

stood at the window and watched them. The moonlight flooded the valley. It brought out the mountains in bold relief against the blue Colorado sky. She looked at them a long time. Then she drew a labored breath. "Strange," she murmured, "how these mountains settle down on one!"

The days that followed were an hourly crucifixion to her. She had not been in the house twenty-four hours before she knew there was something between her and Skidmore and her son. What it was she could only conjecture, but when conjecture is turned loose in a jealous woman's soul it is a ravening wolf, rending at every turn. She had little to base it on. She had seen them one day in the hall as she stood on the landing above. He was holding her hands and talking in a low tone. She had not seen her. She went into her room and sat down wearily.

Robert! Robert!

As the days passed she was torn by conflicting emotions. One hour she would say, "It is only my foolish imagination!"—the next, she would wring her hands and whisper, "Oh God!"

Does this seem melodramatic? Remember, he was her only child, the light of her eyes, the hope of years. She knew that whatever this thing between them was it meant the blighting of his life or the undoing of the girl's.

She came upon them one morning on the street—an hour after he had gone to his work, pleading hurry. They started when they saw her. She made some casual remark and passed on, the several devils of jealousy tearing her soul. She would end this tonight! She would know the truth!

When they were alone that evening she unfolded a plan for housekeeping. She had thought out every detail. A woman of no mean executive ability was Mrs. Etheridge, and the stakes were high.

He listened in silence. Then he said: "Mother, it wouldn't pay to go to housekeeping for the little time you will be here."

It hurt her cruelly. There was no reason why she should not be here always if he wanted her. Then she laid pride, too, on the altar.

"I don't want to teach again, Rob. I'd rather have the little housekeeping we've planned so long." She laid her head on his shoulder—all woman now. She had been father and mother both so long!

"I don't see how we can manage it, mother," he said wearily. "I'm afraid we'll have to give up the 'little housekeeping.'" Her sacrifice had been rejected.

"I'm a good deal troubled about my business," he continued. "The mine shuts down soon—so it's rumored."

Mrs. Etheridge sat up and thought rapidly. This calamity might prove a door of escape.

"Oh, Robert," she cried, "let's go away."

"I've had an offer here," he began tentatively.

"With another company?"

"No. To go into business."

"What business?"

"The grocery business."

There was silence in the room for the space of a minute—a silence that might be felt. Then Mrs. Etheridge spoke with incisive distinctness:

"Do you mean to tell me that you think for one moment of giving up your profession—a profession that cost you four years of your life?" (she did not mention her own sacrifices) "for one reverse and—a grocery store?"

"Oh, well," he said sulkily (he felt that he had been called names—coward, dolt, poltroon.) "a man's got to live. And with silver down to—"

"Who made you this offer?"

"John Skidmore, Mrs. Skidmore's son."

"Robert," she said suddenly, and without relevance, "do you care for this girl?"

"What girl?"

"Idella Skidmore."

"I think a good deal of her—yes."

"Would you marry her?"

There was no escaping her searching directness. It was the same tone she used to take years ago, when she would hold him by the hand and say, "now tell me the exact truth, and he would feel that he had to do it. He felt so now.

"A man might do worse," he answered defiantly.

"Where?"

"Oh, well, mother, he said, angrily, 'you've never done these people justice. Because they are not up to your standard of grammar you think they are worthy of—'

shouldn't I?" he asked doggedly. "Oh, love," she cried impatiently. "This is not love. Love must have some foundation. You are infatuated, that's all—infatuated with her beauty. When that is gone, what will be left? She is hopelessly your inferior. She will be a clog to you always. And think of the folly of it, Rob. You happen to be here at a time when young men think of marriage. You are young accidentally with this girl. Because you have the stirrings of passion within you you think you are in love. Conquer it, Robert. It would mean misery to you both."

"I've promised to marry her, mother. Would you have me break my promise?" Her very lips whitened. But she would not give it up.

"Yes," she said resolutely. "I would. Better a broken promise than two broken lives. This marriage would wreck both. She could not hold your love. You would make her wretched. Tell her plainly that it was a mistake. And then—"

"Mother," he said rising, "we may as well end this. I have resigned to this girl for a year. We are to be married at Christmas. If the mine shuts down I'll have to go in with John Skidmore. I have cast in my lot with these people."

She sat perfectly still. She felt always as if he had struck her. His choice was made. It was for this she had spent her life.

"I should have told you before, mother, but—"

"Yes, dear," she said gently, "I know. We won't talk about it anymore now. Good night."

When he was gone she looked the door and went to her trunk, tossing things about with nervous haste and bringing from the depths of a box of old pictures—the faded kind that are nearest our hearts. She turned them over eagerly, almost frantically, until she came to a tintype with a pinkish mat around it. A sweet child face with curly hair and great solemn eyes looked at her.

She threw herself on her knees and sobbed over it—the bitter sobs of middle age that rend the soul. She kissed the lips with passionate tears, she touched the curls and patted the baby cheek as if it were a living thing—and knew.

"This is the one I worked for," she whispered brokenly. "This is the one that loved me. He's dead now! My little lad! My little lad!"

Weeping endured for a night; with the morning came, not joy, but joy's best substitute—a settled purpose.

Through that vigil Mrs. Etheridge faced the thing that loomed before her, turning it often and viewing it from every side. As the belated dawn struggled over the mountains one conviction cleared itself before her spiritual vision. This infatuation was a madness of the blood. He had fallen under the spell, not of a wicked woman (even in her anguish she was just), but of a weak and beautiful one. He would wake from it some day bewildered, but in his right mind. It was awakening could only come before it was too late!

In her despair of the night before she determined weakly to give it up, to go home, and leave him to work out his own destruction. Now she shut her lips together and spoke sternly to that cowardly self. "No! I have stood by him in every emergency of his life, and he needs me now as he has never needed me before. I'll save him in spite of myself."

When she appeared at breakfast she was her own well-possessed self, as Robert saw with unspoken relief. Admiration rose within him to see how she held herself in hand, with what dignity she accepted defeat. And with admiration came a surging back of his old boyish love. It had been hard for her, harder than Idella or her mother could ever understand, and he glanced from one to the other with swift, invidious comparison.

When they spoke about it again she said only, "She is not the woman I would have chosen for you, and you are sure if she satisfies you, and you are sure it is an everlasting love, I will receive her as a daughter and do my best."

And Robert kissed her, feeling somehow less jubilant in this acquiescence than one would suppose.

The next morning she followed him to the door.

"Robert, would you object to me asking Helen Marsh to visit me while I am here? I had asked her when I thought we might go to housekeeping. It is rather lonely for me—no, do not misunderstand—I expect you to spend your time with Idella, but it throws me back on myself more than it does for me. If I could have Helen for a month or so it would help me out."

He hesitated. "No—, I don't object—only—well, mother, and the old defiant expression came back. "I may as well understand that I am not going to spend any time on Helen Marsh."

"Certainly not, I expect you to spend your time with Idella. It is right that you should. I will explain the situation to Helen when I write."

"That is hardly necessary," he said, wincing as he thought of Helen Marsh's ringing laugh. "She'll soon find it out, I suppose."

In his heart he did not want her to come, but he had been eliminated from the case so neatly that he could hardly object.

"Certainly. And she will feel just as I do about your allegiance."

He frowned. Like most men he did not like essays on allegiance.

That very day Mrs. Etheridge began her preparations. "What will be up one room in this house that will be a constant reminder of his old life," she thought as she sought Mrs. Skidmore.

"Of course, I let her do it," said that lady to her daughter. "That room hasn't been papered since your father died. Besides, she offered to pay for it if I'd let her select it. Yes, you bet I did!"

When that room was ready for the coming guest it presented a striking contrast to the plush clad family photograph gallery below. Mrs. Etheridge had brought some dainty furnishings to Colorado with the unspoken hope of the "little house-keep-

ing." They found a place and a work to do of which she had not dreamed. As Robert Etheridge stood on the threshold he found old memories tugging at his heart.

The faded carpet of yesterday had been consigned to some domestic limbo and rugs covered the stained floor. Soft folds of Madras replaced the cheapest of Nottingham lace, familiar pictures—good ones—hung on the harmoniously colored walls, books (not of the blue plush variety) were everywhere abundant, and new music was on the open piano. Mrs. Skidmore had remarked that for her part, with one instrument in the house—referring to the wheezy cabinet organ—she couldn't see no use for another, further observing, "But let her go to it, Idella. All them things will be yours some day," and Idella, stimulated by the preparations upstairs, had gone into the manufacture of paper flowers for their own parlor.

"Do you like it, Bob?"

His mother turned brightly from the mass of wild columbine she was arranging. He had just come from the paper roses below.

"Like it? Why it looks so like home it actually makes me homesick."

And her heart gave a great throb. As he sank into the big leather covered chair that had been brought as his special trap Idella appeared with a blue plush rocker in tow.

"We can spare you this. Your things look kinder tony and this will brighten 'em up. Don't you want some paper flowers?"

"Heavens, no!" cried Robert. "Can't you see?"

"Robert?"

When Idella with her head up had withdrawn his mother reconstituted. "They meant it kindly. You will have to be most careful about such things, my son."

So she entered the surroundings of this room Helen Marsh fitted like a hand in a glove. Robert could not help seeing this when after a constrained, awkward hour Idella left them and they felt the relief. He had opposed her being brought in, but his mother had said frantically, "She is your betrothed wife, Robert. I want to show her every courtesy that I would if—she were different. I shall not begin by shutting her out from anything."

So Idella had come in, wearing her tea gown, the newest thing she had, looking a very Venus for beauty and a Sphinx for dumbness. And yet Mrs. Etheridge tries hard to introduce her into the conversation.

"That Marsh girl ain't very pretty," Idella said deprecatingly to Robert when he came down to her, and he replied half angrily, "Idella, why don't you try to talk?"

"She don't know any of the people here to talk about," said Idella.

Helen Marsh was an accomplished musician, and Robert Etheridge was hungry for music. He got out his violin, and they played duets—in the midst of which Idella at the organ below would execute "The Sweet By and By," sometimes with the loud pedal on.

"I can't in common decency neglect my mother's guest," he said impatiently when she reproached him with leaving her for Helen. "Don't be silly! Then his conscience smote him and he tried to make up with Idella, who sulked, as Venuses sometimes do.

You know how it went.

If only Helen had not been so bright and full of the joy of living it might have been different. If only Idella had been less exacting and fretful under it, it might have been different. If his mother had been less conscientious it might have been far more different, but she goaded him to madness by her jealous championing of his future wife.

"It isn't right, Robert," she would say. "Your time belongs to Idella. I think we ought to tell Helen."

"Oh! hang it all, mother," he said at last, "let Idella take care of herself; she is abundantly able to do it."

But he always had a ready money turns after such a time, and would sit beside his betrothed listening to Helen's music above and finding fewer and fewer subjects of conversation.

One day there was a change in Idella's tastes. No more sulkings, no more reproaches, but a mysterious air that piqued Robert's curiosity. She sat no more in the plush parlor, nor played "The Sweet By and By."

Robert Etheridge walked home one night with a letter in his pocket and a lump of lead in his breast. The letter offered him a position in a neighboring mine. It was one that he coveted, because it was a distinct rise in the line of his profession. In his grasp today it turned to Dead Sea fruit. It made his marriage possible, but his awakening had come.

"I'll take the offer and go," he said to himself doggedly at last. "At Christmas I will come back for her as I promised. I've been a fool but I'll not be a scoundrel."

When he got home Helen Marsh sat on the porch with a book. She did not look up though he was sure she saw him. In the hall Mrs. Skidmore put her head out of a door and then quickly withdrew it. He could see that she had been crying.

His mother met him at the door. "My son I have bad news. Idella is gone. She has run off with the man that keeps the faro bank. She left this note for you."

He read it in silence. It seemed to him that the whole rocky Mountain system was slipping from his shoulders. When he had finished he drew a long breath, took his mother's face between his hands, looked steadily into her eyes, and smiled. Then he went to Helen Marsh.

At bedtime he came to his mother again.

"Mother, I've told Helen all about it. I wanted to start right, for I am sure this is the everlasting kind. I—I think I must have been possessed."

"You were," she answered, her eyes shining, "by the devil of propinquity." When he was gone she laughed softly.

"Some problems," she said, lapsing into school talk, "are worked out by comparison: some by elimination and substitution. In life the two may be

combined."—Caroline A. Stanley in the Tatler.

KEEPING POISON OUT OF THE WELLS.

The most important consideration in education is to keep the young and impressionable minds from being influenced by opinions and supposed statements of facts that are not founded on truth. Prejudices once acquired in this way can scarcely ever be eradicated, no matter how much their possessor may wish to be rid of them. Bigotry is, after all, founded upon supposed truth acquired when young and ever afterwards influencing all matters of thought. Hence the necessity for guarding school books from the intrusion of what is untrue. Long ago Josh Billings said that "it is not so much the ignorance of mankind that makes them ridiculous as the knowing so many things that ain't so." History, unfortunately, has in many respects come to be a patchwork, a true crazy-quilt of things that are not so. At least we must not permit Catholic children to receive mental bias that will last all their lives because of certain conventions that seem to accept such crazy-quilts as not very ugly things to look at after all.

Every now and then, however, some supposed historian, or at least writer of history for schools, must be called to account because he has not realized the changes that have come on the face of history among English speaking peoples during the last twenty five years. The flagrant example of the history written by a superintendent of education in the Philippines is yet vividly before all minds. There are not wanting examples of similar nature in our own midst, and in the last number of the Messenger Rev. John Scully, S. J., has called Mr. Edward P. Cheyne to account for the errors, omissions and worse of a Short History of England (Ginn & Co.) As Father Scully says, it seems almost impossible for an un-Catholic authority to write unbiased history of events concerning Catholics and their Church.

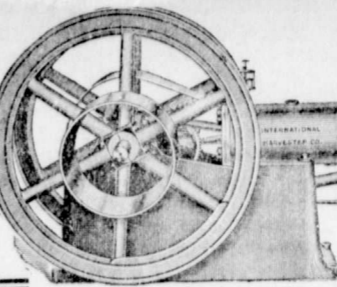
Some of the errors in this school history written by a member of the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania are almost amusing in their lack of appreciation of the Catholic standpoint in history. For instance, the author, following a discredited theory, says that the bishops in Ireland and Scotland at least were only priests filling somewhat higher functions, just as if there were no distinction between episcopal and priestly orders. It is interesting to know that the Rev. Mr. Todd, to whom the world owes the invention of this theory, is also the man who needs it to say that he is an Englishman; no one else would ever present such a lack of humor—who thought that he had proved that St. Patrick was a Protestant (save the mark).

Most of the errors which Father Scully has found it necessary to point out are of a more serious import than this with regard to St. Patrick and Ireland. Mr. Cheyne still continues to teach the old Protestant tradition that the monks were all idlers and the people were glad to be rid of them. This tradition is due to the vile charges made against the lesser monasteries by Cromwell's agents, who were, as Dom Gasquet shows, "as truculent and filthy libelers as ever disgraced a revolutionary cause." Canon Dixon, himself an Anglican clergyman, in his History of the Church of England, says that no proof of deep corruption has ever been made good against the clergy of England. As a matter of fact, the Rev. Mr. Jessup, a non-conformist English clergyman, who wrote on "Parish Life in England Before the Great Pillage" this is his straightforward name for what has been so much more euphemistically but less truthfully called the English Reformation, says that England before the Reformation presents a picture of piety and morality unsurpassed in any age and very rarely ever equalled, certainly not in Protestant England.

We could fill several columns of quotations of these corrected mistakes in a history written for school children. It must not be forgotten that the whole character of history has changed in the last few decades. Just a hundred years ago the Comte De Maistre said in his *Solaces of St. Peter's* that history for the past three hundred years has been a conspiracy against truth. Curiously enough the editors of the Cambridge Modern History, in their preface to this month's issue, issued only a few years ago and still unfinished, said that recent investigations in history had shown that many accepted historical theories were the expression of a conspiracy against the truth, and that in order to get at the truth of history present historical writers had to go behind all the classical writers and consult original documents once more.

Is it any wonder that the danger of the child imbibing such untruths which is so frequent in the case of school children should make Catholics insist on having our children educated in such a way as will not pervert their intelligence and give them bias and prejudice against the great truths of their religion? The worst of it is that the writers of such text-books do not intend to be deceivers nor perverters of truth; as children they themselves imbibed certain prejudices in the matter of historical opinions which conscientiously or unconsciously influence all their later life. They are quite surprised when their errors are pointed out. It is from such unfortunate states of mind that we want to preserve our children. We want them to know the truth, the whole truth, and above all we want them to know nothing but the truth—Catholic Union and Times.

In the anticipation of death men provide by a last testament for the distribution of the monies they have accumulated. Every beneficiary is a designation of special affection. How, then, are we to measure that testator's love for God who falls to name God as one of his beneficiaries?



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When crouched beneath the sheltering hedge, Or stretched on mountain fern, The master and his pupils met— Exultantly to learn.

This is no mere poetic exaggeration was noted by Right Rev. Mr. Molloy in a speech recently at the Golden Jubilee celebration of the Catholic University School of Medicine in Dublin, in which he said: "Mr. Chairman, when we look back on the history of our country, we are proud of the old hedge-schools of a hundred and two hundred years ago, and we glory in the spirit of our fathers, who, forbidden by law to build schools, went out under the canopy of heaven, and trusting to the shelter of a hedge to protect them from the cold blasts of winter, gathered their young flocks about them, and kept alive that love of learning which is one of the brightest characteristics of our race. And story was no myth, but a real institution and it turned out excellent scholars too, though in those days it was by British law felony for a Catholic in Ireland to teach or be taught."—N. Y. Freeman's Journal.

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