

"You are getting quite grown up," he said, after a silence. "What shall I do when you go away and leave me?"

She flushed a little.

"I wanted to talk to you about that," she said, and there was a catch in her voice. "I should like to be a nurse, uncle. I think nurses can do so much good. Next year I shall be eighteen and then I shall be old enough to start training."

"A nurse! There will be no necessity for you to work, Joyce. Listen, child—it is time that I told you something of your history. Your father and I were twin brothers. We were all in all to each other until we met—Joyce—your mother. We both wished to marry her. She preferred him, and so I stood aside. Even when poor Charles died I would not intrude upon her, for I loved her too well. Then for some inscrutable reason, because she was lonely perhaps, she embraced the Catholic faith——"

"My mother! How awful!" He drew her to him tenderly.

"Not awful, dear child, because I felt sure that she thought she did right. I suppose that she was happy in her belief—I don't know—but she died a Catholic and even had you baptized so."

"Me? Am I a Catholic, then uncle?"

"God forbid!" he exclaimed, so energetically that she started from his embrace.

"I don't understand," she said with a puzzled frown settling between her eyes. He smiled.

"No, Joyce. I rescued you from bondage, child. You are a free Protestant—a child of God. 'He hath given His angels charge' "—— he began and stopped. Memory had come suddenly to him. It was the parting blessing of