

NO!

BY ROSE TERRY COOKE.

CHAPTER XII.

"A THANKLESS SON."

THERE was no further attempt that year to rob the B— Bank, and Jack went on in his quiet routine of life with no special excitement. Early in the summer his Aunt Hannah died, and Uncle John removed to Mrs. Manice's house. His wife had lingered much longer than the physician thought was possible; and in constant care and anxiety for her, Mr. Boyd's health had broken down, and when the need to keep up was removed from him by her death he became so ill that his sister-in-law removed him at once to the rooms the old aunts had occupied.

This brought a heavy burden on Manice's shoulders; not only was John a helpless invalid now, but the prospect of his restoration to health or energy was very slight, and he had literally no money.

His wife's long illness had demanded the expenditure of every cent he received, and Will had not helped him at all. When the family met after the funeral, Will told his aunt that he thought the best place for his father to go to was the house of his old coachman, who had bought a farm out in the remote country and would no doubt board Mr. Boyd cheaply in consideration of such light work as he could do about the house and garden.

John Boyd looked up from the sofa where he was lying with an expression almost amounting to terror at this proposition. Manice smiled across at him and put her fingers to her lips. Will saw neither smile nor gesture, but went on in his weak, pompous way: "In fact, I have already talked with Patrick on the subject, and he has fixed his price. For four dollars a week he will supply board and washing, and father will be expected only to fetch in wood, weed in the garden, drive the stock to pasture, hoe corn a little, keep the shed in order, and take care of the poultry; light and amusing work, you see, and calculated to interest his mind. The arrangement strikes me as peculiarly advantageous, and Mrs. O'Brien will be ready now at any time. I think myself that four dollars a week is a high charge, but I hold a mortgage on the place, and this secures me the interest on it, at least while the arrangement lasts."

Jack coloured hotly and opened his lips to speak, but Manice laid her hand on his shoulder and whispered, "Don't."

"You propose to pay four dollars a week, then, for your father?" said Manice to Will, in a voice that fell cold on every ear.

"Yes, that is all I can afford, and the law requires me, I believe, to see that so near a relative is not thrown upon the town; though I do not really know how to afford it. My investments require me to have ready money on hand in case of calls, and some of them are at present unproductive, though safe, perfectly safe."

The two girls looked at each other, and Manice's calm face flushed with disgust; but she controlled her voice and said, very quietly,

"As you acknowledge before these witnesses that you intend to pay that sum for your father's support, I wish to say that I will take him home with

me and make him comfortable for that same sum without exacting from him any labour."

"O—O, well, but Aunt Manice—you see—well, I can't afford to pay you what it is worth here; and—and—then, there's my mortgage, and—"

"Wilson Boyd!" said Mrs. Manice, with a severity Jack had never heard her use before. "You shall not send your father in his age and weakness to be the drudge of any man, and wear out his last days far from any friend or relation. I do not propose to take him to my house and care for him without your help, though he would in any case be a welcome guest here always. But if you have no feeling and no principle, think at least how unwise it would be for you; what a stain and shame on you as a business man to turn your father off in this manner! You can't afford it! You are too well known in Danvers to do it without injuring your character."

Will stood silent and shame-faced for once. Jack's countenance glowed as he looked and listened. Manice's grave, worn face lit up with positive beauty while she spoke—the beauty of a just, generous, and tender soul. Long since the tender tints, the soft rounded outlines, the sparkle and glow of youth, had left her face,

"But a smooth and steadfast mind,
Gentle thoughts and calm desires,"

and the peaceful faith of a heart that rested always in God and tended forever toward "the things which are above," had wrought out a loveliness on Manice Boyd's countenance that youth never knows—the real, literal "beauty of holiness."

"Well, I'm sure," whispered Will, "I'm awfully obliged. I know you'll take good care of him."

Manice did not answer.

"Jack," said she, "I told Dawson to send a carriage here an hour after we came back. I think it has just driven up. Help your uncle out to it, and you and Anne go home with him; his rooms are ready. Alice will help me here, and you will please tell the driver to come for us in another hour."

While she spoke Will had slipped out of the door and taken himself off. He was not a particularly sensitive youth, but his aunt's words had really pierced the armour of his selfish soul. He sneaked back to his business, and visited his self-contempt on the clerks beneath him all the rest of the day, till they were weary of their lives for the remainder of its lingering hours.

So Manice and Alice packed up Mr. Boyd's belongings and Aunt Hannah's things, while Jack and Anne established Uncle John in the pleasant rooms with south windows and a crackling wood fire, which Mimy had hastened home from the funeral to light. She had also warmed some strong broth which she fetched up to Jack to give his uncle, and when the poor old man was laid on the sofa, warmly covered, and Anne sat down in the window with her sewing, so that he might not feel altogether lonely at first, Jack went down stairs, being waylaid by Mimy, who hurried him into the kitchen, and, slamming the door behind her, began at once,

"Well, how was it? How did that Wilson let you fetch him? I heered of his contraptions quite a spell ago, and put your ma up to 'em. I should hope he didn't air 'em dyrect his pa got home!"

Jack told her all about the painful scene, and Will's proposal.

"Well! the' aint no words for sech everlastin' littleness! I should think Will Boyd would want to go away and hate himself to death. But land! them that can do sech things aint never the ones to see how despicable they be; if they was they wouldn't do 'em. And there never was a truer word spoke than that one about making a whistle out of a pig's tail. I tell ye an angel couldn't whistle that feller!"

"I really think though, Mimy, that mother did make him a little ashamed of himself. You ought to have heard her."

"Well, she's as nigh an angel as they make 'em down below. I've said so before, an' now I say it ag'in; but he won't stay ashamed, now I tell ye."

"Mother," said Jack, as he sat on the sofa by her that night, for a quiet talk, as he was to go back to B— in the morning. "I want you to understand that you're not going to spend your substance on Will Boyd."

"My dear Jack, what are you talking about?"

"It amounts to the same thing, your taking Uncle John for four dollars a week, and you're not going to do it. Here am I, getting three hundred dollars a year extra for playing at scare-crow. Now, ma'am, that money is going to be paid right over to you, to be used for Uncle John."

The tears rose to Manice's eyes; she could not speak. Jack went on:

"All the same, don't you let Will go back on his pittance. Make him pay you regularly or threaten him with the law. O! you worldly-wise little mammy! how did you know that your cut-and-thrust about his reputation in business would fetch him so square? That was a regular slugger!"

"Jack! don't be slangy," laughed Manice, who was just ready to cry, but never allowed herself that feminine indulgence except when she was alone—if she could help it!

"But, my dear Jack, I can do a great deal for Brother John without much expense; much to make him comfortable, I mean. And I want you to begin to lay up a little money. I suppose some day, like all young men, you will want a home of your own, and it will be twice as valuable if you lay aside and deny your small wants to that end. I have already put a share every year of what you sent me into the savings-bank here in your name, and for this purpose. If you want to supply Uncle John with some small luxuries that will make his life more pleasant I shall not object. Send him a daily paper if you like, or an illustrated magazine, or some nourishing delicacy that you can get in B— and I cannot get here. The girls and I wish and intend to do all we can for him, and Will must and shall pay his share. It is promised, and I think I can assure it. You know already I can use forcible arguments."

Jack laughed, bidding Manice good-night and good-bye together, as he went back to his work early in the morning. It was well for him that his mother was just as well as generous; and he had occasion to bless her for it shortly after.

Augustus Jones, the teller, had taken of late quite a fancy to Jack—took him out to drive sometimes, after bank hours; invited him to lunch at an expensive restaurant on the most costly

dishes, and did his best to induce him to drink various wines as part of the feast, but Jack persistently and stoutly refused to taste any thing of the sort.

He had also asked Jack to dine at his house, a beautifully furnished and commodious apartment flat, where his pretty wife presided, looking like a fashion-plate in her rich dress and tasteful ornaments.

Jack had a clear head, and this style of living did not seem to him possible on what he knew was usually a teller's salary.

"You're a lucky fellow, Jones!" he said, as Augustus ostentatiously exhibited to him one day a pony and basket-phaeton he had just bought for Mrs. Jones. "You seem to be in such 'fluent circumstances,' as our old Mimy says. Can't you get translated into a cashier's place somewhere, and let me slip into your shoes? A teller's salary must be worth having!"

"My dear fellow!" said Jones, "I trust you're not so verdant as to suppose all this comes out of my teller's pay? Not much! I know a trick worth three of that. Just you keep your eye on the stock-market quotations, Boyd, and watch how they go up and down. Well, sir, that's 'mine oyster!' I've got a friend in the brokerin' business in New York; he wires me the tip, so I buy in low and sell out on a rise, and make dollars easy as you can turn your hand over. I tell you this is the golden goose! Nothin' like it. Any time you've got a hundred or so to spare, fetch it to me; I'll double it for you, and you'll get the idea when you pocket the cash. Why only yesterday I sold out fifty shares of the Black Rock and Shoddyville Road that I had held six weeks for a rise, and made a cool thousand. How is that?"

Jack's head began to turn. Here indeed was a gorgeous prospect. He could not possibly save a thousand dollars in three years, but here Jones had made it in six weeks! He went home in a dream, the dream that has haunted and ruined its tens of thousands, and he wrote to Manice at once. Here is his letter:

"DEAR MOTHER: Will you let me have \$100 of the money you have put in the savings-bank for me? I see a way to double it without any work at all. Our teller does a good deal in buying and selling stocks, and is willing to give me the straight tip now and then, and, as he says, it's the thing to do, 'venture a sprat to catch a whale,' you know. So, mammy, you may be a millionaire's mother yet. Send it in a check, please.

"Your big boy,
JACK."
Manice's answer came as quickly as the mail could bring it; but there was no inclosure, and the first word Jack saw was—"No!"

MANICE SAYS "NO!"
"No, my dear boy. It is time to-day for me to use our watch-word. "In the first place, the money is invested in your name, and how was I to get it without an order from you? Dear Jack, your head was too thoroughly turned to remember even this small detail. Is such excitement wholesome for either your soul or body?"
"In the next place, have you forgotten your experience in betting at that billiard-table at the shore? Speculating in stocks is just as much gambling as that was; it is risking