

The Gratitude of Kittie.

(Continued.)

"But what can we do?" she said, despairingly. "We ain't rich people."

Kittie nodded her head mournfully. "It'd be awful workin' for any one else," she said. "Wish I could work for him forever!" Then she stopped and stared at Hilda's round countenance.

"I've got it!" Kittie fairly screamed. "That's what we'll do."

"Do what?" said the wondering Hilda.

"Work for nothin'!" cried Kittie, her eyes sparkling. "I'll bet the girls will do it! Come along, I'm goin' to tell 'em!" and dragging Hilda by a corner of her blue gingham apron, Kittie ran down the long room where most of the girls had congregated for their noon meal.

"Ain't she a crazy thing?" commented Millie Dulaney, who was seventeen and had a beau and fine airs in consequence.

"Kittie's all right," said Rosie Berger, who lived next door to the Maguires, and by virtue of being the oldest hand among the girls wielded some authority. "There ain't nothing she won't do for you if she takes a notion. Ain't that so, Kittie?" she asked as the little girl came to an abrupt stop in front of her. Kittie was too excited to reply.

"What's the matter?" asked Rosie.

"Ain't you heard?" said Kittie. "Don't you know the boss is hard up and is goin' to shut down the factory?"

The girls stared at her in astonishment.

"I told you she was crazy," said the superior Millie.

"But it's so," said Kittie, stoutly; "the foreman said so."

"Well," said Millie, smartly, "I don't see what we've got to do about it if it is."

"You keep still!" commanded Rosie, who was not demonstrative of her power unless there was occasion for it. "Now go on, Kittie. If it's true, what can we do about it?"

"I've got an idea," said Kittie, more slowly. Somehow her enthusiasm was ebbing away, and her wonderful plan seemed less easy of execution and less positive of results in the cold glitter of Millie Dulaney's black eyes. "Anyway, I had one. Guess it won't do, though. I thought mebbe we could do something, but—"

"What was it?" insisted Rosie.

"We might work for nothin'," said Kittie, slowly.

"For nothin'!" repeated Millie, scornfully. Some of the girls tittered. "What are you talking about?" even Rosie said.

Opposition was all that Kittie's heart needed to fan dying enthusiasm into life.

"See here!" she said. "It ain't as if we had loads of money. If we had, there ain't none of us, 'cept its Millie, who wouldn't lend it all to the boss after all he's done for us. But we ain't got it. But we've got something else. We've got our work. We could lend him that, couldn't we? S'pose we agreed to work for a month and take no wages until he could pay up? An' s'pose we said we'd wait for the back wages he owes us now and is worryin' about, I expect? That would be something, if every one in the factory did it."

Some of the girls looked thoughtful. Even when one is making only three and four dollars a week it means something of a sacrifice to give it up. Perhaps it means even more than when one is making thirty and forty dollars. Besides, there were the fathers and mothers at home to be considered. What would they say when the customary envelope was not forthcoming on Saturday night? They had said enough as it was because the last two weeks had not been paid.

"We won't make any money at all if there's a shut-down," said Kittie, interpreting their thoughts. "There ain't much work anywhere. My brother's been out of a job for a month, and things ain't very pleasant at home. We wouldn't be

gettin' any wages anyway, you see, an' we wouldn't have any comin' either. Mr. Bradford'll pay up some time."

"He's awful nice to us," put in Hilda.

"You bet!" said one of the older girls, emphatically.

"What's he ever done for us?" asked Millie Dulaney.

"You'd better go back to Beals' and see the difference!" said Rose, sharply. "The rest of us know without goin'. Say, Kittie, I'll do it if the rest will."

That was all that was needed.

"I'll do it, too," said one of the other girls.

"Me, too," chimed in another; and presently all the group, even to Millie Dulaney, were pledged.

"Now come on, let's tell the rest," said Kittie. Through the factory went the girls, Kittie at their head, her eyes shining, her whole face alive with joy at the thought of being able to help her friend, the boss. As they went they told the story and their plan of rescue, Kittie enthusiastically explaining and the others indorsing it with many interruptions. There were between two and three hundred employees in the place, and the girls went from top to bottom of the building, to make sure that every one was told.

The men in the mixing-rooms, where the sugar was boiling in great cauldrons, looked up impatiently when their quarters were invaded. Some of them laughed when Kittie outlined her scheme.

"You little idiot!" said one.

"Look out, Joe! The youngster's pretty near right," said a broad-shouldered man. "The old man's mighty white! We've known he was in trouble a good while, and we've been sorry enough about it, but none of us has ever thought of tryin' to help him."

"Why should we?" asked Joe, just as Millie had done.

"Well," said the first man, slowly, "I don't believe you've forgotten the time when your boy died with scarlet fever. How would you have paid the doctor's bill and the funeral expenses if it hadn't been for the old man?"

The other shifted his feet uneasily. You're right, Jim," he said, presently. "But it's queer to have a kid like that tellin' a man what to do."

"Kittie," said Jim, "suppose you go and tell him? Say that if he'll keep the factory going, we'll work a month and let our pay run on until he's straightened out. That will mean several thousand dollars, and perhaps he'll pull through. Tain't much, compared with what we'd like to do, but it might help. Trot along, kid, and tell him."

"Me?" said Kittie, in confusion. "Oh, I can't!"

"Yes, you can," said Jim, "Besides, it's your scheme. Now skip, before the 1 o'clock whistle blows."

Kittie turned to obey.

"Wait a minute," said the practical Hilda. "You've cried chocolate all over your face."

Then, while the girls giggled hysterically, Hilda calmly led Kittie to the nearest faucet and energetically scrubbed her face with a corner of her apron. It was a pink-cheeked maid that ran down the stairs, through the stock-rooms, through the shipping-rooms and into the office, deserted by all but the head of the firm, who had had no appetite for luncheon.

He sat at his desk, his head in his hand, but he looked up wearily as Kittie rapped. It was not often that any employee visited the office, and Bradford would have been surprised if his mind had not been engaged with other things.

As it was, he smiled, not such a smile as Kittie held in her memory, but the kindly, patient smile of a man who sees defeat ahead, but is strong enough to meet it courageously.

"What is it?" he asked.

"Please," said Kittie, timidly, "they say—they say—oh, Mr. Bradford, they say you've lost all your money an' the factory's goin' to close, and we'll all have to leave and—" and then Kittie broke down completely.

"Well," said Bradford, sharply, "what is that to you? You'll be paid!"

"It ain't that," said Kittie, "it ain't that. We don't want you to shut down at all, and we're awfully sorry, and we don't care whether you have any money or not, we'll work for you anyway, and—"

"What are you talking about?" demanded Bradford.

"Workin'," said Kittie, valiantly. "We don't want no wages. Anyway, we don't want any for a long time, and then you can save a lot of money, and p'raps you won't have to shut down at all."

Then Kittie, having at last found her tongue, went on, telling in her own way and with infinite detail just what had happened upstairs. The man at the desk listened in silence. Once or twice he put his hand to his throat as if he were choking, and then he dropped his head and sat so still that Kittie was sure he was offended.

"Perhaps he's mad," she said to herself, taking instant fright at the terrible thought of having given offense to the boss. She shivered at her own temerity. How had she dared to be so familiar?

"We didn't mean to—to do what we hadn't ought to," she said, in an abashed voice, from which the glad, enthusiastic note that had won her a hearing in the work-rooms had quite disappeared. She was very sober now. "You see," she said, timidly, "it was just 'cause you've been so good to us and 'cause we liked you."

"Did they all say that, Kittie?" Bradford asked, softly.

"Yes, sir, and Jim said it might help you to straighten things out."

The man at the desk put his lips together and threw back his shoulders in the way that his friends knew meant he would win or die fighting. After all, things were not quite so bad as Kittie's fancy had painted. It did look like failure, an absurd failure since it hinged on so small a sum. But there had been a somewhat indiscreet expansion of the plant, too close "sailing to the wind," too generous a faith in others' promises, and in the end disaster for himself, since there had seemed to be no one to whom he could turn for temporary relief. But the busy season would begin presently, and perhaps the new holiday stock, planned months ago, would sell rapidly. It seemed ridiculous to talk of failure, when if things could only be tidied over for a month or so everything would be safe.

"You could pay it all back some time," said Kittie.

Bradford sprang to his feet. "Kittie," he said, with a new ring in his voice as he looked down into her eager, upturned face, "we'll do it! Go back and tell my friends that I'm proud to be helped by them, and that with their assistance we'll pull it through."

Three weeks later Bradford ran lightly up the stairs to the work-room, scorning the slower elevator, and stopped near the table where Kittie's fingers flashed above her pan of chocolate. There had been no pay-day for three successive Saturday nights, and the mothers and fathers had grumbled. But the children had had their argument ready. There was not much work to be had anywhere, they pointed out, and besides, some day the boss would be on his feet again.

In the factory itself there had been no discontent. A strange new feeling of comradeship had come over the workers, and from Kittie busy at her chocolate-dipping to broad-shouldered Jim in the boiling-rooms each one was inspired with something that made work a joy.

Bradford, looking down the room and catching responsive smiles everywhere, was thrilled anew with a warm and vitalizing sense of common brotherhood, such as had been his since Kittie had come to his office three weeks ago.

"Just one minute!" he said, in a ringing voice. "I thought you'd like to know that it's all right now. Wages and back pay to-morrow. We've got the biggest order we ever had, and the 'Fatinitzas' are a splendid success. I—" he looked down at Kittie and smiled cheerily, although his voice broke—"I'm much obliged to you, my friends!"—Ida May Jackson in The Youth's Companion.

LEO'S LAST PRAYER.

By Leo XIII.

Leo, now sets thy sun; pale is its dying ray;
Black night succeeds thy day.

Black night for thee; wasted thy frame; life's flood sustains
No more thy shrunken veins.

Death casts his fatal dart; robbed for the grave thy bones
Lie under the cold stones.

But my freed soul escapes her chains, and longs in flight
To reach the realms of light.

That is the goal she seeks; thither her journey fares;
Grant, Lord, my anxious prayers,

That, with the citizens of heaven, God's face and light
May ever thrill my sight;

That I may see thy face, heaven's queen, whose mother love
Has brought me home above.

To thee, saved through the tangles of a perilous way
I lift my grateful lay.

The above poem was included in the book presented by Leo XIII. on March 1, to each of the cardinals of the Sacred College, many of whom had gathered in Rome to congratulate him on his jubilee and ninety-third birthday. In its present English form it is a translation made by an esteemed Protestant journal, the Independent, which comments on the author as follows:

"And this poet, sage and Christian, whose imprisoned soul longs for the beautiful vision of the face of God, is he whom the Westminster Catechism declares to be 'that Anti-Christ, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself in the Church against Christ and all that is called God.' Wonderful was the ill-starred patience that waited so long before revision came."

LOST TO THE CHURCH THROUGH DRINK.

Rev. M. A. Lambing, spiritual director C. T. A. U. of Pittsburg, says:—

"The greater number of those whom Catholics support in their charitable institutions are there either because they or their kindred drank, and were thus rendered either unable or unwilling to provide for them. This is not a random assertion, but a fact known to all who have made investigation. A bishop, appealing to his people in behalf of his orphan asylum, said that the parents of one-half of the orphans had been killed by drink. And the chaplain of another large orphan asylum said three-fourths of its inmates were there on account of drink. The St. Vincent de Paul societies bear witness that nine-tenths of the want they relieve or meet with is due to drink. And it is no better in other institutions. More than ninety-four per cent. of the inmates of a work-house drank, and more than half of them claimed to be Catholics; while more than seventy per cent. of the inmates of the same country's poor house were Catholics, though the Little Sisters of the Poor had two large institutions in that place.

"But what are they whom drink sends to these places compared with those whom it sends to hell? Whence, some one asks, are the Presbyterian Clancys, the Methodist Murphys, the Baptist Kellys, and Lutheran Lynches? They are generally children driven upon the street by drink, picked up by Protestant children's aid societies, and sent to Protestant families. The leaks of the Church are generally caused by drink. It drowns the virtue in parents, and sweeps the children out of the Church!"—Boston Sacred Heart Review.

Crimsonbeak—I saw a fellow slip on the ice a little while ago and go down hard; and, do you know, he reminded me of Christopher Columbus before he discovered this country.

Yeast—How's that?
Crimsonbeak—Why, he looked as if he didn't know just where he was going to land.—Yonkers Statesman.

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Minn.

Bereaved—Well, doctor, now that the interval permits my speaking calmly of my husband's demise, I am prompted to ask you your confirmed opinion as to the cause of his death.

Doctor—A complication of diseases, madam.

Bereaved—Ah! That was so like him. He always was so versatile in everything.—Tit-Bits.