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# ***THE WEB OF TIME***

*By*

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*"The Dawn at Shanty Bay"*

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To  
My Daughter  
ELIZABETH ELLIS KNOX KNOWLES  
whose gentle hands, guided  
from afar, have woven many  
a golden strand into life's  
mysterious web, this book is  
dedicated with unuttered fondness.

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***THE WEB OF TIME***

*THE ASHES ON THE HEARTH*

"No, father's not home yet—go to sleep, dear," and the mother-hand tucked the clothes securely about the two snuggling forms; "don't ask any more, Harvey, or you'll waken Jessie—and go to sleep."

Mrs. Simmons went back to the kitchen, crooning softly to the wakeful baby in her arms. Glancing at the clock, she marked, with an exclamation of surprise, how late it was. "He might be in any minute now," she said to herself as she thrust in another stick for the encouragement of the already steaming kettle. Then she busied herself a few minutes about the table; a brief pause, as if pondering, ended in her moving quickly towards the pantry, emerging a moment later with some little luxury in her hand.

"Poor Ned, this night-work seems so hard—if he's working at all," she thought to herself, "and he'll be cold and tired when he comes in—hush, baby, isn't that your father?" as she laid a finger on the crowing lips.

The footfall came nearer, firm and steady, too—at which the anxious face lighted up; but a moment later it was gone, and silence reigned again. The baby seemed, in some mysterious way, to share the disappointment; in any case, it became suddenly quiet, the big blue eyes gazing up at the mother's. The unfathomed depths, as such depths are prone to do, seemed to start some hidden springs of thought in the woman's mind; for the anxious eyes that peered into them were now suffused with tears, then bright again with maternal fondness as she clasped the infant to her breast.

For she dreaded the home-coming of her husband, even while she longed for it. The greatest of all books assures us that fear is cast out by love—but love may still fear something in the very one it loves above all others; some alien habit, some sin that changes the whole complexion of a soul. And thus was it with the wife who now awaited her husband's coming with a troubled heart.

It had not been ever thus. Far different had it been in the happy days with which her thoughts were busy now as she moved hither and thither, doing what deft and loving hands could do to make all bright and cheery before her husband should arrive. Those vanished days had been happy ones indeed, with nothing to cloud their joy.

When Edward Simmons first crossed her path, she knew that her hour of destiny had come. He was then a journeyman printer—and he was handsome and chivalrous and fascinating; sensitive to the last degree, imperious by nature, but tender in the expression of his love for her. And how rapturously sure of the happiness that lay before them both! Passionate in temper he undoubtedly was—but tideful natures ever are. And he was slower to forgive himself than others.

She had been little more than a girl, a fatherless girl, when first she met Edward Simmons—Ned, as his friends all called him—and in less than a year after their meeting she gave herself to him forever. Then her real life began, she thought; but before a year had passed, it was new-quickened and enriched beyond all of which she had ever dreamed. Her first-born son came to swell the fullness of her joy, and Eden itself broke into flower at his coming. The anguish and the ecstasy of motherhood had come twice again since then—and she marvelled at the new spring of love that each new baby hand smites in the wilderness of life.

But the sky had darkened. When at its very brightest, the clouds had gathered. Steady employment and good wages and careful management had enabled her to garner a little, month by month; womanlike, she was already taking thought of how Harvey should be educated. And just when everything seemed prosperous, that awful trouble had come among the printers—between the masters and the men. Then came strikes and idleness—work by spasmodic starts, followed by new upheavals and deepening bitterness—and Ned had been more with the muttering men than with his Annie and the children.

And—this was so much worse—he had gradually fallen a victim to a sterner foe. A tainted breath at first; later on, thick and confused utterance when he came home at night; by and by, the unsteady gait and the clouded brain—one by one the dread symptoms had become apparent to her. She had known, when she married, that his father had been a drinker; and one or two of her friends had hinted darkly about hereditary appetite—but she had laughed at their fears. Hereditary or not, the passion was upon him—and growing. Lack of work proved no barrier. Little by little, he had prevailed on her to give him of her hard-saved treasure, till the little fund in the post-office savings was seriously reduced.

But there was another feature, darker still. It had changed him so. His whole moral nature

had suffered loss. No wonder the woman's face bore tokens of anxiety as she waited and watched through the long midnight hours; for drink always seemed to clothe her husband with a kind of harshness foreign to his nature, and more than once she had trembled before his glance and shuddered at his words. Against this, even her love seemed powerless to avail; for—and it is often so with the mysterious woman-heart—she seemed but to love him the more devotedly as she felt him drifting out to sea. She could only stretch vain hands towards the cruel billows amid which she could see his face—but the face she saw was ever that of happier days.

Suddenly she started, her heart leaping like a hunted hare as she heard, far-off, clear sounding through the stillness of the night, the footfall she was waiting for. The child's eyes seemed to fasten themselves upon the mother's as if they caught the new light that suddenly gleamed within them; she held her babe close as she went swiftly to the door and slipped out into the night. The silent stars looked down on the poor trembling form as she stood and waited, shivering some—but not with cold—listening for the verdict her ears must be the first to catch.

She had not long to wait; and the verdict would have been plain to any who could have seen her face as she turned a moment later and crept back into the house. The stamp of anguish was upon it; yet, mechanically, the babe's eyes still on hers, she took up the little teapot and poured in the boiling water—the kettle went on with its monotonous melody. She had just time to hurry up and steal a glance at the children; they were asleep, thank God.

The baby turned its eyes towards the door as the shambling feet came up to it and the unsteady hand lifted the latch. The mother pretended to be busied about the table, but the eager eyes stole a quick glance at her husband, darkening with sorrow as they looked. The man threw off his coat as soon as he entered.

"I'm hungry," he said in a thick, unnatural voice.

"I've got your supper all ready, dear," the woman's low voice returned. She tried hard to keep it steady; "and I'll just pour the tea. Are you tired, Ned?"

He did not answer. Staggering towards the table, he began eating greedily, still upon his feet. "To-day's been the devil," he muttered; "I can't eat, I tell you—there's only one thing I want, and I've had too much of that. But I've got to have it."

"You didn't speak to baby, Ned," she said timidly, trying to come closer to him, yet shrinking instinctively; "see how she jumps in my arms—she knows you, Ned."

"I wish she'd never been born," the man said brutally; "it'll only be another hungry mouth—how much have we left in the savings?"

"And she was trying to say 'daddy' to-day—and once I'm sure she did," the mother went on, fearful of his quest and hoping to beguile him thus.

"What's that got to do with it?" he demanded angrily, commanding his words with difficulty. "The strikers had to give in—and we went back to-day. An' the bosses won't take us on again—they've sacked us, damn them, and every man of us has to come home to his hungry kids. How much is left out o' what we've saved?" he repeated, tasting a cup of tea, only to let it fall from his shaking hand so suddenly that it was spilled about the table.

"There's about three hundred, Ned," she said hesitatingly. "We did have nearly five, you know—we've used such a lot of it lately."

"I want some of it," he said gruffly. "I've got to pay into the fund for the men—and anyhow, I want money. Who earned it if it wasn't me?"

"Oh, Ned," she began pleadingly, "please don't—please don't make me, dear. It's all we've got—and it's taken so long to save it; and if times get worse—if you don't get work?"

The pitiful debate was waged a little longer. Suddenly she noticed—but could not understand—a peculiar change that came slowly over his countenance.

"Maybe you're right," he said at last, a leer of cunning on his face. "There ain't goin' to be any quarrellin' between us, is there? We'll see about it to-morrow." His whole tactics changed in a moment, the better to achieve his purpose. "You've always stood by me, Annie, an' you won't go back on me now. Hello, baby," as he tried to snap his limp fingers, coming closer to the two.

The child laughed and held out its arms. The father's feet scraped heavily on the floor as he shuffled towards it. "It knows its dad all right," he said in maudlin merriment; "glad to see its old dad—if he did get fired. Come, baby, come to your old dad," and he reached out both hands to take it.

The mother's terror was written in her eyes. "Oh, don't, Ned—don't, please," she said; "she'll catch cold—I've got her all wrapped up."

"I'll keep the blanket round her," he mumbled; "come to your old dad, baby," his voice rising a little.

But his wife drew back. "Please don't to-night, Ned," she remonstrated; "it'll only excite her more—and I can't get her to sleep," she pleaded evasively.

His heavy eyes flashed a little. "I want that young 'un," he said sullenly, advancing a little; "I ain't goin' to eat her."

The mother retreated farther, her lips white and set, her eyes leaping from the babe's face to its father's. "I can't, Ned," she said; "let us both carry her, dear; come, we'll make a chair of our hands, like we used to do for Harvey—and I'll keep my arm about her, so," and she held out one hand, holding the baby firm with the other.

He struck it down. "Give me that young 'un," he said, his nostrils dilating, his voice shaky and shrill.

She stood like a wild thing at bay. "I won't, Ned, I won't," her voice rang out; "good God, Ned, it isn't safe—go back," she cried, her voice ringing like a trumpet as she held the now terrified infant to her breast, the child rising and falling as her bosom heaved in terror.

His eyes, unsteady now no longer, never left her face as he moved with a strange dexterity nearer and nearer to them both. The woman glanced one moment into the lurking depths, all aflame with the awful light that tenderness and madness combine to give, saw the outstretched hand, felt the fumes outbreathing from the parted lips—and with a low gurgling cry she sprang like a wounded deer towards the door. But he was too quick for her, flinging himself headlong against it. Aroused and inflamed by the fall, he was on his feet in an instant, clutching at her skirt as he arose.

"Give me that young 'un," he said hoarsely; "we'll see whose child this is."

The woman's lips surged with the low moaning that never ceased as the unequal struggle raged a moment, the helpless babe contributing its note of sorrow. Suddenly the man got his hands firmly on the little arms; and the mother, her instinct quick and sensitive, half relaxed her hold as she felt the dreadful wrenching of the maddened hands. With a gasp he tore the baby from her, reeling backward as the strain was suddenly relaxed. Struggling desperately, he strove to recover himself. But the strain had been too much for the ruined nerves. The child fell from his hands, the man's arms going high into the air; an instant later he slipped and tottered heavily to the floor, the woman springing towards them as his outclutching hands seized her and bore her heavily down, the man now between the two, the silent infant beneath the struggling pair.

She was on her feet in the twinkling of an eye, tearing him aside with superhuman strength. But the baby lay in the long last stillness; its brief troubled pilgrimage was at an end. And the little dreamers up-stairs still slept on in uncaring slumber—nor knew that their long rough journey was at hand. And the kettle on the stove still murmured its unconscious song.

\* \* \* \* \*

The evil spirit had departed from the man.

It had gone forth with the destroying angel, both with their dread work well performed. And the man knew—with preternatural acuteness he interpreted his handiwork in an instant.

And they knelt together—that is the wonder of it—together, above the baby form. Both noted the dimpled hand, and the rosebud mouth—both touched the flaxen hair. No word of chiding fell—from the mother's lips nothing but an inarticulate broken flow, sometimes altogether still, like the gurgling of an ice-choked brook.

But he was the first to declare that the child was dead, maintaining it fiercely, his eye aglow now with anguished pity, so different from the weird lustre that it had displaced. And she would not believe it, dropping one tiny hand that she might chafe the other, lest death might get advantage in the chase.

She was still thus engaged when he arose and looked about the room for his hat. It was lying where he had flung it when he came in an eternity ago.

"Good-bye—till—till the judgment day," he said huskily, standing above her, something of the wildly supernatural in the tone. He waited long—but she spoke no word, nor lifted her eyes from the dead face, nor relinquished her stern struggle with the complacent Conqueror.

He went out—and was gone with steady step. She knew it not. Perhaps it was about half an hour later when he returned, opening the door gently and passing her swiftly by. A father's yearning sat upon the ashen face—he went quickly and softly up the stairs. Then he lighted a match, shading it at first with his hands lest it should wake the shut eyes—and while it lent its fleeting light the stricken man drank deep of his children's faces. Then the darkness swallowed them up, and he groped his way down-stairs and passed out into the night.

It was still dark when she at last surrendered—but to God. And the fire was black and the house was cold when she too went out, closing the door carefully behind her. She groped about the little porch, feeling in every corner; and she examined the tiny veranda, and searched through all the neglected garden; she even noticed the fragrance of some simple flowers—they had planted them together, and the children had helped in turn, having one toy spade between them. But it was all empty, all still.

"Oh, Ned," she cried softly, passionately, her hands outstretched beneath the all-seeing stars, her face now the face of age, "oh, Ned, come back—you didn't mean to do it and you didn't know. Come back, Ned," she cried a little louder, "come back to Harvey and Jessie—they'll never know. Oh, Ned," as the outstretched hands were withdrawn and pressed quickly against her bosom. For it pained her—with its mother-burden—and she turned to go back to her baby. Then she saw its still face in the darkness—and her hands went out again towards the night. The silent stars looked down, pitying, helpless; she went back to her fatherless and her God.

## II

### *THE WINE-PRESS ALONE*

"The woman's name's Simmons, sir—an' she took the whole o' this half plot. She keeps a little store, mostly sweetsies, I think," said Hutchins, as he laid his spade against the fence. "An' there wasn't no funeral—just her an' her two children; she brought the little one here from the city—that's where it was buried afore she came here to live."

His chief asked the labourer a question in a low voice.

"Oh, yes, that was all right," the man answered, picking an old leaf from a geranium plant as he spoke. "She showed me the original certificate she got in the city—or a copy of it, leastways; it said the baby came to its death from a fall on the floor. So that was all right—I asked the chairman. I couldn't help feelin' sorry for the woman, sir; she took on as bad as if it was new. An' the two little shavers was playin' hide an' seek round the tombstones afore I got the little grave filled in—she seemed to be terribly alone. It's funny, sir, how hard it is to get used to this business—I often says to my missus as how no man with kids of his own has any license to hire here," and the kindly executioner went off, spade in hand, to make a new wound in the oft-riven bosom of God's hospitable earth.

The hired helper had told about all that was known in Glenallen concerning their new townswoman. Indeed, rather more; for comparatively few knew anything of the little family gathering that had stood one early morning beside the tiny grave. The village was small—Glenallen had not yet achieved its fond hope that it would outgrow the humiliating state of villagehood—and its inhabitants were correspondingly well posted in the source, and antecedents, and attendant circumstances of all who came to dwell among them. But almost all they could ascertain regarding Mrs. Simmons was that she had come from the city, that she had two children living—as far as they could learn, their father was dead—that she had some scanty means with which she had embarked on the humble enterprise that was to provide her daily bread.

And thus far they were correct enough. For the first darkness of the great tragedy had no sooner overswept her than she began to shrink with an unspeakable aversion from all that was associated with the old life that had now no memory but pain. Her heart turned with wistful yearning towards some spot where she might live again the simple country life she had known in the early days of childhood. The cold selfishness of the city chilled her to the soul. She longed for some quiet country place—such as Glenallen was—where she might make a living, and live more cheaply; where her children might have a chance; where the beauty of God's world might do its share of healing.

She had known but few in the city, simple folk—and they had seemed to care but little. Yet they had to be kept in the dark; and the careful story of her baby's fall had been an often crucifixion. They thought her husband had suddenly been crazed with grief, hinting sometimes at the cowardice of his desertion—and she made no protest, dissembling with ingenious love for his sake and her children's. Few were aware when she left the city, and fewer seemed to care. She had little to bring—one sacred treasure was her chiefest burden—and it slept now beside her. And Harvey and Jessie must not know that their father was alive—not yet. They would have enough to bear; and moreover, who could tell? In any case, was he not dead to them?

She never knew exactly what was the cause of it—whether blow or shock—nor did she care; but she trembled for her children as it became more and more certain that her eyesight was failing. It had begun to be impaired soon after that very night. Yet she went bravely on, clinging to her little ones, clinging to life, clinging to hope—even to joy, in a dim, instinctive way. And ever, night and day, she guarded the dread secret; ever, night and day, she cherished the hope that her eyes might look again, if God should spare their light, upon the face she had last seen with that awful look upon it as it came nearer and nearer to her own. So her lips were set tight, lest any revealing word should escape to any soul on earth.

And it was not long till the curious residents of Glenallen felt that the stranger among them was acquainted with grief—but of what sort it was, the most vigilant never knew. Thus did she tread the wine-press alone, pressing silently along the upward path of pain.

And thus had the years gone by.

### III

#### *LOVE'S LABOURER*

"Cut him off another piece, mother—a bigger piece; that there chunk wouldn't satisfy a pigeon. Fruit-cake isn't very fillin'—not to a boy, leastways, and there's nothin' lonelier than one piece of cake inside of a boy that's built for nine or ten."

Mr. Borland's merry eyes turned first upon his wife's face as he made his plea, then wandered towards a distant field, resting upon the diminutive figure of a boy.

"Oh, David," answered his wife, her tone indicating a measure of shock, "you're so vivid with your illustrations. It isn't artistic—I mean about—about those inside matters," as she smiled, rather than frowned, her mild reproof.

"That's all right, mother; it's true to life, anyhow—an' it all deals with his inner bein'; it tells of sufferin' humanity," rejoined her husband. "The smaller the boy, the bigger the hunk—that's a safe rule when you're dealin' in cake. Bully for you, mother—that there slice'll come nearer fittin' him," he concluded jubilantly, as his wife completed a piece of surgery more generous than before.

"Who was it hired Harvey to pick potatoes, father?" inquired Mrs. Borland. "How can he eat this without washing his hands?" she continued, almost in the same breath; "it's such dirty work."

"You just watch him; that won't trouble him much. Boys love sand. It was me that hired him, Martha. He come right up to me on the street an' took off his hat like I was an earl: 'Can you give me any work to do, Mr. Borland?' he says. 'I'm going to make enough money to make mother's eyes well,' an' the little fellow looked so earnest an' so manly, I fair hated to tell him the only kind of job I could give him. I just hated to. But I told him I wanted some one to pick potatoes. An' Harvey brightened right up. 'All right, Mr. Borland,' he says, 'I'll come. I'm awful fond of potatoes, an' I can pick two at a time—three, if they're not too big,' he says, an' I couldn't keep from laughin' to save myself."

"What's the matter with his mother's eyes?" asked Mrs. Borland, as she tore the front page from the weekly paper, preparing to wrap it about the cake.

"I didn't like to ask him. The little fellow seemed to feel real bad about it—an' I never did like to probe into things that hurt," replied her husband. "Even when I was a boy at school, I never could stand seein' a fellow show where he stubbed his toe," continued the homely philosopher, reaching out his hand for the little parcel. "There was one thing about the boy that took me wonderful," he went on; "I asked him would he work by the day or by the bushel, an' he said right quick as how he'd do it by the bushel—I always like those fellows best that prefers to work by the job. Hello, there, old sport," he suddenly digressed as a noise from behind attracted him, "an' where did you come from? You're always turnin' up at cake time. I thought you were goin' to ride to Branchton," glancing as he spoke at the riding whip the girl held in her hand.

Full of merry laughter were the eyes, so like his own, that sparkled upward towards her father's face. The wild sweet breath of happy girlhood came panting from her lips, half breathless with eager haste; while the golden hair, contrasting well with the rosy tide that suffused her cheek, and falling dishevelled on her shoulders, and the very aroma of health and vitality that distilled from her whole form, tall and lithe and graceful as it was, might amply justify the pride that marked her father's gaze.

"So I was," the chiming voice rejoined. "But I turned back. I despise a coward." The eyes

flashed as she spoke. "And Cecil Craig's one—he's a real one," she elaborated warmly. "We met a threshing engine half-way out—and of course I was going to ride past it. But he wouldn't—he got off and tied his horse to a tree. And it broke the lines and got away. I was so glad—and I rode on, and Doctor threw me," rubbing her knee sympathetically as she spoke; "that's what made me so glad his own horse got away," she affirmed savagely, "and the two engine men stopped and caught Doctor for me and I got on him again—astride this time—and I made him walk right up and smell the engine; and Cecil had to walk home. The men told him to touch himself up with his whip and it wouldn't take him long—and that made him awful mad. You see, they knew he was a coward. Who's that fruit-cake for?" she inquired suddenly, flinging her gloves vigorously towards the hat-stand. "I'll just try a piece myself—fruit-cake's good for a sore knee," and she attacked it with the dexterity that marks the opening teens.

"It's for a little boy that's workin' in the field—little Harvey Simmons. He's pickin' potatoes, an' I thought a little refreshment wouldn't hurt him," her father answered, pointing fieldward as he spoke.

"I know him," the maiden mumbled, her mouth full of the chosen remedy; "he goes to school—and he always spells everybody down," she added as enthusiastically as the aforesaid treatment would permit. "Let me take it out to him, father," the utterance clearing somewhat.

The father was already handing her the dainty parcel when her mother intervened. "No, Madeline, it's not necessary for you to take it. It's hardly the correct thing, child; I'll call Julia—she can take it out."

"'Tisn't necessary, mother," quoted her husband. "I want this here cake to mean something. I'll just take it myself," and in a moment he was striding energetically across the intervening paddock, the untiring form of the little labourer alternately rising and falling as he plied his laborious toil.

"Your father is the best-hearted man in the county, Madeline," Mrs. Borland ventured when her husband was out of hearing.

"He's the best man in the world," the girl amended fervently; "and Cecil says his father's a member of the Church and mine isn't," she went on more vehemently; "he said father didn't believe the right things—and I just told him they weren't the right things if my father didn't believe them, and I wouldn't believe them either," the youthful heretic affirmed. "Lally Kerr told me Cecil's father made some poor people give him money for rent that they needed for a stove—I didn't want to tell Cecil that, but when he said his father believed all the right things I told him my father did all the good things, and he was kind to the poor—and I told him he was kind to them because he was poor once himself and used to work so hard with his hands, and——"

"Why, child," and the mother frowned a little, "where did you get that idea? Who told you that?"

"Father told me," replied the child promptly. "He told me himself, and I think I heard him telling Cecil's father that once too—Cecil's father wanted not to give so much money to the men that worked for him. I think they were talking about that, and that was when father said it," the unconscious face looking proudly up into her mother's.

"You don't need to speak about it, dear; it doesn't sound well to be—to be boasting about your father, you know. Now run away and get ready for lunch; father 'll be back in a minute."

The child turned to go upstairs, singing as she went, forgetful of the mild debate and blissfully ignorant of all the human tumult that lay behind it, conscious only of a vague happiness at thought of the great heart whose cause she had championed in her childish way. Less of contented joy was on the mother's face as she looked with half exultant eyes upon the luxury about her, trophies of the wealth that had been so welcome though so late.

Prompted by the conversation with Madeline, her mind roamed swiftly over the bygone years; the privations of her early married life, the growing comfort that her husband's toil had brought, the trembling venture into the world of manufacture, the ensuing struggle, the impending failure, the turning tide, the abundant flow that followed—and all the fairy-land into which increasing wealth had borne her. Of all this she thought as she stood amid the spoils—and of the altered ways and loftier friends, of the whirl and charm of fashion, of the bewildering entrance into such circles of society as their little town afforded, long envied from afar, now pouring their wine and oil into still unhealing wounds. Dimly, too, it was borne in upon her that her husband's heart, lagging behind her own, had been content to tarry among the simple realities of old, unspoiled by the tardy success that had brought with it no sense of shame for the humble days of yore, and had left unaltered the simplicity of an honest, kindly heart.

Her husband, in the meantime, had arrived at the side of his youthful employee, his pace



quicken as he came nearer to the lad, the corners of his mouth relaxing in a sort of unconscious smile that bespoke the pleasure the errand gave him. Absorbed in his work, and hearing only the rattle of the potatoes as they fell steadily into the pail beside him, the boy had not caught the approaching footfalls; he gave a little jump as Mr. Borland called him by his name.

"Here's a little something for you, my boy—the missus sent it out."

Harvey straightened himself up, clapped his hands together to shake the dust from them, and gravely thanked his employer as he received the little package. Slowly unwrapping it, his eye brightened as it fell on a sight so unfamiliar; in an instant one of the slices was at his lips, a gaping wound in evidence as it was withdrawn. A moment later the boy ceased chewing, then slowly resumed the operation; but now the paper was refolded over the remaining cake, and Harvey gently stowed it away in the pocket of his blouse.

"What's the matter?" inquired Mr. Borland anxiously. "Aren't you well—or isn't it good?" The boy smiled his answer; other reply was unnecessary and inadequate.

"Goin' to take it home?" the man asked curiously.

"No, sir. I'm just going to keep it a little while," the youngster replied, looking manfully upward as he spoke, a little gulp bespeaking the final doom of the morsel he had taken. "You don't mind, sir?" he added respectfully.

"Me mind! What would I mind for? You're quite right, my boy—it's a mighty good thing when a fellow finds out as young as you are that he can't eat his cake and have it too; it takes most of us a lifetime to learn that. How old are you, Harvey—isn't that your name?"

"Yes, sir. I'm most fourteen," the boy answered, stooping again to resume his work.

"Do you go to school?" the man inquired presently.

"Mostly in the winter, sir; not very much in the summer. But I do all I can. You see, I have to help my mother in the store when she needs me. But I'm going to try the entrance next summer," he added quickly, the light of ambition on his face.

"Where is your mother's store?" asked Mr. Borland.

"It's that little store on George Street, next to the Chinese laundry. It has a red door—and there's a candy monkey in the window," he hastened to add, this last identification proffered with much enthusiasm.

A considerable silence followed, broken only by the rattling potatoes as they fell. "Mr. Borland, could you give me work in your factory?" the boy inquired suddenly, not pausing for an instant in his work.

"In the factory!" echoed Mr. Borland. "I thought you were going to school."

"I could work after four," replied the boy. "There's two hours left."

Mr. Borland gazed thoughtfully for a moment. "'Twouldn't leave you much time to play," he said, smiling down at Harvey.

"I don't need an awful lot of play," the boy returned gravely; "I never got very much used to it. Besides, I've got a lot of games when I'm delivering little parcels for mother—games that I made up myself. Sometimes I play I'm going round calling soldiers out because there's going to be a war—and sometimes I play I'm Death," he added solemnly.

"Play you're Death!" cried the startled man. "What on earth do you mean by that? I thought no one ever played that game but once," he concluded, as much to himself as to the boy.

"Oh, it's this way, you see—it's one of the headlines in the copy-book that pale Death knocks with—with—impartial steps at the big houses and the little cottages—something like that, anyhow. And it's a good deal the same with me," the boy responded gravely, looking up a moment as he spoke. "It's a real interesting game when you understand it. Of course I'm not very pale," he continued slowly, "but I can feel pretty pale when I want to," he concluded, smiling at the fancy.

Mr. Borland was decidedly interested. And well he might have been. For there was just enough of the same mystic fire in his own heart, untutored though it was, to reveal to him the beauty that glowed upon the boyish face before him. The lad was tall for his years, well-formed, lithe, muscular; dishevelled by his stooping toil, a wealth of nut-brown hair fell over an ample forehead, almost overshadowing the large blue eyes that were filled with the peculiar shining light which portrays the poetic mind. His features were large, not marked by any particular refinement, significant rather of the necessity—yet also of the capacity—for moral struggle; distended nostrils, marking fullness of life and passion, sensitive to the varying emotions that showed first in the wonderful eyes; a deep furrow ran from nose to lips, the latter large and full of rich red blood, but finely formed, curving away to delicate expression at either side, significant of a nature keenly alive to all that life might have to give—such lips as eloquence requires, yet fitted well together, expressive of an inner spirit capable of the firmness it might sorely need.

"Could you drive a horse, lad?" the man suddenly inquired, after a long survey of the unconscious youth.

Harvey hesitated. "I think I could, sir, if the horse was willing. Sometimes we play horse at school, and I get along pretty well."

Mr. Borland looked keenly, but in vain, for any trace of merriment on the half-hidden face. "I drove the butcher boy's horse once or twice, too. And I managed all right, except when it backed up—I hate to drive them when they're backing up," the boy added seriously, with the air of an experienced horseman.

Mr. Borland laughed. "That's jest where it comes in," he said; "any one can drive anything when it's goin' ahead—it's when things is goin' back that tries your mettle. I'll see what I can do. Some of our horses drives frontwards—horses is pretty evenly divided between the kind that goes frontwards and them that won't," he mused aloud as he walked away. "I've struck a heap of the last kind—they backed up pretty hard when I was your age," Harvey could just overhear as he plucked the dead vines from another mound and outthrew its lurking treasures.

#### IV

#### *THE RICHES OF THE POOR*

The retreating figure had no sooner gained the house in the distance than Harvey began to cast glances, eager and expectant, towards the road that skirted the outer edge of the field in which he was working. Once or twice he straightened up, wincing a little with the ache that long stooping brings, and peered intently towards the top of a distant hill beyond which he could not see. Suddenly his eye brightened, and a muffled exclamation of pleasure broke from his lips, for the vision he longed for had appeared. Yet it was commonplace enough—only a coloured sunbonnet, some four or five feet from the ground, and swaying a little uncertainly in the noontide light. But it was moving nearer, ever nearer, to the waiting boy, who knew the love that lent strength to the little feet and girded the tiny hands which bore something for himself.

The girlish form was now well beyond the curving hill, trudging bravely on; and Harvey saw, or thought he saw, the happy smile upon the eager face, the pace quickening as she caught sight of her brother in the distance. Harvey's eyes filled with tenderness as he gazed upon the approaching child; for the poor, if they love and are loved again, know more of life's real wealth than the deluded rich.

A few minutes more and she was at the bars, panting but radiant. Harvey ran to lay them down, taking the bundles from her hands. "Oh, but my arms ache so," the girl said, as she sank upon the grass; "it must be lovely to have a horse."

"Some day we will," her brother returned abruptly. "You just wait and see—and then you won't ever walk anywhere. But you oughtn't to carry these all this way, Jessie; I could bring it in my pocket just as well."

The girl's face clouded a little. "But then it gets so cold, Harvey—and what's in there ought to be nice and warm," she said hopefully, nodding towards the pail. "Mother heated the can just when we put it in, and I came as fast as ever I could, so it wouldn't cool—and I held it in the hot sun all the time," she concluded triumphantly, proud of her ingenuity.

"That's lovely, Jessie," replied the boy; "and you're quite right," he went on, noticing the flitting sign of disappointment. "I just hate cold things—and I just love them hot," he affirmed as he removed the lid.

Jessie bended eagerly over it and the faint steam that arose was as beautiful to her eyes as was ever ascending incense to priestly ministrant.

"It's hot, Harvey! I thought it would be," she cried. "Mother was so anxious for you to have a nice dinner—I knew that was what you liked," as an exclamation of delight came from the boy. "Mother said she never saw such a boy for meat-pies as you. And there's something further down, that you like too—they're under a saucer, and they have butter and sugar both, on them. No, you'd never guess what it is—oh, that's not fair," she cried, "you're smelling; any one can guess what it is if they smell," laughing merrily as she tried to withdraw the pail beyond the range of his olfactory powers.

"It's pancakes!" pronounced her brother, sniffing still.

"Yes, of course—but you never would have guessed. Mother made them the very last thing before I started. And I cried when she was putting them in—oh, Harvey, it was so sad," the girl

burst out with trembling voice, her hands going to her face as she spoke. "And mother cried too," she added, looking out at her brother through swimming eyes.

Harvey halted in his attack. "What for? What were you crying about?" he asked earnestly, the food still untasted.

"It was about mother's eyes. You see, she put the pancakes on the table beside the stove—and there was a pile of table mats beside them. Well, when mother went to put them into the pail, she took up the mats instead—never knew the difference till she felt them. And I could see how sad it made her—she said she was afraid she soon wouldn't see at all; and I just couldn't keep from crying. Oh, Harvey," the shaking voice went eagerly on, "don't you think we'll soon be able to send her to the city to see the doctor there?—everybody says he could cure the right eye anyhow; mother thinks the left one's gone. Don't you think we will, Harvey?"

Harvey looked into space, a large slice of the tempting pie still in his hand. "I'm hoping so," he said—"I made almost thirty cents this morning; I counted it up just before you came—and there's the two dollars I made picking raspberries that mother doesn't know about—it's in that knot-hole in the closet upstairs, you know. And maybe Mr. Borland's going to give me more work—I asked him, and then——"

"I told mother I was going to sell Muffy," his sister broke in impulsively. "But she said I mustn't; I guess she's awful fond of Muffy, she cried so hard."

"I'd hate to sell Muffy," the boy responded judicially; "she's the only one that always lays big eggs. And then, besides, they might kill her and eat her up—rich people nearly always do their hens that way." Two pairs of eyes darkened at thought of a tragedy so dread.

"We wouldn't, even if we was rich, would we, Harvey?" the girl resumed earnestly.

"No, not with Muffy," Harvey assured her. "They're awful rich over there," he volunteered, pointing to the large stone house in the distance.

"It must be lovely," mused the girl. "We could have such lots of lovely things. Why don't you eat your dinner, Harvey?—it'll get so cold."

"I don't want it much," replied her brother. "You see, I had a pretty good breakfast," he explained cheerfully.

The loving eyes, still moist, gazed into his own. She was so young, some years younger than he, and as inexperienced almost as a child could be; yet the stern tuition of poverty and sorrow had given something of vision to the eyes that looked so wistfully out upon the plaintive face before her. She noted his shabby dress, the patches on his knees, the boots that stood so sorely in need of impossible repairs, the grimy stains of toil from head to foot, the furrowed channels that the flowing perspiration had left upon his face. And a great and mysterious pity seemed to possess her. She felt, dimly enough, yet with the sad reality of truth, that her brother had hardly had a chance in life's unequal struggle. His tenderness, his unselfishness, his courage, all these she recognized, though she could not have called them by their names. She knew how ardently he longed to do so much that chill penury forbade; and as she glanced at the dust-covered pile in the distance that his toil had gathered, then back at the tired figure on the grass, all stained and spotted, the food he so much needed untasted in his sorrow, she felt more and more that there was only one hero in the world, however baffled and unrecognized he might be.

"Mother'll be so disappointed," the girl pleaded, "if you don't eat it, Harvey; she tried so hard to make it nice. Besides, I'll just have to carry it back," she suddenly urged, a note of triumphant expectation in her voice; "and it was real heavy, too," well pleased with the culminating argument.

The boy hesitated, then slowly raised the tempting morsel to his lips. "I didn't have such an awful lot of breakfast," he conceded; "I really am pretty hungry—and it was so good of you to fetch it to me, sister," his gaze resting affectionately on her.

A long silence ensued, Jessie watching delightedly as the little repast was disposed of, entertaining her brother the while with a constant stream of talk, all fed from the fountain-head of their own little circle, their own humble and struggling life. But however far afield her speech, with her thought, might wander, it kept constantly returning to the one central figure of their lonely lives, to her from whom their own lives had sprung; and the most unobservant listener would soon have known that the unselfish tenderness, the loving courage, of the mother-heart that had warmed and sheltered their defenseless lives, was reaping now its great and rich reward.

Jessie had reverted again to the dark shadow that overhung them both, their mother's failing eyesight; and two earnest little faces looked very soberly one into the other, as though they must together beat back the enemy from the gate.

Suddenly Harvey broke the silence. "I'm pretty sure she's going to get well," he said earnestly, holding the bottle in one hand and the glass stopper in the other. "I had a dream last night that—that comforted me a lot," he went on, slightly embarrassed by the fanciful nature of his argument; he could see that Jessie had hoped for something better. "I dreamed I was walking some place on a country road. And it was all dark—for mother, at least—it was awful dark, and I was leading her by the hand. I thought there was something troubling her that you didn't know about—nor me—nobody, only mother. Well, just when we were groping round in the dark, a great big black cloud broke up into little bits, and the sun came out beautiful—just like—like it is now," he described, glancing towards the orb above them. "Of course, that was only in my dream—but we went straight on after that and mother could see to walk just as well as me," he concluded, smiling as hopefully as if dreams were the only realities of life.

Jessie, holding her sunbonnet by both strings and swinging it gently to and fro, had a curious look of interest, not unmixed with doubt, upon her childish face. "That was real nice, Harvey," she said slowly at length, "but I don't just understand. You see, people always dream their dreams at night—and the sun couldn't come out at night; anyhow it never does."

Harvey gazed indulgently. "It can do anything when you're dreaming," he said quickly, a far-off look in his thoughtful eyes. "That's when all the wonderful things happen," he went on, still looking absently across the fields. "Poor folks have just as good a time as rich folks, when they're asleep," he concluded, his voice scarcely audible.

"But they know the difference when they wake up," retorted his sister, plucking a clover leaf eagerly. "Only three leaves!" she exclaimed contemptuously, tossing it aside. "Yes, it's very different when they wake up—and everybody's awake more than they're asleep," she affirmed, as confident in her philosophy as he in his.

Her brother said nothing as he proceeded to fold up the rather generous remains of his dinner; poor laddie, he knew the taste of bread eaten with tears, even if he had never heard the phrase. His face brightened a little as his hand went out to the pocket of his blouse, extracting a parcel wrapped in paper. He held it with both hands behind his back, uncovering it the while.

"Shut your eyes, Jessie—and open your mouth," he directed, as enthusiastically as though the formula were being tested for the first and only time.

Jessie obeyed with a confidence born of long experience, and her brother, all care vanished meanwhile from his face, held the plum-cake to her lips. "Now, bite," he said. Jessie, already faintly tasting, made a slight incision. "Oh, Jessie, bite bigger—bite bigger, Jessie!" he cried in dismay; "you're just trying how little you can take—and I kept it for you." But Jessie's eyes were wide open now, fixed on the unwonted luxury. "Too much isn't good for little girls," she said quaintly, swallowing eagerly, nevertheless; "I'll eat one piece if you'll eat the other, Harvey," she said, noticing the double portion.

"I'm keeping mine for mother," said the boy resolutely.

"So'm I," the other exclaimed before his words were out. "I'd sooner have the pancakes, anyhow," she added, fearing his protest. "Will you take it to her, Harvey—or me?"

"I think you'd better," replied her brother, "and I'll eat the rest of the dinner if you'll promise to eat your part of the cake when you get home."

Jessie nodded her consent, and a few minutes saw Harvey's portion of the contract nobly executed, his sister as satisfied as he.

## V

### *A FLOW OF SOUL*

Good Dr. Fletcher always said a little longer grace than usual when he dined at Mr. Craig's. Whether this was due to the length of the ensuing meal, or to the long intervals that separated these great occasions, or to the wealth that provided them, or to the special heart-needs of the wealthy, it were difficult to say. But one thing is beyond all doubt, and that is that the good minister of the Glenallen Presbyterian Church would no more have thought of using an old grace at Mrs. Craig's table than she herself would have dreamed of serving the same kind of soup, or repeating a dessert whose predecessor was within the call of memory.

On this particular evening Dr. Fletcher's invocation had been particularly long, due perhaps to the aroma, more than usually significant, that had escaped the kitchen to assure the sanguine guests; and a sort of muffled amen broke from their waiting lips, soon to confirm the word by all

sincerity of action. This amen was doubtless due in part to gratitude for what had ended, as well as to anticipation of what was about to be begun. Cecil Craig, seated beside his mother, took no part in the terminal devotion; long before the time to utter it, his open eyes were turned towards the door through which the servants were to enter, and from which, so far as he could reckon, all blessings flow.

Soup came first, and young Craig dauntlessly led on in the attack. His mother tried eagerly to call to his attention, and to his alone, that he had seized the spoon meant for his dessert; but Cecil was already in full cry, the mistaken weapon plying like a paddle-wheel between his plate and his mouth—and no signal of distress could reach him. The most unfortunate feature of it all, however, was the speedy plight of one or two timorous guests, who, waiting for the lead of any members of the family, had followed Cecil's; and, suddenly detecting whither he had led them, were soon floundering sadly in such a slough of despond as they scarce escaped from during the entire meal.

Mr. and Mrs. Borland were there, one on either side of Dr. Fletcher; and the light of temporary peace was upon Mrs. Borland's brow—for the Craigs' home was nearer to a mansion than any other in Glenallen. A slight shade of impatience flitted across her face as she glanced athwart Dr. Fletcher's portly form, surveying her husband's bosom swathed in snowy white, his napkin securely tucked beneath his chin. But David was all unconscious, the region beneath the napkin being exceeding comfortable; for the soup was good, and her spouse bade fair to give Cecil a stern chase for the honours of the finish.

Soup is a mighty lubricant of the inward parts; wherefore there broke out, when the first course was run, a very freshet of conversation; and the most conspicuous figure in the flow was that of Mr. Craig. He had the advantage, of course, of an erect position, for he had risen to inaugurate his attack upon the helpless fowl before him; an entrance once effected, he would resume his seat.

"It beats me," he was saying, glancing towards Dr. Fletcher as he spoke, "it beats me how any man can go and see sick folks every day—I'd sooner do hard labour. Don't you get awful tired of it, Doctor?"

The minister's gentle face flushed a little—the same face at sight of which the sad and the weary were wont to take new hope. "I don't think you understand it, Mr. Craig," he answered quietly; "any one who regards it as you do could never see the beauty of it—it all depends on what you take with you."

"Good heavens, do you have to take things with you?" cried the astonished host. "Matters are come to a pretty pass when they expect a poor preacher to be giving—as well as praying," he affirmed, affirmed, savagely at the victim on the platter.

David Borland was listening intently, nabbing dexterously the while at a tray of salted almonds that lay a good arm's length away from him. "The minister's quite right," he now broke in; "you don't understand, Mr. Craig—Dr. Fletcher don't mean that he takes coal an' tea, when he visits poor folks. But what he says is dead true just the same—any one can carry a bag of turnips, or such like, to any one that's willin' to take 'em. But a minister's got to give somethin' far more than that; even on Sundays—at least that's my idea of it—even on Sundays, what a preacher gives is far more important than what he says."

"You mean he ought to give himself," Mrs. Craig suggested, stirring the gravy as she spoke, the dismembered turkey being now despatched to its anointing.

"That's it exactly," rejoined David, beaming on his hostess, her own face aglow with the gentle light that flows from a sympathetic heart. "Everythin's jest a question of how much you give of your own self; even here," his voice rising as he hailed the happy illustration, "even in this here house—with this here bird—we ain't enjoyin' it because we're gettin' so much turkey, but because we're gettin' so much Craig," he went on fervently. "I could buy this much turkey for a quarter," passing a well-laden plate as he spoke, "for twenty-five cents at an eatin' house—but it wouldn't jest taste the same. It wouldn't have the Craig taste, you see—there wouldn't be no human flavour to it, like; an' turkey ain't nothin' without a human flavour. That's what makes everythin' taste good, you see," he concluded, smiling benignly around on the assembled guests.

"I don't believe in any such," retorted Mr. Craig; "no mixture of that kind for mine. Turkey's one thing, and humanity's another—no stews for me," he directed, smiling broadly at this flash of unaccustomed wit; "people eat turkey—but not humanity," he concluded victoriously.

"You're wrong there," replied David Borland quickly. "Folks lives on humanity—only it's got to be served warm," he added, falling to upon the turkey nevertheless.

"What do you think about it, Doctor?" Mrs. Borland enquired absently, for her real concern

was with David; his dinner knife was her constant terror when they were dining out. All was well so far, however, her husband devoting it as yet to surgery alone.

"I think exactly what your husband thinks," replied the minister. "He has said the very thing I have often wished to say. I have always felt that what a preacher *gives* to his people—of his heart and love and sympathy—is far more than what he *says* to them. If it were not so, they'd better stay home and read far finer things than he can say; I often feel that preparing to preach is far more important than preparing a sermon. And I think the same holds true of all giving—all philanthropy, for instance. What you give of yourself to the poor is far more than what you give from your pocketbook—and, if the truth were told, I believe it's what the poor are looking for, far more than they are for money." The tenderness in Dr. Fletcher's face and the slight quiver in his voice attested the sincerity of his feeling; they might, too, have afforded no little explanation of the love that all Glenallen felt for the humble and kindly man.

Mr. Craig laughed; and that laughter was the key to his character. Through that wave of metallic merriment, as through a tiny pane, one might see into all the apartments of a cold and cheerless heart.

"That's mighty pretty, Doctor," he began jocosely; "but if I was poor I'd sooner have the cash—give me the turkey, and you can have the humanity. I believe in keeping these things separate, Dr. Fletcher," he went on sagaciously; "no mixin' up business with religion, for me—of course, helping the poor isn't exactly religion, but it comes mighty near it. And if I give anything to the poor—I used to, too, used to give—to give so much every year, till I found out one family that bought a watermelon with it, and then I thought it was about time to stop. But when I used to—to give to the poor, I always did it strictly as a matter of business; just gave so much to—to an official—and then I didn't want to know how he dispensed it, or who got it, or anything about it."

"Did the—the official—did he give all his time to dispensin' it, Mr. Craig? Or did he just do it nights and after hours?" enquired David Borland, detaching his napkin from his upper bosom and scouring an unduly merry mouth with it the while.

Mr. Craig glanced suspiciously at his guest. "I didn't wish to know," he replied loftily in a moment; "all I'm making out is the principle that governed me. And I always take the same stand in my business—always assume the same attitude towards my men," he amplified, as proud of his language as of his attitude. "Of all the men I've got hired, I don't believe I know a half dozen except the foremen. I get their work, and they get their pay every second and fourth Tuesday—and that's the end of it."

"You don't know how much you miss," the minister ventured, quite a glow of colour on his otherwise pallid cheek. "There's nothing so interesting as human life."

"You bet—that's just it," chimed David's robust voice; "that's where a fellow gets his recreation. I don't think I'm master of my business till I know somethin' about my men—there ain't no process, even in manufacturing half so interestin' as the doin's of folks in their own lives. I know lots of their wives, too, an' half the kids—please give me a little more stuffin', Mrs. Craig: it's powerful good," and David passed his plate as cheerfully as his opinion.

"That may be your way of taking your recreation, Mr. Borland, but it isn't mine," retorted the host, obviously a little ruffled. "Business on business lines, that's my motto. Just the other day a little gaffer asked me for work, on the plea that he wanted to fix up his mother's eyes—wanted to send her to a specialist, I think—and I told him that had nothing to do with the case; if I wanted him I'd take him, and if I didn't, nobody's eyes could make any difference."

"Was his name Harvey Simmons?" David enquired somewhat eagerly.

"I believe it was. Why, what do you know about him?"

"Oh, nothin' much—only I hired him. And he isn't goin' to have no blind mother if my givin' him work will help—that's more. She's got a son worth lookin' at—that's one thing sure. An' he earned every penny I ever gave him, too—what was you goin' to say, Doctor?" For he saw the minister had something to offer.

"I know the little fellow well," said Dr. Fletcher, evidently glad of the opportunity. "Poor little chap, he's had hard lines—his father was a slave to drink, I believe, and the poor mother has fought about as good a fight as I ever saw. I'm sure she carries about some burden of sorrow nobody knows anything about. She has two children. Well, a long time ago now, one of the richest couples in my church offered to adopt the little girl—and they got me to sound her on the subject. Goodness me! You should have seen the way the woman stood at bay. 'Not till the last crust's gone,' she said. She was fairly roused; 'I'm richer than they are,' she said; 'I've got my two children, and I'll keep them as long as I can lift a hand to toil for them.' Really, I never felt more rebuked in my life—but I admired her more than I could tell. And the wee fellow raged like a little

lion. 'Did he want to take sister?—tell him to go home, mother,' and he was fairly shouting and stamping his little foot, though the tears were running down his cheeks all the while. I said she had two children," the minister added, "but I think she lost a baby through some sad accident years ago."

David Borland's eyes were glistening. "Bully for you, Doctor!" his voice rang through the room. "Bully for you—I knew the lad was worth stickin' to. I'm proud to be mixed up with a chap like that," thumping the table as he spoke.

"That's what I often say to Peter," Mrs. Craig began mildly during the pause that followed. "I often feel what you sometimes say in your sermons, Doctor—that we ought all to be mixed up a little more together. The rich and the poor, I mean. They need us, and we need them—and we both have our own parts to play in the great plan."

"That's it, Mrs. Craig," David broke in lustily again; "that's exactly it—last Sunday when we sang that line, 'My web of time He wove,' I jest stopped singin'—it struck me, like it never done before, as how God Himself couldn't weave much without us helpin' Him—the rich an' the poor—it's Him that designs, but it's us that has to weave. An' I reckon our hands has got to touch—if they're workin' on the same piece," he concluded, drinking in the approving smile with which Dr. Fletcher was showing his appreciation of the quaint philosophy.

A considerable silence followed, the host showing no disposition to break it. Cecil was the first to speak.

"Harvey wears patches on his knees," he informed the company. "What is there for dessert, mother?"

Mrs. Craig whispered the important information; the radiant son straightway published it to the world: "Plum pudding!—I like that—only I hope it has hard sauce."

Which it ultimately proved to have—and to Mrs. Borland's great dismay. For David, loyal to ancient ways, yet ever open to the advantage of modern improvement, passed back his plate for a second helping.

"I used to think the kind of gravy-sauce you slashed all over it was the whole thing—but I believe that ointment's got it beat," he said; whereat Mrs. Borland laid her spoon upon her plate, the ointment and the anointed untasted more.

## VI *AN INVESTMENT*

David Borland stood quite a little while gazing at the contents of the window before he entered the tiny store. Rather scanty those contents were; a few candy figures, chiefly chocolate creations, a tawdry toy or two, some samples of biscuits judiciously assorted, a gaudy tinselled box of chewing-gum, and a flaming card that proclaimed the merits of a modern brand of tea.

These all duly scrutinized, David pushed the door open and entered the humble place of business. The opening door threw a sleigh-bell, fastened above it, into quite an hysterical condition, and this in turn was answered by hurrying footsteps from the inner room. It was Harvey who appeared.

"Good-morning, Mr. Borland," the boy said respectfully. "Did you want to see mother?" he enquired a little anxiously; "she's gone to the market, but I think she'll soon be back."

"That's all right, my boy," the man responded. "No, it wasn't your mother I wanted; it was you—I come to do a little business."

"Oh," said Harvey, glancing hopefully towards the window.

"'Tain't exactly shop business," David said, a little nervously, "I come to—to buy a hen," he blurted out. Harvey's hand went like lightning into the glass case. Withdrawn, it produced a candy creature of many colours, its comb showing the damage that vandal tongues had done. "Totty Moore licked at it once or twice when we wasn't lookin'," he explained apologetically; "it used to be in the window—it's a settin' hen," he enlarged, indicating with his finger a pasty pedestal on which the creative process was being carried on.

David grinned broadly. "'Tain't that kind of a hen I'm wantin'," he said. "I want the real article—a real live two-legged hen."

"Oh," said Harvey, staring hard.

"Where's your chicken-house?" enquired David, coming to business direct.

"It's outside," the boy replied instructively—"but there ain't very many."

"Let's go and see them," said the man.

The boy led the way, David ducking his head several times en route, bowing profoundly at the last as they entered the little house.

"This your hennery?" he asked, surveying the inmates amid a storm of cackling; "sounds like you had hundreds of 'em."

"Just five," said Harvey, peering towards his customer through the semi-darkness.

"I think I'll buy that there one on the roost," David said after due deliberation; "seems to be the highest-minded of the bunch."

"Can't," said Harvey, "that's Jessie's; it's only got just one eye—that's why Jessie wanted it. Can't sell Jessie's," he concluded firmly.

David agreed. "Haven't you got one called Pinky?" he enquired.

"No," Harvey replied solemnly, "she's dead—we had her a long, long time ago. I can show you her grave outside in the yard."

"Never mind," said Mr. Borland; "this ain't no day for inspectin' graves. I might have known she'd passed away—how long does a hen live, anyhow—a healthy hen?"

"Depends on how they're used," said the boy; "Pinky sneezed to death—too much pepper, I think. Who told you about Pinky, sir?"

"Depends a good deal, too, on how often the preacher comes to dinner, don't it? It was Madeline told me about Pinky—you know my girl, don't you?"

"Yes," and Harvey's face was bright; "I'm awful sorry Pinky's dead—I could sell you one of Pinky's grandchildren's children, Mr. Borland."

"What?" said Mr. Borland, turning a straw about and placing the unchewed end in his mouth, "one of what?"

"One of Pinky's grandchildren's children. You see, her child was Fluffy, and its child was Topy—that was her grandchild; well, its child was Blackie—and that's her scratchin' her cheek with her left foot. She's done scratchin', but that's her over there."

"She's got the Pinky blood in her all right?" asked Mr. Borland.

"She's bound to have it," the boy answered gravely; "they was all born right in this room; besides, I've got it all marked down on the door."

David surveyed the descendant critically. "Does she lay brown eggs?" he enquired presently. "Madeline said Pinky always laid brown eggs."

Harvey hesitated a moment. "They're—they're pretty brown," he said after a pause. "They mostly turn brown a little after they're laid."

"I'm terrible fond of brown eggs," remarked the purchaser.

"What for?" asked Harvey, looking full into his face.

"Well, really—I don't know," and David grinned a little. "Only I always fancy they're kind o'—kind o' better done, don't you think? Besides," he added quickly, "I always like my toast brown, too—and they kind o' match better, you see."

"Yes," said Harvey reflectively; "I never thought of that before. Of course, there isn't any hen can be taught *always* to lay them brown—I think Blackie tries to make them as brown as she can," glancing fondly at the operator as he spoke. "If you was to feed her bran, Mr. Borland, I think she'd get them brown nearly all the time."

"That's a thunderin' good idea," affirmed Mr. Borland, Harvey chiming in with increasing assurance of success as he marked the favour with which his theory was received.

"We'll call it a bargain," said David.

"All right," exclaimed the boy, "just wait a minute till I get a bag."

"Don't bother about that; I'll just leave her here till I send for her—she'll earn her board. But I may as well pay you now—how much is she worth?"

The boy pondered. "I don't hardly know—of course the brown kind comes a little dearer," he ventured, glancing cautiously at Mr. Borland. "She's an awful well-bred hen—I can show you on the door. And she'll eat anything—Jessie's string of beads broke loose in the yard once and Blackie ate them all but two; that shows she's healthy," he concluded earnestly.

"It's a wonder she ain't layin' glass alleys," remarked David. "Well, about the price—I'll tell you what I'll do with you. Here's a bill—an' if she keeps on at the brown business, mebbe I'll give you a little more."

He handed the boy a crisp note, the lad's hand trembling as he took it. He gave the door a push open that the light might fall on it. "Oh, Mr. Borland," he cried, in a loud, shrill voice, "I won't—you mustn't, you mustn't. Mother wouldn't let me—I can't—please take it back, Mr. Borland," and David noticed in the fuller light that the boy was shaking with emotion, his face



aglow with its eager excitement.

"Nonsense, my lad; what you going on about? I reckon I know somethin' about the price of hens—especially the brown kind. No, I won't take it back. She's worth that much to me jest to keep the yard red up o' glass."

"Oh, Mr. Borland—I wish I——"

"Tut, tut," David interrupted; "boys should take what's set before 'em, an' ask no questions—an' don't you tell nobody now, only your mother. Say, isn't that her callin'? Listen—it is, sure enough—that's your mother callin' you," and David took advantage of the interruption to unlatch an adjoining gate, slipping through to the outer lane, his face the more radiant of the two.

## VII

### "EFFECTUAL CALLING"

"I'll go with you as far as the door, dear—but the elders wouldn't want me to come in, of course." Thus spoke Mrs. Simmons to her son as the little family were seated at their evening meal. Very humble it was, indeed, with its strawberry jam, and bread and cheese, these themselves carefully measured out.

"Come away, Jessie; what's keeping you?" the mother called to the outer kitchen.

"I'll come in a minute, mother," the child's cheery voice replied. "I'm doing something," which was evident a little later when Jessie appeared, flushed and triumphant, bearing in one hand a little plate of well-browned toast, and in the other, her little fingers tingling with its heat, a large brown egg, evidently an unwonted luxury.

"Jessie, my child, what have you been doing?" the mother asked, peering rather closely at the dainties the child had laid upon her plate. "Oh, Jessie, you shouldn't have done it—you know we can't afford it, dear; we need to sell them all," she remonstrated, affection and gratitude nevertheless mingling in her voice.

"It was cracked, mother—it got a little fall," the child explained artfully.

"Jessie gave it a little fall; she always gets the biggest one cracked a little when there isn't much for supper—don't you, sister?" Harvey asked knowingly.

His sister blushed, but the reply she was struggling to provide was interrupted by the tinkling of the bell above the door in the little room without. This was a signal the mother was never slow to obey; customers were rare enough and must not be permitted to escape. Rising quickly, she made her way, her hands extended rather pitifully, to the little room that did duty as a store. Jessie bore the little delicacies back to the kitchen, lest they should cool in the interval.

The mother was back again in a minute, sighing as she resumed her seat.

"Did they buy anything, mother?" her son enquired.

"No, nothing—they wanted something we didn't have; I sent them to Ford's," referring to a more elaborate establishment on an adjoining street. "I was speaking about you going to the elders' meeting, Harvey—I'll go with you as far as the church, as I said. And you mustn't be afraid, son; they'll be glad you're going to join the church. And you must just answer what they ask you, the same as you do to me at home."

"Will they ask me the catechism, mother?"

"Some of the questions, most likely. Be sure you know 'effectual calling'—I think they nearly always ask 'effectual calling.'"

"I know that one all right," the boy answered. "I said it to Jessie four times last night—do you think there'll be others there to join the church, mother?"

"I couldn't say for sure, but it's likely there'll be some. I guess it's almost time to go now, dear," she said rising. "Jessie, you'll do the best you can if anybody comes in—I'll not be long."

"Will it be all right about—about you finding your way back, mother?" Harvey asked slowly, his voice full of solicitude.

"Of course, child, of course—you and Jessie are growing quite foolish about me. I'm not so bad as that," she protested. "Why, I can tell the day of the month, when I stand up close to the calendar—this is the 23d," she affirmed reassuringly, stepping out into the night with Harvey clinging close beside her.

Neither spoke much as they walked on towards the village church. Often, when she thought the boy's eyes were not upon her, the woman lifted her own upward to the silent stars; the night always rested her, something of its deep tranquillity passing into the tired heart that had known

so much of battle. And yet the long struggle had left upon her face the marks of peace rather than the scars of conflict. Of merriment, there were traces few or none, although sufficient provocation could recall the old-time sparkle to the eyes that had been so often dimmed; but something noble was there instead, a placid beauty such as comes alone from resignation, born of a heart that has found its rest in a Strength and Tenderness which dwell beyond the hills of time. If one could have caught a vision of that face, upturned to the radiant sky above her, the glimpse would have disclosed features of shapely strength, marked by great patience, the eyes full of brooding gentleness and love, conscious of the stern battle that composed her life, but conscious, too—and this it was that touched the face with passion—of invisible resources, of an unseen Ally that mysteriously bore her on.

"Let us go in here a minute," the mother said when they were almost at the church.

Harvey followed her, unquestioning. He knew whither her feet were turned, for he had often followed that well-marked path before, often with toddling feet. They entered the quiet churchyard, passing many an imposing monument, threading their way with reverent steps among the graves, careful that no disrespect should be shown the humblest sleeper. On they pressed, the dew glistening upon their shoes as they walked, their very breathing audible amid the oppressive silence. Gradually the woman's steps grew slower; and as she crept close to an unmarked grave that lay among the untitled mounds around it, the slender frame trembled slightly, drawing her poor shawl closer as she halted with downcast eyes, gazing at the silent sepulchre as it lay bathed in the lonely light of the new-risen moon. The boy stood behind her for a moment, then crept close to her, his hand gliding into hers; the woman's closed about it passionately, its warmth stealing inward to her heart.

"I think I remember when baby died," Harvey began, after they had stood long together by the grave; "I was asleep, wasn't I, mother? I remember in the morning."

"Yes, dear," said his mother, her voice tremulous; "yes, you were asleep—I was with baby when she died."

"Was father there too, mother?"

"Yes, Harvey, yes—pull that weed, dear; there, at the foot of baby's grave."

"Did father cry when baby died, mother?—like you did, mother?"

"I don't know, dear—yes, I think so. We'll have to bring some fresh flowers soon, won't we, Harvey?" the mother's lips trembling.

"Yes, mother, I'll pick some pretty ones to-morrow. Did father die long after baby, mother?" the boy pursuing the dread subject with the strange persistence wherewith children so often probe a secret wound.

"No, my son—yes, I mean; yes, Harvey, it was the same night, I think," her nervous fingers roving about Harvey's uncovered head.

"You *think*, mother?" the tone full of surprise.

"It was near the same time, Harvey," she answered hurriedly, unable to control her voice. "I can't tell you now, son—some day, perhaps. But mother was so sorry about baby that she hardly knows—don't ask me any more about it, Harvey," she suddenly pleaded; "never any more—some day I'll tell you all about your father, and all you've asked me so often. But don't ask me any more, my son—it makes mother feel bad," as she bent over to kiss the curious lips.

He could see the tears upon his mother's cheeks, and he inwardly resolved that her bidding should be done, silently wondering the while what this mysterious source of pain might be.

After a long silence the boy's voice was heard again: "Weren't baby's eyes shut when she died, mother?"

"Yes, darling—yes, they were closed in death," and the unforgetting heart beat fast at the tender memory.

"But they're open now, aren't they, mother?—and wasn't it God that did it?"

"Yes, Harvey, they're open now—God opened them, I'm sure."

"Couldn't He make people see all right before they're dead, mother? Couldn't He do it for you?"

"Yes, child—yes, He could if He wanted to."

"And why wouldn't He want to?" the boy asked wonderingly. "I'm sure He could; and I've been asking Him to do it for us Himself—if we couldn't get the money for the doctor to do it. Wasn't that right, mother?"

The moon, high now, looked down upon the lonely pair; they stood together, they two, beside the unresponsive grave, the elder face bathed in tears, the younger unstained by grief and wistful with the eager trust of childhood. The insignia of poverty was upon them both, and the boy

shivered slightly in the chill air; but the great romance and tragedy of life were interwoven there, love and hope and sorrow playing the parts they had so often played before. The woman stooped down amid the glistening grass and took her child into her arms, pressing him close to her troubled bosom, her face against his cheek, while her eyes roved still about his sister's grave.

"We must go on," she murmured presently. "Can you see a light in the church?"

"Did you join when you were just a girl, mother?" the boy asked, his lips close to her ear.

"Yes," she replied, "I was very young when I joined."

"Did father ever join the church?" Harvey went on, releasing his face to gaze about the sleeping city.

"No, dear—no, your father never was a member of the church," she said softly.

"Wasn't he good enough? Wouldn't they let him?" the lad asked wonderingly.

"They never—they never refused him," his mother faltered. "But he never thought he was good enough."

"But he was, wasn't he?" the boy pursued.

"Yes, dear—yes, he was once—he often was. He always meant to be good; he loved you, Harvey. And he made me promise that some day I would tell you why he thought—why he thought he wasn't good enough. He was afraid you might be the same; it was something he—something he couldn't help very well—I'll tell you some day, Harvey. Who's that?" she whispered excitedly, pointing towards a shadowy figure that was winding its way silently towards them.

His mother straightened up as she spoke, Harvey's hand tight clasped in hers again. The figure came swiftly on.

"It's Madeline," the boy said rather excitedly. "It's Madeline Borland—I guess she's going to join too."

Which proved indeed to be the case. "I knew it was you," the girl began, almost breathless as she came up to them. "The beadle said it was you, Harvey; Julia walked to the church with me, and she's waiting till I join. I thought perhaps we might go in together; I don't want to go in alone." Harvey could see in the dim light how eagerly the girl's eyes were searching his mother's face. He did not withdraw his hand, but unconsciously straightened himself in quiet dignity.

"This is my mother," he said simply, quite unfamiliar with the modes of introduction; "and that's Miss Borland, mother."

"Please don't say that," the girl interrupted. "I think you might call me Madeline; anyhow, I heard you call me Madeline to your mother," as she stepped gently around the foot of the grave and extended her hand to Harvey's mother. The older woman was evidently struck by the girl's beauty, by the simple grace and kindness of her manner. At any rate she held the outstretched hand rather long in hers, gazing on the sweet face upturned in the quivering light.

"And this—this is my sister's grave," Harvey's subdued voice added a moment later.

The girl said nothing, turning a solemn gaze upon the lowly mound. She had been long familiar with the quiet acre, but this was perhaps the first time she had realized the dread personality that clothes the grave with dignity.

"You haven't any treasure here, have you, Miss Madeline?" the mother asked timidly, when the pause had become almost painful.

"No, not any," the girl answered in hushed tones; "we haven't even got a plot—I never had a little sister," she affirmed, the moistening eyes turning now to Harvey's face. He looked down, then up again, and the soulful gaze was still fixed upon him. A kind of wave, strange and unfamiliar, seemed to bathe his soul; he did not wish to look longer, and yet a sort of spell seemed to keep his eyes fastened on her face. The girl's look was eloquent of much that neither he nor she was able to interpret, the first venture out to sea on the part of either soul.

"Doesn't it seem strange that we should meet here—here at your sister's grave," she said slowly, after the gaze of both had fallen. "Of course, we've often seen each other at school—but this is our first real meeting, isn't it?" she went on, gazing now towards the light that twinkled feebly in the distant church.

"Yes," he answered simply, "yes, it is—I guess we'd better go. Do you know the catechism?" he digressed, beginning to move forward, half leading his mother by the hand.

"No, I don't. Father doesn't believe in catechisms,—I wanted him to join along with me, but he said he wasn't good enough. Only he said he'd see—it would be just like him to come without my knowing."

"That's what my father said," Harvey interjected quickly; "and my mother says he was often good—only of course it's too late now," a little sigh escaping with the words.

"Perhaps they join them in heaven," the girl suggested in an awestruck voice. "Father says

that's where the real joining's done; if your father was good, I'm sure they'd join him," she concluded earnestly, looking into both the serious faces as she spoke.

"Don't you think maybe they would, mother?" pleaded the boy. The habit of a lifetime committed everything to the mother for final judgment.

"That's in God's hands, dear," the delicate face glancing upward through the mist. "I'm sure God would do it if He could—we'd better hurry on; they'll be waiting for us in the church."

The little procession wound its way back to the humble temple, Harvey still holding his mother by the hand, Madeline following close behind. And the shadowy home of the little child was left alone in the silence and the dark.

The youthful pair disappeared within the ivy-grown door. The mother, her dim eyes still more dimmed by tears, turned upon her homeward way, a troubled expression on her face. Why had she not told him more, she wondered to herself—something about his father, and the cruel appetite that had been his shame and his undoing? And her lips moved in trembling prayer that God would save her son from the blight of his father's life, that the dread heritage might never wrap his life in the same lurid flame.

## VIII *OF SUCH IS THE KINGDOM*

The predominant national type among the Glenallen folks was Scotch, and that distinctly. David Borland was one of the few exceptions; and the good folk about him had varied explanations for the baffling fact that he, American-bred though he was, had been one of the most prosperous men of the community. Some maintained that his remote ancestry must have come from the land o' cakes, even though he himself were oblivious to heaven's far-off goodness. Others contended that his long association with a Scottish neighbourhood had inoculated him with something of their distinctive power; while the profounder minds acknowledged frankly that the ways of Providence were mysterious, and that this lonely spectacle of an alien mortal, handicapped from birth and yet rising to affluence and distinction, was but an evidence of the Omnipotence that had wrought the miracle.

But if, in matters temporal, the historic Scotch stock of Glenallen had been compelled to divide the spoil with those of lesser origin, the control of affairs ecclesiastical was carefully reserved for Scottish hands alone. This went without saying. Over every door of church officialdom, and especially of the eldership, he who ran might read: "No Irish need apply,"—and the restriction included all to whom heaven had denied the separate advantage of Scottish birth or ancestry.

Wherefore it came about that the assembled elders who on this particular night awaited the arrival of applicants for church-membership were about as formidable to look upon as any half dozen of mere men could be. The dignity of their office filled the little room and the sense of responsibility sat gravely on every face. Two there were among them, newly elected to the office—the highest office in the gift of their fellow-men—and these two were fairly dripping with new-born solemnity. The older men, relaxing with the years, had discarded some of the sombre drapery that the newer elders wrapt about them with pious satisfaction.

Æneas Ramsay, one of the veterans, had ventured to ask one of the newly ordained if they would finish the threshing at his farm to-morrow. The question was put before the meeting had well begun, and was whispered in the ear at that; but the shock was easily seen on the new elder's face, who, recovering in a moment, informed his senior that they would discuss the matter after the "sederunt" was adjourned. Which purely Presbyterian term rolled from his lips with the luxurious unction known to Presbyterian elders, and to them alone.

The Session had been constituted, and good old Sandy McKerracher had led in prayer, the other elders standing through the exercise. Most of them had one foot upon a chair, the elbow resting on the knee and the chin upon the hand, before Sandy had concluded. In fact, the precaution of an adjoining chair was seldom overlooked by any when the Moderator named Sandy for this solemn duty, his staying powers famous for fifty years. The chief emphasis of his prayer was laid on the appeal to Infinite Love that none of the intending communicants might eat and drink damnation to themselves. This was a favourite request with all of them on such occasions—excepting one elder, and good Dr. Fletcher himself—and it was largely because of this that the Moderator was wont to see the Session constituted before the candidates were admitted

to the room.

"There's some bringin' their lines frae ither kirks," Robert MaCaig began, when the Moderator asked if there were any candidates for membership, "but there's nae mair nor twa to join on profession o' faith," he added, turning a despondent eye upon his brother elders. "We used to hae a dizzen or mair."

"Twa souls is an awfu' lot, Robert—twa never dyin' souls!" It was Geordie Nickle who sounded the hopeful note. He was the saintliest elder of them all, and the saintliest are the sanguinest. "We maun be thankfu' for twa mair to own the Saviour's name," he added reverently.

"But they're only bairns," Robert urged; "there's no' a muckle man among them."

"That's a' the better," returned Geordie; "the Maister was aye glad to hae the bairns come—ca' them in," he said, the slightest note of impatience in his voice.

A moment later Harvey and Madeline were ushered in, very shy and embarrassed, their downcast eyes fluttering upwards now and then to the stern faces fixed upon them.

There was considerable skirmishing of a preliminary sort, the elders' questions booming out solemnly like minute guns. Suddenly Robert McCaig proceeded to business.

"We'll tak a rin ower the fundamentals," he said, brandishing the age-worn term as though he had just invented it. "What is original sin?" he demanded; "tell the Moderator what's original sin."

"The Moderator kens fine himsel'," Andrew Fummerton whispered to the elder at his right, smiling grimly. But the man beside him scarcely heard, for every mind was intent with the process under way; scores of times had they witnessed it before, but it was again as new and absorbing as the prowess of a fisherman landing his reluctant prize.

There was a long silence, still as death. Suddenly Willie Gillespie fell to sneezing; he it was at whose farm the threshers had been that day, and who had been profanely questioned by Æneas Ramsay, as already told. Perhaps it was the day's dust that provoked the outburst; but, from whatever cause, the explosion was remarkable in its power and duration, one detonation following another with heightening tumult till the final booming was worthy of the noblest efforts of modern artillery. As the bombardment increased in power, the elders unconsciously braced themselves a little on their chairs, dismayed at the unseemly outbreak, considering the place and the occasion.

Harvey, for the life of him, could not forbear to smile; this human symptom was reassuring to him amid the statuesque solemnity of the room—it made original sin less ghostly, somehow, and he looked almost gratefully at the dynamic Willie. This latter worthy, recoiling like a smoking cannon, groped frankly for his nose as if apprehensive that it had been discharged; finding it uninjured, he repaired hastily to the tail pocket of a black coat that had sustained the dignity of a previous generation in the eldership, extracting therefrom a lurid pocket-handkerchief—that is, originally lurid—but now as variously bedecked as though the threshers had enjoyed its common ministry that day. Whereupon there ensued a succession of reports, inferior only to their mighty predecessors themselves, resembling nothing so much as the desultory firing that succeeds the main attack.

"Ye was askin' what might be original sin," Willie murmured apologetically from behind the faithful handkerchief, swishing it back and forward on his nose the while as though he were polishing the knocker on a door; he glanced apologetically towards Mr. McCaig as he spoke, anxious to repair the connection he had so violently disturbed.

"If my memory serves me," Robert returned severely, "if my memory serves me, that is what we was dealin' wi'—order's a graun' thing at a meetin' o' sic a kind as this," he added sternly, his gaze following the disappearing banner now being reëntombed.

"What is original sin, laddie? Mebbe the lassie can gie me the answer," he suggested, Harvey's silence impressing him as incurable.

"I'm not very sure," faltered Madeline—"was it the kind at the beginning?"

Robert McCaig had no desire to be unnecessarily severe; therefore turned enquiringly to his colleagues, implying that the verdict lay with them.

"Very good, child, very good," Dr. Fletcher said approvingly. "It's very hard to answer Mr. McCaig's question—he'd find it difficult enough himself. What is it, Harvey?" he asked, smiling at the boy, who seemed to have an idea ready.

"I'm not very sure either; but isn't it—isn't it the kind that doesn't wear off?" the lad ventured timidly, rather ashamed of the description after it was finished.

"Capital, my boy; first-rate!" the minister cried delightedly. "That's better than anything I learned in college. I don't believe any one could get much nearer to it than that—now we'll just pass from this," smiling around at the elders as he made the suggestion; "there are other things

more important—has any of the elders anything else to ask?"

It was not long before two or three of them were in full cry again. Stern questions, weighty interrogatives, suggestive of the deepest mysteries, were propounded to the youthful pair as complacently as though they were being asked how many pints make a gallon. One wanted to know their view of the origin of evil, following this by a suggestion that they should each give a brief statement of the doctrine of the Trinity. Another urged that they should describe in brief the process of regeneration. Still another asked if they could repeat the books of the Bible backwards—any one, he said, could do it the old way—and one good elder capped the climax by saying he would like to hear them tell how to reconcile the free agency of man with the sovereignty of God.

But just at this juncture Geordie Nickle rose, his face beaming with tenderness, and addressed the chair.

"They're fashin' the bairns, Moderator," he said gently. "Wull ye no' let me pit a wee bit question or twa till them mysel'?"

The Moderator was evidently but too well pleased, and his nod gave Geordie the right of way. The old man moved to where Harvey and Madeline were seated, taking his stand partially behind them, his hands resting gently on the heads of both.

"I mind fine the nicht I joined the kirk mysel'," he began; "it was the winter my mither gaed awa, an' I think God answered her prayer, to mak her glad afore she went—but the elders askit me some o' thae vera questions—an' I kent then hoo far they was frae the soul," he said gravely, looking compassionately on the faces now upturned to his own. "Sae I'm juist gaein' to ask ye what I was wishin' they'd ask frae me. Div ye no' love the Saviour, lassie—and div ye no' ken He's the son o' God?" he asked reverently, tenderly. "Div ye no' ken that, lassie?—an' the same wi' yirsel', my laddie?—I'm sure ye're baith trustin' Him, to the savin' o' the soul; are ye no', bairnies?" and the old man's face shone as the great truth kindled his own simple soul.

Harvey and Madeline nodded eager assent, a muffled affirmative breaking from their lips.

"An' ye ken the Saicrament's juist the meetin'-place where He breaks bread wi' His children, and where they say, afore a' the folk, that they love Him, and trust Him, an' want to be aye leal an' true till Him, and show forth His death till He come—div ye no' ken it that way?" the kindly voice went on, his hands still resting on the youthful heads.

Harvey answered first: "That's what I'd like to be—that's what I want to do," he said simply.

"I want to, too—I'm the same as Harvey," Madeline faltered sweetly.

Then Geordie Nickle straightened himself and turned towards Dr. Fletcher. "Moderator," he said earnestly, "we canna mak the way mair open nor the Maister made it; an' I move that these twa be received intil full communion, an' their names—the Clerk kens what they are—be added to the roll o' communicants in good standin' i' the kirk."

This was carried without further protest and ordered to be done forthwith.

## IX

### *A BELATED ENQUIRER*

The youthful candidates had hardly left the room when the beadle, compared with whose solemnity the gravity of the elders was frivolity itself, announced that a further candidate was in waiting.

"It's Mr. Borland," he said in an awed whisper—"Mr. David Borland. He wants to jine, Mr. Moderator," the beadle informed the court in much the same tone as is employed when death-warrants must be read. "An' it'll be on profession," he added, unable to forego the sensational announcement, "for he never jined no church afore." Then the beadle retreated with the mien that becomes an ecclesiastical sheriff.

An instant later he reappeared with Mr. Borland, whom he left standing in the very centre of the room. The elders gazed wonderingly at the unexpected man.

"Dinna break oot again," Robert McCaig whispered to the now tranquil Willie, fearful of another explosion; "it's no' often a kirk session has sic a duty to perform," and Willie responded by rising slightly and sitting down hard upon the contents of his coat-tail pocket, as though the fuse for the explosion were secreted there.

David looked round upon the elders, in no wise abashed; he even nodded familiarly to two or three with whom he was more intimately acquainted. "It's a fine evening," he informed one nearest him, to the evident amazement of his brethren.

The usual process began, one or two undertaking preliminary examination.

"Have you ever joined before, Mr. Borland?" one of the elders asked him after a little.

"Never joined a church before—haven't been much of a joiner," David answered cheerfully; "joined the Elks once in the States when I was a young fellow—an' they made it pretty interestin' for me," dispensing a conciliatory smile among the startled elders as he turned to catch another question.

"What maks ye want to join, Mr. Borland?" enquired one of the new elders, hitherto silent. "What's yir motive, like? Hae ye got the root o' the matter in ye, div ye think?" he elaborated formally.

David started somewhat violently, turning and looking his questioner full in the face. "Have I got what in me?" he cried—"what kind of a root? That's more than I can say, sir; I don't catch your meanin'."

Dr. Fletcher interposed. "You're not familiar with our terms, Mr. Borland," he said reassuringly. "Mr. Aiken only wants to know why you feel impelled to become a member of the church—perhaps you could answer the question when it's put that way?"

David's first sign of answer was to stoop and pick up a rather shapeless hat lying at his feet. This symptom decidedly alarmed the elders, several of them sitting up suddenly in their chairs as though fearful that so interesting a subject might escape. But David had evidently seized it only for purposes of reflection, turning it round and round in his hands, his eyes fixed upon the floor.

"It was a queer kind of a reason," he began abruptly, clearing his throat with all the resonance of a trumpet—"but mebbe it ain't too bad a one after all. It was Madeline," he finally blurted out, staring at all the brethren in turn. "I knew she was goin' to join—an'—an' I wanted to keep up with her. If she's agoin' to heaven, I'm agoin' too—an' I reckon this here's the way," he added, feeling that the phraseology was not too ill-timed. Then he waited.

"Very good, Mr. Borland—very good," the Moderator pronounced encouragingly. "But about—about your own soul. I'm sure we all hope you—you—realize your need, Mr. Borland. It's a sense of sin we all need, you know. I'm sure you feel you've been a sinner, Mr. Borland?" and the good man turned the most brotherly of faces upon the applicant.

"Oh, yes," responded David agreeably; "oh, yes, I'm all right that way—I've been quite a sinner, all right. The only thing I'm afeart of is I've been 'most too good a sinner. I wisht I wasn't quite so handy at it," he went on gravely. "I reckon I've been about as bad as—as any of the deacons here," glancing towards the open-mouthed about him as he made the comparison, "an' some o' them's got quite a record, if all reports is true. I traded horses onct with Robert there," nodding familiarly in the direction of Mr. McCaig, "an' the first time we traded, he sinned pretty bad—but that's nothin'; bygones is bygones—an' anyhow, the second time we traded, I sinned pretty bad myself. So I'm all right that way, Doctor," he again assured the Moderator, making a last desperate effort to tie his hat into a knot.

"I didna ken the mare was spavined, Moderator," Mr. McCaig broke in, gasping with emotion; "an' a meetin' o' session's no place for discussin' sic like matters onyway," he appealed vehemently. "Thae week-day things has nae richt to be mentioned here—a meetin' o' elders is no' a cattle fair," and Robert looked well pleased with this final stroke.

"That's all right, Robert, that's all right," David returned in his most amiable tone; "don't get excited, Robert—we both traded with our eyes open. An' all these things makes life, anyhow—they all go to the weavin' of the web, as I say sometimes, an' besides——"

But Robert's blood was up.

"Onyhow, I didna swear," he exclaimed in a rising tone; "I didna say damn, Mr. Moderator—an' the horse-doctor tellt me as how the candidate afore us said damn mair nor aince when he found oot about the spavin. He'd mak a bonnie member o' the kirk!" and the elder's face glowed with righteous indignation.

The Moderator cast about to avert the storm. "Maybe he was taken unawares," he interposed charitably; "any one might be overtaken in a fault. Did you, Mr. Borland—did you say what Mr. McCaig says you did?" as he turned a very kindly face on the accused.

David was more intently employed than ever with his hat. "I won't say but what I mebbe did," he acknowledged, an unfamiliar confusion in his words. "You see, sir, I should a knowed a spavin when I seen it; the signs is awful easy told—an' that's what made me mad. So I said I was a fool—an' I said Robert here was an elder. An' I likely said both of us was—was that kind of a fool an' an elder, the kind he says I said—it's an awful handy describin' word," he added, nodding respectfully towards the Moderator's chair.

"So I have heard, Mr. Borland," the Moderator replied, smiling reproachfully nevertheless,

"though I think there are others just as good. However, if that is the worst sin you've been guilty of, I wouldn't say you're beyond the pale."

"Oh, there's lots of things I've done, far worse than that," David exclaimed vigorously. "I don't allow that's a sin at all—that's just a kind of a spark out o' the chimney. I reckon nearly everybody, even ministers, says that—only they don't spell it just the same. I'd call that just a kind of splutter—an' everybody splutters sometimes. Robert there, he says 'bless my soul' when he gets beat on a trade—but he means just the same as me. Oh, yes," he went cheerfully on, "there's lots o' worse things than that against me. There's lots o' little weak spots about me; an' I'll tell them if you like—if the deacons'll do the same," he proposed, looking earnestly around for volunteers.

There was no clamour of response, and it fell to Geordie Nickle again to break the silence.

"These is no' the main things, David," he began solemnly. "Tell us, div ye trust the Saviour wi' yir soul?"

David halted, the gravity of the question shading his face. "I think—I think I do," he ventured after a long pause. "I wouldn't trust it to no one else. My mother taught me that."

"An' div ye want to follow Him, an' to let yir licht shine upon the world? Div ye want to be a guid soldier, an' wull ye try it, wi' His grace?" the old man asked tenderly.

David's voice was very low. "I'm not very far on the road," he said falteringly, "an' I'm afeared there ain't much light in me—but I'd try an' do my best," he concluded earnestly.

The venerable elder proceeded with his gentle art, leading the belated enquirer on from stage to stage, seeking to discover and disclose the hidden treasures of the soul. He was never slow to be convinced of goodness in any heart that he thought sincere, and it was not long till he turned to the Moderator, proposing, as before, that this new name should likewise be enrolled among those of the faithful.

But one or two thought the examination hardly doctrinal enough, nor carried sufficiently far afield.

"Perhaps Mr. Borland would give us a word or two regarding his views on the subject of temperance," suggested Morris Hall. He was a comparatively modern elder; in fact, he had been but recently reclaimed, one of the first-fruits of a spring revival, himself snatched from the vortex of intemperance and correspondingly severe upon all successors in his folly. For largeness of charity, as a rule, is to be found only with those who have been tempted and prevailed.

"I'm not terrible well up on temperance," David began placidly; "but I don't mind givin' you my views—oh, no, not at all."

Then he sank into silence, and the Moderator had finally to prompt him. "Very well, then, Mr. Borland, give us your views on the subject."

"Well," David began hesitatingly, "my views on the subject of temperance is terrible simple. I really hardly ever take anything—never touch it at all except it's before or after meals," he assured the brethren earnestly, the younger men frowning a little, one or two of the older nodding approvingly. But none seemed to remark how generous was the margin this time-table provided for a man of moist propensities.

"Sometimes, when I run acrost an old friend, if he looks kind o' petered out," David went on sympathetically, "sometimes then I have a view or two—most always soft stuff, though," he enlarged, looking hopefully towards his spiritual betters; "most generally they takes the same view as me," he informed them gravely; "my view is to take it an' let it alone—I do both—only I never do them both at the same time," he added seriously. "You see, when I'm well it doesn't hurt me, and when I'm sick—why, mebbe I need somethin'. That's one o' my views. An', oh, yes"—he hurried on as if glad that he had not forgotten, "I always take a little when a new century comes in—I took a little when the clock struck 1900; it's been a custom for quite awhile in our family, always to take a little when a new century comes in—a man has to be careful it doesn't grow on him, you see. So I confine it pretty much to them two occasions. An' I think them's pretty much all my views, gentlemen, on the subject o' liquors. The less views a man has on them, the better. It's the worst plague there is—an' I'm gettin' more set agin' it all the time," and David nodded to the elders in quite an admonitory way.

But these views, simple and candid though they were, were far from satisfactory to Mr. Morris Hall, who violently declaimed against such laxity, and quoted statistics concerning poorhouses, jails and lunatic asylums in much the same tone, and with the same facility, that a boy exhibits when quoting the multiplication table. Mr. Hall concluded with an appeal to David's sense of shame.

This was rather much for the gentle candidate, familiar as he was with the impeacher's



record in days that were yet hardly dry.

"There's one thing sure, anyhow," he returned hotly, in his intensity of feeling. "I didn't never have to be toted home on a stone-boat—that's one thing certain." This was a reference to authentic history of no ancient sort, and Mr. Hall's relapse to silence was as final as it was precipitate.

Whereupon Geordie Nickle again reverted to his motion that Mr. Borland be received. He briefly reviewed the case, emphasizing the obvious simplicity and candour that had been remarked by all, while admitting David's evident unfamiliarity with the formulas and doctrines of the church.

"But there's mony a man loves flowers wha disna ken naethin' aboot botany," he pleaded; "an' there's mony a soul luv'in' Christ, an' trustin' till Him, wha kens little or naethin' aboot theology."

This view seemed to prevail with the majority, and the proposal of the kindly elder would doubtless have been speedily endorsed, had it not been for the protest from David himself. "I'm terrible thankful for your kindness to a lame duck like me—but I believe I'd jest as soon wait awhile," he said. "I'll try an' follow up the best I can. But Dick Phin's comin' to visit me next week—Dick's an old crony I haven't seen for a dog's age. An' besides, Robert there has kind o' set me thinkin'; an' I jest minded Tom Taylor's comin' on Monday to try an' trade back the three-year-old he got in August. So I think mebbe I'd better wait. But I'll follow up the best I can."

## X

### *SHELTERING SHADOWS*

Two chestnut steeds, securely tied, looked reproachfully at the retreating figures as Madeline and her father pressed on beneath the shadow of the great oaks that looked down upon the merry picnickers. For Glenallen's Sunday-school scholars were *en fête* beneath them. Very gladly did these mighty guardians of the grove seem to welcome back the happy throng as each returning summer brought the festal day. And very tenderly did they seem to look down upon the varied pleasure-seekers that gathered beneath their whispering branches; children, in all the helplessness of childhood, mingling with other toddlers whose was the helplessness of age—little tots whose toilsome journey was at hand, and patriarchs whose weary pilgrimage was almost past. Many were there whose fathers' fathers, snatching a brief truce from their struggle with the poverty and stress of early days, had rested and rollicked as only pioneers know how; masters and men, their respective ranks forgotten, had sat side by side about the teeming board, or entered the lists together as they flung the bounding caber, or raced across the meadow-sward, or heaved the gleaming quoits, or strained the creaking cable in the final and glorious tug of war.

As David Borland and his daughter drew near to the central group of picnickers, they found them employed in a very savoury task. They were emptying the baskets one by one, the good things translated promiscuously to the ample table around which all were about to take their places. Pies of every sort there were, cakes of every imaginable brand and magnitude, sandwiches, fruits, pickles, hams that would waddle, fowls that would cackle, tongues that would join the lowing choir, nevermore—all these conspired to swell the overflowing larder.

Suddenly David's eyes fell on a face in the distance, a face for which he had long had a peculiar liking. It was Geordie Nickle's, the old man sitting apart on a little mound, his kindly eyes bright with gladness at the lively scene around him.

"You go off an' have a swing, Madeline," he said; "I'm goin' to have a chat with my friend Geordie here—I'll see you in a little while."

Madeline scarcely heard him nor did any response escape her lips. For other words had fallen on her ears, hot and tingling now with shame and indignation.

"Isn't this the limit," a jibing voice was saying; "isn't this the human limit?—rhubarb tarts! Three of them! Who wants to buy a tin plate?" the voice went jeeringly on. It was Cecil Craig's voice, and he held the humble contributions aloft as he spoke.

"There must be some awful rich folks here to-day—I guess these tarts are meant for the minister. That's all there is in the basket—so I guess some one must keep a rhubarb farm; look at the size of them—big as a full moon! I believe I'll give them to my horse," he cried with a contemptuous laugh. "Have you any idea who sent these, Harvey?" turning with the question to the conscious boy who stood on the outer edge of the circle.

A few joined in thoughtless laughter. But it was no laughing matter for poor Harvey, trying

now to steal alone and unnoticed from among the throng. Yet not alone; for one humble little form clung close beside him, retreating as rapidly as he, her face flushed and drawn. They had taken but a few steps when Jessie's hand stole caressingly into her brother's, the little legs trying eagerly to keep pace with his ardent stride.

"Don't mind, Harvey, don't mind," she said soothingly. "He's just as mean as he can be. It's all because he's rich—an' he thinks we're poor. He doesn't know how good mother is at makin' tarts, or he wouldn't talk like that."

Harvey glanced at his sister as though he scarcely saw her. His eyes, usually so mild, were now almost terrible in their fiery anger, and his hand closed so tightly over his sister's that she cried out in pain. Once he looked swiftly back and caught a glimpse of Cecil leering at him in the distance; he fixed his teeth tight together and strode swiftly on.

"Aren't you goin' back, Harvey?" Jessie enquired a little wistfully. "I'm real hungry, Harvey—an' I saw chickens there, an' there was some peaches too—they looked awful nice," she said earnestly.

"Going back!" Harvey almost shouted. "No, you bet I'm not going back—and neither are you; I'd starve before I'd touch a bite of their stuff. A lot of stuck-up things," he cried passionately, "and you and me cast out everywhere because we're poor! I'll show them yet—you just see if I don't; if I can get half a chance—and to think the way poor mother worked at them, and she thought she was making something real nice too, and——"

"An' she put sugar in them too, Harvey—an' she hardly ever puts sugar in anything now. She put lots of butter an' sugar in, for I saw her. But ain't you goin' back, Harvey?—there's lemonade, you know, a whole boiler full of it. I tasted it and it was lovely," she assured him, looking wistfully up into the angry face.

"The young whelp!" Harvey muttered wrathfully; "hasn't any more brains than a handspike—hasn't got anything but a rich, proud father—I'll fix him yet, you see if I don't." Suddenly he stopped, standing still as the trees around him. "Hello!" he said musingly, then began whistling significantly.

"What's the matter, Harvey?" asked the mystified Jessie.

"Oh, nothing—nothing at all. In fact, everything's all right—see that sorrel horse tied to that hemlock over there? It's Cecil Craig's."

"Yes," replied Jessie wonderingly; "it's kickin' with its legs," she added informatively—"what's it doin' that for, Harvey?"

"Flies," replied the other absently. "I say, Jessie," he began in quite a different tone, his brow clearing like a headland when the fog is lifting, "you better go on back and get your dinner—don't eat too much," he added cautiously, for Jessie, her hand still tight in his, had already turned right about face, her radiant gaze fixed on the distant tables; "and you know mother doesn't want you to take any stuffin'—you'll have to take castor oil if you eat any stuffin', Jessie."

"Won't you go, Harvey?" his sister asked eagerly, supremely indifferent to matters medicinal; she was already pressing onward, half leading her brother by the hand. The boy started to refuse vigorously. Suddenly, however, he seemed to change his mind. "I'll go back with you for a minute, Jessie—just a minute, mind. I'll get you a seat if I can; but I'll have to come right away again. I've got—I've got to do something."

The hungry Jessie asked no further information, well content, poor child, to regain the treat she had so nearly lost. Her hurrying legs twinkled in the sun as she led the way, Harvey following, half reluctantly, back to the appetizing scene. The boy looked at no one as he mingled with the excited throng; nor did many remark his return, so all absorbed are youthful minds in one pursuit alone when that pursuit leads to the dinner-table. This pleased Harvey well; and, confident of their indifference, he took his place beside the three bulky tarts that had been the text for Cecil's scorn.

Good Dr. Fletcher's special care, at such a fête as this, was to see that all heads were reverently bowed while grace was being said. And so they were on this occasion, all but Harvey's. Availing himself of the opportune devotion, he thrust the unoffending tarts roughly within the shelter of his coat, buttoning it tightly over them, quite careless of results. Then, wild chaos and savage attack succeeding the reverent calm, while his ravenous companions fell upon the viands like starving animals, he quietly withdrew, holding his coat carefully about him as he went.

David Borland and the venerable Geordie Nickle were deep in conversation as Harvey passed them by at a little distance, finding his way back to the outer fringe of woods.

"Yon's an uncommon laddie," Geordie remarked to David, his staff pointed in the direction of

the disappearing boy.

"Who? Oh, yes—that's Harvey. You're right, Mr. Nickle; the grass doesn't grow very green under Harvey's feet. He works for me, you know—does a little drivin' between four and six."

"Did ye hear about the minister, David? He was sair vexed wi' Mr. Craig; he went till him, ye ken, to get a wee bit help for the laddie's mither—her eyesicht's failin', it seems. An' Mr. Craig wudna gie him onythin'."

David was busy kicking to pieces a slab of dead wood at his feet. "That man Craig makes me mad," he said warmly—"thinks he owns the earth 'cause he's got a little money. He got the most of it from his father, anyhow—he hasn't got brains enough himself to make his head ache. An' it looks like the young cub's goin' to be a chip o' the old block; you can see it stickin' right out of him now," he declared, nodding towards the blustering Cecil, who was flinging his orders here and there.

"I was thinkin' ower the maitter, David," the old man went on quietly; "I was thinkin' mebbe I might gie the puir buddy a wee bit help mysel'—I hae a wee bit siller, ye ken, an' I haena vera muckle to dae wi't. Div ye think ye cud see about it, David?—about sendin' his mither till the city doctor, ye ken? I cud gie the money to yirsel', an' naebody need ken about it but us twa." Poor Geordie looked half ashamed as he made the offer; such is the fashion of his kind.

"It's mighty clever of you," David answered, smiling a little curiously, "and I'd be terrible glad to fix it for you—only I happen to know it's fixed already. Just found that out to-day. A fellow sent the money to them—some fellow that doesn't want any one to know. But it's just as good of you, all the same, Mr. Nickle."

"Oh, aye, aye, I ken," Geordie responded enigmatically, "aye—juist that."

"Yes, he's a mighty smart boy," David resumed quickly, to hide a little embarrassment. "He works like a beaver all day; steady as a clock and bright as a dollar. It's a darned shame he hasn't got a better chance—that boy'd be heard from yet if he got some eddication," he concluded, opening the big blade of his jack-knife and beginning operations on a leafy limb he had just broken off.

Geordie's face was full of sympathetic interest. "Div ye ken, David, I've been thinkin' the same about the laddie. Dr. Fletcher tellt me about him first—an' I've been enquirin', an' watchin' him a wee bit in a canny kind o' a way, since the nicht he jined the kirk. An' I've got a wee bit plan, David—I've got a wee bit plan."

"Yes, Mr. Nickle?" David responded encouragingly, throwing away the leafy limb and sitting squarely round.

"It's no' quite a fittin' time to mak ony promises," the cautious Scotchman went on, seeing that David expected him to continue. "But ye ken, David, I hae neither wife nor bairns noo; they're a' wi' God," he added, bowing reverently, "an' yon laddie kind o' minds me o' wee Airchie—Airchie died wi' the scarlet fever. An' I've been thinkin', David, I've been thinkin' I never spent the siller that wud hae gone for Airchie's schoolin'. Ye ken, David, div ye no'?"

David knew not how to answer. But his heart was more nimble than his lips. "I was awful sorry when you lost your little boy," he said, his eyes upon the ground; "I never had a son myself—so you're better off nor me."

## XI

### *FOOD FOR THOUGHT*

One pair of eyes, at least, had watched Harvey's unostentatious retreat from the clamorous throng about the table. And no sooner had Madeline noted his departure than she quietly slipped into the vacant place beside his sister, who welcomed her with a smile as generous as the absorbing intensity of the moment would permit. Madeline's cheeks were still rosy with the flush of angry resentment that Cecil's cruel words had started. Twice had he taken his place beside her at the table, and twice she had moved away; even now his eyes seemed to follow her, casting conciliatory glances that found no response.

The picnic feast was finally concluded—but not till sheer physical inability proclaimed a truce—and Madeline and Jessie withdrew together.

"Let's go down into the gully, Jessie," Madeline suggested, pointing towards a slight ravine a little way in the distance; "I think we'd find flowers there, perhaps."

Jessie was agreed. "But I wish Harvey would come," she said; "I wonder where he is—he went

away just when we began our dinner."

"Oh, he's all right," replied the older girl. "I saw him going away—he'll be back in a little."

"An' I didn't see—I didn't see the rhubarb tarts mother made," Jessie continued, her mind still busy with the missing. "You don't suppose Cecil Craig threw them away, do you?" she asked, suddenly fearful; "he's so mean."

"Don't let's speak about him at all," Madeline interrupted. "The tarts are all right," she went on consolingly. "I saw one boy very—very busy with them," she concluded dexterously. "Besides," she added, the connection not so obvious as her tone would indicate, "I've got something to say to you, Jessie—sit down; sit down beside me here."

Jessie obeyed and they sank together on a mossy mound, a few stately oaks and maples whispering welcome; for they were jealous trees, and had begrudged the central grove its throng of happy children, the merry scene just visible from their topmost boughs.

"I've got awful good news for you, Jessie," Madeline began ardently, after a momentary struggle as to how she should introduce the subject.

"What's it about?" Jessie asked, her eyes opening wide.

"It's about your mother," answered Madeline.

Jessie looked gravely at the other.

"Anything about the tarts?" she enquired earnestly, her mind still absorbed with the tragedy.

"No, no—of course it's not about anything like that. It's about her eyes—I'm pretty sure they're going to get well."

Jessie's own were dancing. "Who said so? Why? Tell me quick."

"Well, I know all about everything," Madeline replied, importantly. "I know about you wanting to take her to the doctor in the city—and she's going to go," she affirmed conclusively.

"When?" Jessie demanded swiftly.

"Any time—to-morrow, if you like," Madeline returned triumphantly, withdrawing her hand from her bosom and thrusting the crisp notes into Jessie's; "my father gave me all that money to-day—and it's to pay the doctor—it's to pay everything," she amended jubilantly. "Only father doesn't want any one to know who did it—when do you think she'll go, Jessie?" she asked, a little irrelevantly, for matters had taken a rather unexpected turn.

Jessie was staring at her through swimming eyes, the import of the great moment too much for her childish soul. Her mother's face passed before her, beautiful in its tender patience; and all the pathos of the long struggle, so nearly over now, broke upon the little mind that knew not what pathos meant except by the slow tuition of a sorrow-clouded life. Poor child, she little knew by what relentless limitations even great city doctors may be bound.

"Is it because you're glad, Jessie?" Madeline enquired in a reverent sort of voice, dimly diagnosing the paradox of human joy. But Jessie answered never a word; her gaze was fixed downward now upon the money, such a sum of it as she had never seen before in her poor meagre life. And the big tears fell on the unconscious things lying in her lap, the poor dead symbols baptized and quickened by the living tokens of human love and feeling.

"Oh, yes," she sobbed at last, "it's 'cause I'm glad—mother'll be able to see the flowers now, an' the birds, an' everything—she loves them so. An' poor Harvey won't have to spend his raspberry money; he hasn't any winter coat, but now—I'm nearly as glad for Harvey as I am for mother," she broke off, suddenly drying her eyes, the ever-ready smile of childhood returning to the playground from which the tears had driven it.

"What makes you so glad about Harvey?" Madeline broke in, hailing the returning smile with one no less radiant of her own.

"Because—because mother was sorrier about Harvey than anything else. You see, he's nearly ready to—to be a scholar. An' mother always said she'd be able to do everything for Harvey—everything like that, you know—if she could only see. Our Harvey's goin' to be a great man—if he gets a chance," she prophesied solemnly, looking straight into Madeline's face, the bills quite forgotten now, one or two of them having fallen among the leaves upon the grass.

"Mind you, our Harvey isn't always goin' to be poor—mother says there's lots of rich people gets poor, an' lots of poor people gets rich. An' that's what Harvey's goin' to be—an' mother an' me's goin' to help him," the little loyalist proclaimed, her face beaming with confidence.

This opened up quite a vein of conversation, to which the youthful minds addressed themselves for a serious season. Finally, forgetting all philosophic matters, Jessie exclaimed: "I wonder where Harvey is—he doesn't often leave me alone like this. Won't he be glad though?—I'm goin' to find Harvey."

Little did either of them dream how the object of their wonderings had been employed while they were sequestered in their peaceful nook.

Having left the table, Harvey loitered about till varying sounds assured him that the meal he had abandoned was completed. Then he strode along till he stood beside the drowsy sorrel, still doing spasmodic battle with the flies. Unbuttoning his coat, he removed the tarts and hid them in a hollow log; their confinement had not improved them much. Then he stood a while, pondering. A relieved and purposeful expression at length indicated that his mind was formed. But considerable time elapsed before a wandering urchin hove in sight—and such a being was absolutely necessary. The boy who thus suddenly appeared was evidently bent on an inspection of the animal, looking even from afar with the critical eye that universal boyhood turns upon a horse. The youngster drifted nearer and nearer; he was contriving to chew a slab of tamarack gum and eat an apple at one and the self-same time, which tempered his gait considerably.

Harvey nimbly slipped the noose in the bridle rein, the strap dangling free; the horse was quite oblivious, trying to snatch a little sleep between skirmishes.

"Hello there!" Harvey called to the boy, "come here—I want you to run a message."

The boy responded with a slightly quickened pace, and was almost at his side when he suddenly stood still and emitted a dreary howl.

"What's the matter?" Harvey asked, slightly alarmed, the sorrel waking completely and looking around at the newcomer.

"I bit my tongue," the urchin wailed, disgorging his varied grist as he spoke. The dual process had been too complicated for him and he cautiously pasted the gum about a glass alley, storing both away in his breeches pocket. Then he bent his undivided powers upon the apple.

"That'll soon be all right," Harvey assured him—"rub it with your gums," he directed luminously. "Don't you see that horse is loose?—well, I want you to run back and tell Cecil Craig his horse has got untied; don't tell him who said so."

"What'll you give me?" enquired he of the wounded tongue, extending the injured member with telescopic fluency, squinting one eye violently down to survey it. "Is it bleedin'?" he asked tenderly.

"No—'t isn't even cut," Harvey responded curtly, examining it seriously, nevertheless, with the sympathy that belongs to boyhood. "Let it back—you look like a jay-bird."

The other withdrew it reluctantly, the distorted eye slowly recovering its orbit till it rested on Harvey's face. "What'll you give me?" he asked again, making another savage onslaught on the apple.

Harvey fumbled in his pocket, rather dismayed. But his face lightened as his hand came forth. "I'll give you this tooth-brush," he said, holding out a sorely wasted specimen. "I found it on the railroad track—some one dropped it, I guess. Or I'll give you this garter," exposing a gaudy circlet of elastic, fatigued and springless; "I found it after the circus moved away."

The smaller boy's face lit up a moment at reference to the sacred institution whose departure had left life so dreary.

"Charlie Winter found a shirt-stud an' half a pair of braces there," he said sympathetically; "he gave the shirt-stud to his sister, but he wears the braces hisself," he added, completing the humble tale.

"Which'll you take?" Harvey enquired abruptly, fearful lest the sorrel might awaken to his liberty.

"I don't want that," the younger said contemptuously, glancing at the emaciated tooth-brush; "we've got one at home—a better one than that. An' I don't wear garters," he added scornfully, glancing downwards at his bare legs, "except on Sundays, an' I've got one for that—the left leg never comes down. Haven't you got anything else?" he queried, looking searchingly in the direction of Harvey's pocket.

"No, that's all I've got," returned Harvey as he restored the tooth-brush to its resting-place, still hopeful, however, of the garter. "It'll make an awful good catapult," he suggested seriously.

"Let me see it," said the bargainer.

Harvey handed it to him. "I'll hold your apple," he offered.

"Oh, never mind," the other replied discreetly; "I'll just hold it in my mouth," the memory of similar service and its tragic outcome floating before him. The boy took the flaming article in his hand and drew it back, snapping it several times against the sole of his uplifted foot.

"All right," he said, withdrawing what survived of the apple, "it's a little mushy—but I'll take it."

The errand having been repeated in detail, the youngster departed to perform it, an apple

stem—but never a core—falling by the wayside as he went. Harvey gazed towards the brow of the hill till he caught the first glimpse of a hurrying form, then slipped in behind the tree, carefully concealed.

Cecil Craig came apace, for he could see the dangling strap at a little distance. Hurriedly retying the horse, he was about to retrace his steps when he suddenly felt himself in the grip of an evidently hostile hand, securely attached from behind to the collar of his coat.

"Now you can ask me those questions if you like," he heard a rather hoarse voice saying; and writhing round he looked into a face flaming with a wrath that was rekindling fast.

Young Craig both squirmed and squealed; but the one was as fruitless as the other. Harvey was bent on dealing faithfully with him; and lack of spirit, rather than of strength, made the struggle a comparatively unequal one. After the preliminary application was completed, he dragged Craig to where he had hidden the rhubarb tarts, still crestfallen from solitary confinement.

"Why don't you make some more jokes about the tarts my mother made?" Harvey enquired hotly; "you were real funny about them just before dinner." This reference to his mother seemed to fan the flame of his wrath anew, and another application was the natural result.

"Let me go," Cecil gasped. "I was only joking—ouch! I was just joking, I say," as he tried to release himself from Harvey's tightening grip.

"So'm I," retorted Harvey; "just a piece of play, the same as yours—only we're kind o' slow at seeing the fun of it, eh?" shaking the now solemn humourist till his hair rose and fell—"I'd have seen the point a good deal quicker if my mother hadn't worked so hard," he went on, flushing with the recollection and devoting himself anew to the facetious industry. "Pick up those tarts," he thundered suddenly.

Cecil looked incredulously at his antagonist. One glance persuaded him and he slowly picked up one by the outer edge.

"Take 'em all—the whole three," Harvey directed in a low tense tone. Which Cecil immediately did, not deeming the time opportune to refuse.

"Now give them to your horse," Harvey said; "you know you said you'd a good mind to feed him with them."

"I won't do it," Cecil declared stoutly. "I'll fight before I do it."

Harvey smiled. "It won't do to have any fighting," he said amiably. "I'll just give them to him myself—you better come along," he suggested, tightening his grip as he saw Cecil glancing fondly towards the brow of the hill, visions of a more peaceful scene calling him to return.

Harvey escorted his captive to the horse's head; the equine was now wide awake and taking a lively interest in the animated interview; such preparations for mounting he had never seen before. But he was evidently disinclined to be drawn into the argument; for when Harvey held the rhubarb pie, rather battle-worn now, beneath his nose, he sniffed contemptuously and turned scornfully away.

Cecil, somewhat convalescent, indulged a sneering little laugh. "Your little joke don't work," he said. "Pompey won't look at 'em."

"You'll wish he had, before you're through with them," Harvey returned significantly—"you've got to eat them between you."

"Got to what?—between who?" Cecil gasped, years of grammatical instruction wasted now as the dread prospect dawned grim and gray; "I don't understand you," he faltered, turning remarkably white for one so utterly in the dark.

"It doesn't need much understanding," Harvey returned laconically. "Go ahead."

Then the real struggle began; compared to this difference of opinion, and the physical demonstration wherein it found expression, the previous encounter was but as kittens' frolic in the sun.

The opening argument concluded after a protracted struggle, Harvey emerged uppermost, still pressing his hospitality upon the prostrate Cecil. "May as well walk the plank," he was saying; "besides, they're getting dryer all the time," he informed him as a friend.

"Let me up," gurgled Cecil. Harvey promptly released him; seated on a log, the latter began to renew the debate.

"I've had my dinner," he pleaded; "an' I ate all I could."

"A little more won't hurt you—always room at the top, you know. Anyhow it's just dessert," responded Harvey, holding out one of the tarts. Whereat Cecil again valiantly refused—and a worthy demonstration followed.

The conquered at last kissed the rod and the solemn operation began, Harvey cheerfully

breaking off chunk after chunk and handing them to the weary muncher. "There's lots of poor children in New York would be glad to get them," he said in answer to one of Cecil's most vigorous protests.

"Say," murmured the stall-fed as he paused, almost mired in the middle of tart number two, "let me take the rest home an' eat 'em there—I'll really eat 'em—on my honour; I promise you," he declared solemnly.

"I'm surprised a fellow brought up like you would think of carryin' stuff home to eat it—that's bad form. Here, take it—shut your eyes and open your mouth," commanded his keeper, holding another generous fragment to his lips.

"I say," gulped Cecil plaintively, "give us a drink—it's chokin' me."

"Shouldn't drink at your meals," returned Harvey; "bad for your digestion—but I guess a drop or two won't hurt you. Here, come this way—put on your cap—an' fetch that along," pointing at the surviving tart; "the exercise'll do you good," and he led the way downwards to a little brook meandering through the woods. No hand was on the victim's collar now; poor Cecil was in no shape for flight.

"Give us your cap," said Harvey, thrusting it into the sparkling water and holding the streaming receptacle to Cecil's lips; "that's enough—that'll do just now; don't want you to get foundered."

"I've had enough," groaned the guest a minute later, as if the moment had only come; "I've got it nearly all down—an' I hate crusts. I won't; by heavens, I tell you I won't," bracing himself as vigorously as his cargo would permit.

"I'm the one to say when you've had enough," Harvey retorted shortly, throwing himself into battle array as he spoke, "an' you bet you'll eat the crusts—I'll teach you to eat what's set before you an' make no remarks about the stuff—specially when it's not your own," he said, reverting to the original offense and warming up at the recollection. "You'd make a great fight, wouldn't you—fightin' you'd be like fightin' a bread-puddin'," he concluded scornfully.

Cecil munched laboriously on. "There," Harvey suddenly interrupted, "now you've had enough—that wasn't rhubarb you were eatin'," he flung contemptuously at him; "'twas crow—an' that'll teach you to make sport of folks you think beneath you. You'll have some food for thought for a while—you'd better walk round a bit," he concluded with a grin as he turned and strode away, leaving the inlaid Cecil alone with his burdened bosom.

## XII

### *THE ENCIRCLING GLOOM*

Real boyhood, with its cheerfulness amid present cares and its oblivion to those that were yet to come, was almost past. Such at least would have been the opinion of any accurate observer if he had noted Harvey's face that summer morning as he pressed along the city street. A deeper seriousness than mere years bestow looked out from the half-troubled, half-hopeful gaze; not that it was ill-becoming—the contrary rather—for there was something of steady resoluteness in his eyes that attested his purpose to play some worthy part in this fevered life whose stern and warlike face had already looked its challenge to his own.

How pathetic were many a poor procession—and how romantic too—if we could but see the invisibles that accompany the humblest trudgers on the humblest street!

For Memory and Hope and Fear and Sorrow and silent Pain—Death too, noiselessly pursuing—and Love, chiefest of them all, mute and anguished often-times, crowding Death aside and battling bravely in the shadowy struggle; how often might all these be seen accompanying the lowly, had we but the lightened vision!

Thus was it there that summer day. The careless noticed nothing but a well developed lad, his poor clothes as carefully repaired and brushed as faithful hands could make them for his visit to the city; and they saw beside him only a white-faced woman, her whole mien marked by timidity and gentleness, as if she felt how poor and small was the part she played in the surging life about her. Both made their way carefully, keeping close in under the shadow of the buildings, as if anxious to escape the jostling throng. The woman's hand was in her son's; she seemed to be trusting altogether to his guidance and protection, and very tenderly he shielded her from the little perils of the street. Timidly, yet right eagerly, they made their way—for the quest was a great one; and all the years to come, they knew, were wrapped in the bosom of that anxious hour.

"Hadn't we better get on one of those street cars, mother?" the boy asked, glancing wistfully at a passing trolley. "I'm sure you're tired."

"How much does it cost, Harvey?" the mother asked.

"I'm not very sure, but I think it's ten cents for us both," he answered, relaxing his pace.

The mother pressed on anew. "We can't afford it, dear," she said; "it'll take such a lot to pay the doctor—we'll have to save all we can; and I'm not very tired," she concluded, taking his hand again.

When, after much of scrutiny and more of enquiry, they stood at length before the doctor's imposing place, both instinctively stopped and gazed a little, the outlines of the stately house floating but very dimly before the woman's wistful eyes.

"Will we ask him how much it costs before we go in?" Harvey's mother asked him anxiously.

The boy pondered a moment. "I don't think so," he said at length; "he mightn't like it."

"But perhaps we haven't got enough."

"Well, we can send the rest after we get home—I've got the raspberry money left."

The woman sighed and smiled together, permitting herself to be led on up the steps.

Harvey's hand was on the bell: "You don't suppose he'll do anything to you, will he, mother? He won't hurt you, will he?"

"No, no, child, of course not; he'll make me well," his mother said reassuringly. In a moment the bell was answered and the excited pair were ushered in.

Nothing could have been more kindly than their reception at the hands of the eminent doctor; nor could the most distinguished patient have been more carefully and sympathetically examined. Almost breathless, Harvey sat waiting for the verdict.

But the doctor was very vague in his conclusions. "You must use this lotion. And—and we'll hope for the best," he said; "and whenever you're in the city you must come and see me—don't make a special trip for that purpose, of course," he added cautiously.

"Why?" Harvey asked acutely.

The doctor made an evasive reply. Harvey's face was dark.

"How much is it?" he said in a hollow voice, his hand going to his pocket as he spoke.

"Oh, that's not important—we'll just leave that till you're in the city again," said the kindly doctor, shaking Harvey playfully by the shoulder.

"I'd sooner pay it now, sir; I've got—I've got some money," declared the boy.

"Well, all right," returned the physician; "let me see—how would a dollar appeal to you? My charge will be one dollar," he said gravely.

Harvey was busy unwinding his little roll. "It's not very much," he said without looking up; "I thought 'twould be a lot more than that—I haven't got anything smaller than five dollars, sir."

"Neither have I—what a rich bunch we are," the doctor answered quickly; "I tell you—I'm liable to be up in Glenallen some of these days for a bowling match; I'll just collect it then," leading the way towards the door as he spoke, his farewell full of cordial cheer.

Neither mother nor son uttered a word till they were some little distance from the doctor's office. Suddenly the former spoke.

"The world's full of trouble, Harvey—but I believe it's fuller of kindness. It's wonderful how many tender-hearted folks there are. Wasn't it good of him?"

Harvey made no answer, but his hand loosened itself from hers. "I believe I—I forgot something," he said abruptly. "Just wait here, mother; I'll be back in just a minute—you can rest here, see," leading her to a bench on the green sward of a little crescent not much more than half a stone's throw away.

A minute later he was back in the doctor's office, the surprised physician opening the door himself. "What's the matter, boy—forgotten something?" he queried.

"No," Harvey answered stoutly, his face very white; "but I knew you didn't tell me everything, sir—and I want to know. I want you to tell me now, quick—mother's waiting."

"Why do you want to know, laddie?"

"Because she's my mother, sir. And I've got a little sister at home—and I'm going to take care of them both; and I want to know if mother's eyes are going to get better, sir," he almost panted, one statement chasing the other as fast as the words could come.

The doctor's face was soft with grave compassion; long years of familiarity with human suffering had not chilled that sacred fire. Putting his arm about the youth's shoulder, he drew the throbbing form close to him. "My boy," he began in a low voice, "I won't deceive you. Your mother's eyesight is almost gone. But still," he hastened on as the lad started and turned his



pleading eyes up to the doctor's face, "it might come back—you can never tell. It's an affection of the optic nerve—it's often aggravated by a violent shock of some kind—and I've had cases where it did come back. It might return, lad, might come very slowly or very suddenly—and I can say no more than that."

The poor boy never moved; the mournful eyes never wandered an instant from the doctor's face. The silence seemed long; at least to the physician. One or two patients had arrived meantime, waiting in the outer room—and a coachman's shining hat could be seen through the spacious window. But it did not dawn on Harvey that such a doctor could have any other care in all the world, or any serious duty except such as now engrossed them both.

"What are you going to do?" the physician said presently.

"I'm going back to my mother," the boy answered simply, picking up his hat.

"Oh, yes," and the other repressed a smile; "but I mean—what are you going to do at home? What will you go at in Glenallen—you go to school, don't you?"

"I'm going to work all the time," Harvey replied resolutely, moving along the hall.

The doctor's hand was on the door. "I'm sorry for you, my lad," he said gently. "But there's always hope—we're all God's patients after all," he added earnestly.

Harvey put his hand against the opening door, his face turning in fullness of candour and trust towards the doctor.

"I've prayed about mother for a long time," he said; "is it any use to keep on, sir? You're a specialist and you ought to know."

The doctor closed the door quite tight. "Don't let any specialist settle that matter for you," he said a little hoarsely. "It often seems as if the good Lord wouldn't begin till they get through. So you pray on, my lad—for there's no healing, after all, but comes from God." Then he opened the door and the broken-hearted went out into the street.

Suffused and dim, blinking bravely through it all, were the mournful eyes as Harvey retraced his steps towards his mother; swift and deep was the train of thought that wound its way through his troubled mind. For there is no ally to deep and earnest thinking like a loving heart that anguish has bestirred—all true quickening of our mental faculties is the handiwork of the soul. Harvey saw the trees, the sky, the birds between—all different now, more precious, more wonderful to behold; for he saw them in the light of his mother's deepening darkness, and the glory of all that was evanishing from her appeared the more beautiful, pitifully beautiful, to his own misty eyes.

Involuntarily he thought of the future; of the twilight years that lay beyond—and his inward eyes turned shuddering away. The years that were past, those at least that had come and gone before the threatening shadow first appeared, seemed to lie behind him like a lane of light. Poverty and obscurity and sorrow and care had been well content to abide together in their humble home—almost their only guests save love. Yet his memory now of those earlier years was only of their gladness, their happiness, their light—all the rest had vanished like a dream when one awakes. He remembered only that they two, the fatherless, had been wont to look deep and lovingly into the eyes that looked back their wealth of fondness into the children's faces—night or day, day or night, that light was never quenched; they could see her and she could see them—and to look was to possess, though his early thoughts could not have defined this mystic truth, cherish it fondly though they did. But for the future—ah me! for the future, with blindness in a mother's eyes.

Yet Harvey's thought, swift and pensive as it was, was troubled by no prospect of burden for himself and by no apprehension of all the load that must be moved, under cover of the fast-falling dark, from his mother's shoulders to his own. His thought was what must be called heart-thought, and that alone. If a fleeting view of new responsibilities, or a melting picture of his sister's face, hung for a moment before the inward eye, it retreated fast before the great vision that flooded his soul with tenderness, the vision of a woman—and she his mother—sitting apart in the silence and the dark, the busy hands denied the luxury of work, the ever-open Bible closed before her, the great world of beauty receding into shadow; and, most of all, there rose before him the image of her face, unresponsive and unsmiling when the tender eyes of her own children should fall upon it, mutely searching, yearning silently for the answering sunshine of days that would come no more.

Without a word Harvey took his seat beside his mother. Her hand slipped quietly out and took his own, but without speech or sound—and in that moment Harvey learned, as he had never known before, how cruel are the lips of silence. Suddenly he noticed a cab, rolling idly along, the

driver throwing his eyes hither and thither, poising like a kingfisher for its plunge.

The boy raised his hand in signal and the cabby swooped down upon him like one who has found his prey.

"Get in, mother—we'll drive back," he said quietly.

His mother, startled beyond measure at the prospect of extravagance so unwonted, began to remonstrate, almost refusing. But a different note seemed to have come into Harvey's voice, his words touched with something that indicated a new era, something of the authority that great compassion gives, and in a moment she found herself yielding with a dependent confidence she had never felt before.

"Where to?" asked the man.

"Anywhere," said Harvey—"somewhere near the station; I'll tell you where."

"It'll—it'll cost a dollar," the man ventured, his hand still on the door and his eyes making a swift inventory of the boy's rather unpromising apparel.

"I'll pay you," the latter answered sternly. "Shut the door; close the window too," he ordered—"close both the windows. And don't drive fast."

The spendthrift impulse must have been heaven-born and that vagrant chariot been piloted from afar. For they two within felt something of sanctuary peace as the driver vanished to his place and they found themselves alone—alone with each other and the sorrow that was deep and thrilling as their love. They could hear and feel the busy tide of life about them; the pomp of wealth and the tumult of business frowned from towering mansions, or swept indifferent by, knowing nothing, caring less, about those nestling two who were all alone in the mighty city—but they had each other, and the haughty world was shut out from them, all its cruel grandeur, all its surging billows powerless to rob them of what their stricken hearts held dear. And, if the truth were told, many a stately house and many a flashing carriage that passed them by, held less of love's real wealth than did the mud-bespattered cab that creaked and rumbled on its way.

Several minutes elapsed before either spoke. Then the mother turned towards the silent lad, her face sweet in the wistful smile that stole across it.

"Did you find what you went back for, dear?" she asked.

Harvey cast one sharp agonized glance towards the gentle face—and it told him all. He knew then that the pain of either concealing or revealing was to be spared him; but his heart leaped in pity and in boundless love as he saw the light upon the worn face, the brave and tender signal that he knew the wounded spirit had furnished all for him.

He spoke no answer to her words; he knew that she expected none. But the answer came nevertheless, and in richer language than halting words could learn. For he rose half erect in the carriage, careless as to whether the world's disdainful eye might see, his arms stealing around the yielding and now trembling form with a strength and passion that were the gift of the first really anguished hour his life had ever known.

The woman felt its power, caught its message, even inwardly rejoiced in the great security; pavilion like to this she had never found before in all her storm-swept life.

"Oh, Harvey," she murmured at last, "Harvey, my son, God's been good to me; I'm almost happy when—when I feel how much you are to me now—and Jessie too," she added quickly; "poor Jessie—it'll be hard for her."

Mutely, reverently, guided from on high, Harvey strove to speak the burden of his heart. But it ended only in tears and tender tokens of hand and lip, his sorrow outpouring the story of its pity and devotion as best it could.

"I'll always take care of you, mother," he whispered; "always—just like you've taken care of us. And we'll wait till you get better, mother—we'll wait together."

His mother's fingers were straying about his hair. "I know it, darling," she said; "some ways I'm so poor, Harvey; but other ways I'm wonderfully rich—the highest ways. And now, Harvey," straightening up as she spoke, "there's something I want to attend to. You must tell the man to drive to a store where we get clothes—coats and things, you know. I want to get something."

"What?" asked Harvey suspiciously.

"It's for you. It's a winter coat—you know you haven't one, Harvey."

Then followed a stout protest and then a vigorous debate. But the mother conquered. "You mustn't forget that I'm your mother, Harvey," she finally urged, and Harvey had no response for that. But after they had alighted and the purchase had been duly made he contrived to withdraw the genial salesman beyond reach of his mother's hearing.

"Have you got something the same price as this?" he asked hurriedly; "something for a lady—a cloak, or a dressing-gown—one that would fit, you know," he said, glancing in the direction of

his mother.

The clerk was responsive enough; in a moment the exchange was effected, and Harvey, his mother's arm linked with his, led the way out to the crowded street.

They made their way back to the station. As Harvey passed within its arching portals, he bethought himself sadly of the high hope, now almost dead and gone, that had upborne his heart when last he had passed beneath them. It seemed like months, rather than a few hours, so charged with suspense and feeling had those hours been.

The train was in readiness and they were soon settled for the homeward journey. But scarcely had they begun to move when the door before them opened and Cecil Craig made his appearance. He evidently knew that Harvey and his mother were aboard, for his eye roamed enquiringly over the passengers, resting as it fell on the two serious faces. Suddenly he seemed to note that Harvey had pre-empted the seat opposite to the one on which he and his mother had taken their places; a small valise and the parcel containing the surreptitious purchase were lying on it. Whereupon Cecil strode forward. "Take those things off," he hectorred—"Want the whole train to yourself? Don't you know that's against the rules—I want to sit there."

Harvey had not seen him approaching, for his eyes had been furtively studying his mother's face. He started, looking up at Cecil almost as though he were not there; then he quietly removed the encumbrances and even turned the seat for Cecil to take his place. He wondered dumbly to himself what might be the cause of this strange calmness, this absolute indifference; he did not know how a master-sorrow can make all lesser irritations like the dust.

"Keep it," Cecil said insolently. "I'm going back to the Pullman—I wanted to see who'd walk the plank to-day," casting at Harvey a contemptuous sneer the latter did not even see. And no thought of Cecil, or his insult, or his phantom triumph, mingled with Harvey's grave reflections as they rolled swiftly homeward; he had other matters to consider, of more importance far.

### XIII

#### *THE DEWS OF SORROW*

The dusk was gathering about them as the returning travellers wended their way along the almost deserted street. The dim outline of the slumbering hills could be seen across the river—for Glenallen had grown in a circle upon surrounding heights—and as Harvey's eyes rested now and again upon them in the dying light of the summer day, he felt a secret sense of help and comfort, as if some one knew and cared for his clouded life. It seemed good to walk these streets again—so different from those of the city—with the familiar faces and the kindly voices; and often was he stopped and questioned, not without delicacy and chaste reserve, as to the outcome of their pilgrimage. Which gave his heart some balm, at least for the moment.

"Look, mother," he cried suddenly, forgetting in his eagerness; "look—I can see our light," his face glowing as if the gleam were from palace windows. His mother raised her head quickly, as if she also saw. Perhaps it was even clearer to her, though she beheld it not. But together they quickened their pace, for they knew that earth's dearest shelter, how humble soever it might be, was just before.

And as they came closer, Harvey could see, the white frock showing clear against the shadows, the outline of his sister's form. Poor child, the day had been long for her, waiting and wondering, the portent of the tidings that the night might bring mingling with all her childish thoughts. She was moving out from the door-step now, peering eagerly, starting forward or restraining herself again as doubt and certainty of the approaching pair impelled her. Suddenly she seemed to be quite sure, and with a little cry she bounded along the street, the eager footfalls pattering with the rapidity of love.

The mother knew that music well; her hand slipped out of Harvey's grasp, the hungry arms outstretched as she felt the ardent form approaching—and in a moment, tears and laughter blending, the girlish arms were tight about the mother's neck and warm kisses were healing the wound within. Presently Jessie withdrew her face from the heaving bosom, her eyes turned wistfully upon her mother's, plaintively searching for the cure her childlike hope had expected to find obvious at a glance. Disappointment and pain spoke from her eyes—she could see no difference—and she turned almost reproachfully upon her brother.

"What did he—what—?" she began; but something on Harvey's face fell like a forbidding finger on her lips and her question died in silence.

"I brought you something pretty from the city, Jessie," the mother broke in. She knew what had checked the words. "It's in the satchel, dear—and we'll open it as soon as we get home."

"What's in that other bundle?" asked the child.

"It's Harvey's winter coat," replied the mother.

"I'm so glad," Jessie said simply. "And oh, I've got good news too," she went on enthusiastically. "I sold three pairs of those knitted stockings—all myself; and the man wouldn't take any change—I only asked him once. It was thirty-one cents—and the money's in the cup," she concluded eagerly as they passed within the little door, the bell above clanging their welcome home.

The valise was duly opened and Jessie's present produced amid great elation. Only a simple blue sash, selected by her brother with grave deliberation from the assortment on a bargain counter that lay like victims on an altar; but Jessie's joy was beautiful to behold, aided and abetted in it as she was by the other two, both mother and son trying on the flashing girdle, only to declare that it became Jessie best of all.

Suddenly the girl exclaimed: "Oh, Harvey, the chickens missed you so. I'm sure they did—Snappy wouldn't take any supper. They're in bed, of course, but I don't think they're sleeping—let's just go out and see them. Come."

Harvey was willing enough, and the two sallied out together. But Jessie held her hand tight on the door, drowsy chucklings within all unheeded, as she turned her white face upon her brother.

"Now," she said imperiously, the voice low and strained, "tell me—tell me quick, Harvey."

"I thought you wanted me to see the chickens," he evaded.

"I hate the chickens—and that was a lie about Snappy's supper. I just wanted to ask you about mother. Tell me quick, Harvey."

Harvey stammered something; but he needed to say no more—the girl sank sobbing at his feet.

"I knew it," she cried. "I just knew it—oh, mother, mother! And she'll soon never see again, and it'll always be night all the time—an' she'll never look at you or me any more, Harvey, she'll never look at you or me again. An' I got a little photograph took to-day, a little tintype—just five cents—an' I thought she'd be able to see it when she came back. Oh, Harvey, Harvey," and the unhappy child, long years a struggler with poverty and cloud, poured forth, almost as with a woman's voice, the first strain of anguish her little heart had ever known.

Harvey sank beside her, his arm holding her close. The twilight was now deepening into dark, a fitting mantel for these two enshadowed hearts. The still form of the bending brother, already giving promise of manhood's strength, seemed, even in outward aspect, to speak of inner compassion as he bended over the slender and weaker frame of his little sister. Strong and fearless and true he was; and if any eye had been keen enough to penetrate that encircling gloom and catch a vision of all that lay behind the humble scene, the knightly soul of the struggling boy would have stood forth like a sheltering oak—so powerless, nevertheless, to shield the clinging life beside him, overswept as it was by the winds and waves of sorrow. But the purpose and the heart were there—the fatherless spreading gentle wings above the fatherless—and the scene was a holy one, typical of all humanity at its highest, and faintly faltering the story of the Cross. For if human tenderness and pity are not lights, broken though they be, of the great Heart Divine, then all life's noblest voices are but mockery and lies.

"Don't, Jessie, please don't," he murmured, his own tears flowing fast. "It'll only keep her from getting better—she'll see your eyes all red an'—"

"She won't—she can't," sobbed the girl; "you know she can't—she can't see, Harvey," a fresh tide outbreaking at the thought.

"But she'll feel it, Jessie. Mothers can feel everything like that—'specially everybody's own mother," he urged, vainly trying to control his own grief. "And anyhow, the doctor said she might get better some time—perhaps all of a sudden. And we've got to help her, Jessie; and we've got to make her happy too—and we can—mother said we could," he cried, his tone growing firmer as the great life-work loomed before him.

Hope is the most contagious of all forms of health; and with wonderful gentleness and power the youthful comforter drew the sobbing heart beside him into the shelter of his own tender courage, the hiding-place of his own loving purpose. Soon Jessie was staring, wide-eyed, at her brother, as he unfolded the new duties they must perform together. That word itself was never used, but her heart answered, as all true hearts must ever answer, to the appeal of God.

"I'll try, Harvey," she said at last. "I'll do the best I can to help mother to get well—an' I'll get

up in the mornings an' make the porridge myself," she avowed, smiling, the first step showing clear.

Hand in hand they went back to the house, the light of eager purpose upon both their faces. As they entered, a familiar voice fell on Harvey's ear.

"We was jest a-goin' by,"—it was David Borland's staccato—"an' I thought I'd drop in an' see if you was all safe home. Don't take off your things, Madeline; we're not a-visitin'," he said to the girl beside him. For she was bidding fair to settle for a protracted stay.

"Yes, we're safe home, thank you," answered Mrs. Simmons, "and it's lovely to get back. I'm a poor traveller."

"Tain't safe to travel much these days," rejoined Mr. Borland after he had greeted Harvey; whose face, as well as a fugitive word or two, hushed any queries that were on David's lips—"so many accidents, I always feel skeery on the trains—must be hard to run Divine predestination on schedule, since they got them heavy engines on the light rails. I often think the undertakers is part of the railroad trust," he concluded, smiling sententiously into all the faces at once.

Some further conversation ensued, prompted in a general way by the excursion to the city, and dealing finally with the question of eminent city doctors and their merits.

"I only went onct to a big city man like that," David said reminiscently, "and it was about my eyes, too. You see, I rammed my shaving-brush into one, one evenin' when I was shavin' in the dusk. Well, I was awful skeery about what he'd charge—didn't have much of the almighty needful in them days. An' I heard he charged the Governor-General's missus five thousand dollars, a week or two before, for takin' a speck o' dust out of her eye—castin' out the mote, as the Scriptur says; I'd leave a sand-pit stay there before I'd shell out like that. Well, anyhow, I was skeered, 'cause I knew me an' the nobility had the same kind of eyes. So I didn't dress very good—wore some old togs. An' after he got through—just about four minutes an' a half—I asked him what was the damage. Says he: 'What do you do, Mr. Borland?' 'I work in a foundry,' says I. 'Oh, well,' says he, 'call it five dollars.' So I yanked out a roll o' bills about the size of a hind quarter o' beef, an' I burrows till I gets a five—then I gives it to him. 'How do you come to have a wad like that, Mr. Borland,' says he, 'if you work in a foundry?' 'I own the foundry,' says I, restorin' the wad to where most Scotchmen carries their flask. 'Oh!' says he, lookin' hard at the little fiver. 'Oh, I'll give you another toadskin,' says I, 'jest to show there's no hard feelin'.' 'Keep it,' says he—an' he was laughin' like a guinea hen, 'keep it, an' buy a marble monument for yourself, and put at the bottom of it what a smart man you was,'" and David slapped his knee afresh in gleeful triumph. For the others, too, there was laughter and to spare; which very purpose David had designed his autobiography to accomplish. A moment later Madeline and her father were at the door, the little circle, laughing still, around him as they stepped without.

"You're a terrible one for shakin' hands, girl," David said to his daughter as they stood a moment on the step. "That's a habit I never got much into me." For Madeline's farewell had had much of meaning in it, the sweet face suffused with sympathy as she shook hands with all—the mother first, then Jessie, then Harvey—and the low voice had dropped a word or two that told the depth and sincerity of her feeling. When she said good-bye to Harvey, the pressure of her hand, light and fluttering as it was, found a response so warm and clinging that a quick flush overflowed her face, before which the other's fell, so striking was its beauty, so full of deep significance the message of the strong and soulful eyes. Her father's child was she, and the fascination of sorrow had early touched her heart.

The door was almost closed when David turned to call back lustily:

"Oh, Harvey—Harvey, Mr. Nickle wants to see you; Geordie Nickle, you know; an' if you come round to my office to-morrow about half-past four, I think you'll find him there. He's got a great scheme on; he's the whitest man I ever run acrost, I think—for a Scotchman."

#### XIV

#### *THE WEIGHING OF THE ANCHOR*

Surely the years love best to ply their industry among the young. For two or three of them, each taking up the work where its predecessor laid it down, can transform a youth or maiden to an extent that is really wonderful. Perhaps this is because the young lend themselves so cheerfully to everything that makes for change, and resent all tarrying on life's alluring way. They love to make swift calls at life's chief ports, so few in number though they be; they are impatient to try

the open sea beyond, unrecking that the last harbour and the long, long anchorage are all too near at hand.

The difference that these silent craftsmen can soon make upon a face might have been easily visible to any observant eye, had such an eye been cast one evening upon the still unbroken circle of the Simmons home. The mother had changed but little; nor had anything changed to her—unless it were that all upon which her eyes had closed shone brighter in the light that memory imparts. Still holding her secret hidden deep, her fondness for those left to her seemed but to deepen as the hope of her husband's return grew more and more faint within. If the hidden tragedy delved an ever deeper wound under cover of her silence, it had no outward token but an intenser love towards those from whom she had so long concealed it.

But Jessie and Harvey had turned the time to good account. For the former had almost left behind the stage of early childhood, merging now into the roundness and plumpness—and consciousness, too—that betoken a girl's approach to the sunlit hills of womanhood.

Yet Harvey had changed the most of all. The stalwart form had taken to itself the proportions of opening manhood—height, firmness, breadth of shoulders, length of limb, all made a strong and comely frame. The poise of the head indicated resolute activity, and the evening light that now played upon his face revealed a countenance in which sincerity, seriousness, hopefulness, might be traced by a practiced eye. Humour, too, was there—that twin sister unto seriousness—maintaining its own place in the large eyes that had room for other things beside; and the glance that was sometimes turned upon the autumn scene without, but oftener upon his mother and his sister, was eloquent of much that lay behind. The tuition of his soul had left its mark upon his face. Early begun and relentlessly continued, it had taught him much of life, of life's ways and life's severities—not a little, too, of the tactics she demands from all who would prevail in the stern battle for which he had been compelled so early to enlist. New duties, unusual responsibilities, severe mental exercise such as serious study gives, stern self-denial, constant thought of others, these had conspired to provide the manly seriousness upon the still almost boyish face.

Autumn reigned without, as has been already said, and in robes of gold. Glowing and glorious, the oak and the elm and the maple wrapt in bridal garments, glad nature went onward to her death, mute preceptress to pagan Christians as to how they too should die.

A graver autumn reigned within. For the little circle was to be broken on the morrow, and the humble home was passing through one of earth's truest crises, giving up an inmate to the storm and peril of the great world without. The world itself may smile, stretching forth indifferent hands to receive the outgoing life; what cares the ocean for another swimmer as he joins the struggling throng?—but was the surrender ever made without tumult and secret tears?

"Look, look," Jessie cried, as she turned her face a moment from the pane; "there goes Cecil and Madeline—I guess he's taking her for a farewell drive."

In spite of himself, Harvey joined his sister at the window.

"Is Madeline with him?" he said, throwing quite an unusual note of carelessness into the words.

"Yes, that's the second time they've driven past here—at least, I'm almost sure it was them before," Jessie averred, straining her neck a little to follow the disappearing carriage.

"I wonder what he'll do with his horse when he's away," Harvey pursued, bent on an irrelevant theme, and thankful that the light was dim. The inward riot that disturbed him would have been much allayed could he have known that the parade before their door was of Madeline's own contriving; presuming, that is, that he understood the combination of the woman-heart.

"Doesn't it seem strange, Harvey, that you and Cecil should start for the University the very same day?—he's going on the same train in the morning, isn't he?" enquired Jessie, her eyes abandoning their pursuit.

"I think so," her brother answered carelessly. "Jessie," he digressed decisively, "I want you to promise me something. I'm going to write you a letter every week, and I want you to take and read it—or nearly all of it; sometimes there'll be bits you can't—to Mr. Nickle. If it weren't for him—for him and Mr. Borland—I wouldn't be going to college at all, as you know."

"That I will," the sister answered heartily; "I think he's just the dearest old man. And I can manage it easily enough—there's hardly a day but he comes into the store to buy something. He and Mr. Borland always seem to be wanting something, something that we've always got, too. They must eat an awful lot of sweet stuff between them. And every time Mr. Nickle comes in, he says: 'Weel, hoo's the scholarship laddie the day?'—he's awfully proud about you getting the scholarship, Harvey."

Her brother's face brightened. "Well there's one thing I'm mighty glad of," he said, "and that is that I won't be very much of a charge for my first year at any rate—that hundred and fifty will help to see me through."

"But you mustn't stint yourself, Harvey," the mother broke in with tender tone. "You must get a nice comfortable place to board in, and have a good warm bed—and lots of good nourishing things to eat. I know I'll often be waking up in the night and wondering if you're cold. Do you know, dear," she went on, her voice trembling a little, "we've never been a night separated since you were born—it's going to be hard for a while, I'm afraid," she said a little brokenly as the youth nestled down beside her, his head resting on her lap as in the old childhood days.

"It'll be harder for me, mother," he said; "but I think I'd be almost happy if you were well again. It nearly breaks my heart to think of leaving you here in—in the dark," he concluded, his arm stealing fondly about her neck.

The woman bended low to his caress. "Don't, Harvey—you mustn't. It's not the dark—it's never dark where Christ abides," she broke out with a fervour that almost startled him, for it was but rarely that she spoke like this. "I've got so much to thank God for, my son—it's always light where love makes it light. And I'm so proud and happy that you're going to get the chance you need, Harvey. Oh, but He's been good to my little ones," she cried, her voice thrilling with the note of real gratitude that is heard, strangely enough, only from those who sit among the shadows. The noblest notes of praise have come from lips of pain.

"You'll write to me, won't you, mother?—you'll tell Jessie what to say, and it'll be almost like getting it from yourself."

"Oh, yes," she answered quickly, "and I'll always be able to sign my name. And if you're ever in trouble, Harvey—or if you're ever tempted—and that's sure to come in a great city like the one you're going to—remember your mother's praying for you. I'm laid aside, I know, my son, and there's not much now that I can do; but there's one thing left to me—I have the throne of grace; and if any one knows its comfort, surely it's your mother."

"Mother, won't you tell me something?" he interrupted decisively.

"What is it, my son?"

"Isn't there something else, mother—some other sorrow, I mean—that I don't know about? I've had a feeling for a long time that there was—was something else."

The mother was long in answering. But she raised her hand and drew his arm tighter about her neck, the protecting love very sweet. "There's nothing but what I get grace to bear—don't ask me more, my child," and as she spoke the bending boy felt the hot tears begin to fall. They soon came thick and fast, for the mother's heart was melting within her, and as he felt the sacred drops upon his head the son's soul rose up in purpose and devotion, making its solemn vow that he would be worthy of a love so great.

The evening wore away, every hour precious to them all. Very simple and homely were the counsels that fell from the mother's lips; that he must be careful about making new acquaintances, especially such as would hail him on the street, and speak his name, and cite his friends in witness—they doubtless all knew about the scholarship money; that he must study with his light behind him—not in front—and never later than half-past ten; that a couple of pairs of stockings, at the very least, must always be on hand in case of wet feet and resultant colds; that if cold in bed, he must ask for extra covering—he simply must not be afraid to ask for what he wants; that he must be very careful on those crowded city streets, especially of the electric cars; that in case of illness he must telegraph immediately, regardless of expense; that he must not forsake the Bible-class on Sabbath afternoons, but find one there and enroll himself at once; that he must accept gladly if fine people asked him to their homes, caring nothing though other students may be better dressed than he—they didn't get the scholarship, anyhow.

And Harvey promised all. More than likely that he took the admonitions lightly; he was not so much concerned with them as with the conflicting emotions that possessed him, eager joy that the battle was about to begin in earnest and yearning sympathy for the devoted hearts he was to leave behind. If all to which he was going forth loomed before him as a battle, it was as a delicious battle, whose process should be perpetual pleasure, its issue decisive victory. No thought of its real peril, its subtle conflict, its despairing hours, marred the prospect of the beckoning years; he knew not how he would yet revise his estimates as to who are our real enemies, nor did he dream that his fiercest foes would be found within—and that the battle of inward living is, after all has been said and done, the battle of life itself.

"And now, my children," the mother said at last when the evening was far spent, "we'd better go to our rest, for we'll need to be up early in the morning. But I want to have a little prayer with

you before we part—we'll just kneel here;" and she sank beside her chair, an arm about either child. It was quite dark, for none seemed to wish a light—they knew it could add nothing to the mother's vision—and in simple, earnest words, sometimes choking with the emotion she could not control, she committed her treasures to her God. "Oh, keep his youthful feet, our Father," the trustful voice implored, "and never let them wander from the path; help him in his studies and strengthen him in his soul—and keep us here at home in Thy blessed care, and let us all meet again. For Jesus' sake."

The light—that light that they enjoy who need no candle's glow—was about them as they arose, the mother's hand in Jessie's as they turned away. Harvey sought the shelter of the room that was so soon to be his no more. He closed the door as he entered, falling on his knees beside the bed to echo his mother's prayer. Then he hurriedly undressed and was soon fast asleep.

It was hours after, the silent night hurrying towards the dawn, when he suddenly awoke, somewhat startled. For he felt a hand upon his brow, and the clothes were tight about him. Looking up, he dimly discerned his mother's face; white-robed, she was bending over him.

"Don't be frightened, Harvey; go to sleep, dear—it's only me. I wanted to tuck you in once more, like I used to do when you were little. Oh, Harvey," and a half cry escaped her as she bent down and put her arms about him, "I don't know how to give you up—but go to sleep, dear, go to sleep."

But Harvey was now wide awake, clinging to his mother. "Don't go," he said, "stay with me a little."

There was a long silence. At last Harvey spoke:

"What are you thinking about, mother?"

The woman drew her shawl tighter about her shoulders and settled herself on the bed. "I think I'll tell you, Harvey," she said in a whisper; "it seems easier to tell you in the dark—and when Jessie's asleep."

"What is it?" he asked eagerly. "Is it anything that's hard to say?"

"Yes, my son, it's hard to tell—but I think I ought to tell it. Are you wide awake, Harvey?"

"Yes, mother. What is it?" he asked again.

"Do you remember, Harvey, the night you went to join the church?—and how I walked with you as far as the door?—and we went into the cemetery together? Don't you remember, Harvey?"

"Yes, mother, of course I do. But why?"

"Can you remember how, when we were standing at the baby's grave, you asked me why your father never joined the church, and I said he didn't think he was good enough—and you asked me why, and I said I'd tell you some time. Do you remember that, my son?"

"Yes," Harvey answered slowly, his mind working fast.

"Well, I'm going to tell you now. Your father was so good to me, Harvey—at least, nearly always. But he used"—she buried her face in the pillow—"this is what I'm going to tell you, Harvey; he used—he used to drink sometimes."

The form beside her lay still as death. "Sometimes he used to—we were so happy, till that began. And oh, Harvey, nobody can ever know what a dreadful struggle it is, till they've seen it as I saw it. For he loved you, my son, he loved you and Jessie like his own soul—and it was the company he got into—and some discouragements—and things like that, that were to blame for it. But the struggle was terrible, Harvey—like fighting with one of those dreadful snakes that winds itself about you. And I could do so little to help him."

She could feel his breath coming fast, his lips almost against her cheek. A little tremor preceded his question. "Was he—was father all right when he died?"

It was well he could not see the tell-tale lips, nor catch the quiver that wrung the suffering face. "Oh, Harvey," she began tremblingly, "I asked you never to speak of that—it hurts me so. And I wanted to tell you," she hurried evasively on, "that his own father had the same failing before him. And I'm so frightened, Harvey, so frightened—about you—you know it often descends from father to son. And when I think of you all alone in the big city—oh, Harvey, I want you to ——" and the rest was smothered in sobs as the sorrow-riven bosom rose and fell, the tears streaming from the sightless eyes.

Both of Harvey's arms were tight about his mother, his broken voice whispering his vow with passionate affection.

"Never, mother, never; I promise," he murmured. "Oh, my mother, you've had so much of sorrow—if you want me, I won't go away at all. I'll stay and take care of you and Jessie, if you want me, mother," the strong arms clinging tighter. But she hushed the suggestion with a word, gently withdrawing herself and kissing him good-night again.



"Go to sleep, my son," she said gently; "you've got a long journey before you," and he knew the significance of the words; "God has given me far more of joy than sorrow," as she felt her way to the door and onwards to her room.

Long he lay awake, engulfed in a very tumult of thoughts and memories; finally he fell into a restless slumber. The day was dimly breaking when he suddenly awoke, thinking he heard a noise. Stealing from his bed, he crept across the room, peering towards his mother's. He could see her in the uncertain light; she was bending over his trunk, the object of her solicitude for many a previous day, and her hands were evidently groping for something within. Soon they reappeared, and he could see a Bible in them, new and beautiful. She had a pen in one hand, and for a moment she felt about the adjoining table for the ink-well she knew was there. Finding it, the poor ill-guided pen sought the fly-leaf of the book she held; it took long, but it was love's labour and was done with care. She waited till the ink was dry, then closed the volume, kissed it with longing tenderness and replaced it in the trunk. Rising, she made her way to a chest of drawers, opened one or two before her hands fell on what she wanted, and then produced a little box carefully wrapped in oilcloth. Some little word she scrawled upon it, and the unpretentious parcel—only some simple luxury that a mother's love had provided against sterner days—was deposited at the very bottom of the trunk. She closed the lid and kneeled reverently beside the now waiting token of departure; Harvey crept back to his bed again, his sight well-nigh as dim as hers. When the little family gathered the next morning at the breakfast-table the mother's face bore a look of deep content, as if some burden had been taken from her mind. And the valiant display of cheerfulness on the part of all three was quite successful, each marvelling at the sprightliness of the other two. They were just in the middle of the meal when the tinkling bell called Jessie to the shop. A moment later she returned, bearing a resplendent cluster of roses. "They're for you, Harvey," she said, "and I think it's a great shame—boys never care anything for flowers. They ought to be for me." But she did not hand them to her brother, nor did he seem to expect them. For she walked straight to the mother's chair, holding them before her; and the patient face sank among them, drinking deep of their rich fragrance.

"Who sent them, Jessie?" her brother asked with vigorous brevity.

"I don't know—the boy wouldn't tell. He said 'a party' gave him ten cents to hand them in—and the party didn't want the name given. I hate that 'party' business; you can't tell whether it's a man or a woman. I guess it wasn't a man, though—look at the ribbon."

One would have said that Harvey thought so too, judging by the light on his face. "I'll take the ribbon," he said, "and just one rose—you and mother can have the rest."

"Then you're sure it wasn't a man sent them?" returned the knowing Jessie.

"No, I'm not—what makes you say that?"

"Well—what are you taking the ribbon for, if you're not?"

"Because—because, well, because it's useful, for one thing; I can tie my lunch up in it, or a book or two—anything like that," Harvey replied, smiling at his adroit defense. "Who's this—why, if it's not Mr. Nickle and Mr. Borland!" rising as he spoke to greet the most welcome guests.

"Ye'll hae to pardon us, Mrs. Simmons," Geordie's cheery voice was the first to say; "David here brocht me richt through the shop, richt ben the hoose, wi'oot rappin'. We wantit to say good-bye till the laddie—only he's mair a man nor a laddie noo."

"It was Mr. Nickle that dragged me in by the scuff o' the neck," interjected Mr. Borland, nodding to all the company at once. "When he smelt the porridge, you couldn't see him for dust. Hello! where'd you get the roses?—look awful like the vintage out at our place. Don't rise, Mrs. Simmons; we just dropped in to tell Harvey tra-la-la."

"I'm glad to find ye're at the porridge, laddie," Geordie said genially, as he took the chair Jessie had handed him. "The porridge laddies aye leads their class at the college, they tell me—dinna let them gie ye ony o' yon ither trash they're fixin' up these days to dae instead o' porridge; there's naethin' like the guid auld oatmeal."

"You Scotch folks give me a pain," broke in David; "how any one can eat the stuff, I can't make out. The fact is, I don't believe Scotchmen like it themselves—only it's cheap, an' it fills up the hired men so they can't eat anythin' else. Unless it's because their ancestors ate it," he continued thoughtfully. "I'll bet my boots there's Scotchmen in Glenallen that's eatin' porridge to-day jest because their grandfathers ate it; an' they'll put it down if it kills 'em—an' their kids'll eat it too or else they'll know the reason why. It'd be just the same if it was bran—they'd have to walk the plank. But there ain't no horse blood in me, thank goodness," he concluded fervently.

"Jealousy's an awfu' sair disease," retorted Geordie, smiling pitifully at the alien; "but we canna a' be Scotch."

"I'm so glad you came in," Harvey began, turning to his visitors as the laughter subsided; "we were just speaking of your kindness last night—and I'm glad to have a chance to thank you again just before I go away."

"Stap it," Geordie interrupted sternly. "That's plenty o' that kind o' thing—I'll gang oot if there's ony mair, mind ye," he declared vehemently, for there are few forms of pain more intolerable to natures such as his.

"You'll have to be careful, Harvey," cautioned Mr. Borland; "he's one o' the kind that don't want their left hand to know the stunt their right hand's doin'. Very few Scotchmen likes the left hand to get next to what the right one's at—it wouldn't know much, poor thing, in the most o' cases," he added pitifully—"but our friend here's a rare kind of a Scotchman. By George, them's terrible fine roses," he digressed, taking a whiff of equine proportions.

"I canna gang till the station wi' ye, Harvey—David's gaein'," said Geordie Nickle, taking his staff and rising to his feet, "but guid-bye, my laddie, an' the blessin' o' yir mither's God be wi' ye," and the kindly hand was unconsciously laid on Harvey's head. "We're expectin' graun' things o' ye at the college. I mind fine the mornin' I left my faither's hoose in Hawick; he aye lifted the tune himsel' at family worship—an' that mornin', I mind the way his voice was quaverin'. These was the words:

'Oh, spread Thy coverin' wings around  
Till all our wanderin's cease,'

an' I dinna ken onythin' better for yirsel' the day. Guid-bye, my laddie—an' 'a stoot heart tae a steep brae', ye ken."

As Harvey returned from seeing the old man to the door, Jessie beckoned him aside into his room, not yet set to rights after his fitful slumbers of the night before.

"Harvey," she began in very serious tones, "I only want to say a word; it's to give a promise—and to get one. And I want you to promise me faithfully, Harvey."

"What is it, sister?" he asked, his gaze resting fondly on the girlish face.

"Well, it's just this. You see this room?" Harvey nodded. "And this bed?—you know I'm going to have your room after you're gone. Well, it's about mother—I'm going to pray for her here every night; right here," touching the side of the bed as she spoke. "Dr. Fletcher said it would be sure to help—I mean for her sight to come back again; I asked him once at Sunday-school."

"The doctor in the city told me that, too," broke in her brother.

"Dr. Fletcher knows better'n him," the other declared firmly—"he said God made lots o' people see because other people prayed. An' I want you to always ask the same thing—at the same time, Harvey, at the very same time; an' when I'm asking here, I'll know you're doing the very same wherever you are. You'll promise me, won't you, Harvey?"

Harvey's heart was full; and the unsteadiness that marked his words was not from any lack of sympathy and purpose. "What time, Jessie?" he asked in a moment. "Would eight o'clock be a good time?"

"I don't think so," the girl said after pondering a moment. "You see, I'll often be in bed at eight—I'm going to work very hard, you know. I think half-past seven would be better."

Thus was the solemn tryst arranged, and Harvey bade his sister good-bye before he passed without for the last farewell to his mother.

No tears, no outward sign, marked the emotion of the soulful moment, and soon Harvey and Mr. Borland had started for the station. Once, and only once, did the youth look behind; and he saw his mother's tender face, unseeing, but still turned in wistful yearning towards her departing son. Jessie was clinging to her skirts, her face hidden—but the mother's was bright in its strength and hopefulness, and the image sank into his heart, never to be effaced.

It was evident, from the long silence he preserved, that David was reflecting upon things in general. Harvey was coming to understand him pretty well, and knew that the product would be forthcoming shortly. Nor was he disappointed.

"They're great on givin' advice, ain't they?"

"Who?" enquired Harvey, smiling in advance.

"Them Scotch folks—they'd like awful well to be omnipotent, wouldn't they? It's pretty nigh the only thing they think they lack. It's great fun to hear a Scotchman layin' down the law; they don't see no use in havin' ten commandments unless they're kept—by other people."

"You're not referring to Mr. Nickle, are you?" ventured Harvey.

"Oh, no! bless my soul. Geordie's all wool and sixteen ounces to the pound," responded Mr.

Borland, prodigal of his metaphors. "That's what set me thinkin' of Scotchmen in general, 'cause they're so different from Geordie. That was an elegant programme he fired at you there; what's this it was, again?—oh, yes, 'when it's stiff climbin', keep your powder dry'—somethin' like that, wasn't it?"

"He gave it the Scotch," answered Harvey, "'a stoot heart tae a steep brae,' I think it was."

"That's what I said," affirmed David, "an' it's a bully motto. It's mine," he avowed, turning and looking gravely at Harvey. "I heard a fellow advertisin' a nigger show onct; he was on top of the tavern sheds, with a megaphone. 'If you can't laugh, don't come,' he was bellerin'—an' I thought it was elegant advice. Kind o' stuck to me all these years. You take it yourself, boy, an' act on it—you'll have lots of hard ploughin' afore you're through."

"It suits me all right," Harvey responded cheerfully; "they say laughter's good medicine."

"The very best—every one should have a hogshead a day; it washes out your insides, you see. If a man can't laugh loud, he ain't a good man, I say. I was talkin' about that to Robert McCaig the other day—you know him, he's the elder—terrible nice man he was, too, till he got religion—an' then he took an awful chill. By and by he got to be an elder—an' then he froze right to the bottom. Well, he's agin laughin'—says it's frivolous, you see. I told him the solemnest people was the frivolousest—used the rich fool for an illustration; he was terrible solemn, but he was a drivellin' *ejut* inside, to my way o' thinkin'. Robert up an' told me we don't read of the Apostle Paul ever laughin'—thought he had me. What do you think I gave him back?"

"Couldn't imagine," said Harvey, quite truthfully.

"'That don't prove nothin',' says I; 'we don't ever read of him takin' a bath, or gettin' his hair cut,' says I, 'but it was him that said godliness was next to cleanliness.' An' Robert got mad about it—that's how I knew I had him beat. He said I was irreverent—but that ain't no argyment, is it?" appealed David seriously.

His companion's opinion, doubtless favourable, was hindered of expression by the snort of the approaching locomotive, signal for a sprint that was rather vigorous for further exchange of views. There was barely time for the purchase of a ticket and the checking of the trunk, the conductor already standing with one eye on the baggage truck and the other on the grimy figure that protruded from the engine window.

"I ain't Scotch," David said hurriedly, as he and Harvey stood together at the rear platform of the train, "but I had a father, for all that, just the same as all them Sandys seem to have. An' when I was pikin' out to find the trail—it's a long time ago—the old man stood just like I'm standin' here with you, an' he says to me: 'David,' he says, 'trust in God an' do your duty.' An' I believe them's the best runnin' orders on the road. The old Sandys can't beat that much, can they?"

Harvey had no chance to make reply; for almost in the same breath David went on, thrusting an envelope into his hand as he spoke: "Here's a letter of interduction I want you to present to a fellow in the city—he's the teller in the Merchants' Bank, an' you might find him helpful," David concluded with a hemispheric grin; "hope you'll endorse my suggestion," he added, the grin becoming spherical.

Harvey tried to protest as best he could, protest and gratitude mingling; but the train was already moving out and his communications were chiefly in tableau.

"That's all right," David roared above the din; "good-bye, my boy. Remember Geordie Nickle's motto—an' don't blow out the gas."

## XV

### *A PARENTAL PARLEY*

"Better eat all you can, Madeline; you can't never tell when you're goin' to have your last square meal these days," and David deposited another substantial helping on his daughter's plate.

"Why, father, what's the matter? What's making you so despondent all of a sudden?" Madeline asked in semi-seriousness, following her father's advice the while.

"You don't understand your father, Madeline—he's always joking, you know," interjected Mrs. Borland. "You shouldn't make light of such solemn matters, David," she went on, turning to her husband, "hunger's nothing to jest about."

"Exactly what I was sayin'," responded David, "an' if things goes on like they promise now, you an' Madeline'll have to take in washin' to support this family—that's the gospel truth."

"I don't believe father's in fun," Madeline persisted. "Anything go wrong to-day with business matters?" she enquired, looking across the table at her father.

That David was in earnest was obvious enough. "Everything wrong, appearin'ly," he said, rolling up his napkin and returning it to its ring. "The men's goin' to strike—seems to me there's a strike every other alternate day," he went on. "Doin' business nowadays is like a bird tryin' to hatch out eggs when they're cuttin' down the tree—some o' them darned firebrands from St. Louis have been stirrin' up the men; a lot o' lazy man-eaters," he concluded vehemently.

"What do the men want, David?" his wife asked innocently.

Mr. Borland looked at her incredulously. "What do they want—the same old thing they've been wantin' ever since Adam went into the fruit business—less work an' more pay. An' they've appointed a couple o' fellows—a delegation they call it—to wait on the manufacturers privately an' present their claims. There's two different fellows to interview each man—an' they're comin' here to-night. They didn't tell me they was comin'—I jest heard it casual."

"To-night!" echoed Mrs. Borland, "where'll they sit?"

"Chairs, I reckon," replied her spouse.

"You're so facetious, David. Where'll they sit when they're talking to you?—you know what I mean."

"Oh, I reckon we'll have it out in the den—there'll be lots o' growlin', anyhow. I'm not worryin' much about where they sit; it's the stand they take that troubles me the most," and David indulged a well-earned smile.

"You're very gay about it, father," Madeline chimed in, "making merry with the English language."

"There's no use o' bein' gay when everything all right, daughter; that's like turnin' on the light when it's twelve o'clock noon. But when things is breakin' up on you, then's your time to cut up dog a little. I'm a terrible believer in sunshine, Madeline—the home-made kind, in particular. I always tell the croakers that every man should have a sunshine plant inside of him—when the outside kind gives out, why, let him start his little mill inside, an' then he's independent as a pig on ice. An' really, it's kind o' natural—there's nothin' so refreshin' as difficulties, in a certain sense. Leastways, that's the kind of an animal I am—when I'm on the turf, give me a hurdle now an' again to make it interestin'."

"Is this a pretty stiff business hurdle you've got to get over now?" asked Madeline, as she smiled admiringly at the home-bred philosophy.

"Well, it's stiff enough. Of course, I've done pretty good in the foundry—ain't in it for my health. But it's terrible uncertain; you know the Scriptur' says the first shall be last—an' it's often that way in business. We're really not makin' hardly any money these days; of course, if you tell the men that, they—they close one eye," said David, illustrating the process as he spoke. "Where are you off to, Madeline?" he asked abruptly, for his daughter had passed into the hall and was putting on her cloak.

"I'm going for my lesson—I'm taking wood-carving, you know. Pretty soon I'll be able to do it myself; and then I'm going to make lots of pretty things and sell them. My class and I are going to support four India famine children," she said proudly.

"Bully for you! You'll do the carvin', an' they'll do the eatin'—I suppose that's the idea."

Madeline's merry laughter was still pealing as she closed the door behind her. Mrs. Borland turned a rather fretful face to her husband.

"She's taken a class in Sunday-school," she said, lifting her eyebrows to convey some idea of her opinion on the subject. "I did my best to dissuade her, but it was no use."

"What in thunder did you want to prevent her for?" asked David.

"Oh, well, you understand. They're a very ordinary lot, I'm afraid—just the kind of children I've always tried to keep her away from. I never heard one of their names before."

"I think she's a reg'lar brick to tackle them," returned her husband. "It does me good to see Madeline takin' that turn—nearly all the girls her age is jest about as much use as a sofa-tidy, with their teas an' five-o'clocks an' at-homes, an' all them other diseases," David continued scornfully. "It's all right to have girls learned—"

"Taught, David," corrected his wife.

"It's the same thing," retorted Mr. Borland. "I'm too old for you to learn me them new words, mother—it's all right, as I was sayin', to get them learned an' taught how to work in china, an' ivory, an' wood an' hay an' stubble, as the good book says, but it's far better to see them workin' a little in human bein's. It must be terrible interestin' to try your hand on an immortal soul—they kind o' productions lasts a while. So don't go an' cool her off, mother—you let her stick to them

kids without names if she wants to."

"But she tells me, David, she tells me some of them come to Sunday-school without washing their hands or faces."

"Tell her to wear buckskin mits," said Mr. Borland gravely.

"It's all very well to laugh, David—but they seem to have all sorts of things wrong with them. Madeline told me one day how she couldn't get the attention of the class because one of them kept winding and unwinding a rag on his sore finger for all the class to see it; he said a rat bit it in the night."

"Rough on rats'd soon fix them," said David reflectively; "I mind out in the barn one time——"

"But I'm serious, David," remonstrated Mrs. Borland; "and there's something else I hardly like to tell you. But only last Sunday Madeline was telling me—she laughed about it, but I didn't—how she asked one of the boys why he wasn't there the Sunday before, and he said: 'Please, ma'am, I had the shingles.'"

"Shingles ain't catchin'," declared David, as he gasped for breath. "Ha, ha, ha!" he roared, "that's the richest I've heard since the nigger show. Ha, ha! that's a good one—that's the kind of a class I'd like to have. None o' your silk-sewed kids for me, with their white chiffon an' pink bows! It seems a sin for them teachers to have so much fun on Sundays, don't it?" and David extricated his shank from beneath the table, venting his mirth upon it with many a resounding slap.

Mrs. Borland sighed discouragedly. "Well," she said at length, "I suppose there are greater troubles in life than that. In fact, I was just thinking of one of them when you were speaking about where you'd entertain the men when they come to-night."

"I'm afeard what I'll say won't entertain them a terrible lot," said David, passing his cup for further stimulus as he thought of the ordeal.

"Well, about where you'll talk to them, then," amended Mrs. Borland. "My trouble's something the same. Only it's about the servants; at least it's about Letitia—she's the new one. It seems she belongs to a kind of an Adventist church, and she told me this morning that the Rev. Mr. Gurkle, the minister, is coming up to call on her some afternoon this week. And she asked where would she receive him! Receive him, mind you, David—she's going to *receive*! And she asked me where—asked me where she'd receive him."

"Well, that was natural enough. What did you tell her?" David asked, marvelling at the agitation of which the feminine mind is capable.

"Why, I told her where else would she receive him except in the kitchen—you don't suppose my maids are going to entertain their company in the parlour, do you, David?"

Mr. Borland turned his face reflectively towards the wall, gazing at the lurid painting of a three-year-old who had been the pride of last year's fair. Finally he spoke: "Yes, Martha, I reckon she will. I ain't much of an interfere!—but there ain't agoin' to be no minister of the Gospel set down in the kitchen in this house. Black clothes is too easy stained. Besides, it ain't the way I was raised."

"But, David, surely you don't——"

"Yes, I do—that's jest exactly what I do. I know this Gurkle man—dropped into his church one night when some revival meetin's was goin' on. He's a little sawed-off fellow, with a wig—an' his cuffs has teeth like a bucksaw—an' he wears a white tie that looks like a horse's hames. An' he has an Adam's apple like a door-knocker; it kept goin' an' comin' that night, for there was a terrible lot of feelin' in the meetin'. An' Mr. Gurkle was a cryin' part of the time, an' he's that cross-eyed that the tears run over the bridge of his nose, both different ways. But I believe he's a good little man—an there ain't goin' to be no minister asquintin' round the kitchen in this house. He's goin' to the parlour, mother. The kitchen's all right for courtin'—come in there myself the other night when Mary had her steady company; there was three chairs—an' two of 'em was empty. That's all right for courtin'—it don't need no conveniences, nor no light, nor nothin'. Two young folks an' a little human natur's all you need for that. But prayin' an' sayin' catechism's hard enough at the best; so I reckon they'll have to do it in the parlour, mother," and Mr. Borland rose from his chair and moved slowly towards the window, patting his wife playfully on the shoulder as he passed.

"By George, here they are," he suddenly exclaimed; "I believe that's them comin' now."

"Who?" asked his consort, not with much zest of tone. She was still ruminating on her maid's religious advantages.

"It's the delegation—it's them two fellows that's goin' to present the claims of the union. They're turnin' in at the carriage gate, sure's you're livin'."

"I'm going up-stairs," announced Mrs. Borland. "I've got to fill out some invitations for an at-

home next week—you don't mind my leaving, David?"

"No, no, mother, certainly not. Far better for you not to be around. You see, certain kinds o' labour agitators is always complainin' that the manufacturers jest lives among beautiful things; an' you're the principal one in this house, mother; so I reckon you better slope," and David's hand was very gentle as it went out to touch the frosting locks. Mrs. Borland smiled indifferently at the compliment, secretly hugging it the while. Every true woman does likewise; the proffered pearl is carelessly glanced at and permitted to fall to the ground—then she swiftly covers it with one nimble foot, and solitary hours yet to come are enriched by communion with its radiance.

## XVI

### *DAVID THE DIPLOMAT*

His wife was hardly half-way up the stairs before David was in the height of perfervid activity. "I'll have an at-home myself," he muttered under his breath; "I'll have a male at-home," as he rang the bell.

"Yes, Mr. Borland," said the maid, parishioner to the Rev. Mr. Gurkle, as she appeared in answer.

"Take all them dishes away," he instructed breathlessly; "all the eatin' stuff, I mean," waving his hand over the suggestive ruins. "Is there any salt herrin's in the house?"

"Yes, sir, there's always herrin's on Friday; we keep 'em for Thomas—Thomas is a Roman," she said solemnly, an expression on her face that showed she was thinking of the judgment day.

David grinned. "I'll bet the Pope couldn't tell one from a mutton chop to save his life," he said; "but anyhow, put three herrin's on the table—an' a handful o' soda crackers—an' some prunes," he directed quickly, "an' make some green tea—make it strong enough to float a man-o'-war. By George, there's the bell—when everything fixed, you come in to the sittin'-room an' tell me supper's ready—supper, mind, Letitia."

Then he hurried through the hall to the door, flinging it wide open.

"Why, if this ain't you, Mr. Hunter," he cried delightedly, "an' I'm blamed if this ain't Mr. Glady," giving a hand to each. "Come away in. Come on in to the sittin'-room—parlours always makes me think it's Sunday."

The men followed in a kind of dream. Mr. Hunter's embarrassment took a delirious form, the poor man spending several minutes in a vain attempt to hang his hat on the antlers of a monster head about three feet beyond his utmost reach. Finally it fell into a bowl of goldfish that stood beneath the antlers; great was the agitation among the finny inmates, but it was nothing as compared to Mr. Hunter's.

"That's all right," David sang out cheerily; "reckon they thought it was an eclipse o' the sun," he suggested. "Fling your lid on the floor—I hate style when you have visitors," whereupon Mr. Hunter, fearful of further accident, bended almost to his knees upon the floor and deposited the dripping article carefully beneath the sofa. Mr. Glady, more self-possessed, resorted to his pocket-handkerchief, his hat still safe upon his head. Hiding his face in the copious calico, he blew a blast so loud and clear, that the little fishes, mistaking it for Gabriel's trump, rose with cue accord to the surface—and David's favourite collie answered loudly from the kitchen. Compelled by a sense of propriety to reappear from the bandana, Mr. Glady began hurriedly to sit down and was about to sink upon the glass top of a case of many-coloured eggs, Madeline's especial pride, when David flew between.

"Don't," he cried appealingly, "them's fowl's eggs—an' anyhow, this ain't the clockin' season," whereupon Mr. Glady leaped so far forward again that he collided with a small replica of the Venus de Milo on a mahogany stand, the goddess and the mahogany both oscillating a little with the impact.

Mr. Glady stared at the delicate creation, then cast quick glances about the floor. "Did I break off those arms?" he asked excitedly, pale as death.

"Oh bless you, no—she was winged when she was born," said David, trying to breathe naturally, and imploring the men to be seated, whereat they slowly descended into chairs, as storm-bruised vessels creep into their berths.

When both were safely lodged a deep silence fell. David looked expectantly from one to the other and each of the visitors looked appealingly towards his mate. Finally Mr. Glady brought his lips apart with a smack: "We come—we come to see you, Mr. Borland, because you're an

employer of labour and——"

"By George, I'm glad to hear that," David chimed in gleefully; "that's elegant—there'd be less jawin' between labour an' capital if there was more visitin' back an' furrin' like this. I can't tell you how tickled I am to see you both. I don't have many visitors," he went on rather mournfully, "that is, in a social way. A good many drops out to see me with subscription lists—but they never bring their knittin'," David added with a melancholy smile. "Most o' my evenin's is very lonely. I've seen me wearyin' so bad that I asked the missus to play on the pianner—an' one night I shaved three times, to pass the time."

"Please, Mr. Borland, supper's on the table," said a small voice at the door.

David leaped to his feet. "Come on, Mr. Hunter—come away, Mr. Glady, an' we'll get outside o' somethin'," taking an arm of each and turning towards the door.

The men faintly protested, pleading a similar previous operation; but David overbore them with sweeping cordiality. "Let's go through the motions anyhow," he said. "I'm an awful delicate eater myself; the bite I eat, you could put in—in a hogshead," turning an amiable grin on his guests. "Here, you sit there, Mr. Hunter—an' I guess that's your stall, Mr. Glady; I'm sorry my missus can't come—she's workin'. An' my daughter's away somewhere workin' at wood—turnin' an honest penny. Will you ask a blessin', Mr. Hunter?"

Mr. Hunter stared pitifully at his host. "Tom there'll ask it," he said, his lips very dry; "he used to go to singin'-school in the church."

Mr. Glady's head was bowed waiting. "Mr. Hunter'll do it himself," he said, without moving a muscle; "his wife's mother's a class-leader in the Methodists."

Whereupon the piously connected man, escape impossible now, began to emit a low subterranean rumble, like the initial utterances of a bottle full of water when it is turned upside down. But it was music to the ear of Mr. Glady, listening in rigid reverence.

"What church do you go to, Mr. Glady?" David asked as he poured out a cup of tea, its vigour obvious. "Both sugar and cream, eh—Letitia, have we any sugar round the house?"

"There's a barrel an' a half," the servant responded promptly.

"Oh, yes, I see—fetch the half; we live awful plain, Mr. Glady. Don't go to no church, did you say? Terrible mistake—why don't you?"

"Well," his guest responded slowly, "I look at it this way: if a fellow works all week—like us toilers does—he wants to rest on Sunday. That's our rest day."

"Terrible mistake," repeated David; "two spoonfuls?—it's the workin' men that needs church the most. I was readin' in a book the other day—it was either the 'Home Physician' or the dictionary, I forget which—how the Almighty trains the larks in England to scoot up in the air an' sing right over the heads o' the toilers, as you call 'em—the fellows workin' in the fields. You see, the Almighty knows they're the kind o' people needs it most—an' they hear more of it than lords an' ladies does. An' it's them kind o' folks everywhere that needs entertainment the most; an' I don't think there's anythin' entertains you like a church, the way it gets at the muscles you don't use every day. If you go to sleep, that rests you; an' if you keep awake, it ventilates you—so you gain either way. Oh, yes, every one should go to some church," he concluded seriously.

"That's all right for rich manufacturers," broke in Mr. Hunter; "it's easy to enjoy a sermon when you're thinkin' of the five-course dinner you'll get when it's over. But when you've nothin' afore your eyes only a dish of liver—an' mebbe scorched—a sermon don't go quite so good."

"That's jest where I'm glad to have a chance to learn you somethin'," David returned with quite unwonted eagerness. It was evident he had struck a vein. "There ain't near so much difference as you fellows think. Do have some more prunes, Mr. Glady—they don't take up no room at all. As far as eatin' is concerned, anyway, there's terrible little difference. It's a caution how the Almighty's evened things up after all—that's a favourite idea o' mine," he went on quite earnestly, "the way He gives a square deal all round. In the long run, that is; you jest watch an' see if it ain't so. I ain't terrible religious, an' I ain't related to no class-leaders, but there's a hymn I'm mighty fond of—I'd give it out twicet a Sunday if I was a preacher—it has a line about 'My web o' time He wove'; an' I believe," David went on, his face quite aglow, "it's the grandest truth there is. An' I believe He puts in the dark bits where everybody thinks it's all shinin', an' the shinin' bits where everybody thinks it's all dark—an' that's the way it goes, you see."

"That's all very fine," rejoined Mr. Glady, a little timid about what he wished to say, yet resolved to get it out; "that's all very fine in theory—but a fellow only needs to look around to see it makes quite a bit o' difference just the same," he affirmed, casting an appraising glance around the richly furnished room. "Money makes the mare go, all right."

"Mebbe it does," said David, a far-off look in his eyes. "I wisht you'd both have some more

crackers an' prunes; mebber it does, but it don't make her go very far in—in where your feelin's is, I mean. There's far more important things than for the mare to get a gait on. Look at that Standard-oil fellow, out there in Cleveland, that's got more millions than he has hairs. Well, money made the mare go—but if it'd make the hair stay, I reckon he'd like it better. They say there ain't a hair between his head an' heaven. He could drop a million apiece on his friends, an' then have millions left; but they say he's clean forgot how to chew—if he takes anythin' stronger'n Nestle's food it acts on him like dynamite, an' then he boosts up the price o' oil—he does it kind of unconscious like—when he's writhin'. I wouldn't board with him for a month if he gave me the run of his vault. But there's the fellow that drives his horses; he sets down to his breakfast at six o'clock—with his hair every way for Sunday—an' he eats with his knife an' drinks out of his saucer. An' when all his children thinks he's done, he says: 'Pass me them cucumber pickles—an' another hunk o' lemon pie,'—so you see things is divided up pretty even after all. I believe luck comes to lots o' men, of course—but *one* of its hands is most gen'rally always as empty as a last year's nest—you can't have everything," concluded David, looking first at the men's plates and then down at the crackers and prunes.

"But one handful's a heap," suggested Mr. Glady, lifting the keel of a ruined herring to his lips.

"Tain't as much as you think for," retorted the host. "It don't touch the sore spot at all. If a fellow's got a good deal of th' almighty needful, as they call it, it may make his surroundin's a little more—a little more ornamentorous," he declared, wrestling with the word. "But there ain't nothin' more to it than that. Take me, if you like; I've got more than lots o' fellows—or used to have, anyway. But the difference is mostly ornament; a few more things like that there statute—or is it a statue?—I can't never tell them two apart; that there statute of the hamstrung lady you run up agin in the sittin'-room. But I never eat only one herrin' at a time, an' I jest sleep on one pillow at a time—an' if I have the colic I jest cuss an' howl the same as some weary Willie that a woman gives one of her own pies to, an' he eats all the undercrust. I'm afeard you don't like our humble fare," he digressed in a rather plaintive voice; "won't you have some more crackers an' prunes between you—they'll never get past the kitchen, anyhow."

The horny-handed guests, declining the oft-pressed hospitality, began about this time to look a little uneasily at each other; visions of their original errand were troubling them some. Finally Mr. Hunter nodded very decidedly to his colleague, whereat Mr. Glady again produced his trusty handkerchief, and, after he had tooted his disquietude into its sympathetic bosom, cleared his throat with a sound that suggested the dredging of a harbour, and began:

"Me and Mr. Hunter's got a commission, Mr. Borland. We're appointed to—to confer with you about, about the interests of the men, so to speak; about a raise—that is, about a more fairer distribution of the product of our united industry, as it were," he went on, serenely quoting without acknowledgment from the flowing stanzas of a gifted agitator whose mission had been completed but a week before.

"I'm terrible glad you brought that up," David responded enthusiastically. "I hated to mention it myself; but I've been wonderin' lately about a little scheme. D'ye think the men would be willin' to kind of enter into a bargain for gettin' a certain per cent. of the profits an'—"

"I'd stake my life they would," Mr. Hunter broke in fervidly. "Of course, we haven't no authority on that point, but I'm sure they'd be willin'—a more agreeable lot of men you never seen, Mr. Borland. Don't you think so, Tom?" he appealed to the approving Glady. The latter was framing an ardent endorsement—but David went on:

"An' of course I'd expect them to enjoy the losses along with us too—then we'd all have the same kind o' feelin's all the time, like what becometh brethren. An' we're havin' a lot o' the last kind these days. What do you think, Mr. Glady?"

Mr. Glady was sadly at a loss; with a kind of muscular spasm he seized his cup and held it out towards David; "I think I'll take another cup o' tea," he said vacantly.

"Certainly—an' I want you an' Mr. Hunter to talk that little scheme over with the men. An' you must come back an' tell me what they think—come an' have supper with me again, an' I'll try an' have somethin' extra, so's we can eat an' drink an' be merry."

Nobody had suggested departure; but already the three men were moving out into the hall. "How's all the men keepin', Mr. Hunter?—the men in our shops, I mean," the genial host enquired.

"All pretty good, sir—all except Jim Shiel, an' he's pretty sick. He's been drawin' benefits for a month now."

"Oh, that's too bad; but I'm glad you told me. I'll look around an' see him soon—your folks all



well, Mr. Glady?"

"Yes, thank you. But don't call me Mr. Glady," said the friendly delegate; "I'd feel better if you'd just call me plain Tom."

"An' my name's Henry," chimed Mr. Hunter, "just plain Henry."

"Them's two elegant names," agreed Mr. Borland, "an' I think myself they're best among friends. Speakin' about first names reminds me of an old soldier my grandfather used to know in Massachusetts. He fought for Washington, an' he had great yarns to tell. One was that one mornin' he assassinated thirty-seven British fellows before breakfast; an' Washington, he came out an' smiled round on the corpses. Of course, he slung old Hollister a word o' praise. 'I done it for you, General,' says old Hollister. 'Don't,' says Washington, 'don't call me General—call me George,'" and David led the chorus with great zest.

"Well, we'll be biddin' you good-evenin'," said Mr. Glady, extending his hand.

"Jest wait a minute; I sent word to Thomas to hitch up the chestnuts—he'll drive you down. Here he is now," as the luxurious carriage rolled to the door. Thomas controlled himself with difficulty as he watched Mr. Borland handing his petrified guests into the handsome equipage. Panic takes different forms; Mr. Glady wrapped the lap-robe carefully about his neck, while Mr. Hunter shook hands solemnly with the coachman.

"I don't use this rig a terrible lot myself," he heard David saying; "it's a better fit for the missus. If you feel like drivin' round a bit to get the air, Thomas'll take good care o' you. Good-night, Henry; good-night, Tom," he sung out as the horses' hoofs rattled down the avenue.

Then David went slowly back into the house. He wandered, smiling reminiscently, into the sitting-room. Pausing before the Venus de Milo, he chucked the classic chin.

"Well, old lady," he said gravely, "there's more ways of chokin' a dog besides chokin' him with butter."

## XVII

### *FRIENDSHIP'S MINISTRY*

If any man would learn the glory and beauty of a mighty tree we would bid him range the untroubled forest where God's masterpieces stand in rich profusion. But we are wrong. Not there will he learn how precious and how beautiful are the stately oak and the spreading beech and the whispering pine. But let him dwell a summer season through upon some treeless plain or rolling prairie, and there will be formed within him a just and discriminating sense of the healing ministry committed to these mediators between earth and sky.

And men learn friendship best where friends are not. Not when surrounded by strong and loving hearts, but when alone with thousands of indifferent lives, do we learn how truly rich is he who has a friend. To find then one who really cares is to confront in sudden joy a familiar face amid the waste of wilderness.

Alone among indifferent thousands as he alighted from the train, Harvey Simmons turned his steps, the streets somewhat more familiar than before, towards the house where dwelt the only man he knew in all the crowded city. A few enquiries and a half hour's vigorous walking brought him within sight of the doctor's house; he was so intent on covering the remaining distance that two approaching figures had almost passed him by when he heard a voice that had something familiar about it.

"I'll do the best I can, Wallis," the voice was saying, "but I guess we'll have to put the child under chloroform."

Harvey turned a quick glance on the speaker. It was none other than the doctor himself.

"Dr. Horton—is that you, Dr. Horton?" the youth asked timidly.

The older of the two men turned suddenly on his heel, the keen gray eyes scrutinizing the figure before him. It was but a moment till the same kindly smile that Harvey remembered so well broke over his face. Both hands were on the young man's shoulder in an instant.

"You don't mean to say—I know you, mind—but you don't mean to say you're that young fellow from, from Glenallen—that brought his mother to me about her eyes?"

By this time Harvey had possession of one of the hands. "I'm the very same," he said, his face beaming with the joy of being recognized.

"How is she?" the doctor asked like a flash.

The light faded a little from Harvey's face. "She can't see at all now, sir," he answered

soberly. "She's quite blind—only she can tell when it's morning."

"Thank the Lord for that," said the other fervently; "that's always a gleam of hope." Then followed a brief exchange of questions and answers.

"How does your mother take it?" the doctor asked finally.

"Oh, she's lovely—she's just as sweet and patient as she can be; doesn't think of herself at all."

"Your mother must be a regular brick."

"She's a great Christian," quoth her son. "I think that's what keeps her up."

"Shouldn't wonder—it's the best kind of stimulant I know of," the doctor answered in a droll sort of way, turning and smiling at his companion. "Oh, excuse me, Wallis—what's this the name is?" he asked Harvey; "I've just forgotten it."

"Simmons, Harvey Simmons," the other answered.

"Of course; it's quite familiar now that I hear it. This is Dr. Wallis—and this is Mr. Simmons," he said to the other. "Dr. Wallis was just taking me to see a patient. Did you want to see me about anything in particular, Harvey?—you won't mind my calling you that, will you?"

It only needed a glance at the pleased face to see how welcome was the familiarity.

"Well, really, I did," Harvey responded frankly. Wherewith, briefly and simply, he told his friend the purpose which had brought him to the city, outlining the academic course he intended to pursue, earnest resolve evident in every word. "And I wanted to get your advice about a boarding-house," he concluded; "you see, I thought you might know some nice quiet place that wouldn't—that wouldn't be too dear," he said, flushing a little. "I'm quite a stranger in the city—but I don't want to go to a regular boarding-house if I can help it."

"Well, no," the doctor began, knitting his brows. "And I really ought to be able to help you out on that. But I tell you—you come along with us; then we can talk as we go along. Besides, I'm sure Dr. Wallis here will be able to advise you much better than I could—he knows every old woman in the city."

His confrère smiled. "It's mostly the submerged tenth I know," he answered; "I'm afraid there aren't many of my patients you'd care to board with. Want a place near the college, I suppose?"

"That's not so essential," said Harvey; "I wouldn't mind a walk of a mile or so at all."

"Good idea," said the other; "most students are pretty cheerful feeders—want a room to yourself?"

"I'd prefer it—if it wouldn't add too much to the expense. I've always got to consider that, you know," returned Harvey, smiling bravely towards his new-found friend.

"Right again," affirmed the doctor. "Single stalls are the thing; everybody sleeps better without assistance. Sooner have a few children around? Some fellows study better with kids in the house, and others again go wild if they hear one howl."

"I believe I'd get along just as well without them," said Harvey, laughing; "you see, I'll need to study very hard—and I don't believe they help one much."

"It's like studying in a monkeys' cage," asserted Dr. Wallis vigorously; "what I hate about little gaffers in a boarding-house is the way they always want to look at your watch," he enlarged solemnly, "and five times out of six they let it fall. It's fun for them, as the old fable says, but it's death to the frogs. And of course you want to get into a place where they have good cooking; it's pretty hard to do the higher mathematics on hash and onions—and lots o' students have lost their degrees through bad butter. I've known men whose whole professional life was tainted by the butter they got at college."

"But I'm not over particular about what I eat," began Harvey; "if the place is warm, and if they keep it—"

"That's all right enough," broke in the other, "but it makes a difference just the same. You've got the same kind of internal mechanism as other fellows, and you've got to reckon with it. Well, we'll see what we can do. I've got a place or two in mind now. I'll tell you about them later—we're almost at my patient's house. I say, you may as well come in—it'll be a little glimpse of life for you; and we can see more about this matter after we come out."

Another hundred yards brought them to their destination, a rather squalid looking cottage on a rather squalid looking street. Dr. Wallis knocked at the door, pushing it open and entering without tarrying for response. As Harvey followed with the older doctor a child's wailing fell upon his ears, emerging from the only other room the little house contained.

"Just wait here," said Dr. Wallis to the other two; "the child's in there—I'll be back in a minute."

He disappeared, Harvey and his friend seating themselves on a rude bench near the door.

Both looked around for a minute at the pitiful bareness of the room; and the eyes of both settled down upon a tawdry doll that lay, forsaken and disconsolate, on the floor. Tawdry enough it was, and duly fractured in the head; but it redeemed the wretched room with the flavour of humanity, and the solitary sunbeam that had braved the grimy window played about the battered brow, and the vision of some child's wan face rose above the hapless bundle.

"He's a jewel," Dr. Horton said in a half whisper, "a jewel of the first water."

"Who?" asked Harvey.

For answer, the doctor jerked his head backward towards the adjoining room. "He just lives among poor people like these—they're all idolaters of his. He gives away every cent he makes; when he does get a rich patient he makes them shell out for the poor ones. I know one of my patients called him in once for an emergency—sprained his big toe getting out of the bath-tub—and Wallis charged him fifty dollars for rubbing it. Then he went out and gave the money all away; the patient forgot all about his toe after Wallis got through with him, I can tell you—the pain went higher up. But I was kind of glad—he was the head of a big plumbing firm, and I always thought Providence used Wallis as the humble instrument to chasten him."

"Just come this way please, Dr. Horton," said a voice from the door.

Sitting alone, Harvey listened to the muffled sounds within. The crying subsided as the odour of chloroform arose; and the voice of weeping was now the mother's, not the child's. Finally both grew still and a long silence followed. So long did it seem that Harvey had moved towards the door, intending to walk about till the operation should be over, when suddenly both men emerged from the tiny apartment.

"It's all over," said Dr. Horton—"and I think it's been successful; I believe the child will see as well as ever she did."

Harvey looked as relieved as though he had known the parties all his life.

"I say, Horton," broke in the other doctor, "what'll you charge for this? Better tell me, and I can tell her," nodding towards the room where the mother was still bended over the beshadowed child.

"Oh, that's not worrying me," said the specialist, carefully replacing an instrument in his case as he Spoke. "Nobody looks for money from a neighbourhood like this," indicating the unpromising surroundings by a glance around. "I'll get my reward in heaven."

"A little on account wouldn't do any harm," returned the cheery Wallis. "It's out of the question to ask a man of your station to pike away down here for nothing; I'm going to try anyhow—just wait here till I come back," wherewith he turned towards the little room, closing the door carefully behind him as he entered.

He had hardly got inside before, to Harvey's amazement, Dr. Horton dropped his surgical case and tiptoed swiftly to the door, stooping down to gaze through a keyhole that long years and frequent operations had left more than usually spacious. Watching intently, Harvey could see the face of his friend distorted by an expression partly of mirth and partly of indignation. For Dr. Horton could descry the woman still bending over the little bed, evidently oblivious to the fact that the doctor had returned; and Dr. Wallis himself was conducting a hurried search through his pockets upper and nether, a grimace of satisfaction indicating that he had found at last the material he was in quest of.

The spying specialist had barely time to spring back to where Harvey was standing, when the other reappeared, smiling and jubilant.

"You never can tell, Horton," he began, holding out a bill; "you can never tell—there's nothing like trying. Here's a five I collected for you, and it was given gladly enough. It's not very much but—"

"You go to the devil," broke in the specialist, trying to look angry; "you think you're infernal smart, don't you?—but you haven't got all the brains in the world."

"You surprise me, Dr. Horton," the other began vigorously, commanding a splendid appearance of injured amazement. "You don't mean to insinuate that I put part of the fee in my pocket, do you?" he demanded, striking a martial attitude, and inwardly very proud of the way he had changed the scent.

"Put that rag back in your left-hand vest pocket where you got it," growled the senior physician as he picked up his hat. "You may work your smart-Alec tricks with the poor natives round here—but you can't come it on me. Take Simmons along and find him some place to lay his head," he added, opening the door and leading the way outward to the street.

The three walked together for perhaps four or five squares, the two physicians still engaged in the genial hostilities that Dr. Wallis's financial genius had provoked. Suddenly the latter came

to a standstill at the junction of two streets, his eyes roving along a richly shaded avenue to his left.

"I guess you'd better go along home, Horton," he said—"you'll want to post your ledger anyhow, after a profitable day like this. And I think I'll just take your friend here and go on the still hunt for a little. Don't look much like a boarding-house street, does it?" he added, as he marked the look of surprise on his contemporary's face. "But you never can tell—anyhow, I've got a place along here in my mind's eye, and we may just as well find out now as any other time."

"Wish you luck," the older man flung after them as he went his way; "if you get lodgings at any of those houses you'll have to sleep with the butler."

"It does look a little unlikely, I'll admit," Dr. Wallis said to Harvey as they started down the avenue; "but the whole case is quite unusual. This is a woman of over fifty I'm going to see—nobody knows exactly—and she's almost the only rich patient I've got. She lives a strange, half hermit kind of life—goes out almost none—and mighty few people ever get in. Except her clergyman, of course—she insists on seeing her minister constantly; I think he's just a curate, and I've always had the feeling that he'd consider death great gain—if it came to her. But for a while back she's been talking to me as if she wouldn't mind some one in the house, if they were congenial. It seems one or two attempts have been made to break in at nights—and the butler sleeps like a graven image. Just the other day I suggested she might take in a nurse, a young lady I know, who wants to get a quiet home—but I nearly had to run for shelter; she gave her whole sex the finest decorating I've heard for years. No women for her, thank you."

"Is she a little odd?" Harvey ventured to enquire.

The doctor looked him in the eyes and laughed. "Well, rather! Odd, I should say she is. But she's just as genuine as she can be. And if you get in there you'll be as comfortable as you'd be in Windsor Castle—quiet and secluded as a monastery, the very place for a student. She's been gathering beautiful things for years, all sorts of curios and rarities—and she's passionately fond of animals, keeps a regular menagerie. And she's great on keeping well; pretends to despise all doctors, and has a few formulas for every occasion. Deep breathing is her specialty—she's a regular fiend on deep breathing. But you'll see for yourself," the doctor concluded, as they turned in at an open gate and began to mount the stone steps that led to a rather imposing-looking door.

Spacious and inviting, if somewhat neglected looking, were the old-fashioned grounds about the old-fashioned house. Great spreading trees stood here and there, perhaps thirty or forty in all, some in the sombre dishabille of autumn, some in unchanging robes of green. And two summer-houses, one smaller than the other, nestling in opposite corners, stood deserted and lonely amid the new-fallen carpet of dying leaves. A solitary flower-bed, evidently ill at ease amid the unfettered life about it, waved its few remaining banners, the stamp of death upon them, pensively in the evening breeze. There was an ancient fountain, too, but its lips were parched and dry, and the boyish form that stood in athletic pose above it looked weary of the long and fruitless vigil. Two brazen dogs stood near the gate, sullen and uncaring now, the chill wind awakening memories of many a winter's storm, and foretelling, too, another winter waiting at the door.

Dr. Wallis gave the brazen door-knob an uncommonly vigorous tug. "She likes you to ring as if you meant it," he explained to Harvey, the distant product of his violence peeling and re-peeling through the house.

"We'll likely have to wait a little while," the doctor remarked; "she never lets a servant come to the door till she peeks through that upper left-hand window herself. Don't look," he added hurriedly; "she mightn't let us in if she catches any one looking."

After a few minutes' further waiting, the harsh grating of the heavy bolt and the violent turning of the reluctant handle were followed by the apparition of a head of iron gray, a pair of absolutely emotionless eyes fixed upon the visitors in turn. Dr. Wallis nodded, the man barely returning his salutation as he led the way into a large and solemnly furnished apartment on the left. Harvey's principal impression was of the height of the ceiling and the multitude of mirrors that confronted him on every hand; there seemed to be a goodly assemblage in the room, so often were its two solitary inmates reproduced.

Harvey and the doctor were still engaged in a mental inventory of the room, its paintings, bronzes, and what not, all claiming their attention, when the solemn head of iron gray reappeared at the door.

"Miss Farringall says she'll see you in her room," said the sphinx, his lips closing with an audible smack; whereupon the scanty procession was reformed, following the servant as he led the way up a winding flight of stairs. The man knocked at the door of a small sitting-room, precipitately retiring as soon as he had pushed it partly open.

XVIII  
*VOICES OF THE PAST*

Harvey followed his companion inside, peering eagerly for what awaited them. The mistress of the house fitted her surroundings well. She was reclining in an ample chair, a half-emptied cup of tea on a little table beside her. She was evidently much above medium height, spare and thin, a rusty dressing-gown folded loosely about her. Her hair was quite gray, and quite at liberty, not at all ill-becoming to the large, strong features, and the well-formed head. The brow was broad and high, wrinkled slightly, and furrowed deeply down the centre; high cheek-bones, a rather mobile mouth, a complexion still unfaded, joined with the bright penetrating eyes to make a decidedly interesting countenance. The face looked capable of tenderness, yet as if tenderness had cost her dear. A pair of gold-rimmed glasses sat shimmering on her brow; one swift shuffle of the face reduced them to their proper sphere.

"Barlow didn't tell me there were two," she said, without looking at the doctor. She was looking beyond him at the stranger's face. "He's got both arms anyhow, thank heaven," she said, looking at Harvey. "He nearly always brings people with one arm, that want help," she explained to the newcomer, motioning towards a chair.

"This is Mr. Simmons, Miss Farringall," the doctor began blandly. "I took the liberty——"

"I know him," she interrupted gently, still surveying Harvey. "Didn't you hear me talking to him? And I know all about the liberty too—I do wish Barlow would count people before he shows them up."

"How do you feel to-day, Miss Farringall?" enquired the physician.

"Better," replied his patient. "I gave Barlow that medicine you sent me—I always feel better after Barlow takes it. Is your friend going to be a doctor?" she went on in the same breath, inclining her head towards Harvey.

"Oh, no, he's going to the university—he's a student," the doctor informed her.

"That's quite different—that'll save somebody's life. What did you bring him for?" she demanded frankly, turning the keen eyes for the first time from Harvey's face and fastening them on the doctor's.

"Well, he was with me; he's a friend of Dr. Horton's and mine—and I thought I'd just bring him in. This is his first day. Besides," and the wily tactician paused a moment, "I wanted to ask your advice."

"I'll charge you doctor's rates," said the spinster, restoring her spectacles to their former altitude.

"That's cheap enough for anything," retorted the other. "And anyhow, I'll take the usual time to pay it. But seriously, Miss Farringall, I want your counsel on a matter we're both interested in. You see, I've promised to help Mr. Simmons get a boarding-house if I can, and I thought you might know of some suitable place—you've lived so long in the city," he explained with an amiable smile.

"That's remarkably true," interrupted the lady as she rattled the spoon in the cup beside her—"and I've knocked about so much; lived in the streets, haven't I?—been a kind of a city missionary, I suppose. What kind of a place does your friend want?" she enquired with mock seriousness.

"Oh, any nice quiet place," answered the intrepid doctor, "with plain honest people that'll make him comfortable. He wants quiet—and refinement—more than anything else, I should say."

"If I had my things on, I'd just go out now and enquire around among the neighbours," the woman avowed gravely, trying to control two very rebellious corners about her mouth. "Where do you come from, sir?" she asked abruptly, turning on the silent Harvey.

"From the country, Miss Farringall—from a place called Glenallen."

"Parents living?"

"My mother's living, ma'am; she lives alone—except, I have a sister."

"What's her name?"

"Jessie."

"Sensible name. Are you a churchman?"

"Yes, Miss Farringall—at least I hope so."

"High?"

"No," answered Harvey, wondering slightly. "No, just Presbyterian."

"Oh!" said Miss Farringall, "I see. But you can repeat the creed?"

"Oh, yes, we learned that at school."

"And if you were living in a—in a church family, you'd be willing to come in to prayers when the rector came? You'd be quite willing, I suppose?"

"I'd love to," said Harvey fervently.

"And do you love animals?"

"A good many," Harvey answered cautiously.

"Birds?"

"I love birds," said Harvey.

"Dogs?"

"Better still," replied the interrogated.

"Cats?"

"Sometimes. Of course, Miss Farringall, I won't have a great deal of time to devote to pets. I'll have to study pretty hard; it's largely through the kindness of a couple of friends that I have the chance to——"

But his interrogator was already ringing a hand-bell with great vigour.

"Barlow," she said, as the butler reappeared, "bring Grey here."

"Yes, mum," murmured the mobile servant as he disappeared, returning a minute later with a large specimen of the feline tribe at his heels. The animal was mewling loudly as it came. Barlow turned and departed as his four-footed companion bolted in at the open door.

Miss Farringall made a slight outward motion with her hands and the cat promptly sprang into her lap. Then he turned to survey the company, wasting only the briefest glance on the doctor's familiar face, but subjecting Harvey to the scrutiny that his strangerhood seemed to render necessary.

"You may go, Grey," the woman said in an almost inaudible voice, whereupon the cat slowly descended, standing still a moment to continue its examination of the stranger. Gradually it drew closer, rubbing its sides at length against Harvey's ankles, still scrutinizing the face above. Harvey smiled, whereat the creature looked more intently than before.

"Don't speak," whispered Miss Farringall, "I believe he's going to——" the prediction lost in a little gasp of excitement as the feline suddenly bounded into Harvey's lap, thence to his shoulder, its tail aloft like a banner, while a gentle purring issued forth as it began an affectionate circuit of Harvey's head.

Miss Farringall's face was radiant, her spectacles now at high mast as a result of much facial contortion. "You can stay here if you like, Mr. Simmons, till—till I find a place for you," she said, her eyes still fixed in admiration on the cat. Dr. Wallis said nothing, inwardly blessing the whole feline race.

"You're very kind, ma'am," Harvey began, his face crimson with an excitement he could hardly explain. "And I'll be good to Grey," he added desperately, not knowing what else to say.

"You mustn't feed him, mind," the other broke out intensely—"not a mouthful of anything. And no thanks, if you please; I never knew Grey to make a mistake. Besides, there's something about you that reminds me of—of somebody else," she concluded, her tone softened into unwonted gentleness.

"Was he a relative, Miss Farringall?" the doctor ventured, anxious that the reference should be appropriately received.

"Who said he was a he at all?" retorted his friend, turning suddenly upon him as she groped aloft for the departed spectacles.

"You can have the room over the dining-room," she went on, addressing Harvey again; "it opens on the lawn, and you must leave your window open summer and winter—wherever you maybe in winter," she corrected; "and breathe deep—breathe deep of the fresh air of heaven. Are you a deep breather, Mr. Simmons?" she enquired anxiously.

"I've never thought much about it," said Harvey frankly; "but I'll try and learn, Miss Farringall," quenching a smile as he looked up at the earnest face.

"It's life," she assured him earnestly, "pure life."

"Miss Farringall's right," the doctor added gravely. "There's nothing more connected with life than breathing. I've often noticed that in my practice."

But the irreverent reflection was wasted on the zealous heart of Miss Farringall. "Where are you going to stay to-night?" she asked; "it'll soon be dark."

Harvey hesitated. "I thought I'd just take him home with me," the doctor volunteered; "then

he could come here to-morrow."

"Where's your trunk?" pursued the hostess.

"It's at the station," said Harvey; "I've got the check."

"Barlow'll attend to having it sent up; there's really no reason for him going away from here to-night. I'm willing—you and Grey are credentials enough for me," she added, her face relaxing into a more pronounced smile than Harvey had seen there before.

Dr. Wallis was already moving towards the door. The grave Barlow had it open in advance. "You'll let us know in good time when you get another place for my friend, Miss Farringall—that is, when he has to leave."

"Oh, yes, I'll attend to that," she assured him. "Don't let Grey get out, Barlow—it's too cold for him. Keep your mouth closed, Barlow—breathe through your nose," for the sudden shock of the intelligence that the doctor's words implied, the idea slowly filtering in upon him that a stranger was to pass the night beneath that sacred roof, had thrown poor Barlow's mouth as wide open as his ears.

"Miss Farringall'll let you know when you've got to leave, Mr. Simmons," said Dr. Wallis as he glanced furtively at Harvey, winking violently the while. "You'll feel more comfortable, I'm sure," he resumed, his features quite composed again as he turned towards the mistress of the house, "to have a man around at nights—there have been two cases of house-breaking on this street lately."

"I know that," she answered with bated breath; "I'm often afraid at nights. I thought some one was breaking in last night; I was so sure of it that I turned on the light and began reading the prayer for those in peril on the sea—but it was just Barlow snoring. You snore like Niagara Falls, don't you, Barlow?"

"Yes, mum," replied the accomplished, without moving a muscle.

With a last cheery word to Harvey, and promising to return soon, Dr. Wallis withdrew, leaving the new-found relation to work itself out as best it could. Harvey waited a few minutes amid the mirrors in the parlour while his room was being prepared for its new occupant; to which he was promptly conducted by Miss Farringall herself, Barlow having retired for repairs to a very startled system.

"I should think your trunk would be here a little after supper," she said as she showed him in, "and I'd advise you to change your flannels when it comes. Excuse my advice on such matters," she added, a delicate little flush stealing to her cheek, "but I'm old enough to be your mother—and besides, it's getting quite cool outside. I think there's nothing so wholesome as warm flannels—warm flannels and deep breathing. Sometimes I think people wouldn't ever die if they'd only change their flannels when the weather changes—and keep on breathing deep," she concluded, drawing a profound breath the while, her lips locked like a vice. "Supper'll be ready in half an hour."

Then she hurried back to her little sitting-room, the kindly bosom rising and falling as she faithfully pursued the wondrous treatment. Gaining the room, she immediately rang the bell, and a moment later the partially recovered butler stood before her. He, too, had had a treatment; for which cause he breathed as lightly as the demands of nature would permit.

"Hand me that box from my secretary, Barlow—that ebony box."

He obeyed; and Miss Farringall held it a moment in her hands, then adjusted a tiny key and turned the lock. A queer little tremor rippled over her lips as the thin fingers groped a moment at the very bottom of the box. Those same fingers showed just the least unsteadiness as they released the dim gold clasp that bound a jet-black frame, which, opening, disclosed the portrait of a man about twenty-two or twenty-three years of age. She held it musingly in front of her a moment. Then she held it out towards Barlow, who promptly moved forward like some statue out-marching from its niche, his arms rigid by his side.

"You've never seen that before, Barlow?"

"No, mum."

"Who do you think it's like, Barlow?"

"I couldn't say, mum."

"Don't you think it resembles that visitor of ours—that young man Dr. Wallis brought this evening?"

"Yes, mum," Barlow assented, almost before she had finished her question.

"Do you think it very much like him, Barlow?"

"It's his livin' image, mum," said the talking statue.

"You can go, Barlow."

"Yes, mum," said Barlow, already gone.

The woman sat alone in the fading light, the picture still before her. Suddenly she started, started as violently, almost, as if the dead face before her had broken into speech. Again the bell awoke the echoes of the lonely house, and again the servant stalked like a shadow to the door.

"Barlow, what did Dr. Wallis say was that young man's name?"

"I couldn't say, mum," answered Barlow, with the air of one who has been charged with murder. Even in the shadow he noticed the whiteness of the lips that questioned him.

"Well, find it out then," she exclaimed, her voice rising as she half rose in her chair—"find it out, I say. What do you suppose you're here for, if it's not to know who's in the house?"

"Yes, mum," Barlow responded, his tone now the tone of the convicted.

"Never mind that—go and find out the name. Tell him we'll need to know when the postman brings the letters—tell him anything—go now," as the menial vanished in the direction of Harvey's room.

It was but a moment till he was back. "It's Simmons, mum—he says it's Simmons."

Miss Farringall was now erect. "What was his father's name?—his mother lives alone, he told me. Ask him what was his father's name—this minute, hear."

Barlow was back in even less time than before. "Simmons," he said solemnly; "it seems his father's name was Simmons too, mum."

His mistress advanced a step or two towards him; the faithful Barlow bowed his head like one ready to be offered. "Go back," she said in a low tense tone, "go back and ask him what his father's first name was. I want to know. And if you blunder this time, sir, you'll walk out of my house, mind."

"Yes, mum," agreed the man, lifting his eyes devotedly as he spoke, and vanishing into the outer gloom.

"Edward, mum," he informed her in a moment, "Edward Simmons—and he says what might you want to know for, mum."

A wave of indescribable emotion swept over the woman's face. She walked slowly to the window, gazing blindly out at the encroaching shadows of the autumn night. She saw the lurid sky beyond the city's utmost fringe, still crimson with the gilding of a departed sun, touched with the colour that was fading fast; even as she looked, the once radiant clouds were turning cold and gray, the ashen hue of age displacing the splendour of their transient joy. And the withered leaves, contemptuously tossed by the rising wind, moaned about the knees of many a heartless tree that had once flaunted them so proudly, whispering the story of their beauty to both earth and sky. But the silent gazer saw little of the autumn scene. For the grave and tender eyes were fixed on something far beyond it, far behind, nestling in the bosom of departed years; and what they saw was blighted with no decay of autumn, but stood fresh and beautiful in the light of summer. Green fields they saw, and tender bud and opening blossom everywhere, the very clouds beautiful in noble gloom because of the unconquerable sun. And that sun was Love—and the face she saw amid it all was the face of Edward Simmons.

Her eyes suddenly seemed to withdraw themselves from the scene without, turning wistfully upon the picture she still held in her hand. Only a moment did they linger there before they were turned again upon the autumn world without. And lo! The blackness of it all, its loneliness, all the pathos of the withered summer, seemed now to rise up before the woman's creative gaze; the sky, with its mystic tragedy as the glow surrendered to the gloom, the unbannered trees, the hurrying, homeless leaves, the dirge of the mournful wind—all these were deepened and darkened by that other vision of summer gladness that now was past and gone. For there is no mmistrant to sorrow like the sweet face of some dead happiness; it is June that gives November all its bitterness.

Long musing, she turned at last from the window, again summoning the faithful servant.

"Barlow," she said, the tone quite low, "go to the vault—look in that lower left-hand drawer and bring me a parcel of papers there. They're only newspapers," she added, "all tied together; bring them here."

A few minutes later Barlow handed her the parcel. "Shall I light the gas, mum?" he asked, turning at the door.

"No, thank you; I don't want it—but you can kindle the fire."

Then she sat, the papers and the photograph in her lap, till the crackling flame was bright. And again the wistful eyes pored over the past as though it were an open book. Far clearer now she saw it than before. For every leaping tongue of flame babbled of other days while the hearth-fire plied its ancient subtle industry, calling up long-vanished faces as it ever does, rebuilding the



ruined past, echoing once again the long silent tones of love—and the panorama of the bygone years passed in a lane of light between the burning eyes and the mystic fire, both knowing, both caring, both sorrowing.

It was almost dark when the spare and slender form rose from the chair, moving to the secretary in the corner of the room. From the lowest compartment of it she lifted, very gently, a little bundle of letters. Then she picked up the photograph again, extracting an old newspaper from the parcel before her; a quick glance at its date confirmed what she already knew. Then, with the old daguerreotype and the old letters and the old faded newspaper in her hand, she sank upon a hassock that lay beside the fire—the fire too was old, so old and dear—and she smiled to herself as she settled down in the old girlish way, the lonely blaze greeting her as it flung its glow again upon the flushed and quivering face, as dear to it as in the gladder days of yore. One by one she turned them over—the picture and the letters and the paper—the whole story of her life was there. The shadows gathered deeper and darker as she sat and fondled these precious things, the only real treasure of all her treasure-laden house—but the fire burned on as brightly as in other days, as brightly as if it had never faltered through the years.

It was a new sensation that crept about Harvey Simmons' heart that night, such a sensation as can come only to the youth who is denied for the first time the vision of his mother's face. It seemed strange to have said good-night to nobody in the old familiar way, to hear no reassuring sound of voices indistinctly chatting in the distance, as Jessie's and his mother's always could be heard, and to give or hear no final word of mirth or message as the lamp went out and the comfortable couch received him.

The room appointed to him was replete with all that might minister to comfort, even rich and elegant in its appointments. How often Harvey had wished his own humble home had boasted such a room, not for himself but for another; yet, now that he had come into possession of all he had so often envied, how paltry and insignificant it seemed, how far beneath what he had imagined—and how gladly he would have exchanged it all for his little room at home, if he might have but again been near the dear ones from whom he had never been parted a single night in all the course of his uneventful life.

His eyes fell upon a little table in the corner, generously furnished with materials for writing. It was, in consequence, very late before he committed himself to sleep. Yet he had only written two letters, the first to his mother, a faithful and exhaustive narrative of every hour since he had seen her last. It was a new experience to him, and he wondered a little at the almost mysterious ease with which he filled page after page. It was a new-found joy, this of writing—and both intellect and emotion entered into the task with a zest and instinct that surprised himself.

The second letter was begun with much misgiving, and after long consideration. For it was to Madeline, to whom, in a kind of way he was quite at a loss to understand, his thought went out in his loneliness—far more, indeed, than it had ever done when he lived beside her. Much misgiving about this second letter there was, as has been said; and yet he felt it could not be unwelcome since its purpose was so far from personal—for its main story was of the little child and the poor family of whom he had come to know through his contact with Dr. Wallis. And he knew Madeline would love to help, in some way her own delicate judgment would suggest. But before he was through his pen had rather run away with him; and some of his impressions of the new life about him, with a little, too, that treated of life in general, had sighed itself in a kind of lonely soliloquy through the expanding pages. And he read this second letter over twice, correcting it with great care, a process the first had been denied.

His trunk had been duly delivered, as Miss Farringall had assured him it should be, and it was with a kind of reverent tenderness that the lonely stranger raised the lid and surveyed all his poor belongings, each one lying where it had been placed by the loving hands that were now so far away. The care-worn face rose again before him as he bended over these last tokens of his mother's devoted care; and instinctively, with a dumb sense that she would have wished it so, he searched first for the sacred book he had seen her place there. He soon found it, and carrying it to where the light might fall upon it, he turned wistfully to the fly-leaf. Still with his eyes fixed on it he sat down on the bed beside him, the dim mist gathering as the poor misguided handwriting looked up at him in all the eloquence of sightless love:

*"Dear Harvey*

*From his loving mother"*

was all that was written there. But every character was aflame with fondness, and every word was a vision, bright with tender beauty, fragrant of the unselfish courage that had filled their lowly lives with a gladness denied to many a richer home. The very waywardness of the writing, the lines aslant and broken, enhanced the dauntless love that penned them; and Harvey's lips were touched to the mute symbols with reverent passion.

Still swimming, his eyes fell again upon the page, and he noticed—what he had not seen before—that something had been written at the lower corner. Isaiah 66:13, it said; and a moment later he had found the text. The full heart overflowed as he read: "As one whom his mother comforteth so will I comfort you." With a stifled sob, and still repeating the wonderful words, he sank on his knees beside the bed. And as he did so there arose before him the vision of other days, long departed now, when he had thus knelt for his evening prayer; a tranquil face looked down again upon the childish form, and he could almost feel the chill of little feet seeking cover while he prayed; the warm hands held his own, reverently folded together, and amid the stillness that wrapped his heart there floated out, with a silvery sound like that of an evening bell, the tones of the dear voice that had been so quick to prompt his childish memory or to recall his wandering thoughts. The hurried ending, the impulsive uprising, the swift relapse into boyish merriment, the plunge into the waiting crib, the good-night kiss, the sudden descent of darkness, the salvo of farewells the cozy cuddling into the arms of slumber—all these came back to him with a preciousness he had never felt before.

His loneliness, prompted by every reminiscence, slowly turned to prayer. He tried to thank God for all the treasure his soul possessed in the dear ones at home, and to ask for strength to be worthy of love and sacrifice so great. He promised to be true; a swift memory of his mother's fear lest dormant appetite should prove his foe mingled with his prayer a moment, and was gone. For the whole burden of his pleading seemed to revolve again and again about the love-laden text that had taken such a hold upon his heart, till at last he only repeated it over and over before God: "As one whom his mother comforteth so will I comfort you." Suddenly he paused; for he felt, though he knew not why, that his mother too was kneeling by the Mercy Seat—distant far, sundered by weary miles, yet he could not dispel the assurance, which warmed and caressed his very life, that another kept her sacred midnight vigil. And as he thought of Jessie's slumbering face, and of the other's, upturned in pleading for her son, a deeper peace than he had known before crept about him, the loneliness vanished like a mist, and but a few minutes passed before he slept the sweet sleep of all homeless lads who trust the keeping of their mother's God.

## XIX

### *A BRUSH WITH DEATH*

It was quite in vain that Harvey tried to read. For two much-loved faces, one worn and grave, the other bright and hopeful, kept coming and going between him and his book. Another, too, whose setting was a wealth of golden hair.

"You seem in a hurry to get on—guess you're going home," broke in a voice from the seat immediately opposite his own in the crowded car.

Harvey smiled and laid his book aside. "I'm in a hurry all right," he answered, "though I don't know that looking at one's watch every few minutes helps matters much. But I don't relish the idea of being late."

"Student, aren't you?" asked the man, nodding towards a pin in evidence on Harvey's coat.

"Yes—I'm just going home for a little visit."

"Been long at college?"

"A couple of years," answered Harvey; "they go rather slowly when a fellow's anxious to get through. Say, isn't this train going at a tremendous pace? What's the matter?" his voice rising as he clutched savagely at the side of the seat.

It was too late for his companion to make reply—already he was being caught into the current of the storm.

What followed defies description. Harvey's first thought was of some irregularity that would last but a moment—he could not realize that the worst had happened. A shrill voice from another part of the car cried out that they were off the rail, but he swiftly rejected the suggestion. An instant later he was as one struggling for his life. The engine had never left the rail and the

driver was quite unconscious of the situation. Dragged ruthlessly along, the car leaped and bounded like a living thing: it seemed, like a runaway horse, to be stampeded by its own wild plunging as it was flung from side to side, bouncing almost clear of the road-bed with every revolution of the wheels.

Flung into the corner by the window, Harvey braced himself as best he could with hands and feet, dimly marvelling at the terrible length of time the process seemed to last. He glanced upward at the bell-rope, swingingly wildly; but he knew any attempt to reach it would be disastrous, if not fatal. Still the mad thing tore on; shrieks and cries rose above the din; parcels and valises were everywhere battering about as if flung from catapults; one or two of the passengers cried out in plaintive wrath, some as if remonstrating with a mettlesome steed, others as if appealing for a chance against the sudden violence. Harvey remembered, long after, how he had said to himself that he was still alive—and uninjured—and that all might yet be well, if it would only stop.

Confused and terrified though he was, his senses worked with almost preternatural acuteness; he remarked the spasmodic eagerness with which men clutched at one another, muttering the while like contestants in a mighty struggle; the very grotesqueness of the thing flashed upon his mind an instant, as, the car taking its last desperate bound, he saw strong men flung about like feathers in a gale; two or three near him, shouting wildly, were tossed to the very ceiling of the car, their limbs outflung as when athletes jump high in air. Then the coach was pitched headlong; the man to whom he had spoken but a moment before was hurled through the spacious window, and the overturning car sealed his lips with eternal silence; two stalwart men fell full on Harvey's crouching form—darkness wrapped him about as the car ploughed its way down the steep embankment.

"This is death," he said involuntarily, and aloud, as the dread descent was being accomplished. Many things—much that could never be reproduced, more that could never be uttered—swam before him in the darkness. A sort of reverent curiosity possessed his soul, hurrying, as he believed himself to be, into the eternal. He was to know now! All of which he had so often heard, and thought, and conjectured, was about to unfold itself before him. A swift sense of the insignificance of all things save one—such an estimate as he had never had before—and a great conception of the transcendent claim of the eternal, swept through his mind. Then suddenly—as if emerging from the very wreck of things, illumining all the darkness and clothing the storm with a mysterious calm, there arose the vision of his mother's face. A moment later all was still; blessed stillness, and like to the quietness of death. The car was motionless.

But only for a moment did the stillness reign. Then came the wild surging of human voices, like the sound of many waters; appeal, frenzied fear, tormenting pain, pitiful enquiry—all blended to make it such a discord of human sounds as he had never heard before. It froze his soul amid all the agony of suspense he himself was bearing. For that human load was still upon him, still holding him pinned tight in the corner of the now overturned and shattered car; how much more might hold him down, he could not tell. And with this came his first real taste of terror; the thought of imprisonment beneath the heavy wreckage—and then the outbreaking fire—tore for a moment through his mind.

But already he could feel the forms above his own writhing in their effort to rise; one, his thigh fractured, gave over with a loud cry of pain. The other was trying to lift him as gently as he might. Soon both were from above him. The moment that followed thrilled with suspense—Harvey almost shrank from the attempt to straighten himself up lest he might find himself pinned beneath the deadly truck. But he tried—and he was free. And he could see through the window of the door, upside down as it was, the sparkling sunshine, never so beautiful before.

With a gasp of joy he bounded towards it—then stopped suddenly, checked by the rebuke of what he saw about him. For—let it be recorded to the praise of human nature and the credit of sorrow's ministry—every man who was unhurt seemed engaged with those who were. Strong, selfish-looking men, utter strangers, men who had sat scowling behind their newspapers or frowning because some child's boisterousness disturbed them, could now be seen bending with tender hands and tenderer words above some groaning sufferer, intent only on securing the removal of the helpless from the threatened wreck.

Not threatened alone, alas! For even as they were struggling towards the sweet beguiling light a faint puff of smoke floated idly in about them; and the first to notice it—not with loud outcry but with hushed gasp of terror—was one unhappy man whom the most desperate efforts had failed to free from the wreckage. But as the car gradually filled with the smoke, and as, a little later, a distant crackling could be heard, the stifled moan became a cry, and the cry at length a shrieking appeal for deliverance from the living death that kept ever creeping nearer.

"My God," he cried frantically, "you can't leave me here—I'll burn to death," his eyes shining with a strange unearthly light; "I'll burn to death," he repeated in grim simplicity.

Harvey never left him till the all-conquering flame had all but kindled his own garments; half-blind, soaking with perspiration, gasping for breath, he at last turned his back upon the awful scene and staggered away. The waters of death were now surging about the man—if the unfitting metaphor may be allowed. As he groped his way towards the brow of the up-torn declivity, Harvey stumbled on the silent form of the man who had sat beside him in the coach—a brakeman was hurrying towards it with a sheet. Then dense darkness flowed about, and kind unconsciousness delivered him.

\* \* \* \* \*

"You've made as good progress as any man could look for," the doctor said; "don't you think so, Mr. Nickle? He's been lucky all through, to my mind; two broken ribs, and a twisted elbow, was getting off pretty well—considering what he came through. Another week will do wonders."

"It's bad eneuch," rejoined the cautious Scotchman; "but it micht hae been waur."

"Well, old chap, I guess I'll have to go," the doctor said as he began putting on his gloves; "just have patience and you'll be all right. What you'll feel most will be the result of the shock—don't get discouraged if you sag sometimes, and feel as if the bottom were falling out of everything. You'll likely have queer spells of depression—all that sort of thing, you know. 'Twouldn't be a bad idea to take a little spirits when you feel one coming on; and if a little doesn't help, take a little more," he concluded, laughing.

Mrs. Simmons' face was white and drawn; but she controlled herself, and no word escaped her lips. When the doctor left the room she followed him, closing the door behind her. A few minutes later he returned:

"Oh, I've just been thinking over that matter, Harvey," he began carelessly, "and I believe this prescription would be a fully better stimulant," producing pencil and pad and beginning to write.

He remarked how Harvey received the advice—the latter's lips were pale, and the doctor could see them quivering. "Don't fool with the other at all," he added impressively: "I don't believe it would do you a bit of good."

Geordie Nickle lingered after the doctor had taken his departure; but he found it quite impossible to engage Harvey in conversation. "I hae nae doot a' this sair experience'll be for some guid purpose," he began, the face of the saintly man suffused with the goodness of his heart; "only dinna let it be wasted, laddie. A wasted sickness is a sair thing, an' a wasted sorrow's waur—but there's naethin' sae sad as to look intil the face o' death, wi'oot bein' a different man to a' eternity. It's a waesome thing when a soul snatches spoils frae death—an' then wastes them on life, my laddie," earnestness and affection mingling in the eyes that were turned on Harvey's chair.

But Harvey's response was disappointing. "If I could only sleep a little better, Mr. Nickle. I'm really all right except for my nerves. Yes, what you say is very true, Mr. Nickle."

After one or two equally fruitless attempts, the old man seemed to realize the hopelessness of his efforts. "Weel," he said pleasantly, "I maun be gaein'—yon's the kirk bell that's ringin'. Why, there's David," he cried suddenly, looking out of the window; "I'll juist gie ye intil Mr. Borland's care. I think yir mither said she's gaein' till the kirk—we'll gang thegither," as the kindly patriarch made a brief farewell, withdrawing to join Mrs. Simmons and guide her to the house of prayer.

"Hello, Harvey! Why, you're lookin' like a morning-glory," was David's salutation as he drew his chair up beside Harvey's. "I jest thought I'd drop in an' look you over a bit when Madeline an' her mother was at church. Ought to be there myself, I know," he went on, a reproachful smile on his face; "but it's such an elegant mornin'—an' besides, I'm doin' penance. I remembered it's jest two years ago to-day, by the day o' the month, since I traded horses with Jim Keyes—an' I thought mebbe I shouldn't have took any boot—so I thought I'd jest punish myself by stayin' away from the meetin' this mornin'. How're you keepin', Harvey?" he concluded earnestly, his elbows on his knees as he peered into the patient's face.

"I'm not bad," said Harvey—"only a little grouchy. Is that really the reason you're not going to church this morning, Mr. Borland?" he asked, a slight note of impatience in the tone. David might have noticed, indeed, that Harvey seemed ill at ease, and as if he would as soon have been alone.

David stared at him. "That there accident must have bumped all the humoursomeness out o' you," he said, grinning. "No, of course it's not—but Dr. Fletcher ain't goin' to preach to-day. That's the real reason. An' he's got a fellow from Bluevale rattlin' round in his place; can't stand

him at all. He's terrible long—an' the hotter, the longer. They say he dives terrible deep; an' mebbe he does—but he comes up uncommon dry," and David turned a very droll smile on his auditor. "The last time I heard him, he preached more'n fifty minutes—passed some excellent stoppin'-places, too," David reflected amiably; "but the worst of it was when he come to conclude—it was like tyin' up one o' them ocean liners at the dock, so much backin' up an' goin' furrin' again, an' semi-demi-quaverin' afore he got plumb still. That's the principal reason I'm punishin' myself like this," he added gravely. "Say, Harvey, what's makin' you so kind o' skeery like?—anythin' hurtin' you?"

Harvey cleared his throat nervously. "I say, Mr. Borland," he began nervously, "would you do something for me?"

David, very serious now, drew his chair closer.

"You bet—if I can. What is it?"

Harvey stood up and walked unsteadily towards the table. Then he thrust the little paper the doctor had left into a book. "I wonder if you'd go to the drug-store for me," he began rather huskily, "and get me a little—a little spirits—or something like that; spirits would be the best thing, I think—the doctor spoke of that. I'm just about all in, Mr. Borland—and I think if I were only braced up a little—just to tide me over, you know," he stammered, his courage failing him a little as David's steady eyes gazed into his own.

David looked long in silence. Then he rose, and without a word he took Harvey in his arms. Slowly they tightened round the trembling form, the old man holding the young as though he would shelter him till some cruel storm were past. Tighter still he held him, one hand patting him gently on the shoulder as though he were a little child.

Harvey yielded to the embrace—and understood. When at length David partially released him, he looked into the face before him. The eyes that met his own were swimming, and David's face was aglow with the yearning and compassion that only great souls can know.

"Oh, Harvey," the shaking voice began, hardly above a whisper, "I love you like my own son. Don't, Harvey—for God's sake, don't; kill your mother some other way," and again he drew the now sobbing lad close to his bosom.

A moment later he whispered something in Harvey's ear. It was a question—and Harvey nodded, his face still hidden.

"I thought so," David murmured. "I thought so—an' there's only one way out, my boy, there's only one way out. An' it's by fightin'—jest like folks fight consumption, only far harder. That ain't nothin' to this. Jest by fightin', Harvey—an' gettin' some One to help you. All them other ways—like pledges, an' promises, an' all that—they're jest like irrigatin' a desert with one o' them sprayin'-machines for your throat. I ain't much of a Christian, I know—but there ain't nothin' any good 'cept what Dr. Fletcher calls the grace of God. An' if you think it'd help any, from an old fellow like me—I'll—I'll try it some, every mornin' an' night; 'twouldn't do no harm, anyway," and the protecting arms again drew the yielding form into the refuge of his loving and believing heart.

Only a few more sentences passed between the two; only a few minutes longer did David wait. But when he passed by the church on his homeward way his head was bowed, and his face was like to the faces of those whose lips are moist with the sacramental wine.

## XX

### *THE RESTORING OF A SOUL*

"And you think you'll go back to-morrow, Harvey? Are you sure you feel strong enough, my son? Your voice is weak."

Harvey's answer was confident enough. But pale he certainly was—and the resolute face showed signs of abundant struggle, and a new seriousness sat on the well-developed brow. "I think life'll be all different to me now, mother," he went on; "a fellow can hardly go through what I have, without seeing things in a different light. I didn't think so much of it when Mr. Nickle said it, but it's been running through my mind a lot lately—he said what a terrible thing it is for a fellow to snatch spoils from death and then waste them on his after life."

"He's a godly man," the mother rejoined musingly. "He's been like a light to me in my darkness—often I think my heart would have broken if it hadn't been for him. When things looked darkest, and he'd drop in for a little talk, I always seemed to be able to take up the load and go on

again. He and Mr. Borland have been good angels to us all," and the sightless face was bright with many a gladsome memory.

"Mother, when you speak of darkness—and loads—do you mean—do you mean about your sight?"

His mother reached out, instinctively guided, and laid a thin hand on one of Harvey's. "Do I speak much about loads, my son, and darkness?" she asked in a gentle voice. "For I've always asked for grace to say little of such things as those."

"But you haven't answered me, mother," the son persisted. "Mother," he went on, sitting up straight, his voice arresting her startingly, "you've been more to me, I think, than ever mother was to a son before. But I know, mother—at least, I think I know—I'm almost sure you've never told me all that troubles you; I feel sometimes as if there were some sealed book I've never been allowed to see. Don't you understand, mother?"

"What do you mean, my son? How could it be so?"

"Well, mother," he went on, his voice low and serious, "look at it this way. You know how easily a mother kind of scents out anything like that about a son—just by a kind of instinct. Well, don't you think sons love mothers just as much as mothers love sons?—and don't they have the same kind of intuitions? Don't you understand, mother?"

She drew him closer to her side. "Yes, my son," she said after a long silence; "yes, I understand, my darling. If I understand anything, it's that. And I'm going to ask you something, Harvey—you'll forgive me, my boy, won't you? But what you've just said opens the door for what I'm going to ask. And I've wanted to do it ever since you came home."

Harvey's heart told him what was coming. The very faculty he had been trying to define was pursuing its silent quest, he knew. And no movement, no exclamation betrayed surprise or resentment when his mother whispered her trembling enquiry in his ear.

Perhaps he had never learned as well the luxury of a mother's love. Once or twice he looked up wistfully, as though his mother's eyes must be pouring their message into his, so full and rich was the tide of her outflowing love, strong, compassionate, healing, But the curtain still veiled the light of the luminous soul behind—and he realized then, as never before, that his loss had been almost equal to her own. Yet the soulful tones went far to make amends, caressing him with tenderness, inspiring him with courage, as little by little they drew from him the story of the days.

"It all went so well for a long time, mother," he said, much having been said before. "Perhaps too well. I got the scholarship, as you know—and then another—and I was elected one of the inter-collegiate debaters. Then I got on the first eleven; perhaps that pleased me most of all; and I used to go to the other towns and cities often, to play. And I was so happy and comfortable at Miss Farringall's—she's been so good to me. And I gradually met a lot of nice people in the city; and I had quite a little of social life—that was how it happened," he said in a minor tone, his eyes on the floor.

The mother said nothing, asked nothing. A moment later he went on of his own accord. "I don't mean to make excuses, mother," he began, "but I didn't really deliberately break the promise I gave you—and that comforts me a lot. But it was one night I was out at a Southern family's home—they had just come lately to the city, and Dr. Wallis knew them. Well, they had refreshments; and they had a lot of queer Southern dishes. One was a little tiny thing—they called it a syllabub, or something like that; I had never heard of it before. And I took it—it had wine in it—and oh, mother," his eye lighting and his voice heightening at the memory, "no one will ever know—it was like as if something took fire. I didn't know what it meant—I seemed so helpless. And I fought and I struggled—and I prayed—and I wrote out my promise to you and I used to read it over and over. And I was beaten, mother—I couldn't help it," he cried pitifully, his voice echoing every note of pain—"and then I felt everything was up and I had nothing more to fight for, and I just—oh, I can't tell you; it maddens me when I think of it—nobody'll ever know it all. And Miss Farringall tried so to help me—so did Dr. Wallis—but I wouldn't let anybody. I turned on them," he exclaimed fiercely; "and I tried to forget about you, mother—I tried to forget about you and Jessie. Then I played the coward. I came back afterwards to Miss Farringall, and I—I borrowed money from her;" he forced the words like one who tells a crime. "And after that \_\_\_"

Thus ran the piteous tale. The mother spoke no word for long, staunching the flowing wound as best she could and by such means as only mothers know. And she mutely wondered once or twice whether this—or that other night—had brought the deeper darkness.

But when his voice was still; when the poor wild wailing that had rung through it all had

hushed itself, as it were, within the shoreless deep of her great, pitying love, she asked him another question:

"How much did you borrow from Miss Farringall, Harvey?" the voice as calm as if no storm of grief had ever swept it.

"Five dollars, mother," he answered, the crimson face averted. "But I know one or two things I can deny myself this term—and that'll pay it back;" the glance that stole towards his mother was the look of years ago.

Without a word, dignity in every movement, she rose and made her way to a little bowl that stood on the table. From it she took an envelope, her fingers searching it; then she handed him its contents, the exact amount.

He broke out in loud protest; but she was firm. "You haven't anything there that you can afford to give up," she said quietly, "and we can afford this, dear—but not the other. Take it for mother's sake," as she thrust the bill into his hand. It was worn and faded; but his eyes fell upon it as upon a sacred thing, hallowed by the love and sacrifice and courage that had wakened many a holy vow in his heart before. As they did now again, this latest token burning the hand that held it, melting the heart that answered its appeal of love.

And the mother's tryst began anew; closer than ever she clung to her unseen Helper; more passionately than before she turned her waiting eyes towards the long tarrying Light.

## XXI

### *A HEATED DEBATE*

The years had left Harvey wiser than when first he entered college. The passing months, each opening the door a little wider, had admitted him farther and farther to the secrets of the new life about him—farther too, for that matter, into the mystery of life itself, the great complicated maze of which college life is at once the portal and the type.

And as he stood in the main hall of the great Gothic building this bright spring morning, a reminiscent smile played about his lips as he recalled the day, far distant now, whereon he had first gazed in wonder on the animated scene. For that had been an epoch-marking day in Harvey's life. The very stateliness of the surroundings had filled him with a subdued awe he had never felt before, and his breath had come quicker at the thought that he, a humble child of poverty, was really a successor to the many great and famous men who had walked these halls before him. His gown was faded and rusty now, but he could recall the thrill with which he had first donned it years ago, the only badge of rank he had ever worn. And how fascinated he had been by the restless throng of students that buzzed about him that opening day, each intent upon his own pursuit, and all, or nearly all, indifferent to the plain-clad stranger who felt himself the very least among them. Some, with serious faces, had hurried towards the professors' rooms or gravely consulted the time-table already posted in the hall; while others, oblivious to the portent of the day, had seemed to hail it only as the gateway to a life of gaiety, entering at last upon the long-anticipated freedom their earlier lives had been denied.

Not a few had moved idly about, turning blank faces here and there, all unquickened by the stimulus of the atmosphere and the challenge of the hour—dumb driftwood in life's onmoving stream. And some there had been—on these Harvey's gaze had lingered longest—who were evidently there by virtue of a heroism not their own, their plainness of apparel and soberness of mien attesting the struggle that lay behind the opportunity they had no mind to waste.

He was opening a letter from Jessie now, handed to him from the morning mail; and the tide of youth flowed unnoticed about him as he devoured it, still standing on the spacious stair that led upward from the main entrance of the college. The smile on his face deepened as he read; for the letter was full of cheery tidings, all about their every-day toilsome life, quickened as it had been by the good news concerning his progress in his studies. "We're quite sure you'll get another scholarship," wrote the hopeful Jessie. And then followed the news of the village—much regarding Dr. Fletcher and the church, and a reference to the hard times that were paralyzing business—and a dark hint or two about the struggle David Borland was having to pull through; but it was rumoured, too, that Geordie Nickle was giving him a hand, and doubtless he would outstride the storm. And Cecil had been home two or three times lately, the letter went on to say—

and he and Madeline had been seen a good deal together, and everybody knew how anxious Mrs. Borland was that it should come to something—but everybody wondered, too, what was coming of Cecil's work in the meantime; these things the now unsmiling Harvey read towards the close of the letter. And the last page or so was all about their mother, her sight giving as yet no sign of improvement, and her general health causing Jessie no little alarm. But they were hoping for the best and were looking forward with great eagerness to Harvey's return when the college year should be ended.

Harvey was still standing with the letter in his hand when a voice broke in on his meditations.

"Well, old sport, you look as if you'd just heard from your sweetheart," as Harvey looked quickly up. It was Cecil himself, and he stopped before his fellow student as if inclined to talk. For much of the antagonism between the two had been dissolved since both had come to college, Cecil being forced to recognize a foeman worthy of his steel when they had met on an arena where birth and patrimony go for nothing. A few casual meetings had led to relations of at least an amicable sort; once or twice, indeed, he had sought Harvey's aid in one or two branches of study in which his townsman was much more capable than himself. But such occasions were obviously almost at an end. For the most uninitiated might have diagnosed Cecil's case as he stood that spring morning before the one he had so long affected to despise.

A false ideal of life, and of what constitutes life's enjoyment, and a nature pampered from childhood into easy self-indulgence, together with strong native passions and ample means wherewith to foster them, had made their handiwork so plain that he who ran might read. The face that now was turned on Harvey was stained and spotted with marks significant of much, the complexion mottled and sallow, the eye muddy and restless, the voice unnaturally harsh and with the old-time ring departed—such a voice as years sometimes give. Real solicitude marked Harvey's gaze as it rested on the youth before him; something of a sense of kinship, because of old-time associations—in spite of all that had occurred to mar it—and a feeling that in some indefinable way the part of protector was laid upon him, mingled with his thoughts as he noted the symptoms of the ill-spent years.

"From your very own, isn't it?" Cecil bantered again, looking towards the letter in Harvey's hand.

"You're right enough; that's exactly where it came from," the other answered, smiling.

"I was just thinking about you," Cecil went on; "I've kind of chucked classes for this session—going to study up in the summer and take the 'sup's' in the fall. I've been too busy to work much here," he explained with a grimace—"but that's not what I wanted to speak to you about; some of the fellows asked me to bring you round to a little meeting we're going to have this evening—seven to eight o'clock—we're going to the theatre after it's over. It's something kind of new; Randolph got on to it down in Boston, and they say it's fairly sweeping the country. I believe myself it's the nearest thing to the truth, in the religious line, anybody's discovered yet."

"What is it?" Harvey asked interestedly.

"Well, it's a kind of religious meeting, as I said," Cecil informed him—"only it's new—at least it's new here; it's a kind of theosophy, you know—and many of the strongest minds in the world believe in it," he added confidently. "That's why we want you to sample it."

Harvey waited a little before answering. "I've heard a bit about it," he said at length; "I've read about it some—and I'd advise you to leave that sort of thing alone, Craig."

"You're not fair," the other retorted; "you've never heard it expounded, have you, now?"

Harvey admitted that he had never had that privilege.

"Then I want you to come to-night," urged Cecil; "come and give it a trial anyhow."

A little further parley ended in Harvey's consenting to attend the gathering of the faithful, not, however, without much candid prediction of the issue.

Seven o'clock found him there. The believers, some thirteen or fourteen in all, were already assembled, and Harvey's scrutiny of the different faces was swift and eager. Some few he recognized as those of earnest students, men of industry and intelligence. Others, the light of eager expectation on them as though the mystery of life were at last to be laid bare, belonged to men of rather shallow intellect, novelty-mongers, quick to yield to a seductive phrase or a plausible theory, men with just enough enterprise of soul to put out from shore, yet not enough to take their bearings or to find a pathway in the deep beyond. And two or three, conspicuous amongst whom was Cecil, were evidently hospitable to any theory, however fanciful, that would becalm the inward storm of their own making, and promise healing to secret wounds of shame, and absolve from penalties already pressing for fulfillment. Not intellectual unrest, but moral



ferment, had been the tide wherewith they had drifted from the moorings they were now endeavouring to forget and professing to despise.

The little room was fairly full and Harvey was seated on a small table in the corner. The proceedings were opened by a solemn-visaged youth who evidently felt the responsibility of his office. For he paused long, looking both around him and above, before he proceeded to read some ponderous passages from a book, evidently their ritual.

Much of this was punctuated by ejaculatory eulogies of one, Lao-tsze. Harvey had never heard this name before, but the expounder pronounced it frequently in terms of decided reverence; and he was at great pains to convey to his hearers his dependence upon this man of unpronounceable name as the fountain-head of inspiration and guidance.

The solemn disquisition ended, several others added their testimony to the light and comfort this teaching had afforded them, one or two venturing further to expound some doctrines which all seemed to find precious in proportion as they were obscure. Such phrases as "explication of the Divine Essence," "deduction of the phenomenal universe," "unity imminent in the whole," were freely dispensed, the listening faces answering with the light of intelligence, the light most resolutely produced where the shades were deepest. "Paracelsus" was a name several hastened to pronounce, and familiarly, as though he were an old-time friend. One very small student with a very bespotted face broke his long silence by rising to solemnly declare that since he had been following the new light he had come to the conclusion that God was the great "terminus ad quem," taking a moment longer to express his surprise and disappointment that all men did not so discern the truth in its simplicity.

Another rose to deplore that so little was known of the life of the great and good Lao-tsze, but comforted his hearers with the assurance that this distant dignitary had been reincarnate in a certain American poet, whose name he mentioned, well known as a wandering printer whose naked lucubrations were given at intervals to a startled world. This later apostle then received his share of eulogy, after which the ardent neophyte quoted copiously from his works, scattering the leaves of grass among the listening circle.

Exhausted, the speaker surrendered the floor to another, who launched into a glorification of the great Chinaman—and his successor—amounting to a deification. To all of which Harvey listened in respectful weariness, for he knew something of one of them at least, and of his works. Suddenly the devotee introduced the great name of Jesus Christ; for purposes of comparison alone did he quote the latter name, conceding to the founder of the Christian faith a place among the good and great, but making no attempt to conceal the deeper homage he accorded to the other.

This was too much for the visitor, who could hardly believe his ears. Indifference had gradually taken the form of contempt, this in turn deepening to disgust as he listened to what at first struck him as shallow platitude, descending later to what he esteemed as blasphemous vulgarity. Deeper than he knew was his faith in the One his mother had taught his childish lips to bless; and, as there rose before him a vision of the humble life that same faith had so enriched and strengthened, of the heavenly light that had gilded her darksome path, of the sweetness and patience that this light and faith had so wonderfully wrought, his soul rose up in a kind of lofty wrath that overbore all considerations which might have sealed his lips. Moreover, a casual glance at his watch informed him that it was exactly half-past seven—and the covenant he had scarcely ever forgotten at that hour was secretly and silently fulfilled.

Rising during a momentary silence, he was received with a murmur of subdued applause. But the appreciation of the circle was short-lived.

"Did I understand the last speaker to say," he asked in a low, intense voice, "that he puts that man he quoted from—that American poet—alongside of, or ahead of, Jesus Christ?—as a moral character, I mean, and as a teacher of men?"

The youth thus addressed made some evasive reply, not, however, revising his classification in the least.

"Then listen here," exclaimed Harvey as he reached for the volume of poems lying on the table. "I'll read you something more from your master." Hastily turning the leaves, he found the passage he was in search of after some little difficulty, and began slowly to read the words, their malodour befouling the atmosphere as they came.

One of the faithful rose to his feet with a loud exclamation of protest. But Harvey overbore him. "If he's all you say he is, you can't reasonably object," he declared; "I'm not reading anything but what he wrote," still releasing the stainful stream.

Harvey flung the book on the table as he finished. "The gutter's the place for that thing," he

blurted out contemptuously; "that's where it came from—a reprobate that deserted his own children, children of shame though they were, and gave himself to kindling the lowest passions of humanity—these be your gods, oh Israel," he went on scornfully. "I'll crave permission to retire now, if that's the best you've got to help a fellow that finds the battle hard enough already—I'll hold to the old faith till I get some better substitute than this," moving towards the door as he spoke.

The leader almost angrily challenged him. "Perhaps our friend will tell us what he knows about 'the old faith,' as he calls it, and why he clings to it so devotedly—it's not often we get a chance to hear from a real Christian," he added jeeringly, "and it's a poor cause that won't stand argument."

A chorus of voices approved the suggestion. "If you've got one good solid intellectual argument for it, let us hear it," one student cried defiantly. "We've had these believers on general principles with us before."

Harvey turned, his hand already on the door, his face white and drawn. "Yes," he cried hotly, "I'll give you one reason—just one—for the faith that's in me. I don't profess to be much of a Christian—but I know one reason that goes for more with me than all the mouthings I've heard here to-night. It's worth a mountain of such stuff."

"Let's have it, then," the leader said, moving closer to where Harvey stood. "Give us your overwhelming argument."

Harvey cast a haughty glance at him and those behind him.

"I will," he thundered; "it's my mother, by God," he cried passionately, the hot blood surging through his brain—"do you hear that—it's my mother."

There was a brief hush, for they must be reprobate indeed who would not recognize that sovereign plea. But one intrepid spirit soon broke the silence; a young stalwart of nineteen or twenty, towering among the rest, was quickly to the fore with his verdict. "Just what I expected," he drawled derisively; "the old story of a mother's influence; you forget, my dear fellow," turning towards Harvey as he spoke, "how credulous the woman-heart is by nature—and how easily they imagine anything they really want to believe. Besides, we haven't the advantage of knowing your saintly relative," he added, something very like a sneer in the voice.

He was evidently bent on developing his idea, but the words had hardly left his lips before Harvey had brushed aside those who stood between as he flung himself towards the speaker. His eyes were aflame, and his burning cheek and flashing eye told how deep the taunt had struck. He did not stop till his face was squarely opposite the other's, his lips as tense as though they would never speak again.

"Gemmell," he said, calling the man by name, "I don't know whether you mean to insult me or not—but I'll find out. You don't know anything about my mother—and she's not to be made the subject of discussion here. But I know her; and I know the miracle her dark life's been. And if you say that that's all been just her imagination, and her credulity, then I say you're a liar and a cad—and if you want to continue this argument outside, by heavens, here's the door—and here's the invitation, — you," as he smote the astonished debater full in the face. Parrying the return blow, his lips white and livid, he turned to lead the way outside. His fuming antagonist made as if to follow him; but two or three, springing between the men, undertook the part of peacemakers. Perhaps Cecil's efforts were as influential as any. "Let the thing drop, Gemmell," he counselled his friend in a subdued voice; "I know him of old—and he's the very devil in a fight."

Whatever the cause, the fact remains that when Harvey paused a minute or two outside the door he found himself joined by none but Craig himself.

"Come on," said the latter, "what's the use of making fools of ourselves over religion? Come on, and we'll go to the theatre. I told you we intended going there after anyhow—but I doubt if the others will be going now; so we'll just go ourselves. There won't be anything very fine to hear, perhaps—but there'll be something real interesting to look at," with a laugh that his companion could hardly fail to understand. But Harvey was thinking very little of what his guide was saying, his mind sufficiently employed with the incident just concluded, and he hardly realized whither he was being led till he found himself before the box-office in the lobby. A rubicund face within was the background for a colossal cigar that protruded half-way through the wicket; Cecil was enquiring from the source of the cigar as to the price of tickets.

Rallying, Harvey made his protest and turned to go away. "I've got to work to-night," he said; "it's too near exams."

Craig laughed. "Don't get nervous," he retorted significantly. "I'll pay the shot—it's only half a dollar each."

Whereat Harvey, the pride of youth high within him, strode back to the window, almost pushing his companion from him as he deposited his money and pressed on into the crowded gallery.

Not more than half an hour had passed when the spectacular side, as Cecil had so confidently predicted, grew more and more pronounced.

"I told you," he whispered excitedly to Harvey; "look at that one in the blue gauze skirt," leaning forward in ardent interest as he spoke.

Harvey's answer was given a few minutes later when, without a word to the enchanted Cecil, he rose and quietly slipped towards the door and downward to the street. "Money with blood on it, too," he half muttered hotly to himself as he passed the office that had received the hard-won coin.

Hurrying towards home, he suddenly noticed a heavy dray backed up against the window of an office; evidently the moving was being done by night, that the day's work might not be interrupted. Pausing a moment to watch, the stormy face brightened a little as he stepped up to the man in charge of the waggon. There were only two, which made Harvey more hopeful of his scheme.

"Want any help?" he asked abruptly.

"You're right we do," the man answered promptly. "Another of our men was to be here to-night, but he hasn't turned up—I'll bet a five he's in the gods over there," nodding towards the festive resort that Harvey had deserted.

"How long will it take?" enquired the student.

The man reflected a moment. "Oh, I guess about two hours," he surmised; "that is, to get the things out and then get them hoisted in at Richmond Street."

"How much'll you give me if I help you?"

"I'll give you forty cents—and you'll have a free ride," said the man jocosely.

"Make it fifty," proposed Harvey. "I owe half a dollar—I'll do it for fifty cents."

"All right," replied the teamster, whereat Harvey flung the coat from his back and the burden from his conscience. And the face which Miss Farringall was now coming to await so eagerly was very bright when he got home that night, her own beaming as she marked its light.

## XXII

### ***BREAKERS AHEAD***

There is a peace, deep and mysterious, which only the defeated know. It is familiar to those who, struggling long to avert a crisis, find that their strivings must be all in vain. The student long in doubt; the politician weary of his battle; the business man fighting against bankruptcy—all these have marvelled at the strange composure that is born when the last hope of victory is dead. Many an accountant and confidential clerk, contriving through haunted years to defer the discovery which must some day lay bare his shame, has felt this mysterious calm when destiny has at last received him to her iron bosom. And who has not observed the same in some life struggling against weakness and disease?—when the final verdict is announced and Death already beckons, the first wild tumult of alarm and anguish will presently be hushed into a silent and majestic peace.

David Borland's kindly eyes had less of merriment than in the earlier years. The old explosive spark was there indeed, unconquerable still; but the years had endowed the face with a gentle seriousness, not visible before, which yet became it rather better than the merriment it had unconsciously displaced. And there were signs that other enemies than the passing years had wrought their havoc on the mobile face. For care and conflict, hope of victory to-day and fear of overthrow to-morrow, had wrought such changes as the years could not effect.

Yet there was more of peace in the serious eyes than there had been of yore. Madeline was beside him as he sat this morning by the window, gazing long in silence at the handiwork of spring without. Soft wavy clouds floated in the sky, pressing serenely on their way as if there were no such things as tumult and pain and disappointment in the world beneath them; the air was vocal with many a songster's jubilation that his exile was past and gone; the bursting trees and new-born flowers and tender grass all joined the silent anthem that acclaim the regeneration of the year—and David thought they had never seemed so beautiful.

"There isn't nothin' can take that away from us, Madeline," he said at last, obviously as much

to himself as to the girl beside him.

"What, father?" she enquired softly.

"Oh, lots o' things—all the real things, that is. All that's lovely; all I'm lookin' at now—nobody can't take them away, the trees, an' the flowers, an' the birds. No matter how poor we get, they're some o' the things thieves can't break through an' steal, as the Scriptur' says," he mused, gazing far over the meadow at the orchard in its bridal robes, and beyond them both to the distant grandeur of the sky.

"Will we really have to give up very much, father?" the girl ventured, unconsciously turning as she spoke and permitting her eyes to rove a moment about the richly furnished home.

David was silent quite a while. His face seemed wrung with a pain he could not control, and his hands went out gently towards the girl's head.

"Let it down, daughter," he said quietly.

"What, father? Let what down?"

"I like it better the old way, dear," he said in answer, already releasing the wealth of lovely hair; "let it fall over your shoulders the way it used to do, Madeline," as the flowing tresses, but little darkened by the darkening years, scattered themselves as in other days. "Now sit here, Madeline—come. No, you're not heavy, child; I've got kind o' used to carryin' loads these days—an' this always seems to make 'em lighter," as she nestled in his arms.

Another long silence followed, broken at last by David's brave, trembling voice. "This is the hardest part o' the whole business, Madeline," he said resolutely. "But I just found out the worst this mornin'—an' I ain't goin' to keep nothin' back. I've failed, daughter; I've failed—leastways, I've failed in business. I don't think I've failed no other way, thank God," he added in firmer tone, but still struggling with his words. "There won't be no stain, Madeline," his lips touching the flowing strands as he spoke; "but things got awful tight—an' I made one last terrible effort—an' it failed; it failed, Madeline."

The girl's arm was about his neck. "I knew there wouldn't be any stain," she murmured as her face was bended downward to his own; "not with my father—and it won't stop us being happy, will it?" she added hopefully, looking into the care-worn eyes.

"No, dear, no," responded David—"only there's just one thing troubles me the most. It's about Geordie Nickle. He bought a lot o' the stock; I felt at the time he done it just to help me—an' I didn't ask him—an' I kind o' hoped it'd all come out all right. But it didn't, Madeline—an' Geordie's lost an awful lot. I don't know if he has more left—but I'm hopin' so. There ain't no better man in the world than him. One of the things that's always kept me believin' in God, is—is just Geordie Nickle. Men like him does more to keep faith livin' than all the colleges an' all the professors in the world; he's a beautiful argument for religion, is Geordie Nickle—he kind o' proves God, just the same as one sunbeam proves the sun," David concluded, his eyes still fixed on other credentials in the silent glory that wrapped earth and sky.

It was some time before Madeline spoke again. "Poor old father," she said gently; "what you must have suffered all these long months—more than mother and I ever thought of."

"It's been years, child," the father answered softly; "lots o' times I thought I couldn't stand it no longer—but it came awful easy at the last," he suddenly exclaimed. "It was a kind of a relief when I knew the worst—real funny, how calm I took it. It's a little like some women I seen once at an afternoon five-o'clock at-home," he went on dryly, a droll smile stealing over his face; "they was eatin' them little rough cakes they call macaronies—an' I was watchin' two or three of the nobbiest of 'em. Well, they nibbled an' nibbled so dainty, like a mouse at a hunk o' cheese—an' then, when they thought nobody wasn't lookin', they just stuck the whole thing in an' swallowed it like a bullfrog does a fly, an' then passed their cup as calm as you please for another helpin' o' tea. That's a good deal the way I took my medicine when I got the last dose of it—had a kind of a feelin' of relief. Didn't you never notice how easy an' quiet a stream runs when it's past the waterfall? Shouldn't wonder if this feelin' I've got's somethin' the same as the way some fellows enjoys gettin' a tooth yanked after they've been holdin' hot salt to it every night for a month," and David heaved a reminiscent sigh as the memory of his own sleepless nights drifted before him for a moment.

Very low, much of it inarticulate, some of it altogether silent, was the language with which Madeline sought to comfort the weary and wounded heart, little knowing how successful she was; the father held her closer and closer to him; and the swiftly slipping treasures around them, that must soon be sacrificed, seemed more and more insignificant as the preciousness of love's possessions grew more real and more dear.

"Do you know, Madeline, they tell me I won't be worth nothin' when everythin's sold—an' I

only hope there'll be enough for everybody—they tell me I won't be worth nothin'—but I never felt richer than I do this minute," the words coming from lips half hidden among the golden hair. "They can all go to thunder about their assets, so long's I've got this one—Bradstreet's an awful liar about how much a man's worth," he added almost gleefully, holding Madeline's soft hand to his furrowed cheek.

"And I never loved you so much as I do right now," the girl responded, employing his own words, her hand wandering among the gray. "Only I'm so sorry for mother—she was so fond of all the things. Where do you suppose we'll live, father?" she asked him timidly after a pause.

Mr. Borland made no reply for a little, his eyes fixed upon a lane of sunbeams that came dancing through the window.

"I can't exactly say, Madeline," he began slowly. "Only I reckon it'll be a little place, wherever it is—but them's often the kind that has the most room," he went on reflectively; "I'm sure there'll be room for everybody we love, an' every one that loves us. I often think how it was the One that hadn't no place to lay His head that offered everybody else a place to rest in," he mused reverently; "an' I think it ought to be a little that way with folks, no matter how poor they get."

Before his words were ended Madeline had slipped from his arms; looking up, David could just see her disappearing as she hurried up the stairs. Half in sorrow, half in jubilation, he was still holding communion with his thoughts when she returned, the dancing sunbeams falling athwart her face as she resumed the place she had deserted.

"I've got something to tell you, father," she began excitedly, drawing a tiny paper book from its envelope. "It's just a little surprise—but I'm so glad I'm able to do it. No, father, you mustn't refuse," she protested as she saw him beginning to speak, his eyes remarking what she held in her hand. "I saved this all myself, father; I began over two years ago—it's nearly three hundred dollars," she declared jubilantly after a fitting pause, "and I was going to get something with it—something special, something wonderful—it doesn't matter now what it was—besides, I wanted you to see how saving I could be. But now I want you to take it all, father," the eager face, so unfamiliar with financial magnitudes, radiant with loving expectation, "and pay those awful creditors. Won't that help, father?—won't it help?" she cried again, not knowing what to make of the expression on her father's face.

David Borland's hands shook as he took the little pass-book. His head was bowed over it and the silence lasted till a hot blur fell upon it, a message from afar.

"Yes," he murmured huskily. "Yes, thank God, it helps; more than any man can tell till he's got a broken heart like mine," he said passionately, the long stifled tide of grief and care bursting forth at last. "It more than helps—it heals," he murmured iow again, holding the pass-book close over his brimming eyes. "Who's that?" he suddenly digressed sharply, the deathlike stillness broken by a knock at the door. "Who's got to go an' come now of all times?" as he released the wondering girl, already moving forward to answer the summons.

"Come in, come in," David heard her cry delightedly a moment later, his own face brightening as he recognized the voice. Instinctively he rose as if to rush across the room and bid welcome to the visitor; yet something seemed to check the impulse as he sank back in his chair, an expression of deepening pain on the tired face. But the resolve formed strong within him again and the voice rang like a trumpet.

"Come in, Mr. Nickle," it cried, echoing Madeline's, "come in, an' welcome. I see by your face you know it all—an' I knew you wouldn't be long o' comin'. Sit down—here, alongside o' me."

A man shall be as a refuge from the storm; so runs the ancient message that has shed its music on multitudes of troubled hearts. And how wonderfully true! How mysterious the shelter that one life affords another, if only that life be strong and true; gifted it need not be, nor cultured, nor nimble with tender words nor skilled in caressing ways—for these are separate powers and sparingly distributed. But let the life be true, simple and sincere and brave, and its very existence is a hiding-place; no word may be spoken, or aim achieved, or device employed, but yet the very being of a strong and earnest man remains the noblest pavilion for the defeated and the sad.

How oftentimes the peace of surrender is deepened by an experience of friendship such as comes only to the vanquished! And friendship's sweetest voice is heard by the despairing heart. Thus it was with David Borland as his friend sat beside him, so grave and tender, his very look betokening that he knew all about the long, bitter conflict, as he obviously knew the disaster that had marked its close. He sat long in comparative silence, only a word at intervals to show that he was following David's story.

"An' I feel worse over that than all the rest," David said at length, "to think you lost by me.

But I'll see yet that no man will lose a cent by me, if I'm spared long enough—there's a heap o' work in these old bones yet," he went on bravely, "if only——"

"And what about me, father?—what about me?" Madeline broke in, drawing near with half outstretched hands; "I'm going to work too—there isn't any one in this house as strong as I am," she affirmed, her glowing face and flashing eyes indicating the sincerity of her words.

David Borland almost groaned as he took the extended hands. "Oh, child, they're so soft, they're so soft and tender. And you'll never do a day's work while your old dad can work for you," he said tenderly, gazing into the deep passion of her eyes.

"Won't I though? I'll show you, father," she cried in sweet defiance. "Do you think I'm nothing but an ornament, a useless ornament?" she asked reproachfully. "Why can't a woman bear her part in the battle just as well as men?—I'm going to do it, anyhow. I know how to do lots of things; I can teach, or sew, or do woodwork—or I can learn stenography—it doesn't matter which; only we'll fight it out together, father, you and me—and mother," she added dutifully.

David's eyes were swimming with loving admiration. Once or twice he tried to utter what he felt, but the words seemed to choke before they reached his lips. Finally he found the very ones he wanted. "Madeline, you're a thoroughbred," was all he said; but the girl knew the greatness of the eulogy.

David turned again to his visitor. "Please don't think I'm buttin' in where I've no business—but I can't keep from wonderin' if—if—if this has took everythin'," he said in much embarrassment. "That's been kind of hauntin' me for months."

The old man smiled. "I dinna feel it maitters muckle about mysel'," he answered slowly. "I'll hae what I'll be needin' till I gang till my rest, I'm thinkin'," he went on quietly; "an' ony way, I gaed intill't wi' my eyes open—but I thocht it was for the best. There's juist ae maitter that's giein' me mair trouble than anither."

"What's that?" David asked abruptly; "I'll bet all I haven't got it's not yourself."

"Weel, ye're richt—it's no mysel'," Geordie answered; "I could thole it better if it was. It's the laddie—it's Harvey, ye ken. You an' me'll no' be able to help him ony mair—an' the laddie was daein' fine at the college; an' I'm dootin' it'll be a sair blow on his puir mither to tak' him awa. Does she ken?" he asked, slowly raising his head towards David.

"I don't think so," said his friend; "but I suppose she'll have to be told sooner or later."

"Hoo lang will it be till the laddie's through?"

"He gets his degree the next graduating class," volunteered Madeline, her face showing the keenness of her interest. "It's not so very, very long," she added wistfully, looking as unconcerned as possible.

Then the old man began in the quietest and most natural way to tell David and Madeline all about his circumstances, the simple story touched with the pathos of an utterly unselfish heart. For his chief concern was evidently not for himself at all—he would have enough with strict economy to keep a roof still above his head—but his grief for Harvey's interrupted career was sincere and deep. He recognized fully, and admitted frankly, that it would take what little was left him to supply the humblest necessities of his remaining years. But this seemed to give him little or no disquietude; his thoughts were divided between Harvey and his mother, and he seemed troubled as to how the latter should be apprised of the cloud that had brought this additional darkness to her life.

"She'll no' learn it frae the lips o' gossip, if I can help it," he said resolutely at last, his staff coming down with emphasis on the floor.

"Go easy on that Turkey rug, Mr. Nickle," David interrupted with valorous merriment; "it belongs to my creditors now, you know."

Geordie permitted himself to abandon his line of thought long enough to say: "Ye dinna mean to tell me, David, that ye'll hae to part wi' a' yir bonnie bit things about the hoose?"

David never flinched as he looked straight into the sober eyes.

"All that's of any value," he answered resolutely; "no stolen plumage for me—I've no desire for it, thank God," he added cheerily. "I don't want nothin' but a few little necessities—an' a couple o' luxuries, such as this here," drawing Madeline within his arm as he spoke; "it's great how the law can't get at a fellow's real treasures. Just what I was sayin' to you a few minutes ago, Madeline—the things that counts the most is the things that's left, no matter how poor a fellow gets."

Geordie's eyes were shining with delight; such philosophy as this touched the inmost heart of him.

"Ye're richt, David, ye're richt," he cried fervently. "Man, but it's bonnie to see ye takin' the

chastenin' o' th' Almichty like ye dae. I was sair feart for ye, when I found oot what was gaein' to happen. But ye've got the richt o't, David, ye've got the richt o't," the old man went on earnestly; "it's a sair loss, nae doot—but it canna rob ye o' what ye love the most. An' I'll tell ye anither thing, David," he pursued, his voice the prophet voice, "it canna rob ye o' the providence o' God—it canna change the purpose o' His will for ye," and Geordie's outstretched hand, not often or lightly so extended, took David's in its own. "But about Harvey's mither," he suddenly resumed, recalling the thread that had been broken; "she'll no' hear what's happened frae the lips o' gossip. I'll tell her mysel'," he affirmed, the resolution forming swiftly; "an' I'll dae it when I'm gaein' hame frae here," proceeding forthwith to button up his coat preparatory to departure.

"I'll go with you," David said quietly. "There's no reason why I shouldn't. I've a lot to regret, but nothin' to be ashamed of—nothin' to be ashamed of, as I said afore. Where's your mother, Madeline?—I want to see her afore I go."

"She's up-stairs," Madeline answered in rather a subdued tone. "I think she's looking over some things."

David sighed as he rose and turned towards the stair. Reaching the room above, he found his wife gazing upon the rich contents of several receptacles whose treasures were outturned upon the floor. He sat down beside her on the bed, making rather a plaintive attempt to comfort the heart whose sorrow he knew was different from his own.

"I'm going to keep everything of Madeline's I can," she said, after some preliminary conversation. "Poor child, she was looking forward so to her coming-out party—but I guess that's all a thing of the past now," she sighed. "And everybody said you were going to be elected the town's first mayor, too. I was counting so much on that—but of course they won't do it now. But do you know, David, there's one bit of consolation left to us—and that's about Madeline. I think, I think, David, she'll be provided for, all right, before very long," smiling significantly as she made the prediction.

"How?" David asked, quite dumfounded, yet not without a kind of chill sensation in the region of his heart.

"Oh, the old way," responded his wife; "the old, old way, David. I've seen signs of it, I think—at least I've seen signs that some one else wouldn't mind taking care of her, some one that would be able to give her quite as much as we ever did," she concluded, a note of decided optimism in the voice.

David sat up straight and gasped. "Surely," he began in a hoarse voice, "surely you ain't talkin' about—about matrimony, are you, mother?"

Madeline's mother smiled assentingly. "That's the old, old way, David—I guess that's what it'll end in, if things go on all right. Don't look so stormy, David—I should think you'd be glad."

"Glad!" cried David, his voice rising like a wind. "Good Lord, glad—glad, if a fellow's goin' to lose everything an' then be left alone," he half wailed; "you expect a fellow to be glad if he gets news that he might have to part with the dearest thing he's got?" he went on boisterously. "But I'm makin' a goat o' myself," chastening his tone as he continued; "there ain't no such thing goin' to happen. Who in thunder do you imagine wants our Madeline?—I'd like to see the cuss that'd \_\_\_"

"But, David," his wife interrupted rather eagerly, "wait till I tell you who it is—or perhaps you know—it's Cecil; and I'm quite sure he'd be ever so attentive, if Madeline would only permit it. And I don't suppose any young gentleman of our acquaintance has the prospects Cecil has."

David's face wore a strange expression; half of pity it seemed to be and half of fiery wrath. "That's so, mother," he said in quite a changed voice; "if all reports is true there ain't many with prospects like his—he'll get what's comin' to him, I reckon. But there's one thing I'm goin' to tell you, mother," and the woman started at the changed tone of the words, so significant in its sternness, "an' I'll jest tell it to you now—an' it's this. Mebbe we'll have to beg our bread afore we're through—but Cecil ain't never goin' to have our Madeline—not if me an' God can help it," whereat he turned and went almost noiselessly from the room, his white lips locked in silence. And Madeline wondered why his eyes rested so yearningly on her when he returned, filled with such hungering tenderness as though he were to see her never more.

Neither Geordie nor David spoke a word as they went down the steps and passed slowly along the avenue that led from the gate to the house. But just as they opened the gate David turned and took a long wistful survey of the scene behind.

"It'll be quite a twist to leave it all," he said, trying to smile. "I've got so kind o' used to it—there's a terrible pile o' difference between *bein'* poor an' *gettin'* poor," he added reflectively.

"But ye'd hae to gang awa an' leave it, suner or later," Geordie suggested; "it comes to us a'—an' it's only a wee bit earlier at the maist."

"That's dead true," assented David; "sometimes I think th' Almighty sends things like this to get us broke in for the other—a kind of rehearsal for eternity," he concluded, quite solemnly for him. "Look there, Mr. Nickle," he suddenly digressed, pointing towards the house, "d'ye see that upper left-hand window, with the light shinin' on it, an' the curtain blowin' out?—well, that's where Madeline was born. It's kind o' hard," he said, so softly that Geordie scarcely heard.

"But ye hae the lassie wi' ye yet—the licht's aye shinin' frae her bonnie face," Geordie replied consolingly.

"Poor child, she's had to scrape up most o' the sunshine for our home herself this last while," responded David, "but it ain't goin' to be that way after this—when things is dark, that's the time for faces to be bright, ain't it?—even if a fellow does lose all he's got. Do you know, Mr. Nickle," he went on very earnestly, "I've a kind of a feelin' a man should be ashamed of himself, if all his money's done for him is to make him miserable when it's gone. I mean this," turning and smiling curiously towards Geordie, "if a fellow's had lots o' money, an' all the elegant things it gets him, it ought to kind o' fit him for doin' without it. I don't believe you catch my meanin'—but money, an' advantages, ought to do that much for the man that's had 'em, to learn him how to do without 'em if he has to—it ought to dig wells in him somewhere that won't dry up when his money takes the wings o' the mornin' an' flies away, as the Scriptur' says."

"Yon's graun' doctrine, David," Geordie assented eagerly; "forbye, there's' anither thing it ought to dae for a man—it should let him ken hoo easy thae man-made streams dry up, an' what sair things they are to minister till the soul. An' they should make him seek the livin' water, so he'll thirst nae mair forever. I seem to ken that better mysel' than I've ever done afore."

"Mebbe that's part o' the plan," David made reply; "'cause how a fellow takes a thing like this here that's happened me, depends 'most altogether on jest one thing—an' I'll tell you what it is—whether he takes it good or bad depends on whether he believes there's any plan in the business at all. I mean some One else's plan, of course. There's a terrible heap o' comfort in jest believin' there's a plan. When things was all fine sailin' with me, I always held to the plan idea—always kep' pratin' about the web a higher hand was weavin' for us all—an' I ain't agoin' to go back on it now," he added with unwonted vehemence. "No, sir, I never believed more in God's weavin' than I do this minute. 'Tain't jest the way I'd like it wove—but then we don't see only the one side," he added resignedly. "D'ye know, Mr. Nickle, we're terrible queer critters, ain't we? It really is one of the comicallest things about us, that we don't believe th' Almighty's plan for us is as good as our own plan for ourselves. Funny too, ain't it, now?" he pursued, "an' the amusin' part o' the whole business is this, how the folks that's most religious often kicks the hardest when they ain't allowed to do their share o' the weavin'," he concluded, looking earnestly into his friend's face.

Geordie's reply found expression more by his eyes than by word of mouth. But both were interrupted by their journey's end, for by this time they had arrived at the little store. Entering and enquiring for Mrs. Simmons, they were conducted by Jessie into the unpretentious sitting-room where Harvey's mother was seated in the solitary armchair that adorned the room, her hands busy with the knitting that gave employment to the passing hours.

Grave and kindly were the salutations of her visitors, equally sincere and dignified the greetings in return. After some irrelevant conversation, David introduced the purpose of their visit with the tact that never fails a kindly heart, bidding his friend tell the rest; and the half-knitted stocking fell idle on her lap as the silent listener composed herself bravely to hear the tidings that something assured her would be far from welcome.

Once or twice she checked a rising sigh, and once or twice she nervously resumed the knitting that had been given over; but no other sign bespoke the sorrow and disappointment that possessed her. If any wave of pain passed over the gentle face, it found no outlet in the sightless eyes. Geordie kept nothing back; the whole story of their present situation—and of their consequent helplessness to further aid her scholar son—was faithfully rehearsed. And the very tone of his voice bore witness to the sincerity of his statement that the whole calamity had no more painful feature than the one it was their mission now to tell.

"I'm content," she said quietly when Mr. Nickle had concluded. "I'll not deny that the hope of



—of what's evidently not to be—has made the days bright for me ever since Harvey went away," she went on, as if her life had never known darkness; "but he's had a good start, and he can never lose what he's got already—and maybe the way'll be opened up yet; it's never been quite closed on us," she added reverently, "though it often looked dark enough. The promise to the poor and the needy never seems to fail. And I'm sure Harvey'll find something to do—and oh," she broke in more eagerly than before, "I know the very first thing he'd want me to do is to thank you both for your great kindness, your wonderful kindness to us all," she concluded, both hands going out in the darkness to hold for a moment the hands of her benefactors.

The conversation was not much longer continued, both Geordie and David retreating before the brave and trustful resignation as they never would have done before lamentation or repining. And after they had gone Jessie and her mother sat long together in earnest consultation; for the one was as resolved as the other that something must be done to avert the impending disaster.

"Just to think, mother, he'd be a B.A. if he could only finish with his class," said Jessie; "and then, then he could be nearly any thing he liked, after that. If only business were a little better in the shop," she sighed.

"But it's losing, Jessie," the mother replied, forcing the candid declaration. "I can tell that myself—often I count how many times the bell above the door rings in a day; and it's growing less, I've noticed that for a year now. It's all because Glenallen's growing so fast, too—that's the worst of it; what helps others seems to hurt us."

Jessie understood, the anomaly having been often discussed before; it had been discussed, too, in the more pretentious shops, though in a far different frame of mind. "We've got along so well this far—we've got almost used to doing without things," she said with a plaintive smile, "and it seems such a pity to have to stop when the goal's in sight."

"If I were only stronger," mused the mother; "but I'm not," she added quietly, the pale face turning towards Jessie's—"your mother's not gaining any; you can see that, can't you, dear?"

Jessie's protest was swift and passionate. "You mustn't talk that way," she cried appealingly; "you've spoken like that once or twice—and I won't hear of it," the voice quivering in its intensity. "You're going to get well—I'm almost sure you will. And there's nothing more I'd let you do," her eyes glowing with the ardour of her purpose, "if you were as well and strong as ever in your life."

Mrs. Simmons smiled, but the smile was full of sadness.

"Have it as you will, my child," she said, "but there's no use shutting our eyes to the truth—it's for your own sake I spoke of it, Jessie. When you write to Harvey, do you tell him I'm gaining, dear?" a smile on the patient face.

Jessie was silent a moment. "Don't, mother don't," she pleaded. "Let's talk about what we'll do for Harvey. Oh, mother," the arms going about the fragile form in a passion of devotion, "it seems as if your troubles would never end; it's been one long round of care and struggle and pain for you ever since I can remember. And this last seems the worst, for I know how you've lived for Harvey. And it shan't all be for nothing; we'll get through with it somehow—I know we will."

"You shouldn't pity me so, my daughter," and the mother's voice was as calm as the untroubled face. "I really don't think you know how much happiness I've had; I often feel there's nothing so close to joy as sorrow. And you and Harvey have been so good—and I'm so proud of him. The way's always been opened up for us; and God has strengthened me, and comforted me, beyond what I ever thought was possible. And besides, dear," the voice low and thrilling with the words that were to come, "besides, Jessie, I've had a wonderful feeling lately that it's getting near the light—it's like a long tunnel, but I've caught glimpses of beauty sometimes that tell me the long darkness is nearly over. Oh, my darling," she went on in the same thrilling voice, holding her close in a kind of rapture, "I never was so sure before—not even when I could see all around—never so sure—that it's all light after all, and my very darkness has been the light of God. I don't know why I should cry like this," she sobbed, for the tears were now falling fast, "for I'm really happy—even with all this new trouble; but for days and days lately I've kept saying to myself: 'They need no candle, neither light of the sun'—and I can't think of it without crying, because I know it's true."

Very skillfully did Jessie endeavour to turn the conversation into other channels; her own sinking heart told her too well that her inmost thought was not far different from her mother's. For the dear face was daily growing more pale and thin, and the springs of vitality seemed to be slowly ebbing. But on this she would not permit her mind to dwell.

"Don't you think we could get some bright girl to mind the shop, mother; some young girl, you know, that wouldn't cost very much? Because I've just been thinking—I've got a kind of a plan—I've been wondering if I couldn't make enough to help Harvey through. You know, mother,

I can sew pretty well—Miss Adair told me only yesterday I managed quite as well as the girls with a regular training, and she just as much as offered me work. And I'll see her about it this very day; we could get some one to mind the shop for a great deal less than I could make—and Harvey could have the rest. You wouldn't object, would you, mother? I wouldn't go out to sew; some of the girls take the work home with them, and so could I. Or, if I was doing piece-work, I might be able to mind the store myself at the same time—there seems to be so little to do now," she added, looking a little ruefully towards the silent shop.

The expression of pain deepened on the mother's face as she listened. Yet she did not demur, although the inner vision brought the tired features of the unselfish girl before her. "It seems hard," she said at length; "I was always hoping you'd soon have it a little easier—but this will only make it harder for you."

"But not for long," Jessie interrupted cheerily; "just till Harvey's through—and then he'll be able to make lots of money. And maybe you and I'll be able to go away somewhere for a little rest," she added hopefully, her eyes resting long on the pallid face.

"Harvey must never know," the mother suddenly affirmed; "we'll have to keep it from him, whatever happens, for I know he wouldn't consent to it for a moment. Where are you going, Jessie?" for she knew, her sense of every movement quickened by long exercise, that the girl was making preparations to go out.

"I'm going to see Miss Adair, mother. I won't be long—but now that my mind's set on it, I can't rest till I find out. If I can only get that arranged, it'll make it so much brighter for us all."

The mother sat alone with many conflicting thoughts, marvelling at all that so enriched her life, dark though it was, and bearing about with it a burden that no heart could share.

Jessie's errand was successful, as such errands are prone to be; and only those who understand life's hidden streams could have interpreted the radiance on the maiden's face as she returned to announce her indenture unto toil, new gladness springing from new sacrifice, for such is the mysterious source whose waters God hath bidden to be blessed.

David was absorbed in a very sober study as he walked slowly homeward. Not that he shrank from the personal sacrifice that his present circumstances were about to demand, or that any sense of dishonour clouded his thought of the business career that seemed about to close—from this he was absolutely free. But he was feeling, and for the first time, how keen the sting of defeat can be to a man whose long and valiant struggle against relentless odds has at last proved unavailing.

Still reflecting on this and many other things, he suddenly heard himself accosted by a familiar voice; turning round, he saw Mr. Craig hurrying towards him.

"Going home, Borland?" said the former as he came up with him; "I'll just walk along with you if you are—I want to talk to you."

David's mind lost no time in its calculation as to what the subject of this conversation would likely be; during all his period of struggle, well known and widely discussed as it had been, Mr. Craig had never approached him before. David felt an unconscious stiffening of the lip, he scarce knew why.

"I wanted to tell you, Borland, for one thing," Mr. Craig began as they walked along, "how much I feel for you in the hard luck you're having."

"Thank you kindly," said David promptly.

"I don't suppose I'm just able to sympathize as well as lots of men could," Mr. Craig observed; "unbroken success doesn't fit one for that sort of thing."

"Oh!" said David, volumes in the tone.

"Well," said the other, not by any means oblivious to the intonation, "I suppose it does sound kind of egotistical—but I guess it's true just the same. I suppose I'm what might be called a successful man."

"I reckon you might be *called* that, all right," said David, getting out his knife and glancing critically at a willow just ahead. The spirit of whittling invariably arose within him when his emotions were aroused.

"What do you mean?" Mr. Craig enquired, a little ardently. He had noticed David's emphasis on one particular word.

"I don't mean nothin'," responded David, making a willow branch his own.

"You seem to doubt a little whether I've really been successful or not?" ventured the other, looking interrogatively at his companion.

"Depends," said David laconically; "you've been terrible successful outside."

"I don't just follow you," Mr. Craig declared with deliberate calmness. "I don't suppose we judge people by the inside of them—at least I don't."

"I do," answered David nonchalantly. "A fellow can't help it—look at this here gad; it looked elegant from the outside," holding it up to show the wound his knife had made.

"What's the matter with it?" Mr. Craig rejoined, pretending to look closely.

"It's rotten," said David.

"What do you mean by that?" Mr. Craig demanded rather more sharply.

"I don't mean nothin'," responded David.

"Then it hasn't anything to do with the question of success?"

"That's an awful big question," David answered adroitly, "an' folks'll get a terrible jolt in their opinions about it some day, I reckon—like the rich fool got; an' he thought he was some pun'kins, too. Nobody can't tell jest who's a success," he went on, peeling the willow as he spoke. "I reckon folks calls me the holiest failure in these parts—but I'm a terrible success some ways," he went on calmly.

"What ways?" Mr. Craig enquired rather too quickly for courtesy.

"Oh, nothin' much—only under the bark—if it's anywheres," David jerked out, still vigorously employed on the willow. "But there ain't no good of pursuin' them kind of thoughts," he suddenly digressed, making a final slash at the now denuded branch; "they're too high-class for a fellow that never went to school after he left it—let's talk about somethin' worldly. They say you're goin' to be Glenallen's first mayor; goin' to open the ball—ain't that so?"

Abating his pace, Mr. Craig drew closer to David, a pleased expression displacing the rather decided frown that had been gathering.

"To tell the truth, now that you've mentioned it," he began confidentially, "that's the very thing I wanted to talk about. Of course, there's no use in my pretending I don't want the office, for I do—the whole thing is in being the *first* mayor, you see, after Glenallen's incorporated. Kind of an historical event, you understand—and, and there seems to be a little misunderstanding," he went on a trifle hesitatingly, "between you and me. I find there's a tendency to—to elect you—that is, in some quarters," he explained, "and I thought we might come to a kind of an agreement, you understand."

"What kind?" David asked innocently.

"Oh, well, you understand. Of course, I know you wouldn't care for the office—not at present, at least. I've felt perfectly free to say as much whenever the matter was mentioned to me."

"You're terrible cheerful about resignin' for other people," rejoined David with some spirit; "some folks is terrible handy at makin' free with other folks' affairs."

"Oh, well, you know what I mean—you've got your hands full——"

"They're not terrible full," David corrected dismally.

"And besides, you see," Mr. Craig went bravely on, "you're not British born—you were born in Ohio, weren't you?"

"Not much," David informed him; "there's no Buckeye about me—I was born in Abe Lincoln's State. Peoria's where I dawned—and he often used to stop at my father's house when he was attendin' court." David was evidently ready to be delivered of much further information, but the candidate had no mind to hear it.

"Well, anyhow," he interrupted, "I think it'd be more fitting that the first mayor should have been born under the British flag. But you don't mean to say you think you'll stand?" he suddenly enquired, evidently determined to ascertain the facts without further parley.

"Couldn't jest say," David replied with rather provoking deliberation; "you see, I'll have a good deal o' time lyin' round loose, now that I'm givin' up business for my health," this with a mournful grin. "So mebbe I'll be in the hands o' my friends—that there expression's one I made up myself," he added, turning a broad smile upon his friend's very sober face. Mr. Craig, to tell the exact truth, grew quite pale as he heard the ominous words. For his heart had been sorely set on the immortality the first mayorship of Glenallen would confer, and he knew how doubtful would be the issue of a contest between David and himself.

"I was thinking," he began a little excitedly, "perhaps we could make some arrangement that would be—would be to our mutual advantage," he blurted out at last; "perhaps—perhaps I could give you a little lift; I could hardly expect you to withdraw for nothing. And now that you're in financial difficulties, so to speak, I thought perhaps a little quiet assistance mightn't go amiss."

But David had come to a dead standstill, his eyes flashing as they fastened themselves on the other's face. "D'ye mean to say you're tryin' to bribe me?" he demanded, his voice husky.

"Oh, no, Mr. Borland—oh, no, I only meant we might find common ground if——"

"Common ground! Common scoundrelism!" David broke in vehemently; "you must think I'm devilish poor, Mr. Craig," his voice rising with his emotion, "an' it appears to me a man has to be sunk mighty low afore he could propose what you've done. I've bore a heap, God knows—but no man never dared insult me like this afore; if that's one o' the things you've got to do if you're pure British stock, then I thank the Lord I'm a mongrel."

"Be calm, Mr. Borland," implored his friend suavely, "you don't understand."

"I understand all right," shouted David; "a man don't need much breedin' of any kind to understand the likes o' you—you want a man that's lost all he's got, to sell himself into the bargain," the withered cheek burning hot as David made his arraignment.

"Now, Mr. Borland, do be reasonable—I mean nothing of the sort. I only wanted to give you a helping hand—of course, if you can do without it—"

"Yes, thank God," and David's voice was quite shaky, "I can do without it all right. I can do without your dirty money—an' everybody else's for that matter—but I can't do without a conscience that ain't got no blot on it, an' I can't do without a clean name like my father left it to me," he went hotly on, his flushed face and swift-swallowing throat attesting how deeply he felt what he was saying.

"Oh, come now, Borland," Mr. Craig urged, reaching out a hand towards his shoulder, "come off your high horse—preachin' isn't your strong point, you know."

"I ain't preachin'," David retorted vigorously. "I'm practisin'—an' that's a horse of a different colour," he added, casting about to recall the amiability that had almost vanished.

"There's no need for any trouble between us, Borland," Mr. Craig began blandly; "'twouldn't be seemly, considering all that's liable to happen—if things go on as they're likely to," he added significantly. "We'll need to be on the best of terms if we're going to be relations, you know."

"What's that you're sayin'?—relations, did you say?" David was quite at a loss to understand, and yet a dim fear, suggested not so long before, passed for a moment through his mind.

"Yes, relations," returned Mr. Craig, smiling amiably; "these young folks have a way of making people relations without consulting them—at least, till they've gone and settled it themselves. I guess you understand all right."

A hot flush flowed over David's cheek. "Do you—do you mean my Madeline?" he stammered, staring like one who did not see.

"Well, maybe—but I mean my Cecil just as much. All this won't make any difference to Cecil."

"What won't?" David groped, the words coming as if unguided, his thoughts gone on another mission.

"Oh, these little difficulties of yours—all this financial tangle, I mean; your failure, as they call it round town. That'll never budge Cecil."

The men were still standing, neither thinking of direction or of progress. But David moved close up to the other, his eyes fixed on the shrewd face with relentless sternness.

"It don't need to make no difference," he said through set teeth. "There ain't nothin' to get different—if you mean your son, Craig—or if you mean my daughter, Craig," the words prancing out like a succession of mettled steeds; "either you or him's the biggest fool God ever let loose. There ain't no human power, nor no other kind, can jine them two together. Perhaps I'll have to go beggin'—but I'll take Madeline along with me afore she'll ever go down the pike with any one like your Cecil, as you call him." David paused for breath.

"She'd be mighty lucky if she got him," Cecil's father retorted haughtily. "One would think you were the richest man in the county to hear you talk."

David's face was closer than ever. "Craig," he said, his voice low and taut, "there's mebbe some that's good enough for Madeline—I ain't a-sayin'—but th' Almighty never made no man yet that my daughter'd be lucky if she got. An' I know I'm poor; an' I know I've got to take to the tall timbers out o' there—where she was born," the words coming with a little gulp as he pointed in the direction of his home, "but I'm a richer man, Craig, than you ever knew how to be. An' you can go back to your big house, an' I'm goin' to hunt a little one for us—but I wouldn't trade you if every pebble on your carriage drive was gold. An' I'm happier'n you ever knew how to be. An' your Cecil can't never have our Madeline. An' when it comes to budgin', like you was talkin' about, I reckon I can do my share of not budgin', Craig—an' you can put that in your pipe an' smoke it."

David started to move on; he was panting just a little. But Mr. Craig stopped him; and the sneer in his words was quite noticeable:

"I suppose you'll be giving her to your charity student—she'll be head clerk in the Simmons' store yet, I shouldn't wonder."

David was not difficult to detain. He stared hard for a moment before speaking. "Mebbe they're poor," he said at length, "an' mebbe his blind mother has to skimp an' save—that settles any one for you all right. But it wouldn't take me no longer to decide between that there charity student an' your son, than it would to decide—to decide between you an' God," he concluded hotly, turning and starting resolutely on his way. "Now you know my ideas about success," he flung over his shoulder as he pressed on; "you're a success, you know, a terrible success—I'm a failure, thank heaven," his face set steadfastly towards home, bright with the hallowed light that, thought of his treasure there kept burning through all life's storm and darkness.

But Mr. Craig fired the last shot. "I wish you luck with the coming-out party," he called after him mockingly; "be sure and have it worthy of the young lady—and of her father's fortune," he added, the tone indicating what satisfaction the thrust afforded him.

David answered never a word. But the taunt set him pondering, nevertheless; once or twice he stopped almost still, though his pace was brisk, and something in his face reflected the purpose forming within him. When he reached his home he found Madeline and her mother together; they were still employed with the sombre task of selecting what should be the survivors among their domestic treasures.

"How did Mrs. Simmons take it?" Madeline asked almost impatiently, as he drew her down in the chair beside him.

"She took it like as if she believed in God," David answered solemnly; "an' she took it that way 'cause she does—that's more," he added emphatically. "But I've got somethin' to say—somethin' important."

Both waited eagerly to hear. "Tell me quick," said Madeline.

"Well, it's this. I don't want nothin' touched here—not till after what I'm goin' to tell you. We'll have to waltz out o' here, of course," he said, looking gravely around the room; "but it'll be some considerable time yet—an' as long as we're here, we'll be here, see? An' we're goin' to have your comin'-out party, Madeline—we're goin' to have it the last night. So it'll be a comin'-out party, an' a goin'-out one, at the same time—ain't that an elegant idea? An' it'll be a dandy, too—there'll be high jinks till nobody can't see anybody else for dust. An' we're goin' to have things jest like they are now—no use o' kickin' down your scaffold till you're through with it," he concluded, chucking Madeline under the chin in his jubilation.

Madeline and her mother gasped a little as they exchanged glances. Mrs. Borland was the first to speak. "Don't you think it'll throw a gloom over everything, David, when everybody'll know what—what's going to happen?"

"If anybody begins that kind o' throwin', I'll throw them out sideways," David replied fiercely. "Most certainly it won't. Everybody'd always be slingin' gloom round, if that'd do it—'cause nobody ever knows what's goin' to happen any time. Leastways, nobody only One—an' He ain't never gloomy, for all He knows. Anyhow, nothin' ain't goin' to happen—'cept to the furniture," he added scornfully, glancing at the doomed articles that stood about.

"One good thing," Madeline suggested radiantly, "there'll be nothing to hide—everybody'll know they're expected to be jolly."

"Sure thing!" echoed David, utterly delighted. "I'm goin' to have that on the invitations—there ain't goin' to be no 'Answer P.D.Q.' on the left-hand corner; I'm goin' to have somethin' else—I'm goin' to have what that cove on the tavern sheds yelled through the megaphone: 'If you can't laugh don't come.' I often told you about him, didn't I?—well, that's the prescription's goin' to be on the admission tickets."

Considerable further dialogue was terminated by a very serious question from the prospective débutante. "Won't it look kind of strange, father?" she ventured rather timidly, "going to all that expense—just at this particular time?"

David put his arms about her very tenderly, smiling down into the sober face. "There ain't goin' to be no champagne, Madeline," he said quietly, "nor no American beauties—there'll jest be one of heaven's choicest. It'll be an awful simple party—an' awful sweet. An' music don't cost nothin'; neither does love, nor friends, nor welcomes—the best things is the cheapest. An' I'll show them all one thing," he went on very gravely, his eyes filling as they were bended on his child, "one thing that ain't expensive—but awful dear," the words faltering as they left his lips.

"Of course you ought to go. I've got a kind of feeling, though I don't know why, that the whole party will be spoiled if you're not there."

"Spoiled! Spoiled for whom?"

"Oh, for somebody—I guess you know all right."

It was Miss Farringall who was pressing her advice so vigorously; Harvey the beneficiary. They were seated in the little room in which they had first met, everything in the same perfect order, the fire still singing its song of unconquerable cheer, the antique desk in the corner still guarding its hidden secrets. The domestic Grey, the added dignity of years upon him, had come to regard the one-time intruder with almost the same affection that he lavished on his mistress in his own devoted, purring way. He was slumbering now on Harvey's knee, and, could he have interpreted the significance of human glances, he might have seen the fondness with which the woman's eyes were often turned upon the manly face beside her.

"If I thought Miss Borland really wanted me to come," mused Harvey.

"Maybe Miss Borland doesn't care very much," his friend retorted quickly, "but I'm sure Madeline wants you," her eyebrows lifted reproachfully as she spoke.

Harvey smiled in return. "Of course, it would give me a chance to see mother," he said reflectively; "and Jessie says she's very poorly. Perhaps I really ought to go—Jessie's quite anxious about her."

"I think both reasons are good ones," Miss Farringall said after a little silence. "Do you know, Harvey," she went on, a shade almost of sadness coming over her face, "I feel more and more that there's only one thing in life worth gaining—and one should never trifle with it. If you lose that, you lose everything—no matter how much else you may have of money, or luxury—even of friends," she said decisively; "even of friends—if you miss that other."

Harvey, slightly at a loss, fumbled about for something to say. "You have everything that money can provide, Miss Farringall—and that's a good deal," he added, magnifying the lonely asset as best he could.

"Yes, perhaps I have—and maybe it is," she said as if to herself. Then neither spoke for a long interval. But finally Miss Farringall turned towards Harvey with a peculiar expression, as if she had just come to a decision after much inward debate.

"Would you like to hear something I've never told any one else?" she said impressively—"not even to the rector. He has a second wife," she explained, smiling, "and they're always dangerous."

"If you wish to trust me with it," was Harvey's answer.

"Well, I will—and you'll tell me whether I did right or not. It's not a long story, and I'll tell it as directly as I can. It's about a man—a gentleman," she corrected. "No, I never loved him—doesn't this language sound strange from me?" as she noticed the surprise on Harvey's face. "But it was—it was different with him. He was a married man, too. And his wife was very rich—richer than he was. And she hated him—they lived in the same house, but that was all; a proud, selfish woman; so selfish, she was."

Miss Farringall rose and moved to the window, gazing long on the leafy scene about her. The silence was broken suddenly by the butler's voice, his approach as noiseless as ever.

"Please, Miss Farringall, the rector's here—he's in the hall. And he wants to know——"

"Tell him he can't," Miss Farringall said softly, without turning her eyes from the window.

"Yes, mum," as the impassive countenance vanished.

Harvey did not speak, did not even look towards the silent figure at the window. He knew, and waited. Presently the woman turned and silently resumed her chair.

"It was different with him, as I said," she slowly began again—"not that I ever encouraged him; it terrified me when I found it out. Well, one day when we were alone together, he—he forgot himself," a slight tremor of the gentle form and a deep flush upon the cheek betokening the vividness of the memory. "And I fled from him—and I vowed we should never meet again," the sad face lighting up with the echo of a far-off purpose. "And I kept the vow for years," she went on, gazing into the fire—for there it is that the dead years, embalmed of mystic forces, may be seen by sorrow-brightened eyes.

Harvey waited again, silent still. And once again the strange narrative was resumed. "But I broke it at last," she said. "He was dying—a slow, painful disease. And he had everything money could give him; he had everything that anybody wants—except that one thing. His wife went on in her old, idle, fashionable way, caring nothing, of course. Well, one day he sent for me—it was his wife who brought the message; she knew nothing of what had happened, of course, and she told

me of his request and asked me if I wouldn't come and sit with him sometimes. And I went—I went often—used to read to him; many different books at first, mostly poetry—but as it came nearer the end it was hardly ever anything but the Bible.... The end came at last. And just the day before he died he said to me: 'It'll be to-morrow—to-morrow about this time.' Then he took a big envelope from under his pillow, and he said: 'This'll be good-bye; God bless you for what you've been to a dying man. And I want you to do this. I want you to come to my grave a year from the night of the day I'm buried—and open this envelope there—but not for a year.' And we said good-bye. Well, I couldn't refuse the request of a dying man—I did as he asked me. But I waited a year and four days, Harvey," and Miss Farringall's voice was quite triumphant; "I waited that long because I knew no man would believe a woman could do it.... And that's how I'm situated as I am, Harvey. I don't think anybody ever knew—I guess nobody cared; principally stocks, simply transferred. Do you think I did right, Harvey?" she asked after a pause.

"Yes," said Harvey quickly, unable to take his eyes from her face.

"Not that the envelope ever did me very much good," she went on. "I often think how much happier I'd have been if I'd been poor—and had had that other. But it wasn't to be. And all this never made me happy—there was only one could have done that; and he went out of my life long ago—long ago now," she said, her gaze scanning his face in wistful scrutiny, her heart busy with the photograph entombed in the silent desk before her.

"So I think you certainly ought to go, as I said," she resumed, quietly reverting to the original topic. "I know the signs," she added in plaintive playfulness—"even if they do call me an old maid; I shouldn't wonder if they know the signs best of all. But this is all nonsense," straightening herself resolutely in her chair, "and has nothing to do with what we're talking about. When is the party, Harvey?"

"It's Friday night week—the very day after I graduate. And they leave the old home the next day—I told you all about Mr. Borland's failure. It seems they've been prepared to leave for some months—and now it's actually come. Mr. Borland gave up everything to his creditors, I believe. And this is a notion of his own—just like him, too—that they'll celebrate the last night in their old home this way; he's going to have Madeline's coming-out party for a finish. Quite an original idea, isn't it?"

"Will that young fellow from your town be there?—Mr. Craig, you know?" asked Miss Farringall, without answering his question. She did not look at Harvey as she asked her own.

"Oh, yes," Harvey answered, "he'll be there, of course—he's very attentive." Harvey's eyes were also turned away.

"Who's he attentive to?"

"Why, to Miss Borland—to Madeline, of course. He's been that for a long time."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes. At least, I suppose so. Why?" Harvey asked wonderingly.

"Oh, nothing much—only I heard his affections were divided; another Glenallen girl, I heard."

"What was the name?" asked Harvey, interestedly.

"I did hear, I think—it doesn't matter. Please don't ask me any more—really, I'm ashamed of myself, I'm getting to be such a silly old gossip. Tell me, are you going to get the medal when you graduate?"

The look on the face before her showed that the conversation had turned his thoughts towards something more absorbing than college premiums, covetable though they be; he too was coming to realize that life has only one great prize, and but one deep source of springing joy.

"I have my doubts about the medal," Harvey answered after a pause; "I'm afraid of Echlin—but I'll give him a race for it. I think I'm sure of my degree, all right. That's another reason inclines me to go home next week," he added cheerfully; "I want to give my sheepskin to my mother; it's more hers and Jessie's than it is mine—and I want them to see my hood, too, when I get one; and the medal," his face brightening, "if I should have the luck to win it. But there's another thing that troubles me a little," he added with a dolorous smile, "and that is that I haven't got anything to wear, as the ladies say. I haven't a dress suit, you know—and I'm afraid anything else'll be a little conspicuous there."

Miss Farringall smiled the sweetest, saddest smile, as she turned her face to Harvey's. "Oh, child," she said, "you're very young; and you're certainly very unfamiliar with the woman-heart. A girl doesn't care a fig for dress suits—I think they rather admire men who dress originally," she went on assuringly; "I know I did, then. And besides, it's all to your credit that you haven't one—I think that's one of the fine things about you, that you haven't got so many things you might have had, if you'd been a little more selfish," she said, almost fondly.

"Talk about not being selfish," Harvey broke in ardently; "I'm a monster of selfishness compared to some others I could name—you ought to see my mother and my sister," he concluded proudly.

"I hope I may some day," she answered. "But meantime—about what you'll wear. I'd wear the medal if I were you. But tell me first," she went on in a woman's own persistent way, "that you'll accept the invitation. Can't you make up your mind?"

Harvey was silent for a moment. "No," came his answer decisively, "I don't think I will. I'm going to decline with thanks—self-denial's good for a fellow sometimes."

"Some kinds of self-denial are sinful," said Miss Farringall quietly; "but they bring their own punishment—and it lasts for years." She sighed, and the light upon her face was half of yearning, half of love.

"Is our Tam hame frae Edinburgh yet?" Such were the last wandering words of an aged brother of the great Carlyle, dying one summer night as the Canadian sun shed its glory for the last time upon his face. Thrice twenty years had flown since, fraternal pride high surging in his heart, he had clung to his mother's skirts while she waited at the bend of the road for the returning Tom. Carrying his shoes, lest they be needlessly worn, was that laddie wont to come from the halls of learning where he had scanned the page of knowledge with a burning heart—carrying his shoes, but with his laurels thick upon him, his advent the golden incident to that humble home in all their uneventful year. And in death's magic hour the thrilling scene was reënacted as the brother heart of the far-wandered one roamed back to the halcyon days of boyhood.

The same spirit of pride, the same devotion of love, brooded over the happy circle as Harvey sat this placid evening between his mother and sister in the home that had furnished him so little of luxury, so much of welcome and of love. He was home, and he was theirs. Trembling joy mingled with the mother's voice as now and then she broke in with kindly speech upon the story Harvey found himself telling again and again. The story was of his career in general, and of the last great struggle in particular; how he had shut himself up to his work in a final spasm of devotion, pausing only to eat and sleep till the final trials were over and the victory won. And the great day, his graduation day, was described over and over, both listeners in a transport of excitement while he told, modestly as he might, of the ovation that had greeted him when he was called forward to receive his hard-won honours.

"And you're a B.A., Harvey, now—a real B.A., aren't you, Harvey?" Jessie cried ecstatically. "It seems almost too good to be true."

Harvey merely smiled; but his mother spoke for him. "Of course he is," she answered quietly; "it'll be on all his letters. But the medal, Harvey—oh, my son, I always knew you'd win it," her voice low and triumphant. "I can hardly just believe it; out of all those students—with their parents so rich and everything—that my own son carried it off from them all. And has it your name on it, Harvey?—with the degree on it too?" she enquired eagerly.

"Of course," said Harvey, "it's in my trunk—and my hood's there too; they're both there, mother. It's a beautiful hood—and I'll show them to you if you'll wait a moment," he exclaimed impulsively, rising as he spoke.

But his eyes met Jessie's and a darkness like the darkness of death fell upon them both. Jessie was trembling from head to foot, her hand going up instinctively to her face as if she had been struck. Harvey's pale cheek and quivering lips betrayed the agony that wrung him.

"Forgive me, mother," his broken voice implored as he flung himself down beside her, his arms encircling her; "forgive me, my mother—I forgot, oh, I forgot," as he stroked the patient face with infinite gentleness, his hands caressing the delicate cheeks again and again.

"He didn't mean it, mother—he didn't mean it," Jessie cried, drawing near to them; "he just forgot, mother—he just forgot," the words throbbing with love for both.

But the mother's voice was untouched by pain. "Don't grieve like that, my darling," she pleaded, pressing Harvey's hands close to her cheek; "I know it was nothing, my son—I know just how it happened. And why will you mourn so for me, my children?" she went on in calm and tender tones, her arms encircling both. "Surely I've given you no reason for this—haven't I often told you how bright it is about me? And something makes me sure it's getting near the light. Don't you remember, dear, how the doctor said it might all come suddenly?—and I feel it's coming, coming fast; I feel sure God's leading me near the light."

"Are you, mother?" Harvey asked. The question came simply, earnestly, almost awesomely.

"Yes, dear; yes, I'm sure."

"We always asked for that. Harvey and I have, every day—haven't we, Harvey?" Jessie broke



in eagerly.

Harvey nodded, his gaze still on his mother's face. For the light that sat upon it in noble calm entranced him. No words could have spoken more plainly of the far-off source that kindled it; and a dim, holy sense of the grandeur of her outlook, the loftiness of her peace, the eternal warrant of her claim, took possession of his soul. The beauty that clothed her was not of time; and no words of tender dissembling could conceal the exultant hope that bespoke how the days of her darkness should be ended.

The silence was broken by his mother's voice. "Go and get them, Harvey—bring your medal and your hood. Bring them to your mother, my son," she said, as she released him to do her bidding.

He was gone but a moment; returning, he bore in one hand the golden token, his name inwoven with its gleam. The other held his academic hood, its mystic white and purple blending to attest the scholar's station; he had thrown his college gown about him.

Mutely standing, he placed the medal in his mother's hands. They shook as they received it, the thin fingers dumbly following its inscription, both hands enclosing it tightly, thrilling to the glad sensation. Then he held the hood out towards her, stammering some poor explanation of its material and its meaning.

"Put it on, Harvey," she said.

He swiftly slipped it about his neck, the flowing folds falling down from his shoulders. Involuntarily he bended before his mother, and the poor white hands went out in loving quest of the dear-bought symbol, tracing its form from end to end, lingering fondly over every fold. She spoke no word—but the trembling fingers still roved about the glowing laurel as her scholar boy stood silent before her, and the hot tears fell thick and fast upon it. For the memory of other days, days of poverty and stress; and the vision of the childish face as she had last beheld it; and the thought of all the hidden struggle, more bitter than he ever knew, that had thus brought back her once unknown child in triumph to his mother's home—back, too, in unchanged devotion and unabated love, to lay his trophies at the feet of her who bore him—all these started the burning tears that trickled so fast from the unseeing eyes and fell in holy stains upon the spotless emblem.

Clocks are the very soul of cruelty, relentless most when loving hearts most wish that they would stay their hands. The ebbing moments, inconsiderate of all but duty, tell off the hours of our gladness, even of sacramental gladness, with unpitying faithfulness. And yet, strange as it may seem, how blessed is the law that will not let us know when the last precious moments are on the wing! How often do devoted hearts toy with them carelessly, or waste them in unthinking levity, or drug them with unneeded slumber, or squander them in wanton silence, as though they were to last forever! How the most prodigal would garner them, and the most frivolous employ, if it were only known that these are the last golden sands that glisten their parting message before they glide into the darkness!

We may not know. As these two did not; and the last unconscious hour was spent in the company of another. "It's so good of you to come and sit with me, Miss Adair, while the children are at the party," was Mrs. Simmons' welcome to the kindly acquaintance as she entered. "Jessie's going on ahead—she promised to give Madeline some little help, so she had to go earlier. Won't you need to be starting soon, Harvey?"

"I'm going just in a minute, mother," her son answered. "And you should have seen our Jessie," he digressed, turning to their visitor. "She never looked sweeter in her life. And the dress that she had on, she made it herself, she said—I didn't know Jessie was so accomplished."

"Oh, Jessie's made many a—she's made many an admirer, by her dresses," the adroit Miss Adair concluded, noticing a quick movement of Mrs. Simmons in her direction, and suddenly recalling the injunction she had forgotten.

"I'm so sorry her flowers were withered," Harvey broke in, quite unconscious of what had been averted. "I sent her some from the city—but they were so wilted when they came that I didn't want her to take them."

"Wait a minute, Harvey—I'll go with you a step or two," his mother interrupted as her son stooped to bid her good-night. "Please excuse me, Miss Adair; I'll be back in a minute," taking Harvey's arm as he turned towards the door.

"It was so thoughtful of you to send those flowers to Jessie," she said as they moved slowly along the silent street; "she was quite enraptured when they came."

"I sent some to—to Madeline too," Harvey informed her hesitatingly. "You see, I didn't expect,

till this morning, to go to the party at all—and I wrote Madeline declining. So she isn't expecting me. Jessie promised not to tell her I had changed my mind; and in my letter I told Madeline I was sending the flowers in my place—but I'm afraid they'll be withered too. What's the matter, mother?" for her whole weight seemed suddenly to come upon his arm.

"Nothing, dear; nothing much," she said, a little pantingly. "Let us sit here a minute," sinking on an adjoining step. "I've had these off and on lately," she added, trying to smile. "I'm better now—the doctor says it's some little affection of the heart. I guess it's just a rush of happiness," she suggested bravely, smiling as she turned her face full on Harvey's.

"I'm so happy, my son—so proud and happy. You've done so well; and God has watched over you so wonderfully—and protected you." Then her voice fell almost to a whisper, faltering with the words she wanted to speak, yet shrank from uttering. These spoken, she listened as intently as if for the footfall of approaching death.

"No, mother," he answered low, "no, never once since—yet I won't say I haven't felt it; I know I have, more than once. If I'm where it is—even if I catch the odour of liquor—the appetite seems to come back. And it frightened me terribly; it was like the baying of hounds," drawing closer as he spoke.

"That's like what your father used to say," she whispered, quivering.

"But never once, mother—never a single time, since. I've always remembered that first night you came into my room—and that other time."

"And I," she cried eagerly, "haven't I? I've been there many a night since then, when Jessie was asleep—I used to try and imagine it was you, Harvey," she said, turning her face on his in the uncertain light.

The gentle colloquy flowed on while the shadows deepened about the whispering pair, the one happy because youth's radiance overshadowed his path, the other peaceful because a deeper, truer light was gathering in her heart. One cloud, and one alone, impaired the fullness of his joy; and that was, what even his hopeful heart could not deny, that his mother's strength was obviously less than when he had seen her last. But all the devotion of the years seemed gathered up into this gracious hour; the mother, mysteriously impelled, seemed loath to let the interview be at an end, though she knew Harvey must soon be gone.

"You'd better hurry now, dear," she said when their own door was reached; "no, no, I can go in alone all right—on with you to the party, Harvey; they can't any of them be happier than I am to-night. And tell Madeline, for me, there's only one chick like mine in the world—and whoever gets—"

The remainder of the message was lost in laughing protest as the good-byes were said; the mother stole softly in to her patient guest, her son hurrying on to the gathering revelry.

## XXV

### *WHAT MADE THE BALL SO FINE?*

Harvey could not forbear to indulge a glance through the flaming windows as he drew near the house. He noted, a little ruefully it must be said, that almost every gentleman guest was attired after the conventional fashion he had predicted; but a moment's reasoning repelled any threatening embarrassment with scorn. Pressing bravely on, he had soon deposited his hat and coat, and after a minute or two of waiting in the dressing-room began his descent of the stairs to mingle with the animated scene.

Looking down, one of the first to be descried was David Borland himself, as blithe and cheerful as though he were beginning, rather than concluding, his sojourn in the spacious house. He was chatting earnestly with Dr. Fletcher, interrupting the conversation now and then to greet some new-arriving guest. Near him was his wife, absorbed in the pleasant duty of receiving the steadily increasing throng who were to taste for the last time the hospitality for which that home had long been famous.

But all others, and there were many whom Harvey recognized at a glance, were soon forgotten as his eyes rested on one whose face, suddenly appearing, filled all the room with light. For Madeline was making her way into the ample hall, flushed and radiant; her brow, never so serene before, was slightly moistened from the evening's warmth, while the wonderful hair, still bright and sunny, glistened in the softly shaded light. Aglow with excitement, her cheeks seemed to boast a colour he had never seen before, the delicate pink and white blending as on the face of

childhood; and the splendid eyes, crowning all, were suffused with feeling. The significance of the hour and the animation of the scene united to create a sort of chastened mirthfulness, brimming with dignity and hope, yet still revealing how seriously she recognized the vicissitude time had brought, how well she knew the import of the change already at the door.

Harvey stood still on the landing, gazing down unobserved, his eyes never turning from the face whose beauty seemed to unfold before him as he stood. Yet not mere beauty, either—he did not think of beauty, nor would he have so described what charmed him with a strange thrill he had never owned before—but the rich expression, rather, of an inward life that had deepened and mellowed with the years. Great sense was there, for one thing—and in the last appeal this feature of womanhood is irresistible to a truly manly heart; and her face spoke of love, large and generous, as if the weary and the troubled would ever find in her a friend; cheerfulness, courage, hope, the dignity of purity, the sweetness that marks those who have been cherished but not pampered and indulged but not petted, all combined to provide a loveliness of countenance that fairly ravished his heart as he peered through spreading palms upon the unconscious face beneath.

Yet the joy he felt was not unmingled. For he could see, as a moment later he did see, that other eyes were turned with equal ardour in the same direction as his own. Madeline's appearance was a kind of triumphal entry; and there followed her, willing courtiers, two or three of the gallants of the place, whose function it evidently was to bear the glorious groups of flowers that various admirers had sent. Harvey's face darkened a little as he noted that Cecil was among them; though, to tell the truth, his seemed the most careless gaze of all—if admiration marked it, it was hungry admiration and nothing more. But the flowers he was carrying were pure; he had asked leave to carry them—and they themselves could not protest, shrink as they might from the unfitting hand. Others, nobler spirits, had burdens of equal fragrance, all fresh and beautiful as became the object of their homage.

Slowly Harvey moved down the stairs. The proprieties were forgotten—all else as well—as he passed Mr. and Mrs. Borland by, the one glancing at him with obvious admiration, the other with impatient questioning. He was standing close in front of Madeline before she knew that he was there at all; suddenly raising her head as she turned from speaking with a friend, the soulful eyes fell full on his. She did her best—but the tides of life are strong and willful, and this one overswept the swift barrier she strove to interpose, as straws are swept before a storm. And the flood outpoured about him, surging as it smote the passion that leaped to meet it, the silent tumult beating like sudden pain on heart and ears and eyes, its mingled agony and rapture engulfing him till everything seemed to swim before him as before a drunken man.

What voices silent things possess! And how God speaks through dull inanimate creatures as by the living lips of love! And what tell-tale tongues have the most trivial things to peal out life's holiest messages! For he saw—dimly at first and with a kind of shock, then clearly and with exultant certainty—he saw what was in her hand. It was only a bunch of simple flowers; but they were sorry looking things compared to their rivals whose fragrance filled the air, and the languor of death was upon them—yes, thank God, their bloom was faded, their freshness gone. For he recognized them, he knew them; and in the swift foment of his mind he even saw again the hard commercial face of the man from whom he had bought them, again the hard spared coins he had extracted from the poor total his poverty had left him, his heart the while leaping within him as though it could stand imprisonment no more. Dimly, vaguely, he saw behind her the noble clusters that other hands had sent—but other hands than hers were bearing them—and his were in her own, in the one that was bared in careless beauty as her glove hung indifferent from the wrist, unconscious of all that had displaced it. Careless observers had doubtless noted the dying flowers, marvelled mayhap; they knew not how instinct they were with life, how fadeless against the years their memory was to sweeten and enrich.

He stood silent a moment with his hand half-outstretched, his eyes divided between the flowers beneath and the face above. His soul outpoured itself through them in a riot of joy he had neither desire nor power to restrain. Madeline stood like some lovely thing at bay, her eyes aglow, their message half of high reproach and half of passionate welcome.

"You told me you weren't coming," she said in protesting tones, the words audible to no one but himself; "and I didn't expect you," her lips parted, her breath coming fast and fitfully, as though she were exhausted in the chase. Her radiant face was glorified—she knew it not—by the rich tides of life that leaped and bounded there, disporting themselves in the hour they had awaited long. Yet her whole attitude was marked by a strange aloofness, the wild air of liberty that is assumed by captive things; and her voice was almost controlled again as she repeated her

remark.

"You said you weren't coming;" the words voiced an interrogative.

"So I did," he acknowledged, his eyes roaming about her face; "but I came," he added absently, a heavenly stupidity possessing him.

"How's your mother?" she asked, struggling back.

"She's not at all well," he answered, the tone full of real meaning; for this was a realm as sacred to him as the other.

She was trying to replace her glove, the latter stubbornly resisting.

"Please button this for me," as she held out her arm. He tried eagerly enough; but his hand trembled like an aspen. Her own was equally unsteady, and progress was divinely slow. He paused, looking helplessly up into her face; her hand fell by her side. Before either knew that he was near, Cecil's voice broke in: "Allow me, Madeline," he said; "I'm an old hand at operations like this—I'll do it for you, Madeline," as though he gloried in the name, and almost before she knew it he had seized her arm, swiftly accomplishing his purpose.

Madeline was regal now, her very pose marked by unconscious pride. "Thank you," she said, still sweetly, "but I don't believe I want it fastened now—it's quite warm here, isn't it?" and with a quick gesture she slipped it from her hand, moving forward towards her father. Harvey stood still where he was; but the new heaven and the new earth had come.

The evening wore on; nor could any gathering have been enriched with more of feeling than pervaded the triumphant hours. All seemed to forget the occasion that had convened them, remembering nothing but the valued friends who were still to be their own, even if outward circumstances were about to undergo the change so defiantly acknowledged. The crowning feature came when the simple supper was finished and the table partially cleared; for they who would remember David Borland at his best must think of him as he appeared when he called the guests to order and bade them fill their glasses high.

"Take your choice of lemonade or ginger ale," he cried with a voice like a heightening breeze; and they who knew him well silently predicted the best of David's soul for the assembled guests that night. "There ain't nothin' stronger," he went on with serious mien; "drinks is always soft when times is hard—but drink hearty, friends, an' give the old house a good name."

Possibly there was the slightest symptom of a tremor in his voice as it referred thus to what he held so dear, now about to be surrendered; but a moment later the old indomitable light was kindled in his eye, the strong face beaming with the unquenched humour that had been such a fountain in his own life and the lives of others. Something of new dignity was noticeable in his entire bearing, the bearing of a man who, if beaten, had been beaten in honourable battle, resolved still to retain all that was dearest to his heart; this explained the look of pride with which he marked, as he could hardly fail to mark, the affection and respect with which every eye regarded him as he stood before his friends.

The toast to the King, and one other, had been disposed of, David proceeding merrily to launch another, when suddenly he was interrupted by Geordie Nickle, who rose from his place at the further end of the table.

"Sit doon, David," he enjoined, nodding vehemently towards his friend, "an' gie an auld man a chance. Ladies an' gentlemen," he went on, directing his remarks to the company, "I'll ask ye to fill yir glasses wi' guid cauld water for to drink the toast I'll gie ye—naethin'll fit the man I'm gaein' to mention as weel as that; there's nae mixture about him, as ye ken. I'm wantin' all o' ye to drink a cup o' kindness to the man we love mair when he's puir nor we ever did afore. Here's to yin o' th' Almichty's masterpieces, David Borland—an' may He leave him amang us till He taks him till Himsel'."

Geordie paused, his glass high in air. And the fervid guests arose to drink that toast as surely toast had never been drunk before. With a bumper and with three times three, and calling David's name aloud after a fashion that showed it had the years behind it, and with outgoing glances that spoke louder than words, every face searching his own in trust and sympathy and love, they did honour to the host who should entertain them there no more.

It was almost too much for David. He arose when his guests had resumed their seats, and stood long looking down without a word. But he began at last, timidly, hesitatingly, emotion and language gradually making their way together as his eyes were slowly lifted to rest upon the faces of his friends. He referred frankly to the occasion that had brought them together, thus to bid farewell to the scene of many happy gatherings. "Folks say I'm beaten," he went on, "but that ain't true. I'm not beaten. I've lost a little—but I've saved more," as he looked affectionately around. "I'm not really much poorer than I was. I never cared a terrible lot about money; 'twas

the game more. Just like boys with marbles; they don't eat 'em, they don't drink 'em—but they like to win 'em."

Then he referred to the justice of the power that disturbs the security of human comfort, though he employed no such terms as those. "A fellow's got to take the lean with the fat," he said resignedly; "hasn't got no right to expect the clock'll strike twelve every time. A miller that sets his wheel by the spring freshet, he'd be a fool," he announced candidly, knowing no term more accurate, "'cause it's bound to drop some time. Of course, it comes tougher to *get* poor than to *be* poor; it's worse to be impoverished than jest to be poor, as our friend Harvey here would say; he's a scholar, you know, and a B.A. at that," he added, turning his eyes with the others towards Harvey's conscious face.

"A stoot heart tae a steep brae, David!" broke in Geordie's voice as he leaned forward, his admiring gaze fixed on his friend.

"Them's my sentiments," assented David, smiling back at the dauntless Scotchman. "I mind a woman out in Illinois—she was terrible rich, and she got terrible poor all of a sudden. Well, she had to wash her own dishes, after the winds descended an' the floods blew and beat upon her house, as the Scriptur' says—an' she jest put on every diamond ring she had to her name an' went at it. That's Mr. Nickle's meanin', my friends, I take it—an' that's jest what I'm goin' to do myself. I don't know exactly what I'm agoin' to go at," he went on thoughtfully; "I've got a kind of an offer to be a kind of advisin' floor-walker for the line I've been at—an' maybe I'll take it an' keep my hand in a bit. We're goin' to live in a little cottage—an' there'll always be heaps o' room for you all. An' we're goin' to manage all right," he went on, his eye lighting at what was to follow; "I've got an arrangement made with Madeline here. We won't have a terrible lot of help round the house; so she's goin' to attend to the furnace in the winter—an' I'm goin' to look after it in the summer. So we'll get along all right, all right. An' now, friends," he continued seriously, "I must hump it to a close, as the preachers say. But there's one thing—don't believe all Mr. Nickle tells you about me; I ain't near as good as he says. These Scotchmen's terrible on epitaphs when they once get started. An' he's like all the rest o' them—when he likes a man he swallows him whole. But I want to thank you all for helpin' us to make the last night so jolly. I don't find it hard myself, for I'm as certain as I ever was of anythin' it's all for the best. I want you to give that hymn out again next Sunday, doctor," and David's face had no trace of merriment as he turned to look for his pastor by his side; "oh, I forgot the doctor goes home early—but I'll ask him anyhow, an' we'll sing it louder'n we ever did before. It's been runnin' in my mind an awful lot lately: 'With mercy an' with judgment'—you can't beat them words much; it's the old comfortin' thought about Who's weavin' the web. So now I jest want to thank everybody here for comin'—we've had good happy years together, an' there's more to follow yet, please God," he predicted reverently as he resumed his seat, the deep silence that reigned about him being more impressive than the most boisterous applause.

The pause which followed was broken by a suggestion, low and muffled at first, gradually finding louder voice and at last openly endorsed by Geordie Nickle, that "auld lang syne" would be a fitting sequel to what had gone before. David hailed the proposal with delight.

"We'll sing it now," he said enthusiastically, "an' we'll have the old doxology right after—they're both sacred songs, to my way o' thinkin'," as he beckoned to Geordie to take his place beside him, the company rising to voice the love-bright classic.

But just as cordial hands were outgoing to loyal hands outstretched to meet them, the door-bell broke in with sudden clamour, and some one on the outer edge of the circle called aloud the name of Harvey Simmons. There was something ominous in the tone, and one at least detected the paleness of Harvey's cheek as he hurried towards the door. A moment sufficed the breathless messenger to communicate what he had to tell, and in an instant Harvey had turned swiftly towards the wondering company. He spoke no word, offered no explanation, but his eye fell on Jessie's in silent intimation of what she already seemed to fear. Noiselessly she slipped from the now voiceless circle, joining her brother as they both passed swiftly out into the night.

## XXVI

### "THE FAIR SWEET MORN AWAKES"

Darkness was about them, dense and silent; nor were the shadows that wrapped their hearts less formidable. For something seemed to tell Harvey that one of life's great hours was approaching,

like to which there is none other to be confronted by a lad's loving soul. Involuntarily, almost unconsciously, his hand went out in the darkness in search of his sister's; warm but trembling, it stole into his own. And thus, as in the far-off days of childhood, they went on through the dark together, the slight and timid one clinging to the strong and fearless form beside her. But now both hearts were chilled with fear—not of uncanny shadows, or grotesque shapes by the wayside, or nameless perils, as had been the case in other days—but of that mysterious foe, one they had never faced before, ever recognized as an enemy to be some day reckoned with, but now knocking at the gate. Yet, awful though they knew this enemy to be, their feet scarce seemed to touch the ground, so swiftly did they hurry on to meet him, counting every moment lost that held them back from the parting struggle. Hand in hand they pressed forward, these children of the shadows.

"Did they say she was dying, Harvey?" Jessie asked in an awesome voice, little more than a whisper.

"That's what they thought," he answered, his hand tightening on hers; "she thought so herself."

The girl tried in vain to check the cry that broke from her lips. "Don't, sister, don't," he pleaded, his own voice in ruins; "maybe she won't leave us yet—but if she does, if she does, she'll see—she'll see again, Jessie." The emotion that throbbed in the great prediction showed how a mother's blindness can lay its hand on children's hearts through long and clouded years.

"But she won't see us, Harvey, she won't see us before she goes. Oh, Harvey, I've longed so much for that, just that mother might see us—even if it was only once—before she dies. And, you know, the doctor said if it came it would come suddenly; and I've always thought every morning that perhaps it might come that day. And now," the sobbing voice went on, "now—if she goes away—she won't have seen us at all. And we always prayed, Harvey; we prayed always for that," she added, half-rebelliously. Her brother answered never a word. Instead, he took a firmer grasp upon his sister's hand and strode resolutely on. By this time his head was lifted high and his eye was kindled with a strange and burning glow, his heart leaping like a frightened thing the while; for he could descry the light of their cottage home. Tiny and insignificant, that home stood wrapped in darkness save for that one sombre beacon-light—but the flickering gleam that rose and fell seemed to call him to the most majestic of all earthly scenes, such scenes as lend to hovel or to palace the same unearthly splendour.

"Will she know us, do you think?" Jessie whispered as they pushed open the unlocked door and went on into the dimly lighted house. Harvey did not seem to hear, so bent was he on the solemn quest, ascending the stair swiftly but silently, his sister's hand still tight within his own. As they came near the top they could just catch, through the half-open door, the outline of their mother's face, the stamp of death unmistakably upon it; she lay white and still upon her pillow, two forms bending above her, one of which they recognized at once as the doctor's. Whereat suddenly, as if unable to go farther, Harvey stopped and stood still; Jessie did likewise, turning with low sobs and flinging herself into her brother's arms, her face hidden while he held her close, silently endeavouring to comfort the stricken heart.

"Don't, Jessie," he whispered gently. "Let us make it easier for her if we can—and let us think of all it means to her—all it'll bring back again. Come," the last word spoken with subdued passion, courage and anguish blending. They went in together, slowly, each seeming to wait for the other to lead the way. Their look, their movements, their manner of walk, the very way they leaned forward to peer with eager, awe-inspired eyes upon their mother's face—all spoke of childhood; everything reverted in this great hour to the sweet simplicity of that period of life that had bound them to their mother in sacred helplessness. The primal passion flowed anew. And the two who crossed the floor together, tip-toeing towards the bed whereon their only earthly treasure lay, were now no more a laurel-laden man and a maiden woman-grown, waging the stern warfare life had thrust upon them; but they were simply boy and girl again, hand linked in hand as in the far departed days when two stained and tiny palms had so often lain one within the other—boy and girl, their hearts wrung with that strange grief that would be powerless against us all, could we but remain grown-up men and women. For the kingdom of sorrow resembles the kingdom of heaven, in this, at least, that we enter farthest in when we become like little children; and an all-wise Father has saved many a man from incurable maturity by the rejuvenating touch of sorrow, by the youth-renewing ministry of tears.

"Look, oh, Harvey, look," Jessie suddenly whispered in strange, excited tones. Subdued though her voice was, a kind of storm swept through it. Harvey started, looked afresh—and saw; and instinctively, almost convulsively, he turned and clutched Jessie tightly by the arm. She too

was clinging to him in a very spasm of trembling.

"She sees us," came Jessie's awesome tidings, her face half-hidden on her brother's shoulder.

"She sees us," he echoed absently, his face turning again towards the bed, his eyes resuming the wondrous quest.

He gazed, unspeaking, as one might gaze who sees within the veil. All else was forgotten, even great Death—so jealous of all rivals—whose presence had filled the room a moment or two ago. And the silent years beyond—ah me! the aching silence after a mother's voice is hushed—were unthought of now. And the grim and boding shade of orphanhood, deepening from twilight into dark, was unavailing against the new-born light that flooded all his soul with joy.

For he saw—and the bitter memories of bygone years fled before the vision as the night retreats before the dawn—he saw a smile upon his mother's face, the smile he had not seen for years; unforgettably, for it had mingled with his dreams—but it had vanished from her eyes when those eyes had looked their last upon her children's faces. Yes, it was in her eyes—brightness he had often seen before on cheek and lip, merriment even—but this was the heart's loving laughter breaking through the soul's clear window as it had been wont to do before that window had been veiled in gloom.

He remembered afterwards, what he did not then remark, that the doctor, observing his rapt expression, came close with some whispered explanation—some discourse on the relaxation of the optic nerve as a result of physical collapse—something of that sort, and much more, did the good man stammer forth to eke out this miracle of God. But Harvey heard him not—nor saw him even—for the love-light in his mother's eyes called him with imperious voice, and almost roughly did he snatch himself from Jessie's grasp as he pressed forward with outstretched hands. He moved around the foot of the bed, his hands still extended; and as he did so he noticed, with wild surging joy, that the devouring eyes followed him as he went. The sensation, new, elemental, overpowering, almost overcame him; something of the sense of repossession of a long absent soul, or the kindling of a long extinguished fire, or the cessation of a long tormenting pain, laid hold upon his heart. As he drew near and bent low above the bed, his mother's face was almost as a holy thing, so transfigured was it with its glow of love. The rapture in her eyes was such as conquerors know—for it was the moment of her triumph after the long battle with the years. And her lips moved as if they longed to chant the victor's song; yet they were muffled soon—for the hands she laid upon the bended shoulders of her boy were hungry hands, and that strange strength so often vouchsafed the dying was loaned her as she drew the manly form, all quivering and broken now, close to her throbbing bosom. A moment only—for the yearning eyes would not be long denied—till she gently released the hidden face, holding him forth before her while the long thirsting orbs drank deep of holy gladness.

"Oh, Harvey," she murmured low, "Harvey, my son—my little son."

"Mother—my mother," he answered back, as his hand stroked the pallid cheek; for the new vision was as wonderful to him as her returning vision could be to her. "Oh, mother, don't—don't leave us now, dear mother," he sobbed in pleading, the child-note breaking through his voice again, "now, when we'll all be so happy, mother."

She smiled and shook her head faintly; his plea seemed to find but faint lodgment in her mind. For she was otherwise employed; she gazed, as though she could never gaze enough, upon the loving, pleading face before her; she was searching for all that would reveal the soul behind—all that might speak of purity, and temperance, and victory; she was gathering traces of the years, the long curtained years through which his unfolding soul had been hidden from her sight. And her eyes wandered from his face only long enough to lift themselves to heaven in mute thanksgiving to that God whose truth and faithfulness are the strength and refuge of a mother's heart.

Suddenly she turned restlessly upon her pillow, her gaze outgoing beyond Harvey's now bended head.

"Oh, Jessie," she said with returning rapture, "oh, Jessie—my wee Jessie—my little daughter; oh, my darling," as she drew the awe-stricken face down beside her brother's. There they nestled close, there as in blessed and unforgettably days, all the fragrance of the sorrow-riven past, all the portent of the love-lorn future mingling in baptism upon their almost orphaned heads.

The thin white fingers toyed with the girl's lovely hair; "it's so much darker," she half-whispered as if to herself, "but it's beautiful; your face, Jessie; let me see your face," she faltered, as the maiden turned her swimming eyes anew upon her mother. "Thank God," she murmured, "oh, let me say it while I can—He's been so good to me. He's kept us all—all—so graciously; and He's—always—found the path. It was never—really—dark; and now He's made it light at

eventide," she half cried with a sudden gust of strength and gladness. "And I know—I've seen—before I go; it'll make heaven beautiful," and she sank back, faint and exhausted, on her pillow.

The devoted doctor and the faithful friend had both slipped noiselessly from the room. They knew that love's last Sacrament was being thus dispensed, the precious wine to be untasted more till these three should drink it new in the kingdom of God. But now Miss Adair, her love impelling her, ventured timidly back; she came gently over, so gently that she was unnoticed by the bending children, taking her place beside Harvey. She touched him on the shoulder; his eyes gave but a fleeting spark of recognition as they fell on what she held in her hand.

"I thought she'd like to see them," said the kindly woman; "she couldn't before, you know," and as she spoke she bended above the bed, a look of expectation on her face as she held Harvey's hood, and his medal, before the new-illuminated eyes. The lamp's dim light fell athwart them and they gleamed an instant as if in conscious pride.

The dying woman saw them; her eyes rested a moment on them both, and the kindly purposed neighbour made as if to put them in her hands. But the purpose died before she moved—for the mother's glance showed her that these things were to her now but as the dust. The time was short; the night was coming fast; the dying eyes, so strangely lightened for this parting joy, were consecrated to one purpose and to that alone—and the gleaming gold and the flashing fabric lay unnoticed on the bed, the mother's face still turned upon her children's in yearning eagerness, as though she must prepare against the years that would hide them from her sight till the endless day should give them back to her undimmed gaze forever.

Few were the words that were spoken now. The stream of peace flowed silently; and the reunited three held their high carnival of love—and of strange sorrow-clouded joy—the long tragedy of their united lives breaking at last into the blessedness of resignation, resignation aglow with hope. For this pledge of God's faithfulness was hailed by every heart; and they felt, though no lip voiced the great assurance, that life's long shadows would at last be lost in love's unclouded day.

Into a gentle, untroubled slumber their mother fell at length. When she awaked, her eyes leaped anew, fastening themselves upon her children as though the precious gift had been bestowed afresh.

"I had a lovely—dream," she faltered. "I saw you—both—little children—like you used to be. And I thought your father—was—there too. It was heaven," she went on, her face brightening with a far-off light; "I thought he was there—and all the—the struggle—was past and gone. You asked—me—once, dear—if he was there," her sweet smile turned on Harvey. "Not yet, dear—not yet—but—" She motioned him to bend down beside her. "Your father's living," she whispered low, her shining eyes fixed on his. Jessie retreated, not knowing why, but the wonderful light told her that it was a great moment between mother and son. "He's living," the awed voice whispered again—"but he's afraid. He'll come back—some day—Harvey. And you—you—must forgive him. He'll tell you. And love him; tell him—I'm—waiting there. You must love him—and forgive him—and bring him—" Then she stopped, breathless.

The wonderful tidings seemed at first almost more than the son could bear. With face suffused and eyes aglow, he gazed upon his mother. Suddenly his lips began to move; he spoke like one who has descried something wonderful, and far away.

"Yes, mother," he whispered low, "yes, I'll love him—I love him now; I'll love him—like you love him. And I'll bring him, mother, when he comes back; I'll bring him—we'll come together. I'll tell him what you said," he cried, forgetful who might hear, "and then he'll come—I know he'll come," his face radiant with the thought.

"And Jessie," the mother murmured, "Jessie too."

"Yes, Jessie too," he answered; "come, Jessie—come," as he beckoned to her; she moved gently over and kneeled with him beside the bed.

The day had broken. And the glowing heralds of the approaching sun were making beautiful the path before him. Hill and dale, their shining outlines visible in the distance, were clothed in golden glory; the opal clouds announced the coming of their king; the fragrant trees, and the bursting buds, and the spreading blossoms, and the kindling sward, and the verdure-covered fields gave back the far-flung smile of light. Like a bride adorned for her husband, all stood in unconscious beauty as far as eye could reach.

"Look, mother, look," Harvey cried suddenly, gently lifting the dear head from the pillow as the sanctity of the scene impelled him. "Oh, mother, you can see them all," rapture and sorrow mingling in the tone.

The far-seeing eyes turned slowly towards the window, rested one brief, wonderful moment



upon the wonderful sight, then turned away in ineffable tenderness and longing, fastening themselves again where they had been fixed before. For love is a mighty tyrant and the proudest kings must take their place as vassals in his train.

An instant later the dying eyes seemed to leap far beyond, beautiful with rapture. "Look, look," she cried as though the others were the blind, "look, oh look," her voice ringing clear with the last energy of death; "it's lovelier yonder—where it's always spring. Don't you see, Harvey? Jessie, don't you see? And baby's there, Jessie—Harvey, the baby's there—and she's beckoning; look, look, it's you—not me—she's calling. Let us all go," she said, the voice dropping to faintness again, the eyes turning again upon her children; "let us—all—go; it's so—lovely; and we're—all—so tired," as the dear lips became forever still.

And the rejoicing sun came on, the riot of his joy untempered, no badge of mourning in his hand. And he greeted the motherless with unwonted gladness as he filled the little room with light, kissing the silent face as though he would wish it all joy of the well-won rest. For he knew, he knew the secret of it all. He knew Who had transfigured hill and dale and tree and flower with the glance of love; he knew the source of all life's light and shade; he knew the afterward of God; he knew Death's other, sweeter name.

But the motherless made no response. Still they knelt, one on each side of the unanswering form; and still, tightly clasped, each held a wasted hand.

## XXVII

### *A BROTHER'S MASTERY*

It was the following night, the last night of all. Harvey lay with wide staring eyes that sought in vain to pierce the darkness; he felt it were almost a sacrilege to sleep, even could he have done so, since there would lie never more beneath the long familiar roof the beloved form that he had never known absent for a single night. He suddenly realized this—and it leaped like fire in his brain—that he had never spent a night in this, the only home he had ever known, without the dear presence that must to-morrow be withdrawn. He recalled the comfort and the courage this had given him in many a trembling hour when the nameless fears of childhood gathered with the night; how sometimes, tormented by grotesque shapes and grotesquer fancies, his terror had vanished like a dream when he had heard her cough, or sigh, or break into the gentle tones he had early learned were between her soul and God. He recalled, too, that often, startled by some unreasoning fear, he would call out loudly in the night; and in a moment the gentle form would be beside his bed, her hand upon him as she caressed him with a word, which word became the lullaby upon whose liquid wave he was borne back to dreamland.

All this could never be again, he mused in bitter loneliness. As he dwelt upon it the thought became almost intolerable; and suddenly rising—for he had not yet undressed—he began noiselessly to descend the stairs, purposing to go out into the night; for there is healing in the cool cisterns of the midnight air. But he noticed, to his surprise, a light stealing from beneath Jessie's door; instinctively he turned and knocked, his lonely heart glad of the sympathy he would not seek there in vain.

She bade him enter; obeying, he stood amazed as he beheld how his sister was employed. For Jessie was full dressed; it was after three o'clock, but she had made no preparations for retiring. Instead, she was seated on the bed, the room bestrewed with materials for the toil that was engrossing her. Cloth, of various kinds and in various shapes, separated fragments yet to be adjusted, were scattered about; scissors and spools and tape measures lay upon the bed on which the stooping form was seated. And Jessie herself, a lamp whose oil was almost exhausted stationed high above her, was sewing away as if for life itself; worn and weary, her fingers chafed and sore, a burning flush on either cheek, the tired shoulders stooped and bent, she was pressing on with her humble toil.

He uttered a quick exclamation of surprise, almost of reproach, as his eyes fell on the pitiful face and noticed the signs of drudgery about her. His first thought, as soon as he could collect himself, was that his sister was preparing the habiliments of mourning which her orphanhood would now demand. But sad and striking contrast, the fabric over which the fragile form was bent was of a far different kind. The material was of the richest and gayest sort, while yoke of rarest embroidery, and costly lace, and rich brocade, spoke of wealth and fashion far beyond their station.

Jessie started as if detected in some guiltful work; she even made one swift attempt to hide the handiwork that lay glistening across her knee.

Harvey closed the door; and there was more of sternness in his voice than she had ever heard before. "Jessie," he said gravely, "our mother's lying dead downstairs."

Alas! the poor girl knew it well. And her only answer was a quick and copious gush of tears. It was pitiful to see her snatch the delicate creation and toss it quickly from her, lest her grief should stain it; then she rocked gently to and fro in a gust of sorrow.

"Oh, Harvey," she sobbed, "you didn't mean that, brother. I know you didn't mean it."

He was still in the dark. But the anguish of this dear heart, so loyal to him through the years, was more than he could stand. With one quick stride he took his place beside her on the bed, his arm encircling her with infinite tenderness.

"Don't, sister," he said, "don't cry like that; I didn't mean it, dear—only I didn't understand—I can't understand."

She offered no explanation, sobbing gently a few minutes in his arms.

"I couldn't understand, Jessie," he said again a little later.

"I couldn't help it," she said at last without raising her head. "I didn't want to sew, with mother lying dead—but I couldn't help it. I really couldn't. It's not for me," she flung out at last, the long hidden secret surrendered after all. "It's not for me—and I had to get it done. They insisted so—and I couldn't afford to lose them—it's for a party."

The blood left Harvey's face, then surged hotly back to it again. His arms fell from about her and he sat like one in a trance. His eyes roved dumbly about the room, falling here and there upon many a thing, unnoticed in the first survey, that confirmed the assurance which now chilled him to the heart. Then his eyes turned to his sister's face. It was averted, downcast—but he could see, what he had but casually remarked before, how the hand of toil had left its mark upon it. Sweet and tender and unselfish, courage and resolution in every line, he could now read the whole sad story of what lay behind. The worn fingers were interlocked upon her lap, and he could see how near the blood was to the very fingertips. And as he reflected, almost madly, upon the desperate necessity that had held her to her work under the very shadow of death, and driven her to it though with a broken heart; as he recalled the mysterious sources of support that had never failed him till his college course was done, a flood of sacred light broke upon it all—and the dear form before him, tired and wasted as it was, was gently drawn to his bosom with hands of reverent love, his murmuring lips pressed lightly to the burning cheeks in penitent devotion.

"Forgive me, sister," he pleaded in a faltering voice, "oh, forgive me; for I did not know—I did not know."

Her answer was never spoken; but it came.

It was not long till he had learned, and from her own reluctant lips, all the story of the toil and drudgery that had been thus so suddenly revealed. But, protest as he might, Jessie was resolved to press on with the work she had been engaged in.

"I'm just as well able to work as you are, Harvey," she said earnestly. "I certainly will not give up the store."

"But I'm sure of a position on the newspaper I was telling you about, Jessie," Harvey urged—"and I can at least help; I can always spare a little," he assured her confidently, "and there's one thing you must do before very long," he went on eagerly; "you've really got to come and stay a while with Miss Farringall. She practically made me promise for you. Couldn't somebody mind the store while you're away?"

"I suppose so," Jessie relented enough to say; "Miss Adair could manage it well enough, of course. And I'd love to have a long visit with you, brother," she added fondly. "We're all alone in the world now, Harvey," her voice trembling as the tired eyes filled to overflowing—"we haven't anybody else but each other now."

Harvey looked her full in the face. "There's another," he said in a whisper after a long silence. Jessie started violently; then her demand for more light came swift and urgent.

As gently as he could, he broke to her the wonderful news. The girl was trembling from head to foot.

But her first thought seemed to be of her mother. "And that was it," she cried amid her sobs; "that was the sorrow mother carried about with her all the time. Oh, Harvey, I always knew there was something—I always felt mother had some burden she wouldn't let us share with her—I always felt her heart was hungry for something she hoped she'd get before she died. Poor, poor mother—our dear, brave mother!"

Harvey staunched the tide of grief as best he could. Their talk turned, and naturally enough,

to the hope of their father's return some day, both promising the fulfillment of their mother's dying wish.

"We'll do just as mother would have done," the girl said in sweet simplicity; "and we'll wait together, Harvey—we'll watch and wait together."

"And you'll help me, won't you, sister?" Harvey asked suddenly.

"What to do?" Jessie said wonderingly.

"Just help me," he answered, his voice faltering. "Will you promise me that, Jessie; you don't know yet all it means—just always to stick to me, and help me, and believe in me—till—till father comes?" he concluded, looking steadfastly into her wondering eyes. "Come with me, sister—come."

The darkness was at its deepest, the lamp-light now flickered into gloom, as he rose and led her gently from the room. Groping noiselessly, they two, the only living things about the house, crept downward to the chamber of the dead. The door creaked with a strange unearthly sound as Harvey pushed it open and drew his sister in beside him. Onward he pressed, his arm still supporting her, till they stood above the silent face. It lay in the pomp of the majestic silence, calmly awaiting the last earthly dawn that should ever break upon it, awaiting that slow-approaching hour when the last movement should be made, the last tender rudeness which would lay it, swaying slightly, upon the waiting bosom of the earth—and then the eternal stillness and the dark.

They stood long, no sound escaping them, above the noble face. Its dim outlines could be just discerned, calm and stately in the royal mien of death. They gazed long together. "I believe she's near us," Harvey whispered. Then he drew her gently down till their faces met upon the unresponsive face of their precious dead.

A moment later he led her tenderly away. She passed first through the door; but he turned and looked back. The first gray streak of dawn was stealing towards his mother's face; and he saw, or thought he saw, a look of deeper peace upon it than had ever been there before. And the still lips spoke their benediction and breathed their love upon her children—all the more her own because she dwelt with God.

## XXVIII

### *A LIGHT AT MIDNIGHT*

"There's something—but I don't know what it is. But there's something; now Jessie, do sit up straight, and breathe deep—you know you promised me you'd breathe deep. Yes, there's something wrong with Harvey."

If Jessie was not breathing very deep she was breathing very fast. Even Grey felt a nameless agitation in the domestic atmosphere, looking up with cat-like gravity into Miss Farringall's troubled face. He had noticed, doubtless, that the mercurial spectacle, had been ascending and descending from nose to brow and from brow to nose with significant rapidity. Grey did not look at Jessie—except casually. She not been sufficiently long in the house—and belonged to one of the oldest and best-bred of feline families.

Still Jessie did not speak. But her hostess, dear soul, was ever equal to double duty. Like most maiden ladies, Miss Farringall had the dialogue gift abundantly developed; nor was it liable to perish through disuse.

"Yes," she went on as cheerfully as her perplexity would allow, "he's been so different lately. He comes home at such strange hours, for him. And sometimes he waits a long time at the door, as if he didn't know whether to come in or not. Of course," she added reassuringly, "no one else knows but me; Barlow never hears anything, for he's dead all night—he never resurrects till half-past seven," a timid smile lighting her face a moment. "But Harvey's different every way; all his fun and merriment are gone—and he seems so depressed and discouraged, as if he was being beaten in some fight his life depended on. I don't know what to make of it at all."

Jessie's face showed white in the gaslight; and her voice was far from steady. "Has this all been since—since mother died?" she asked, with eyes downcast and dim.

"Not altogether. No, not at all. I noticed it first, a while after he went on the *Argus*. He was so proud about getting on the staff—he got hold of a life of Horace Greeley in the library, and he used to joke about it and say some day he'd stand there too. But it began one morning—the change, I mean—and he's never been the same since. And one night, just before he went out, he

brought me an envelope and asked me to keep it till he came back. I'm not very sure, but I think there was money in it—and it was just at the end of the month too," she added significantly.

"Doesn't he like newspaper life?" enquired Jessie.

"Oh, yes; I think he's crazy about it. You see, with his education and his gifts—he's a born writer—there isn't any kind of business could suit him better. I think he has his own times with Mr. Crothers—he's the city editor, a kind of manager. He's a strange man, blusters and swears a good deal, I think—but he's got a good heart, from what I can hear."

"Why don't you have a confidential talk with Harvey?" suggested Jessie. "He'd tell you almost anything, I'm sure."

"I've thought of that. But I was going to ask you the very same thing. Why don't you?—you're his sister."

Jessie's lip quivered. "I couldn't," she said hesitatingly; "I couldn't stand it. Besides, you know, I ought to go home to-morrow. Miss Adair's expecting me—and she says the store always prospers better when I'm there myself; she's had charge for ten days now, while I've been visiting here."

Miss Farringall sighed. "I wish I could coax you out of that," she said. "Why will you go away so soon, Jessie? These days you've been here have been such a joy; I'm such a lonely creature," she added glancing out at the silent, dimly-lighted hall. "There's hardly ever anybody around now but Barlow—and he's a ghost. Of course, Dr. Wallis comes when I send for him—but we always quarrel. Then, of course, the rector comes every little while—but he's a kind of a prayer-book with clothes on; he gets solemn every day. What I'm getting to hate about him," she went on, vehemently, "is that he has his mind made up to be solemn, and he's not meant for it—red-headed men with freckles never are," she affirmed decisively. "But you and Harvey, you almost seem, Jessie—you might have been my own children, I think sometimes," a queer little tremor in the voice, the withered cheek flushing suddenly. But Jessie did not remark the strange tenderness of the glance she cast towards the treasure-hiding desk in the corner. "Some day I want to tell you —"

But her voice suddenly died away in silence as both women turned their eyes eagerly towards the door. For they could see the approaching form of the subject of their conversation. And it needed but a glance to confirm the opinion Miss Farringall had already expressed. Harvey was making his way heavily up the stairs, his step slow and uncertain, his whole bearing significant of defeat. As he passed the door a faint plaintive smile played upon the face that was turned a moment on the familiar forms within; the face was haggard and pale, the eyes heavy and slightly bloodshot, the expression sad and despondent. Yet the old chivalrous light was there; clouded it was as if by shame and self-reproach, yet with native pride and honour flashing through it all as though the fires of a stern and unceasing conflict were glowing far within.

Jessie started as if to greet him. But something checked her—she would wait till they were alone.

Entering his room and pausing only to remove his boots, Harvey flung himself with a stifled groan upon the bed. How long he had lain there before interruption came, he neither knew nor cared. For the unclosed eyes were staring out into the darkness, his brain half-maddened with its activity of pain. Nearly everything that concerned his entire life seemed to float before him as his hot eyes ransacked the productive dark. Childhood days, with their deep poverty and their deeper wealth; the light and music of their darkened, sorrow-shaded home; the plaintive enterprise of their little store; the friends and playmates of those early days—and one friend, if playmate never; the broadened life of college, and all his discovery of himself, his powers, his possibilities, his perils; the one epoch-making night of life, its light above the brightness of the sun—his burning face hid itself in the pillow, his hands tight clenched as those half-withered flowers in Madeline's hand rose before him, his hopes more faded now than they. Then came the holy scene that had followed fast, so wonderfully vivid now—for in the dark he could see his mother's dying face with strange distinctness, the dear eyes open wide and filled with tender light as they turned upon her son, the thin hands outstretched as if to call the tired one to the comfort of her love.

The glow of filial passion lingered but a moment on the haggard face. For other memories followed fast. How he had bidden farewell to Jessie, returning to the city with high resolve to snatch nobler gains than the poor laurels her secret heroism had enabled him to win—his hood and medal flitted for a moment through his thought, only to be cast aside as paltry baubles, garish trifles, with their dying sheen; how, later, he had secured a worthy place on the news staff of one of the leading dailies of the city, his heart high with hope for the career that should await

him; how his gifts and his opportunity had conspired to confirm the hope.

Clouds and darkness were about the remainder of his reverie. But part of it had to do with his hour of joy and triumph. He felt again the jubilation, the separate sort of thrill, that had possessed him when the great "scoop" had been accomplished—to use the vivid metaphor that journalists employ. And he recalled the annual banquet—he could see many of the faces through the dark—at which his own name had been called aloud, actually requested as he had been to propose the toast to the paper it was his pride to serve. Then came the brief, fatal struggle as the glasses were lifted high. He ground his teeth as he remembered Oliver—once friend and chum, now fiend and enemy; and Harvey's thought of him was lurid with a kind of irrational hate—for Oliver had spurred and stung him to his fall with one or two quick sentences that seemed cogent enough at the time; the appeal had been to shame, and to what was due the concern that had honoured him, and to other things of that kind; in any case, it had all been like lashing a horse that hesitates before a hurdle. And he had leaped it—oh, God, he thought to himself, this cad against his mother! He had leaped it. And then the slumbering passion that had sprung anew to life within him—not passion perhaps, nor yet appetite either—but a kind of personal devil that had tangled its will all up with his own, and had seemed to laugh at his feeble struggling, and to exult like one who had won again an unforgotten victory, running riot in fiendish glee since his prowess had prevailed once more. Harvey held his hands to his burning brow as he recalled the pitiful resistance that had followed; he could feel the ever-tightening grasp again, like the relentless coils of the sea-monsters he had read about so often; he recalled how his soul had fluttered its poor protest, like some helpless bird, against this cruel hand that was bound to have its will with it—and how struggle and promise and pledge and prayer had all seemed to be in vain.

He thought, too, but only for a moment—he could not, would not longer dwell upon it—of the shameful peace he had found at last; the peace of the vanquished; such peace as servile souls enjoy, for it can be purchased cheap—and the evil memory of it all surged over him like hissing waves. Nearly a week had followed, such a week as any mother, bending above the cradle of her child, might pray God to—

But this was like groping in a morgue—and it must stop. He rose half erect from his bed, shaking himself like one who tries to clamber back from the slough of evil dreams. Just at this moment a knock came to the door; his soul leaped towards the sound—it was a human touch at least, thank God, and he needed some such Blucher for such a Waterloo.

"Come in," he said huskily, lest reinforcement of any sort whatever might escape.

And she came. Without a word, but her whole being fragrant of sympathy and love, she moved unhesitatingly towards the bed. She caught, as she came nearer, the fateful fumes. And she knew—the most innocent are the most sensitive to the breath of sin—but her heart only melted with a tenderer compassion, her arms outstretched in yearning, taking the stalwart frame into what seemed to him like the very guardianship of God.

"Oh, Harvey," the voice thrilling with the melody of love; "oh, my brother."

He clung closer to her, without speaking.

"Tell me, Harvey—won't you tell me?" He could feel the care-wrung bosom heaving.

Still no word.

"We've never had any secrets, brother—won't you tell me, Harvey?"

"You know," after a long pause.

Still silence. Why did she breathe so fast?

"Don't you know, Jessie?"

Silence long—"Yes, I know," she said, "and I never loved you as I love you now."

Then the flood-gates were rolled back and the tide burst forth. Oh, the luxury of it; the sweetness of it—to feel, nay, to know, that there was one life that clung to him, trusted him, loved him, through all the waste and shame! And the blessed relief it gave; to tell it all, keeping nothing back, blaming no other—not even Oliver—breathing out the story of the struggle and the overthrow and the humiliation and the anguish. And in that hour Hope, long absent and aloof, came back and nestled in his heart again. On he went, the story long and intimate and awful, coming closer and closer by many and circuitous routes to the very soul of things, hovering about the Name he almost dreaded now to speak, yet yearned with a great longing to pronounce; his soul was crying out for all that was behind his mother's name, the comfort and sympathy and power which he felt, dimly but unconquerably, could not be stifled in a distant grave.

"Do you think she knows?" he asked at last, in a tone so low that even Jessie could scarcely hear.

They could catch the sound of the wind upon the grass as they waited, both waited. "Yes," as

she trembled closer, "yes, thank God."

He started so suddenly as to frighten her. The conflict-riven face peered into hers through the dark.

"What?" he asked sternly. "What did you say?"

"I think she knows," the calm voice answered. "I'm sure God knows—and it makes it easier."

He held her out at arm's length, still staring at her through the gloom. "What?—I thought sorrows were all past and over—for her," the words coming as a bitter questioning.

Jessie's face, serene with such composure as only sorrow gives, was held close to his own. "We cannot tell," she whispered low; "that is between her and God—they both know."

He struggled silently with the deep meaning of her words.

"You see," sweet girliness in the voice again, "you see, Harvey, they know what's farther on—oh, brother, brother dear, it'll be better yet," her voice breaking now with an emotion she could control no longer; "it won't always be like this, Harvey—you won't do it any more, will you, brother?" sobbing as she buried her face beside his own. "We've had so much trouble, Harvey—the joy's only been the moments, and the sorrow's been the years—and we got mother safe home," the quivering voice went on, "and I thought we'd follow on together—and—some day—we'd find our father. And you won't make it all dark again, will you, Harvey? You'll fight—and I'll fight—we'll fight it out together, Harvey. It seems nothing now, what we had before—I mean, it doesn't seem a bit hard just to be poor—if we can only keep each other, Harvey," and the poor trembling form, so long buffeted by life's rude billows, clung to the only shelter left her, her soul outbreathing its passionate appeal.

There was more of silence than of speech while they waited long together. He could feel the beating of the brave and trustful heart beside his own; this seemed to bring him calm and courage. In a mysterious way, she seemed to link his wounded life anew to all the sacred past, all the unstained days, all the conflict for which he had had strength and to spare, all the holy memories that had drifted so far from him now, a yawning gulf between.

"Won't you come home with me, Harvey?" she said at length.

"Why?"

"Well, perhaps it would help us both. I was going to ask you to come anyhow—for one thing, I wanted you to help Mr. Borland," she added quickly, glad of the fitting plea. "He's going to run for mayor, you know—and I thought you'd like to do what you can."

Harvey smiled. "I guess my own contest will give me enough to do," he said rather bitterly. "It was good of you to ask me, Jessie—but I'll stay on my own battlefield," his lips tightly shut.

A long silence reigned again. "Look," he cried suddenly, "it's getting light."

Jessie turned and looked. And the wondrous miracle crept on its mystic way; healing, refreshing, soothing, rich with heavenly promise and aglow with heavenly hope, telling its great story and bidding every benighted heart behold the handiwork of God, the silent metaphor was uttering forth the lesson of the returning day. For the new heaven and the new earth were appearing, fresh with unspotted beauty, recurring witnesses to the regenerating power of the All-sanguine One.

"It's getting light," she echoed dreamily. "Do you remember that line, Harvey, mother used to love so much?"

"No; what line?"

"It's a hymn line," she answered softly. "'The dawn of heaven breaks'—I'm sure she sees this, too. Look at the clouds yonder, all gold and purple—it's going to be a lovely day."

"It's going to be a new day," he said, gazing long in silence at the distant fount of light.

## XXIX

### *HOW DAVID SWEEPED THE FIELD*

"Go and wash your hands, Madeline, before you fix your father's tie. I little thought my daughter would ever come to this—filling those wretched kerosene lamps; it's bad enough to have to come down to lamps, without having to fill them," and Mrs. Borland sighed the sigh of the defrauded and oppressed.

"Don't worry about me, mother; if you only knew how much better a girl's complexion shows with them than with the gas, you wouldn't abuse them so. All right, father, I'll put the finishing touches on you in a minute—what did you say was the hour for the meeting? I wish I could go—

one of the hardest things about being a girl is that you can't go to political meetings," and Madeline's merry face showed how seriously she regarded the handicap.

"Them lamps is all right, mother—they come of good old stock," and David regarded a tall, umbrageous one with something very like affection; "that there one was the last light that shined on my father's face," he added reminiscently, "an' I'm awful glad we kept it. The meetin's at half-past eight, Madeline. An' don't feel bad 'cause you can't go—us politicians has our own troubles," he continued with mock gravity; "it was this kind o' thing killed Daniel Webster—an' I'm not feelin' terrible peart myself. But I'm goin' to wear my Sunday choker," he concluded cheerfully enough, holding his tie out to Madeline, the dimpled hands now ready for the important duty.

"Tie it carefully, Madeline—if your father's going to resign, he should look his best when he's doing it," and Mrs. Borland surveyed the operation with a critical eye. "I'll warrant you Mr. Craig'll be dressed like a lord."

"I ain't goin' to resign, mother—I'm only goin' to withdraw," David corrected gravely. "There's all the difference in the world between resignin' an' withdrawin'; any one can resign, but it takes a terrible smart man to withdraw. You've got to be a politician, like me, afore you know what a terrible difference there is between words like them; can't be too careful, when you're a politician—for your country's sake, you know. No, mother—no, you don't—I ain't goin' to wear that long black coat."

"Oh, father," began Madeline.

"But, David," his wife remonstrated, interrupting, "remember you're going to make a speech—and when would you wear it, if not to-night? I'm sure Mr. Craig'll have on the best coat he's got—and that tweed's getting so shabby."

"I won't go back on it when it's gettin' old an' seedy," David retorted vigorously; "I know what that feels like myself. It stuck to me when I seen better days, an' I'm not goin' to desert it now—I ain't that kind of a man. An' if Craig wants to dress up like an undertaker, that's his funeral. Besides, a fellow's ideas comes easier in an old coat—an orator's got to consider all them things, you know. Confound this dickie, it won't stay down—I believe Madeline put 'east in it," as he smote his swelling bosom, bidding it subside.

"I'm sorry you're not going to stand, David; I believe you'd be elected if you'd only run. I always hoped you'd be the first mayor of Glenallen—let me just brush that coat before you go," and Mrs. Borland fell upon it with right good-will.

"Words is funny things," mused David, as he suffered himself to be turned this way and that for the operation; "'specially with orators an' politicians. If a fellow stands, that means he's runnin'—don't scrape my neck like that, mother," ducking evasively as he spoke. "It's somethin' like what I heard a fellow say at the Horse Show; he says, 'the judges look a horse all over—they fellows don't overlook nothin',' says he. No, I ain't goin' to stand, mother; nor I won't run, neither. I'll jest sit down. You see, a fellow that lives in a cottage this size, there ain't nothin' else for him to do—not unless he's a fool. Don't brush my hat like that, mother; you're skinnin' it—what did it ever do to you? Well, good-bye, mother; I'm a candidate now—but I'll only jest be a man when I get back. I won't even be an orator, I reckon. Good-bye, Madeline—wrap that there black coat up in them camp-fire balls," he directed, nodding towards the rejected black.

"I'm going with you as far as the gate, father; you've got to have some kind of a send-off."

"That's all right, daughter; welcome the comin', part the speedin' guest, as the old proverb says."

"Speed the parting guest, you mean, David," Mrs. Borland amended seriously.

"Same thing, an hour after he's gone," David responded cheerily; "feed him'd be better'n either of 'em, to my way o' thinkin'," as he started forth on his momentous mission.

Mrs. Borland was not far astray in her prediction. For when at length the two candidates—and there were but two—ascended the platform in the crowded hall, David's rival was resplendent in a new suit of which the far-descending coat was the most conspicuous feature. Mr. Craig had fitting notions as to what became the prospective mayor of a town which had never enjoyed such an ornament before.

And his speech was almost as elongated as the garment aforesaid, largely composed of complacent references to the prosperity the town had enjoyed as the product of his own. Surreptitious hints to the effect that only the commercially successful should aspire to municipal honours were not wanting. "It's a poor assurance that a man can manage public affairs, if he can't look after his own successfully," he said, as David sat meekly listening; "and," he went on in a sudden burst of feeling, hastening to the conclusion of his speech, "I may, I think, fairly claim to

have been a successful man. And I won't deny that I'm proud of it. But, fellow citizens, nothing in all this world could give me so great pride as to be elected the first chief-magistrate of this growing town. I've known something of life's honours," he declared grandiloquently, "and I've mingled some with the great ones of the earth; at least," hesitating a little, "I did when I was a child. And just here I'll tell you a little incident that I can never refer to without feeling my heart beat high with pride." (Mr. Craig had no little fluency as a public speaker when he discoursed of things concerning himself.) "As many of you know, my father was a gentleman of leisure—and he travelled widely. Well, I can still recall one winter we spent in Spain—I was but a child—but I can remember being at a great public meeting in Madrid. Some members of the Royal family were there," he declared, as he paused to see the effect on the gaping sons of toil, "and I remember, as if it were but yesterday, how, when the Infanta was going down the aisle and I was standing gazing up into her face, she laid her hand upon my boyish head as she passed me. I'll not deny, fellow citizens, that that touch has been sacred to me ever since—but I say to the working-men before me to-night that I consider it a greater honour to hold the horny hand of the working-man, the hands that will mark the ballots that shall bring me the crowning honour of my life," and the candidate gathered up the folds of his spreading coat as he resumed his seat, smiling benignly down upon the rather unresponsive crowd.

For many of his auditors were decidedly in the dark as to the source of this honour that had befallen him in ancient Spain.

"What kind of a animal was that, Tom, that tetched him on the head?" one bronzed toiler asked of his companion as he still gazed, bewildered rather, on the reclining Mr. Craig. "Did he say a elephant—sounded summat like that anyhow, didn't it?"

"No, no," the other answered, a little impatiently; "what would elephants be doin' at a public meetin'? He said 'twas a infantum—I heard him myself."

"What's a infantum?" the first persisted earnestly.

"Oh—well. Well, it's a kind of a baby—only it's feminine," he explained learnedly. "An' I think it's got somethin' to do wi' the cholery—don't talk, there's Mr. Borland gettin' up. Hurrah," he shouted, joining in the general chorus, and glad of this very opportune escape.

David began very haltingly. Yet he could not but feel the cordiality of his welcome; and his glance, at first rather furtive and shy, became more confident as he gradually felt the ground beneath his feet. "I ain't much used to public speakin'," he started hesitatingly; "never made but one speech like this before. They were a little obstreperous when I began, but before I got through you could have—have heard a crowbar drop," he affirmed, to the delight of his audience. "I can't sling it off like my friend Mr. Craig, here; mebbe it's because I've not moved in them royal circles," he ventured as soberly as he could. "Though I think I've got him beat when it comes to rubbin' noses with the quality. I've done a little in that line myself—when I was a little shaver, too. None o' them royal folks ever patted me on the head—but I threw up all over Abe Lincoln once. Old Abe used to stop at my father's in Peoria when he was ridin' the circuit," David explained carefully; "an' once he picked me up—I was jest a baby—an' threw me up to the ceilin'; then I done the same when I came down—too soon after dinner, you see," he added, his words lost in the mirth that stormed about him. "But other ways, I ain't what you'd call a successful man, I reckon," he went on, the quotation obvious. "I've always been kind o' scared, ever since I was a young fellow, for fear I'd be too successful—that is, the way some folks reckon success. I knew a terrible successful man in Illinois one time—he was that successful that he got richer than any other man in the county. An' he got so fond o' bein' successful that he nearly gave up eatin'—jest to be more successful. He got that fond of it that by and by he wouldn't even spend the money for gettin' his hair cut; he used to soak his head, in the winter, an' then stand outside till it froze stiff—then he'd break it off. He was a terrible successful man, to his way o' thinkin'," David went on gravely, the crowd rocking to and fro in a spasm of delight. "So I think, my friends, I'd better jest own up I've been a failure. An' I thank you, more'n I can say, for wantin' me to be your first mayor—but I'm goin' to sit back quiet an' give some better man the job. For one thing, I'm gettin' to be an old man—an' that's a disease that don't heal much. Besides, I'll have enough to do to make a livin'. I won't deny I used to wake up nights an' think it'd be fine to be the first boss o' the whole town; but I reckon it ain't comin' my way—it ain't intended to be wove into my web, by the looks o' things. But I thank you for—for your love," David blurted out, vainly searching for a better word. "An' what kind o' gives me a lump in my throat, is the way I see how the men that used to work for me is the loyalest to me now. That's terrible rich pay—an' I can stand here to-night an' say, afore God an' man, that I've tried to be more a friend than a boss. Your joys has been my joys, an' your sorrows has been my sorrows," his voice quivering a little as he spoke the



gracious words; "an' I ain't disgraced—if I did get beat in business. This here's far sweeter to me now than if it'd come my way when I was livin' in the big house, wadin' round knee-deep in clover. It's when a fellow's down he loves to find out how many true friends he's got; any old torn umbrella's just as good as a five dollar one—till the rain's peltin' down on him—an' then he knows the difference. So I can't do nothin' but thank you all, an' tell you how glad you've made me. I'll be all right," he concluded with heroic bearing, "I'll get my bite an' my sup, an' I'll go down to my rest in peace; an' I'm richer—far richer than I ever thought. It's friends that make a fellow rich; an' I intend keepin' them as long as I live—an' after, too," he concluded, turning from his chair to add the words, electrical in their effect.

Then came a scene, such a scene as gladdens the heart of but one man in a generation. All sorts and conditions of men joined in the storm of protest, refusing to permit David to withdraw his name. Many, mostly toil-stained working-men, struggled for the floor. Testimonies came thick and fast, volunteered with glowing ardour.

"He never used to pass my little girl on the street without givin' her a nickel or a dime—most always a dime," a burly blacksmith roared, his voice as powerful as his muscle.

"Mr. Borland kept me on when times was hard," an old man proclaimed in a squeaky voice; "he kept me mowin' the grass four times a week, when everythin' was burnt up wi' the drooth."

"He sent my little boy to the Children's Hospital in the city," another informed the thrilling multitude; "an' now he can run like a deer—it was hip-disease."

"He sat up two nights hand-runnin' with Jake Foley when he had ammonia in both lungs," imparted one of the lustiest of David's former workmen, "an' the next day they found ten dollars in a sugar jug; an' when they axed him if he done it he said they wanted to insult him—said it was the same as axin' a man if he'd been tastin'. But we ain't all fools," concluded the witness, his indignant eulogy cheered to the echo.

After a valiant struggle the chairman secured order, Mr. Craig looking on with the expression that children wear when they see their tiny craft being borne out to sea. The noble electors demanded a vote; which, duly taken, voiced the overwhelming desire that David should be their man. Whereupon Mr. Craig, not slow to remark the signs of the times, possessed himself of a very imposing hat and made as if to leave the platform, the crowd suddenly subsiding as it became evident he had a word to say before retiring.

"I'm done with municipal life from this time on," he declared hotly, as quiet was restored. "I'm not going to enter the lists with a man that has proved—that hasn't proved—with David Borland," he concluded, floundering. "If the town can do without me, I guess I can do without the town."

"You'd better go and travel abroad in them foreign parts, an' mebbe——" a voice from the audience began to advise.

"That's mean," David cried above the returning din; "that's mean—sit down, Mr. Craig," turning with a grace even those who knew him best would hardly have thought he could command.

"I withdraw," Mr. Craig shouted hotly.

"But don't go yet," David pleaded in the most unconventional voice. "I don't like to see a man withdrawin' that way." Somewhat mollified, Mr. Craig resumed his seat.

Loud demands for a speech finally brought David to his feet again. "Well, friends," he began, "I'm all used up. I never expected nothin' like this—an' I don't hardly know what to say. But I can't—I jest can't refuse now," he said, his words lost in a mighty cheer. "I didn't know you all felt that way—so much. An' I believe I'm gladder for—for two people that ain't here to-night," he said in a low, earnest voice, "than for any other reason in the world. An' I'll—I'll take it—if Mr. Craig here'll help me," suddenly turning towards his rival of a moment before. "He knows lots more about them things than me," moving over to where he sat, "an' if he'll promise to help, we'll—we'll run the show together."

There being now no other candidate, the returning-officer declared Mr. Borland the first mayor; and the vanquished, yielding to the great soul that challenged him, took the other's hand in his.

"I don't believe we'll ever find him, Harvey. We have so little clue—and almost all we can do is wait." Jessie sighed; her life had had so much of waiting.

"That's the hard part of it," her brother answered, "but what else can we do; it does seem hard to think one's own father is living somewhere, and yet we may live and die without ever seeing him. I've tried all the poor little ways I can—but they're so ineffectual. Yet I don't think there's ever a day my mind doesn't go out to him. Mother said, though—she said he'd come back some day."

"What did she mean?" Jessie asked eagerly.

"I don't know," said Harvey. "That is, I don't know just what was in her mind. And she told me about his—his weakness," the brother's face flushing with the words. "And if I ever succeed enough—if I ever get rich enough, I mean—I'll begin a search everywhere for him; she said no father ever loved his children more," and Harvey's eyes were very wistful as they looked into his sister's.

Jessie was silent a while. "You're—you're going to succeed, aren't you, brother?" she said, timidly. "If father ever does come back—he'll—he'll find we've—conquered, won't he, Harvey?"

Harvey's answer was very slow in coming. Finally he reached out and took his sister's hand; the words rang hopefully.

"I feel somehow, I don't know why, Jessie, but I feel somehow as if I were just at the turning of the tide. Nobody'll ever know what a fearful fight it's been—but I don't think I'll have to struggle like this much longer. It's like fighting in the waves for your life—but I think it's nearly over. I don't want you to go home again for a little, Jessie."

"What do you mean, Harvey? Do you mean anything particular's going to happen?"

He hesitated. "I don't know—but I think so. I've always had a feeling to-morrow'd be a better day than yesterday. I've always felt as if something lay beyond; and when I reached it—and passed it, everything would be different then."

There are few who know it—but the uncertainty of life is life's greatest stimulus. That is, the sense of further possibilities, unexpected happenings, developments not to be foreseen. This is true of the poor, the enslaved, the broken-hearted; it is no less true of the caressed of fortune and the favourites of fate. The veil that hides to-morrow's face is life's chiefest source of zest, not excepting love itself. Men's hearts would break if they could descry the plain beyond and search its level surface to the end; wherefore the All-wise has broken the long way to fragments, every turn in the road, the long, winding road, a well-spring of hope and expectation. The most dejected heart, proclaim its hopelessness as it may, still cherishes a secret confidence that things cannot always thus remain; downcast and tear-bedimmed, those eyes are still turned towards the morrow, or the morning, or the spring-time—for by such different symbols God would teach us how ill He brooks monotony.

Especially is this true of one who struggles with his sin. Beaten again and again, vows turned to shame and resolutions to reproach, conscience and will trodden under foot of appetite, the wearied warrior still trusts that to-morrow will turn the battle from the gate. Something will turn up; if he could but get a fresh start, or if he could escape from boon companions, or if he were once braced up a bit, or if this did not worry and that beset—all these varied tones does Hope's indomitable voice assume. Sad and pitiful enough, we say; and we smile at what we call the weakness of poor humanity—but it all bears witness to that hopeful anguish which is bred of manifold temptations; it is the earnest expectation of the creature waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.

"Not enough snap about any of this stuff, I tell you, Simmons." The time was an hour and a half after Harvey had bidden Jessie, again Miss Farringall's willing guest, good-bye, and gone forth to his work until the midnight. The words were those of Mr. Timothy Crothers, city editor and director in chief of the *Morning Argus*. Mr. Crothers had taken off his collar an hour before, which was silently accepted by the staff as a storm-signal of the most accurate kind. Cold let it be without or hot, Mr. Crothers' sanctum soon became a torrid region when once he had removed his neck apparel—and Harvey looked up with more of expectation than surprise, having already witnessed the divestiture.

"It makes a man hot under the collar," Mr. Crothers pursued wrathily, giving a phantom jerk in the neighbourhood of his neck, "to have stuff like this brought in to him; it's as dry as Presbyterian preaching."

"Isn't it true, Mr. Crothers?" Harvey asked, calmly opening his knife and applying it to an exhausted pencil. "That's the first quality for news, isn't it?"

"First qualities be hanged," quoth Mr. Crothers contemptuously. "And it isn't news at all—it's chloroform. Nothing's news that doesn't make people sit up; you'll never make a newspaper man till you learn how to spice things up—lots of pepper, red pepper at that. A paper that can't make 'em sneeze will never earn its salt."

"Are you referring to the report I wrote of the game with the Scotch bowlers, Mr. Crothers?" Harvey enquired, nodding towards a confused cluster of well-scrawled pages on the table.

"Yes, mostly that; you don't make the thing bite. It's nearly all about how they played—and we don't get twenty bowlers here from Scotland every year."

"About how they played!" echoed Harvey. "What else is there?"

"Everything else. Nobody cares a fig about how they played. Serve up something about the Johnnies themselves—something real interesting. That's the whole thing. Now, for instance, look at some of this other stuff," and Mr. Crothers took a chair close to Harvey, settling down to business; "here you have an item about a law being enforced by the Government, to provide that all dangerous lunatics must be confined in asylums. Don't you see what's the proper thing to say about that?"

"No," said Harvey. "It strikes me that's an occasion for saying mighty little."

"Nothing of the sort. It's a bully fine chance to say that this means the organ across the way will lose its editor. Everybody'll enjoy that, don't you see?"

"The editor won't," said Harvey.

"Of course, he won't—that's just the point. And here's another case—about the Hon. Mr. Worthing being struck by a street car. I notice you have him sitting up already. That won't do; a paper that cures them as quick as that won't be able to pay its office-boy soon. Of course, it's true enough, I dare say—he's probably playing billiards in his home, with a trained nurse answering the front door; like enough, he's sitting up all night going over his accident policies. But we've got to have him bandaged to the teeth—the public loves lots of arnica and sticking plaster—and he's struggling for consciousness—and he's got to be crying out every now and then as if he were being ground to powder; and his wife's going into swoons and coming out of them like a train running tunnels in the Rockies. Besides, we've got to lambaste the Company; the street-car line is our municipal assassin—Moloch—Juggernaut—all that sort of thing. But both those words should be in—and you can't use words like that if their victim's going to be down street to-morrow."

"You should have a staff of novelists," suggested Harvey.

"And here—here's a capital illustration of what I mean," Mr. Crothers hurried on, ignoring the innuendo. "I see Rev. Dr. Blakeley comes out with the announcement that there's no such place as hell—do you know what I'd say there, Simmons?"

"You'd say you had no objections, I should think," Harvey's face lighting with unfamiliar merriment.

"I wouldn't—the public doesn't care a tinker's malediction whether I object or not. There's a great chance there for a civic stroke—I'd say this information throws us back on Blankville," and Mr. Crothers named with much contempt a rival city fifty miles away. "It's little gems like that, that make a paper readable. I see a fellow in that same city was arrested for kissing girls on the street; then he was examined and found insane. Well, the thing to say there, is, that any one who had ever seen their girls would have known the man was crazy. News is like food, Simmons—everything depends on how it's prepared; nobody likes it raw."

"But what about that game with the Scotchmen?" Harvey ventured, inwardly rather chagrined with the verdict on his handiwork.

"Well, you've got it chuck full of points about the game—and that's no good. It's got to be interesting. You've got to give it a human touch. There's one of the Scotch bowlers, for instance, old Sanderson from Edinburgh—they say he's worth eleven millions. Well, I'm told there's an old fellow that sweeps out a little struggling church on Cedar Street—he's its caretaker—and I'm told he used to go to school with Sanderson. Now, it's the simplest thing in the world to have that old geezer come around to the green with his feather duster in his hand—and Sanderson stares at him a minute; then he recognizes him all of a sudden, and the old dodgers fall to and hug each other like two old maids. And have them both weep—especially Sanderson, because he's rich. And some of those other millionaires should go off to the edge of the lawn and blow their nose—you understand—the human touch, as I said. Make Sanderson go home with the old geezer for supper; might just as well—it wouldn't hurt him."

"Sanderson wouldn't relish the caretaker's bill of fare, I'm afraid," Harvey said significantly.

"I guess you're right. And that brings me back to the thing I intended particularly to speak about. Those Scotchmen were properly beaten, as your score-card shows. But you don't give the

real reason—and it's the kind of a reason everybody likes to hear about. For all you say, any one would think it was a mere matter of skill. Now, of course, we all know the reason—it's the moist time they were having that licked them. Most of them were full. Of course, it wouldn't do to put it that way—nobody'd enjoy that. But it's a capital chance for some delicate word-painting—keep it kind of veiled. Say something like this: 'our genial visitors drank deep of the spirit that was much in evidence throughout the game.' Or, better still: 'our genial visitors became more and more animated by their national spirit as the game wore on—some of them seemed quite full of it.' Or something like this: 'in liquid prowess our British cousins far outran us—if, indeed, that be the proper verb, since many of our friends were in various degrees of horizontality before the game was finished.' You see, a description like that appeals to the imagination—it's subtle—keeps readers guessing. Or this would be a fine way of putting it: 'it was evident yesterday that the little finger plays an important part in the ancient game of bowling on the green'—something like that. What I'm getting at, Simmons, is this—there's a great chance there for something humorous, and a journalist ought to make the most of it. What makes you look so glum, Simmons?—I don't believe you've got much sense of humour yourself."

Harvey made no response. But his face was resting on his hand, and there must have been something in the plaintive eyes that engaged the attention of Mr. Crothers. He could hardly fail to see that all of a sudden Harvey had become deaf to his tuition; and, more remarkable, the care-worn face seemed but to grow graver as his monitor pursued his praise of mirth.

"You're looking rather blue, Simmons," he added after a keen scrutiny, Harvey still remaining silent; "but that needn't prevent you writing lots of funny things. Some of the funniest things ever written, or spoken, have been done by people with broken hearts inside of them. Take an actor for instance—doubling up his audience, and his own little girl dying at home—most likely asking why father doesn't come, too; queer tangled world this, my boy, and nobody feels its pulse better than us fellows. Anything the matter, Simmons?" he suddenly enquired, for Harvey's lips were pale; and the chief could see a quiver, as of pain, overrun his face.

Harvey's voice had a wealth of passion in it. "You'll have to get some other fellow to see the humorous side of—of—of that thing," he said.

"What do you mean? What thing?" asked the dumfounded Crothers.

"That drink business—God! it's no comedy," and Crothers started as he saw the perspiration breaking out on Harvey's brow, his face a battlefield, his hands clenched as if he saw an enemy.

Crothers indulged in a low whistle, his eyes never moving from Harvey's face. For the veteran journalist was no child. He knew the marks of strife when he saw them; experience partly, and sympathy still more, had fitted him to tell the difference between a man sporting in the surf and a man fighting for his life against the undertow. And one keen look into the depths of Harvey's outpouring eyes told him he was in the presence of a tragedy. He rose and put his hand on Harvey's shoulder; familiar with tender ways it was not—but it was a human hand, and a human heart had laid it there.

"Simmons," he said, and the usually gruff voice had a gentle note; "Simmons, I know what you mean. May as well tell you straight, I've heard a little—and I've seen a little, too. And I should have known better than talk like that to you. And we all believe you'll win out yet, old chap. Now I'll tell you what I think you ought to do. You ought to go away somewhere for a little trip—there's nothing helps a man in a fight of this kind like having his attention taken up with something else. I'll keep your place open for you here—and if you could get a couple of congenial fellows to go off with you for a little holiday you'd be like a new man when you came back. Strictly water-waggon fellows, of course," he added with a smile. "I know it's a hard fight, my boy—but buckle right down to it. And you go right home now—you're played clean out, I can see that—and take a good sleep till noon. Then you skip out just as soon as you can arrange it and have a ripping good holiday; that'll set you up better than anything else. Good-night now—or good-morning, rather, I guess. And remember this above all things, Simmons—keep your mind diverted, always be sure and keep your mind diverted," with which advice Mr. Crothers rose to accompany Harvey to the door.

### XXXI

#### *THE TROUGH OF THE WAVE*

He was glad to be alone. Lesser conflicts crave the help and inspiration of human company; but

there comes a time when a man knows the battle must be fought out alone against the principalities and powers that no heart, however strong or loving, can help him to withstand. For no other can discern his enemy but himself.

Harvey turned with swift steps towards home. He thought of his waiting room, with everything that could contribute to self-respect and comfort; and of Miss Farringall, whose increasing devotion seldom failed to find a voice, no matter how late the hour of his return. But as he hurried along he marvelled at the strange craving that gnawed persistently within. The action of his heart seemed weak; his lips were parched; his hands were shaky, his nerves a-tingle, while a nameless terror, as if of impending ill, cast its shadow over him. And through it all burned the dreadful thirst, tyrannical, insistent, tormenting.

Resolved to resist to the last, he was still pressing steadily on. Suddenly he stopped almost still, his eyes fixed upon a light in an upper window. His heart leaped as he saw a tall form pass between him and the lamp. For he recognized it, or thought he did. The room was Oliver's—that same Oliver as had goaded him to that fatal toast—and it was quite a common experience for that worthy to be playing host through the small hours of the morning. A sense of peril smote Harvey as he looked; yet, reflecting a moment, he assured himself that he would find around that brilliant light two or three whose blithe companionship would help to beat back the evil spirit that assailed him. A chat on matters journalistic, a good laugh, an hour or two of human fellowship would give him relief from this infernal craving. Besides, what hope for him if he could not resist a little temptation, should such present itself?

So his resolve was quickly formed; putting his fingers to his mouth, a shrill whistle brought a familiar face to the window.

"Jumping Jehoshaphat! is that you, Simmons?" was the exclamation that greeted Harvey as soon as he was recognized. "Come on up—we were just speaking of you. I'll be down to the door in less than half a minute."

The allotted time had scarce elapsed when Palmer, for such was the name of the cordial blade—clerk in a mercantile house and friend to Oliver—was at the door. Taking Harvey's arm he guided him cheerfully through the somewhat dingy hall, ushering him into a rather dishevelled room, in separate corners of which sat the hospitable Oliver and another boon companion, Scottie Forrester by name. Like Oliver, Scottie was in newspaper life; his apprenticeship had been served in Glasgow.

"Brethren," Palmer said solemnly as they entered, "I know you're always glad when we can bring in any poor wanderer from the highways or byways. I want you to be kind to the stranger for my sake—he hasn't had anything to eat since his last meal."

"Sit down, Simmons," directed Oliver. "Don't mind Palmer—he's farm-bred, you know, and he thinks it's a deuce of an achievement to sit up at night. He used to have to go to bed with the calves."

"Now I sit up with the goats," rejoined the once rustic Palmer, producing a pipe and calmly proceeding to equip it. "But I ought to be in bed. I'm played out. I was so tired at dinner to-night I went to sleep over the salad course."

"Oh, Lord," broke in Forrester; "hear him prattling about night dinners—and he never had anything but bread and molasses for supper on the farm. And hear him giving us that guff about the salad course, as if he was the son of a duke. If you'd lived in Glasgow, my boy, they'd have brought you to time pretty quick. A man's got to be a gentleman over there, I tell you, before he has evening dinners and all that sort of thing—did you drink out of the finger-bowls, Palmer?"

"You needn't talk, Scottie," growled Oliver. "You write your letters at the Arlington—and you get your dinner for fifteen cents at Webb's, at the counter, with your hat on."

"You're a liar," retorted Scottie, meaning no offense whatever. "I've got as good blood inside of me as any man in this city; my mother was born in Auchterarder Castle and——"

"I wouldn't be found dead in a root-house with a name like that," interrupted the agricultural Palmer. "Anyhow, I guess she was the cook—and what's more, nobody here cares what you've got inside of you. But there's poor Simmons—he's our guest—and he looks as if he hadn't put anything inside of him for a dog's age. Where's the restorative, Scottie? It's always you that had it last."

Scottie arose and walked solemnly to a little cupboard in the wall. "I'll inform you, Mr. Simmons," he began gravely, his back still turned to the company, "that we're here for a double purpose. First, we were having a little intellectual conference on—on the rise and fall of the Russian empire, as a great authority put it. You see, we're a kind of a Samuel Johnson coterie—and this is a kind of a Cheshire Cheese. I was there once when I was in London."

"He went to London with cattle," informed Oliver, striking a match—"he was a swine herd in Scotland."

"And I'm Samuel Johnson," pursued Forrester, unruffled; "and Palmer, he's Boswell. And we have a great time discussing things."

"Who's Oliver?" Harvey enquired with faint interest.

"Oh, yes, I forgot him; Oliver's the cuspidor—you ought to be right in the middle of the room, Oliver," he continued amiably, turning round with a large black bottle in his hand. "And the other purpose we're here for, Mr. Simmons, is to celebrate Palmer's birthday. We don't know exactly how old he is—he's lied about his age so long that he's not sure himself. But this is his birthday, anyhow; and they sent him up a little present from the farm. It's a superior brand of raspberry vinegar, made by an aged aunt that's worth twenty thousand and won't die."

"Stop your jack-assery, Forrester," broke in Palmer; "you can't fool Simmons—he's got his eye on the label."

Which was true enough. Harvey's eye was gleaming, staring, like some pallid woodsman's when it catches the glare of an Indian's fire.

"That's all right, Simmons," explained Forrester calmly; "the bottle happens to bear an honoured Glasgow name—and the liquid is worthy of it. There isn't a headache in a hogshead—try it and see."

Harvey's lips were white and dry. "No, thank you, Forrester," he said in a harsh voice that sounded far away. "I won't take any."

"Take a little for Palmer's stomach's sake—he's had enough."

Harvey refused again. Destitute was his answer of all merriment or banter. He stood bolt upright, fixed as a statue, his eyes still on the big black thing Forrester was holding out in front of him. "Not any, Forrester," he said; "I don't want any, I tell you."

"Let him alone, Scottie," interrupted Palmer. "Simmons is on the water-waggon, to-night anyhow—and besides, that stuff's a dollar and a half a quart."

Forrester was about to comply when Oliver suddenly arose from his lounging position and shuffled out to where the two were standing. He had already familiarized himself with the bottle sufficiently to be in a rather hectoring mood.

"Go and sit down, Forrester," he growled out; "I guess I'm the host here. And I don't blame Simmons for turning up his nose," he went on as he turned and opened a little cabinet—"poking a black bottle in front of a man as if he were a coal-heaver; we're not on the Glasgow cattle market," he added contemptuously, producing a couple of glasses and handing one to Harvey. "Here, Simmons, drink like a gentleman—and I'll drink with you." And the sweat came out on Harvey's forehead as the stuff poured out, gurgling enticingly as it broke from the bottle's mouth. "Here, this is yours; and we'll drink to the *Morning Argus*—it'll belong to you some day. I heard to-day it's going to change hands soon anyhow."

The mention of the name lent a wealth of resolution to Harvey's wavering will. He recalled, his heart maddening at the memory, how Oliver had pressed this self-same toast before.

"I won't, Oliver," he said, controlling himself. "I don't want any."

"Come now, Simmons, don't be foolish; you've had a hard night's work, and you look all in—just a night cap to help you sleep."

"Look here, Oliver," Harvey's voice rising a little, "I guess I know my own mind. I tell you I won't drink. I'm under promise. I'm bound over not to take anything; and I've got more at stake on it than I can afford to lose—so you may as well shut up."

Oliver came a step nearer. "You can't bluff me, old man," he said through his teeth, his heavy eyes snapping. "And anyhow, I'll pay it," he blustered, holding out the fuming glass, a leer of dogged cunning on his face. "I'll pay your stake, Simmons."

"You go to hell," hissed Harvey, striking out wildly, one hand smashing the bottle in fragments to the floor, the other clutching Oliver by the throat; "you infernal blood-sucker," as he pressed him backward to the wall.

Palmer and Forrester sprang towards the men; but before they were able to interfere, Harvey had hurled Oliver against the table, which crashed to the floor in a heap, Oliver mingling with the wreckage. While his guests were helping him to his feet, Harvey strode towards the door; the accursed fumes rose about him like evil spirits, importunate and deadly, clutching at the very heart-strings of his will.

Pale and trembling, he turned when he reached the door. "Anything more to pay?" he muttered, nodding towards Oliver; "does he want to continue the argument?"

Oliver made a stifled protest, but his friends united to declare that the debate was at an end.

"Come back, Simmons," appealed Palmer; "don't let our little evening break up like this—Oliver's got no kick coming. Sit down."

But Harvey uttered an inaudible malediction and slammed the door behind him. They could hear him finding his way along the unlighted hall.

"You got what was coming to you, old chap," Palmer informed his host; "nobody's got any right to badger a fellow the way you did Simmons. It's worse than setting fire to a barn—you're a damned incendiary," he concluded, resuming the smoke that had been so effectually interrupted.

While the debate, thus happily begun, went on its vigorous way, Harvey was walking aimlessly about the street, caring little whither his steps might lead him. After the first gust of excitement had subsided a new and delicious sense of victory possessed him. Not from having worsted Oliver—that was quite forgotten—but from having met and conquered his temptation. His breath came fast as he recalled, how stern and sore had the conflict been; but a kind of elation he had never known before mingled with the memory of it all. For he had won—and under the most trying circumstances—and he smiled to himself as he thought how he had passed through the ordeal. Its most hopeful feature was for the future; it was a pledge of how he might hope to prevail if the fight should ever be renewed. Reassured, he even fell to thinking of other things; of his promise to his mother—had she seen his struggle and gloried in his victory, he wondered; and of Jessie, faithful ally; and of his profession and his progress in it. He recalled, as though it had occurred long ago, Oliver's prediction that he would some day own the *Argus*—and his fierce anger towards Oliver abated a little. Yet all this was insignificant, he reflected, compared to the progress he was making along higher lines.

But the elation did not last. Fatigue crept upon him. And he was chilled; he was hungry, too. Besides, the nervous strain had been a severe one, and the reaction was correspondingly acute. Gradually the tide ceased to flow, then stood stationary a moment—then began ebbing fast. And the sense of victory paled and died; the thrill of exultation passed away; the ardour of battle and of conquest chilled within him. And again his lips became parched, his hand again unsteady, his nerves again unstrung. And the dreadful thirst returned. To the swept and garnished house the evil spirit crept back with muffled tread, hopeful of a better tenure.

The stoutest castle is easily taken if its lord has ceased to watch. Or if he be absent, the capture is easier still—especially if he be gone to feast on former battle fields where his right arm brought him victory.

Wherefore Harvey's second struggle was brief and pitiful; the enemy had caught him unawares. And more shrill and impatient than before was the whistle that sounded soon again beneath Oliver's still lighted window. And his welcome was not less cordial, Oliver himself taking the leading part.

"What in thunder's the matter, Simmons?" enquired Palmer; "you look as if you'd been through a threshing machine."

Harvey paid no attention. His blood-shot eyes looked about the room, searching for something. His hand was shaking, and every now and then he ran his tongue over the withered lips; the blood seemed to have left his cheek.

"I've changed my mind," he began huskily; "I'm not well—and I'll take some of that, if you don't mind. Just a little—but I've got to get braced up or I'll collapse."

Forrester whistled. "The spring's gone dry, old man," he said. "I'm cruel sorry—but it was that little gesture of yours that did it."

Harvey's eyes looked around imploringly. The pungent fumes were still rising from the floor, goading his appetite to madness.

"I'm afraid that's right, Simmons," added Oliver; "there's a teaspoonful there in the heel of the bottle—but it's not enough to make a swallow."

"Where is it?" muttered Harvey, starting to where the broken fragments lay.

He found it; and even those who had tried so hard to overbear him a little while before cast pitying glances as he stooped down, trembling, lifting the bottom of the bottle in both his shaky hands, lifting it carefully and holding it to his lips till the last drop was drained.

It was but a few minutes till he resumed the quest. "Must be some more lying round somewhere," he said, with a smile that was pitiful to see.

"Afraid not," said Oliver; "that was the last."

"What's in that cabinet?" Harvey urged, rising to his feet.

"No go, Simmons, I'm afraid," muttered Forrester; "if there was any round, Oliver'd know it—when he gives up, there ain't any."

Harvey got up and went over to Palmer, throwing his arm about his shoulder. "I say, old

man," he began, controlling his voice as best he could, "you don't know how bad I'm feeling. And you've got a flask with you, haven't you, Palmer?—I wouldn't ask you, only I'm feeling so tough. Had a hard time of it in the office to-night."

Palmer looked hard at him. "If I had a tankful I wouldn't give you a drop, Simmons," he said.

Harvey winced. And he stood looking into Palmer's face like a guilty man, his eyes gradually turning away in confusion before the other's searching gaze. A hot flush of shame, not yet unfamiliar flowed over cheek and brow. But it was only for a moment—these better symptoms retreated before the flame that consumed him. "I'm going out," he said presently, his eyes turning heavily from one face to the other, his parched lips trembling.

"If you've got to have it, I think I know a place we can get in—I'm sure I do," drawled Oliver, yawning. "But bed's the place for all of us."

Harvey was all alive. "Come on, old chap," he exclaimed eagerly; "that's a good fellow—here's your hat. It won't take long," he added assuringly, moving towards the door.

There was little reluctance on Oliver's part. And a few minutes later the two went out together arm in arm, the victor and the vanquished—but vanquished both. It was Harvey who clung close, almost fondly, to the other; no memory of Oliver's share in his undoing, no hatred of the assassin-hand tempered the flow of fellowship between them now.

The morning had not yet come. But passion's gust was over and sated appetite refused.

"I'm going home," said Harvey, his voice unnatural, his feet unsteady.

"Not yet," said Oliver—"let's make a night of it."

"A night of it!" exclaimed the other bitterly. "Good God, Oliver!"

"Come on," said his companion doggedly. "Come with me—we'll both see the thing through."

"Come where?" said Harvey.

"You'll see. Come down this alley here—wait a minute."

Three or four minutes had elapsed; they were still walking.

"There," said Oliver, standing still; "can you see that light?—there, in that upper window."

He saw it. It gleamed sinister, significant, through the mirk; blacker than the deepest darkness was its baneful light.

"What about it?" said Harvey.

Oliver said something in a low voice; then he laughed.

Simmons turned full on his companion. The moon was setting, but its latest beams still shed a fitful light. And they showed Harvey's face flushed and worn, the eyes unnatural in their heaviness and gloom. But there was a strange redeeming light in them as they fixed themselves on Oliver, the light of indignant scorn; any who had known his mother would have recognized something of the old-time light that had glowed from her face before the darkness veiled it.

Harvey's heavy eyes flashed as he spoke. "Oliver," he said, and the tone was haughty, old-time pride struggling against fearful odds as the sun writhes its way through the mist; "Oliver, if you're going to the devil, you can go alone. I'm not quite gone yet, thank God. I'm a good many kinds of a fool, I know—but I'm not that kind—I'm not a sot. And Oliver," coming closer up to him, "I'll admit I'm as much to blame for to-night as you are—but we're done, Oliver, now. We're done with each other—forever. D'ye hear, Oliver?" as he turned and started back up the shadowy lane.

Oliver blinked after him a moment; then he went on towards the light, into the darkness.

## XXXII

### *HARVEY'S UNSEEN DELIVERER*

The succeeding day was melting softly into dusk.

While it may be true that none can utterly affirm, it is equally true that none can finally deny, the ministry of the dead. Probably none altogether rejects the thought except those who disbelieve in the immortality of the soul. For if death be but the disenchantment of the spirit, and its engraftment on the infinite, how thus should its noblest passion cease or its holiest industry suffer interruption? We may not know; though mayhap we may still receive. If beneficiaries we are of the unforgetting dead, we are unconscious of it—and this too shall swell the sum of that great surprise that awaits us in eternity.

Some unconscious influence had brooded about Harvey through the day. Except for a few



brief minutes with Miss Farringall and Jessie, during which neither had spoken much, the long hours had been spent alone. And the solitude had seemed to teem at times; with what, he scarcely knew. Shame and discomfiture and fear had thronged his heart, and the day was one of such humiliation as cloistered monk might rejoice to know. Not that he was conscious of the process, nor did he even inwardly call it by any such name as that. But he knew that he had been beaten—beaten, too, in the very hour that had thrilled with the confidence of victory. More than once, recounting his defects one by one, and recalling his frequent vows, was he on the verge of self-contempt; against this he fought as if for life.

As the day wore slowly by, the struggle deepened. A strange heart-chilling fear of the night began to possess him. Looking from the window of his room, he could see the westering sun and the lengthening shadows; both seemed to point the hour of returning conflict.

He tried in vain to dismiss this strange misgiving. The sun crept slowly closer to the glowing west, and its silent course seemed to have something ominous about it, solemnly departing as if it knew the peril of the crafty dark. He tried to read, but his eyes slipped on the words. Turning to one of his dead mother's letters, he sought the comfort of the loving words; but he found no shelter there, and the relentless thirst kept deepening in his heart. Then he tried to recall some of the gayer scenes of departed college days; their mirth was turned to ashes now.

Finally, and with a bounding heart, like a fugitive whose eyes descry some long-sought place of refuge, he bethought himself of the Bible his mother had hidden in his trunk when first he had left her care. Reverently, passionately, hopefully he made his way to many a tree of life within it—but its shade seemed riven above him and the fierce heat still searched his soul.

With a stifled cry he sprang from the bed, despairing of reinforcement elsewhere than in his own beleaguered heart. He would fight it out, though the fight should kill him. The strange sinking fell again upon his spirit and the unearthly fires burned anew within him. His lips again were parched and his shaking hand all but refused to do the bidding of his will. He had not tasted food throughout the day; yet the thought of food was intolerable. What tormented him most was the thought, presenting itself again and again, that if he had but the smallest allowance of stimulant the pain would be at an end and the threatened collapse averted. But he knew how false and seductive was the plea, and resisted. Yet what could he do?—this unequal conflict could not endure. The perspiration stood in beads upon his brow, though he was shaken with chills as by an ague. Defiant, his resolution rallied as he noted the symptoms of his weakness. A kind of grim anger gathered as he felt the deadly persistence of his enemy; and his step was almost firm as he walked to the door of his room. He locked it swiftly, putting the key in his pocket, stamping his foot as he turned away.

This seemed to help him some. It made him feel at least that he had come to close quarters with his destroyer, shut up alone with his dread antagonist. Herein was the hopefulness of the situation, that he had come to recognize the strength of his enemy and the portent of the struggle. Had he been locked in the same room with a madman the situation could not have been more real.

Suddenly a strange thing befell him. Some would explain it in terms of an overwrought nervous system, some in terms of a disordered fancy. It matters not. But Harvey heard, amid the wild tumult of that twilight hour—he heard his mother's voice. Only once it came—and the sweet notes slowly died, like the tones of some rich bell across a waste of waters—but he heard it and his whole soul stood still to listen. He caught its message in an instant; the whole meaning of it was wonderfully clear, and his heart answered and obeyed with instant gladness. For it seemed to point the way to rest, and victory, and healing.

He glanced at his watch. There was just time to catch the train; and without pause or hesitation he unlocked the door and passed out into the street. A word to a servant, to allay wonder at his absence, was his only farewell.

What greyhound of the seas is swift enough to outrun the greedy gulls that follow? And what heart, however swiftly borne, can escape its besetting sin? It may ascend up into heaven, or make its bed in hell, or take the wings of the morning, or plunge into the lair of darkness—but temptation never quits the chase. Thus was poor Harvey pursued as the bounding train plunged through the darkness towards his far-off boyhood home. Still the battle waged, and still the fangs of appetite kept groping for his heart and clutching at his will. But he endured as seeing the invisible; and the City of Refuge came ever nearer.

As they came closer to Glenallen—when they were almost there—peering through the dark, he caught now and then a fleeting glimpse of the scenes of other days; fences that he had climbed; elms beneath whose shelter he had played; braes he had roamed and burns he had

waded and brooks he had fished, he smiled, as the inward pain still smote him and the dreadful craving burned—it seemed all but impossible that life could have changed so much, the evening shadows threatening before its noon had come. And he felt, in a dim unreasoning way—what other men have felt—as if he had been somehow tricked out of the sweetness of youth, its glory faded and its fruitage withered before he had known they were there.

The streets of his native town were hushed as he hurried towards his home. Nearing the familiar scene, he paused, standing still. He felt a kind of awesome fear and his head was bowed as he crept close to the humble door. Suddenly he lifted his eyes, surveying the well-remembered outlines through the gloom. And suddenly they seemed transfigured before him, speaking out their welcome in tender silence as though they recognized the heart-sore wanderer. It was with little difficulty that he effected an entrance, a half-hidden window in the rear yielding readily.

The stillness within almost overcame him. Yet there must have been holy power in it; for the evil spirit that had haunted him seemed to retreat before it; and his groping eyes fell now on this familiar thing and now on that, each an ally to his struggling soul. He could see but dimly, but they were all beautiful, each telling some story of the sacred days that would come no more. He felt his way through the little hall into the room where he had last looked upon his mother's face. He stood where he had stood before—and he looked down. Long musing, he turned and made his way up-stairs. As he passed the half-open door on his way, he could see the shadowy outline of the little store, as Miss Adair had left it for the night, the petty wares consorting ill with the significance of the hour. Yet the nobility of all for which it stood broke afresh upon him.

Ascending the creaking stairs, he stopped and listened. It seemed as if some voice must speak—for silence like to this he had never known before. But all was still, wondrously still—this was the silence of death. He glanced into Jessie's room; relics of her sore toil were still scattered about; all was as she had left it when she had started on her visit to the city.

Then he entered his mother's room. With head bowed low and with noiseless step, as devout pilgrims invade some holy shrine, he passed within the door. Then he lifted his eyes—the night seemed to stay its hand—and he could see here and there traces of his mother's life, many of them undisturbed. An apron that she used to wear, folded now and spotless white, laid aside by Jessie's loving hands; a knitted shawl that had so often enclosed the fragile form; the unfinished knitting from which the needles should never be withdrawn. Then he gave a great start, muffling a cry—for he thought he saw a face. But it was his own, moving in shadowy whiteness as he passed the little mirror—he marvelled at his timidity amid such scenes of love.

He sank on the bed and buried his face in his hands. He was trembling, yet not with fear. But something seemed to tell him that he was not alone; no tempter, no turgid appetite, no relentless passion assailed him now. He was safe, he felt, like some ancient fugitive falling breathless before a sacred altar—but he felt that he was not alone. Some unseen power seemed to be about him, an influence so gentle, a caress so tender, a keeping so holy as time could not provide. He did not seek to reason with the strange sensation, or to solve, or to define; but his soul lay open to the mystic influence in helplessness and hope, the ministry of the awful silence having its way with his broken and baffled life.

Almost without knowing it, he rose and made his way to the little table by the window; something dark lay upon it. The touch told him in a moment what it was—his mother's Bible, that Jessie had begged him to leave for her. His hand trembled as he took it up; it opened of itself and he peered downward on the well-worn page. But it was dark, and he could only see enough to know that one particular verse was gently underscored. Fumbling for a match, he lit it and its glow fell upon the words:

"Unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless."

The message flashed upon his soul with the import of eternal hope. He closed the book violently, as if something might escape, and sank again upon the bed. He felt as if God Himself had spoken through the shadows and the silence. His face was again buried in his hands, but his heart was running riot with its exuberance of feeling, of purpose, of hope from far-off fountains fed. There gleamed before him a vision of the reality of it all, the real truth that a worsted heart may find strength somewhere higher up, away beyond this scene of human struggle—and that the most stained and wasted life might yet become a holy thing, again presented to the great God whose grace had saved it, a faultless life at last.

Thus he sat, nor knew how long, while the regenerating moments flew. He was recalled by feeling something fall at his feet. Stooping, he picked it up; it was a letter, fallen from the leaves of the book he held. A brief search revealed a candle on a chair beside the bed. This he lit,

holding the fitful flame above the missive now spread out before him. The letter was from his mother and addressed to him. A swift look at the date explained why it had never been sent—she had been busy with it when he had unexpectedly returned the night of Madeline's party. His eyes burned their way over the opening sentences, all uneven as they were, the unsteady hand having found its course as best it could. And the gentle epistle had come to a sudden close—the letter had never been completed. But his eyes were fixed in almost fierce intensity upon the last words—probably the last the dear hand had ever written. "And I'm praying, my son," thus ran the great assurance, "as I shall never cease to pray, that He will make His grace sufficient for you and that..."

He arose, recalling where his mother was wont to pray. Had she not told him, and had Jessie not spoken of it often? Beside his own bed, he knew—there, where he once had slept the sleep of childhood in the innocent and happy days of yore; there had been her altar, where, kneeling before God, she had pleaded that the keeping and guidance of the Highest might be vouchsafed her absent son. Thither he turned his steps, his heart aflame within him; one hand still held his mother's Bible, the other the precious letter. And he laid them both before the Throne, sacred things, familiar to the all-seeing Eye, pledges of a faith that must not be denied.

The silence still reigned about the bended form. But it was vocal with unspoken vows, the vows of a soul that unseen hands, wasted once and worn but radiant now and beautiful, had beckoned to the Mercy Seat. He could not see the bending face; he could not know the exultation of the triumphant one—but he knew that the dear spirit shared with him the rapture of that hour when his mother's prayers were answered, when his soul came back to God.

### XXXIII

#### *PLAIN LIVING AND HIGH THINKING*

The day slipped past in quiet solitude, marked by the peace of penitence and inward chastening; convalescence is the sweetest experience of the soul and the outlook to the eternal is its rest. Harvey felt in no hurry to leave the pavilion-home, thronged as it was with blessed memories. But when the evening fell, a curious eagerness quickened his steps towards David Borland's altered home. He had not visited it before. Drawing near, the first figure he descried was that of David himself, engaged in the very diminutive garden that lay beside the house. He had not noticed Harvey's approach. A shade of pain darkened the eye of the younger man as, unobserved, he took a keen survey of the older face. For not alone was David more thin and worn; his cheeks had lost their colour, pinched and pale, and it required no special acuteness to detect how changed he was from the robust David of former years. Suddenly lifting his head, Mr. Borland saw Harvey close at hand; he dropped the light tool he was holding, hurrying to greet the visitor.

"You're as welcome as a registered letter," he cried in his old hearty way; "come on an' sit down—there's nothin' tastes so good in a new house as an old friend. I've been hungerin' for a mouthful of you. I was jest doin' a little work," he explained—"when a fellow's got to work hard, nothin' makes it so easy as doin' a little more. I'm goin' to raise some flowers," he went on, pointing to a tiny bed; "nothin' pays like flowers—it pays better than manufacturin', I think sometimes. Here, sit beside me on the bench," for David seemed willing to rest. "How's Jessie?" he asked presently, his general observations concluded.

"Lovely," answered Harvey. "She's visiting Miss Farringall."

"So I believe. They say Miss Farringall's lovely too, ain't she?"

Harvey pronounced a eulogy.

"She's an old maid, ain't she?"

"I suppose some would call her that," was Harvey's rather deliberate reply.

"Oh, that's all right," David assured him; "I don't mean no disrespect. Most old maids is reg'lar angels—with variations. I often tell the missus if I was ever left alone I'd probably marry again, out of respect for her—there's nothin' like an encore to show you've enjoyed the first performance—an' I always say I'd take an old maid. Of course, I might change my mind," David went on gravely; "most old fools does, takes up with some little gosling that ought to be in school. An' I've noticed how the fellows that yelps the loudest at the funeral begins takin' notice the soonest—they don't most gen'rally stay in long for repairs," he concluded solemnly, scraping the clay from his boot-heel as he spoke.

"If Miss Farringall's an old maid," Harvey resumed, "she's one of the nicest I ever knew—and

one of the happiest too, I think."

"Old maids is pretty much all happy," pronounced David, "that is, when they stop strugglin'—but most of 'em dies hard. They'd all be happy if they'd only do what I heard a preacher advisin' once. I was mad as a hatter, too."

"What about?" asked Harvey wonderingly.

"Well, I'll tell you. It was at a funeral in a church—last year, I think—an' after the service was over he came out to the front o' the pulpit. 'The congregation 'll remain seated,' says he, 'till the casket has went down the aisle; then the mourners will follow, an' the clergy 'll follow them. After that,' says he, 'after that, the congregation will quietly retire.' Quietly, mind you!" said David sternly; "did he think we was goin' to give three cheers for the corpse, I wonder?" and he looked earnestly at Harvey for approval of his indignation. "But I've often thought, jest the same, how much happier everybody'd be, 'specially old maids, if they'd only retire quietly."

"I'll have to tell that to the editor of the funny column," Harvey said when his composure had returned; "and I'll send it on to you when it appears in the *Argus*."

"I'm a subscriber to that paper now," David said complacently; "how 're you gettin' along?—like the editin' business pretty good?"

"Fine," Harvey assured him cordially. Then he told, as modestly as he could, of what success he had achieved and of his prospects of promotion.

"Where you got the start was goin' into it as soon as you left school," David averred; "there's nothin' like gettin' at your work early. That's why I advise gettin' up a little afore day—for other folks. You see, you'll get the hang of it—of editin', I mean—afore you're set in your ways. If you want to succeed these days, you've got to take time by the fetlock, as one of them old philosophers said. That's what makes all the difference between two fellows; one'll waste his time gallivantin' round, while the other's learnin' all about his business an' gettin' ready for somethin' big. Now, there's poor Cecil, for instance—you've heard what's come o' Cecil?"

"No," answered Harvey, sitting up very straight. "No, I haven't heard anything—has anything happened?"

"Oh, nothin' terrible important. Only he's off for Africa—went last week. He was foolin' an' fiddlin' round, spong'in' on his father—an' he got into one or two little scrapes. An' his father kind o' got tired of it—an' Cecil got a chance of some kind of a job with some company that's buildin' a railroad or somethin' in South Africa. An' the old man let him go—so he's gone," David concluded earnestly, "an' I reckon punchin' mules is about the highest position o' trust he'll be occupyin'. Let's go into the house."

"Is Cecil going to stay long in Africa?" Harvey asked as they walked along.

"He won't likely be back to tea very often," ventured David. "Jemima! I'm so short in the wind now," his breath coming fast. "I don't much calculate he'll be back till the walkin's good—unless the old man fetches him," a droll smile showing on David's face, as they entered the little house.

"Sorry Madeline's not in," Mr. Borland began as he sank into a chair; "she works pretty steady now, poor child—they say she's a reg'lar dabster at that wood-work. She paints chiny too," he went on, pride in the voice—"I think she's out at Hyman's, burnin' it, this evenin'. Sit down, Harvey," motioning towards a chair, for his guest was standing in a spasm of attentiveness. "It's a bit different from the old place, ain't it?" as he looked round the humble room.

"It's just as good," said Harvey bluntly, rather at a loss.

"That's where you're shoutin'," David responded, something of his old-time vigour in the tone. "It's jest every bit as good. When I'm settin' here in the evenin'—I don't work so very hard; they gave me a nice easy job at the office—an' Madeline's puttin' on my slippers or runnin' her fingers round my old gray head, when I shut my eyes I can't tell the difference. Never did set in only one chair," he mused as if to himself, "never did wear but one pair o' slippers, never did have but one Madeline to cure my headaches an' my heartaches an' everythin' like that. An' I like the lamp better'n the old sulky gas—an' we've got the best pump in the county," he went on enthusiastically—"right out there; it's far better'n the old tap water. So we're jest as happy, Harvey."

Harvey smiled, and lovingly, at the beaming face.

"An' I can prove it," the old man suddenly resumed. "I can prove it," he repeated eagerly. "See that fireplace there?" pointing to the hearth on which the wood was already laid. "Put a match to it, Harvey—you're younger than me. Set it agoin', Harvey, an' I'll show you—it's gettin' coolish, anyhow."

Harvey did as directed. The shavings led the flame upward to the little twigs, and the twigs hurried it on to the willing cedar, and the cedar lit the way to the gnarled pine knots; these

opened their bosoms to the flame and soon the leaping tongues began their glad crusade against the shadows, a revelry of sight and sound flooding the room with light and music.

"There!" cried David jubilantly. "Tell me the difference if you can—ain't that the very same as it used to be in the great big house? Didn't I tell you I could prove it?—there ain't no difference, Harvey; it's jest the very same," he repeated once again, rejoicing in the great truth he found so difficult to express. "An' that's what I always trained myself to believe," he went on after a long pause. "I always believed in simple livin'—even when I had lots o' chance the other way. Didn't I, Harvey?" he pursued, gazing into the other's eyes through the glow.

"That you did, Mr. Borland," Harvey affirmed. "And that's why it comes so easy to you now."

"That was how I knew poor Mr. Craig was on the wrong tack," David pursued thoughtfully. "I spotted the signs as soon as they began; when he started callin' his sideboard a 'buffy'—an' when he began sayin' 'blue mange' instead o' cornstarch; I heard him at his own table—an' callin' 'Johnny-cake' corn-cake—an' referrin' to the cuspidor when he meant a spittoon—when he began them tony names, I knew it was all up with poor Mr. Craig. When a man gets so dainty that his horses stop sweatin' an' begin perspirin', he ain't much good for common folks after that. That's why Mr. Craig wanted so bad to be mayor—jest that buffy idea, same thing," David explained pityingly. "An' then it wasn't long till he made the foolishhest break of all," he went on; "d'ye know what it was?" as he looked enquiringly at Harvey; "you'd never guess."

"No idea," admitted Harvey.

"Well, he began takin' his dinner at supper time. Leastways, he began callin' it dinner—an' it's a terrible bad sign when a fellow begins takin' dinner when the dew's fallin'. His old father used to say: 'Well, I reckon it's time to feed again,' but Craig always said he guessed he'd have to go home to dinner—an' he wasn't never the same man after he begun that kind o' foolishness," David affirmed seriously. "The only other man I ever heard callin' supper dinner was a terrible rich fellow from New York. He had a summer cottage on Lake Joseph; he used to bring his own doctor with him, an' his own minister—an' his own undertaker. An' he took his dinner about bedtime," David concluded mournfully.

"Makin' out pretty good at the newspaper business, Harvey?" David asked presently, some minor themes disposed of.

Harvey pondered. He was thinking of many things. "Do you mean financially, Mr. Borland?" he asked at length.

"Yes, I reckon so; you're climbin' up the ladder a bit, ain't you?"

"I'm getting along pretty well, that way," Harvey replied. "And I think I'm getting an insight into the business. They say the *Argus* is going to change hands—but that won't affect my position at all."

"Pity you couldn't get a-hold of it," said David reflectively. "But don't worry about that, my boy. Don't never be disappointed if success don't come as fast as you think it should. It nearly always slips through a fellow's fingers at the last—so don't get set up on it. I'm gettin' to be an old man now; an' if there's one thing I've learned better'n another, it's how a man don't have them things in his own hands. I believe every man's jest runnin' on the time-table that's laid out for him; an' he'll spoil everythin' if he tries too much to interfere. Often we think we're terrible smart. An' mebbe we are—but we find out sooner or later we've got to walk the plank, an' it's queer how we get jockeyed jest when we think we're at the winnin' post. We're pretty handy with the rod an' the reel—but God handles the landin'-net Himself. That's why the biggest ones most gen'rally always get away," and David nodded his head seriously as he peered into Harvey's eyes.

"I'd sooner win along other lines than that," mused Harvey.

"Than what?"

"Than the money way. That isn't everything."

"That there was a beautiful thing you done in the cemetery," David digressed suddenly. "That there was high finance."

"What?" asked the bewildered Harvey.

"You know," said the other—"your mother's gravestone. I didn't know nothin' about it till Madeline took some flowers out one evenin'. That was lovely, Harvey."

Harvey's voice was thick. "That was the first money I ever saved, Mr. Borland," he said after a long silence; "the only money I ever saved."

"Savin's like them is holy," David said simply. "An' I'm goin' to tell you somethin', Harvey," as he braced himself for the purpose. "An' I'm goin' to trust you not to tell any one—not any one in the world."

Harvey turned to gaze into the earnest face.

"I don't know jest why it should be so hard to tell," David began calmly. "But it's this, Harvey—my day's jest about done—I ain't goin' to be here much longer, Harvey. No, don't now, please," he pleaded as he stretched out his hand towards the livid youth, already leaping to his feet. "Don't, Harvey, don't—but it's true. An' I've known it a good while now; the doctor told me long ago," he continued calmly. "My old heart thinks it's jest about quittin' time, it seems. An' I don't blame it a terrible lot—it's had a long day's work, an' I reckon it's a good deal like me, kind o' ready for its rest," the tired voice went on. "That's where the trouble is, anyhow," he affirmed placidly, "but I never told nobody—a fellow ought to burn his own smoke, I think, an' not let it trouble other people. But I've told you now, Harvey—so you won't be so terrible surprised when ... And besides," his voice breaking for the first time, "besides—I wanted to tell you somethin' else, my boy—I wanted to tell you—how—how much I loved you, Harvey—for fear—for fear I mightn't have another chance," as the tired face went downward to his hands, the hot tears trickling between the fingers that were so thin and worn.

The room was hushed in silence as Harvey's tear-stained face was bowed beside his friend. He spoke no word, and no touch of tenderness was felt except the slow tightening of his arm about the furrowed neck, holding the quivering form close in strong and silent fondness. David spoke at length. "I want you to come along with me, Harvey."

"Where?" Harvey asked in a startled voice.

"Oh, not there," said David, smiling. "You thought I meant the long, long road. No, not that; but I'm goin' to the communion, Harvey—that's what I meant—I'm goin' to join the church."

"I'm glad," said Harvey after a long stillness.

"I nearly joined once afore," David went on. "I reckon you remember when I had that meetin' with the elders—kind o' run agin a snag, I did. An' mebbe I ain't much worthier yet—but I see it different. I ain't much of a Christian, I know—but I'm a kind of a sinner saved by grace. An' I'd kind o' like to own up in front of everybody afore—afore it's too late," he said, his voice almost inaudible.

"When?" asked Harvey.

"Next Sunday," answered David. "But I didn't go up agin the elders this time, mind you—I wouldn't," he went on stoutly. "It seems to me a fellow ain't no more called on to tell a lot of elders—human elders—about them things, an' his soul, than he is to tell 'em about his love-makin'; so I jest went to Dr. Fletcher, an' I told him what I felt about—about Christ—an' I said I felt like I'd had a bid from some One higher up. An' Dr. Fletcher said no elder wasn't to have a look-in this time. So I'm goin', Harvey—an' it'd be an awful comfort if you an' me went together. It's quite a spell since you was there, ain't it, Harvey?"

The fire had gone out upon the hearth. And Harvey spoke never a word amid the thickening gloom.

## XXXIV

### *THE OVERFLOWING HOUR*

The light had almost faded from the sky and the stealthy shadows were settling down about Glenallen as Harvey strode towards one of the hills that kept their ancient watch about the town. He did not know whither his course was tending; nor did he greatly care, for many and conflicting were the thoughts that employed him as he walked.

Still fresh and vivid, almost overpowering sometimes, was his sense of loss and shame. The defilement of his besetting sin, and the humiliation of a life so nearly honeycombed, and the tragedy of a will so nearly sold to slavery—all these had their stern influence on his soul. The bruised and beaten past rose afresh before him; and if ever human heart felt its own weakness, and human life its own unworthiness, it was as Harvey Simmons climbed that solitary hill amid the deepening dusk. Mingling with his sense of shame was the realization of all that it must cost him—for his manhood would refuse to claim what only a worthier manhood could fairly win.

Passing strange it was that at that very moment, the moment of true self-reproach and humiliation, his roving eyes should suddenly have been startled as they fell on two white-clad figures that were climbing the hill behind him. One of them he recognized in an instant—it was Madeline—and his heart almost frightened him, so violently did it leap. He struggled to repress the rising tide—for the test had come sooner than he thought—but a thrill of passion swept through all his frame.

Yet his resolve strengthened in his heart—the purpose that had been forming within him through many days. The resolve of a hero, too, it was; and the native strength of the man flowed anew, stern and unconquerable, as he made the great renunciation. Not that he loved the less; the more, rather. And not because he doubted that her heart answered, if perhaps less ardently, to his own. He saw again, as he had never ceased to see, the withered flowers in her hand. That picture he had cherished ever since, deep hidden in his deepest heart—patiently waiting, till his achievements and his station should warrant him to come back and drink to all eternity where he had but sipped before.

He knew now that this should never be. He thought, and swift and lurid was the image, of his own father, and of his mother's broken heart, and of the baneful legacy that had been his own—and of the shrouded chapter that had been so carefully kept from him, tight shut like the chamber of the dead. He knew, besides all this, that he loved too well to offer Madeline a life that was not intrinsically worthy; if accounted worthy, it could only be by the shelter of a living lie. Thus was his resolve taken, anguish-born. Yet his hungering heart cried out that it could not go its way in silence—this luxury at least it claimed, to tell its story and to say farewell.

He turned and made his way downward to the approaching pair. Lifting his hat as he came close, he spoke Madeline's name and stood still. Her surprise seemed to seal her lips at first, but he could see through the gloaming what inflamed his heart afresh.

"I heard you were in Glenallen," her low voice began, "but I didn't expect to see you. When did you come? Oh, pardon me, let me introduce you to my friend," as she spoke her companion's name.

He removed his hat again and bowed. One or two commonplaces passed.

"Where are you going?" Harvey asked abruptly.

"We're going to see a little girl that's sick; she lives on the first farm outside the town. She's one of my class," Madeline explained, "and I asked Miss Brodie to accompany me—my friend lives in that house yonder," pointing to a residence near the foot of the hill; "it gets dark so early now."

"I'll go with you myself," said Harvey.

"What?" was all Madeline said, her voice unsteady.

"I'll go with you myself," he repeated; "Miss Brodie won't mind—we'll see her home first. I wish to speak with you," and without further explanation he turned to lead the way to Miss Brodie's home.

Madeline's protest came, but it was weak and trembling. And her companion spoke no word except to give assent. For there seemed to be some strange authority about the silent man; something in his voice, or manner, or in the drawn face that looked into the distance through the fading light. They could not tell; but they followed as he led. Madeline's hand trembled as it made its way into her friend's; a moment later she withdrew it, walking on alone. But her bosom rose and fell with the movement of that eternal mystery that so many a maiden's heart has known, that none has ever solved. And her eyes were moist and dim, she knew not why; and now and then a strange quiver shook the graceful form, protesting, reluctant, half-rebellious, yet at the mercy of something she could neither fathom nor deny.

Bidding Miss Brodie good-night, they retraced their steps and pressed on towards the outskirts of the town. Perhaps both wondered why they walked so fast, Madeline wondering, indeed, why she walked at all. But there was something indescribably sweet about the strange mastery in which he seemed to hold her—and her eyes smiled, though she was trembling, as she looked ahead into the waiting shadows.

"That's the house." These were the first words that broke the stillness, and they came from Madeline's lips—"that's where she lives," pointing to a distant light.

"Who?" and Harvey turned his eyes upon her.

"The child I'm going to see—I told you."

Silence still; and still they walked on together. Once she stumbled over an uneven plank. His hand went out swiftly to her arm, and as he touched it his whole frame swayed towards her. In an instant his hand was withdrawn; but not before a faint outbreak flowed from her lips. He looked down at her through the darkness—her face was deadly white.

"I don't believe I'll go," she said weakly; "I'll go to-morrow."

He pointed into the darkness. "I want to speak with you," he said, striding on.

A little murmur surged to her lips. She checked it. "Will you wait for me—till I come out, Harvey?" the last word coming slow.

"I can't."

"What?" she said, her tone firmer, her pace abating.

"I cannot wait," he said; "you can't go in till—after."

She cast a swift glance upwards—but his eyes were forward bent. He pressed swiftly on. She walked beside him.

Suddenly he paused, then stood still. He listened intently; no sound but the desultory barking of a distant watch-dog. He looked about—and the voiceless night seemed to contain no other but those twain. He could see the blinking light in the window, the one Madeline had pointed to; it made the solitude deeper, like a far-off gleam at sea.

"Let us go in here and sit down," he said, pointing towards a little clearance under the shadow of two spreading oaks that towered above an intervening thicket.

They stepped down from the rickety sidewalk. And they crossed the dusty road, neither speaking; and the dew glistened on their feet as they went on into the thickening grass—and Madeline could hear her poor heart beating, but she uttered never a word.

It is the glory of a strong woman that she sometimes may be weak; nay, that she must be, by very token of her strength. For her strength hath its home in love and in her capacity to love—there is her crown and there the well-spring of her beauty and her charm. Yet this knows its highest strength in weakness; and its victory is in surrender. And the greatest moment in the life of the noblest woman is when convention and propriety and custom—and the tyranny of the social code—yea, when even her own native pride, her womanly reticence, her insistence on all that a woman may demand, are defiantly renounced; when these all lie in ruins at her feet, scorned and forgotten by reason of the torrent of her love; when beauty's tresses lie dishevelled, and its robes of dignity are stained with tears, then is woman's wild eternal heart at its very noblest in all the abandon of the passion that sets it free from every tie save one.

Wherefore Madeline—she of the beauteous face and of the snow-white heart—went on with Harvey where he led. Down from the pavement she stepped, down into the earthly road, reckless of the dainty fabric that the dust leaped to stain; and she walked on into the glistening grass, and her eyes saw the waiting oak and the vast sky behind. And the night was dark, and even the distant blinking light was hidden; and she could hear the soft language of the mother bird that kept her love-taught vigil, and the whippoorwill's cry came in mellow waves across the rippling woods—and the great tender arms of the holy night were about them all.

"Let us sit here," and Harvey motioned towards a giant log that lay beneath the oaks. "And I'll tell you, Madeline."

She raised one white hand to her throat as she took her place; even then he noticed the delicate tapering fingers, so well fitted for the work to which her father had referred. Something seemed to be choking her, so long were the white fingers held to the soft flesh above. The other hand went out absently, uplifted, and she held tight to the soft-swinging branch of the ancient oak, for the leaves bended about them where they sat.

"Very well, Harvey," she said. "Isn't it about father—didn't you see him this evening?" Commonplace questions enough they were; and her heart had clutched wildly at them as her hand had seized the bough above her. But commonplace the words were not—a surge of fire made them glow and gleam, to him at least, her troubled soul sweeping through them like a flood. For her voice was shaking as she asked the simple questions; and her arm was still outstretched as she clung to the yielding bough—and the white fingers still pressed the quivering throat.

"No, it isn't about that," he said, his voice as low as the voices of the night. She never moved. But he heard, actually heard, her lips as they slowly parted—and her breath came as if she were resting from a race.

"It's about us—oh, Madeline, it's about us," he began, and his words came swift, as if they were driven out by force. "You know, you know, Madeline, all that's in my heart—all that's been there for years. Ever since I worked for your father—ever since we went to school—ever since that night beside my baby sister's grave—and since you came to see mother when she got blind—and since I went to college—and always, always, Madeline, through all the years. You know, Madeline, you know." Then his words poured out in a passionate stream, swirling like waves about her, and he told her what they both had known long, what neither had ever heard before. The maiden's eyes shone dim; and one hand clutched tighter at the crushed and broken twigs; the other slipped from the quivering throat, pressed now to the paining bosom. And the moist lips were parted still, but the speech that flowed between was silent as her listening soul.

"And I've told you the worst, Madeline," he vowed at length. "I was determined to tell you the worst, before I go away, before I go away to take up the struggle against my sin—alone. And to win—to conquer," he added low. "So I'm not worthy, Madeline—and the future's uncertain—and I



know it and you know it. And nobody but God can ever tell what it has meant to me to say all I've said to-night; and it's all because I love you so... Oh, Madeline," and the strong voice struggled in vain to keep on its way; too late, it broke and trembled, the pain and passion bursting through it as he bowed his head and hid his face. "So I'm going away," he murmured low, "I'm going away."

The sighing wind was hushed and the mother bird was silent and the whippoorwill was dumb. "Harvey, don't."

It was such a gentle note, barely audible, like the first faint cry of some wood-born nestling when it sees the light. But it filled and flooded all his soul. He raised his head, so slowly, from his hands; and slowly he turned his face till his eyes rested full upon her. The moon had risen and he could see her beauty. Both hands were lying now in the white folds of her dress, and between them were the crushed and broken leaves, their fragrance outstealing from their wounds. The branch she had released was still swaying to and fro. But Madeline saw it not; nor aught else beside. The veiled and glistening eyes were looking far beyond; he could not tell whether they were fixed on the darkling thicket or on the crescent moon. But while his gaze stole upward to her face a night-bird in the thicket piped softly to its mate—and he saw her eyes search the frowning shade. Then they were still. But he could see the radiance on cheek and brow, and he felt the life-stream that her eyes outpoured, aglow with the emotion of her soul. Her bosom rose and fell, nor did she seem to know—again and yet again the candour of her love spoke thus. And while he looked she slowly turned her head. He noted, even then, and in the gathering light, the wealth of lovely hair, the fair purity of her forehead, the mystic lure of her quivering lips, the throb that beat swiftly in her throat, soft and white like the lily's bloom—but they all were lost in the glory of her wondrous eyes. These were transfigured; surrender, conquest, yearning, pity, pride, the joy of possession and the rapture of captivity—all that unite to make that mysterious tide called passion, looked their meaning from her face.

Her breath, fresh from the parted lips, floated outward till it touched his face—and to him spreading oak and whispering grove and shadowy thicket and crescent moon had ceased to be. He saw her eyes alone, his soul swimming towards them through the torrent; his finger-tips touched her shoulders first—and she was there—and the soft form yielded, and the glory slowly faded as the eyelids fell, and the fragrance of her breath made life a holy thing forever as he drew her into the strong shelter of his love.

## XXXV

### *"INTO HIS HOUSE OF WINE"*

They came up the little hill together. And many eyes were turned on them in wonder as they went up the aisle, David still leaning on the strong man beside him. It was Robert McCaig who took the token from Mr. Borland's hand, and his own told its welcome by its lingering clasp.

They were almost at David's pew, Madeline and her mother already seated there, when Harvey stood still and whispered. "Let us go to my mother's seat," he said.

David's assent was quick and cordial. He knew the sacrament of love; and the look with which Madeline and her mother followed them showed that they recognized the higher claim.

Very beautiful was the service of that holy hour. The opening psalm breathed the spirit of penitence and trust. When Dr. Fletcher rose to pray, his face was illumined with such joy as there is in the presence of the angels when a new star swims into the firmament of heaven. And his prayer gave thanks for the cloud of witnesses that compassed them about, and for those who had gone out from them along the upward path of pain.

Wonderful stillness wrapped the worshippers about as the elders went slowly down the aisle with the symbols of redeeming love. It was not his accustomed place, but Geordie Nickle bore the bread and wine to where David and Harvey sat. His eyes shone with a great light as he placed the emblems first in David's shaking hand; and the moist eyes were upturned to God; and his lips moved while he stood before them in the grand dignity of his priestly office. The compassion glowing on his face was worthy of the Cross.

David and Harvey bowed their heads together, the old man and the young. The one was touched with the whitening frost of years, the other with the dew of youth. But their lips were moist with the same holy wine and their hearts were kindred in their trembling hope. Before them both arose the vision of a Saviour's face; but the old man's thought was of eternal rest, and the other's was of the battling years beyond.

Harvey's mind flew quickly over all the bygone days. Love and loneliness, conflict and respite, hope and despair, victory and overthrow passed before him—and all seemed now to have conspired towards this holy hour. He felt that the way had been chosen for him amid life's perplexing paths; that an unseen Hand had been at the helm; that the prayer and purpose of another's life had led him back to the path from which he had departed, fulfilling the design of an All-wise Sovereign Will.

David gave a little start of surprise when Dr. Fletcher announced the closing hymn.

"He done that for me," he whispered to Harvey; "he knows it's mine."

They rose to sing the noble song. The great words rolled slowly out from many reverent lips:

"The sands of time are sinking."

It was when they came to the soul's great boast

"With mercy and with judgment  
My web of time He wove,"

that Harvey turned his eyes towards David; and his heart melted as he saw the tears rolling down the withered cheeks. David's head was bowed, for it hurt him sore that men should see. But there had come about him such a tide of feeling—all his chequered life rising up before him—and such a sense of the abundant grace that had made the shadows beautiful with light, that his soul dissolved in gratitude to the Hand that guided and the Heart that planned through all the labyrinth of years.

Other lips were still, and Harvey's among them, when they reached the closing lines:

"Amid the shades of evening  
While sinks life's lingering sand  
I hail the glory dawning  
In Immanuel's land."

But those who were beside him marvelled at the strong rich tones with which David sounded the exultant note. His voice was no more the voice of age; and the scars of battle had vanished from his face. Strong and victorious came the swelling strain, and his uplifted eyes had the glow of unconquerable youth. He had caught the lights of Home.

## XXXVI

### *A MISTRESS OF FINANCE*

"Some men are born lucky—and some get lucky—and some have the confoundedst kind of good luck thrust upon them," affirmed Mr. Crothers, nodding towards a letter in Harvey's hand.

"I'm just going to read this over once more; it really seems too good to be true," was Harvey's rather irrelevant reply, his eyes fastened again upon the letter.

"You're dead right. If any one had told me, that night three months ago—you remember our conversation then—that you'd be given a position like that so early in your career, I'd have laughed at them. I don't think I ever knew a man get as quick promotion in the newspaper business as you've had, Simmons. I really don't. But then you've got the education—and the material above the eyes—and that's the whole outfit. Well, I can't do any more than congratulate you, old man," and the sincerity of Mr. Crothers' words was evident as Harvey looked across the table into the deep-set eyes.

"You've had more to do with it than anybody else, I'm sure," Harvey returned; "and I'll do all I can to make good. I'll expect you to——"

"I'll tell you something I've been thinking of for quite a while," the other broke in, lowering his voice and leaning far over the table. "If we could only get a hold of the business—the paper, I mean—the whole box and dice! The thing's going to change hands, as you know; everybody has known that, since the president got the collectorship of customs—and it would be worth more to

us than to anybody else. We could run it to the Queen's taste—the whole shooting-match. But I suppose there's no use talking—can't make bricks without straw. Of course, I've saved a little chicken-feed—not enough, though—there, that's my total," as he pencilled some figures on a blotting-pad and passed it over; "and if you could duplicate it—or a little better—we'd have the thing in our mitt. But I suppose there's no use thinking about it?" looking rather eagerly at Harvey, nevertheless.

"Out of the question," answered Harvey decisively, leaning back in his chair; "you can't get blood from a turnip, or, as Geordie Nickle, a Glenallen friend of mine, would say, you can't take the breeks off a Hielan'man. I haven't any money, that's the English of it. Of course," a tinge of pleasure in the tone, "I'll have a pretty good salary now—but what's that for a plunge like this?" as he pushed the blotting-pad back across the table.

"About as good as a dozen of eggs for an army," Mr. Crothers agreed disconsolately. "Oh, well, we'll just have to make out the best we can—but I'm mighty glad of your good luck, old man, just the same."

Both men turned to their work. Harvey's first move was to ring for a stenographer. But he changed his mind. "I won't need you for a few minutes," he said; "I'll write this one myself."

The letter closed as follows: "... So it's come at last, sister—and your days of drudgery are past. They will always be a sacred memory to me, for I wonder if any man ever came to his own through as noble sacrifice as has filled all your life for me, yours and mother's. Now, Jessie, be sure and do as I've told you. Sell your business—lock, stock, and barrel—or give it away; make Miss Adair a present of it, or rent it to her, or anything you like. Only one thing remember—you'll rest now, and all my good fortune will be spoiled unless you share it with me.

Your ever loving

"HARVEY."

Even Grey started with surprise when Harvey arrived home that night an hour earlier than usual. And Miss Farringall's face brightened suddenly as Harvey's knock at the door of her sitting-room was followed by the appearance of a very radiant face. He had a letter in his hand.

"I want to speak first," she said impulsively, divining his purpose.

"Yes, Miss Farringall," he said enquiringly.

"It's something I've wanted to ask you for a long time—and I'm going to do it now," she added very softly, rising and moving to the window; "did your mother ever—did she ever speak to you about your father, Harvey?"

Harvey's answer was slow. "Yes," he said at length.

"Did you know he's living?" she asked after a long pause.

"Yes," and Harvey's voice was little more than audible. "My mother told me that when she was dying. Why?" he asked resolutely, moving to where she stood.

"I only wished to know, dear," and her tone breathed gentleness as she turned and fixed her pensive eyes on his. "I knew he was living, and——"

"Where—do you know where?" he broke out, almost with a cry. "My mother didn't know, and ——"

"No, I don't know where," she interrupted, her eyes now looking far without; "but I know he's living yet. We'll both know more some day—what's in that letter, Harvey?" the voice betokening that the subject was dismissed, at least for the present.

"It's something you'll be glad to read," he answered absently as he handed it to her.

Deep silence reigned a while.

"I knew it, Harvey," she said when she had finished. "I expected this—I was waiting for you to come home. I wanted to see you very much. Can you think what for?"

"I don't know," Harvey answered abstractedly, musing still.

"Barlow," she called.

"Yes, mum," a sepulchral voice answered from the hall, followed a moment later by the apparition of the never distant servant.

"You know the vault, Barlow?"

"Yes, mum," replied its guardian of years.

"And the box in the lower left-hand corner?"

"Yes, mum."

"And the paper we deposited there yesterday?"

"Yes, mum."

"That Dr. Wallis helped me to draw?"

"Yes, mum."

"Then bring it to me at once."

"Yes, mum," and Barlow turned in his tracks as he had done for a quarter of a century.

He was back in a moment. "You can go now, Barlow—and shut the door. Take Grey, and don't stand outside. Go and count the spoons."

"Yes, mum," and the immobile Barlow departed to make the oft-repeated inventory.

"I expected this to come, Harvey," she began as soon as they were alone. "I know the president of the *Argus*—or of the company, or whatever you call it. I'm not such a hermit as some people think. But I've been wishing for something better for you, Harvey—can you guess what it is?" her words ending in a nervous little cough.

Harvey's face showed how innocent he was of any such knowledge.

"Well, it keeps running in my mind that you ought to own that paper."

Harvey gave a little laugh. "That's what Mr. Crothers was saying," he began confusedly; "he thinks we could do wonders if we had it between us—but of course it's out of the question. It would cost—oh, I don't know how much."

"I know all about that," and Miss Farringall's cheek had a strangely heightened colour. "I've looked into all that," she added in a low tone; "and do you think you could? Would Mr. Crothers really make a good partner?"

Harvey stared. "He's a jewel, Miss Farringall, every way—but why do——"

"Excuse me," Miss Farringall interrupted with authority. "Let me proceed. I want to make an investment. I want to buy a business that belongs to you and Jessie. Sign that paper, please," as she handed him the document Barlow had brought.

Amazement took possession of Harvey as he read.

"Close your lips, Harvey—when you're excited, breathe deep; it's a great sedative," and Miss Farringall smiled as she watched his face.

Harvey laid the paper down with a gasp. "But, Miss Farringall," he began excitedly, breathing as best he could, "the proposition is preposterous—a sum of money such as this for a paltry outfit like that little store in Glenallen! The whole thing isn't worth——"

"Be careful, Harvey Simmons, be careful, now," Miss Farringall broke in sternly. "You haven't read the agreement. Maybe the price does look big—but did you see all I'm to get in return?"

Harvey shook the document excitedly. "You ask the business—the stock, and the good-will—and neither the one nor the other's worth one tithe of——"

"Wait a minute," broke in the prospective purchaser; "I ask more than that. The vendor goes with the sale," she announced, rising to her feet. "It's that way in the paper—Jessie goes with it; I buy her too. I can do what I like with the business—and Jessie comes to me. Yes," she cried, her voice shaking in its eagerness, "that's what I want the most—and Jessie's willing. I've found that out top—and she's to be mine, to keep and care for. And she's to be shipped here, right side up with care, and she's to give me value for my money every time I see her sweet face and hear her merry laugh. I've spent a lot repairing this old house—but that's the kind of repair it's been needing for long years, and it's going to get it now. When you get the purchase money you can invest it as you like; it'll be your own—only sign, Harvey, sign now. I've got the price all ready," her voice ringing with merry music as she brandished a bulky envelope before his eyes.

Harvey gazed long into the triumphant face. Then he moved slowly up to her, holding out his arms, and she put her own about his neck with hurrying, passionate eagerness and held him tight. When, released, he looked again into the flushed and quivering face, the swimming eyes seemed not to see his own, fixed in yearning on the silent desk that held the secret of the years.

## XXXVII

### *THE CONQUEROR'S HOME-GOING*

"You're wanted on the long-distance line, Mr. Simmons; Glenallen wants to speak with you," was the message that interrupted Harvey and Mr. Crothers in the midst of a very delightful conference; the future of the *Morning Argus* was the subject of discussion.

"Somebody wanting to congratulate you," ventured Mr. Crothers; "tell them the new firm's flourishing so far," a smile of great satisfaction on his face. The fulfillment of the ambition of half

a life-time had filled Mr. Crothers' cup to overflowing.

Five minutes later Harvey had returned, the gladness vanished from his eyes.

"What's the matter, Simmons?—nothing gone wrong, I hope."

"I've got to leave within ten minutes," Harvey answered, stooping to arrange some scattered papers on his desk. "I'll just have time to catch the Glenallen train. The dearest friend I have in the world is dying, they tell me—and he wants me."

"Who?" asked Mr. Crothers, rising from his seat.

"Mr. Borland—David Borland. You've often heard me speak of him."

Mr. Crothers' countenance fell. "I should think I have; I almost feel as if I knew him, you've given me so much of his philosophy. I always hoped I might meet him—what's like the trouble?"

"Heart," said Harvey, unable to say more.

"That was where his homely philosophy came from, I should say," ventured Mr. Crothers; "it's the best brand too."

Harvey nodded. A few minutes later he was gone.

The evening sun was prodigal of its beauty. And once, when Harvey lifted up his eyes to look, he could see the flashing windows of David's old-time residence, its stately outlines showing clear against the sombre trees behind. But the little house on which his eyes were fastened now—where a great soul was preparing for its flight—seemed far the grander of the two. For it was clothed with the majesty of things invisible and the outlook from its humbler windows was to the Eternal.

He entered without knocking; and Mrs. Borland was the first to meet him.

"He's sinking fast," she said, greeting Harvey with a warmth he had not known before. "He can still speak with us, though—and he's been asking for you."

"Who's with him?" asked Harvey.

"Just Madeline. We sent for Dr. Fletcher—but he's away, attending some meeting of ministers. Mr. Nickle's coming, though—he'll soon be here now."

Harvey stood a minute at the door before he entered David's room. Madeline looked up and smiled; but her father's eyes were turned away, fixed on the distant hills. The gaze of the younger man rested long and lovingly on the pallid face upon the pillow. Never had David looked so grand before. The thin, responsive lips; the care-worn face, compassion and sympathy in every line; the crown of silvery hair, so whitened since Harvey saw it last; the large, far-seeing eyes, homes of the faith and hope that had upborne his life and made it beautiful, out-gazing now beyond the things of time, calm with the last long peace—all these gave to the face that spiritual beauty which is the handiwork of God.

Harvey drew closer to the bed. David slowly turned his head; his eyes met Harvey's, and he held out his hand.

"I knew you'd come," he said gently; we're all together now—all but Geordie."

Harvey's answer was a warmer pressure of the wasted hand.

"The sands is runnin' fast," David said with a faint smile—"the battle'll soon be done. An' I'm pretty tired, Harvey."

Harvey was still standing by the bed, bowed, still holding David's hand. And the dying man could see the tears that were making their way down the quivering cheeks.

"Don't, Harvey," he implored; "this ain't no time for that. Madeline, read that bit again."

The girl lifted the Bible from the bed. "She knows the place I want—it's John the fourteenth," David said, his face turned to Harvey's. "We love all the places—they're all beautiful. There's lovely shade in the Psalms when the hot sun's beatin' down—an' it's all good; but John the fourteenth's like a deep, clear spring, an' that's where we stay the most—wearsy travellers loves a spring," and the dying man turned his eyes eagerly on the book Madeline had opened.

"Let not your heart be troubled.... In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so I would have told you." Thus flowed the stream of love; and David closed his eyes, drinking deep indeed of the living tide.

"Ain't that beautiful?" he said, his voice thrilled with passionate gladness. "I like that about the mansions the best, I think. Everybody loves a mansion. I got turned out o' one—the one our Madeline was born in; but this'll be a far better one, an' me an' Madeline an' mother'll live there always, an' nobody can't ever turn us out. It's our Father's," he added reverently.

Mrs. Borland was bending over him. "Don't talk, David," she pleaded; "it's too much for your strength."

He gazed up at her. "I want to give a—a testimony—afore I go," he said falteringly. "I jest

want to own up that I always loved God—lots o' folks didn't think so—an' He always loved me, an' picked the path for me. An' He made everythin' to happen as it did; an' I believe I'm thankfuller for the things I didn't want to happen than for the ones I did—He seen the best, 'cause He was higher up. Madeline, sing for me," he appealed with failing breath; "sing a children's hymn—that one about the river," his eyes gently closing as he lay back upon the pillow.

"He always loved that one," his wife whispered brokenly to Harvey. "It's so simple. We can't, David," as she bended over him, "we can't sing now."

"I can, mother," and Madeline's voice was firm. The others' eyes were hidden, but Madeline's were fixed steadfastly on her father's as the crystal notes came low and sweet:

"Soon we'll reach the silvery river  
    Soon our pilgrimage shall cease;  
Soon our happy hearts shall quiver  
    With the melody of peace,"

and the dying lips broke in once or twice in a plaintive effort to swell the triumph strain.

The singing ceased. But David's eyes still rested on his daughter. Then they were turned on Harvey, as he stood beside her; they seemed, indeed, to rest on both at once. And their meaning could be easily read. Suddenly he motioned them down beside him; the girl was trembling, her pale lips quivering slightly, for she had interpreted her father's look.

David feebly raised his hands till one touched each bended head. "You'll sing that hymn—that river hymn—often, together—won't you; in your—own home," drawing the bowed heads closer down—"in your happy home?" he faltered.

For a moment neither moved nor spoke. Then, in strong and passionate silence, Harvey slowly lifted his face till his eyes spoke their great vow to the dying man; and, unashamed, he placed his arm gently, resolutely, about the maiden's bended form, holding her close with a fondness that kindled all his face with light. But Madeline's was hidden, her head still bended low.

David's face was wonderful in its glow of love and gladness. Suddenly his gaze went out beyond the plighted pair.

"Geordie!" he said, the name breathed out in tenderness as his misty eyes saw the well-loved form coming slowly through the door.

The aged man came over, leaning heavily on his staff, his face suffused with a gentleness that flowed from his very heart. He bended low above his dying friend, dumbly groping for his hand. He still leaned heavily on his staff, for his outgoing pilgrimage, too, was close at hand. And the two men looked long without a word; the memories of happy years passed from soul to soul; in silence their eyes still rested on each other, but the troth of many years was plighted once again as they stood at the parting of the ways. And both knew the promise was to all eternity.

Slowly David drew the strong Scottish face down beside his own. Then he said something in a tone so low that no other ear could hear; Geordie's answer was in a trembling whisper—but both spoke a language not of time.

"Lift me up, Geordie—Harvey, lift me up," David's feeble voice broke out a moment later. "I want to look once more," his eyes turning to the window. The sun had set, and the gilded west was bathed in glory as they tenderly lifted the wasted form, the weary head resting on the bosom of his child.

David's eyes, wondrously lightened now, rested long on the crimson pathway. "It's a lovely road to go!" he murmured, gazing at the lane of light. "I'm glad I'm not goin' in the dark—things looks so strange in the dark. An' I'm glad..."

It was Geordie Nickle who bended low, as though he were love's best interpreter, passionately listening for the ebbing words. The receding tide flowed back in a moment, and David's voice came clearer: "An' I'm glad it's the evenin'—things looks clearest in the evenin' or the mornin'—it's the long afternoon that's dark."

Geordie was almost on his knees beside him, the strong Scottish face wrung with its depth of feeling. "Oh, David," he cried with the eagerness of a child, "ye'll sune be hame. An' we're all comin'—we'll no' be lang. An' oor Faither's hoose has mony mansions—if it were na' so..." but the choking voice refused.

"He'd have—let us know," the dying man added gently, completing the mighty promise. "It's gettin' dark," he whispered suddenly, looking up into Madeline's eyes; "it's time for Him to come—I don't know the way."

In a moment his whole expression had undergone a change, such a change as comes to darkening hill-tops when the morning sun loves them into life. Light covered his face as with a flood. The weary eyes opened wide, the eager hands outstretched. "It's all bright now," he faltered—"an' He's comin'—He's comin', like He said. I knew—He'd—come."

They were bending low about him; his weeping wife breathed a long farewell. But Madeline saw the last movement of the dying lips, and the yearning eyes seemed to bid her listen. Her face was veiled with reverent love as she stooped to catch the parting breath; it came, and her face became transfigured as by the light of God.

"I'm jest home," she heard him murmur; "I'm jest home."

Gently they let the dear form sink back to its long, long rest. Geordie softly closed the eyes, never to give their light again. Then the aged man, his frame shaken with the sobs he could not repress, bent down and kissed the furrowed brow.

"His battle's past," he said, the words struggling out like driftwood through the surge, "an' he was a guid soldier."

And the conqueror lay in noble stillness, the glory of the departed day abiding on his face.

### XXXVIII

#### *THE FLEEING SHADOWS*

It was long after midnight, and Harvey's night's work was almost done. He was the last one left in the office, and, as far as his duties were concerned, everything was almost ready for the waiting press. He had just snapped his watch with an exclamation of surprise at the lateness of the hour as he hurriedly turned to conclude his writing, when he fancied he heard a noise on the step outside his office door.

He thought nothing of it; and the pen flowed faster than before. But only a couple of minutes more had passed when a similar sound fell upon his ear. And it disturbed him strangely. Perhaps he was nervous, for the strain of the night's work had been severe enough—and he was alone. The sound, to his ears at least, had something unusual and ominous about it—yet he knew not why.

He turned again to complete his work, his glance searching the room a moment before he did so. But the disturbance had come from without—the room was just as his associates had left it. He tried to concentrate his attention; yet a strange feeling possessed him—he felt in a vague, restless way, as though he were being watched. His office at the very top of the building was almost lonely in its separation; from the half-open windows the sleeping city might be seen, wrapped in the trailing garments of the dark. His mind seemed strangely sensitive, a-quiver almost, as if some influence were borne in upon him from the haunted chambers of the night.

Suddenly, impelled by some mysterious impulse, he flung his pen upon the table and turned his gaze over his shoulder with a swift motion, fixing his eyes on the large pane of glass that formed the upper portion of the door.

Involuntarily he uttered a startled cry—for he could see, two or three inches from the pane, a human face. And the eyes were wide, and fastened upon him with almost fierce intensity. The bearded face was pallid and haggard—but the eyes were the outstanding features, gleaming with a nameless significance that spoke of a soul stirred with passion. They never flinched—even as Harvey sprang from his chair they did not turn away. Nothing could be seen but the face—and the impact of the unmoving eyes was terrific.

Harvey stood a moment, trembling. The face never moved. Then he strode swiftly to the door and flung it wide.

"What's the meaning of this, sir?" he demanded sternly. "What's your business here?"

The man's eyes moved only enough to wander slowly about his face. He waited till Harvey's lips were framing other words, his hand now on the door as if to slam it shut. Then he walked slowly in, his face still turned upon the other's. He shut the door himself.

"I want you to look at something," said the man, and the voice was deep and passionate.

He was clad in the meanest garments; poor repairs were on them here and there. The signs of poverty were everywhere about him, and his whole appearance was that of one who had suffered much amid the billows of misfortune. He seemed to be struggling hard to resummon something he had lost—the quivering lips and the despairing eyes told that he had been beaten in the fight, yet not without stern resistance, nor yet left without flickerings of the old-time fire. His

spirit seemed broken, yet not utterly destroyed.

"What are you doing here? What's your business?" Harvey demanded; the man was fumbling in the pocket of his coat.

"I'm a printer," he answered, "and one of your foremen gave me work to-day. I only began to-night—and I came upstairs to see you. *I knew you were here.*"

Something in the way he uttered these last words clutched at Harvey's heart. "I knew you were here," the man repeated, nodding his head slowly, his eyes again on Harvey. And they seemed to melt with a strange wild longing, following him with a kind of defiant wistfulness. Somehow, like a faint and fleeting dream, Jessie's face—or an expression Harvey had often seen upon it—passed like a wraith between him and the bearded man.

"Who are you?" he said huskily.

The man's eyes rested a moment on the floor—and he was trembling where he stood. Slowly he raised them till they rested on Harvey's pallid face. Then they looked long and silently at each other, the dread and voiceless dialogue waging—that awesome interchange of soul with soul that makes men tremble, when eyes speak to answering eyes as lightning calls from peak to peak.

"I'm your father," the low voice said at last, the deep eyes leaping towards him in a strange mastery of strength and passion.

Harvey gave a cry and started back. The man followed him, straightening as he came, the hungry face out-held a little, pursuing still. The younger man retreated farther, gasping; and his eyes, like something suddenly released, raced about the unkempt form, surveying boots and clothes and beard and brow in an abandonment of candour.

"No, no," he murmured as he kept creeping back, the man following still; "no, no, it cannot be."

The stranger's hand was outstretched now. Something whitish was in it—and something black. "Look," he said, his lips parting in a weird, unearthly smile, "look, and deny it if you can; it's a photograph—and a letter."

Harvey stood still; then took them from the outstretched hand. The gas jet was just above. He read the letter first—it was his mother's handiwork. And the letter breathed of love, and hope, and of impatient joy at their approaching wedding-day.

Then he held the sharp-edged tin-type up before him. And then he knew. For his eye fell first on his mother's face, sweet with the new-born joy of motherhood. And a laughing babe was in her arms—and the man beside her, one hand resting on her shoulder, was the man whose panting breath he heard, whose burning eyes were fixed upon him now.

"That's you," the man said hoarsely; "and that's your mother—baby wasn't born. And I hadn't ever drunk a drop then," he added, a bleating cry mingling with the words.

Harvey stood long, looking down. Once the stranger put out his hand—but he drew back with the picture, gazing still. The tide of battle rose and fell within him. Then his hand shook like an aspen, his whole frame trembled, his sight grew blurred and dim. Yet through the gust of tears he looked again upon the haggard face—and again, more clearly than before, something of Jessie's swam before him. A moment later, and his soul, surging like the ocean in a storm, went out in primal passion to the quivering man; swiftly, overmasteringly, as if forevermore, he took him in his arms.

\* \* \* \* \*

"If you'll help me, my son—if you'll help me, I'll try again." The flickering gas jet still gave its light above them and the silent stars still watched the sleeping city. And the son still held his father in the clasp of a long-slumbering, new-awakened love.

"We'll fight it out together—and we'll win," the lips of youth replied. "I know all about it, father—and I'll help all I can. I promised mother—I promised to bring you, father. Mother's waiting; and I said we'd come together—and Jessie, too."

"Will Jessie love me?" the broken voice enquired, the tone plaintive with mingled love and fear.

"She's always loved you, father," and the son's voice was thrilling with compassion. "We're both your children," and it was pitiful to see the strong lips struggling; "we're your children—and we promised mother."

Thus the gentle stream flowed on. And as they talked a new peace flowed into the haunted eyes; and the blessed tidings of those he loved—of her whose sweet face was even now upon its pillow, and of the one who dwelt with God—came with balm and healing to his soul.

"I'll try, Harvey," he said again—"and I'll trust your mother's God."



As Harvey guided him out into the night the quiet stars above him seemed to be the very sentinels of heaven. And he marvelled that this wondrous charge had come to him at last—over all the waste of years; and that the secret plan of the Unseen, its deep design unchanging, had entrusted to his hand the fulfillment of his mother's prayers.

It was night again; but beautiful. And if any of the Glenallen slumberers, a moment waking, heard upon the pavement the tread of two silent men, they knew not how holy was the mission that impelled these pilgrims of the night. They paused but once, these two; before a weather-beaten little house, empty now, its grimy shop-window staring out into the dark. But the older man seemed as if he could not look enough; like cathedral to reverent saint this squalid building was to him. Once the younger man pointed to an upper window—no light gleamed from it now—but the other's eyes, even when they had left it far behind, turned to caress it with lingering tenderness.

They passed together through the gate that guarded the little city of the dead. The moon was hidden; and no word passed between them as they made their way to the holy of holies where lay their precious dead. But Harvey's hand went out to his father's; and thus they went on together, hand in hand through the darkness, as children go beneath life's morning sun.

They stopped beside two grassy graves. Nearest to them, at their dewy feet, lay the larger mound; the baby's nestled close beside it. The older man's head, uncovered, was bowed in reverence; even in the dark Harvey could see the stamp of eternity upon his face. The son's love, unspeaking, went out in silent passion to his father; so near he seemed, so dear, so much his own in that holy hour. Yet the broken heart beside him carried a load of anguish of which the son knew nothing; it was torn by a tragedy and rended by a memory no other heart could share—and the weary eyes looked covetously at the quiet resting-place beside the waiting dead.

His tears fell—on the baby's grave. He leaned over, as if he saw—first above the one, turning again to the other—and God was busy meantime with the wound, the long bleeding, unstaunched wound.

Harvey touched him on the shoulder. He looked a moment into his son's face, almost as if surprised to see him there. Then his eyes turned again to the lowly mounds, and he sank on his knees between them. Reverently, the yearning of the years finding now a voice, he stooped low till his lips touched the sod above the mother's face. Then his own was upturned to the distant sky, the lips moving.

Harvey knew the broken vow was for God alone. He turned away. The moon stole gently forth from the passing cloud; and, as he turned, his eye fell on the new-illuminated verse graven on the simple stone:

"UNTIL THE DAY BREAK AND THE SHADOWS  
FLEE AWAY"

THE END

\* \* \* \* \*

**By Robert E. Knowles**

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