

Purified by Suffering

BY
MARY J.
HOLMES.

As thoughts of Geneva, always made Wilford kinder to his wife, so now, he kissed her white cheek, not that he was kinder to her, but that he was kinder to himself. It was winter than last year in June. But mountain air would bring back the roses, he thought, as he handed her the note.

"Oh, yes, from Marian Hazelton," Katy said, glancing first at the name and then hastily reading it through. "Who is Marian Hazelton?" Wilford asked, and Katy replied by repeating all she knew of Marian, and how she came to know her at all. "Don't you remember Helen wrote that she fainted at our wedding, and I was so sorry, fearing that I might have overworked her?"

Wilford did remember something about it, and then dismissing Marian from his mind, he told Katy of his plan for taking her to the Mountain House a few weeks before going to Saratoga.

"Would you not like it?" he asked, as she continued silent, with her eyes fixed upon the window opposite. "Yes," and Katy drew a long weary breath. I shall like any place where there are birds and rocks, and trees, and real grass, such as grows of itself in the country; but Wilford and Katy crept close to him now. "If I might go to Silvertown, I should get strong so fast! You don't know how I long to see home once more. I dream about it nights, and think about it days, knowing just how pleasant it is there, with the roses in bloom and the meadows so fresh and green. May I go, Wilford? May I go home to mother?"

Had Katy asked for half his fortune just as she asked to go home, Wilford would have given it to her, for that quiet submission was better than useless opposition, and so Silvertown was again given up. But there was one consolation. Seeing Marian Hazelton would be almost as good as going home, for had she not recently come from that neighborhood, bringing with her the odor from the hills and freshness from the woods? Perhaps, too, she had lately seen Helen or Morris at church and had heard the music of the organ which Helen played, and the singing of the children just as it sometimes came to Katy in her dreams, making her start in her sleep and murmur snatches of the sacred songs which Dr. Morris had taught. Yes, Marian could tell her of all this, and very impatiently Katy waited for the morning when she started for No. 4 Fourth Street, with the piles of sewing intended for Marian.

It was a fault of Marian's not to remain long contented in any place. Tiring of the country, she had returned to the city, and thinking she might succeed better alone, had hired a room far up the narrow building of a high, sombre-looking building, and then from her old acquaintances, of whom she had several in the city, she had solicited work. More than once she had passed the handsome house on Madison Square where Katy lived, walking slowly, and contrasting it with her one room which was not wholly uninviting, for where Marian went there was always an air of comfort, and Katy, as she crossed the threshold, uttered an exclamation of delight at the cheerful air of the apartment, with its bright ingrain carpet, its simple shades of white, its chintz-covered lounge, its one rocking-chair, its small parlor stove, and its pots of flowers upon the broad window sill.

"Oh, Marian," she exclaimed, tripping across the floor, and impulsively throwing her arms around Miss Hazelton's neck, "I am so glad to meet some one from home. It seems almost like Helen I am kissing," and her lips again met those of Marian Hazelton, amid her joy at finding Katy unchanged, wondered what the Camerons would say to see their Mrs. Wilford kissing a poor seamstress whom they would have spurned.

But Katy did not care for Camerons then, or even think of them, as in her rich basquine and pretty hat, with emeralds and diamonds sparkling on her fingers, she sat down by Marian.

"Tell me of Silvertown; you don't know how I want to go there; but Wilford does not think it best, at present. Next fall I am surely going and I picture to myself just how it will look; Morris's garden, full of the autumnal flowers—the grapes ripening on our orchard, the grapes peaches in our orchard, and the long shadows on the grass, just as I used to watch them, wondering what made them move so fast, and where they could be going. Will it be unchanged, Marian? Do places seem the same when once we have left them?" and Katy's eager eyes looked wistfully at Marian, who replied, "Not always—often, in fact; but in your case they may. You have not been long away."

"Only a year," Katy said. "I was as long as that in Canada; but this past year is different. I have seen so much, and lived so much, that I feel ten years older than I did last spring, when you and Helen made my wedding dress. Darling Helen! When did you see her last?"

"I was there five weeks ago," Mar-

ian replied; "I saw them all, and told them I was coming to New York."

"Do they miss me any? Do they talk of me? Do they wish me back again?" Katy asked, and Marian replied, "They talked of little else, that is your own family. Dr. Morris, I think, did not mention your name. He has grown very silent and reserved," and Marian's eyes were fixed anxiously upon Katy, as if to ascertain how much she knew of the cause for Morris's reserve.

But Katy had no suspicion, and only replied, "Perhaps he is vexed that I do not write to him often, but I can't. I think of him a great deal, and respect him more than any living man, except, of course, Wilford; but when I try to write, something comes in between me and what I wish to say, for I want to convince him that I am not as frivolous as he thinks I am. I have not forgotten the Sunday school, nor the church service; but in the city it is so hard to be good, and the service and music seem all for show, and I feel so hateful when I see Juno and Wilford's mother putting their heads down on velvet cushions, knowing as I do that they both are thinking either of their own bonnets or those just in front."

"Are you not a little uncharitable?" Marian asked, laughing in spite of herself at the picture Katy drew of fashion trying to imitate religion in its humility.

"Perhaps so," Katy answered. "I grow bad from looking behind the scenes, and the worst is that I do not care, and then Katy went back again to the farm-house, asking numerous questions and reaching finally the business which had brought her to Marian's room.

There were spots on Marian's neck, and her lips were white, as she grasped the bundles tossed into her lap—the yards and yards of lace and embroidery, linen, and cambric, which she was expected to make for the wife of Wilford Cameron, and her voice was husky as she asked directions or made suggestions of her own.

"It's because she has no such joy in expectation. I should feel so, too, if I were thirty and unmarried," Katy thought, as she noticed Marian's agitation, and tried to divert her mind by talking of Europe and the places she had visited.

"By the way, you were born in England? Were you ever at Alnwick?" Katy asked, and Marian replied, "Once, yes. I've seen the castle and the church. Did you go there to St. Mary's, I mean?"

"Oh, yes, and I was never tired of that old churchyard. Wilford liked it, too, and we wandered by the hour among the sunken graves, and quaint headstones."

"Do you remember any of the names upon the stones? Perhaps I may know them?" Marian asked; but Katy did not remember any, or if she did, it was not "Genevieve Lamport, aged 22." And so Marian asked her no more questions concerning Alnwick, but talked instead of London and other places, until three hours went by, and down in the street the coachman chafed and fretted at the long delay, wondering what kept his mistress in that neighborhood so long. Had she friends, or had she come on some errand of mercy? The latter most likely, he concluded, and so his face was not quite so cross when Katy at last appeared, looking at her watch and exclaiming at the lateness of the hour.

Katy was very happy that morning, for seeing Marian had brought Silvertown near to her, and airy as a bird she ran up the steps of her own dwelling, where the door opened as by magic, and Wilford himself confronted her, asking, with the tone which always made her heart beat, where she had been, and he waiting for her two whole hours. "Surely it was not necessary to step so long with a seamstress," he continued when she tried to explain. "Ten minutes would suffice for directions," and he could not imagine what attraction there was in Miss Hazelton to keep her there three hours, and then the real cause of his vexation came out. He had come expressly to the carriage to take her and Sybil Grandon to a picnic up the river, whither his mother, Juno and Bell, had already gone. Mrs. Grandon must wonder why he staid so long and perhaps give up going. Could Katy be ready soon? and Wilford walked rapidly up and down the parlor with a restless motion of his hands which always betokened impatience. Poor Katy! how the brightness of the morning faded, and how averse she felt to joining the picnic, which she knew had been in prospect for some time, and had fancied she should enjoy! But not to-day, with that look on Wilford's face and the feeling that he was vexed. Still she could think of no reasonable excuse, and so an hour later found her driving into the country with Sybil Grandon, who received her apologies with as much good-natured grace as if she too had not worked herself into a passion at the delay, for Sybil had been very cross and impatient; but all this vanished when she met Wilford and saw that he was disturbed and irritated. Soft, and sweet and smooth was she both in word and manner, so that by the time the grove was reached Wilford's ruffled spirits had been soothed, and he was himself again, ready to enjoy the pleasures of the day as keenly as if no harsh word had been said to Katy, who, silent and unhappy,

listened to the graceful damage between Sybil and her husband, thinking how differently his voice had sounded when addressing her only a little while before.

"Pray put some animation into your face, or Mrs. Grandon will think we have been quarrelling," Wilford whispered, as he lifted his wife from the carriage, and with a great effort Katy tried to be gay and natural.

But all the while she was fighting back her tears and wishing she were away. Even Marian's room, looking into the dingy court, was preferable to that place, and she was glad when the long day came to an end, and with a fearful headache she was riding back to the city.

The next morning was dark and rainy; but in spite of the weather Katy found her way to Marian's room, this time taking the avenue cars, which left her independent as regarded the length of her stay. About Marian there was something more congenial than about her city friends, and day after day found her there, watching while Marian fashioned into shape the beautiful little garments, the sight of which had a strangely quickening influence upon Katy, sobering her down and maturing her more than all the years of her life had done. Those were happy hours spent with Marian Hazelton, and Katy felt it keenly when Wilford at last interfered, telling her she was growing quite too familiar with that sewing woman, and her calls must be discontinued, except, indeed, such as were necessary to the work in progress.

With one great gush of tears, when there was no one to see her, Katy gave Marian up, writing her a note, in which were sundry directions for the work, which would go on even after she had left for the Mountain House, as she intended doing the last of June. And Marian guessed at more than Katy meant she should, and with a bitter sigh laid it in her basket, and then resumed the work, which seemed doubly monotonous now that there was no more listening for the little feet tripping up the stairs, or for the bird-like voice which had brought so much of music and sunshine to her lonely room.

CHAPTER XIX.

For three weeks Katy had been at the Mountain House, growing stronger every day, until she was much like the Katy of one year ago. But that stay among the Camerons was ended, and on the morning they were going to Saratoga, where Mrs. Cameron and her daughters were, and where, too, was Sybil Grandon, the reigning belle of the United States. So Bell had written to her brother, bidding him to hasten on with Katy, as she wished to see "that child of a widow in her proper place."

And Katy had been weak enough for a moment to feel a little throb of satisfaction in knowing how effectually Sybil's claims to belle-ship would be put aside when she was once in the field; even glancing at herself in the mirror as she leaned on Wilford's shoulder, and feeling glad that the day was so bright, and exercise had brought the roses back to her white cheeks and the brightness to her eyes. But Katy wept passionately at the thought of that weakness, when an hour later she read the letter which Mr. Grant had sent in answer to one she had written from the Mountain House, concerning her short-comings, and lamenting that the evils and excesses which shocked her once did not startle her now. To this letter Morris had replied as a brother might write to an only sister, first expressing pleasure at her happiness, and then reminding her of that other life to which this is only a preparation.

Katy was not doing herself much credit at Newport; but save Wilford, there was no one to raise a warning voice, until Mark Ray came down for a few days' respite from the heated city, where he had spent the entire summer, taking charge of the business which belonged as much to Wilford as to himself. But Wilford had a wife; it was more necessary that he should leave, Mark had argued; his time would come by and by. And so he had remained at home until the last of August, when he appeared suddenly at the Ocean House one night when Katy, in her airy robes and child-like simplicity, was breaking hearts by the scene. Like others, Mark was charmed, and not a little proud for Katy's sake, to see her thus appreciated; but when one day's experience had shown him more, and given him a look behind the scenes, he trembled for her, knowing how hard it would be for her to come out of that sea of dissipation as pure and spotless as she was in. "If I were her brother I would warn her that her present career is not one upon which she will look back with pleasure when the excitement is over," he said to himself; "but if Wilford is satisfied it is not for me to interfere. It is surely nothing to me what Katy Cameron does, he kept repeating to himself; but as often as he said it there came up before him a pale, anxious face, shaded with Helen Lennox's hands of hair, and Helen Lennox's voice whispered to him: "Save Katy, for my sake," and so next day, when Mark found himself alone with Katy, while most of the guests were at the beach, he questioned her of her life at Saratoga and Newport, and gradually, as he talked, there crept into Katy's heart a suspicion that he was not pleased with her account, or with what he had seen of her since his arrival.

For a moment Katy was indignant but when he said to her kindly: "Would Helen be pleased?" her tears started at once, and she attempted an excuse for her week folly, accusing Sybil Grandon as the first cause of the ambition for which she hated herself.

"She had been held up as my pattern," she said, half bitterly, and forgetting to whom she was talking—"she, the one whom I was to imitate; and when I found that I could go beyond her, I yielded to the temptation, and excited to see how far she was left behind. Besides that," she continued, "is it no gratification, think you, to let Wilford's proud mother and sister see the poor country girl, whom ordinarily they

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of Mrs. Wilford, who had passed beyond her criticism. Sybil Grandon, too, stood back in wonder that a simple country girl should win and wear the laurels she had so long claimed as her own; but as there was no help for it she contented herself as best she could with the admiration she did receive, and whenever opportunity occurred, said bitter things of Mrs. Wilford, whose parents' age and low estate were through her pretty generally known. But it did not matter there what Katy had been; the people took her for what she was now, and Sybil's glory faded like the early dawn in the coming of the full day.

As it had been at Saratoga, so it was at Newport. Urged on by Mrs. Cameron and Bell, who enjoyed her notoriety, Katy plunged into the mad excitement of dancing and driving and coquetting, until Wilford himself became uneasy, looking her once in her room, where she was sleeping after dinner, and conveniently forgetting to release her until after the departure of a friend of some young man from Cambridge, whose attentions to the Ocean House belle had been more strongly marked than was altogether agreeable to him. Of course it was a mistake—the looking of the door—and a great oversight in him not to have remembered it sooner, he said to Katy, by way of apology; and Katy, with a suspicion of the truth, laughed merrily at the joke repeating it down stairs to the old dowagers, who shrugged their shoulders meaningly and whispered to each other that it might be well if more young wives were locked into their rooms and thus kept out of mischief.

Though flattered, caressed, and admired, Katy was not doing herself much credit at Newport; but save Wilford, there was no one to raise a warning voice, until Mark Ray came down for a few days' respite from the heated city, where he had spent the entire summer, taking charge of the business which belonged as much to Wilford as to himself. But Wilford had a wife; it was more necessary that he should leave, Mark had argued; his time would come by and by. And so he had remained at home until the last of August, when he appeared suddenly at the Ocean House one night when Katy, in her airy robes and child-like simplicity, was breaking hearts by the scene. Like others, Mark was charmed, and not a little proud for Katy's sake, to see her thus appreciated; but when one day's experience had shown him more, and given him a look behind the scenes, he trembled for her, knowing how hard it would be for her to come out of that sea of dissipation as pure and spotless as she was in. "If I were her brother I would warn her that her present career is not one upon which she will look back with pleasure when the excitement is over," he said to himself; "but if Wilford is satisfied it is not for me to interfere. It is surely nothing to me what Katy Cameron does, he kept repeating to himself; but as often as he said it there came up before him a pale, anxious face, shaded with Helen Lennox's hands of hair, and Helen Lennox's voice whispered to him: "Save Katy, for my sake," and so next day, when Mark found himself alone with Katy, while most of the guests were at the beach, he questioned her of her life at Saratoga and Newport, and gradually, as he talked, there crept into Katy's heart a suspicion that he was not pleased with her account, or with what he had seen of her since his arrival.

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would despise, stand where they cannot come, and even dictate to them if she chooses so to do? I know it is wrong—I know it is wicked—but I like the excitement, and so long as I am with these people I shall never be any better. Mark Ray, you don't know what it is to be surrounded by a set who care for nothing but fashion and display, and how they may outdo each other. I hate New York society. There is nothing there but husks."

Katy's tears had ceased, and on her white face there was a new look of womanhood, as if in that outburst she had changed, and would never again be just what she was before.

"Say," she continued, "do you like New York society?"

"Not always—not wholly," Mark answered; "and still you misjudge it greatly, for all are not like the people you describe. Your husband's family represent one extreme, while there are others equally high in the social scale who do not make fashion the rule of their lives—sensible, cultivated, intellectual people, of whose acquaintance one might be glad—people whom I fancy your sister Helen would enjoy. I have only met her twice, but my impression is that she would not find New York distasteful."

Mark did not know why he had dragged Helen into the conversation, unless it were that she seemed very near to him as he talked with Katy, who replied:

"Yes, Helen finds good in all. She sees differently from what I do, and I wish so much that she were here."

"Why not send for her?" Mark asked, casting about in his mind whether in case Helen came, he, too, could tarry for a week and leave that business in Southbridge, which he must attend to ere returning to the city.

It would be a study to watch Helen Lennox there at Newport, and in imagination Mark was already her sworn knight, shielding her from criticism, and commanding for her respect from those who respected him when Katy tore his castle down by answering impulsively:

"I doubt if Wilford would let me send for her, nor does it matter, as I shall not remain much longer. I do not need her now, since you have shown me how foolish I have been. I was angry at first, but now I thank you for it, and so will Helen. I shall tell her when I am in Silvertown. I am going there from here, and oh, I so wish it was to-day."

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