

Sir Christopher

able to stand against me?' But, Cecil, there is still something I did once decline like a churl when thou didst offer it, and have longed for in secret ever since."

"Oh, you mean Mother's picture; why, of course you may have it, and mine too, which has larger pearls round it, — may he not, Mother?"

"Cecil, what is ours is his."

"And better still, what is his must be ours, so I shall have the bow and arrows without asking. We will have our feast to-night, and we will set out all the candles in the house and deck the table with flowers of purification and the bowl of punch and the seed-cakes."

"*Ave Maria Purificante!*" quoth Father White, who had entered unperceived at the open door. "Sir Christopher, you have borne yourself nobly under the shadow of a great tragedy."

"Tragedy! Nay, the story with a happy ending is not such. My life is no tragedy."

And Christopher Neville spoke truth, for the only real tragedy is the degeneration of the soul under misfortune, and the only real misfortune is that which dominates character.

"Hurrah for Candlemas Day, raid and all!" cried Cecil.

From the street came an echoing cry, —

"Hey for St. Mary's, and Wives for us all!"