

THE YEARS BETWEEN.

A Novel by William J. Fischer.

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CHAPTER XIX.

ROSES AND CARNATIONS.

On her way home, after her visit to Mrs. Carroll, Dorothy could not help thinking of Dr. Mathers. It was no wonder that the people all idolized him. He was so kind and gentle and so very pleasant in his manner and conversation, and he always carried a goodly amount of sunshine with him into a patient's sick room.

Dr. Mathers stood in Dorothy's memory continually, erect and manly looking, and for hours she could not brush the picture away. She had seen him at Carroll's standing thoughtfully near the curtained window. The parting sun stole in tenderly and settled its glint upon his half-gray hair. His face was that of a man who took his work seriously yet derived therefrom a great deal of happiness and compensation.

Everywhere we meet the cold, disappointed man who has lost hope and given up so easily, whose name is a stain on the world's bright escutcheon. Failure has touched him with her scorching wings, and the Past, Present and Future are enigmas, alike gloomy and uninteresting to him. He has simply missed the "get" of this great, absorbing life. But Charles Mathers was not such a man. He was a toiler in the living Present; he was trying to do all the good he could in this life. The world had treated him kindly and given him plenty from her store of riches, and he had accepted it all with a humble heart.

When Dorothy reached home she told her parents of her pleasant visit to the Carrolls. "Mrs. Carroll," she added, "is going to the opera to-night, but poor Michael will have to stay at home."

"Why?" questioned her father. "I suppose he'll have to stay to keep the cat and bird company. Mrs. Carroll you know does not on her pets. Ah, well, she's never had any children, and poor old Tabby and little yellow-coated Dicky are all the world to her."

"No, it is not that. When I reached the place I found Mr. Carroll in bed."

"In bed, Dorothy?" exclaimed Mrs. Fairfax with great surprise. "Surely the old man's not sick?"

"Yes, mother, the old fellow slipped and fell. At first they thought he had fractured his leg, but Dr. Mathers was there when I arrived, and after a careful examination, he told them there was no break, but the ligaments were badly torn."

"Poor, old Michael!" exclaimed Mrs. Fairfax, pathetically. "To think he'd have to be so unlucky in his old days!"

"Mrs. Carroll," Dorothy continued, "at last consented to come out this evening to hear me, after I had promised to send Bridget over to keep Michael company. He has quite a bit of pain you know and requires looking after. They were so glad I called."

"Of course you met Dr. Mathers?" interposed the father, looking up from the evening paper. Before Dorothy could answer her mother said: "I hope he impressed you favorably."

"Yes, I met him," Dorothy answered demurely, "and I felt quite interested in him. He is a good-souled fellow, handsome and clever. But what's the use of that, mother? I am sure he has met some one by this time whom he likes better than himself. One of those mornings you will wake to hear that he has been married and that he has gone off somewhere on his honeymoon."

Just then Mr. and Mrs. Fairfax's eyes met. In that brief instant the two held kindred thoughts, and in their hearts lingered the wish that God would some day favor Dorothy with such a man as Dr. Charles Mathers. He had been entertained and feted by the queasily mothers of his past years, but so far he had daughters in parsonages, but so far he had thought it wise and best not to venture out upon the uncertain matrimonial seas that lead some into dangerous, stormy deeps of disquietude, and others into peaceful havens of rest.

At an early hour that evening crowds filled the Lyceum. Billington, true to her gifted child, had turned out en masse to honor Dorothy, and hundreds went home delighted with the performance. The young singer had done full justice to herself.

Dr. Mathers was in the audience that evening. He sat several seats from the front. His eyes fairly revelled in the beautiful costumes and scenery, and his ears eagerly drank in the soulful music of Gounod. Dorothy made a beautiful Marguerite, gentle and innocent as a saint, and, when in the depths of her sorrow she threw herself down at the Blessed Mother's feet and poured out the prayerful threnody that echoed through her pure soul, the eyes of hundreds of her listeners filled suddenly with tears. Even Dr. Mathers' heart was touched as it had never been before.

"Dorothy is so good and pure," he thought to himself, and as he listened to the sound of her voice and followed her through the different scenes of the opera, a longing desire stole into his heart that he might some day learn to love and win this beautiful woman. And he asked God to draw their hearts closer together. He could not help envying Faust this Marguerite. Such strange feelings seemed to overpower him—feelings that never before disturbed the serenity of his heart, and, when later Faust sang "La Parole D'Amor," the lively, tender Flower Song, his temples fairly throbbled. Wholly he was listening to the melody that he had heard for the first time at Mrs. Carroll's in her brown seal-skin coat and red walking dress. Again the words of the singer came to him. He did not see Faust; he saw only himself, standing before Dorothy and singing,

in all the gladness of his manly heart, the self-same words that floated from the stage—

"Gentle flow 's in the dew
Bear no flower to me
Tell her no flower 's rarer
Tell her that she is fairer
Dearest to me than all
Though fair you be!

"Gentle flow 's in the dew
Bear no flower to me
Tell her no flower 's rarer
Tell her that she is fairer
Gladly my life surrender,
Her Knight to be!

For days after Dorothy's face haunted him. No matter where he went or what he did, she rose before him. In the sick room, in the very presence of death, she came to him in fancy and comfortingly touched his hand. It was like the whisper of a tender prayer to his sanguine ears. He always felt better after it, and it seemed to nerve him for the day's battle. He could not forget her; he tried hard at times to do so, but without avail. She had been thrown across his life's path by God, and in his heart of hearts he thanked Him for it. No, he could never forget Dorothy. Strange, tender feelings held his heart in thrall. They were the feelings that came through Love's first, kindly ministrations. Life's joyous rosetime was here.

Dorothy's success of that first performance was repeated. The elite of the city filled the Lyceum every evening; they were a music-loving people. Besides, indreeds came long distances to hear her sing. The papers were full of her. They printed long interviews and followed them with short sketches of her young life. Everybody seemed to be proud of Dorothy, proud that she was a Billington girl, glad that she had mounted so high in her noble art. Hers was the beautiful character, humble and unassuming, gracious and unaffected. For two weeks she had appeared nightly in the various operas in her repertoire, and soon the farewell concert came.

Dorothy was glad when the last evening arrived. Singing such exacting roles night after night was heavy work. The young prima donna therefore felt glad that she would soon be relieved of all her anxiety. Signor Lamperti called at her home a few days before closing night and asked: "Well, Dorothy, what will we stage closing-night?"

"Anything at all, Signor, as far as I'm concerned."

"The public is clamoring for 'Faust.' It was the opening bill and made a very good impression, I believe."

"Then let it be 'Faust.' I would just as leave be Marguerite again. That evening the largest crowd in years poured into the theatre. Dr. Mathers would not have missed that performance for all the gold in Billington. His office boy, little Toby, whom he had rescued from the streets some years before, was busy brushing off his overcoat.

"Hurry, Toby! 'Tis 8 o'clock and I'll have to go presently," he exclaimed. "I am going to the theatre to-night. If any people call me, tell them I'll be back between 11 and 11:30."

Thereupon Toby stood on a chair and held his master's coat for him.

"Now, Toby, don't fall asleep! Watch the door-bell and the telephone!"

"I'll try hard to keep awake, doctor," and he rubbed his eyes like a spoiled child.

"Well, good-bye Toby," the doctor cried as he made his way through the office door.

Just then the door-bell rang loudly. "Toby, go see who it is," the doctor commanded.

In another minute the boy returned. "Who is it wants me?"

"A poor, old woman. I could not catch her name. Her boy is very sick."

"Where does she live?"

"Two miles on the other side of the river."

"Well! well! that's too bad—ready to go to the opera and disappointed again," the doctor exclaimed as he threw his coat and hat upon the sofa.

But send the woman in, Toby!" Presently the woman entered. She was poorly clad and looked as if she had not tasted good food for a long time.

"Be seated, madam!" the doctor directed as he kindly handed her a chair. "What can I do for you to-night?"

"Ah, my poor boy's very sick, doctor. I am afraid he's dying," the woman cried out in tears. "He's all I have in the world, doctor, and he's been such a good boy."

"How old is he?"

"Sixteen, this coming winter. He worked until noon to-day, but then a severe pain overtook him. Oh, he was a good boy, and I am afraid the Lord will take him. If it hadn't been for him I'd have drifted to the poor-house long ago."

"Is he the only child?"

"No. He is the oldest of ten, but the only bread-winner in the family."

"Is your husband dead, madam?"

"No, worse than that. He's a heavy drinker and when he is drunk, he abuses us shamefully. He hasn't bought a loaf of bread for us in months."

"Then you cannot depend upon him for help at all?"

"No, sir!"

"What's your name?"

minute decided it all. It was simply a case of duty first, then pleasure.

The doctor's eyes stole down to the pitiful bundle of rags before him, and when he noticed the poor woman's tears, his conscience whispered to him: "Go to the sick boy! 'Tis there you are needed." Then in a strong, kind voice he said to Mrs. Bland: "You can go home. I'll come over at once to see Tom."

"God repay you for it all!" she murmured with a throb of emotion, as she pressed the doctor's hands in her own and disappeared in the darkness.

Thirty minutes later Dr. Mathers stood at Tom's bedside. The poor boy was desperately ill. He had chills and high fever and considerable pain.

"What do you think ails him, doctor?"

"Appendicitis. He'll have to be operated upon immediately. 'Tis dangerous to wait until morning."

That very evening Dr. Mathers saved faithful Tom's life at the hospital. When it was all over he returned to his office and sank into his chair, tired and sleepy.

During the "Faust" performance that evening the audience went wild with applause, and when Dorothy sang the ever delightful Jewel Song the climax was reached. When later the last word had echoed from her lips, a beautiful bouquet of roses and carnations fell suddenly at her feet. She picked them up graciously and smiled tenderly. The people clapped hands and whistled loudly. The whole audience was nothing but a mass of handkerchiefs. It was a great triumph for Dorothy Fairfax.

When she returned to her dressing-room she examined the bouquet more closely.

"Aren't they delicious?" she remarked to her maid as the latter was loosening her gown. "I wonder who could have been so kind as to send me them?"

Just then a little card fell to the floor. The maid picked it up and handed it to the singer.

"From Dr. Mathers!" she exclaimed loudly, overcome with surprise. "Goodness gracious! The great surgeon has deigned to notice me. I feel flattered."

The flowers had really made her feel very happy indeed, and she thought, that that the last bow in her hair. Billington's most noted man sent a thrill through her heart that carried an added share of happiness.

"It was so good of him to send me these roses and carnations," she whispered, and again she raised them to her face. But this time her lips touched the little white card. "I only wish—"

Without there were sounds of loud applause, but Dorothy stood still in the little dressing room, wrapped in deep thought. She was just then thinking of Charles Mathers. "I only wish—I—" she muttered again to herself, but she did not finish the sentence.

"Come, Dorothy, they are waiting for you on the stage," shouted her maid as she tied the last bow in her hair. "I'm afraid you've missed your cue."

"Surely not, Frances. I must have been dreaming. Ah, yes, there's the tenor singing the opening bars to the duet." And gaily she darted out of the dressing-room and made for the open stage.

In another minute their voices blended admirably, and soon the tenor was led to everybody but Faust—and Dr. Mathers. The gentle singer had just finished reading the language of love and flowers, and from that time on, roses and carnations were ever her special choice.

CHAPTER XX.

WHEN LOVE IS MASTER.

It was about eleven o'clock when Dr. Mathers returned to his office, for he had seen that Tom Bland was comfortable at the hospital. He had had a hard day's work and felt glad that the night was at hand to give him the rest he needed sorely. Toby, the office-boy, had fallen asleep on the couch, waiting for his master. The doctor however did not disturb the lad, but allowed him to sleep on. There were no messages on the slate; thus Dr. Mathers knew there had been no calls.

It was a cold night out-of-doors, and the office was just a little chilly. A raw October wind was tossing the leaves about in small clouds, after the slight down-pour of rain which had subsided. The voices of Autumn were piping across the hills, and the skies were beginning to assume their leaden, gloomy color.

Charles threw an extra supply of coal upon the fire. Then he lit a cigar and for some time followed the pictures that fancy painted for him in the pale blue cloud of smoke. And presently in the soft haze Dorothy rose before him in a long, flowing, silken garment of white, her eyes tender and loving, and from her lips some cheery message seemed sounding.

The opera was over. Out upon the slippery pavement sounded the footsteps of the homeward-bound theater-goers. In his heart Charles could not help wondering what kind of a reception they had given Dorothy.

"I wonder," he mused to himself, "if she received my roses and carnations? I wonder did she appreciate them, or throw them aside carelessly?"

Such thoughts as these kept Charles' mind active as he sat pulling away idly at his cigar. Suddenly the telephone sounded in the outer hall. In an instant Toby was on his feet and, rubbing his eyes carelessly, he gave way to a couple of yawns. Then he made his way into the hall just as the telephone ceased ringing.

"Hello!" he called over the wire in his boyish, musical voice.

"Where?"

"At Mr. Fairfax's house."

"Miss Dorothy?"

"Very well. I'll tell him to come at once."

Somewhat excited Toby hung up the receiver and running into the little room exclaimed wildly:—"Doctor, you're to come over to Fairfax's right away. Miss Dorothy slipped and fell upon the icy steps at the theatre, but a few minutes ago, just as she was leaving the place after the performance, they think she's sustained a severe fracture.

She's in great pain and they want you at once."

The color left the doctor's lips. He rose from his chair somewhat nervously; his heart felt a sickly pain, and he grabbed his overcoat and started hurriedly, grip in hand.

"It is really too bad, the poor thing!" he said to himself as he closed the office-door. "I hope it is nothing serious."

When he reached the Fairfax home all was excitement. But a few minutes before the ambulance had brought Dorothy home and what a shock it was to her parents when several strong men carrying the stretcher upon which lay the helpless girl entered the house! In her hands she held the treasured bouquet of roses and carnations. It was too bad Charles had not arrived a few minutes earlier. It would have done his heart good to have seen how zealously Dorothy guarded the flowers.

The doctor stepped lightly into the sick-room where the injured girl lay. As he entered she smiled gently through her suffering and exclaimed, somewhat girlishly: "Oh, doctor, I am so glad you came. I am afraid I have a bad foot, but in the first place I must thank you for the flowers. They are so beautiful. It was really kind of—"

Just then a sharp pain in her foot weakened her so that she could not finish the sentence. Even in all her misery and suffering those roses and carnations were uppermost in her mind, and she could not help thanking the donor at the first opportunity.

Dr. Mathers made a thorough examination of the foot and reported a bad fracture above the ankle.

"And what will all this mean to me, doctor?" Dorothy asked, somewhat sadly. "Oh, about four or six weeks in bed. Miss Fairfax," Charles answered. He felt like calling her Dorothy, but had not known her long enough for that.

"Well, I suppose, I've got to make the best of it, then, mother," she said to Mrs. Fairfax, who stood in tears at the foot of the couch. "Mother you must not cry so—'tis only a break, and I'll soon be able to walk again," she added encouragingly.

"Yes," interrupted Dr. Mathers. "It will only be a matter of time. We will have to give her a chance—that's all. She is, after all, the best physician. I will require the assistance of a nurse to help set the fracture. There is a little swelling and I think the sooner the foot is attended to the better. Whom shall I telephone for?"

"Sister Angela," exclaimed Dorothy gladly.

"But," interrupted her mother, "that is impossible, child. You know as well as I that the nurse never do private nursing."

"I knew it, mother. Her name just came to my lips and that is why I said it. But Sister Angela is so good and kind, mother. She is a sweet, little nun—just a darling. It is just grand to be sick when she is around."

"Sister Angela, you know, doctor," said the mother, "nursed Dorothy through a very serious illness four years ago, and she has never forgotten her."

"Miss Fairfax," remarked the doctor, "I am sure Sister Angela would be pleased to nurse you again, but if such were your wish, we would have to take you to the hospital."

"I would rather remain at home here with mother, doctor," Dorothy replied. "So procure a nurse at once!"

TO BE CONTINUED

THE WHISPERER.

Lord Cashel and Miles Keon, the Whisperer, were foster-brothers. They had drawn the milk from the same bounteous peasant breast, and there was a brotherly feeling between them for all that their lord was Earl of Cashel and Miles Keon a peasant by birth, and a Whisperer, that is to say, a horse tamer by profession.

Miles was a little fellow, lean and agile, and as brown as a nut. My lord was a big, fair, kindly young man, one of the ladies found it as hard to resist as the horses did the Whisperer. It was said that Mary Keon loved the fair child she had suckled at least as well as she did her flesh and blood. Be that as it may there was no jealousy in Miles Keon's heart child or man towards the foster-brother who had left him hungry in babyhood.

Always Miles was at his lordship's heels, from babyhood, through boyhood; and in manhood, if they were sometimes separated in the body, they were not in heart. They had had a happy boyhood together. My lord was an orphan, and his guardian lived in London, and was well content to shuffle off the personal care of his ward on to Mr. Spence, the rector, who taught him Latin and Greek, and saw that he did not lack training in the manly arts.

Perhaps, after all, the most important part of Lord Cashel's education was learnt in the woods, in the company of Miles Keon, and on the mountains and the waters. Miles had a wonderful way with the wild creatures. The same gifts that made him a Whisperer brought the birds to feed from his hand and the hares creeping about his feet. The red deer would stand for him to stroke their coats, and the eagle that builds on Carrigdu had seen him approach the nest that was like a charnel house with the bones of lambs and such innocent creatures and had spared to strike him dead. They said the fishes would come to the top of the water when he played upon his flute. It was a gift of great love that struck down between him and the animals the barrier of fear and enmity that has stood since the first of man.

Where Miles could go my lord could not follow; but he learnt secrets in the woods that he would never have known in any companionship but that of Miles Keon.

Miles was a man before it was found he had the power of the Whisperer. He was employed at that time about Lord Cashel's stables at Ballaghadamore. He always went riding with my lord, and had a general power of supervision over the stables and the kennels, for my lord Cashel hunted the Muskery country.

Once it was found that he had the gift he was in great request in three counties, and my lord put no barrier in the way of his exercising his power with

the horses. Usually, to tame young, unbroken colts was his business, and it was remarkable that he never used the whip on them; but sometimes he was sent for to tame an incurably vicious horse, and it was then his real gift came out.

He would enter a stable where a kicking, roaring devil was playing havoc with all around him. At the first low caressing note of his voice there would be quiet, and a few minutes later he would come out, leading a horse in his right mind. Was it the whisper in the horse's ear that wrought the marvel? The Whisperer kept his secret. But he would often say to those he heard talking of the wickedness of a horse that it was the wickedness of a man was to blame somewhere—for it stands to reason," the Whisperer would say, "that the animal was created without sin, and it was only with man that sin entered the world." He was a bit of a theologian, and a pious boy in his way.

Lord Cashel had been visiting somewhere in the Bog of Allen, and the day he returned he came with a cloud of care on his brow. No sooner had he eaten and drunk than he sent for Miles to the stables. Fortunately no call had come for the Whisperer for a couple of days back.

His Lordship sat in his private room waiting for him. The carpet was threadbare and the moths had eaten the old curtains, but the driftwood fire burnt so cheerfully that one forgot the shabbiness of the furniture. When Miles came in, His Lordship was looking moodily at the toes of his boots, and at the sight the Whisperer's heart sank. Mary Keon's heart for her foster-child had passed to her son, and Miles Keon scenting trouble, stood looking anxiously at the handsome gold head in the firelight. His Lordship leaped to his feet. He had not known her long enough for that.

"Well, Miles," he said, using the old boyish name, and extending a frank hand. The Whisperer dropped his cap on the floor and met the handshake. The affection in his eyes was as touching as the rap glance of a dog.

"Sit down, Miles," went on His Lordship, kicking a chair towards him. "I'm in a devil of a fix."

"You are?" said Miles with a keen, fond glance.

"I've planted all I'm worth on a brute that has killed two grooms already, and has made it as much as a man's life is worth to approach him."

He laughed shyly, like a boy owing to an escapade.

"Why did you do it?" asked Miles.

"Wait till you see him. You'll ask no questions then. What's that English horse they talk about? Eclipse? Aye, that's the name. Well, I'd back the Blackbird with you up to show Eclipse a clear pair of heels."

"Would you now?" said Miles slowly. He was never one to get excited, and perhaps this quietness of his was one of the elements in his power with nervous creatures on whom so often our words play like the wind on the harp strings. His cheeks had reddened with pleasure.

"You think you'll be equal to him, Miles? He'll take a powerful strong whisper to make him a lamb. I'll doubt you'll ever do it, Miles."

"I can but try. Where is he?"

"Coming down the road with half a dozen porters leading him and keeping a mile off his heels. The devil was quiet in him when he started, but he'd kicked his box-stall into smithereens the day before."

"Poor beast!" said Miles in the soft voice he had inherited from Mary Keon. "You haven't asked the price, Miles."

"No, your Lordship?"

"Ten thousand guineas. Ten thousand golden guineas, Miles!"

Miles started.

"'Tis a great fortune, your Lordship. 'Tis what the lawyers are asking for Neville's Court, Neville's Court and Ballaghadamore in a ring would have been a fine property."

Miles was with lingering regret. "Ballaghadamore will be outside the ring if my venture doesn't come off, Miles. 'Tis the security for the price of the Blackbird."

"'Tis a deal of dependence to put in a horse."

"And on you, Miles," said his Lordship eagerly. "The Blackbird with you up. Wait till you see him, Miles."

Miles's face brightened in answer to the appeal in the beloved voice.

"Your Lordship can count on me."

"I know it, Miles. There never was a faithfuller friend and brother."

Again the two hands met and clasped and fell apart. His Lordship's thoughts took a new turn, and his face became moody as he looked into the fire. Miles had picked up his stable cap from where it lay, and was turning it in his hands mechanically while he waited for his dismissal. His soft, bright eyes still watched the wasted face with a world of concern.

Lord Cashel stood up restlessly and kicked at a log in the grate. For a minute or two there was silence. Then he turned abruptly.

"I've matched the Blackbird against Waneliffe's Pegasus for fifty thousand and a side. If I win, Miles, it means a clear forty thousand in my pocket, and more than that to me, Miles. More than forty times forty thousand."

He blushed as rosy as a girl, but his face was serious even to tragedy.

Miles looked down at his cap.

"Lady Mabel 'd never be after thinkin' of the Duke for a husband. There are bad stories to his name."

"His mother is all for the marriage, and Lady Mabel is young. I'm a poor man and will be ruined if my stroke for fortune should fail. What chance should I have against the Duke?"

"You won't fail," said Miles, with conviction.

His Lordship's face cleared.

"Not if you can help it, Miles. I know that."

vation at her whenever they met, but he was too humble and simple to believe she could ever care for him.

The Blackbird arrived a few days later. His guard looked as exhausted as if they had been in charge of a tiger, and were full of sullen anger against the horse. They had spent anxious days and watchful nights on the road, and there was a long bill for my Lord Blackbird's tantrums.

The Whisperer was riding with my Lord when the horse arrived. The two rode into the stable yard to a scene of wild hurly-burly. They were trying to get the Blackbird into his stall, about twenty of them armed for terror of him with sticks and forks and broom handles, on anything they could find to their hands to defend themselves in case he should try to kill them. One fellow had the rusty blunderbuss that had hung behind the harness-room door for many years than anyone could remember.

Two stout fellows were banging on to ropes round the horse's head. The Blackbird was rearing on his hind legs, kicking out and making furious rushes at his tormentors. His beautiful coat was covered with sweat, and steaming. His eyes and nostrils were full of blood, and he was half screaming and half sobbing.

At the sight my Lord uttered a shout of rage and pain that made the stable-helpers momentarily forget their terror of the horse. He flung himself out of the saddle like a madman, and rushed into the middle of the group insensible of the danger to himself. But quick as he was, the Whisperer was quicker. My Lord was caught and pulled back with a force and violence born of terrified love, and the next thing he saw was the Whisperer holding on to the horse's head-collar and shouting to the men at the ropes to let him free.

Twice he was swung from his feet as the horse reared; twice he was flung back on the stones of the yard with violence, but he held to his grip, quite unconscious that my Lord, struggling to be by his side, was held back by his old huntsman and a couple of grooms.

Suddenly the horse trembled and came down on his forefeet with a crash. It happened so suddenly that no one could tell the moment when his passion was quelled. The Whisperer was now stroking his disordered coat, and murmuring against his ears with a sound softer than the wind in the leaves in summer. The horse was still trembling and turning wild eyes of fear on the man, but every minute he grew quieter. When a few minutes had passed, Miles led him into his stall, and presently, when my Lord followed, he found him rubbing down the beautiful coat, humming between his teeth after the fashion of grooms, while the horse, as quiet as Brown Bess, the mother of many foals, stood turning grateful eyes upon him.

"A miracle, Miles, a miracle!" cried my Lord. "Good God, what an escape! If the accursed foals had injured him! Every man of them goes to-night."

"They are not to be blamed," said Miles. "They are not cruel by nature, but the fear makes them mad. They are like the dumb beast."

After this the Blackbird's reformation seemed to be an assured thing. True, Miles was never long absent from him, and the friendship between the man and the horse was a beautiful thing to see. That the Blackbird had been wicked and had done evil only made the man's pity the greater. As he stood currying-comb him, he used to think upon the sufferings the horse must have had to endure. He had belonged to old Carden of Kilmannass, a fire-eater and a bully, and reputed the cruellest man of a day when people were not particular about the rights of Every man of them goes to-night."

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