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RASH PROMISES.

BY JACQUELINE.

(From the Morning Star.)

CHAPTER I.—REVERSES.

Twilight was filling all the room with its soft soothing presence...

A settled, sad expression of countenance had chased away the joyous smile of happier days...

Oh, mamma! they both exclaimed in a breath, catching hold of either hand, yet speaking very low...

No, I haven't, Norm; have I now, mamma? I only said it was something nice...

No, I haven't, Norm; have I now, mamma? I only said it was something nice...

Why, what a universal little genius, Laura, you are going to be—even learning to cook with a success that might shame an older hand...

My poor darling, said her mother, you cannot know how it distresses me to see those delicate little hands already growing rough under such work as this...

Indeed, mother, I have dreaded that, too; but I depend on your influence to carry my point. You know you can do anything with him...

Mrs. Lambert found her husband much refreshed and cheered by his unbroken sleep, and the baby getting restless, had crawled and nestled close to her father...

At this juncture Laura entered the room, carrying a neatly arranged tray, with her father's meal. He had not sufficiently recovered from his agitation to speak for a few moments...

Your mother, daughter, he continued, has been telling me of the great financial scheme that little head has been cogitating, and painful though the necessity be, yet I must agree with her...

Now, that is my own dear papa, exclaimed Laura, joyfully, jumping up and kissing him warmly. But this was just the worst thing she could have done...

may be even beyond such a courier. Who knows but that the same little head and hands heretofore so helpless...

Then, looking softly and earnestly in her mother's face, and drawing her chair close to her side, she continued:

Mamma, darling, I have a secret—the first I ever kept from you; and it has been, O! such drearily hard work.

That is news indeed, Laura; but I don't believe it is anything very serious. Not a lover, I hope, unless, indeed, that Irish Knight, a descendant of a long line of kings, has suddenly appeared, and taken your heart by storm?

Now, mother, why will you always be joking me about those detestable Irishmen. You know that I hate them, and never, never mean to marry one, even if there is not another man left?

Well, well, my child, said her mother, soothingly, I'll say no more, for indeed my joking days seem over; only serious thought and hard work lie before us all now...

Indeed, mother, it is something very serious; but if you feel inclined to blame me, you must try to remember the motive that impelled me to the act. You know, mother dear, how long poor father has been sick, and how little hope there seems to be of his ever being well enough again to attend to business...

Indeed, mother, it is something very serious; but if you feel inclined to blame me, you must try to remember the motive that impelled me to the act. You know, mother dear, how long poor father has been sick, and how little hope there seems to be of his ever being well enough again to attend to business...

Mrs. Lambert's heart was to full for words. All the noble sacrifice involved in this heroic step of her beautiful daughter, was prefigured in an instant to her mind. She could only clasp her in her arms, and ejaculate between her tears:

But how can I lose you? How fill your place at home, and send you, so young and inexperienced, among cold and indifferent strangers?

We mustn't think of that, mother dear. It is the present necessity alone that we must meet, and leave the rest to God. Only think of what fifty dollars will do for all of you at home, and how far it will help to spin out the little fund, that is growing so beautifully less every day.

Never mind, Laura, said Mrs. Lambert, as she upset a pan of potatoes, 'this kind of work at any rate will be soon over for you.'

I must confess, mamma, that I shall not be sorry, for though I generally come off victor, still it is not without a good many hard rubs, as my poor hands and burnt clothes can testify.

Yes, I have already been thinking of that, and have a girl in my mind that I shall like to secure.

Not an Irish woman I hope, mamma?

Yes, none other.

Oh! mamma, you will be tormented to death.

Perhaps so; but not more by one of that race than another. Your prejudices are unaccountable, Laura, toward that people, and I almost begin to think, irreconcilable. Why is it that you doubt them so much?

Because they are dirty and unreliable.

Well, do not the same qualities exist among classes of every other people? Are there not good and bad among our own? Why then should you make these the exception?

Yes, but I never saw any good in the Irish except a few external manifestations. They go to church, and pray like saints, and come out, and behave, with their drunkenness and swearing, like demons.

That is true of a class, replied her mother; and yet the fact of their going to church proves that they are not entirely lost, but, through faith, feel the need they have of grace to uphold

them against the force of their own inherent vices. They are impulsive in everything; quick to sin, quick to repent; and as for their other failings to which you so strenuously object, you must remember that there are idiosyncrasies, nationalities, of which God takes a different account from ourselves.

Well, well, mamma, I cannot argue the question; I only know that I don't like the race, and never mean to.

And, no doubt, replied the mother, laughing, 'will end your prejudices by marrying one of the most exaggerated type.'

Never! Not Brian Borroilme himself could tempt me!

That I can believe; for the historical picture that has come down to us of that gentleman's royal costume, would scarcely make him sufficiently attractive to so fastidious a young lady as yourself.

Laura had been dressing during the conversation, and was now ready to go out on a visit to Col. Chamberlain, to tell him that she was ready to accept the position he had secured for her, and to make all the final preparations.

These concluded, she returned home a little heavy-hearted, as the realization of the separation from her family pressed more heavily upon her.

beckoning her mother from her father's room, she said, with a choking voice, 'It is all settled, mamma, and Col. Chamberlain has been so kind. He is even going to procure me a free passage on the Erin, as he is well acquainted with the captain and clerk, both of whom, he says, are clever, gentlemanly men, and will take good care of me if no one else offers among the passengers.'

When does the boat leave? asked Mrs. Lambert after a pause.

In four days, and I have so much to do to get ready.

Four days! slowly repeated her mother. So soon! Oh my child! my child! I cannot let you go!

Now, mamma, remember your promise, and keep up your own brave heart. Think how much I may be able to do towards getting father well, and keeping Alice at school another year.

It is true, my child. A mother's mission is one of self-sacrifice from beginning to end, and I must not shrink, at this late day, even from this.

Time flies when his wings are barbed with sorrows, and though every moment of the four days was filled with occupation, yet the final hour struck only too soon. The relatives and few friends of the family, who had remained faithful through all their adversities, now proved their interest by contributing some article of use or ornament to complete Laura's outfit for her new home.

Col. Chamberlain had found a lady and gentleman who were going nearly the same distance as Laura; so, between their care and that of the captain and clerk, her parents felt assured of her protection.

The hardest task was the parting with her father. Even the ever-cheering voice of hope failed to deaden the premonition, as she looked upon and kissed over and over again his white brow and pallid, quivering lips, that she should never see his dear face in life again.

May the Lord Almighty in Heaven keep you, dear young lady, and send your purty face back soon again, to give light to the house, which will be dark enough without yees. Spite of her prejudice, Laura had been rather prepossessed by this woman, of whom they had received an excellent character; so, only thinking of her mother's future comfort she bade her a kind good-bye, adding, I hope, Catherine, that I will find you here when I return, and that you will do all you can to help mamma through with her many cares.

Indeed you need never fear that same, Miss Laura. I like the madam and the childer, God bless them, and not a hair of their heads shall be hurt while I am to the fore.

One long, last embrace, and mother and daughter felt the bitter pang that a first separation always brings. The novelty of the change, the excitement of motion, the 'colour-de-rose' tints that crowned all her anticipations, soon dispelled the deeper sadness of leave-taking and separation.

The boat was an elegant one, the passengers of a good class, and many of them disposed to make the trip one of pleasure. Laura's musical talent was constantly called into requisition, and when she played or sung, the occupants of the gentlemen's cabin gathered as near the line of demarcation as was permissible. Among these was one particularly distinguished by his handsome face and elegant bearing, which, with his style of dress and unusual reticence, marked him

as a foreign stranger. Laura's attention had first been called to him by observing his gaze fixed very intently upon her at the breakfast table, the first morn of her journey. After that, she noticed that he was generally, during the day, the sole occupant of the main cabin, always intent upon some book, the reading of which he varied by walking rapidly up and down the saloon. He was rarely seen in the social hall, and never at the card table, save occasionally as a looker-on of the mysterious and exciting games of poker, brag or Boston. These games, and the characters who devoted themselves night and day to them, afforded him great amusement; but he declined every invitation to try his hand at the great or little misery, or open his pocket-book to 'go it \$100 better.' Consequently he was set down by the men as a stuck up Englishman, and by the ladies as a model of morality. Whenever Laura took her seat at the piano, he would stand listening like one under a spell, but never joined in the audible admiration that always followed her performance.

On the evening of the second day out, Mr. Banks, the clerk, made his respects to the ladies. Apologizing to Laura for not sooner acknowledging the honor her charge conferred upon him, he said, 'I rarely can leave the office until we are fully under way, as there is always an accumulation of work after leaving port; and duty, you know Miss Lambert, must take precedence even of the ladies. But how do you like our boat?'

Very much, replied Laura, and the life and motion are charming. I can now understand the fascination that such a life seems always to have for you river men?

Have you observed the decorations of the cabin? Don't you think the green and gold paneling harmonize with the name? and the harp—the harp, you know, of Erin, is it not splendidly executed?

Oh, yes, replied Laura, coloring slightly; but—and here she hesitated—

But what, Miss Lambert? Don't be afraid; ask any question you choose.

Well then, before I commit myself past forgiveness, tell me, Mr. Banks, if you are an Irishman?

Neither I nor Capt. Nelson have that honor, but both are full blooded Americans. But, seeing her drift, the owner of this boat is one, and I must say, as noble and generous a man as lives; and this floating palace he built as a monument of love and remembrance to his dear native land.

Well, then, I may now answer your questions. I was going to say when you asked me how I liked the boat, that I admired everything but the name and associations that characterize all her adornments. I wonder what travelers on the Rhine would think, if they should find such strong patriotic proclivities carried out by some of the foreign speculators in their midst?

I think, Miss Lambert, that though they might not like the associations, they would at least admire the sentiment; for love of home and country strikes a chord that vibrates in every heart.

Laura felt the polite reproof, and was sorry she had started the subject. It was always hateful to her, and yet some strange fascination of fate seemed ever drawing her into it. Others had now joined the circle, and entered into the subject.

Why, resumed Mr. Banks, do you dislike Ireland and her people so much?

Oh! please don't press me too close, or I shall have to give only a woman's reason—because.

Of course; but because what?

Well, they are ignorant, dirty, and untruthful, and would rather beg than work.

All those counts may be true in individual cases, and so they are of every nation and degree; but, on the other hand, no people have given greater proof of courage under danger, endurance under suffering, fidelity under change and trial, than even the most ignorant of the Irish race.

Well, I grant you that, replied Laura; but, after all, the virtues you have enumerated are only animal instincts; commendable, it is true, but not exceptionally praiseworthy. Besides, Ireland is behind almost every other country in great men or heroic deeds.

Oh! what a mistake, here cried out several voices.

I am afraid, Miss Laura, said Mr. Jewel, an old gentleman under whose care she was, that we will have to class you with the blind that won't see. I am not an Irishman, but I always like justice; and with all their natural faults, we must not lose sight of their virtues. As to the sparseness of her great men, her records show many a page blazoned with deeds, enlightened and heroic. Such statesmen as Burke, Sheridan, and O'Connell; such jurists as Grattan, Curran and Emmett; such poets as Goldsmith, Moore, and Mangan, ought to be sufficient to redeem

them against the force of their own inherent vices. They are impulsive in everything; quick to sin, quick to repent; and as for their other failings to which you so strenuously object, you must remember that there are idiosyncrasies, nationalities, of which God takes a different account from ourselves.

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