

TANGLED THREADS

If Rob had not been quite so proud and hurt, if he had insisted upon learning Helen's reasons for breaking with him, if he had opened his heart to her, showing that her image alone dwelt in his holy of holies, how different might have been the result—how much of suffering both might have been spared!

But how often a fatal misunderstanding is caused by a proud reserve; how surely will the neglect to reveal the real self mar the course of two lives which otherwise might have been ideal!

When Helen received the foregoing epistle she was inclined to believe that she might have been a trifle hasty and unjust in her judgment of Rob; that she ought to have been more explicit and allowed him to inform himself. She feared, however, that she was transcribing her feelings in his affections, and thus enabled him to explain and justify himself if he had been so disposed.

There was an undercurrent of intensity in the latter portion of the letter, in spite of its proud reserve, which had touched her deeply, and she now regretted that she had not written differently. What he had said about being ready for a summons from her if she ever needed him did not look very much as if he had forsaken her for another; and then, too, he had signed himself "Ever yours."

Ah! what if he had made a mistake! What if her act should drive him to Marjorie for sympathy and so into finally loving her!

But what was done was done, and she would have to abide by the result, although she felt in her heart of hearts that she should love and be true to him for all time.

Hubert Alton had been a constant visitor in the Seymours' attractive home ever since their return from the mountains, and Mrs. Seymour, into whose good graces he had effectively ingratiated himself, encouraged his coming, especially after the break between the lovers, and occasionally accepted an invitation to a lecture, concert, or the theater from him for herself and Helen.

Business crowded in upon her more and more as the season advanced. Until she was forced to secure additional help, and this was an encouraging indication that her business was more prosperous than it ever had been before.

Helen threw herself into her school work with more than her accustomed energy, hoping thus to ease the pain in her yearning heart; but though she thus won the commendation of her instructors and made rapid progress in her beloved art, she could not forget. She grew thin and pale, yet wore a brave and smiling face through it all, and never uttered a complaint or made a sign to show how she grieved in secret over her blighted hope.

And thus the winter came upon them, one of the severest and most trying that New York had ever known. Just in the midst of the busiest part of the season Mrs. Seymour was stricken suddenly and alarmingly ill, and for weeks was helpless, even to lift her head from her pillow.

For awhile her forewoman managed to carry on her business after a fashion, but it soon began to show the absence of its mainspring; complaints from numerous patrons poured in and work fell off to an alarming degree.

It was an intensely trying time for Helen, who would not allow her suffering mother to be troubled with harassing details, and so tried to throw herself into the gap, hoping thus to brave the storm.

It was more than she was equal to, however, for she had no practical knowledge of the business. The help became disaffected and refused to serve under the forewoman, who had become ill-natured under her burdensome responsibilities and overworked them; and after a month of mismanagement and misery, Helen in despair closed the establishment and refused to take any more orders until her mother regained her health.

It can well be imagined that her expenses were enormous during this trying time. The cost of the work-rooms and their appliances, the bills of the nurses' bills and medicines, besides the cost of maintaining their household, amounted to a sum that was absolutely appalling.

When Mrs. Seymour finally began to convalesce she also began to think of her neglected business; but her vitality and strength were so reduced that her physician said she must not think of resuming it for several months to come.

This verdict was a great disappointment to her; but her own judgment confirmed it, and, feeling that it would be ruinous to go on at that rate of expense while she waited to get well, the harassed woman gave up the establishment, which she had carried on for years, and she carried on a thriving business and announced to her numerous customers that she could do no more work for them at present.

That old adage, "misfortune never comes singly," seemed to prove true in the case of our friends, for, shortly after settling up her business, a trust company, in which Mrs. Seymour had invested the greater portion of the money that she had accumulated, suddenly collapsed, and, with the exception of a small mortgage which she held and a few hundreds in one of the New York savings banks, she found herself reduced almost to the extremity of her youth.

smaller rooms. I will run out this afternoon and see what I can find." "It will be hard to move," murmured Mrs. Seymour, with a shiver as she thought of all that such a change would involve at that trying season of the year, of her excessive weakness and of Helen's inexperience in all that pertained to such a responsibility.

"I wish," began Helen thoughtfully, and with an anxious glance at the pale, pinched face upon the pillow beside her, "I wish that we could go to a warmer climate—to some quiet place in the South, where we could live cheaply and you could get out into the sun and air every day."

"Oh, that would never do, dear; you must not be interrupted in your school work," Mrs. Seymour hastily returned; you must keep on with that for this year at least. Give me the morning paper; I will see what there is advertised for rooms, and you can go out after lunch and see what you can find that will come within our means."

Helen would have much preferred to spend their little all and take the frail invalid South, but she realized that it would be very detrimental to her to leave the art school just then, especially if she expected to teach during the next year, which she felt would be an absolute necessity in order to keep herself and her mother from abject poverty.

So she spent that afternoon in house-hunting, and finally decided to take a tiny apartment in an unpretentious street, and for which she would have to pay less than half the amount charged for the one they were now occupying.

They moved thither on the following Saturday, that being Helen's birthday. She had been ill for some time, and as throughout the long and trying illness of Mrs. Seymour, Hubert Alton came to their relief; indeed, he took upon himself the brunt of the moving, and was so deft and helpful in getting them settled that he aroused their heartfelt gratitude.

Helen actually began to regard him with a feeling akin to that which she believed she would have experienced for a brother, if she had been so happy as to have had one, and found herself leaning upon him and seeking his advice upon numerous matters regarding which she realized her inefficiency.

"I am sure I do not know what I should have done without you, Mr. Alton," she observed to him just as he was about to leave them late on Sunday evening, after having worked hard all day, "resolving order out of chaos," as she expressed it. "You have accomplished wonders. Why I begin to feel at home already!" and she glanced appreciatively around the little parlor in which they were resting for a few moments and which had indeed taken on a very home-like appearance.

Mrs. Seymour had long since retired, completely worn out with the confusion and excitement of the last two days, and the young people were alone. The young man gravely studied the girl's weary face for a moment before replying; then he observed, with a thrill of tenderness in his tones, for both her manner and words had made his heart bound with sudden hope:

"You know, Helen," he had gradually grown into this familiar way of addressing her—"that I am only too glad to serve you in any capacity and relieve you of every burden possible. I only wish that I might devote my life to soothing your pathway, saving you from every care, and making you happy."

The tone and manner told Helen more than his words. She shot one startled look at him, and then her white, tired face flushed a vivid crimson.

Never until that moment had she imagined that he entertained a thought of love for her.

She had accepted his attentions and enjoyed his frequent visits in a spirit of friendship, and because her mother appeared to take great pleasure in his society, while, too, she felt that they were doing him a kindness and perhaps throwing something of a safeguard around him by allowing him to have the freedom of their house and regard it as a kind of home.

It is true that of late he had been so much more kind during her time of sore trial and responsibility, her regard for him had strengthened, and she was grateful to him from the depths of her heart; but love—she had none to give him—that was forever in the keeping of another.

"I have started you," Hubert remarked, as he observed her look of blank astonishment and her flush of embarrassment. "Perhaps I should not have told you this just yet; but, Helen, I do love you with—"

She threw out her hand with a gesture of mingled pain and repulsion. "Don't!" she cried, in a voice that was husky from emotion, "you must not talk like that to me! Oh, I thought you were my kind, true friend; why have you spoiled it all?"

"Forgive me," said the young man humbly. "I am your true friend; I am more than that; but I see I have made a mistake. You are tired out and I should have been more considerate. But, dear, I cannot help loving you. You won my heart long ago, and when we were in school, and I can no more change the fact than the sea can stop its ebb and flow."

"No, no!" almost sobbed Helen, and trembling like a leaf.

He arose and went to her side, looking down upon her with all his heart in his eyes.

"We will not talk more of this now, Helen," he said gently. "Perhaps another time when you are rested you will think more kindly of what I have said. Good night."

And he was gone before she could reply.

left or of aught else save her own desolation—her blighted life. But she was suddenly recalled to herself by the voice of her mother who, aroused from the slumber into which she had fallen, called out in a weak voice:

"Helen, where are you? What are you doing?"

The exhausted girl wiped her tears and hushed her sobs, and went to answer the call.

"What were you doing, dear?" repeated Mrs. Seymour, as she entered her room. "Surely it must be very late."

"Yes, it is late, but I was resting for a few moments before going to bed," Helen replied, not quite truthfully, although she had been sitting for the first time in hours.

She tried to speak naturally, for she did not wish her mother to know that she had been weeping, and she was thankful that the room was not lighted to betray her tear-stained face.

But the loving heart could not be deceived; the quick ear caught the unnatural tone, and knew at once that something had gone wrong with her dear one.

"Helen, you have been crying!" she said with a sharp note of anxiety in her voice. "What has grieved you?"

"Dear mamma, don't mind me; it is nothing, but what I shall go over. I am just dead tired and there is no use denying it. My nerves got the better of me, and I had to open the safety-valve and have my little weep." Helen replied, with a little conscious laugh, and trying to make light of her weakness.

"Poor child; poor child!" moaned the invalid tremulously.

"Hush, dearest! I'm not going to be made a baby of after all the work I've done today," said the girl, with playful authority. "You have no idea how much we have accomplished this evening," she rattled on, to turn attention from herself. "You will hardly know the rooms when you see them in the morning. Mr. Alton has worked like a steam engine; he is a perfect wonder for executive ability, and you will be just astonished to see how nearly settled we are."

Yes, Hubert is a dear boy—as faithful as a son," said Mrs. Seymour appreciatively, and wholly unconscious of the shiver that shook Helen from head to foot at those last words. "But you both have done too much. I wish I could have helped you instead of being obliged to be here a useless burden," she concluded plaintively.

Helen bent down and caressed her fondly.

"You mustn't say that," she said tenderly. "For you are the most precious object in life to me. Now let me get you a glass of milk and a drink of hot beef tea before you go to sleep again."

"No, indeed, dear; go yourself straight to bed and get your rest, or you also will be ill tomorrow," said the sick woman, with an anxious sigh.

Helen dropped another gentle kiss upon the pale face on the pillow then sought her own room, and ere long the tiny suite had settled into silence.

But the following morning broke cloudless and glorious, and the world looked somewhat different to our friends. Mrs. Seymour had slept well and seemed much stronger than yesterday; Helen also had rested, and the little apartment was with the bright warm sun streaming into the small dining-room and kitchen, that both mother and daughter felt greatly comforted.

Helen prepared breakfast and was made happy by the fact that Mrs. Seymour enjoyed the meal and ate heartily. Then she put the rooms in order, and her mother as comfortable as she could for the day, after which she hurried away to her school.

Their new home was so far from the art school that she was obliged to take her lunch, and so could not return until late in the afternoon.

This was a matter of keen regret and anxiety to her, for she had concluded that they could not afford to keep a servant, and she did not like to leave her mother so long alone in her present weak state.

[To be Continued.]

Stop That Headache

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There's a good deal of difference between knowing and having the information.

WOMAN AGITATOR STIRS ALL POLAND

Agitation Gaining Rapidly Among Peasants.

RUSSIA AIDS THE MOVEMENT

Sect Believes in Paying the Taxes and Nonresistance, Thus Obtaining Favors.

Warsaw, Poland, June 9.—Perhaps no country in the world can show so many instances of feminine influence in all movements, political and social, as Poland. Once more is history repeated, and a woman is at the head of a religious revival which has set the country agog with party faction, for the new sect has declared open war against politics in general and patriotism in particular.

It is needless to say that such a sect has gained the approval and even the protection of the Russian Government. These revivalists call themselves the "Sons of Mary," because they profess to follow exactly the rules for conduct laid down by Christ, but their opponents scornfully dub them "cuffers," because their priests wear black cuffs to distinguish them from those priests who have remained under the control of the Polish bishops.

The idea of the revival first originated in the brain of a pious Capucine monk, Father Honoratus of Nove Misto.

Father Honoratus died before he could win more than four priests to his way of thinking, and no more was heard of the revival until three or four years later, when Felicia Kozłowska, a clairvoyant, assumed the leadership of the crusade. It is difficult to say exactly how much power she claimed at the beginning, but it seems to be quite certain that the few young priests eagerly adopted her plans for organizing a revival, and the movement rapidly spread among the lower clergy of the diocese of Plock.

Kozłowska claims to receive divine commands for the direction of her followers, who call her "Holy Mother," and blindly obey her. She lives a retired life, to all but a few favored clerics, and prefers to issue directions through the telephone. Those who approach her do so on their knees. Her visions are of frequent occurrence, and two or three have, by their extraordinary clairvoyance, won popular publications, firmly established her reputation among thousands of people as a divinely inspired prophetess.

The bishops began to forbid the "cuffers" from the churches, and ordered Kozłowska to be put under medical treatment. Kozłowska, however, saying that she was a doctor of medicine, refused to seek medical advice; the Polish bishops appealed to the Russian authorities, who refused to interfere in the matter, and Kozłowska stayed where she was. About this time the Russian government, which she said she had learned that the Anti-Christ was born a year or two before in small Poland, and when that it was the mission of the revivalists to wage war against him as soon as he was grown up, and to prepare for the struggle in the meanwhile by making as many converts to the new sect as possible. Politics was to be abandoned, and the Russian government obeyed, and everything done to quiet Poland in order to give as much time as possible to the crusade against the Anti-Christ.

The Russian Government learned with satisfaction that the priests belonging to the new sect told their flocks that they must pay the Government tax, thus rendering unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's. But the Polish patriots, who had organized an anti-taxpaying crusade, and the higher clergy were aroused to the greatest indignation by these tenets, which, if adopted by the Polish people, will entirely alter the national life.

Bishop of Plock sent the "cuffer" priests from his diocese to other government, hoping that when far away from Kozłowska they would forget about their revival, but this plan only served to spread it throughout the priests in which the disgraced cleric settled. The Archbishop of Warsaw then determined to evict the refractory priests from their parishes, and replace them by those who still acknowledge his authority.

The peasants of the parishes in which the refractory priests go, but will not allow their successors into the churches.

According to the Polish press, there is hardly a crime, except murder, of which Kozłowska is not guilty. Her visions, they affirm, and her retirement are but excuses for licentious conduct; and her pretensions to clairvoyance, which she claims to have inherited from her father, are the most horrible orgies; the Anti-Christ the sect professes to wage war against is her own son; and ruin must inevitably overtake Poland if the followers of such tenets and such a woman continue to exercise their baneful influence upon the ignorant peasants.

The "cuffers" are carrying on a propaganda in the large towns and especially in Warsaw. This is done by means of fanatical women, who enter the churches during mass, and just as the elevation of the host spreads silence over the congregation, shout out the words in their voices: "Join the sons of Mary! Fight against the Anti-Christ! The end of the world is near!" Panic ensues; the leaders look for the offenders; the service is interrupted, and the congregation takes an active part in the dispute.

The sect seems also to have enlisted the sympathies of the Socialists, who tell their followers that Christ was a Socialist, and that the sons of Mary faithfully followed the teachings of Christ. The revivalists have an academy for preparing followers of both sexes for clerical work. They have already established several charitable institutions, supported by funds given by Kozłowska, who has complete control of the treasury.

Some of the peasant communes have told the church authorities that, as their money built the churches, they intend to build a new village church, which have formally been made over to the sect by order of the Russian Government.

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