

THROUGH THORNY PATHS.

BY MARY ROWENA COTTER.

CHAPTER VIII.—Continued.

For a few days Cecelia suffered... she had resolved to be brave, and she was glad that she could go to the chapel and lay before the tabernacle the sorrows which she would not reveal even to her cousin...

"How very learned you are, Cecelia. I cannot understand it, since we have always been together and you are younger than I." "Our dispositions differ," laughed Cecelia, "and that is no fault of either of us."

were ready to go to the chapel a little earlier than the others, and told the Sister they wished to go to confession before Mass. "Go, dear children, and you, Cecelia, prepare yourself well for your Communion, which I wish you to offer for a special intention."

"I knew my darling would come to me, and you will not leave me until I am better. How tall you are growing, and you are getting more beautiful every day!" "Yes, father, I shall remain with you."

once until my father was on his deathbed, when he told me all." "Then Mrs. Eaton is no more my grandmother than Agnes?" "No, Cecelia, she is not. Are you sorry?" "I am afraid I am," said the girl, "for she has always been so kind to me. But tell me about my own grandmother."

of your grandmother. My father put it on my finger just before he died, and I never took it off until I had outgrown it, then I put it away to be handed down to my eldest child. "I will wear it, if you wish, papa, and thank you, but you are not going to die. You must not, for it would break my heart."

CHAPTER IX.

"Sweet sixteen to-morrow," and Agnes Cullen drew herself up proudly standing on tiptoe to make herself look taller, just as her aunt had done years before when she was about to go with Mrs. Eaton as a companion.

"What for, Agnes?" "I want to buy some candy and good things to give the girls a treat to-morrow." "Why not ask her yourself?" "Because I am afraid she might refuse me, and you know she never refuses you anything."

"I think it is real mean, Cecelia, that Sister will not allow me to go home with you, when I know you are not fit to travel alone." "If you had been really needed, Agnes, you would have been sent, and the fact that you were not gives me hope that father may not be dangerously ill. As for travelling alone, I can get on very well."

"I should like to have this sick man himself begin to have fears that he might not recover. His wife had gone out for a walk and he had purposely sent his mother from the room to rest that he might have an opportunity to talk to his child. Taking a bunch of keys from under his pillow, he selected one and said: "Cecelia, go to my safe and in the little drawer at the top you will find a white plush box, which I wish you to bring to me."

"Quite an honor, papa, to be told that I resemble her. I see now why it was that so many strangers were puzzled to know who I was like; but why have you kept this beautiful picture hidden these years?" "One reason, Cecelia, it was too sacred for the eyes of strangers to be gazing upon, and besides, it did not quite please my stepmother to have the lovely face of her predecessor continually before her. I think you could hardly blame her for that, as it was not her fault that she was far less beautiful."

"All dressed and ready for my first party, Cecelia. I expected you would be ready first. How slow you are!" "You must excuse me this time, Agnes, for I am not usually behind time." "This is a time, Cecelia, above all others when you should not be late."

To be Continued.)

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