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THE RIGHT OF WAY

By Gilbert Parker

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CHAPTER XLI

IT WAS MICHAELMAS DAY

Not a cloud in the sky, and, ruling all, a sweet sun, liberal in warmth and eager in brightness as its distance from the northern world decreased. As Mrs. Flynn entered the door of the post-office she sang out to Maximilian Cour, with a buoyant lilt: "Oh, isn't it the fun o' the world to be alive!"

The tailor over the way heard it, and lifted his head with a smile; Rosalie Evanturel, behind the postal wicket, heard it, and her face swam with colour. Rosalie busied herself with the letters and papers for a moment before she answered Mrs. Flynn's greeting, for there were ringing in her ears the words she herself had said a few days before: "It is good to live, isn't it?"

To-day it was so good to live that life seemed an endless being and a tireless happy doing—a gift of labour, an inspiring daytime, and a rejoicing sleep. Exaltation, a painful joy, and a wide embarrassing wonderment possessed her. She met Mrs. Flynn's face at the wicket with shining eyes and a timid smile.

"Ah, there y'are, darlin'!" said Mrs. Flynn. "And how's the dear father to-day?"

"He seems about the same, thank you."

"Ah, that's foine. Shure, if we could always be 'about the same,' we'd do. True for you, darlin', 'tis as you say. If ould Mary Flynn could be always "bout the same,' the clods o' the valley would never cover her bones. But there 'tis—we're here to-day, and away tomorrow. Shure, though, I am not complainin'. Not I—not Mary Flynn. Teddy Flynn used to say to me, says he: 'Niver born to know distress! Happy as worms in a garden av cucumbers. Seventeen years in this country, Mary,' says he, 'an' nivir in the pinitintiary yet.' There y'are. Ah, the birds do be singin' to-day! 'Tis good! 'Tis good, darlin'! You'll not mind Mary Flynn callin' you darlin', though y'are postmistress, an' 'll be more than that—more than that wan day—or Mary Flynn's a fool. Aye, more than that y'll be, darlin', and y're eyes like purty brown topazzes and y're cheeks like roses-shure, is there anny lether for Mary Flynn, darlin'?" she hastily added as she saw the Seigneur standing in the doorway. He had evidently been listening.

"Ye didn't hear what y're ould fool of a cook was sayin'," she added to the Seigneur, as Rosalie shook her head and answered: "No letters, Madame—dear." Rosalie timidly added the dear, for there was something so great-hearted in Mrs. Flynn that she longed to clasp her round the neck, longed as she had never done in her life to lay her head upon some motherly breast and pour out her heart. But it was not to be now. Secrecy was her duty still.

"Can't ye speak to y're ould fool of a cook, sir?" Mrs. Flynn said again, as the Seigneur made way for her to leave the shop.

"How did you guess?" he said to her in a low voice, his sharp eyes peering into hers.

"By the looks in y're face these past weeks, and the look in hers," she whispered, and went on her way rejoicing.

"I'll wind thim both round me finger like a wisp o' straw," she said, going up the road with a light step, despite her weight, till she was stopped by the malicious grocer-man of the village, whose tongue had been wagging for hours upon an unwholesome theme.

Meanwhile, in the post-office, the Seigneur and Rosalie were face to face.

"It is Michaelmas day," he said. "May I speak with you, Mademoiselle?"

She looked at the clock. It was on the stroke of noon. The shop always closed from twelve till half-past twelve.

"Will you step into the parlour, Monsieur?" she said, and coming round the counter, locked the shop-door. She was trembling and confused, and entered the little parlour shyly. Yet her eyes met the Seigneur's bravely. "Your father, how is he?" he said, offering her a chair. The sunlight streaming in the window made a sort of pathway of light between them, while they were in the shade.

"He seems no worse, and to-day he is wheeling himself about."

"He is stronger, then—that's good. Is there any fear that he must go to the hospital again?"

She inclined her head. "The doctor says he may have to go any moment. It may be his one chance. The Cure is very kind, and says that, with your permission, his sister will keep the office here, if—if needed."

The Seigneur nodded briskly. "Of course, of course. But have you not thought that we might secure another postmistress?"

Her face clouded a little; her heart beat hard. She knew what was coming. She dreaded it, but it was better to have it over now.

"We could not live without it," she said helplessly.

"What we have saved is not enough. The little my mother had must pay for the visits to the hospital. I have kept it for that. You see, I need the place here."

"But you have thought, just the same. Do you not know the day?" he asked meaningly.

She was silent.

"I have come to ask you to marry me—this is Michaelmas day, Rosalie."

She did not speak. He had hopes from her silence. "If anything happened to your father, you could not live here alone—but a young girl! Your father may be in the hospital for a long time. You cannot afford that. If I were to offer you money, you would refuse. If you marry me, all that I have is yours to dispose of at your will: to make others happy, to take you now and then from this narrow place, to see what's going on in the world."

"I am happy here," she said falteringly.

"Chaudiere is the finest place in the world," he replied proudly, and as a matter of fact. "But, for the sake of knowledge, you should see what the rest of the world is. It helps you to understand Chaudiere better. I ask you to be my wife, Rosalie."

She shook her head sorrowfully.

"You said before, it was not because I am old, not because I am rich, not because I am Seigneur, not because I am I, that you refused me."

She smiled at him now. "That is true," she said.

"Then what reason can you have? None, none. 'Pon honour, I believe you are afraid of marriage because it's marriage. By my life, there's naught to dread. A little giving here and taking there, and it's easy. And when a woman is all that's good, to a man, it can be done without fear or trembling. Even the Cure would tell you that."

"Ah, I know, I know," she said, in a voice half painful, half joyous. "I know that it is so. But, oh, dear Monsieur, I cannot marry you— never—never."

He hung on bravely. "I want to make life easy and happy for you. I want the right to do so. When trouble comes upon you—"

"When it does I will turn to you—ah, yes, I would turn to you without fear, dear Monsieur," she said, and her heart ached within her, for a premonition of sorrow came upon her and filled her eyes, and made her heart like lead within her breast. "I know how true a gentleman you are," she added. "I could give you everything but that which is life to me, which is being, and soul, and the beginning and the end."

The weight of the revealing hour of her life, its wonder, its agony, its irrevocability, was upon her. It was giving new meanings to existence- primitive woman, child of nature as she was. All morning she had longed to go out into the woods and bury herself among the ferns and bracken, and laugh and weep for very excess of feeling, downright joy and vague woe possessing her at once. She looked the Seigneur in the eyes with consuming earnestness.

"Oh, it is not because I am young," she said, in a low voice, "for I am old—indeed, I am very old. It is because I cannot love you, and never can love you in the one great way; and I will not marry without love. My heart is fixed on that. When I marry, it will be when I love a man so much that I cannot live without him. If he is so poor that each meal is a miracle, it will make no difference. Oh, can't you see, can't you feel, what I mean, Monsieur—you who are so wise and learned, and know the world so well?"

"Wise and learned!" he said, a little roughly, for his voice was husky with emotion. "'Pon honour, I think I am a fool! A bewildered fool, that knows no more of woman than my cook knows Sanscrit. Faith, a hundred times less! For Mary Flynn's got an eye to see, and, without telling, she knew I had a mind set on you. But Mary Flynn thought more than that, for she has an idea that you've a mind set on some one, Rosalie. She thought it might be me."

"A woman is not so easily read as a man," she replied, half smiling, but with her eyes turned to the street. A few people were gathering in front of the house—she wondered why.

"There is some one else—that is it, Rosalie. There is some one else.
You shall tell me who it is. You shall—"

He stopped short, for there was a loud knocking at the shop-door, and the voice of M. Evanturel calling: "Rosalie! Rosalie! Rosalie! Ah, come quickly—ah, my Rosalie!"

Without a look at the Seigneur, Rosalie rushed into the shop and opened the front door. Her father was deathly pale, and was trembling violently.

"Rosalie, my bird," he cried indignantly, "they're saying you stole the cross from the church door."

He was now wheeled inside the shop, and people gathered round, looking at him and Rosalie, some covertly, some as friends, some in a half- frightened way, as though strange things were about to happen.

"Shure, 'tis a lie, or me name's not Mary Flynn—the darlin'!" said the Seigneur's cook, with blazing face. "Who makes this charge?" roared an angry voice. No one had seen the Seigneur enter from the little room beside the shop, and at the sound of the sharp voice the people fell back, for he was as free with his stick as his tongue.

"I do," said the grocer, to whom Paulette Dubois had told her story.

"Ye shall be tarred and feathered before y'are a day older," said Mary Flynn.

Rosalie was very pale.

The Seigneur was struck by this and by the strangeness of her look.

"Clear the room," he said to Filion Lacasse, who was now a constable of the parish.

"Not yet!" said a voice at the doorway. "What is the trouble?" It was the Cure, who had already heard rumours of the scandal, and had come at once to Rosalie. M. Evanturel tried to speak, and could not. But Mary Flynn did, with a face like a piece of scarlet bunting. Having finished with a flourish, she could scarce keep her hands off the cowardly grocer.

The Cure turned to Rosalie. "It is absurd," he said. "Forgive me," he added to the Seigneur. "It is better that Rosalie should answer this charge. If she gives her word of honour, I will deny communion to whoever slanders her hereafter."

"She did it," said the grocer stubbornly. "She can't deny it."

"Answer, Rosalie," said the Cure firmly.

"Excuse me; I will answer," said a voice at the door. The tailor of Chaudiere made his way into the shop, through the fast-gathering crowd.

CHAPTER XLII

A TRIAL AND A VERDICT

"What right have you to answer for mademoiselle?" said the Seigneur, with a sudden rush of jealousy. Was not he alone the protector of Rosalie Evanturel? Yet here was mystery, and it was clear the tailor had something important to say. M. Rossignol offered the Cure a chair, seated himself on a small bench, and gently drew Rosalie down beside him.

"I will make this a court," said he. "Advance, grocer."

The grocer came forward smugly.

"On what information do you make this charge against mademoiselle?"

The grocer volubly related all that Paulette Dubois had said. As he told his tale the Cure's face was a study, for the night the cross was restored came back to him, and the events, so far as he knew them, were in keeping with the grocer's narrative. He looked at Rosalie anxiously. Monsieur Evanturel moaned, for he remembered he had heard Rosalie come in very late that night. Yet he fixed his eyes on her in dog-like faith.

"Mademoiselle will admit that this is true, I presume," said Charley.

Rosalie looked at him intently, as though to read his very heart. It was clear that he wished her to say yes; and what he wished was law.

"It is quite true," answered Rosalie calmly, and all fear passed from her.

"But she did not steal the cross," continued Charley, in a louder voice, that all might hear, for people were gathering fast.

"If she didn't steal it, why was she putting it back on the church door in the dark?" said the grocer. "Ah, hould y'r head, ould sand-in-the- sugar!" said Mrs. Flynn, her fingers aching to get into his hair. "Silence!" said the Seigneur severely, and looked inquiringly at Rosalie. Rosalie looked at Charley.

"It is not a question of why mademoiselle put the cross back," he said. "It is a question of who took the cross away, is it not? Suppose it was not a theft. Suppose that the person who took the relic thought to do a pious act—for your Church, Monsieur?"

"I do not see," the Cure answered helplessly. "It was a secret act, therefore suspicious at least."

"'Let your good gifts be in secret, and your Heavenly Father who seeth in secret will reward you openly,"' answered Charley. "That, I believe, is a principle you teach, Monsieur."

"At one time Monsieur the tailor was thought to have taken the cross," said the Seigneur suggestively. "Perhaps Monsieur was secretly doing good with it?" he added. It vexed him that there should be a secret between Rosalie and this man.

"It had to do with me, not I with it," he answered evenly. He must travel wide at first to convince their narrow brains. "Mademoiselle did a kind act when she nailed that cross on the church door again—to make a dead man rest easier in his grave."

A hush fell upon the crowd.

Rosalie looked at Charley in surprise; but she saw his meaning presently —that what she did for him must seem to have been done for the dead tailor only. Her heart beat hot with indignation, for she would, if she but might, cry her love gladly from the hill-tops of the world.

Alight began to break upon the Cure's mind. "Will Monsieur speak plainly?" he said.

"I did not see Louis Trudel take the cross, but I know that he did."

"Louis Trudel! Louis Trudel!" interposed the Seigneur anxiously. "What does this mean?"

"Monsieur speaks the truth," interposed Rosalie. The Cure recalled the death-bed of Louis Trudel, and the dying man's strange agitation. He also recalled old Margot's death, and her wish to confess some one else's wrong-doing. He was convinced that Charley was speaking the truth.

"It is true," added Charley slowly; "but you may think none the worse of him when you know all. He took the cross for temporary use, and before he could replace it he died."

"How do you know what he meant, or did not mean?" said the Seigneur in perplexity. "Did he take you into his confidence?"

"The very closest," answered Charley grimly.

"Yet he looked upon you as an infidel, and said hard things of you on his death-bed," urged the Cure anxiously. He could not see the end of the tale, and he was troubled for both the dead man and the living.

"That was why he took me into his confidence. I will explain. I have not the honour to have the fulness of your Christian faith, Monsieur le Cure. I had asked him to show me a sign from heaven, and he showed it by the little iron cross."

"I can't make anything of that," said the Seigneur peevishly.

Rosalie sprang to her feet. "He will not tell the whole truth, Messieurs, but I will. With that little cross Louis Trudel would have killed Monsieur, had it not been for me."

A gasp of excitement went out from those who stood by.

"But for you, Rosalie?" asked the Cure.

"But for me. I saw Louis Trudel raise an iron against Monsieur that day in the shop. It made me nervous—I thought he was mad. So I watched. That night I saw a light in the tailor-shop late. I thought it strange. I went over and peeped through the cracks of the shutters. I saw old Louis at the fire with the little cross, red-hot. I knew he meant trouble. I ran into the house. Old Margot was beside herself with fear —she had seen also. I ran through the hall and saw old Louis upstairs with the burning cross.

I followed. He went into Monsieur's room. When I got to the door"—she paused, trembling, for she saw Charley's reproving eyes upon her—"I saw him with the cross—with the cross raised over Monsieur."

"He meant to threaten me," interposed Charley quickly.

"We will have the truth!" said the Seigneur, in a husky voice.

"The cross came down on Monsieur's bare breast." The grocer laughed vindictively.

"Silence!" growled the Seigneur.

"Silence!" said Filion Lacasse, and dropped his hand on the grocer's shoulder. "I'll baste you with a stirrup-strap."

"The rest is well known," quickly interposed Charley. "The poor man was mad. He thought it a pious act to mark an infidel with the cross."

Every eye was fixed upon him. The Cure remembered Louis Trudel's last words: "Look—look—I gave —him—the sign—of . . . !" Old Margot's words also kept ringing in his ears. He turned to the Seigneur. "Monsieur," said he, "we have heard the truth. That act of Louis Trudel was cruel and murderous. May God forgive him! I will not say that mademoiselle did well in keeping silent—"

"God bless the darlin'!" cried Mrs. Flynn.

"—but I will say that she meant to do a kind act for a man's mortal memory—perhaps at the expense of his soul."

"For Monsieur to take his injury in silence, to keep it secret, was kind," said the Seigneur. "It is what our Cure here might call bearing his cross manfully."

"Seigneur," said the Cure reproachfully, "Seigneur, it is no subject for jest."

"Cure, our tailor here has treated it as a jest."

"Let him show his breast, if it's true," said the grocer, who, beneath his smirking, was a malignant soul.

The Cure turned on him sharply. Seldom had any one seen the Cure roused.

"Who are you, Ba'tiste Maxime, that your base curiosity should be satisfied—you, whose shameless tongue clattered, whose foolish soul rejoiced over the scandal? Must we all wear the facts of our lives—our joys, our sorrows, and our sins—for such eyes as yours to read? Bethink you of the evil things that you would hide—aye, every one here!" he added loudly. "Know, all of you, what goodness of heart towards a wicked man lay behind the secret these two have kept, that old Margot carried to her grave. When you go to your homes, pray for as much human kindness in you as a man of no Church or faith can show. For this child"—he turned to Rosalie-"honour her! Go now—go in peace!"

"One moment," said the Seigneur. "I fine Ba'tiste Maxime twenty dollars for defamation of character. The money to go for the poor."

"You hear that, ould sand-in-the-sugar!" said Mrs. Flynn. "Will you let me kiss ye, darlin'?" she added to Rosalie, and, waddling over, reached out her hands.

Rosalie's eyes were wet as she warmly kissed the old Irishwoman, and thereupon they entered into a friendship which was without end.

The Seigneur drove the crowd from the shop, and shut the door.

The Cure came to Charley. "Monsieur," said he, "I have no words. When I remember what agonies you suffered in those hours, how bravely you endured them—ah, Monsieur!" he added, with moist eyes, "I shall always feel that—that you are not far from the kingdom of God."

A silence fell upon them, for the Cure, the Seigneur, and Rosalie, as they looked at Charley, thought of the scar like a red cross on his breast.

It touched Charley with a kind of awe. He smiled painfully. "Shall I give you proof?" he said, making a motion to undo his waistcoat.

"Monsieur!" said the Seigneur reprovingly, and holding out his hand.
"Monsieur! We are all gentlemen!"

CHAPTER XLIII

JO PORTUGAIS TELLS A STORY

Walking slowly, head bent, eyes unseeing, Charley was on his way to Vadrome Mountain, with the knowledge that Jo Portugais had returned.

The hunger for companionship was on him: to touch some mind that could understand the deep loneliness which had settled on him since that scene in the postoffice. It was the loneliness of a new and great separation. He had wakened to it to-day.

Once before, in the hut on Vadrome Mountain, he had wakened from a grave, had been born again. Last night had come still another birth, had come, as with Rosalie herself, knowledge, revelation, understanding. To Rosalie the new vision had come with a vague pain of heart, without shame, and with a wonderful happiness. Pain, shame, knowledge, and a happiness that passed suddenly into a despairing sorrow, had come to him.

In finding love he had found conscience, and in finding conscience he was on his way to another great discovery.

Looking to where Jo Portugais' house was set among the pines, Charley remembered the day—he saw the scene in his mind's eye—when Rosalie entered with the letter addressed "To the sick man at the house of Jo Portugais, at Vadrome Mountain," and he saw again her clear, unsoiled soul in the deep inquiring eyes.

"If you but knew"—he turned and looked down at the village below— "if you but knew!" he said, as though to all the world. "I have the sign from heaven—I know it now. To-day I wake to know what life means, and I see—Rosalie! I know now—but how? In taking all she had to give. What does she get in return? Nothing—nothing. Because I love her, because the whole world is nothing beside her, nor life, nor twenty lives, if I had them to give, I must say to her now: 'Rosalie, it was love that brought you to my arms, it is love that says, Thus far and no farther. Never again—never—never—never!' Yesterday I could have left her—died or vanished, without real hurt to her. She would have mourned and broken her heart and mended it again; and I should have been only a memory—of mystery, of tenderness. Then, one day she would have married, and no sting from my going would have remained. She would have had happiness, and I neither shame nor despair. . . . To-day it is all too late. We have drunk too deep-alas! too deep. She cannot marry another man, for ghosts will not lie for asking, and what is mine may not be another's. She cannot marry me, for what once was mine is mine still by ring and by book, and I should always be haunted by a torturing shadow. Kathleen has the right of way, not Rosalie. Ah, Rosalie, I dare not wrong you further. Yet to marry you, even as things are, if that might be! To live on here unrecognised? I am little like my old self, and year after year I should grow less and less like Charley Steele. . . . But, no, it is not possible!"

He stopped short in his thoughts, and his lips tightened in bitterness.

"God in heaven, what an impasse!" he said aloud.

There was a sudden crackling of twigs as a man rose up from a log by the wayside ahead of him. It was Jo Portugais, who had seen him coming, and had waited for him. He had heard Charley's words.

"Do you call me an impasse, M'sieu'?" Charley grasped Portugais' hand.

"What has happened, M'sieu'?" Jo asked anxiously. There was a brief silence, and then Charley told him of the events of the morning.

"You know of the mark-here?" he asked, touching his breast.

Jo nodded. "I saw, when you were ill."

"Yet you never asked!"

"I studied it out—I knew old Louis Trudel. Also, I saw ma'm'selle nail the cross to the church door. Two and two together in my mind did it. I didn't think Paulette Dubois would tell. I warned her."

"She quarrelled with mademoiselle. It was revenge.

"She might have been less vindictive. She had had good luck herself lately."

"What good luck had she, M'sieu'?"

Charley told Jo the story of the Notary, the woman, and the child.

Jo made no comment. They relapsed into silence. Arriving at the house, they entered. Jo lighted his pipe, and smoked steadily for a time without speaking. Buried in thought, Charley stood in the doorway looking down at the village. At last he turned.

"Where have you been these weeks past, Jo?"

"To Quebec first, M'sieu'."

Charley looked curiously at Jo, for there was meaning in his tone. "And where last?"

"To Montreal."

Charley's face became paler, his hands suddenly clinched, for he read the look in Jo's eyes. He knew that Jo had been looking at people and places once so familiar; that he had seen—Kathleen.

"Go on. Tell me all," he said heavily.

Portugais spoke in English. The foreign language seemed to make the truth less naked and staring to himself. He had a hard story to tell.

"It is not to say why I go to Montreal," he began. "But I go. I have my ears open; my eyes, she is not close. No one knows me—I am no account of. Every one is forgot the man, Joseph Nadeau, who was try for his life. Perhaps it is every one is forget the lawyer who save his neck— perhaps? So I stand by the streetside. I say to a man as I look up at sign-boards,' 'Where is that writing "M'sieu' Charles Steele," and all the res'?' 'He is dead long ago,' say the man to me. 'A good thing too, for he was the very devil.' 'I not understan',' I say. 'I tink that M'sieu' Steele is a dam smart man back time.' 'He was the smartes' man in the country, that Beauty Steele,' the man say. 'He bamboozle the jury hevery time. He cut up bad though.'"

Charley raised his hand with a nervous gesture of misery and impatience.

"'Where have you been,' that man say—'where have you been all these times not to know 'bout Charley Steele, hein?' 'In the backwoods,' I say. 'What bring you here now?' he ask. 'I have a case,' I say. 'What is it?' he ask. 'It is a case of a man who is punish for another man,' I say. 'That's the thing for Charley Steele,' he laugh. 'He was great man to root things out. Can't fool Charley Steele, we use to say here. But he die a bad death.' 'What was the matter with him?' I say. 'He drink too much, he spend too much, he run after a girl at Cote Dorion, and the river-drivers do for him one night. They say it was acciden', but is there any green on my eye? But he die trump—jus' like him. He have no fear of devil or man,' so the man say. 'But fear of God?' I ask. 'He was hinfidel,' he say. 'That was behin' all. He was crooked all roun'. He rob the widow and horphan?' 'I think he too smart for that,' I speak quick. 'I suppose it was the drink,' he say. 'He loose his grip.' 'He was a smart man, an' he would make you all sit up, if he come back,' I hanswer. 'If he come back!' The man laugh queer at that. 'If he comeback, there would be hell.' 'How is that?' I say. 'Look across the street,' he whisper. 'That was his wife.'"

Charley choked back a cry in his throat. Jo had no intention of cutting his story short. He had an end in view.

"I look across the street. There she is—' Ah, that is a fine woman to see! I have never seen but one more finer to look at—here in Chaudiere.' The man say: 'She marry first for money, and break her heart; now she marry for love. If Beauty Steele come back-eh! sacra! that would be a mess. But he is at the bottom of the St Lawrence—the courts say so, and the Church say so—and ghosts don't walk here.' 'But if that Beauty Steele come back alive, what would happen it?' I speak. 'His wife is marry, blockhead!' he say.

"'But the woman is his,' I hanswer. 'Do you think she would go back to a thief she never love from the man she love?' he speak back. 'She is not marry to the other man,' I say, 'if Beauty Steele is . . .' 'He is dead as a door,' he swear. 'You see that?' he go on, nodding down the street. 'Well, that is Billy.' 'Who is Billy?' I ask. 'The brother of her,' he say. 'Charley, he spoil Billy. Billy, he has not been the same since Charley's death-he is so ashame of Charley. When he get drunk he talk of nothing else. We all remember that Charley spoil him, and that make us sorry for him.' 'Excuse me,' I say. 'I think that Billy is a dam smart man. He is smart as Charley Steele.' 'Charley was the smartes' man in the country,' he say again. 'I've got his practice now, but this town will never be the same without him. Thief or no thief, I wish he is alive here. By the Lord, I'd get drunk with him!' He was all right, that man," Jo added finally.

Charley's agitation was hidden. His eyes were fixed on Jo intently.

"That was Larry Rockwell. Go on," he said, in a hard metallic voice.

"I see—her, the next night again. It is in the white stone house on the hill. All the windows are open, an' I can hear her to sing. I not know that song. It begin, 'Oft in the stilly night'—like that."

Charley stiffened. It was the song Kathleen sang for him the night they became engaged.

"It is a good voice-that. I see her face, for there is a candle on the piano. I come close and closter to the house. There is big maple-trees —I am well hid. A man is beside her. He lean hover her an' put his hand on her shoulder. 'Sing it again, Kat'leen,' he say. 'I cannot to get enough.'"

"Stop!" said Charley, in a strained, harsh voice. "Not yet, M'sieu'," said Portugais. "It is good for you to hear what I say."

"'Come, Kat'leen!' the man say, an' he blow hout the candle. I hear them walk away, an' the door shut behin' them. Then I hear anudder voice—ah, that is a baby—very young baby!"

Charley quickly got to his feet. "Not another word!" he said.

"Yes, yes, but there is one word more, M'sieu'," said Jo, standing up and facing him firmly. "You must go back. You are not a thief. The woman is yours. You throw your life away. What is the man to you—or the man's brat of a child? It is all waiting for you. You mus' go back. You not steal the money, but that Billy—it is that Billy, I know. You can forgive your wife, and take her back, or you can say to both, Go! You can put heverything right and begin again."

Anger, wild words, seemed about to break from Charley's lips, but he conquered himself.

The old life had been brought back to him with painful acuteness and vividness. The streets of the town, the people in the street, Billy, the mean scoundrel, who could not leave him alone in the grave of obscurity, Kathleen—Fairing. The voice of the child—with her voice—was in his ears. A child! If he had had a child, perhaps——He stopped short in his thinking, his face all at once flooding with colour. For a moment he stood looking out of the window down towards the village. He could see the post-office like a toy house among toy houses. At last he turned to Jo.

"Never again while I live, speak of this to me: of the past, of going back, or of—of anything else," he said. "I cannot go back. I am dead and shamed. Let the dust of forgetfulness come and cover the past. I've begun life again here, and here I stay, and see it out. I shall work out the problem here." He dropped a hand on the other's shoulder. "Jo," said he, "we are both shipwrecks. Let us see how long we can float."

"M'sieu', is it worth it?" said Portugais, remembering his confession to the Abbe, and seeing the end of it all to himself.

"I don't know, Jo. Let us wait and see how Fate will play us."

"Or God, M'sieu'?"

"God or Fate—who knows"

CHAPTER XLIV

"WHO WAS KATHLEEN?"

The painful incidents of the morning weighed heavily upon Rosalie, and she was glad when Madame Dugal came to talk with her father, who was ailing and irritable, and when Mrs. Flynn drove her away with a kiss on either cheek, saying: "Don't come back, darlin', till there's roses in both cheeks, for y'r eyes are 'atin' up yer face!"

She had seen Charley take the path to Vadrome Mountain, and to the Rest of the Flax-beaters she betook herself, in the blind hope that, returning, he might pass that way. Under the influence of the fresh air and the quiet of the woods her spirits rose, her pulse beat faster, though a sense of foreboding and sorrow hovered round her. The two-miles walk to her beloved retreat seemed a matter of minutes only, so busy were her thoughts.

Her mind was one luxurious confusion, through which travelled a ghostly little sprite, who kept tumbling her thoughts about, sneering, smirking, whispering—"You dare not go to confession—dare not go to confession. You will never be the same again—never feel the same again—never think the same again; your dreams are done! You can only love. And what will this love do for you? What do you expect to happen—you dare not go to confession!"

Her reply had been the one iteration: "I love him—I love him—I love him. We shall be together all our lives, till we are old and grey. I shall watch him at his work, and listen to his voice. I shall read with him and walk with him, and I shall grow to think like him a little —in everything except religion. In everything except that. One day he will come to think like me—to believe in God."

In the dreamy happiness of these thoughts the colour came to her cheeks, the roses of light gathered in her eyes. In her tremulous ardour she scarcely realised how time passed, and her reverie deepened as the afternoon shadows grew and the sun made to its covert behind the hills. She was roused by a man's voice singing, just under the bluff where she sat. To her this voice represented the battle-call, the home-call, the life call of the universe. The song it sang was known to her. It was as old as Rizzio. It had come from old France with Mary, had been merged into English words and English music, and had voyaged to New France. There it had been sung by lovers in fair vales, on wide rivers, and in deep forests:

"What is not mine I may not hold,
(Ah, hark the hunter's horn!),
And what is thine may not be sold,
(My love comes through the corn!);
And none shall buy
And none shall sell
What Love works well?"

In the walk back from Vadrome Mountain, a change—a fleeting change— had passed over Charley's mind and mood. The quiet of the woodland, the song of the birds, the tumbling brook, the smell of the rich earth, replenishing its strength from the gorgeous falling leaves, had soothed him. Thoughts of Rosalie took a new form. Her image possessed him, excluding the future, the perils that surrounded them. He had gone through so much within the past twenty-four hours that the capacity for suffering had almost exhausted itself, and in the reaction endearing thoughts of Rosalie had dominion over him. It was the reassertion of primitive man, the demands of the first element. The great problem was still in the background. The picture of Kathleen and the other man was pushed into the distance; thoughts of Billy and his infamy were thrust under foot—how futile to think of them! There was Rosalie to be thought of, the to-day and to-morrow of the new life.

Rosalie was of to-day. How strong and womanly she had been this morning, the girl whose life had been bounded by this Chaudiere, with a metropolitan convent and hospital as her only glimpses of the busy world. She would fit in anywhere—in the highest places, with her grace, and her nobleness of mind, arcadian, passionate and beautiful. There came upon him again the feeling of the evening before, when he saw her standing in his doorway, the night about them, jealous affection, undying love, in her eyes. It quickened his steps imperceptibly. He passed a stream, and glanced down into a dark pool involuntarily. It reflected himself clearly. He stopped short. "Is this you, Beauty Steele?" he said, and he caught his brown beard in his hand. "Beauty Steele had brains and no heart. You have heart, and your wits have gone wool-gathering. No matter!

What is not mine I may not hold,
(Ah, hark the hunter's horn!)'"

he sang, and came quickly along the stream where the flax-beaters worked in harvest-time, then up the hill, then—Rosalie.

She started to her feet. "I knew you would come—I knew you would!" she said.

"You have been waiting here for me?" he asked breathless, taking her hand.

"I felt you would come. I made you," she added smiling, and, eagerly answering the look in his eyes, threw her arms round his neck. In that moment's joy a fresh realisation of their fate came upon him with dire force, and a bitter protest went up from his heart, that he and she should be sacrificed.

Yet the impasse was there, and what could remove it—what clear the way?

He looked down at the girl whose head was buried in happy peace on his shoulder. She clung to him, as though in him was everlasting protection from the sprite that kept whispering: "You dare not go to confession— your dreams are done—you can only love." But she had no fear now.

As he looked down at her a swift change passed over him, and, almost for the first time since he was a little child, his eyes filled with tears. He hastily brushed them away, and drew her down on the seat beside him. He was wondering how he should tell her that they must not meet like this, that they must be apart. No matter what had happened, no matter what love there was, it was better that they should die—that he should die—than that they should meet like this. There was only one end to secret meetings, and discovery was inevitable. Then, with discovery, shame to her. For he must either marry her—how could he marry her? —or die. For him to die would but increase her misery.

The time had passed when it could be of any use. It passed that day in the hut on Vadrome Mountain when she said that if he died, she would die with him—"Where you are going you will be alone. There will be no one to care for you, no one but me." Last night it passed for ever. She had put her life into his hands; henceforth, there could never be a question of giving or taking, of withdrawing or advancing, for all was irrevocable, sealed with the great seal. Yet she must be saved. But how?

She suddenly looked up at him. "I can ask you anything I want now, can't I?" she said.

"Anything, Rosalie."

"You know that when I ask, it is because I want to know what you know, so that I may feel as you feel. You know that, don't you?

"I know it when you tell me, wonderful Rosalie." What a revelation it was, this transmuting power, which could change mortal dross into the coin of immortal wealth!

"I want to ask you," she said, "who was Kathleen?" His blood seemed to go cold in his veins, and he sat without answering, shocked and dismayed. What could she know of Kathleen?

"Can't you tell me?" she asked anxiously yet fearfully. He looked so strange that she thought she had offended him. "Please don't mind telling me. I should understand everything—everything. Was it some one you loved—once?" It was hard for her to say it, but she said it bravely.

"No. I never loved any one in all the world, Rosalie—not till I loved you."

She gave a happy sigh. "Oh, it is wonderful!" she said. "It is wonderful and good! Did you—did you love me from the very first?"

"I think I did, though I didn't know it from the very first," he answered slowly. His heart beat hard, for he could not guess how she should know of Kathleen. It was absurdly impossible that she should know. "But many have loved you!" she said proudly. "They have not shown it," he answered grimly; then added quickly, and with aching anxiety: "When did you hear of—of Kathleen?"

"Oh, you are such a blind huntsman!" she laughed. "Don't you know where my little fox was hiding? Why, in the shop, when you held the note-paper up to the light, and looked startled, and bought all the paper we had that was water-marked Kathleen. Do you think that was clever of me? I don't."

"I think it was very clever," he said.

"Then she-Kathleen—doesn't really matter?" she asked eagerly. "Of course she can't, if you don't love her. But does she love you? Did she ever love you?" "Never in her life."

"So of course it doesn't matter," she rejoined. "Hush!" she added rapidly. "I see some one coming in the trees yonder. It may be some one for me. Father knows I come here sometimes. Go quickly and hide behind the rocks, please. I'll stay and see who it is. Please go—dearest."

He kissed her, and, keeping out of sight, got to a place of safety a few hundred feet away.

He saw the new-comer run to Rosalie, speak to her, saw Rosalie half turn in his own direction, then go hastily down the hillside with the messenger.

"It is her father!" he exclaimed, and followed at a distance. At the village he learned that M. Evanturel had had another seizure.

CHAPTER XLV

Spring again—budding trees and flowing sap; the earth banks removed from the houses, and outside windows discarded; the ice tumbling and crunching in the river; the dormant farmer raising his head to the energy and delight of April.

The winter had been long and hard. Never had there been severer frost or deeper snow, and seldom had big game been so plentiful. In the snug warm stables the cattle munched and chewed the cud; the idle, long-haired horses grew as spirited in the keen air as in summer they were sluggish with hard work; and the farm-hands were abroad in the dark of the early mornings with lanterns, to feed the stock and take them out to water, singing cheerfully. All morning spread the clamour of the flail and the fanning-mill, the swish of the knife through the turnips and the beets, and the sound of the saw and the axe, as the youngest man of the family, muffled to the nose, sawed the wood into lengths or split the knots.

Night brought the cutting and stringing of apples, the shelling of the Indian corn, the making of rag carpets. On Saturday came the going to market with grain, or pork, or beef, or fowls frozen like stones; the gossip in the market-place. Then again sounded jingling sleigh-bells as, on the return road, the habitant made for home, a glass of white whiskey inside him, and black-eyed children in the doorway, swarming like bees at the mouth of a hive.

This particular winter in Chaudiere had been full of excitement and expectation. At Easter-time there was to be the great Passion Play, after the manner of that known as The Passion Play of Ober-Ammergau. Not one in a hundred habitants had ever heard of Ober-Ammergau, but they had all shared in picturesque processions of the Stations of the Cross to some calvaire; and many had taken part in dramatic scenes arranged from the life of Christ. Drama of a crude kind was deep in them; it showed in gesture, speech, and temperament.

In all the preparations Maximilian Cour was a conspicuous and useful official. Gifted with the dramatic temperament to a degree rare in so humble a man, he it was who really educated the people of Chaudiere in the details of the Passion Play to be produced by the good Catholics of the parish and the Indians of the reservation. He had gone to the Cure every day, and the Cure had talked with him, and then had sent him to the tailor, who had, during the past six months, withdrawn more and more from the life about him, practically living with shut door. No one ventured in unless on business, or were in need, or wished advice. These he never turned empty away.

Besides Portugais, Maximilian Cour was the one man received constantly by the tailor. With patience and insight Charley taught the baker, by drawings and careful explanations, the outlines of the representation, and the baker grew proud of the association, though Charley's face used to haunt him in his sleep. Excitable, eager, there was an elemental adaptability in the baker, as easily leading to Avernus as to Elysium. This appealed to Charley, realising, as he did, that Maximilian Cour was a reputable citizen by mere accident. The baker's life had run in a sentimental groove of religious duty; that same sentimentality would, in other circumstances, have forced him with equal ardour into the broad primrose path.

In the evening hours and on Sunday Charley had worked at his drawings for the scenery and costumes of the Play, and completed his translation of the German text, but there had been days when he could not put pen to paper. Life to him now was one aching emptiness—since that day at the Rest of the Flax-beaters Rosalie had been absent. On the very morning after their meeting by the river she had gone away with her father to the great hospital at Montreal—not Quebec this time, on the advice of the Seigneur—as the one chance of prolonging his life. There had come but one letter from her since that hour when he saw her in the Seigneur's coach with her father, moving away in the still autumn air, a piteous appeal in her eyes. The good-bye look she gave him then was with him day and night.

She had written him one letter, and he had written one in reply, and no more. Though he was wholly reckless for himself, for her he was prudent now—there was nothing else to do. To save her—if he could but save her from himself! If he might only put back the clock!

In his letter to her he had simply said that it were wiser not to write, since the acting postmistress, the Cure's sister, would note the exchange of letters, and this would arouse suspicion. He could not see what was best to do, what was right to do. To wait seemed the only thing, and his one letter ended with the words: Rosalie, my life is lived only in the thought of you. There is no hour but I think of you, no moment but you are with me. The greatest proof of love that man can give, I will give to you, in the hour fate wills—for us. But now, we must wait—we must wait, Rosalie. Do not write to me, but know that if I could go to you I would go; if I could say to you, Come, I would say it. If the giving of my life would save you any pain or sorrow, I would give it.

Sitting on his bench at work, it seemed to Charley that sometimes she was near him, and more than once he turned quickly round as though she were, in very truth, standing beside him. He thought of her continually, and often with an unbearable pain. He figured her in his mind as pale and distressed, and always her eyes had the piteous terror of that last look as she went away over the hills.

But the weeks had worn on, then the Seigneur, who had been to Montreal, came back with the news that Rosalie was looking as beautiful as a picture. "Grown a woman in beauty and in stature; comely—comely as a lady in a Watteau picture, my dear messieurs!" he had said to the Cure, standing in the tailor's shop.

Replying, the Cure had said: "She is in good hands, with good people, recommended to me by an abbe there; yet I am not wholly happy about her. When her trouble comes to her"—Charley's needle slipped and pierced his finger to the bone—"when her father goes, as he must, I fear, there will be no familiar face; she will hear no familiar voice."

"Faith, there you are wrong, my dear Cure" answered the Seigneur; "there'll be a face yonder she likes very well indeed, and a voice she's fond of too."

Charley's back was on them at that moment, of which he was glad, for his face was haggard with anxiety, and it seemed hours before the Cure said:
"Whom do you mean, Maurice?" and hours before the Seigneur replied:
"Mrs. Flynn, of course. I'm sending her tomorrow."

Mrs. Flynn had gone, and Charley had, in one sense, been made no happier by that, for it seemed to him that Rosalie would rather that strangers' eyes were on her than the inquisitively friendly eye of Mary Flynn.

Weeks had grown into months, and no news came—none save that which the Cure let fall, or was brought by the irresponsible Notary, who heard all gossip. Only the Cure's scant news were authentic, however, and Charley never saw the good priest but he had a secret hope of hearing him say that Rosalie was coming back. Yet when she came back, what would, or could, he do? There was always the crime for which he or Billy must be punished. Concerning this crime his heart was growing harder—for Rosalie's sake. But there was Kathleen—and Rosalie was now in the city where she lived, and they might meet! There was one solution— if Kathleen should die! It sickened him that he could think of that with a sense of relief, almost of hope. If Kathleen should die, then he would be free to marry Rosalie—into what? He still could only marry her into the peril and menace of the law? Again, even if Kathleen did not stand in the way, neither the Cure nor any other priest would marry him to her without his antecedents being certified. A Protestant minister would, perhaps, but would Rosalie give up her faith? Following him without the blessing of the Church, she would trample under foot every dear tradition of her life, win the scorn of all of her religion, and destroy her own peace; for the faith of her fathers was as the breath of her nostrils. What cruelty to her!

But was it, after all, even true that he had but to call and she would come? In truth it well might be that she had learned to despise him; to feel how dastardly he had been to take her love, given in blind simplicity, bestowed like the song of the bird upon the listening fields —to take the plenteous fulness of her life, and give nothing in return save the empty hand, the hopeless hour, the secret sorrow.

Nothing could quench his misery. The physical part of him craved without ceasing for something to allay his distress. Again and again he fought his old enemy with desperate resolve. To fall again, to touch liquor once more, was to end all for ever. He fought on tenaciously and gloomily, with little of the pride of life, with nothing of the old stubborn self-will, but with a new-awakened sense. He had found conscience at last—and more.

The months went by and still M. Evanturel lingered on, and Rosalie did not come. The strain became too great at last. In the week preceding Easter, when all the parish was busy at Four Mountains, making costumes, rehearsing, building, putting up seats, cutting down trees, and erecting crosses and calvaries, Charley disclosed to Jo a new intention.

In the earlier part of the winter Jo and he had met two or three times a week, but now Jo had come to help him with his work in the shop—two silent, devoted companions. They understood each other, and in that understanding were life and death. For never did Jo forget that a year from the day he had confessed his sins he meant to give himself up to justice. This caused him no sleepless nights. He thought more of Charley than of himself, and every month now he went to confession, and every day he said his prayers. He was at his prayers when Charley went to tell him of his purpose. Charley had often seen Jo on his knees of late, and he had wondered, but not with the old pagan mind. "Jo," he said, "I am going away—to Montreal."

"To Montreal!" exclaimed Jo huskily. "You are going back—to stay?"

"Not that. I am going—to see—Rosalie Evanturel." Jo was troubled but not dumfounded. It had slowly crept into his mind that Charley loved the girl, though he had no real ground for suspicion. His will, however, had been so long the slave of the other man's that he had far-off reflections of his thoughts. He made no reply in words, but nodded his head.

"I want you to stay here, Jo. If I don't come back, and—and she does, stand by her, Jo. I can trust you." "You will come back, M'sieu'—but you will come back, then?" Jo asked heavily.

"If I can, Jo—if I can," he answered.

Long after he had gone, Jo wandered up and down among the trees on the river-road, up which Charley had disappeared with Jo's dogs and sled. He kept shaking his head mournfully.

CHAPTER XLVI

THE FORGOTTEN MAN

It was Easter morning, and the good sunrise of a perfect spring made radiant the high hill above the town. Rosy-fingered morn touched with magic colour the masts and scattered sails of the ships upon the great river, and spires and towers quivered with rainbow light. The city was waking cheerfully, though the only active life was in the pealing bells and on the deep flowing rivers. The streets were empty yet, save for an assiduous priest or the cart of a milkman. Here and there a window opened and a drowsy head was thrust into the eager air. These saw a bearded countryman with his team of six dogs and his little cart going slowly up the street. It was plain the man had come a long distance— from the mountains in the east or south, no doubt, where horses were few, and dogs, canoes, and oxen the means of transportation.

As the man moved slowly through the streets, his dogs still gallantly full of life after their hard journey, he did not stare about him after the manner of countrymen. His movements had intelligence and freedom. He was an unusual figure for a woodsman or river-man—he did not wear ear-rings or a waist-sash as did the river-men, and he did not turn in his toes like a woodsman. Yet he was plainly a man from the far mountains.

The man with the dogs did not heed the few curious looks turned his way, but held his head down as though walking in familiar places. Now and then he spoke to his dogs, and once he stopped before a newspaper office, which had a placard bearing these lines:

The Coming Passion Play In the Chaudiere Valley.

He looked at it mechanically, for, though he was concerned in the Passion Play and the Chaudiere Valley, it was an abstraction to him at this moment. His mind was absorbed by other things.

Though he looked neither to right nor to left, he was deeply affected by all round him.

At last he came to a certain street, where he and his dogs travelled more quickly. It opened into a square, where bells were booming in the steeple of a church. Shops and offices in the street were shut, but a saloon-door was open, and over the doorway was the legend: Jean Jolicoeur, Licensed to sell Wine, Beer, and other Spirituous and Fermented Liquors.

Nearly opposite was a lawyer's office, with a new-painted sign. It had once read, in plain black letters, Charles Steele, Barrister, etc.; now it read, in gold letters and many flourishes of the sign-painter's art, Rockwell and Tremblay, Barristers, Attorneys, etc.

Here the man looked up with trouble in his eyes. He could see dimly the desk and the window beside which he had sat for so many years, and on the wall a map of the city glowed with the incoming sun.

He moved on, passing the saloon with the open door. The landlord, in his shirt-sleeves, was standing in the doorway. He nodded, then came out to the edge of the board-walk.

"Come a long way, M'sieu'?" he asked.

"Four days' journey," answered the man gruffly through his beard, looking the landlord in the eyes. If

this landlord, who in the past had seen him so often and so closely, did not recognise him, surely no one else would. It was, however, a curious recurrence of habit that, as he looked at the landlord, he instinctively felt for his eye-glass, which he had discarded when he left Chaudiere. For an instant there was an involuntary arrest of Jean Jolicoeur's look, as though memory had been roused, but this swiftly passed, and he said:

"Fine dogs, them! We never get that kind hereabouts now, M'sieu'. Ever been to the city before?"

"I've never been far from home before," answered the Forgotten Man.

"You'd better keep your eyes open, my friend, though you've got a sharp pair in your head—sharp as Beauty Steele's almost. There's rascals in the river-side drinking-places that don't let the left hand know what the right does."

"My dogs and I never trust anybody," said the Forgotten Man, as one of the dogs snarled at the landlord's touch. "So I can take care of myself, even if I haven't eyes as sharp as Beauty Steele's, whoever he is."

The landlord laughed. "Beauty's only skin-deep, they say. Charley Steele was a lawyer; his office was over there"—he pointed across the street. "He went wrong. He come here too often—that wasn't my fault. He had an eye like a hawk, and you couldn't read it. Now I can read your eye like a book. There's a bit of spring in 'em, M'sieu'. His eyes were hard winter-ice five feet deep and no fishing under—froze to the bed. He had a tongue like a cross-cut saw. He's at the bottom of the St. Lawrence, leaving a bad job behind him.

"Have a drink—hein?" He jerked a finger backwards to the saloon door.
"It's Sunday, but stolen waters are sweet, sure!"

The Forgotten Man shook his head. "I don't drink, thank you."

"It'd do you good. You're dead beat. You've been travelling hard—eh?"

"I've come a long way, and travelled all night."

"Going on?"

"I am going back to-morrow."

"On business?"

Charley nodded—he glanced involuntarily at the sign across the street.

Jean Jolicoeur saw the look. "Lawyer's business, p'r'aps?"

"A lawyer's business—yes."

"Ah, if Charley Steele was here!"

"I have as good a lawyer as—"

The landlord laughed scornfully. "They're not made. He'd legislate the devil out of the Pit. Where are you going to stay, M'sieu'?"

"Somewhere cheap—along the river," answered the Forgotten Man.

Jolicoeur's good-natured face became serious. "I'll tell you a place— it's honest. It's the next street, a few hundred yards down, on the left. There's a wooden fish over the door. It's called The Black Bass — that hotel. Say I sent you. Good luck to you, countryman! Ah, la; la, there's the second bell—I must be getting to Mass!" With a nod he turned and went into the house.

The Forgotten Man passed slowly up the street, into the side street, and followed it till he came to The Black Bass, and turned into the small stable-yard. A stable-man was stirring. He at once put his dogs into a little pen set apart for them, saw them fed from the kitchen, and, betaking himself to a little room behind the bar of the hotel, ordered breakfast. The place was empty, save for the servant—the household were at Mass. He looked round the room abstractedly. He was thinking of a crippled man in a hospital, of a girl from a village in the Chaudiere Valley. He thought with a shiver of a white house on the hill. He thought of himself as he had never done before in his life. Passing along the street, he had realised that he had no moral claim upon anything or anybody within these precincts of his past life. The place was a tomb to him.

As he sat in the little back parlour of The Black Bass, eating his frugal breakfast of eggs and bread and milk, the meaning of it all slowly dawned upon him. Through his intellect he had known something of humanity, but he had never known men. He had thought of men in the mass, and despised them because of their multitudinous duplication, and their typical weaknesses; but he had never known one man or one woman from the subtler, surer divination of the heart. His intellect had made servants and lures of his emotions and his heart, for even his every case in court had been won by easy and selfish command of all those feelings in mankind which make possible personal understanding.

In this little back parlour it came to him with sudden force how, long ago, he had cut himself off from any claim upon his fellows—not only by his conduct, but by his merciless inhuman intelligence working upon the merciful human life about him. He never remembered to have had any real feeling till on that day with Kathleen—the day he died. The bitter complaint of a woman he had wronged cruelly, by having married her, had wrung from him his own first wail of life, in the one cry "Kathleen!"

As he sat eating his simple meal his pulses were beating painfully. Every nerve in his body seemed to pluck at the angry flesh. There flashed across his mind in sympathetic sensation a picture. It was the axe-factory on the river, before which he used to stand as a boy, and watch the men naked to the waist, with huge hairy arms and streaming faces, toiling in the red glare, the trip-hammers endlessly pounding upon the glowing metal. In old days it had suggested pictures of gods and demi-gods toiling in the workshops of the primeval world. So the whole machinery of being seemed to be toiling in the light of an awakened conscience, to the making of a man. It seemed to him that all his life was being crowded into these hours. His past was here—its posing, its folly, its pitiful uselessness, and its shame. Kathleen and Billy were here, with all the problems that involved them. Rosalie was here, with the great, the last problem.

"Nothing matters but that—but Rosalie," he said to himself as he turned to look out of the window at the wrangling dogs gnawing bones. "Here she is in the midst of all I once knew, and I know that I am no more a part of it than she is. She and Kathleen may have met face to face in these streets—who can tell! The world is large, but there's a sort of whipper-in of Fate, who drives the people wearing the same livery into one corner in the end. If they met"—he rose and walked hastily up and down—"what then? I have a feeling that Rosalie would recognise her as plainly as though the word Kathleen were stitched on her breast."

There was a clock on the wall. He looked at it. "It will not be safe to go out until evening. Then I can go to the hospital, and watch her coming out." He realised with satisfaction that many people coming from Mass must pass the inn. There was a chance of his seeing Rosalie, if she had gone to early Mass. This street lay in her way from the hospital. "One look—ah, one look!" For this one look he had come. For this, and to secure that which would save Rosalie from want always, if anything should happen to him. This too had been greatly on his mind. There was a way to give her what was his very own, which would rob no one and serve her well indeed.

Looking at his face in the mirror over the mantel, he said to himself

"I might have had ten thousand friends, yet I have a thousand enemies, who grin at the memory of the drunken fop down among the eels and the cat-fish. Every chance was with me then. I come back here, and—and Jolicoeur tells me the brutal truth. But if I had had ambition"—a wave of the feeling of the old life passed over him—"if I had had ambition as I was then, I should have been a monster. It was all so paltry that, in sheer disgust, I should have kicked every ladder down that helped me up. I should have sacrificed everything to myself."

He stopped short and stared, for, in the mirror, he saw a girl passing through the stable-yard towards the quarrelling dogs in the kennel. He clapped his hand to his mouth to stop a cry. It was Rosalie.

He did not turn round but looked at her in the mirror, as though it were the last look he might give on earth.

He could hear her voice speaking to the dogs: "Ah, my friends, ah, my dears! I know you every one. Jo Portugais is here. I know your bark, you, Harpy, and you, Lazybones, and you, Cloud and London! I know you every one. I heard you as I came from Mass, beauty dears. Ah, you know me, sweethearts? Ah, God bless you for coming! You have come to bring us home; you have come to fetch us home—father and me." The paws of one of the dogs was on her shoulder, and his nose was in her hair.

Charley heard her words, for the window was open, and he listened and watched now with an infinite relief in his look. Her face was half turned towards him. It was pale-very pale and sad. It was Rosalie as of old—thank God, as of old!—but more beautiful in the touching sadness, the far-off longing, of her look.

"I must go and see your master," she said to the dogs. "Down—down, Lazybones!"

There was no time to lose—he must not meet her ere. He went into the outer hall hastily. The servant was passing through. "If any one asks for Jo Portugais," he said, "say that I'll be back to-morrow morning—I'm going across the river to-day."

"Certainly, M'sieu'," said the girl, and smiled because of the piece of silver he put in her hand.

As he heard the side door open he stepped through the front doorway into the street, and disappeared round a corner.

CHAPTER XLVII

ONE WAS TAKEN AND THE OTHER LEFT

Rosalie carried to the hospital that afternoon a lighter heart than she had known for many a day. The sight of Jo Portugais' dogs had roused her out of the apathy which had been growing on her in this patient but hopeless watching beside her father. She had always a smile and a cheerful word for the poor man. A settled sorrow hung upon her face, however, taking away its colour, but giving it a sweet gravity which made her slave more than one young doctor of the hospital, for whom, however, she showed no more than a friendly frankness, free from self- consciousness. For hours she would sit in reverie beside her sleeping father, her heart "over the water to Charley." As in a trance, she could see him sitting at his bench, bent over his work, now and again lifting up his head to look across to the post-office, where another hand than hers sorted letters now.

Day by day her father weakened and faded away. All that was possible to medical skill had been done. As the money left by her mother dwindled, she had no anxiety, for she knew that the life she so tenderly cherished would not outlast the gold which lengthened out the tenuous chain of being. This last illness of her father's had been the salvation of her mind, the saving of her health. Maybe it had been the saving of her soul; for at times a curious contempt of life came upon her—she who had loved it so eagerly and fully. There descended on her then the bitter conviction that never again would she see the man she loved. Then not even Mrs. Flynn could call back "the fun o' the world" to her step and her tongue and her eye. At first there had been a timid shrinking, but soon her father and herself were brighter and better for the old Irishwoman's presence, and she began to take comfort in Mrs. Flynn.

Mrs. Flynn gave hopefulness to whatever life she touched, and Rosalie, buoyant and hopeful enough by nature, responded to the living warmth and the religion of life in the Irishwoman's heart.

"'Tis worth the doin', ivery bit of it, darlin', the bither an' the swate, the hard an' the aisy, the rough an' the smooth, the good an' the bad," said Mrs. Flynn to her this very Easter morning. "Even the avil is worth doin', if so be 'twas not mint, an' the good is in yer heart in the ind, an' ye do be turnip' to the Almoighty, repentin' an' glad to be aloive: provin' to Him 'twas worth while makin' the world an' you, to want, an' worry, an' work, an' play, an' pick the flowers, an' bleed o' the thorns, an' dhrink the sun, an' ate the dust, an' be lovin' all the way! Ah, that's it, darlin'," persisted Mrs. Flynn, "'tis lovin' all the way makes it aisier. There's manny kinds o' love. There's lad an' lass, there's maid an' man. An' that last is spring, an' all the birds singin', an' shtorms now an' thin, an' siparations, an' misthrust, an' God in hivin bein' that aisy wid ye for bein' fools an' children, an' bringin' ye thegither in the ind, if so be ye do be lovin' as man an' maid should love, wid all yer heart. Thin there's the love o' man an' wife. Shure, that's the love that lasts, if it shtarts right. Shure, it doesn't always shtart wid the sun shinin.' 'Will ye marry me?' says Teddy Flynn to me. 'I will,' says I. 'Then I'll come back from Canaday to futch ye,' says he, wid a tear in his eye.

"'For what's a man in ould Ireland that has a head for annything but puttaties! There's land free in Canaday, an' I'm goin' to make a home for ye, Mary,' says he, wavin' a piece of paper in the air. 'Are ye, thin?' says I. He goes away that night, an' the next mornin' I have a lether from him, sayin' he's shtartin' that day for Canaday. He hadn't the heart to tell me to me face. Fwaht do I do thin? I begs, borrers, an' stales, an' I reached that ship wan minnit before she sailed. There was no praste aboord, but we was married six weeks afther at Quebec. And thegither we lived wid ups an' downs—but no ups an' downs to the love of us for twenty years, blessed be God for all His mercies!"

Rosalie had listened with eyes that hungrily watched every expression, ears that weighed eagerly

every inflection; for she was hearing the story of another's love, and it did not seem strange to her that a woman, old, red-faced, and fat, should be telling it.

Yet there were times when she wept till she was exhausted; when all her girlhood was drowned in the overflow of her eyes; when there was a sense of irrevocable loss upon her. Then it was, in her fear of soul and pitiful loneliness, that her lover—the man she would have died for— seemed to have deserted her. Then it was that a sudden hatred against him rose up in her—to be swept away as swiftly as it came by the memory of his broken tale of love, his passionate words: "I have never loved any one but you in all my life, Rosalie." And also, there was that letter from Chaudiere, which said that in the hour when the greatest proof of his love must be given he would give it. Reading the letter again, hatred, doubt, even sorrow, passed from her, and her imagination pictured the hour when, disguise and secrecy ended, he would step forward before all the world and say: "I take Rosalie Evanturel to be my wife." Despite the gusts of emotion that swayed her at times, in the deepest part of her being she trusted him completely.

When she reached the hospital this Sunday afternoon her step was quick, her smile bright—though she had not been to confession as was her duty on Easter day. The impulse towards it had been great, but her secret was not her own, and the passionate desire to give relief to her full heart was overborne by thought of the man. Her soul was her own, but this secret of their love was his as well as hers. She knew that she was the only just judge between.

Soon after she entered the ward, the chief surgeon said that all that could be done for her father had now been done, and that as M. Evanturel constantly asked to be taken back to Chaudiere (he never said to die, though they knew what was in his mind), he might now make the journey, partly by river, partly by land. It seemed to the delighted and excited Rosalie that Jo Portugais had been sent to her as a surprise, and that his team of dogs was to take her father back.

She sat by her father's bed this beautiful, wonderful Sunday afternoon, and talked cheerfully, and laughed a little, and told M. Evanturel of the dogs, and together they looked out of the window to the far-off hills, in their golden purple, beyond which, in the valley of the Chaudiere, was their little home. With her father's hand in hers the girl dreamed dreams again, and it seemed to her that she was the very Rosalie Evanturel of old, whose thoughts were bounded by a river and a hill, a post-office and a church, a catechism and a few score of books. Here in the crowded city she had come to be a woman who, bitterly shaken in soul, knew life's sufferings; who had, during the past few months, read with avidity history, poetry, romance, fiction, and the drama, English and French; for in every one she found something that said: "You have felt that." In these long months she had learned more than she had known or learned in all her previous life.

As she sat looking out into the eastern sky she became conscious of voices, and of a group of people who came slowly down the ward, sometimes speaking to the sick and crippled. It was not a general visitors' day, but one reserved for the few to come and say a kindly word to the suffering, to bring some flowers and distribute books. Rosalie had always been absent at this hour before, for she shrank from strangers; but to-day she had stayed on unthinking. It mattered nothing to her who came and went. Her heart was over the hills, and the only tie she had here was with this poor cripple whose hand she held. If she did not resent the visit of these kindly strangers, she resolutely held herself apart from the object of their visit with a sense of distance and cold dignity. If she had given Charley something of herself, she had in turn taken something from him, something unlike her old self, delicately non- intime. Knowledge of life had rationalised her emotions to a definite degree, had given her the pride of self-repression. She had had need of it in these surroundings, where her beauty drew not a little dangerous attention, which she had held at arm's-length—her great love for one man made her invulnerable.

Now, as the visitors came near, she did not turn towards them, but still sat, her chin on her hand, looking out across the hills, in resolute abstraction. She felt her father's fingers press hers, as if to draw her attention, for he, weak man, was ever ready to open his hand and heart to any friendly soul. She took no notice, but held his hand firmly, as though to say that she had no wish to see.

She was conscious now that they were beside her father's bed. She hoped that they would pass. But no, the feet stopped, there was whispering, and then she heard a voice say, "Rather rude!" then another, "Not wanted, that's plain!"—the first a woman's, the second a man's. Then another voice, clear and cold, and well modulated, said to her father: "They tell me you have been here a long time, and have had much pain. You will be glad to go, I am sure."

Something in the voice startled her. Some familiar sound or inflection struck upon her ear with a far-off note, some lost tone she knew. Of what, of whom, did this voice remind her? She turned round quickly and caught two cold blue eyes looking at her. The face was older than her own, handsome and still, and happy in a placid sort of way. Few gusts of passion or of pain had passed across that face. The figure was shapely to the newest fashion, the bonnet was perfect, the hand which held two books was

prettily gloved. Polite charity was written in her manner and consecrated every motion. On the instant, Rosalie resented this fine epitome of convention, this dutiful charity-monger, herself the centre of an admiring quartet. She saw the whispering, she noted the well-bred disguise of interest, and she met the visitor's gaze with cold courtesy. The other read the look in her face, and a slightly pacifying smile gathered at her lips.

"We are glad to hear that your father is better. He has been ill a long time?"

Rosalie started again, for the voice perplexed her—rather, not the voice, but the inflection, the deliberation.

She bowed, and set her lips, but, chancing to glance at her father, she saw that he was troubled by her manner. Flashing a look of love at him, she adjusted the pillow under his head, and said to her questioner in a low voice: "He is better now, thank you."

Encouraged, the other rejoined: "May I leave one or two books for him to read—or for you to read to him?" Then added hastily, for she saw a curious look in Rosalie's eyes: "We can have mutual friends in books, though we cannot be friends with each other. Books are the go-betweens of humanity."

Rosalie's heart leapt, she flushed, then grew slightly pale, for it was not tone or inflection alone that disturbed her now, but words themselves. A voice from over the hills seemed to say these things to her. A haunting voice from over the hills had said them to her—these very words.

"Friends need no go-betweens," she said quietly, "and enemies should not use them."

She heard a voice say, "By Jove!" in a tone of surprise, as though it were wonderful the girl from Chaudiere should have her wits about her. So Rosalie interpreted it.

"Have you many friends here?" asked the cold voice, meant to be kindly and pacific. It was schooled to composure, because it gave advantage in life's intercourse, not from any inner urbanity.

"Some need many friends, some but a few. I come from a country where one only needs a few."

"Where is your country, I wonder?" said the cold echo of another voice.

Charley had passed out of Kathleen's life—he was dead to her, his memory scorned and buried. She loved the man to whom she supposed she was married; she was only too glad to let the dust of death and time cover every trace of Charley from her gaze; she would have rooted out every particle of association: yet his influence on her had been so great that she had unconsciously absorbed some of his idiosyncrasies—in the tone of his voice, in his manner of speaking. To-day she had even repeated phrases he had used.

"Beyond the hills," said Rosalie, turning away.

"Is it not strange?" said the voice. "That is the title of one of the books I have just brought—'Beyond the Hills'. It is by an English writer. This other book is French. May I leave them?"

Rosalie inclined her head. It would. make her own position less dignified if she refused them. "Books are always welcome to my father," she said.

There was an instant's pause, as though the fashionable lady would offer her hand; but their eyes met, and they only bowed. The lady moved on with a smile, leaving a perfume of heliotrope behind her.

"Where is your country, I wonder?"—the voice of the lady rang in Rosalie's ears. As she sat at the window again, long after the visitors had disappeared, the words, "I wonder—I wonder—I wonder!" kept beating in her brain. It was absurd that this woman should remind her of the tailor of Chaudiere.

Suddenly she was roused by her father's voice. "This is beautiful—ah, but beautiful, Rosalie!"

She turned towards him. He was reading the book in his hand—'Beyond the Hills'. "Listen," he said, and he read, in English: "'Compensation is the other name for God. How often is it that those whom disease or accident has robbed of active life find greater inner rejoicing and a larger spiritual itinerary! It would seem that withdrawal from the ruder activities gives a clearer seeing. Also for these, so often, is granted a greater love, which comes of the consecration of other lives to theirs. And these too have their reward, for they are less encompassed by the vanities of the world, having the joy of self-sacrifice.'" He looked at Rosalie with an unnatural brightness in his eyes, and she smiled at him now and stroked his hand.

"It has been all compensation to me," he said, after a moment. "You have been a good daughter to me, Rosalie."

She shook her head and smiled. "Good fathers think they have good daughters," she answered, choking back a sob.

He closed the book and let it lie upon the coverlet. "I will sleep now," he said, and turned on his side. She arranged his pillow, and adjusted the bedclothes to his comfort.

"Good-night," he said, as, with a faint hand, he drew her head down and kissed her. "Good girl! Goodnight!"

She patted his hand. "It is not night yet, father."

He was already half asleep. "Good-night!" he said again, and fell into a deep sleep.

She sat down by the window, in her hand the book he had laid down. A hundred thoughts were busy in her brain—of her father; of the woman who had just left; of her lover over the hills. The woman's voice came to her again—a far-off mockery. She opened the book mechanically and turned over the pages. Presently her eyes were riveted to a page. On it was written the word Kathleen.

For a moment she sat transfixed. The word Kathleen and the haunting voice became one, and her mind ran back to the day when she had said to Charley: "Who is Kathleen?"

She sprang to her feet. What should she do? Follow the woman? Find out who and what she was? Go to the young surgeon who had accompanied them, ask him who she was, and so learn the clue to the mystery concerning her lover?

In the midst of her confusion she became sharply conscious of two things: the approach of Mrs. Flynn, and her father's heavy breathing. Dropping the book, she leaned over her father's bed and looked closely at him. Then she turned to the frightened and anxious Mrs. Flynn.

"Go for the priest," she said. "He is dying."

"I'll send some one. I'm stayin' here by you, darlin'," said the old woman, and hurried to the room of the young surgeon for a messenger.

As the sun went down, the cripple went out upon a long journey alone.

CHAPTER XLVIII

"WHERE THE TREE OF LIFE IS BLOOMING—"

As Charley walked the bank of the great river by the city where his old life lay dead, he struggled with the new life which—long or short—must henceforth belong to the village of the woman he loved. . . . But as he fought with himself in the long night-watch it was borne in upon him that though he had been shown the Promised Land, he might never find there a habitation and a home. The hymn he had mockingly sung the night he had been done to death at the Cote Dorion sang in his senses now, an ever-present mockery:

"On the other side of Jordan,
In the sweet fields of Eden,
Where the tree of life is blooming,
There is rest for you.
There is rest for the weary,
There is rest for the weary,
There is rest for the weary,
There is rest for you."

In the uttermost corner of his intelligence he felt with sure prescience that, however befalling, the end of all was not far off. In the exercise of new faculties, which had more to do with the soul than with reason, he now believed what he could not see, and recognised what was not proved. Labour of the hand, trouble, sorrow, and perplexity, charity and humanity, had cleared and simplified his life, had sweetened his intelligence, and taken the place of ambition. He saw life now through the lens of personal duty, which required that the thing nearest to one's hand should be done first.

But as foreboding pressed upon him there came the thought of what should come after—to Rosalie. His thoughts took a practical form—her good was uppermost in his mind. All Rosalie had to live on was her salary as postmistress, for it was in every one's knowledge that the little else she had was being sacrificed to her father's illness. Suppose, then, that through illness or accident she lost her position, what could she do? He might leave her what he had—but what had he? Enough to keep her for a year or two—no more. All his earnings had gone to the poor and the suffering of Chaudiere.

There was one way. It had suggested itself to him so often in Chaudiere, and had been one of the two reasons for bringing him here. There were his dead mother's pearls and one thousand dollars in notes behind a secret panel in the white house on the hill, in this very city where he was. The pearls were worth over ten thousand dollars—in all, there would be eleven thousand, enough to secure Rosalie from poverty. What should Kathleen do with his mother's pearls, even if they were found by her? What should she do with his money did she not loathe his memory? Had not all his debts been paid? These pearls and this money were all his own.

But to get them. To go now to the white house on the hill; to face that old life even for an hour, a knocking at the door of a haunted house—he shrank from the thought. He would have to enter the place like a thief in the night.

Yet for Rosalie he must take the risk—he must go.

CHAPTER XLIX

THE OPEN GATE

It was a still night, and the moon, delicately bright, gave forth that radiance which makes spiritual to the eye the coarsest thing. Inside the white house on the hill all was dark. Sleep had settled on it long before midnight, for, on the morrow, its master and mistress hoped to make a journey to the valley of the Chaudiere, where the Passion Play was being performed by habitants and Indians. The desire to see the play had become an infatuation in the minds of the two, eager for some interest to relieve the monotony of a happy life.

But as all slept, a figure in the dress of a habitant moved through the passages of the house stealthily, yet with an assurance unusual in the thief or housebreaker. In the darkest passages his step was sure, and his hand fastened on latch or door-knob with perfect precision. He came at last into a large hallway flooded by the moon, pale, watchful, his beard frosted by the light. In the stillness of his tread and the composed sorrow of his face he seemed like one long dead who "revisits the glimpses of the moon."

At last he entered a room the door of which stood wide open. In this room had been begotten, or had had exercise, whatever of him was worth approving in the days before he died. It was a place of books and statues and tapestry, and the dark oak was nobly smutched of Time. This sombre oaken wall had been handed down through four generations from the man's great-grandfather: the breath of generations had steeped it in human association.

Entering, he turned for an instant with clinched hands to look at another door across the hall. Behind that door were two people who despised his memory, who conspired to forget his very name. This house was the woman's, for he had given it to her the day he died. But that she could live there with all the old associations, with memories that, however bitter, however shaming, had a sort of sacredness, struck into his soul with a harrowing pain. There she was whom he had spared—himself; whose happiness had lain in his hands, and he had given it to her. Yet her very existence robbed himself of happiness, and made sorrowful a life dearer than his own.

Kathleen lay asleep in that room—he fancied he could hear her breathing; and, by the hospital on the hill, up beyond the point of pines, in a little cottage which he could see from the great window, lay Rosalie with sleepless eyes and wan cheeks, longing for morning and the stir of life to help her to forget.

For Rosalie he had come to this house once more. For her sake he was revisiting this torture-chamber, from which he knew he must go again, blanched and shaken, as a man goes from a tomb where his dead lie unforgiving.

He shut his teeth, went swiftly across the room, and beside a great carved oak table touched a hidden

spring in the side of it. The spring snapped; the panel creaked a little and drew back. It seemed to him that the noise he made must be heard in every part of the house, so sensitive was his ear, so deep was the silence on which the sounds had broken. He turned round to the doorway to listen before he put his hand within the secret place.

There was no sound. He turned his attention to the table. Drawing forth two packets with a gasp of relief, he put them in his pocket, and, with extreme care, proceeded to close the panel. By rubbing the edges of the wood with grease from a candle on the table, he was able to readjust the panel in silence. But, as the spring came home, he became suddenly conscious of a presence in the room. A shiver passed through him. He turned round-softly, quickly. He was in the shadow and near great window-curtains, and his fingers instinctively clutched them as he saw a figure in white at the door of the room. Slowly, strangely deliberate, the figure moved further into the room.

Charley's breath stopped. He felt his face flush, and a strange weakness came on him. There before him stood Kathleen.

She was in her night-gown, and she stood still, as though listening; yet, as Charley looked closer, he realised that it was an unconscious, passive listening, and that she did not know he was there.

Her mind only was listening. She was asleep. Was it possible that his very presence in the house had touched some old note of memory, which, automatically responding, had carried her from her bed in this somnambulistic trance? That subtle telegraphy between our subconscious selves which we cannot reduce to a law, yet alarming us at times, announced to Kathleen's mind, independent of the waking senses, the presence once familiar to this house for so many years. In her sleep she had involuntarily responded to the call of Charley's approach.

Once, in the past, the night her uncle died, she had walked in her sleep, and the memory of this flashed upon Charley now. Silently he came closer to her. The moonlight shone on her face. He could see plainly she was asleep. His position was painful and perilous. If she waked, the shock to herself would be great; if she waked and saw him, what disaster might not occur!

Yet he had no agitation now, only clearness of mind and a curious sense of confusion that he should see her en dishabille—the old fastidious sense mingling with the feeling that she was now a stranger to him, and that, waking, she would fly embarrassed from his presence, as he was ready to fly from hers. He was about to steal to the door and escape before she waked, but she turned round, moved through the doorway, and glided down the hall. He followed silently.

She moved to the staircase, then slowly down it, and through a passage to a morning-room, where, opening a pair of French windows, she passed out onto the lawn. He followed, not more than a dozen paces behind her. His safety lay in getting outside, where he could easily hide among the bushes, should someone else appear and an alarm be raised.

She crossed the lawn swiftly, a white, ghostlike figure. In the middle of the lawn she stopped short once as if in doubt what to do—as a thought-reader pauses in his search for the mental scent again, ere he rushes upon the object of his search with the certainty of instinct.

Presently she moved on, going directly towards a gate that opened out on the cliff above the river. In Charley's day this gate had been often used, for it gave upon four steep wooden steps leading to a narrow shelf of rock below. From the edge of this cliff a rope-ladder dropped fifty feet to the river. For years he had used this rope-ladder to get down to his boat, and often, when they were first married, Kathleen used to come and watch him descend, and sometimes, just at the very first, would descend also. As he stole into the grounds this evening he had noticed, however, that the rope-ladder was gone, and that new steps were being built. He had also mechanically observed that the gate was open.

For an instant he watched her slowly moving towards the gate. At first he did not realise the situation. Suddenly her danger flashed upon him. Passing through the gateway, she must fall over the cliff.

Her life was in his hands.

He could rush forward swiftly and close the gate, then, raising an alarm, get away before he was seen; or—he could escape now.

What had he to do with her? A weird, painful suggestion crept into his brain: he was not responsible for her, and he was responsible for a woman up there by the hospital, whose home was the valley of the Chaudiere!

If Kathleen were gone, what barrier would there be between him and Rosalie? What had he to do

with this strange disposition of events? Kathleen was never absent from her church twice on Sundays; she was devoted to work of all sorts for the church on week-days—where was her intervening personal Providence? If Providence permitted her to die?— well, she had had two years of happiness with the man she loved, at some expense to himself—was it not fair that Rosalie should have her share? Had he the right to call upon Rosalie for constant self-sacrifice, when, by shutting his eyes now, by being dead to Kathleen and her need, as he was dead to the world he once knew, the way would be clear to marry Rosalie?

Dead—he was dead to the world and to Kathleen! Should his ghost interpose between her and the death now within two-score feet of her? Who could know? It was grim, it was awful, but was it not a wild kind of justice? Who could blame? It was the old Charley Steele, the Charley Steele of the court-room, who argued back humanity and the inherent rightness of things.

But it was only a moment's pause. The thoughts flashed by like the lightning impressions of a dream, and a voice said in his ear, the voice of the new Charley with a conscience:

"Save her—save her!"

Even as he was conscious of another presence on the lawn, he rushed forward noiselessly. Stealing between Kathleen and the gate-she was within five feet of it he closed and locked it. Then, with a quick glance at her sleeping face-it was engraven on his memory ever after like a dead face in a coffin—he ran along the fence among the shrubbery. A man not fifty feet away called to him.

"Hush—she is asleep!" Charley whispered, and disappeared.

It was Fairing himself who saw this deed which saved Kathleen's life. Awaking, and not finding her, he had glanced towards the window, and had seen her on the lawn. He had rushed down to her, in time to see her saved by a strange bearded man in habitant dress. His one glance at the man's face, as it turned towards him, produced an extraordinary effect upon his mind, not soon to be dispelled—a haunting, ghostlike apparition, which kept reminding him of something or somebody, he could not tell what or whom. The whispering voice and the breathless words, "Hush—she is asleep!" repeated themselves over and over again in his brain, as, taking Kathleen's hand, he led her, unresisting, and still sleeping, back to her room. In agitated thankfulness he resolved not to speak of the event to Kathleen, or to any one else, lest it should come to her ears and frighten her.

He would, however, keep a sharp lookout for the man who had saved her life, and would reward him duly. The face of the bearded habitant came between him and his sleep.

Meanwhile this disturber of a woman's dreams and a man's sleep was hurrying to an inn in the town by the waterside, where he met another habitant with a team of dogs—Jo Portugais. Jo had not been able to bear the misery of suspense and anxiety, and had come seeking him. There was little speech between them.

"You have not been found out, M'sieu'?" was Jo's anxious question.

"No, no, but I have had a bad night, Jo. Get the dogs together."

A little later, as Charley made ready to go back to Chaudiere, Jo said:

"You look as if you'd had a black dream, M'sieu'." With the river rustling by, and the trees stirring in the first breath of dawn, Charley told Jo what had happened.

For a moment the murderer did not speak or stir, for a struggle was going on in his breast also; then he stooped quickly, caught his companion's hand, and kissed it.

"I could not have done it, M'sieu'," he said hoarsely. They parted, Jo to remain behind as they had agreed, to be near Rosalie if needed; Charley to return to the valley of the Chaudiere.

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Good fathers think they have good daughters
Shure, if we could always be 'about the same,' we'd do

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