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HONOUR WITHOUT RENOWN

BY MRS. INNES BROWN

Author of "Three Daughters of the United Kingdom" CHAPTER IX

"You are not well today," observed Sister Marguerite a few days later, seating herself near the couch of her patient. "Is your foot more painful than you look so depressed?"

"It does hurt me unmercifully at times, but it is not only that which disturbs me. I have been thinking."

"It does us good to think sometimes; we realize then how short, and therefore how precious, are the fast fleeting hours."

"I was never deemed a sentimental man. Whether this illness has unnerved and weakened me I know not, but now and again I feel stirred and overpowered by impulses and feelings which are altogether foreign to my nature."

"If the impulses produce softer and purer sentiments than any you have experienced heretofore, yield fully to them, and be assured that they will bring peace."

Manfred's large brown eyes wandered round the little room, settling themselves at last upon the face of Sister Marguerite, who was stitching quietly.

"She might well speak of peace and joy for she was not the very personification of both as she sat there, her pure brow unruined and her merry eyes and lips ready to break into laughter at the smallest provocation—thought her patient as he lay gazing upon her. Wherein lay the secret of it all?—ah, he would give worlds to know."

"Sister," he said solemnly, and their eyes met: "do you really and honestly think that I shall recover?—I mean sufficiently to enjoy life again."

"Even though you should have to endure yet more bodily pain, I trust that, considering your strong constitution, you may yet recover; but to enjoy life?—and the honest eyes looked volumes—" do that, one must possess a conscience free from grievous stains."

"I know not how it is," he said, with more earnestness than usual, "but I trust you as I have never trusted human being before, and I would fain tell you something—confess to you a story which lies like a load upon my heart. Would you listen to me?"

"Why not tell it to those whose office authorizes them to listen to such tales? Their advice would be of service to you."

"His good angel had well nigh consoled when the evil spirit whispered again, 'Caution! why place your liberty in the hands of anyone?' He hesitated a moment, then shaking off the evil influence, continued, 'If I may not tell it to you, Sister, then I will never reveal it to any living soul.'"

"Since it must be so then, Mr. Manfred, speak to me openly, and rest assured that to the utmost of my ability I will aid you." She spoke calmly, but her heart was beating quickly.

"Sit where I can see you better, Sister; let the light fall upon your face: the sight of it will give me encouragement. Yes, that will do!" as she moved her chair in the endeavor to please him, and taking up her sewing, fixed her eyes upon the work as though her mind were concentrated only upon the size and evenness of her stitches.

Again Manfred paused, and each instant the spirit of evil seemed to be gaining ascendancy over him. At last he began:

interesting than that which you have related to me during the last five minutes. I must beg of you to allow me to withdraw my chair to a more shady part of the room; really as I sit here the glare of light is most trying."

"No, no! Do please remain where you are. I was but wondering where to begin. Bear with me and be your own kind self; it will give me more confidence to speak." Once more the merry eyes were shaded by the long dark lashes, and the sweet face gradually assumed that trustworthy look of enduring patience, so often now its necessary expression; and Manfred, as he gazed upon her, felt that desire increase within him to lay open to her judgment sorrows and troubles which he had never dared to expose to mortal before.

"Doubless you are fond of children," he resumed, after a pause, "so let me tell you that once, a long time ago, there were two little boys, half-brothers, with a difference of but two years between them. Their mother was a woman of deep passions, of violent likes and dislikes. She was devotedly attached to a man whom we will name Manly, and was engaged to be married to him. Unfortunately she grew fanatically jealous of the necessary and innocent attentions which her lover bestowed upon a cousin, and flying into a blind rage, she quarrelled with her fiancé and dismissed him. All his endeavors to pacify her, to assure her of the falsity of the reports which had reached her, were futile. Blinded by jealousy, she would not listen to reason; so taking her at her word, he left her and set sail for Australia. Now, as fate would have it, the cousin—for reasons of her own, but unknown to Manly—took a passage in the same ship, and gossip was not slow to report that they had been privately married. Shortly after this another gentleman, one who for a long time had secretly loved the aggrieved lady, came forward and offered by his faithful love to heal her wounded heart. In her resentment she accepted, and married this generous and warm-hearted man, whom we will call Edmund."

The Sister started; surely the busy needle must have pricked her finger. But Manfred, engrossed in his story, noticed nothing. He continued:

"Edmund was a distant cousin of his wife's, and was also the youngest son of an old baronet who, just before these events took place, had joined the majority, leaving to his eldest son a beautiful estate, comprising a hall and the broad acres of an old abbey, with its stately ruins. Sir Henry, the elder son, was many years older than Edmund; and these two, between whom the closest ties of brotherly love existed, were the sole living descendants of a family whose representatives had been forgotten at the Court of Henry VIII. Edmund inherited for his portion the Manor Farm of two hundred acres, which adjoined the estate of his brother; and thither he brought his stately wife.

"Ere a year had elapsed a son was born, and he also received the name of Edmund. He was but two months old when misfortune fell upon the master of the Manor House. Manly returned, as he had gone, a single man! To depict the grief and remorse of his former fiancée would be impossible. Edmund, her husband—for whom she had never really cared—had always been delicate. Comprehending but too plainly how matters stood, he lost heart and his health quite failed him. Generous as he was, he never once upbraided his wife for her neglect of him, but left her the sole inheritor of the house and all that he possessed. But before he died, this good husband had made a great bequest. Struggling to his feet, he dragged his weary limbs up the steep grassy walk which led to the old Abbey Towers, bearing in his arms the infant whom he loved so tenderly. Ever and anon he sat and ruminated; for small and light as the burden was, it was more than he could sustain for long. All that he now realized was that he was carrying his little treasure, his tiny Edmund, to give him to Henry's charge—Henry, who had been to himself as a father. To no one else would he trust his darling. He had reached the very spot where for centuries no blades of grass had been visible—the nave of the old Abbey church. This place had ever possessed a strange fascination for him; and a feeling of security, almost of peace, stole over him as, having laid the baby tenderly down on the soft earth, he sank upon a broken breast."

"Poor man!" ejaculated the tender-hearted listener, as drawing forth her coarse handkerchiefs she wiped the sympathetic tear from her eye. Then in a low tone, as though communing with herself, she murmured: "Poor weary sufferer, alas! might he not well feel a sensation of peace and calm steal over him when seated amid the magic influence of such surroundings?"

Then warning to a subject which was always most dear to her, she continued. "Have you not often experienced a mysterious thrill of inexplicable awe, as straggling through the melancholy ruins of our ancient monasteries and abbeys you have realized—as surely you must have done—that warm living hands, like your own, foiled with labor and pride to pile together those massive walls; that for centuries men and women of all ages and degrees, guided by the light of faith, flocked to those sanctuaries to pour out before God's altar the burning love of their hearts. Has no feeling of desecration moved you? No voice, as from the silent

dead, sounded in your ears, bidding you tread with light and reverence step the consecrated ground wherein once your ancestors were wont to kneel and bat? Ah, believe me that they who reared those walls had no stunted notions of what was due to God. Their conceptions of Him were great and vast, as likewise were the temples they raised to His honor. And you have felt nought of this?" she asked again, reading aright the look of astonishment on his face.

He shook his head, but ventured no response, simply signed to her to continue.

The neglected needlework fell to the floor as suddenly she rose to her feet and advancing towards the window, fixed her eyes upon the narrow space of sky perceptible through the small casement, and as though gazing upon one of memory's living pictures she continued:

"'Tis a marvel! Nay, I can scarce conceive how men of one generation can so easily forget all that their forefathers prized and held most dear. Often, indeed, they forget even the very resting places of those whose wealth or sacred possessions they rightly or wrongfully hold as their own. There are no spots in all the kingdom half so dear to me as are the consecrated spaces wherein once stood our venerated abbeys. For hours I have wandered amid these desecrated aisles. Often have I toyed with the massive stone work in their dilapidated walls, marvelling at the strength and solidity of its masonry. How proudly I have stroked and caressed some magnificent remains of carving, which chance, not pity, has rescued from the ruthless hand of destruction. So soft, cool, and soothing the stone felt, as reverently I pressed my burning cheek upon it, praying inwardly for him whose able hand had wrought and traced the unique design. If seated upon a carved or mosaic stone, my very ground beneath has claimed my homage and respect, for lo! deep below the sod and ruins repose the blessed bones of ancient saints laid peacefully to rest. And I thought I may have sat alone in a body, where once they knelt, who perchance were my kith and kin in blood as well as in heart and faith, still, believe me, I was not, nor did I ever feel alone. And you?" he questioned, turning fully toward him: "you have perhaps lived amid such scenes, and never felt the least enthralled by the power of fascination of the past?"

"Never! I forgot it all. I never thought of it like that," he answered in a low tone, as though fearful to disturb the earnestness of her words and manner.

"Never thought of it," she repeated to herself. "How strange! Then surely it were an almost impossible task to explain to one like you the joy that I have felt, the sweet but realistic visions that my fanciful brain has oft-times conjured."

She raised her eyes with a rapt upward look, and continued in a low, impressive tone, as though communing with herself, and still regretful that he should have lived unmoved amid such scenes:

"Never thought of it! And often, oh, how often— With throbbing heart I've sat and watched The weeping ruins round, Till fancy lent her magic wand, Transforming sight and sound. No more were columns flung apart In desecrated heap; With one gigantic bound they rose, As from eternal sleep. Leaping from pillar to pillar, Spanning the vacant spaces, Rose row on row of arches, Unrivaled of their race. Strong and massive, light and graceful. Oh, who could count their cost? Riveted, I gazed upon them, In raptur'd wonder lost. Then higher yet and higher still The mighty roof arose, Crowning the sacred edifice In bold and grand repose. From marble steps the altar glowed, All shining white and gold; The taper gleamed, the organ pealed, Exultant volleys rolled. While soaring amid the sunbeams Which pierce the jewelled glass, Flotted clouds of perfumed incense, At high and solemn Mass. Or rolling as mighty billows, From chancel back to nave, Came full-toned chant of liturgy, In rhythmic wave on wave. Small need was there to bid me kneel In adoration low; I felt the breath of multitudes Seeking to and fro. I bowed my head in humble prayer, I felt no more alone; Prelates, monks, babes, all supplicants, We knelt around the throne. She ceased abruptly, as though suddenly recalled to the present. A deeper color flushed her cheek as she quietly sank into her chair once more and resumed her work. "Please forgive this ill-timed interruption to your story," she pleaded.

"And yet, 'tis a subject I love. Never, never! I will dear old England realize the sorrow and regret which fills her children's hearts as they wander through the neglected ruins of her most venerated shrines. Enough of this! I must endeavor to restrain my feelings by keeping them under more severe control."

"Nay, why did your song cease so abruptly? You carried me with you, and as though a veil had

suddenly dropped from my eyes, I was looking upon familiar scenes with a keener interest and clearer perception than I had ever done before."

"Call it not a song!" she replied, merrily shaking her head. "Nor mistake a little warmth of feeling, badly expressed, for real genius. I possess no talent whatsoever. Even if able to conceive, I cannot portray. But," as if to herself, "I knew one dear girl who could." She thought of Madge. "Now, please proceed with your story. You left the father and child in my beloved old ruins."

"Yes; and there they remained until the sun was well-nigh sinking to rest. Too weak and ill to move, Edmund gave way to the lethargy that had stolen over him, and seated with his elbows on his knees, he rested his weary head between his hands, and perhaps—who knows—may have seen visions and heard sounds similar to those you but now recounted to me. And still the baby slept."

TO BE CONTINUED

TWO PARTS OF A LETTER

Middleburgh is a charming little American town, neat and well-kept, but with an air of aloofness about it, an old-time stillness and peace, which it had preserved despite the proximity of bustling centers and high importations of trade. Thereby the town was the scene of a sensational murder, which took place on one of its most exclusive streets and in a palatial mansion. The victim of this atrocious crime was Lawrence O'Brien, a leading citizen of the town and its foremost banker.

The crime, which remained obstinately enshrouded in mystery, had been discovered by the banker's daughter, Marian. In her horror and dismay she had rushed screaming from the house to summon the nearest doctor. But the physician could only pronounce life extinct and declare the cause of death to have been a blow on the head from some heavy but dull instrument. Nor did the inquest elicit anything more than this bare fact. The servants men and women, who had been in the house, had heard no noise of any sort and could throw no light on the mystery. Their antecedents and their long years of services prevented the possibility of suspicion falling upon them.

Marian O'Brien, who had been spending the evening with friends, had returned about midnight and hastily throwing off her outdoor wraps, she had hastened to the small and plainly furnished room which the banker had chosen for his study and where she saw a light burning. She opened the door to find her father lying on the floor almost directly under the portrait of his ancestor, Sir Malachy O'Brien, who had been executed during the penal times in Ireland. There was evidence of a struggle. Various objects were strewn about the apartment, but there was nothing to give any clue to the midnight assassin, his motive or his means of entrance. Marian O'Brien was never again precisely what she had been. And yet that very evening had been a red-letter one in the young girl's experience. Lewis Lansing, a young graduate of a foremost Catholic university and son of a wealthy and influential citizen of Middleburgh, had walked home with her from her friend's house. She had met him that summer on several occasions, during which they had resumed a childish intimacy, when the judge's son and the banker's daughter had attended school or spent their holidays together. Lewis Lansing had so distinguished Marian by his attentions that already she was once weaned of her father's love and whispering what a suitable match this would be. Upon that fatal evening of the murder he had come to her where she sat at the piano and begged her to sing his favorite—a quaint old English melody:

"When first I saw thy face, I resolved to honor and adore thee!"

Her cheek had flushed and her heart had begun to beat as if she had a sudden assault, but her bright smile, and played the first bars of the accompaniment. As Lewis Lansing stood waiting at the foot of the stairs to see her home and Marian was having a parting chat with her hostess, the young man whistled that exquisite air softly to himself. He was a handsome and stalwart youth, well proportioned of figure, gay and good-humored, as he stood there, the cynosure of many eyes, while above her hostess sat idly to her young guest:

"We are all so glad, dear. It will be an ideal match." And Marian called back to her, laughing: "How can you be so absurd!"

During the homeward walk Lewis Lansing began quite naturally, as it seemed, to talk about that old song and quite as naturally to apply it to his own peculiar case. It is true, his speech was not quite so fluent at times as befitted the cleverest graduate of his year and the most promising young member of the bar, and he even fell silent now and again, a silence which the young girl by his side made no effort to break. It was a lovely night, soft and perfumed, with the palpitating hush of the mid-summer still lingering, and the confused, mist-shrouded radiance of many stars looking down upon the

young couple, to whom life seemed so fair and full of promise. When Marian was deeply moved her voice had a peculiar vibrating sweetness, and she talked with Lewis earnestly of this subject he had mooted, of their youth and of the obstacles which might be in their path.

"We must be very sure of ourselves," she said, with a gravity which was almost quaint, as she stood a moment at the gate which led into her father's grounds and gave Lewis her hand in farewell. "I cannot be any surer of myself than I am now," Lewis cried, with that confidence of youth which is, after all, so fine a thing. "If only you care for me and are willing to be my wife, nothing can part us!"

Was it the chill of that passing dark cloud, which struck upon Marian's heart, coldly just then? But she gave Lewis permission to come and see her and talk matters over, before he should speak to her father.

Marian turned toward the house, while Lansing played hide-and-seek with the shadows for a last glimpse of her, and as he walked away he whistled that quaint old roundelay again.

"When first I saw thy face," Marian went up the stairs full of life and hope, with the warm glow of a great happiness at her heart, to meet that fearful presence, Death, and under its most terrible form. The shadow of that tragedy seemed to unfold her from that hour. She shut herself up in the old mansion, with only the faithful old servants for company. A woman who had been her nurse from childhood was the only one to whom she ever spoke freely.

She seemed in some mysterious way to connect Lewis Lansing with the awful event of that night. Perhaps she was remorseful that she had been so completely absorbed in her own happiness while that terrible drama was being enacted, and, indeed, she declared to her nurse that had she not been absent the crime might never have been committed. In any case, she refused to see Lansing or even to hear his name mentioned. For a time he haunted the house, being observed by the vigilant townspeople on moonlight nights to walk like an uneasy ghost up and down in front of the mansion, and in point of fact he was frequently there in darkness and storm, when Middleburgh had on its midnight. But Marian never vouchsafed him a word or sign, and at last he went off to New York, and interested people said that here was the end of a promising romance and blamed the girl for what seemed a morbid devotion to her father's memory.

But Marian had a reason apart from the tragic associations which hung around Lansing's name. On the night when she had enticed her father's room to find him dead, she had discovered under a heavy frame, which had fallen to the floor, a fragment of a letter, which her father had evidently been writing to a friend.

"By all the gods, Martin," he had written, "beginning in the style of Horace, I would declare to you that my pet anxiety is now the future fate of my daughter. I will not have her marry, no, not before she is twenty-five. If she does it, it will be as in the old fairy tales with my malison. Besides, there is no one in this town who shall ever put a ring upon my daughter with even a fragment of my consent. She will have to run away like the King's false damsel who was rowed over the stormy sea and swallowed up in the flood."

These were the last words on the page, and either another page had never been written, or was hopelessly missing. Marian took the letter to heart, and with absurd literalness determined to obey it, as the expressed wish of her dying father. Yet, as time went on, and her nature began to rally from the shock, she found self imposed duty a hard one. So that, while she kept the fearful anniversary of her father's death in silence and gloom, there was nevertheless associated with it a memory of that sweet, homeward walk in the starlit gloom, when the love of an honest heart had been offered to her.

Her health began to fall under the stress of loneliness, of regret, of the solitary life she led, and she grew more dull and listless as day passed after day. She scarcely roused herself from a brooding reverie, one September twilight, when her nurse came in with a look of importance in her face. She was hurrying, indeed, with the news she had to tell, but she knew that it must be told care fully. Its purport was briefly: In a distant city, a man had died, confessing upon his death-bed to have been the murderer of Lawrence O'Brien. His motive had been solely that of gain. He had been informed that the banker on the very night in question had taken home a large sum of money, which he meant to secrete for the night in the chimney under the portrait of Sir Malachy. The murderer had effected an entrance through an unused cellar door and had cautiously made his way upward to where the banker worked alone. He had hoped merely to disable him, and having administered a drug, to fly with the money. But Lawrence O'Brien was both a powerful and a courageous man, and there had been a struggle there in that silent room in the end of night which had been terminated by a blow from a loaded stick which the burglar carried.

He had then secured the money, and had taken away, in the chance of finding tokens or other valuables

among them, a sheet of papers from the table. These he returned with some few articles of value. The money had long since been spent. It gave Marian a sickening feeling to hear these details and seemed to renew the full horror of the tragedy. But she conquered this repugnance and began to turn over the papers, which she felt might throw light on some of her father's affairs. Among them she discovered a page of a letter, the consecutive page to that she had read, and it was as follows:

"I repeat that no one in Middleburgh shall marry my daughter, unless, indeed, Lewis Lansing should elect to do so and that Marian's inclination should run that way. But I can scarce hope for such a consummation. The fates forbid such ideal unions! Seriously, my friend, I would it were God's will, Lansing is a gentleman, honorable, high principled, a sterling Catholic. His father was my best friend, his mother my first love. I should die happy could I see my daughter married to this lad, who has a career of his own, outside of his father's position. I would give them my blessing were it with my last breath."

The letter ended there abruptly. Perhaps the hand of death had really out its short. Marian sank upon her knees. A rush of happiness penetrated the deep gloom of her sorrow as sunlight invaded a long-darkened room. But this happiness presently gave way to a pang of unavailing regret.

"It is too late!" she cried out. "O, my God, it is too late!" The days that followed were full of this same blending of pleasure and pain. Her father approved her choice. Her father had, as it were, spoken to her from the world of shadows whither he had gone. But Lewis' patience had been tried too far. He had passed out of her life forever. And yet he had been so sure that nothing could ever part them.

One moonlight night, barely two weeks after the receipt of that startling budget of news, Marian went out into the garden. She was feeling unusually restless, and her heart was aching with that sad sense of loss, which all hearts must sometimes know. The silence and peace, the unutterable magic of moonshine, seemed to ease her pain. As she drew near that point where the garden fence was lowest, she thought she heard a sound and stood still to listen. Someone was whistling an air which she was not slow to recognize:

"When first I saw thy face!" She made a step forward to be confronted with Lewis Lansing. He looked paler and graver, but he smiled at her in the moonlight. "I am keeping my usual vigil," he said in a voice that sounded somewhat unnatural. "I come here very often when I am in town, and I believe all Middleburgh knows it, except you."

She made no reply, and he asked hesitatingly: "Are you not angry, Marian?" "No, no, Lewis," she said frankly. "It makes me very happy to know that you are here."

Surprise, pleasure, joy, succeeded each other on Lewis' honest face. "You know I am sure of myself as ever, Marian," he said. "And I am very sure now, too. They stood still facing each other. "May I come to talk things over?" Lewis asked.

"Yes, Lewis," she said, "though there is not so much to say, after all." It was only after they were married that Lewis saw the two fragments of the letter, and it is quite possible that inquisitive Middleburgh has never seen them at all.—Anna T. Sadler.

CHRIST WITHOUT DOGMA

It is only natural that a religion which began with a confusion of faculties should end in confusion of thought. Of this fact Protestantism has afforded a continuous succession of illustrations, which, taken together, cover practically the entire field of theology and philosophy. One of the latest of these is a brief but very striking article contributed to a recent number of the Outlook, by Dr. Lyman Abbott. And I am tempted to criticize it, not because it possesses any special or intrinsic importance, but only because it offers so typical an example of that laxity which seems inseparable from contemporary Protestant literature. The article to which I have alluded is in the form of a meditation upon the story of the Epiphany, as related in St. Matthew's Gospel. It was written to emphasize a single point, and that point is emphasized with all Dr. Abbott's singular ability. The three wise men sought Christ. They sought Him with openness of mind and steadfastness of purpose. And they found Him without the help of church or sacrament or creed. It is just this fact, together with the inferences suggested by it, which Dr. Abbott considers as possessing a special and peculiar significance for the twentieth century.

Now as to the fact itself, one can hardly help but wonder as to Dr. Abbott's reason for attaching to it the significance he does. For if the wise men were to find Christ at all, it is difficult if not impossible even to conceive them finding Him without that very mental attitude which to the Doctor seems at once so impressive and so important. They could not surely have approached

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