stand by Ian Macrae if the whole world was against him."

"Suppose I should displease him—suppose he told me I must marry Allan Reid, and I would not—would you stand by me as you stand by Donald, Aunt Jessy?"

"Through thick and thin to the very end of the controversy, no matter what it was."

"I saw Father stop and look at the book I laid down."

"What book was it?"

"'David Copperfield,' and Father told me not to read Dickens. He said he was common, and would take me only into vulgar and improper company. He told me to read Scott, if I wanted fiction."

"Scott will take you into worse company. Romance does not make robbers and villains good company. Dickens's common people are real and human, and have generally some domestic virtues. Yes, indeed, some of his common people are most uncommonly good and lovable. For myself, I cannot be bothered with Scott's long pedigrees and descriptions. If there's a crack in a castle wall, he has to describe how far it runs east or west. It is the old, bad world Scott writes about, full of war and bloodshed, cruel customs and hatreds. And his characters are not the men and women we know, but if you go to England you will see the characters of Dickens in the omnibuses and on the streets."

"I would like us to have everything in beautiful order on Wednesday, Aunt."

"Everything is in beautiful order now and will be at any hour Lady Cramer chooses to call, as long as I am head of this house."

Still, on Wednesday afternoon Marion looked at the chairs and tables and all the pretty paraphernalia of the parlor critically. There was nothing in it she could wish different. The furniture was of rosewood upholstered in pale blue damask. The walls were covered with a delicate paper, and hung on them were pastels of lovely faces and green landscapes. The latticed windows were open, and a little wind gently moved the white lace curtains. The vases were full of flowers, and a small crystal one held the first rose of the season. There was nothing she could do but open the piano, and place a piece of music on its rack, that would give a sense of life and song to the room.

This done she looked around and, being satisfied, took a book and sat down. The book was "David Copperfield," and she had just arrived at that pleasant period when *David* finds out that *Dora* puts her hair in curl papers, and even watches her do it, when Mrs. Caird entered the room.

"Marion," she said, "I see the Cramer carriage coming, stand up and let me look at you."

Then Marion rose and she seemed to shine where she stood. From her throat to her sandals she was clothed in white organdie. A white satin belt was round her waist, and a necklace of polished white coral round her neck. There were white coral combs in her abundant black hair, and beautiful white laces at her elbows.

"You are a bonnie lassie," said her aunt proudly, "and see you hold up your own side. You are Ian Macrae's daughter and as good as any lady in the land. And beware of flattering my Lady in any form or shape. It is the worst of bad manners, as well as clean against your interests, to flatter a benefactor. Let them say nice words to you."

Then the carriage was at the door, and Mrs. Caird was there also, and Marion could hear the usual formalities, and the rustle of clothing and all the pleasant stir of arriving guests. She sat still until Lady Cramer entered, then rose to greet her. For a moment there was a slight hesitation, the next moment Lady Cramer cried, "You are Marion! I know you, child! I thought you were an angel!"

"Not yet, Lady Cramer."

The right key had been set. Lady Cramer fell at once into a charming, simple conversation and Dr. Macrae, who feared his daughter would be shy and uninteresting, was amazed at the cleverness of her conversation and the self-possession of her manner.

When tea was served, Marion waited upon Lady Cramer. She had given her father one look of invitation to take her place, but the Minister knew better than to answer it. The Apostles had refused to serve tables, he respected his office equally. Spiritually, he sat in the place of honor, how could he serve anyone with tea and muffins? There was a maid in cap and apron to perform that duty. The Macraes were a proud family, but it was not temporal pride that actuated the Minister. In all cases and at all hours he followed St. Paul's example and "magnified his office." He had always retired from anything like service, either at home or abroad, and it would be idle and false not to admit that he was admired and respected for it. It was honor enough that he condescended to be present, for in those days the Calvinistic ministry were a grave and rather haughty religious oligarchy. But they were not to blame; for the honor of God and their own satisfaction the people made them oligarchs.

After tea Lady Cramer asked Marion to sing for her. "There is a song," she said, "that I hear everywhere I go, and never too often. I dare say you can sing it, Marion. May I call you Marion?"

"I should like you to do so, Lady Cramer. And what is the name of the song?"

"I cannot tell you; it is about rowing in a boat; it is the music that charms. My dear, it beats like a human heart."

"I know it," answered Marion and, with a pleased acquiescence, she played a few chords embodying a wonderful melody, and anon her voice went with it, as if it was its very own:

"Row, young comrades, row, young oarsmen,  
Into the crypt of the night we float;  
Fair, faint moonbeams wash and wander,  
Wash and wander about the boat.  
Not a fetter is here to bind us,  
Love and memory lose their spell,  
Friends of the home we have left behind us,  
Prisoners of content! Farewell!"

At the last four lines the charm was doubled by someone—not in the room—singing them with her. It was a man's voice, a fine baritone, and was used with taste and skill. Every line raised Marion's enthusiasm, no one had ever heard her sing with such power and sweetness before, and during the little outburst of delight that thanked her Lord Richard Cramer entered the room.

"The praise is partly mine," he cried in a joyous voice, "and I know the musician will give me it." As he spoke he took the Minister's hand, and Dr. Macrae rose at the young man's request, and introduced his daughter to him. They looked, and they loved. The feeling was instantaneous and indisputable. Richard was on the point of calling her "Marion" a dozen times that happy hour; and "Richard" came as naturally and sweetly to Marion's lips. They sang the song over again, and before Lady Cramer left she had noticed the impression made upon her son, and resolved to have the young people under her supervision.

"I must have Marion for a week," she said to Mrs. Caird, and Lord Richard added that he had promised to teach Miss Macrae to ride, and that the lessons would require "a week at the very least." And Mrs. Caird was pleased to give such a ready consent to the proposal that Dr. Macrae could find no possible reason for refusing it.

Then the party broke up in a happy little tumult that defied the cold proprieties of the best society; for Lord Cramer had set the chatter and laughter going, and to Mrs. Caird the relaxation was like a glass of cold water to a thirsty woman.

"I am worldly enough to like the Cramers' way," she answered, when the Minister regretted the innocent merriment. "There was not a wrong word; no, nor a wrong thought, Ian; and I was fairly wearying for the sound of happy singing, and the voices of young folks chattering and laughing. This afternoon has been a great pleasure to me. And I'm hoping there will be plenty more like it. A man from the Hall has just brought a box. It appears to be a heavy one."

"It is full of books and papers."

"What kind of books, Ian?"

"Books that many are reading with an amazing interest, Jessy; and which I have long thought of examining. Huxley and Darwin's works, poor Hugh Miller's 'Investigations,' Bishop Colenso's 'Misconceptions,' Schopenhauer and others——"

"Ian, do not open one of them. There is your Bible. Don't you read a word against it. In a spiritual sense, it is the sun that warms, and the bread that feeds you."

"The intellectual feeling of the critical school of Bible readers ought to be familiar to me, or how can I preach against it, Jessy?"

"You have all the sins mentioned in the Commandments to preach against. The critical school can bear or mend its own sins."

"Let me explain, Jessy. The late Lord Cramer during his long illness read all these questioning, doubting books, and he wrote many refutations of their errors, or at least he believed them to be refutations. I have promised Lady Cramer to examine the papers, and prepare them for publication."

"Ian, do not do it. I entreat you to decline the whole business."

"You are unreasonable, Jessy."

"These men of the Critical School are intellectual giants. Are you strong enough to wrestle with them and not be overcome?"

"Not unless I comprehend them. Therefore, I must read what they say."

"What matters comprehension if you have Faith?"

"I have Faith, and I can trust my Faith. I know what I preach. My creed is reasonable and I believe it. I am no flounderer in unknown seas."

Nor was he. Ian Macrae was surely at this period of his life an upright soul. All his beliefs were fixed, and he was sure that he understood God perfectly. So he looked kindly into the pleasant, anxious face before him, and continued:

"I have not a doubt. I never had a doubt. I wish I was sure of everything concerning my life as I am of my creed. In my Bible, the blessed book from which I studied at St. Andrews, I have written these lines of an old poet, called Crawshaw:

"Think not the Faith by which the just shall live

Is a dead creed, a map correct of heaven,  
Far less a feeling fond and fugitive—  
It is an affirmation, and an act,  
That bids eternal truth be present fact."

"We do not know ourselves, Ian; however, we do know that the Christ who carries our sins can carry our doubts. And no one is sure of what will happen in their life. What is troubling you in particular?"

"Donald—and Marion."

"Marion! The dear child! She has never given you a heartache in all her life."

"She gave me one this afternoon."

"Because she was happy. Ian, you are most unreasonable."

"I am afraid of Lord Cramer. He would have made love to her this afternoon——"

"I will suppose you are right and then ask, what wrong there would have been in it?"

"More than I can explain. For seven years he was in a fast cavalry regiment, and he kept its pace even to the embarrassing of the Cramer estate. He had reached the limit of his father's indulgence three years ago. His stepmother has been loaning him money ever since, and he is in honor bound to repay her as soon as possible. That duty comes before his marriage, unless he marries a rich woman. My daughter would be a most unwelcome daughter to Lady Cramer, and I will not have Marion put in such a position. Dislike spreads quickly, and from the mother to the son might well be an easy road. There is something else also——"

"Pray let me hear the whole list of the young man's sins."

"He is deeply influenced by the 'isms' of the day, and, though brought up strictly in the true church, Lady Cramer fears he never goes there; for she cannot get him to spend a Sabbath at home."

"All this, Ian, is hearsay and speculation. We have no right to judge him out of the mouth of others. Speak to him yourself."

"I cannot speak yet. But at once I wish you to speak to Marion. Tell her to hold her heart in her own keeping. The late Lord Cramer was my friend. He told me whom he wished his son to marry, and it would be a kind of treachery to the dead if I sanctioned the putting of my own daughter in her place. I would not only be humiliated in my own sight, but in the sight of the church, and of all who know me."

"No girl can hold her heart in her own keeping if the right man asks for it. There was my little sister——"

"We will not bring her name into the subject, Jessy. It is painful to me. I saw plainly this afternoon that Marion was pleased with Lord Cramer's attention."

"Any girl would have been so. He is a handsome, good-natured man, full of innocent mirth, and Marion loves, as I do, the happy side of life—and is hungry—as I am—for its uplifting."

"Marion has never seen the unhappy side of life. Her lines have fallen to her in pleasant places. A short time ago Allan Reid told me he loved her and asked my permission to win her love, if he could. I gave him it. She could not have a more suitable husband."

"Girls like handsome, well-made men, Ian, men like yourself. Allan Reid is not handsome; indeed, he is very unhandsome. Marion spoke to me of his long neck and weak eyes, and——"

"Girls are perfectly silly on that subject. A good man, and a rich man, is as much as a girl ought to expect."

"Men are perfectly silly on the same subject. A good woman with a heart full of love is as much, and more than, any man ought to expect. But, before he thinks of these things, he is particularly anxious that she should be beautiful, and graceful, and money in her purse makes her still more desirable."

"A man naturally wants a handsome mother for his children."

"Girls are just as foolish. They want a handsome father for their children. I think, Ian, you might as well give up all hopes of Marion's marrying Allan Reid. She believes him to be as mean-hearted as he is physically unhandsome. She will never accept him."

"I shall insist on this marriage. Say all you can in young Reid's favor."

"Preach for your own saint, Ian. I have nothing to say in Allan Reid's favor."

"Then say nothing in favor of Lord Cramer."

"What I have seen of Lord Cramer I like. Do you want me to speak ill of him?"

"I have told you what he has been."



"His father's death has put him in a responsible position. That of itself often sobers and changes young men. Ian Macrae, leave your daughter's affairs alone. She will manage them better than you can. And what are you going to do about Donald?"

"Donald is doing well enough."

"He is not. I am afraid every mail that comes will tell us that he has taken the Queen's shilling, or gone before the mast."

"What do you want me to do?"

"Ask Donald what he wants, and give him his desire—whatever it is."

"There is not a good father in Scotland that would do the like of that, Jessy."

"Then be a bad father and do it. I am sure you may risk the consequences."

"These children are a great anxiety to me. Something is wrong if they will not listen to their father. I am very much worried, Jessy. I will go and unpack those books and then read awhile."

"Listen to me, Ian. You say that now you have perfect Faith. When you have gone through those books, your Faith will be in rags and tatters."

"I do not fear. There is no danger but in our own cowardice. We are ourselves the rocks of our own doubt. The danger lies in fearing danger. I made a promise to the dead. I cannot break it, Jessy. Such a promise is a finality."

"You made that promise by the special instigation of the devil, Ian."

"Jessy, you never read these books. The men who wrote them were morally good men, seekers after truth and righteousness. I believe so much of them."

"You are partly right. I have never read the books, but I have read long, elaborate, wearisome reviews of them. That was enough, and more than enough, for me."

"Why did you read such reviews?"

"Because I wanted to know whether Donald and Marion should be warned against them. I think they ought to be warned."

"You can leave that duty to me. If I think it necessary, they will receive the proper instruction."

"I wonder the government allows such books to be published. They will ruin the coming generations. The Romans had not much of a religion, but when they began to doubt it they went madly into vice and atheism and national ruin. If men have such wicked thoughts as are in the books you are going to read, they ought to keep them in their own hearts. If they could not do that, I would put them in prison, and take pen and ink from them."

"Do be more charitable, Jessy. The Bible teaches——"

"It teaches us to let such destructive books alone. God himself specially warned the Israelites not even 'to make inquiry' about the religion of the Canaanites; they did it, of course, and you know the result as well as I do. And men these days are so set up with their long dominion and the varieties of strange knowledge they have accepted that they do not require any Eve to pull this apple of disobedience and doubt of God. They manage it themselves."

"Jessy Caird, you have no right to impute evil to either men or books that are only known to you through some critic's opinion." Then he rose and, standing with uplifted eyes, said with singular emotion:

"O God, that men would see a little clearer!  
Or judge less harshly where they cannot see.  
O God, that men would draw a little nearer  
To one another! They'd be nearer Thee!"

With these words he left Jessy and went to the room where the fateful books were waiting for him.

And Jessy could say no more. But she threw her knitting out of her hands and let them drop hopelessly into her lap.

"When men stop reasoning, they quote poetry," she mused angrily. "I never heard Ian quote a whole verse before, unless he was in the pulpit; well, I have warned him, and now I can only hope he will feel that sense of utter desolation in his soul that I always felt after a few sentences of Schopenhauer or Darwin. There! I hear him opening the box. Now begin the to-and-fro paths of Doubt and Persuasion, days full of anxious brooding, nights full of shadowy chasms, that nothing but Faith can bridge. But Ian has Faith—at least in his creed—and there are spiritual influences that no one can predict or resist, for the way of the Spirit is the way of the wind." Motionless she sat for a few minutes, and then rose hastily, saying softly as she did so, "Wherever is Marion? I wonder she was not seeking me ere this."

She found Marion in her own room. She was kneeling at the open window with her elbows on the broad stone sill, and her cheeks were almost touching the sweet little mignonettes. A tender

smile brooded over her face, a tender light was in her eyes, she was lost in a new, ineffable sense of something full of delight—some pleasure strangely personal that was hers and hers alone.

"I am lonely without you, Marion. Why did you run away from me?"

"I thought Father was with you and, perhaps, saying something I would not like—about our visitors."

"What could he say that was not pleasant? I am sure they were everything that any reasonable person could expect."

"You know what Father told you about Lord Cramer. I have now seen him. I would not believe any wrong of him. I shall not listen to any wrong of him without protesting it; so I thought it best not to go into temptation."

"You did right."

"He is a beautiful young man—and how exquisite are his manners! How did he learn them?"

"He has always lived among people of the highest distinction, and they practice them naturally—or ought to do so."

"To you, to his stepmother, to Father, and to me he was equally polite. He did not treat me indifferently because I have only the shy, half-formed manners of a school-girl. He paid you as much respect as he paid Lady Cramer, though you are old and beneath her in social rank, nor was he in the least subservient to Father because he is a famous minister. He was equally attentive and courteous to all."

"I will take leave to differ with you, Marion Macrae. I am not old. I am in the midway of my life, young in soul, mind and body, and I am nothing beneath Lady Cramer in rank. Keep that in your mind. And you are not a shy, untrained school-girl; you are a young, lovely woman, with the naturally fine manners that come from a good heart and proper education. As for subservience to your father, I saw nothing of it from Lord Cramer, but Lady Cramer deferred to him in everything, and I wonder she has not turned his head round, and his heart inside out with her humility, and homage, and her downcast eyes."

"She is very pretty, Aunt."

"She is fairly beautiful. She has the witching ways of those golden-haired women, and all their flattering submissions. She can drop her blue eyes, and then lift them with a flash that would trouble any man's heart that had love or life left in it. And see how wisely and warily she dresses herself—the long, black, satin gown, with its white crape collar and cuffs, and the black and white satin ribbons so fresh and uncreased!"

"And the wave and curl of her lovely hair, under the small white lace bonnet! I thought, Aunt, she —"

"She ought not to have worn a white bonnet. It is too soon after her husband's death to wear a bit of white lace and a few white flowers on her head. She should have worn her widow's bonnet for two years, and it is wanting half a year at least of that term. But, this or that, she is a butterfly of beauty and vanity, and I would not be astonished if she fell in love with your father. To most women he would be an extraordinarily attractive man."

"O Aunt Jessy, what an idea! That would be the most unlikely of things."

"For that very reason it is likely."

"Father never notices women except in a religious way—when they are in trouble, or want his advice about their souls."

"You can no more judge your father by his outside than you can judge a cocoanut. He has a volcanic soul—ordinarily the fire is low and quiet, but if it should become active it would be a dangerous thing to meddle with."

"Father may have an austere face, but he has a tender mouth; and, O Aunt, I have seen love leap into his shadowy eyes when I have met him at the door, or drawn my chair close to his side in the evening."

"Your father is a good man. He has a genius for divine things—but women are not reckoned in that class."

"And I think Lord Cramer is a good man, though his genius may be for military things. He had the light of battle on his face this afternoon when he told us of that fight with the Afghans; and how sad was his expression when he described the burying of his company's colonel after it—the open grave in a cleft of hills dark with pines, the solemn dead march, the noble words spoken as they left their leader forever, and turned back to camp to the tender, homely strains of *Annie Laurie*. Oh, I could see and hear all. I have felt ever since as if I had been present."

"He appears to be a fine young fellow, though we must remember that men judge men better than women can; and it may be possible your father's opinion of Lord Richard Cramer has at least some truth in it."

"I do not believe it has. I think, also, that Lord Cramer is the handsomest man I ever saw. Just

compare him with Allan Reid."

"Why are you speaking of Allan Reid?"

"Because Father thinks I will marry the creature."

"Will you do as your father wishes?"

"Once, I might have done so—perhaps. Not now. My eyes have been opened. I have seen a man like Lord Richard Cramer, and I will marry no man of a meaner kind. How tall and straight and slender is his figure! How bold and manly his face! His gray eyes are full of quick, undaunted spirit, he is all nerve and fire, and I believe he could love as well as I am sure he can fight."

"You need not take love into the question. Richard Cramer will be compelled to marry a rich woman. Your father says he is bound both by honor and necessity to do so."

Marion buried her face in the mignonette, and did not answer; and Mrs. Caird, after a few moments' silence, said:

"Be glad that your heart is your own, and do not give it away until it is asked for."

"As if I would be so foolish, Aunt! I stand by Lord Cramer because people tell lies about him. I always stand by anyone wronged. I would even stand by Allan Reid, if I knew he was slandered without just cause."

"That is very good of you. If Allan heard tell of your opinion, he would get someone to lie him into your favor."

"He could not, because I would believe anything bad of Allan."

Then Mrs. Caird laughed, and Marion wondered why. She had forgotten the exception just made in his favor. Her thoughts were not with Allan Reid.

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## CHAPTER III

### DONALD PLEASURES HIS FATHER

"The songs our souls rejoiced to hear  
When harps were in the hall;  
And each proud note made lance and spear  
Thrill on the banner'd wall.

"God sent his singers upon earth,  
With songs of sadness and of mirth.  
That they might touch the hearts of men  
And bring them back to heaven again."

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The Minister had said he would go and read awhile, and Mrs. Caird had heard him unpacking the box of books that had arrived. But at that hour he went no further than to arrange them conveniently on a table at his side. He was too utterly amazed at Mrs. Caird's admitting that she had read criticisms and reviews of books she considered objectionable for himself. He remembered then, what he had only casually observed during all the years she had dwelt with him, that Jessie Caird was never without a book in her work-basket. But he had noticed on all of them the cover and the mark of the public library, and had felt certain they were novels. And, as the children were at schools and she much alone, he had been considerate in the matter and not asked any questions. How could he suspect that such objectionable literature was lying openly among her knitting and mending?

As he made this reflection, his eyes sought the volumes lying on the table, and he noticed that his Bible was close to them. Its familiar aspect brought a warm, comfortable sense to his heart. It was surely the Word of His Father in heaven. He leaned forward and laid his head affectionately upon it. What a Friend it had been to him! What a Counselor! In every way he had such a tremendous prepossession in its truth and blessing that he could smile defiantly at any man, or any man's book, being able to make him doubt a tittle of its law or its promises.

"The heavens and the earth may pass away," he said, "but not one word of God shall perish!" And, though he spoke softly, as to his own heart, the affirmation was hot with the love and fervor that thrilled the words through and through. In a few moments he rose, lifted the Book with tender homage, and laid it on a small table holding nothing but one white moss rose in a slender crystal vase. He did it without intention, actuated by a sudden spiritual reverence for holy things.

But as soon as the transfer was accomplished he began to reason about it. "Why did I remove the Bible?" he asked himself. He was not sure why, but he *was* sure that the impulse to do so had been a good and proper one.

"There is no book that looks like it in all the world," he thought. "It belongs to the Sanctuary. It is the Sanctuary in itself. How could I leave it among books that doubt and perhaps revile it?" Then his glance fell upon the books to which he had attributed a crime so likely and so heinous, and he continued his reflections.

"How commonplace and similar they look! They might be text-books, or novels, or even poetry. But God has set his mark upon the Bible. We cannot mistake it. Printed in any size or shape, bound in any color or any material, we know the moment our eyes fall upon it that it is the Word of God."

However, it is easy for the mind to find a ready road from spiritual to personal things, and it was not long before Lord Cramer had possession of the Minister's meditations. There appears to be no relevancy between the Bible and Lord Cramer, but Thought has swift and secret passages, and perhaps the way had been through the discredited books; for he was thinking of the young nobleman with much the same feelings as he had given the doubtful and objectionable volumes. He had felt them to be unworthy to lie on the same table with the Bible. He was equally certain that Lord Richard Cramer was unworthy to lift his eyes to Marion Macrae, and quite as positive that he intended to do so.

"Marion must marry Allan Reid," he decided. "It is for her happiness every way. What profit is there in a title, if its holder is too poor to honor it? Young Reid is rich, and will be rich enough to buy a title if he wants one. Moreover, Lord Richard is not like his father in a religious sense. Lord Angus Cramer—my friend—was present at divine service as long as he was able to be so. Lord Richard does not observe the Sabbath. His stepmother is troubled at his attitude toward the Church. Such a man is not fit to be *my* son-in-law—a man who does not keep the Sabbath! The idea is an impossible one! Allan Reid fills his place every Sabbath in the Church of the Disciples. To be honorable, and rich, and to keep the Sabbath! These are the three cardinal points of a respectable and religious life, and Marion must be made to accept them." Yet he felt quite sure that, at that very moment, Lord Richard Cramer was thinking of his daughter, and almost equally sure that Marion was thinking of Richard Cramer.

In a measure Macrae was correct. Lord Cramer was thinking of Marion, but he was telling himself it was only in a philosophical way. Sitting smoking on the lawn in the late twilight, he was curiously asking his heart the question so many ask, "Why is it that, out of the thousands of persons we meet, only one can rouse in us the tremendous passion of a first true love?" Yet, in whatever manner Richard Cramer tried to reason with himself, he was quite aware that something had happened that afternoon that could never be satisfied by any reasoning.

He would not believe it was love. Yet he had an extraordinary elation, his heart beat rapidly, and he was in a fever of longing and wonderment about the girl he had just met. He thought he knew all about women, but Marion was quite different, and she had called into life something deeper down than he had ever felt before. He was dreamy and yet restless, he was strangely happy, and yet strangely unhappy. Ah, though he would not admit it, the poignant thirst and exquisite hunger of a great love were beginning to trouble him.

He knew, however, that he could not run blindly into such a life-long affair as wooing the Minister's daughter. It might prove to be the dislocation of all his plans and prospects. Debt weighed heavily on him, especially his debt to his stepmother. So long as he owed her a shilling he was not his own master. He had been a gallant cavalry officer, but not averse to relinquish the limitations of that position for the title and estate that had fallen to him. Yet he could not keep up the state necessary unless he married a rich woman. He had promised his father to do this, and had almost resolved to try his fortune with Miss Victoria Marvel, the heiress of an immensely wealthy banker, and a young and lovely woman. This night, however, Miss Marvel was far beyond his horizon; he could think of no woman in all his world but Marion Macrae.

A week after Lady Cramer's call at the Little House, she came again and took Marion back with her to Cramer Hall for a visit. It was a pleasure to see the beautiful girl depart with her, for so much joyful expectation filled her heart that it transfigured her whole person, and she smiled so brightly, and stepped so lightly, that she seemed at that hour just a little above mortality. And the brilliant sunshine, and the calling of the cuckoo birds, the scent of flowers, and the breath and murmur of the sea, appeared to be just the natural atmosphere of her happy soul that wonderful June morning.

Lady Cramer chatted pleasantly as they drove over the brae and by the seashore, until they reached the large, plain, Georgian mansion called Cramer Hall. It was only remarkable for its size, and for the great extent and beauty of its gardens and park. As they neared the dwelling, Marion saw Lord Cramer descending the flight of steps which led to its principal entrance. She saw him coming to her! She felt him clasp her hand! She heard him speaking! But all these things took place to her in a delightful sense of semiconsciousness. She knew not what she said. Words were so dumb and inconsequent. Truly we have all confessed at times, "I had no words to express my feelings." Shall we ever in this life find words for our divinest moments? Or must we wait for their expression until Love and Death,

"Open the portals of that other land,  
Where the great voices sound, and visions dwell."

Marion was only too glad to reach the room prepared for her, and to sit still and draw herself together; for happiness really dissipates the inner personality, and squanders the richest and

rarest of our feelings. It was an antique room, full of the most beautiful, world-forgotten old furniture, one piece of richly carved oak being a cheval glass that showed her Marion Macrae from head to feet. And, in some way, these material household things calmed and steadied her.

Now let those who have truly loved tell themselves how time went by in this Eden home for Richard and Marion. True, nothing strange or startling marked its passage, only a delightful monotony of events usual and looked forward to. They rode, and read, and sang, they wandered about the house and garden, talking such divinity as only lovers understand. If there was company they kept much apart, and spoke little to each other, but every one present knew they were *really one*. For Love and Beauty create an atmosphere of ethereal union to which even those ossified by a material life are not quite insensible.

Lady Cramer indeed affected ignorance, but she was well aware of what was going on. She had anticipated it and, because she knew her stepson's disposition so well, had planned this very intimacy, feeling certain it would easily dissipate the light, roving fancy of the young man. She had so often seen him fall desperately in love, and so often seen him fall coldly and wearily out of it, and that with women whom she considered vastly superior to Marion in every respect. When she asked Marion to Cramer Hall, she believed that one week's unchecked intercourse would find Richard called to Edinburgh or London on very important business. When he received no such call she invited Marion to extend her visit for another week. In her opinion, it would be an incredible thing for Richard Cramer to live his life from morning to night for two weeks with the same girl and not utterly exhaust his fancy for her. At the end of two weeks, finding him still enraptured with "the same girl," she invited Marion for the third week, telling herself, as she did so: "If he stands three weeks of this absurd entanglement, there will have to be some strong measures taken. In the first place I shall speak to the Minister."

Now the Minister was much displeased at this second extension of his daughter's visit, and he wrote to her concerning it, saying, "A third week's visit is most unusual. I am troubled and angry at your acceptance of it. You are imposing on Lady Cramer's kindness, and I do not think it was at her wish this third invitation was given. I hope it was not your doing. Come home, without fail, immediately on its termination."

Acting on Mrs. Caird's advice, he had kept away from the Hall during Marion's visit. "There are a lot of young people coming and going between Cramer Hall and the neighboring gentry," she said, "and they do not want the Minister's company unless it be to marry them. I know the Blair girls, with their brother, Sir Thomas, were there two or three days; and I heard the young people were walking quadrilles on the lawn, and playing billiards in the house. Moreover, Starkie was in the kitchen the other day, and he told Aileen that Lady Geraldine Gower—who is a perfect horsewoman—was putting Marion and her pony through their paces; and I am feared for such ways—he said also, that the Macauleys were with them, and Captain Jermayne from the Edinburgh garrison."

"Marion ought not to be in such company."

"Marion is good enough for any company."

"That is allowed. I was thinking of her being led into temptation."

"Think of yourself, Ian, you are in far greater temptation than Marion will ever have to face. Did you notice a book lying open on the small table in your study?"

"No."

"I want you to notice it. I left it lying face downward purposely. If you lift it carefully, you will see that I have marked a few lines. Read them."

"*Lines!* Poetry, I suppose! Jessy, I have not time to read outside my present work."

"They are directly inside of your work."

"I wish you would drive over to Cramer, and say a few words of counsel to Marion."

"I will not, Ian. Marion must learn how to counsel herself. She is now in a fine school to learn that lesson, and she will come home *dux* of her class when it is closed."

He was turning toward his study as Mrs. Caird spoke, and he was closing the door as her last words reached him, "Read what I have marked, Ian."

He said to himself that he would not read it. Jessy required to be put a little more in her proper place. She had advised him too much lately, and he felt that she ought to wait until asked for her opinion on subjects belonging particularly to his profession. Her attitude was subversive of all recognized authority.

So he looked at the book lying on the table, but did not lift it. He was the more determined not to read the marked "lines" because Jessy had left the book face downward. She knew that this habit of hers seriously annoyed him, and that she had calculated on this annoyance making him lift the book and so in straightening the pages see the marked passage. He told himself that this was taking an unfair advantage of one of his most innocent peculiarities. He was resolved not to sanction it.

But the book lying on its face vexed and even troubled him. It might be a good book, the mental

abode of some wise man, who had pressed his finest hopes and thoughts on its white leaves. He could neither read nor write with that fallen volume before him. For he was so used to listen with his eyes to the absent or dead who spoke to him in a low counterpoint that he could not avoid a feeling that he was treating a visitor, whether friend or foe, with great unkindness.

He rose and he sat down, then rose again, and, with a resolved attitude, lifted his prostrate friend or enemy. One leaf was crumpled and, when he had smoothed it carefully out, he saw a passage enclosed in strong pencil lines. So he walked to his desk and, taking a piece of rubber, erased with pains and caution the indexing marks, nor did he read one word of the message the book brought him until he had set it free to advise, or reprove, or comfort him, according to its tenor. Then the words that met his eyes, and never again left his memory, were the following:

"Let lore of all Theology  
Be to thy soul what it *can* be;  
But know—the Power that fashions man  
Measured not out thy little span  
For thee to take the meeting rod  
In turn, and so approve to God  
Thy science of Theometry."

Many times over he read this message, and then he sat with the book in his hand, lost in thought.

But of the tenor of these thoughts he said nothing; yet Mrs. Caird was satisfied. If he had not read the lines, she knew he would have told her so, and, having read them, they could be left without discussion. He was in a less moody spirit all the rest of the week, and spoke to her several times of the hopeless discouragement involved in Comte's scheme of "supreme religion," a mere possibility of posthumous though unconscious "incorporation with the *Grand Être* himself," said he.

"Well, we are not on holy ground with Comte, Ian, and we need not take off our shoes," answered Mrs. Caird. "This *Grand Être*, this Great Being, is made up of little beings—yourself and I for instance."

"And yet, Jessy, Comte does not think all men worthy even of this honor. Vast numbers will remain in a parasitic state on this Grand Being—really burdens on him, Comte says."

"O Ian! What a poor unhappy God! Put your thoughts on the first ten words in Genesis. Consider their infinite sublimity and simplicity. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. This God is our God, and He has been, and will be our dwelling place in, and for, all generations, *Our Father!* The weakest souls are not parasites or burdens to Him. Like a father He pities them."

"You are relying on the Bible, Jessy. It does not enter into Comte's scheme, and indeed what is called scientific religion discredits the Book generally."

"The Bible was not printed yesterday, Ian. Its assailants come and go, come and go, but it stands unmoved forever. With what new weapons can it be attacked? You told me yesterday that Strauss thought he had abolished Paul, and that Ewald answered there was nothing new in Strauss. As far as I can see, the giants of unbelief slay each other, while the Bible goes on to blend itself with the thought and speech of every land under the sun."

Such conversations became frequent between the Minister and his sister. He appeared to provoke and enjoy them. And he looked with a kind curiosity at this woman who had sat nearly twenty years on his hearth, nursing his children, ordering his household, sewing, knitting, telling fairy tales, and yet pondering in her heart the highest questions of time and eternity. The facts violated all his conceptions of women, and one day, after a very vivid illustration of this kind, he said softly to himself, yet with intense conviction:

"Women are inscrutable creatures! I doubt if I know anything about them." And perhaps these very words were "the call" for the wider and sadder knowledge that awaited him.

On Saturday he prepared to go to Glasgow to fulfil his usual duty in the Church of the Disciples; but his study of unbelief had got a stronger hold on his mind than he recognized. For the first time in all his ministry he felt a slight reluctance for spiritual work. But Mrs. Caird did not encourage this feeling, she was too anxious about Donald to miss his father's report of him, though she always discounted the same. But she reminded him for his comfort that when he returned from Glasgow on Monday he would find Marion at home to welcome him.

"I expect that," he answered promptly. "If I am disappointed I shall go to Cramer Hall for her."

However, very early on Monday morning Mrs. Caird saw Marion and Lord Cramer from afar, riding very slowly over the brae and, apparently, engaged in a conversation that admitted of none of the little irregularities of light or fugitive intercourse. Their attitude as they came nearer was distinctly, though unconsciously, that of lovers; and when Mrs. Caird met them she saw with delight the sunshine on their faces, mingling with a glory and radiance far sunnier from within; and heard the pride and tenderness in Lord Cramer's voice as he said, "Good morning, Mrs. Caird, I have brought Marion safely back to you."

"You have done well," she answered. "The Minister was wearying for her."

"How soon will he return from Glasgow? I wish to speak with him."

"His times are not set times; he comes this hour, and that hour. He deviates a good deal and, as for speech with him, you had better choose any day but Monday."

"Why not Monday, Mrs. Caird?"

"Because a Minister's stock of loving kindness is apt to be low on Monday, and he is tired and not disposed to frivol, or talk of unsacred things."

"But I want to talk to him of the most sacred of all mortal things. I am sure Dr. Macrae will be reasonable on any day of the week."

"There is a likelihood, but I have lived long enough in this astonishing world to observe that the head and the heart do not run over at the same time; and men keep their reasonable judgment the while. There's luck in leisure, Lord Cramer. Take my advice and leisure awhile."

Then Lord Cramer led Marion to the little summer house, and Mrs. Caird left them to give some orders concerning lunch, but when it was ready she saw Cramer riding away from the gate, and Marion, still in her habit, standing there watching him. Hearing her aunt's footsteps she turned, went to her side and, kissing her, said, "Dear Aunt, I am glad to be with you again."

"Then we are both glad, and your father will be glad also. Run upstairs and take off your hat and that width of trailing broadcloth. Then come and get a good lunch."

In a few minutes Marion appeared at the table in the simplest of her home dresses and, with a sigh of pleasure, said again, "Oh, but I am glad to be with you, Aunt!"

"Yet you had a happy time at Cramer Hall?"

"Richard was there. That was enough."

"And many other pleasant people?"

"Yes."

"And Lady Cramer?"

"I do not think she had a nice time. She was weary of company, and it was an effort for her to be quite polite during the last week."

"You ought, then, to have come home."

"I had no excuse for doing so."

"And you had an excuse for staying, eh?"

"Yes."

"Lord Cramer?"

"He begged me to stay. And, as I am going to marry him, I did what he desired, of course."

"Of course. And, of course, you will do what your father desires?"

"If Father is reasonable."

"The Fifth Command says you are to obey your father, and it does not make any exceptions as to whether he is reasonable or unreasonable."

"I intend to marry Richard, and no other man in all the wide world."

"You do not require to be so pointed about it. There is no one here wishes to prevent you."

"No one can prevent me, Aunt. I love Richard and he loves me. We fell in love with each other the moment we met."

"That is the right way. I like men that go over head and ears at first sight. Most take little careful steps, hesitating, fearing, one at a time. Cowardly lovers! No woman wants such. She just looks scornfully at them, and then turns her eyes toward something pleasanter."

All afternoon they talked on this and kindred subjects, and the time went so rapidly that the clock struck five before Mrs. Caird reflected that the Minister was two or three hours behind his usual time. What was keeping him? What was wrong? Then she began to worry about Donald; for, if anything usual becomes unusual, our first thought is not—what is right? or what is happy or profitable? but, always, what is wrong? And Mrs. Caird's anxieties drifted to the youth she loved so dearly.

"I wonder! I wonder whatever is wrong, Marion? Your father is always home by three, or at most four o'clock. I am feared something is wrong with Donald." And, in spite of Marion's optimistic persuasions, she was constantly asking her heart this woeful question. From the door to the gate she went with tiresome frequency, but it was after eight o'clock ere she saw two men walking leisurely toward the house. The twilight was over the earth, and nothing was very clear, but she knew them. Hurrying into the house she called to Marion in a voice of great pleasure and excitement:

"Your father is coming! And Donald is with him! And what can that mean?"

"Something good, Aunt."

But Mrs. Caird did not hear her. She was ordering this and that luxury, which she knew would be welcome to the belated travelers, and she had the natural wisdom and good-nature which never once asked, "What kept you so late?" She was satisfied with their presence, and with the fact that both were happy, and in the most affectionate mood with each other. She placed Donald's chair beside her own and, when he touched her hand, or smiled in her face, or whispered, "Dear, dear Aunt!" she had a full payment for all her anxious hours about him.

It was not until Marion and Donald had gone to their rooms that the Minister felt inclined to explain his tardy return from the city. "I was afraid you would be anxious, Jessy," he said; and she answered, "Not about you, Ian. I knew you were all right, but I was feared about Donald. I thought something was wrong with him, and I could not fix on any particular danger. I thought of the trains and the sea, but someway they both assured my mind they were innocent of doing him any harm. The trouble was an unknown one. What was it, Ian?"

"Not much, Jessy. Donald has not been behaving himself after the ways and manners approved of by the Reids."

"I never yet heard any word of the Reids being set for our example. What way was Donald breaking their laws?"

"It seems, Jessy, that last Wednesday night there was some kind of civic anniversary—the Provost's birthday, or the birthday of some great man or other. I have totally forgotten the name or event. And serenading came into the thoughts of Donald and four others, and they lifted their violins and went together to the Provost's house. As it happened, he was eating a late supper after his speech in the City Hall, and the lads played and sang the songs in every Scotsman's heart. And there were three or four of his cronies with the Provost and, when the lads had sang twice over,

'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,'

they brought in the singers and made them sit and drink a glass of toddy at their table, and the Provost thanked them heartily and gave them a five-pound note to share between them."

"That was fine! The Provost is a gentleman. And he knew how to win the hearts of the Scotch laddies growing up to be good Scotchmen. Who were the five lads, Ian?"

"Donald was the leader, and there were with him Matthew Ballantyne, David Kerr, John Montrose, and Allan Reid, all of them members of my Wednesday night Bible class."

"Then I cannot believe they did anything much out of the way, unless the Reids' way is narrower than the Bible way."

"After they left the Provost's, Donald suddenly bethought himself that it was also his Uncle Hector's birthday, and they all went to his big house in Blytheswood Square. There was a light in his parlor; for, you know, he always reads until the new day is born, and this night he was reading 'Nicholas Nickleby,' and laughing with himself over that insane *Mark Tapley's* pretenses to be jolly. Suddenly the violins asked sweetly and passionately, 'Wha Wadna Fecht for Charlie?' The old man took no notice. Then they all together began to merrily tell him,

"Twas up the craggy mountain,  
And down the wooded glen,  
They durst na go a-milking,  
For Charlie and his men.'

And by the time they had finished this delightful complaint, and Donald had lifted his voice to assert that,

'Geordie sits in Charlie's chair,'

and exhorted all true Hieland men,

'Keep up your hearts, for Charlie's fight,  
Come what will, you've done what's right,'

a crowd had gathered. For, you know, Jessy, how Donald can sing men out of themselves, and the crowd began to sing with him, so that this passionate little rant filled the square. Windows were lifted, and doors flung open, and men and women at them joined heartily in the song."

"And wherever were the constables?"

"They were singing with the crowd, and no necessity for them to interfere. It was a perfectly orderly crowd, singing their national songs, and when they had finished

'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,'

and fervently assured each other they,



'For Scotland's King and law,  
Freedom's sword would strongly draw,  
Free men stand, and free men fa','

my Uncle Hector threw wide his door, and bid the lads into his parlor.

"He is a grand old pagan—I mean saint."

"Say what you mean, Jessy. Donald says he looked proudly at him, and he thought for a moment he was going to kiss him, but instead of that ceremony, which might have been a little abashing and confusing to the lad, his uncle led him to the hearth and, pointing to two swords crossed over the chimneypiece, he said:

"Look well at them, Hieland laddies! They were in the hands of Alexander and Fergus Macrae when they fought to the death for King James and Prince Charlie. God rest their souls!"

At these words the Minister became silent, words appeared to choke him, and his eyes held a glimpse of the old dead world of his fathers. Jessy, also, was speechless, but their silence was fitter than any words could be.

In a short time the Minister steadied himself and proceeded: "The four young men with Donald doffed their bonnets, and looked silently at the weapons that had come home red from Culloden's bloody field, and were still holding the red rust of carnage; but Donald stretched up his hand and touched them reverently, and then kissed his hand, and he told me his tears wet the kiss, and that he was proud of them—and really, Jessy, my own eyes were not dry—and a wave of—love came over me—and I—before I knew it—had clasped Donald's hand and I think—yes, I am sure, I kissed him! I wonder at myself! Whatever made me do it?"

"The love of God, Ian, which is the love of all good and gracious things. The love of God, which is the love of your son, and the love of your country, and the love of all the noble feelings for which men dare to die, and go and tell *Him* so. And what next, Ian? What next?"

"Uncle Hector called his valet, and bid him 'Bring in the punch bowl,' but Donald said they had drank from the Provost's bowl all that was good for them. The old man then asked them to play him a reel, and off went 'The Reel of Tullochgorum.' One of the boys from the orchestra played, and the other four danced it with wonderful spirit and, though my uncle did not try the springing step, he snapped the time with his fingers and beat it with his feet and was in a kind of transfiguration. After the dance they sang 'Auld Lang Syne' together, and then the old man was weary with his emotion and he said:

"Good boys! Good night! You have given my old age one splendid hour of its youth back again! My soul and my heart thank you, and here is a ten-pound note to ware on yourselves and good Scotch music'; and so with a 'God bless you all!' he bid them good-bye!"

"It was a splendid hour and he did well to ware ten pounds on it."

"Elder Reid did not think so and, after the Sabbath service, he asked me to give him half-an-hour's conversation at his office in the morning. I thought it was concerning Allan and Marion, but Donald, on Sabbath night, told me about the serenade, and so I went to Reid's office in the morning quite prepared for the subject of offense."

"Did Elder Reid say anything about your uncle?"

"He said only think of that old pagan, Hector Macrae, giving the ranting boys ten pounds of good money!"

"*Major Macrae*,' I corrected. 'He won his title on memorable battlefields, Elder, and he has every right to it.' And, I added, 'He is far from being a pagan. I wish we all loved God as sincerely as he does.' Then Reid cooled a little, and answered, 'You know, Minister, it would have been almost a miracle if he had given ten pounds to our Foreign Mission Fund. I asked him myself one day, and he pretended to be deaf, and would say nothing but 'Eh? What? I don't hear you! I'm vera busy!' and so to his bills and papers without even a 'Seat yourself, Elder,' and not a penny for the Foreign Mission Fund.'"

Jessy laughed, a queer, indeterminate little laugh, and the Minister looked at her doubtfully, and then continued, "I reminded him that the Major gave with both hands to our Home Missions, and that men gave as their hearts moved them; also, that Christ considered Home Missions had the prior claim, 'First at Jerusalem,' and so also first in Glasgow, and then in India. 'We are getting off our subject,' I said to him and he answered crossly, 'An altogether silly subject, kissing old swords, dancing old reels, snapping fingers and the like of such old world nonsense. I think Major Macrae forgot his duty, he should have admonished the young men, and not encouraged them in their foolishness.'"

"What did you say to that, Ian?" asked Mrs. Caird.

"I reminded him that, in Leviticus, nineteenth chapter and fourteenth verse, it is written, 'Thou shalt not curse the deaf'; and I added, 'The absent are also the deaf, they cannot speak for themselves. I need say no more to you, Elder.' And he begged pardon, and admitted he might be judging Major Macrae wrong, for it was true a great many people thought him a perfect saint; and I said, 'You know, Elder, that a country is in a poor way when its religious life does not blossom in saints.'"

"Was Donald in the office when you went there?"

"Yes, I saw him counting up a line of figures as I passed his desk, and I felt sorry for the boy."

"I am glad of that, Ian. It was the best sign of grace you have had for a long time."

"Do not say such a thing as that, Jessy. I love my son with my whole heart. My life for his, if it were necessary."

"Forgive me, Ian! I believe you. What was the Elder wanting to talk to you about?"

"He asked, first, if I had spoken plainly to Marion concerning his son's offer. I told him I had no opportunity to do so, as she had been visiting Lady Cramer for the past three weeks. Then he continued to urge Allan's claims until I grew weary of the talk, and I finally said——"

"That Marion must not be forced to marry anyone, surely you said that much, Ian?"

"Not quite that, Jessy. I promised to stand by Allan and to urge Marion to favor him, but I added, 'There is a certain right, Elder, which draws a girl to the *one man* in the world for her. It is not much believed in, but perhaps it is the only Divine Right in this world.' He seemed puzzled at my remark, and I did not explain it. Then he was huffy, and said he would make free to call my 'Divine Right' Richard Cramer, a poor lord, with all his income mortgaged, and no morality to balance his poverty."

"You could have cleared yourself on that score. Why did you not tell him you were as much against Lord Cramer as he could be?"

"I was angry at the purse-proud creature, and I would say neither good nor ill of Lord Cramer. I let him see, and feel, I thought his words and temper very unbecoming in the Senior Elder of the Church of the Disciples, and so left him feeling very uncomfortable."

Then Jessy looked admiringly at her brother-in-law. She knew well how "uncomfortable" he could make people under his Scriptural reproofs.

"How was it Donald got home with you?" she asked. "Was the little favor a propitiation for the Elder's unguarded temper? Did the Elder know he was coming?"

"As I left him, I said, 'I will tell Donald to meet me at Stewart's for lunch, and I will give him suitable counsel, Elder'; and the man was on his highest horse at once, and answered, 'I hope you will, sir. For your sake, I should hate to send Donald off, but I must do so if he leads my son into any more ridiculous tom-fooleries. Allan has a tender conscience, and he felt he had done wrong, so he came straight to me and made his confession. I hope Donald will be equally frank with you.'"

"So Donald lunched with you at Stewart's? I am proud of that occurrence, Ian."

"I was proud likewise. There were over a dozen ministers present, and they all looked up and looked pleased when we entered the room together. Every one had a word of praise and hope for Donald, and nearly all said, 'You will be for St. Andrews, Donald, no doubt.' I am afraid I had more personal pride in the lad's beauty, fine carriage, and fine manner than I ought to have had, but——"

"Not any too much. What advice did you give him?"

"None of any kind. I do not think Donald did anything wrong. If Elder Reid has fears for his son, let him look after him. I certainly told Donald that the Elder would send him off if he tempted his son Allan again; and perhaps I let Donald see and feel that I should not be grieved at all if he relieved Mr. Reid's anxiety about his son's morals."

"Did Donald understand you?"

"He said, 'Thank you, Father!' And then I remarked you were wearying to see him, and that I would wait in Bath Street until three o'clock if he wished to go to Cramer with me."

"But did you not come by that train?"

"No. I saw that Donald could not forego the pleasure of 'sending himself off' and this he could not do until Reid returned to his office after the lunch hour."

"I hope he kept in mind the fact that Mr. Reid is your chief Elder, and used few and civil words as became his youth and his position."

"He behaved like a gentleman. He apologized for asking his son to join the serenading party, and begged leave to resign his stool in the office lest he might offend again. And the Elder was much annoyed, and replied that he hoped he would remain; for, Jessy, I am sure he was in his heart very proud of Allan being invited into the Provost's parlor to eat and drink with the notables there."

"Certainly he was, and he will talk of the lad's capers as long as he lives, and in a little while both Allan and his father will have come to believe that the whole affair was of Allan's planning and management."

"I have no doubt of it. Donald, however, refused even his offer of a higher salary to begin in

September and, bowing respectfully, left him alone with his disappointment and chagrin. As he was going through the office, Allan called him, and then Donald's temper got a little beyond his control, and he walked near to where Allan sat among the clerks, and said, 'I have no words for a tale-bearer, Allan Reid. He is always a contemptible fellow, and I warn you, gentlemen, that you are with a spy and a mischief-maker.' That is the end of the circumstance, Jessy."

"You little know whether it is the end or the beginning, Ian."

"As far as Donald is concerned, I mean. He came to me radiantly happy and satisfied with himself and, after we had drunk a cup of tea, we came leisurely home."

"Very leisurely. I'll admit that. Well, we have to take ourselves as we are and other people as we can get them, and it is not always an easy job."

"Indeed, Jessy, there is scarcely anything that is at the same time more wise and more difficult."

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE GREAT TEMPTATION

"Love not, love not! Oh, warning vainly said,  
In present years, as in the years gone by;  
Love flings a halo round the dear one's head  
Faultless, immortal—till they change or die."

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It was a warm, sunny day in August, and the slim and graceful Adalaide, Lady of Cramer, was waiting and watching for Dr. Macrae. She had a new purpose in her heart, and it was evident not only in her eyes, which were full of a soft blue fire—languid yet masterful—but also in her dress, from which every trace of black had been eliminated. In a soft flowing gown of white lawn and lace, with belt and bows of white satin, she looked fresh and lovely as a flower on the day of its birth.

"Take my book and work-basket to the Ladies' Rest, Flora," she said to her maid, "and if there are callers, they may come to me. Tell Brodie to attend them."

The Ladies' Rest was a circle of wonderful turf in the very center of which stood a gigantic oak, whose far-stretching branches kept the circle in a dreamy, shadowy peace. Near the heart of the circle there were seats, and a small table, and my Lady, standing in white on its green turf, with the green and golden lights of the garden all around her, was as fair a creature as mortal eyes could desire to see.

When left alone her elfin prettiness became particularly noticeable, for she was practicing her bewildering ways to her own thoughts, her manner being at one moment arch and coquettish, and at the next pensive and affectionate; practicing all her small facial arts with the predeterminate aim and intention of capturing the hitherto impregnable, insensible heart of the handsome Minister.

He was quite unconscious of the danger into which he was walking, and his thoughts were on the eternities, and the tremendous destinies that are connected with them. The gravity induced by such thoughts was becomingly dignified, and Lady Cramer thought him handsomer than even her imagination had painted him. Certainly he was worth captivating, and she was resolved to effect this purpose. Indeed she wondered at herself for not having accomplished such a delightful triumph before.

But, if she had honestly examined her dilatory movement in this direction, she would have known that it was caused by facts brought vividly to her notice during the past few weeks, when Cramer Hall had been filled with company of a pleasantly mixed character—young nobles and soldiers, and many types of beautiful and eligible young ladies. Every one, then, had regarded her as a kind of matron, and she found all her pretenses to be yet of the younger set quietly put aside. She was admired and treated with the greatest respect, but no one made love to her; and she was piqued and humbled by this neglect.

"Because I am thirty-two," she said to herself, "because I am thirty-two, I was treated like an old lady. The insolence of youth is intolerable!" Then she heard steps upon the flagged walk and, turning, saw the stately, rather somber figure of the man whose conquest she was meditating approaching her. She met him with charming smiles, and little fluttering attentions and, in words soft and hesitating, tried to hide, and yet to express her great joy in his presence. "It is so long—so long—since I saw you! I have felt desolate and, oh, so lonely!"

"Lonely! You have had so much pleasant company."

"But *you* never came—not even when I wrote and asked you—did you know how cruel you were? My company was young and thoughtless—no one cared for me—I longed to see your face you

never came—I have been very lonely—but *now!* Oh, you cannot tell what a pleasure it is to have someone to talk to who does not regard tennis and golf as the chief end and duty of man," and she smiled and laid her jeweled white hand confidingly on his.

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**"She smiled and laid her jeweled white hand confidingly on his"**

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He was much astonished, but also greatly touched, by her frankness and evident joy in his presence; and, as any other man would have done, he accepted her gracious kindness without doubt or consideration. Her pretty face, full of sympathetic revelations, and her flattering words went like wine to his head and heart, his eyes dilated with pleasure, and he clasped the hand she had laid upon his own. Its soft warmth, its slight pressure, the tender smile on her lips, the love light in her eyes, were to his starving soul irresistible temptations. But he never thought of these things as temptations; if he had done so, there was in him a Will gigantic enough to have put them behind him. As a man dying of thirst would have seized a glass of cold water, so his soul, famishing for love, took hastily, greedily, the astonishing blessing offered him. Scarcely could he believe in his happiness; yet fast, oh, so fast, he forgot everything before this hour! And when he left Cramer it was with his heart like a spring brimming over with love.

Under the sweet strength of the stars he walked home. He felt that he could not meet Mrs. Caird until he had communed with himself in the silence and solitude of the night. His whole life, without his expectation or conscious desire, had been changed. Something wonderful had taken place. He thought he had loved before, but this startling, unforeseen, and unmistakable passion filled him with rapture and a kind of sacred fear. He had in no way sought it. By some Power far above him it had been sent. Yet his beating heart, his strange joy, his firm step, active brain, and glad outlook on life taught him that all the long years of his ascetic rejection of love must have been a mistake.

When he reached home he had not decided whether it would be prudent to tell his sister-in-law of the new joy that had come into his life. His nature was reticent, and he felt a keen personal pleasure in the secrecy of his love. He did not dream of her suspecting or discovering it. He found her sitting on the little porch absolutely idle. He was astonished at the circumstance, and more so at her face and manner, which were both sad and weary.

"Are you sick, Jessy," he asked, "or have I stayed too long at the Hall?"

"You are sooner home than I expected. How are all there?"

"No one is there at present but Lady Cramer. We had dinner together, and I came away as soon as I could well leave. She is very lonely."

"So am I, for that matter."

"Marion is with you."

"In a way, not much. Her heart is at Oban or thereabout."

"Lady Cramer told me that Lord Cramer and Donald had gone on a tramp together. They are walking through the western highlands. It did not please me."

"And why not?"

"Because it is strengthening Donald's love of adventure and change. I wanted him to rest quietly here until we returned to Glasgow. Then I hoped he would be willing and glad to enter St. Andrews, and to settle down to the life I intended for him."

"If he had stayed here, I think he would have regarded St. Andrews with delight. The company of hundreds of young men, the pleasant city, and the fine golf ground would make St. Andrews—after a month of this place—a very Elysium of satisfaction."

"I thought this place was like the Garden of Eden to you."

"I don't blame Eve, if it is. All right for a settled woman like me, and yet I, myself, am missing my afternoon callers and the library. And the two lasses are growing surly for want of company. Aileen was saying an hour ago that, 'If there was only a constable, and a hand-organ passing now and then,' she could bear the loneliness better."

"As for me, I like it more and more. I am thinking of asking the Church to get a supply for a month. I feel a little rest to be necessary."

"I feel as if I had had enough of the country."

"What does Marion say?"

"She is as happy here as anywhere. All places are wearisome to those who live for a person who is not in the place."

"And Lady Cramer tells me that her stepson is miserable if he is not with Donald. She says they are inseparable and very unhappy if apart."

"Like to like, the wide world over."

"But they are not alike."

"You do not know your son. I do. But if you take a month's rest here, you might get through that weary, useless reading of silly books and sillier manuscripts."

"I hope it is not useless reading, Jessy. Every book that discredits scientific theology adds to the evidences of Christianity."

Then Jessy lost control of herself, for she answered angrily, "Do you think, Ian, that I have not read 'Evidences'? Let me tell you how I felt after reading Paley's. I just thought it *probable* that Christianity *might* be true. That was only an opinion, but let a man or woman *do* God's will, until He speaks within them like a living voice, and then they will *know* there is a God."

"But, Jessy,——"

"Don't interrupt me. I must tell you the truth. Upon my word, I believe you are training yourself to the habit of doubting much and believing little. You have dropped words lately I did not like, and I do not like your selfishness about your children. I have always noticed, as religious faith dies, selfishness takes the place of self-sacrifice. There were the Dalrys! Their children were lost to everything good, because they were forced to marry where they did not love. What have you got to do with Marion's love? I wonder sometimes if you ever loved my little sister! I am doubting it."

"Jessy,——"

"Yes, I am doubting it. You thought it no sin to urge her to leave father and mother, and go away with yourself, though the Bible lays it down as the *man's duty* to leave father and mother for his wife's sake. Marion wants to do nothing worse than you begged Agnes to do. There is a change—a change for the worse—in you, Ian. I cannot just put my finger on it, but I feel it. Yes, I feel it."

"That may be so, Jessy. We all change, and no wrong done by it. We must in some way carry about with us the aura of any book that takes possession of our thoughts or feelings. The doubtful books I have been reading so steadily have their own influence—perhaps not a good one."

"A very bad one."

"In a way, you are right, Jessy. It makes me unhappy and uncertain, and with a strong insistence leads me from one skeptical writer to another. I wish to destroy them all!"

"Ian, you are not the man appointed to destroy the devil. Keep yourself out of his power, and leave the devil and all his books to God Almighty."

"Many of these skeptical books show a reverent spirit, Jessy."

"I will not believe that. As far as I can judge, they are altogether destructive. They have no business in this room, though in the libraries of hell they ought to be given high place and honor."

"The libraries of hell! What an idea!"

"A very reasonable one. There are books that have slain more souls than any man could slay—but —"

"O Jessy, Jessy! Doubts will come, even if you fight them on your knees—will come to thoughtful men and women; and doubt can only be cured by investigation."

"As far as I can see, the doubt of all Doubters is just the same, and the Book of Job contains as much philosophy of that kind as the world is ever likely to come to. But I notice that, as soon as doubting gets hold of a man, he will believe anything, so long as it is *not* in the Bible."

"The 'Evidences of Christianity'—"

"Ian, I have no patience with you. If there is anything plain and clear in the religious teachings of the Bible, it is that religion proves itself. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned, not intellectually. If a man has had a good dinner, he knows it; there is no need to argue about the matter. If a soul thirsts after righteousness and drinks of the Waters of Life, it knows it, and is happy and satisfied; it does not want evidences that it is so."

"You are right, Jessy, but what is the matter with you to-night? You are very queer—I may say 'cross.'"

"I am neither queer nor cross. This afternoon, for a few moments, I lost my bodily senses, and found *myself*—and I saw a black cloud coming straight to our house—coming as if it knew just where to go—as if it had been sent. And it entered the house, and I came to myself in a dream and sweat of terror; and I am feared for my children, for they are heart of my heart. And your selfish way with them both is enough to call some tragedy, a deal worse than a marriage that does not suit you, or the taking of his own way by a good, brave lad who is sure not to take a wrong way, though it may not be the one you prefer."

"Marion has no knowledge of the world, and it is my duty to stand between her and the world."

"Marion loves Richard Cramer, and if she is willing to thole his temper and all the rest of his shortcomings, it is likely her appointed way toward perfection—it seems to be God's commonest way of training women. You do not require to bear with Cramer in any way. He will not trouble you, for there is no doubt he thinks you as selfish and disagreeable as you think him."

"I dislike Lord Cramer for his immoralities."

"God puts up with what you call his 'immoralities,' and I think you need not be so strict to mark iniquity—if there is any. In my opinion, Cramer is as good as the rest of men—fond of women's company, of course, and, like Donald, daft about music and fine singing, but what good man is not?"

"As for Donald, I only ask him to walk in my own footsteps."

"They are over-narrow for him."

"Nevertheless, he shall tread in them or make his own way. I have money to send him to St. Andrews and give him every advantage. He can go there next month—or he can go to the ends of the earth."

"Then he will go to the ends of the earth. But take heed to my words, Ian Macrae, you will not escape the sorrow of it. However you may try to comfort yourself, you will not be able to forget the loving, handsome lad who stands at your side to-day like a vision of your own youth."

"I had a very happy afternoon, and you have completely spoiled it, Jessy."

"You can have a happy afternoon to-morrow, and every day, if you wish it, but if you ruin your children's lives you can never, never undo that wrong. Have some pity on yourself, if you have none on them."

"I will not be bullied into doing what I know to be unwise, Jessy. I am considering the whole life of my children, not a few weeks or months of youth's illusory dreams and temptations. Donald, as a man, will have the privilege of making a choice; as for Marion, I shall insist on her accepting a marriage which will shelter her as far as possible from all the ills of life."

"Do you mean that you will make her marry that lying, sneaking, tale-telling cub, Allan Reid?"

"Certainly. His faults grew out of his jealousy of Donald's beauty and cleverness. He confessed his fault to me and I forgave him. All stands as it stood before that disagreeable evening. He said Donald was very scornful and provoking. I can believe it."

"I hope he was." Then she laughed, and added, with an air of satisfaction: "Donald has a way of his own. He can be very civil, and very unbearable. I have seen him—," and she laughed again at the memory.

"I am going to my room, Jessy. I have said all I have to say on these subjects."

"Will you have some bread and milk first?"

"No. I had an excellent dinner. It was late also. You have made me wretched, Jessy."

"I am sorry, Ian. But, as it concerns the children, we are pulling at opposite ends of the rope."

"They are *my* children. You will kindly remember that fact, Mrs. Caird." He spoke with a haughty determination and left her without even his usual perfunctory "good night." She was troubled by his somewhat unusual show of temper, and the noble repose of the night had no note of comfort for her. The silence of the far-receding mountains, the murmur of the streams, the air of lonely pastoral melancholy, with a light like dreamland lying over all, did not help her wounded feelings. The Scot does not ask Nature for comfort in any heart sorrow; there is the Book, and the God of his Fathers. But Jessie Caird had not yet arrived at the point where she felt her exigencies beyond her own direction.

In a few minutes she saw Dr. Macrae light his room, and through its open window there came the odor of a fine cigar. "After the manner of men," she muttered. "They don't permit a woman to smoke—if she is worried or ill-tempered—it is not ladylike. And I'm wondering what improves its manners so as to make it gentleman-like. Men are selfish creatures, all of them, not one good, no, not one!"

Then she rose and rather noisily locked the door; she hoped that Dr. Macrae would hear her, and so come and attend to what he considered his duty when at home. But Dr. Macrae was lying on the sofa smoking and dreaming of Lady Cramer's beauty, and that night he did not care who locked the door. The huge key turned, the bolts slipped into their places, and she went upstairs, full of indignation at her brother-in-law. She could not understand his mood; for she remembered that in spite of the gravity of the subjects on which they had disagreed there was an air of yawning and boredom about him. It was evident to her that they were intruding on some subject much more interesting.

At that hour she was trying to find out what really filled her with forebodings. Little wondering, wandering thoughts about some change in her brother-in-law had flitted for two weeks in and out of her consciousness. But all his slight deviations from the natural and usual were as nothing in comparison with the change she perceived this night. Then, in the midst of her trifling suppositions, there was suddenly flashed across her mind a few words she never doubted: "*He is in love with Lady Cramer! He intends to marry her!*"

The clue had been given and she followed it out. She thought she now saw clearly why Macrae was so determined to marry Marion to Allan Reid. He was going to marry into the Cramer family himself, and it would be most disturbing and confusing if Marion did the same. It would be too much. Though there was no legal barrier, there was a positive social one, so vigilantly deterrent, indeed, that she was sure no such case had ever been brought to the Minister's notice; and then she speculated a while as to what would have been his action under the circumstances.

As she slowly undressed she continued her relentless examination of the supposed condition. "Why," she said to herself, "the silly jokes that would be made about the relationships following the double marriage would be just awful. Even his elders and deacons would hardly refrain themselves. They would give him some sly specimens of their wit—and serve him right, too; and I know well there are families in the Church of the Disciples who would not feel sure in their particular consciences whether such close marriages were quite right in the sight of God. They will think, anyway, that the Minister ought to have been more careful to avoid the appearance of evil, and they will be 'so sorry' and ask for explanations, and say it is 'really so confusing.' Yes, I can see and hear the great congregation of the Church of the Disciples all agog about the Minister's queer marriage. As for myself, I shall tell any unmarried man or woman who says what I don't like 'to look after their own marriages'; and, if they are married, I will tell them to 'mind their own business'; but this, or that, the clash and clatter will drive a proud man like Ian to distraction. True, he is proud enough to strike them dumb with a look. I'll never forget seeing him walk up to the pulpit that Sabbath after he was made a D.D., and I mind well how he was so dignified that pretty Martha Dean called him '*a procession of One.*' The Church was down at his feet that day—and if he should marry my Lady! I'll go into no surmises—things will be as ordered."

Thus she followed her thoughts backward and forward until the night grew chilly; then she began again her preparations for sleep, saying softly to herself as she did so: "I am a wiser woman to-night than I was in the morn. I know now why my poor little Marion is to be made to marry Allan Reid, and, moreover, why her selfish father wants the marriage immediately. It is to prevent the joking about his own marriage, for if she got into the Cramer family first it would take a deal of courage to marry his daughter's mother-in-law. My goodness! What a lot of quiet fun and pawky jokes there would be passing round. I must talk it out with Marion in the morning. I am going to sleep now—sleeping must go on, whether marrying does—or not."

In some respects Mrs. Caird's theory was wrong. It was likely that Dr. Macrae had some nascent, unacknowledged admiration for Lady Cramer, but never until that day had he hoped to marry her. Marriage had been so long and so resolutely barred from his thoughts and feelings that it took the encouragement of Lady Cramer to bring it to recognition in his hopes and desires—so the selfishness Mrs. Caird presupposed had not been in any way as yet conscious to him. The situation was sure to present itself, but it had not yet done so. It was probable, also, that it would affect him precisely as it affected Mrs. Caird, but how he would meet or baffle it no one could say. A man in love cannot be measured by those perfectly sane and cool; besides, love has secret keys with which to meet difficulties.

Mrs. Caird had determined to sleep well, but she was restless and had disturbing dreams, for,

"No tight-shut doors, or close-drawn curtains keep  
The swarming dreams out, when we sleep."

And the calm freshness and beauty of the morning almost irritated her. What did Nature care that she was unhappy, that she had painful puzzles to solve, and the very unpleasant inheritance from yesterday to dispose of? Still she was disposed to be reasonable, if others were. But Dr. Macrae was neither ready nor wishful to bring questions so important to a hurried and already inharmonious discussion. At that hour the affair between Lady Cramer and himself was more hopeful than settled, her affection being of a tentative rather than of an actual character. She was as yet experimenting with her own heart, and the Minister's heart was a necessary part of the trial, while his sublime confidence in her little coquetries amused her.

Breakfast was usually a very pleasant meal, but this morning all were reserved and silent. Dr. Macrae knew the value of a cool indifference, and he took refuge in that mood. Nothing interested him, he was lost in thought, he answered questions in monosyllables, and placed himself beyond conciliation in any form. Even Marion's remarks passed unheeded, though his heart failed him when she laid her small hand on his and asked softly,

"Are you sick, dear Father?"

"No," he answered, "I am in trouble."

"Can I help you, Father? What is it? Tell me, dear."

"I have brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." His voice was sad and low with the pathetic reproach, and he rose with the words and went to his study. Marion, with a troubled face, turned to her aunt.

"What is the matter?" she asked.

"Come with me to my room, dear, and I will tell you what he means."

"I think I know what he means," she replied as soon as they were alone. "He is cross because I will not marry Allan Reid."

"Can you not manage it, Marion? He has set his heart on that marriage."

"I would rather die. You said you would stand by me."

"So I will."

"Why is Father so cruel to me?"

"Because he wants, I think, to marry Lady Cramer."

"Would you go away from Father in that case?"

"Would I not?"

"I should go with you, of course."

"That stands to reason."

"How do you know, Aunt? I mean, about Lady Cramer?"

"I had a sure word. I do not doubt it."

"Did my father tell you?"

"No. It is a new thing yet; only a mustard seed now, but it will grow to a great tree. It might have happened yesterday."

"Longer ago than that, Aunt, at least on Lady Cramer's side. When I was staying at the Hall she was cross because he did not come, and she wanted to send for him, but Richard would not let her."

"Why then?"

"Because he said the company they had would be an offense to the Minister, and the Minister would be unwelcome to the other guests. I must write and tell Richard your suspicion. It may affect his prospects."

"No doubt it will, but, if he could marry you at once, it might prevent the other marriage."

"I see not how nor why."

Then Mrs. Caird went pitilessly over the sensation the double marriage would make not only socially, but in the Church of the Disciples. She put into the mouths of its elders, deacons and members the foolish jibes and jokes they would be sure to make. The riddling and laughter and comedy sure to flow from the situation were vividly present to her own imagination, and she spared Marion none of the scorn and indignation they would evoke.

"Just think, Marion," she continued, "of your father having to thole all this vulgar tomfoolery—he, that never sees a flash of humor, however broad and plain it may be. Some men would just laugh, and let the jokes go by, but not so your father. They would be words in earnest to him, and every



word would be a whip lash. He would fret and fume and worry himself into a brain fever, or he would fall into one of his miraculous passions with some laughing fool, and there would be tragedy and ruin to follow."

Marion did not speak, but she was white as the white dress she wore. Mrs. Caird looked at her and was not quite pleased with her attitude. She had expected tears or anger, and Marion gave way to neither, but her silence and pallor and a certain proud erectness of her figure spoke for her. At this hour she was startlingly like her father. She had put herself completely in his place, and was moved just as he would have been by her aunt's scornful picture of the Church of the Disciples in a jocular insurrection. So she looked like him. Quick as thought and feeling, the soul had photographed on the plastic body the very presentment of Ian Macrae. Her erect figure, her haughty manner, her scornful and indignant expression, and her large dark eyes, full of reproach, but quite tearless, were exactly the symptoms which he would have manifested if subjected to a like recital. For it is the expression of the human face, rather than its features, which makes its identity. The face enshrined in our hearts, which comes to us in dreams, when it has long moldered in the grave, is not the mechanical countenance of the loved one—it is its abstract idealization, its essence and life—it is the spirit of the face.

Mrs. Caird was astonished. It was a Marion she did not expect, but after a few moments' silence she said, "You can see your father's position, child?"

"Yes, I can see it and feel it, too. He would be distracted with the gossip and the disgrace of it."

"Well, then?"

"I must prevent it."

"Would you marry Allan Reid?"

"No."

"What will you do?"

"Stand by my father whatever befall, if he will let me."

"And Lord Cramer?"

"We can wait."

"But if you married at once, the onus of such a condition as I have pointed out would be on your father, and he would not face it for any living woman. That stands to reason."

"It is nineteen years since my mother died. He has given all those years to Donald and myself. He gave us *you* for a mother, but he never gave us a stepmother. He was good to us in that respect, and, though we may not have known it, he may have had many temptations to alter his life and he denied himself a wife for our sakes. I must stand by my father. If he wishes to marry Lady Cramer, I will only express satisfaction in his choice."

"But if he insists on your marrying Allan Reid first?"

"That I will not do. His hopes and desires are sacred to me. I shall expect him to give to mine the same regard. I am sure he will do so. Why do you not point out to him the results you have just made so plain to me?"

"Not I! I shall wash my hands of the whole affair. I wonder what kind of mortals you Macraes are! I was trying to prepare some plain road for you and your lover, and the thought of your father steps in between you and you make him a curtsey, and say, 'Your will be it, Father.'"

"Aunt, for a thousand years the father and the chief in my family have been *one*. He has had the affection and the loyalty due to both relations. My father is still to me *the* Macrae, and I owe him and give him the first and best homage of my heart."

"Goodness! Gracious! I am very sorry, Miss Macrae, I have presumed to meddle in your affairs. I am only a poor Lowland Scot, ignorant of your famous clansmen. I have seen some of them, of course, in the Glasgow and Edinburgh barracks, but we called them 'kilties,' just plain kilties! Good soldiers, I believe, but——"

"Dear Aunt, you are making yourself angry for nothing at all. If you think over what I have said, you will allow I am right."

"I have something else to think over now, and I'll meddle no more with other people's love affairs. There now—go away and let me alone—I want no kissing and fleeching. You have cast me clean off—after nineteen years——" and the rest of her complaint was lost in passionate sobs and tears.

Then Marion was on her knees, crying with her, and the upcome and outcome was kisses and fond words and forgiveness. But do we forgive? We agree to put aside the fault and forget it; the real thing is, we agree to forget.

After this common family rite Mrs. Caird washed her face and went down to look after dinner, and as she did so she felt a little hardly toward Marion, and her thoughts were grieving and reminiscent. "Oh, the sleepless nights and anxious days I have spent for that dear lassie!" she sighed; "and, now she is a woman, her lover and her father fill her heart. I am just a nobody. Well, thank the Father of all, I gave my love freely. I did not sell it, I gave it, and the gift is my

reward. It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Marion, at her sewing, had thoughts not much more satisfactory. "Aunt makes so much of things," she said to herself. "She is so romantic and simple-minded, and she goes over the score on both sides; everything is the very worst or the very best. I wish she would not talk so much about Richard, and be always planning this and that for us. Oh, I ought to be ashamed of such thoughts, and I am ashamed! Aunt Jessy has been my mother, God bless her!" She had a few moments of repentant reflection and resolutions, and then she continued them in a different way, saying almost audibly: "My father! Oh, Aunt knows my father is different. His blood flows through my heart. I am his child from head to feet. Aunt has often told me so. She ought, then, to know I would stand by my father, whomever he married."

They had forgiven each other—but had they forgotten?

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## CHAPTER V

### THE MINISTER IN LOVE

"The sun and the bees,  
And the face of her love through the green,  
The shades of the trees,  
And the poppy heads glowing between:  
His heart asked no more,  
'Twas full as the hawthorn in May,  
And Life lay before,  
As the hours of a long summer day."

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For a week there was no change in the usual course and tenor of life at the Little House. Dr. Macrae read or wrote all morning, and after his lunch he dressed with care and rode over to the Hall, took a late dinner with Lady Cramer, and returned home about ten o'clock. He usually took a manuscript with him, and often spoke of reading it to Lady Cramer. Sometimes, also, he alluded to other company who were present, most frequently to the elderly Earl Travers, whom he described as an ultramontane Presbyterian. "He sits in a Free Church," he would say, with a slight tone of anger, "but his place is in one of the churches yet subject to Cæsar, not in a Free Church, which is a Law unto itself; its title deeds being only in the Registry above." Marion was proud of his enthusiasm, but Mrs. Caird told herself, privately, that Earl Travers had no doubt stimulated its character. For it was evident he disliked Travers on grounds more personal than the government of the Church.

Travers had been a close friend of the late Lord Cramer, and he took his place quietly but authoritatively at the side of his widow; indeed it appeared to Dr. Macrae that, on the very first night he met him at the Hall, Lady Cramer referred questions to the Earl that might have been left to his judgment. Even then, Dr. Macrae had an incipient jealousy of the Earl, who had just returned from a twelve months' cruise, rich in charming anecdotes of entertaining persons and events.

Really, Travers was much interested by the Minister and, hearing that he was going to preach in Cramer Church on the following Sabbath, he made an engagement at once with Lady Cramer to go with her to the service. She was delighted with the proposal and, with an intimate look at Dr. Macrae and a private handclasp as she passed him, vowed it would be the greatest pleasure the Earl could offer her. "I have always longed," she continued, "to hear one of those famous sermons that are said to thrill the largest congregations in Glasgow."

Certainly Dr. Macrae was flattered and much pleased. He had no fear of falling below any standard set up for him, yet he kept closely to himself all the previous Saturday, for he was gathering together his personality, so largely diffused by his late happiness, and flooding the sermon he was to deliver with streams of his own feeling and intellect. And, oh, how good he felt this exercise to be! For some hours he rose like a tower far above the restless sea of his passions. He put every doubt under his feet, he made himself forget he ever had a doubt.

The next morning was in itself sacramental, a Sabbath morning

"so cool, so calm, so bright;  
The bridal of the earth and sky,"

filled the soul with peace, and everywhere there was a sense of rest. Even the cart horses knew it was Sunday, and were standing at the field gates, idle and happy. In the pale sunlight the moor stretched away to the mountains, and silent and serious little groups of people were crossing it from every side, but all making for one point—Cramer Church.

Dr. Macrae had been driven there very early and, during the hour before service, he was in the small vestry at the entrance of the church, and was, as he desired, left quite alone. In that hour

he rose to the grandest altitude of his nature and, when the cessation of footsteps told him the congregation was gathered, he opened the vestry door. Then a very aged elder set wide the pulpit door, and Dr. Macrae—tall, stately, long-gowned and white-banded—walked with a serious deliberation unto that High Place from which he was to break the Bread of Life to the waiting worshipers before him. There was an irresistible power, both in him and going forth from him, that drew everyone present to himself. His burning, vehement spirit found its way in full force to his face, and it infected, nay, it went like a dart, to souls sleepy and careless in Zion.

To the Episcopalian the prayers are everything; to the Presbyterian it is the sermon; and there was a sigh of satisfaction when Dr. Macrae read with clear, powerful enunciation the last four verses of the sixth chapter of Hebrews, and boldly announced that he would speak "first of *God the Chooser*, then of *God the Slain*, then of *God the Comforter*."

From these great seminal truths he reasoned of righteousness and judgment to come with a penetrative, judicial power; but he quickly passed this stage and entered into their enforcement with an overwhelming insistence. Something was to be *done* rather than explained. The sermon was almost fiercely theological, but through it all there was that wonderfully inspired look, that diviner mind, that "little more" which declares the Superman to be in control.

Two remarks showed something of the personal struggle that he was going through. Speaking of the doubting spirit prevalent in the whole religious world, he said: "You will find in the words of my text the remedy: that, by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." And, again, very pointedly, he asked: "When we have done wrong, how shall we remedy the wrong? I will tell you. We must work day and night, as men work on a railway when the bridge is broken down. For all traffic between our souls and heaven will be interrupted until we get this ruin—this reason for God's withdrawal—out of the way."

The last sentences of his sermon were given to defending the creed of his country, and the Minister who does this clasps the heart of his people to him. He preached an hour and the time was as ten minutes. No one moved until he closed the Book and, with a glowing face and a joyful voice, gave the benediction.

He looked ten years younger than he did when entering the pulpit. He appeared to be much taller and of a larger bulk, and his face shone and his eyes glowed with more than mortal light. For, at that hour of superman control, the virtue of the spiritual erected and informed the physical. The congregation longed to speak to him and to touch his hand, but he walked through the gazing throng with uplifted face and towering form, silent and enwrapped with his own power and eloquence, and, going into the little vestry to unrobe, remained there until the Earl and Lady Cramer had departed, and only a few humble and fervent worshipers lingered thoughtfully among the graves in the churchyard. To these he spoke, and they looked into his gracious, handsome face, touched almost reverently the hand he offered and to their dying day talked of him as of a man inspired and miraculous, a true Preacher of His Word.

At his own door Marion met him with a kiss, a thing so unusual that it had a kind of solemnity in it. "My good, wonderful father!" she whispered, "there is no man can preach like you!" His heart beat pleasantly to her love and admiration, and, though Mrs. Caird only looked at him as he took his place at the table, he was as well satisfied as he had been with Marion's greeting. He could see that she had been weeping. The light of prayer was on her face, and from the whole household he heard the silent psalm of thanksgiving.

That day he remained at home, and on Monday he did the same. He thought he was honestly "working day and night as men work on a railway when the bridge is broken." Something had gone wrong between God and his soul. The Power with the multitude which had been given him he still retained, but that wonderful faculty within us which feels after and finds the Divinity did not respond to his call. Yet he knew well that we have our being in God, that God's ear lies close to our lips, that it is always listening, that we sigh into it, even as we sleep and dream. Why did not God give him again the personal joy of His salvation? He walked hour after hour all Monday up and down his study, examining and defending himself; for this attitude is almost certainly our first one when we come penitently to God. Yet Dr. Macrae knew well that only with blinding tears and breaking heart can the sinner go to His Maker and plead: "Cast me not away from Thy Presence, take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy Salvation."

Tuesday he was physically weary and when he opened the book he was considering, Hugh Miller's "Red Stone," he could not read it. The words passed before his eyes, but his mind refused to notice them, and he threw down the volume and resigned himself to religious reverie. His eyes were on his closed Bible, and he was recalling in a regretful mood the power and splendor of its promises and assurances. He was "feeling after God, if haply he might find Him," trying to call up arguments for his existence, his personality, His loving and constant interflow into the affairs of men. But he had lost the habit of Faith, and was continually finding himself face to face with the incomprehensible problems which Science may propound but can never answer: Whence come we? Whither do we go? Why was man created? Why does he continue to exist? What has become of the vast multitudes of the dead? What will become of the vaster multitudes that may yet tread the earth?

But ever when he reached the outermost rim of this useless thought, these awful and sacred questions still called to his soul for an answer. Indeed, he felt acutely that he had not gained from Science any intelligible religious system; nor yet any belief which he could profess, or which he

could defend from an assailant. He could find in it nothing that a man could have recourse to in the hour of trouble, or the day of death; and, when Mrs. Caird came into his study about the noon hour, he felt compelled to speak to her. With a quick, nervous motion he laid his hand upon some books at his side and complained wearily:

"All they say about God is so terribly inadequate, Jessy."

"Of course it is inadequate," she answered. "When men know nothing, how can they teach, especially about Him,

... 'Who, though vast and strange  
When with *intellect* we gaze,  
Yet close to the heart steals in  
In a thousand tender ways.'"

"O my dear sister, I am so miserable!"

"My dear Ian, when we withdraw ourselves from that circle within which the Bible is a definite authority, we must be miserable."

"Why?"

"We have then only a negative religion, and pray what is there between us and the next lower down negation? And I assure you it would become easy to repeat this descending movement again and again. Indeed, there could be no reason for making a stand at any point, until——"

"Until?"

"The end!"

"Then?"

"There might come the dread of sliding away toward the brink—and over the brink—of the precipice."

"Then what help is there for a man who has taken this road ignorantly and innocently?"

And Jessy, with the light and joy of perfect assurance on her face, answered, "There is the breadth, the depth, the boundless length, the inaccessible height of Christ's love, which is the love of God."

Ian did not answer immediately and, Mrs. Caird, walking to the window, saw the Cramer carriage at the gate.

"Lady Cramer is coming," she said. "I will go and meet her."

Then Ian saw Lady Cramer fluttering up the garden walk, a lovely vision in pink muslin and white lace, carrying a dainty basket of ripe apricots in her hand. He thought he had not been looking for her visit, but Mrs. Caird could have told him a different story. She knew by the care bestowed on his morning toilet that he was expecting her, but she was a considerate woman and made an excuse to leave them alone a few minutes.

"I have come for Marion," she said. "I am going to do a little shopping, and she has such good taste—and I thought you would like the apricots—I expected you yesterday—I looked for you even Sunday. You did not come—I was unhappy at your neglect."

He stood gravely in front of her, looking down at her pretty, pleading face, her beautiful hair, her garments of rose and white. He did not speak. He was trying to recall the words he had resolved to say to her, but, when she lifted her eyes, they hastened out of his memory; and when she had laid her hand on his and asked, "Have I grieved you, my dear Ian? Have you forgotten that you loved me?"

"My God, Ada!" he cried in a low, passionate voice, "My God! I love you better than my own soul."

"You will dine with me this evening?"

"This evening, yes, yes, I will come."

"If you have any scruples—if you do not wish—if——"

"Oh, you know well, Ada, that I am dying to come to you, to taste again the sweetness of your embrace, to know the miraculous joy of your kiss. You know, Ada, that you hold my heart in your small, open hands."

"Ian, you are the greatest man in Scotland," she answered. "The Earl says you have the eloquence of Apollo and the close reasoning of Paul."

"And you, Ada?"

"I have wanted to be good, Ian, ever since Sunday. Help me, dear one. I am so weak and foolish."

Then he took her in his arms and kissed his answer on her lips; and, in a few moments, Mrs. Caird and Marion came laughing into the room. And it is needless to say that in the evening Dr. Macrae took dinner as usual with Lady Cramer. The hours they were together were really what

Dr. Macrae said they were, the happiest hours in all his life.

They were indeed so mutually happy that Lady Cramer began this night to take herself seriously to task after them. She dismissed her maid early, saying, "I am sleepy," but she did not go to sleep. She wrapped herself in a down coverlet and took an easy chair by an open window. The secret silence of the night was what she wanted. It was the fifth day of the moon, and its crescent moved with a melancholy air in the western heavens, while the exquisite perfume of the double velvet rose scented the cool air far and near. This rose is forgotten now, but then its leaves were kept among a lady's clothing, and imparted to it an ethereal fragrance far beyond the art of the perfumer. It was Lady Cramer's first reflection.

"The roses are in perfection," she thought, "the leaves must be gathered to-morrow. They give my dresses the only scent I can endure. Ian always notices it. He says it is so delicate and delicious that too much of it would make him faint with pleasure. *Heigho!* I have had a few hours that I dare not repeat. I am so susceptible—so foolish. This affair must be stopped. I will not allow it to go further. I dare not. I should become a Minister's wife if I did. Could I think of that? Decidedly not. I love him, yes. I love him, but I cannot sacrifice my life to make his life sweeter. Should I make it sweeter? I am sure I would not. Religion is very well on a Sunday morning, nice and ladylike, and I generally enjoy it; but every day in your life is too much. I endured eight years with an old noble that I might get entry into his caste. I cannot throw that privilege away for love. No, I must marry a duke—good-bye, my handsome Ian! We have had some happy hours together—but it is now time to part."

She sat discussing this subject with what she called her "heart" till long after midnight; then the still, sweet atmosphere was invaded by the sudden impetuous trample of a ghostly wind. The moon had set, and the sky was bending darkly over a darker world.

"Those clouds terrify me," she whispered. "They seem to look angrily at me. I shall have bad dreams if I do not go to bed"—and as she did so she nervously continued her soliloquy. "I dare say this is the hour that liberates ghosts; such a wind would open all the old doors in this old house, and the old joys and sorrows would come out. It is not cannie. I will sleep now, and to-morrow—I will get ready for London."

Dr. Macrae had lingered long on the moor. He had refused the carriage, feeling that physical motion was the imperative craving of the hour. But he was in such a miraculous state of rapture that his walking was not walking; he trod upon the air, the earth was buoyant under his feet. He knew not, he asked not, whether he was in the body or out of the body. The exquisite Adalaide loved him. She had promised to be his wife. With a little cry of joy he recalled that ecstatic moment when she had kissed on his lips the one little word which made all things sure.

"This is love!" he cried joyfully, lifting his face to the heavens, "and I have blamed and punished those who have fallen through love! O man foolish and ignorant of the great temptation!"

He did not sleep. He had neither the wish to sleep nor the need of it. Never in all his life had he been so keenly alive, so stubbornly awake. With a face of rapt expectancy he recalled the looks and words and motions of Adalaide. She had said they would have a year's honeymoon among the storied cities and churches of the Mediterranean, and he began to consider what this proposal meant. Certainly it implied his resignation from the pulpit of the Church of the Disciples. Could he bear that? Would he like to sit and listen to other men preaching the Word, while he sat silent? On the previous Sabbath he had shown forth that irresistible ordination which comes through the call and Hand of God. Could he deny this great honor and stand like a dumb dog in the courts of the Lord?

Was love indeed the greatest thing in the world? He was too honest a thinker to admit this fallacy. In his own congregation he had seen love set aside for duty, for gold, for power, and he knew young men and women who had put love behind them in order to remain with helpless parents and succor them. They had received from their fellow creatures no particular praise nor indemnity, they had quietly resigned love for the nobler virtue of duty. Women without number were constantly making this sacrifice, and should he resign the helpfulness and honor of his God-given office to this pretender of supreme earthly power? Positively he refused to entertain for a moment the possibility of casting away the work God had given him to do.

When he came to this decision the day was sullenly breaking, and he heard his sister-in-law's voice and the tinkle of the breakfast china. Then came the call for coffee and he said: "It is just what I wanted, Jessy. Are we not earlier than usual?"

"Yes," she answered, "but I knew you were awake, and thought your coffee would be welcome."

"It is. Thank you, Jessy"; and the words were said so pleasantly she met them with a smile and, as he seemed wishful to talk, she responded readily to his desire.

"Where is Marion?" he asked.

"In the Land of Sleep and Dreams, wherever that is."

"Nobody knows that, Jessy. There is so much we do not know, and never can know, that striving for Truth is discouraging."

"Yes, but when we cease striving for Truth we begin striving for ourselves."

"You reason well, Jessy. Have you studied logic?"

"What would a woman want with the mere faculty of logic? It belongs to lawyers and men educated in Edinburgh. I can draw an inference from anything reasonable, but logic is beyond the straight-forwardness of women and, also, the will of genius. When you were preaching last Sunday your words were arrows of the Almighty, they did not fly according to the rules of logic; if they had would they have found the hearts of the people? I think not. When are we going back to Glasgow, Ian? I am wearying for it all day long and, sitting alone at night, I would rather hear the melancholy human noises of the street than the song of the nightingale."

"For two more Sabbaths, Jessy, there is a minister in my place. After that we will go home."

"What kind of a minister?"

"A Free Church minister."

"That stands to reason and goes without saying. I mean is he sure on Moses and reverent with the Gospels? Is he a believer or a doubter? That is what I mean."

"Who can tell? If a good man doubts, he does not babble his doubts from the pulpit."

"What are you doing now, Ian?"

"I am bringing dogmas to Scripture and trying to make Scripture agree with them. People read too much now. When I was a lad, Joseph Milner's 'Church History,' and Newton on the 'Prophecies' were in every house. They were good books, fragrant with home piety, and with their Bible were all men and women wanted."

"And now it is even fashionable to have a book against the Bible lying on the parlor table. It is not a good change, Ian."

"The change is the spirit of our era, Jessy, but God is directing it. We can do nothing. We are only clay in the hands of the potter."

"Even so, but the potter does not make vessels for the express purpose of breaking them, and I am sure it is wrong to say, 'We can do nothing.' Our influence, be it good or bad, has had a commencement, and it will never have an end. I heard Dr. Wardlaw say that, and, also, that what is done is done, and it will work with the working universe, openly or secretly, forever. When Jethro, the Midianitish priest and grazier, hired an Hebrew outlaw as his herdsman, he doubtless thought little of the circumstance; but Moses still lives, and busies himself in the daily business of all nations. Your work has been set you, Ian; hold fast your faith in it, and do not dare to desert it."

"I was thinking your thought an hour ago, Jessy. My will is to finish the work given me to do. If I allowed my will to be overpowered by any circumstance, I should be the sport of Fate. I should indeed be then *Not Elect*." With these words he rose, straight and strong, full of confidence in his own will to do right and, with an encouraging smile to Jessy, he went to his study.

It was a chill, dull day without sunshine, but Dr. Macrae carried his own sunshine. The morning would get over, and Ada would be sure to send a close carriage for him in the afternoon. Then he would bring to a clear understanding the fact that marriage could not separate him from his spiritual work. He was dressed and waiting long before he could reasonably expect the carriage, but at three o'clock it had not arrived, and he was so wretched he resolved to take the Victoria and drive over to the Hall. As this intention was forming in his mind a servant from Cramer brought him a letter. He opened it with anxious haste, and read the following lines:

DEAR, DEAR IAN—I received this morning a most astonishing and peremptory letter from my lawyer, directing me to come to London by the next train. It is a purely business letter, dear, but you know we cannot neglect business, especially as our contemplated year's travel will draw deeply on our resources. I shall not forget you; that would be impossible! I shall be at the railway station at four o'clock; be sure to meet me there. It would be dreadful not to bid you good-bye.

YOUR ADA.

Four o'clock! It was then a quarter after three; there was barely time to reach the station, but half-a-crown to the driver gave him five minutes in which to see his beautiful mistress in her new winter gown of dark blue broadcloth, trimmed with sable fur. The small blue and brown toque above her brown, braided hair gave her quite a new look. She was so chic, so radiant, so loving. And, in some of the occult ways known to women, she managed in those few minutes to make him both happy and hopeful. Then the guard held open the door of her carriage, she was in the train, the door was shut, the cry of "All right" ran along the moving line and, with a heart feeling empty and forlorn, he returned to the Little House.

"Lady Cramer has gone to London," he said to Mrs. Caird, and she looked into her brother-in-law's face and understood.

There was nothing now for him but reading, and he took up the books waiting for him and tried to forget in Scientific Religion the pitiless aching and longing of love; and he was glad, also, that the minister who had been filling the pulpit of the Church of the Disciples during his month's rest proposed to come to Cramer and stay part of the last week with him. He hoped they might be

able to talk over together some of the startling religious ideas he was then reading and, perhaps, receive help from his more advanced age and wider experience.

Mrs. Caird doubted it as soon as she saw the man. He had a handsome physical appearance with such drawbacks as attend a long course of self-indulgence. His stoutness reduced his height, he had become slightly bald, and he wore glasses; so Dr. Macrae's slim, straight figure, his fine eyes and hair, and his good, healthy coloring, moved the brother cleric to a moment's envy.

"I used to be as natty and bright as you, Macrae," he said, "but age, sir, age—the years tell on us."

Dr. Macrae met him at the railway station with the Victoria, and he admired the turnout very much. "That is a fine machine," he remarked; "it must have cost you a pretty penny."

"It is not mine," answered Dr. Macrae. "It belongs to Lady Cramer. I have, by her kindness, the use of it this summer."

"What an unusual kindness!"

"Also of her dower house, with all its beautiful furnishings. Very little you will see in it belongs to me."

"I have never fallen on such luck. My church is large, but poor—poor. There are a few wealthy families—but—but they do not lift themselves above the ordinaries of collection—the plate and the printed lists."

"Yes."

"And, even so, I generally think scorn of their donations. I suppose you are on a very easy footing with Lady Cramer—friendly, I mean."

"Yes, we are good friends."

He was in a fit of admiration with everything he saw, the antique homeliness of the parlors, the lavender on the window sills, the Worcester china on the table. He looked critically at the latter, and said with a knowing air, "It belongs to the best period, having the square mark on it." The light shone on olives and grapes, on cut glass and silver, and specially on a claret jug of Worcester, with its exotic birds, its lasting gold, and its scale-blue ground like sapphire. He had the artistic temperament, and these beautiful things appealed to him in a way that astonished Dr. Macrae, whose temperament was of spiritual mold, and had not been destitute of even ascetic tendencies in his youth.

He had, therefore, little sympathy with his guest's enthusiasms; indeed, it rather pleased him to strip himself bare of all the beauty around him. "Not one of these lovely things is mine," he said. "I should not know what to do with them. I would rather have a few deal shelves full of good books."

"You don't know yourself, Macrae," was the answer. "The possession of artistic beauty develops the taste for it. When you are rich——"

"I shall never be rich."

"You have a fine income."

"I save nothing from it; a man who tries to save both his money and his soul has a task too hard for me to manage."

It must be acknowledged that Mrs. Caird took a dislike to the man, and she made Dr. Macrae feel that it was important he and his visitor should go to Glasgow on Thursday. "Take him to Bath Street," she said. "Maggie will provide for you; besides, I am sending Kitty down to-morrow, and he will be a hindrance to me here."

Wednesday was very wet and the two ministers had perforce to remain in the house, and in one of the exigencies of their prolonged conversations Dr. Macrae unfortunately referred to the pile of scientific religious books lying on his table. Then his visitor rose and looked at them.

"Yes," he said with a great sigh, "we are very scientific to-day, with our 'tendencies' and 'streams of influence' and our various 'thought movements.' They are all purely material."

"They cannot be that," replied Dr. Macrae, impetuously. "Streams of influence imply spiritual beings, and movements of thought must come from thinkers."

"Agreed," was the reply, "but you cannot call 'a stream of tendency,' or 'a power that makes for righteousness,' God. No, sir, you cannot, without striking at the very foundation of Theism. The next step would be to deny the supernatural guidance of the universe and of life. And the next? What would it be?"

"I know not. Such questions are mere spiritual curiosity. Keep your thumb down on them."

"I will tell you. The morality based on the supernatural would fail, and, unless a man had found a scheme of scientific morality based on the natural instead of the supernatural, he would be wrecked on the rock of his passions. The question arises, then—is there such a scheme?"

"You must answer your own question, Dr. Scott. As far as I can see, if there is in scientific philosophy a rule of life that can take the place of the Bible and Christianity, it must be able to guide the ignorant and humble, and restrain and comfort men. Philosophy failed Cicero at the hour of trial, and who would offer to the mourner, or the outcast, a chapter of scientific philosophy? It would be feeding hunger on straw."

"See here, Macrae, you are going further than I have any desire to follow you. I am a licensed preacher of the Scotch Church. My articles stipulate that I shall preach the doctrines of Christianity as elucidated by the creed of John Calvin. That is the extent of my obligation—the full extent of it."

"No."

"Yes. I chose the profession of Divinity, as my brother chose that of the Law. Both are recognized means of business. I accepted Divinity as such. I agreed to preach Calvinism to those who chose to come to my church—to my place of business, really—and listen to me."

"Do you believe what you preach?"

"That is another question. Answer it yourself, Macrae. I can only say that, in preparing for the profession of Divinity at St. Andrews Divinity Hall, it was understood I would preach Calvinism. There was no specification concerning my belief or non-belief in it. I was licensed to be a preacher of Calvinism, and I have never preached anything else. My brother has the authority of the courts to be a pleader for criminals. He pleads well for them, and he does not much care whether they are guilty or innocent. You see, Macrae, this preaching is a professional business. Men are qualified for it, as men are qualified for law or medicine. They serve—just as Divinity does—rich and poor, good and bad. I do not know but what they are as reputable and useful 'divines' as we are."

"Supposing you were a sceptic—as many now are—would you go on preaching?"

"Unquestionably. Pray, why not? What I believe is between my Maker and myself. My congregation have nothing to do with it. My belief or non-belief would not injure or improve my sermons. I should in either case preach a good Calvinistic sermon; that is what I qualified myself for. It is my business. If you have been in London you have seen in the great thoroughfares men in scarlet blouses, whose business it is to direct strangers to the places they wish to find. Nobody asks them about their personal religion. If they are good guides to those seeking certain places, they fulfil their duty. I am in just such a position. So are you."

"If I thought so, I would leave it at once."

"If you had a wife and five children you would put their comfort before your own feelings. That stands to reason. All this talk about the higher criticism is like the sickly talk of the higher civilization; it is anemia in some form or other. Macrae, we have our duty to the Church. We are pledged and sworn to that. It is as much the work given us to do as plowing and sowing are the farmer's work."

"But the Truth—the Truth, Doctor!"

"What is Truth, Macrae? Who knows? The Truth of yesterday is the error of to-day."

"Then, it never was Truth, for Truth is unaffected by time, and remains a witness of the past, the present, and the future."

Then the visiting cleric struck the table heavily with his closed hand and, with a fierce intensity, whispered,

"O Man! Man! what if all this religion should be a dream!"

And Dr. Macrae answered, "Then, where is the Reality?"

Both men were silent, but in the eyes of both there was that look which is only seen in the eyes of men who are defrauding their own souls.

In a few moments there was the tinkle of a small silver bell, and Dr. Macrae said, "Tea is ready," and they rose together. Passing the parlor they heard Marion trying a new song, and they loitered a moment or two and listened, as very slowly and softly she asked:

"What says thy song, thou joyous thrush,  
Up in the walnut tree?"  
"I love my Love, because I know  
My Love loves me."

A little sadly they entered the parlor, but the blazing fire threw warm gleams on the handsomely set table; and the tempting odors of young hyson, fresh bread, and a rook pie filled the room. Involuntarily everyone smiled and sat down gladly to the dainty, delicate food before them; and Dr. Macrae said to his friend:

"Life is full of emotions. Such a variety of them, too!"

"And all good—or, at least, pretty much so. A rook pie! That is a luxury indeed! I suppose there is a rookery at Cramer."



"A very ancient and a very large one," answered Dr. Macrae, and he recognized in his own voice and manner that slight sense of proprietorship which flavors a coming good. He was ashamed of it, and made some foolish remark about the rooks being a present. "The birds are not in the market," he said, "and, if they were, a poor minister could not buy them."

"You are a fortunate man. The country is full of blessings. I wish I lived in the country. You must like it, Macrae."

"I am of *Touchstone's* opinion—in respect that it is in the fields, it pleaseth me well; but, in respect that it is not in the city, it is tedious. That reminds me, we shall leave for the city early in the morning."

"Not too early, I hope?"

"About ten o'clock."

"That will do very well."

The men were up early, but Mrs. Caird saw that Ian had spent a sleepless night. Indeed, his conversations with Dr. Scott had raised many serious questions in his mind. Was it possible that this doubt of God's existence—of the inspiration of the Bible—of the dogma of eternal punishment and other vital points of Christian belief was not an uncommon condition of the ministerial mind, not only in Calvinistic churches but throughout the creeds of Christendom?

"There is no absolute Faith in any Protestant Church, no matter how its creed is written," Dr. Scott had said, with an air of knowledge and certainty; adding, "Belief is an individual thing, Macrae, every man must discover what is true in his own case."

"What is the most general point of unbelief among ministers?" asked Ian, and Dr. Scott, after a moment's reflection, answered, "I think, perhaps, the divinity of Jesus Christ." At these words Mrs. Caird flushed angrily, and looked at Ian. She expected him to deny this accusation, but he only cast down his eyes and remained silent. Then, she said, with great feeling, "Constance Norden has well described the religion of such men as

'Pale Christianity, with Christ expunged;  
Faint unbelief deploring its own skill,  
With tomes of metaphysic lore, that sponged  
The World away, leaving the lonely Will.'

And Dr. Scott bowed slightly, but made no other answer to Constance Norden's accusation.

"Do you think the divergencies of the Bible are a great difficulty, Jessy?" and Ian looked anxiously at his sister as she answered without a moment's hesitation, "A want of belief is the chief, is the whole difficulty. God speaks to men and they will not believe Him."

"You must remember, Mrs. Caird, that we have to talk to congregations who know all about the system of Christian theology."

"If I was a preacher, Doctor, I would let the system of theology alone. I would take for granted the divine in men, bring them past every disability of race, station, or morality, right into the presence of God, and offer them all God's good will, though they were slaves or outcasts."

"Such sermons would not do for this era of the Church. They would have to be gradually introduced."

"Then do not introduce them. Better do nothing than do by halves and quarters."

"Our civilization, Mrs. Caird——"

"Can never save the world. It cannot even save the individual. Besides, our civilization, whatever it may be scientifically, is ethically bankrupt."

"I was going to say, Mrs. Caird, that new truths affecting old clerical dogmas are generally offensive to old church members. Many good men live by serving the altar. They must be considered, and your brother and I, and every minister, knows that our people judge for themselves and only accept what they desire to accept. Is not that so, Macrae?" And Macrae, as he looked at his watch, answered indifferently, "You are right, Doctor. It is now time we took the carriage if we intend to catch our train."

So there was movement and a little noise, but, amid it, Ian heard his sister's answer, "To be sure, Dr. Scott, we all know well that Scotsmen do that which is right in their own eyes—and, also, that which is wrong."

With the usual pleasant formalities the men went away together, and Jessy sadly walked through the perishing garden, whispering to herself, as she did so:

"Through sins of sense, perversities of will,  
Through doubt and pain, through guilt and shame, and ill,  
Thy pitying eye is on Thy creatures still."

For she knew in her heart that no man could be more miserable than Ian Macrae. His religion was no longer even a habit, it had become an acute fever, and all conversation on this

tremendous subject seemed so ineffectual, so mockingly beneath its meaning and its needs. It wearied his aching heart and brain, and gave him neither hope nor consolation. For he knew that any reasoned argument would be but the surface exhibition; it was only the unreasoned and immediate assurance that could satisfy his soul.

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## CHAPTER VI

### DONALD TAKES HIS OWN WAY

"Love is a sea for which no compass has been invented."

There are times which mark epochs in life; they cut it sharply asunder—the continuity of life is broken.

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There was a sense of relief when the two divines were comfortably beyond the horizon of the Little House the next morning, and Mrs. Caird could begin her preparations for their own removal. "I was fain to come to this place, Marion," she said, "and mightily set up with it when I got here. But I have had lots of care in its pretty rooms and among its flowers. So I am just as fain to go back to the big, dull rooms in Bath Street. Paradise is fairly lost, dear. We may dream of it, but we never find it."

"O Aunt Jessy, some surely find it."

"They may think they do for awhile, but indeed,

'There's none exempt from worldly cares,  
And few from some domestic cross;  
All whiles are in, and whiles are out,  
For grief and joy come time about.'"

She was tearing up some old cotton for dusters as she repeated the rhyme, and she emphasized "some domestic cross" by a rent of rather angry vigor; then she added, "Go to your father's study, you will be out of the way of the cleaners there, and I have no doubt whatever that you have an important letter to write."

"Aunt, when did you hear from Donald?"

"It is so long since, I have forgotten."

"Where were they then?"

"In the Shetland Islands. Whiles I fear they have been shut in there by early storms, or have gone out pleasuring in some cockle shell of a boat and got——"

"No, no, Aunt. I had a letter from Perth. They were on the mainland the seventh of September."

"Then they are all right. Some day soon they'll come traipsing in, wet and draggled, and tired and hungry."

"They will not come here, will they?"

"I hope not. It is little welcome I'll give them if they come after this house is in order. They would have to go to the kitchen itself."

"You would never do that, Aunt?"

"Would I not? If the occasion comes you will see."

The occasion came that afternoon. Mrs. Caird was standing before a large chest of fine napery, counting napkins, when Donald threw open the door of the room and, before she could speak, threw his arms around her neck and kissed her, and kissed her over and over again. "You dear Auntie! You dear Mammy!" he shouted, and she, between laughing and crying, gasped out: "Be done, you ranting, raving laddie! See you have made me drop the finger cloths, and my count is lost; and I shall have to go over them again."

"I'll count them for you, Mammy."

"You!" she ejaculated with horror. "Your hands are not fit to touch them."

"Oh yes, you are going to give me one when you give me my dinner."

"I will not. The tale of them is correct and just from the laundry, and I shall not have one of them soiled for anybody."

"Not even for Richard Cramer?"

"Where is he?"

"In the parlor with Marion."

"*Humph!*"

"And we are hungry, Auntie, and we are going to stay here to-night."

"No. Your rooms are now in the cleaning, you had better go to the Hall."

"Very well, we can do that."

"No, you can't. I won't have it, and Lady Cramer is in London."

"Jericho! What took her there? Richard will be astonished."

"So you will have to stay here. It's notably inconvenient, but whenever do men consider the conveniences? I'll give the two of you the guest-room, and we will just have to stay here a day longer, and make it decent-like after you."

"Auntie, we are hungry; nothing to eat since breakfast, and I am not in love. I can't live on kisses and sweet words like Richard."

"Surely not. Come with me and I will give you pot luck until six o'clock, then you'll get your dinner, and not a minute sooner. I have three extra women hired by the day and I can't slack my care of them."

"Come and see Richard. He wants to see you."

"Not he! He would have come up with you if he had wanted bad enough."

"He got stopped on the way. How could he pass Marion? She was watching for him."

"Did she know you were coming?"

"I think so—certainly, certainly she knew."

"And the little minx so innocently asked me if I knew!"

So Mrs. Caird went down to the lovers, pretended to scorn them, and sent Richard upstairs to wash and make himself like a gentleman. Then, with a beaming face, she turned to Marion and said: "My dear girl, we will have a few days' happiness, no matter what comes or goes. We can put the cleaning behind the dear lads."

"They can go to the kitchen, Aunt. They are quite used to it. From what Richard says, I think they have mostly lived in kitchens, and also thoroughly enjoyed kitchen hospitality."

"That would be like them. It takes gentlemen to understand the reality of kitchen hospitality. We will give them the best in our cupboard, and set them a fair table in the dining-room. It is not too often in life that true love comes to eat with you."

"Richard must go away to-morrow. When he heard Lady Cramer was in London it worried him. He said he must go and see what she was doing."

"Well, then, give the day to him. When he has left to-morrow, Donald can do a deal to help. I taught him everything about the house, as you know. He'll not need to marry any girl that she may make the pot or kettle boil, or sew a button on. And he'll help us with carpets and curtains, and the like, and enjoy it. We will have one good day when we can get it. You may look up Ecclesiasticus 14:14 for permission. So come with me and we will spread in the dining-room a comfortable 'pick-up' for hungry men, and you must serve and entertain them, for there is too much fine linen lying loose, and too many strange hands around, who may be clever at finding things—not lost."

The dinner and the evening were all that Mrs. Caird intended. She left the lovers very much to themselves and, wherever she was, Donald was with her. Never had she been so proud and so fond of him. "He is the handsomest lad in Scotland," she said, "and the best, and I care not who says 'no' to that truth—it will stand."

Still the visit delayed them a day, and it was Tuesday when they again reached the Bath Street home and, for a few days, Mrs. Caird was always finding out some advantage in it hitherto unnoticed. She was glad to live under high ceilings once more; the Bath Street water made far better tea. She had had enough of lamps and candlesticks forever—even if they were made of silver—just give her a common gas burner and she would never inquire what it was made of. Thank goodness there was a market now to go to! You had to take what meat and poultry you could get in the country; the fleshers in Glasgow knew they must give you the very best, that and that only; and, above all, she could order a street car to wait on her, or a nobby to call for her whenever she wanted to step to church or call on a friend, and that suited her feelings far better than any lady's Victoria.

Dr. Macrae was not pleased at such remarks. "Gratitude is a late plant," he said; "it grows at the very gate of heaven. A human being hardly ever receives it. I am sure, Jessy, if you had had to pay rent for the house and all its favors and advantages, it would have cost you a large sum of money."

"If you are sure, Ian, that a kindness is true kindness, it is easy to be pleased and grateful; but, if

you come to see there has been a selfish foundation for it, why should you be grateful?"

"There was no selfish motive in Lady Cramer's kindness, Jessy."

"I am glad to be informed of that. I thought it was very like the thousand pounds left you as a token of Lord Cramer's friendship. What weary reading and writing you have given for it, not to speak of the mental and spiritual danger and trouble, I call that thousand pounds the worst money you ever put in your purse. I don't think you owe Lord Cramer a pennyweight of gratitude for it. When did you get rid of the Reverend Dr. Scott?"

"He went home early on Monday morning. He asked a queer favor of me on the Sabbath morning."

"What was it?"

"'Macrae,' he said, as we ate our breakfast, 'I ask you not to come to the Church of the Disciples to-day. I could not preach if you were present. I should be dumb.' I wondered at it."

"I think it was a most natural request. Men are just like women. That last wet day made you say things to each other you were soon sorry for."

"That may be so. Where is Donald? Did he not return with you?"

"He came to the very doorstep with us. Then he had to hurry away to the Buchanan Street Station to see Lord Cramer, who is off to London."

"Why?"

"I never asked him. Donald will be here anon; he said he would not miss eating with us the first meal of our home-coming. He seemed particular about it. I thought he might be thinking of going away himself, perhaps——"

"He is going to St. Andrews."

"You are reckoning without your host, Ian. Donald has not one intention about St. Andrews."

"Nevertheless, he is going to St. Andrews."

"Just so—according to Ian Macrae. Donald Macrae is to hear from."

"Every Scotchman, Jessy, considers it a great privilege to go to St. Andrews. St. Andrew was a good and a great man."

"He was a very prudent, forecasting Saint—the only one of the Disciples who, at the great Preaching, knew where the bread and the fishes were. But, though I will not preach for your Saint, I will say nothing against him. If he can get Donald he may have him. But we will have our meal at six o'clock, Ian, and I hope there will be only good words with it to-night. It would be real unlucky to have a quarrel over our first meal."

Certainly Mrs. Caird did all she could to prevent it. It was a pleasure to go into the firelit, gaslit room, and see the pretty plenteous table; and to hear the pleasant laughter of Donald and Marion, who were standing together on the hearthrug. Dr. Macrae took in the charming picture at a glance, but his attention was specially drawn to Donald. His holiday had improved him. He was so manly and so handsome that his father quite involuntarily addressed him as sir. "Well, sir," he said, "I hope you have had a good holiday."

"A grand one! I do not see how I could have had a better one in every way."

"That is good. Your aunt is waiting. Let us sit down. Where did you go first?"

"Lord Cramer was with me and we went first to Skye, and spent nearly four days at Dunvegan Castle with Macleod of Macleod. He remembered my grandfather and spoke bravely of him, and, if I had not been a Scotchman to the last drop of my blood, Dunvegan would have made me one."

"It is the oldest inhabited castle in Scotland," said Dr. Macrae, "and in my grandfather's day it was only accessible from the sea by a boat and a subterranean staircase."

"It is now approached by a modern bridge crossing the chasm."

"Is the old castle intact?"

"Yes, and there are many good modern additions. On the whole it is very picturesque. We were nobly entertained. We saw all to be seen in the neighborhood. The castle has some rare relics, also. The Macleod himself put into our hands for a few minutes a wooden cup beautifully carved and mounted in silver, which belonged to Catherine O'Neill in 1493. We also saw the fairy banner which controls the destiny of the Macleods, and the claymore and horn of Rory More, or Sir Roderick Macleod. It was a very memorable visit, sir."

"I am glad you have been there. You saw a grand Scotch noble. Where did you go next?"

"To Oban, where we spent a couple of days on the mountains with John Stuart Blackie. Such a lunch as we had with him on the hills—curds and rich cream—cold salmon—cold lamb—roasted duck—veal pie—ham—peas and, of course, hard-boiled eggs. I was told Blackie does not think any meal perfect without them. With these things we had plenty of milk, beer, and claret with a

fine rich bouquet. Blackie said claret without it was no better than colored cold water."

"Did Blackie talk much?"

"Did he ever cease talking? But every word was good. You would not have missed one of them."

"On what subjects did he speak?"

"While eating he told us that every meal should have three courses, adding, 'Three is a sacred number. Aristotle settled that. Three is the first number that has a beginning, a middle, and an end, and this gives the perfect idea of a whole. Every dinner ought to have three courses, every song three verses, every novel three volumes, every sermon three heads.'"

Dr. Macrae really laughed as he asked, "What were your three courses, Donald?"

"Curds and cream first, salmon and roast duck second, and, for the third, cheddar cheese, beautifully browned oat cakes and a glass of old port that Blackie said 'fell like the dew of Hermon' upon the oat cakes."

"That was like Blackie. His similes often have a Biblical flavor."

"He talked wisely and cleverly about eating, said the Englishman was an aristocratic animal, and his eating large, royal and rich, and that the man who fed in his style would do nothing in a meager style. The French thought we did not understand how to eat—that we eat without science, had only one sauce, that we made of flour and water, and called melted butter. He quoted Novalis for the Germans, who said, 'Eating is an accentuated living.' I think, Father, Novalis is right, for everything is always best when well accentuated. A student from Edinburgh joined us while we were eating, a tall, thin man who was living on the hills to recruit after the severe drill of last winter at the University."

"Yes, the drill is severe," said Dr. Macrae, "unless you have a grand purpose for it."

"Blackie said he knew him well, that he met him near Glencoe two years ago, and at that time he could only speak a few words in broken English. Two years afterward he won the bronze medal in the Greek class at Edinburgh, and that all had been done upon oatmeal, cheese, salt herrings, and fifteen pounds sterling."

"That is by no means a singular instance," said Dr. Macrae. "All things are possible to a Scotch Celt in love with learning and seeing a pulpit in the distance. No doubt his medal paid for all his privations."

"I was very sorry for the man. That bronze medal would not have paid me for two years' hard study and meager living."

"I am sorry to hear you say that, Donald," and Dr. Macrae's face suddenly shadowed, and he asked for no further stories of his son's holiday. On the contrary he remembered some letters that must be written, and rose, saying:

"Donald, after breakfast to-morrow morning, I should like to speak to you. Come to my study."

"Yes, Father. I will certainly come."

Then, with a slight reluctance, Dr. Macrae went away, but long afterward he could hear, if he listened, sounds of happy talk and laughter at the pleasant table he had deserted. And he had several longings to go back to the cheerful parlor; his heart was not satisfied, and he could offer it no excuse for its deprivation that it would accept.

"I am sorry Father has gone away, Donald," said Marion. "I had a feeling you were coming to something very interesting."

"Then it is just as well his father did not stay to hear it," replied Mrs. Caird. "I never saw two men whose ideas of what was interesting were further apart than those of Ian and Donald Macrae."

"Well," continued Donald, "our next move was a doubtful one, and it might perhaps have seriously offended Father. I told Professor Blackie I had a little lecture ready about the private history of our favorite Scotch songs—the men or women who wrote them, the circumstances that produced them, the places in which they were written, and so on. And I said I would like to deliver it in Oban. He was greatly delighted, offered to be my chairman, and arranged the program, adding also to my facts many interesting anecdotes. Both Lord Cramer and I illustrated the songs with our violins and voices, and Blackie provided the enthusiasm for the crowds that came to hear the stories and the singing and to see the dancing. The enthusiasm was beyond belief. Indeed, at our battle song of Lochiel's men charging the French at Waterloo, most of the audience stood up, and from all parts of the hall came the *Sa! Sa! Sa! Sa!* of a Highland regiment charging an enemy. Well, when all expenses were paid, we had cleared one hundred and four pounds, which was very acceptable, as we were both out of money. At Perth we raised the sum of eighty pounds, and then at Wick we took a boat for Shetland, and had a glorious time with the fishermen on Brassey Sound—out on the ocean with them, all through the long, light nights, while the sunset lingered in the west and the dawn was tremulous in the east, and the moonlight silvered everything on earth and sea, and the aurora, with rosy javelins, charged the zenith. Such wonderful nights! Such quiet, grave, purposeful men! Such nets full of quivering fish, in the silver lights between sea and deck! We got away with the strange fishers after the *foy* or feast and, stopping at St. Andrews, tramped through all the queer little coast towns of the ancient kingdom

of Fife and so to Edinburgh, with three times as much money as we started with, and all the health and happiness of the trip added to it."

"I am glad you called at St. Andrews. What did you think of the place?" asked Marion.

"It is pretty enough, but the very atmosphere is learned as well as religious, and you catch the spirit of the place whether you like or not. Walking the streets you appear to imbibe knowledge. I could think only of divinity, science, and philosophy. One of the professors asked me to give my lecture, and said he would sanction the meeting—but I could not sing there."

"Why?"

"Well, Marion, it is a psychical problem. The atmosphere had infected me, and the scientific or philosophical man is never a singing man. Now, Aunt, you see there was nothing wrong in our way of raising the wind, but it is very uncertain how Father would look at it."

"I do not think it would have his approval and, if you take my advice, you will tell him nothing about it."

The following morning, however, Dr. Macrae reverted over and over to Donald's adventures, and would have been really glad if Donald had taken up the subject again, but he did not care to ask the favor—partly because he was a proud man with his children, and partly because it was not a suitable preface for the serious conversation he intended to have with him. He left the table before Donald and spent the interval in steadying his mind and purpose with regard to his boy's future. Never had he been so dear to his heart, never had he been so proud of his beauty, his fine presence and mental alertness. He told himself the world would be full of temptations to such a youth, so charming, and that it was his manifest duty "to bind him, even with cords, to the horns of the altar." There only he would be safe from the lures of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Many things he was not sure about, but this thing he regarded as a duty from which he could not righteously relieve himself.

In the midst of such a positive decision Donald, handsome and happy, entered the room. His father met him with the respect and kindness due from one man to another, whatever their relationship, for Dr. Macrae had fully recognized the preceding evening the manhood of his son, and had resolved in the future to acknowledge it in all his dealings with him.

"Sit down, my dear Donald," he said, "I want to talk with you about your future. Your holiday has been a long and delightful one. You have got rid of the commercial life you disliked so much—though, by-the-by, Mr. Reid says you would have made a good business man—now, then, I should like you to start for St. Andrews at once, so as to go in with the entering classes—it is always best. You will find St. Andrews a delightful little city."

"I spent three days there a week ago, sir. The classes were gathering then."

"And you liked it, I am sure?"

"I wished to like it for your sake, Father, but I could not. I disliked everything about it."

"I am sorry for that, because you will require to spend a few years there. But, even if you do not like the place, it has many compensations and, among these I count the name that will be yours as soon as you are entered on its list."

"The name, sir?"

"Yes. You will then be *A Man of St. Andrews!* Other universities have students, scholars, fellows, etc., but St. Andrews breeds *Men!* In after life you will know each other as 'Men' and call each other '*Man*' with the grip of a kindly world-wide brotherhood, for East, West, North, or South St. Andrews' '*Men*' soon find each other. Donald, my dear son, be a Man of St. Andrews."

"O Father, I cannot. It is impossible! I would rather die."

"Speak sensibly, Donald, men don't talk of dying because duty demands of them a certain amount of self-denial."

"Duty asks nothing of me, sir, in regard to St. Andrews. I have seen the world has now one test. It asks of every man and of every proposition, *Will it work?* If it will not, it must go. I could not do any kind of work in a university. Plenty of better men than I am would work splendidly there. I should die of spiritual and mental nausea. I have considered university life, both as regards law and medicine. I thought we might compromise, perhaps, on medicine, but my feeling is the same. I am an open-air man. I want to live with every part of my body at the same time, not with my brain only—to be tethered to a desk with a book, whether ledger or Bible, would be to me a dreadful existence."

"We will put *me* out of the question. Do I not deserve some honor and obedience? It is my positive will that you should go to St. Andrews."

"In order to give you pleasure, sir, I might be willing to give up, say three of the best years of my life, but you would then want the whole of my life to preach Calvinism."

"I have given my youth and my life to preach Calvinism or the Truth—they are the same thing."

"If Calvinism is true, sir, then I think my opinion ought to have been asked before I was sent into

the world on such terms."

"This talk is irrelevant. What I ask of you is, will you go to St. Andrews and study Divinity? Donald, I will make it as pleasant as I can for you—will you go?"

"No, sir. Forgive me. I cannot."

Dr. Macrae looked steadily at his son, and his large, lambent eyes were full of tears.

"It is for your salvation, Donald. My son, think again, your father asks of you this favor—for your own good."

Donald was even more moved than his father and, if he had followed his instincts, he would have fallen at his father's knees and said, "I am your son. I will do all you wish." But his resolve was not a something of yesterday, and his will was the strongest force in his nature. He put all feeling under its majestic orders and, though his heart was aching with sorrow, he answered, "Forgive me, Father. I must take my own way. I must live my own life."

Then Dr. Macrae turned his face toward his desk. It was covered with papers and he lifted a pen and began to write. Donald waited patiently, neither speaking nor moving for about five minutes. Then his father lifted his head and said with cold politeness, "You can go, sir, there is nothing more to say."

"I would like to tell you something about my plans, Father."

Dr. Macrae went on writing and did not answer. In a few moments Donald continued: "I have resolved to go—"

"I have no interest in your plans, sir."

"But Father, listen."

Then Dr. Macrae threw down his pen. It fell upon his sermon and left a large, unsightly blot which irritated him. He did not speak, however, but by an almost imperceptible movement of his eyes and outstretched hand said to Donald more plainly than words could have done, "Leave the room!"

With that relentless figure regarding him, Donald knew that delay or entreaty was vain. He gave his father one long, last look, a look of such love as would master time, and then, with two scarcely audible words, "Farewell, Father," he obeyed the silent order he had received.

That look pierced Dr. Macrae's heart like an arrow, and those two words went pealing through his ears like words of doom. He threw up his hands and rushed to the door. He wanted to cry, "Come back, come back, Donald," but the hall was empty and still. It was but a few steps to the front door, he opened it in frantic haste, but neither up nor down Bath Street could he see the son he loved so dearly and had sent away so cruelly. He called Mrs. Caird and she came from the kitchen, her hands covered with flour.

"What are you wanting, Ian?" she asked. "I am just throng with the pastry."

"Have you seen Donald within the last five minutes?"

"Nor within the last hour. He went to your study after his breakfast. That is the last I have seen of the poor lad. What is the matter?"

"He has gone."

"Gone! Where to?"

"God knows," and, heedless of Mrs. Caird's inquiries and reproaches, he fled to his study and locked the door. He was suffering as he had never before suffered in all his life. He said to himself, "My heart is bleeding," and he felt as if this sensation might be a reality. For a long time he stood by his table quite still, heartless, hopeless, aidless, almost senseless. He had expected a fight, but that his child would be finally disobedient had been an incredulity to smile at. Yet he had bid him farewell and had gone to face the world without either his help or his counsel.

He would take no lunch, nor would he see or speak to anyone. His heart and brain seemed stupefied by this irreparable sorrow that had so suddenly ruined all his happiness. He tried to think of it as appointed and inevitable, but his heart would not listen to such a suggestion. It told him plainly that many times all had depended on his own yes or no; that a step forward, a look of kindness, a gesture of entreaty would have prevented it. He understood at that hour that sorrow has only the weapons we ourselves give her.

The call to lunch broke the dumb stupidity which had followed the blow of Donald's farewell. Thoughts of what the Church and friends would say began to pierce through the first black despair of his personal feelings and, as the clock struck two, a great change occurred. In half an hour the postman might bring him a letter from Lady Cramer—must bring him one. He stood up, shook himself, and went into a small adjoining room and washed his face and hands. The knowledge that she loved him went like wine to his heart, and her letter would bring him great consolation; he was sure of that.

No young girl waiting for her first love letter ever watched more feverishly for the tall, uniformed official that was to bring it. He was ten minutes later than usual, ten minutes full of hope and

despair, but at length the letter was given to him. It was small and light, and he weighed it in his right hand and was disappointed. He had hoped for a long letter telling him of all his beloved was doing, and perhaps asking him to visit her in London, and he had resolved to accept her invitation as soon as it came.

There was no sign of such favor in the few hastily written lines he held in his hand.

DEAR IAN—You know that I love you, and I would like to tell you so one thousand times in this little letter. I am, however, in a tumult of hurry and preparation, for I am going to Paris this afternoon with Lady Landgrave's party. We shall only be a week, so do not get blue and think I have deserted you. I shall write you a long letter from Paris, if I can find one hour by myself. Yours,

ADA.

He threw the tiny note down on the table. He was in one of those atavistic rages which should have revealed to him the original type of bare-armed thanes from whom he was descended. His grandfather, in the same insurrection of feeling, would have instantly put his hand on his dirk. With a slow passion Dr. Macrae tore the offending letter into minute pieces, and then dropped them on the burning coals, and his face and movements during the act had a black expression of anger and contempt. None the less he suffered, none the less he would have taken the offending woman with unspeakable joy to his heart.

But this tempest of rage calmed him. After it he sat down like a man exhausted, and he wished to weep but would not. "It has been a calamitous morning," he whispered, "but what is ordered must be borne. If the lad would only come back! If he would only come back! But he will not—he will not—he will never come back. I must get myself together—there are other things, yes, there is Ada. As Donald was preparing to leave me, she was coming for my consolation."

Then he remembered that he had a session that night at the Church of the Disciples—a session regarding the expenses of the coming year, and not to be neglected. He dressed leisurely for the meeting, and then was sensibly hungry and wished his dinner was ready. When the little silver bell tinkled he needed no other call and, with a preoccupied air, took his place at the table. He could see that Mrs. Caird had been crying, and Marion was white and silent with a trace of indignation in her manner. But, when her father clasped her hand as he took his seat and smiled faintly, she returned his clasp and smile and looked at her aunt with an expression that seemed to plead for tolerance.

At the beginning of the meal there was little conversation, but when the family were alone, Mrs. Caird said, "I hope you are feeling better, Ian. What at all was the matter with you at the lunch hour?"

"I was not sick. I was very wretched, and could not eat."

"Donald, poor lad! I suppose?"

"Just so. Donald has treated me in a very ungrateful and disobedient manner. I know not how I can bear it."

"Forgive him."

"I have forgiven so often."

"That is the way. The best children are aye doing something wrong, forgive Donald as you go along. It is God's way with yourself, Ian."

"His behavior has destroyed my happiness."

"Perhaps, also, you have destroyed his happiness. Everyone has their own kind of happiness, but you want everyone to be happy in your way or not be happy at all. I call that even down selfishness. Ian, you have made a great blunder. I only hope it will not be followed by a great penalty."

"Blunder! Yes, if it be a blunder to take a man out of temptation and put him under the best of influences."

"You think college life the best of influences?"

"It is better than wandering about the country as a musician, however clever he is, must do."

"But Donald likes wandering. He wants to see the wide world over."

"A roving life, Jessy, leads to wavering principles. How can a man be religious who has no settled church? Already, Donald disbelieves in the creed his father preaches, and a man without a creed is a loose-at-ends Christian. General scepticism will succeed it, and scepticism poisons all the wells of life and undermines the foundations of morality."

"Donald is no sceptic. He is a God-loving, God-fearing lad. You'll be to excuse me now. I have a sore headache and I want to be alone."

So she went to her room and Dr. Macrae was much annoyed at her air of injury and sorrow.

"Your aunt is fretting about Donald," he said. "Donald has behaved very cruelly to me, Marion. I



suppose you know how."

"About college, Father?"

"Yes. I begged him, for his own good, to go to St. Andrews, and he flatly refused, bid me farewell, and left his home."

"Did you not ask him where he was going?"

"No."

"I am so sorry."

"I knew you would be sorry for me. Never would Marion treat her father in a way so disrespectful and disobedient, eh, dear?"

"While I live I never will say farewell to you, my dear Father."

"You will always obey my wishes, I know."

"When I can, yes, when I can I will always gladly obey them."

"Do I not know what is best for you?"

"Not always, you might be wrong sometimes, Father—everybody is wrong sometimes—but, even so, I would obey you if I could."

"You mean that if you could not you would take your own way?"

"Not exactly."

"And say farewell to me and leave your home?"

"I would never say farewell to you. I do not think I would leave my home in any such way."

"What would you do?"

"Love you and die daily at your side. When you saw me suffering you would give me my desire, because it would be my life."

"I would not. If confident I was right I would not do wrong to please you. And it would be far better for you to die than to make yourself a wanderer in improper company and a prodigal daughter."

"Father, fear to say such words. I am God's daughter. I am your daughter and I do not forget I am a daughter of the honorable clan of Macrae. Such words are an insult to me, to yourself, and to every Macrae, living or dead." She rose as she spoke and with a white, angry look was leaving the room when her father laid his hand tenderly on her shoulder and said:

"Promise me you will not marry anyone without my consent."

"For nearly two years, Father, I could only make a runaway marriage, liable to be temporarily broken at your will."

"Why do you say temporarily?"

"Because, if I loved any man well enough to run away with him I should stay with him forever. You might sever us 'temporarily,' but I should go back to him as soon as I went twenty-one and marry him over again," and her face flushed crimson, and she lifted her brimming eyes to her father and added:

"But all the time I should love you. I should never say farewell to you. To the end of my life, throughout all eternity, I should be your daughter, and you would be my dear, dear Father. Is not that so? Yes, it is! It is!"

He looked at her with a swelling heart full of intense admiration and unbounded love. He could have struck and kissed her at the same moment, but he could find no words to answer her loving question. So he lifted his hand from her proud, indignant form and, with such a sob as may come from a breaking heart, he turned from her to go to his study. She could not bear it. When the parlor door shut, that piteous cry was still in her ears, and she hastened to the study after him. But just as she reached the door she heard the key turn in its lock.

Then she fled upstairs and found her aunt lying still in the semidarkness of her room. "Aunt! Aunt!" she cried in a passion of tears, "I cannot bear it! No, I cannot bear it! My poor Father! Someone ought to think of his feelings. Yes, indeed they ought."

"It seems to me, Marion, that you are busy enough in that way. What is the matter with the Minister now?"

Then Marion, with many tears and protestations, related her conversation with her father, and Mrs. Caird listened as one destitute of much sympathy, and, when she spoke, her words were not more comforting.

"You are a half-and-half creature, Marion; neither here nor there, neither this, that, nor what not. Why didn't you speak plainly to him as your brother did? Mind this! You can't move the Minister

with tears and a mouthful of good words. Not you! He will keep up his threep like a gamecock till he dies with it in his last crow. I'm telling you—heed me or not—I am telling you the truth."

"No, he will not, Aunt."

"Such to-and-fro words as you gave him! He'll build his own way strong as Gibraltar upon them. See if he doesn't. Your fight is all to do over, but, as you have taken the matter in your own hands, you and him for it."

"O Aunt! I am so miserable."

"Well, then, I have seen lately that you are never happy unless you are miserable."

"I have not heard from Richard, either yesterday or to-day."

"What is that! At your age I was very proud and satisfied with a love letter once in a fortnight. That's enough in all conscience."

"Two weeks! If Richard was so long silent it would kill me."

"Have you any more nonsense to talk?"

"Aunt, do not be cross with me. I thought you were as full of trouble as I am. Why else did you come here?"

"Partly to keep the doors of my lips shut, and partly to think. I am not full of trouble. I cannot do as I wish to do, but I have a Friend who does all things well. And, when it is my time to act, I shall be ready to act. Now go to your sleeping place and dream without care sitting on your heart; then in the morning you can rise with a clear, trusting soul, such as God loves."

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## CHAPTER VII

### MARION DECIDES

"Love is indestructible,  
Its holy flame forever burneth,  
From heaven it came, to heaven returneth.

"Love is the secret sympathy,  
The silver link, the silken tie,  
Which heart to heart, and mind to mind,  
In body and in soul can bind."

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After Donald left his father he went straight to his aunt's room and, when she had finished making her pastry, she found him there, nursing his anger and sorrow with passionate tears and words of self-justification. He had kept a brave face to his father, but to his aunt-mother he wept out all his trouble, and he was comforted as one whom his mother comforteth. When Dr. Macrae asked her if she knew where Donald was she had truthfully answered, "No," but she instantly suspected, and shortened her work as much as possible in order to go to him.

They talked cautiously of his plans and prospects and, when dinner time arrived, she surreptitiously carried him a good meal upstairs; for she was not willing that the servants should discuss Donald's quarrel with his father—the Master being to them, first of all, an ecclesiastic with a suggestion of the surplice ever around him. She knew their sympathy would veer decidedly toward the Master, for Donald played the "wee sinfu' fiddle" too much, and, as he went through the halls and parlors, was always whistling some irreligious reel, or strathspey, forbye hardly keeping himself from dancing it.

He was in his aunt's sitting-room while Marion related to her the conversation she had just had with her father and, no doubt, Mrs. Caird's short and rather indifferent attention to her niece's trouble arose from the stress of his unacknowledged presence. For Donald had begged not to see Marion that evening. "She will ask me all kinds of questions about Richard," he said, "questions I cannot answer until I see him." So Marion felt as if she had been snubbed and sent off to bed with a little sermon just when she wanted to talk of Richard more than she had ever before done. Mrs. Caird explained the circumstances to her the following day, but she was more offended than satisfied by the explanation.

"You supposed, Aunt," she answered, "that I was so selfish as to be insensible to Donald's anxiety and trouble, and would put my own before his. You must have a poor opinion of me. It hurts me."

"You are too sensitive, Marion. Donald is going away from us."

"Where is he going to?"

"He does not know until he hears from Richard."

"Where is Richard? I have not had a letter from him in two days."

"I do not know—exactly."

"Nor do I. He told me that he was going to see Lady Cramer about the settlement of his debt to her. It is shameful in her to press it."

"Not at all. It is her right. He said that himself."

"I did not mind getting no letter yesterday, but here is another day nearly gone, and I do not expect to sleep a moment to-night. I am so anxious about him."

"Preserve us all! What are you talking about? It is fairly sinful of you to be making trouble where there is none. That is the way to worry love to death, if so be you want that result."

"You care for no one but Donald now, Aunt."

"You are not far wrong. Donald is in trouble."

"You love Donald best."

"I like Donald's way best. There is no shilly-shallying with Donald. I like a definite 'Yes' and 'No' in answer to important questions."

"Women cannot get into passions and say unladylike words, especially to their fathers. You taught me that yourself. 'Exceed in nothing. Be moderate in all things.' These were among your regular advices."

"All right. Moderation is a very respectable word. I wish you would apply it to the subject of letters."

"You are cross with me, Aunt, and without any reason."

"Reason enough when I see you worrying yourself—and me, also—about the coming of a letter from your lover; and caring nothing about the going away—perhaps forever—of your own brother. Kin is closer than all other ties—ever and always, blood is thicker than water."

Then Marion was angry. "I am glad I was respectful and moderate with Father," she said haughtily. "He is the best and greatest of men. He is the Minister of God. I cannot be too respectful. I intend——"

"To marry Allan Reid and send away Richard Cramer. Good girl! I wish you joy of your choice—such as it is."

For six days the partial estrangement lasted, but Marion and her father seemed to enjoy the interval. They were much together, and Mrs. Caird was frequently startled by the Minister's hearty laugh over some of Marion's observations, and once by his actually joining her in singing that tender little love song, "My Love's in Germany."

"My love's in Germany,  
Send him hame! Send him hame!  
My love's in Germany,  
Fighting for loyalty,  
He may ne'er his Jeannie see,  
Send him hame! Send him hame!"

The entrancing longing and sweetness of this melody doubtless echoed the dearest wish of both hearts; for, if Marion was watching for Richard Cramer, the Minister had an equal fervor of desire for his beautiful Ada.

For a week there appeared to be no change in affairs, but the slight feeling of separation or estrangement did not trouble Mrs. Caird. She knew that Donald was with his Uncle Hector, and would be there until Richard's return; then, it would be time enough for her to interfere, if interference was necessary. But during this interval, Donald had requested her to give no one any information as to his whereabouts. For, though his uncle had sheltered him readily and kindly, he had also said:

"Mind this, Donald. You are to keep a close mouth about Uncle Hector. I could not endure every woman in the Church of the Disciples clacking with their neighbor concerning the sin of my encouraging you in your disobedience against your father. You are freely welcome, laddie, but you must be quiet for a few days. I have written to Richard to hurry himself here, for reasons of my own, as well as yours. I see you are wondering at my writing to Lord Cramer."

"I did not know you were friendly—that is all."

"I knew the present Lord Cramer when you were in petticoats and ankle bands. The late Lord Cramer and I fished in Cromarty Bay, and hunted on Cromarty Hills together half a century ago. When he got the estate into trouble it was my care and skill saved it from roup and rent rack. Then he married his second wife, a butterfly of a woman who wasted and helped her stepson to waste, and I knew well things were going wrong long before the old lord died."

"Richard told me," said Donald, "that it was not so much the amount he was owing as the people to whom it was due that had made him resolve to retire for awhile and let the income of the

estate have time to pay its debts."

"He is right. His stepmother is a large creditor and she bores him. The Jews come next and, sleeping or waking, they are robbing him. We are going to stop all such plundering; then, if he will be quiet a short time, he will be in comfortable circumstances. He tells me he is going to marry Marion, and I am bound to make things as pleasant as possible for my niece. Forbye I have a liking for the young man on his own account."

"You will then be uncle to a lord, if you are caring for such mere words."

"I am uncle to *the Macrae*, that is honor enough. The Macraes are a far older and more honorable family than the Cramers; 'by our permission' they settled in Cromarty—well, well, this is old world talk, and means nothing to the matter in hand. You will stay quietly here till I have done with Richard."

"Will you require him long, Uncle?"

"A day will be sufficient. I only want his authority to use his name to papers necessary to carry out my plans for his relief." Then he laughed and, clapping his hands resoundingly, cried out, "Great Scot! How amazed he will be to learn of his good luck!"

"Oh, I hope he has some good luck! He is such a fine fellow!"

"Luck! Wonderful luck! Undreamed of good luck. But that is the way godsend comes—steal round a corner of your life, and stand at your door, and never sign or whisper before them."

"If I have to stay a few days, Uncle, is there not something I can do to earn my bread while I wait?"

"Plenty of writing you can do; only, you'll not write a line to your sister. If you do, she will come with her own answer, all smiles and tears and compliments, things I can't stand against, and won't try to."

"I will not write to Marion at all. I must write to my aunt. She will tell no one. I will swear it for her."

"As far as I know, your aunt is a prudent, douce woman; but crooked and straight are all women, uncertain, Donald, uncertain as the law."

"Not so with aunt. Jessy Caird is straight all through and at all times."

"I'll take your word for her. It is only for an odd occasion; one promise at a time is as far as I durst trust myself with any woman."

So Mrs. Caird was not astonished when, one morning in the early part of the following week, Lord Cramer entered the Minister's parlor while the family were at breakfast. He held Marion's hand while he offered his other hand to Dr. Macrae; and Dr. Macrae took it, though Mrs. Caird noticed that he left the table while doing so, saying he had finished his breakfast and, when Lord Cramer had done likewise, he would be glad if he would come into his study for a little conversation. "And, pray," he added, "how was Lady Cramer when you left her?"

"In the finest of health and spirits," was the answer. "Indeed, sir, you would vow she was but twenty years old. She is the gayest of the gay, and outdresses the Parisians."

Dr. Macrae bowed, but made no answer, and Mrs. Caird, who knew every phase and mood of the man's temper, was quite sure that no words could have translated that silence. It was like a black frost. For he had in his breast pocket a letter from Lady Cramer, received an hour previously, in which she described herself as really ill with longing for him, having no heart for the follies and gaities of Paris and seldom going out. Further, she declared that nothing but the wretched climate of Scotland kept her from flying back to Cramer and to him; but her cough troubled her in damp weather, and she felt herself frail, and wished to get well and strong for his sake.

"And I have been believing and pitying this lying woman!" he said in an awful whisper, as he took the false message from his breast, and with a silent rage savagely placed his foot upon it. "I will never write another word to this shameless creature! I will never speak to her again! If she sought her pardon at my feet, I would spurn her from me," and to such passionate evil promises he trod the lying letter under his foot. Then he sat down, erect and motionless, with eyes fixed and arms folded across his breast. For, though trouble with the majority runs into motion, with Dr. Macrae it gathered itself together, and in a still, dumb intentness thought out how best to suffer or to do.

Fortunately Richard had so much to say to Marion that his breakfast occupied him nearly a couple of hours, and by that time Dr. Macrae had decided on his course. He was now more than ever determined to prevent his daughter's marriage to Lord Cramer. How could he permit her to come under the influence of a woman so wicked as Lady Cramer? She would either alienate his daughter from him or she would alienate her husband, and make his child a wronged and miserable wife. To prevent this marriage had suddenly become the most imperative duty of his life.

Really, from Dr. Macrae's point of view, there was nothing favorable for Marion in it. He held his uncle's ideas with regard to the superior nobility of the Macraes; he did not like Lord Cramer personally, and he believed him to be much poorer than he really was. With the pertinacity of his

race he still clung to the Reid alliance. He told himself that circumstances have a kind of omnipotence, and that any day they might alter affairs so radically that Marion might come to see things as he did. "If Cramer would only go to the other side of the earth," he whispered, "it would leave a vacuum in Marion's life. Nature abhors a vacuum; she would hasten to fill it, and there is the possibility—yes, the likelihood—that Allan might slip into that other man's place, or the other man might be killed—or he might see someone he liked better than Marion—if Richard Cramer would only go away—if he would only go forever—yes, forever! It is no sin to wish a bad man to his deserts."

At this reflection Richard Cramer entered the room, and the first words he uttered seemed to promise a realization of Dr. Macrae's desire.

"Well, sir," he said, as he took the chair Dr. Macrae indicated, "well, sir, I am going with the Enniskillen Dragoons to India next week, but our route is far north, and so we shall doubtless escape the cholera."

"But not the warlike native tribes?"

"We are going to turn them into peaceable tribes."

"Not an easy task."

"It will be done."

"Yes—finally."

"Sir, you must know that I have loved your daughter ever since I first saw her. I ask your permission to make her my wife."

Dr. Macrae remained silent.

"I cannot bear the idea of waiting for nearly two years."

"You will be compelled to wait."

"Sir?"

"It is my will that you wait."

"Marion wishes to go with me."

"Have you asked her to go with you?"

"Not definitely, but——"

"Ah! I thought so."

"I will ask her to go with me now, and she will go."

"She will not. I forbid it. She will be her own mistress in twenty months. She can marry you then—if she wishes. But I advise you to give her up."

"Never! Until Marion gives me up I will never give Marion up. I swear it!"

"She is my daughter for twenty months longer. Time is sure to bring changes. Even now she would not leave me to go with you to India. You must be mad to imagine such a thing."

"I am in love. I trust her love by my own. She will do as I wish."

"She will keep faith with her father. You shall see that," and he rose, threw open the door of the room, and called imperatively,

"*Marion!*"

"Yes, Father," was the ready answer. "Do you want me?"

"Yes. Come quickly."

Lord Cramer had followed him into the hall, and when Dr. Macrae perceived this some innate, in-born sense of courtesy due the stranger within his gate caused him to return at once to his study. In two or three minutes Cramer followed. He had Marion's hand in his, and Mrs. Caird was but a few steps behind. She entered the room with them, and Dr. Macrae looked at her not very pleasantly.

"I did not call you, Jessy," he said.

"I am aware of that fact, Ian," she answered. "I called myself."

"We are not requiring your presence."

"I was never more needed. What for are you wanting Marion?"

"You can stay and hear, if you wish."

Then Dr. Macrae took the chair at his desk, and Marion and Lord Cramer stood before him. Their hands were still clasped, and unconsciously Marion leaned slightly toward her lover. The transfiguration of love suffused her face, and she stood smiling in all its glory. Dr. Macrae was

struck afresh by a beauty he had hitherto regarded too little. He saw in her at this hour the noblest type of Celtic loveliness—its winning face, splendid form, rich coloring, all vivified by a well-cultivated intellect, and made charming and winsome by childlike confidence and simplicity. For a moment his heart swelled with pride as the sense of his fatherhood flashed over him.

"Marion," he said not unkindly, "Marion, Lord Cramer tells me you are willing to go to India with him. I cannot believe it."

"I have promised Richard to be his wife, so then, wherever he dwells, there my home will be. Is not that right, Father?"

"Yes, under proper conditions. But a promise made out of law and time is no promise. The law of your native land forbids you to make that promise, without my consent, until you are twenty-one years old."

"What right has the law of England to interfere with my marriage?" Then she laughed cheerfully, and said, "But it is no matter, dear Father, for you are above the law in this case. You have only to say, 'I do not want to delay or spoil your happiness, Marion; I am quite willing you should marry——'"

"Marion, it would be impossible for me to say such words. How can I be willing for you to go to a country so far off—a country full of deadly diseases and constant fighting—where the heat is intolerable and savage beasts, treacherous men and deadly serpents abound everywhere—yes, where even the insect life makes human existence a constant torture."

"Father, many delicately nurtured women brave all these things, for their husbands' sakes."

"Yes, and the majority die in doing so. That is, however, your side of the question. But I also have a definite right in this matter, a direct ethical right, which in the stress of this unhappy hour I feel fully justified in claiming. In my favor the law considers that for nineteen years I have had all the care, anxiety and expense of your feeding, clothing and education—that I have provided you with teachers and physicians, and looked after your religious instruction."

"I cannot see that there was any necessity for the law of the land to be looking after your rights in respect to the care and education of the children," said Mrs. Caird. "The interest of Marion's money paid both Marion's and Donald's expenses excepting——"

"I am stating the conditions and provisions of a law, Jessy, not any particular application of it."

"Then what for are you naming its application to yourself?"

Dr. Macrae ignored Mrs. Caird's question, and continued: "This law argues, and very justly, that a girl who has received nineteen years of unlimited love and attention of all kinds should remain until she is twenty-one to brighten her parents' home, learn how to estimate their affection and goodness to her, and get some ideas concerning the world into which she may finally go. It permits her parents, also, to bring proper lovers to her notice, and to point out the faults of those not worthy of her regard. It is a law that all girls with money of their own should rigorously observe;" and in making this last remark Dr. Macrae looked so pointedly at Lord Cramer that he was quite justified in defending himself.

"Minister Macrae," he said, "I have never supposed that Marion had any fortune; if she has, I want none of it. You ought to know that. Not a penny piece." And he raised his head proudly and drew Marion closer to his side, and whispered a word or two, which she answered by a bright, loving smile, and an emphatic, "No!"

"Marion has twenty thousand pounds from her mother," said Dr. Macrae. "She has a very wealthy uncle who will not forget her—and other relatives."

"You need not count Jessy Caird among 'the other relatives,' Ian. My money is all going to Donald—every bawbee of it."

Dr. Macrae looked at her, and then continued: "My dear Marion, the case is now fully stated to you. You are your own judge. I am at your mercy"; and he stood up and regarded the poor girl with eyes from which his passionate soul radiated an influence that it was almost impossible to resist.

"O Father!" she cried, "what is it you wish?"

"That you should deal justly with me. If you have no love left for your father, at least give him justice."

"You mean that I must pay you the toll of two years' love service for my support and education?"

"Yes."

Then she turned to her lover and put her hands upon his shoulders. Her cheeks were flaming and her eyes brimming with tears. "Good-bye, Richard!" she cried. "Good-bye, dearest of all! I must pay this debt. My Father refuses to release me. I must free myself."

"This decision is what I expected from my daughter," said Dr. Macrae, and he rose and went to her side and took her hand.

"One moment, sir!" said Richard, with all the scorn imaginable; "and, Marion, my darling,

remember in one year, seven months and eleven days I shall come for you. It is dreadful to leave you so long in the power of a man so cruel and so wickedly selfish, but——"

"Our interview is over, Lord Cramer, and I do not forget that abuse is the privilege of the defeated."

Richard was holding Marion's hands, looking into her dear face, listening to her short, quick words of devotion, and he never answered Dr. Macrae one word, but the look on Lord Cramer's face, his defiant attitude, and his marked and intentional silence were the most unbearable of repartees. He glanced then at Mrs. Caird, and, putting Marion's arm through his own, they passed out of the room together. Dr. Macrae was furious, but Mrs. Caird stepped between him and the lovers, and, while Richard was kissing and comforting his betrothed, and promising to come again that night for a last interview, there were some straight, never-to-be-forgotten words passing between the Minister and his sister-in-law.

No one that day wanted dinner. Mrs. Caird and Marion had a cup of tea in Mrs. Caird's parlor, and the Minister refused to open his door or answer anyone that spoke to him. But the maids in the kitchen, as they ate an unusually long and hearty meal, were sure the Minister was right and Mrs. Caird and Miss Marion wrong. In those days Scotchmen were always right in any domestic dispute, and the women always wrong. For six thousand years of strict wife culture had taught women not only to give three-fourths of the apple to man, but also to assume all the blame of their enjoyment of it.

What the Minister suffered and did in those lonely hours between morning and evening no one but God knew. There was not a movement in the room nor any sound of a human voice, either in prayer or complaint. Dr. Macrae was not a praying man—what Calvinist can be? If all this trouble had come of necessity, if it had been foreordained, how could he either reason with God or entreat Him for its removal? It was in some way or other necessary to the divine scheme of events; it would be a grave presumption to desire its removal.

Always questions of this kind had stood between God and Dr. Macrae, so that he considered private prayer a dangerous freedom with the purpose of the Eternal. Alas! he did not realize that we are members of that mysterious Presence of God in which we live and move and have our being; and that, as speech is the organ of human intercourse, so prayer is the organ of divine fellowship and divine training. He had long ceased to pray, and they who do not use a gift lose it; just as a man who does not use a limb loses power in it. Poor soul! How could he know that prayer prevails with God? How could he know?

Marion had, however, the promise of a farewell visit in the evening, and what had not been said in the morning's interview could then be remedied. For this visit she prepared herself with loving carefulness, putting on the pale blue silk, with pretty laces and fresh ribbons, which was Richard's favorite, and adding to its attractions a scarlet japonica in her black hair. She knew that she had never looked lovelier, and after her father had left the house she began to watch for her lover. Richard was aware that the Minister was due at his vestry at half-past seven, and Marion was sure that Richard would be with her by that time. He was not. At eight o'clock he had neither come nor sent any explanation of his broken tryst. By this time she could not speak and she could not sit still. At nine o'clock she whispered, "He is not coming. I am going to my room."

"Wait a little longer, dear," said Mrs. Caird.

"There is no use, Aunt. He is not coming. I can feel it."

And Marion's feelings were correct. Richard neither came nor sent any explanation of his absence, and the miserable girl was distracted by her own imaginations. In the morning she was so ill her aunt would not permit her to rise. Hour after hour they sat together, trying to evoke from their fears and feelings the reason for conduct so unlike Richard Cramer's usual kindness and respect.

"He has concluded to decline a marriage so offensive to my father," said Marion. "I have thought of his behavior all night long, Aunt, and this is the only reason he can possibly have."

By afternoon Mrs. Caird was weary of this never-ceasing iteration, and finally agreed with her niece. Then Marion had a pitiful storm of weeping, and, after she had been a little comforted, Mrs. Caird suddenly said, with a voice and expression of hope, "I know what to do. Why did I not think of it before?"

"What will you do, Aunt? What will you do?"

"I will go and see your uncle. He can clear up the mystery—if there is one. It is now two o'clock. I will go straight about the business. At the worst I can but fail, and I never do fail if there is any probability to work on. Wait hopefully for an hour or two, and I will be back with good news, no doubt."

Then she dressed herself with some care, and, calling a cab, drove to Major Macrae's house in Blytheswood Square. It was a handsome, self-contained dwelling with business offices at the back. There was no intimation of this purpose, but the visitors who went there on business knew the plain green door that admitted them to chambers about which there was an atmosphere of great concerns and aristocratic business—perhaps also of some mystery. The latter distinction suited Macrae; it was necessary to the class of clients with whom he did the most of his business.

It clung also to himself, almost as if it was a natural characteristic. No man of wealth and prominence was so little known and so much misunderstood, but he was amused, rather than annoyed, by the variety of opinions concerning him, holding himself always a little apart, so as to be in important matters a final judge or director. He had quite as much temper as his nephew, but it was better in kind and surer in control. His intellect was broad and clear, his love of literature knew no limitation, and in religious matters he trusted no living man. He was a master among his fellows, and he did not give women any opportunities to influence him. It was known that he had positively refused to attend to the business of ladies of high birth and great wealth, and even his house servants were all young men, noiseless, silent, thoroughly trained for the work they had to do.

All these real peculiarities, with many others not as real, were familiar to Mrs. Caird, and at a little earlier date she would never have thought of calling on him. But Donald's opinion of his uncle had entirely changed her own, and she looked forward with a pleasant curiosity to an opportunity to form her own estimate. She found him in a fortunate mood. He was taking his afternoon smoke when her card was given to him, and it roused instantly in his mind a curiosity to see whether Donald's love and lauding of Aunt Caird were worth anything. Also he liked to know the innermost coil of an untoward or unhappy circumstance, and he was not sure that either Donald or Richard had made a naked confession to him. In this family affair he felt sure Mrs. Caird might be the key to the situation.

So he rose with great cordiality to meet her, and a moment's glance at the pretty woman so handsomely dressed, so well poised, so smiling and good-mannered, thoroughly satisfied him. With the grace and courtesy of a man used to the best society, he placed a chair near his own for her, and during that act Mrs. Caird made a swift but correct estimate of the man she had to manage. Physically he had the great stature and dark beauty of his family. His hair was still black, his eyes large and gray, with a courageous twinkle in the iris, his figure erect, his walk soldierly, his manner commanding. He impressed a stranger as tough, unconquerable, fearless, like an ash tree, yielding very slowly, even to time.

"Now, Mrs. Caird," he said, as he seated himself beside her, "I know you have not come to call on me without a reason. Is it about the children?"

"Just that, Major, and thank you for coming to the point at once. I am very unhappy about Donald."

"Let me tell you Donald has taken the road of happiness to his own desires. To ware your sympathy on Donald is pure wastrie. The lad is happy."

"Where is he?"

"I could not tell you, unless I was at sea, and taking his latitude and longitude."

"Where is he going?"

"To New York—perhaps."

"America?"

"Ay, America is the second native land of all not satisfied with their first one."

"Have you any address through which a letter would reach him in New York?"

"Ay, I have."

"I want to send him one hundred pounds. Will you send it for me?"

"No, I will not. There will be three hundred pounds lying in the Bank of New York for him when he gets there, and he had sixty pounds with him. That is enough at present. He can make a spoon or spoil the horn with that."

"Is he going to stop in New York?"

"Not long. New Yorkers are very easy with their money. They'll give it away for a song that pleases them—or a lilt on the wee fiddle—or even a few steps of clever dancing."

"I know someone, not far from me, just as easy with their money—under the same circumstances."

Then the Major laughed. "You are right, Mrs. Caird," he said. "I declare you are right. Oh, but you are a quick woman!"

"Well, after he has done with New York, where is he then going?"

"Straight west as far as the Mississippi River. What he will do on the way to the river no one knows—but luck is waiting for him."

"Perhaps he will go to California."

"No. California gold does not tempt him. He is going down the Mississippi to New Orleans. A good many Scotch boys are there. I gave him letters to three whom I sent to New Orleans fourteen years ago. They are well-to-do cotton merchants now."



"You help a great many men, Major?"

"These three smoked their pipes with me in the trenches at Redan; and we rode together down the red lanes of Inkerman. I was making friends for Donald then."

"But Donald will not stay in the city of New Orleans?"

"Would Donald stay in any city? As soon as he wishes it he will journey for that land of God called Texas. If I had been twenty years younger, I would have gone with him—just for a sight of the place. Glorious things are told of it—you would think it was the New Jerusalem itself."

"Once I heard Richard Cramer say that he was going there to stay with a friend. Why did you send him to the army?"

"Did I send him?"

"He told us you advised the army."

"Ay, but *sending* and *advising* are very different terms."

"In your mouth, Major, they would be the same."

Then the Major laughed again and answered: "You have a wonderful perception, Mrs. Caird. I dare say Cramer told you to what locality in Texas he was going? Donald is now going there for him."

"He spoke most of the immense ranch of Lord Thomas Carew. He said he had bought with his inheritance as a younger son a dukedom of the richest and loveliest land in the world—somewhere on the Guadalupe River, not far from San Antonio. It was like listening to a fairy tale to hear him describe its beauties. And he said that last summer the ladies, Alice and Annie Carew, accompanied by their eldest brother, visited Lord Thomas; and that, after four months' stay in his handsome bungalow, when they had to return to England, Lady Alice refused to leave Texas. He thought she was still there."

"She is. I had a letter from her father a week ago, and he told me Lord Thomas and Lady Alice were yet living in Paradise. They are just 'Tom and Alice Carew' there. Their life is absolutely free, simple and happy. Titles would be too big a burden to carry, but they will be glad of Donald's company, and make much of him, doubtless."

"They will that. Oh, the dear, dear, joyful singing lad!" and, though Mrs. Caird's voice was low and soft, there was a caress in every word she spoke.

The Major looked at her with pleasure, and then asked, "How is Donald's sister? Is she as lovable and handsome as her brother?"

"Whiles—in a woman's way—yes. Her father's heart is set on her, and she is breaking her heart about Richard Cramer's going to India. What for, at all, did you send him?"

"Me send him?"

"Yes, you."

"Well, as you are a wise woman, and love all of the three youngsters, I'll tell you. I sent Richard Cramer out of my way. I sent him where he could not meddle or interfere with what I am doing to make him solvent and happy. And I wanted him to be under authority a little before I put him in full possession of a big estate, free of debt. He has had too much of his own way—he is obeying orders now—that's good for him."

"But when you set him free, what then?"

"He will marry Marion Macrae, and I count on a Macrae—man or woman—getting their full share of their own way in all things."

"Why did he not come and bid Marion good-bye last night? She is fairly ill this morning. Why did he not come?"

"Because, while the Minister and he were explaining themselves, a telegram came ordering him to join his ship without a moment's delay. She was going to sail Thursday, instead of Saturday. I had two men seeking him, and his valet had packed his valise, and he had twenty minutes to reach his train. He could not have written her, even a line, if someone had not been thoughtful enough to have paper and pencil ready to push into his hand."

"Then he did write to her?"

"Ay, he wrote to her. Poor lad, he was near to crying as he did so."

"She never got that letter."

"My certie! I forgot it! Will you take it?"

"Will I take it? It is what I came for. Goodness! Gracious! Only to think of you keeping what may be his last message to her! O man, how could you? It is a cruel-like thing to do. It was that."

"I am very sorry for it. I quite forgot. I am not used to sending love letters. I never was in love in my life."

"I am not believing you. No, sir! I am sure some good woman's love sweetened the dour, ill-tempered Macrae blood in your heart. Think backward a matter of forty years and you will maybe remember her name."

He looked at Mrs. Caird in amazement, and then lifted her hand, "You are right," he answered slowly. "I remember her, a dear, sweet girl, fresh and pure as the mountain bluebells she had in her hand when we first met. She died one morning—whispering my name as she went. I loved her! Yes, I loved her!"

"Good man! I am glad you told me. I know you now, and I am not feared for you any longer. Give me Marion's letter."

"Cannot you stay half an hour longer?"

"Not now."

"I want to talk to you about Ian."

"You had better talk to him. He is requiring some one to do so. He is spelling life now with a woman's name."

"Marion's?"

"No."

"The lovely widow Grant's?"

"No. You must look higher up."

"You don't—you can't mean Lady Cramer?"

"Just Lady Cramer."

"The mischief! Is it true?"

"True? I should say so. I am living at his side, and love and a cold can't be hid. Forbye, he is reading books he has no business to read, and writing letters he ought not to write—love letters."

"Why should he not write love letters if he wishes to do so?"

"Because I am sure my Lady Cramer is only making a fool of him."

"It would be most like her—though mind you, Mrs. Caird, she is playing with fire. Ian is a very fascinating man. She will likely get the heartache herself she is sorting out for him. I'll have a talk with the Minister. Think of him trusting that woman! the blind fool! the mortal idiot!"

"Not as bad as that."

"Ay, and worse, if I had the words I want for his folly. Here is Marion's letter. Tell her I am perfectly annoyed at myself for forgetting it. She must forgive me."

"Good-bye, Major. I am glad I came."

"Good-bye. You are welcome here. I hope you will come again—soon."

And oh, how welcome she was when she reached home. Marion was watching for her, and when Mrs. Caird, as she left the cab, held up the letter Marion was at the door to take it from her hand. Her eyes dilated with rapture when she saw Richard's writing, and, after kissing and thanking her aunt, she ran away with it to her room. There was no offense in that—Mrs. Caird both understood and sympathized with the movement. And when she went into the parlor, an hour afterward, she found Marion rocking gently in the firelight and, with closed eyes, singing softly to herself:

"My heart is like a singing bird,  
Whose nest is in a watered shoot;  
My heart is like an apple-tree,  
Whose boughs are bent with sweetest fruit;  
My heart is like a rainbow shell,  
That paddles in a halcyon sea;  
My heart is gladder than all these,  
Because my love has come to me."

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## CHAPTER VIII

### MACRAE LEARNS A HARD LESSON

"What though it be the last time we shall meet,  
Raise your white brow and wreath of golden hair,  
And fill with music sweet the summer air,

Not this again shall draw me to your feet,  
Peace, let me go."

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Joyful or sorrowful, the days go by. With what passes in the soul and heart the hours meddle not, but over our physical life they are relentless masters. No matter how full of trouble the heart is, we must enter common life, must have dry eyes and take part in conversation; for the moment we differ from everyone else everyone is surprised. The meals are to be cooked, the parlor swept, callers are to be received, and calls are to be made, and we must dress the body decorously for dinner, though the heart and soul be sitting in sackcloth. Such experiences are very costly; we pay for them with wearisome days and wakeful nights, with wasted energies and lost illusions.

Mrs. Caird lifted the life emptied of Donald with the serenity and cheerfulness of her fine nature. She thought of him, and talked of him, and watched for the letters that were sure to come to her, constantly reminding herself how interesting they were certain to be and how glad she was that her boy was having the dew of his youth.

Marion felt the wrench of events more keenly. To the young everything that comes to an end is the end of the world. No one can be so hopeless as the young. It is the middle-aged and the old that have the power of hoping on through everything, for they have come to the knowledge that the soul survives all its disappointments and all its calamities. This is the good wine God keeps for our latter days. Marion rallied as soon as she received Richard's first letter from his ship; for it is the sorrow not sure which we feel to be unbearable. That letter enabled her to locate her lover, and, though the halo of distance and the mystery of night travel were around him, her soul sought him out and found in the romance of the situation some balm for her anxiety not without value. For the young like to believe that their trials are not common trials, and Marion knew of no girl whose lover had been torn from her side and sent off to India for nearly two years without notice or preparation for such an exile. The lovers of all her friends had been acceptable to their parents, but her lover's proposal had been met by almost insolent refusal and threat. And he was of ancient and noble lineage, and she was certain none of the girls in the Church of the Disciples had ever had a lord for a lover. She felt then that her grief was a very romantic one, and when grief can consider its romantic features it is not far from comfort.

Indeed, in a month the home affairs of the Minister's house had their settled regular observance. There had been happy letters from both Richard and Donald, and there was the promise of a regular continuance of this new element in their lives—an element of constant change and of unusual events—conversations about letters received and sent—and the looking forward to those journeying to them by day and night. These things gave to their lives a sense of romance and of far-off happenings; for our thoughts and conversation do affect our surroundings, just as rain affects the atmosphere.

It was not as well with the Minister as with his daughter and sister-in-law. To him the world had become a bewildering maze of sorrow and perplexity. Until his son had gone he had not realized how dear Donald was to him. Now his empty place at the table was a constant shock, his voice haunted the house, and he was sometimes so positive that he heard him going upstairs, whistling "Listen to the Mocking Bird," that he silently opened his study door to look and listen. And though Marion had quickly gone back with all her heart to his fatherly love, though she sat with him and read to him and sang to him, he missed his boy. Oh, how he missed him!

Not often did he receive any comfort from Lady Cramer. Sometimes she ignored his complaints, sometimes made light of them, generally she told him that her love ought to more than balance all his other love losses. But nothing that she said had a tone of reality, nothing was positive—she was going to stay all winter in Paris, she was coming to London at Christmas time, she was too sick to go out in one letter, and the next letter was perhaps only a list of invitations to a variety of houses and amusements received, but which she had neither accepted nor declined.

Yet he loved her with a passionate affection, a love full grown in that one wonderful hour when she made manifest to his suddenly awakened heart her own love for him. It is said that when love flames before it burns it dies quickly; but Ian's love, flaming in a moment, had stood within the past three months all the tests that a capricious, absent woman could give it. As Christmas approached he was in a fever of expectation, and he told himself that she would now return to London and redeem all her promises to him.

He had made no confidant of his love affair with Lady Cramer, and passion lived long in him, just as fire that is covered lives long. But Mrs. Caird read his story as clearly as if he had put it into words. And she was sorry for him, for the man's life had been broken to pieces, and nothing that had once seemed of great importance to him was now cared for. One morning near Christmas he packed, with angry haste, all the papers and books left to him by the late Lord Cramer, and sent them to the care of the steward at Cramer Hall. Mrs. Caird watched the proceeding, but she made no remark, and when the carrier came to take them away she was equally silent. She heard Ian give him a few short, sharp directions, after which he put some money into his hand and then went directly to his study.

It was a wretched day, the heavy fog shrouded all things and fused the melancholy noises of the street into a dull rumble, while a soft drizzling rain added to the general depression. Through the misty windows Mrs. Caird watched the man carrying the box to the cart which would convey it to

the railroad station. It was a plain wood box, much longer than it was wide, and in the dim gray light it looked very like a coffin. At any rate, it reminded Mrs. Caird of one, and she said to herself: "It is really a coffin. What wrecked Faith and dead Hopes! What memories of a life that can never come back it carries away!"

It left the feeling of a funeral with her, and the feeling haunted her all the day long. Late in the afternoon she went to her room to rest a while, and she fell asleep and dreamed that the long white box was full of slain souls, and it cost her a strong physical effort—an effort like that of removing her clothes—to throw off her mind the uncanny influence it had established.

Then she remembered that Marion was going to a dinner and dance at Deacon Lockerby's, and she hastened to her room to see if she was preparing for the event. She found Marion fully dressed, and the girl rose, smiling, shook out her pink tarlatan gown, and asked, "Am I pretty enough to-night, Aunt?"

"Quite," was the answer. "I wish Richard could see you. Where did you get that exquisite lace bertha?"

"Father went to Campbell's and bought it for me this morning. I told him last night that I wanted a bertha, but disliked to go out in the fog to buy one, and Father said, 'I will go for you,' and I was so astonished and pleased I let him do it."

"You did right, but you know it is just like a man's purchase. I can see your father walk up to a clerk and say, 'I want a bertha, so many inches, good and pretty as you have'—no mention of its price."

"It is very pretty."

"Yes, and no doubt it cost ten times as much as a girl's bertha should cost—but it was a good spending, and I dare say he had a lighter heart as well as a lighter purse after it."

"I know I was charmed by his goodness, and I told him so in half a dozen ways, and, Aunt, at last—I kissed him. Yes, I really did. And Father looked at me with tears in his eyes, and at that moment I could have done anything he asked me to do."

"I'll warrant you. Your father ought then to have——"

"Please, Aunt, do not say the words on your lips. Nothing in life could separate me from Richard, and you know it."

"Well, well. Go and show yourself to your father, and be in a hurry. I hear a carriage at the door. Will you have a cup of tea before you go?"

"Aileen brought me one here. I want no more."

They went to the door together, and as the vehicle drove away a youth stepped through the fog, whistling merrily,

"There's a good time coming, boys,  
Wait a little longer."

He made Mrs. Caird think of Donald, and she blessed him as he passed. "I am not superstitious," she whispered, "not at all, but when a good word comes to me I am going to take it and be glad of its message." "A good time coming"—to these words singing in her heart she went into the parlor and tinkled the little silver bell, which was answered by Kitty bringing in the teapot under its satin cozy. A few minutes afterward the Minister entered. The table had been set for him and Mrs. Caird by the parlor hearth, and he took his chair silently. Then they were alone, and, as he lifted his cup, he casually lifted his eyes and met the love and sorrow in Mrs. Caird's eyes, and there was a moment's swift understanding between them. Dr. Macrae stretched out his long, lean hand, and she clasped it and said, "Cheer up, Ian; things are never as bad as you think they are."

He smiled faintly and asked, "Where is Marion going?"

"I thought she told you."

"She did. I had forgotten. To James Lockerby's, I think she said."

"Yes, his daughter is engaged to David Grant. It is her betrothal party."

There was a moment's pause, then she continued: "I met Thomas Reid to-day on Buchanan Street. He told me that the city intended nominating him for Parliament."

"Him!"

"Yes. He said it was a great prospect, requiring extra diligence in business and very punctual observance of church ordinances."

"Had the city of Glasgow no better man to send to Parliament than Thomas Reid—although Reid is a clever man—unquestionably so."

"He has at least *survived*, and that is *the* cleverness, according to Darwin. He sent Marion a message, but I have not given it to her."

"What had he to say to Marion?"

"He asked me to remind her of the opportunities she had thrown away. He said if he was sent to Parliament he should take all his family to London for the season, and that then Marion might have stepped into a circle above her own—the very best society, of course, being open to a woman with a father in Parliament."

"What answer did you make, Jessy?"

"My words were ready. I was intensely angry at his inclusion of Marion in 'his family,' and still more angry at his appropriation of the title of 'father' in any shape to my niece, and I answered haughtily: 'Sir, on her twenty-first birthday Miss Macrae will become the wife of Lord Richard Cramer. He was in Her Majesty's Household before his father's death, and on his return from India will probably resume his duties at St. James's Palace. That will give Miss Macrae entrance into the royal circle. There is no higher one.'"

"You said well, Jessy. And I am glad you were able to give the cocksure insolence of the purse-proud creature such a perfect rebuff. Did he say anything further?"

"For a moment he was astonished and mortified, but he quickly rallied, and said, with a queer little laugh, 'That is a great exaltation for the young lady. Just keep her head level by reminding her that there's many a slip between the cup and the lip.' Then I said, 'Good morning, sir.'"

After a few moments' silence Mrs. Caird continued in a tentative manner, as if reminding herself of the circumstance, "There was a long letter from Donald this morning."

A sudden interest came into Dr. Macrae's face, though his listless voice did not show it; however, Mrs. Caird was watching his face, not his voice, and she was not astonished when he asked:

"Where is he? Has he reached America?"

"Oh, no! He is in London at present. He escorted Lady Cramer from Paris to London two days ago."

"Lady Cramer?"

"She requested him to do so."

"What was Donald doing in Paris?"

"When he first left Glasgow he went to Paris to see his friend, Matthew Ballantyne. Matthew had gone to Rome, and he followed him there, and he has been studying with Matthew's Roman master until Christmas drew near. Then he resolved to spend his Christmas in England and leave for New York at the beginning and not at the end of the year. In Paris he met Lady Cramer in the foyer of the Grand Opera House, and she induced him to stay with her, and to finally convey her to the Cramer House in London. It looks like kindness in Lady Cramer, but Donald is an extraordinarily handsome man, and women like her want such in their train."

"Like her! What do you mean, Jessy?"

"Oh, gay, flirting women, who count men's broken hearts and hopes very ornamental to themselves. As like as not she will be making eyes at Donald. I wish he was out of her seductions and safe on the Atlantic."

"If my advice had been taken, he would now be safe in the hallowed halls of St. Andrews. How can he afford such carryings on? They cost money."

"Donald will never want money while I live; forbye, the violin in his hand is a sure fortune."

"Was it not Izaak Walton who said that God had given to some men intelligence and to others the art of playing on the fiddle?"

"Let me tell you, Ian, a man could not play the fiddle without intelligence. My goodness! he requires brains to his fingers' ends to play as Donald plays. But Izaak Walton is right in one thing—Donald's gift is the gift of God, and every gift of God is good if used for innocent purpose. For myself, I am real glad that Donald's gift was music. There will be music in heaven, but there is no mention of preaching there; no matter how many play and sing in a household, if they do it well, there are never too many; but one preacher is enough in any family."

"Do not be angry, Jessy. It was but a passing remark—blame Izaak Walton for it—if it was he."

"I have no doubt it was he. The remark is just what you would expect from a man who could spend day after day and year after year putting hooks through the throats of fishes only weighing a pound or two. I think he would need few brains for that vocation. The silly body with his fishing rod! I wonder at sensible people quoting anything he says."

Dr. Macrae laughed a little, silent laugh which did not brighten his sad face, and then asked, "What time will Marion be home?"

"After midnight; you would do right if you went for her."

"Then I will go. You need have no fear, Jessy. I will be at Lockerby's before midnight."

"Marion will be pleased, and the Lockerbys will take it as a great honor. Speak kindly to the

young people; you will make them your friends forever."

"Jessy, something has come between me and my people, something that dashes and interferes. It has grown up lately."

"It is yourself, Ian. You are different. Your countenance used to be steadfast and hopeful, your voice strong and sincere, your simple presence encouraging. Your face is now troubled, your voice indifferent, your presence has lost much of that sympathy which binds one heart to another."

"My congregation, Jessy, is too material to be moved by anything but spoken words or positive actions."

"Unconsciously your face—so dark and pathetic—moves them. The immortal Dweller, in molding its home, uses only the material you give it. So the sense of desolation, which has been stirred in you by the writings of Darwin, Schopenhauer, Comte and others, is visible on your countenance; and your people look on you and catch your spirit, even as we look over an infected country and catch its malaria."

Dr. Macrae shook his head in desponding denial, and Mrs. Caird continued: "What has Kant's 'Thing in Itself,' or Hegel's 'Absolute,' or Pascal's 'Abyssom,' or Renan's 'Scepticism,' or Spencer's 'Agnosticism' given you? O Ian, what are they but words empty of help or meaning to souls who have lost their faith in God. Listen to this," she cried, as, moving swiftly to a small hanging bookcase, she took from it a slim volume, "a man like yourself, Ian, fighting his doubts and fears and sad forecastings, wrote them;" and her eager face and intense sympathy made him bend his head in acquiescence. They were standing together in the center of the parlor floor, and Dr. Macrae was anxious to be alone and consider the news he had just received about Lady Cramer and his son, but he found something promising in his sister-in-law's words, and he stood expectantly watching her strong, sweet face as she spoke, or God in her spoke, these lines:

"Away, haunt thou not me,  
Thou vain Philosophy.  
Little hast thou bestead,  
Save to perplex the head,  
And leave the Spirit dead.  
Unto thy broken cisterns wherefore go?  
While from the secret treasure depths below,  
Wisdom and Peace and Power  
Are welling forth incessantly.  
Why labor at the dull mechanic oar  
When the fresh breeze is blowing,  
And the strong current flowing,  
Right onward to the Eternal Shore?"

"Whosoever wrote those lines, Jessy, had lain with me in the dungeons of Doubting Castle."

"Arthur Hugh Clough, an English clergyman, wrote them. His feet well-nigh slipped, but he constantly struggled to hold fast the skirts of Faith, and bid himself remember that in the Christ creed

"The souls of near two thousand years  
Have laid up here their toils and fears;  
And all the earnings of their pain.  
Ah, yet consider it again!"

"Let me have the book, Jessy," and he stood a few minutes looking at it. What Mrs. Caird was saying he heard not, his eyes had fallen upon a few lines describing the Christ creed:

"With its humiliations combining  
Exaltations sublime, and yet diviner abasements,  
Aspirations from something most shameful here upon earth, and  
In our poor selves, to something most perfect above in the heavens."

"I do not care for poetry, Jessy, but this book appears to reveal a soul. I will take it to my room; it may have something to say to me."

But Dr. Macrae did not read any book that night. To sit still with closed eyes and consider what this sudden association of Lady Cramer and his son might mean was the most urgent of his desires. Until near midnight he thought over the circumstance in every possible way, coming finally to the conclusion that Lady Cramer's attentions to Donald were a most delicate revelation of her love for himself; and this conviction brought instantly an acute longing for her presence. He felt that he must reach London as soon as it was possible. For some weeks he had anticipated this visit and made the necessary preparations for it. The finest clothing was ready to put into his valise, and there was little to do except to secure a minister to supply his pulpit for one Sabbath. This was easily accomplished, and on a fine, bright Monday morning he took a very early train southward.

"I am sure," said Marion, "Father has taken this journey purposely to see Donald again. It is so

good of him, and I do hope Donald will treat him properly."

"Nonsense!" answered Mrs. Caird. "Your father has gone to London to see Lady Cramer."

"Aunt, he told me he hoped Donald would be in London; he said he wished to see him."

"Then why did he not start for London at once?"

"He thought Donald would be delayed and detained by Lady Cramer. I thought so also. She liked to have young men waiting upon her. She always found them plenty to do. Father wanted to see Donald again."

"If your father wants anything, it is not his way to wait three or four days for it."

"Anyway, I do not believe my father and Lady Cramer are in love with each other. It is not likely."

"Do you think Richard and yourself have captured all the love in the world? Your father is a very handsome man and Lady Cramer is a beautiful woman. Why should they not be in love with each other?"

"They are so old, Aunt."

"Richard is not what I would call a young man. He will be thirty-five years old."

"Oh, no! He is thirty, and he has never been married. I am his first love. He told me so, many times he told me so."

"That is no wonder. All men say such things. Their words stand for just what you take them at. When I was a girl we used to sing a duet in which the soprano declared she had heard of a land where every man was true, where the women issued all orders, and the men did as they were told to do, and

'All was sweet serenity,  
And life a long devotion.'

Then the contralto expressed her longing for such a land, her willingness to go to it at once, and asked, 'How am I to get there?' Upon which a young man in the room appointed to give the information sang out melodiously,

'Go *straight* down the crooked lane,  
And *all around* the Square?'

Then both laughed, and Marion said, "Well, Aunt, as no one could go straight down a crooked lane, or all around a square, no one can find that happy land of your girlhood. I will go and write to Richard now, and tell him about the song, and about Father going to London."

"And do not forget to name Donald's care of his stepmother from Paris to London."

"I will tell Richard that also. I had forgotten the circumstance."

"Everyone forgets Donald."

And Marion, tired of assuring her aunt that Donald was not forgotten, answered carelessly, "Yes, they seem to do so. I wonder why?"

"Because Donald is not requiring their thoughts. Donald can think for himself; he knows what he wants, and he takes what he wants, and so he is well served." She was leaving the room as she spoke, and she closed the door emphatically enough to enforce her opinion.

In the meantime Dr. Macrae was going southward. In spite of the philosophies with which he had saturated himself, he had yet in his nature primitive traits which ruled him—often foolish ones—but so natural and spontaneous that they were actually dear to him. And among these relics of ancient feeling was the pleasure of giving surprises. All the way to London he was telling himself: "How happy Ada will be! How surprised she will be to see me! I shall walk unexpectedly into her parlor, and see the love and joy and astonishment light up her beautiful face as I approach her! That moment will pay for all—for all!"

He lived in the consideration of that moment all the way to the great city; but it was dark when he arrived there, and he was tired and hungry, and quite eager for whatever comfort the old Charing Cross hostelry could give him. About eight o'clock, however, he was thoroughly refreshed, and he called a cab and was driven to Lady Cramer's residence. It was fairly well lighted, and he judged her, therefore, to be at home. So he dismissed the cab and then walked slowly up and down before the house for a few minutes. As he was thus steadying himself for his eagerly desired happiness a carriage drove up to the house, and immediately afterward Lady Cramer, attended by a tall, middle-aged gentleman, entered it; and they were driven rapidly away. Dr. Macrae was by no means a shy man, but love unnerves the bravest when its environments are strange and uncertain; and he actually allowed Lady Cramer and her companion to drive away without any effort to arrest attention. In fact, he realized that he had stepped backward, and this cowardice made him both angry and ashamed.

"Why did I not cry halt! Why did I not call her? Why did I let that man carry her off when I was not more than an arm's length from her?" And the inner man answered, "You could have stepped

to her side, laid your hand upon her shoulder, and whispered, 'Ada!' in her ear. You had all the moments necessary. You were too cowardly to take your opportunity."

For nearly an hour he walked up and down before the house, letting the poor ape, jealousy, mingle with all his nobler love thoughts; then he noticed that the lights had been much lowered, and he rang the bell and asked for Lady Cramer.

"My Lady has gone to the play," was the answer.

"At what hour will she return?"

"It will be very late, sir. There is a supper and dance at Lady Saville's after the play, sir."

Then Dr. Macrae put a crown into the man's hand and asked to what theater Lady Cramer had gone, and, having received this information, he followed her there.

"Her Majesty's Theatre."

Was it conceivable that Dr. Ian Macrae had given such an order? A few months previously he had said to a large congregation in relation to the theater, "My feet have never crossed the unhallowed threshold." And he had made this declaration with what he considered a justifiable spiritual satisfaction. Would he now transgress a law of his whole life? Alas! at this hour life meant Lady Adalaide Cramer and to follow her, see her face, and consider her companion was an urgency he could not control—had indeed no desire to control.

He bought a ticket in the pit and looked around. Lady Cramer was not present, but several boxes were empty, and in a few minutes he saw her enter one of them. She was the center of a gay party and the most beautiful woman in it. His ticket, bought at random, had placed him in an excellent position for seeing the play he had come to see, and it was hardly likely Lady Cramer would let her eyes fall on anyone beneath the seats where the nobility sat.

Dr. Macrae looked at the lady of his hopes first. She had improved marvelously, she was radiantly beautiful and dressed in some magnificent manner beyond his power to itemize; yet he felt with a thrill of idolatrous passion the total effect of the combination. And he kept telling himself: "She is mine! And I will not suffer any other man to parade himself in her beauty! I will remain in London until we are married."

Then he looked at the man who was parading himself in her beauty, and had a swift, sharp pang of jealousy. He was about fifty years of age, one of those large, blond, well-groomed Englishmen who represent the imperial race at its best. There were two other ladies, a young naval officer and a well-known diplomat in the box, but Dr. Macrae took no note of them, though it interested him to see how cleverly Lady Cramer used them in order to exhibit the little airs and graces which diversified her gay or sentimental coquetries.

That Dr. Macrae should enter a theater was not the only wonder of that night. The play happened to be "Julius Cæsar," and he soon became enthralled with the large splendor of its old Roman life. He neither heard nor saw one thing that he could disapprove; and he said to himself, almost angrily, that it was wrong to prevent the happiness which hundreds of thousands might receive from such an entertainment if a mistaken public opinion did not prevent it. And, though this decision was only rendered mentally, he felt in its rendering all the ministerial intolerance of one who is deciding *ex cathedra* a point of great moral importance. The end of the performance found him in the foyer, watching for Lady Cramer's appearance. He had not long to wait. She came forward, leaning on the arm of her escort, and looking, as Dr. Macrae thought, divinely beautiful. He went straight to her. His step was rapid, his manner erect, even haughty, and, touching her hand gently, he said, with ill-concealed emotion:

"Ada!"

She started and answered, "Why, Doctor Macrae! Is it possible? In a theater, too! Oh, it is incredible!"

"I came to see you, not the play."

"To-night I am going to a supper and dance at Lady Saville's. Come to breakfast with me—nine o'clock. See, we are delaying people behind us—excuse me——" And as she went hurriedly forward she called back with a smile, "Breakfast—nine o'clock."

He was so summarily dismissed that he could not answer; then the waiting crowd made him feel their impatience, and with a sense of humiliation he went rapidly into the gloomy street. What had happened to him? All his spirit, all his pride and enthusiasm had vanished. Ada also had vanished, the play was over, and he had been told to wait until morning.

He passed the night in a fever of passionate contradictions. He blamed Ada in words which he had never used in all his life before, he praised her in words equally extravagant and unusual, and he had pangs of such cruel suffering, and thrills of such exquisite love and longing, as made him understand that it is through the mind, and not the body, that the greatest misery and the most enthralling happiness are experienced.

But, joyful or sorrowful, he never thought of prayer. If he had, there was his visit to the theater to be explained, and at the bottom of his soul's crucible there was yet a residuum of doubt on that score. Besides, the theater was only a detail; the real trouble was the woman.



About four o'clock he fell into a sleep so deep that it was far below the tide of dreams, and when he awakened he had barely time to prepare himself for his early visit. However, the rest had refreshed him, and when he left his hotel for Lady Cramer's residence there was not in all London a man of greater physical beauty or more aristocratic bearing. He was aware of this fact, and he smiled faintly as he looked in the mirror, and thought a little contemptuously of any rival he might have.

Like a true lover, he outran the clock, and reached his tryst some minutes before the appointed hour. He found Lady Cramer waiting for him. With beaming face and extended hands she came to meet him, and he forgot in a moment every word of reproof he had prepared for her. A delicate breakfast was laid on a table drawn to the hearth of her private parlor, and when she took her place, and made him draw his chair close to her own, the cup of his happiness was brimmed. Never before had she seemed so beautiful and so desirable. Her hair was loosely dressed, and the open sleeves of her violet silk gown showed the perfection of her hands and arms without rings or ornaments of any kind but the threadlike band of gold on her marriage finger. That ring he meant to remove and replace with one bearing his own and Ada's initials, and, at any rate, it was but an empty symbol, a dead pledge.

He did not waste these happy hours in explanations, but spent every moment in wooing her with all the fervor and passion of his manhood, and in winning again those tender marks of her favor which had really made her fly from his influence before. He entreated her to marry him at once—to-morrow—to-day—and he declared he would not leave London unless she went with him.

At this point she made a firm stand. "Marriage is an impossibility just yet," she answered; and, when pressed for any reason making it so, replied, "I must see how the affair between Richard and Marion ends before I entangle myself;" and, while she was making this excuse, there was the sound of a man's deep, authoritative voice in the hall, and the next moment he entered the room, full of his own eager pleasure, or at least feigning to be so. He pretended not to see Dr. Macrae, but cried out hurriedly:

"Ada! Ada! The horses are at the door. It is such a lovely morning. Come for a gallop. Quick, my dear!"

"Duke, you do not see my friend. Let me introduce you to Dr. Ian Macrae, the most eminent of our Scotch ministers."

"Glad to meet you, Doctor. Glad to see Ada—Lady Cramer—has such a wise friend. Kindly advise her, sir, to take her morning gallop—her physician considers it imperative. I have left all my affairs to take care of her, and I hope you will advise her to obey orders. Run away and put on your habit, Ada. The animals are restive and Simpson is holding both."

Ada looked at Ian and smiled, and what could Ian do? He was not a good rider. He had never escorted a lady on horseback in a public park; he knew nothing of the rites and regulations of that duty. It was better to give place than to render himself ridiculous. So he bowed gravely, and, turning to Ada, said:

"I advise you to take your morning ride, Lady Cramer. I can see you afterward."

"Come in to dinner, then, Doctor, and let us have our talk out about my stepson."

"It will not be convenient," and with these words he retired.

"A remarkably handsome, aristocratic man," said the Duke. "Make some haste, Ada, or we may miss the sunshine."

And as Lady Cramer ascended to her dressing-room she sighed sorrowfully, "I have missed it."

During this scene the Minister had preserved a noble and rather indifferent manner, and he left the room while she was hesitating about her ride. But oh, what a storm of slighted and disappointed love raged within him! Through the busy streets, forlorn and utterly miserable, he wandered slowly, careless of the crowd and the cold, and only thinking of the pitiless strait he had been compelled to face. He knew no one in London but Lady Cramer, and he felt as deserted and abandoned as a wandering bird cast out of a nest.

There is no waste land of the heart so dreary as that left by love which has deserted us. This is the vacant place we water with the bitterest tears, and, even in the cold, crowded London streets, his melancholy eyes and miserable face attracted attention. Men who had trod the same sorrowful road knew instinctively that some troubler of the other sex had been the maker of it.

He went back to his hotel and wondered what he should do with himself. He had intended to spend the hours not spent with Lady Cramer in the British Museum. He could not now do so. He preferred to sit still in his room and try to discover the truth concerning the position in which he so unexpectedly found himself. He had firmly believed in the love of Lady Cramer, he had regarded her only one hour previously as his own, and talked with her of their marriage. And she had apparently been as happy as himself in that prospect.

Yet the mere advent of Rotherham had changed her attitude, and he had felt at once that his presence was an inconvenience. More than this, in some way too subtle to analyze he had been intensely mortified by her changed manner, and by her reference to Richard and Marion, as if their love affair accounted for his presence in her household—the more so as they had not spoken

of the young people at all that morning. He did not feel that it was at all necessary to invent an excuse for asking him to dine with her.

So it was in an intense sense of mortification that his wounded feelings expressed themselves, and it was an entirely new experience to him. Throughout all the years of his manhood he had been praised and honored, served with the greatest consideration, and almost implicitly obeyed. He had never been in any society he considered more noble or more distinguished than his own. Yet undoubtedly Lady Cramer had been ashamed of his presence. He recalled the expressions on her face, the tones of real or pretended boredom in her voice, all the pretty coquetries of her eyes and hands, and all her graceful efforts to bewitch the Duke, and with a scornful laugh muttered, "She thought I did not understand her double game. She thought me a fool, and made a plaything of my love." And then he uttered some words which a minister should not use, and which a woman does not care to write.

Now, mortified feeling becomes hatred in passionate natures, and ridicule or scorn in cold natures. It tended to hatred with Ian. He had been so long accustomed to adulation and reverence that he could not endure the memory of the covert slights he had felt compelled to ignore. And it was not long ere he became furious at himself for not boldly taking his position as Lady Cramer's future husband. He told himself that, even if there had been a scene there and then, a man would have been present, and to him he could have made explanations, but now what could he do but suffer?

For hours he tormented and humiliated himself with the certainty that Lady Cramer was ashamed of condescending to his love, and that she had represented their acquaintance as arising from a necessary interference between her stepson and the minister's daughter. He knew exactly how she would represent the subject; he could tell almost the words she would use, and this mean, underhanded denial of himself hurt every nerve of his consciousness like a physical wound. Indeed, the suffering was greater, for a man may forgive a thrust from a sword, but a slap in the face! No! And Lady Cramer's treatment of her betrothed lover had been a decided slap in the face. He told himself passionately that he would never forgive it.

With this mortifying experience he sat until daylight waned, then he went to the office and asked if there were any letters for him. There was one from Marion, which he laid aside; there was none from Lady Cramer. Then his aching disappointment revealed to him that, in spite of his anger, he had been expecting a propitiating note, and perhaps a renewal of her invitation to dinner. For in this early stage of his wrath all his despairing thoughts were peopled with the phantoms of his love and his desires.

But there was no letter, and when he had dined alone he had arrived at that point of impatience which can no longer be satisfied with hoping or believing—he insisted on seeing. So he went to Lady Cramer's house and found it in semidarkness; consequently she was out. The obliging porter informed him, in return for a crown piece, that his lady had gone to the theater with the Duke of Rotherham, and Ian quickly followed her there. The play was in progress, but the man who had seated him previously came smilingly to take his ticket.

"Never mind the location," said Ian; "put me where I can see Lady Cramer and not be seen."

"A box on a higher tier would be the best."

"Then take me there."

"It will be five shillings more."

"Here is a sovereign. Give me a good location and keep the change."

He got all he desired, and for two hours fed the fire in his heart through the sad, tearless avenues of his eyes. Only the Duke was with her. He was in full dress, with all his ribboned orders on his breast; she was robed in pale amber satin and glittering with diamonds. The house was very full, the entertainment mirth-provoking, and there was a great deal of sweet, sensuous music. He did not hear anything either sung or spoken, for all his life was in his eyes, and what they saw burned the word *unattainable* on all his hopes. He left the theater before the performance was finished; he did not wish to meet his false mistress until he was quite sure of his decision. When he thought he was so he lifted his valise and packed it. He had resolved to see her once more and then return to Glasgow. His manner was then haughty and quiet, and his face looked as if carved out of steel, so cold and clear-cut were its features, so hard and implacable the resolve written on them.

In the morning he went to Lady Cramer's house, and was readily admitted. She was rather glad of his visit, for she by no means realized her offense nor her lover's indignation at it. Indeed, when he entered the parlor she rose with a little cry of pleasure, and, with both hands extended, hurried to meet him.

"O Ian! Ian! How glad I am to see you!" she cried. "I have just written to you—why did you not come again yesterday?"

He had advanced to about the middle of the room, and he stood there, stern and inflexible, until she was near to him. Then he raised his hands, palms outward, and said: "Stand where you are, Ada. I do not wish you to touch me. You are the most false of all women. I have come to give you back your worthless promise. I do not value it any longer."

"Ian! Ian! What do you mean?"

"I mean that I know you are going to marry that old Duke—going to sell yourself once more."

"Oh, indeed," she answered, "if my marriage is a sale, I prefer to be sold for a dukedom than a Free Kirk pulpit. And, if you have come here to be insolent, understand that I do not care for anything you say."

"Care a little for my farewell. I will never trouble you again. I give you back your promise."

"Thank you! If you had been brave enough to insist on my keeping it, I might have done so. You are a very indifferent lover. Twice over Duke Rotherham drove you away, just because he was a duke."

"You are mistaken. I set you free because you are utterly deceitful. I hate deceit. I love you no longer."

"You are deceiving yourself. You can never cease to love me."

"I love you not. I have ceased already."

"Indeed, sir, in the matter of love you leave off loving when you can, not when you wish."

"A burnt-out fire cannot be rekindled; you are dead to me."

"I shall live in your memory."

"I have buried you below memory, and, for the graves of the heart, there is no resurrection."

"Do not quarrel with me, Ian. I did love you! I did intend to marry you!"

"You are a beautiful woman, but you are only a face without a heart. It would have been a good thing for you to have become my wife. I should have taught you how to love."

With a little mocking laugh she answered: "It might have been a good thing to be your wife, but oh, what happiness it is not to be your wife! You have much learning, sir, but you do not know the way to a woman's heart." Then she slipped from her finger the ring he had given her and let it fall to her feet.

"I take back my promise, Ian. Take back your ring. Farewell!" and, with head proudly lifted, she passed him. At the door she turned, and he was just lifting the ring. "Ah!" she cried, "the diamonds are pure enough for you to touch, I see," and with a contemptuous laugh she closed the door behind her.

Her eyes were tearless, and there was a dubious smile around her mouth, but her heart grew so still she thought something must have died there. "Farewell, Ian!" she whispered, as she sank wearily on her bed. "Farewell! You wanted too much. You made the great blunder of confounding love-making with love. You took every trifle too seriously. I thought I loved you, but what is love? I might have married you, if I had not wanted to be a duchess. You might have spoiled that dream, and I am glad you are gone. *Hi! Ho!* I think I have managed very well."

Really it was her gift of blindness to anyone's pleasure but her own that at this time had kept her ignorant of danger until she had drifted past it. If Ian had been more persistent, the end of the affair would have been very different.

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## CHAPTER IX

### WHEN WILL THE NIGHT BE PAST?

"Alas! God Christ—along the weary lands,  
What lone invisible Calvaries are set,  
What drooping brows with dews of anguish wet,  
What faint outspreading of unwilling hands,  
Bound to a viewless cross with viewless bands.  
While at the darkest hour what ghosts are met  
Of ancient pain and bitter fond regret,  
Till the new-risen spirit understands."

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Doctor Macrae left London immediately after this interview, but he did not at once return to Glasgow. He spent two days at Oxford and nearly a week in the manufacturing towns of Yorkshire, the rest of his leisure in the historic city of Newcastle. He was interested in what he saw, but not comforted by it. For he was well aware that all his hopes had been stripped to the nakedness of a dream. The week days trailed on the ground and the Sabbaths made no effort to rise to the height of their birth. For the spiritual center of his being had never yet been in touch with the spiritual center in the universe, and all philosophies and all creeds must come back to

this sympathetic understanding between the Comforter and the Comforted, or they come to nothing.

Many years ago he had analyzed prayer by his creed, and felt that it had nothing to do with troubles so personal and selfish as his love or his hatred. For some wise purpose this discipline of wasted love had been given him, and his duty was to bear his loss as manfully as he could. There had once been a time when he would even have rejoiced to give up any personal happiness if he thought that by doing so he was learning a God-sent lesson. He could not do that now. He had been too long looking *into* the Deity instead of looking *up* to Him. He had compelled himself to question and to qualify until he knew not how to believe nor yet what to believe. Poor soul! He thought prayer could be reasoned about! Prayer, which is an unrevealed transaction, beyond the region of the stars!

At length, the time of his absence from duty being completed, he took a train for Glasgow, arriving there early in the evening. It was raining hard, it was dark, and the points of gas light only rendered the darkness visible. The streets were crowded with men and women in dripping coats, jostling each other with dripping umbrellas as they hurried home after their day's work.

In the quiet space of Bath Street the driver of his cab dropped his whip and stopped in order to regain it; and in those moments Dr. Macrae noticed a wretched looking man trying to get a few pennies by singing "The Land of Our Birth." His voice was full of pain and tears, and Macrae called him and put a shilling in his hand. The beggar's look of amazement and gratitude was wonderful. He raised the coin as he took it, and cried out, "*O God!*" and the look and the words fell on Macrae's heart like a soft shower on a parched land. They called up one of those tender smiles quite possible, and even natural, to his face, though far too seldom seen there. In the light of this smile he reached his home, and the next moment the door opened and Marion and Mrs. Caird stood waiting with outstretched hands to greet him.

He fell readily into their happy mood, and sat down between them to the excellent tea waiting for him. And the blessing of the shilling was on him, and he talked cheerfully of all that he had seen, but added as he took his large easy-chair on the hearthrug,

"East or West, Home is Best."

Alas! this blessed mood did not last. In a few days he was again brooding in a hell of his own making. He could not rest his heart on any affection. Lady Cramer had deceived him, Donald had deserted him, Marion was restlessly waiting for her lover's return. Then she also would go. And Jessie Caird's heart was with Donald. He thought of these things until he felt himself to be a very lonely, desolate man; for the heart is like a vine, it withers and dies if it has nothing to embrace.

In a deep and overwhelming sense he knew that to obey or to disobey duty was to say "yes" or "no" to God, but what was his duty? He told himself that if he could only see the way of duty clear he would take it, however unpleasant or difficult it might be. Yes, he was sure of that. But what was his duty? He tried to find out by every logical method known to him, and every method pointed out some flaw in every other method.

One morning, at the end of January, Dr. Macrae received a batch of London newspapers. They were brought to the breakfast table, and he looked at their number and wondered. He did not seem to understand what they portended, but Mrs. Caird did. Some womanly instinct told her what information they brought, and when Macrae did not come to the dinner table she said softly to Marion, "Lady Cramer is married. I wonder how he will bear it."

In the middle of the afternoon she took some coffee into the Minister's study, and at his request sat down beside him. "Stay an hour with me, Jessie," he said. "I am in trouble."

"I know, Ian."

"She is married."

Jessy nodded slightly, and said: "I know. My dear Ian, you were but a little child in the hands of Adalaide Cramer. Very likely she thought she loved you."

"I think she did love me."

"Whom has she married?"

"The Duke of Rotherham."

"She had a great temptation, but no doubt she suffered in giving you up, even for a dukedom."

"She ought to suffer. I wish her to suffer."

"Then you no longer love her?"

"Loving is now out of the question, but I had, I thought, a great love for her."

"Had!"

"Yes. I loved Ada until she contemplated making me a partner with her in the sin of deceiving the man who was then—almost—her husband. After that I had no hesitation in resigning her. I would not remain in London—she was very lovable—I might—I think not—but I might—"

"You acted as an honorable man must have done. Danger is an unknown quantity until you meet it face to face, and in this danger you were like a swimmer that only tips the tangles and does not know the depth of the water below them. I am glad you had the courage to leave her. Let her be dismissed even from your thoughts."

"How should I dare to think of her after those London papers? The Decalogue and Christ's words concerning its seventh law still stand with me as a finality. I no longer love her. I am not even angry with her. She was just the reef on which my life went down. An hour ago I buried her."

"Your life has not gone down. It ought to be more rich and buoyant for this very experience. It will be."

"Perhaps. Yet all life's pleasant things have suffered the same change that Autumn works on the flowery braes of Spring, and I feel,

'My days are as the grass,  
Swiftly my seasons pass,  
And like the flower of the field I fade.'"

Jessy waited a moment or two, and then replied, "I think, Ian, you might be just and honorable to the poet. Why do you cut the verse in two? I will give you the other three lines, as you seem to have forgotten them:

'O Soul, dost thou not see  
The Wise have likened thee  
To the most living creature that is made?'"

"Living creature?"

"Yes, in the Spring does the grass tarry for any man's help? It comes up without tool, or seed, or labor. In the garden, the field, the roadside, it comes, fresh and strong and heavenly green. Its withered blades have a new life. Likewise certain portions of our lives change or pass away, but something better for our coming years is given us."

"My dear Jessy, how good are your words. Is there any poetry you do not know?"

"Men and women who have souls meet each other in good poetry. I have met many a sweet soul there."

"I must tell you, Jessy, that it is not the *Duchess of Rotherham* but the Church of the Disciples that is now troubling me. I dread every Sabbath Day before me. I feel as if I could not—could not preach."

"Do you think a woman's 'no' should change your life and your life's work?"

"It might do so."

"It cannot. If there is no place open to a man but a pulpit, it is clear God means him to preach—whether he wants to or not. I think little of the men who are feared for the day they never saw. Bode good and you will get good. That's a fact, Ian."

"Jessy, I seem to have lost everything in one bad year—my love, my children, my work, my friends. All are changed or gone. I feel poor. Once I was rich, and knew it not."

"You are not poor, Ian. The poor are those who have never lost anything. You are not doing badly even now, and you are learning on very easy terms the grand habit of doing without."

"I am very miserable, Jessy, I know that."

"You are deserving misery badly, or you would hardly punish yourself. God is giving you blessings on every hand, and you do not even thank Him for them."

"Jessy Caird!"

"I'm right, quite right. He took the great temptation of a heartless beautiful woman out of your way. You could have thrown love and honor and your very soul on that water, and got nothing back—through all the years of your life—but sorrow and shame. Well, well, it is little gratitude we give either God or angel for the *escapes* they help us to make. How often have we been in the net of some adverse circumstances, and suddenly and quietly the net is broken and we escape. Then we are as likely to grumble as to rejoice."

"If it wasn't for the preaching——"

"Ay, it is always 'something' if it is not 'somebody' that is to blame. Not ourselves, of course! What do you think of making the best of what you have, Ian? There was a wonderful letter from Donald yesterday. Ask Marion about it."

"I will take a walk as far as the cathedral. There is a painted window in the crypt that is always delightful to me."

"A painted window?"

"Yes—representing Christ as a youth reading the Book of the Law."

"You are a queer man, Ian Macrae. Your ideal of Christ has a papistical leaning."

"Nothing of the kind, Jessy. Nothing!"

"The Roman idea is to represent the Redeemer of the World just a baby in the Virgin's arms, or he is the victim on the Cross, or the dead God being prepared for burial. How many paintings do you know representing Christ as the Lord of Life and Death—the co-equal of the God Everlasting? Indeed, if you do happen to find a painting of Christ as a man among men, he is sure to be the least handsome and godlike of all those surrounding him. And you can find comfort in the figure of a boy reading the Book of the Law!"

"Do you know the window?"

"I do. The last time I saw it, Donald was with me. He liked it well. There was a long letter from Donald yesterday."

"I will now dress and take a walk."

"It is raining hard."

"Then I will only go as far as Blackie's, and look over his new books. That is always interesting."

"Don't go out, Ian. Sit with Marion. She has a letter she wants to read to you."

"Jessy, I am seeking the Truth. The search impels me—I cannot rest—I can do nothing else but seek it—not for my life!"

"Do you expect to find it in Blackie's bookshop?"

"I know not where to find it."

"It is lying there—at your right hand."

He glanced down at his right hand, and saw the familiar old Bible of his college days. The place-keeping ribbon was lying outside its pages, and he lifted the Book and replaced the ribbon; then, with a feeling of sorrowful tenderness, laid it, on a shelf of his bookcase. "My father put it in my hands the morning I went first to St. Andrews," he said softly, and then turned to Jessy, but she had left the room.

With a strange smile of satisfaction he touched the inner breast pocket of his long black vest, for in that pocket there lay a letter from Donald which was all his own. It had come to him by the same mail which brought Marion's, but some curious Scotch twist in his nature prompted him to conceal the fact. The root of this secrecy was undoubtedly selfishness. He did not want anyone else to see, or touch, or handle it—it was all his own, as long as it lay unspoken of in his breast wallet. There were things in it he could not bear to discuss—things that appeared to actually deny all the results he had declared would be the natural and certain consequences of Donald's disobedience and irreligious tendencies.

So he kept the letter in his breast and said nothing about it, and he went to Blackie's bookshop and brought home in his hand a volume by Mills with which he passed the long evening. Now and then he vouchsafed a few remarks on passing events, but upon the whole he had reason to congratulate himself upon his reticence and its success.

Nevertheless, it had been less successful than he imagined, for, after he had retired with Mr. Mills to the solitude of his study, Marion said, with a sigh, "He never named Donald, Aunt;" and Mrs. Caird answered sharply, "I am thinking, Marion, he knows all about Donald. He has had a letter his own self. The man is far too curious to have kept whist if he had not known what we were meaning by Donald's good fortune. No doubt Donald wrote to him. I would hardly believe your father if he said different."

After this event the gloomy winter of snow and rain and thick fog settled over the busy city, and people with firm-set lips and gloomy faces went doggedly about their business and tried not to mind the weather. But Dr. Macrae was acutely sensible to atmospheric conditions, and the nearly constant gloom and drizzle was but the outward sign of his mental and spiritual darkness and doubt. Day followed day in a monotonous despairing search for what he could not find, and life lost all its savor and searching all its hope and zest.

Finally his health began to suffer. He found out what it meant to be nervous and inadequate for duty. He became unreasonable or dourly despondent, and every change was marked by moods and tempers that affected the whole household. For the mind has malignant contagious diseases, as well as the body, and the black silent sulk or the fretful complaining in the study passed readily into every room of the gloomy household.

There are doubts that traverse the soul like a flash of lightning, burning their way through it; there are others that come slowly, insinuating themselves through a few careless words that somebody said because they had a clever ring. Doubt came to Ian like a mailed warrior, and met him, as *Apollyon* met *Christian*, with defiant words and straddling all over the way. What if there was no God? he asked boldly—if blind forces, beyond his comprehension, controlled the world? If life was only a semblance and mankind dreamers in it? What if the heavens were empty? If there was no one to answer prayer? If Christ had never risen? If the Word of God was *not* the Word of God?

Such questions are only of casual importance to the material man, but to Ian they were the breath of his nostrils. He lived only to solve them, and to pluck the Very Truth from the assertions and contradictions in which it lay buried. By night and by day he was in the thick of this storm, and was often so weary that he fell into long sleepy stupors. For great griefs and anxieties have these respites from suffering, and it was likely this very lethargy which overtook the Disciples in the sorrowful Garden of Olives. And this spiritual warfare was not a thing to be decided in a few days, or even weeks. Slowly, as the weary months went on, it disintegrated the Higher Life, leaving the man acutely intellectual, but without spiritual hope or comfort. It was mainly by Mrs. Caird's pleadings and reasonings that he had even been kept at his post in the Church of the Disciples.

"What do you expect to gain by leaving your work, Ian?" she asked. "If God should send a word to comfort you, it would doubtless come as it came to the good men and prophets of old—when they were on the threshing-floor, or among the flocks, or about their daily duties. You can at least do as Dr. Scott does—keep faithfully your obligation to the Presbytery, and, as a matter of professional honesty, preach good Calvinistic sermons to those who desire them. It might be that while you were helping and encouraging others the Divine Whisper would reach your heart. At any rate, it is more likely to come to you in the stress and duty of life than when you are thinking yourself into a stupor in that haunted study of yours."

"Haunted!"

"Yes, Ian, haunted by doubts that gather strength by habit—and by fears, that, like the needle, verge to the pole till they tremble and tremble into certainty."

And, though Ian had declared that he never could or would preach as a mere professional duty, he found himself obliged to do so. It was necessary to have a reason for his sermons, for without a reason he could neither write nor preach them; and he found in the faithful fulfillment of his ministerial vows the only substitute for that fervent zeal which had once touched his lips as with a live coal from the altar.

Indeed, many of the oldest sitters in the Church of the Disciples said that he had never before preached such powerful and unanswerable Calvinistic sermons—sermons that "crumpled up sinners spiritually" until the business obligations of Monday morning restored their elasticity. And though Mrs. Caird knew well that the passion and fiery denunciation of these sermons came out of the misery and the ill-conditioned temperament of the preacher, she approved his eloquence. With a sort of satisfaction she said to herself, "If these people like the God John Calvin made, I am glad that Ian shows Him to them—'predestinating from all eternity, one part of mankind to everlasting happiness and another to endless misery, and led to make this distinction by no other motive than his own good pleasure and free will.'"

To Ian she said, "Your people can make no mistake about the kind of God they have to meet, and I am glad that lately you have been bringing your sermons to the counter and the hearthstone. You began your sermon to-day, as I think Christ must often have done, '*What man among you.*' Men like to be appealed to, even if they have to admit they are wrong."

"I thought I might be too severe—when I consider it was a sinner correcting sin. But, Jessy, it is such blind, weary work, preaching what I do not believe."

"You do believe it. You know well it is the only Scripture for the dour, proud, self-reliant souls who have accepted it. I wonder, indeed, if they would respect a God who forgave his enemies, and who thought rich men would hardly win their way into the kingdom of heaven. As for hell, it is the necessary place for all who do not think as they do, or who in any other way offend them."

"*Oh, that I knew where to find him!*" cried Ian, and the passionate sorrow and entreaty in the lifted eyes and hands filled Mrs. Caird with a great pity, and she answered softly:

"When you seek for God with all your heart and with all your soul, Ian, you will find him."

"Do I not seek for Him with all my heart? I do! I do!"

Thus, in constantly soothing and strengthening the unhappy man, the weary months passed slowly away. And during them Ian was deteriorating both spiritually and physically, so much so that Mrs. Caird began to wonder if he ought not to be relieved from the strain of living so difficult a double life. Was there any necessity which would justify it?

"And he ought to be so happy," she said one day to herself, with a sob of something between anger and pity, "he ought to be constantly thanking God about his children, and he can think of nothing but what he himself wants, and that want a spiritual gift that few obtain. If he cannot believe Christ and the multitudes who have done so and found it sufficient, in whom, then, can he believe? There will be no special dispensation for Ian Macrae, and he need not be looking for it."

This fretful soliloquy took place nearly two years after the coming of those miserable books of Lord Cramer's into Dr. Macrae's life. He read others constantly which he hoped would nullify their power, but every fresh scientific or theological writer had only made his doubts and perplexities more and more confused and distressing; and it seemed at last, even to Jessy Caird, that he ought to be released from playing a part, which, however much good it did to others, was killing in its personal effects.

It was at this crisis he was walking one lovely Spring morning up Buchanan Street, and met

Major Macrae. They clasped hands with an understanding smile, and the Major said, "I want an hour's talk with you, Ian. It is important. Come home with me." So they went together to Blytheswood Square, and into the little office at the back of the house, and the Major said:

"Ian, I am ready to recall Lord Cramer, and you will be glad to know that his estate is now money-making and in good condition; and, as my application for unlimited parole is not likely to be refused, there is no reason for delaying my niece's marriage."

"You must have great power with the War Office?"

"I am the power behind the power. Also, it is the desire of the Government that all noblemen should be on their estates. I have no doubt Lord Cramer will receive what he desires."

"He owed a large sum of money. Have you performed a miracle?"

"No. I have only made available a much larger sum. Many years ago, while riding with the late Lord, I noticed a peculiar appearance of the sea among the little bays that wash the northern part of the estate. I thought to myself, 'There is an oyster bed there,' but I said nothing, for the late Lord was only too speculative, and I needed all his money and all his interest at that time to get the property out of trouble. When Lord Richard was in the same trouble I remembered my suspicions, and sent half a dozen old oyster fishers to examine the situation. They found immense beds of oysters, and now there is an oyster fishery village there, and just one mile of railroad connects it with the line to Edinburgh. And, man! there's your market all waiting and ready. There never was such wonderful luck!"

"But the village and the necessary materials, the boats and cottages, the railroad and other requirements, must have cost a lot of money."

"To be sure they have. I have put a lot into the development myself. Why not? It will pay splendidly. Your future son-in-law will not only have a steady flow of gold from his oyster beds, they will also supply him with something to do and to look after. I have thought of that. I know it is good for men to come constantly in contact with facts. It helps them to keep their moral health. Tell Marion her lover may be home in three months, and I hope, Ian, you will no longer oppose their marriage."

"Marion can marry when she is twenty-one. Not until."

"You cannot prevent the young from marrying. They will do it. Donald tells me he is to be married on the fifth of December. I suppose you know whom to?"

"I know nothing about Donald, excepting that on the steamer to New York he met a Scotchman called Macbeth, and that somehow they struck up a friendship, and Donald was going with him to a place called Los Angeles. He appears to be much older than Donald. I do not understand such friendships, and, as I did not answer Donald's letter, he did not write again—and I have heard nothing further."

"I will tell you further, though you are not deserving the news—the why and wherefore of the friendship between Donald and Mr. Macbeth was, first of all, that they both played the violin and both loved it, and on the voyage they turned the smoking-room into a concert room, for the Captain played likewise, and he brought his violin there when he could. The second thing was that everyone—men and women—were loving Donald, and when they reached New York Macbeth would not part with the lad, and they went together to Los Angeles, and then to his handsome home a few miles from the city. There he had great vineyards and farms of figs and lemons, and wonderful peaches and pears, and Donald has taken gladly and happily to helping him in the making of wines and raisins and the drying of fruit. The work is all out of doors in a climate like Paradise. In the evenings they play their violins and sing Scotch songs, and are as near heaven as they can be on earth."

"You can't sing Scotch songs anywhere but in Scotland. They won't bear transplanting any better than bell-heather. Fancy bell-heather in a London park!"

"Scotchmen are singing them all over *this* world, and, for all I know, all over *other* worlds; but we are getting away from our subject, which was my nephew, Donald Macrae. This Mr. Macbeth has a daughter, a beautiful girl, not eighteen until the fifth of December. Then he will give her to Donald with half a million dollars, which Donald will invest in Macbeth's business, and so become his partner. The girl is lovely as an angel. I have a picture of her. Do you want to see it?"

"No."

"And she has a beautiful name, and I'll just put it into your memory, Ian. She is called Mercedes."

"Spanish! Is she a Spaniard?"

"Her mother was a California Spaniard of old and wealthy lineage."

"A Roman Catholic, doubtless."

"Of course. That goes without saying. It does not matter if she loves God."

"It matters anyway and every way. It takes all the good out of the circumstance. The girl was the devil's bait for the poor lad's soul."



"Nonsense, Ian! One creed is as good as another. Creeds, indeed! Religion has nothing to do with such outside details. God save us! What kind of a head must a man have who could think so? I can tell you, Ian, the belief in any creed stands in these days on the edge of a razor."

"Then what have we left?"

"We have Faith, man. Faith goes below creeds, straight to the impassioned human hopes out of which creeds have grown. Faith in spiritual matters is just what courage is in material life. *My word, Ian!* if you had only Faith, you would see some good in every creed."

"Well, then, all creeds claim to come from the Bible."

"There is no such thing as a creed or a system of Divinity in the Book—nothing in it but human relations touched by the Spirit of God."

"I am glad, however, to hear of Donald's good fortune."

"It is wonderful. Every good gift of life put into his hand unsought. A beautiful and wealthy wife, who loved him from the moment they met, and a father-in-law who treats him already as a dearly beloved son."

"Donald is not his son, however, and never can be. I am forever and ever Donald Macrae's father."

"A splendid home, a large and prosperous business, and the finest climate outside of the Kingdom of Heaven. It is like a fairy tale," continued the Major enthusiastically.

Ian smiled, and said slowly, as if he could hardly remember the words he wished to say, "You are right,

'It sounds like stories from the Land of Spirits,  
If any one attain the thing he merits,  
Or any merit that which he obtains.'

I am glad to have heard such a romance."

"Marion, or Mrs. Caird, could have told it to you, chapter by chapter, as it was making."

"And with what advices and entreaties!"

"Words only. I never mind words. Ian, you are looking ill. What is the matter with you? Is it the loss of that woman?"

"The Duchess of Rotherham? No. I never allow myself to think of her. It is a loss so transcendently greater that there is not speech to define the distance. *I have lost God!*" and he looked up with a face of such desperate sorrow and patience as infected the heart of the older man with uncontrollable pity.

"O Ian! Ian!" he answered in a low, intense voice, "you cannot lose God, and, if you could, He cannot lose you."

"My father's brother!<sup>[1]</sup> I have lost God, and the Devil——"

"Stop now. I disclaim for you and for myself all interest in the devil. I deny him! I deny him! *Ach!* I will not talk of him. If there be a devil, he can talk for himself."

"My God has left me. I know not where to find Him. I watch the day and the night through for a whisper or a sign from Him. 'As the hart panteth after the water brook, so panteth my soul for the living God.' To all my pleading He is deaf and dumb. My heart would break, but He has made it so hard that sometimes I can only pray for tears, lest I die of my soul's thirst."

"But this is dreadful, Ian, dreadful! Dear me! Dear me! What can I do?"

"What do you do when, through faults all your own, you have lost the sense of God's loving presence?"

"I will tell you truly, Ian. I write down all my sins and shortcomings, and then, kneeling humbly at His feet, I acknowledge them, and ask for pardon. I wait a moment or two, and then I mark them out with the sign of the [symbol: cross]. It cancels all, and generally I can feel this. If I do not feel it, I know something is wrong, and the confession is to make over again. It seems a childish thing for a man of sixty years old to rely on, Ian, but it has kept me at His Pierced Feet all my life long. If I had been a Roman Catholic—as the Macraes once all of them were—I should have gone to my confessor and had the priest's absolution; and I suppose it is some ancient feeling after the need and the comfort of confession. For I have 'confessed' in this way ever since I was a little lad, and I shall do so as long as I live. I have never told anyone but you of my simple, solemn rite; but it is a very solemn thing to me, however simple. Yes, it is. I speak the truth."

"Thank you. It is sacred and secret with me. Tell me now what would you do if you had to carry the burden Bunyan makes poor Christian carry through the Slough of Despond every Sabbath. It is my unspeakable burden to be compelled to preach. While I am preaching to others I am asking my soul, 'Art thou not thyself become a castaway?' Life is too hard to bear."

"Yet it was small help or comfort you gave your congregation last Sabbath."

"I did not see you in Church."

"I was there. It is indeed a very rare circumstance, but I was there, and I heard you tell your hearers that, bad as this life was, the next life would be much worse unless they lived a kind of righteousness impossible to them. Why do people listen to such words? Why do you say them? How do you dare to represent God as ordaining all things, yet angry with the actions of the creatures whom He has created to disobey His orders? And, since a man must sin by the very necessity of his nature, why is he guilty of his sins? How can people bear such sermons?"

"They do not feel them. No one takes them as for themselves. The majority give all menaces to their neighbors. A great many do not believe such doctrine any more than you do."

"Then why do they go and hear it?"

"Because in Glasgow, Uncle, the respectable element compel the scornful to sit in the seat of the righteous. It is fashionable to go to church, and the strictest sect is the most fashionable. Anything like Armenianism or Methodism is democratic, and suitable only for the lower classes—it is too emotional, and brings religion down to Ohs! and Ahs! and to feelings that compel expression. There are various other reasons not worth mentioning."

"And you are permitting this false preaching of a false doctrine to kill you?"

"My trouble is far greater. Is there a God at all?"

"Now, Ian, such a question as that never darkened any man's life who did not go out of his way to seek it. Why did you meddle with those cloudy German philosophies? Like Satan, they are one everlasting *No!* How could you be influenced by them? I defy any metaphysician to argue me out of the testimony of my soul and my senses. It is not the 'No!' but the victorious 'Yes!' that life demands."

Then Ian made some explanations, but without success. The Major laughed scornfully at the names of his misleaders, and said, "I know all about them that I want to know. I could not sleep if their books were under my roof. *Imphm!*" he added with ejaculatory disdain. "You call their ravings scientific religion and religious philosophy. *Rubbish, rubbish* is the exact term for them."

"They have been widely read, sir."

"Nonsense! The Scotch mind is far too logical to grasp an existence that is non-existent; it sees no reality in what never happened, and you cannot make it believe that 'Being and not Being' are identical facts. It leaves all such ideas to those who live in that land

'Where Hegel found out, to his profit and fame,  
That Something and Nothing were one and the same.'

These two lines of a great critic were all I needed. I laughed heartily, and sent all the philosophies I had to the Clyde. Sandy, who threw them into it, said they went straight to the bottom. Ian, you are wandering in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Are you quite alone? Have you lost the Great Companion?"

"Yes."

"Then trust to the Man within you. No one can lose his soul who risks it with his Higher Self. He will lead you to the One mighty to save. And go and do your daily duty as you see it, and I am led to believe you will require to begin in the house on Bath Street. *Dod, Man!* I'm sorry for the two poor women who have to live with you. You must be a very uncomfortable, unsocial fellow to eat and to bide with."

"I don't think so, Uncle. When I cannot eat it is kind to keep away from the table; when I am unable to converse about the trivial things of this life it is best for me to be silent. A man as full of sorrow as I am——"

"Fills the whole house with his worry and lamenting. Go home, and eat with the two women you are treating so badly, and talk with them about the people and the things that they love and care for. That you *can* do, and that you *must* do."

"They love and care for me."

"I'm bound to say you don't deserve it, and that's a fact. Talk to them of Donald and Lord Cramer, and talk hopefully and pleasantly. They will be so grateful to you and so kind in return."

"They are always kind to me."

"Well, well! They just show that the grace of God and two women can live with a man that no one else could live with. I met Marion last week in the Arcade, and the little girl was miserable. She said you had scarcely spoken a word for three days. It is not right. Go home and talk to them."

"How can I talk what seems foolishness to me?"

"Try it. Foolishness has often turned out to be wisdom. There is what Paul calls 'the foolishness of preaching.' What are you going to do about that subject?"

"What would you do, Uncle?"

"I would preach the Truth, as I saw it and felt it, or—I would not preach it at all."

"Jessy Caird thinks that, until Marion is married, everything should remain as it is. Then! Then I will seek God until I find Him, or die seeking."

"Just so! I have noticed that few things give a man more satisfaction than a resolve to do better at some future time. As for Marion's marriage, I can't see what influence your preaching or not preaching can have on that circumstance. She will not be married in the Church of the Disciples, and of course you cannot marry her."

"Marion will be married in my church and I shall marry her. It will be a great trial, but I shall not shirk it."

"Lord Cramer will insist on being married in St. Mary's Church, and by the Episcopal ritual. You would not be permitted to perform any service in St. Mary's unless you had taken Episcopal orders."

"Then we can have a private marriage."

"We can do nothing of the kind. Do you think that I will consent to my niece being married in a mouse hole? The Bishop is going to marry her, and it is to be a very grand affair. I have influence to bring to the ceremony most of our neighboring nobility, and the military friends of Lord Cramer will be there in force, and their splendid uniforms will make a fine effect. It is the first wedding I have ever had anything to do with. You were married in a little Border village, and none of your kin there;—father and mother and your wife, all gone!" and the Major looked into the far horizon, as if he must see beyond it, while Ian stood still and white at his side. Not a word was spoken. For a few minutes both men surrendered themselves to Memory's divinest anguish. Then the elder returned to their conversation and said—though in a much more subdued manner:

"Tell Marion to choose her six bride'smaids and give them beautiful wedding garments; tell her all I have said, and try to take some interest in the matter. Do, my dear lad, for no man will ever win Heaven by making his earthly home a hell. Be sure and tell Marion that Lord Cramer will be here in three months, and give her a big check to prepare for his coming."

"I promise to tell Marion. I will be as good as my word."

"Just so. But this is a forgetful world, so I'll remind you of your promise once more—and there is the girl's little fortune."

"It is ready for her as soon as she is married. I have not touched a penny of it. It is intact, principal and interest, and, by a little careful investment, much increased."

"You are a good man—a generous man."

"No, no, Uncle. It was just pride, nothing better. She is *my* child. I preferred to take care of her myself—with my own money."

Then they talked over the amounts to be spent on the marriage, on dress, visitors, the ceremony and traveling expense, and when some decision had been reached the Major was weary. He sighed heavily, and advised Ian to go home and try to be of a kinder and more familiar spirit. "And tell Marion," he said, "Lord Cramer will be in Glasgow in three or four months, and she must have all her 'braws' ready, for he will not hear tell of waiting—no, not for a day."

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## CHAPTER X

### A DREAM

For while all things were in quiet silence and the night was in the midst of her swift course.... Then suddenly visions of horrible dreams troubled them sore, and terrors came upon them unlooked for.—WISDOM OF SOLOMON, 18: 14: 17.

Dreams are rudiments of the great state to come.

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For nearly two weeks after the Minister's talk with his uncle something of the old cheerfulness and peace returned to the house on Bath Street. To Marion her father was exceedingly kind and generous, and the girl was radiantly happy in his love and in the many beautiful gifts by which he proved it. But "the good and the not so good," which is, to some extent, the inheritance of us all, gave him no rest, though for some days he was able partially to control the strife. He had been too intense a believer to stand still and say nothing about his doubts; and when a Scotchman has cast off Calvin, and been unable to accept Kant, he is not an agreeable man in domestic life. He was morbid, but he was not insincere, and he was really desperate concerning the salvation of his own soul. So the busy gladness of Mrs. Caird about the wedding preparations and the joyous voice and radiant face of Marion, as the stream of love was bearing her gently to the Happy Isles, rasped and irritated him. He was beginning to feel that he had done enough—to wonder if he

could not go away until the marriage was an accomplished fact. Everything about it, as far as he was concerned, had undergone the earth and been touched by disappointment; and nothing had brought him back the calm peace, the sweet content, the abiding strength that his old trust in the God of His Fathers had always given. The cynicism of lost faith infected his nature. He was even less courteous to all persons than he had ever been before. The man was deteriorating on every side.

"Oh, the regrets! the struggles and the failings!  
Oh, the days desolate! the wasted years!"

To such mournful refrains he walked, hour after hour, the crowded streets and the narrow spaces of his own rooms; for he felt, even as St. Paul did, that, if all this great scheme of Christianity were not true, then its preachers were of all men most miserable. Generally speaking, poor Burns' prayer that we might see ourselves as others see us is surely an injudicious one, but if the Minister could have been favored with one day's observation of Ian Macrae, as he really appeared to his family, it might at least have given him food for reflection.

After a day of great depression, partly due to the marriage preparations and gloomy atmospheric conditions, but mainly, no doubt, to his wretched spiritual state, he went one evening to a session at the Church of the Disciples. He wondered at himself for going and his elders and deacons wondered at his presence. He was lost in thought, took no interest in the financial report of the treasurer, and left the meeting before it closed.

"The Minister was not heeding whether the Church was in good financial standing or not," said Deacon Crawford, "and I never saw such a look on any man's face. It comes back, and back, into my mind."

"Ay," answered another deacon, "and did you notice his brows? They were sorely vexed and troubled. And the eyes that had to live under them! They gave you a heartache if he but cast them on you."

"We'll be having a great sermon come the Sabbath Day, no doubt," said the leading Elder; "and, the finances being in such good shape, what think you if we give the Minister's daughter a handsome bridal gift?"

"It isn't an ordinary thing to do, Elder."

"The Minister is getting a very good salary."

"He is an uncommonly proud man, too."

"And his daughter is marrying a lord."

"Well," answered the proposer of the gift, "there's plenty of time to think the matter over," and all readily agreed to this wise delay.

Though the Minister had left the session early, it was late when he reached home, weary and hungry, and glad of Mrs. Caird's kind words and plate of cold beef and bread.

"Where on earth have you been, Ian?" she asked. "Do you know it is past eleven?"

"I have been going up and down and to and fro in the city, watching the unceasing march of the armies of labor. The crowd never rested. When the day workers stopped the night workers began—weary, joyless men. It was awful, Jessy."

"I know," said Mrs. Caird, "it is

'All Life moving to one measure,  
Daily bread! Daily bread!  
Bread of Life, and bread of Labor,  
Bread of bitterness and sorrow,  
Hand to mouth, and no to-morrow.'

Good night, Ian. Go to sleep as soon as you can."

How soon he kept this promise he never could remember; he only knew that when he awakened he was drenched with the sweat of terror and trembling from head to feet. "Who am I? Where am I?" he asked, as he fumbled with the Venetian blind until it somehow went up and let in the early dawning. Then he noticed the dripping condition of his night clothing, and he hurried to his bed and cried out in a low, shocked voice, "*The sheets are wet! The pillow is wet!* What can it mean? What has happened? *Oh, I remember!*" And he covered his face with his hands and his very soul shuddered within him.

Then his wet clothing shocked and frightened him, and he began to remove it with palpitating haste, muttering fearfully as he redressed himself: "How I must have suffered! Great God, the physical melts away at the touch of the Spiritual! Oh, I wish Jessy would come! Why is she so late? When I do not want her she is here half an hour before this time." The next moment she tapped at his door and called,

"Ian."

"Oh, come in, Jessy. Come in! I want you! I want you!"

"Breakfast is waiting."

"Let it wait. Come in. I want you to tell me the truth, the plain, sure truth about what I am going to ask you."

"What is it, Ian?"

"Jessy, did you ever know me to dream?"

"Never. You have always declared that you could not understand what Marion and I meant by dreaming."

"Well, I had a dream this morning, and, though it seemed very short, I felt when I awoke from it as if I had been in hell all the night long."

"What did you dream?"

"I was in the vestry of the Church of the Disciples, putting on my vestments. I knew that the church was crowded, and I looked at myself and was proud of my appearance. Then I was walking up the aisle very slowly. Step by step I mounted the pulpit stairs, and stood facing the largest congregation I had ever seen. And the light was just like the light when there is an eclipse of the sun—an unearthly, solemn obscurity, frightful and mysterious. I stood in my place and surveyed the congregation. It filled the church, but the furthest points of distance appeared to be nearly in the dark. I could see forms and movements there, but nothing distinct. I looked at this gathering for a moment, and then laid my hand upon the Bible, and, with my eyes still upon the people, I opened it—Jessy!"

"O man! Speak!"

"There was nothing there."

"Nothing there! What do you mean?"

"Every page was blank—only white paper—not a word of any kind——"

"Ian Macrae!"

"I looked for my text. It was gone. I turned the pages with trembling hands, but neither in the Old nor the New Testament was there a word. And I cried out in my anguish, and looked at the wordless Bible till I felt as if body and soul were parting. God, how I suffered! Earth has no suffering to compare with it."

"Then, Ian?"

"Then I looked up at the congregation, and was going to tell them the Bible had faded away, but I saw the people were a moving dark mass, in a rapidly vanishing light; and I tried to find the pulpit stairs, but could not, for I was in black darkness. And I was not alone; to the right and the left there were movements and whispers and a sense of *Presence* about me. Powers unutterable and unseen that must have come out of inevitable hell. The whole earth appeared to be awake and aware, and *the Name, the Name* I wanted to call upon I could not remember. The effort to do so was a tasting of death."

He covered his face and was silent, and Mrs. Caird took his cold hand and said softly, "O Lord, Thou Lover of souls! Thou sparest all, for they are Thine."

"At last *the Name* came into my heart, Jessy, and though I but whispered the Word, its power filled the whole place, and the Evil Ones were overcome—not with strength nor force of celestial arms, but with that *One Word* they were driven away; and I awakened and it was just daylight, and I was so wet with the sweat of terror that I might have been in the Clyde all night. Was this a dream, Jessy?"

"Yes."

"What does it mean?"

"You know best. A God-sent dream brings its meaning with it. It is not a dream unless it does so. You know, Ian. Why ask me?"

"Yes, I know."

About this experience Mrs. Caird would not converse, for she was not willing to talk away the influence of Ian's spiritual visitation. She was quite sure that he understood the message sent him, and equally sure that he would implicitly obey it. So she left him alone, though she heard him destroying papers all day long. The next day being Saturday, he was very quiet, and she told herself he was preparing his sermon, and then with a trembling heart she began to speculate as to its burden. She feared that in some way his dream would come into relation or comment, and she could not bear the idea of such a public confidence.

She was still more uneasy when on Sunday morning he said in his most positive manner, "Jessy, I wish you and Marion to remain at home to-day. A little later you will understand my desire."

"As you wish, Ian. We shall both be glad of a quiet rest day. I hope you know what you are going

to do, Ian. Our life is a spectacle—a tragedy to both men and angels—bad angels as well as good ones. Don't forget that, Ian."

"I shall not forget, and I know what I am going to do."

She looked at him anxiously, but had never seen him more decided and purposeful. He was also dressed with extreme care, and, though in ecclesiastical costume, was so singularly like his uncle that Mrs. Caird involuntarily thought, "How soldierly he carries himself! What a fighter he would have been! But he is some way quite different—not like the old Ian at all."

Yes, he was different, for on the soul's shoreless ocean the tides only heave and swell when they are penetrated by the Powers of the World to Come. And Dr. Macrae was still under the emotions of his first experience of that kind. He was prescient and restless. For, though the outward man appeared the same, the archway inside was uplifted and widened, and Dr. Macrae had risen to its requirements. He was ready to fight for his soul. Yes, with his life in his hand, to fight for its salvation. What would it profit him if he gained the whole world and lost his soul?

Frequently he assured himself that he did not now regard the Bible as divinely inspired, yet he was constantly deciding this or that question by its decrees. So quite naturally he followed this tremendous inquiry of Christ's by those two passionate invocations of David, "Cast me not away from Thy Presence. Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." To be cast out of God's Presence. To be sent into the Outer Darkness, full of the Evil Ones! "O Jessy!" he cried, "such a doom would turn a living man into clay!"

It was of this awful possibility he was thinking as he walked to the Church of the Disciples. Two or three of the deacons were standing in the vestibule, and they looked at him and then at each other with a pleased expression.

"We rejoice to see you, sir, looking so well," said one. "The church is full, sir, and, if our clock is correct, there is but five minutes to service time."

He had five minutes yet, in the which he could draw back or postpone his intention—or—or—then his dream came to his remembrance, and he put all hesitation out of the question. With a thoughtful gravity he walked down the aisle, ascended the pulpit stairs, and stood in his place before the people. And they watched him with a sigh of content and pleasure. They had often seen in his eyes that far-away gaze of one who looks past the visible and sees time and eternity as the old prophets saw them.

They expected from this sign a sermon which would take them for an hour "to the Land which is very far off."

He stood silently facing his congregation, for even at this last minute there came to his soul a doubtful whisper, "The position is yet yours. You can delay any explanation a week—or even two. You had better do so." He trembled under the strain of this instant decision. But the whole congregation were rustling their hymn books and the precentor was taking his desk. Then in a dear, vibrant voice he said:

"We shall sing no hymn this morning. We shall make no prayer. I am here to bid you farewell. You will see my face no more."

There was an indescribable movement throughout the building, but nothing articulate, and he quietly continued: "I have ceased to believe in the divinity and the inspiration of the Bible. It is not any longer to me the Word of God. It has nothing to say to me, either of Time or Eternity. Its pages are blank. I might have gone away from you without any explanation. I was tempted to do so, but we have been twenty years together, and I desired to give you my last words." There was no response from the cold, voiceless crowd, but he felt their antagonism to be more palpable than that of either scornful looks or reproachful words. With eloquent anger he described the cynical complaisance with which the very existence of God and the inspiration of the Bible were now challenged and discussed. "There is boundless danger in all such discussions," he cried. "As long as we are loving and simple-minded we judge the Bible by the heart and not by the intellect. And of such are the Kingdom of Heaven." Then, as he spoke, the *Word* became *Flesh* and prevailed like a message from another world. Many were the hard words he gave them, and, if he had never before spoken the whole truth, he did so at this last hour—not of any settled purpose—but because it was the last hour, and he wanted them to see through his sight "the dead, small and great, standing before God for the judgment to come."

At this point the church was no longer either cold or voiceless, it felt rather as if it were on fire. The people trembled and prayed and wept as he spoke, and Ian Macrae was a man they had never before seen. His tall, grave figure radiated a kind of awe, his voice rang out like a command. The keen spiritual life within lit up his pale, striking face, and in his eyes there was a strange glory—they shone like windows in a setting sun.

The intensity of feeling had been so great that there was in about fifteen minutes an inevitable pause. Then he looked round, and continued:

"Listen to me a few moments, while I illustrate what I have said by my own experience. A few months ago the Bible lay in every fold of my consciousness. Now it has nothing to say to me, and it is impossible to describe the loneliness and grief that fills my empty heart. For the God of my Bible has left me. All my life I had trusted to whatever God said in His Word. God had said it, and I knew that God would keep His Word. Then I was tempted by the devil—no, by the gift of one

thousand pounds, to examine my Father's Word—to prove, and to test, and to try it, by the suppositions and ideas of some small German, French, English—and Scotch, so-called philosophers. And I was too small for the intellectual dragon I went out to slay. All of them wounded me in some way, and my God left me. I deserved it. I have lost my place among the sons of God. With my own hand I crossed out my name from the list of those who serve His altar. In the honored halls of St. Andrews they will think it kind to forget Ian Macrae.

"I am now bidding farewell—bidding farewell forever—to you, and not only to you, but to all the innocent pleasures and happy labors of the past. For me there is no birthday of Christ—no farewell supper in the upper chamber—no flowery Easter morning. I dare not even think of that sacred ghost story in the garden, for, if the stone was not rolled away from the grave of Christ, it lies on every grave that has been dug since the creation. And if there is no resurrection of the body—there is no Life Eternal—*there is no God!*"

His voice had sunk at the last few words, but it was poignantly audible. A long, shuddering wail filled the church, and the women's cries and the men's mutterings and movements were sharply distinct. Then the Senior Elder looked expressively at the precentor, and he instantly raised the hymn known to every church-going Scot:

"O God of Bethel, by whose hand  
Thy people still are fed,  
Who through this weary wilderness  
Hast all our fathers led."

The first line was lifted heartily by the congregation; they evidently felt it to be a proclamation of their Faith, but the melody quickly began to scatter and cease, and before the first four lines were sung it had practically ceased. Everyone, with movements of shock or sorrow, was watching the Minister, who was slowly removing from his shoulders the vestment of his office. In a few moments he had laid it slowly and carefully over the front of the pulpit. Then he turned to the stairs, and he remembered his dream and was afraid of them. What if there should be only *one* step to the floor below? The descent seemed steep and dark. He kept his hand on the railing of the balusters, and the cries of hysterical women and movements and mutterings of angry men filled his ears. It was growing dark. He felt that he was losing consciousness. Then a large, strong hand was stretched up to him, and, grasping it gratefully, he reached the ground in safety. And when he looked into his helper's face he said with wonder, "Uncle! You?"



**"The descent seemed steep and dark"**

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"Just me, laddie. Keep your heart and head up. Come what will, you've done what's right. Put your arm through mine. We will take this walk together."

So arm in arm down the long aisle they went, and the Major said afterward, "It was a worse walk than any down a red lane on a battlefield." The women mostly covered their faces and wept. Many of the men were standing up, angry and offensive in word and manner, but sure that their attitude was well pleasing to God and to the Kirk He loved. The Major's carriage was standing at the curbstone, and, without delay, yet also without hurry, they took it and went together to Dr. Macrae's home. Being Sunday morning, the streets were nearly empty, and the drive, as became the day, was slow and silent. But Ian's hand was clasped in his uncle's hand, and words were not necessary.

Mrs. Caird was at the open door to meet them. "I heard the clatter of the Major's horses; they clatter louder than any other in Glasgow—but what are you here for? Who's preaching this morning? Ian, are you ill? Major, what is it?"

"Wait a while, my dear lady. Ian wishes to be alone, and I am going to take lunch with you. Then I will tell you all that Ian has done. I am going to give to-morrow to Ian and his affairs, so he will not require to worry himself either about the Kirk or the market place."

"I wish I had been present," answered Mrs. Caird. "I wish I had! I think I also would have had a few words to say—or at least a few questions to ask."

"I cannot understand Ian taking such a noticeable farewell. It would have been more like him to have said nothing to anyone, just resigned without reason or right about it. But doubtless he had a reason."

"He had. Two nights ago he had a dream."

"Never! Ian never dreams."

"He dreamt last Friday morning just at or before the streak of dawn. Listen!"

Then in an awed and whispering voice she related Ian's dream. The Major, who was naturally a psychic man and a great dreamer, listened with intense interest, but did not at once make any comment. After a short reflection, however, he answered with an air of complacent gratitude:

"God's dealings with the Macraes have ever been close and personal. Plenty of preachers are no doubt preaching this day what they do not believe, but they have not been shown and warned like Ian. I think his dream was a great honor and favor."

"You Macraes have a wonderful way of appropriating God. I dare say a great many ministers have been warned and advised as well as Ian."

"No, Jessy, they have not. If they had been warned as Ian was warned, they would have done exactly as Ian has done. Dreams are strange things. You cannot help noticing them—you cannot help being led by them. I wonder why."

"Because dreams belong to the Spiritual World, and humanity has an instinctive belief in this Spiritual World. You do not have to teach men and women to dream. A true dreamer has the gift in childhood as perfectly as in old age. There is no age, no race, no class, no circumstances free from dreams. God is everywhere and knows everything, and He speaks to His children in dreams and by the oracles that lurk in darkness."

"In my own life, Mrs. Caird, they have often read the future. How do they do it?"

"How can we tell what subtle lines are between Spirit and Spirit? A century ago nobody knew how messages could be sent through the air—sent all over the world. We had not then discovered the medium nor the method. In another century—or less—we may discover the medium and method of communication between this world and the other."

"Do you think some houses are more easily visited by dreams than others?"

"Yes, and for many reasons, but they cannot be prevented from entering any place to which they are sent. I was not a week at Cramer before I was aware

'of Dreams upon the wall,  
And visions passing up the shadowy stair and through the vacant hall.'"

"I am glad you told me of Ian's dream. I understand him better now."

"And like him better?"

"Yes, but I have always loved Ian above all others."

"Then be patient with him now. It is hard for mortals to live when their moments are filled with eternity."

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## CHAPTER XI

### LOVE IS THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW



"Then, as the veil is rent in twain,  
From unremembered places where they lay  
Dead thoughts, dead words arise and live again,  
The clouded eyes can see, the lips can pray.  
A purer light dawns on the night of pain,  
And, on the morrow, 'tis the Sabbath day."

The love of God, which passeth all understanding.

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For a few days Dr. Macrae was seen frequently about the streets of Glasgow. Some bowed to him, some passed by on the other side. He was also generally accompanied by Major Macrae or by a certain well-known lawyer, neither of them men partial to greetings in the market place or conversations at the street corners. So in a manner he was protected by his companions and his preoccupation. In his home all knew that he was going away, but no one named the circumstance to him. It was not an easy thing to talk to Macrae on subjects he did not wish named.

Indeed, it was four days after his public resignation from the ministry before the Church of the Disciples ventured to make any movement signifying their acceptance of his withdrawal. Then a little company of church officials called on him to exchange some necessary papers and pay the salary which was due. Thomas Reid's name was among those of the visitors, and for a moment Ian resolved not to meet them. But it was Jessie Caird who brought him their request, and she looked so persuasively at Ian that he answered:

"Very well, Jessy, if you think so, send them in here."

When the little band entered his study his heart melted at the sight of these old associates of his dead life. They had honored and loved him for many years, and his miserable state was not their fault. Only Elder Reid had ever offended, and he had always regretted the trouble and been glad when it was removed. So Ian looked at them with his heart in his eyes, and they looked at him and could not utter a word.

For this man was not their long-beloved Minister. He was even outwardly so changed they could not for a few moments accept him. That very day Ian had taken off his "blacks" forever. The long black broadcloth coat and vest and the snow-white band around his throat had been replaced by a very handsome suit of dark tweed, such as they were themselves wearing. And this change in his dress—so totally unexpected—moved them beyond all reason. They looked at him in silence, and their hearts and eyes were full of unshed tears.

They had seated themselves on the long sofa, and Macrae rose and went to them: "You have come to bid me farewell," he said, "and I am glad to see you—you have been brothers to me—it breaks my heart to part with you—and all you represent—but I must go. I know not where—nor yet what may befall me, but if I die I shall die seeking the God I have loved—and—lost."

As he spoke he advanced to the man nearest him and held out his hand, and it was taken with great apparent love and emotion. An older man bent his head over it—was it not the kindly, gracious hand that had so often broken to him the Bread of Life? Thomas Reid was the last of the company. He looked into Macrae's face with brimming eyes, and when he took Ian's offered hand a great tear dropped upon the clasping fingers. Both men saw it, and Macrae said with a sad smile:

"That washes all unkindness out, Elder," and with sobbing words Reid answered: "It does, sir. It does. O Minister, is it not possible for you to unsay the words you said last Sabbath Day?"

"No."

"The Lord is merciful to His elect."

"I have denied the Lord, and He has forsaken me."

"He cannot forsake those whom He has chosen. You have lived a good life."

"I have not. I have run after strange gods. I have looked His Word in the face and disobeyed it. I have put scientific and philosophical religion in the place of Christ's religion, and my Bible, once full of comfort, has nothing to say to me."

"Well, then, sir, you know who is the mediator between God and man."

"Elder, if there is a God, I want to find Him."

"Then seek Him, sir."

"I am seeking Him as those who seek for life and life eternal. Through the world I will seek Him. To the last breath of this life I will call upon—perhaps—if there is a God—He may hear me."

Blind with feeling, the men went away so quietly that Mrs. Caird threw down her work and said impatiently: "There! He has sent them off without a word. How could he do it? Oh, but Scots are hard-baked men. Even those proud English would have had a 'God speed' to bless the parting, and I—"

Then Ian entered, and he said cheerfully: "We had a pleasant parting, Jessy. I am glad of it. I would have been sorry to have missed it."

"What did you say to them?"

"What I said last Sabbath—that I was going to seek Him whom my soul loveth, even if I died in the search."

"There is no 'if' in such a search. God is not a 'highly probable' God. He is a fact. He is nearer to you than breathing, closer than hands and feet. Even a pagan knew that much, Ian; all that is wanted is to become conscious of the *nearness of God*, and to seek God with all your heart and all your soul, and you will find Him. Not perhaps! You *will* find Him." And Ian was silent and troubled, and went away.

Then Jessy took her knitting again, and, as she lifted the dropped stitches, said slowly and sorrowfully: "Ah me! How many half-saved souls must come back again to learn the lesson they should have learned in this life. God may well be merciful to sinners, for they know not what they do."

On Saturday morning he went very quietly away. He had done all that could be done for the happiness of his family, and the situation had been tranquilly accepted by them. There was no haste, no irritating questions or advices, and, as soon as he was out of sight, everyone went back to the work occupying them. Yet the man they had watched away was near and dear to them, and full of a sorrow so great they hardly understood it.

He was bound for the Shetlands, because he believed he would find in their simple Kirks the height, and depth, and purity of Calvinism. But he found nothing peculiar to these strong, silent fishers. They had generally an inflexible faith in their own election, and in the ordering of their lives by a God who knew "neither variableness nor shadow of turning." They went fearlessly out on any sea a boat could live in, because, if it was not their appointed hour of death, "water could not drown them"; and in all other matters they approved of John Calvin's plan of sin and retribution, and stuck to it like grim death.

Yet he spent the whole summer in Shetland, and winter was threatening to shut in the lonely islands when he saw one morning an unusual craft fighting her way into harbor. She was a strong, handsome boat, a perfect model of what a fine fishing-smack should be, and she was flying a blue ribbon from her masthead. Evidently she was one of the mission ships serving the Deep-Sea Fishermen. Ian was instantly much interested, and soon fell into conversation with one of her surgeons, who took him on board and who talked to him all day of this great floating city of the fishing fleets—a city whose streets were made of tossing ships—a city without a woman in it—a city whose strange, winding lanes of habitations ceaselessly wander over the lonely, stormy miles of the black North Sea—a city even then of more than forty thousand inhabitants.

"And what of the men in this floating city?" asked Ian.

"They are men indeed! Speaking physically, they are the flower of our race. They have muscles like steel, their eyes are steady, their feet sure. The sight of the work they do strikes terror in the heart of one not used to it. When the call comes for the great net to be hauled they hurry, half-asleep, on deck, very often to face a roaring icy wind, lashing sleet or blinding snow. They tramp round the capstan and tug and strain with dogged persistence until the huge beam of the trawl comes up. Then, often in the dark, they grope about till they mechanically coil the nets and begin the gruesome work of sorting and packing fish, with but fitful gleams of light."

"What a dreadful life!" exclaimed Ian.

"And when the haul is over there is no bath, no change of clothes, no warmth for the men. They plunge into their reeking dog-hole of a cabin, and in their sodden clothes sleep until the next call sends them on deck with their clothes steaming.

"But you see, sir," he continued, "we are beginning to send mission ships and hospital ships among the fleets, and the men do not have—when they break or fracture a limb, or in other ways injure themselves—to be tossed from ship to ship until, perhaps after three or four days, they come to a place where they can be attended to."

"And are you improving these conditions in every way?" asked Ian.

"Yes, indeed, very rapidly."

"I should like to go with you."

"No. You would soon be wretched. You could not bear to see the smacksmen at their work. It makes me shiver to think of it. Two days ago I attended to a man who had shattered three fingers and divided a tendon, and who was working out his time in pain that would have been unbearable to me or to you. Our hospital ships, when we have builded plenty of them, will alter such things. But, sir, if you do not want to die of heartache, keep out of the Deep-Sea Fishing Fleet. No weakling could stand it—he could not live a month in it."

Ian, however, could not be discouraged. He remained anxious to see the fleet fisheries at close quarters, and when a boat, urged by four strong rowers, came that afternoon for the surgeon, Ian pleaded to accompany him. "I can help you, Doctor," he said. "I know a little about surgery." So Ian prevailed, and in a few minutes was with the surgeon on his way to the injured man. They

found him lying in a lump on the deck, under his head a coil of ropes. The skipper stood at his side, making no pretense to hide his grief. "It's Adam Bork, Doctor," he said, "the best sailor in the fleet, *my old mate*. Doctor, do something for him."

The Doctor looked at the man, then at the skipper. "There is not a hope," he answered. "He is dying now."

The man heard and understood, he looked at the skipper and the skipper bent to his face. Something was asked, something was promised, and the two men, with one long farewell look, parted forever.

The Doctor soon found other patients, and he told Ian to watch by the dying sailor and to give him spoonfuls of cold water as long as he could take them.

"Is that all that can be done?" inquired Ian.

"I will ask him," and he said, "Adam, you are in mortal pain—the pains of death—shall I give you something to ease them?"

"What can you give me?"

"Laudanum."

"No. I won't go to God drunk."

"You are right, Bork. Good-bye."

About dawning the dying man looked at Ian with such a piteous entreaty in his pale blue eyes that Ian felt he must, if possible, grant whatever he desired. Very slowly and distinctly he asked, "What—do—you—want—me—to—do?" and the answer came, as if from another world, muffled and far off, but thrilled with such an agonizing intensity that it struck Ian as if it was a physical blow,

"*Pray for me!*"

Ian knelt down. He tried to pray, but he could not. With almost superhuman efforts he tried to pray, not for himself, but for this poor sailor sinking and dying in that dark place, struggling, forsaken, alone, but he could not. Again the dying man whispered, "*Pray!*" and his eyes were full of reproach, and the look in them almost broke Ian's heart. The next moment he was gone.

It was against all Ian's spiritual feelings to pray for the dead, but in after years he prayed often and sincerely, "for the repose of the soul of Adam Bork." And why not? God was still in His Universe, Adam was therefore somewhere in God's presence. It may even be that prayer prevails there more easily than here. Creeds may say what they like, the heart of humanity prays for its beloved dead as naturally as it prays for its beloved absent.

As soon as possible Ian was put on shore, and a week afterward he found himself in his uncle's home. He had gone first to Bath Street, but the house there was closed and empty. There were placards in the windows offering it for sale or rent, and the windows themselves, always so spotless, were now black with smoke and dust. It was a cold day and had a sharp promise of winter in its flurries of north wind and little showers of icy rain with them. All was desolation. Ian's first thoughts were of an angry, injured nature. The empty house told its own story. Marion was married, Donald in California, and Jessy had doubtless returned to her own home in the Border country. "No one cared about him, etc.," and when people get into this selfish mood they never ask themselves whether they are reasoning on just or unjust premises.

So Ian went to Blytheswood Square, and found his uncle cheerfully eating a good dinner. He was delighted at his nephew's return. "Laddie! Laddie!" he cried joyfully, "you are a sight to cure sore eyes. I was just thinking of you; when did you touch Glasgow?"

"An hour ago. I went to Bath Street, and found the house empty."

"Just so. All gone to bonnier and better homes. At least they think so, and we must even bear the same hope. Where have you been?"

"In the Shetlands. I found nothing to help me there. The last week I spent with the North Sea Fishing Fleet."

"Did you? I am delighted. That is where all my spare cash goes. That is the reason I do not give Elder Reid a big sum for his Foreign Mission Fund. I do not like Hindoos and Chinamen, and they have a religion of their own quite good enough for them. But oh! Ian, those big, brave fellows, working like giants and suffering beyond ease or help, they are our kin—leal, brave Scots, who would die for Scotland's right, or Scotland's faith, any hour it was necessary. It was only yesterday Reid stopped me on the street and asked me for a subscription for the Chinese Missions."

"What did you say?"

"I did not heed him. I buttoned up my coat and set my eyes far off to the river side."

"You did right."

"It stands to reason that Scotchmen ought to look after their own first."

"I suppose I am quite forgotten. I have had no letters. I do not know whether anything has happened or not."

"You left no address. You wrote to no one. Yes, to me you sent one letter, full to its edges with uncertainties. You must remember Marion is married and greatly taken up with her husband. You never answered Donald's letter, and the lad, of course, takes it for granted that his silence was what you wished. Ian, you have tried wandering, and there is no peace or profit in it. Now, then, if you cannot pray, you can work; if you can't love God, you can love your fellow creatures. Dr. James Lindsey was here last week, and I spoke to him about you. When you were a stripling you were all for surgery, and Dr. James thinks you will yet make a fine surgeon. You are to live with him, and he was delighted at the very thought of your company. It is the great opportunity left you, and I hope you see all its possibilities and will accept them."

Ian was satisfied at the prospect. It was quite true that even in boyhood he had had a craving for the surgical profession, and the arrangements made for him by the two elder gentlemen were so homely and generous, and so full of kind consideration, that he was greatly moved by their unselfishness. In a few days he went to London, and was met at the train by Dr. Lindsey. Ian was not ignorant of him. He had seen him at his uncle's house several times, and he knew that the Major and Dr. James had been friends since ever they were barefooted laddies, fishing in the mountain streams together.

Neither was Lindsey ignorant of Ian. He had heard him preach, and he knew something of the soul struggle through which he was passing. Indeed, he had his own plans for relieving this spiritual misery, and, as soon, therefore, as Ian reached London, he found all his days filled with study and labor. But his surroundings were homelike and pleasant, and the men were intellectually well matched.

Now, the road downward is easy and rapidly taken, and Ian had managed to slip from the pinnacle of ministerial fame into silence and forgetfulness in about one year, but it took him a ten years' climb to win his way to about the same pitch of public favor in his new vocation. But of this ten years I shall have little to say. The road upward is a climb to the very top, and all men find it so, but Ian enjoyed the study and the practical work of his profession and became extraordinarily skillful in it.

Their lives were by no means dull or monotonous. Truly the day was given up to business, but they usually dined together at seven, and afterward went to the opera or theater, or perhaps to a reception at some house where they were familiar and honored guests. Or, if they wished to stay at their own fireside, they were the best of good company for each other. Nothing that touched man's soul or body came amiss for their discussion, and if Ian was the more widely and generally educated, Dr. Lindsey had the keener spiritual instinct, and his soul often ventured where Ian's followed only with flagging and uncertain wings. In the summer they made short trips to the Continent or they went to Glasgow, and, being joined there by the Major, sailed north to the Macrae country, and then home by Cromarty and Fife.

When Ian had been in London ten years Dr. Lindsey began to talk of a rather longer holiday than usual. "But first," he added, "here is a letter from Squire Airey, and he wants either you or me to run up to Airey Hall to examine his fractured arm. It is all right, I know, but he is frightened and impatient, and you might go as far as Furness and make him comfortable."

"I should like to go. I have long wanted to see Windermere, and I could return that way."

With his patient at Airey Hall Ian stayed two days, and on the third morning the Squire said: "Doctor, I will give you a good mount, and you can ride as far as Ambleside. You will go through a lovely land. Leave the horse at the Salutation Inn in Ambleside when you take the train. I will send a groom for it."

So Ian took the Squire's offer, for it was a lovely day in August, and everything seemed to shimmer and glow through a soft golden haze. The tender, peaceful scenes on all sides induced in him a little mood of pathos or regret. He could not help it. He had no particular reason for it; he appeared, indeed, to be in a very enviable condition. He was yet exceedingly handsome, for it takes a Scotchman fifty years to clothe his big frame, to round off the corners and soften the large features, and to make out of a gigantic block of bone and sinew a handsome, finely modeled man. He had, as far as business went, made himself twice over. He was the welcome friend and guest of the greatest scientists and physicians, and his short visits to the most exclusive drawing-rooms were regarded as great favors. Was he not happy, then? No. Regret, like a slant shadow, darkened all his sunshine, and the want of personal love left his life poor and thin on its most vital side.

Nor could he ever forget that solemnly joyful night following the day of his admission to the ministry. Like the knights of old, he had spent the midnight hours in the dark, still Kirk of Macrae, and the promises he then made and the secret, sacred joys of his espousal to the Holy Office, had been graven on his memory by a pen which no eraser can touch. Whenever he was long alone this memory shone out in every detail, and he said once, in a passion of anger at himself: "If I had been a soldier of the Queen, they would have drummed me out of the ranks. I would have deserved it—yes, I would!"

This morning the unwelcome memory returned and returned, and, in order to be rid of it, he began to pity himself for the loneliness of his life and the misfortune which had attended all his affections.

"There was old Lord Cramer, his apparent kindness was all a plot to get a little posthumous fame out of my intellect. His one thousand pounds was a miserable price for the work he proposed for me, and he tried to pass it off as a kindness. I hate the man, and I hate myself for being fooled by him. Lady Cramer—nay, I will let her go—another has judged her now. Donald, whom I idolized, nearly broke my heart, gave a son's love to a stranger, married a Spaniard and a Roman Catholic, and has not noticed me for years. I dare say Donald and that Scotchman have had many a laugh over my leaving the ministry. Jessy went to them, and she could tell them every circumstance of the event. And, though Marion writes whiles, and has called her son after me, I never see her unless she happens to be at Uncle Hector's when I go to see him. And, of course, I cannot call at Lord Cramer's house, not even to see my daughter. Was any man ever so undeservedly deserted as I am?"

He was slowly passing through a little village as he troubled his heart with these thoughts. And, as he looked at the small dark cottages wanting the usual gardens of flowers, he said to himself, "It is a mining village; there must be many of them in this locality;" and so was returning to his unprofitable musing when a tremendous explosion occurred, and the women from every cottage ran crying to the pit mouth. Ian also hastened there, and, when he said he was a physician, was taken down in the first cage. It stopped at an upper gallery and the men ran backward into the mine. Ian thought he had suddenly awakened from life and found himself in hell. He heard only cries and groans and shouts, and the running of men and their frantic calling of names. And he was spellbound at the first moment by the sight of a boy about nine years old, lying in a narrow cut of the coal, with a great block of coal across his body. His father stood beside him, his face full of unspeakable love and pity, for the mute anguish of the child was terrible. But, ere he could speak to them, there was a frenzied rush of men crying, "Fire! Fire! After-damp!" For just one minute they stood at the cut where the child lay, and called, "For God's sake, Davie, come, come, come!" and Davie shook his head slightly, and answered,

*"Nay, I'll stay with the lad."*

And when Ian heard these words, they smote him like a sword, and he cried out: "*I have seen God's love! This hour I have seen God's love*—like as a father pitieth his children—even unto death—so God pities and loves. My God, love me! Teach me how to love! I am thy faithless son, Ian; forgive me and love me!"

He was in an ecstasy, and, even as he prayed, a still, small voice ran, like a swift arrow of flame, through all the black galleries of the mine—a voice like the noise of many waters, but sweet as the music of heaven, and it spoke but one word:

*"Ian!"*

Through all that earthly hell, filled with death and horror of suffering, above the crying of the men, above the screams of the wounded, the voices of fear and agony, this wonderful voice passed along, swift as the lightning, yet full of the divinest melody.

These events so marvelous to Ian had not occupied more than a moment or two of time. Then there was another rush of men with the assurance that it would be the last. They swept Ian with them, but Davie, still standing by his child, just shook his head and repeated his decision, "*Nay, I'll stay with the lad*"; and the crowd, with fire behind them, struggled to the cage and were drawn up to the sunshine.

At the pit mouth Ian met the rescue company of the pit and the physicians, and he untied his horse and rode away into the woods and hills. He was weeping unconsciously, washing every word he uttered with tears of repentance and love.

"Oh, it is wonderful!" he cried. "*Wonderful! Wonderful!* Out of all the millions of men in this world, *God knew my name*. He knew *where I was*. He *called me by my name*. Oh, miracle of love!"

All the way to Ambleside he rode slowly. He was in a transport of love and joy—had he not been veritably taken by God's love "out of hell"? He was thrilled with wonder, and he would make no haste. He bent his soul to the heavenly influences which had made the last few hours forever memorable. So his prayers grew sweeter and calmer. They had in them the voices of the night wind, the awe of the stars, and the rustle of unseen wings. And, just as he was entering Ambleside, his Bible took part in his happiness and whispered to his heart a verse he had read hundreds of times, but which at this hour seemed to have been written specially for him.

"Fear thou not. I have redeemed thee. I have called thee by thy name. Thou art mine."—Isaiah 43:1.

He knew then what he was to do.

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## CHAPTER XII

### AFTERWARD

"Christ is God's realized idea of perfected humanity."

"Think, when our Soul understands  
The Great Word which makes all things new,  
When earth breaks up and heaven expands,  
How will the change strike me and you  
In the house not made with hands?"

"Pouring Heaven into this shut House of Life!"

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According to a literary scripture, my story should end here. I have satisfied my proposition—the man who lost God has found Him; therefore, to say more is to pass my climax and break a very prominent canon of criticism. But I am sure that there are many who have followed the struggle of Ian Macrae into the Second Birth who will desire to know what the New Man did with his New Life; and I think it better to grant a good wish than to keep a literary law.

In that blessed night, full of the presence of God, which Ian had spent on the hills surrounding Ambleside, he had looked steadily and hopefully into the future, and clearly understood what he must do. So he never thought of returning to London, but early in the morning took a train to Glasgow. In the place where he had doubted and denied God he must show Him forth publicly as the Father and Lover of Souls, the God gracious and long-suffering, full of mercy and truth. He was anxiously longing to begin this work; he grudged the hours in which he had to be silent, and was full of a buoyant joyfulness so sincere and so radiant that people looked into his face and involuntarily smiled.

He reached Glasgow before the noon hour, and as soon as he was inside his uncle's house he called him in resounding tones, full of eager, wistful excitement. And the Major, who was in his private office, recognized the voice and went hastily to meet his nephew.

"Why, Ian, Ian! What is the matter?" he cried. "Whatever has come to you? You look—you speak like a different man!"

"Uncle! *Brother of my father!* I have found what I lost! I have found Him whom my soul loveth!" Then they sat down, and Ian related the wonderful story of the last wonderful twenty-four hours; and the old man listened with a joy past utterance. His face radiated wonder and love, his blue eyes shone through reverential tears, unconsciously his head and hands were uplifted, and his lips whispered the prayer of thanksgiving that was in his heart.

"It is a heavenly story, Ian," he said, "and the greatest wonder is this—though numberless souls have such experiences, every one has its own solemnly distinct personality. And their number never makes them common. They are always wonderful. They are never doubted, and they never fail. But, Ian, no one that has been 'called by name' can ever forget the voice that called him; it haunts and hallows life forevermore. Now, then, what are you going to do?"

"I am going to preach the Love of God!—the patient, everlasting Love of God! O Uncle, can I ever forget the love in that father's face as he stood waiting to die with his child? I was not told, I did not read of it, I *saw* the love of God in that father's face, and knew in that moment how God so loved the world that He gave His Son for its salvation. Now, through all the days of my life, I am going to preach the Love of God."

"That is right. You shall have a church here—in Glasgow."

"Somewhere among the teeming habitations of the poor."

"No. The rich need the gospel you have to preach more than the poor do. We will build among the terraced crescents, where the rich dwell. And we will build of good gray granite, and finish it with the best of everything—and the pulpit will be yours."

"Dear Uncle, no pulpit! I could not go into one again. I have two memories of a pulpit. I wish to forget them. But there is something we have not spoken of that I desire greatly to have in connection with my church. I mean a dispensary. Christ healed the body as well as the soul; for it is not a soul, nor is it a body we wish to train upward—it is a *Man*, and we ought not to divide them."

So they talked over the dispensary with perfect accord, all the time the table was being laid for dinner and the meal eaten. Nothing interfered with this interest. It was quite a fresh one to the Major, and he was greatly delighted with the idea. Indeed, it was the old soldier who first proposed a small surgery connected with the dispensary. "When I was at the wars," he said, "I saw many a poor man suffering for want of the knife and a bandage. We must have a little surgery, Ian." And Ian joyfully acceded to the proposition.

"It will be a big increase in your work, Ian, but——"

"O Uncle, I am here to work—not to study and dream. I must work, I must preach; I must help the sick and sorrowful. How soon can the church be ready?"

"I do not know exactly, but we will build the surgery and dispensary as soon as we have got the proper location. They will give you many good opportunities while the church is building. And I hope you have not forgotten duties kin and kindred to yourself. They cannot be overlooked, Ian."

"I will overlook none of them, Uncle. I have been a great sinner in this respect."

"For instance, Marion has never weaned herself from you. She talks of you constantly when she comes here, and we have had some tearful hours about your silence and neglect."

"I will atone for them as soon as may be. I have often been sorry that I did not stay and see her marriage."

"It was a grand affair. Nothing like it was ever seen in Glasgow before or since. There were the Bishop and two clergymen to perform the ceremony and a notable company to see that it was properly done. Among this company were three officers from the Household troop, and, if I had the words, I would tell you about their splendid uniforms and stars and ribbons of honor. And there was Lochiel, in full Highland costume, looking more like some old god than a man—and McAllister and McLeod and Moray, and half a dozen more in all their varieties of kilts and plaids and philabegs; velvet vests and gold buttons, and eagle feathers in their Glengary caps. They were a splendid and picturesque background for the lovely bride, clothed in white from head to foot and looking like an angel. McAllister had sent a basket of white heather for bridal bouquets, and every Highlander there wore a spray of it in his vest or cap. I had a stem or two at my own breast—and Marion's veil was crowned with a wreath of the lovely flowers."

"After the marriage, where did they go?"

"First of all, they came here, to my house—and we had a bridal breakfast that none will forget. Lord Glasgow toasted the bride, and the Provost of the City made answer for her. His speech was well enough, but a little o'er long—considering the occasion."

"And then?"

"They went to all the capital cities of Europe. It was a wonderful honeymoon trip. They might have been royalties themselves, they were that nobly entertained. Well, well! Marion Macrae was a bonnie bride, and she is far bonnier and better now than she was then—the best of mothers, the best of wives, a noble woman every way. She has a son called 'Ian,' after you, and two little girls who wear the names of Agnes and Jessy—you know—"

"Yes—I know. How could I ever forget?"

"And there is poor Donald. You are not to slight Donald. You will write to him, Ian?"

"I will *go* to him. I can never be quite satisfied until I have seen Donald. I was cruel and selfish then, but I loved him. I love him now better than ever. He sits in the center of my heart. I must go as soon as may be to California."

"You are right. We will buy our land and make our estimates, and set the men to work. Then you can go and kiss your banished son."

"I am afraid I cannot bring him home again."

"Would you think of suchlike foolishness? God gave him his wife and his portion out there. But I will tell you what you can do—you can bring home Mrs. Caird. In her last letter to Marion she said she was weary of golden oranges and perpetual sunshine; and she hoped God would let her come hame to her ain countrie before she died. She was fairly sick for the gray skies and green braes of Scotland, and, as for the rain, it was only gloom upon gleam, and gleam upon gloom—very comfortable weather upon the whole. I was sorry for the pleasant little woman. You can bring her back. See that you do so. For I am counting on you living with me, Ian. Why should we part? I am growing old, and need your love and company; and I want to be your right hand in the Godlike work before you."

"My dear Uncle, you shall have all your will. I desire nothing better than to share your love and your home, and have your constant counsel and help."

"Then bring back Mrs. Caird. She will send away all the wasteful, lazy, dirty men bodies round the house, and hire in their place tidy, busy young lasses. Then, Ian, I can have a dream of a home for my old age. No matter what her 'will and want,' give her everything she asks—only bring her back."

"I will do so, Uncle—if possible."

"Possible or not—bring her back."

There was no pause in their conversation until the long summer twilight filled the quiet square. Then they suddenly remembered Doctor James Lindsey and the London duties that might be hard to relinquish, and thus delay the work which they so eagerly willed to do. So Ian spent the evening in writing to his friend, while the Major lost himself the while in financial calculations about the great project.

Ian had not one doubt of his friend's sympathy. "I know James Lindsey, Uncle," he said with an air of happy confidence; "he will count God's claim long before his own. And he will see at once that I have been unconsciously preparing myself for the great work we are planning for eleven years; and, though I have been led by a way I knew not, every step has been taken right."

Then the Major looked into his happy face and said solemnly: "Ian, if you *saw* the love of God shining on that father's face in the awful pit, I see it just as plainly on your countenance. It has

absolutely changed it. Your voice is also different, and your words go singing through my soul. You are a new man. You are a happy man, and I used to think that, of all men, you were the most miserable."

"Uncle, I might well be miserable. The phantoms that peopled my nights must have destroyed life if God had not forbidden it—remorse that came too late—cries uttered to inexorable silence—doubt—anguish—prostration worse than death. I was afraid to look back, equally afraid to look forward; and then last night changed all in the twinkling of an eye. I fell at the feet of the Father of Spirits with a joy past utterance. Troubles of all kinds grew lighter than a grasshopper. I had a rest unspeakable until rapture followed rest, and I cried out, 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee!'" Then the two men involuntarily clasped hands. They had no words fit for that moment. Words would have been a hindrance, not a help.

The next morning Ian was crossing Exchange Place when he saw a man approaching who gave him a thrill of recollection. He hesitated for a moment, and then went quickly forward. His hand was outstretched and his face smiling.

"Richard!" he cried. "I am glad to see you. I am glad to have this opportunity of saying I did you wrong. I was very unkind both to you and to Marion. I am sincerely sorry for the past, will you forgive it now?"

And Lord Cramer clasped the hand offered and answered with hearty gladness: "I cannot forgive it now, sir. I forgave it many years ago. Marion stands between us. We are the best of friends." Then they walked together cheerfully to a hotel and ordered a good lunch, for both English and Scotchmen cannot celebrate any event—whether it concern the heart or the purse—without offering a meat and drink sacrifice for the occasion. During the meal Ian sent loving words to Marion, and promised to be with her on the following day, and thus love and good-will took the place forever of wronged and slighted affection. Then he saw his eldest grandchild, a beautiful boy of ten years old, Ian, the future Lord of Cramer, and his heart went out to the lovable child, as it did also to the bright, seven-year-old Agnes and the pretty baby, Jessy. Three days he spent at Cramer Hall, and saw all the improvements made there—the additions to the Hall, the fine condition of the park and gardens, and the famous and highly profitable oyster beds. So his heart was filled with that mortal love for which it had been aching and perishing.

When he returned to Glasgow he found Dr. Lindsey with his uncle. He had come in answer to Ian's letter, and he was enthusiastic concerning all Ian's intentions and eager to assist in realizing them. "You know, Ian," he said, "we were preparing for a long holiday together when you started for Furness and Ambleside. This is 'the long journey' for which we were unconsciously preparing. I called at the little mining village as I came here——"

"And that father and his boy?" interrupted the Major.

"They died together in the pit. They were laid in one wide grave, and rich and poor, from far and near, came to honor that perfect image of the Divine love. I called on his widow. She was still weeping for 'her man and her lile lad.' He was her first-born, but she has four other children, the youngest a few weeks old. She is very poor. Her neighbors are feeding her."

"But that must stop," cried Ian. "It is my duty and my pleasure. How can I ever pay the debt? I will see to it at once. It is a sin that I have not already done so."

"You are right, Ian," answered the Doctor; "and we may recall now how wonderfully you have been led, and realize that there is a kind of predestination in our life. It was necessary for you to spend ten years in the House of Pain and Suffering and Death; necessary for you to know how to cure the sick and to heal the wounded, in order to prepare you to receive the sacred mystery in that horrible pit, and make you fit for the work you have yet to do. Do you remember how impossible we found it, night after night, to satisfy ourselves as to the course and country our holiday should take? And all the time the journey was being arranged for us. Surely the steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord."

"*Steps*," said the Major. "We may be glad of that word, for it is easy for a man to take just one step to ruin or to death."

The journey to America being determined, Dr. Lindsey went back to London to prepare his business for an absence of three months. Ian was glad of his companionship, and promised to meet him in Liverpool on the 25th of July. There they would take together passage for New York. This plan was fully carried out, but of the voyage, the journeyings and their life in California there is no necessity to write. Possibly most of my readers have crossed the Atlantic, and know far more about California than I do; so that I may well leave any descriptions to their memories or imaginations. It is the humanity of my story with which we have to do.

They had been eagerly looked for at Los Angeles, and were welcomed with unbounded love and respect. Donald and his father drew aside for a moment, but what they said to each other only God knows. There is a divine silence in forgiveness. When Peter first met Christ, after his denial of Him, what did Peter say? What did Christ say? We are not told; but great wrongs can be wiped out in one tender word, though such acts in the drama of life are not translatable. It was different with Macbeth. He greeted his guests with a proud and delightful extravagance.

"You are welcome, '*Men of St. Andrews!*'" he cried; "you are tenfold welcome!" And for the next five weeks he gave himself to entertaining them in every possible way. The pretty Spanish wife



was shy and reticent, but her three sons spoke for her, and Donald was evidently the idol of his house and in all his surroundings prosperous and happy.

Jessy Caird, however, had failed and faded physically more than she ought to have done, so Ian was not slow to take the first opportunity of speaking confidentially to her. She was sitting just within the open door of her bungalow. Her eyes were closed, her work had fallen from her hands, and there was no book of any kind within her reach. Ian wondered at these things. Jessy doing nothing! Jessy without a book! What could be the meaning of it?

She opened her eyes as she heard his approach, and said with a smile, "You are walking like your old self, Ian, but for all that sit down by me."

"That is what I am here for. I want to talk with you, and with you only. My dear sister, you look sick—or very unhappy. Which is it?"

"Ian, I am both sick and unhappy. In the first place, I am heartbroken for my native land. I want to see once more the green, green straths of Scotland—the green straths with a haze of bluebells over them! I want the gray, soft skies and the little silvery showers that blessed both humanity and nature with constant freshness. And O Ian, I want, I want, I want the living tongue of running water! Do you mind that, in all the summers we spent in Arran, we could not go anywhere on the island and lose the happy sound of running water? Do you mind how the waters leaped from rock to rock, and thundered down the craggy glens, and then went singing and gurgling along the roadside? Ian, Ian, take me home! I want to die in my own country!"

"*Die!* Nonsense, Jessy! You must live for others even if you want to die. I need you. You must go back to Scotland and help me. I have told you of the great work my uncle and I are planning. We cannot do without you."

Her face brightened, there was a smile in her eyes, and she looked eagerly at Ian as he continued:

"It would make you heartsick to see that fine house in the Square going to destruction. The Major's heart and head are in the building of the church, and the servant men are neglecting everything beneath their hands."

"It serves him right. The Major was set on having only servant men. Three or four tidy women would have——"

"To be sure. We shall soon get rid of the men when you and I get home."

"What are you meaning, Ian? Speak straight."

"I am going to live with my uncle. He is an old man and needs me."

"Stuff and nonsense! He will never need either you or anybody else. You may need him."

"I need him now, Jessy. He is mainly building the church. His heart and soul are in it. He has given up practically his large business."

"Given up his business! What does the man mean?"

"He is only retaining the charge of three estates until the heirs come of age. He promised to do that, and does not feel it right to break a promise made to the dead."

"Well, then, a man may live decently from three estates."

"Jessy, we have laid out together such a great and good work, but without your help we cannot carry it forward. We must have some good woman to look after our food and our home. We are counting on you, and you must stand by us."

"I will go with you gladly. I will soon put a stop to the wastrie and pilfering going on in the Major's house; and I will take good care of you two feckless, helpless men—but I am your sister, Ian; I must look to my position."

"You are right. You will be mistress. You will stand at my right hand, as you always did; and the Major said you were to have 'your will and want and wish,' whatever it was. Jessy, you are going *home*."

"How soon, Ian?"

"Any mail may bring me word to hurry back to Scotland. I feel that I ought to be there now. Get ready for an early journey."

In less than two weeks the expected letter, urging Ian's early return, came; and Ian and Jessy set their faces Scotlandward the next day; but Dr. Lindsey resolved to stay another month and see more of a country so wonderfully fresh and interesting. Jessy went away very quietly, and it struck Ian she was glad when the parting was over; and she acknowledged that in a certain way she was so.

"I was that feared I would die there," she said, "and I could not keep the little Border graveyard out of my thoughts. My kindred for three hundred years lie there, and I wanted to take my last rest among them." This feeling would be to an American an unthinkable source of anxiety, but to the Scotch man or woman it would be a real and potent promoter of the feeling. For they cherish

the memory of their fathers—good or bad—and there burns alive in them a sense of identity with the dead, even to the twentieth generation. Ian thoroughly understood Jessy's worry and respected her for it.

"You should have written to me, Jessy. A word concerning your fear would have brought me to you at any time. Why did you think of dying? Were you not well treated?"

"I could not have been better treated. I was close to Donald's heart, the children loved me, and Macbeth wanted me to be his wife."

"And Mercedes?"

"Perhaps not so much. She was a wonderfully jealous little woman. She did not like Donald or the children or her father to be long in my company. She did her best to conquer the feeling, but how could she with centuries of Castilian blood in her veins? It was my own fault if I was not happy, but the longing for Scotland was above all other desires. I had too little to do. I wanted some work that was *my* work. No one can be content without it."

"The children are fine boys."

"Yes—do you remember the morning you would not hear of their father going either to the army or navy? You said he was the only Macrae to keep up the name of the family, and forthwith sent him to a desk in Reid's shipping office. You have four grandsons now, three of them Macraes. You see God knew, if you could only have trusted Him. What is the Major's worry now?"

"He has a hankering after a pulpit. I do not want one."

"But will your creed be respectable without a pulpit?"

"I have no creed."

"Ian!"

"Except the commandment that we love God and do unto others as we would like them to do unto us. Love is the fulfilling of the whole law. If this creed does not satisfy you, Jessy——"

"Oh, you know, Ian, I can abandon my creed at any time, but I shall carry my prejudices into eternity."

Thus discussing, in Jessy's various moods, their old religious differences, they came finally to the end of their journey, and found the Major waiting to receive them at the Buchanan Street railway station. He had ordered a feast to honor their arrival, and the men who prepared it—not knowing for whom it was prepared—cooked it badly and served it in slovenly fashion. The next morning they all went away forever, and three clever, active girls reigned in their stead. Then Jessy, the happy-tempered bringer of the best out of the worst, was satisfied; and the Major knew he would have a home to live in, and Ian, always fastidiously fond of order and quiet, was sure his domestic life would fill every necessity of his public work.

This work was progressing in spite of various delays, and at the end of the following year the beautiful building was fully ready for use. It was filled as soon as opened. Doubtless, curiosity had something to do with the crowded services; yet Ian was already much beloved among all classes and conditions of men and women, for the love of God, which filled and influenced his whole life, attracted to him the love of all who met him. Many remembered him as a haughty cleric, full of learning, and not very approachable, even to his own congregation. But this new Ian was always smiling and kindly, ready to cure the wounded and heal the sick and to give with love and sympathy all the consolations that flow from the reality of heavenly things.

The opening of the new church was a great day in Glasgow. There was not even standing room for one more worshiper, and when Ian saw a large contingent from the old Church of the Disciples present he was very happy. And as he looked at them his face shone with love and they saw it as the face of a Man of God. Tender and inspiring was the sermon he preached that day, and one sentence in it went—no one knew how—the length and breadth of Scotland. Yea, before it had been spoken half an hour there came to him testimony that it had begun its mission. For, as he was walking leisurely down Sanchiehall Street, Bailie Muir, an old class-mate at St. Andrews, joined him.

"O man! man!" he cried in an exultant voice, "I bless you for some words you said to-day! I have been longing to hear them, though I knew not until this morning what I wanted."

"And you know now, Bailie?"

"Yes. You said that we came here to *work out* our salvation with fear and trembling. Listen! You said, '*Immortality is an achievement!* It is not a favor, not a gift, not a selection, not a chance; it is something we must work for—something we must win. *Immortality is an achievement!*' Are these words true?"

"They are faithful and true words. Come home with me and we will talk them over."

Thus out of the old paths and into the brighter new ones this great heart led his people. By day or night he knew no weariness in well-doing. His loving kindness was a constant over-flowing of self on others—a heavenly thing, springing from the soul just at that point where the divine image is nearest and clearest.

Do you ask if he is preaching to-day? It is not impossible. Yet my feeling is that by the full employment of a holy life he arrived some years ago at maturity for death. Such a man could not linger too long on the Border Land. Christ himself would speak the *compelle intrare*, "Enter! Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

## THE END

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[1] Among Highlanders the name of the relationship expresses more emotion than the baptismal name.

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