

Elizabeth's Rosary...

Lida L. Coghlan

"It cannot be, Arthur. You are my own cousin."

"But I love you, Elizabeth. Love like mine is a sacred thing — too sacred to be lightly thrown aside. The law which forbids the marriage of cousins is only a law of the Church, not one made by Christ."

"To a Catholic, the laws of the Church are just as binding. Then, too, it is a wise law. Cousins should not marry."

"Never mind the law, Elizabeth. Tell me, do you love me?"
A shadow crept over the girl's face, and she looked at him wistfully.

"I don't know, Arthur. I love you as a friend, a companion, a cousin, or even as I should love a brother, had I one, but I hardly think I love you as I should love the man I shall marry. Perhaps, if you were not my cousin, I might love you as you wish."

"I am answered, dear. If you really loved me there would be no question of relationship, and you would have no doubts on the subject. I must have your whole heart."

"Arthur dear, it grieves me to refuse what you ask. You have always been so good to me!" Then in a lighter tone: "Have you forgotten that this is our last evening together — that I start for home to-morrow?"

"Forgotten? That is why I was determined to know my fate to-night. I wish I could forget that I am losing you, not for a few months as I had hoped, but for all time. I was a careless fellow, caring little for my profession, when you came to us a year ago. I grew to love you, Elizabeth, and the hope of winning you has been a spur to my ambition. Now I have a fair chance of success, and you rob me of it all." He turned upon her with sudden anger. "How can you be so cruel?"

"I did not know, Arthur, did not dream of such a thing. To me you are a cousin — the dearest of cousins. How should I know that you thought differently of me?"

"How should you know? Are you really such a simpleton, or are you flirting with me? Great Heavens! girl, have you never had a lover?"

"Not that I know of."

"How old are you—eighteen?"

"I shall be twenty my next birthday."

They were on the upper gallery of the old house — Elizabeth seated in a rustic chair, Arthur leaning against the pillar, his arms folded across his breast, his dark face drawn with suppressed passion. His lips curled scornfully as he looked down upon the shrinking figure in the chair. He spoke clearly and distinctly, each word falling upon the girl's heart like a blow.

"Nearly twenty, and you have never had a lover. You have gone among men with your calm eyes and angelic face, have talked to them, sung for them, let them touch your hand, and no man has ever loved you? Do you expect me to believe that? I thought you an innocent child — and I find you a heartless flirt."

She rose and faced him. Her face was like marble — save for a spot of crimson on each cheek — and the usually calm eyes flashed angrily.

"And I thought my cousin a gentleman. I am equally sorry to be disillusioned. I have answered your questions honestly. That you doubt my word does not alter the fact that I speak the truth. Good-night," and she swept into the house.

When Elizabeth returned from early mass next morning Arthur met her at the gate.

"Will you come into the rose garden, my cousin?"

She looked up, half frightened, but the old kindly light shone in his eyes; all trace of last night's passion had vanished. He was again her dear cousin Arthur. With a silent prayer of thanksgiving she followed him.

"I want to ask your pardon, dear, for my conduct last night. I was mad, I think. Can you forgive me?"

"Fully and freely, my dear cousin. Will you forgive my angry words?"

"You had every right to be angry. After you left me last night I came out here; the cool night air and the perfume of the roses quieted me. As I thought more calmly I realized how unjust I had been. Remember, Elizabeth, that I am unused to girls so innocent and free from vanity as you are."

"I suppose I am innocent—most of my life has been spent in the dear old convent. I had no thought of wounding you, for I never dreamed that you thought of me other than a cousin. I wish you could believe me, Arthur."

"I do believe you, dear—forgive my momentary doubt. Forget my rash words and be again my gentle, loving little cousin. Before you go I want you to give me something that I can always keep with

me as a kind of talisman. Something you have used often so often as to be a part of yourself."

Elizabeth looked at him thoughtfully.

"I have but one thing which answers your description, and that you would not care to have. It is—" she hesitated—"my rosary."

"Your rosary?"

"Yes, Father Desmond gave it to me when I was confirmed. I have used it every day and key; it under my pillow every night since then. I have nothing which comes so near being a part of me."

"Will you give it to me, dear? I cannot promise to say the prayers, for I do not believe in that, but I will keep it because it was yours. It shall be my talisman, and the thought of my pure-hearted cousin will keep me from going very far astray."

Elizabeth laid her rosary in his outstretched hand. He looked at it reverently, not because of its religious meaning, but for the fact that she loved it, had told its beads daily since her childhood and kept it always about her.

It was a simple little rosary. The beads of white bone, were perfect carved roses, strung upon a slender steel chain. The medal which joined the decades was of bone, with the Ecce Homo thrown up in bold relief on one side, and the Mater Dolorosa on the other.

The crucifix had the figure of the Redeemer carved into it. Every detail was perfect — the noble beauty of the face, the chaste symmetry of the limbs, even the nails which fastened the hands and feet to the cross.

"I could not give you anything I prize as much. Will you keep it always about you?"

"Always. It is to be my talisman, you know," he smiled sadly into her earnest eyes, "and I promise never to do anything to grieve your tender heart, or to make your rosary ashamed of being with me. You shall have the prettiest rosary in Mobile in exchange."

"And I will say it every day for you, Arthur."

On Trinity Sunday the Bishop had administered confirmation at Saint Margaret's. The music had been very beautiful, the pipe organ, which had replaced the cabinet organ, having been used for the first time. Mrs. Tremont, Dr. Tremont's widow, had trained the choir, and both the pastor and people were justly proud of the music rendered. Mrs. Tremont's only child had been confirmed, and Father Meister had called to congratulate the widow upon the success of her teaching, as well as to bring the child a little present in remembrance of the occasion.

"I am sorry, father, but Elizabeth is not at home," Mrs. Tremont said, as she shook hands with her pastor. "She has gone for a little visit to her grandmother Tremont in Springfield. She has studied faithfully and I thought she needed a little rest."

"You were quite right, my child. I brought a small present for her which I will leave with you. It is only a little Rosary, but it came into my possession in rather a curious way. I will tell you about it, Mrs. Tremont, and you can tell Elizabeth as much of the story as you think best."

"Very well, father."

"Some ten years ago, I was chaplain at the Hotel Dieu, in Havana. Typhoid was raging, and we made a special study of such cases. One day a well-dressed man suffering from the fever was sent ashore from a vessel bound for New Orleans. There was no clue to his identity save the initials A. T. W., which marked his trunk and all his clothing. The same initials appeared on his wallet, which contained, besides a roll of money, this little Rosary. From this we judged him to be a Catholic, and as it was a hopeless case, we watched closely for a sign of consciousness, that he might receive the sacraments before he died."

"I was coming in from Mass one morning, when a nurse stopped me in the hall. The patient in 27 is awake, father, and quite rational. Will you see him?"

"What was my surprise to find that he was not, nor had ever been, a Catholic. But I think I should like to be one, father. Will you baptize me?"

"Certainly, if you really desire it. But you seem to know something of the faith, my son, else why the Rosary which you found in your wallet?"

"That is my talisman, father. It was given me by the woman I loved. She could not give me her heart, so—she looked up with a faint smile—she gave me her Rosary. Elizabeth loved it very dearly. It was given her the day she was confirmed, and she kept it always about her. Where is my Rosary, father? I want it."

"You shall have it. Do you really wish to be baptized? I wish you would think seriously about it,

my son. You know typhoid is treacherous."

"You think I am likely to die?" he interrupted.

"I fear the chances are about even."

"You were right, Father, I do know something of the Faith, and I should like to die a Catholic."

"But should you recover?"

"He smiled faintly. 'Then I shall try to live a Catholic. I gave Elizabeth a rosary in exchange for this. She said she would say it every day for me. She must have kept her word. What think you, Father?'"

"Some one has been praying for you, my son. Rest now, you have been talking too much. I will see you again this afternoon."

"After Vespers I baptized him. He was very weak, but seemed quite happy. After the ceremony, he said, 'When I am gone, father, I want you to send this back to Elizabeth. Tell her that her rosary was not only a talisman to keep me from evil, but that it and her prayers have brought me into the Church she loved so well. I will tell you all about it to-morrow, father, I am tired now,' and he closed his eyes wearily."

"When I called to see him next morning he was dead. The nurse, going her rounds at five o'clock, found that he had passed away in his sleep, his hands clasped, as if in prayer, over his beloved Rosary. Of course I did not know where to send the Rosary, so I kept it. I thought I would give it to your little daughter as a confirmation gift, she is such a pure-hearted child, and her name is Elizabeth. I'll leave it with you, Mrs. Tremont, and as I said before, you may tell her as much of the story now as you think best."

"O, my God, I thank Thee, I thank Thee," cried the widow, fervently. With grateful tears Elizabeth Tremont pressed to her lips the little Rosary which she had given to her cousin, Arthur Winston, in the rose garden, fifteen years before.—Our Lady of Good Counsel.

ONE OF MANY.

He was the newest recruit of them all, a clean, well-set-up country boy, not long, loosed from his mother's apron strings, for he blushed like a girl and neither swore nor used tobacco.

The captain's eyes rested kindly upon his latest acquisition, the blue-eyed, fair-haired "Rookie" of "K" Company.

"He'll do," was the captain's brief comment, as he watched the boy's eagerness to acquire every soldierly detail.

The "Stentch Regulars" sailed with the Fifth Army Corps for Cuba, and all during the long, hot journey from Port Tampa to Siboney the "Rookie" proved to be a splendid nurse, capable and tender.

"He'll do," remarked the young surgeon, emphatically.

Always ready and willing for any extra bit of duty, rifle and belt always in first-class order, the "Rookie" even won a word of praise from the gruff old "top sergeant."

The day before the fight for Santiago the "Stentch" met their first "ma" from home. A curiously directed, illiterate letter reached the captain of Company "K." It was from the "Rookie's" father.

"Honored sir," it read, "our boy, the last of six children, has listed with you, and his mother's heart is broke. We will pay you any price of you see he stays out of all fights. Our farm is worth \$2,000. Your humble servant," etc., etc.

That night the orders came for the advance on San Juan. During the thick of the fight next day the captain of "K" Company kept his eyes on him. "Rookie" He was one of the first of that thin blue line to reach the blockhouse; he helped tear down the yellow and red of Spain; his left hand sent up the Stars and Stripes, the right helping with a bad flesh wound. That same left arm brought in the second lieutenant from a murderous fire.

"Private Blank," wrote the captain in his notebook, "medal of honor."

The captain wrote the boy's father from the line of entrenchments: "Your boy is a man. There isn't enough money in the United States Treasury to pay me to keep him out of a fight."

The "Rookie" bore a charmed life; not a bullet touched him; the fever passed him by. But the fifth day out, on their homeward way, the lad sickened, died and was buried at sea.

"A true hero," murmured the captain, as he stood with bared head watching the committal of the body to the deep, "but the world will never hear of him." — Catholic Home Annual.

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Derry-Na-Mona

(By Victor Power.)

The November storm was raging around the old house of Derry-na-mona, and in a small room on the ground floor — the "school room," as it was called — a girl sat, all alone in the hreilight, her slender form convulsed with passionate sobs.

"Miss Eily, are you widdin, Miss?"

The girl started, then rose, stole to the door, and unlocked it.

"Come in, Nora — come in," she said hurriedly, as the old servant entered. "I'm in trouble, Nora — terrible trouble — and I've locked myself in here to have a good cry."

"Ach! for shame, Miss Eily! See, now! I can guess what it is, and maybe things 'll turn out all right in the end. God is good. And the master won't force you to do this, when it comes to the point. Just you wait and see."

Nora Brien was holding Eily Quinlan's hand in hers. The old woman had lived with the Quinlans for the previous forty years — had shared in the heyday of the family, and, of late years, in their bitter reverses. She knew that James Quinlan — Eily's father — was tottering on the verge of ruin — that the old homestead of Derry-na-mona was mortgaged to its very chimneys — that the sole prospect of rescue from the abyss lay in the chances of Eily's making a wealthy marriage. She knew that James Quinlan had spent a good deal of his time for the previous weeks over at Shula Castle, with Walter Hamilton, the owner of the estate, who had only recently come to reside there from abroad, and that a rumor was afloat in the neighborhood that Hamilton had fallen in love, "as first sight," with Eily Quinlan, and was negotiating with the girl's father to pay off the incumbrances on the Derry-na-mona property, in exchange for the privilege of receiving the beautiful girl for his wife, and as mistress of the ancient castle.

But Nora Brien had heard these whisperings from outsiders only. She had yet to learn that they were actual facts; and that there was also another fact which was breaking Eily's heart, day by day.

Between her sobs, Eily now poured her story into the old servant's sympathetic ears. That very evening Eily's father had introduced to his daughter the subject of Walter Hamilton, and had told her, in so many words, that he had as good as promised Hamilton that Eily would be his wife.

"And it is killing me to think of it, Nora!" the girl sobbed. "I could not remain in the dining-room; and I have come here to try to realize what it means!"

"But why are you so upset over it, Miss Eily?" Nora Brien asked, after a pause. "Sure, isn't Mr. Walker a fine, handsome young gentleman, and very rich, too, by all accounts? And what betteth could you do then?"

"Oh, hush, hush, Nora! You don't know what you are saying! The freight flashed on the girl's face as she thus spoke; and Nora, as she gazed earnestly at her young mistress, saw that Eily's blue eyes were strangely haggard, and that the withered bloom of her cheeks gave place to a sickly pallor. Her russet-gold hair was dishevelled, and her full lips were quivering.

"You don't know what you are saying, Nora!" she repeated, in a choking whisper. "Are you forgetting — forgetting Master Frank?"

And she suddenly burst into bitter weeping.

When she had grown somewhat calmer, Nora ventured to take up the subject of Eily's last words.

"Why, I thought, child, that you never heard from Master Frank Carruthany more. I thought it was all over forever, since he left home, and went away to Dublin to attend to his profession last year?"

"He asked me to keep our secret to myself, Nora. But I feel I must tell you the truth now. I promised, a year ago, to be his wife some day — and I expect him this evening or to-morrow, to arrange further particulars as to our future."

"Expect him, Miss Eily? Not here, surely?"

"No; how could he come here, Nora? You know well enough that papa detests the Carralls — ever since that wretched law-suit between our family and theirs."

This was true, and Nora could only sigh and shake her head despondently — and a long silence followed.

"And when did Master Frank come home, Miss Eily?" Nora asked, at last.

"I do not know yet whether he has come or not. I had a letter from him to-day, from Dublin — sent under cover to Julia Neill."

(Julia Neill was a farmer's wife, living near; she had been Eily's playmate once upon a time, and was a tenant of the Quinlans.) "He said he intended running down to Clones for a couple of days, and starting from Dublin either to-day or to-morrow. And he promised to send a message to me whatever evening he should arrive."

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