

# NÉE CORRIGAN

BY ROBERT BARR

THE interview with her father left Mrs. Godfrey Wentworth somewhat depressed. For the first time in her life, Peter Corrigan had definitely refused to accede to a request of hers; an occurrence so unexpected that at first the girl failed to grasp its significance. Even when her marriage was in question, much as Peter disliked his prospective son-in-law, he had not withheld his consent. In point of fact Dorothea had quite ignored the trifling formality of requesting it, being well accustomed to dispense with premission when she made up her mind to any particular course of action. Therefore Dorothea Corrigan became Mrs. Godfrey Wentworth, and then gradually arrived at the conclusion that it was easier to get along without her father's consent than his cheque-book. Dorothea had given no thought to settlements; the young man would have scorned to ask for them, even had it occurred to his unsophisticated mind that the income enabling him to enjoy a comfortable bachelor's life, following no more serious pursuit than the writing of dainty *belles lettres*, would be insufficient for two people. Yet the amount which kept Wentworth in comparative luxury, and paid for the publication of little books in elegant bindings, represented Dorothea's idea of abject poverty, and although she was willing to endure martyrdom for her husband's sake, if needs be, she had inherited too much of her father's

capability to admit the necessity. Until the critical conversation with Peter Corrigan, she had never given the idea a second thought. She was still her father's daughter, and he had no other child on whom to lavish the wealth he continued to accumulate.

When Dorothea set out to visit her father, her anxiety was solely lest Godfrey Wentworth's sensitiveness should be hurt by the idea of his wife contributing so largely to their household exchequer, and her mind was busy with a scheme for avoiding any injury to his pride. She knew that Peter Corrigan's financial standing gave him considerable influence; many offices which her husband might fill would be offered to him instantly if his father-in-law but said the word, and this word she resolved to request on Godfrey's behalf. Dorothea foresaw some difficulty in overcoming her husband's scruples as to his fitness for a responsible post, but this obstacle, not insuperable, was the most serious she expected to encounter.

At first she treated her father's refusal as a joke, but by degrees she came to realise its uncompromising decision. Peter Corrigan expressed his opinion of his son-in-law in brief, but pithy phrases that left little room for doubt as to his meaning. For a few moments Dorothea's impulse was to walk away in hot indignation, but her upbringing had imbued her with the belief that emotions and sentiment should never be allowed to in-