

away from Saint John for two months. When I returned I looked for the familiar figure the first afternoon I passed his bench, but he was not there. Several days passed, and still he did not appear. On Sunday I dropped into the rectory for a pipe after evensong, and in the course of conversation I mentioned the old man and asked the rector if he knew anything of him. Then I learned that the old fellow was very ill; the rector had been told of him by the doctor, and had been visiting him frequently since his attack. At the parson's suggestion I myself called the following day, and during the remaining two months of the old man's life I was his constant visitor. He lived in a small house in a side street, and an old negro manservant was his sole attendant. He did not suffer any pain, and his mental faculties were unimpaired. He always seemed glad to see me; and I can never forget the wistful sweetness of his smile nor the gentle courtesy of his manner, a courtesy that was part and parcel of the man himself.

We talked often and long and of many things, and by degrees he gave me more and more of his confidence. But weeks passed before he made any reference to those three graves on the hill-side, and I had again begun to despair, for he was not of those whose confidence can be forced. But my patience—if I may call it so—was at last rewarded. One evening, after an hour's talk, we had fallen into one of those silences which are the test and proof of true communion between friends. We had been talking of the delicate adjustment so often necessary to preserve the proper relations between parent and child. Suddenly he turned to me and said, "You must often have wondered about those three graves over which I so constantly sat when I was able to go about; I am going to tell you the story of them, for it bears very closely upon the subject we have just been discussing." And then he told me the following tale, which, as nearly

as I can remember, I give in his own words.

"In order to begin at the very beginning I must go back to a time some years before my own entry into the story. Just seventy years ago a gentleman who lived some two days' ride from Dublin, having fallen heir to a substantial legacy, undertook some extensive alterations and enlargements in connection with his house and outbuildings. For the execution of the work he secured the services of a well-known Dublin architect and builder, who sent out a young man of twenty-five, an apprentice, to carry out the preliminary work of clearing the ground and making the necessary excavations.

"Now, this gentleman had been twice married, and his second wife was still living. By his first wife he had two daughters, the elder of whom had married a Dublin tea merchant. The latter was a lovely girl, just past her seventeenth birthday, and of a most amiable disposition. In after years I heard not a little of how the village folk and peasantry worshipped her; how she ministered to them, young as she was, in the many sorrows of their lot, and shared with a full heart in their simple joys. It was among the people that she found a field for the exercise of those qualities of sympathy and kindness which, unfortunately, she was given no opportunity of expressing at home. For her father thought only of his stables and kennels, while her step-mother had been hard and cold towards her from the first—in marked distinction to her attitude of lavishly indulgent affection towards her own offspring.

"Why is it that in such circumstances women so frequently fail to rise to their opportunity, and criminally neglect their responsibility? When a woman marries a widower with children surely she assumes responsibility for the exercise of maternal care for the children but little less than that of wifely care for the father! One would think that all