

JANUARY 28, 1905.

A FORLORN HOPE.

"There be the place, miss," Si Dunn, who ran the one wagonette that comprised the "livery" of Dunsmuir, slacked the reins as he reached the turn in the mountain-road and pointed to an old stone house, rising grim and gray beneath overshadowing oaks, while range after range of forest-crowned heights stretched above and around it. "There be Cameron Place, as you ask for, miss—'ere for getting board thar. I don't think you've any chance at all."

"It will do no harm to try," said the little lady, who was Si's only passenger this June morning. She was a dainty little creature, with her wind-blown hair and dancing eyes. Gowned with exquisite simplicity, there was an air about her from her pretty straw hat to the tip of her little French boot, that made her seem a strange and delicate blossom for these rugged wilds. "No harm, miss," said honest Si, doubtfully.

"Cameron never was so tongue-tied, he's got harder and rougher since his trouble last year with young Don—"

"Young Don?" queried the little lady softly.

"His son," explained Si, giving his bony nose a loose rein for one, and then he was silent. "They had a son, and he was monstrous not on him. And no wonder—'ere was a fine fellow, tall and strong and straight as a mountain pine. The old folk gave him everything first class, college education, tower in Europe—everything he asked. Didn't spoil him none, neither—all the folk on the mountain side agreed to that. He was that pleasant and friendly, he was that everybody took to him. He could have gone anywhere this county would send him—if 'twas to the White House itself, when the last up came and spilled all. Now he has quit those parts forever."

"Forever?" echoed the girl in a low voice.

"Lord, yes. Don Cameron ain't the sort to knock down. You see, he met some girl of yonder, and lost his heart to her. Thar, thar, much hurt, if he hadn't lost his head, too—clean forgot all the bad blood that has been biling in the Camerons for hundreds of years, and turned Romanist with his sweet heart."

"Romanist! Oh, you mean Catholic, I suppose," said the little lady.

"It's all one, I guess," continued Si, "flecking a bluebird" from the mare's ear. "They said the old lady flinders up here. They said the old man almost went off in an apoplexy—said the sort of rough things a young man can't forgive or forget. Told Don to go and never come back, and Don said he never would until his father called him. Which ain't ever going to be the mountain side knows old Angus Cameron. Him and everybody through if it kills him, he won't ever have Don's name spoken before him. And he has shut himself up with the old woman in that big house nussing his grief and bitterness and pride and spite."

"Oh, stop, please—here is the gate. What a lovely, lovely place! Oh! I must go in and see if they will take me. Wait here." And Si's passenger leaped lightly to the ground. "I will be back in half an hour—unless the old Squire eats me entirely."

"It is a forlorn hope, I know," continued Miss Elsie Vane, as she opened the garden gate boldly, "but I am a soldier's daughter with the fighting blood of three generations in my veins. And I have managed just as well before," she added to herself with a little tremulous laugh as she advanced to the porch, where Squire Angus Cameron, grim and gaunt and gloomy as the granite walls of his home, sat smoking his morning pipe.

"It took all the pluck of a soldier's daughter to charge such a sentinel, but strong men had gone down under the battery of Miss Elsie's bright eyes so often that she had the courage of the conqueror."

"Boards!" echoed the Squire in brusque reply to her request. "Take boards here? No, we don't. Never did and never will. Don't wait either their money or their company." And the speaker's tone and look were enough to rout the most reckless invader.

But Miss Elsie held her ground according to the most approved feminine tactics, charmingly unconscious of the Squire's beetling frown and uncivil speech.

"Oh, I am so sorry," she said plaintively. "It is such a lovely, lovely place. I never saw such beautiful oaks. And your view!" Here words quite failed Miss Elsie. "May I sit down just one minute and look at those mountains?"

And she sank in a pretty girlish way on the stone step at the Squire's feet. The shaggy brows relaxed somewhat. The pretty invader had touched a weak point.

"Ay, the view is fine. I've heard painter folks say they never saw anything like it. And though I've been looking at it summer and winter this forty year, I never found it twice the same. It's mist and cloud, storm and rainbow, changing ever."

"Wonderful," said the girl softly. "I have never been in the heart of the mountains before. I can understand how their children love and long for them. I have not been very well, but continued, turning the bright battery of her eyes upon the old man's face. The doctor ordered quiet and mountain air. But it seemed a difficult task to find. All the hotels are filled with gay, noisy crowds, dancing and frolicking day and night. I thought I would search these lovely heights and see if some kind, good people would take me in."

Again the bright, bewitching eyes flashed upon the Squire, and again the lines gave way as a tender memory twined about his knotted heartstrings. Twenty years ago he had laid a little maid to rest under the lindens—ard—and the old wound hurt yet. Some thing in the bright, uplifted glance recalled the little lass of long ago.

"I dunno," he said, reluctantly.

"There ain't a place round here fitting for folks that want quiet and rest. And if you're not well—Mahala," as a thin, sad-faced old woman stepped to the door behind him, "here's a young woman that the doctor has ordered to the mountains. She has come looking here for board."

"Oh, not 'board!' The pretty appeal of the eyes went straight now to the old mother's heart. "Of course, I can get board anywhere. But I am looking for a home for a few weeks—sweet, quiet, peaceful home, where I can rest and grow strong."

"You'd not be wanting jiggling and junketing like they have at the Mountain House?" asked the old Squire, suspiciously.

"Not a jig or junket," answered Miss Elsie, shaking her head. "Nor a crowd of young folks blather ing around night and morning. Forgive me if I have tried to win it by a woman's strategy. Donald said if you knew me you would love me—and so I stole here under my mother's name."

She paused trembling, as the old man's brow blackened and his eyes blazed. "Ah, do not look at me like that," she pleaded. "You know what you would give me if you were worth—"

"Ay, and I hold to it, lass, I hold to it," burst forth the old Squire impetuously, while his eyes suddenly cleared and flashed into light even as his own moon atop of the Squire's head. "I hold to the bargain, and to the Squire, he was what ye say. Donald's sweetheart, he was? Eh, but I can't blame the L.L. Mother, mother, come 'Mother knows all,' laughed Elsie. 'I told her last night. And Donald, the fair arms wreathed themselves around the old man's neck. 'Donald is not very far away, and you said—' you know you said—' The brown eyes sparkled roguishly."

"That I'd take a blackthorn stick to them that stood betwixt ye," and old Angus Cameron burst into a laugh that swept away the gloom of years. "Ah, ye helped! ye have me mended neck and heel. But Angus Cameron never went back on his word yet. Bid the lad come home."

And so the old Covenanter yielded, and the faith came to Cameron Hall with the triumph of Elsie's "forlorn hope."—Mary T. Waggaman in Ben-ziger's Magazine.

IMITATION OF CHRIST.

HOW A DESOLATE PERSON OUGHT TO OFFER HIMSELF INTO THE HANDS OF GOD.

Thou knowest what is expedient for my progress, and how servicable tribulation is to rub away the rust of sin. Do with me according to thy desired good pleasure; and despite not my sinful life, to no one better or more clearly known than to thyself alone.

Grant, O Lord, that I may know what I ought to know; that I may love what I ought to love; that I may prize that which is most pleasing to thee; that I may esteem that which is valuable in thy sight; that I may despise what is despicable in thine eyes.

Suffer me not to judge according to the sight of the outward eye, nor to give sentence according to the hearing of the ears of men who know not what they are about; but to determine both visible and spiritual matters with true judgment, and above all things ever to seek thy good will and pleasure.

The sentiments of men are often wrong in their judgments, and the lovers of this world are deceived in loving visible things alone.

What is a man the better for being reputed greater by men? One deceives the vain, the blind the deceitful, the weak the weak, whilst they extol them; and in truth one doth rather confound another, whilst he vainly praiseth him.

"For how much each one is in things eyes; so much he is and no more," saith the humble St. Francis.

SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY.

Measured by the results it brings to the individual, to society and to the State, there is no problem to-day which affects each more than marriage. From the general conviction expressed in every quarter existing conditions demand immediate correction. To this end much has been attempted, but practically nothing accomplished.

These conditions warranted the assertion that marriage to-day, outside of the Catholic Church, is a frivolous, mercenary and meaningless relation. It has entirely lost the sacred character which it ought to possess. It is entered into lightly, schemingly and with no higher motive than personal profit. Individuals run it on with less consideration than they give their garments. Its history as presented by the divorce courts of the country prove it to be a convenient cloak for temporarily legalizing lust.

With such conditions continuing and augmenting it is no surprise to see the plane of society sinking and vice reigning in the body politic. There are the necessary and inevitable consequences. Civic virtue is impossible if there be no sacredness in the marital relation. The same is true of society.

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and that for the reason that both are founded on the family. As the family is so will be the State.

To maintain the sacred character of the marital state and thus preserve the purity of the family, the Catholic Church alone has had success against the destructive stream of divorce. She alone stands firm. Against its severance she has firmly and steadily set her divine authority. Upon those who violate her law she visits the severest penalties. Therefore, around the individual, the home, society and the State she has thrown the strongest safeguards. Therein she is fulfilling her God-ordained mission and showering her benefits and blessing upon each.

According to her teaching, marriage is more than a natural contract. It is a sacrament. That is, a visible sign of an invisible grace, instituted by our Lord, for our sanctification, by means of which grace is conveyed to all souls. As such its purpose is to fill the Church and its members so completely with a great sacrament in as much as the union which it affects represents the espousal of Christ with His Church.

By the acceptance and practice of this doctrine only can there be hope for change in the conditions from which society now suffers so severely. In it alone will be found the solution of the problem now earnestly sought.—Church Progress.

Consider from time to time what persons are used in your soul, and having discovered them, such a method of thinking, speaking and acting as may counteract them.



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