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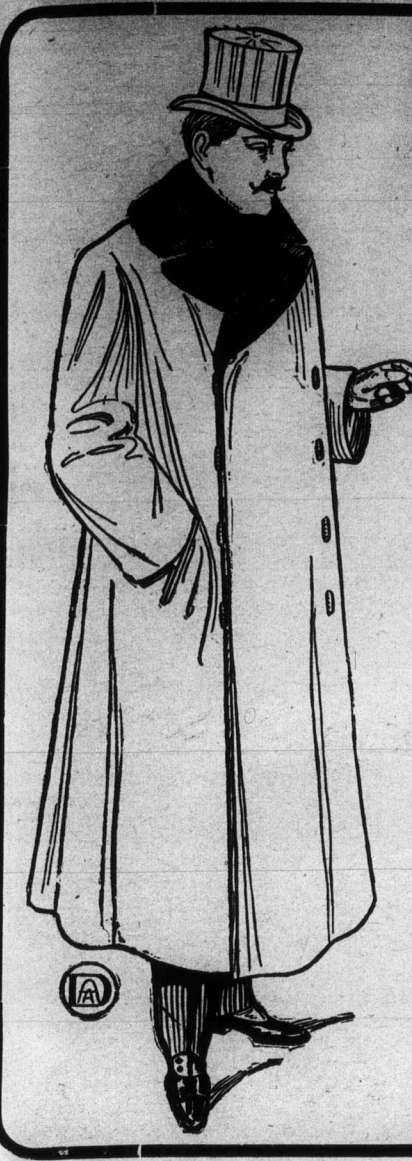
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A Marriage of Reason

By Maurice Francis Egan, Author of 'The Land of St. Laurence,' 'Tales of Sexton Maginnis,' 'The Fate of John Longworthy,' 'Songs and Sonnets,' 'The Ghost in Hamlet,' Etc

CHAPTER XXII.

Katherine was alone with her thoughts at last. The best part of the day had gone, a soft glow filled the room, which was well appointed, but unhome-like. Her trunk and bag had been brought up to her; relieved as she was—safe as she felt when she had turned the key in the lock, she sat on her trunk and began to cry. But after all, it was a blessed thing to be alone. If one could lock the world out from even the smallest room, one need not be unhappy! She resolved to wait a little while and then to seek out the working girl she had seen at the dressmaker's—the one whose place she had taken for a few moments, much to her aunt's disgust. That girl had a gentle and honest face; from her she could get the address of a lodging house where she could live while she looked about for work. She waited until she heard five o'clock strike, then she went into the street; stopping only for a prayer at St. John's she went directly to the establishment of the fashionable importer of "robes et manteaux."

MILBURN'S LAXA LIVER PILLS. Cure Constipation. Cure Biliousness. Cure Coated Tongue. Are a combination of the active principles of the most valuable vegetable remedies for diseases and disorders of the Liver, Stomach and Bowels.

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rich and respected. He could have given her everything that the world admires—except sympathy in that most essential of all things, religion. Of love she had been told little at the convent, and the novels she had read were few; but Mother Ursula, who spoke often to the young girls on the practical duties of life, had insisted on perfect respect and sympathy in marriage. How could she partake of the great Sacrament of Matrimony with one who did not believe it to be a sacrament? How could she respect one who denied the divinity of Christ—her All in all? And there was Lord Marchmont, an avowed Agnostic, keener and cleverer than Percival, but from whom she shrank with a woman's intuition that surpasses all logic! No; not even to save herself from death in the right, from the terrors of an unknown future, would she marry Lord Marchmont! The uncertain future was better than that. She knelt and said her beads, bathed her face on which the tears had stood—for a young girl has a great capacity for self-pity—turned up the gas, rung for more tea and bread, and began to bustle about in preparation for the coming of the young woman from the shop. There was a grate in the room and she had a fire made. Things took a more cheerful look. She would never look back again; her face must be set forward.

More Terrible Than War!

More terrible than war, famine or pestilence, is that awful destroyer, that hideous monster, Consumption, that annually sweeps away more of earth's inhabitants than any other single disease known to the human race. It is only a cold, a trifling cough, say the careless, as the irritation upon the delicate mucous membrane causes them to hack away with an irritable tickling of the throat. When the irritating settles on the mucous surface of the throat, a cough is the result. To prevent Bronchitis or Consumption of the Lungs, do not neglect a cough however slight as the irritation spreading throughout the delicate lining of the sensitive air passages soon leads to fatal results. If on the first appearance of a cough or cold you would take a few doses of

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you would save yourself a great deal of unnecessary suffering. Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup contains all the life-giving properties of the pine trees of Norway, and for Asthma, Croup, Whooping Cough and all Throat and Lung affections it is a specific. Be sure when you ask for Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup to get it. Don't be humbugged into taking something else. Price 25 cts. Miss Lena Johnston, Toledo, Ont., writes: "I have used Dr. Wood's Norway Pine Syrup for throat troubles after taking numerous other remedies, and I must say that nothing can take the place of it. I would not be without a bottle of it in the house."

"If you knew what it is to stand on your feet from eight o'clock in the morning until half-past six at night, you would find how restful it is! I am always so glad to get home. And you are very kind. Madame kept us half an hour later tonight."

Katharine watched her enjoy the tea, the light and the warmth. "You are very kind," she said, putting down her cup. "I am afraid that they will worry about me at home, but I shall get down more easily, for at this hour the car is not so crowded."

"Who will worry about you?" "My sister and John—John is my small brother."

"You will forgive me for detaining you—but I will see you part of the way home, if you like—"

"Oh, no!" said the girl, "I am used to it, and you would be obliged to go back alone. You were so kind to me that I should be ungrateful not to be anxious to oblige you."

"I am anxious to find a room, with meals, if possible, in a quiet place, as I told you, and I can not afford to pay much for it. You are surprised that I am poor? But I am. I liked your face; you seemed to me like a good and gentle girl, and I thought I would go to you for advice. I am to be a working girl."

"It will be very hard." "Everything is hard in this world—unless we learn to do it for the love of God."

The girl sighed. "I know that well." She paused, and then spoke with heightened color. "You must forgive me for speaking very plainly. I know," she added, with a quick glance at Katharine's face, "that one had better die than live wrong. But, if one can keep one's self-respect at all and also have leisure and comfort, it is best to bear some crosses. It is, indeed! I am so tired on Saturday, after the week's work, that I can scarcely get strength enough to go out to confession when the first Sunday of the month comes. Besides, Miss O'Connor, you do not know what poverty means; it means care and fear and anxiety; it means dependence; it means the endurance of slights and the feeling of inferiority."

"I should not mind," said Katharine, wondering at the girl's choice of words; she was certainly not uneducated. "Ah, you don't know! You will have to think twice before buying an extra loaf of bread, and that will be very hard for you who can afford to buy flowers like that. They are lovely!" said the girl, looking at the roses.

"You may take them home!" said Katharine, putting them in the girl's hands. "You will please me very much!"

The girl's eyes sparkled. "Oh, they are lovely! We grow flowers in our yard in the summer, but I have never had roses like these. You must pardon me for speaking frankly—I can only show you what poverty means by speaking of myself. I awake every day with the fear that I may get sick. My sister at present can do little to earn money, and my brother must not leave school yet, and so, if I fall sick, the support of the whole of us at Madame's and only ask who made them in Paris, and care very little about the price, will find it dreadful to have to make an old dress last years—yes, years. It would not be so hard if I had not a debt to pay. Our house is mortgaged, and I should like to call it our own, but I can scarcely pay the interest. How will you bear the strain of working from day to day, all the year round, to find you have nothing that you can call your own? Sometimes I fear that my sister will lose her mind—she gets so blue thinking of the debt through, and she so helpless."

"Is she ill?" "Ill and unhappy!" "I should not be unhappy if I had a sister's love," said Katharine, gravely.

"Ah, you don't know," said the girl, shaking her head. "You are running away from—you have been disappointed—but if you knew how despondent they are—that is, if they think, you would pause before you leap from the height of luxury and appreciation to a depth where life is—oh, so different. Not that I have known a life very different from my present life—but I can imagine it."

Katharine did not speak at once. She looked at the girl thoughtfully; she saw a sweet and gentle face, too thin about the temples, and with dark brown hair, waving a little over the low broad brow, with a straight line of care or sorrow bisecting it—a young girl, but with a look as if she might suddenly become old. Her simple brown cloth dress was neat and carefully kept. Her face lost its tenderness as she sipped the tea, and enjoyed the warm fire and the scent of the roses. For a moment she seemed to forget Katharine, who reflected that, at least, it was something to be able to give this tired being a little rest. But the girl aroused herself.

"I must go," she said. "But, first, will you find a boarding-house for me?" "I shall try, if you—"

"A sudden glow of hope lighted up the girl's face, and then it disappeared. A vague likeness in it to somebody she had seen before struck Katharine—who was it?"

"It—"

"But we are too poor to take you into our house—I want to live among the poor—in there a Catholic Church near your house?"

"Oh, yes, there are two very near."

"If you have room I shall live with you. And I have," added Katharine, with a confident smile. "And I shall be able to help you."

The girl's face brightened. "It will be a great help to us to have somebody take our spare room. But if you knew—Oh, nobody can ever make us happy again."

"Our Lord—"

"By a miracle—a miracle!" said the girl, hastily. "There are even worse things than penury. To bear a broken heart in one's breast—to have the light taken from one's life—to be despised by those we loved!" the girl went on, vehemently.

Katharine listened in amazement, but with interest. "When will you come to see our house?" the girl said, remembering herself. "I must go!"

"To-morrow, in the morning."

"Good-bye—thank you—thank you." She shook Katharine's hand, took the roses, and, throwing her coat over her arm, went towards the door. Katharine saw that she rose thus hastily to hide her tears. She looked at the card which had been written in pencil; she read the words in pencil:

"Jane Mavrick, care of Mrs. Cayre." And then followed the addresses that had appeared in the two mysterious notes.

CHAPTER XXIII.—At Mrs. Cayre's.

Katharine read the address over and over again. It was in the handwriting of the notes she had previously received. There was no doubt of that—"Jane Mavrick, care of Mrs. Cayre." On the back of the card were the directions for finding the house. It was far down town. Katharine saw that she must take two lines of street cars to reach it.

What was in store for her? What would this lead to? If Katharine had been a sentimental girl she would have constructed a strange romance upon this and sought high and low for a confidant. The white satin heroine in the old sentimental plays always had a confidante in white muslin, and the sentimental woman in our times finds great happiness when she is unhappy by pouring forth her tale into sympathetic ears. But Katharine was not sentimental. Mother Ursula had not let her feast on all sorts of novels and had discouraged day dreams; consequently she was without silly conceit or self-consciousness. It must be admitted that it had been a different kind of young woman she might have had some reason to believe that she was specially marked out for special favor. Had she not been made a belle on her first entrance into society? Had not the most sought after man in town proposed to her? And was not a Lord—truly only a Lord by courtesy—waiting for her now?

But Katharine saw nothing remarkable in all this. She was not a remarkably brilliant girl; she was only a naturally good girl, perfectly trained to see clearly right from wrong and not to put undue value on earthly things.

At funerals sometimes, when the priests speak about the worthlessness of earthly gain, the onlookers say to themselves, "Ah, if he had not paid attention to money-getting he would not have silver handles on his coffin." But Katharine would not have cared for the silver handles, she saw with a straight simplicity beyond. She was simply the result of the teaching of the nuns, who had voluntarily chosen the Lady Poverty as their mistress.

On the morning of the next day, she went out to Mass, and then breakfasted in her room. Would her aunt come? Well, if she did, there was only one condition for a return to Kenwood—Lord Marchmont must not be mentioned. But her aunt did not come; a telegram did.

"Come back at once or you shall never come back. A sensation or even a scandal will not frighten me."

Katharine tore up the papers. She could see that her aunt thought she had run away, to make a sensation. She took the Chestnut street car and rode towards the river. It was a bright morning and she enjoyed the drive.

She changed cars and went down another street—down through a neighborhood whose horrible squalor appalled her. She shrank back in horror; she had never seen anything like this. Early as it was, dishevelled women, white and black, set down on the lower doorsteps or lounged about the damp and dirty pavements, and groups of all ages, men, women and children, mostly black, were gathered about stands, where oysters and crabs were sold. There were strange smells, and the car was obliged to stop in order that a wretched woman, scolding and mad with drink, could be conveyed from one side of the street to the other.

Katharine had never seen this sort of poverty, poverty and laziness, and sin—poverty the result of self-indulgence. Farther down and farther down she drove, until she came almost in sight of the green fields. Then the conductor told her that she had reached her destination. The houses for many squares had pleased her by their neatness and cleanliness, but rather wearied her by their monotony. Red brick and white paint seemed to stretch for miles—brick scrupulously red and paint scrupulously white. Everybody visible seemed to be engaged in cleaning the front of their houses. Some of the houses were fine and handsome but all without one patch of green in front of them—or, when there was a patch of green, it was tanked in by two other houses. This struck Katharine as odd. A world without a patch of green had no attraction for her. Not a flower or a shrub in all this vast expanse of brick wall—not a half acre in which little children could play. It is true, she saw some daisies in the gutter, and an attic bench at. She walked upon the three snowy stone steps, and pulled a dazzlingly brilliant bell-handle.

(To be continued.)