

"Y-e-s, yes," answered Eileen, conscience-stricken.

Philip noticed her hesitation and fearing his mother would inquire the reason hastened to speak, "Yes, they certainly have been inspiring."

Eileen, shocked beyond words, glanced sideways into his face at this remark, but there was no flush of shame there as she had expected.

Then Mrs. Norton continued, "How is it you do not use our pew during evening services? One can appreciate and enjoy Father Farrelly's sermons far better when close enough to watch his emotional gestures, which give greater expression to his words, and our pew affords us this advantage."

"You see, mother, Eileen gets faint when the church is so warm and crowded, and I think it best to sit near the door so that she can get out in the air quickly, if necessary."

My God, was he becoming a hypocrite and liar now? Her Philip, so straightforward and square in all his dealings. To use her as his excuse to his mother. This was more than she could stand, and she was on the verge of exposing him there and then, but the thought of wounding his feelings thus, held back the impulsive words.

After Mr. and Mrs. Norton had entered the church, Eileen turned a pale, pained face to his. "Philip, how could you?"

Already having begun to battle with his conscience on realizing his deceit, he answered irritably: "For God's sake, Eileen, leave me alone! 'You'll drive me crazy with this religious business of yours. Don't you know if I had told mother the truth I would have no more peace? Can you imagine how she would carry on? I know her better than you do, and I am heartily sick of all this. I am a man now and will do as I please."

"God help you," was all that poor Eileen could say, and no more was said on the way home.

III

Two years had passed since Philip and Eileen had plighted their vows at this holy altar, where Eileen now knelt, in sorrow. At home a beautiful bouquet of rare flowers graced the table, sent by Philip, to the faithful little wife of his choice. Tonight they would celebrate their anniversary in a fitting manner. A box at the opera, for themselves and a party of friends, had been arranged for; then supper at the most exclusive restaurant, and then the dance, till the early hours of the morning. Philip had planned a memorable anniversary, and his little sweetheart was to be the prettiest, happiest and most beautifully gowned of that party of girls. Her dress had been selected by him to make sure that it would be elaborate enough. Eileen's modest taste would spoil his plans, for he was going to show off his wife to some old college friends and others who he knew would envy him.

In vain did Eileen protest against the sleeveless and extremely décolleté gown that was selected. "Sweetheart, can't you see how ravishing you look in that gown? Come, be a sport like other girls." The gown was bought, and Eileen dreaded the approach of night with its festivities, when she, robed in it should be the center of attraction, and should act the part to please Philip.

"O God," she prayed, "I would sacrifice all if only he would leave the company that are leading him away from Thee! Willingly would I give my life if doing so would make him realize his folly and bring him to Thy feet in repentance!"

IV

The anniversary party was all that Philip could have desired. He was more in love with Eileen than ever. He was not jealous over the attention paid her by the young men of the party, for he knew that Eileen's love was all for him, and their interest flattered him.

Dance after dance Eileen went through, and now she was warm and tired, so calling Philip aside begged him to take her somewhere to get a little air and sit out a dance. He led her to a seat near the window, which he opened slightly, but the sudden cold draft made her shiver. She had neglected to draw her scarf over her shoulders and the slight warmth obtained from it now was not enough to dispel the chills that continued to creep through her. She pleaded with Philip to bring the party to a close and go home, and when he saw the traces of strain on her tired face he consented to take her home.

The next morning Eileen was unable to leave her bed. The few remaining hours of the night after they returned home were spent with fever, chills and racking headache, and the morning only convinced her that she could not shake off her illness. Philip could not fail to see that she was suffering, and at the first signs of dawn, telephoned the physician to come at once. A very severe cold, he said, and great care should be taken to ward off pneumonia. He came again in the afternoon and looked very serious after examining the patient; left orders with the nurse, but gave no one else any information. Philip did not go to the office that day. The first bitter pang of remorse had entered his heart. He thought of the way Eileen had been attired the night before to satisfy his wishes, his thoughtlessness in allowing her

to dance, though tired, until all his friends were satisfied.

The fever had now entered Eileen's brain and her delirium was torture to Philip. Every word that came from her lips, every accustomed prayer (her prayers for him) went like a dagger through his heart. His mother came to cheer her boy, and was astounded to hear Eileen's raving prayers. "What could it all mean?" But Philip could no longer play the hypocrite; suffering was already bringing out the good in his nature. He told his mother of his neglect of his devotional practices and she comforted him in his sorrow and repentance and thanked God for giving her boy so pure and unselfish a wife, begging now that she be spared to him to be his guiding star through life.

Then Eileen's voice: "O God, willingly would I give my life to bring him to Thy feet in repentance."

The mother who had once hardened her heart against this girl, now melted into sobs of grief. "Has that been her prayer, O Lord? Save her, spare her, do not accept the sacrifice, dear God." Philip flew into the room and caught the unconscious girl in his arms, unheeding the nurse's protestations. "O God, not that! Not that! It will break my heart. Leave her to me, my God, and I will be a new man." He prayed on and on, burying his head in the covers of her bed, clutching for her hands and kissing them, calling on God to hear him, sinner though he was, he would pierce the very clouds to the Throne itself and beg Him to leave his darling to him.

But Eileen's condition grew steadily worse and the physician at last told the grief-stricken husband to prepare for the worst.

The last rites were administered and in a few days Eileen's sacrifice had been accepted by God.

The small form was robed in the wedding gown of but two years previous. The golden head rested in the folds of satin as if only in peaceful sleep, at least so it seemed to Philip—that his darling must soon awaken and speak to him, softly, caressingly, her own sweet way. Oh the weight of his heart, the cruel fingers that kept clutching at it, tearing the very cords asunder. That she could but lay her hand on his to soothe his troubled spirit. He bent and kissed the lips, expecting the warmth of life. He had kissed them so often to quiet her ravings, but oh, what a shock; how cold, how still! This quiet little form bore the resemblance of Eileen, but only a resemblance. Where was his Eileen? Still praying for him, perhaps. He would not leave her side. Too soon would come the hour when she would be closed from his sight forever. No, not forever. They would meet in Heaven. On passed the hours of the night, faithful friends kept loving vigil, offering consolation to Philip, who could not be consoled. The early hours of the morning found few remaining friends. Mother and son alone were in the room with the dear dead. The solemn hush over the world, and particularly in that room of sorrow, soon soothed the weary watcher into slumber. His nerves relaxed against his will and unknowingly he slept. And then came a dream. Eileen was before him as of old. Full of life and joy and happiness, and how beautiful, how wondrously beautiful, his Eileen, thank God. She held both hands to him, but when he was about to take them, behold, a river divided them. It widened as he watched and he could not take her hands. He was about to plunge in to swim across to her, when an angel appeared, and pointing to him said: "Look!" He gazed down upon himself. My God! Could this be Philip Norton? This ragged, bruised, dirty creature. Those hands that had always been so white and well-kept, now shriveled, blackened, rough and hard; could they be his? Had he dared extend those hands to hold the beautiful creature across the river. What had happened to him? Why was he in this filthy condition?

The angel's voice spoke: "The effects of mortal sin. Thus appears thy soul in the sight of God. Thou canst not come near this soul until thine own has been cleansed. It is in thy power to do so in—"

The angel ceased speaking and Philip raised his head and beheld, he was at the foot of the Cross! The Sacred Heart was bleeding, and on him fell a small drop of the Precious Blood! And with that drop of Blood came a new, sweet peace into his soul, and Philip was a changed man. He looked again. The angel was gone and Eileen, too. He awoke to find himself beside the body of his loved one. "Blood of Christ, wash me, and make me worthy to be with her some day in Thy Divine Presence!"

V

Years have passed. In a distant city a vast crowd fills the church. The expectant look on the faces of the congregation prove that it is a day of special interest.

The organ peals out—a prelude to the Mass. Now comes a number of acolytes, and then the Priest. All eyes are strained toward him, for this is to be his first Mass, and although he is unknown to this vast congregation, they are deeply interested. This man with the streaks of gray in his hair and lines of suffering on his face—do you recognize him, dear reader? Yes, Philip Norton, for whom Eileen had offered

her sacrifice. Philip Norton, whom suffering had awakened to the value of his soul; who, for the past many years has striven to amend and atone, and through mortification and self-sacrifice has been purified, and now deemed worthy to enter this holy state. Was Eileen's sacrifice wasted? Had she given too much in offering the life of her body for the life of Philip Norton's soul?

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TRUE CHEERFULNESS

A truly cheerful person is such a blessing to his or her surroundings that it may be of interest to consider the cause of cheerfulness. First it is founded on inward power and a pure patience and capability to bear suffering, loving and cherishing one's neighbors—enduring and meeting them even though their presence be disagreeable. A cheerful person does not turn away from sorrow unsympathetically, but is armed to meet it, and endeavors to raise others above their trials also.

There is constant need of cheerfulness in this restless and materialistic age, when human hearts are struggling with disappointment, injustice and sorrow. If we can add but a mite to the sum total of happiness by being cheerful and kind shall we not make every effort to do so?

Like every other personal trait, cheerfulness leaves its imprint on the features, and this probably is the cause of its contagious tendency. Mothers, in particular, should remember this, so their smile, tranquil and loving, may cast sunshine into the heart of the child and thus impart the foundation for the same pleasing trait of character in their children.

A certain amount of cheerfulness, in company or upon social occasions, is common to all; yet the gayest of them all may soon afterward fall into deepest depression; and cheerfulness is not part of this character.

True cheerfulness is a happy, harmonious combination of different parts; a sound, unspoiled character, clear judgment, a natural calmness in feeling and disposition, a spirit of self-sacrifice, a sincere love of our neighbor and a childlike confidence in God.—The Echo.

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