

# The Better Way

BY EVELYN CLAIRE FORTNER

Profound silence reigned in the great library. Outside the birds sang and the world looked bright and fair. But inside, in the rich, old room, the marks of conflict showed plainly on the faces of mother and son.

"Well Anthony, I am waiting for your answer." It was the woman who spoke. A tall, handsome woman with a haughty face crowned with a wealth of jet black hair. She tapped with her long, manicured fingers, the highly polished table.

"I'm sorry. There is no answer," replied the man. He raised his thin, dark face to observe the effect of his words upon the woman. One could see at a glance that he was scarcely more than a boy though his face showed lines of dissipation.

At his words, the eyes of the woman blazed angrily and she turned even paler as she drew herself to her full majestic height and said finally.

"Very well, Tony. From now on you shall not touch a cent of my money and you shall leave this house to-day. I shall pay up all your standing debts and your travelling expenses, whenever you wish to go. I might have expected you would follow in your father's footsteps. You have disgraced me as he did. Now go." She pointed to the door and then turned her back upon the son, who had wounded her pride, as his father before him, had done.

At eighteen years of age, Margaret Armstrong, as the last of the Morten heirs, had inherited a large estate. At the age of twenty-one she had married, and brought to her beautiful country home, a poor artist. Anthony Armstrong was good-natured and kind but weak and dissolute. Five years after their marriage he died, as a result of his dissipation, after having squandered a great deal of his wife's money and wounded her pride.

One son, Anthony Armstrong, Junior, had been born to them. He was like his father, in that he was artistic and rather wild. From his mother he inherited the Morten pride. On him, the mother lavished her love. She allowed him to grow up almost as he pleased. As a result he was, at nineteen, spoiled and ungoverned, though kind and noble at heart.

Tony Armstrong moved in the town's fast set. He began to gamble and to frequent notorious gambling houses. For a time Margaret Armstrong was almost totally unaware of her son's wild ways. She moved little in society and stayed at home in the big house, nursing her grief and wounded pride.

Thus it came as a great shock to her, when she overheard from the servants of "Mr. Tony's gambling scandal." At first she would not, could not believe it. Then when Tony came home she summoned him to the library and told him the story she had heard, and asked him to deny it. And Tony had said that there was no answer. He could not deny it.

Then it was that his mother's anger rose. Her heart became hard and bitter. Again she would be disgraced and by an Armstrong. The noble name and house of Morten would be dragged in the dust of public scandal. She could not stand it. She decided to send away out of her sight forever,—this cruel son of hers.

Mrs. Anthony Armstrong loved her son, but she was proud. Pride was her besetting sin.

Everyone, from the servants upward, knew of and feared Margaret Armstrong's pride. Even her son quailed before it.

So it was that Tony Armstrong understood that his mother's words, in the old Morten library, that day, were final. Proudly, like a Morten, he gathered up his personal belongings and left the home of his childhood, to begin work, as an artist, in another city.

For Margaret Armstrong, the months that followed, in the great lonely house, were months of self-torture and gloom. Often her love for Tony, wrestled with her foolish pride, but almost always the latter

won in the battle. Sometimes she found herself wondering how things would have turned out, if she had chosen the other way, and had not sent Tony away. Almost, she wished she had.

Six weary years crept by and the proud Mrs. Anthony Armstrong sat in her great library, alone as usual. She made a noble picture, as she sat before the fire-place, reclining in a massive, carved chair, against whose crimson velvet, her black head rested royally. A huge mastiff lay at her feet, peacefully sleeping. The fire-light played on her handsome features and satiny hair. The rest of the room was in shadows, except when the light flickered over the many bookcases, and the small gleaming statues. Outdoors the wind sighed wondrously, among the trees, and the curtains on the long windows, swayed in the breeze, like ghostly arms.

Mrs. Armstrong's face was paler than was wont and many new lines had appeared in it. She sat for, perhaps, an hour, thinking—and yes—regretting a little. Then as she rose to retire for the night, sudden pains shot through and through her head. She turned white as marble, and reeling, fell forwards onto the velvet rug, in a dead faint.

When she regained consciousness she was lying in her great carved bed, with the old family doctor bending over her.

"How-do-do Mrs. Armstrong! You are a fine kind of a lady to get sick," he said briskly, looking searchingly into the tired, sad eyes of the sick woman. Then Margaret Armstrong asked listlessly, "What's wrong with me Doctor? Am I very sick?"

"I'm afraid you're in for a few months in bed, Mrs. Armstrong. A case of nerves, I think. I've telephoned to New York for a nurse. She will be here to-morrow."

The nurse proved to be a sweet-faced girl, competent and cheerful; but for three weeks Mrs. Armstrong was too ill to notice her at all. For a time, she hovered between life and death and when finally she began to recover she was a changed woman. The old haughty pride had vanished completely, leaving a yearning, humble love in its place. The mother in Mrs. Anthony Armstrong had wakened afresh and was calling for her only child, Tony, the boy whom she had sent away.

As she grew stronger, she became interested in the nurse, Elsie Adair, and as the weeks slipped by, she grew to love her; to love her as she would a daughter. To Elsie she confessed the story of her proud, unhappy life. She told her of the artist husband. She told her eagerly of Tony; her little boy, she called him. She bade Elsie bring to her the toys and playthings of the absent son.

She showed to her, with pride, the little sketches and drawings which Anthony had done in earlier years. At these the young nurse looked interestedly.

"Isn't it odd, dear Mrs. Armstrong, she said one day, "that you have an artist son and I have an artist lover?"

"Have you?" The older woman started slightly.

"Yes, indeed," she replied blushing and bending her flower-like head. "He is a New York artist, but not yet one of the New York artists. You see I became acquainted with him, when he came as a patient to our big hospital, about six years ago. He was almost down and out, he told me, and that he had disgraced his people. I had to coax him a bit and cheer him up to make him get well. When he left the hospital he had decided to begin life over again and be a better man. He came back to look me up and thank me again."

Here the girl laughed softly and "We became better acquainted and I found that he was doing splendidly in his work—painting. We kept up our friendship, and a year ago he told me he loved me." Here the girl's voice sank low and her grey eyes shone like twin stars. Then she finished, "And oh Mrs. Armstrong, I love him so, and when he comes back from his trip to the mountains,

where he has gone to paint, we are going to be married."

"And his name?" The voice of Tony's mother was strained and eager, as she raised herself on elbow, her face flushed.

"His name," Elsie answered, "is Andy Morland." Tony's mother sank back on her pillows. Her face looked suddenly grey and old.

"Oh Elsie Adair," she cried, taking the girl's hand in hers. "I do hope he makes you happy, for I have grown to love you dearly. Oh how I wish Tony had turned out like your Andy. I wish, Elsie, too, that I had chosen the better way and had not sent my boy away." She began to weep softly and the girl rose, and kissing her softly, said coaxingly.

"Come now, my patient must do better than this. Mrs. Armstrong why not advertise for your son in the papers? Write a notice in the personal columns telling him you want him to come back to you. I am sure that if he sees it, he will come back."

"I have thought of that. I believe I shall try it. It cannot do any harm and it may bring good results. Please bring me ink and paper."

The girl complied and soon notices were written to the leading papers. In the days that followed, they waited anxiously for results.

One evening they sat together in the huge, old library. Mrs. Armstrong sat in an invalid's chair and Elsie Adair sat at her feet, the fire-light playing on her bronze head and sweet face. Suddenly the door opened and on the threshold stood a tall, dark man. As each woman turned there was a cry—"Oh Tony!"

"Andy!" The man looked from one to the other in amazement and then sprang forward and folded them both in his arms.

"Mother how I have longed for you! And Elsie, to have you here! I have just come back from the mountains and I have been unable to receive my mail for a long time. I have come gladly, Mother, at your call; and I am doubly repaid to find Elsie here."

"Why I thought Elsie told me that her fiancée's name was Andy—Andy Morland. What does it all mean?" the bewildered Mrs. Armstrong asked gazing from one to the other.

"I changed my name to Andy Morland when I went to New York. You see I didn't want to bring further disgrace on your name. You have forgiven me, have you not Mother? All I am now, I owe to Elsie Adair."

He turned to the nurse, as he spoke, and a smile of complete understanding passed between them.

Margaret Armstrong, watching breathless a prayer of thanksgiving that she had found a daughter and had been given back a son. The fire-light played upon the happy faces and peace, like a benediction, stole over the soul of Mrs. Anthony Armstrong.



**To him that hath shall be given**  
Was the Biblical version of our modern saying: "Nothing succeeds like success." So it was with Dr. Pierce, of Buffalo, N. Y., who, over 30 years ago, gave to the world a Prescription which has never been equalled as a tonic for the weakness of women. Many women in every hamlet, town or city will gladly testify that Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription did them a world of good. Ask your neighbor. Another of this great physician's successful remedies is known as Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery and, like the "Prescription," is now sold by druggists everywhere, in both liquid and tablet form. This medicine was a success from the start, for the list of men and women all over the universe who have successfully used it for indigestion and as a blood tonic and system builder, makes an amazing total of thousands.

## QUEER LAWSUITS

A few years ago a wounded Italian officer brought suit to obtain a decision as to the rightful ownership of a bullet extracted from his body. Both doctor and nurse claimed it, but the officer contended that it was legally his.

The judge gave his decision in favor of the officer. He found that the projectile, once discharged from the gun, ceased to belong both to the man who fired it and to the country that entrusted it to him. The officer discovered it in his body. The surgeon, assisted by the nurse, merely brought the projectile to light. Hence the officer was entitled to keep it.

When a French abbe left one village to take up work in another the mayor and the citizens of the town he was leaving lighted a bonfire in the road to speed the departing one, and in other ways showed that they were overjoyed to see the last of him. The abbe thought himself insulted and brought action for damages, but as he was unable to show any cause the case was dismissed.

A very stout man who bought a third-class ticket at an English railway found that he could not enter the narrow doorway of a third-class compartment. Accordingly, he went into a first-class compartment, the doors of which were wider, and refused to pay the excess fare. The railway company sued him for the balance, and the man had to pay both that and the costs, for the court decided that this could not have been his first offence, and that, knowing that he could not squeeze through the door of a first-class compartment, he ought to have purchased a first-class ticket.

After telling a barber to trim his beard, an American fell asleep in the chair. He woke up clean shaved. His beard, twelve inches in length of which he was very proud, was gone. He sued the barber for \$1,000 and received \$100.

## ORIGIN OF POPULAR SAYINGS

"A red-letter day" is an expression which arose out of the old Ecclesiastical Calendar, in which festivals and high holidays were printed in red ink. These important days consequently became known as "Red-letter Days"—hence the term to-day. "Murder will out" is a phrase which Geoffrey Chaucer originated, although in the first instance it was spelt "Mordre wol out." "Truth is stranger than fiction" is a well-used saying, and perhaps it is not generally known that it was originally employed by Byron in his "Don Juan". "Escaped with the skin of his teeth" it is interesting to observe, originates in the Bible—Job, chapter 19, verse 20. "Field" originally meant land on which trees had been "felled" or "field." "Necessity is the mother of invention" is well over two and a half centuries old. These well-worn words were first found in Frank's "Northern Memoirs," written in 1658. "Eaten her out of house and home," a phrase, in view of the present price of food, undoubtedly repeated by worried housewife, was originated by Shakespeare in his "Henry IV." "Anything for a quiet life" is an expression which arose from a play by Middleton, bearing that title. "Turn over a new leaf," by the way, was first used in the same play.

Everyone reads the "Guide-Advocate Want Column" on page 4.

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