

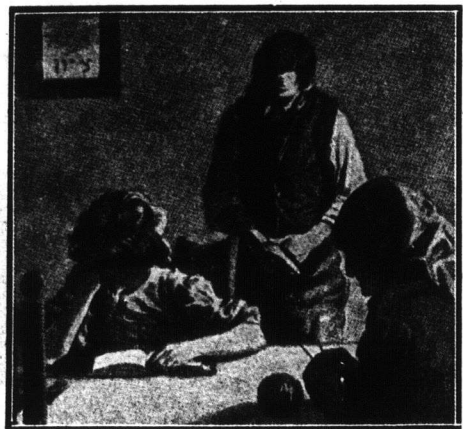
once; but she is my child no longer. I worked for her night and day, so she might have a good education—that her life should not be as hard as her mother's. She went to college, there to grow big in mind. She wanted to be a teacher, and I let her study. What did she do?" The old man's voice was now as a pitiful wail. "What did she do?" She disgraced her father and her mother—she married a Christian? A Christian, do you hear? Your sister is married to a Christian!"

Isaac's voice was choked with the sobs that shook his frame. The wife's eyes were dimmed with tears.

"Honour thy father and thy mother," the commandment says, and she has dishonoured us!" he moaned. "She, who was brought up in the faith of her forefathers, found a husband in another faith. To you and to your mother, and to me, she is as one who is dead."

Jakey understood but vaguely the meaning of his father's words; he was too young to grasp the force of the centuries of tradition that lay behind them. But he knew his sister was not dead. He had seen her that very day, had smacked of the luxuries with which she was surrounded. And when the prayer was finished, when the last word of the mournful chant for the dead had been said, his face, lighted with the anticipation of another trip in the motor, looked into that of his father. "Father, you don't mind, do you, if I go to see Esther to-morrow?" he asked, innocently.

A scowl that suggested the threatening fury of a wild animal contorted the father's visage. "She is not satisfied with what she has done," he said to his



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wife; "now she wants to take our son from us! She would teach him, too, not to honour his parents; but she shall not! She insults us by sending us the money of her husband, and tries to bribe our son away from us. But she shall learn, from my own lips, and from the lips of her mother, that she cannot beguile us into forgiveness."

Crumpling the notes that lay on the table, he placed them in his pocket. "Come," he said to his wife, "Jakey shall show us the way."

The resentful passion that prompted Isaac to start with his wife and son to the home of her who once was his daughter had not spent itself when the three reached the house. Before the big brown-stone mansion, with its gate of bronze, they looked shabby and out of harmony with the surroundings. Nevertheless, they marched boldly up the steps and pressed the electric button.

The door was opened by the butler, who looked curiously at them. When they were finally ushered upstairs the wife pressed the arm of her husband, imploring him not to be too harsh. "Remember, she is of our flesh and blood!" she pleaded.

In his East End Settlement work Charles Phelon had acquired a good knowledge of the dwellers in the congested district, and during the two years that he had been married to Esther Moscovitz his interest in his work of philanthropy had heightened materially. He had also obtained a keen insight into the nature of the people among whom he worked; so that when he entered the library and faced his wife's father, mother, and brother, he was as outwardly placid as if he had planned their coming and was ready to welcome their arrival. "I'm glad to see you! It is the first time you have visited us," he

said to Isaac, cordially extending his hand.

The old man did not respond to the greeting. The elemental fury that was raging within him was intensified at sight of the man who had taken his daughter. Only the anxiety that was visible on the face of his wife caused him to repress the eruption of words that were struggling for an outlet.

Silently Isaac took the money from his pocket and laid it on the little mahogany table in the centre of the room. "Here is the bribe," he said, with as much calm as he was able to command. "Now bring Esther here! I would let her know that she cannot take our son away from us! I would make her realize how basely she has betrayed her parents!"

"She has not betrayed her parents," Phelon replied. His voice was soothing and persuasive. "She has been true to herself, true to the promptness of her soul. She has followed her love where it led—into my arms. It is you who have been false to yourself; it is your narrowness that has hemmed in your generosity and the human qualities you possess. I planned to bring you here to-day. I sent the money, not as a bribe, but as a lure. You submerged your paternal love to the emotions of hatred; you severed the ties between you and your daughter—not she. I knew that no appeal to your instinct as a father could bring you here; so I made resentment my bait. And it brought you, and you shall listen!"

Phelon placed his hand affectionately on the old man's shoulder; but Isaac shook him off. He listened sullenly, as if anxious to have the scene over as soon as possible.

"Your daughter has been very ill," Phelon continued, very ill. This is the first day she has been able to be out, and her first thought was of you and her mother. Is that a daughter to be disowned, to be cast off like a fallen creature? She wants you to stop working, to leave the sweating den that is exhausting your energies and taking away the sight of your eyes. She wants her mother to move out of her squalor, and enjoy the rest of her days in comfort. Is that the token of an undutiful daughter? She wants her brother—your Jakey—to have a better opportunity than his father; she doesn't want him to toil and toil, to live on the edge of hunger and want all his life. Is that an unworthy feeling? And because I want to do as she says, because I want to make your life happy and comfortable, am I to be condemned for that? Am I less human because I was not born in your faith? Were you cast in a special mould, made of different clay than I? Are we not brothers in this great universe, created by the same Creator, following the same natural laws for all of us? My arms are wide open to you and yours, as I want yours open to us."

Isaac and his wife became aware of the presence of their daughter, who had entered through the folds of the curtain that separated the library from the little lounging room in the rear. They saw at once what Jakey, in his excitement, had failed to observe. Her cheeks were ashen pale, dark ringlets encircled her eyes; there was a suggestion of maturity about the girlish outline of her form, as if she was in process of transition from girlhood to womanhood. And on her face there glowed the holy light of maternity.

"Mother!" she exclaimed, as she fell on the shoulder of her parent.

Father and husband, with little Jakey in the background, watched the two women as their two forms shook in each other's embrace. They made a strange group, almost grotesque, in the luxurious library with its black oak finish illumined by the soft rays of the shaded lights.

Esther impulsively seized the hand of her father; the wife's fingers entwined themselves about his. Isaac stood dazed by the conflicting emotions that raged within him. In the double consciousness of his mind he felt two powerful forces drawing him in opposite directions. Like one inert, he remained immovable against the onslaught of emotion.

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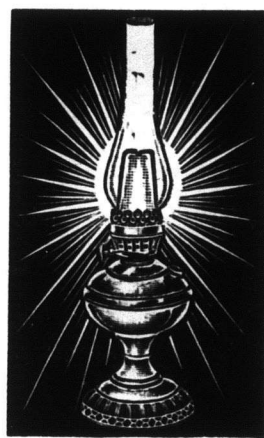
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