

and then—she, whom you could not drag into a train once, much less a boat.

So they chattered on until a gentle-faced Sister came to call Sister Margaret away to meet another sweet surprise in the person of Lady Edith de Mowbray.

That evening the married portion of the "United Kingdom" cordially invited Father Egbert and Percy—soon to be Father Basil—to their apartments, and a right merry time they had of it. Father Egbert told and connected such tales of the misconduct of the two girls in their former days, that their husbands were horrified and astonished. In the enjoyment of such merry converse and happy prospects we must leave them for the eventful day declines, and the shades of night draw rapidly on; and so the curtain must also fall, and hide from view for a time our three dear convent girls. Yet would I fain raise it to present one last tableau to your view.

It is three years hence, and the scene is the flowered terrace of Baron Court. The Dowager Countess de Woodville has been ill, very ill. A cancer is doing its sure and deadly work, and the mother yearns for her daughter's society. Nay, she has learnt to bless God for the part she has chosen.

Sister Margaret—her sunny eyes filled with a holy, peaceful light, the white cornette upon her head—stands in front of her two companions, who look up at her from their low seats, admiration depicted in their faces. Her attention is divided between the bonnie, healthy-looking infant in her arms, little Lord Cranthorpe, and the sweet little toddler at her side, Margaret the third, so like that elder Margaret who peacefully reposes in the quiet cemetery at St. Benedict's, that the heart of her young mother thrills with pride as she gazes upon her.

As for Marie, Countess de Woodville, her portrait hangs in the lofty picture gallery side by side with the far-famed one of her mother, and they are as twin sisters. Stretched at full length in the shade close by lies Bartley's faithful canine friend and admirer Leo. What matters it to him if she has changed the outward shape and make of her robes? He sees no alteration, no difference in her. For he would willingly give his life, and his faithful eyes follow her everywhere. It is a bright and pretty habitude.

Whether or not I continue to give you glimpses of the members of the "United Kingdom" in a future history, will depend very much upon the reception which they meet with as depicted in this volume.

THE TIP OF THE SCALES

It was a honey kitchen where Aunt Becky sat peeling apples. Walls of that yellow you see in old crockery, with brown trimmings that had a hint of red; a braided rug, cream tinted curtains, and a wood stove.

"I will have to give up my stove some day, for wood is getting scarce, and men to cut and haul it in, scarce, but there is no use crossing your bridge till you come to it." Thus Aunt Becky, when obeying her "Honey, put a stick of wood in the stove for me please," I expressed my delight at that relic of our grandfathers' days.

"I will have these apples ready for the oven in a jiffy, and then I'll look at those samples I suppose you got for me in town yesterday. It seems the strangest thing in the world my buying a dress for the wedding of a Grayson and a Kelly," she went on, scoping the core out of the apple. "If Cousin Rose Grayson knew of it, she would rise out of her grave to forbid it. You can't understand it honey, how some of those old families here in the Blue Grass used to despise the Irish, back there before the war, I never believed the Irish for siding with the Yankees. It was their chance to get even. I believe in everybody getting even, if they can. The good Lord does Himself. You do anything against the Lord, and you'll settle up, some time or other."

"My father's plantation joined Uncle John's, and, as their children were grown up, and ours growing, I spent half my time over there. I was there the night Martin Kelly came singing up the road and turned in at the gate. He had heard, he said, that my uncle had a stone fence to build and he was there to build it. My uncle didn't think as much of him as one of his negroes, but he belonged to the white race. He gave him a room to himself and he ate his meals on the back porch."

"Cousin Rose was my uncle's youngest child. She was seventeen, and a mighty pretty girl, even if I do say it. The first Sunday Martin Kelly was at my uncle's, Rose and I met him, dressed up and walking toward the gate. 'Where are you going Martin?' she demanded. 'To Mass in Lexington, Rose' he answered. I saw my cousin's face get a burning red. The young man walked on, singing as he went down the white surpise. Rose flew to my uncle, mad as a hornet. 'Served you right for taking any notice of him' was all the satisfaction she got from the old man. Rose was very quiet all that day, and I think she laid her plans to punish him herself. The next morning I noticed she took great pains in dressing, and she said to me: 'The Irishman sings

well Becky. I imagine he can tell good stories, too. When we go out on the back porch, you may go to his table, and ask him if there really are fairies in Ireland.'

"I did as I was bid, while Rose stood at one of the pillars, fastening up a morning glory. 'Certainly, there are fairies in Ireland,' said Kelly, 'and you can take back my answer to your cousin, since she sent you.' Rose heard him and again she got red in the face, and I thought she would fly to uncle. Instead, she looked down at him and smiled prettily, and said, 'You are quite smart, Mister Kelly! What else would an Irishman be, Miss Grayson?' he replied, smiling back at her. 'And are there really fairies in Ireland?' she went on, still looking at him, and smiling. 'You'll never hear an Irishman denying it,' he rejoined. Then, I broke in with a question. The first thing I knew, Rose had gone down from the porch half way and he had come up the other half, and the three of us were standing close together. 'Becky,' Cousin Rose said to me, later in the day, 'Mr. Kelly is quite handsome, don't you think?'

"The fence he was building was to run between my father's land and my uncle's, and as I went back and forth frequently, Rose, instead of one of the negroes, began to accompany me. I riding behind her on her black mare, Delight. But, instead of going by the surpise, she would take the way through the fields, and nearly always she stopped to talk with Martin Kelly. So things ran on until Christmas eve.

"I've told you often of those Christmases of the good old times. This was to be one of them, but on Christmas eve Grandfather Grayson who lived in Lexington, took suddenly sick, and all the children and grandchildren were summoned. I had a bad cold and was left at my uncle's. Rose staying home to care for me. The colored people of course went on with their justifications down in the quarters. I was in a big arm chair by the fire, nursing my new doll, and Rose was walking up and down the room, stopping every once in a while to listen as if she were expecting someone. Then, she said: 'Becky, aren't you afraid here in this big house by yourself?' I was not, but naturally became so. 'I believe I hear someone at the front door,' she whispered. She gave a little scream and I gave a big one. Then the door leading to the back porch opened and Martin Kelly came in looking frightened.

"I heard you cry, he said, going straight to Rose. 'What is the matter?' I felt timid here in the house alone, she said. 'Didn't you know I was here to protect you?' he asked, and his voice was low and tender. 'But you didn't come,' she began, then stopped. 'You never asked me,' he replied. 'You would not have wanted to be asked, if,' she said, then stopped. 'If what?' he asked, his voice choked up. 'If I cared, do you mean? When she didn't say anything, he rushed on: 'You know I care! Rose, darling, you know I love you better than my life! and he caught both her hands in his, and was drawing her to him.

"A moment followed—and many a time since I have thought how much hung on that moment! An arm snatched her up—she couldn't have helped it, for if ever there was a man, it was Martin Kelly. But I saw her eyes narrow, like a cat's, and I felt what she was going to do.

"How dare you!" she cried, wrenching her hands away. "You—you—" But she couldn't say what she wanted to, for he was towering over her, and the wrath in his face was so terrible it seemed to be crushing her. "Exactly—I!" he then said, and his voice was like his face. "My father will kill you for this! This insult!" she cried. "Oh, no, your father won't!" he answered, with a cruel laugh. "You don't know my father," she began. "But I know his daughter!" he flung at her. "You poor, vain, cowardly little thing! And I thought you a queen among women! I even thought I loved you! You will not tell your father—and I will stay here and finish my fence. I always finish what I begin. I want you to remember that. It is my Christmas gift to you—instead of this!" and he tossed a package he carried into the fire. He swung around and left the room.

"Rose sank to the floor and watched the flames as they swept over the tissue paper and began to eat up the spray of red roses, which he had walked to Lexington that day to buy. I began to cry. It seemed to me as if it were something living which was being burned up.

"The stone fence stretched its gray length between the Grayson farms slowly, for the winter days were short, and often too cold for even the hardy Irishman to work. We heard from the servant who had him in charge, that when he was not working he was always reading out of big books. Rose became a changed girl. My uncle and aunt grew anxious about her and took her to a doctor in Lexington. He could find nothing wrong and advised a change of scene. But Rose would not go away.

cried, 'Martin, won't you forgive me?' "I can always see him as he stopped and lifted himself, taking of his hat as he did. 'When I forgot you!' he said, and with another look at her, replaced his hat, and stooped again over his work.

"The stone fence was finished, and, ignorant of the tragedy builded into it, my uncle paid Martin Kelly and apparently he passed out of our lives. But not so. He went straight to Lexington and entered the law school of the university. Before he was graduated, even, he began to attract attention, for he joined the abolitionists and was like a firebrand. As a lawyer, he fairly leaped to success. I was fifteen now, and as the constant companion of my Cousin Rose, went about more than I should otherwise have done. All her sisters and brothers were married and while she had suitors, it seemed that she could not make up her mind. We were often in Lexington and saw Martin Kelly, for, while his race and religion were social bars, his fame and talent and personality carried him across them. Then, he was handsome and accomplished, and much is forgiven such men.

"But with Lexington's wealth and beauty before him, he fell in love with a young French girl from St. Louis, who was teaching at St. Catherine's Academy. I was with Rose the June day she received the announcement of her engagement to Martin Kelly. Across it he had written: 'I have forgotten!'

"I think that was her death-blow. A few days later, she astonished us all by announcing her engagement to Richard Grayson, a distant relative, wealthy, and a rising power in Lexington politics. I was too young to understand all that was going on, but it was soon evident that Richard Grayson and Martin Kelly were openly fighting each other. I have heard men say no one knew why they should be enemies. Perhaps Richard Grayson himself did not know—but I knew and I think Martin Kelly knew. And in every encounter Martin won. His wife's French blood delighted in such battles, and as far as a woman, might at that time, she made her influence felt. She was charming, she could manage men, and every move she made was for the advancement of her husband. Their marriage was a perfect one.

"Then came the war, its red hand sweeping aside personal animosities. Of course, all the Graysons were for the South, and Martin Kelly joined his friends for the North. Honey, those two old houses on either side of the stone fence went up in smoke. The slaves abandoned their masters, the cattle were taken to feed the enemy, the fine horses were ridden off. The day the houses were burned, Rose, flying with me and her two children, came to the stone fence, and she dug herself out on the South, and Martin Kelly joined his friends for the North. Honey, those two old houses on either side of the stone fence went up in smoke. The slaves abandoned their masters, the cattle were taken to feed the enemy, the fine horses were ridden off. The day the houses were burned, Rose, flying with me and her two children, came to the stone fence, and she dug herself out on the South, and Martin Kelly joined his friends for the North. 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