

Charlie can undo what I have done, or give me back the happiness I have lost." "Oh Jack, surely Margaret cannot have said no!" "I have not asked her to say yes. I could not make up my mind to go in for penury, like Bertie Clare. What could I do as a married man, upon £800 a year, and my pay? But I am utterly wretched. I shall never see anyone to compare with her, if I live to be a hundred years old; it is too late now for regrets."

"Did you instruct Margaret in your views?" asked Mary, in a slightly chilly tone. He replied by giving her a short sketch of what had passed. When he had ended, she turned upon him with indignant blue eyes flashing through tears of anger. "Jack," she exclaimed, "I am not going to spare you; it would not be true friendship, at this time, to fear hurting your feelings, or seeming hard—you know I am fond of you; but I shall speak out. Don't you see that, even by your own showing, you have not had one thought for her, it is all your sorrow, your loss: it is your hunting, shooting, gloves, ties, cigars and club, which would have to be given up! Do you suppose she could feel anything but contempt for such intense selfishness? You are wrapped up in self, as not even to be aware that there is anyone or anything else that ought to be considered. Could she have an ounce of womanly dignity in her, and not dismiss you quietly as you say she did? Why, Charlie and I have £500 a year and our pay, all told, and we both have to do without lots of things we like; but you just ask Charlie if he would exchange me and 'Charlie, boy,' for all the gold of the Indies, and you know just what I feel!" Captain Bevington looked at her in mute amazement. The torrent of words ended, and the excitement passing off, she put her handkerchief to her eyes and sobbed out, from behind it, "Forgive me, Jack, dear old friend, do forgive me, I am so fond of Margaret, you know." His keen sense of justice already made him see the truth of her words; it seemed as if a mist were withdrawn from his eyes, and he saw himself as he must have appeared in the eyes of Margaret Douglas, and could better understand the meaning of what had passed in the doctor's drawing-room. "Mary," he began, "have I thrown away my whole life's happiness?" But just then the door again burst open, and Mr. Bernard entered. "Why, Mary, are you still up? It's an awful morning! we are just off. The pilot says the sea is like a whirlpool outside; but we are only a transport, and a 'left wing,' so what does it matter? I am nearly frozen, it's like the middle of winter on deck. What's that you have there, Mary?" "Only my Japanese tea-pot; I coaxed the steward to get me some boiling water, and I brought a bottle of cream with me. The tea keeps hot all night in this pot; you had better have some before the ship does more than creak and groan." And she proceeded to pour it out. "You'd better hurry to your berth now, Bevington," said Mr. Bernard, "or you will have the mortification of being obliged to say 'excuse me if I give it up,' as the gentleman did of the conundrum; for I assure you the ship will have no child's-play of it to weather this gale." Captain Bevington promptly followed this advice: he had intended to "think it all out," but alas! the antics of that unhappy vessel were beyond description and precluded any attempt at thought of anything beyond the miseries of the moment. As soon as

the shelter of the land was passed, she began to execute a sort of delirious dance, her bows apparently pawing the air; as she rose to the crest of a wave, she would tremble from stem to stern, as if in terror of the frightful plunge to follow—when it came! every suffering passenger felt like "Tom Brown" when tossed in a blanket, as if his interior economy had remained behind on the roof of the berth. The next instant they almost welcomed the conviction that she could never right herself from the fearful roll, and that all must find an immediate and watery grave. But she was a staunch little ship, if an unsavory and uncomfortable one, and after what seemed an interminable battle with the fierce elements she at last steamed slowly into dock once more—this time on the Scotch side—and before nightfall the gallant "left wing" had joined the "right wing," in its new quarters.

A few days later, Captain Bevington, having decided upon an application for three days' leave of absence, and a run back to Waterford by the quickest route, for the purpose of seeing Miss Douglas once more, sauntered into the ante-room to take a look at the papers. An officer seated at a table handed him one, saying "Have you seen this, Bevington? it appears to concern a charming friend of yours; what a pity it had not occurred before we left, you will be for hurrying back at once!" It was the announcement of the death of Col. Archie Douglas, V.C., late of the — Regiment, with a short notice of the many actions in which he had distinguished himself, and stating that he had left the whole of his not inconsiderable wealth to "his niece Margaret, daughter of his only brother, Walter Douglas, M.D., of Waterford." Captain Bevington sat with the paper extended between himself and his friend, trying to recover from the shock he had received, before speaking. "Miss Douglas is to be congratulated," he said at last. His voice sounded strangely in his own ears, his heart throbbed heavily; but outwardly there was not the smallest sign of his intense feeling. As soon as he could leave without attracting attention, he withdrew to his room, and there gave way to bitterest reflections. He realized that, through selfish considerations, he had lost the only girl he had ever really loved, for to ask her now to marry him would be an insult to her, and as he saw once more, in imagination, the sweet, sad face at parting, he felt that he might then have won her. He remembered too, with keen self-reproach, a remark of his fair young mother (who died while he was yet a lad at school), "Jack, darling, beware of selfishness; all wrong and folly seem to me to begin in it. The man who is tempted to drink, or gamble, to get into debt, or to give way to a sulky or an ungovernable temper, or otherwise cause grief to those who love him, would do none of these things if he did but consider the welfare and happiness of others, he would thus learn to deny himself." He had been impressed at the time, by her earnestness, because of his tender early love for her; but time and circumstances had weakened the impression, and now he had, by careless extravagance, involved himself in debts, which would, he knew, be a serious inconvenience to his father, if he applied to him to set him free, as he had already had too much to do in that line for his eldest son. He had also, as he now realized, caused grief to sweet Margaret Douglas, and, what must be even harder to bear, to one of such natural

dignity, mortification and the pain of feeling contempt for one for whom she had so warm regard. And he winced inwardly as he remembered the quiet scorn in the usually soft eyes.

We need not intrude further upon his reflections and regrets; it is sufficient to say that he made up his mind firmly at once to take his affairs in hand; to deny himself all unnecessary expenses—to part with one horse—perhaps two—to smoke a pipe instead of cigars, as a rule—to give up various expensive amusements; and so, by degrees, pay off the debts without troubling his father. He also determined to try how it would feel to be more considerate of the good and comfort of others than of his own, as opportunity offered—which he expected would be seldom—and was surprised to find the (often unpleasant) frequency with which the opportunity came. He hoped thus to make himself more worthy of the esteem of Margaret, if he were fortunate enough to regain it;—for as regards her, the end of his reflection was that she was far too noble a girl to marry for anything but true love; therefore, if she remained single long enough for him to get free of debt, and to prove, to himself, that he had profited by his severe lesson, and was honestly learning to be more worthy of her—then he would endeavor to win her, in spite of this unfortunate money. If, in the meantime, she married, he should know for certain that he had been mistaken in thinking it possible that she had deeply cared for him.

III.

Three years later—years not passed in luxurious ease and amusement, but in steadfast, self-denying striving against the most serious defect in his character. He had, from the first, been the pride and ornament of his regiment. He had now won the sincere respect of all who knew him, and the debts were things of the past. The regiment had gone abroad on leaving Glasgow, and he had been through a short term of active service in which his bravery and skill had been conspicuous, but a severe wound, and the fever consequent upon it, greatly reduced his strength and had obliged him to return home on sick leave. He was now at the shooting-lodge of Mary Bernard's father, where he had been invited, in the hope of recruiting his health. He and the Bernards travelled up together; (Charlie and Mary had been left behind with the depot when the regiment was ordered abroad.) On arrival they found no one at home; so Charlie said he would "stroll out and take a look round," and Mary said she intended to remain in her room and rest until her father came home. In reality she had certain plans to consider and arrange, and was glad of the opportunity quiet time. Captain Bevington, left alone, went into the cozy drawing-room, turned over some books, looked at the pictures, tried the piano, and finally settled himself on a cushioned window-seat, over-looking a glorious prospect. Being still far from strong, somewhat fatigued after the journey, he fell asleep. He was roused by voices close to him; being behind the curtains, it was evident that the speakers were unaware of his presence. One—a man—was saying, "Then I suppose, dear, it is no use my pleading for him before I write? He is really a fine fellow, and 'well fixed,' as the Americans say." His feelings may be more easily imagined than described when the well-remembered and loved voice of Margaret Douglas replied, "Papa, dear, you know you don't care about the 'fixings' any