

prisoner myself, almost like one buried alive myself, as I stood alone in a gloomy little room with barred windows looking on a dull court, trying to pray, trying to think what I would say to Jack, but unable, try as I might, to do anything but mentally repeat words without meaning, and count the window-bars and chimney-stacks; so that when at last father came, and I was led into Jack's cell and left alone with him, I was entirely unprepared, and could only throw my arms around his neck, and sob out entreaties that he would forgive me for all the rough and cross words I had ever spoken to him.

"Poor little Kitty," he said with a deep voice more like father's than his own, "my poor little sister, you and father are both alike, not a reproach, not a complaint;" and then placing me on a chair, while he paced up and down the cell, he said, "I did think he would have been in a passion, Kitty, and, I am sure, I wish he had! It would have been much easier." Then, after a pause, in a tone more like his own old easy, careless way, "It is the most unlucky thing in the world. I am the most unlucky man in the world. Only three days and my salary would have been paid, and everything would have been right. However, one must never look on the dark side. Something may turn up yet." And then he asked eagerly all that the lawyers thought.

I said they seemed to have much hope of success.

He seized at this in his old sanguine way, as if success had been certain, and after talking some time about his unluckiness, he concluded,—

"But you know, Kitty, it's a long lane that has no turning. I always knew that there would be a change of fortune for me some day. And now I shouldn't wonder, if it's on the point of beginning; for, to confess the truth, they were rather a low money-making set after all, that Company. The secretary's a screw and a perfidious hypocrite into the bargain. Although not exactly in the way one might have chosen, I've no doubt it will turn out a good thing in the end to have done with them. And as to any little hasty words you may ever have said, Kitty," he concluded, as we heard footsteps approaching, "never mention such a thing again. We all have our little infirmities, and you were always the best little soul in the world."

But as I drove back with father my heart seemed absolutely frozen. Here were we all breaking our hearts about the sin, and doing what we could to make it weigh less heavily on Jack. And his conscience seemed as light as air. He seemed to have no conception that he was anything but unlucky.

How could he ever be made to understand about right and wrong?

The next evening Uncle Beauchamp came to me from an interview with the lawyers, in the greatest perturbation. They said Jack would not enter into their line of defence, and it seemed

doubtful if he could be got to plead not guilty.

"You must go and talk to him, Kitty," he said, "and persuade him. If any one can you will. For as to myself," he added, "people's idea of morality and religion seem to me so incomprehensibly turned upside down since the Methodists came into the world, that I cannot make out anybody or anything."

So next morning early I was admitted to Jack's cell.

"Uncle Beauchamp says you and the lawyers cannot understand each other, brother," I said, "and I have come to see if I can be of any use."

"The lawyers and I perfectly understand each other," said Jack. "They want me to swear to a lie, and I can't. I did take the money; and if my only defence is to swear I did not, why then, Kitty, there is no defence, of course, and I see no way out of it. I thought they would have found some other way, but it seems they can't."

I felt my whole heart bound with a new hope for Jack, and I went up to him, and took his hands, and said, looking up in his face,—

"You would rather suffer any penalty than tell a lie, brother?"

"Of course, I couldn't swear to a lie, Kitty. What do you mean?"

"Thank God," I said; and I could not help bursting into tears.

Jack paced up and down the cell a minute or two, and then he paused opposite to me and said very gravely, "Are you surprised, Kitty, that I will not tell a falsehood? that I will not perjure myself? Did you think I would? Did you think because I had anticipated a few days the salary due to me from a set of beggarly trades-fellows, I could tell a deliberate lie, and take a false oath?"

"Oh, Jack," I said, hiding my face in my hands, "how could I tell, since you took what did not belong to you? It troubled us so much!"

Jack turned from me angrily, and as I sat leaning my head on my hands, I heard him pacing hastily up and down. And then, after some minutes, not angrily but softly, and in slow, deep accents, very unlike his usual careless manner, he said,—

"I understand, Kitty; you thought if your brother could steal, he could do anything else."

"But you will not, Jack!" I said, kneeling beside him. "You will not. You will suffer anything rather than do what you feel to be wrong—to be sin. Thank God! thank God!"

He sat for some time quite silent, and then he said, a little bitterly,—

"You seem very thankful, Kitty, for what every one might not think a very great mercy, to have the way cleared to the gallows, as it is to me. I suppose you know a poor woman was hanged the other day for stealing six-pence; and I have stolen fifty pounds. Do you think father and mother will be as glad as you are?"

"Oh, Jack!" I said, "you know what I mean—you feel what I feel.

We will move heaven and earth to get you set at liberty, and I feel such a hope that we will succeed. I feel that God is on our side now, brother. And he is so strong to help."

But I felt that if we succeeded beyond my brightest hopes (and I was full of hopes, for there was prayer, and I thought of a plan), I think I shall never know a truer thrill of joy than that morning in Jack's gloomy cell, when he chose anything rather than do what he felt wrong.

For it seemed to me my brother was then for the first time his true self, the self God meant him to be. He was in the far country still, in the country of husks, where no man gave him even husks; but might I not hope he was "coming to himself?"—that the sin *foreign* to his character was (as Hugh once said it might) awakening him to the sin habitual to his character, which was indeed *his sin*?

My plan was at first regarded as exceedingly wild by every one but Evelyn. But at last one objection after another gave way; and Cousin Evelyn and I were suffered to drive in Aunt Beauchamp's coach to the residence of Elias Postlethwaite, Esq., Secretary of the Original Peruvian Mining Company.

Mr. Postlethwaite wore beautiful ruffles and very brilliant jewels, but his face wanted that indescribable something which makes you *trust* a man, and his manners wanted that indescribable something that makes a gentleman. He received us with most officious politeness, taking it for granted that we had come for shares (many fashionable ladies, Evelyn said, having lately acquired a taste for such gambling as more exciting than cards). He was afraid that at present not a share was to be purchased at any price. The demand was marvellous. But he did not seem much relieved when Evelyn told him we had no intention of investing in the Company. And his manner changed very decidedly when I contrived to stammer out the object of our visit.

"It is a most painful business, young ladies, a most painful business. The young gentleman was, moreover, an intimate friend of mine. I thought it would have been an opening for the poor young fellow."

I pleaded Jack's youth, I pleaded his refusal to plead not guilty, I even pleaded for father's sake and mother's, though it seemed like desecration to make them and their sorrows a plea with that man. But he could not be moved. He said it was exceedingly painful, and quite against his nature, but there were duties to the public which young ladies, of course, could not understand, but which, at any cost, must be performed. At last he grew impatient, the boor's nature came out under pressure, and he remarked with a sneer that those kind of scenes were very effective on the stage, in fact, always brought down the house; but that, unhappily, society had to be guided not by what was pretty, but what was necessary. In conclusion he said that, in fact, it did not rest with him; the Governors were suspicious, and had found fault with the accounts before, and it was essential an example should be made.

Meantime Evelyn had been reading (I thought absently) over the printed paper on the table, describing the objects of the Company, and giving a list of the Governors, and at this moment, fixing her fingers on two or

three of the principal names, she read them aloud, and said calmly,—

"These are the Governors, Mr. Postlethwaite; and you say the decision rests with the Governors. We will drive to their houses at once. Lord Clinton is one of my father's most intimate friends."

The manner of the Secretary changed again. "Lord Clinton," he said nervously, "Lord Clinton, madam, knows very little of our affairs. In fact, he will no doubt refer you back to me."

"We will see, sir," said Evelyn coolly, fixing her calm, penetrating eyes on him.

He winced evidently. "Lord Clinton," he said, pressing his forefinger on his forehead, as if endeavouring to recollect something; "ah, I remember, there was a little mistake there, a little mistake which, but for press of business, should have been corrected long ago. Lord Clinton's name was put down inadvertently, without his having been consulted."

"Then the Hon. Edward Bernard, or Sir James Delaware, will do as well," said Evelyn; "come, cousin," she added, rising, "there is no time to be lost. I suppose, Mr. Postlethwaite, those two gentlemen were consulted before their names were printed?"

"Certainly, my dear madam, certainly!" he replied. "But, excuse me, what will you say to these gentlemen that they do not know already, or that I could not explain as well, and save you the trouble?"

"Thank you, the trouble is nothing, Mr. Postlethwaite," said Evelyn quietly. "I will recommend these gentlemen," she continued very deliberately, "who, you say, have their suspicions roused about the accounts, to look into the accounts, and to see if no other victim can be selected for the office of scape-goat except my cousin, Mr. Trevelyan."

His keen, fox-like eyes quailed very visibly before her clear, open gaze.

"My dear madam," he said after a pause, "Mr. Trevelyan is your cousin; your cousin, and an intimate friend of mine. The Governors, I confess, are much irritated, but we must not too easily despair. Leave the matter to me, and we will see what can be done."

"Very well, sir," said Evelyn; if you will see what can be done, I will not. You will let us know to-morrow."

And she swept out of the room, Mr. Postlethwaite bowing her to the steps of the carriage.

"What do you think will be the end of it, Evelyn!" I said when we were alone in the carriage, for I felt very much bewildered.

"The end of what?" said Evelyn. "Of this terrible affair of Jack's," I said.

"I cannot see as far as that, sweet little cousin," she said; "but I think I see the end of Mr. Postlethwaite and the Original Peruvian Company."

"And the prosecution?" I said. "How can there be a prosecution, dear little Kitty," she said, "when the prosecutor is hiding his head, for fear of finding himself in Jack's place, and when the Company is scattered to the winds?"

"He seemed a terribly hard man," I said; "I never saw any one like him before, Evelyn. It makes me quite shudder to think of him. And you really think the whole thing was a deception?"

(To be continued.)