An Angel Unawares
by Mrs Wellesley Smith.

Read this grand complete story.

[February 13th, 1918]
Our Roll of Honour

Have you a son, brother, or sweetheart, or relative in the Army or Navy or Territorial? If so, we would like to publish his portrait in this journal. Please send us his portrait. You should enclose with each photo a slip of paper giving full particulars of his rank, regiment, or ship, etc. Then add your name and address, and state whether portrait is of your son, brother, or sweetheart. We will return photos when requested, but where possible would be glad to keep them. Address photos to: "Roll of Honour." HORNER'S PENNY STORIES, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

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A Grand Complete Story of a Woman's Part in the Great War.

By BESSIE REYNOLDS.
THIS WEEK: BROKEN PRIDE.

The tenor voice that had hushed the ward to silence ended, and a girl who had been waiting stepped forward immediately. The man at the piano struck a few chords, and her voice seemed to steal out into the crowded ward with a wonderful haunting sweetness that made the men almost hold their breath.

And, with a start, as the first words dropped one by one into the silence, Mary saw that Private Ainsleigh was suddenly aware. She looked up with a start, passed her unjured hand across his eyes as though to brush some vision of sleep from them, and half started up.

"The hours I spent with thee, dear heart, as a sheaf's value did I count them over every one apart, My rosy heart, my rosy heart.""}

Mary half moved to check him, but she thought quickly. Even if the movement caused him pain, surely anything was better than the apathy that had made him indifferent to everything, never even caring to try and struggle back to life.

So she resolutely looked away from the white, startled face, and the haggard, staring eyes that were fixed upon the sweet face of the singer, and looked herself deliberately at the girl.

"I tell each bead unto the end, and there a Cross is hung, the sweet voice sang, and it seemed to Mary that there came a groan from the listening man. What memories had the song evoked? she wondered, and then some instinct made her turn quickly, in time to see him slip back into the bed in a faint that was like death.

With a swift movement she drew the ever-ready screen about his bed. No need to worry the singer or her audience. But as she bent over the unconscious man and began to apply the remedies at her hand, the words of the song, a little muffled now by the encircling screen, yet stole across to her:

"O memories that bless and burn! O barren gain and bitter loss! I kiss each bead, and strive at last to learn To kiss the Cross, sweetheart, To kiss the Cross.""

The wounded man came slowly back to a consciousness, and with the return came also a little veil of reserve. He made no remark about his fainting fit, not even to apologise for the trouble that he had given, as most of the men would have done. But something in the man's stormy grey eyes made Mary understand that here was pain too deep to enable him to remember the small things of life.

"I am all right now," he said. "If you'll leave the screen round I can lie here and listen—you go and enjoy the music, Sister."

The whispered words were somehow imperative. It occurred to Mary that perhaps he wanted to be left alone. She slipped round the screen, and took her place among a little group of nurses in the background.
A man with a merry face was telling a series of funny stories with gay, friendly patter in between, setting the whole room into fits of laughter.

But though Mary joined in the laughter, at times somehow she could not forget the man in the bed behind the screen. Somehow the sad song had stirred him out of his apathy, something in it had moved him of emotion that had been almost too strong for his weak frame.

She hardly noticed that the short concert was over, and that the singers were making the round of the beds, until the girl who had sung "The Rosary" came up to her.

Mary saw then that she had been giving away bunches of violets from a great armful that she carried. There were violets thrust into the rough tawny coat that she wore, and her eyes were the same colour—violets drenched with dew.

"Why, there are a screen around this bed, Sister," she asked softly, "I—I hope the poor man is not very ill. Is the noise too much for him, do you think?"

"He felt just as you began your song," Mary explained quietly. "He is very weak, but I am sure that he will be sorry that he missed the end of it."

"Oh, I am so sorry!" the violet eyes were lifted quickly, and Mary told herself that behind all their sweetness there was somehow a haunting sadness. "Do you think—she laid a little slim, ungloved hand on Mary's grey sleeve—"do you think he would like something that would be just for himself, and that would show that I was sorry? And I have brought them each a bunch of violets,

Mary acted absolutely upon impulse then, an impulse that had come suddenly, and that would not be denied. In her heart she knew that Private Ainsleigh wanted only to be left alone, but she led the way with a little nod of acquiescence round the screen.

The wounded man, looking up indifferently at the sweet-faced musician, somehow the gentle standing suddenly became two forms. His face seemed to blanch again as he caught sight of the little figure with her arms full of violets, and Mary heard her give a queer little gasp.

The violets slipped unheeded from her hands, and shed their sweetness upon the polished floor at his feet, and as though scarcely sure of her welcome, she stood there, the colour coming and going in her face.

"Stephen!" she said. "It is Stephen—and I never knew!"

Mary slipped away. Surely those two would come to a better understanding alone, she told herself. But when the concert party was ready the girl with the violet eyes came out rather pale and silent, and certainly not looking as though she had just happily cleared up some lovers' quarrel. The crowd gravitated towards the door, and stood there chatting with one or two of the surgeons. This was the last word to be visited, and they were off now to the couple of big touring-cars that bore them from one hospital to another.

But this girl lingered a moment beside Mary, and spoke in a low voice.

"You are nursing Private Ainsleigh, I suppose?" she said. "Can you tell me whether any of his people have come to see him?"

Mary tried not to see that the pretty lips were quivering a little—"he seems to have no friends; or, at least, they do not appear to know that he is here."

"He has never asked for them?"

"No. He has not asked for anyone."

"I'm afraid he does not forgive you," the girl said. "Or, at least, he doesn't wish to forgive you. But I shall find that out. May I leave my name and address with you, Sister? And then if—he should be worse, you would let me know."

"I will let you know how he is in any case," Mary said quietly, and earned thereby a look of half fearful gratitude from those eyes that must surely haunt my man who had once cared for them.

She went back feeling a little angry with this patient who did not forgive easily, who had apparently proved unapproachable even by the little lady of the violets and the songster's threat.

Mary had read the card that the other had handed before she put it carefully away in her pocket, and she had recognised the name upon it as that of a well-known singer.

But when, feeling more than a little annoyed with this very tiresome patient, she went round the screen to him, she paused suddenly with something like a little smile of satisfaction upon her lips.

He had not heard her soft footsteps, and he was quite unaware that other eyes watched him as he lifted the little bunch of violets that had fallen, or been placed within reach of his hand. The man she had thought so grim and indifferent lifted the little bunch of violets to his lips, and Mary crept away before he should discover her presence.

"Yes, then, for the girl of the violet eyes! That meant that things must surely come right. Mary had never known it to fail yet.

GOOD FOR EVIL.

A

ND Molly O'Hearn, of the concert party, sat very thoughtfully in the car that drove them back to the hotel. They were staying in this particular town for a couple of hours, and going on in the evening to sing at a camp not many miles away. There were men there, drilling until they were weary out, working day by day to fit themselves to do their "little bit," who needed cheering almost as much as the men in the white beds in the hospital that they had just left.

But over the dinner that they consumed hurriedly enough, Molly sat thoughtfully. She had pushed back her chair from the table and clasped her hands, and, falling about her shoulders, it seemed to throw up the pathetic Irish beauty of her face.

And the result of her thoughts was that when the meal was over she sought the leader of the little party and asked to be released next day.

"I will, of course, fulfil our engagement to-night," she said; but tomorrow I particularly wish to go some miles away. I could join you again the next day if you will allow me to do so."

And since she apparently did not intend to explain any more he could only bow gravely and say, "Come, call on the sister, give your help," he said.

The journey when dinner was over was a good long run to that distant camp. The two cars went at a pace that would surely have brought them a fine in the old days. But there seemed nobody about on these dark barren stretchers where the keen air was strong enough to the camp to be 'challenged by the sentries.

Then they were out of the darkness presently into what seemed a blaze of light that fell upon hundreds of smiling, many faces, and Molly found herself singing to the eyes of the most appreciative audience that she had ever met.

But this time she did not sing "The Rosary"; it held her for her the memory of a man's white, proud face, and a still, bandaged figure.

Through a pressing, eager crowd of khaki-clad figures the two cars crawled out of the camp, and as they gathered speed the final appreciative cheers seemed to follow them into the darkness of the unlighted road beyond.

Molly sat looking straight before her into the heavy darkness, while around her the laughing voices of the others rang out into the night air.

She was thinking of a proud woman who had hidden her go away and sacrifice herself for the sake of her love, of the man, equally proud, who had been so ready to believe the story that had been so carefully prepared for him.

How it was that he was lying in a hospital ward unsought by his home folk, she did not understand. Stubborn pride had held him even in his weakness, and he had refused to touch her hand or answer her timid little greeting. And she had not dared, somehow, to put the question where even her presence was so evidently undesired.

But what had happened that the mother who had seemed to worship him had never been near him? Or was it that she did not even know that he was lying here wounded?

Somehow that was the solution that seemed to Molly to be most feasible. That was why she had decided to intrude upon a woman who had once insulted her. Because she knew that her son loved her, she would tell him the truth. She should at least know that Stephen
was lying in the hospital wounded, weak still, helpless. The rest she must leave.

The hotel where they were to spend the night was one of those old-fashioned places that Dickens would have loved. As a matter of fact, it possessed a “Dickens room” and a store of legends of the past.

There was a great fire burning in an open grate in the big, spacious hall where, late though it was, a few of the people staying in the house were still sitting about. They looked up as the little party of motorists entered, girls and men laughing and chatting together in Bohemian comradeship.

A stately dame, who had been seated near the fire reading the paper, rose up with a dignified rustle of silk, and turned to go up the wide, shallow staircase exactly at the moment that Molly reached it.

The girl stood aside, and, with the gracious dignity of a duchess, the elder woman turned to bow. Then, catching sight of the sweet, sad little face, she paused with her foot upon the stair, and seemed to freeze into an attitude of cold, angry pride.

“Hmph!” The colour swept in a hot tide over the girl’s sweet face. Almost unconsciously she held out one little gloved hand to the elder woman, but it was coldly ignored. The colour swept out of her face again almost as swiftly as it had come, leaving her a white, pathetic little creature who might surely have moved the pity of anyone less. bitterly antagonistic.

“I—I wanted to see you.” Molly said softly, with a men’s of the groups in the hall. “I was going to Ainsmere to-morrow. If you will give me an interview, please—”

The other woman gave her a cold, sweeping glance that seemed to travel contemptuously over her, from her little tawny suede travelling hat to the trim shoe that peeped beneath her skirt; and then, not even deigning to reply, she turned away.

Her thin, old hands dropped flashes of light from her rings as she lifted her black silk skirt ever so slightly, and went up the stairs without even a backward glance.

Molly bit her lip. It had been the snub direct, which perhaps was just what she might have expected. Stephen’s mother had never made any secret of her dislike and even contempt for the girl who had won her son’s heart.

Though perhaps now that Stephen no longer cared—she might surely be less bitter, Molly told herself ruefully.

But then, perhaps, she did not know that Molly had received the number of her own room before she turned towards the stairs. Now, feeling very much crushed and sad, she followed that proud old figure meekly and at a distance, yet near enough to hear that the woman had disappeared into a room that was next door to her own.

Not that it made it any more likely that she would have a chance of speaking to her. Somehow there was no way of making a person listen to you if she absolutely refused to do so.

Molly flung off her fur-lined coat, and the little hat that she had been wearing so long. The others had been talking of a supper in one of the rooms, but Molly did not feel like supper to-night, neither did she feel like the talk and merry laughter of the little Bohemian party.

She was seeing again the white, thin, haggard face behind the screen, the face that had grown cold and contemptuous at the sight of her—like his mother, she told herself miserably.

And, of course, she was silly to expect anything else. Had she not gone away because, as his mother said, she would ruin his career, spoil his life? It had been a compact that she should let him believe her faithless, and she had played her part well, slipping swiftly out of his life.

She seemed to see again the proud old woman pleading with her, by the love she bore Stephen, at least not to spoil his life.

But there had been very little softening about the proud old woman to-night, and, of course, all this was an old story, and had happened before fame came to her as a singer, though no amount of fame would be likely to make Mrs. Ainsleigh accept her as a possible daughter-in-law.

And now, in spite of her own withdrawal from the contest, it seemed that there was no friendship between mother and son, or why had she never been to see him while he was lying there?

Was it because he had enlisted and was just plain "Private" Ainsleigh? That would hit the old lady hard, of course, though it was just like Stephen, if there were not a commission to be obtained just then, to serve in the ranks.

Her own heart thrilled with pride in him, though he did not care now what she thought of him.

A MUCH Bewildered and Entirely Indignant Old Lady Sat Still on the Floor in a Far from Dignified Position, While Molly Made a Rush for the Water Jug, and Flung Its Contents Over the Flaming Bed.

One thing was certain, his mother ought to be told the truth. It was quite possible that if they had parted bad friends she did not know that he was lying ill and wounded. It would be just like Stephen never to give the address of friends to whom the information might be sent.

If she knew—well, there had never been any doubt about her love for him, however little else of emotion that proud heart might hold!

Molly, sitting thinking hard, at last decided upon her course of action. If the proud old woman would not condescend to look at her, at least she might read a note. She found a sheet of notepaper and an envelope, and wrote a brief letter, simply conveying the information that Stephen was lying wounded, and giving the name of the hospital and the town where he was.

The rest might surely be left to a mother’s heart!” Then, still dressed as she had been when she sang in the ward, save that she had taken off her hat and coat, she slipped out to the corridor. She must have
been sitting thinking a long time, for the hotel seemed wrapped in silken curtains, and slipped the little note beneath the door. In the morning Stephen's mother would surely see it, and she would have read it before she guessed from whom it came.

She straightened herself, and turned away—at least, she was about to turn away, when something arrested her steps.

A strange faintly stinging scent of smoke that seemed to come from somewhere quite near. For a moment she stood looking helplessly around, thinking that she must be mistaken, for the weather of the tale. And so bent down to the keyhole she realized that it was coming from the room within.

That strange, pungent smell of burning, the acrid, stinging smoke—she connected it quickly with Stephen's mother; and, like a flash, it came to her that the elder woman had been in the room.

Mechanically, and with no real hope of obtaining entrance to the room, she turned the handle of the door. To her surprise it was unlocked, and it gave quickly at her touch.

The next moment she was in the room, and she gave a quick grasp of horror at the sight that met her eyes.

For at first it seemed that the whole of the bed was in flames, and she almost dreamed what might meet her gaze when she sprang forward, unconsciously kicking out of the way the letter that she had so carelessly thrown to her mother. Then, the next moment, she saw a lady that had been quite too much for Molly's slender arms.

And the moment after, a much bewildered and dazed, and entirely indignant old lady, sat still on the floor in a far from dignified position, while Molly made a wild rush for the water jug, and flung its contents over the flames.

Then followed a few anxious moments at beating at flames with the rug that she snatched up, and at the final victory that left her breathless, with smoke-blackened face and dishevelled hair, and hands that she gazed at wistfully, they were smarting so badly.

But by this time Mrs. Ainsleigh had gathered herself together, and realized the imminence of the peril from which she had been rescued.

"I suppose I owe you my life," she said then a little shakily. "After all, she was getting on in years, and this was another thing to upset the nerves of the most dignified of old ladies.

"Oh, it's nothing!" Molly told her, which sounded a little rude, perhaps, but Mrs. Ainsleigh certainly did not notice it.

"I was reading with a candle," she said. "It is a habit that I have been used to—night. But I don't understand how you came here, or how you knew that I am nervous, and that I always keep my door unlocked."

"I—I don't know if I smelt the smoke and tried to open the door. I've been written a letter to you, and put it under your door," she explained. "I was in slopping that I smelt the smoke."

"A letter! A little shadow passed over the fine old face. Where is it?"

Molly stooped and found it, and handed it to her.

"That was a letter that mother when I tried to speak to you downstairs," she said. "And I thought perhaps you would read the letter."

"What was it that you wanted to tell me?"

Old Mrs. Ainsleigh subsided into a deep chair with the letter still clasped in her hand. And Molly forgot her own grief, when she heard, that she didn't want to tell anyone, that she didn't want to speak to anyone.

"It was about Stephen—your son. I thought perhaps you didn't know that he is in a hospital not many miles from here—that he had been very badly wounded."

Mrs. Ainsleigh seemed to draw herself more upright. "Did you think you wouldn't tell them my address that they might send to me?"

"And—Molly discovered a desperate courage, or perhaps she thought that what she had done had given her a certain right to speak—" even though he had enlisted in the ranks, it is very splendid of him! And I am conscious of a real interest in him."

"I think you mistake," Mrs. Ainsleigh said. "I did not quarrel with Stephen because of his enlisting. As a matter of fact, I knew nothing about that. It was he who flung himself away from me when he found that I was looking in the Sackville Row. As long as I believed that I had something to do with it, as, of course, I had. I question whether he would see me even now, unless I can take you with me, and give you back to him."

"Oh, you mean—you can't mean—" She looked aghast.

It seemed to Molly that she had been talking for a long time.

Old Mrs. Ainsleigh caught the girl's hands in hers, and then as, in spite of herself, Molly winced and gave a low cry, she examined them keenly.

"You poor child!" she said. "We must get the nearest doctor along at once. You never told me that you hadn't been at school like this! Dear me, what will Stephen say?"

Which was such a taking of things for granted, that, bad though the pain was, Molly found herself smiling happily.

What Stephen and his mother really said to each other no third person ever knew. That ever useful screen concealed them both admirably, and they talked in low tones that were not to be overheard, even by his comrade in the next bed. But it was plain to see that there were some questions set out to find the girl who had been left waiting downstairs until "everything had been explained."

And perhaps it was because everything had been so fully explained by the elder lady that these two found nothing to say to each other. And not only that, but the little girl by her side, been left waiting downstairs until "everything had been explained."

Pink eyes, shy and drooping, yet revealing a great love when for a moment they were raised to his face—violet eyes that he wondered now that he could ever have doubted.

Molly lifted her head very gently after the other two little bandaged hands, and then drew a sweet face down, and found a better place for kisses on lips that trembled at his touch.

"I suppose you'll forgive me—some time?" he said.

"When I find out what there is to forgive," Molly whispered. "Stephen, when you are well—"

"I'm coming home for a time, and so are you," he said. "And the master has arranged that we'll get married straight off the reel, and then, of course, you are to live with us in London."

He paused, but Molly lifted brave eyes.

"You know I'd have to go back and do my duty, you know we are still all wanted, and you understand, dear."

Molly nodded. There were tears in the violet eyes, but she winked them away bravely.

"You'll still come to London if you hadn't," she said.

Next week's complete romance will tell the story of SISTER MARY's MARRIAGE. YOU MUST not miss this touching story.

RESULT OF OUR 15TH SOLDIER'S LETTER CONTEST.

Thirteen novices succeeded in sending a correct solution of this puzzle letter, and we are therefore dividing the total prize money of £5 15s. amongst them. They each, therefore, receive the sum of £3 5s.

1. W. Hindmarsh, Stockton; Mrs. Jacobs, Handsworth; C. H. Taylor, Shildon; J. M. Young, Edinburgh; Mrs. Stamer, Nottingham; Mrs. T. Gurney, Tenbury; Miss B. L. Munden, Kettering; W. Cunning- ham, Morley; L. A. Taylor, Brierfield; Mrs. Smith, Brierfield; Miss Kent, Brighton; Miss M. Wallach, Croydon; Mrs. Spatham, Aireton; V. Chambers, Bingleham; T. Taylor, Gainsborough; Mrs. W. N. Beechmore, A. Taylor, Lancaster; Miss M. Raikes, Miss M. Stocley, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman, Miss M. Honeyman.
A Delightful Complete Romance

By Mrs. WELLESLEY SMITH.

CHAPTER I.

THE TRYING HOUSEHOLD.

"The Lord will provide," Ruth Gibson said with complete and simple faith. "I have no fear of the future."

"But, my child," the trained nurse protested, as she contemplated the trim figure in the plain black dress. "You must not do anything to hurt yourself."

"I have an uncle—my mother's only brother—but I have not seen him for many years. He is not well off."

"I say his father's people," Nurse Wells began suggestively.

"They cast my father off for marrying the girl he loved," Ruth answered. "I know nothing whatever about them—I am even ignorant of what their name may be. Father took his second name—'Gibson', and neither he nor my darling mother gave me any information beyond what I have just told you."

"I see," Nurse Wells glanced round the cheerfully-furnished but daintily-kept room doubtfully. For a fortnight she had nursed Mrs. Gibson through the sharp and sudden attack of pneumonia that had proved fatal, in spite of all efforts; now she was remaining a few days to look after the grieving and stricken daughter, left behind to face the world almost penniless, for Mrs. Gibson's annuity ceased at her death.

Mother and daughter had occupied the pretty little cottage at Hindhead for many years. Though by no means well off, they had enough, and Ruth's exquisite needlework provided them with many small luxuries. They were all in all to each other, content to be together. Mrs. Gibson, always more or less an invalid, had never left her husband's side.

The loss of her mother had nearly broken Ruth's heart, and Nurse Wells sighed as she noted how transparently white and thin the girl looked.

"I think, my dear," she said gently, "that you should write to your uncle and tell him exactly how you are situated. I am sure that your dear mother would wish you to do so."

Ruth's case stricken her as particularly sad. She seemed the merest child—so delicate, yet so strong in her complete faith in God. Ruth's life had been a sheltered one. Mrs. Gibson had watched over and protected her from all that was ugly and sinful, while teaching her always to help others less well situated than herself.

Presently, when Ruth, who was weeping at the mention of her mother's name, grew calmer, the nurse rose.

"We will have a cup of tea," she suggested cheerfully. "How would you like to come with me and help Mrs. Maloney, who lives in the village? The baby is nearly a week old; it would be so nice if you will wash and dress it for me—there is so much we could do for the poor woman."

"Indeed, I will," Ruth promised, filling the little kettle, and setting it on the fire. "I must bring two or three of the Maloney children back here for a day or two," she observed. "They would not be much trouble, and there is plenty of room—now, with a trembling lip. "That would be very kind," the nurse agreed. "Biddy, the eldest girl, honestly does her best, but she is only a child herself, and there are so many of them in that tiny cottage," secretly delighted at the success of her suggestion. Ruth, roused and interested, ate a better meal than she had done since her mother's death.

"You know your uncle's address?" her companion asked presently, as she assisted Ruth to wash up in the bright little kitchen.

"Yes," soberly. "I will write to him to-night."

"That will be the best possible thing to do. Now, shall we go on our errand of mercy?"

"I am quite ready."

Together they set forth, Ruth carrying a big basket. "I love the country," she said wistfully. "We have been so happy here." with a glance at the lovely surroundings.

"It is a beautiful place," Nurse Wells agreed. "Here we are—I hear baby crying."

"All the children seem to be doing the same," Ruth said, stepping into the untidy room, where half a dozen small children were gathered, alternately slapped and coaxed by Biddy, a thin and anxious maiden of twelve. An hour later, Ruth and the nurse returned to Rose Cottage, accompanied by Pat and Susie, aged five and three, who absorbed all Ruth's attention before they were washed and safely put to bed, hugely delighted with their change of quarters. Nurse Wells was not at her next case for nearly a week, and had yielded gladly to Ruth's request that she should remain with her, for she had grown very fond of the girl during her attendance on Mrs. Gibson.

The letter to Reuben Trail written and posted, Ruth waited patiently for a reply. Several days passed, and she began to think that either her letter had miscarried or that her uncle wished to have nothing to do with her. Yet there were the small debts to be paid, including the funeral expenses. Ruth found that she would have a tidy income of twenty pounds a year, for Mrs. Gibson had saved and scraped to leave her adored daughter something.

"I can work," Ruth said to Nurse Wells. "Twenty pounds added to what I can earn is more than sufficient. I only wish I could afford to remain in dear Hindhead—and take paying guests."

"My dear, you are far too young and too pretty for that—and paying guests might fail to fill the larder. Here is the postman with a letter—perhaps your uncle has written."

"The postmark is Brixton," Ruth answered doubtfully.

"I wrote to Hastings."

"He has perhaps moved; that would account for the delay in replying."

Ruth read the letter anxiously. "He has left Hastings—my letter followed him," she explained.

"Mr. Trail wrote warmly and at some length. Ruth must, of course, go to them immediately."

"Your aunt is dead, and although we're poor enough, Heaven knows, there's always room for my sister's child. If you want money, let me know, and I'll try to send it to you. I would come to you myself, but it is impossible to get away."

"It is a kind letter," Ruth said, folding it up. "I do not mean to be an additional burden to Uncle Reuben—I shall work and help them."

"It will be a home," Nurse Wells said, "and your cousins will be nice companions. I have a proposal to make, dear. You will not want this furniture at your uncle's—let me use it. I am going to furnish a few rooms for myself and sister. We should be very careful.
of it, and could agree what sum I shall pay you for the use of it. It would be better than storing it—or selling—".

"A thousand times better. I could not bear to sell it. My mother was so proud of our dear little home. You need not pay me a penny!" cried Ruth.

"Oh, but I shall! You are too unbusinesslike," Nurse Wells protested. And after a little argument, Ruth agreed.

Her preparations for immediate departure were soon concluded; and with many tears, Ruth Gibson left Rose Cottage, to begin her new life.

"Remember," Nurse Wells said, "I shall be in London, and we must not lose sight of each other. If you should ever want a friend, come to me."

"My Heavenly Friend will never fail me," Ruth said.

"Thank you a thousand times, nurse, for your goodness. I shall be only too glad to be counted as a friend of yours."

She kissed her affectionately, and the train steamed slowly out of the station, leaving the nurse waving her handkerchief on the platform.

Waterloo reached, Ruth, obeying Mr. Trail's instructions, called a taxicab, and with her best luggage beside the driver, she turned into the street. A dusty and driven black kitten presented by Mrs. Maloney in her arms, the cat sat gazing in amazement at the teeming streets that were so foreign to her. Mrs. Gibson had preferred the country, and Ruth was quite a stranger to the great metropolis.

The rain pattered dismally on the windows; it was very cold, for a sharp east wind was sweeping round the corners, reddening the noses and spoiling the tempers of the hurrying pedestrians. At last the cab pulled up with a jerk.

"Are you sure this is the road?" Ruth asked.

"Seven, Elmhurst Road, Brixton, miss—that's right, isn't it?" asked the driver civilly, pitying her obvious fatigue.

Elmhurst Road, with its twin rows of tightly packed semi-detached villas, looked its least attractive. Ruth got out of the cab, and pushed open the rusty iron gate, hanging perilously on one hinge.

Ruth's heart sank as she walked up to the door, and found the bell broken and no signs of a knocker.

"Take your brolly, miss," the man suggested, pointing to her neat umbrella.

Ruth obeyed, and after a considerable interval the door was opened by a sulky-looking lad of fourteen, with a smudged face and grimy collar.

"Does Mr. Trail live here?" Ruth asked.

The boy nodded.

"Are you one of his cousins?" he asked.

"Yes, I believe I come in?"

He nodded again, and, moving aside, screamed: "Polly! Polly!"

A girl's shrill voice replied impatiently: "If it's the grocer, tell him to call again; father's out."

"It's Ruth!" the boy called, and down the stairs came a tall girl, with elaborately frizzled yellow hair, and much cheap lace and jewellery round her throat.

"Well, I never! I didn't think it was so late. Come along in. I'm Polly!" the new-comer explained. "I hate hangings over rooms, a tidy up. Are those your boxes? Put 'em in the hall. Tom and Steenie can carry 'em up presently."

Ruth paid and dismissed the taxi. She had a forlorn feeling that her last friend had deserted her as she heard it whirr into the darkness.

Polly, opening a door to the left of the narrow passage, ushered Ruth into a shabby, littered room.

On the table in the middle was a crumpled and airing tablecloth and half a dozen chipped cups and saucers of different patterns. The wallpaper was flapped, still in its wrappings, and one or two bent knives and dull-looking teaspoons completed the arrangements for the tea for which Ruth was longing.

Another boy, introduced by Polly as Steenie, aged twelve, was doing sums at the corner of the table, and a fat little girl, with masses of negroid curl that sat on the heartthug, calmly drinking milk out of a spoutless jug, during intervals of crunching lumps of sugar from a badly depleted basin.

"Tut, you naughty little imp, how dare you!" stormed Polly, snatching the culprit, who instantly began to sob as Steenie's face flushed. Don't you look after her?"

"Because I've got my lessons to do," her brother retorted. "Go and get tea, Polly. Cousin Ruth looks tired."

"So I will," Polly said readily, exhibiting large holes in her stockings as she turned away.

Tom hurriedly cleared the lesson books off the table, and poked the almost defunct fire.

"We're at sixes and sevens, as usual," he muttered.

"Polly's always gadding about; it's no wonder father says he never has a comfortable or decent meal. Sit down, Cousin Ruth. Tom, stop screaming, and look at the kitchen."

Tom, rubbing her eyes, ceased her cries, and Polly hurried in with a dingly plated teapot.

"The kitchen fire was nearly out! Oh, dear, what a worry everything is! I never have a minute to myself!"

The flame from the Built fires swelled, and they had to perform their usual duties. Tea was a terrible meal to fastidious Ruth. She managed with difficulty to swallow a cupful of lukewarm liquid and eat a small piece of bread and butter.

"Aren't you hungry?" asked Polly, who was voraciously devouring slices of bread and jam, while she examined her newly-found cousin from behind the teapot.

"No," Ruth returned. "I have a headache."

"Supper isn't till nine," the other girl explained, "then it's only cold. I can't be bothered to look after it. We don't care much, and anyway, even if we can't afford it. A charwoman comes for half a day each morning, but she's dreadfully lazy, and won't do a thing. I think housekeeping is horrid, don't you?"

"No; I like it," Ruth returned. "It's very interesting."

"Well, I never! You do look a queer sort of old-fashioned one. Black is awful dowdy. I told father it was silly going in mourning for Aunt Janet, considering we've never seen her," chattered Polly.

Ruth winced. Elmhurst Road seemed impossibly far from the garden which had ever helped her at Rose Cottage; she had managed entirely alone, with her mother's occasional assistance and frequent counsel.

"Perhaps you'd like to come upstairs," Polly suggested, rising, "It isn't quite straight. I was out all the morning, and at my dancing class in the afternoon, and Mrs. Murphy forgot to do your room; but I dare say you won't mind."

"It is very good of you to let me come here," Ruth returned, following her cousin up stairs decorated with much dust and ragged carpets.

She could hardly suppress an exclamation of dismay at sight of her bed. The curtains and blinds were thick with dirt; the uncertain progress of Polly's brush and duster was plainly visible on the worn linen and the odd pieces of dilapidated furniture.

"I'll soon finish it," Polly said, "and then you'll see how nice it is."

"No, no; let me do it myself," Ruth said hastily, knowing that slumber in such a room was impossible.

"All right; just as you like. I'll send Tom out for some tinned salmon for supper; it's tasty."

"I have a cold roast chicken in my basket," Ruth returned. "He and the cat have eaten it all. I can't bear to think they had to be killed. There are two others I brought, not yet plucked, and some eggs."

"Goody! That'll be nice," Polly agreed. "Sure I can't help you? I'll just nip round to the library, then."

Ruth finished, and Ruth had determination to vanquish her inclination to burst into tears, pulled an overall out of her box, and very quickly reduced her small room to passable tidiness.

"To-morrow I must clean it," she murmured; and armed with the cold chicken and the eggs, marched downstairs.

Tom and Steenie quickly agreed to assist preparing a surprise supper.

A long hunt resulted in the finding of a clean cloth, and the table was as well set as the limited china and glass allowed. Ruth arranged a vase of flowers she had bought and floral ingenuity had converted to the use of a basket in Rose Cottage, and having swept up the hearth and tidied the room, retired to the disorderly kitchen, and proceeded to make a delicious hot dish of savoury eggs.
"My word, father will stare! There he is!" Tom cried, vigorously polishing plates for Ruth. "It smells as if you'd set fire to it." Mr. Trail kissed Ruth kindly and affectionately. He was a tall, middle-aged man, with a handsome, worn face and nervous, irritable manner.

"You are very like your mother, my dear," he told Ruth. "What are you doing—cooking? Polly should not have allowed it. Where is she?"

"Gone to the library. I'm afraid I didn't ask, Uncle Reuben. Tom and Steenie helped me. I hope you don't mind?"

"Certainly not. I'm afraid you'll find things in a muddle. Those are fine apples," as Ruth piled the fragrant fruit on a dish unearthed from the back of a cupboard. "We had a nice garden—mother and I—and the fruit was very plentiful last year. Supper is quite ready, Uncle."

Mr. Trail exclaimed with pleasure over the table, and ate heartily of the nice fare. Polly, arriving when the meal was half over, accepted her father's reproof of her late return with a toss of her much frizzled head, and a glance of dislike at poor Ruth, who was, she decided, responsible for it—for Mr. Trail had given up taking any notice of what she did.

Ruth had a long talk with her uncle when the children had gone to bed, and Polly was sulking in the kitchen.

"Dear uncle, I do not intend to be a burden," she said softly. "I can work—"

"You shall do just as you like," he said, stroking her hair. "I don't expect you to stay here. Heaven knows, discomfort and dirt are not attractive! Different to when your aunt was alive. She was a famous housewife; but Polly is flighty."

"She is so young—hardly seventeen. If I might help in the house?" timidly. "I am used to it; if Polly didn't mind."

"She'll only be too glad," put in Polly herself, who had entered then. "I get no thanks for doing my best. Take it over and welcome, so long as you leave me alone. I've plenty else to do than bother a house and the children!" And the speaker flounced off to bed.

It was a long time before Ruth slept. It was plain to her that her duty lay in remaining with her uncle and doing her utmost for the neglected household.

"I will not be selfish," she murmured, kneeling in prayer beside her uncomfortably lumpy couch. "I must follow the example set by my Divine Master. Heavenly Father, help me to do my best," she added earnestly and reverently.

**CHAPTER II.**

**TOT MEETS WITH AN ACCIDENT.**

"ELL, I never did! Not in all my life!" ejaculated Mrs. Murphy, the charwoman, staring at Ruth. "I've had the best 'lasses, an' 'wans always give satisfaction; an' now to be telled by a bit of a gal that I 'aven't done a thing proper! All I says is, do it yourself, Miss 'gh an' 'auty.'"

The angry woman placed her formidable red arms akimbo, after flinging down the disclatho as a sign of defiance at Ruth's feet.

"Very well! Here is your money, and you need not come again." Ruth returned calmly.

"But! You'll do a pore widdler out of a job—an' me with a sick 'usin'?"

"I have no desire to do that, Mrs. Murphy," the quiet voice answered, the grave eyes meeting the angry ones. "If you wish to remain, things must be done differently to this. I must have the house thoroughly cleaned, and kept so. I will give you ten minutes to think it over."

Ruth quietly left the kitchen, and returned to her occupation of taking down and washing the dirty and dilapidated Venetian blind in the sitting-room. Polly was out, the children at school.

Ruth had already worked wonders in the dingy little house. Daylight had revealed neglected corners of accumulated dust that took her breath away.

"Polly is quite a child," she murmured. "She will learn better presently."

When Ruth returned to the kitchen, Mrs. Murphy was vigorously poking the fire.

"I've pulled the damper out," she announced, "so we'll 'ave plenty of 'ot water! I'd best scrub them slats. They want it bad!"

Ruth handed them over, and for the rest of the day the two laboured together, the charwoman proving herself an excellent worker, readily agreeing to remain for the afternoon, for which Ruth paid her from her own store of money.

At the end of a week, No. 7, Elmhurst Road was transformed. Clean curtains, shining windows, and irreproachable blinds replaced the disorder Ruth had found. Tom and Steenie openly rejoiced over neatly mended clothes, whole carpets, and attractive meals. The lines of fretful worry began to fade from Mr. Trail's face as
"I'm sorry I said that," she said. "You and me aren't a bit alike. I believe you really like going to church, and it does you good." "Of course I do. Sunday only comes once a week. Surely we need not grudge it to God's service."

"Oh, well, I don't pretend to be religious!" Polly said awkwardly. "I like pretty dresses and becoming hats —"

"So do I!" smiled Ruth. "It is only right to make the best of yourself."

"Then why do you dress so plainly? Of course, you're in mourning — flushing — but a bit of lace or some little black something brightens you up. You could be a real beauty. And your hair why, you don't even curl it on Sundays!"

Polly patted her frizzled locks as she spoke with satisfaction.

"I like plain clothes better. It is only a difference of taste. I always think it is a pity you wave and curl your hair. It is such a pretty colour, and the irons spoil it — so a hairdresser told me."

"Did he?" Polly looked somewhat taken aback.

"Oh, well, I'll use curlers! I look a fright with it plain!" And she settled the mock pearl necklace round her pretty throat.

Certainly Polly Trail was exceedingly pretty, with her big blue eyes and golden hair, regular features, and perfect teeth, that made up a most attractive whole. Beside Ruth, she was almost sallow, as are most City-bred girls, and occasionally she resorted to cheap rouge to supply her with the colour she lacked.

"How nice it would be to be rich!" Polly went on discontentedly. "I'm better-looking than lots of those toffs I see in motor-cars, all dressed up. I'd pay for toggling, too, and some day I shall have all I want. A gypsy told me my fortune, and a very rich man struck me, in going to marry me. But she told me I'd never meet him if I stuck at home."

"Fortune-telling is all nonsense!" Ruth declared warmly, "and everybody cannot be rich. It is better to be happy and well disposed."

"What a queer girl you are!" Polly returned, placing a huge black straw hat, loaded with cheap flowers, on her golden head.

"Rich men do not marry poor girls like you, Polly dearest except in books. I hope you'll marry the man you love when the time comes" —shocked at Polly's sentiments.

"You can be quite sure I'll take good care not to love a poor one!" the girl retorted lightly, as she left the room.

Ruth retired to the bright and clean little kitchen. Once or twice she sighed a little. Polly promised to be a constant care. Very quickly had she realised that the light, pleasure-loving nature of her cousin was likely to fail her, and the straight and narrow path she duty. Deeply did she desire to gain the girl's affection and trust, that she might try to influence her. Many silent prayers had left Ruth's lips as she worked and strove for her new-found relative.

"With God's help, I must surely win Polly's love," Ruth murmured, as she prepared to pick potatoes and onions.

"I'll peel them," Mrs. Murphy interrupted. "You'll spoil your 'ands. Seems to me you slave yourself to foolish grounds. Why don't you air it bit grateful."

"Indeed I do not," Ruth said, smiling.

She well knew that her niece and the three younger children depended on her more each day. The children are late," she observed rather uneasily, when the stew was gently simmering on the stove. "It is after dinner-time."

"The pudding's done," Mrs. Murphy returned, and I've set the table."

At that moment a thunderous knock resounded through the house. Ruth, seized with a sudden fear of her knew not what, flew impulsively to the door.

On the doorstep was a man clad in an expensive motor-coat. Just behind him was a stalwart policeman, carrying Tot, white and unconscious, while Steenie and Tom, both weeping bitterly, clung to his coat-tails. "He's dead!" gasped Ruth, reeling for a moment against the wall.

"No, no," the stranger said reassuringly. "Don't be afraid. I think she is more frightened than hurt."

"Bring her in here!"
up the path, staring curiously at the departing Mr. Laneham.

"My, what swell friends you've got, Ruth!" she cried.

"You might have introduced me. You are jealous!"

"He is no friend of mine," Ruth returned. "I have never seen him before." And she told the girl what had happened.

"She never did. It's just like a story-book. He's rolling in money. Father ought to get a good bit out of him, knocking over Tot like that. Perhaps he'll bring her something nice; he ought to. I'm glad she isn't much hurt. Shall I run up to her whilst you get your dinner? You may expense it, yellowly and white," offered Polly, struck by Ruth's paller.

"We must thank God she was not killed or crippled for life. Will you not join me in doing so, dear Polly?"

"Oh—er—you can do it better than I can," Polly returned, very red in the face. "I was never much good at that sort of thing.

She ran hastily upstairs as she spoke, and left Ruth alone.

CHAPTER III.

A STORY BETWEEN FATHER AND SON.

"I cannot be too thankful that the child is not seriously hurt," Mr. Laneham said, sitting opposite Reuben Trail in one of the rickety arm-chairs. "I shall, of course, be only too glad to stand all the expenses of the accident, and when she is better, send the little girl to the seaside for a month that shall be thoroughly recuperative."

Reuben Trail flushed, deeply resenting the patronising tone.

"Thank you," he said stiffly. "Since the occurrence was not your fault, I do not expect or desire to put you to any expense.

"No offence, my dear sir," the visitor returned soothingly. "If I was too zealous in my wish to do the best possible, pray forgive me. Your very capable niece, Miss Gibson, is a born nurse—so Dr. Jones has just told me. She has been to the East and the West of England, and thoroughly recuperative.

"Polly is a girl in a thousand—a treasure," Reuben ended. "I cannot hope to keep her long; some fortunate man will win her.

"There is no immediate prospect of her marrying, is there?" asked Mr. Laneham.

"No, my dear sir," retorted Polly shortly. "One would think she was an angel! I'm sick of being made to take a back seat.

"Ah"—still more softly. "It is only natural.

"I don't want her to sort," Polly said gravely; "dreadfully straitlaced and religious—thinks of nothing but scrubbing and cleaning.

"Not your sort at all," he suggested thoughtfully.

"Indeed, no. I believe in a jolly time, enjoying yourself, and making yourself look nice.

"You had better have much difficulty in doing that," he returned, smiling amusedly as Polly flushed with delight.

"I'm going to be a typist. Catch me sticking here eternally cooking and worrying about the kids! Not this old Trail shooing his head.

"It happens," Mr. Laneham said slowly, "that I require a young lady for typing and shorthand. How would you like to take the post?"

"I'd love to! I've just finished my course of instruction. I only want a little practice," she exclaimed eagerly.

"We will see what your father says. It is not a hard post—twenty-five shillings a week to begin with. But I demand, and see if I get, implicit obedience"—with a sudden change of manner that alarmed Polly. "Not till I do best to please you," she said, in a subdued voice, half frightened, half attracted by the piercing black eyes bent on her.

"That is all right. I never tolerate disobedience, Miss—Trail. I like smart and good-looking people in my house, and am prepared to treat them well if they suit me.

"Well, I'm not a dowdy like Ruth, and I'm no fool," Polly said tersely.

"Mr. Laneham laughed cynically and turned away. But Ruth, bowing with her delicate, high-bred beauty, gleaming hair, and wonderfully sweet expression! This little yellow-haired Cockney was not in the same street with her cousin for looks, he thought, as, with a few more careless words, he took his leave. Polly skipped excitedly upstairs to watch from an upper window the departure of the big, glittering car.

"Just fancy, Ruth; Mr. Laneham has offered me a post in his office," she told her cousin, later. "He's taken a fancy to me, and I shall get on like a house afire. It is a settling good chance—twenty-five shillings a week; quite decent for a start. What are you looking so solemn about?"—resentfully.

"I was thinking," Ruth answered, gently sponging Tot's face and settling the little girl's pillow more comfortably. "Mr. Laneham is very kind.

"I know; the ha'penny's doing; I heard that," Polly giggled. "Suppose he fell in love with me and asked me to marry him. I'm pretty enough"—defiantly.

"Mr. Laneham is quite old," Ruth said rebusingly. "You should not talk in that way; it is not nice, dear.

"All right, but Ruth," Polly returned flirtantly. "What a spoil-sport you are! Don't you wish you'd got my chance, that's all!"

"Indeed I do not! I have no desire for such a post," Ruth returned firmly.

"Is that because the restless Tot, Ruth sighed. She did not like Mr. Laneham: his face was not one to be trusted. Some instinct told her that he was not a good man. But she hesitated to say anything to her uncle. Ruth was eminently fair. It would not be right to do so."

"I wish he had been more positive that she was right in her surmise. So she said very little when Reuben discussed Mr. Laneham's offer with her.

"He is doing his best to make up for poor little Tot's accident. Mr. Trail said, "and it seems to be a good chance for Polly."

"She can always leave if it proves to be unsuitable," his niece agreed.

"Yes." Her uncle bent and kissed her fondly. "It was a blessed day for us, Ruthie, when you came here. Polly doesn't care for housekeeping; you are a born housekeeper."

"I was always fond of domestic work," Ruth said, smiling.

"It is no good pretending—better face the music and have done with it," she continued.

The library at Laneham Towers was, if anything, a trifle gloomy, with its oak paneling, black with age, and diamond-paned windows; but a handsome crimson carpet and curtains to match struck a glowing and cheerful note in the big room.

At the writing-table, piled with papers, sat the owner of it all; opposite him his son, a tall, fair-haired young man, with keen grey eyes and a firm mouth, whose relentless lines spoke of a strong—and perhaps, cruel will.

"You might be mistaken, pater," suggested Godfrey, throwing the end of his cigarette in the fire.

"No, I am not. The girl is Kenelm's daughter; and all this—waving a well-manicured hand—'is hers. We must make, with our living to make... After all these years."

"It doesn't sound very attractive," Godfrey Laneham said.

He had been prospective heir of Laneham Towers since his gold-days, never knowing what it was to want money, with plenty of leisure to enjoy himself; spoiled by all mothers with daughters, as a more than good match.
"Very queer coincidence coming across her in such a way. Has she any idea who she is?"

"Apparently no. She calls herself Gibson-your uncle's second name. My dear boy, you know as well as I do myself that my brother Kenelm made a fool of himself—marrying for love a poor girl called Trail."

"Yes?" nodded his son, "that is old history. Grandpa turned him out with declination to have anything more to do with him, but relented on his death-bed, left everything to the elder son he had not seen for years—or failing him, to his children, if any."

"Exactly: after allowing me to consider that all would be mine better. Had Kenelm been alive, I should have been dependent on his charity, but fortunately he was dead, and his low-born wife and one little girl were supposed to have perished in the flames of a conflagration at a boarding-house in Broomsbury soon afterwards. A mistake, my boy; a ghastly mistake! Kenelm's wife is dead, but not his daughter."

"I don't see how such a mistake could arise."

"Nor I; but I am convinced that the girl is at this moment living in Brixton with her uncle."

"Even so, she may never discover who she is—it's years since grandpater died."

"She may find out any moment" irritably, "I could not live with such a sword hanging over my head."

"What do you propose to do?" demanded Godfrey, rising and walking to the window. "Tell her?"

"Yes," roared Mr. Laneham.

"What then?" The young man turned round and faced his father. "Short of actual murder, I am quite ready to fall in with any ideas you may have on the subject. I have no more fancy for poverty than you."

"Avoiding consideration," Mr. Laneham returned angrily, "Murder. Who spoke of such a thing?" glaring at his son.

"Well, things are pretty desperate, if she really is my cousin. Godfrey retorted.

"That's not the half of it! You are resuming to an unlawful and melodramatic cure!" curtly. "First of all, I shall make absolutely certain; that will be easy, for there is no mis-

Tell your musical friends that we shall publish another selection of National Melodies for the Home.

Taking her; she's the image of Kenelm as a boy. I have offered to take her Cockeyn cousin as a typtip—it will provide an opening for getting better acquainted with the girl and doing her some good."

"You must marry her?"

"What?" The young man swung round impetuously.

"You are surey joking?"

"I was never more serious. It is the only way out."

"I fail to see it. But perhaps you will explain more fully. Do I too her as a humble suppliant at the feet of the owner of Laneham Towers. And, admitting she consents to be my wife, what is to happen afterwards? Having saddled me with a common little upset—"

"She is neither the one nor the other. Once your wife, it would be easy to prevent her finding out who she is; and, did she do so, well, nothing would alter the fact that you are her husband."

"No; drily; "nothing will alter that. Come, pater, what idea have you behind all this? Something, I know."

Mr. Laneham carefully avoided his son's eyes.

"The girl does not look strong, he muttered; "accident is always with her—so many infectious complaints about—she can never tell. And remember, I am a full-blown doctor, though I do not practise."

"And a considerable authority on germs and bacilli, I see. Well, it's quite a neat scheme. Suppose your worst fears are realised; how do you propose to set about things? At present I do not even know by sight the girl that Fate seems determined I am to marry."

"We can arrange all that."

It is rather hard on her," Godfrey opined, "but— it's each for himself in this world, and twenty thousand a year is worth fighting for. There is one contingency you have not thought of."

"Discovery, you mean? Why?"

"Not that. She may decline to marry me."

"Hardly likely. Women spoil you, Godfrey—she will be no exception to the rule."

Mr. Laneham was full of the art of dismissing the matter, busied himself with some letters lying near, and Godfrey's eyes wandered to the big oil painting of the mother he had never known. All his life the young man had lacked the loving care of the woman who, dying at his birth, had deprived him of an influence which would possibly have made all the difference in her son. Brought up by his father to think only of himself, ignorant of what love of a mother could mean, Godfrey Laneham was selfish and worldly, and quite prepared to be unscrupulous methods he would adopt to gain his own ends.

Money and all it bought had been his gods almost from birth; the thought of poverty—even comparative—appalled him.

"All right," he said at last, "I'll do it—if you find she is really Uncle Kenelm's daughter. It seems to me hardly possible such a mistake could be made, considering the thousands that are at stake."

"Mistakes are always possible," his father answered gloomily.

"If you had not run into that wretched child, we should have been in blissful ignorance of the girl's existence all our days," grumbled Godfrey.

"Possibly—and possibly not. It is impossible to say,"

Mr. Laneham returned. "Once she is your wife, we have nothing to fear."

"And I shall have nothing to fear for anything but love. She has no money—no position. You have only to play your cards carefully, Godfrey."

"A very big 'only,'" his son said. "I hope the girl is not an utter outsider."

Godfrey nodded grimly. "He was a rather sentimental picture of Ruth rose before him; but no fraction of pity for her intended fate softened his heart.

CHAPTER IV.
THE LITTLE HOUSEKEEPER.

"WILL you be a good girl and go to sleep while I run out and do the shopping?" asked Ruth, bending over Tot. "Daddy will sit with you, and I'll be as quick as I can."

"Yes," replied the little girl, shutting her eyes. "I'll be good, Ruthie."

It was Saturday night. Polly was, as usual, out, and the necessary shopping for Sunday still remained to be done. Ruth had been far too busy to stir out all day; night was closing in, and her head ached, and the prospect of a walk was attractive.

"Don't hurry back, dear," Mr. Trail said. "Tot will be all right. You look pale with so much nursing—I only wish I could send you and Tot to the sea!" sighing a little, as he counted out the housekeeping money.

"I promised Tom Yorkshire pudding with the beef to- morrow," Ruth said meditatively, "and Steenie particularly wants a jam roly-poly. Yes, I think I can manage it—with a little contriving."

It was a moment dream you her uncle said. "We spend less money and get more to eat."

Ruth smiled, and putting on hat and coat, slipped downstairs, leaving Mr. Trail in charge of the spotlessly neat and fresh sick-room. Armed with a serviceable string bap, the house, and walked briskly towards the high-road. The shops were thronged, and it took her some little time to obtain all she desired. Ruth turned homeward at last, her purse very light and the string bag very heavy.

In order to get home, she left the main road, and plunged into a narrow back street calculated to save her at least five minutes. A crowd just ahead attracted her attention; fearlessly she went on her way. From the centre of the interested idlers came heartrending cries that sent Ruth hot-foot into the middle of it, reckless of consequences.

An exclamation of anger burst from her as her eyes fell on a burly man, clad in corduroy, and evidently beside himself with passion. In one hand he held a thick leather (Continued on page 15.)
GREAT LORD OF HOSTS, ETERNAL.

A HYMN OF INTERCESSION.

H. CULLUM.

Key: E♭.

1. Great Lord of Hosts Eternal, Beneath Whose Kingly sway We live in close allegiance, Until that glorious day When Thou shalt call us higher, To reign with Thee above, And share the joys of Heaven, Where war gives place to love.

2. p Here in Thy House, before Thee, Our hearts feel sad within, pp For soldiers brave are falling, 'Midst battles' awful din. Ah! many a home is darkened, Which once was bright and glad: p Come, Lord, with loving pity, To comfort all the sad.

3. pp Speak tend'rest words to comfort Those mourners who to-day Shed scalding tears for loved ones Who've fallen in the fray.

4. ff When once again in triumph Our flag floats out in peace, Let ev'ry thought of hatred, All strife and vengeance cease: When war's dread fire's extinguished, Grant, for our Empire's good, All nations may be welded In one vast brotherhood.

Published in aid of the Belgian Relief Fund. Copies can be obtained from Mr. H. Cullum, 20, Willowbridge Road, Canningbury, London, N.
THE RED, WHITE, AND BLUE.

A POPULAR PATRIOTIC SONG.

Key G. :s, s, :d :d | r :s f |

1. O Britannia, the pride of the

ocean,
The home of the brave and the free,

The shrine of the sailor's de-

vo-tion,
No land can compare unto thee!

Thy mandates make heroes as-

semble,
With Liberty's bright laurels in view;

Thy banners make tyranny

trouble,
When borne by the Red, White, and Blue!

Three
cheers for the Red, White, and Blue,
Three cheers for the Red, White, and Blue;
Thy

banners make tyranny tremble,
When borne by the Red, White, and Blue!

2. When war spread its wide desolation
And threatened our land to deform,
The Ark then of Freedom's foundation,
Britannia rode safe through the storm:
With her garlands of victory around her,
When so nobly she bore her brave crew,
With her flag floating proudly before her,
The boast of the Red, White, and Blue:
Three cheers for the Red, White, and Blue,
Three cheers for the Red, White, and Blue;
With her flag floating proudly before her:
Three cheers for the Red, White, and Blue.

3. Then our liberties dear let us cherish,
That to gain cost our fathers so dear;
May the fame of their deeds never perish,
But for aye be a beacon to cheer.
May sweet Peace in her arms long enfold us,
To our boast and traditions ever true;
But Great Britain will ne'er shrink from conflict,
While she boasts of the Red, White, and Blue:
Three cheers for the Red, White, and Blue,
Three cheers for the Red, White, and Blue;
But Great Britain will ne'er shrink from conflict:
Three cheers for the Red, White, and Blue.

REST OF THE WEARY, JOY OF THE SAD.
A HYMN FOR THE WEARY AND DISTRESSED.

REV. J. S. B. MONSELL. OLIVER J. JAMES.

Key D. | m : f | r | s : : s | m : f | s : : s : l | t | d ' : m | n | r | t : d | r : : |

1. mp Rest of the weary, joy of the sad, p Hope of the dreary, f Light of the glad;
2. mp Peace of the dying, f Life of the dead;

Home of the stranger, strength to the end, cr Refuge from danger—Saviour and Friend!
Path of the lowly, prize at the end, Breath of the holy—Saviour and Friend!

3. mp When my feet stumble to Thee I'll cry,
Crown of the humble, (f) cross of the high;
cr When my steps wander, over me bend,
Truer and tender, Saviour and Friend!

4. mp Ever confessing Thee, I will raise
cr Unto Thee blessing, glory, and praise:
All my endeavour, world without end,
f Thine to be ever, Saviour and Friend!
ANNIE LAURIE.

ONE OF SCOTLAND'S FAVOURITE SONGS.

1. Maxwell's braes are bonnie, Where early fa's the dew, And it's there that Annie Laurie Gied me her promise true, Gied me her promise true, Which ne'er forgot will be; And for bonnie Annie Laurie, I'd lay me down and dee!

2. Her brow is like the snowdrift, Her neck is like the swan, Her face it is the fairest That e'er the sun shone on, That e'er the sun shone on; And dark blue is her e'e; And for bonnie Annie Laurie I'd lay me down and dee!

3. Like dew on the gowan lying Is the fa' o' her fairy feet; And, like winds in summer sighing, Her voice is low and sweet, Her voice is low and sweet, And she's a' the world to me, And for bonnie Annie Laurie I'd lay me down and dee!
AN ANGEL UNAWARES

(Continued from Page 10)

strap, in the other a screaming, writhing boy, whose ragged clothes hardly covered his painfully-thin form.

With the buckle end of the strap the man was besmearing his face.

"'E'll kill 'im long afore the bobbies come along," a woman standing by Ruth said. "When Bill Evans 'as 'ad a drop o' drink 'e don't know what 'e do—'e's mad-raving soft.

"Do why do you one of you stop him?" asked Ruth indignantely. "How can you men stand her, and watch without moving a finger to interfere?"

The man she addressed shuffled his feet uneasily, blinking his eyes as they met the scorn in hers. "We don't want to go to 'ospital," he said sullenly. "Bill Evans is a terror 'en 'e's drunk.

"Cowards!" Ruth's clear voice rang cut loudly. "He shall not do it! Hold these, please?"

Into the arms of the nearest bystander she thrust all her parcels. The woman beside her seized her arm. "What are you going to do? 'E'll kill yer."

"I mean to put a stop to this! He shall not kill that lad!"

Ruth shook off the dirty detaining hand, and sprang into the centre of the group.

Bill Evans, a tall, pale-faced man with a glance that struck terror into the hearts of those nearest him, the bully was broad in proportion, with fists and arms that matched his great bulk. A formidable adversary at any time, now, mad with drink and anger, he was one to be feared. And yet Ruth never flinched.

"Give him back!" she commanded, "and let the boy go. He is only half-conscious. You have nearly killed him, bully and coward that you are!"

"I'll kill 'im quite!" bellowed Bill. "Stole my baccy, c—did—young limb!"

He wrenched his arm from Ruth's grasp, and took a fresh grip of the limp and bleeding bundle of rags in his grasp.

Ruth flung both her arms round the lad's neck, sheltering him entirely with her own body.

"Bill," she said softly but clearly, and the silence in Dunt's Court was intense, "would you hit a woman who has never done you any harm?"

Bill's mouth fell open. He had hit many women in his time, as the bruises of his patient little wife testified, but somehow he found it impossible to let the cruel strap fall on this brave girl with the steady eyes.

"Let go o'—im!" he cried hoarsely, "lest I do yer a mischief!"

"No!" she replied. "You cannot hit him—it will be murder to strike him with this stick!"

With courage, Bill Evans pushed his victim from him. "She's got pluck," he said, "she's ain't there a man who will stand up to me?"

He spat on his hands and cast a belligerent eye over the fascinated spectators, his keen ears astretch for the least of derision that might come.

"Wot, ain't none o' yer got this gal's spirit?" he demanded. "Come along—I'll take any one o' yer on!"

"I accept your challenge," came the drawled answer. "I will fight you, Bill Evans, and teach you a lesson."

He threw the ring stamped, a slim young man, clad in immaculate—tail-coat and tail, with light kid gloves on his hands.

"Allo, my bantam!" jeered the bully, dancing unsteadily round. "Yer own mother won't know yer w'en I've adone."

"That remains to be seen," was the unflustered answer. "I've been watching you, my man, and if you had laid a finger on this brave girl, I'd have killed you.

"Ho, ho! Words are cheap, but deeds speak louder," Evans retorted.

Godfrey Laneham, a light-weight champion, smiled, and approached Ruth, kneeling on the dirty cobblestones to support the inert head of the boy she had rescued.

"Please," she said, "do not fight!"

"I must," he said, "and I assure you Mr. Evans will be all the better for it."

With that Godfrey removed his coat, hat and gloves, and moved forward with easy nonchalance.

"Read?" he asked. "I will—or ask these gentlemen to see fair play and keep watch for any policeman and may be about. Come on."

The bully came—with a whirring rush, to be met by a blow that sent him sprawling. Of the fight that followed Mr. Evans has only the vaguest idea to this day. He still has an uneasy memory of iron fists that seemed to come all ways at once, of a slender, elusive figure, figures just out of reach, of sickening blows that made his head ring, and of a final utter collapse; and the reawakening to the amazing fact that he was a badly beaten man, with no more fight left in him.

By the time the terror of the squalid neighbourhood had scrambled to his unsteady feet, completely sobered, and with an eye that was rapidly turning all the colours of the rainbow, Mr. Laneham had resumed his coat—just as the word "Police" ran round.

The crowd melted like magic, leaving only Ruth and her charge, the victor, and the groaning loser, painfully dainting his blowed hand.

"It's quite all right, constable," Mr. Laneham said to the man in blue. "This—er—gentleman and I have had a little disagreement. Here is my card, and I should be obliged if you will summon an ambulance and take this boy to the hospital; he is rather badly knocked about."

The bewildered constable looked at the card—and also at Bill Evans's variegated countenance.

"Very good, sir," he returned doubtfully, "but it’s quite all right, Mr. Evans insisted.

A coin exchanged hands, and the constable departed to summon the ambulance.

"If you will allow me, I will see you home," Mr. Laneham said addressing Ruth. "If I might, I'd like to see that you're the bravest girl I've ever met."

Ruth smiled.

"I was in God's hands," she returned reverently. "This poor lad is coming round, I think."

I fancy Mr. Evans won't be quite so bloodthirsty for the future," Godfrey remarked, "letting a glance at that gentleman, who, bloodstained and bruised, staggered across to them.

"Twas a fair fight. I'd like to 'eak 'ands with the lady."

Ruth rose, and placed her hand in his huge hairy paw.

"There is no glory gained in hitting those who can't hit back," she said.

The man looked at the boy, and for the first time a feeling of shame filled his heart. He mumbled uninterrosingly, and shuffled off.

When the ambulance had gone, Mr. Laneham prepared to escort Ruth home.

"If I hadn't lost my way," he said, "I should have missed a thoroughly enjoyable fight. Perhaps you can do a bit of Elmhurst in the future."

"Of course I can. I live there with my uncle, Mr. Trail. My name is Gibson—Ruth Gibson.

The expensive cigarette-case in Godfrey's hands clattered on to the pavement. He looked at her, amazed.

She had re-collected her parcels by this time, and was well dressed.

"Good Heavens! Is it possible?" the young man ejaculated; then, recovering himself, he took possession of the string bag. "I'll carry that. I'm Godfrey Laneham. My father did his best to do for a little girl—"

"It's my money."

"Yes: I came down to see if she was getting on all right and to give this letter to a Miss Polly Trail."

"We live quite close," Ruth said quietly. "And Tot is better."

They walked along for some minutes in silence.

"I say, Miss Gibson, do you usually go about championing the oppressed," he asked, "and endangering your own life? Do you realise that that man was entirely beside himself—not responsible for what he might do?"
"Yes, I saw that,"—simply.  
And yet you never hesitated."  
"My life was in God's hands, to do with as He pleased," she returned. "I do my best to serve my Master."  
Godfrey Lanham whistled very softly between his teeth.  
"Before we are," Ruth observed. "Will you please hold these?"  
She handed him a bag of apples, and, producing a latchkey, opened the door and led him into the narrow hall.  
"I will call my uncle," she said; "but before I do so, I must thank you for—"  
"Blackening a bully's eye," he put in. "I will not see what you are talking about, Miss Gibson. I knew I was pretty safe in doing so; I'm a champion light-weight boxer. Bill Evans hadn't much chance against science."  
"None the less, it was brave of you," she insisted, and vanished upstairs.  
"Poor earth did I tell her that?" muttered Godfrey.  "Why didn't I let her exalt me into a hero? It would have been an excellent beginning."  

CHAPTER V.  
AT LANCHEM TOWERS.  

[Image 0x0 to 476x711]  

"DECLARE it's a shame! Ruth has all the luck," said Polly softly. "Why should they ask her to take Tot to Lanchem Towers? I'm her sister, and—"  
"That's enough, Polly!" Mr. Trail, entering the room unobserved and overhearing his daughter's speech, frowned. "Ruthie wants a change. She's been working hard for us, and nursing Tot. Besides, Mr. Lanchem invited her.  
"You will stay with her, remain behind and work myself to death in his horrid office," fumed Polly.  
"Lanchem & Son were large provision contractors, and the girls for several weeks had been employed at the head office of the admirably managed and very successful concerns."  

Tom, busy on his lessons, laughed as his father left the room.  
"Old Lanchem's got eyes in his noddle," he said.  
"Ruth's worth half a dozen of you, my girl!"—with irritating-brotherly candour.  

Before Polly could give utterance to the sharp speech that trembled on her lips, Ruth herself came in, looking decidedly disturbed.  
"Tom, have you been up to my room and meddled with my things?" she asked.  
"I didn't know," said the boy instantly. "Why should I?"  
"I thought perhaps you might. I cannot find an old desk in which I keep some papers and a few trinkets of no value whatever. I am sure it was in my box."  

Tom thought he was so orderly you never missed anything. He specked Polly, whose pretty cheeks were deeply flushed. "I dare say you've forgotten, and put it somewhere else."  
"I am perfectly certain I have not," said Ruth. "It is very curious."  
"Well, if the contents are of no value, none of us are likely to steal it," snapped Polly. "I'll go upstairs and have a look round. I dare say I shall find it."  
She ran out of the room as she spoke. If Ruth had been able to follow her movements, she would have been-concluded.  

First of all, Polly went to her own small and very untidy bed-chamber. Falling on her knees, she unearthed a packet of papers from the bottom of an overfull drawer, then from the top of the cupboard she produced the missing desk and hastily replaced the contents, locking it with a key of her own, for the little box was cheap and the lock of a very ordinary pattern.  
"What an idiot I was not to put it all back last night!" muttered Polly. "I wonder what on earth Mr. Lanchem will say about this rubbish for. Anyway, it's brought me five pounds, and I can have that new dress now. Wilfred will hardly be able to keep his eyes off me. He says my colour is blue, so blue it shall be."  
Miss Trail crept to the door and listened a minute; then, seeing that her way was clear, whisked into her cousin's room and began to make a great search with much clatter and noise.  
"Ruth—Ruth!" she cried presently. "Is this the desk?"  

Downstairs went Polly, carrying her supposed find, and burst into the kitchen, where Ruth was making a meal.  
"Well, yes, that is the desk," Ruth replied wonderingly. "Where did you find it?"  
"Did it ever enter your head to look on the top of the wardrobe?" demanded Polly evasively.  
It certainly did not. I am quite sure I never put it there," Ruth said and nodded.  
"Whoever put it there, here it is. A fuss for nothing!" Polly dumped the old-fashioned box ungently on the table, and took possession of a chair, watching her cousin's busy hands.  

A bright fire blazed in the shining grate, the tins and pots whirled and simmered. The kitchen was now the most comfortable room in the house, and Mr. Trail insisted on having his supper there, to Polly's disgust, for that young lady's ideas were growing more and more what she called "genteeel," thanks to the influence of Mr. Wilfred Bates; Mr. Lanchem's dashing manager, whose typist Polly had become. Already she built castles in the air of all she would do when she became Mrs. Wilfred Bates, with servants of her own, and as many clothes as she desired.  

Now, idly watching Ruth, she turned up her pretty little nose.  
"I can't understand you liking mental work," she observed loftily. "I mean to have plenty of people to do it for me some day; but I verily believe you'd rather cook and clean, and never work in the library, than go to theatres and dances and enjoy yourself."  
"I like laughed.  
"I like to enjoy myself," she said, "but not in that way. Theatres have no attraction for me. Mother and I have to have on rags and piece it together, and I'm a lovely place. In the winter we went to lectures the vicar gave, and belonged to a Reading Society. Oh, there was plenty to do. I was never at a loss."  
"Things I wouldn't do,—stale and dry. A picnic is all right, if there's lots of other people there; but lectures—poor Polly snapped her fingers.  
"I wish you'd come to one with me," Ruth suggested.  
"I know you'd enjoy it."  
"Not! I've made dad and the boys go to church, and started prayers night and morning—that's quite enough. You leave me to my own ideas, and I don't interfere with you. I'm only surprised you consent to stay at Lanchem Towers. I should have thought it was far too worldly for you," finished Polly loftily.  

I shall enjoy it," was the gentle answer. "It is very kind of you. Mr. Lanchem and Tot want a change; she looks dreadfully washed-out after her accident, poormite"—glancing at the little girl, who sat on the hearthrug playing with a costly doll bestowed on her by Godfrey, who had called several times at Booloore. Ruth closed her eyes and smiled on the rich and comfort of her father.  

Thanks to Polly's unscrupulous assistance, Mr. Lanchem had satisfied himself that Ruth was no other than his elder brother's child—owner of Lanchem Towers and several hundred flourishing shops in various parts of the Kingdom. The invitation to stay with them was the result of long consideration and deep thought. A distant relation of his dead wife was coming to act as hostess and to chaperone Ruth. Mrs. Belmont was an elderly widow, who, spending all her money on the pursuit of 'comforts and fortunes' and 'pleasures,' was in a constant state of semi-bankruptcy, and only too pleased to accept Hedworth Lanchem's invitation for an indefinite period of luxury and ease.  

Poor Mr. Trail, while heartily insisting that Ruth should have the offered change, contemplated with private despair the dirt and discomfort of Polly's rule.  

Two days later, Mr. Trail saw his niece and small daughter safely off. He was proud of Ruth, and decidedly flattered by this invitation, which showed a certain amount of condescension on Hedworth Lanchem's part.  

Lanchem Towers was only thirty miles from London, and Ruth found herself on the clean-looking platform of the little country station in a miraculously short time. A smartly attired footman approached her.  
"For Lanchem Towers, madam?" he inquired respectfully.  
"Yes," she returned, yielding her handbag. "Come, Tot!"
Tot, lifted into the big motor waiting outside, could contain herself no longer.

"It’s a fairy-tale!” she cried. “Like Cinderella, Ruthie! What does that man wear gold for?"

"His livery, dear."

"Is he a king?—much impressed.

The footman, stiling a grin, swung into his place, and the car started, making very little of the five miles to Lancham Towers.

Mrs. Belmont, acting on Mr. Lancham’s express instructions that she was to be particularly nice to the new arrivals, came into the hall to welcome them. She knew nothing whatever about the girl, and, expecting someone very different, stared in surprise at Ruth.

“What a little doll!” the lady thought. “She must be rich, or Hedworth would never have asked her here. He isn’t the sort to waste politeness on a mere nobody”—shrewdly.

She smiled sweetly, and kissed both Ruth and Tot in her best manner.

“You would like tea at once, and to go to your room afterwards?” Mrs. Belmont suggested hospitably.

“Thank you. If she may, Tot will go straight to bed when she has had tea.”

“I understand you have not brought a nurse. One of the housemaids will wait on the child, and look after her.”

“What’s a ‘housemaid’?” demanded Tot ignorantly.

“Ruthie puts me to bed, and dresses me, and makes the beds, and cooks and—oh, lots of things!” finished the little girl.

Mrs. Belmont glanced uneasily at the footman, woodily offering cakes and other good things, her keen eyes noting that Ruth was not in the very least disconcerted by the outspoken comments of her small cousin. She was perfectly at her ease, and her bearing was modest and charming.

Hedworth—Mrs. Belmont tackled Mr. Lancham the moment he came in—“who is this girl you have asked down? Is she rich—an heiress?”

He looked a little startled.

“An heiress!” he repeated. “What put that into your head?”

“Well, I thought she must be, and that you wanted for Godfrey.”

Don’t think, Hester. Just carry out my instructions. That what you’re here for,” Mr. Lancham returned shortly.

Mrs. Belmont shrugged her shoulders.

“It’s very funny!” she said peevishly. “The child talks as though Miss Gibson were a sort of servant. I can’t understand it.”

“Leave it at that”—quietly.

“But you have a reason for asking her here?”—persistently.

“I have—and a vital one, be sure of that,” Mr. Lancham turned away.

“I’m not quite such a fool as I look!” muttered Mrs. Belmont. “Of course it’s money! It will pay me to be civil to her. He’d never throw such a pretty girl in Godfrey’s way otherwise.”

Ruth’s arrival at Lancham Towers had taken place on a Friday evening. Saturday was spent very pleasantly in a long motor drive, with luncheon and tea at picturesque village inns, and on the Sunday morning Godfrey greeted his guests cheerfully.

“We’ll motor out to Penhull after breakfast,” he began. “There are some rippling rains—”

“Not to-day’s case,” Ruth said, colouring.

“Why not? Are you tired after yesterday?”—very much astonished.

“It is Sunday”—gently.

“Of course it is what of it?”

“I am going to church,” she said.

“Oh, I see! Yes, of course. But afterwards we might start.”

“I would rather not”—firmly.

“Mean you don’t think it right?”

“I think, Mr. Lancham, that we must not grudge one day a week to the worship of the Master we serve. At home, when I lived with my dear mother, Sunday was the day we loved best.”

Godfrey whistled under his breath.

“Do just as you like, of course. The village church is two miles away. You must take the motor. No! You would rather walk?” And an amused smile played about his thin lips.

“I do not say I would prefer to walk, but the servants naturally wish to go to church, so you give them as little to do as possible.”

Godfrey stared. Never in his whole life had he considered the wishes or desires of any servant. They were paid to wait on one, and there was an end of the matter.

He was lounging lazily in the hall when Ruth, accompanied by Tot, came downstairs, carrying her prayer-book.

“Will you not come, too?” she asked, and raised her lovely eyes to his.

As much to his own surprise as anyone else’s, Godfrey

POLLY RAMMED ALL THE PAPER INTO HER BAG, JUST AS MR. BATES TRIED FORTHWITH TO OBTAIN POSSESSION OF THEM. HE CLUTCHED HER ARM WITH CHEVAL STRENGTH. “GIVE THEM TO ME!” HE CRIED.

found himself agreeing. It was years and years since he had been to church; save to occasionally attend fashionable weddings, he had not entered one since his schooldays. During the service he covertly watched Ruth. How pretty she was, and how sincerely devout! There was something about her very different from the smart girls with whom he was accustomed to associate.

The afternoon brought an influx of visitors. Lancham Towers was within an easy motor drive from London, and their friends found it a pleasant meeting-place.

After tea, bridge was proposed by Mrs. Belmont.

“The very thing!” a lively girl agreed. “You will play, Godfrey?”

“No,” he said. “You forget, Lillie, it is Sunday. Another time! Come and see the orchid houses.”

“But you’ve often played on a Sunday before!” protested Lillie, taken aback.

“Why on earth—”

“There are six other days on which we can play. Surely it’s not too much to give it a rest one in seven?”

Hedworth Lancham, overhearing, grinned.

“Splendid, my boy—splendid!” he muttered. “You’re playing up top-hole to the girl. You’ll get a walk-over.”

Godfrey shook off his father’s hand impatiently, and
CHAPTER VI.
THE REFINING INFLUENCE.

“UPon my soul, I’d no idea the boy had it in him!” Mr. Lanchem stood at the window of his own particular study, watching Ruth in the garden, accompanied by Godfrey. “He ought to have gone on the stage. He is a better actor than many I’ve seen. Ha, ha, ha! It’s funny—really funny—to see the supposed change in my son! Church on Sundays, all secular amusements strictly taboo, and no such writers—family prayers, morning and evening! And the girl is ready to drop into his hand like a ripe plum, thinking that her influence alone is responsible for this reformation of a worldly young man.”

Then his face became graver.

“Shan’t you spoil until she’s safely his wife? After all, she is a nice girl. I am almost sorry to play such a trick on her.”

Mr. Lanchem glanced round, as though afraid such unaccustomed thoughts might be by some extraordinary means overheard. He was not in the habit of regretting his actions.

Meantime, out in the sunny garden, Godfrey, untouched by her half-open rose, mused content and happy. The girl’s lovely face flushed pink. She looked adorable, he thought—a half-open rose. Into her grave eyes a great joy crept.

“You love me?” she repeated unsteadily.

“Tell me it’s all my heart,” she answered. “Who could help it? My love of you, how sweet and dear are you? Don’t say ‘No,’ Ruth! I swear I’ll try to be more worthy of you. Dear love, you have opened my eyes as to what I really am. I’ve neglected my religious duties. I fear I have almost forgotten the Master I am supposed to serve, and I’ve thought only of myself. Ruth, you have been, and will be, my salvation. Marry me’—passionately—and I will worship and adore you all the days of my life!”

Ruth turned, her eyes were full of tears.

“Cry, woman!” she whispered. “I—I—love you—and you must not give yourself so dreadful a character—I won’t allow you to speak in such a way of my—future husband.”

Her voice dropped to the merest whisper on the last two words. The next moment she was in his arms.

“My own—my precious sweetheart!” the young man exclaimed; and drawing her close he kissed her. Timidly Ruth’s lips met—pressed them lovingly, blushing at her own temerity.

During the weeks of her sojourn at Lanchem Towers she had learned to love him with all the strength of her nature, seeing his faults, knowing him far from perfect, yet unerringly detecting the good in him.

Toll me again. Say ‘Godfrey, I love you—I love you’ be commanded her. Ruth obeyed.

“Oh, my dear,” she cried, her head on his shoulder. “I hope and pray I shall never disappoint you. Are you quite, quite sure you want to marry such a nobody? You have so much money, I have nothing. ‘Except your nature, you have no lovely self. Disappoint me? What nonsense! As to the money, why, Ruthie, until I knew you, I looked upon it merely as a medium for luxury, for enjoying myself. You have taught me differently, taught me that it can be for me and my happiness. And dear Ruthie, I shall never forget my first sight of you—so slim and so brave, facing that great bully bravely and fearlessly. Oh, you darling! I cannot live without you! You must marry me as soon as you can.”

I’ll see you”—demurely. “Uncle Reuben wants me, too”—with a mischievous little smile.

“Not half so badly as I do,” he insisted.

A considerable time passed, then Mr. Lanchem, no longer able to control his impatience, strode, apparently casually, in the direction of the garden. He discovered them at the extreme end of the garden, too much occupied with each other to have eyes or ears for his approach. He coughed loudly, and Ruth tore herself free of Godfrey’s arms, and faced him with blushes and smiles.

“Well though Mr. Lanchem said, “deeds speak louder than words—I am I to congratulate you both?”

“Yes, please,” his son said quietly. “Ruth has promised to marry me—as soon as I like”—audaciously.

“With your consent—and my uncle’s,” put in Ruth gently. “I hope you are not disappointed.”

“Godfrey must please me. Since he loves you, Ruth, I am quite ready to welcome my daughter.” And Edworth Lanchem held out his hand and kissed her on the forehead. “I need hardly say that I’ve been expecting this,” he added genially.

Tot’s voice calling her drew Ruth to her immediately, leaving father and son alone.

“Well done, boy—very well done!” the elder man said heartily. “Upon my word, you are a fine actor! Anyone would think it genuine—the real thing.”

“It is the real thing,” Godfrey said very quietly.

“Ah—oh—I see what you mean—art equal to nature.”

“I mean that I really love her”—firmly. Mr. Lanchem stared at him.

“Do you mean this, Godfrey?”

“I was never more in earnest. She is the whole world to me, and always will be.”

The statement deprived Mr. Lanchem of breath. He could only stare at the speaker in silence.

“What are you going to do?” he questioned, in an uncertain voice.

“Marry her—if she’ll have me—after I’ve told her the truth.”

“Good gracious! The boy is mad—crazy! Tell her the truth? Ridiculous! Since she is to be your wife, it would be quite unnecessary. If you have really fallen in love with her, well—there is no necessity to go to extremes”—significantly.

Godfrey hesitated. He greatly feared to lose Ruth’s love and respect; the impulse that made him tell her everything was the outcome of her gentle influence. Mr. Lanchem’s suggestion tempted him; all his life he had taken the line of the least resistance.

His father, quick to read the expression of his hand- somely continued in histrionically.

“Ruth doesn’t care about money, except to help others; and if by any unfortunate chance she should learn how matters stand, why, what could be easier or simpler? We are as much amazed and surprised as she is. My dear Godfrey, no man would be such a fool, under the circumstances, as to deprive himself of money—to leave himself dependent on the whim of a woman, as we would be, were I foolish enough to agree to your proposal.”

Ruth, returning with Tot, interrupted their conversation. Her lover, dissatisfied and hesitating, took the child in his arms. This new impulse stirring in his heart were as yet very weak and uncertain shook his by the long-established weeds of selfishness.

It was so easy—just to be silent. He would think about it, there was no immediate hurry, so he decided.

Mrs. Belmont heard the news without much surprise. Of course she had known that new impulses stirring in his heart were as yet very weak and uncertain shook his by the long-established weeds of selfishness.

It was so easy—just to be silent. He would think about it, there was no immediate hurry, so he decided.

“Never you mind,” Polly retorted, unwilling to confess that in Ruth’s absence she had opened her desk, and, reading carefully its contents, stumbled on a clue that
had made it possible for her to discover something very near the truth.

"Geet! Just fancy! Old Laneham will pay a pretty penny for silence."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, that explains everything, silly! That stuck-up son of his no more loves your cousin than I do. Just going to make her, so if she finds out he has at least a share in the cash—so?"

"Ruth thinks he loves her," Polly said, "and she thinks no end of him."

"Wonder if she would marry him if she knew? But it's all right. We'll be in far more by lying low and saying nothing to her. Just you leave it to me, Polly—I'll settle with him."

"It's blackmail, isn't it?" the girl asked fearfully, frightened now by the blaze she had started. "I thought, if Ruth was rich, she'd give us money."

"Don't bother your little head!" Mr. Bates was very well pleased with himself. "We'll get married, dear, and have a high old time—plenty of money and nothing to do for it. Laneham will see that. Why, we're made for life!"

"No!" Quite suddenly Polly snatched the papers, her good angel triumphant. "I don't want to live on money got in such a beastly way. I don't know what I shall do. Ruth would be miserable if she thought Godfrey did not love her. I've often said nasty things about her, and been jealous and horrid, but it's only fair she should know."

"Don't be a fool! A pretty friendly trick to tell her the man she loves is a wrong—un—a nice way of appreciating her! She'll not give you a "thank you"—and you never marry for life!"

Polly hesitated, a fury of indecision in her heart. Wilfred Bates was very handsome, she was quite sure that she loved him; and yet Polly's crooked little mind could not bring herself to agree to her lover's infamous proposal. Unconsciously she had been influenced by her gentle cousin, and had made quite a struggle to keep the house tidy during her absence.

She rammmed all the papers into her bag, just as Mr. Bates sprang forward and tried forcibly to gain possession of them. He clutched her arm with cruel strength.

"Give them to me!" he snarled. "I will not!" Polly struggled like a veritable fury.

"Let me go!"

With a final wrench she tore herself free, and dashed out of the room. Panting and dishevelled, she rushed out into the corridor, sobbing as she went.

"I shall tell Ruth the truth!" she decided. The tears rushed to her eyes. "Wilfred will never speak to me again! Oh dear! Oh dear!"

Ruth had insisted on returning to her uncle's house to prepare for her wedding, and she opened the door herself when Polly too agitated to remember her latch-key, rang and knocked.

"What is the matter, dear?" Ruth exclaimed, amazed to see the girl at that hour. "Are you ill?"

Polly shook her head, and led the way into the little kitchen.

"Ruth," she said vehemently, "is the truth always best?"

"Yes—firmly."

"Then, Ruth, you love Godfrey Laneham?"

"With all my heart. Polly dearest, what is it?"

"He—oh, he's a sneak—a thief!" burst out Polly. "He's marrying you for your money."

"But I haven't any."

"Yes, you have—and lots! It's yours; not his!"

Ruth's fair face hardened.

"Polly, you are surely crazy! Do, please, explain. How can Godfrey's money be mine until we are married? Then it is different, of course." And Ruth's tender smile made her radiantely beautiful.

The girl's face died white, when Polly blurted out her story. First, how her suspicions had been aroused by Mr. Laneham's offer of a five-pound note if she—Polly—would get him a sight of all papers belonging to Ruth.

"Then I got hold of his keys," Polly went on, "and went through his drawers. I knew there was something in the wind, and I was right. Your father was Kenelm Gibson Laneham, the elder brother, and everything is yours."

Polly was naturally sharp; she had cleverly pieced the evidence together. Ruth, utterly confounded, stared at the proofs.pushed triumphantly under her nose."

"There isn't much doubt," her cousin said.

"I'm afraid not."

"Afraid! Good gracious! Don't you want to be rich?" gasped Polly incredulously.

"Polly, I don't want to be alone for a little time. I—must think—think.

Polly stared at the set, white face.

"Ruth, I didn't want to hurt you—I didn't know what to do. Wilfred wanted me to be silent, but—but—"

"You have done quite rightly, dear. Take Tot with you, please!" Ruth spoke as one walking in her sleep, and Polly, much alarmed, retired with the indignant Tot. Left alone, Ruth fell on her knees, and her head sank forward on her clasped hands.

"Almighty God, help me—help me!" she prayed.

For a long time she knelt there. No one came near her. Polly, beside herself with fear and pity, mounted guard over the door, driving everyone away. It was growing dark when Godfrey, dusty and pale, demanded admittance.

"Where is Ruth?" he asked.

"In there," Polly replied curtly. "Oh, yes, you may as well go in—"

The young man hardly heard her. Opening the door softly, he called his beloved so tenderly that Polly's heart swelled. Was he really Ruth?"

"Ruthie, my darling, are you there?"

She rose quietly to her feet.

"Yes, I am here. Come in, Godfrey."

He closed the door behind him. The little kitchen was only dimly lit. The only light he found another time Godfrey might have wondered why Ruth had no light; just now he was too full of his mission. Going straight to her, he drew her into his arms.

"Darling," he said, "I have come to tell you something. It is quite likely, when I have finished, you will never speak to me again. I thought I could keep silent, I meant to; but I find I cannot. Oh, Ruth, Ruth, what will you say when you learn how I have deceived you?"

"Tell me"—very low.

"The whole story burst from his lips.

"I love you, I love you. I want you. I want to marry you because I love you. I could not help doing so when I knew you. Ruth, the money is all yours. We're only impostors, my father and I, and I have no excuse to offer. What are you going to say to me?"

He stood like a prisoner at the bar awaiting sentence, and Ruth laid her hand on his arm.

"Godfrey, I know," she whispered.

"You knew?"

"Yes. But, oh, thank God, you told me yourself, my dearest my dear! She broke into a storm of tears, and threw her arms round his neck.

"Do you mean you can possibly forgive me?" he asked, dazed and trembling.

"Ain't I to be less merciful than my Heavenly Father—less forgiving? You remember, Godfrey—unto seventy seven times seven."

"My little saint, you—you love me still?"

"I shall always love you"—with sweet seriousness. "And as to the money—why, we will share it, and do all the things we can for those who are unforgotten."

Polly was crouching on the stairs when at last the kitchen door opened.

"Well?" she asked breathlessly.

"It is all right, dear," Ruth whispered. "Godfrey told me himself."

"And you've forgiven him? Ruth, I wish I was as good as you are. I will try hard for the future." And Polly, kissing her cousin, registered a silent vow to take her as a model.

"Ruth, how can I thank God sufficiently for your love and trust?" Godfrey said, in a moved voice.

"By loving Him with all your heart, dear, and trying to serve Him," whispered Ruth. "Let us thank Him now for all His mercies."

And Godfrey fell on his knees beside her, and uttered his first real prayer.

The End.

Next week: LOVE FOUND WANTING, a grand complete story by ELIZABETH M. MOON. Ready on Monday next.
A BRIGHT BEACON AMID THE DARKNESS.

M DEAR FRIENDS,—In speaking of the good that men do, the poet has declared that it is “oft interred with their bones,” and that it is the evil deeds which live on and by which men are remembered.

But surely this is a view which cannot be upheld. When the smoke and ashes and confusion of a great colliery disaster had all been dispelled, and things again began to assume, at all events in outward lives, their customary order, there remained an indelible memory fixed in the hearts of all those who had been bereaved and were connected with that catastrophe.

And the memory was just this: people remembered that it was a time when everyone was kind to everyone else. There were no harsh words, there was no lack of the divine quality of sympathy, but each one, although with heart-broken grief and loss, went about doing what he or she could do to help the stricken friend and neighbour.

About such a sorrow, borne in such a spirit, there is something of the divine; it is as though it were the lesson that the disaster had to teach.

In this greater calamity which has come upon us there has been evidenced the same splendid spirit of comradeship, and I want my readers to realise, if they cannot don the King’s uniform and fight for the honour of their country, that they can go about wearing the badge and symbol of service in the ranks of the army of the King of Kings.

There is work to be done binding up the broken heart, which can only be done by one whose heart knoweth its own bitterness and who has tasted of the cup of sorrow. Let those who are stricken find ease for their aching hearts in going to a stricken friend, taking a message of comfort and hope.

I WAS recently reading how, on one of the Orkney Islands, a great rock—Lonely Rock, it is called, and is very dangerous to vessels—puts right out into the sea. In one of the fishermen’s huts on this island coast one night, sat a young girl, busy at her work at the spinning-wheel, looking out upon the dark, angry waves, and the skudding clouds.

All night she watched and toiled at her wheel, and when the morning broke one of the fishing boats had not returned to the harbour. It was missing out on the deep, and the boat was her father’s.

A little way further up that rugged coast the fishermen found her father’s body, washed up by the tide. His boat had been wrecked on the Lonely Rock.

The young girl watched by her father’s body, as was the custom with the people of her lonely isle, until it was laid in its last resting-place, and then, when the night came, she arose and got a lamp and set it in her easement.

There it was, a little bright beacon amid the darkness, and cast on the storm-tossed waters of the deep the fishermen could see the signal of their grief and loss. Her act of love was prompted by the sorrow she felt at the death of her father. Out of the seed of her great grief there sprang up a lovely tender plant of sympathy and love for others in peril. Her eyes were opened by the anguish she suffered. That is the lesson which I know is being learned in many a home in these sad days. It is the gleam which is shedding radiance beneath the dark cloud, a radiance which will shine when the cloud has passed; and by it we shall see more clearly and understand.

I REMEMBER a true story which is told of Phillips Brooks.

He had a dear friend, a little girl of five years of age, and the two were often together. When Phillips Brooks died and the little girl was told that she would see him no more on earth, and that he had gone to Heaven to live with the angels, she said to her mother:

“Mamma, how very glad the angels will be.”

I think that remark was a wonderful tribute to the saintly Christian character of Phillips Brooks. If, during these days, we can so live that when we die people will think that the angels in Heaven are to be congratulated on having our company we shall have done our duty to our nation and our fellow-countrymen at a time when every bright Christian man and woman had great need to exercise his and her helpfulness.

TWO boys were heard laughing together, and a gentleman, meeting them, was curious to know what made them so happy.

“Happy,” answered the elder of the two. “Why, I makes Jim glad, and gets glad myself.”

And I think there is no truer word than this for all who are sorrowful and despairing now. Never mind your own grief, put it aside for the moment and go and endeavour to make someone else happy. Consolation and that peace of mind which comes from the Giver of all good, will be vouchsafed to you. Making others happy is the surest way of helping yourself in a time of trial and difficulty. It is the road by which we shall be led away from our own numbing grief and loss.

“Catch and radiate the sunshine,
Pass along the word of cheer;
Give a tender smile or token
To the sad ones far and near.
Scatter sunshine, brother, sister,
Sympathise with smile or tear;
Make this sudden’ world the brighter,
For your tender words of cheer.”

I think the verse above is the one you have in mind, R. D. M. (Cheekbeaston). The very kind thoughts you have expressed, tell me that you are endeavouring to carry out the message that it speaks. Thank you! The whole army of encouragers—and a noble army they are—were never more needed than to-day, and I hope that you will go forward in the good work that you have undertaken at no inconsiderable sacrifice to yourself. Service for the young, such as you are doing, is of the greatest value, for it is to them that we must look to carry on the work when for us the Angelsus has sounded.


Your sincere friend,

JOHN EARNEST.
The pathetic story of a rector's daughter, who married against her father's wish. Told by herself.

I laughed shrilly. My laughter ended with a sob, and then I felt this girl's eyes fixed on me. She was holding me tightly. She tried to sympathise, tried to calm me; but suddenly a thought came to me, and I wrenched myself free. I stood before her, looking her in the face.

"And you," I said, "you have heard of this shame that has come to me. Do—you—if you believe it, too?"

She did not answer me.

"An answer! I cried furiously. "Do you believe that I am what they say I am?"

"I did believe it," I saw no reason to doubt it," she said. "I thought of you as a young woman, a girl married to a man much older than you were. I thought of you as tired, chilled perhaps by his lack of love for you, and turning to another man—"

"Oh, don't—don't—don't!" I cried. "Don't! It is not true! It is all a lie! I never cared for any other man but my husband in my life—never! I loved him—loved him—loved him! You—you don't understand how I loved him. I would have given him anything. Even willingly. It would have seemed a poor thing to have given, so great my love for him was. And—and that other man—that other man—"

I laughed bitterly, I know, yet still I laughed, for I was heart-whole so far as the other man was concerned. I wish I thought of him with a pitying contempt could afford to laugh. "That other man, I helped him. He came whining to me for help. He was in fear for his liberty. He had done some wild, foolish, wrong thing; he had come and asked me for money to help him. And because I was sorry for him, because I felt a contemptuous pity for him, I helped him. And now—now they think—you—all the world thinks—"

"I don't—I don't!" she cried. "I don't! I believe in you still that what you do not guilty of wrong doing, and I will believe in you!"

"Why should you?" I cried. "I am nothing to you. You know nothing of me. Even the little time we have been together we have not even been friends. Why should you care for me?"

"Because I know that no guilty woman could look as you look," she said; "because I know that mine were the first lips that told you of this suspicion against you!"

I left my husband because he no longer loved me; because he could not love me any more. Are—are you sure—sure about this—sure about what you have told me? Oh, of course you are," I went on, without waiting for her answer—"of course you are! Mr. Smithson knew of it. Mrs. Roberts, that horrible Holland—they all knew of it! Think—think! He wanted me to stay—stay there at the show room as a sort of attraction. He offered me more money to stay there so that people should come and see me!"
A FOREWORD!
Our great new serial

"Little White Saint"

BY

ETHEL F. HEDDLE,

begins shortly. Further particulars next week.

She put her arms around me suddenly, and held me tightly.

"This morning, while you lay here sleeping, I stood watching you, and you looked like a child, an innocent child!" she said. "You are not a wicked, guilty woman, I know that!"

"Why should you believe in me?" she asked.

"Why should I believe in all that I do believe in?" she said. "I believe in God and God's way, and I believe in you, because something tells me to believe in it. And that same something tells me to believe in you."

"Elise, you are very good to me," I said.

"I am not. I have done nothing. I am not capable of doing good to anyone." she said, bursting into tears. "But you want friendship, companionship, and sympathy; and, poor as I am, I can give you that, Joyce, and I will. And I can give you faith and trust, too," she added.

I rose and put my arms around her and held her. I took her to my heart, and felt the life in her lips. It did me good; it melted some of the ice away from around my heart; it made me more human.

She left me now to rise and adjust my clothing and wash myself. And presently I went out into the tiny sitting-room, and found breakfast laid for two. She had put it there, had lit a spirit lamp, and looked up at me with a bright smile.

"Breakfast is just ready, Joyce," she said.

"Elise," I said, "let us come to an understanding before we go any further."

"Oh, yes!"

"I know you are not rich. I know what you earn at Holland's. It is hardly enough for you to keep yourself on. I am not going to live on your charity. I have a little money. So long as it lasts, if you will let me stay here with you and pay my share, I shall be grateful to you. When that money has gone, and if I have not found other work, then we must part!"

"And where will you go?" she asked.

I shook my head. It did not bear thinking about. "I am talking of the present, not of the future," I said. "My money will not last a few weeks. Tell me that you agree we shall share expenses?"

"If you wish it, Joyce," she said.

And so it was arranged. We had our breakfast together and then she left me soon after seven to go to her work at Holland's. She would be away for twelve hours; and for those twelve hours I should be left to myself and my own thoughts.

But I would not, be idle all that time. It was for me now to find fresh work, to find work in some place where I was not likely to be recognised. If I could have had more money I might wish to leave London for ever; but leaving London would mean parting from Elise, and I didn't want that. In these last hours the girl had become very dear and very necessary to me.

Plans came into my mind and went. I thought of where to go to father and borrow from the truth. I sat down and took my pen up, and then a sense of burning shame came to me. I felt that I could not do it. Surely, surely, in spite of all that others said about me, father would still believe in me. Ruth would still believe I was true and pure and good. No, I could not write to them yet, not in the frame of mind in which I was now.

I busied myself about the rooms. I made the bed and washed the breakfast things. I found plenty to do, and I was glad to do it; it occupied my mind and filled in my time. It was ten o'clock now and I went out on my errands, returning from them with little success. I had left Holland's, and in no case could I ever go back there again to that horrible man, to the fear of any moment, of any day, meeting some of those whom I had known in other days.

I made up my mind that I would look for work in some other places than the streets, in some of the small shops, where, though the pay would probably be less, I should be free from the risk of meeting some of the people I had known.

But work was difficult to find. I went from shop to shop, asking if they had employment to offer. But not one did. It was nearly two o'clock now, and I felt weary and dispirited. Surely no girl in all the world, I thought, had to bear what was thrust upon my shoulders; a weight
of undeserved shame, poverty, hardships, I felt as if tears were very near, then suddenly all desire to weep went from me. I would have turned had there been time to avoid her, but there was no time. Suddenly I had come face to face with Essie Robertsowsh.

She was not alone. Another woman whom I dimly recollected having met once, was with her. Mrs. Robertsowsh said something quickly to her companion, and then both turned and stared at me. There was a smile on Essie Robertsowsh's face. Distinctly I heard the other woman say:

"Surely you cannot think of such a thing, Essie?"

"Why not? I'm curious; I'd like to know where they are!"

Suddenly she came towards me. I quickened my step, eager to pass her by, but she put herself directly in my way.

"Well, you silly little thing," she said, "what have you to say for yourself?"

"To you, nothing," I said. "Nothing, Let me pass."

"Oh, of course, if you want to. You're a little fool, though, to throw away the chance of my friendship. I can assure you there aren't many women in London who would even speak to you now!"

"I do not wish them nor you to speak to me," I said.

"Let me pass.""

"Oh, pass," she said. "You've passed!" she laughed sharply. "A nice hash you've made of your life. I didn't think you'd have been such a fool. Well, you've only got yourself to thank. Where are you living? How came you to be in that shop; Holland's, yesterday?"

"I have told you, I have nothing to say to you, Mrs. Robertsowsh!" I said.

"Very well; I'm not interested. You're down and out now," she laughed, and repeated the words "down and out." Everyone in London knows about you; that poor fool of a husband of yours was one of the last to know. But he'll soon be rid of you now. I suppose there will be no defence?" She looked at me as she spoke.

"I do not understand you, and I do not wish to talk to you!" I cried.

"Where is he? At least you might tell me that."

"Please let me pass," I said. "You are standing in my way."

"Oh, very well, insolent little fool!" she said. "You'll be sorry one day that you didn't accept my overtures. You won't find many women who will have much to say to you now. You've done the wrong, the unpardonable, thing! You might have amused yourself, but—but you did the wrong thing. Nothing can excuse that! Little fool!" she added, "I thought better of you!"

Then she turned aside, and with blazing cheeks I walked on. I heard her shrill laugh following me. I knew that both women were staring after me, and I walked on with a feeling of utter desolation and misery at my heart.

All London knew, she had said. Everyone was talking about it. My husband had been one of the last to know. Then it had not been he who had spread my so-called shame. I was glad to think that; I felt a little less bitter towards him.

I went back to the little flat and threw myself down on a sofa. I would not go out again. I was almost afraid to go out in case I might meet someone. I had failed to find work; another search this afternoon would only result in failure, too.

What did the future hold for me? I asked myself, and the answer was easy to find. Nothing! Nothing! Nothing!

What happened to women like me? Women who had been shamed, justly or unjustly. Women who were "down and out!" Those were her words. How bitter they had sounded, yet they were true. "Down and out."

"It was that," I said. "Down and out!" "Down," at least now, perhaps "out." Soon, I laughed bitterly. "Out!" Yes, there was one way of being out. I smiled at the thought. I was yet a girl. I, fond of life, beautiful, as I knew without vanity I was, I could think of death in this careless, easy way, as something to be wished for, hoped for!

It grew dark in the little flat. The sound of traffic came, muffled by the distance. I suppose I dropped asleep. I know that I woke suddenly, listening to the

That's why I enjoy
my walks so!

Wearing Wood-Milne Rubber Heels, the roughest, hardest road seems like rich, soft carpet. I take long walks without fatigue, finding pleasure and health untold—so may you—if you'll wear "Wood-Milnes." There are no other rubber heels so resilient, none that wear so well!

Wood-Milne RUBBER HEELS

repay ten times their cost; one pair of "Wood-Milnes" outlast three soles.
Made in Black, Brown, or Grey rubber, at prices to suit all. Be sure to see the name "Wood-Milne."

The sturdy British Tea planter, toiling in the Tea Gardens of our great Indian Empire, realises with satisfaction that his labours are appreciated by his countrymen—that Indian Tea is firmly established as the popular favourite in every home in the United Kingdom.

So insistent is the popularity of Indian Tea that every grocer in the land must sell it. The British Housewife, quick to recognise the delicate and subtle flavour of Indian Tea, will have no other.

Insist on Indian Tea. Then you know what you are getting.

Indian Tea
Britain's Best Beverage.
sound of heavy footsteps on the stairs, then a tapping on the door.

I rose quickly as the door opened; a man came into the room. It was so dark that I could not see him, and my heart beat heavily for a moment. I thought—I dared to think it might be Howard; but it was not.

"Why, you're all in the dark here, get," he said.

I could have laughed almost. I had thought this was Howard.

"I will have a light in a moment," I said. "You wish perhaps to see Miss Palmer?"

"Ay, I did?" I turned up the light and looked at him. He was a middle-aged man, stout, good-tempered-looking. He looked like a prosperous farmer or well-to-do tradesman from the country.

He stared at me hard for a moment.

"I ain't seen you before," he said, "but I know who you are, all right. You're Miss Newcombe—Elsie's friend?"

I would have denied it, but he went on without listening to me:

"I'm 'er uncle. I am George Beale, up from Burtenham. I dessay she's spoke to you about me sometimes. Well, 'er am. I always promised to give 'er a look up when I come to Lunnun, which ain't often. Can't bear the place! Your life ain't safe, not two minutes together, with them taxi-cabs boosting round every corner, and they motor-omblibus rushing down on you like—like I don't know what. Give me the country, and a quiet death in my bed. But 'ere I am, and I expect Elsie'll be glad to see me. I've got a proposition to make to 'er, 'Ave. I been thinking it out a powerful long time, and the chance has come. We don't often 'ave any shops to be got in our town, we don't. Burtenham's a busy place, I can tell you; a rare trade's done there, small as it is. Why, you'd laugh comparing it with London now. Still, as I say, there's a rare lot of business done. But at any rate I'm sure the chance's come, and I been thinking it over and talking it over with Aunt Ann—that's the missus—and she and me come to the conclusion it'll be best for Elsie to be out o' London. I don't ol' with young gels being alone in London by themselves. Down there—"

"Won't you come in and sit down?" I said. "Would you like me to make you a cup of tea? Elsie won't be in till seven."

"Till seven! Bless me, and it ain't no more than half-past five! Well, I can't go without seeing her, anyhow. Yes, I'll come in, my dear, and thank you, and the cup of tea quiet will be grateful and comforting, as the saying is."

He could not help liking his rustic simplicity. He reminded me of old Josephs at home. Home! The very thought of home brought bitter tears into my eyes. I knew that he was looking at me—looking at me for a long time while I spread the cloth and boiled the water in the little kettle by the stove.

"My dear, are you, like Elsie, 'ere alone?" he asked.

"Yes," I said; "quite alone."

"Then it didn't ought to be," he said. "A girl like you didn't ought to be left without friends and protectors, as you do."

(Continued on page iii, of cover.)

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**CAN YOU READ THIS SOLDIER'S PUZZLE LETTER?**

1st PRIZE £2. 2nd PRIZE £1. Ten 3rd Prizes of 5s. each.

Can you read this soldier's letter "from the front"?

Thousands of our readers are enjoying these entertaining weekly contests. Are you? If not, enter this week. All you have to do is solve the soldier's puzzle letter, write your solution out clearly on a piece of paper, then cut out the puzzle picture, pin it to your solution, and forward it to the Editor.

You should keep by you, for reference, an exact copy of your solution.

Show your friends the puzzle, and ask them to help you. They will be very much interested in it. Remember, a picture may represent a phrase of one, two or three words, but not more than three.

Our handsome prizes will be awarded as follows.

The First Prize of £2 will be awarded to the reader whose solution is correct, or most nearly correct, in accordance with the original in the possession of the Editor. The Second Prize of £1 will be awarded to the reader who comes next in order of merit, and the same rule will apply in the case of the Ten Third Prizes of 5s. each.

The Editor reserves the right to add any or all of the prizes together should the number of readers qualifying render this course advisable. No reader can receive more than one prize.

This contest is being conducted by Horner's Penny Stories, "Horner's Weekly," "Sunday Circle," and "Golden Hours," and all readers of these journals may compete. All members of families may compete, but each must send in a separate solution. Readers can send in as many complete solutions as they like, but each solution must be accompanied by a puzzle picture taken from either of the journals named above.

Remember, each week's contest is complete in itself. When you have solved this week's picture puzzle, do not wait until next week, but send your solution at once to: Puzzles editor from the front, Horner's Penny Stories Office, Crouch Square, London, E.C. All solutions for this week's contest must reach us not later than Friday, February 19th. The result of this contest cannot appear in this journal for five weeks.

*You will find the result of our 15th Contest on page 4.*

W. B. HORNER AND SONS, LIMITED, THE FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

No. 1117.
wives and the lady's-maids uncle talks about. I'm going to get all the best customers there, and know the reason why.

"We'll make the place smart, not like a small country shop at all, Joyce," she said. "You will receive the customers and — ."

"I — I!" I cried. "Elsie, what do you mean? I am not going!"

"You are," she said. She looked up at me. "You are coming with me. I told uncle, and he seemed more than pleased. I know you want to get away from London; I know you hate it, and with even more reason than I do. Joyce, you will come with me?"

"You—you don't mean it; you can't want me. Besides, it isn't fair. There is your other friend, Ethen Newcombe."

"Ethen is to be married in two months," she said, "so she won't come with me in any event; but you can and will, Joyce, won't you? Say 'Yes'; I count on you. I long to have you with me down there; I shall need you, too. If you don't come I shall have to find someone else but I want you."

"Elsie," I cried — "Elsie, do you mean it? You—you are not taking me out of pity — out of charity?"

"No, I am taking you because I really want your help. A girl like you would be more than valuable there. You will come?"

I looked at her. For me suddenly life changed. The greyness was gone. Yes, I would go; I longed to see that little country town, where I might perhaps forget all this misery.

"Then you will come, Joyce?" she said. She came to me and put her arm around me.

And I burst into tears and hid my face against her breast.

(Another long instrument of this grand serial next week. Do not miss it.)

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