

minutes reflection she resolved to inquire for the residence of a clergyman of that church of which she herself was a member, and ask him in the name of Christian charity and kindness, to give her a home until she could send a telegram to her husband, and he could furnish her with means to pursue her journey.

Inquiring of the ticket agent the name of the clergyman she hoped to find, being politely directed to his house, she was soon at his door and rang the bell. He answered the summons in person, and in a few hurried sentences she made known her misfortune and her request.

The Rev. Mr. Ripley was thin, tall and straight. He was apparently about forty-five years of age; polished, but pompous; no particles of dust could have been found upon his fine, black broadcloth, or nicely polished boots; the tie in his cravat was faultless; his hair was brushed carefully forwards to conceal the coming baldness. Very dignified, very important, very ministerial appeared the reverend gentleman; but as Mrs. Herbert looked in his cold, grey eyes she felt that benevolence was by no means as strong an element in his composition as selfishness. Her heart seemed to chill in his presence; she could not help contrasting him mentally with the good Mr. Weston, who was pastor of her own church at home. Ah, not often had the hand now thrust into the bosom of the tight buttoned dress-coat been prompted by the cold heart beneath it to place a bright coin upon the palm of beggared childhood; not often had his footsteps found their way to poverty's door; yet this unworthy representative of the Christian church preached charity to his rich congregation at least twice every Sabbath, and, so far as himself was concerned, made preaching supply the place of practice.

"Madam," he said, after eyeing her from head to foot, "you have a pretty story, but the streets of L— are full of such stories at the present day. Did I listen to one half I hear of the kind, I should have my house filled with poor mendicants all the time, and, perhaps, few of them would be worthy of my respect; I can not keep you as you request."

Mrs. Herbert turned from the inhospitable door of the Rev. Mr. Ripley. The cool insolence with which he had treated her, had almost driven courage from her heart; but she determined now to seek a hotel, where at least to rest herself and decide upon some course of action. She had eaten nothing since morning, indeed she had not thought of food; but now she felt faint and weary, and the consciousness that she was alone in a strange city, friendless and penniless, with the shades of evening already falling, quite unnerved her. As she glanced up and down the street the first thing that attracted her attention was,—not a public house sign, but in large gilt letters the words—"Masonic Hall." Her heart gave a quick, joyful jump. Her husband belonged to the Masonic Fraternity, and she knew that any duty a Mason owed to a brother, he owed equally to that brother's wife or daughter. She remembered also that to that noble Order she was indebted for nearly all the happiness she had known in her life. But familiar as she had been with its workings in her native city, she had never realized its universality, and never understood how, like some great talismanic belt, it circles the earth, embraces all mankind in its protecting folds; softening the asperities of dissenting religionists, shedding the purple light of love on the fierce rapids of commercial life, enlightening and ennobling politicians, and harmonizing their conflicting sentiments upon a sense of kindred.

Mrs. Herbert now paused irresolute. What would she now not have given for a knowledge of one mystic sign by which to call her husband's Masonic brothers to her side?

Men were passing rapidly up and down the street; elegantly dressed ladies were out enjoying the delicious coolness of the evening, for the day had been sultry; but among all that busy throng there was not one whom she had felt at liberty to accost.

A gentleman was passing her, leading a little girl by the hand. With a quick gesture she arrested his steps. She had observed nothing peculiar in the stranger's face; indeed, she had not noticed it at all; but a Maltese cross was suspended from his watch guard, and the moment she discovered it, she had involuntarily lifted her hand to prevent his passing her.

The stranger looked at her inquiringly; she pointed to the cross and said; "That, sir, is why I stopped you; will you excuse me for addressing you, and please tell me if you are a Mason?"

"I am," he replied.

"Oh, sir, my husband is a Mason, and perhaps you will be kind to a brother's wife."

"Where does your husband live?"

"In Boston. His name is G. W. Herbert; he is of the firm of Herbert, Jackson