

The Northwest Review.

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NO 52

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A FABLING BLOW.

The blow is falling! Let it fall—
Even death were not calamity;
God wot, why should we whine or call?
It cannot hurt our souls at all,
Since we are free.

A little less of earthly things,
Less favor of the world have we:
What then proud man? The robe still
rings
'Tis not the crown that maketh kings
But being free.

Then let the blow fall! What if it
Should lay us prone, both you and me?
O Lord of light, give us the wit
To soar heaven high, though low we sit
Content and free.

To toil to suffer, to live unknown:
What matter if brave men we be?
Why we can live and make no moan,
And, dying feel the grave a throne,
Divinely free.

—Sir Henry Wotton—

RUTH

BY AGNES L. SADLER

From the Catholic News

From that time forth, two or three
evenings each week found him seated in
Robert's room. In obedience to his wish-
es, Mrs. Carr, called, and much to Des-
mond's relief, passed a favorable hour
with Ruth, but reiterated her former one,
with added emphasis, in regard to her
mother.

As for Desmond, I may as well admit
that he was by this time deeply in love
with Ruth. Had she been a Catholic, he
would have asked her to be his wife at
once; but as it was, he thought it better
to wait. The task of bringing her around
to the Catholic faith was by no means so
difficult as he had thought it would be,
her very nature, direct, simple, and
permeated with a sweet humility, had
been the best possible preparation for
conversion. He found that the brother
and sister had often gone to a Catholic
Church near by; the witnessing of its
solemn, majestic rite had been the only
experience not utterly commonplace
which they had ever enjoyed, and it had
soothed and satisfied them, Ruth espe-
cially, beyond expression.

The end of May came, and the Des-
monds and Carrs left town; but before
going Mrs. Desmond visited Mrs. Ames
and wrung a reluctant consent from her
that Ruth and Robert should spend the
month of August with them at Orange.
Ruth was enchanted with the project;
she had never spent any time in the
country, and had always longed to do so
and she thanked Mrs. Desmond her face
wore so sweet an expression that the
lady kissed her with unusual warmth,
and thought if she were but a Catholic
nothing could please her more than to
see her Anthony's wife.

With their departure the slight ripple
of interest which their acquaintance had
made in her life subsided, and it became
as quiet as before she had known them
but not so dull; for though she now saw
Desmond but seldom, scarcely a single
day went by without some proof of his
generous thoughtfulness, in the shape of
fruit, rare cordials, or wines for the in-
valid, for such Robert continued to be
or flowers or books for Ruth.

The month of June proved excessive-
ly warm, and it told on Robert, who grew
visibly weaker. He now passed the most
of his time on the lounge and Ruth sel-
dom left him, except for a short walk af-
ter the sun went down.

One evening she was seated by
him, reading aloud Newman's "Callista,"
which Desmond had sent, and in which
they were both deeply interested, when
Margaret appeared at the open door and
announced that Mr. Van Dam wished to
see Ruth in the drawing room.

Poor Ruth trembled, she knew but to
well what this portended; but she was
above all things desirous of keeping all
agitation from Robert, so she rose with
seeming cheerfulness, laid her book on
the table, and with an insurance to Rob-
ert that she would return as soon as pos-
sible, hurried down through the dimly lit
house to the drawing room. Upon open-
ing the door she found just what she had
expected and feared to find, Mr. Van
Dam and her mother seated and discuss-
ing, in their usual slow, keen manner,
a large sale of real estate which had taken
place that day. His entrance had no
immediate influence upon the conversa-
tion; Mr. Van Dam rose and bowed, then
sat down again and proceeded to answer
her mother in a way which showed that
his attention had not deviated from the

lady for a moment. But at length Mrs.
Ames arose and left the room, closing the
door as she did so, and then Mr. Van
Dam fastened his small, dark eyes, which
always appeared to Ruth curiously like
her mother's, upon her, and began, in
his small, keen voice: "Ruth, from what
I can gather from your excellent mother
it would be well nigh superfluous to
make a declaration of my sentiments in
regard to you. You are well aware of
them.

He paused, possibly to give Ruth an
opportunity to express her complete
knowledge of the said sentiments, but
if so she failed to take advantage of it,
and sat silent with downcast eyes and
hands folded lightly in her lap.

Finding herself obliged to proceed
without a reply he resumed:

"I am likewise informed by your moth-
er that you yourself, to some extent,
share them; that, in short, that the pros-
pect in becoming my wife is not a dis-
agreeable one to you."

"He paused as if relieved. Even to
such a man as Mr. Van Dam; the utter-
ance of a purpose of marriage is attend-
ed with some slight embarrassment. As
a natural manner of concealing this, it
occurred to him to draw forth a snowy
handkerchief and wipe his high and long
forehead while waiting for the lady of
his choice to assent.

As for poor Ruth, she felt that a cru-
cial moment which she so long dreaded
had arrived; the horrible probability
which had always through the late pleas-
ant days been like a serpent upon a
bank of flowers had become a certainty.
She must resist now or resign herself for-
ever to her fate; there are no fetters so
strong as those of implication and it was
with these her mother had bound her to
her would-be-lover, for whom she now
felt a mounting repugnance, instead of
indifference.

Gaining strength from desperation,
she lifted her eyes and looked steadily
at Van Dam, while she said in a voice
which trembled slightly in spite of her
utmost effort:

"You are mistaken in supposing that
the prospect of becoming your wife is not
disagreeable to me. It is so disagreeable
that nothing on earth would force me to
entertain it."

Van Dam stared at her for a moment.
Mentally he objurgated the silly novels
which he felt sure were responsible for
Ruth's acting in this ridiculous manner.
She had been reading of lovers' scenes
and quarrels, and no doubt was deter-
mined to have the whole process gone
through before her consent should be
given. He would have to sit with her,
walk with her, talk with her even in
thought he could bring himself to de-
clare that he would have to purchase
flowers or books for her and all this
while the important business of his life
would perhaps would be neglected. Alas
how unlike she was to her mother! She
he felt sure, had required no such non-
sense as love-making; but then, to be
sure, she was an exceptional woman. If
she were but twenty years younger?

All of these thoughts of Mr. Van Dams
required some space in which to be re-
corded and read, but of course required
very few instances in which to be
thought. He finally arrived at the con-
clusion that it was best to say nothing
more upon the subject that evening, and
rising, stiffly bade Ruth good night and
retired.

The front door had scarcely closed af-
ter his exit from the house when Mrs.
Ames quietly glided into the drawing
room and seated herself in a chair which
Van Dam had just vacated.

"I trust, Ruth," she said, in a slightly
more icy tone than that which was habit-
ual with her, "that you have not been
attempting any silly coquetry with Mr.
Van Dam."

Ruth stood in great awe of her mother
and Mrs. Ames had done her utmost to
encourage this feeling. She waited in
cold silence for poor Ruth's reply, which
was slow and faltering.

"I have not, mamma. I have only told
him that I cannot be his wife."

"And, why?"

"Because I have no affection for him."
"Ruth, I have brought you as far
apart from other girls as possible in
order to keep you free from those non-

sensational notions of love and lovers, which
fill their silly heads. Now, I ask you to
consider calmly whether a child like you,
or an experienced woman like me; knows
what is best for you."

"I could never be happy with Mr. Van
Dam," said Ruth, bursting into tears in-
stead of carrying on the discussion.

Her mother cast a scornful glance at
her as she sat weeping with her head
buried in her hands. "I see," she said,
"that it is useless to argue with you."
You have been exposed to other in-
fluences and in consequence you have
lost sight of your duty to me. But I will
not fail in mine, which is to preserve you
from any act of folly, and from this mom-
ent you may consider your acquaintance
with the Desmond's at an end."

She rose and glided from the room
leaving Ruth in a state better imagined
than described. After a long time spent
in trying to calm herself, for even in her
sorrow the unselfish girl thought of Rob-
ert, she arose and stole upstairs to the
study.

She opened the door softly and
stepped within; but what was her surprise
to perceive Desmond seated in a chair
which she had vacated when she de-
scended to her momentous interview, and
reading the book which she had laid
down.

In her amazement she stood still, and
Desmond arose at once and came to-
wards her. "Robert fell asleep on the
lounge shortly after I came in, and I
have been waiting for him to awaken
ever since. You see, he said 'what
poor company I am for an invalid, I
certainly cannot flatter myself with the
result which has crowned my efforts to
entertain him, can I?'"

"It may be the best thing for him,
however," she answered, conscious that
she was looking pale and miserable, and
that her eyes plainly showed that she
had been weeping, and in consequence
hardly knowing what she was saying.

"It is rather depressing to my vanity
however," he replied lightly, "and so
I shall withdraw and meditate upon it
during my walk home. Perhaps it may
do me good. Good-night!"

"Good night," returned Ruth quietly,
though her heart was breaking with the
thought that it was for the last time.
Would he be so calm she wondered, if
he, too, knew that it was to be a final
farewell. She moved aside to permit to
pass, and he was about to quit the room
when another glance at the fair stained
face, which had grown to be the dearest
thing on earth to him, made him hesi-
tate and finally step back and approach
her.

"Forgive me if I am rude," he said,
quietly. "But I cannot bear to see you
grieve. I know you are troubled about
your brother, but, believe me, there is
no real cause, as yet, for fear. He will
improve during the summer, and be-
next winter sets in I will carry him off
to Cannes and settle him there com-
fortably with some friends of mine, who
always pass the winter there, and are
the very kind of people that Robert
would like. In fact, I myself think I will
snatch a holiday. You must know I
have been threatening for the past five
years to take one and stay a while with
him."

But what was poor Desmond's dismay
on perceiving that, instead of bringing
back the bright look which he so loved
to her face, his words only made the
tears which she had been restraining
with the greatest difficulty burst forth
afresh.

"No, no. You are very kind," she
cried, "but it cannot be," and then, con-
scious that she was losing all control of
herself, she rushed from the room, leav-
ing Desmond astounded beyond mea-
sure.

"A pretty mess I made of the whole
thing," he muttered to himself, as he
strolled homeward smoking his cigar.

"I told it so awkwardly that I suppose
she thought I intended to separate Rob-
ert from her—as if my holiday at Can-
nes would be any holiday without her to
share it. What a clumsy brute I was!"
and he smoked fiercely in his rage with
himself as he again perceived with his
mind's eye that slight, trembling figure
with its bowed head buried in its hands.

The following evening instead of going
to Orange, Desmond remained in the
city, and at an unseemly early hour

mounted the steps of the house in St.
Mark's Place. But what was his amaze-
ment when the door was opened by a
strange servant, who informed him that
Mrs. Ames had left the city that morn-
ing with her son and daughter, but she
did not know whether they had gone.

Twelve o'clock that evening found
Desmond in consultation with Mrs. Carr.
That lady wisely decided that Mrs. Ames
would never permit her material inter-
ests to suffer, no matter in what corner
of the world she might be, and advised
him to address a letter to the city house
and rely on its being forwarded to her
with her other correspondence. Des-
mond acted in accordance with this ad-
vice, and asked for her consent to his
marriage with her daughter. In the
course of a few days he received a reply
containing a curt refusal.

Three months went by without Des-
mond having seen Ruth, although his in-
genuity in endeavoring to find out her
abode deserved success. He perused with
the unflinching perseverance every notice
of the watering places in the daily pap-
ers, and visited St. Mark's Place every
evening to see if the house showed any
sign of life.

At length, on Sunday afternoon he be-
took himself to the Jesuits' church for
vespers, whither Ruth had once accom-
panied him. When the service was fin-
ished, Desmond who dreaded to go back
to the glaring streets, or to the great
empty house in Fifty-seventh street, de-
cided that he would go into the house
and visit one of the Fathers. So he sat
still and watched the slim congregation
as they passed down the aisles. Sudden-
ly to his utter amazement, he saw Ruth
among them. She was utterly uncon-
scious of Desmond's proximity, and the
later noted, with a lover's quickness,
that the sweet face looked worn and sad.
She passed him by without perceiving
him, and Desmond instantly rose and
followed her and down the steps, and
then he said "Miss Ames." At the sound
of his voice she turned her face towards
him. A vivid blush rose to her pale
cheeks, and this, joined to the glad light
in her eyes, made her face radiant with
beauty. But she said nothing, only sim-
ply placed her hand in his.

A few months later there was a low
nuptial Mass one morning at the Jesuits
Church, and Ruth and Anthony Des-
mond were married. Mrs. Ames was
not present; she had remained fixed to
her opposition to the last. Mr. and Mrs.
Desmond then went abroad, taking Rob-
ert with them, and Schuyler Van Dam
took up his abode in the house in St.
Mark's Place, and the report spread
that Mrs. Ames intended to make him
her heir. But in the early spring she
died quite suddenly of pneumonia, and
it was then discovered that she never
carried out her threat of making a new
will.

By the only one in existence Ruth re-
ceived the larger share of the enormous
fortune.

And never was wealth used more wis-
ely than it has been. Realizing perfect-
ly what so many, even among pious
Catholics, forget, that those who possess
great wealth are but stewards of a trust
for His poor, she used it chiefly in dry-
ing the tears of misery, and stilling the
cry of want which rises by night and
day in our great city.

The End.

RAILROADS FOR JAPAN.

The Japanese government has agents
in England negotiating for large purchas-
es of Rails, engines, bridges, and plant
required for her railway development.
—Frank Leslie's.

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